

O Timothy

“Keep that which is committed to thy trust...”

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

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“Rockhill Church uses full blown contemporary music, including Hillsong, and in typical emerging fashion, everything is dark. The room is dark for the worship service and it is dark for the preaching. It would be nearly impossible to actually look at your Bible and ‘search the Scriptures’...The fruit of a New Evangelical stance is a never-ending progression of change. Each generation goes farther from the truth. The emerging church is simply the twenty-first century face of New Evangelicalism. It is the product of a natural and inescapable path of progression.” Page 2.

Digging in the Walls: A month’s worth of news items, republished from Friday Church News Notes. **Page 13.**



LANCASTER BAPTIST CHURCH’S CONTEMPORARY FRUIT ~ By David Cloud

California is being populated with contemporary churches that are products of and spin-offs of Lancaster Baptist Church of Lancaster and the West Coast Baptist College that it operates. The same thing is happening in many other parts of North America and beyond. In fact, the reason we began warning about Lancaster a few years ago was that we had seen the fruit of its contemporary compromise in churches overseas.

In many cases, the pastors of the contemporary churches are sons of Lancaster’s leaders, staff, and teachers.

Any man can have a son or student who goes in a different direction philosophically, but that is not the case here. These contemporary works have not been publicly renounced. In most cases, they have the express blessing of the (allegedly) non-contemporary fathers.

These works are a product of the positivist philosophy that is taught at Lancaster. It is a New Evangelical



philosophy: keep the message positive, avoid dealing with personalities, be known for what you are for, not for what you are against.

These works are a product of Lancaster’s despising of clear warnings.

The resulting ignorance leaves men and women liable to deception.

These works are also a product of Lancaster's commitment to the use of contemporary praise music. While Lancaster has toned down the rhythm and cleaned up the presentation of the music (e.g., singers standing still instead of dancing), the music has transformational power, nonetheless. CCM's "lighten up, don't be so strict, keep it positive, promote unity" philosophy has captured the hearts of many people at Lancaster, and many of the West Coast graduates are taking the use of CCM much farther than Lancaster probably intended it to go. When you let the camel put his nose in the tent, the result is predictable.

(For documentation of Lancaster's commitment to contemporary music see "[Have I Exaggerated the Music Problem at Lancaster?](https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/have-i-exaggerated-music-problem-lancaster.php)" <https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/have-i-exaggerated-music-problem-lancaster.php>)

ROCK HILL CHURCH, FONTANA, CALIFORNIA

This year, Paul Chappell's youngest son, Matt, started a contemporary work called Rock Hill Church in Fontana, California.

Paul ordained him for this work on April 25, 2016, and has tweeted praise for the new work.

In a blog at the founding of Rock Hill in early 2017, Paul Chappell tweeted, "Thankful to hear from our son Matt tonight how the Lord is already working as they are planting Rock Hill Baptist Church in Fontana, CA."

When Paul talks about Matt's work, he says he is starting Rock Hill Baptist Church, but the church's online material (rockhill.church), is listed as "copyright Rock Hill Church." The church sign says "RH Rockhill Church." They are positioning themselves as a generic church.

In a blog dated September 15, 2017, Paul again recommended Matt's work. He says that Matt "uses some methods I do not use" and he says, "I'll not have these methods taught at WCBC" ("[3 Priorities for Ministry Dads and Their Ministry Sons](https://www.paulchappell.com)," [Paulchappell.com](https://www.paulchappell.com), Sep. 15 2017). So using Christian rock and preaching a Chuck Swindoll brand of "grace" and accepting immodest and unisex fashions are just different methods.

Rockhill Church uses full blown contemporary music, including Hillsong, and in typical emerging fashion, everything is dark. The room is dark for the worship service and it is dark for the preaching. It would be nearly impossible to actually look at your Bible and "search the Scriptures."

Matt's Instagram post for Feb. 18, 2017, featured a photo of his praise team singing Hillsong's "Love So Great."

The following ad published by Rock Hill uses full-blown rock and roll: www.instagram.com/p/BWGXI1iDtmo/

Matt's messages are littered with motivational, positive-thinking language such as "leveraging a new beginning." The messages are very light on sin and holiness and very heavy on grace, and it is not a Titus 2:11-15 grace. It is an emerging grace. It is a Chuck Swindoll grace. Matt's preaching is filled with non-critical references to the pop culture. In his first message at Rock Hill, Matt cited and non-critically referenced a basketball star, rocker Taylor Swift, Steve Jobs, the Los Angeles Lakers, and a professional fisherman.

What signal does that send to his listeners?

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When Paul Chappell ordained Matt in 2016, he reminisced online about how that Matt surrendered to preach in the 7th grade and that he is the product of Lancaster Baptist Church and West Coast Baptist College. Consider the following excerpt:

“Last night was a highlight for Terrie and me and our church family as we had the ordination here for our youngest son, Matthew. ... I look back over the years since [Matt surrendered to preach], and I know that where Matt is today is the fruit of so many investments. It’s the fruit of every Sunday school teacher, Christian school teacher, youth worker, West Coast Baptist College faculty and staff, and the Lancaster Baptist Church deacons and church family who have loved our family and encouraged our children. ... It was my joy last night to preach Matt’s ordination service...”
<http://www.paulchappell.com/2016/04/25/when-seventh-graders-surrender-to-the-ministry/>

We agree with what Pastor Chappell says here. Matt Chappell *was* prepared by Lancaster and West Coast. He is a product of the positivist philosophy that is taught at Lancaster. He is a product of the use of contemporary praise music. He is the product of Quick Prayerism.

The fruit of a New Evangelical stance is a never-ending progression of change. Each generation goes farther from the truth. The emerging church is simply the twenty-first century face of New Evangelicalism. It is the product of a natural and inescapable path of progression. See “[Emerging Church: The 21st Century Face of New Evangelicalism](https://www.wayoflife.org/database/emerging_church_new_evangelicalism.html)” at https://www.wayoflife.org/database/emerging_church_new_evangelicalism.html

As already noted, any man can have a son or student who goes in a different direction philosophically, but that is not the case here.

COASTLINE BAPTIST CHURCH, OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Coastline Baptist Church, Oceanside, pastored by Paul Chappell’s brother, Steve, is a full-blown rock & roll church. Paul’s son, Matt, spent a few years there as youth pastor before he started Rockhill.

Robert Bakss, a rock & roll pastor with an emerging philosophy who has caused a lot of confusion in

Australian Independent Baptist churches, spoke at Coastline on February 5, 2017. (See [Baptist Church on a Slippery Slope](#), available in print or as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.)

On Coastline’s website under “Our Team,” the ministers include their favorite super heroes. Worship Pastor Ryan Gass’s is Wolverine; Assistant Pastor Jon Telles’s is Captain America; Student Ministries Pastor J.J. Mordh’s is Batman; Spanish Pastor Jairo Dominguez’s is Spiderman; Office Secretary Lisa Chappell’s is Wonder Woman. That is a huge green light for church youth to immerse themselves in worldly, sensual things that are forbidden by God’s Word (Ephesians 5:11; 1 John 2:15-16). No wonder most churches have thrown away godly, modest dress standards when the minds of the leaders are filled with such garbage (and probably much worse).

LOS ANGELES BAPTIST CHURCH, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The church’s web site under “Our History” says it was founded at the direction of Paul Chappell. Los Angeles Baptist has followed Lancaster’s example of despising “warnings” and thus being ignorant of many important issues facing God’s people today. It has also followed Lancaster’s example of using “adapted” contemporary worship music.

Not surprisingly, last year, the pastor’s daughter, who graduated from West Coast with a BA in missions, raised nearly \$18,000 to join World Race on an 11-month backpacking “missions trip” in multiple countries. The backpacking teams are called “squads.” The endeavor was promoted by her pastor father. She told the congregation that while working on a presentation for the church’s mission day, World Race caught her attention and she felt that God was calling her to this. It should be obvious, though, that the voice she heard is not God’s. World Race is extremely ecumenical. Its belief statement says, “We emphasize interdenominationalism and unity of the body of Christ, as such we are ministers of reconciliation. We seek to bring pastors and churches together in ministry.” Thus, World Race squads are seen as instruments for ecumenical unity. Christian rock music is at the heart of World Race. It is also committed to contemplative prayer. (See the free eBook [Evangelicals and Contemplative Prayer](#), www.wayoflife.org.) The emphasis is more on “kingdom building” than preaching

the gospel. In fact, the gospel is not mentioned in World Race's belief statement. There is also no mention of repentance, the imminent return of Christ, biblical separation, end-time apostasy, defense of the faith, and other teachings of Scripture that are essential to the times in which we live. There are no warnings of such things as Roman Catholicism, theological liberalism, Pentecostalism, Charismaticism, and the deep compromise of evangelicalism. Because of its ecumenical, positivist, "judge not" philosophy, World Race is a bridge to anything and everything. It's one thing for a pastor's child to depart from what he or she has been taught; it is quite another thing for a pastor to support and promote a child that has gone in an unscriptural direction.

GRACE GATHERING, SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Grace Gathering was founded by Todd Weaver, a graduate of West Coast Baptist College and the son of Toby Weaver who is listed on the staff page of West Coast.

The church's goal is to "partner with God to build to advance his kingdom." It's more about kingdom building than gospel preaching and discipleship. Grace Gathering believes "that God hasn't given up on the world and is working through people to bring about His renewal of all things."

Everything is very emerging at Grace Gatherings. Instead of a statement of faith, they have a "Theology Narrative." Instead of the Bible being infallibly inspired by God, it is an "authoritative narrative." For salvation, there is no mention of repentance or born again, just the "the Spirit of God affirms as children of God all those who trust Jesus."

They don't do missionary work; they do "holistic," "missional" work. They say the church's work is to "usher in the kingdom of God" and "partner with God to build to advance his kingdom." The church, they say, "is a global and local expression of living out the way of Jesus through love, peace, sacrifice, and healing as we embody the resurrected Christ, who lives in and through us, to a broken and hurting world." Grace Gathering is "participating in God's movement to rescue and restore His good creation." That is an emerging philosophy, and the church's "theology narrative" uses emerging terms such as "narrative," "missional," "relational,"

"fractured," "marginalized." Grace Gathering teaches that Christians are to "serve, care for, and cultivate the earth."

One will look in vain in the church's "theology narrative" for a statement on God's eternal judgment of the unsaved in the lake of fire. There appears to be a strong element of universalism. Their "community works" projects include the New Agey Alcoholics Anonymous with its emphasis on a "higher power" rather than the God of Scripture.

Grace Gathering describes itself as "a people that "respect differences of opinion and encourage dialogue."

It sounds like Weaver has been influenced by men such as Rob Bell, Robert Webber, and Brian McLaren. In fact, Grace Gathering's web site says they are "a people that trust that Love Wins in the end." That's the title of Rob Bell's book promoting universalism.

But Lancaster/West Coast's "do not criticize" philosophy doesn't allow for church members and students to be properly educated and warned of such men and their heresies. And many bridges are built from the church and student body to evangelicalism and beyond by such things as contemporary worship music.

NEW LIFE BAPTIST CHAPEL, RANCHO VISTA, CALIFORNIA

New Life is a satellite of Lancaster Baptist Church and is listed at the ministry section of Lancaster's web site under "New Life Baptist Campuses" (www.lancasterbaptist.org/).

New Life's web site is very hip and emerging, and the church features a contemporary praise team and a contemporary style P&W stage.

Other New Life Baptist Chapel campuses in California are in Rosamond, Mojave, Castaic, and Taft.

None of them mention or even hint at repentance in their gospel presentations.

AMBASSADOR BAPTIST CHURCH, FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

Ambassador Baptist Church (also known as Fresno Church) was pastored by Mark Irmeler until it was turned

over to his son, Joshua, in 2007. Mark has taught at West Coast and is promoted on Paul Chappell's Ministry 127 blog.

Under Joshua's leadership, Ambassador Baptist has a full-blown contemporary praise program and philosophy. Currently (September 2017) they are using Rick Warren's *40 Days in the Word* program. (See fresnochurch.com.)

CONCLUSION

When has Pastor Paul Chappell publicly and emphatically renounced the many contemporary West Coast graduates, including his own son Matt of Rock Hill Church, that are leading people astray around the world?

For more about the emerging church see the free 55-page eBook *The Emerging Church Is Coming*, and for a more thorough study, see the 440-page *What Is the Emerging Church?* Both are available at www.wayoflife.org.

What Is The Emerging Church?

By David Cloud

What is the Emerging Church?



David Cloud

Purchase from [Way of Life On Line Store](http://www.wayoflife.org)

Seek to Make the Church STRONGER

By David Cloud



The following is a new addition to [WHAT IF THERE IS NO STRONG CHURCH?](http://www.wayoflife.org) ISBN 978-1-58318-237-6. This book addresses the situation in which many believers find themselves in that there is no strong church in their area. We deal with the subject under nine headings: 1. Be sure that you understand the importance of the church. 2. Be careful that you are not looking for a perfect church. 3. Commute to a strong church. 4. Relocate to a place that has a strong church. 5. Attend the best church. 7. Seek to make the church stronger. 7. Be wise in dealing with pastors. 8. Give full attention to your own spiritual life. 9. In some cases, a new church can be established. The tips are very practical and deal with most situations that have come to our attention through the years. 60 pages. Available as a free eBook download as

well as in a print edition from https://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/index.php

While there is a time to leave a church when it is clearly and irrevocably committed to unscriptural paths, it is also very important to do everything possible to strengthen existing churches insofar as this is possible. And regardless of how strong a church might be, there are doubtless ways it can be strengthened.

A biblical church that has even many weaknesses is worth fighting for as long as there is hope of strengthening it. In regard to churches, I have two goals in my ministry. One is to strengthen existing Bible-believing churches, and the other is to encourage the establishment of new

churches that are built on a strong foundation from the very beginning.

This is not to say that a church cannot be irredeemably spoiled by unrepentant sins and errors. Christ warned the church of Ephesus that if it did not repent of leaving its first love, He would remove its candlestick so that it would no longer be one of His churches (Rev. 2:4-5). He warned the church at Pergamos that if it did not repent of its worldliness He would come quickly and fight against them (Rev. 2:14-16). He warned other churches similarly. There are definitely sins and errors that can destroy a church if not repented of.

There is a time to fight for a weak church and a time to leave it alone, and only the Lord can give wisdom about these matters.

I know of a number of churches that have become stronger in recent years rather than weaker, thus going in a different direction than that in which most churches are headed. The “people” have strengthened the hands of the pastors in issues such as prayer, music, standards for workers, the building up of the homes, separation from the world, discipline, evangelistic vision, etc.

I think of many young preachers who have strengthened senior pastors in recent days by their zeal for the truth. And I encourage young preachers to do this very thing. Don’t be afraid of man. Fear God and love Christ and truth and help your fellow preachers, even the oldest ones, to be stronger rather than weaker in these evil days.

I know of a number of churches that have gotten stronger in the music issue, for example, because the pastors were challenged by members or by other preachers. Some church members are better informed in many ways than the pastors, and wise pastors will benefit from their knowledge and spiritual wisdom.

I think of a very conservative Independent Baptist church with a passionate and godly pastor. It has some strengths but also plenty of weaknesses, some of them serious from my standpoint. In fact, I am convinced that this church will not be standing in the next generation unless some major changes are made. But the pastor is getting stronger rather than weaker, more knowledgeable rather than less, and the church is benefitting. This is through the influence of many things. The pastor is a student and a reader, for one thing, and he is willing to hear challenges from a

wide variety of men, even “radicals” like me! And there are godly people in the congregation who are graciously and wisely pushing for the church to be stronger and are holding up the pastor’s hands in that direction.

That church is what I call a mixed multitude, which is the typical Bible-believing church today. A mixed multitude church is one in which the membership is composed largely of people who are *not* passionate Christians. Only a few attend special prayer meetings, for example, and when people don’t love prayer meetings I have a difficult time thinking they are even true Christians. Whatever they are, they don’t have the spiritual character of the members of the first church (Acts 2:42). One man told me that he could count only about ten true disciples in that church family, though the membership is about 70, I would guess. This is typical, as we point out in the book [*The Discipling Church*](#).

But this is a church with many good biblical characteristics, and it is moving in a stronger direction and for that we are thankful to the Lord. We want to do everything we can to help such churches.

BY PRAYER

One of the most important ways this is done is earnest prayer. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Prayer can change any situation, even the most hopeless, because effectual prayer is entering into intimate communion with God and taking hold of His infinite power and omniscient wisdom. “To pray is to enter the treasure house of God and to enrich oneself out of an inexhaustible storehouse of riches.”

When praying for a church, we must focus our attention on the power of God, not the weakness of the situation. To Abraham and Jeremiah, God said, “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” (Ge. 18:14; Jer. 32:27). God was challenging their faith. Many times Jesus reproved the disciples for their lack of faith (Mt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Lu. 12:28).

I have witnessed situations in which pastors became concerned for issues about which they had not previously been concerned, and I have no doubt that this was an answer to the prayers of, and a product of the effort of, concerned church members.

Instead of merely criticizing pastors, pray for them! Pray believing (Mr. 11:24); pray earnestly (Ro. 15:30; Jas. 5:16); pray persistently (Mt. 7:7; Lu. 18:1); pray with fasting (Mt. 17:21). Pray with prayer partners. Paul taught the importance of this by his frequent, earnest requests for prayer (Ro. 15:30; Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3; 1 Th. 5:25; 2 Th. 3:1). Agree with likeminded brethren to pray for specific things in the church.

BY CHALLENGING THE PASTORS

Another way to help strengthen a church is to challenge the pastors and teachers in a gracious and wise way. This is never wrong. It's not wrong to talk to a pastor or teacher about an issue. It is not wrong to encourage a pastor or teacher to read something that could help them. I have often been helped in this way by well-meaning people.

I thank the Lord that I know of *many* churches that have been strengthened by members who have challenged the preachers on a variety of issues.

Of course, this requires that a preacher receive challenges, even instruction, from the "people."

No man naturally likes to be challenged or corrected, but a pastor or teacher who does not receive exhortation properly misunderstands his position and authority. The church is a body in which the leaders have a *unique* teaching role but not the *only* teaching role (Eph. 4:11-16). Every member of the body is to contribute to the edification of the whole.

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:16).

The brethren are instructed to "exhort one another" (Heb. 10:25).

This is not to say that a church member is to be a "loose canon" and operate independently of or in defiance of the leaders. But in light of the Bible's teaching, why wouldn't God use any member of the church body to challenge the preacher?

The pastor does have very real authority. We believe in that and we teach God's people how to submit to that

authority, but a pastor's authority is not the authority to demand blind, unquestioning loyalty. The people are commanded by God to "prove all things" (1 Th. 5:21), so it cannot be wrong when they do so. Paul did not reprove the Bereans for testing him by Scripture (Acts 17:11).

In Lectures to My Students, Charles Spurgeon gave the following counsel:

"A sensible friend who will unsparingly criticize you from week to week will be a far greater blessing to you than a thousand indiscriminating admirers if you have sense enough to bear his treatment, and grace enough to be thankful for it. When I was preaching at the Surrey Gardens, an unknown censor of great ability used to send me a weekly list of my mispronunciations and other Slips of speech. He never signed his name, and that was my only cause of complaint against him, for he left me in a debt which I could not acknowledge. I take this opportunity of confessing my obligations to him, for with genial temper, and an evident desire to benefit me, he marked down most relentlessly everything which he supposed me to have said incorrectly. Concerning some of these corrections he was in error himself, but for the most part he was right, and his remarks enabled me to perceive and avoid many mistakes. I looked for his weekly memoranda with much interest, and trust I am all the better for them. ... He demanded my authority for calling a man covetous; and so on. Possibly some young men might have been discouraged, if not irritated, by such severe criticisms, but they would have been very foolish, for in resenting such correction they would have been throwing away a valuable aid to progress. No money can purchase outspoken honest judgment, and when we can get it for nothing let us utilize it to the fullest extent" (Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, vol. 4).

The preacher who doesn't like challenges not only misunderstands his position and authority, he is also ignorant of the reality of his own condition. No man knows everything or sees everything. *Every man* has weaknesses and blind spots. It matters not how long one has lived, how much experience one has, and how much one has studied, we are all like babes in this present life. We must be careful to maintain the humility demonstrated by Agur, who said,

"Surely I *am* more brutish than *any* man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy. Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what *is* his name, and what *is* his son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Proverbs 30:2-4).

Agur was not saying that he was ignorant. He was comparing himself to God rather than to man. He was

saying that before God's omniscience, he is like a dumb animal. This is the humility that will keep the preacher right in his self-perception so that he remains open to further learning and correction.

BY BEING BUSY BUILDING THE CHURCH

Every member of the church should serve Christ with all of his heart and strength, doing everything he can to make the church prosper. As we have seen in Ephesians 4, the church is a body and the ministry of the church is the work of the entire body, with each member diligently contributing his or her part.

We see the same thing in 1 Corinthians 3. The warning about the Judgment Seat of Christ is given in the context of the work of the church.

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye *are* God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are" (1 Co. 3:9-17).

The church is the temple of God; the foundation is Christ; and each member is to build on this foundation by the unction of the Holy Spirit. Paul, as an apostle, was a master builder. He didn't choose that function; it was assigned by God. Paul was used by God to write a large portion of the blueprint for the church in the canon of the New Testament. Every member has his or her assigned part in this great business, and each member will be judged as to how he builds.

Kelly Whiting makes the following important observation from this passage:

"It is extremely clear from the passage that even the conflict-riven, carnal, and sin-tolerating church at Corinth was God's church and that the members, all of them (1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 2:1; 3:1; etc.), were responsible for correcting the errors of the church and that their reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ would consist very largely

of what they did with respect to building up that church. The context of verses 9-14 show that the Holy Spirit is speaking of the foundation of the church in Corinth and that the rewards were the things built 'upon this foundation.' So the child of God who believes God's Word will aim to protect, defend, and edify the church God has placed him in so long as he discerns that it remains a church (by using his well-exercised spiritual senses, Hebrews 5:14), knowing that his labor of faith will receive reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Similarly, if a believer refuses to do his part to edify his church, he will suffer loss at that Judgment, AND it goes on to say that any man that defiles the church will be destroyed by God."

If you want to make the church stronger, be faithful to all of the services, to every prayer meeting, to visitation programs. Get involved in every ministry opportunity that is open to you, then ask the pastors what you might be able to do in particular beyond that.

Those who are faithful and are busy serving are much more likely to get a hearing from the leaders as opposed to those who are on the sidelines. A team member can "criticize" more effectively than a bystander.

And a team member tends to care for the team a lot more than those who merely watch others play.

There is a saying, "If the whole church were like me, what would the church be?"

What If There Is No Strong Church?

By David Cloud



Free download from [Way of Life On Line Store](#)



The Bible teaches us to learn spiritual and moral lessons from the creation, which was made, among other things, as a divine revelation (Psa. 19:1-3; Rom. 1:20). Everything is under God's control. He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). By Him all things consist (Col. 1:17). He "hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm" (Nahum 1:3).

We need to look at life through the lens of Scripture and always be learning.

Hurricane Irma hit mainland Florida on September 10. I am a native Floridian and I travel there to visit Mom (age 93) and other relatives as often as I can. I was scheduled to fly into Tampa on September 8 but cancelled the trip due to the approaching hurricane. Growing up in Florida, I experienced many hurricanes. As a nine year old, I was staying with my grandparents north of Lakeland when the eye of Donna came right over central Florida in 1960. It came ashore as a category 4 with sustained winds of 130mph. I remember that it came through at night and you couldn't see what was happening, but the terrible winds were frightening. Donna damaged more than 5,000 houses on the mainland, mostly on the Gulf Coast. Then it exited north Florida, increased in intensity, and hit North Carolina.

On September 8, Irma looked like it would be much, much nastier than that. It was the most powerful Atlantic storm on record as it wreaked havoc on the Caribbean and Cuba.

Consider some lessons from a hurricane:

JUDGMENT AND CHASTISEMENT AND CALL TO REPENTANCE

From a biblical perspective, there can be no doubt that the steady onslaught of "billion dollar storms"--with the

loss of life and property and business and the mind-boggling increase in debt--are a judgment upon America for her moral wickedness and the deep compromise of her churches. There have been more than 200 such weather disasters since 1980. And the cost is rising and the debt is rising. One senator told the news media that Congress is ready to do whatever is needed for the costs of Irma, but that is not true. All they will do is increase the nation's already unfathomable debt.

No nation since Israel of old has had such light of Scripture or sinned against that light so brazenly as America. America's Christians should be on their knees, but mostly it is party time as usual, even in the face of terrible storms.

God sends trouble for many reasons, but one of those is for repentance. Joel describes a judgment God sent to Israel, a judgment on their agriculture (Joel 1:2-4) and a judgment at the hand of Israel's enemies (Joel 1:6-7).

These were acts of God's mercy to call the people to repentance.

"Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests: howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God: for the meat offering and the drink offering is withholden from the house of your God. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the LORD your God, and cry unto the LORD" (Joel 1:13-14).

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil" (Joel 2:12-13).

This is a description of true repentance, and this is what the Almighty is saying to America, but few are listening. The *interpretation* of Joel pertains to the day of the Lord and God's redemption of Israel, but the *application* is for today.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

Every Bible-believing church in America should heed the call of Joel. It would change things. It would change things greatly.

President Trump's "day of prayer" on September 3 was nothing, really, other than an acknowledgment that there is some sort of unnamed God. The proclamation made far more ado about man's ability than God's. Trump said, "As Americans, we know that no challenge is too great for us to overcome." He then urged Americans thusly: "Each of us, in our own way, may call upon our God for strength and comfort during this difficult time." It's a prayer about man, not about God. It's a prayer to a God who is there only to help man. There is no mention of the nation's sin against God. No call to repentance. No mention of Jesus Christ, in whose name and by whose atonement alone a sinner can acceptably approach unto God.

Trump's day of prayer is not a day of prayer after the fashion of earlier times in American history. The nation was birthed and carried along by real biblical prayer.

At least 16 times, the Continental Congress proclaimed days of fasting, repentance, and prayer, "and the entire American community repaired to their various churches on such days" (Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era*, Vol. 1).

For example, a resolution in 1776 called upon all Americans "that we may, with united hearts, CONFESS AND BEWAIL OUR MANIFOLD SINS AND TRANSGRESSIONS, AND, BY A SINCERE REPENTANCE AND AMENDMENT OF LIFE, appease his [God's] righteous displeasure, and, THROUGH THE MERITS AND MEDIATION OF JESUS, obtain his pardon and forgiveness; humbly imploring his assistance to frustrate the cruel purposes of our unnatural enemies."

This is the "day of prayer" that America needs today and it is the only type of prayer that will bring any substantive change. God doesn't hear human-centered prayers offered to a nameless deity.

MERCY AND ANSWERED PRAYER

Another lesson from Irma is that God is a merciful and very longsuffering God. He waited 250 years to destroy the northern kingdom of Israel after the wicked and brazen establishment of an idolatrous religion by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12). He waited 150 years after Ahab and Jezebel introduced Baal worship. All that time, God was sending the prophets to call Israel to repentance.

I have no doubt that God answered prayer and showed great mercy in regard to Irma. We cannot forget that there are still many God-fearing people in America, and God has mercy on the nation for their sake and for their prayer's sake.

The day before Irma hit, when it was a category 5 storm and when it looked like Florida would be devastated like the Caribbean islands had been devastated, some of which are currently uninhabitable, I sent the following note to some of my relatives:

"Grandma used to write out her prayers, which I always found to be interesting. Here is mine today, 'Lord, America has sinned greatly against the light of your Word. We deserve any judgment you give us. But we are asking for and trusting in your mercy. You told us to pray, and we are looking for answered prayer. We ask that this great storm will not devastate Florida and not harm any of your many people living there. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.'"

Others were praying after this fashion. Within hours the storm weakened and it hit the Florida mainland as a category 2 and not the category 4 or 5 that was expected. There was a lot of damage, billions of dollars' worth, probably, but the damage was *nothing* compared to what it would have been. One news source said, "Florida dodges a canon." Indeed. The storm surge that deluged parts of Jacksonville could have deluged every city and town on both coasts. The winds from a category 4 or 5 would have ruined buildings throughout the state. It could have destroyed thousands of expensive boats and tens of thousands of Florida's mobile homes. It could have been a *trillion* dollar storm.

Those who are thanking “good luck” for this respite are blind.

BENEVOLENCE

In these natural disasters, America’s benevolent spirit is on display. Though America has fallen far in character from what it was in past times because of her general rejection of God’s Word, America is still powerfully influenced by the Bible. Neighbor helps neighbor. Strangers help strangers. The entire nation responds to these things with an outpouring of compassionate help.

The response of the U.S. government itself is a reflection of biblical values. For the most part, the response was benevolent, efficient, unified, and honest. From the local level to the federal, there is little corruption and self-seeking in these events.

As an individual who has spent 28 years of his life living outside of America and who has traveled to about 50 countries, I see these things through different eyes. Americans complain about their government, and there is plenty to dislike, but compared to South Asia or China or South America and Africa, even most of Europe, the U.S. government is still the world model of efficiency, justice, and honesty (again, measured by the standard of this world, not by the standard of God’s Word).

Once I told an Indian man in Nepal that I had never heard of anyone having to bribe to get a government service in America, and he didn’t believe me!

The preparations for Irma were impressive, and the cooperation between the federal, state, and local governments and between government and business and between government and private entities such as the Red Cross and Samaritan’s Purse, was wonderful to behold. (Some 80% of the aid in such events comes from private sources.)

Tens of thousands of people moved to shelters as they were instructed, but everything was orderly; little or no pushing and shoving and fighting, not much self-seeking. Theft and looting was the rare exception.

For the most part, it was neighbor helping neighbor and stranger helping stranger. This is not man’s natural way; it is a reflection of the powerful influence of the Bible upon a people.

When the famous Russian novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn visited America, he said, “The United States has long shown itself to be the most magnanimous, the most generous country in the world.

Wherever there is a flood, an earthquake, a fire, a natural disaster, an epidemic, who is the first to help? The United States. Who helps the most and unselfishly? The United States.”

The U.S. Department of Defense is one of the world’s largest providers of international aid and disaster relief, and this reflects the nation’s benevolent spirit. A U.S. aircraft carrier is en route to provide assistance to *non-American territories* that were hit hard by Irma.

The U.S. Navy has two massive hospital ships that are mostly devoted to aiding the needy. The *USNS Mercy* and the *USNS Comfort* “serve as 70,000-metric-ton symbols of how much America cares as a nation and as a people” (“Hospital Ships,” navy.com). Converted from oil supertankers, the two ships originally cost \$560 million. The ships are each 894-feet long (the length of three football fields) and the height of a 10-story building. Each ship is a 1,000-bed hospital that carries 700 medical personnel at full capacity. On a visit to Southeast Asia in 2010, the *USNS Mercy* treated 109,754 patients and performed 1,580 surgeries.

In 2015, the *USNS Comfort* provided care for more than 120,000 patients in 11 countries in the Caribbean and South and Central America. These projects are funded by the U.S. government with assistance by volunteer medical personnel and supplies donated by private organizations.

Such neighborly love is the fruit of the Bible on Western Society.

(For more about this see [The Bible and Western Society](#). This 240-page book is available to view online, to download as a free eBook, or to purchase in print edition - www.wayoflife.org.)

FOREWARNING

The final lesson I would mention is that Irma is a forewarning of what is coming. Isaiah 29:6 prophesies of the Great Tribulation when the world will be visited

by God “with storm and tempest.” Revelation 6-18 describes these terrible judgments. Billions will die.

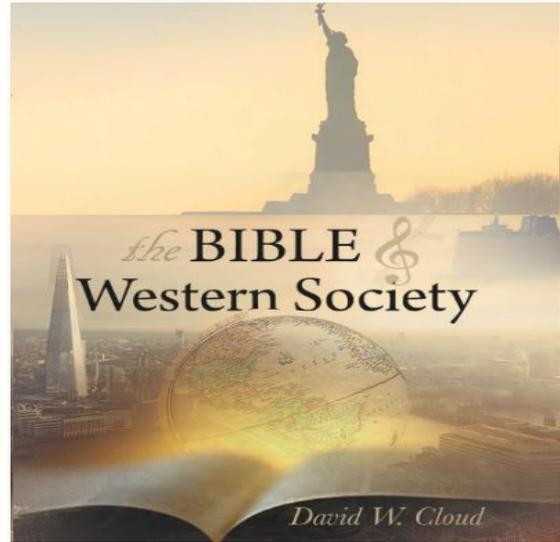
Why? Because man has sinned against God and broken His holy laws, beginning with the first law which is to love God with all the heart, soul, and strength.

Most men have ignored the call of the gospel of Jesus Christ and have refused to repent and receive God’s compassionate offer of salvation. Instead of humbling themselves before the Creator, mankind in general has walked in pride.

This present situation will not long continue. The end is near. In the coming day, “the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low” (Isaiah 2:11).

The Bible & Western Society

By David Cloud



Free download from [Way of Life On Line Store](#)

THE SQUID WITHOUT A SHADOW (Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, September 12, 2017: “Many marine creatures reflect surrounding light. They can do so because of tiny light-reflecting platelets. Typically, these crystalline platelets are made of purine, one of the building blocks of DNA, but these particular crystals cannot change how much light they reflect. The Hawaiian bobtail squid, however, needs to be able to reflect different levels of light because of its unique lifestyle. This squid glides through moonlit waters, but without its special reflective tissue its shadow would be seen as it passes over the bottom. The bobtail squid has light generating tissue on its underside facing the bottom and this produces just sufficient light to make its shadow disappear. In other words, it can generate variable levels of light. What's more, the squid can move its light-generating platelets around so that they might be scattered among its cells or concentrated where needed. Rather than being composed of just one amino acid, this squid's platelets are made up of six amino acids. God is the source of all light,



including spiritual light. According to evolution, the squid is closely related to some of the first animals that evolved in the sea. Yet, its technically sophisticated camouflage, which perfectly fits its environment and life-style is a testimony to God's wise design, not the early stages of mindless evolution. The spiritual light of God's truth makes that clear. Notes: *Science News*, 1/10: 2004, p. 20, A. Goho, ‘Moonlighting.’”

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?



ISRAEL'S PRIME MINISTER SEEKS RUSSIA'S HELP AGAINST IRAN

(Friday Church News Notes, September 1, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- In his meeting with Vladimir Putin on August 23, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought Russia's help in resisting Iran's growing influence. Netanyahu told Putin that Iran's growing presence in Syria is deeply concerning because it has vowed Israel's destruction. Netanyahu said, "Mr. President, with joint efforts we are defeating Islamic State, and this is a very important thing, but the bad thing is that where the defeated Islamic State group vanishes, Iran is stepping in. We cannot forget for a single minute that Iran threatens every day to annihilate Israel. It arms terrorist organizations, it sponsors and initiates terror" ("Netanyahu to Putin: Iran Seeks to 'Annihilate Israel,'" *Israel Today*, Aug. 24, 2017). Netanyahu needs to read his Hebrew Bible more carefully. Russia will lead a military alliance against Israel in the battle of Gog and Magog described in Ezekiel 38-39. Ezekiel tells us exactly where this Gog lives, and that is in the "north parts" relative to Israel (Eze. 38:6, 15; 39:2). Netanyahu does well to see Iran as a threat, as Iran (the biblical Persia) is listed as one of Gog's associates (Eze. 38:4-7). Russia has a long history of anti-Semitism, stemming back to ancient

times. The Czars stirred up pogroms against the Jews by spreading lies about them. In 1984, the U.S. ambassador dealing with human rights under the Helsinki Accords said, "Berlin was once the world capital of anti-Semitism; I am afraid that today it is Moscow." Russia has been arming Israel's enemies since the early 1950s. When Israel entered the Sinai Peninsula in 1956 to force Egypt to allow free movement for its ships, Russia threatened her with annihilation (Moshe Dayan, *Diary of the Sinai Campaign*, 1966, p. 185). Russia armed Syria and Egypt for the 1973 Yom Kippur War with some of its most advanced weapons systems and provided Soviet technicians to help operate the equipment (Jerry Asher, *Duel for the Golan*, Kindle location 520). By the early 1970s, 15,000 Soviet military experts were shaping the Egyptian armed forces into a modern army (Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War*, Kindle Loc 255). Russia supplied Israel's enemies with fighter jets, tanks, artillery, anti-aircraft missile batteries, and portable anti-tank weapons. Russia airlifted 15,000 tons of armaments to Syria and Egypt during the war. Russia is also providing Iran with nuclear technology and high-tech armaments. In September 2008, Israel's ambassador to the United States, Sallai Meridor, warned that Russian arms sales to Iran and Syria are "destabilizing and dangerous for Israel" ("Israel Irked by Iran-Russia Military Ties," *PressTV.ir*, Sept. 13, 2008). "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come

up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel” (Ezekiel 39:1-2).

POPE AND WORLD COUNCIL MEET TO PROMOTE UNITY AND TO SAVE THE WORLD

(Friday Church News Notes, September 1, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- On August 23-24, leaders of the World Council of Churches had a private audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican Palace to discuss ecumenical unity and the salvation of the world. WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit called the meeting fruitful and said that the “the unity of the church and the unity of humankind are interconnected” (“Pope Francis, WCC leadership meet in Rome, WCC News, Aug. 24, 2017). Tveit said that ecumenical unity is necessary to save the world, and he doesn’t mean the salvation of souls. Addressing the pope, the WCC leader said, “The future of humanity is threatened; the poorest among us are already feeling the worst consequences of them. We encourage you and the Roman Catholic Church to be with us in mobilizing a real change of mind, heart and priorities.” They want to save the world from such things as poverty, racial and religious division, nuclear armament, and climate change. “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

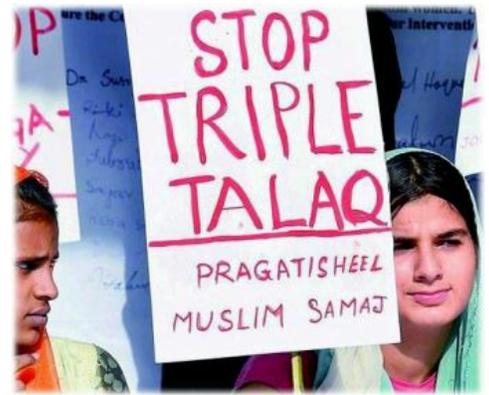


(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:17-20).

INDIA’S ISLAMIC LEADERS DEFIANT AFTER SUPREME COURT RULES AGAINST SHARIA DIVORCE

(Friday Church News Notes, September 1, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from The Middle East Media Research Institute, Aug. 24, 2017: “On August 22, 2017, the Supreme Court of India delivered a landmark verdict invalidating the practice of instant triple talaq (divorce) among Indian Muslims. The verdict is a milestone in the journey of the Muslim women’s rights movement in India. Prior to this decision, a Muslim husband could divorce his wife by uttering ‘talaq’ three times in the presence of two witnesses in one sitting-- either informally or formally through a letter, email, WhatsApp, and so on. This instant form of divorce is called *talaq-e-biddat*, is irrevocable, and is valid in shari’a law. The other form of triple talaq is called *talaq-e-hasan*, whereby a husband delivers one *talaq* each over the course of three months. ... The practice of instant triple talaq, abolished by 22 Muslim nations, had emerged as a social disease in India in recent years. ... Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, which is a leading organization of Indian Islamic scholars, was defiant. Maulana Mahmood Madani,



general secretary of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, warned: ‘Regardless of the court ruling, the practice of talaq, including instant triple talaq, will continue in the country and will be considered valid.’ ... Leading Islamic scholars at the Darul Uloom Deoband, the second largest Islamic seminary after Cairo’s Al-Azhar University, were disturbed by the verdict. As per a report in the *Urdu Times*, ‘the scholars of Deoband, while describing the court verdict as perplexing, warned that no interference in shari’a will be tolerated.’ Mufti Abdul Qasim Nomani, chancellor of Darul Uloom Deoband, said that ‘the triple talaq is purely a shari’a issue in which no amendment can be effected.’ ... Muhammad Saeed Noori, the general secretary of the Mumbai-based Raza Academy ... criticized the verdict, saying: ‘If a law is made which is against shari’a, then it will be unacceptable to us. And like such other laws, it too will meet the same fate that it will remain a law but will not be followed.’ Syed Parvez Qaisar, a leader of the Muslim League, condemned the verdict, calling it ‘interference’ in Muslim personal law. ... The practice of instant triple talaq affects only the Sunni Muslims who form the bulk of India’s Muslim population. The opinion of Shi’ite clerics, who welcomed the Supreme Court verdict, is inconsequential to the debate.”



FORMER AUSTRALIA PRIME MINISTER ADMITS HE WAS DRUNK DURING CRUCIAL FINANCE VOTE (Friday Church News Notes, September 1, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Australia's former prime minister, Tony Abbott, recently admitted on a television program that he was passed out drunk during a crucial finance vote in 2009. He made the admission in an interview with Annabel Crabb

("Former Australian PM," *ZeroHedge.com*, Aug. 26, 2017). This reminds us of the prophet Hosea's description of Israel's kings. "In the day of our king the princes have made *him* sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorn" (Hosea 7:5). We think of the case of Benhadad (1 Ki. 20:16) and Belshazzar (Da. 5:1-4). Alexander the Great became ill after one of his prolonged drinking bouts and died 10 days later, at age 32. Drunkenness takes away the heart in the sense of enslavement; it takes away the heart in the sense of corrupting the thinking and the emotions. The wisest position toward alcoholic beverages is total abstinence, since we are told by the highest authority that wine is a mocker and deceiver (Pr. 20:1). One

who partakes of it cannot know when and how it will deceive him. Proverbs further warns that those who tarry at the wine have woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, and wounds without cause; they love strange women and their hearts utter perverse things (Pr. 23:29-35). Further, those who drink "forget the law, and pervert judgment" (Pr. 31:4-5). Total abstinence is the only sure protection from all of these great evils.

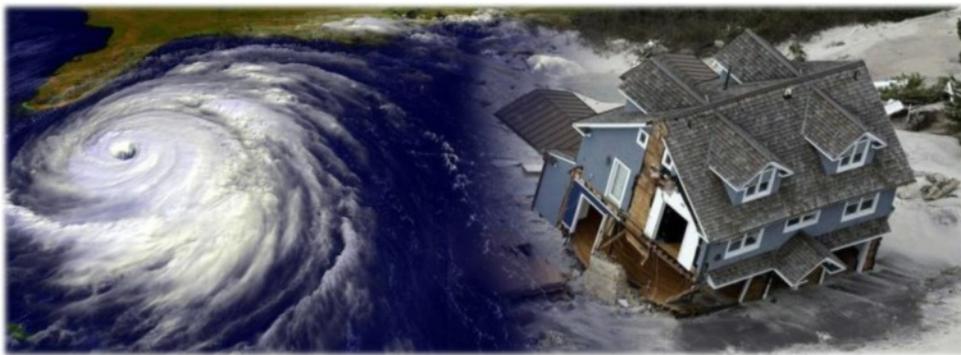
AMERICAN'S CONTINUAL CURSE OF \$1 BILLION STORMS (Friday Church News Notes, September 8, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Between 1980-2016, 196 billion-dollar weather and climate disasters caused \$1.1 trillion in damage in

UNBORN BABIES PROTECT THEMSELVES (Friday Church News Notes, September 1, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, August 7, 2017: "When someone receives a donated organ they must take powerful drugs to prevent rejection. That's because the body's immune system identifies the implanted organ as 'not me.' It then assumes that the invader is dangerous and must be destroyed. That brings us to a puzzling mystery that scientists have been trying to solve: Why doesn't a mother's body recognize her unborn baby as being foreign to her body? After all, carrying genetic information from the mother and father, the unborn baby is genetically unique. Some scientists theorize that the placenta

is a physical barrier between the baby and the mother's immune system. Others believe that the unborn baby somehow hides from the mother's immune system. A third theory is that the mother's immune system is somehow forced to tolerate the unborn child. New research from scientists at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Georgia, supports this third alternative. Researchers have shown that the placenta produces an enzyme (IDO) that works to suppress immune cells. In effect, the unborn child puts together just the right enzyme to keep mom's immune system from attacking it. Scientists say that this discovery may lead to new drugs to treat autoimmune diseases and organ



rejection. This system or a similar system had to be fully operational in the first creature for successful pregnancies and births. It could not gradually evolve. This fact and the wisdom of this system provides more evidence of an all-wise, all powerful Creator of every form of life and all that exists. Notes: 'Don't reject me, fetus tells Mom,' *Science News*, v. 154, p. 152, September 5, 1998."



America. In the 1980s, the annual average was 2.7 billion-dollar disasters. That more than doubled in the 2000s. It has doubled again in the 2010s, with an annual average of more than 10 billion-dollar disasters (“Billion Dollar Disasters,” newamerica.org). In 2017, there have been 10 “disaster events” costing more than \$1 billion each, capped off in August with Hurricane Harvey, the costliest storm in American history (National Centers for Environmental Information). Most of Harvey’s damage to southern Texas and Houston was caused by flooding from record rainfall, more than 50 inches in a mere five days. The storm didn’t pass through; it camped. The damage is estimated to be \$160 billion, similar to the combined effect of Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy (“At \$160B, Harvey expected to be the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history,” UPI, Aug. 30, 2017).

BENEVOLENCE IN HOUSTON

(Friday Church News Notes, September 8, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - American catastrophes typically bring out a deluge of humanitarian care, and this was evident following Hurricane Harvey. Even after the deleterious efforts of nearly a century of socialism, most Americans don’t sit back and wait for the government to act. They roll up their sleeves, open

their purses, and pitch in to do whatever needs to be done. In Houston, neighbor helped neighbor, and strangers flocked from far and wide to help. There was the Cajun Navy, for example, consisting of more than 1,500 volunteers from neighboring Louisiana who brought roughly 800 private boats to assist in the rescue effort and transport desperately needed supplies. Thousands of other volunteers came from as far away as America’s east and west coasts, 1500 miles distant. A mobile phone drying company from Denver packed a truck with supplies and drove one thousand miles to offer free services. A man from south Florida packed a truck full of supplies donated by friends and drove all night to rush the aid to those who needed it. No one told them to go; no one paid them; they went at their own cost. Americans have already pledged billions of dollars to assist in the relief effort,

including \$1 million from President Trump. America’s benevolence is so great and so prominent that it has been called the “Benevolent Empire.” Who can deny that this is the influence of the Bible? The Bible teaches love for one’s neighbor. It teaches people to “do good” (Galatians 6:10), and America, taken as a whole, has been a great “do gooder” nation. America’s benevolence was evident from its inception. Its founders were not seeking great power and wealth for themselves. They were willing to sacrifice their wealth and their very lives for the establishment of America as a free nation, and some of them made that ultimate sacrifice. George Washington served for eight years as America’s Commander-in-Chief *without pay*, and as president he borrowed personally to pay the expenses of office that weren’t covered by his salary. America’s benevolence has been so broad and so large, reaching from the individual and local level to the state, regional, and national, that it can never be quantified. America has helped the needy and downtrodden and oppressed more than any other nation. Americans help one another. Historically, Americans helped one another clear land, build houses and barns, and gather in crops. Americans continue to rally in support of all sorts



of community and charitable causes. They construct churches, build parks, clean neighborhoods, repair sidewalks, man fire departments (more than 70% of firemen in the U.S. are volunteers), collect food and clothing for the needy, operate shelters for the homeless. They run errands for shut-ins, donate blood, preserve historical landmarks, operate libraries, 4-H clubs, scout troops, youth sports teams. The spirit of volunteerism extends far beyond America's shores. Americans have established international humanitarian organizations such as the YMCA, American Red Cross, United Way, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, and Lions Club. Generations of Americans have volunteered for missionary work, the Peace Corp, and countless other aid projects. In contrast, China, which has the world's second largest economy, is one of the least generous nations. A recent report observed, "... conscious, voluntary action for the public good has not yet become an integral part of people's lives. Unlike gambling, giving does not seem to be in Chinese genes" ("Why Has Philanthropy Failed to Take off in China?" *Forbes*, May 30, 2014). In a study in 2010, China ranked 147 out of 153 countries in charitable giving, and the Chinese were found to be "the least likely on the planet to volunteer" ("Charitable giving by country: who is the most generous," *The Guardian*, Sep. 8, 2010). The previously cited *Forbes* article asks, "Why Has Philanthropy Failed to Take off in China?" The answer is that China is not built on the Bible. It is built on pagan religion and more recently, Maoism, combined today with the frenzy for pursuing wealth at any cost. These influences do not create a spirit of charity. Sadly, in recent

times socialism, government welfare, and the encouragement of a victim mentality have constrained the spirit of volunteerism and charity in some American communities, particularly inner cities, and has taught the people to look to the government for everything, complain about everything, and blame others instead of taking care of themselves. As a result, these communities have deteriorated and the sense of civic pride and public contribution has weakened.

CHURCH FOUNDED BY LANCASTER MOVING INTO DANGEROUS WATERS (Friday Church News Notes, September 8, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The use of contemporary worship music is a bridge to the most dangerous waters of end-time apostasy, and we see the evidence of this on every hand. (See the free eBook [The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians](#) for extensive evidence, available from www.wayoflife.org.) A recent case to come to our attention is Los Angeles Baptist Church of Los Angeles, California. The church's web site under "Our History" says it was founded at the direction of Paul Chappell, pastor of Lancaster Baptist Church and head of West Coast Baptist College. Los Angeles Baptist has followed Lancaster's example of despising "warnings" and thus being ignorant of many important issues facing God's people today. It has also followed Lancaster's example of using

"adapted" contemporary worship music. Last year, the pastor's daughter, who graduated from West Coast with a BA in missions, raised nearly \$18,000 to join World Race on an 11-month backpacking "missions trip" in multiple countries. The backpacking teams are called "squads." The endeavor was promoted by her pastor father. She told the congregation that while working on a presentation for the church's mission day, World Race caught her attention and she felt that God was calling her to this. It should be obvious, though, that the voice she heard is not God's. World Race is extremely ecumenical. Its belief statement says, "We emphasize interdenominationalism and unity of the body of Christ, as such we are ministers of reconciliation. We seek to bring pastors and churches together in ministry." Thus, World Race squads are seen as instruments for ecumenical unity. Christian rock music is at the heart of World Race. It is also committed to contemplative prayer. (See the free eBook [Evangelicals and Contemplative Prayer](#), www.wayoflife.org.) The emphasis is more on "kingdom building" than preaching the gospel. In fact, the gospel is not mentioned in World Race's belief statement. There is also no mention of



repentance, the imminent return of Christ, biblical separation, end-time apostasy, defense of the faith, and other teachings of Scripture that are essential to the times in which we live. There are no warnings of such things as Roman Catholicism, theological liberalism, Pentecostalism, Charismaticism, and the deep compromise of evangelicalism. Because of its ecumenical, positivist, “judge not” philosophy, World Race is a bridge to anything and everything. It’s one thing for a pastor’s child to depart from what he or she has been taught; it is quite another thing for a pastor to support and promote a child that has gone in an unscriptural direction.

EMERGING CHURCH PASTOR SAYS YOUNG PEOPLE NEED A CALLING, NOT RULES

(Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Steven Furtick of Elevation Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, says that what this generation needs is not more rules to live by, but a calling to live for (“Charlotte Pastor,” *The Christian Post*, Nov. 26, 2010). This is typical emerging church philosophy. In reality, what youth need is BOTH rules to live by and a call to real discipleship. In Scripture, discipleship involves keeping divine rules. The Lord Jesus instructed the churches to teach converts to “observe all things whatsoever I have

commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20), and those “all things” are found in the New Testament Scriptures. Consider the epistle of Ephesians. This epistle tells us that salvation is by God’s grace without works, but it also contains three chapters packed with rules for believers to live by, rules that cover every aspect of life, private, family, and work. Addicted to the pop culture, this generation has rejected rules for a “me first” lifestyle and philosophy, and the emerging church is tickling itching ears with a lusty Christianity (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Assuming an upbeat emerging stance, Furtick claims that this is “the most driven, most opportunistic, most positioned generation in history to take the gospel of Jesus Christ all over the world.” In fact, this is a generation that typically lacks the self-sacrifice, discipline, and long-term commitment to accomplish such a task, but when a young person rejects his “generation,” repenting of his love for the ungodly, vain pop culture, and becomes a true disciple of Christ, submitting himself to Christ’s rule as expressed in Scripture, he can indeed help take the gospel of Christ to this needy world. This is the objective that every church should have for its young people. What we do agree with is that young people in Bible-believing churches don’t need JUST rules, and they particularly don’t need a focus on a mere list of shallow external standards divorced from training in genuine heart-level discipleship. The essence and fundamental of the Christian life is not rules; it is Christ Himself.

FALSE CHRISTS TODAY (Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)



- The Bible warns of the coming of false christs. A recent report in *The Telegraph* (London, England) describes seven “modern-day messiahs.” These include Vissarion (Siberia) who has a following of 5-10,000 disciples in the Siberian forest; Jesus of Kitwe, a taxi driver in Zambia; Alvaro Theiss of Brazil, who calls himself Inri Christo, hears a voice in his head that he believes is God the Father, has mostly female disciples, and is transported around his compound on a really tacky rolling throne; Moses Hlongwane of South Africa; and David Shayler of England, a transvestite cross dresser. “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*” (2 Corinthians 11:4). “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 John 2:18).

EFFECTS OF SMARTPHONE USE ON IGEN (Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Dr. Jean Twenge, Professor of



THE SMOKESCREEN OF CARBON POLLUTION (Friday Church News Notes, September 8, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, July 11, 2016: “To environmental alarmists, carbon dioxide is a pollutant and its existence in Earth’s atmosphere is one of the greatest threats facing our planet today. But if plants could talk, they’d tell you a totally different story. To plants, carbon dioxide is food, and right now they are begging for more! According to Mike Adams, editor of NaturalNews.com, ‘CO2 is desperately needed by food crops, and right now there is a severe shortage of CO2 on the planet compared to what would be optimum for plants.’ He also notes that ‘greenhouse operators are

actually buying carbon dioxide and injecting it into their greenhouses in order to maximize plant growth.’ The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food supports this position when it says, ‘CO2 increases productivity through improved plant growth and vigour ... earlier flowering, higher fruit yields ... improved stem strength and flower size.’ To keep carbon dioxide from being viewed in a positive light, environmental alarmists often shorten ‘carbon dioxide’ to just ‘carbon.’ Dr. E. Calvin Beisner, founder of the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, writes, ‘By calling carbon dioxide carbon,



the alarmists fool people. They raise specters of black soot that’s truly dangerous to health. Then they speak of a carbon tax, or carbon footprint, or reducing carbon emissions or carbon pollution.’ If anything, our planet would be a whole lot greener if we put more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. And the plants would breathe easier, too!”

Psychology at San Diego State University, has researched and written extensively on the selfie generation. She is the author of *Generation Me* and *Living in the Age of Entitlement*, and her most recent book, *iGen*, examines why today’s “super-connected kids” are “less happy and completely unprepared for adulthood.” iGen is the name of the first generation of kids to spend their entire adolescence with a smart phone. It is the generation that was born in 1995. Twenge says, “That has had ripple effects upon their behavior, their attitudes, and their mental health. Teens are spending a lot less time hanging out with their friends in person. ... That trend has been going on for awhile, but it really fell off a cliff around 2010-11, right when smart phones became very common. ... Teens who spend more

time on phones are more likely to be unhappy, lonely, and have more risk factors for suicide” (“Smart phone era: Is it damaging teenagers?” BBC, Sep. 3, 2017). Twenge recommends limiting cell phone usage for young people to one hour a day or less. If the secular world can see the great danger smart phones present to young people, how much more should God’s people understand these things and take great care about protecting the youth? (For tips about smart phones and youth see [The Mobile](#)



[Phone and the Christian Home and Church](#), available from www.wayoflife.org.)

FAT STUDIES (Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “The Fatuity of Fat Studies” by Bruce Bawer, *National Review*, Aug. 21, 2017: “I wrote about fat studies in my 2011 book *The Victims’ Revolution*, a critical survey of several academic ‘disciplines’ that fall under the general category of identity studies. Even then, fat studies was a pretty established field. To be sure, it’s nowhere near as widespread as, say, women’s studies or black studies or queer studies. But it already has its own key founding text, *Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth*



about Your Weight (2008) by Linda Bacon, and its own classroom anthology, *The Fat Studies Reader* (2009) ... Courses in fat studies have been offered by several colleges, and it's been accepted with surprising rapidity as a legitimate area of study. Now, the basic premise of all these identity-based 'studies' is that the members of the groups in question are all oppressed victims. ... Fat people are victims of 'sizeism,' a.k.a. 'fat oppression.' If you're fat, part of the oppression you experience is constantly being told that you should lose weight for the sake of your health. According to fat studies, when you suggest that a portly pal skip that second slice of cake, you're not showing concern for his or her well-being; you're committing a microaggression, expressing bigotry, causing emotional pain. Because--and this, believe it or not, is a central article of faith in fat studies--it's possible to be healthy at *any* weight. ... but then, fat studies isn't about facts. ... it's about group therapy. ... Everything, in short, was someone's else's fault. Or capitalism's. What it all came down to--and I'm not making this up--was a horrific phenomenon called *healthism*. You see, encouraging people to watch their health is ... 'a coercive and potentially fascist act linked to capitalism, racism, and Nazi-style eugenics.' ... In a talk given on August 3 at this year's convention of the American Psychological

Association, Joan Chrisler, who teaches psychology at Connecticut College, accused doctors of 'fat shaming' when they propose that their plump patients drop a few. Such conduct by physicians, charged Chrisler, is 'mentally and physically harmful.'"

ARAB THIEVES DESTROY HONEY FARM (Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from BreakingIsraelNews, Aug. 15, 2017: "One woman's dream to bring to life Israel's blessing as a land flowing with honey came crashing to the ground two weeks ago when local Arabs broke into her factory, stealing an entire season's supply of honey. Her plight is only one example of an epidemic facing every branch of Israeli agriculture. Yael Farbstein began Dvash Kedumim, or Kedumim Honey, in Kedumim in Samaria six years ago. Her passion produced remarkable results in February when she won the prestigious annual Black Jar Honey Tasting Contest held by the Center for Honeybee Research in Asheville, North Carolina. Hundreds of honey producers from around the world competed, so Farbstein was thrilled when she won first place in the category of the International Multi-Floral Sourced Honeys. Two weeks ago Arabs broke into Farbstein's factory. They stole precious equipment and caused damage, but worst of all, the thieves stole every last jar of honey, an entire season's worth of labor. Nothing remained, not even the jar of prize-winning honey Farbstein had set aside as a keepsake. The loss was doubled last Sunday morning when Farbstein returned from her Sabbath

rest to find that the thieves had struck again. In an act of pure destruction, they had plugged up the hives remaining in the fields, leaving the bees to die in the summer heat. 'There is no possibility of retrieving anything,' said Farbstein. 'Those responsible are already sitting comfortably in areas where the Israeli authorities are not permitted to go.' Farbstein explained that every Israeli who works in agriculture suffers from this plague. According to the Oslo Accords signed in 1995, the Israeli Police are not allowed to enter areas under Palestinian Authority jurisdiction. An Arab who steals from a Jew in Judea and Samaria is never more than a few minutes away from a politically sanctioned hideaway. 'We worked during the day and



frequently guarded at night, like the first pioneers who came to Israel, but it was still not enough,' she said. 'The average farmer cannot cope with this threat. Security is a huge expense.' Not only is theft an issue, but vandalism is rampant. Farbstein related how a nearby farm recently had a barn full of hay burnt to the ground. She related that irrigation systems, miles of pipes that must remain in the field to be effective, are frequently destroyed for no reason."

SOUTHERN BAPTIST PROFESSORS AND LEADERS PROMOTING "PROTESTANT UNITY" (Friday Church News Notes, September 22, 2017,



*Dresden Statue Of
Martin Luther*

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- Several Southern Baptist professors and leaders are signatories to a new confession promoting broad Protestant unity. "A Reforming Catholic Confession: A 'Mere Protestant' Statement of Faith to Mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation" emphasizes "interdenominational unity in the essentials of the faith." Two Southern Baptists were on the drafting committee (Malcolm Yarnell and Gregg Allison), and it has been signed by professors from all six Southern Baptist seminaries, eight colleges, SBC pastors Matt Chandler, J.D. Greear, and James MacDonald, Russel Moore, president of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and Ed Stetzer, formerly with Lifeway. The confession deals with 12 topics, including the Trinity, Scripture, the person and work of Christ, the Gospel, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the church, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and last things. It is brief and shallow, at best, (which is obviously its purpose) and heretical in places. For the purposes of ecumenical unity, there is only silence in regard to the mode of baptism and the Lord's

Supper. They are called "sacraments" and are said to "communicate life in Christ to the faithful," which is a Catholic/Protestant heresy. Large numbers of Baptists were killed and otherwise persecuted by Protestants, oftentimes over the "mode" of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and it is sad to see such ignorance and compromise among Baptists today. (See [Protestant Persecution of Baptists](#), available for free online viewing and as a free eBook download at https://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/index.php.) The statement on "Last Things" in A Reforming Catholic Confession states that Christ will consign "any who persist in unbelief to an everlasting fate apart from him, where his life and light are no more." That extremely weak statement leaves room for a wide variety of heresies held by Protestants, Baptists, and "evangelicals" who deny eternal fiery judgment. For example, Billy Graham has long defined hell fire as "a burning thirst for God that can never be quenched." Even if A Reforming Catholic Confession contained pure truth, it would be wrongheaded, because the Bible's teaching on unity cannot be limited to any manmade list of "essentials." Biblical unity is a unity of one mind rather than a unity in diversity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Co. 1:10). Biblical unity is a unity found in the local church rather than a "universal" unity. The exhortations about unity are addressed to individual churches rather than "the church." See Romans 15:5-6; 1 Corinthians

1:10; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 1:27. (For more on this see the free eBook [In Essentials Unity](#), https://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/in_essentials_unity.php)

RICK WARREN AND CATHOLIC BISHOP HAIL ECUMENICAL UNITY (Friday Church News Notes, September 22, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- In a recent interview published in *Crux*, a Catholic magazine, Southern Baptist Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church, and Catholic bishop Kevin Vann discussed their five-year friendship and cooperation and urged it as a model for evangelicals and Catholics around the world ("In Orange County, bishop and pastor model Catholic/Evangelical ties," *Crux*, Sept. 14, 2017). Warren and Vann have partnered in ministry in projects pertaining to mental health, pro-life, and prayer. At the beginning of 2017, Saddleback Church and Catholics in Orange County "came together to pray for God's blessings on all our Holy Week services." Bishop Vann says, "We've seen first-hand that much good can be accomplished for the Kingdom of God by Catholics and evangelicals being present to one another, praying for each other, and ministering to our communities together." Warren says, "Our prayer is that Orange County might be a model for others around the world."



Bishop Kevin Vann Rick Warren

It is sad that a Southern Baptist pastor can be so blatantly disobedient to Scriptures such as Psalm 119:128; Acts 20:26-31; Romans 16:17; 2 Timothy 3:5; and Jude 3. (For more on this see [Purpose Driven or Scripture Driven: A Warning about Rick Warren and the Purpose Driven Philosophy](#), a free eBook available at https://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/index.php)

BETH MOORE CALLS DOWN “HOLY FIRE” (Friday Church News Notes, September 22, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from Pulpit&Pen, Aug. 3, 2017: “Beth Moore began her career as a small group women’s Bible teacher and author of women’s Bible studies. According to her bio, ‘at the age of 18, Beth sensed God calling her to work for Him. Although she couldn’t imagine what that would mean, she made it her goal to say yes to whatever He asked.’ One might ask, ‘How did God call her to become a famous worldwide preacher?’ In light of the clear teaching of Scripture that a woman must remain silent in the churches and hold no authority over men, Moore has clearly usurped the authority of men and has created her own doctrine to follow. ... As one who began her ministry in a Southern Baptist church, she’s now turned full-on charismatic. Scripture teaches that one of the fruits of redemption is



sanctification--a work of the Holy Spirit. That is, that one is led out of moral corruption, but also theological error, not deeper into it. Beth Moore is no stranger to theological error. Her gravest error? That God gives her visions--and these visions are contradictory to Scripture. Her visions range from being raised up in the air and watching God tear down the denominational divide between the false church of Rome and the true Church, uniting ‘all sectors of Christendom,’ to getting a vision from God about giving money to a woman at a random bus stop. Moore regularly convenes with other false teachers in the Word of Faith movement including Christine Caine and Joyce Meyer. Simply put, Beth Moore has slid from small town, small group teacher to a world-renowned Pentecostal Word of Faith prosperity gospel preacher. This is clearly not the work of the Holy Spirit. Beth Moore’s latest venture received an interesting word of acclamation from *Charisma News* where she was panegyricized by Lee Grady who wrote, ‘Her message was so convicting and so saturated in the Holy Spirit that people ran to the stage even though she didn’t even invite people to the altar.’ Moore was speaking at the 28th General Conference of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, a revival gathering in Orlando, FL, which included leaders from the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and Nigeria’s Redeemed Christian Church of God. According to Grady, he couldn’t decide if a Southern Baptist’s call to embrace the ‘holy fire’ of Pentecostalism was ‘more fascinating’ than the fact that a Southern Baptist woman was preaching to men.”

A MAGAZINE THAT IS NOT OUTSPOKEN IS A LITERARY



NUISANCE (Friday Church News Notes, September 22, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following words by Charles Spurgeon are from *The Sword & Trowel*, 1870: “This Magazine has not been conducted in a timid, crouching spirit, neither have we pandered to popular tastes. Some of our articles have brought down upon us upbraidings which we have borne without regret. Our reviews, when we have felt conscientiously bound to censure, have cost us many a postal lecture. We are not, however, penitent; we have nothing to retract, but doubt not that we shall sin again; we would not needlessly irritate, but we will not be silent in the presence of error, neither will we bespatter with flattery where honesty demands denunciation. **A magazine which is not outspoken, and is destitute of principle, is a literary nuisance.** We use the *trowel* wherever we can to aid every good cause, but we have a *sword* also and mean to use it. We expect to receive blows, and therefore when we do we are not overwhelmed with dismay. Christ’s truth is too dear to us for us to flinch from its defense. In the widespread defection which is now so sadly apparent in certain quarters, we see not only signs of coming struggles, but calls to duty, stern and arduous, from which only cowards will desire to be excused. The ancient

faith, assailed by foes on all hands, must not lack for champions.”

WHAT VALUE IS MUSIC?

(Friday Church News Notes, September 22, 2017, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is from CreationMoments.com, September 8, 2017: “The Bible tells us that the earliest generations of human beings were making music. By the time the eighth generation of man came along, Jubal, a member of that generation was able to make his living providing musical instruments. On the evolutionary side of things, however, musical ability would seem to provide no survival advantage. Yet, the human brain devotes considerable resources to the processing of music. Our love of music is wired into our



brain. Each of our sense organs is important to our enjoyment of music. And each of these organs is linked to its own part of the brain which is responsible for how we experience the music. Parts of the brain are reserved for memory which stores the music. Other parts of the brain are dedicated to trying to understand the

entire piece of music, referencing back to parts of the music stored in the memory. Even more interesting is that one need not hear music to activate the various parts of the brain devoted to music. Positron-emission tomography reveals that a person only needs to imagine music for these portions of the brain to become active. The ability to make or appreciate music offers us no apparent survival value, and therefore, according to evolutionary theory, should not have developed. Yet, our brains, and indeed, all our senses, are designed to make and appreciate music. The obvious message here is that evolution had nothing to do with the formation of human beings. Rather, we were created by God Who loves music, and wants us to praise Him with music.”

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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)
- Standing for the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27; Jude 3)
- Challenging Christian workers to uphold the truth and resist the apostasy of our times. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)
- Exposing the spirit of error and compromise within Christendom (Hosea 4:6a; 2 Tim. 3)
- Upholding the New Testament Church (1 Tim. 6:13-14). O Timothy is a ministry of Bethel Baptist Church of London, Ontario.
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