

O Timothy

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

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

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"There are thousands of 'Bible believing churches' that do not teach the members to be skillful Bible students, do not expect them to become skillful, and do not reprove them for not being skillful. In these churches, the preaching and teaching is weak and does not produce skillful Bible students." Page 7.

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



THE AMAZING JOURNEY OF THE ALEPPO CODEX ~ By David Cloud

The Aleppo Codex is a hand-written Hebrew Bible produced by Masoretic scribes in Israel in the 10th century AD. It is a codex, meaning that it is a bound book rather than a scroll.

Called "the Crown" (*Keter*), the Aleppo Codex was the apex of the work of the Masoretic scribes who preserved the Hebrew Scriptures after the scattering of the Jews following the first and second Roman-Jewish Wars (AD 70 and 135) and particularly after the widespread devastation resulting from the rise of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries AD.

The Masoretes worked from about the 6th to the 10th centuries, in Tiberias on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, as well as in Jerusalem and in Babylon.

The Masoretes were exceedingly cautious about preserving the text, which they considered to be the very Word of God in every letter.

The Aleppo Codex

Read the Aleppo Codex







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The manuscript known as the Keter or "crown" of Aleppo is the oldest existant manuscript known to us of the complete hebrew bible. It also seems to be the most authoritative, precise and holy source of the biblical text and also of the system of vocalization, the cantillation marks (which also serve as punctuation), and the tradition of alternate readings, making it the most highly prized Hebrew manuscript, exceeding all other manuscripts of the bible in religious, scientific, and even in financial value. The "keter" was written by a scribe named Salomon, the son of Wia's, more than a thousand years ago, and it was proofread, vocalized, and edited by Aaron Ben Asher, an expert in the textual of the Ben Asher

Articles and resources

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They first determined the correct Hebrew text. It is known from the Dead Sea Scrolls that there were some Hebrew texts in the two centuries before Christ that were not

exactly like the text preserved by the Masoretes. But these are in the minority in the Dead Sea caves. Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls “are virtually identical to the Masoretic Text” (VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2004, p. 105).

Having determined what they considered to be the correct Hebrew text, the Masoretes then preserved it in perfect detail. They counted every word and every letter and were ultra-meticulous in writing the scrolls.

They also created a system of vocalization marks to preserve aspects of the Hebrew text that had previously been transmitted orally. The Masoretes produced a system of **vowel** or **vocalization marks**. (The Hebrew manuscripts found in the Dead Sea caves, for example, are mostly consonantal.)

They also produced a system of **cantillation marks** that describe the accenting of words and the melody or chanting style for public reading. These indicate which words should be read together, where to put the main stress and secondary stress, when to lift one’s voice or to lower, and when “to linger for an additional split second for syllables that are in danger of being swallowed” (M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Aleppo Codex and the Rise of the Massoretic Bible Text,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 42, No. 3, Summer 1979).

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The Masoretic apparatus (called the *Masorah*) consists of thousands of annotations that describe the spelling and sound of every word in the Hebrew Bible. There were three Masoretic annotation systems: Tiberian, Palestinian, and Babylonian, but the Tiberian prevailed.

It was the Masoretic Hebrew text that was put into print in the 15th and 16th centuries and that became the foundation for the Bibles that went to the ends of the earth during the great missionary movement. The most important printed Hebrew Bible was the Ben Hayim or the Bomberg. “[T]he famous massoretic scholar Ginsburg has argued that it was a good representation of the Ben Asher text” (“The 1524 Second Rabbinic Bible: Mikraot Gedolot” Bible Manuscript Society).

“The earliest printed editions of the Hebrew Bible derive from the last quarter of the 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th century. The oldest Masoretic codices stem from the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th. A comparison of the two shows that no textual developments took place during the intervening 600 years. A single standardized recension enjoyed an absolute monopoly and was transmitted by the scribes with amazing fidelity. Not one of the medieval Hebrew manuscripts and none of the thousands of fragments preserved in the Cairo Geniza (synagogue storeroom) contains departures of any real significance from the received text” (“The Christian Canon,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*).

One reason why the Masoretes were so careful was that they believed that they no longer correctly understood the Scriptures and they needed to meticulously transmit the text so that one day they could regain the correct meaning.

“The text must be perfect because an imperfect text loses information vital to the book’s divine message. It is not just that we must know exactly what the words mean, Jewish tradition tells us, because WE DO NOT AND CANNOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY MEAN; PERHAPS WE DID ONCE; AND PERHAPS WE WILL AGAIN ONE DAY, but for now the information must be preserved even if it is beyond our understanding. A tiny vowel sign, one that makes only a minute difference in how a word is pronounced—prolonging the syllable *ah*, for example, into *aah*—might be sheltering precious and secret information” (Matti Friedman, *The Aleppo Codex*).

This is a pathetic admission, and it is the fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah's dire warning.

"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear. ... Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, *but* we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if *we had* no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; *we are* in desolate places as dead *men*. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but *there is* none; for salvation, *but* it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions *are* with us; and *as for* our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood" (Isa. 59:1-2, 9-13).

The prophet Amos added, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*" (Am. 8:11-12).

The Aleppo Codex is called "The Crown" because it is considered the most perfect edition of the Masoretic Hebrew text. "It is the only manuscript of the entire massoretic Bible in which the correspondence between text and massoretic notation is practically perfect" (M.H. Goshen-Gottstein).

The Codex was written in exquisite letters, lines, and columns by Shlomo Ben Boya'a, and the Masorah was added by the most famous Masoretic scholar, Aaron Ben Asher, son of Moshe Ben Asher. They were the apex of a family of Masorete scholars that labored for five or six generations.

The Codex was completed in about AD 930 in Tiberias. The following information is from an inscription that was written in the Codex when it was purchased a century later by the Karaites:

"This is the complete codex of the twenty-four books, written by our teacher and rabbi Shlomo known as Ben Boya'a, the swift scribe, and the spirit of the Lord guided him, and it was vocalized and transmitted with great meticulousness by the great scholar and wise sage, the lord of scribes and the father of sages, the chief of scholars, swift in his deeds, whose understanding of the work was unique in his generation, master Rabbi Aharon the son of master Rabbi Asher, may his soul be bound in life with the prophets and pious and righteous."

A Karaite Jew bought the Codex in about 1050 and transferred it to the Karaite community in Jerusalem. The Karaites accept only the authority of the Hebrew Bible and reject Talmudic tradition. The Codex was taken out of its storage place three times a year and displayed to the public. It was also made available for examination by scholars wanting to resolve questions relating to the Hebrew text.

In 1099, the Catholic knights of the First Crusade captured Jerusalem, killed and enslaved many Jews, and stole Hebrew writings for ransom. The Ben Asher Codex was redeemed by wealthy Jews living in Egypt and kept in a synagogue in Fustat, near Cairo. It was borrowed by Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon (Maimonides or Rambam) (1138-1204) and proclaimed by him to be the most accurate text.

In his *Mishneh Torah*, a famous rabbinical commentary, he says, "In these matters we relied upon the codex, now in Egypt, which contains the twenty-four books of Scripture and which had been in Jerusalem for several years. It was used as the standard text in the correction of books. Everybody used to accept it as authoritative, for Ben Asher went over it most exactly for many years and corrected it many times. I relied upon it in the Torah scroll that I wrote according to Jewish Law."

In the 14th century, the Codex was moved to Aleppo, Syria, probably by Rabbi David Ben Yehoshu'a, a great-great-great-grandson of Maimonides. It was kept in the Central Synagogue, which had existed since the 5th century, though sometimes damaged by Muslim invaders. The Codex was kept in an iron chest in a cave that was traditionally called the Cave of Elijah. There were two keys to the chest so that two trusted members of the synagogue were required to be present to remove the Codex.

As time passed, the Codex was treated more like a magic talisman. People would pray before it in search of good fortune. “Over the years, it came to be venerated less as a source of wisdom than as a precious possession of great age and worth, like a jewel or an ornament. ... The Jews of Aleppo swore oaths on the Crown, lit candles in its grotto, and prayed there for the welfare of the sick” (Friedman, *The Aleppo Codex*).

Eventually the Aleppo Jewish community severely restricted access to the Codex even for the purpose of preparing Hebrew Bibles. God gave the Scriptures to Israel to be a light to the nations (De. 4:5-6), but they shut up the light. This did not begin with the synagogue at Aleppo.

When God commanded the prophet Jonah to preach to Nineveh in the 9th century BC, he tried to flee, instead, to Spain, not wanting the Assyrians to have an opportunity to repent. Jonah finally went to Nineveh after God got his attention by means of a whale’s belly, but after the Ninevites repented, the prophet got angry at God for blessing them. The Jews despised their Samaritan neighbors so much that they had no dealings with them. As the Samaritan woman in Sychar, under the shadow of Mt. Gerizim, told Jesus, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (Joh. 4:9).

The Aleppo rabbis wouldn’t even allow the Codex to be photographed, except for a couple of pages. Paul Kahle was refused access to the Aleppo Codex in the 1930s, and he turned to the Leningrad Codex instead, which is an inferior text. In this way, subsequent editions of Kittel’s *Biblia Hebraica* were corrupted and this moved modern Bible versions away from the pure Hebrew text. “The history of internal disharmony among manuscripts started then and there. By various counts, the consonantal text of the Leningrad Codex—wrongly proclaimed to this day as practically identical with Aaron ben Asher’s codex—has been shown to be about the furthest removed from that subtradition” (M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, “The Aleppo Codex and the Rise of the Massoretic Bible Text,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 42, No. 3, Summer 1979).

No thanks to the Aleppo rabbis, or any other rabbis, the lion of the Hebrew Scripture has long been loosed from its cage. This happened in the 16th century when the

Masoretic Hebrew Bible was printed by Gentile printers and published to the ends of the earth by Gentile churches.

Even before the coming of Jesus, the Hebrew Scriptures were becoming buried beneath rabbinical tradition. Jesus fulfilled Messianic Scripture in every detail, but He was rejected because He did not fit rabbinical tradition. He said to the Pharisees, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? ... Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:3-9).

The law of Moses was made into a system of works religion, whereas it was intended by God to be a schoolmaster to lead sinners to Christ by showing them their lost condition and pointing them to Christ by types and prophecies.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:19-24).

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:24-26).

Paul, who was trained by that great rabbi Gamaliel, described what had happened. “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock

of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 9:31-33).

As time passed, layer upon layer of tradition was added by various rabbis, and this mass of tradition was formulated into the Talmud, which remains the chief authority of rabbinical Judaism to this day.

Rabbinical Judaism is also leavened with occultic mysticism called Kabbalah. Consider *The Guide of the Perplexed* by Maimonides, the most revered ancient rabbi. This very popular and influential book is an unfathomable work of philosophy that buries the Scripture under mountains of allegorical mysticism.

To Maimonides, God is unknowable. He cannot be described in language. He has not revealed Himself, has not spoken through prophets.

To Maimonides, the Bible is a riddle that can be fathomed only by those who can delve beyond its literal meaning to plumb the depths of the secrets hidden therein. Maimonides’ God is more like the Hindu Brahman than the Jehovah God of Scripture. This is Rabbinical, Talmudic, Kabbalah Judaism.

Having lost the meaning of the Hebrew Bible because of willful blindness, many Jews have made the biblical scrolls themselves into objects of superstitious veneration. Following is a description of the use of the Hebrew scrolls in the synagogues. “On top of the scroll there is often a silver crown: the Jews dress their book up like a king and stand up in respect when it is taken from the ark, just as they would if a dignitary entered the room.” There is nothing wrong with standing in respect of God’s Word, but the problem is that they rejected their King 2,000 years ago, when “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11). The Scripture itself is not king; it points to the King.

When the United Nations voted in favor of the partitioning of Palestine into Jewish and Palestinian states in December 1947, Muslims went on a rampage and burned the synagogue. At least part of the Codex was rescued by the Jews and hidden. It was smuggled out of Syria to Israel in 1958, ten years after Israel won the War of Independence, and today it is housed in the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The book on display consists of one sheet of the original (if not a facsimile of a sheet) attached to a dummy book. The

original is kept in a vault elsewhere in the building. “Access requires three different keys, a magnetic card, and a secret code” (Friedman).

About one-third of the Aleppo Codex is missing (196 of the original 491 original pages). The missing parts include most of the Pentateuch (except the last part of Deuteronomy beginning with 28:16), three pages from Kings (2 Ki. 14:21 - 18:13), three pages from Jeremiah (Jer. 29:9 - 31:34), three pages from the Minor Prophets (Am. 8:13 to Mic. 5:1, including the books of Obadiah and Jonah), four pages from the end of the Minor Prophets (end of Zep. to Zec. 9:17, including Haggai), two pages from Psalms (Ps. 15:1 - 25:1), 36 pages from the Writings (Song 3:11 - 6:14, and the entire books of Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah).

The Aleppo Codex in the hands of the modern state of Israel begins with Deuteronomy 28:16, with the warning of the curses that would come upon Israel if she turned from God’s Word.

“Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the field. Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store. Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out. The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it” (De. 28:16-21).

It is Deuteronomy 28 that gives the entire history of Israel since the Babylonian Captivity.

“And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee. ... And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God. And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto

the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life” (De. 28:37, 62-66).

Deuteronomy 28 even describes the desertification of the land, which formerly was a paradise. “And thy heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee *shall be* iron. The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed” (De. 28:23-24).

The fulfillment of this amazing prophecy is why Israel is largely arid and semi-arid today, whereas it is described as a paradise in the time of Moses. This is why the famous American author Mark Twain could describe the land as follows in 1867: “Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the prince. The hills are barren, they are dull of color, they are unpicturesque in shape. The valleys are unsightly deserts fringed with a feeble vegetation that has an expression about it of being sorrowful and despondent. ... It is a hopeless, dreary, heart-broken land. Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. ... Palestine is desolate and unlovely” (*The Innocents Abroad*).

The fact that Israel’s Crown begins today with Deuteronomy 28, we find to be fascinating and instructive. It is as if God is saying, “Israel has broken and despised my law, and I have removed it from their most revered copy. Now their revered book begins with my curses upon the nation and my promises of restoration.” Deuteronomy 28 contains Moses’ prophecy of what would happen to Israel if she turned from God’s Word, but Deuteronomy 30 prophesies the return and conversion of Israel, in God’s great mercy, which will be fulfilled in the imminent future.

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with

all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (De. 30:1-6).

This is a prophecy of the present return only in small part. Only the part about the return to “the land which thy fathers possessed” is fulfilled so far. The main focus of the prophecy is a great event that will happen in the future, probably the near future. It is Israel’s national conversion and the establishment of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31). It points to the time when the hearts of the people of Israel will be circumcised to love Jehovah God and to obey His voice. That is not true today, but it is coming.

(In *The Aleppo Codex: In Pursuit of One of the World’s Most Coveted, Sacred, and Mysterious Books* (2013), journalist Matti Friedman describes his effort to find the answer to the mystery of how the pages were lost and where they are. He gives some evidence that the Codex was largely intact after the burning of the synagogue. This would mean that the pages were not destroyed or stolen by Muslims. It would mean that Jews were involved. At this time, no definitive conclusion can be made.)

Following are links to three online facsimiles of the Aleppo Codex -

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Aleppo_Codex
<http://aleppocodex.org/>
<http://www.tanachonline.org/manuscripts/>





The following is from the new commentary on Hebrews, the latest title in the [Way of Life Commentary Series](#).



“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:11-14).

This passage is not only an indictment of individual Christians who do not grow to maturity and become skillful, discerning students of God’s Word, it is an indictment of churches that do not produce such Christians and that accept immaturity as the status quo. There are thousands of “Bible believing churches” that do not teach the members to be skillful Bible students, do not expect them to become skillful, and do not reprove them for not being skillful. In these churches, the preaching and teaching is weak and does not produce skillful Bible students. The people can sit under the preaching year after year without learning how to study the Bible for themselves and without developing a hunger to do so. The writer of Hebrews did not accept this condition as the status quo. He sharply rebuked those who were immature. He warned them that if they are not skillful in the word of righteousness, they are mere babies, no matter how old they are in the Lord. This is the example that every preacher should follow. The people must be awakened to their true spiritual condition and not be allowed to remain babies.

Consider some of the lessons from this important passage:

1. Dull hearing is caused by not growing spiritually (Heb. 5:11).

Spiritual teaching can be understood properly only by spiritual people. The natural or unsaved man cannot understand it at all (1 Co. 2:13-14). The carnal believer can only understand it imperfectly (1 Co. 3:1-2).

2. Every believer should be a teacher (Heb. 5:12).

This is God’s express will. It does not mean, of course, that every believer should be a preacher or a church leader; it means that every believer has a sphere of teaching in which he should be involved. Every believer should know the Word of God well enough to fulfill this calling. When we listen to preaching and teaching, we should understand that we do not know what we are hearing well enough until we can teach it to someone else, at least at a basic level.

Every believer should have a ministry of exhortation and admonition (Heb. 3:13). This involves encouraging and challenging one’s fellow brethren, lifting up the downcast and warning the erring. See Ro. 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Th. 5:11.

Every believer should have a ministry of sharing the gospel with others (Mr. 16:15). The believer should labor to be able to handle the Word of God so well that he can effectively help people understand the gospel. People have questions and arguments that need to be answered.

Every believer should have a ministry of earnestly contending for the faith (Jude 3). Observe that Jude’s command to earnestly contend for the faith is not directed to preachers alone but to God’s people in general. Every

believer should know the Scriptures well enough to defend its cardinal doctrines, such as salvation by grace alone, the deity of Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, bodily resurrection, eternal judgment, and such.

Though women are forbidden to teach men (1 Ti. 2:12), they have the very important ministries of teaching women (Tit. 2:3-4) and teaching children (compare 2 Ti. 1:5 and 3:15).

3. If you do not grow spiritually, you will go backwards (Heb. 5:12).

The Christian life is like a boat on a river. As long as the believer is paddling up stream he is making progress, but as soon as he stops paddling, he begins to go backwards with the flow. The pressures and temptations of the Christian life always tend to push us backwards unless we face them squarely in God's grace and move ahead.

4. The Bible is the very utterance of God (Heb. 5:12).

The word "oracles" is from the Greek *logion*, which means "an utterance" (Strong). It is used of the Old Testament Scriptures (Ac. 7:38; Ro. 3:2).

5. Every believer should grow and become mature (Heb. 5:13-14).

The new believer is a baby and must feed on the milk of God's Word, but he should not be content to remain a baby.

6. A chief characteristic of a baby Christian is his inability to use God's word skillfully (Heb. 5:13) and his lack of keen spiritual discernment (Heb. 5:14).

It doesn't matter how faithful and busy he is in the service of Christ, if a believer cannot handle God's Word skillfully and cannot discern truth from error, he is a baby.

"I don't care how active you are in the church. You may be an officer. You may be on every committee in the church. ... I don't care who you are, or what you are; if you are not studying the Word of God, and if you don't know how to handle it, you are a little baby. It is tragic to occupy a church office when you are just a little baby. You ought to grow up. It is tragic that there are people

who have been members of the church and have been saved for years, and they are still going around saying, 'Goo, goo, goo.' They have nothing to contribute but little baby talk" (J. Vernon McGee).

7. Maturity in Christ requires the following things:

Spiritual maturity requires becoming skillful in the Scripture (Heb. 5:13). Consider some keys to effectual Bible study:

- It requires *reading* (De. 17:19; Re. 1:3). The Bible is first of all a book to be read. It should be read systematically, with a reading plan. Reading it through at least once a year facilitates understanding the Bible as a whole.
- It requires *study* (2 Ti. 2:15). Studying the Bible requires learning the principles of Bible interpretation. It requires the use of good study tools, particularly a good concordance, Bible dictionary, the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, and carefully selected commentaries. These things are explained in the Advanced Bible Studies Series course "[How to Study the Bible](#)," available from Way of Life Literature.
- It required *meditation* (Ps. 1:2; Jos. 1:8). (See the [Memory Verse Journal](#), www.wayoflife.org.)
- It requires that the study of God's Word be made *a major priority* in one's daily life ("seek ye FIRST," Mt. 6:33). To become skillful in God's Word absolutely requires that the student carve out serious time for this endeavor and make this the highest priority. There are no short cuts.
- It requires *consistency and persistence* ("if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth," Joh. 8:31; "continue in them," 1 Ti. 4:16). Effectual Bible study requires that I establish a time in my daily schedule during which I meet with God and apply myself to His Word. It is important to keep this divine appointment and not miss it except when absolutely necessary. "Read the Bible when you feel like it, and when you don't feel like reading it, read it until you do."
- It requires *diligence and work* (Pr. 2:1-5). "Most great truths do not lie on the surface. They must be brought up into the light by patient toil" (Frank Thompson).
- It requires *prayer* (Ps. 119:18; Pr. 2:3; Eph. 1:17-18). "Prayer will do more than a college education to make the Bible an open and glorious book" (R.A. Torrey).

- It requires *obedience* (Ps. 119:133; Lu. 11:28; Joh. 7:17; Heb. 5:14; Jas. 1:22-27; 1 Pe. 2:1-2). In order to make good progress in my knowledge of God's Word, I must apply it's lessons to my daily life.
- It requires *sound teachers* and the help of a good church (1 Ti. 3:15; Eph. 4:11-12; Heb. 13:7; Re. 2:3).

Every church must be a serious Bible institute to produce skillful Bible students. The goal must be that every single member will become the skillful student that is described in Hebrews 5:14. The church must aim for nothing less. The preaching and teaching must be of the caliber that it produces such people. If church members can sit under a preaching ministry year after year and not be challenged to be serious Bible students and not be taught how to be serious Bible students and not be reproved sharply if they are not serious Bible students, that is not a New Testament church.

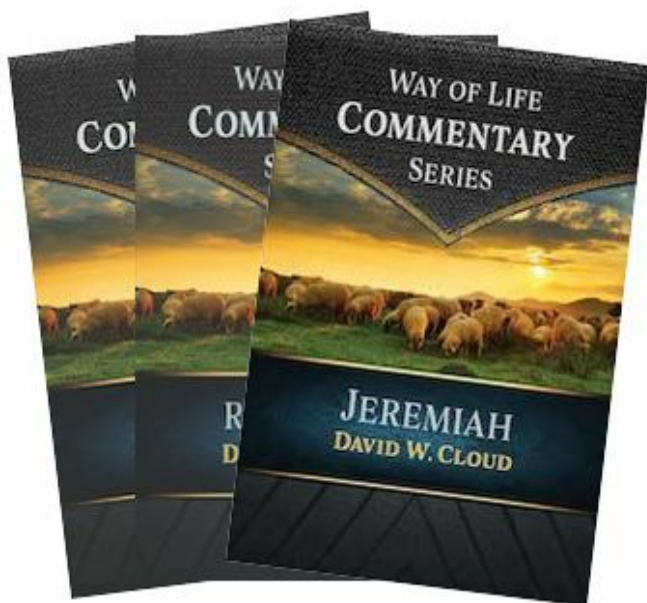
Spiritual maturity requires discerning between good and evil (Heb. 5:14).

- The skill in God's Word must produce keen spiritual discernment. The study of Scripture is not a mere intellectual exercise. The objective is that the student's daily life will be transformed by the renewing of the mind (Ro. 12:2). In 1 Corinthians 2, we are taught that the Scripture contains the deep things of God in Spirit-taught words; it contains the

mind of Christ (1 Co. 2:10-13, 16). Thus by becoming skillful in the use of the Scripture, the student is putting on the mind of Christ. By filling his mind with God's Word, he must cast down every imagination that is contrary to it (2 Co. 10:4-5). This is the process of exercising the spiritual senses.

- Spiritual senses must be exercised just like physical muscles. This is how a baby grows. Even in its new born state, it is moving and exercising.
- Spiritual muscles are exercised by discerning between good and evil. The believer must learn God's Word and then use it to measure all things. He considers everything in his life and everything that he encounters in order to discern whether it is right or wrong, good or evil, true or false, God's will or not God's will, and he rejects everything that doesn't pass the divine standard. In this way he develops a keen sense of spiritual discernment. Compare Ps. 119:128.
- Contrary to the contemporary philosophy, there is much judging to be done in the Christian life. Compare Joh. 7:24; 1 Co. 5:3; 14:29. The believer must judge all things (1 Co. 2:15; 1 Th. 5:21): daily activities, doctrine, philosophy, decisions, friendships, entertainment, fashion, everything. The believer has an absolute standard for judgment in the Scriptures (2 Ti. 3:16-17).

The infallible Word of God is profitable for "instruction in righteousness."



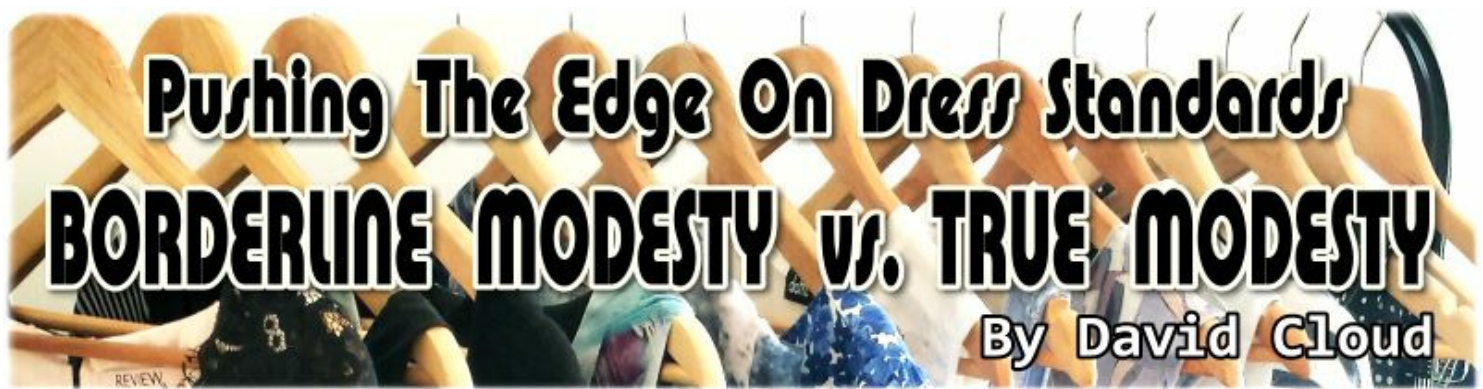
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By David W. Cloud

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The following is from the book [*Dressing from the Lord*](#), which is available in print and eBook editions from Way of Life Literature.

In my preaching conferences I have had occasions, sadly, to observe that though a church or Christian school might have pretty good dress standards (written or unwritten) for workers and youth, many of the girls and young women dress immodestly.

I am not the only one to notice this. One pastor wrote as follows:

“In 2006, I visited the campus of ----- Christian College and attended a chapel service. I was grieved as I watched the students assemble. Many of the girls were wearing tight, form fitting blouses and skirts. There were a lot of skirts above the knee as well as slits that went above the knee. One pastor friend refers to the slit skirt as ‘peek-a-boo’ skirts. How can the young men possibly keep their minds pure as they train for the ministry when so many of the girls are dressing like strange women all around them?”

Another man wrote:

“Our church teaches and preaches separation. Our pastor has even compiled a small booklet on modest dress. Having said all that, we have had and still do have problems. In order to be a choir member or teach Sunday School, etc., we must sign a form saying we agree to the dress standards as well as many other standards of conduct. WHAT I HAVE SEEN IS, YES THEY ARE WEARING DRESSES, BUT MANY ARE FAR FROM MODEST. ... FORM FITTING CLOTHING [IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS]. A lady can be actually wearing a reasonably nice dress that meets the standard, at least in their mind it does, but the problem is that it is at least a size too small for her! These folks are rarely confronted because they are wearing a dress, you know! I believe we easily forget modesty and be-

come lost in ‘I’m wearing a dress attitude.’ To be honest I have seen more modest pants on many lost ladies than the ‘dresses on our standard-signing church ladies.’ I’m not for pants; I’m just referring to our hypocrisy! It shows either a lack of discernment on their part or a worldly desire to show off the body, maybe both.”

Another man described the same problem:

“I am thankful you are writing a book about dressing modestly. It is needed in this day and time when most fundamental independent Baptist Christians think that just as long as they wear a dress that comes below the knee, it’s appropriate.”

A lady gave the following description of the fundamental Baptist church that she attends:

“The teenagers wear the skirts that come to the knee but when they bend over or sit down...well you know. Their tops are low cut with a v and look like they were painted on. ... My husband leads the music and he said he can’t even look at the people because there are so many short skirts, etc.”

The problem in these situations is that while the dresses might be long enough (when the woman is standing), they are still not modest because of the way they are cut or what happens to the clothing when the woman is involved with various activities.

For one thing dresses can be cut too low. Many men who wrote to me on this subject mentioned that this is a great distraction and temptation. The woman needs to be aware of what might be displayed when she bends over.

But we must understand that modesty is much more than merely covering nakedness. That is only a baby step in modesty. The heart of the truly modest girl or woman is sensitive to holiness and aware of her influence in this

world and seeks to be truly modest from every standpoint, caring nothing about fashion or merely “walking on the edge” of modesty.

One major problem is tight and clingy clothing. In our survey of Christian men on the issue of women’s dress we found that tight clothing is at least sensually seductive for men as skimpy clothing. Most of the men indicated that tight skirts and tight blouses and form-fitting jeans hold a “VERY great potential” for lust.

Consider the following statements:

“You don’t even need to see skin; they provide all the curves.” Another man said: “I would say the Number One problem is any garment that is form fitting, be it jeans, pants, skirt, dress, shirt, whatever. Anything that is tight, no matter how long it is, leaves nothing to the imagination, and that defeats the whole purpose of covering the skin in the first place!”

“One thing I see in my church is tight clothing. Oh, it may very well be covering but it is revealing the shape in a woman. This can be even more tantalizing to a man.”

“The point is that it is not merely the type of clothing that can trip a man up; rather it is the amount and the level of cling to the body.”

Thin clothing can also be a serious modesty issue. One man wrote: “If a woman is standing so that light can shine through her skirt, although she may be covered with a garment, it is so transparent that everything is revealed. A woman can be covered yet at the same time uncovered.”

For a time in the Roman Empire, silk clothing became a fashion craze, but some Romans condemned the garments as decadent because of their thin, clinging character. Seneca the Younger (3 BC - 65 AD) said silk dresses should not be called clothes because the “the adulteress may be visible through her thin dress, so that her husband has no more acquaintance than any outsider or foreigner with his wife’s body.”

The Roman philosopher and statesman had more wisdom about modesty than many Independent Baptist pastors.

There are ways to be “seductive” even in “modest” clothing. God, through the prophet Isaiah, rebuked the women of that day not only because of what they wore

but also *because of the countenance and because of how they carried themselves*:

“Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet” (Isaiah 3:16).

One man wrote:

“It’s not just clothing that can be inappropriate -- also high heel shoes. They cause the hips to gyrate when the lady walks. The secular world told us this, so why is it in the church? Bright red nail varnish on fingernails and toenails, red lipstick, seamed stockings -- that look from the ‘50s and ‘60s [that draw undue attention to the legs.] It’s not always what the attire is but how it is worn and the woman herself. ... Excessive use of perfume and make up -- both designed to draw men; they should be used with wisdom.”

The battleground, of course, as we have noted many times, is the heart. If a lady is worldly in her heart, she will probably not be modest even if fully clothed and she will look for ways to push the boundaries of any clothing standards with the objective of being fashionable and perhaps showing herself off.

A pastor that operates a home for troubled young women wrote as follows, “We have had girls come from homes and churches that hold to strict dress standards, but they carry themselves like strange women in modest clothing because it’s in their hearts!”

It’s in their hearts! It’s in their hearts! Whatever is in the heart will show itself in the dress.

When young women’s clothes are form fitting and they push the envelope of decency on every side, it is obvious that one of two things is happening.

First, in many cases the objective is not really to be modest before the Lord but rather simply to obey man’s rules and that only as long as necessary. That is a serious issue that is reflective either of an unregenerate heart or a backslidden one. It has been said that true character is demonstrated by what we do when no one is watching.

Second, there are doubtless cases in which girls and young women simply don’t understand how immodest

they really are in the eyes of men. They are naively going along with the current fashion and with the crowd. If this is the case, the lady in question will be open to correction and will respond to plain preaching and teaching and private exhortation on this subject.

How can a church, then, resist the problem we have described and gain true modesty in the congregation? Following are some suggestions:

True modesty requires education. A dress code is not enough. The Bible principles of modesty must be taught the carefully and the people must learn how to apply them. This won't happen through a sermon or a Sunday School lesson every few years. It requires making modesty a real emphasis in the church and developing a course of instruction that will educate the people properly and in addition to that mentioning it often in the preaching/teaching ministry of the church in a kind and patient way.

True modesty requires example. It is crucial that the wives of the pastors and teachers and deacons and the older female church members understand the issue of modesty and that they are committed to it from the heart and are applying the Bible's principles consistently rather than just going by a couple of written rules. If there is a failure here, it will be reflected throughout the congregation. If the wives of church officers push the boundaries of modesty, if they are careless about their necklines and if their dresses are too tight and if fashion is more important than modesty, the church will never win this battle. Victory has to start at the top.

True modesty requires exhortation. Teaching is not enough; exhortation is also needed. The preacher is instructed to "reprove, rebuke, exhort" (2 Tim. 4:2). This goes beyond teaching. Reproving, rebuking, and exhorting are all necessary. God's people have a sin nature that tends to backslide and go after the things of the flesh and the world, and they must be reprovved and exhorted to stay in the Lord's narrow paths. This ministry of reproof is as much a necessary part of the pastor's ministry as teaching. If he neglects it he is compromising. Both the males and the females of the congregation need to hear reproof on all areas of practical Christian living, and that certainly includes modest dress and separation from the world. Pastors who leave this out of their preaching will find that many things slip in the congregation because of the lack of plain reproof.

True modesty requires consistency in the preachers' children. It is not enough for a pastor to preach modesty; his family must demonstrate it before the congregation and that includes his children. I have known of many pastors who have injured their ministry by the lack of enforcement of biblical modesty in the lives of their own wives and daughters. I recall a church in Florida where the pastor was a strong preacher and a soul winner, as well as a compassionate man and a good example to the people in many ways. But his beautiful teenage daughter dressed indecently and her poor example and her father's acquiesce in the matter helped break down the separation from the world in the youth department and many young lives were ruined by the love for the world.

True modesty requires educated, concerned men. It is necessary for Christian men to understand the issues of female modesty and to take a stand for it in their homes and to support it in the church. If the women are trying to be modest but the men are worldly, the men will put pressure on the women to be more "fashionable" and "less dowdy." (And I must emphasize here that I don't think Christian women should be "dowdy." The right choice isn't between immodesty and dowdiness. It is between immodesty and modest but attractive femininity.)

True modesty requires a wise dress code. I believe strongly in dress codes for Christian workers in this day and age, but the dress code must be thorough. It is not enough to say that the women must wear dresses rather than pants. It should describe all of the important features of a modest dress, that the neck line must not be too low, that the clothing must not be tight, that it must be long enough so that the leg is covered, that it must not be clingy, that it must not be sheer, etc. The issue needs to be spelled out plainly. The dress standard is not only a code; it is a teaching tool to educate the people on this matter. And dress standards for church leaders and workers is a model for for the rest of the church to follow.

Of course, if a girl or woman is worldly in her heart she will still look for ways to push the boundaries of the standards regardless of how clear they are, but that is a separate problem altogether.



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?



HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE CAPTURES MORE STUNNING PHOTOS OF GOD'S AMAZING UNIVERSE

(Friday Church News Notes, August 2, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- America's Hubble Space Telescope has been capturing stunning photos of God's amazing universe for nearly 30 years. Last week, Hubble captured a photo of a spiral galaxy known as NGC 2985. It is said to be 70 million light-years away, located in the constellation Ursa Major, also known as the Great Bear. "The galaxy is at a perfect orientation for astronomers on Earth to see its incredible structure, with wide arms spreading out into space. The intricate, near-perfect symmetry on display here reveals the incredible complexity of NGC 2985. Multiple tightly wound spiral arms widen as they whirl outward from the galaxy's bright core, slowly fading and dissipating until these majestic structures disappear into the emptiness of intergalactic space, bringing a beautiful end to their starry splendor" ("Hubble Captured Gorgeous Snapshot," MSN, July 26, 2019). Earlier in July, Hubble captured an image of NGC 972, a spiral galaxy "that shows vibrant star formation pockets that look like red flowers" ("Hubble Snaps 'In Bloom' Spiral Galaxy," Geek.com, July 1, 2019). If these astronomers didn't have willful blinders on their eyes, they would all cry out with the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the

glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1). In 1999, observations by NASA astronomers, using the Hubble, suggested that there are 125 BILLION GALAXIES in the universe. The most up-to-date star count was announced in July 2003 as 70 sextillion observable stars (70,000,000,000,000,000,000). Of course, that is probably only a small part of the actual number, and God knows their names. "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names" (Psalm 147:4).

GOOGLE ENGINEER: "OUR TECH IS NOT POLITICALLY NEUTRAL"

(Friday Church News Notes, August 2, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from "Google Engineer," *DailyWire*, July 24, 2019: "The engineer, Greg Coppola, a senior software engineer in the Google Assistant division, told Project Veritas that he was going public with his warning in an attempt to encourage increased transparency in Big Tech amid what he described as an increasingly politically biased atmosphere. Claiming there's no bias in Google's algorithms is 'ridiculous,' he said. ... 'I've been coding since I was ten [years old.] I have a PhD, I have five years' experience at Google and I just know how algorithms are,' said Coppola (partial transcript via Project Veritas). 'They don't write



themselves. We write them to do what we want them to do.’ ‘I think we’re just at a really important point in human history,’ he said in explanation for why he is coming forward. ‘I think for a while we had tech that was politically neutral. Now we have tech that really, first of all, is taking sides in a political contest, which I think, you know, anytime you have big corporate power merging with political parties can be dangerous. And I think more generally we have to just decide now that we kind of are seeing tech use its power to manipulate people. It’s a time to decide, you know, do we run the technology, does the technology run us?’ Asked about Google CEO Sundar Pichai testifying in front of Congress last December that there’s no bias in his company’s searches, Coppola said that while he respects Pichai a great deal, the claim is ‘ridiculous.’ ... ‘I think everyone who supports anything other than the Democrats, anyone who’s pro-Trump or in any way deviates from what *CNN* and the *New York Times* are pushing, notices how bad it is.’ The problem of political bias in Big Tech has gotten worse in recent years, he argued. After about a decade of relative neutrality, people began to trust companies like Google to provide them unbiased means of finding information. ‘We haven’t had time to absorb the fact that tech might have an agenda,’ he said. The turning point in Big Tech from relatively neutral to increasingly partisan, he suggested, was Donald Trump’s presidential run. ‘I think as the election started to ramp up, the angle that the Democrats and the media took was that anyone who liked Donald Trump was a racist...’ he said. ‘And that got picked up everywhere. I mean, every tech company, everybody in New York, everybody

in the field of computer science basically believed that.’

CHRISTIAN DOCTOR IN ENGLAND LOSES HIS JOB OVER TRANSGENDER

LANGUAGE (Friday Church News Notes, August 2, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from “Christian Doctor,” *The Telegraph*, July 10, 2019: “A Christian doctor lost his job in a government department after he refused to refer to ‘a six-foot-tall bearded man’ as ‘madam’, a tribunal heard. Dr David Mackereth, 56, claims he was sacked as a disability benefits assessor by the Department of Work and Pensions over his religious beliefs. The father-of-four alleges he was asked in a conversation with a line manager: ‘If you have a man six foot tall with a beard who says he wants to be addressed as *she* and *Mrs*, would you do that?’ Dr Mackereth, an evangelist who now works as an emergency doctor in Shropshire, claims his contract was then terminated over his refusal to use transgendered pronouns. He argues that he was dismissed ‘not because of any realistic concerns over the rights and sensitivities of transgender individuals, but because of my refusal to make an abstract ideological pledge’. The doctor is now suing the government at an employment tribunal for discrimination on the grounds of his



Dr David Mackereth

religious belief. A hearing in Birmingham was told how Dr Mackereth believes transgenderism is a ‘delusional belief’ and an ideology ‘which I disbelieve and detest’. In a statement admitted into evidence, he told the court: ‘If you believe in gender fluidity, gender is no more than one’s own fantasy about oneself.’ ... In a statement put before the court, Dr Mackereth said: ‘I appreciate that in the present political climate, some people, including some of those who believe they are transgender, may find my beliefs to be offensive. However, in a free society, this is not a good enough reason to censor my beliefs and coerce me to act contrary to my conscience. Moreover, as a doctor, my responsibility is always to act in good conscience in the best interest of the patients--not to adopt various fancies, prejudices, or delusions, to avoid offence at all cost.’ Dr Mackereth added that his inherent belief is that transgenderism is a ‘rebellion against God, which is both pointless and sinful’. He said: ‘I am, of course, aware that there are men or women who believe they have been trapped in a wrong body, and I do not question the sincerity of their convictions. A small number of such people have always existed. Up until recently, such a belief was considered by medics to be delusional and a symptom of a medical disorder. It is only recently that transgenderism has been recognised as normal and such delusional beliefs accepted at face value. What is responsible for that change is political pressure, not scientific evidence.’”

FRANCE LET A WIFE SENTENCE HER DISABLED HUSBAND TO DEATH

(Friday Church News Notes, August 2, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)



- The following is excerpted from “France Let a Wife,” *The Stream*, July 11, 2019: “[Vincent Lambert died today, at age 42.] He became a quadriplegic in a ‘vegetative state’ in 2008. France’s highest court ruled that his food and water should be removed. ... make no mistake, the French government is guilty here. It could and should have intervened to protect this citizen. But the bad actor here seems to be the person with legal power over Vincent’s fate: his wife. ... Mr. Lambert was not in excruciating pain. He seemed to live comfortably on simple food and water support. He responded to stimuli. ... Vincent’s mother reported: ‘He sleeps at night, wakes up during the day, and looks at me when I talk,’ she said, according to Reuters. ‘He only needs to be fed through a special device and his doctor wants to deprive him of this so that he can die, while legal experts have shown that this is not necessary.’ She also emphasized that he has reacted to their voices, stating, ‘In May, when learning about his planned death, he cried.’ ... We have no room to throw stones. Too few of us recall the horrors of Terri Schiavo’s death in 2005. As I wrote at the time: Here’s a woman who was not in a coma, was not brain dead, and didn’t require elaborate machines to stay alive—just a nutrition drip in the stomach, of the sort any one of us might need after, say, a tonsillectomy. ... And yet American courts decided that her adulterous husband had the right to impose her death by starvation and

thirst. ... As St. Louis neurologist William Burke told author Wesley Smith, as he was researching his book on euthanasia *Forced Exit* ... ‘Imagine going one day without a glass of water! Death by dehydration takes ten to fourteen days. It is an extremely agonizing death.’ We should prepare ourselves. Throughout the West, collapsed birth rates and huge cohorts of retirees will exert enormous pressure on health systems. Countries with few babies, and few workers paying in, will have a very strong motive to accept active euthanasia. As in a poison pill, or a needle in the arm. It’s quicker, cheaper, and in one sense more ‘merciful’ than the ‘passive’ method of letting people like Mr. Lambert die of thirst. That’s in our future. ... And I think judges and policymakers in places like France are purposely authorizing the slow, agonizing deaths by thirst of patients such as Mr. Lambert. Why? Precisely because they’re so horrible. The public, sentimental and easy to manipulate via almost unanimous media, will respond not by demanding that sick people like Mr. Lambert be saved. But instead, that we kill them more quickly and painlessly. Like the animals that Darwinism tells us we really are.”

DID PETER GET IT WRONG?

(Friday Church News Notes, August 2, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is from *Creation Moments*, June 13, 2019: “In both of his epistles, the apostle Peter writes about the Flood. In his first epistle, he wrote: “God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight persons, were saved by water.” Peter goes on to compare the Flood to baptism. The account of the Flood



in Genesis shows that Noah and his family were saved from the wrath of God on a sinful world by the Ark and, therefore, waterproofed through that judgment. The ordinance of baptism is, therefore, predicated on the historicity of the Flood and the necessity of it being a worldwide Flood. In 2 Peter 3, the apostle refers to scoffers who believe that all processes have continued from the beginning at the same rate as they proceed today. This is the evolutionary principle that the present is the key to the past. Peter refutes this argument by pointing out that the whole world was created by God and that the whole world was deluged by Him. He writes that the scoffers have deliberately ignored these two world events. The application is clear. Modern evolutionists and deep time geologists are like Peter’s scoffers, interpreting the world as a gradual development of slow processes over long aeons of time. Peter is clear that the biblical account of the Flood really happened, and, if he were wrong, the whole of his teaching would fall apart.”

CHINA’S THOUGHT TRANSFORMATION CAMPS

(Friday Church News Notes, August 9, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

- The following is excerpted from “BBC Report Shows Disturbing Nature,” *The Stream*, July 1, 2019: “Adorned with bright smiles and clothed in colorful garb, Uighur



Muslims held in political reeducation camps flash across the screen as they sing and dance triumphantly to the words that President Xi Jinping wrote just for them. These sights, captured by the BBC, are what the Chinese government wants journalists and the outside world to see. No amount of colorful displays of political allegiance, however, can hide the reality: Not one of these people is in a political reeducation facility of their own accord. One interchange in the video is especially telling. The BBC reporter asks one of the men whether it was his choice to be in a political reeducation facility. ‘Yes,’ he replies. ‘A policeman at my village told me to get enrolled in the school and transform my thoughts.’ The reporter also speaks to Chinese officials. Nearly every one alludes to the notion that the roughly 800,000 to 1 million people interned in Xinjiang are affected by religious extremism and in need of reeducation so that their thinking aligns with the Chinese Communist Party. The conflation of religion with extremism took shape in new regulations instituted in February of last year. These regulations continue the government’s practice of ‘Sinicizing’--or secularizing--religion, so that it conforms to the core tenets of the Communist Party. In addition to ‘thought transformation,’ people in these facilities must undergo Mandarin lessons, self-criticism sessions, forced labor, and even torture. Occasionally, there are deaths. ... The BBC reporter

notes up front that the facilities they were permitted to visit were cleaned up for journalists’ prying eyes. Satellite images showed that prior to the BBC’s visit, watchtowers and barbed wire were removed from the premises and barren outdoor spaces were transformed into sports facilities. Documentaries like this one are incredibly important to building a human rights case against the Chinese government. They provide additional evidence, especially of what the Chinese government wants the outside world to see. Such evidence augments the troves of satellite imagery collected over the last several years and eyewitness testimony of former prisoners, who can testify that these facilities are far from benign. The existence of these facilities and the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people arbitrarily detained within their walls is now irrefutable.”

LIFESITENEWS BANNED FROM APPLE NEWS (Friday Church News Notes, August 9, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) -

The following is excerpted from “Apple News Bans LifeSite,” Lifesitenews.com, July 31, 2019: “A little over one week ago, Apple approved LifeSiteNews’ application to publish our news on their Apple News platform. Today, without warning, Apple News abruptly reversed course, telling LifeSite that



they had deleted our channel and all of our content from their platform. Apple claimed that LifeSite’s channel ‘didn’t comply with our Apple News guidelines.’ Specifically, they stated that LifeSite’s ‘[c]hannel content shows intolerance towards a specific group.’ ... ‘We don’t yet know the reason for Apple’s decision to delete our channel,’ said LifeSiteNews Editor-in-Chief John-Henry Westen. ‘However, at a time when there is growing evidence that tech juggernauts are engaging in concerted censorship against even mainstream conservative viewpoints, Apple’s decision--made unilaterally, and without opportunity to appeal--is frightening. It goes without saying that LifeSite would never promote intolerance or hatred against any group. However, in our current divisive political climate, even mild expressions of common conservative viewpoints are often written off as *de facto* hatred and intolerance. We certainly hope that this is not what Apple is doing. However, we urge our readers to contact Apple and to respectfully demand that they reinstate LifeSite’s channel.’”

GOOGLE WANTS TRUMP TO LOSE IN 2020, FORMER ENGINEER FOR TECH GIANT SAYS (Friday Church News Notes, August 9, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Google wants Trump to lose in 2020,” *Fox News*, Aug. 3, 2019: “A former Google engineer who claims he has been blacklisted by the tech giant says he believes the company will try to influence the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. ‘They really want Trump to lose in 2020. That’s their agenda,’ Kevin Cernekee said Friday on *Fox News’ Tucker*



Carlson Tonight. 'They have very biased people running every level of the company,' Cernekee continued. 'They have quite a bit of control over the political process. That's something we should really worry about.' Cernekee was fired in June 2018 after Google told him he was terminated for misuse of the company's equipment, including its software system for remote access. However, Cernekee, who describes himself as a whistleblower, maintains he was terminated for his outspoken conservative views. ... Cernekee spent ... three years fighting the Mountain View, Calif.-based firm over the alleged violations and arguing that conservative employees were being treated unfairly, according to the report, which cites interviews, documents and copies of posts on the company's internal message boards. Carlson asked Cernekee if he thought Google would try to 'influence' the 2020 election and attempt to 'prevent' Trump from being reelected. 'I do believe so. I think that's a major threat. They have openly stated that they think 2016 was a mistake. They thought Trump should have lost in 2016,' Cernekee responded. Cernekee called the Google operation 'highly ideological' and 'plagued with bias.'"

WHO IS BORIS JOHNSON?

(Friday Church News Notes, August 9, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Who Is Boris Johnson," *The Stream*, July 31, 2019: "A colorful character, known for his shock of shaggy blond hair and blustering, entertaining, flamboyant style, Boris Johnson [b. 1964] has had one of the most amazing careers in English politics. A journalist, magazine editor, member of Parliament, the conservative who did the impossible in getting elected mayor of London twice, foreign minister, leader of the radical Brexit movement to leave the European Union, he's done it all. Johnson's a celebrity. ... He clowns around *and* quotes long passages of Homer in Greek. 'BoJo,' as he's sometimes called, is England's Donald Trump. Both came to office already famous. Both were international celebrities. [Both were] known for saying outlandish things, poking the politically correct and infuriating their political opponents. Sometimes infuriating their own party. As of July 24th, that is, when he became the new prime minister of the United Kingdom. ... He takes office with an unstable razor-thin majority, with many members of his

own party opposing him. He's taken up the almost impossible task of getting the U.K. out of the European Union by October 31st. ... Johnson's election represents his party's commitment to completing Brexit and leaving the European Union. It expresses the party's rejection of the European Union globalists, including those in the other major political parties, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. It is part of a broader trend around the world electing conservatives as world leaders. ... *The London Times* fired him for making up a quote. He moved on to the more conservative *Daily Telegraph*. Still, he became the favorite journalist of conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. His writings became a key influence on the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party in the early 1990s. That party's agitation eventually led to Brexit. ... He took some left-leaning positions, however, on climate change, LGBT issues and race relations. ... He became editor of *The Spectator*, the UK's top conservative weekly. Tabloids revealed in 2004 that Johnson was having an affair with *Spectator* columnist Petronella Wyatt, resulting in two abortions. He was married to his second wife at the time. He was fired from his position with the Conservative party for lying about the affair. Another affair led to a child. ... Johnson became the mayor of London in 2008, the first Conservative to ever achieve that position. He ran on a campaign that



included legalizing medical marijuana and allowing amnesty for illegal immigrants. ... [When] Theresa May became Prime Minister, she appointed him Foreign Secretary in 2016. As Foreign Secretary, Johnson praised U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel as a 'moment of opportunity' for peace. ... In a controversial 2018 article for *The Daily Telegraph*, he discussed the Danish face veil ban. While he opposed a ban on the burqa or niqab, he suggested that such garments make the wearer resemble a 'letter box' and 'bank robber.' ... Johnson was baptized a Catholic. He was later confirmed in the Church of England. However, he says 'his faith comes and goes.' He's not a serious practicing Christian."

BACTERIA THAT DISSOLVE STEEL (Friday Church News Notes, August 9, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from *Creation Moments*, July 17, 2019: "They work silently and in the dark. While most of earth's inhabitants need oxygen for life, they merely tolerate it. They prefer to build their own environments where there's no oxygen. Then they go to work. And they love metal. Using complex chemistry, they begin dissolving metal. They can make a sixteenth-of-an-inch hole through an inch-thick pipe in six months. Stainless steel isn't so tough—it doesn't slow them down a bit. Even modern space age



metals like titanium can't stand up to them. No, we're not talking about some hideous creatures from outer space. These strange-sounding creatures are called sulfate-reducing bacteria. Each year metal corrosion causes about \$167 billion dollars in damage. And a large part of that damage is caused by bacteria destroying metal pipes. Sulfate-reducing bacteria begin by sealing off their colony from liquid in a pipe or tank. Once sealed off, bacteria begin forming hydrogen gas. Sealed under the biosphere, the hydrogen accumulates and is absorbed by the metal. The absorbed hydrogen begins to corrode and make the metal brittle. Researchers using pipes coated with epoxy couldn't stop the bugs. It appears that the bugs thought the pigment in epoxy made a great change of diet. Despite our modern scientific sophistication, moth and rust continue to afflict our efforts. This is God's way of reminding us that we, along with the creation, are afflicted with sin and are in need of the forgiveness of sins that is ours only through Jesus Christ. REF.: Raloff, Janet. 1985. "The bugs of rust," *Science News*, v. 128, July 20. p. 42."

YOUTUBE CENSORS HARVARD PROFESSOR ALAN DERSHOWITZ AND DENNIS PRAGER'S VIDEO ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

(Friday Church News Notes, August 16, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Dennis Prager on Google restricting PragerU videos," *Fox News*, Aug. 7, 2019: "Radio host and PragerU President Dennis Prager said Wednesday on 'Fox & Friends' that freedom of speech is being threatened by Google, pointing out content from



his own platform that has repeatedly been restricted by YouTube. In a new *Wall Street Journal* column, Prager wrote that a video called 'The Charlottesville Lie,' from CNN's Steve Cortes, was quickly moved to the 'restricted list' on Monday just hours after it was posted. 'This happened two weeks after a Senate hearing at which a Google representative swore under oath that the company doesn't censor based on political views,' he wrote. ... Prager added that the video was also removed from Twitter after complaints from the left. He explained that a video from Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz called 'Israel's Legal Founding' was also placed on the restricted list by Google-owned YouTube, along with Prager's own video about the Ten Commandments. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, asked a Google representative at a recent hearing how 'The Ten Commandments: What You Should Know' made it onto a restricted list. The man said with a straight face, 'because it mentions murder.' ... Prager said Dershowitz told him in the upcoming film *No Safe Spaces* that he fears the left 'much more than the right.'"

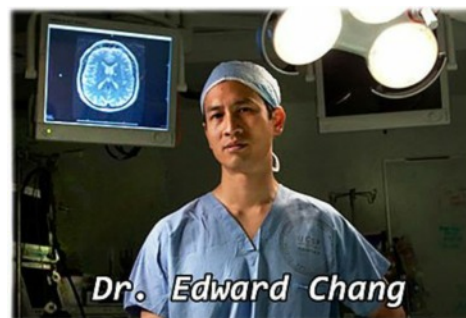
ILLINOIS PASSES LAW REQUIRING LGBT HISTORY CURRICULUM (Friday Church News Notes, August 16, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from



"Illinois Passes Law," *The Hill*, Aug. 10, 2019: "Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D) signed legislation ensuring state schools teach the role and contributions of LGBT people in American history. Pritzker signed off on House Bill 346, which was recently passed by state House earlier this year, on Friday. The law requires all schools in the state include 'the role and contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in the history of this country and this State' in official textbooks. The state's Board of Education is also required to publish a list of the textbooks authorized to be purchased under the law annually. 'Each public school district and state-recognized, non-public school shall, subject to appropriations for that purpose, receive a per pupil grant for the purchase of secular and non-discriminatory textbooks,' the bill text reads. The bill also includes a section that allows the department to adopt rules 'as necessary' for the implementation of the law and 'to ensure the religious neutrality of the textbook block grant program.' State Sen. Heather Steans (D), who sponsored the legislation, said in a previous statement that 'one of the best ways to overcome intolerance is through education and exposure to different people and viewpoints.'"

NEUROSCIENTISTS DECODE BRAIN SPEECH SIGNALS INTO WRITTEN TEXT (Friday Church News Notes, August 16, 2019,

www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Neuroscientists," *The Guardian*, Jul. 30, 2019: "Doctors have turned the brain signals for speech into written sentences in a research project that aims to transform how patients with severe disabilities communicate in the future. The breakthrough is the first to demonstrate how the intention to say specific words can be extracted from brain activity and converted into text rapidly enough to keep pace with natural conversation. In its current form, the brain-reading software works only for certain sentences it has been trained on, but scientists believe it is a stepping stone towards a more powerful system that can decode in real time the words a person intends to say. Doctors at the University of California in San Francisco took on the challenge in the hope of creating a product that allows paralysed people to communicate more fluidly than using existing devices that pick up eye movements and muscle twitches to control a virtual keyboard. ... The work, funded by Facebook, was possible thanks to three epilepsy patients who were about to have neurosurgery for their condition. Before their operations went ahead, all three had a small patch of tiny electrodes placed directly on the brain for at least a week to map the origins of their seizures. During their stay in hospital, the patients, all of whom could speak normally, agreed to take



part in Chang's research. He used the electrodes to record brain activity while each patient was asked nine set questions and asked to read a list of 24 potential responses. With the recordings in hand, Chang and his team built computer models that learned to match particular patterns of brain activity to the questions the patients heard and the answers they spoke. Once trained, the software could identify almost instantly, and from brain signals alone, what question a patient heard and what response they gave, with an accuracy of 76% and 61% respectively. ... While the work is still in its infancy, Winston Chiong, a neuroethicist at UCSF who was not involved in the latest study, said it was important to debate the ethical issues such systems might raise in the future. For example, could a 'speech neuroprosthesis' unintentionally reveal people's most private thoughts? Chang said that decoding what someone was openly trying to say was hard enough, and that extracting their inner thoughts was virtually impossible. 'I have no interest in developing a technology to find out what people are thinking, even if it were possible,' he said. 'But if someone wants to communicate and can't, I think we have a responsibility as scientists and clinicians to restore that most fundamental human ability.'"

DEMOCRATS USE SUPERMAJORITY IN ILLINOIS TO FAST-TRACK LATE-TERM BABY MURDER LAW (Friday Church News Notes, August 16, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Illinois gov. signs 'extreme' abortion bill," *The Christian Post*, June 12, 2019: "Illinois Gov. JB

Pritzker signed into law on Wednesday a bill that pro-lifers are calling the most ‘extreme’ late-term abortion measure in the country. ‘The governor and the Democratic supermajorities who fast-tracked this legislation have created a new *death penalty* in Illinois, with no possibility of appeal, for viable unborn preemies,’ said Peter Breen, former Illinois representative and vice president of Thomas More Society, in a statement. The Reproductive Health Act, or SB 25, establishes a fundamental right to have an abortion while removing all rights from the unborn. It repeals the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, legalizing late-term abortion, even when there is fetal viability, ‘to protect the life or health of the patient.’ The bill broadens the definition of ‘health of the patient’ to include (but not limited to) physical, emotional, psychological and familial health and age. ‘This bill is a horrible contradiction of fundamental scientific truths and the work that I do every single day,’ said Emily Kelly, a neonatal ICU nurse at a major Chicago hospital, according to Illinois Right to Life. ‘Under this law, every single one of my patients could be legally killed in utero in our state.’ Other provisions in the Reproductive Health Act include requiring private insurance companies to cover abortion with no exceptions for religious institutions explicitly made in the bill and allowing non-physicians, such as



advanced practice registered nurses, to perform abortions. ... Gov. Pritzker said the new law is a ‘giant step forward for women’s health.’ ... ‘The legacy of this governor, and any legislator who voted to pass this law, will be that of cruel dehumanization of unborn Illinoisans on a mass scale,’ said Breen. ‘They will bear the legacy of thousands of late-term dismemberment abortions inflicted on perfectly healthy, viable children.’”

TRANSEXUAL POWERLIFTER STRIPPED OF WOMEN’S CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

(Friday Church News Notes, August 16, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Female Trans Powerlifter,” *Daily Wire*, May 12, 2019: “Male-to-female transgender powerlifter Mary Gregory has been stripped of several women’s championship titles after the Powerlifting Federation determined that Gregory was not eligible to compete as a female. ... in April Gregory set world records in the women’s squat, bench press, and deadlift, and had earned a ‘Masters total world record’ for her powerlifting scores across the board. ... But on Friday, the same 100% Raw Powerlifting Federation announced that Gregory would be stripped of her currently held titles because, it seems, the board does not consider Gregory sufficiently female, Hot Air reports. ... Federation president Paul Bossi said in a statement to media. ‘Our rules, and the basis of separating genders for competition, are based on physiological classification rather than identification.’ ... In a vote held late last week, USA Powerlifting passed a policy banning transitioning athletes from competing against athletes that match their ‘gender



identity’ by a vote of 46-5. The board explained the policy by referencing the specific advantage that male athletes (even those transitioning to female) hold over biological females. ‘Men naturally have a larger bone structure, higher bone density, stronger connective tissue and higher muscle density than women,’ the board wrote. ‘These traits, even with reduced levels of testosterone do not go away. While MTF may be weaker and less muscle than they once were, the biological benefits given them at birth still remain over than of a female.’ Transgender athletes competing against the gender of their choice has become a prominent issue in the world of sports, particularly in the world of high school sports.”

THE BLESSING OF REPROOF

(Friday Church News Notes, August 16, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - It has been said, “He who corrects me gives me a gold coin.” Proverbs teaches that the wise individual will receive godly reproof. One’s attitude toward such reproof is evidence of his spiritual condition. “He *is in* the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth” (Pr. 10:17). “Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof *is* brutish” (Pr. 12:1). “Poverty and shame *shall be to* him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured” (Pr. 13:18). “A fool despiseth his father’s instruction: but he that

regardeth reproof is prudent” (Pr. 15:5). “Correction *is* grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: *and* he that hateth reproof shall die” (Pr. 15:10). “The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise” (Pr. 15:31). “He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding” (Pr. 15:32). “A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool” (Pr. 17:10). “*As* an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, *so is* a wise reprover upon an obedient ear” (Pr. 25:12).



MARY QUANT FASHION REVOLUTIONARY (Friday Church News Notes, August 23, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Clothing is a language, and never has that been truer than today. Consider Mary Quant, the revolutionary British fashion designer of the Beatles era. This year, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London has a major exhibit on Quant, inventor of the miniskirt and hot pants and a major popularizer of trousers on women. The focus of the exhibit is revolution, liberation from biblical morality, and breaking down the barriers between the sexes (unisex, androgyny). There is no attempt to hide this. Quant put women in men’s attire: pants, ties, suit jackets, and short hair. One display, entitled “Boys Will Be Girls,” says that Quant “subverted

menswear.” “Trousers are considered inappropriate for women [but] Quant wears them anywhere she wants.” Mary Quant knew that trousers on women in modern Western society is not an issue merely of comfort and freedom of movement. Following are some other quotes from the exhibition signage: “using fashion to question hierarchies and gender rules,” “a rebellious approach to established gender norms,” “mocking religion,” “an independent style,” “self-expression,” “freedom.” “The miniskirt became an international symbol of women’s liberation.” “[Quant’s] provocative styles reflected increasingly relaxed attitudes in society towards sexuality in all its forms, reinforced legally by the decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967.” Quant also broke down barriers between ages, dressing women in girl’s fashions. She said, “I didn’t want to grow up.” The 1960s was a major changing of the times, and the moral revolution was driven by a technological revolution. It was the dawn of the era of color television, color printing, international mass marketing, and global merchandising empires. Why were Quant’s fashions so popular? Why does a Quant exhibit at a major art museum draw thousands of eager visitors? She helped create the modern ME culture, the “lovers of their own selves” generation prophesied in 2 Timothy 3:2. The music, the fashion, the entertainment, the commerce, everything broadcasts the message, “It’s your life; live as you please!” and fallen man has loved that message ever since Mamma Eve believed the devil’s tale, “Ye shall be as gods.” It’s all a terrible lie. No one gives himself life. We own nothing; we are God’s creatures in God’s world. “Behold, all souls are mine ... the soul that

sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). The Good News is that an atonement is available in Jesus Christ to fully satisfy my sin debt against God and I can be saved, but the Bad News is that if I die without Christ I will spend eternity settling an account with God that will never be settled.

DEMOCRATS AT FOREFRONT OF PUSH TO ALLOW “ABORTION” AT TIME OF BIRTH (Friday Church News Notes, August 23, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “America, Are We Really Questioning If a Baby Deserves to Live?” *Brown’s Newsletter*, May 2019: “Several States across the United States have actively questioned whether a baby, born alive is a human being. At what point, does life begin then? In January of 2019 Virginia Democrats dared to claim that a child, at the moment of birth could still be aborted. Again, according to House Bill 2491, which did not pass in Virginia, an abortion could be requested at the moment of dilation. Further, in New York, a



similar piece of legislation did pass. Acting on what is acclaimed by Democrats to be for ‘Women’s Rights’ the bill allows for a woman to abort her child at any point during pregnancy, including the moment of birth. In North Carolina, Pro-Life organizations are attempting to sway legislators to override the Democratic Governor’s veto of a measure they say would ensure newborns delivered after a failed abortion are cared for like any other baby. The Republican-controlled Senate in North Carolina is planning to vote on Tuesday to override the veto and forward the legislation. To accomplish such, the action will require several Democrats and Republicans from the House and Senate to complete the override. The ‘Born-Alive Abortion Survivors’ bill would further protect children who survive botched abortions. To support the bill, Pro-Life organizations included stories of children who were born alive after botched abortions and otherwise left to die. Legislatively, bills across the country from Democratic members of State’s respective Houses and Senate’s are working to pass legislation which calls into question, when does life actually begin. In response to abortion bills and the question of when does life actually begin, some Republicans are working on drafting legislation that could challenge all forms of abortion after a heartbeat is detected. Medically, a heartbeat determines the end of life, and some states are working to claim that, medically a heartbeat determines the beginning of life. ... In the South, states across the board have passed legislation which makes abortion illegal after a heartbeat is detected. Further, a heartbeat can be identified as early as two weeks, rendering the majority of abortions illegal.”



CHINA’S HORRIBLE FORCED LABOR CAMPS (Friday Church News Notes, August 23, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “She Survived China’s Forced Labor Camp; Now She’s Urging Americans to Reject Socialism,” *The Stream*, July 8, 2019: “Jennifer Zeng grew up admiring the Communist Party of China and adhering to its stringent rules. But her life changed forever when she embraced religion and was swept up in a government crackdown on Falun Gong. Arrested four times as a young adult and held in as a prisoner in a labor camp, she quickly woke up to the horrors of living in a socialist state. After being subject to brutal torture, Zeng managed to escape China and now tells about the evils of socialism and communism. At a time when more Americans are embracing Karl Marx’s teachings, Chris Wright has helped Zeng share her story as part of a network called the Anticommunism Action Team. They recently spoke to *The Daily Signal* along with Darian Diachok, who escaped from Soviet-era Ukraine as an infant and has helped former Soviet satellite states democratize and overcome their failed communist systems. ... Jennifer Zeng: ‘I was arrested, like you said, four times and sent to the Beijing Female Labor Camp for practicing a spiritual practice called Falun Gong. It is a spiritual practice based on truth, compassion, forbearance, and

plus five sets of gentle exercises, including meditation. Because it’s very obvious health benefit, within seven years, there were more Falun Gong practitioners in China than Communist Party members. At that stage, in 1999, the party decided to crack down on it. So, I ended up in the Beijing Female Labor Camp. The first day was feeling like going directly into the hell. For the first moment, we were forced to squat under the baking sun for 15 hours, and whenever someone couldn’t endure it and fainted away, they were shocked by electric batons so that they could wake up. Every day, in the camp, it was a battle between life and death. ... While I was in the camp, apart from torture every day, apart from hard, forced labor, we were also given repeated physical checkups so that if anyone need an organ we could be killed on demand if we were a match. Fortunately, I told the doctor I had Hepatitis C before I practiced Falun Gong. I was able to be exempted from becoming a victim of organ harvesting. ... The torture I experienced and I saw was beyond description.”

MILLIONS OF GIRLS MISSING (Friday Church News Notes, August 23, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Millions of girls are missing,” Fox News, Aug. 18, 2019: “Indian baby girls are being aborted simply because of their gender. For a family living in poverty, a house full of sons is deemed more profitable, since they are considered the main breadwinners. Afraid of what a daughter will cost, many families choose to simply never have one. Despite the fact that gender-selective abortions were outlawed by the Indian government in 1994, the



practice still occurs. This is why so many baby girls were ‘missing’ from those northern Indian villages. And it’s just one example of a much larger trend across the country. While many other nations have either a balanced gender ratio or one that tips in favor of females, India’s population is skewed. As of 2018, there were only 92 females for every 100 males in the country. According to the data, India is home to 63 million fewer women than it should be.”

THEY SHALL SEE HIS FACE (Friday Church News Notes, August 23, 2019, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - “*And they shall see his face*” (Re. 22:4). Under the law, Moses was not allowed to see God’s face (Ex.

33:20), but the redeemed saints in the New Jerusalem will see it. The face they will see is the face of Jesus. The knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Co. 4:6). Jesus is the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3). Christ’s face is the face of the Creator God, the face of pure holiness, the face of unfathomable love, the face of infinite wisdom, the face of prudence and witty inventions (Pr. 8:12), the face of almighty power, the face of the one “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Mic. 5:2), the face of the Ancient of days (Da. 7:9, 13, 22). The human face is an amazing creation. It is the face of the individual soul. Even “identical twins” are not identical. Martin Schoeller, a portrait photographer who has photographed more than 100 identical twins, says, “Once you see them side by side in the same light and the same camera angle, you come to realize how different most twins look” (“Why identical twins look different,” *The Globe and Mail*, Apr. 30, 2018). The face reflects the individual’s

intelligence and character and feelings. It has been called “the organ of emotions.” Knowledge of the face (“reading people’s faces”) is an important law enforcement tool. The face has a set of about 20 flat muscles, called the mimetic muscles, that enable it to reflect the full range of human emotion. They are controlled by the facial nerve which is in turn controlled by the mind and spirit. They are the only muscles that insert into the skin. A study by electrical and computer engineer Aleix Martinez found that the face makes 21 emotional expressions that differ according to the muscles involved (“Human Faces Can Express at Least 21 Distinct Emotions,” *Time* magazine, Mar. 31, 2014). The saints know God in Christ and long to see His face. The hymn “Face to Face” says, “Face to face with Christ, my Saviour, face to face—what will it be, when with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me?...Face to face! O blissful moment! Face to face, to see and know; face to face with my Redeemer, Jesus Christ who loves me so.”

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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)
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