

O Timothy

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

A Monthly Newsletter for Spiritual Protection and Edification

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“What the individual allows his mind to dwell upon, what he harbors and nurses in his heart, will determine the course of his life. This is a loud warning in an age when individuals can connect 24/7 in the most private manner with any and every aspect of the pop culture, and there are a great many dark and perverted things with which one can fill the imagination. In fact, dark and perverted is an apt description of much of today’s music, movies, television programs, video games, and novels.” Page 5.

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



DOES 2 CHRONICLES 7:14 APPLY TO THIS AGE? - By David Cloud

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Some have challenged my application of 2 Chronicles to the situation in America.

But 1 Corinthians 10 and Romans 15:4 instruct us that we can learn lessons from the Old Testament Scriptures for the Christian life and church age.

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime **were written for our learning**, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto



Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the

wilderness. **Now these things were our examples**, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come**” (1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

Though the law of Moses is not the believer’s rule of life, it is an important source of instruction for the Christian life. We draw spiritual lessons from it. We learn from its examples.

(The fact that the believer is not under the law of Moses does not mean that he doesn’t have a law. The believer has a new, higher law, which is *the law of Christ*. This means to be conformed to His image, Romans 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:17-18. The believer’s new law is also called *the law of the Spirit*, Galatians 5:16-18. By walking in the Spirit, which means obeying the Spirit and yielding to Him and trusting Him, the believer does not fulfill the law of the flesh.)

The New Testament is filled with lessons from the law of Moses. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul draws lessons from

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Israel’s wilderness wanderings from Exodus and Numbers. We learn lessons about Christ (as the Rock and the living water), and we are warned not to commit idolatry and fornication or to murmur against God. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul draws lessons from the passover. In 1 Corinthians 14:34, Paul used the law to teach that women should keep silent in the churches. the writer of Hebrews draws lessons from Israel’s unbelief and hardness of heart in the wilderness (Heb. 3:7-13).

We interpret lessons from the law of Moses and the Old Testament by comparing Scripture with Scripture to see if there are similar principles in the New Testament.

Consider Deuteronomy 22:5, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deut. 22:5). This contains a moral principle that there should be a distinction between the sexes even in how they dress. That this principle remains valid in the New Testament dispensation is clear by comparing Scripture with Scripture. The teaching of Deut. 22:5 is confirmed in Genesis, where we find that God made man male and female (Gen. 2:27). And it is confirmed in 1 Corinthians 11:3-15 where we find that the sexes are to be distinguished by their hair length.

Consider Leviticus 19:28, “Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD” (Lev. 19:28). This moral lesson of avoiding pagan customs such as tattoos that are associated with idolatry and moral reprobation is confirmed in passages such as Jeremiah 10:2; 1 Corinthians 10:20-22; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; and Ephesians 5:11.

Now concerning 2 Chronicles 7:14, while this verse can’t be applied literally and fully to America (or England or Canada or other nations with a significant Christian heritage), it is certain that we can draw a fundamental lesson that is confirmed in the New Testament, which is as follows: In time of trouble God’s people must get on “praying ground” (by humbling themselves and turning from their wicked ways) and they must pray and seek God’s face. The key to healing is repentance, obedience, and earnest prayer.

In this present age, “God’s people” refers to the church which is the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15).

2 Chronicles 7:14 teaches us that God's people are the key to real change, because they have access to the God who can do all things and who is ready and willing and able to answer their prayers.

The promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14 to "heal their land" refers, of course, to the land of Israel. We can't apply this literally in the church age, and I don't know to what extent God would heal America if Bible-believing churches got serious about prayer, **but I know He would do great things, because He has promised to do so.**

Any capable student who studies the Bible's extensive teaching on prayer (more than 500 references) knows that little prayer means little power and great prayer means great power, but what we have currently in the vast majority of churches, even the "good churches," is *little prayer*.

Consider some New Testament passages on prayer

James 4:7-10

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

James says that if God's people will humble themselves and draw nigh to God (which refers to the affection of the heart and the prayers of the lips) and cleanse their hands of sinful deeds and purify their hearts of evil thoughts and be afflicted and mourn for their backsliding, God will draw nigh to them and bless them and the devil will be defeated.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Paul instructs the churches to pray for secular government leaders so that we might live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This is not a suggestion; it is a solemn exhortation that every church should take seriously. Why would God exhort His people to pray for such a thing if He weren't ready to grant quietness and peace?

James 5:16

"Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James says the *effectual fervent prayer* of a righteous man availeth much. That is a description of *serious* prayer. In my experience, having personally preached in hundreds of churches and hearing from people from hundreds of church each year, this type of prayer life is rare. The average church member knows little to nothing about such prayer. The typical prayer meeting is pathetic in its character (involving a few minutes of prayer tacked onto a regular service) and not well attended. Special prayer meetings are almost unheard of, and few would come if the pastor called for them. I think of a church that runs 600 but has only a few men attend its before-service prayer meetings. This is one of the best churches I know of, and at least it *has* before-service prayer meetings, but how amazingly pathetic is the response! This is where **we are spiritually, and until we acknowledge how lukewarm we are and how far we have fallen, we will never see the power of God.**

Conclusion

The old "cottage prayer meetings" that churches used to have to prepare themselves for Bible conferences and "revivals" are largely relics of the past.

To call for special prayer meetings and entire days of fasting and prayer before major elections and other important national events is unheard of today, but churches did this routinely in former times of American history.

Prayer with fasting is a foreign thing to most churches.

The result is little power in the homes and congregations and nations that are in moral free fall.

You can talk about *Fox News* and Rush Limbaugh and Breitbart and the *National Review* and the Tea Party and how Trump will be better than Hillary and all such things.

I talk about those things, too, **but I intend to talk about and focus far more on the power of prayer.**

The Tea Party at its best can't change the moral and spiritual condition of the country, but prayer could.

The Tea Party has given us Donald Trump who "holds high the flag for gay equality" (*The Washington Times*, Nov. 2, 2016).

God knows all things and can do all things, but He has ordained that His people pray and seek His face while standing on "praying ground." God acts through effectual prayer.

Christ taught in Luke 18:6-9 that persistent prayer even has a role in prophetic events. In Revelation 8:3-5, we

see that the prayers of the saints are active in the Tribulation. They are likened to incense that comes up before God and brings about the trumpet judgments.

In Isaiah 62:6-7 we again see the connection between prayer and prophetic events. Here prayer is associated with the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the blessing of Jerusalem.

Prayer is so powerful that it is history changing.

Moses' effectual fervent prayer caused God not to destroy Israel (Ex. 32:9-14).

The prayers of Bible-believing churches can still change history, but not until they get on "praying ground" (James 4:8-10) and become really serious about intercession.



"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Proverbs 4:23-27).

We live in an age of technology-driven fantasy, and a rapidly-growing number of people live in fantasy worlds.

The human imagination is a gift of God and can be used for good as well as evil, but man's fallen condition and the existence of dark spiritual powers means there are great dangers in fantasizing.

The first appearance of "imagination" in the Bible is a warning about evil imaginings: "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

The corruption of the imagination was one of the first steps in the downward slide to idolatry and moral perversion in man's early history as described in Romans 1.

"... when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but BECAME VAIN IN THEIR IMAGINATIONS, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21).

The same thing happens in the lives of individuals. If the imagination becomes perverted, the person's life will reflect this.

The heart is the source of man's actions. God's Word says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life," and, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 4:23; 23:7).

A fleeting thought is of little consequence, but what the individual allows his mind *to dwell upon*, what he *harbors* and *nurses* in his heart, will determine the course of his life.

This is a loud warning in an age when individuals can connect 24/7 in the most private manner with any and every aspect of the pop culture, and there are a great many dark and perverted things with which one can fill the imagination. In fact, dark and perverted is an apt description of much of today's music, movies, television programs, video games, and novels.

Jesus warned about gaining the whole world while losing one's soul. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

What would He say about those who sell their souls for nothing but a figment of the imagination!

Fantasy Science Fiction

Science fiction and the superhero genre of entertainment have grown ever darker, stranger, more sensual and godless, and many people are living a dark fantasy world portrayed in books, movies, video games, and online virtual worlds.

Science fiction has been a godless world since its inception. There might be "a god," a "force," but it is not the holy Creator God of the Bible. Many prominent names in science fiction are atheists and haters of Jehovah God.

Carl Sagan, whose best-selling sci-fi novel *Contact* was made into a movie, was one of the high priests of atheistic evolution. In this novel, he has the main character debating two preachers and saying, "There is no compelling evidence that God exists." In 1997, Sagan said, "I share the view of a hero of mine, Albert Einstein:

'I cannot conceive of a god who rewards and punishes his creatures or has a will of the kind that we experience in ourselves.' Neither can I--nor would I want to--conceive of an individual that survives his physical death. Let feeble souls, from fear or absurd egotism, cherish such thoughts'" (*Parade*, March 10, 1997).

Isaac Asimov, in a 1982 interview, said, "Emotionally, I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time" (Paul Kurtz, "An Interview with Isaac Asimov on Science and the Bible," *Free Inquiry*, Spring 1982, p. 9).

Only a spiritually-blind man can say there is no evidence for the existence of a Creator God. The evidence is EVERYWHERE!

Robert Heinlein, called "the dean of science fiction writers," rejected the Bible and encouraged "free sex." He promoted agnosticism through his sci-fi books.

Arthur Clarke, author of many sci-fi works, including *2001: A Space Odyssey*, promoted evolutionary pantheism. He told a Sri Lankan newspaper, "I don't believe in God or an afterlife" ("Life Beyond 2001: Exclusive Interview with Arthur C. Clarke," *The Island*, Dec. 20, 2000).

Kurt Vonnegut was an atheist, and as an honorary president of the American Humanist Association he subscribed to its code which "does not accept supernatural views of reality."

Gene Roddenberry, creator of *Star Trek*, was an agnostic and humanist who envisioned a world in which "everyone is an atheist and better for it" (Brannon Braga, "Every Religion Has a Mythology," International Atheist Conference, June 24, 2006).

Ray Bradbury (d. 2012), author of *Fahrenheit 451* and the *Martian Chronicles*, grew up in a Baptist home, but he described himself as "delicatessen religionist." He was particularly enamored with Buddhism and Eastern religion, even calling himself a "Zen Buddhist." He was a pantheist and an evolutionist. He considered Jesus a wise prophet, like Buddha and Confucius, a man who became christ through self-effort ("Sci-fi Legend Ray Bradbury on God," CNN, August 2, 2010). Bradbury claimed that when it comes to God, "none of us know

anything.” He said, “We must become astronauts and go out into the universe and discover the God in ourselves.”

H.G. Wells, author of such science fiction classics as *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*, and *The First Man on the Moon*, converted to atheistic Darwinism as a college student under the influence of Thomas Huxley (“Darwin’s Bulldog”) and spent the rest of his life preaching atheism and an extreme form of eugenics. He wanted to create a master race through Darwinian survival of the fittest and urged society to have “no pity and less benevolence” toward the inferior. Not surprisingly, he was an early advocate of “free love” and lived a debauched moral life. He was a serial adulterer, even committing adultery with the daughters of his friends. One of his partners in adultery was fellow atheist and eugenicist Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood. He died an “infinitely frustrated” and broken man, with no hope for the future, neither for himself nor for the human race. This is the result of an attempt to live in a fantasy world without God.

Science fiction has never been a spiritually neutral genre, and there are great spiritual dangers in delving into this fantasy world.

The sci-fi superhero genre today is moving ever deeper into dark realms.

Consider James Holmes, who murdered a dozen people and wounded nearly 60 more in a movie theater where *Batman: The Dark Knight Rises* was premiering. Jesus taught us that murder is an acting out of the impulses of the fallen nature (Mark 7:21-23), and the sin nature can be inflamed. Holmes had dyed his hair red and said he was The Joker, the clownish, ultra-violent enemy of the superhero Batman (“NYC Police Commissioner Said Alleged Shooter Calls Himself The Joker,” *Fox News*, July 20, 2012).

Today’s Batman comics and movies are worlds apart from the original Batman stories. They are vile and ultra-violent. In the 2008 movie *Batman: The Dark Knight*, a man’s face is filleted by a knife, another’s is burned half off, a man’s eye is slammed into a pencil, a bomb is stitched inside of a man and exploded, a man is bound to a chair and set afire, a child is threatened by a man with a melted face, and clowns are shot point-blank in the head. In the comic book “Batman: The Dark Night” The Joker murders an entire television audience.

Thirteen years earlier, not far from where Holmes acted out his perverted fantasies, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold murdered 13 and wounded 21 in a public school. They, too, were acting out demonic fantasies that had been enflamed through violent music, video games, and dark movies.

Pop Idol Fantasy

The entire field of pop idols, from Elvis to Justin Bieber, is a fantasy. The pop stars are real people, but their pop idol personas are fantasies created by clever music industry people from Colonel Parker to Johnny Kitagawa.

The latter, head of Johnny & Associates, has been creating pop idol boy bands for 50 years in Japan, the world’s second largest music market. Young men called “Johnny juniors” are carefully chosen and then trained for five years before being placed with other juniors into a boy band. An additional two years is required to train them to perform together and to “act like certified idols” (“Unraveling a fantasy: A beginner’s guide to Japanese idol pop,” AVClub.com, Jul. 18, 2014).

Japanese producer Yasushi Siskimoto has done with girl bands what Kitagawa has done with boy bands.

The ultimate fantasy pop idol is Hatsune Miku. One of the most popular Japanese pop singers of all time, she performed sold-out concerts attended by tens of thousands of screaming fans and opened for Lady Gaga. But she doesn’t exist. One hundred percent fantasy, she is an avatar created by the Japanese company Crypton Future Media. She is projected onstage as a dancing hologram. She is the ultimate scantily-clothed pop singer of youthful fantasy with an unrealistically proportioned figure and a hyper-cute, Manga-influenced face. Girls fantasize that they are Hatsune, and boys fantasize that she is their girlfriend. One fan said, “She’s rather more like a goddess: She has human parts, but she transcends human limitations. She’s the great post-human pop star” (“Hatsune Miku: The world’s fakest pop star,” *CBNNews*, Nov. 9, 2012). Hatsune Miku is the avatar for Yamaha’s Vocaloid (“vocals plus android”) software which allows anyone to use her voice (actually that of Japanese voice actress Saki Fujita) on their own songs, so the songs performed at her “concerts” are all fan written. More than 100,000 songs have been created and many have gone viral on YouTube and the Japanese equivalent *Nico Nico Douga* and other forums. Vocaloid “has fostered the rise

of a vibrant, nation-spanning community of do-it-yourself musicians, artists, filmmakers, and writers who create their own pop-culture products through the avatar of cartoon girl.” “For fans, creating and sharing content is as much a part of the experience as the singer herself.”

Indeed, Hatsune Miku is the ultimate “me generation” pop star. It is *me* singing *for* me and to *me*, with others participating in my *me*-fest!

The reference by a Hatsune fan to “goddess” is enlightening, because goddess worship is pure fantasy and has always been about the worshiper. Idolatry is all about the pursuit of personal happiness apart from the Creator God.

The heart and soul of pop idol fantasy is sex, as with pop music as a whole. The boys and girls of the idol bands are carefully selected to fit within the current definition of cute and sexy, and the unisex aspect appeals both to “straights” and homosexuals.

“Kawaii [the Japanese idea of cuteness] is deployed to elicit glee from tweens and salaciousness from adult, manga-loving men” (“Unraveling a fantasy: A beginner’s guide to Japanese idol pop,” AVClub.com, Jul. 18, 2014).

Fantasy Digital Worlds

Virtual worlds are hugely popular. More than 15 million people have participated in *Second Life* alone, the most popular of the many virtual worlds, creating fantasy depictions of themselves, fantasy identities, hanging out at fantasy places, having online fantasy sexual relations, even buying and selling fantasy property.

Players reinvent themselves and “embark on the kind of adventures he or she has always dreamed of.”

The player creates an **avatar** to represent himself. This began in 2006 with Nintendo’s avatar-building tool in the Wii gaming console. The avatar was called a Mii.

The whole concept of having an avatar “means that you can change everything about yourself; your appearance, your personality, your ethnicity, even your gender.”

You can be a pirate, a knight, a witch, an animal, a combination human-animal, a sex goddess, a superhero, or whatever you can imagine, in a world that doesn’t

exist. You can be as strange or as beautiful, as good or wicked, as you please. One gamer said, “It’s like playing god ... with yourself.”

The avatar has been called a “mini-me.” Winda Benedetti, a gaming reporter, describes her avatar as physically perfect, with its “flawless hair and skin” and “attractively proportioned” figure on which clothes hang “with a stylish perfection,” remarking, “She’s little more than a cartoon, but still, my mini me--my avatar--I can’t help it, I wish I was her” (“I can’t help it--I wish I were my avatar,” *NBC News*, Nov. 25, 2008).

In *Second Life*, there are many different worlds, such as Dynasty of Dragons, Isle of Faerun (“a land of magic”), Midnight Dreams (“a dark role play and combat environment focused on Vampires”), Museum of Magical Arts, Morgan Straits (“a role play community set in the Golden Age of Piracy”), and Remnants of Earth (“a cyberpunk fantasy role playing game”).

Users are drawn into virtual worlds by the offer of free entry levels, but they usually end up spending money, sometimes a lot of money, to purchase entrance into deeper levels and to buy virtual goods. During the first ten years of its existence (2003-2013) *Second Life* users spent \$3.2 billion!

Users become emotionally attached to the virtual worlds. I heard a woman on the *Kim Komando* computer radio show describe the deep distress she experienced when her virtual world was unplugged by the bankrupt parent company. She had spent a lot of time and money building her virtual paradise, and the highlight of her day was to enjoy it, but it had disappeared overnight.

Avatars can communicate with and interact with other avatars, which often leads to problems in real life. Many marriages have been destroyed when one partner formed a fantasy attachment to an avatar. People have run away from their families to live with people they met online.

One report on this was “Avatars and Second Life Adultery: A tale of online cheating and real-world heartbreak,” *The Telegraph*, Nov. 14, 2008.

Multi-player online video games

“Some studies suggest that gaming is absolutely taking over the minds of children all together.”

“Virtual life becomes more appealing than real life.”

Nothing takes over young people’s hearts and minds more than MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing games).

The most addictive games in 2015 are the following: Madden, Dota 2, Grand Theft Auto, Tetris, Candy Crush Saga (the company is valued at \$7.5 billion), Minecraft, EverQuest (called “never rest” and “ever crack”), The Sims (player has omnipotent control over people), World of Warcraft (called World of War Crack), Call of Duty (the last two are played by more than 100 million players), Halo 3 (called Halodiction), Total War, Pong, Civilization, Diablo 3, Super Meat Boy, Team Fortress 2, Dark Souls 2, Counter Strike, Starcraft 2, Persona 4 Golden, Monster Hunter 3, Elder Scrolls, Angry Birds, Faster Than Light, Peggle, League of Legends, Civilization V, Pokemon.

Even in remote places like Nepal, gaming is becoming popular. A report on Nepali gamers in the *Kathmandu Post* (Aug. 29, 2015) was entitled “By Their Bootstraps.” Gaming started in Nepal in internet cafes in 2010. The 2015 Colors E-sports Carnival at the Civil Mall had 500 participants competing at *Defense of the Ancients* (DOTA), a multi-online battle game.

Fantasy Sports

Fantasy Sports is a multi-billion-dollar-a-year industry that attracts more than 51 million American participants. Fantasy players spend an average of \$465 a year on their fantasies. Two leading fantasy companies, DraftKings and FanDuel, are worth an estimated \$1 billion each.

“In fantasy sports a participant creates his own team, selecting players from a real-world sports league like the NBA, National Football League, or England’s Premier League football. As real games are played, a fantasy team competes and is ranked against others based on the actual-game performance of its players” (“Like the real game, fantasy sports now worth billions,” AFP, Jun. 28, 2015).

Fantasy Comics

In Asia, the Manga culture has captured the imaginations of multitudes of young people. (Manga is Japanese; in Korea it is *manhwa*, and in China it is *manhua*.) *Anime*

refers to the animation of Manga as television programs and movies.

Manga has had a large influence on Japanese pop culture. It has been said that one cannot understand modern Japan “without understanding the role that manga play in the society.”

Manga is a multi-billion a year industry that has spread to Europe and America.

Manga refers to comics that come in a wide variety of genre: romance, superhero, superheroine, science fiction, etc.

Manga is popular within a wide variety of society, including children, students, businessmen, and housewives.

Manga stories often mix real world scenes with alien worlds. The characters are normal people with shadow lives via superpowers or robot or alien friends. There is a lot of witchcraft (such as soul migration). There is also a lot of sexual content and homosexuality.

It is fantasy escapism, and it has been described as a “pop cultural obsession.” Manga fans often dress and act like their Manga heroes. They attend Manga conventions. They become fixated on Manga.

One 13-year-old wrote, “I have a problem, I’m addicted to the computer and on the computer all I do is watch anime and read manga and that is what I’m addicted to the most and I stay up all night because of it” (“Anime and Manga Causing Sleep Deprivation”).

Fantasy Romance Novels

Romance novels are the most popular literary genre in America, capturing 55% of book sales, and they appear in 90 languages other than English.

The romance novel exploded in popularity in the 1970s. In 1976, sales reached 40 million copies. By 2008, sales were 74 million.

Many romance novels have a strong sexual content. A recent example is *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which even delves into sadomasochism. This type of thing has *no* place in a Christian’s life.

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints” (Ephesians 5:3).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Ephesians 5:11).

“These novels were written to be titillating, and I really don’t think there’s a huge difference between this and porn. It’s ‘soft porn,’ and indeed many women find themselves far more aroused by reading something like this than they would be watching porn on a computer. So women who devour novel after novel like that aren’t that much different from men who watch porn all night” (“Romance Novels: Dangerous, Harmless, or Just Fun?” Jan. 16, 2012, tolovehonorandvacuum.com).

Dr. Julia Slattery warns that there are similarities between what happens to a man when he views pornography and what happens to a woman when she reads a romance novel. “There is a neurochemical element with men and visual porn, but an emotional element with women and these novels” (“Romance novels can become addictive,” May 30, 2011, KSL.com).

She is seeing more and more women “who are clinically addicted to romantic books.”

Even G-rated romance novels take the reader into an unrealistic world typically populated by strong, beautiful heroines and handsome, caring men who “fall in love.” They can produce addiction to a fantasy world and dissatisfaction with real life.

In 2011, the *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health* in Britain reported that romance novels “are a cause of marital breakdown, adulterous affairs and unwanted pregnancies.”

Best-selling author Shaunti Feldhahn notes, “[S]ome marriage therapists caution that women can become as dangerously unbalanced by these books’ entrancing but distorted messages as men can be by the distorted messages of pornography.”

As with anything, there is the danger of progression, by starting out with harmless novels and clean Christian romance novels and then branching out. “I’ve known so many Christian teens who just devoured all the romances in the church library, and then headed to the public library

for more, and ended up almost addicted to really steamy stuff” (“Romance Novels: Dangerous, Harmless, or Just Fun?” Jan. 16, 2012, tolovehonorandvacuum.com).

Why Living in a Fantasy World Is Wrong

We are not saying that fiction and fantasy are totally wrong.

I am not saying it is wrong ever to read a novel or watch a harmless movie or play a harmless video game or some such thing.

I am saying that there are great dangers lurking in the realm of fantasy today, as we have documented.

And I am saying it is wrong to *live in* a fantasy world instead of living in the real world. This is wrong for the following reasons:

- Reality cannot be escaped; it can only be ignored for a short while. Each individual is a soul made in God’s image and each individual will face God in judgment. “Amusement” refers to non-thinking (*a*=none, *muse*=thinking), but all of the amusement and escapism and fantasy and alcohol and drugs in the world will not change the soul’s appointment with God.
- “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27).
- Living in a fantasy world can hide the soul from salvation. God loves each sinner and wants to save him before it is too late, but the opportunity for salvation is finite. If an individual chooses to live in a fantasy world in this life, he can waste away his opportunity. You won’t find the gospel of Jesus Christ in popular video games, sci-fi, manga, pop music, etc.
- Man-made fantasy is an empty, foolish thing compared to the real God and real salvation and real life as God intended it to be lived.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil” (Proverbs 4:23-27).



I received the following communication from a reader in regard to the article “Reply to a Pastor about a Family That Left His Church,” published Dec. 1, 2015:



Dear Brother Cloud,

First let me say that I wholeheartedly agree with you on this issue. You are really one of the only people that I know of that takes such a strong stand against contemporary music of any kind.

Having said that, an unfortunate fact of life is that if you believe this way at some point you will have to put up with it in the church that you attend. The most conservative churches that I know of in my area sing the old hymns, but still allow toned-down contemporary songs to be sung for the special music.

It seems that there are areas that pastors just aren't interested in going anymore, and to a certain degree I guess I understand. If you preached on social media, dress, the dangers of the internet, and the god of entertainment in most places today you wouldn't have more than a house church. These topics seem to be off limits with anyone under 40.

I am not sure what the answer is other than prayer and continuing to stand when your Pastor and church may not agree with you. I don't take a holier than thou approach to these things, but I try not to compromise in my own life and in my home. I support my Pastor, and will not undermine his authority. I do fear as you do that my children and grandchildren will not take the same stand because of the influence that they will find in most churches.

Thanks again for the stand that you take, and for your informative newsletters.

REPLY FROM BROTHER CLOUD

Thank you for taking the time to write. From my experience, you are absolutely on target. There are extremely few Independent Baptist preachers who truly care about the music issue and are properly educated about it and are effectively educating the people and barring the door against contemporary worship in all its forms. Many are still keeping the focus on hymns in congregational singing, but it seems that this is only because of tradition and an apparent desire to remain somewhat "conservative" and a fear of being "contemporary." But because of their ignorance of what contemporary music is and its real danger even in its more subtle forms, they are unwittingly allowing the camel's nose into the tent, and it is only a matter of time until the tent falls.

One of the major reasons why so many Independent Baptist pastors are weak on the music issue is that they aren't being challenged and led by the influential preachers. In fact, as we have extensively documented, the biggest names in Independent Baptist churches and schools are leading the way in “adapting” and “borrowing from” contemporary worship music. As Dr. Lee Roberson used to say, “Everything rises and falls on leadership,” and the biggest leaders are exceedingly weak and near sighted on this, and they don't care to listen to warnings. I am confident that the reason for this is the desire to keep the crowds, contemporary-ish music (whether Southern Gospel or the Townend-Getty stuff) being very popular, but the Lord is the only one who knows men's hearts. Whatever the motive, the result is the same: bridges are being built to the one-world church through music, and the young people are going to cross those bridges.

As for only having a house church if you preach the whole counsel of God and apply God's Word to every part of daily living, that will be the case in some places,

but it is certainly not the case everywhere. We had 300 at our annual missions conference this year, and I know many churches of a good size that preach everything I preach. Some run in the many hundreds in every service.

As to what can be done, if I were in a place where there was no church that took an educated and Scriptural stand on the music issue, I would ask the Lord to open the door for me to move to a place where there is such a church. I would do this by faith, knowing that God has commanded me to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and it is impossible to do this properly apart from a sound church.

The God-designed church is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15). Truth, therefore, is a fundamental essence of a sound church, and if a church is not committed to absolute truth in every area, it is not doing its job before the Lord and is on the way to compromise and apostasy. I would make the move for the sake of my own soul and for the sake of my family, both in this generation and the next. I would take a cut in pay and do whatever I had to do to make that happen. A good church is more than worth it.

Many parents have testified to me that being in the right church was a major reason why their grown children are serving the Lord today.

Last year, I believe it was, I met a grandfather at Fairhaven Baptist Church in Chesterton, Indiana, who told me that his children and now his grandchildren are serving the Lord. He said that he moved to that area many years ago when his children were young and he had bought a house. Afterwards he found Fairhaven and knew this was where the Lord wanted him to raise his family, but it was more than an hour's drive from his house. He put the house on the market and commuted to church every service. He thought his house would sell quickly, but it took more than two years, if I remember correctly, yet he continued to commute to a good church rather than settle for a mediocre one.

The sweet fruit of this wise decision has already continued to the second generation.

The Lord bless!

Brother Cloud

HANDMADE CARDS

Some of the **Nepali Christian ladies** make very needed income at home by making *beautiful cross-stitched Christmas Cards*.

The cross stitches are done on readily available burlap, which gives a unique touch and beauty to an otherwise ordinary material.

The cards in which the cross stitches are encased are made entirely of *local handmade paper*. There is at least a half a day of work in each card.

To help with this needy ministry, we have shipped some of the cards

to the States and are selling them in packets of five.

When you purchase these unique cards **ALL OF THE PROFIT FROM THE SALE** goes to the Nepali Christian women who make the cards. The distribution in Canada and the States is done by volunteers.

Quantities are limited!

Visit [Way of Life Store](#)



DIGGING IN THE WALLS

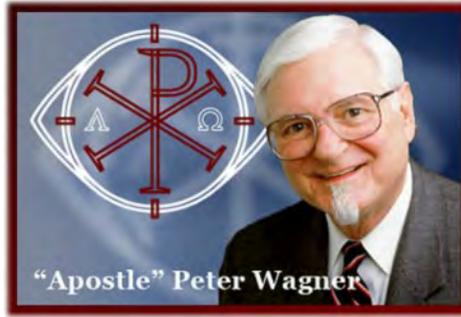
God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to dig in the walls of Israel's temple and observe the evils being done in secret by apostate religious leaders of that day. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall ... And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So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

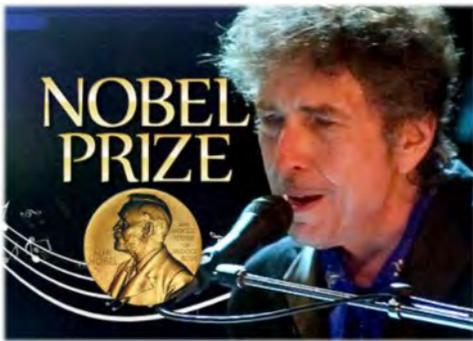
As in Ezekiel's day much of the apostasy of our hour is hidden from the view of the average Christian. We intend by God's grace to "dig in the walls" of modern ecumenism and to expose and cry out against the things we find. In this section we also report on secular events which are relevant to Christians.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



“APOSTLE” C. PETER WAGNER DIES (Friday Church News Notes, November 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - C. Peter Wagner, a church growth guru who accepted the mantle of an apostle in the last decades of his life, passed away on October 21. Wagner was a missionary to Bolivia for 16 years and a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary from 1971-1999. While at Fuller, Wagner moved into the charismatic movement under the influence of John Wimber and became increasingly deceived to the end of his life. They jointly taught an influential course in the early 1980s called “Signs, Wonders and Church Growth,” promoting the use of “miracles” to make evangelism effectual. Wagner coined the term “Third Wave” to describe evangelicals who accept charismatic sign gifts and phenomena but do not want to be known as charismatics. (The first wave was classical Pentecostalism, and the second was the charismatic movement.) Wagner said, “A key part of my own spiritual pilgrimage was my close friendship with John Wimber, which began in the mid-1970’s” (*The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit*, p. 27). He claimed that Bible-style prophecy was being restored. In a message at Indianapolis ’90, Wagner said, “In 1980, God began speaking to the churches about the resurgence of biblical prophecy. ... I’m talking about Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah kind of prophecy, where God speaks to the churches. ... all these signs, all that the Spirit is saying to the churches, are pointing to the great revival, the capital ‘R’ revival ... children are prophesying, children are laying hands on the sick and they’re

getting healed” (from notes taken at the conference by D. Cloud). Wagner claimed that he was healed of frequent headaches after John Wimber told him it was a “demon of headache” and that he had to “treat it like a cat on the back porch! yell at it and tell it to go away” (Ibid., p. 69). This is the type of nonsense that has so often passed for healing through all “waves” of Pentecostalism. Their sign gifts are nonexistent; their apostles are ridiculous; their tongues are gibberish; and their prophecies are a lie. In the 1990s, Wagner became a leader in the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), believing that Christ’s return will be preceded by the restoration of apostles and a great revival of apostolic signs. The “prophetess” Cindy Jacobs proclaimed Wagner an apostle and said the Lord showed her that Wagner was “going to change the face of Christianity ... like what Martin Luther did” (“Mobilizing the Prophetic Office,” National School of the Prophets, May 11, 2000). Wagner wrote many books on these subjects and had a vast heretical influence. We don’t know where Peter Wagner is today, but we do know that he now understands that he is no apostle. I heard Wagner, Wimber, and many other Pentecostal, charismatic, and “Third Wave” heretics speak at conferences in New Orleans ’87, Indianapolis ’90, St. Louis 2000, and elsewhere. For a report on these see [Charismatic Confusion](#), available in print and as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org. For an extensive report on John Wimber, see [The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians](#), also available as a free eBook from [Way of Life](#). And for much more on this subject see [The Pentecostal Charismatic Movements](#), also available from [Way of Life](#).

BOB DYLAN WINS NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE (Friday Church News Notes, October 28, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Last week it was announced that 1960s rock legend Bob Dylan won the 2016 Nobel Prize for literature. The first



musician to win the prize, Dylan is credited “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition.” Except for his brief stint as a “Christian” songwriter in the early 1980s, Dylan’s music has presented questions without answers, which is what the world loves and acclaims. Chief among these is Dylan’s song “Blowin’ in the Wind,” which was made famous by Peter, Paul and Mary in 1963 and was used as a war protest and civil rights anthem. The song has since been covered by hundreds of groups and is one of the most famous folk-rock songs of all time. It consists of a series of questions about the human condition, such as “how many times must the cannon balls fly before they’re forever banned?” followed by the line, “The answer, my friend, is blowin’ in the wind.” In other words, no one knows. But there are clear answers to life’s great questions, and the answers are in God’s Word, the holy Bible. In 1978, Dylan made a profession of faith in Christ at a Vineyard church in California, but it was short-lived. Within a couple of years, he had repudiated his claim to the Christian faith and returned to his eclectic religious philosophy and rock & roll lifestyle. The *San Luis Obispo (California) Register* for March 16, 1983, quoted Dylan as saying: “Whoever said I was Christian? Like Gandhi, I’m Christian, I’m Jewish, I’m a Moslem, I’m a Hindu. I am a humanist.” In 1997, Dylan made the following statement to David Gates of *Newsweek* magazine: “Here’s the thing with me and the religious thing. This is the flat-out truth: I find the religiosity and philosophy in the music. I don’t find it anywhere else. Songs like ‘Let Me Rest on a Peaceful

Mountain’ or ‘I Saw the Light’--that’s my religion. I don’t adhere to rabbis, preachers, evangelists, all of that. I’ve learned more from the songs than I’ve learned from any of this kind of entity. The songs are my lexicon. I believe the songs” (“Dylan Revisited,” *Newsweek*, October 6, 1997). That is a sad and very empty foundation for one’s faith. Five years before Dylan’s fling with Christianity, I put my faith in Jesus Christ and in the Bible as God’s infallible revelation, and I can say with the Apostle Paul, who was once a Christ denier, “I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12).

MORE EVIDENCE OF ROME’S DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWISH TEMPLE (Friday Church News Notes, October 28, 2016, www.wayoflife.org/fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Archaeologists have found evidence of the actual battlefield from the Roman siege of Jerusalem in AD 70. Found is a section of a “third wall” described by the historian Josephus, and outside the wall the ground is still littered with ballista and sling stones. Excavation directors Rina Avner and Kfir Arbib said, “This is a fascinating testimony of the intensive bombardment by the Roman army, led by Titus, on their way to conquering the city and destroying the Second Temple” (“Ancient Roman Battlefield Uncovered in Jerusalem,” *Live Science*, Oct. 21, 2016). This is a confirmation of Christ’s prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and, of course, of Israel’s historic connection with the city. Josephus said that over a million Jews perished during



the siege and ninety-seven thousand were taken captive. Many were sold as slaves. Some were put to work in Egyptian mines. Others were used as slave labor to build the Coliseum. Gold and valuables confiscated from Israel helped finance that project. For an extensive pictorial presentation on Rome’s destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and Titus’ victory triumph in Rome the next year, see *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms* and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation “Herod’s Temple and the Roman Era,” available from Way of Life Literature.

SOUTHERN GOSPEL WORLDLINESS (Friday Church News Notes, October 28, 2016, www.wayoflife.org/fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) -



The following wise comment about contemporary Southern Gospel (which is the vast majority of Southern Gospel today) was sent to us by a friend of the ministry. We would that more preachers had this level of discernment and spiritual conviction: “I am including links to a few examples of Ernie Haase & Signature Sound (EH&SS). On the song ‘Any Other Man’ they show their love for southern rock as the lead guitar goes into a jam session as any secular rocker would. You can see this at the 3:40 mark. The other videos show the showmanship seen in much of today’s Southern Gospel. Bill & Gloria Gaither have influenced Ernie Haase and many other up and coming Southern Gospel artists. The Gaithers continue to influence many churches today, and they use their influence to promote CCM. I’m still surprised to see their songs being promoted in many Independent Baptist circles such as Bible

Truth Music directed by Byron Foxx.”
www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpjRKWDL21c

POPE URGES LUTHERANS TO SET ASIDE DOCTRINE TO WORK TOGETHER (Friday Church News Notes, October 28, 2016,



www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “Pope Urges,” Associated Press, Oct. 13, 2016: “Pope Francis urged Lutherans to set aside doctrinal differences Thursday and work with Catholics to care for the poor, the sick and refugees as he laid out his vision for greater communion before his visit to Sweden later this month. Francis greeted about 1,000 Lutherans who were visiting the Vatican on an ecumenical pilgrimage. They had arrived in Rome from Germany, where Martin Luther famously sparked the Protestant Reformation by nailing his 95 theses to a church door to challenge the abuses of the Catholic Church. Francis will mark the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation with his Oct. 31-Nov. 1 visit to Sweden, where he will participate in an ecumenical service with the Lutheran World Federation. Like his predecessors, Francis has reached out to Protestants, Orthodox and other Christians to heal Christianity’s divisions. But unlike his predecessors, Francis has said theological differences should be put aside so Christians can work together on issues of pressing social concern, including caring for the poor, the environment and helping Christians under assault in Iraq and Syria.”

BLOOD: ANOTHER MASTERPIECE OF DESIGN (Friday Church News Notes, October 28, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) -

The following is from CreationMoments.com, March 16, 2016: “Have you ever wondered why blood cells look like red discs that are indented toward the middle? Furthermore, is this distinctive shape an element of design or is it the product of millions of years of mutations and natural selection? Creationist and biologist Alan Gillen makes a strong case for design in his aptly named book *Body by Design*. According to Dr. Gillen, scientists used IBM mainframe computers to determine the ideal shape for a cell whose job is transporting oxygen to cells and taking away waste products. They discovered that the red blood cell’s bioconcave shape allows for maximum surface contact of oxygen-carrying hemoglobin with the cells. This facilitates the two-way exchange of blood gases. He also points out that this shape gives red blood cells flexibility and elasticity, so they can be folded when flowing through narrow blood capillaries. Plus, they have smooth, rounded edges that reduce the amount of friction as they scurry through veins, arteries and capillaries. Now, what if evolution’s first attempt produced red blood cells that were shaped like cubes and had thin, sharp edges? What if the cells didn’t have their distinctive bioconcave shape? Obviously, blood cells had to be designed just right the first time or else the living organism would have died. And while we’re on the subject, try asking an evolutionist which evolved first--the blood, the heart or the circulatory system with its veins, arteries



and capillaries? Once again, God had to have created them all at the exact same time.”



AMERICAN MILLENNIALS AGREE MORE WITH MARX THAN THE BIBLE (Friday Church News Notes, November 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - According to a new poll by YouGov, American “millennials”^{*} agree more with Marx than the Bible on the issue of work. 64% agreed with Marx’s principle, “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his need,” while only 53% agreed with the Bible’s statement, “If any would not work, neither should he eat.” And 70% agreed with Bernie Sanders statement, “A nation will not survive morally or economically when so few have so much, while so many have so little.” This is not surprising, of course, in light of the many decades of socialistic brainwashing in America’s educational system and the fact that most Americans are addicted to government handouts. On another point, 32% of millennials insanely believe that President George W. Bush killed more people than Joseph Stalin, 42% haven’t heard of Mao Zedong and 33% haven’t heard of Lenin. This is a reflection of the *gross* historical ignorance of a large percentage of young Americans. The American public school system is a massive propaganda machine to brainwash the populace in such things as moral relativism, humanism, evolution, and Marxism, and prepare them for New Age globalism. An ignorant, overly-entertained populace is easy to control. (* *Millennials* were born between 1981 and 1997 and thus are currently in their 20s and early 30s.)



CHINA'S RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION REPORT (Friday Church News Notes, November 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "China Report," China Aid, Oct. 5, 2016: "*The following is an executive summary of Christian persecution in China in 2015-2016 that was presented to the European Union Parliament.* As China regresses into a more Maoist regime, the Communist Party continues to place restrictive measures on religious freedom and executes its control over all forms of dissent by arresting or otherwise harassing those who oppose the strictures. According to current president Xi Jinping, religion must conform to and benefit a socialist society. At a national conference on religion held in April of this year, he urged his administration to ensure that religions 'merge religious doctrines with Chinese culture, abide by Chinese laws and regulations, and devote themselves to China's reform and opening up drive and socialist modernization in order to contribute to the realization of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation,' and argued that the role of the Party was to 'guide and educate the religious circle and their followers with the socialist core values....' His words reinforced a pre-existing nationwide crackdown on religious institutions, including an ongoing cross demolition campaign, arbitrary arrests of pastors and lawyers, and the suppression of Tibetan Buddhists and Uyghur Muslims. Because China Aid receives reports on Christian persecution, this summary will spotlight their cases as examples indicative of a much wider repression of belief. ..

Persecution campaigns made 2016 one of the most tyrannical years since the Cultural Revolution. As imprisoned human rights lawyers still fight for the right to defend their clients without legal repercussions, officials in Zhejiang province carry out the third consecutive year of a beautification movement that targets church crosses for demolition, Henan province launched a movement focusing on forcing "illegal" Catholic and Protestant churches to conform to socialist ideals, and authorities arrested and detained church members. ... Another Christian lawyer, Li Heping, vanished into police custody on July 10, 2015, followed by his brother, attorney Li Chunfu, on Aug. 1 of that year. Li Heping was formally arrested on Jan. 8, 2016, on suspicion of "subverting state power." Since their disappearance, family members have not been able to contact either of the men. ... This campaign echoes the new political trend set out in a proposed revision of the Regulations on Religious Affairs, which was introduced by the State Council earlier this month. The revision introduces tighter control on peaceful religious activities, such as punishing house church meetings by imprisoning Christians or heavily fining the church leaders, forbidding religious adherents from attending conferences or trainings abroad, and barring minors from receiving religious education."

BABY'S HEART MIGHT START BEATING AT 16 DAYS (Friday Church News Notes, November 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from *LifeSite News*, Oct. 13, 2016: "Research on live mice has led scientists to conclude that the human heartbeat might begin as soon as 16 days after conception and before most women even realize they have missed a period. Mary Ellen Douglas of the Campaign Life Coalition of Canada told *LifeSiteNews* that 'science is catching up with what we always have known, that life begins with union of the sperm and ovum and what is in the

womb after that is a human being with its own DNA, and with its own heart pumping its own blood.' Carol Tobias of U.S. National Right to Life agreed. 'This will make it much more difficult [for abortion advocates] to pass off the unborn child as a *blob of cells* if the heart is already beating.' The Oxford University study shows that the heart muscle in mice under examination started to beat after 7.5 days--the equivalent of 16 days in human embryos, or a week earlier than previously thought. Previously, the heart was believed to start beating once it had developed into a tube, but the Oxford discovery places the heartbeat at an earlier stage when the heart muscle forms into a crescent shape.



The team detected the muscle was beating in response to regular 'pulses' of calcium that kept up until the heart could beat on its own. 'The heart is the first organ to form during pregnancy and is critical to providing oxygen and nutrients to the developing embryo,' the University of Oxford reported. In other words, the human heart, even well before its full development, is already doing its job only 16 days after conception."

BURLINGTON REVIVAL AND SOUTHERN GOSPEL (Friday Church News Notes, November 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The recently concluded "Burlington Revival" in North Carolina was driven by jazzy Southern Gospel music, and the vast ignorance on the part of the leading preachers was sad to behold. Typically, these preachers say they are opposed to "contemporary Christian music," but they love contemporary Southern Gospel.

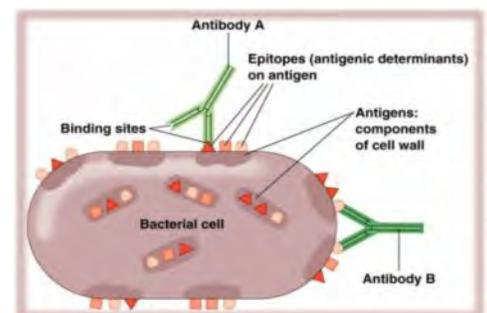


They don't love the Gettys; they love the Gaithers (or people like the Gaithers). But there isn't two cents worth of difference between the world of contemporary worship and the world of contemporary Southern Gospel. It is fleshly music that gets the people emotionally addicted to honky tonk, ragtime rhythms and even pure rock & roll. Southern Gospel yokes the church's people into association with the likes of the Gaithers and the National Quartet Convention crowd, and a more radically ecumenical crowd does not exist. (See our report "[Visit to the National Quartet Convention](#)" at the [Way of Life](#) web site.) The Burlington crowd got offended at my suggestion that they are ecumenical, but anyone who is hooked into Southern Gospel is holding hands with and playing footsie with ecumenists and is on a fast road to full-blown ecumenism. No wonder C.T. Townsend, the evangelist leading the Burlington Revival, welcomed the Billy Graham people with open arms and had one of them lead in prayer instead of warning the people about Graham and his ecumenical philosophy. In a message on "How to Continue in Revival," Pastor Randy Hobbs of New Hope Baptist Church, where the revival began, said, "In too many churches you can't tell the church song from the Honky Tonk." Not being properly educated about sacred music, and not being willing to get educated with material that is readily and even freely available, the pastor doesn't understand that he is talking about his own church. About 20 years ago I preached at a church in Cowpens, South Carolina, and the music was raucous honky tonk Southern Gospel powered by a white-haired

grandmother pianist that would put any 1920s barroom rag-timer to shame. After the service, the elderly pastor asked me what I thought of the music, and I replied, "It is boogie woogie." He exclaimed, "I don't want boogie woogie." I said, "That's what you've got, pastor." He said he loved *O Timothy* magazine and showed me a stack of them in his office, but I never heard from him again. There is not any significant difference between rock & roll and the specials that are sung at New Hope and the music that is sung by visiting evangelists such as C.T. Townsend. Having been born and raised in the South, saved in the South, educated in the South, and begun preaching in the South, I have watched as Baptist churches there have grown ever weaker over the past 30 years, and one of the reasons is the influence of Southern Gospel and the worldly, ecumenical baggage that it carries. I refuse to have anything to do with it. Even 20 years ago, I wouldn't have preached in the church at Cowpens had I known what their music was like. I feel much stronger about this today. We have documented the vast influence of the Gaithers on practically the entire field of Southern Gospel. See [The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians](#), available in print as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

SCIENTISTS HAVE DISCOVERED A NEW ASPECT OF OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM (Friday Church News Notes, November 4, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Biologists at Imperial College London have discovered a new aspect of the

human immune system pertaining to the epitopes, which are molecules on the surface of the cells that identify toxic or foreign pathogens in the body (such as bacteria and viruses). The epitopes recognize pathogens via an antigen, which is a unique molecule belonging to that pathogen. The epitopes create a tag on the antigen that flags it for attack by antibodies. Some aspects of these amazing signaling processes were known, but now they are understood to be vastly more broad and complex than previously thought. The new discovery is so important that it has been likened to finding a new continent. Biologist Michael Stumpf says, "This could lead to not only a deeper understanding of how the immune system operates, but also suggests new avenues for therapies and drug and vaccine development" ("Scientists have discovered," *Science Alert*, Oct. 21, 2016). What scientists have discovered the past half century is that the living cell is an entire world of complexity. It is complexity upon complexity upon complexity, and this is evident though scientists are only *beginning* to understand the molecular and atomic worlds. The machinery of the living cell makes complex human machines such as the electron microscope seem like child's toys, and human machines are not only simple by comparison, they are not living and cannot reproduce. From this I am instructed that the living cell has a creator, just as the microscope has a creator, but the Creator of the living cell is far more intelligent and powerful. I've never had a problem believing in God, even when I was a rebel. Every aspect of the creation witnesses of Him. But believing in God is not salvation.



Salvation requires believing the gospel of Jesus Christ: that God became a man by the virgin birth, lived a sinless life, and made redemption for man's sin by suffering and bleeding on the cross of Calvary, dying, and rising from the dead the third day. I became a 100% believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ 43 years ago and have never doubted or regretted it. Some ridicule my faith that God became a man, but I ridicule their faith that a worm became a man.

THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (Friday Church News Notes, November 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The results of the U.S. presidential election were interesting, to say the least, and it was satisfying to see the Clintons go down in defeat after their attempt to thumb their noses at the nation's laws, but nothing of substance has changed, morally and spiritually. An immoral man lacking in true wisdom will occupy the White House, and his character will not change when he takes the oath of office. While he and the Republican majority will doubtless accomplish some things that will be improvements over the last administration and will probably appoint a better man to the Supreme Court, they will not change the character of America or stop the downward slide. An anti-constitutional, judicial activist mindset will still be promoted in the law schools. The government will not shrink. The deficit spending that is bankrupting the nation will not stop. Onerous government regulations will not be rolled back. The homosexual agenda will continue its breathtaking progress. The



foolish addiction to alcohol and drugs will continue to spread, as evidenced by the legalization of marijuana in yet another state. The Muslim goal of establishing sharia law will not be stopped and probably not even hindered. The public school system will remain a vast humanistic indoctrination program. The murder of unborn children will continue apace. The nation will remain more frightfully divided than since the Civil War. The rampant wickedness and idolatry that permeates every level of American society will remain a stench in God's nostrils. The only way that substantive change could possibly come would be if the Bible-believing churches really moved on to "praying ground" and committed themselves to serious intercession for the soul of the nation. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

CHRIST'S TOMB POSSIBLY FOUND DURING RESTORATION AT CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE (Friday Church News Notes, November 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Last month, during restoration work in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a team of excavators removed two marble slabs covering the tomb thought to be that of Jesus Christ, and dug down to the original limestone floor. They found part of the tomb intact and installed a new window to allow a view of the new discovery. "When the marble cladding was first removed on the night of October 26, an initial inspection ... showed only a layer of fill material underneath. However, as researchers continued their non-stop work over the course of 60 hours, another marble slab with a cross carved into its surface was exposed. By Friday night, just hours before the tomb was to be re-sealed, the original limestone burial bed was revealed intact" ("Original limestone

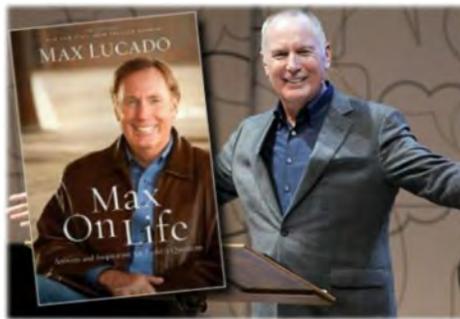


bed' on which Jesus was buried uncovered," *The Times of Israel*, Oct. 31, 2016). Though the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an apostate mess, divided into jealously-held territories controlled by the Roman Catholic Church and branches of the Eastern Orthodox Church, we believe that it was built over the sites of Christ's crucifixion and burial. In AD 135, the Roman Emperor Hadrian built a temple of Artemis (Diana) over the tomb that was revered by Christians as Jesus' tomb. This was only about 40 years after the apostle John's death, and the location of the tomb would still have been known. Two hundred years later, in 335, the Emperor Constantine pulled down the Artemis temple and built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre over that place. Thus it was built on the actual site of Christ's tomb. Constantine destroyed the pagan temple, dug down to the tomb, and built the church over it. Part of the tomb was destroyed in 1009 on order of the Fatimid caliph of Egypt, but at least six other first century tombs exist nearby, so we know this was a burial place outside the city walls at the time of Jesus. The latest edition of *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms* has a PowerPoint presentation of Christ's Passion Week which illustrates these things extensively.

THE EMPTY TOMB STILL WITNESSES TO CHRIST'S RESURRECTION (Friday Church News Notes, November 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Jesus Christ rose from the dead early Sunday morning about 2,000 years ago, and the tomb has been empty ever since.

Fifty days later, on Pentecost, Peter preached somewhere in the vicinity of Herod's Temple and told the people that Jesus had risen from the dead (Acts 2:22-24). Everyone hearing that sermon knew about these events and knew where Jesus' tomb was located nearby. If the tomb wasn't empty, they would have mocked Peter as a liar and rejected his preaching. Instead, 3,000 of them believed, and a little while later "a great company of priests" believed (Acts 6:7). They believed in Christ's resurrection because there is no other reasonable explanation for the empty tomb. The Jews didn't take the body, because they wanted to prove that Jesus was not the Son of God. The story the Jewish leaders concocted about the disciples stealing the body while the guards slept was patently a lie (Mat. 28:11-15). If the guards were sleeping, how could they know what happened? Further, the disciples would have been fools to have suffered unto death for a lie. The Roman government didn't take the body, as they are the ones who had sealed the tomb to put the disturbance surrounding Jesus to rest. The tomb was empty because Christ rose from the dead, and He was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:3-6).

MAX LUCADO SAYS UNITY CREATES BELIEF AND IS THE KEY TO EVANGELISM (Friday Church News Notes, November 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Church of Christ pastor and best-selling author Max Lucado is calling for Christian unity as the key to evangelistic success. He says, "On the last night of his life Jesus prayed a prayer that stands



as a citadel for all Christians [John 17:20-21] ... Unity creates belief. How will the world believe that Jesus was sent by God? Not if we agree with each other. Not if we solve every controversy. Not if we are unanimous on each vote. NOT IF WE NEVER MAKE A DOCTRINAL ERROR. But if we love one another. ... The world will be won for Christ when the church is one in Christ" ("Max Lucado: Jesus Prayed for Unity," *Christian Post*, Nov. 2, 2016). In his book *In the Grip of Grace*, Lucado thanks God for the Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics. These good-sounding platitudes are so deadly wrong. Lucado is a wolf in sheep's clothing. He would have God's people ignore false teaching for the sake of unity. He would have them love false teachers more than they love God and truth. We are to mark and avoid false teachers (Rom. 16:17) and avoid those who "have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof" (2 Tim. 3:5). We are to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and it is impossible to earnestly contend for sound doctrine while striving for ecumenical unity at the same time. Paul didn't seek unity with heretics; he reprovved them sharply (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:35-36; Gal. 5:7-10; Col 2:8). Lucado has never renounced Church of Christ heresy and has maintained a close relationship with Pepperdine University and Abeline Christian University, both staunch Church of Christ institutions. In June 1997, I talked with Lucado on the phone as well as with Elder Doyle Jennings of the Oak Hills Church. Both stated that they believe that baptism is necessary for salvation, but they do not

believe in "baptismal regeneration." They have added the rite of baptism to the grace of Christ for salvation. This is standard Church of Christ error, and it is a very serious matter for it constitutes a false gospel. Elder Jennings told me he does not accept the doctrine of eternal security, while Lucado said this doctrine is not an issue in the church and the people are free to accept it or reject it. This is significant. Those who believe that a born again child of God can lose his salvation do not understand the gospel properly. Lucado is laden down with heresies, including contemplative mysticism and salvation apart from personal faith in Christ. In the book *Max on Life* the following question is asked: "What about the people who have never heard of God? Will God punish them?" Lucado replies: "No, He will not. Heaven's population includes throngs of people who learned the name of their Savior when they awoke in their eternal home" (p. 222). No wonder Lucado calls for "unity." Heretics love ecumenical unity and hate biblical separatism.

NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE UNEARTHED IN LACHISH (Friday Church News Notes, November 11, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The city of Lachish was one of the largest and best fortified cities in ancient Israel, and archaeological research since the 1930s has unearthed a wealth of material supporting the Bible's account of ancient history. There is evidence of the city's destruction by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in the eighth century BC during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Ch. 32:9): the siege ramp, hundreds of iron



arrowheads, lance heads, sling stones, and stone ballistae. The siege and destruction of Lachish is described from the Assyrian perspective in an amazing series of bas-reliefs from Sennacherib's palace discovered by Henry Layard in the mid-1800s. Today the 90-foot-long series of pictorial reliefs line the walls of the *Lachish Room* in the British Museum, standing as mute witness before the world of the historical accuracy of the Bible for those who have eyes to see. The reliefs show the Assyrians attacking the city, building a siege ramp, using battering rams to destroy the walls, and brutally mistreating the Jewish prisoners. New evidence confirming biblical accounts pertaining to Lachish and ancient Israeli history was discovered earlier this year during a new excavation of the main Lachish gate. The gate has now been completely exposed, and it is 13 feet tall, 80 feet wide, and 80 feet deep. It is the largest known gate of the First Temple period and is one of the best preserved. It is a three-chambered gate (three large chambers on each side), and the benches with armrests where judges and city elders sat are still extant. On the side of the gate is a chamber with stairs leading down to another chamber where offerings were made to Baal on two four-horned altars. This confirms the Bible's account of Judah's descent into idolatry during the days of Ahaz (2 Ki. 16:3-4). Further, the altars were found to have been desecrated by breaking the horns, which fits the account of Ahaz's son Hezekiah's zeal against idolatry (2 Ki. 18:4). And to top it off, archaeologists have found a toilet in the Baal chambers. It is "a stone fashioned in the shape of a chair, with a hole in its center." We read in 2 Kings 10:27 how that Jehu made the Baal temple in Samaria into a toilet, and in Lachish we now find evidence of this practice. (For an extensive visual study of Lachish see the course [Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms](#) and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation "Hezekiah and His Times," available from [Way of Life Literature](#).)



TRUMP "HOLDS HIGH THE FLAG FOR GAY EQUALITY" (Friday Church News Notes, November 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - On Sunday, October 30, two days before the presidential election, Donald Trump "proudly held up a rainbow flag with the words 'LGBT for Trump' written on it to a cheering crowd of thousands" ("Donald Trump holds high the flag," *The Washington Times*, Nov. 2, 2016). An OpEd in the *Washington Times* said, "It was an historic moment for gay equality and the Party of Lincoln as the 2016 GOP nominee for President of the United States held high the flag for gay equality. No other Republican Presidential nominee in history has embraced the LGBT community in such a loud and proud way." Some Baptists have told me that Trump is an answer to prayer. I want to ask them, "If God is actually answering prayers in regard to the American presidential election, why didn't He raise up one of the Republican candidates who ran on at least something of a moral ticket? I don't believe Donald Trump is an answer to prayer. I believe the fact that he blasted out of nowhere to push aside better men and gain the Republican nomination at a time when Democrat's nominee was exceedingly vulnerable is yet another in a series of divine judgments on a wicked nation."

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GERMANY WILL NOT TRY TO CONVERT JEWS (Friday Church News Notes, November 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - On November 9, the Evangelical Church in Germany approved a declaration

rejecting any efforts to convert Jews. Synod president Irmgard Schwaetzer said it is "a further step on the path of contemplation and reorientation in our relationship with Jews" ("German Lutheran Church," Associated Press, Nov. 9, 2016). The truth is that it has been a very long time since this liberal "church" has tried to convert anyone by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The German Lutheran church was the very mother of theological liberalism which destroyed the absolute authority of God's Word, which, in turn, resulted in moral relativism. In 2010, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the German state of Bavaria adopted a ruling that "gay and lesbian ministers may live with their partners in parish parsonages if they have entered into a state-sanctioned civil union" ("German Church Allows Gay Pastors to Live with Partners," *Huffington Post*, Nov. 17, 2010). It is obvious that the Evangelical Church in Germany does not believe the words of



Jesus Christ when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Nor do they accept the authority of the apostle Paul who said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

DEATH OF BENJAMIN CREME (Friday Church News Notes, November 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Benjamin Creme, who taught that Christ had returned to earth in the form of Maitreya, died on October 24 at age 93.



Creme's book *The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom* got major publicity in 1982 when Creme was interviewed on Merv Griffin's television show. Creme claimed that Christ's name is actually Maitreya, the leader of the Planetary Hierarchy, and that he has held the *Christ office* for 2,600 years. It is this *Maitreya*, allegedly, that came upon the man Jesus at his baptism and left at his crucifixion, which is the ancient heresy of adoptionism. According to Creme, Maitreya is the fulfillment of the fifth Buddhist, the Islamic Mahdi, the Hindu Krishna or Kalki, the Zoroastrian Shah-Bahram, and the Jewish Messiah. Maitreya supposedly reappeared on earth in 1977, descending from his ancient Himalayan retreat and bringing along a group of highly advanced disciples called Masters of Wisdom to help mankind realize its divinity and usher in an Aquarian Age wherein men live in oneness and harmony. Creme taught the practice of Transmission Meditation to channel the "energy from the Masters." In reality, every type of transcendental meditation is communion with devils masquerading as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:14-15). In 1982, Creme said that Maitreya would reveal himself on June 21 of that year by worldwide television and communicate telepathically with "all mankind simultaneously" and perform "hundreds of thousands of miracle cures." He made a similar bogus claim in 1997, but he continued to promote Maitreya until his death. Creme came into contact with deceiving demons in his teenage years when he dabbled with Tibetan Buddhism and the occult. Later he studied Alice Bailey's Theosophy and claimed to have contact with UFOs and heavenly

"masters." "And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, he *is* there; believe *him* not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect" (Mark 13:21-22).

WARNING ABOUT THE CLARK FAMILY (Friday Church News Notes, November 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - We received the following timely warning from a reader: "A growing trend I've noticed is a group out of New Jersey. I heard them several years ago when the doctrinally unsound but 'cute' 'He knows my name' was sung by one of their younger boys. The pop/sliding style was immediately popular with the young people (I'm only 36), and the polished 'clean' look of their kids became a seller for Independent Fundamental Baptists who didn't have a guard up, or even if they did, they saw a clean-looking family that seemed to be fundamentalists so they must be OK, right? The flood gates were quietly and unwittingly opened, so now it would be hard for these pastors to close that gate. Their teens and youth already have a taste and think the Clark Family is OK. Their first few CDs included patriotic songs, old-time songs popular with IFBs, and a few 'edgy' songs. They promoted polished vocals so it was difficult for IFBs to warn their youngsters against it. (Actually, it shouldn't have been difficult, but few have the courage or discernment anymore.) Fast forward to their latest CD. The kids have gotten older, and what I can only assume is their



unrestrained lust for CCM, which was somewhat hidden in earlier CDs, has become full blown. 'Blessed' is the title of their new CD and includes tracks by Matt Redman, Chris Tomlin, and the Newsboys, all-out CCM rockers."

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND GOD'S REPENTANCE (Friday Church News Notes, November 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbs@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - God's eternity and omniscience, omnipotence, and sovereignty means that He knows all things, knows the end from the beginning, and works out His eternal plans in accordance with this knowledge, but there is also a sense in which God is in the present and reacts to man's deeds in the present and gives men very real choices and He responds to those choices. The Second London Baptist Confession of 1677 (and 1688 and 1689, and repeated in the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, but itself largely based on the Westminster Confession of 1646) said, "God's knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain." This is partly true but not exactly. The authors of this confession were leaning more on Augustine and his disciple, John Calvin, than Scripture alone. While God's knowledge is most certainly infinite and infallible, His decisions are not entirely independent of man but rather take into account and respond to man's actions. We see this in God's repentance (Gen. 6:5-6). In His omniscience and eternity, God knew most perfectly that man would come to the place of apostasy in Noah's day, and God had determined to send the Flood as part of His eternal plan. Yet when man did sin, God reacted to this sin in a heartfelt way and repented that He had made man. How could that be if God's decisions are "independent upon the creature"? There is obviously more to this than the old confessions would have us believe. Consider God's dealings with Solomon. God knew what Solomon would say when asked what he wanted

from God, yet the Bible says, “And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing” (1 Ki. 3:10). God also knew that Solomon would apostatize, but He exhorted him to remain faithful (1 Ki. 3:14). He even warned Solomon a second time (1 Ki. 9:1-9), and the Lord was angry when Solomon turned aside (1 Ki. 11:9-13). So there is a sense in which some things are “to him contingent,” because God made some things contingent upon man’s response, man’s actions. We see this, further, in the earthly life of the eternal Son of God. He “knew all men” (Jn. 2:24), yet He was amazed at men (Mat. 8:10) and disappointed with men (Mat. 8:26). Further, in His eternal perspective, God knew that Israel would apostatize and He planned to use this to create the church, but in the here and now, the Son of God wept over Israel (Mat. 23:37; Lk. 19:41-42). When Jesus said, “I would ... ye would not,” He refuted the Augustinian/Calvinist concept of God’s sovereignty. God is most certainly and most emphatically sovereign, but this must be defined by Scripture alone and not by human reasoning and theological wrangling.

65 MILLION-YEAR-OLD DNA (Friday Church News Notes, November 18, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is from CreationMoments.com, September 12, 2016: “Most listeners to these programs will at some time have visited a museum to see the dinosaurs. Of course, the tangible remains consist of fossil skeletons and, if one is allowed to touch the bones, they are as hard as rock. Sometimes they are actually cement or



plaster since they are copies. However, we are told that over the millions of years, the original bone had been replaced by minerals. Except for the millions of years, this is often true but not always. Fence posts, for example, have been found mineralized at one end and plain wood at the other. In 1993, *Science Research News* reported graduate student Mary Schweitzer's reaction when examining a slice of 65-million year old T. rex bone from Montana using the electron microscope: “I got goose bumps ... it was exactly like looking at a slice of modern bone ... How could blood cells survive that long?” (*Science Research News*, Sept. 7, 1993, Vol. 261). To compound the problem, strands of DNA were later identified within the blood. What does this mean? Firstly, from the known rate at which the DNA structure breaks down under natural radioactivity, the cells were clearly less than 10,000 years old. Secondly, this is not an isolated case, and a major argument is now brewing behind the cloistered walls of academia. This is further mounting evidence against the popular but godless doctrine of evolution.”

RABBIS ASK PUTIN AND TRUMP TO HELP BUILD THE THIRD TEMPLE (Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - A group of leading rabbis in Israel have sent a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President-elect Donald Trump urging them to work together to rebuild the Third Temple in Jerusalem (“Rabbis Urge Trump, Putin,” *Israel Today*, Nov. 15, 2016). Rabbi Hillel Weiss, a spokesman for the Sanhedrin, said Israel “is poised to rebuild the Temple.” He likened this present time to that of 2,500 years ago when Cyrus of Persia helped build the Second Temple. In truth, the Third Temple will be built during the early reign of the Antichrist. Revelation 11 describes the measuring of the Temple when the Two Witnesses preach in



Jerusalem to proclaim Christ’s soon-coming kingdom. This is the first half of Daniel’s 70th Week (Dan. 9:24-27). The Antichrist will come on the scene with his unprecedented peace program and will make it possible for the Temple to be built. It will be occupied by the Antichrist half way through Daniel’s 70th Week when he proclaims himself as God. Christ said the Antichrist will stand in the holy place, referring to the rebuilt Temple (Matthew 24:15). Paul prophesied that the Antichrist will sit “in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

THE SELFIE BOTTLE (Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Coca-Cola has invented “the world’s first selfie bottle.” Actually it’s a device that attaches to the bottom of a 500ml plastic Coke bottle and snaps a photo every time you take a drink. The good news is that you can’t buy one of these gadgets, because it was developed and produced as a one-time promotional for Coca-Cola Israel’s Summer Love event. Coca-Cola, Pepsi, *et al*, aren’t content to sell products; they sell a philosophy of life. It’s all about being young and beautiful and very cool, which pretty much describes an individual with a distinct lack of wisdom and a corresponding excess of arrogance. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves ...” (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

CHINA’S FORCED ORGAN TRANSPLANT INDUSTRY (Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org



fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from “China’s Forced Organ,” *Epoch Times*, June 26, 2016: “A decade ago, two Canadians released a report on illicit organ harvesting in China so shocking that many struggled to believe it. Since then, the investigation has continued and they’ve now updated their findings in a report that details the industry that has sprung up in China around the harvesting of human organs. David Kilgour, a former Secretary of State and federal Member of Parliament and international human rights lawyer David Matas released their initial report in July 2006. This Friday, June 24, the two returned to Ottawa with investigative journalist and author Ethan Gutmann, to release updated research that puts transplant volumes at up to 1.5 million in China. The source of those organs is not explained officially and the Chinese regime claims only 10,000 to 20,000 transplants take place annually rather than the up to 100,000 estimated in the updated 817-page report. That new figure is based on primary source research from thousands of documents “indicating that the scale of organ transplants is much larger than previously perceived by a large factor,” said Kilgour. ‘For the last 15 years, as you all know, across China there has been regime-sanctioned pillaging and trafficking in the vital organs of prisoners of conscience, overwhelmingly from practitioners of Falun Gong, but also Tibetans, Uyghurs, and some house Christians, to fund an immensely profitable but despicable commerce with wealthy Chinese patients and organ tourists,’ Kilgour said. ... The profits

generated from the selling of the organs is in the billions of dollars.”

PUTIN TELLS THE UNITED STATES TO BE MORE LIKE ISRAEL IN FIGHTING TERRORISM

(Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Russian President Vladimir Putin has advised the United States to look to Israel as an example for fighting terrorism. Speaking at the Valdai International Discussion Club, Putin criticized America’s weak approach to combatting ISIS and other terror groups in the Middle East, suggesting that this has enabled the increase in terrorism (“Russia Tells US to Be More like Israel,” *Israel Today*, Nov. 6, 2016). Putin said, “Israel never steps back, but always fights to the end, and this is how it survives. There is no alternative. We need to fight. If we keep retreating, we will always lose.” That’s good advice from an unlikely source. Israel is definitely the world leader in fighting Islamic terrorism.

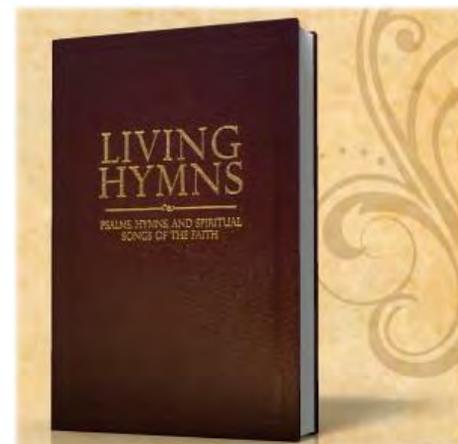
KNOWLEDGE SHALL INCREASE

(Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - About 2,500 years ago, during the Persian Empire, an angel told the prophet Daniel, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4). We are seeing a dramatic fulfillment of this in our day. Recent inventions include the following: **Scientists have invented a way to use tiny mirrors to capture detailed 3D images of cell structures.** “The new technology, dubbed MEANS (mirror-enhanced, axial-narrowing, super-resolution) microscopy, works by capturing layers of the cell at different focal points, giving the researchers the ability to see the changes in layers of the cell. The process works by growing cells on small, custom-made mirrors. A glass cover slide is placed on top of the cells, and then the mirror can be added in place

of a usual slide in a confocal or wide-field microscope” (*Science Alert*, July 1, 2016). **Dutch scientists at the Delft University of Technology have found a way to read and write information at the atomic level**, which would potentially allow the entire contents of the U.S. Library of Congress to be stored in a 0.1 millimeter cube (“World smallest hard drive,” Newsmax.com, July 20, 2016). Currently the memory can operate only at liquid nitrogen temperature, so the marketing of the technology is not yet feasible. **Israeli scientists use nanobots and thoughts to control when drugs are administered** (*Times of Israel*, Aug. 27, 2016). “Researchers at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya and Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan have built the nanobots to which medication is attached and then are injected into the body. The nanobots have a ‘gate’ that opens or closes--thereby controlling drug release--depending on brain activity.”

LIVING HYMNS HYMNAL

(Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - Oftentimes I am asked for a recommendation on hymnals, and a couple of years ago I examined *Living Hymns* (second edition) and found a lot to like. It was first published by Al Smith in 1972 and is still copyrighted by Al Smith Ministries. The latest edition is published by Paul Chappell’s Striving Together Ministries. It has a



large selection, with 887 songs and hymns, which is a great benefit. There is no author index, but I tried to look at the author of every song. There are two by the Gaithers but none by any of the other contemporary worship artists, as far as I could see. It has hymns that are rarely seen, such as Charles Weigle's lovely "No One Ever Cared for Me Like Jesus." There are little-known hymns by old-time fundamentalists such as R.A. Torrey, James Gray, and Lewis Sperry Chafer. Thousands upon thousands of sacred songs and hymns have been written just in the last couple of centuries, so any hymnal is just a sampling and no one hymnal will meet every church's needs, but *Living Hymns* seems to be a good all-around English hymnal. In light of such a wealth of truly sacred songs and hymns available in English, it's too bad that so many churches feel the need to mess around with contemporary worship music and thus build bridges to exceedingly dangerous waters. (For documentation of this danger, see the free eVideo presentations [The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise Music](#) and [The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music](#) at the Way of Life web site, www.wayoflife.org.)

SENTIMENTALITY VS. OBEDIENCE (Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016,

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"Sentimentality is an enemy of church discipline. Sentimentality is the love of man divorced from the love of truth. Under the specious guise of broadened sympathies it cloaks a big lot of hypocrisy and moral decay. The church sentimentalist is so kind to his fellow church member that he is willing to ignore the plain instructions of the Book of his faith rather than bring him to account for unchristian conduct. 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' he quotes, but he forgets to quote (1 Cor. 5:12, 13), 'Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without God judgeth'" (Victor Masters, "Church Discipline," *Baptist Courier*, South Carolina, Aug. 21, 1902).

BAPTIST BIG NUMBERS-ISM AND PRAGMATISM IN 1877 (Friday Church News Notes, November 25, 2016, www.wayoflife.org
fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143) - The pragmatism that has characterized the vast majority of larger Baptist churches since the 1960s was already showing its ugly head in the 19th century. "While it is true that a Baptist church is, in theory, a body of regenerated, baptized believers, it can hardly be doubted that,



in our wild scramble for numbers, we of this generation--preachers and people--are becoming less and less disposed to insist upon what our fathers used to call the marks of a genuine 'grace experience' on the part of those who offer themselves as candidates for baptism and church membership. ... If a long church-roll were any evidence of efficiency, or if large numbers were indication of large graces, it would be easy to understand this all prevailing anxiety for numbers. But when it is perfectly clear to the dullest apprehension among us, that such is not the case, it must be confessed that this wild desire for counting up our hosts is too highly suggestive of David's sad sin in numbering Israel. Who, where, and of what value are the multitudinous hosts of Baptists that we put into the Associations and Conventions in the bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention?" (J.C. Hiden, "Looseness of Discipline," *Working Christian*, Mar. 22, 1877).

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- Exalting the Lord Jesus Christ; His eternal perfect, and preserved Word; and the Gospel of his Grace. (2 Peter 3:1-2, 18)
- Standing for the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27; Jude 3)
- Challenging Christian workers to uphold the truth and resist the apostasy of our times. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)
- Exposing the spirit of error and compromise within Christendom (Hosea 4:6a; 2 Tim. 3)
- Upholding the New Testament Church (1 Tim. 6:13-14). O Timothy is a ministry of Bethel Baptist Church of London, Ontario.
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