

# FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

## HILLSONG STILL SCRATCHING ITCHING EARS

Some years back, Brian Houston, senior pastor of Hillsong Church in Sydney, was asked by a reporter from the city newspaper why his church is so prosperous in a country like Australia, which is decidedly *not* the Bible belt. He replied, “We are scratching people where they are itching” (“The Lord’s Profits,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 30 2003). It was refreshing to hear his honesty in admitting that he is fulfilling prophecy. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3). The apostate generation described in this prophecy has ears that itch for new things and fables, and there are “heaps” of teachers clamoring to satisfy that itch. A major way that Hillsong scratches the apostate itch is through music, which is admitted in the following review of Hillsong Young & Free’s “This Is Living” album: “As oxymoronic as it may sound, JESUS CERTAINLY SOUNDS GOOD ON THE DANCE FLOOR. While Hillsong Worship and Hillsong UNITED thrive on a decidedly more anthemic pop-rock stadium filling sound, Hillsong Young and Free (Y&F) exists more for those who wish to take Jesus into electronic dance music (EDM). With swirling beats and disco dazzling daze, Y&F has given worship music an updated sound that makes it stand toe to toe with the music of Meghan Trainor and Bruno Mars ... With more and more members of UNITED getting pass their youthful prime, Y&F has been pioneered to lead younger folks to Jesus WITH MUSIC THAT TICKLES THEIR EARS and gets them JIVING FOR THE GOSPEL” (“Hillsong Young and Free,” *Hallels.com*, Jan. 6, 2015). There is no doubt that Hillsong is one of the biggest itching-ear-ticklers on the planet. This generation is “hooked on a feeling,” and CCM scratches that itch in a big way.

## DEATHS AND INJURIES AMONG THOSE TRYING TO TOUCH JESUS STATUE

Two died and a thousand sought medical attention in the commotion surrounding the worship of a Roman Catholic statue of Jesus in the Philippines. Five million barefoot people performing penance flooded the streets as the statue was paraded through Manila preceding the visit of Pope Francis. The frenzied crowds want to touch the statue and rub cloths on it, in the pagan belief that they can experience the transfer of blessings and miracles from a dead idol. The popular 17th-century statue, which depicts a dark-complexioned, long-haired, haloed Jesus carrying a cross, was approved for veneration in 1650 by Pope Innocent X. In 1880, Pope Pius VII gave the statue a papal blessing and granted plenary indulgence for those who pray before it. It is brought out for public veneration three times a year: New Year’s Day, January 9, which is the statue’s Feast procession, and Good Friday. It is exactly the type of thing that Hindus do, hoping for blessing and good luck from their idols. Last year, a new routine



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was begun for the Black Nazarene. The Jesus statue stopped at the Basilica Minore de San Sebastián where a Mary statue (Our Lady of Mount Carmel) was brought out and held up by priests to “see” and “meet” the Black Nazarene. As the Jesus statue is transported from the basilica, the priests slowly turn the Mary statue so that it “watches” the Black Nazarene depart (Ricky Velasco, *Doctor Love* radio show, DZMM 630, Manila, Jan. 9, 2014). This is supposed to re-enact the mythical fourth Station of the Cross in Jerusalem, where Jesus allegedly met Mary on His way to the cross. Of course, no Catholic ritual would be complete without a reference to Mary. False Christianity is the devil’s masterpiece and has been a great stumblingblock to many people. They see this type of thing and think, “Christianity is just another vain religion,” not knowing that this is not true Christianity. None of this is supported by Scripture, and the prophet Isaiah warned, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them*” (Isa. 8:20).

## THE DEATH OF THE JEWS IN FRANCE

The following is excerpted from “The Death of the Jews of France,” Pamela Geller, Breitbart.com, Jan. 12, 2015: “In the wake of the slaughter of four Jews in a Paris kosher supermarket by an Islamic jihadist, a Parisian Jew said: ‘In the past year, 7,000 Jews have already left France and after this there will be many thousands more. We are not safe in France any more. There is no future for Jews here in France. We are finished in France.’ Europe loves to memorialize dead Jews, even to the point of fetishizing them--it’s live ones that they cannot tolerate. The idea that French President Francois Hollande did not want Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu at a memorial march for Jews who were slaughtered in exactly the same way as Jews were in 2012 in Toulouse--where he said they were murdered because they were Jews, and even more importantly, in the same way as the Germans murdered Jews--speaks volumes. Inviting the head of a terror movement, Mahmoud Abbas, because Netanyahu was coming, was depraved. A French Jew wrote to me Monday: ‘No one in France can protect the French Jews, who will be massacred one by one. And even with 50,000 officers in front of synagogues, there are over 12 million Muslims in France. If 10% of them go extremist (which is low), there will be a bloodbath in Paris, and that blood will be Jewish.’ He said this about the massive march in Paris Sunday that was attended by political leaders from all over the world (except Barack Obama): ‘As

you saw on TV, three million people marched for Charlie Hebdo, but believe me, no one marched for the Jews who were massacred in the Hyper Cacher supermarket! No one cares. People are getting used to it. France let its Jews die in World War II and it will do it again.’ So will the rest of Europe. The Holocaust, while it was a German initiative, was carried out by every nation in Europe, save for the Danes. There were Dutch Nazis, Polish Nazis, French Nazis, etc. Europe as a continent decided it was a good idea to get rid of the Jews. Researchers at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum have catalogued 42,500 Nazi ghettos and camps. That number includes death camps, forced labor camps, POW camps, brothels, and ‘care’ centers in which the Nazis forced pregnant women to have abortions. There were 30,000 slave labor camps; 1,150 Jewish ghettos; 980 concentration camps; 1,000 POW camps; 500 brothels; and thousands of other camps. Over 42,000 concentration camps? That wasn’t just the Germans.”



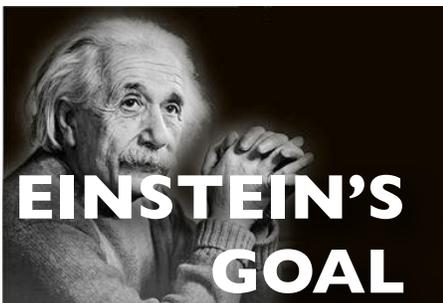
## ATLANTA FIRE CHIEF FIRED FOR BELIEVING THE BIBLE

On January 6, Kelvin Cochran, fire chief of Atlanta, was fired for publishing a book that contains quotes from the Bible and statements against homosexual behavior and other forms of immorality. Last November, Cochran had been “suspended without pay and ordered to undergo sensitivity training after publishing a book that contains quotes against homosexual behavior and other forms of sexual perversion” (“Atlanta Fire Chief Suspended,” *ChristianNews.net*, Nov. 26, 2014). The book, *Who Told You That You Were Naked*, contains lessons that Cochran prepared for men’s Bible study groups. At the press conference to announce Cochran’s firing, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed said: “I, too, am a person of very deep religious faith ... 1 Corinthians 14:40 says, ‘Let all things be done decently and in order,’ and I want to make very clear in my judgment that was not done here. Chief Cochran’s book ... was published in violation of the city’s standards of conduct, which require prior approval of the ethics officer and the board of ethics” (“Fire Chief Loses His Job,” *The Blaze*, Jan. 8, 2015). Cochran claims that he had verbal permission from Atlanta ethics officer Nina Hickson to write the book and that he had given Reed’s office a copy of the book in January 2014. Regardless, this is religious persecution, and it is probable that Cochran’s firing was pushed by



homosexual rights activists who were not satisfied with public reproof and sensitivity training. How ironic that Atlanta has an “ethics officer,” yet they persecute a Christian for quoting the Bible. How amazing that America has arrived at the place where government workers must get approval for their speech even when they are off duty. The Christian’s constitutional liberties are being sacrificed at the altar of homosexual rights, and this is just the beginning of this phenomenon. Yet when we urge churches to have special prayer for the nation, the plea is met with

silence. We are glad that hundreds of people gathered at Georgia’s capitol building to protest Cochran’s firing and to leave a petition with the mayor with nearly 50,000 names (“Better Luck Next Times,” Family Research Council, Jan. 13, 2015), but it is earnest prayer that is going to make any real and lasting difference. Persecution has been the order of the day for Bible believers for 2,000 years, and the Lord has given some wonderful promises along that line. If Mr. Cochran knows the Lord, he has nothing to fear. In fact, it is rejoicing time. “Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets



“Albert Einstein once said, ‘I want to know God’s thoughts in a mathematical way.’ Einstein wanted an equation, perhaps no more than one inch long, that would encapsulate all physical laws, the beauty, the majesty, the power of the universe into a single equation. That was his life’s goal” (“Einstein,” History Channel). Einstein, a Jew by heritage, was a brilliant man who had a gift of understanding “natural” laws, and he knew that those laws required a Designer, but according to his own testimony he never knew that Designer because

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## EINSTEIN'S GOAL

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he rejected the Designer's Word. The Bible doesn't encapsulate the mysteries of the universe in a mathematical equation, but it does encapsulate those mysteries in pithy statements that will require an eternity to fully understand. Like this one: "God ... hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:1-3). In these 70 simple words, 58 of which are a mere one syllable and 51 of which are four letters or less, we learn the answer to the most important questions of life and the greatest mysteries of the universe. We learn that there is a God. The Bible doesn't try to prove God's existence, because His existence is evident in His work. A universe that must be described in terms of "beauty, majesty, and power"

requires a beautiful, majestic, powerful Author. God gave man enough sense to know that, unless the man corrupts his own reason through rebellion. We learn, too, that God has a Son, and that Son is the express image of His person, and that Son is the Creator. We learn that God has so much affection for man that His Son died on the cross for man's sin. We learn that the Son is currently sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and that the Son upholds all things by the word of His power. The word "uphold" is also translated "to carry" and "to bear." It refers to bearing a man in a bed (Lk. 5:18) and carrying a cross (Lk. 23:26). Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the Creator, bears this universe along in His almighty power. The "God particle" is God Himself (not that the creation *is* God, of course). Thank the Lord that one doesn't have to have the brilliance of an Einstein to know this lovely God. He only has to humble himself and repent of his sin and put his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

### CONCLUSION

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