CONTEMPORARY MUSICIANS AND SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION STANDS UNITED WITH NEW AGE ROMAN CATHOLIC

This week, the Southern Baptist Convention and some of the most popular and influential contemporary Christian musicians joined hands with a New Age Roman Catholic in a unity performance. The January 21 “We Will Stand” concert, sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources, Voice of the Martyrs, and Compassion International, among others, featured “33 of the greatest CCM artists in history” (“We Are United,” thefishomaha.com). These included Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant, Newsboys, Don Moen, Mark Schultz, Sandi Patti, Travis Cottrell (Beth Moore’s worship leader), Steven Curtis Chapman, Steve Green, Dallas Holm, Russ Taff, The Imperials, Don Francisco, First Call, Michael Omartian, Francesca Battistelli, Kari Jobe, Jaci Velasquez, Laura Story, Petra, 4Him, Point of Grace, Carman, and Nicole Mullen. The theme is unity: “CCM United: one message, many voices.” The concert title is from Russ Taff’s song “We Will Stand,” which says, “You’re my brother/ You’re my sister/ So take me by the hand/ together we will work until He comes.” We Are United is the brainchild of Stan Moser, one of the fathers of CCM. Board members of the Gospel Music Trust Fund, one of the major beneficiaries of the concert, include Bill Gaither and National Quartet Convention President Les Beasley. They are all peas in one pod, and Amos 3:3 tells us that they agree together in the terrible compromise. Billed as “the greatest night in the history of contemporary Christian music,” it demonstrates unequivocally the one-world church character of this movement. It’s not a biblical unity in truth and righteousness, but an abominable unity in diversity.

Roma Downey played a prominent role in the concert. As we have reported in past issues of Friday Church News Notes, Downey is the Roman Catholic co-creator (with her husband) of the History Channel’s popular “The Bible” miniseries and The Son of God movie. She calls Pope Francis “a new pope of hope” (“Roma Downey,” Christian Post, April 4, 2013). She says, “I have prayed to Mary and loved her my whole life” (“The Bible: An Epic Mini-Series,” Catholiclane.com, Feb. 28, 2013). She promotes the use of the rosary as a meditation practice by which she prays to Mary as the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of God. The Catholic Mary is sinless and can hear and answer the prayers of every petitioner, thus having the divine attributes of mediatorship, omnipresence, and omnipotence. But Roma Downey’s heresies exceed Rome’s papacy, sacramental gospel, and communion with a demon masquerading as Mary. Roma graduated from the University of Santa Monica with a graduate degree in Spiritual Psychology, which is described at the school’s web site as “the study and practice of the art and science of human evolution in consciousness.” The benefits of Spiritual Psychology include “experiencing enhanced spiritual awareness through knowing yourself as a Divine Being” and “learning to relate to yourself with greater compassion and awareness of yourself as a Divine Being having a human experience.” Roma Downey’s false gospel, false christ, and false spirit are welcome within the broad tent of CCM, and Bible-believing churches that play around with contemporary worship music are building bridges to this most dangerous world.
One of the things I am thankful for in the education I received at Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple in the 1970s was the emphasis on Christ's Great Commission of “go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” That large church gave half of its income to world missions. The annual missions conferences were glorious and powerful. As many as 100 missionaries would challenge the hearts of the students. Hundreds and hundreds went out from there to the ends of the earth with a fire in their souls for gospel preaching and church planting. The old Highland Park and Tennessee Temple are gone, but world missions remains God’s heartbeat today. That is what this age is all about. When Jesus rose from the dead, He emphasized this, and we have that

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IS THE GREAT COMMISSION OVER?

The hypocrisy and inconsistency of the ecumenical movement was on display recently in the Cairns Christian Ministers Network (Cairns, Queensland, Australia). (Cairns is pronounced “cans.”) On January 13, the CCMN sent out a statement that they are not supporting the local World Day of Prayer service in March because it is being held in the Mormon church. The announcement stated that “CCMN (corporately and individually) emphatically does not support the beliefs of the Mormon church in any way.” Two days later, the CCMN sent out an announcement promoting the annual Blessing Cairns Service at St. Monica’s Catholic Cathedral. They said, “We believe you will be equally blessed this year. Pastors from across ten denominations are participating this year, witnessing clearly to our city that we truly are one Church.” But they aren’t one. They are keeping the poor Mormons at arm’s length, even though they name the name of Christ. The ecumenical crowd criticizes the “fundamentalists” as judgmental and Pharisaical for testing things by God’s Word, but when they judge the Mormons or Unitarians or whoever, that is all right. Either you separate from heresy, or you don’t. If you can judge some false doctrine, then you can judge all false doctrine. If it is right to judge Mormonism’s false christ and false gospel according to 2 Corinthians 11:4, it is equally right to judge Rome’s “consecrated wafer” christ and her sacramental gospel which begins with baptismal regeneration.
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emphasizes in Scripture with a five-fold repetition (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8). The language Christ used is simple and forceful. What is there not to understand about this? It is every church’s marching orders “to the end of the world,” but most Bible-believing churches pay only scant attention. What they do in evangelism and world missions represents the scraps of their resources and endeavors rather than the firstfruits. In a conversation with a friend from Switzerland recently, he told me that some churches are saying that the time of world missions is over. I would say to them that they have no scriptural authority for that, and the reality is that probably most people in the world today have not heard a clear presentation of the gospel. There are hundreds of millions in that condition in South Asia alone. And there are people being born every minute. World missions won’t be over until Christ catches away the saints, and even then the baton will be picked up by Jewish evangelists and a multitude that cannot be numbered will be converted during the Tribulation (Revelation 7). God loves to redeem.

GALILEE’S ANCIENT HARBORS

The Sea of Galilee had many harbors and anchorages in Jesus’ day. Sixteen of them have been found since the 1970s. In January 1986, during a drought when the water level dropped, an ancient fishing boat was found in the mud between the harbors of Gennesar and Magdala. It was the first such find ever, and archaeologists have dated the boat to between 100 BC and 100 AD. The boat was 27 feet long and 7.5 feet wide. Such vessels typically had a crew of five (four rowers and a helmsman) and could hold 15 people, so this boat could have held Jesus and the 12 disciples. It can be seen today at the Yigal Allon Museum in Kibbutz Ginosar. The harbor at Capernaum, where Jesus healed Peter’s mother, was quite sophisticated. The beautiful little lakeside city has been recreated in an archaeological reconstruction drawing by Dr. Leen Ritmeyer, and can be purchased and licensed from www.ritmeyer.com.
LAODICEA AND THE SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16). One of the many lessons from this passage is the fact that the believer is either on fire for the Lord or he is backsliding. There is no neutral territory. I’m either “pressing on to higher ground” or I am going backwards. To stay hot requires a lot of effort. As soon as I pour my morning coffee, before I take the first eye-opening sip, it is cooling down. We have a hot water pot on 24/7 in our house, but the water is kept hot only through a constant flow of electricity to the heating elements. Scientists call this principle the second Law of Thermodynamics. There is a universal law of decay, deterioration, which reminds us that we live in a fallen world. To maintain anything requires the constant application of energy, whether it be muscle tone or a shiny automobile, and this is true spiritually as well as physically. Lukewarm is merely a step on the way to cold. The source of energy that keeps the Christian life hot is a know-so salvation, a passionate walk with Christ, a serious relationship with His Word, a disciple’s faith and obedience. The hot Christian life is about zeal, passion, fervency, single-mindedness, unwavering devotion, first love.

APOLLO 8 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

In 1968, the astronauts aboard Apollo 8 circling the moon, sent a live Christmas message to earth by reading from Genesis 1:1-10 in the King James Bible. The estimated one billion people who heard the broadcast was the largest audience to ever listen to a human voice at the time. Borman said, “The only instructions that we got from NASA was to do something appropriate,” so he, Jim Lovell, and Bill Anders took turns reading the Scripture. They concluded the historic broadcast by saying, “And God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth.” Madelyn Murray O’Hair, founder of the American Atheists, collected 28,000 signatures on a petition demanding that government employees be prohibited from citing Scripture while on duty, but other Americans sent NASA more than 2.5 million letters and petitions in support of the astronaut’s actions. O’Hair sued the U.S. government but lost the case in the courts. Later she lost her head at the hands of a murderer she had hired in her atheist business. We understand that NASA has since forbidden the reading of God’s Word by astronauts, and to our knowledge it has not happened again. In Christ’s coming kingdom, there will never again be such godless restriction, and the wonderful Creator will be glorified in everything.