FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

ROMAN CATHOLIC & BILL GAITHER CREATING SOUND TRACK FOR THE ONE-WORLD CHURCH

Matt Maher, a Roman Catholic contemporary worship musician, describes himself as a “musical missionary.” His goal is to bridge Protestantism and Catholicism. Christianity Today, which has never seen an ecumenical bridge it didn't appreciate, says “Maher is bringing his music--and a dream of unity into the Protestant church” (“Common Bonds,” CT, Oct. 27, 2009). Maher says that touring with people like Michael W. Smith is producing ecumenical unity because people come to the concerts and find themselves standing beside a

continued on next page...

THE HOLLYWOOD CROWD WILL REGRET PLAYING AROUND WITH THE HOLY THINGS OF GOD

Since Mel Gibson’s blockbuster The Passion of the Christ and the History Channel’s The Bible, Hollywood has seen the light that “faith based” themes can rake in serious bucks from America’s shallow and oh-so-gullible Christians. The latest effort is Warner Brothers’ Apostle Paul, starring Hugh Jackman, who will also produce the movie along with Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. Jackman, who has starred in the R-rated X-Men and Wolverine, renounced his Christian father’s faith in Christ for transcendental meditation. The view he described to Parade magazine in 2009 is probably the mainstream faith today in North America. He said: “I just find the evangelical church too, well, restrictive. But the School of Practical Philosophy is non-confrontational. We believe there are many forms of scripture. What is true is true and will never change, whether it's in the Bible or in Shakespeare. It's about oneness. Its basic philosophy is that if the Buddha and Krishna and Jesus were all at a dinner table together, they wouldn't be arguing. There is an essential truth. And we are limitless” (Parade, April 27, 2009). In other words, TM lets the movie star live as he pleases and be his own god. That might work at some level in this life, but every individual knows in his deepest conscience that there is a holy Creator God to whom he is accountable, and no one can escape the accounting. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Salvation is available, but it is only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
priest or nun, and they learn that “we’re all in this family together.” Now Maher is widening his ecumenical circle to include the gullible world of Southern Gospel. A few months ago he explained on YouTube the story behind his 2014 song “Because He Lives.” He says that he wanted to write a new edition of Bill Gaither’s 1974 song by that title and collaborated with his friend Chris Tomlin, a popular contemporary worship musician. Deciding that they wanted to use some lines from Gaither’s song, they contacted him. Maher says, “We went to Mr. Gaither and asked him if it would be OK if we incorporated elements from his song and he agreed. So what we have is this song which is a collective result of a lot of people’s effort. And I think that’s always been a big part of my ministry, which is trying to unify the church and to bring all of these different voices from different streams together, so this song just continues that mission. I hope it blesses your congregation” (“Behind the Song ‘Because He Lives,’ Matt Maher, YouTube, Nov. 4, 2014). In 1990, the Gaithers performed at the Indianapolis ’90 ecumenical conference where half of the attendees were Roman Catholics, and a Roman Catholic mass was held every morning. Those who are adapting contemporary worship music are building bridges to the one-world church, and nothing could be more spiritually dangerous. (For more about Matt Maher, Bill Gaither, and Chris Tomlin see The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians, available in print and a free eBook edition, www.wayoflife.org.)

THE POWERLESS CHANGE MAKERS

One of the great magnets at the heart of the one-world church today, one of the things drawing all brands of “Christians” together, is social work. It’s the old social gospel revised, and it excites everyone from Nashville to Rome. It’s as big a unifying factor as contemporary music, contemplative prayer, and the modern (“pick your favorite”) Bible versions. The evangelicals and the emerging churchers think of themselves as great change makers. Being dispensationally confused, they think they can change the world. They talk about “mission,” referring to social justice work, more than “missions,” referring to “traditional” missionary gospel-church planting. An example is CATALYST, a community of “influencers, storytellers, innovators, cultural architects, and social entrepreneurs in our generation” that exists “to create change makers through training, resources, and gatherings that unify, equip, and challenge our community to engage and impact their world for good.” (I wonder why we don’t read about any of those things in the book of Acts?) CATALYST was founded in 1999 by John Maxwell, Andy Stanley, and other “thought leaders.” The April 16-17 conference in Irvine, California, includes a “change maker panel featuring a conversation on how the church is partnering with community agencies in LA to create holistic change.” They boast of the “ability to reach across denominations,” which is the one-world “church” element. They say they love doctrine, but they don’t, really, because a zeal for biblical doctrine would get in the way of their agenda. In reality, they are pragmatists who have replaced the program given by Christ to the apostles with their own (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; Acts 1:8). The interesting thing is that the rise of the contemporary evangelical change makers over the past 20 years has coincided with a dramatic reduction in the influence of Christianity on society. When the prominent type of “evangelical” Christianity was a more “fundamentalist” type, the influence on society was greater, even though the emphasis was on gospel preaching, separated Christian living, and doctrinal purity rather than social work. (This is not to say that there is no social aspect to the gospel; we are talking about emphasis and program.) The change makers, with their worldly music and pragmatic principles and “good time Charlie” philosophy, have proven to be powerless to bring real change.
VANESSA HUDGENS, A HILLSONG CHRISTIAN

Hillsong’s worldly cool, non-judgmental brand of Christianity is evident in the life of former Disney star Vanessa Hudgens. She credits Hillsong for strengthening her “own personal relationship with Jesus” (“Vanessa Hudgens Credits Hillsong,” New York Times, Mar. 29, 2015). Hudgens also credits her live-in boyfriend, actor Austin Butler, with helping to restore her Christian faith (she grew up Catholic). She “loves Jesus,” but she also lives with a man to whom she is not married and uses New Age and pagan forms of “spirituality” such as crystals and dreamcatchers. She says, “I’m a definite hippie. I’m literally my happiest self when I’m dancing half naked on a grass field listening to Led Zeppelin.” Hillsong Christianity is a major sign of the times, and Bible-believing churches that are adapting contemporary worship are building bridges to this dangerous world.

“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; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

ATTORNEYS WARN U.S. SUPREME COURT THAT GAY MARRIAGE COULD BRING GOD’S JUDGMENT ON THE NATION

Friends in Christ, please make the upcoming Supreme Court decision a matter of much prayer. We are glad for the boldness of these attorneys. The following is excerpted from “Attorneys Warn,” Christian News Net, Apr. 11, 2015: “A legal brief recently submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court warns that forcing states to recognize same-sex ‘marriage’ could bring God’s judgment upon the nation. As previously reported, in January, in light of contrasting appeals court decisions, the nine justices agreed to take up a case that would determine whether or not the U.S. Constitution provides states the right to ban same-sex nuptials. The case is set for oral argument this month with a decision in June. ‘This case before this Court is this nation’s tower of Babel. At issue is whether we as a people are going to continue to conform the institution of marriage to the one created and established by God, or instead will reform the most sacred of human institutions into something else chosen by an elite set of jurists,’ reads the amicus brief, filed by the U.S. Justice Foundation of Ramona, Calif. and the law offices of William Olsen of Vienna, Va. Several other Christian attorneys joined in the submission, including Kerry Morgan of Pentuik, Couvreur & Kobiljak P.C. in Wyandotte, Mich., James Clymer of Clymer Conrad, P.C. in Lancaster, Pa. and J. Mark Brewer of Brewer & Pritchard, P.C. in Houston, Texas. In addition to warning that requiring states to recognize same-sex arrangements would continue to have detrimental ramifications for Christian business owners, churches and society in general, the attorneys spoke of the spiritual consequences for such a decision. ‘The Holy Scriptures reveal that God created mankind, male and female, in the image of God,’ the attorneys declare, pointing to Genesis 1:27 and Matthew 19:4-6. ‘Homosexual sex and homosexual marriage are a repudiation of God’s created order.’ ‘Should the court require the states and the people to “ritualize” sodomite behavior by government issuance of a state marriage license, it could bring God’s judgment on the nation,’ they warn, pointing to Leviticus 18:22 and 24-30. ‘Holy Scripture attests that homosexual behavior and other sexual perversions violate the law of the land, and when the land is “defiled,” the people have been cast out of their homes.’”
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.