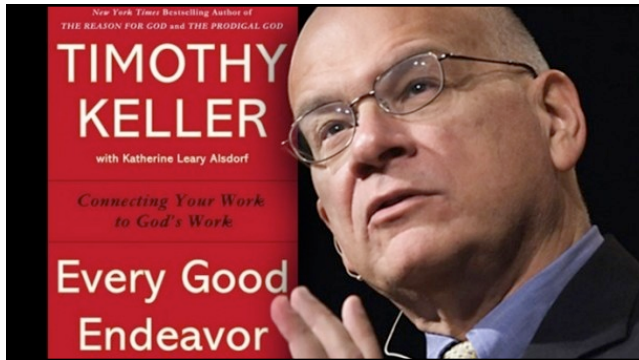

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

TIM KELLER: REDEFINING SIN AND JUSTIFYING LOVE FOR THE POP CULTURE



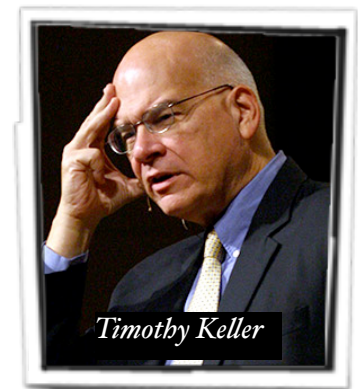
The following is excerpted from “Redefining Sin” by E.S. Williams, www.newcalvinist.com: “In his book *Every Good Endeavour* (2012), Tim Keller, founder of The Gospel Coalition and prominent New Calvinist, expresses his disappointment that Christians are not more involved with popular culture. He writes: ‘Christians’ reaction to popular culture in the last eighty years has been some form of

disengagement. ... Why this disengagement with our culture? One reason is a ‘thin’ or legalistic view of sin, where sin is seen as a series of discrete acts of noncompliance with God’s regulations. You pursue Christian growth largely by seeking environments where you are less likely to do these sinful actions. ... This view of sin comports with a lack of understanding of the thoroughness and richness of Christ’s gracious work for us. ... If we have a thin view of sin, we will feel safe if we remove from our view anything that could tempt us to commit actions of overt sexual immorality, profanity, dishonesty, or violence’ (Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, pp. 192, 193). ... He says that Christians, who hold such a view of sin, are ‘legalists’ who withdraw from the popular culture of the world in order to avoid situations that could tempt them to commit ‘thin sins’, like overt acts of sexual immorality, profanity, dishonesty, or violence. ... Here we should note the

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TIM KELLER’S INFATUATION WITH CATHOLIC AUTHORS AND PRACTICES

Many of America’s most popular “evangelical” preachers are infatuated with Catholicism, as we have frequently documented. Consider Tim Keller, pastor of the Redeemer megachurch in New York City, head of the Redeemer City to City church planting network, and co-founder with D.A. Carson of The Gospel Coalition (council members include John Piper, Alistar Begg, Mark Dever, Moody Church pastor Erwin Lutzer, and Southern Baptists Russell Moore and Al Mohler). Keller has a huge influence by his writings via books and blogs, his books reaching the top 10 of the *New York Times* bestseller list even in an apostate age. His love for Catholicism is evident in his book *The Reason for God* (2012), in which he quotes and refers to Catholic theologians and philosophers frequently, passionately, and non-critically. He includes Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox within his definition of true Christians. Referring to the Apostles, Nicene, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian creeds, he says, “For our purposes, I’ll define Christianity as the body of believers who assent to these great ecumenical creeds” (p. 117). In *The Reason for God*, Keller quotes



Timothy Keller

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TIM KELLER: REDEFINING SIN...

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biblical definition of sin. The Bible describes sin as breaking God's law (1 John 3:4). It is also defined as rebellion against God (Deuteronomy 9:7), which separates the sinner from God (Isaiah 59.2). Sin is an offense to God's holy character, and all sin is primarily sin against God. ... Keller's assessment is completely wrong, for it is those who hold what he calls a 'thin view' of sin who have been convicted of their sin and rebellion against God's holy law and understand that their only hope of salvation is God's grace revealed in the Cross of Christ. Hence their prayer: 'Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy Cross I cling'. Born again Christians, who have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and stand in God's grace for their salvation, are those who delight in God's moral law and seek to obey it with all their heart, and do all they can to comply with what Keller calls 'God's regulations'. [This is the true grace of God, Titus 2:11-15.] ... Keller's 'thick view' of sin encourages Christians to engage with worldly culture ... But Scripture makes no distinction between thick and thin sin. It teaches that sin comes from the lusts and desires of the human heart that is desperately wicked (James 1:14-15). Keller's classification of sin into thin and thick is entirely without scriptural authority and purely a figment of his foolish imagination; it is profoundly heretical, for it presents a false and misleading view of sin that downplays the wickedness of disobedience to God's moral law, suggesting that Christians should engage with the world in order to overcome what Keller calls 'the compulsive drive of their heart to produce idols'. ... Scripture warns that friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). Christians must not conform to the pattern of the world (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:11; 1 John 2:15-17). ... God commands his people to be separate from the things of the world (2 Corinthians 6:17)."

TIM KELLER'S INFATUATION...

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Catholic philosopher Peter Kreeft, Catholic writer Mary Flannery O'Connor, Catholic mystic Simone Weil, Polish Catholic poet Czeslaw Milosz, and Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero, whose doctrine Keller calls "orthodox" (p. 66). He also quotes from Malcolm Muggeridge, J.R.R. Tolkien, and G.K. Chesterton. Not one of these people hold to the one true gospel of grace alone without works. All of them trust in baptism and Rome's sacraments for salvation. Not surprisingly, Keller promotes Catholic contemplative prayer. In 2009, his church taught "The Way of the Monk," encouraging Catholic monastic practices such as *lectio divina*, centering prayer, "silence," the "prayer rope," and the spiritual exercises of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. In his lecture series *What Is Meditation?* Keller promotes the contemplative prayer techniques of four Catholic "saints": Loyola, Francis de Sales, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila. He says, "The best things that have been written are by Catholics during the Counter Reformation. Great stuff!" This lecture series was promoted on The Gospel Coalition website. (For more about this see *Evangelicals and Contemplative Prayer*, available as a free eBook and in print from Way of Life Literature.)

NORWAY'S FASCINATION WITH GHOSTS

A recent *New York Times* article documents Norway's fascination with ghosts. "While churches here may be largely empty and belief in God, according to opinion polls, in steady decline, belief in, or at least fascination with, ghosts and spirits is surging. Even Norway's royal family, which is required by law to belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, has flirted with ghosts, with a princess coaching people on how to reach out to spirits" ("Norway Has a New Passion: Ghost Hunting," *New York Times*, Oct. 24, 2015). This is merely the latest in reports that have documented Europe's growing love of the occult. "Palmistry, the



crystal ball and astrology have never been so popular" ("Europe's Love of the Occult," *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 2007). Most European countries turned from paganism to Roman Catholicism in the first millennium; many of them

turned to Protestantism in the second; now they are returning to paganism. Atheistic science leaves man empty, with the deepest questions unanswered. "Science" cannot answer the fundamental questions of life, such as where did man come from, why is he so dramatically different from the animals, what is man's purpose, how should man live, is there a God and if so what is he like, and what happens after death?

CHURCH OF ENGLAND DYING

The Church of England is on a death spiral, with only 17% of British identifying as Anglican (down from 40% in 1983), while 49% identify as "no religious faith." The number of regular attendees at Anglican churches is extremely small. One in four Anglican parishes have fewer than 10 regular worshippers. The Church of England was never established on a Biblical foundation, and in the last half century it has killed itself with unbelief and liberalism. In 1953, Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple said in *Nature and God* that "there is no such thing as revealed truth." In 1961, Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey said, "... heaven is not a place for Christians only. ... I expect to see many present day atheists there" (*London Daily Mail*, Oct. 2, 1961). In 1982, Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie said he was an agnostic as to why Jesus suffered on the cross (*Sunday Times Weekly Review*, London, April 11, 1982). In 1984, David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham, described Christ's resurrection as "a conjuring trick with bones" (AP, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, Oct. 28, 1984), and two years later, Jenkins called the God of the

Bible "a cultic idol" (Ecumenical Press Service, July 16-21, 1986). In 1984, the Associated Press reported that only 20 of 31 Church of England bishops polled insisted that Christians must accept Jesus as both God and man. In 1994, it was reported by the *Sunday Times* (July 31) that at least 100 Anglican priests were atheists who did not believe in "an external, supernatural God." In 1996, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey lashed out at "fundamentalists" who place the Bible "above and beyond human inquiry" (*Christian News*, Dec. 9, 1996). In 1997, a survey found that 31% of Anglican vicars in England do not believe in the virgin birth (*Alliance Life*, March 12, 1997). In 2002, Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, said Christians should pray to "God the Mother" (*The Times*, Nov. 3, 2002). On September 14, 2008, the Church of England officially apologized for rejecting Darwin's theory of evolution ("Church Makes 'Ludicrous' Apology," *The Daily Mail*, Sept. 13, 2008). On May 16, 2009, the bells of the Anglican Cathedral of Liverpool pealed out John Lennon's atheistic song "Imagine."

YOUR MULTIPURPOSE EYE



The following is from CreationMoments.com, September 23, 2015: “Scientists have learned that the eye is a multipurpose organ. They have long tried to figure out how our internal biological clock is set. This amazing clock is located in the brain and follows a period of almost exactly a day. It controls many of the body's rhythms, so it's important that it is properly set. Scientists do know that the clock is set by light. They also know that your clock is not set by the rods and cones in your eye that see color and images. They had conclusively

shown that the eye's rods and cones have nothing to do with setting the clock. Several years ago, researchers bred mice whose eyes lacked rods and cones. As they shifted light periods, the mice still adjusted their biological clocks to the new periods. Now researchers are convinced they have found how our eyes adjust our biological clock after studying, of all things, the African horned frog. While studying the frog, scientists discovered a photoreceptor called melanopsin. This photoreceptor is found in the skin, eyes and brain of the frogs. They then decided to test for melanopsin in our eyes. They discovered that a form of the photoreceptor is produced in the inner retina of our eyes. The rods and cones of our eyes are located on the outer retina. The human eye, and those of mammals, is a multi purpose organ! The intricate and precise ways in which we have been made increasingly glorify our Creator as we learn more about how we have been made. Surely it takes more faith to believe that such an elegant system as our biological clocks evolved by chance.”

INFORMATION

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.