
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

EVANGELICAL MEGACHURCH WITHERS AFTER SUPPORTING “GAY MARRIAGE”

We reported in February 2015 that GracePointe Church near Nashville had changed its stance on “gay Christianity.” After country music star Carrie Underwood spoke in favor of “gay marriage” in 2012, the pastor led the church in a three-year process of



Pastor Stan Mitchell

“listening on the topic of sexual orientation and identity.” Though the matter has been settled in Scripture for thousands of years and Bible-believing churches since the apostles have universally treated homosexuality as a sin to be repented of, the very modern senior pastor Stan Mitchell led GracePointe to accept homosexuals into “the full privileges of membership,” including “being able to serve in leadership.” Two years later, *Out & About Nashville* reports that GracePointe is a shadow of its former self. Attendance has fallen by more than two thirds, from 700-800 to 250, and the church is selling its multi-million dollar property. Mitchell told reporter Julie Chase, “We need to get being LGBGQI off the sin list, because it’s killing kids” (“Stan Mitchell and GracePointe,” *O&AN*, Sep. 8, 2017). No amount of “listening” and cunning exegesis can change the Bible’s simple and clear teaching that marriage is

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BOY SCOUTS NOW ADMITTING GIRLS

“On Wednesday, the Boy Scouts of America announced that they would be admitting girls in their ranks as a way to counter their declining membership. The new policy would go into effect starting next year and would admit older girls. Leaders of the Girl Scouts have not exactly welcomed the news with open arms. ‘The Boy Scouts’ house is on fire,’ they told *ABC News*. ‘Instead of addressing systemic issues of continuing sexual assault, financial mismanagement and deficient programming, BSA’s senior management wants to add an



accelerant to the house fire by recruiting girls.’ ... The Boy Scouts admitting girls comes amidst a wave of political correctness that has severely infected the organization these past several years. It began first with the admittance of openly gay scout leaders that then yielded to the admittance of transgender individuals. The change-ups have caused a massive uproar among their primary source of membership: churches. In response to the political correctness, some churches have stopped doing business with the Boy Scouts entirely.”

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limited to one man and one woman and that any sexual relationship apart from sacred marriage is sin before God. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4). Mitchell frames the issue in terms of “love.” If we love the homosexual, we are supposed to sympathize with his condition rather than sit in judgment on him. In fact, the issue is love, but the first direction of our love must be toward God, as per His first law (Deuteronomy 6:5), and toward His infallible Word which cuts against the grain of this proud generation. Further, the call for sinners to repent is the truest definition of love, for this makes it possible for them to have a right relationship with God. Mitchell also frames the issue in terms of inclusion. He says that “inclusion means that we can live together in agreement and disagreement.” That is not what Paul taught. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be NO DIVISIONS among you; but *that* ye be PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER IN THE SAME MIND and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). There is no unity in diversity here.

COLORADO WEIGHS NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

The following is excerpted from “Five Years after Legalizing,” *Christian Headlines*, Nov. 27, 2017: “The *Gazette* [‘The sad anniversary of Big Commercial Pot in Colorado,’ Nov. 21, 2017] reports, ‘Five years later, we remain an embarrassing cautionary tale.’ The disappointing statistics range from increased drug use in K-12 schools, area homelessness topping the most growth in the country, and fatal, drug-related automobile accidents skyrocketing in number. ‘The

number of drivers who tested positive for marijuana use jumped 145 percent,’ reports the *Denver Post* [‘Traffic fatalities linked to marijuana,’ Aug. 25, 2017]. Expect a heightened awareness on the effects of drugging and driving to follow the drastic increase in traffic incidents caused by drivers under marijuana’s influence. ‘The 2013-16 period saw a 40 percent increase in the number of all drivers involved in fatal crashes in Colorado, from 627 to 880, according to the NHTSA data.’ Teen drug use in Colorado is the highest in the nation, leading authorities to wonder what the overall effect will be on a nation already struggling with an addiction epidemic. According to Colorado’s Marijuana Accountability Coalition, ‘It’s one thing to decriminalize marijuana, it’s an entirely different thing to legalize an industry that has commercialized a drug that is devastating our kids and devastating whole communities.’”



CHINA'S FUTURISTIC LIBRARY

The newly opened Tianjin Binhai Library in China is designed to look like a giant eye. The five-story library contains 1.2 million books, though multitudes of books won't be found there due to state censorship. The building was designed by the Dutch company MVRDV in collaboration with local architects. Such a library is an interesting investment in the age of eBooks. In 2006, just before the Kindle Reader first appeared, the annual sales of eBooks was only about \$20 million. In a mere decade that has risen to \$1 billion ("Amazon's Kindle turns 10," *The Guardian*, Nov. 13, 2017). The eBook has facilitated the age of the self-publishing. The number of self-published books rose from 80,000 in 2006 to 800,000 in 2016, and that doesn't include the large number of titles that are published without an ISBN. I do 75% of my reading on a large screen iPhone using a Kindle app. The last time I visited the British Library and

renewed my reader's card, I told the lady that these libraries are going to be museums soon. One of the reasons why I sold my 6,000-volume library some years ago, which had many rare books on history, was that they can be found online because Google has scanned them.



A PRAYING CHURCH

Metropolitan Tabernacle of London, England, during Charles Spurgeon's days (pastored 1854-1882) is an example of a mighty prayer church. Thousands were saved with changed lives as evidence. The preaching was strong and the church was very aggressive in evangelism (e.g., street preaching, aggressive tract distribution, 27 Sunday Schools and Ragged Schools ministering to over 8,000 children with 612 teachers), but the converting, life-changing power was in the Spirit's response to prayer.

"Spurgeon regarded the prayer meeting as 'the most important meeting of the week.' He often said that it was not surprising if churches did not prosper, when they regarded the prayer meeting as of so little value that one evening in the week was made to suffice for a feeble combination of service and prayer meeting" (*Wonders of Grace: Original testimonies of converts during Spurgeon's early years*, p. 14). A.T. Pierson, who ministered at Tabernacle during Spurgeon's last illness, said, "This Metropolitan Tabernacle is a house of prayer most emphatically ... prayer is almost ceaselessly going up. When one meeting is not in progress, another is. ... There are prayer meetings before preaching, and others after preaching. ... No marvel that Mr. Spurgeon's preaching has been so blessed. He himself attributes it mainly to the prevailing prayers of his people" (Ibid.).



