
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

BOB JONES UNIVERSITY'S PLUNGE INTO NEW REFORMED CALVINISM



Steve Pettit, BJU President

Since 2006, we have documented the move toward Reformed Calvinism on the part of many BJU graduates, but it wasn't clear where the school itself stood. That picture has now come into clear focus, and it is worse than we suspected. In October, BJU president Steve Pettit participated in the "Greenville Conference on Reformed Theology" at Second Presbyterian Church. The other two speakers were Joel Beeke and Richard Phillips. Beeke is a professor at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary and Phillips serves on the board of The Gospel Coalition. On November 11-12, Andy Naselli was the guest speaker at BJU for the Stewart Custer Lecture Series. Naselli is a professor at John Piper's Bethlehem College & Seminary and an elder of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Naselli is also on the staff of The Gospel Coalition. It is becoming more clear why Bob Jones University is building bridges to Keith Getty, who is a Reformed Calvinist and whose pastor, Alistair Beggs, is a prominent member of The Gospel Coalition.

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MR. ROGERS, THE NICE CHRISTIAN

A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood, starring Tom Hanks, depicts the life of Fred Rogers, a Presbyterian minister who was famous for the children's television program *Mr. Rogers*. He was "Mr. Nice" personified. He was always positive. He never condemned or offended anyone. He never called anyone a sinner, never commanded anyone to repent or perish, never warned of destruction. He had his own code of personal morality, but he didn't judge anyone else's. His most famous line was "Won't you be my neighbor?" In fact, he didn't even mention God on his program. Even *The Daily Beast*, an ultra-liberal, leftist, pro-abortion, pro-homosexual rights, pro-socialist news site, praises Mr. Rogers for his "niceness" in the report "Finally, Something Nice: Tom Hanks Playing Mr. Rogers May Save Us All" (Nov. 18, 2019). But the reason why Mr. Rogers' Christianity appealed even to some atheists is that it was false. The true Jesus is far more loving than Mr. Rogers' Jesus and also far more holy and just and righteous. The true Jesus is love incarnate, but He is not Mr. Nice by man's standards.



Tom Hanks, Fred Rogers

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BOB JONES UNIVERSITY'S PLUNGE...

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TGC represents the new Reformed Calvinism. Unlike old Reformed Calvinism, new Reformed Calvinism is ecumenical. The old Reformed men believed that Rome is the great whore of Revelation 17, drunken with the blood of the martyrs, but the new Reformed have ecumenical relationships with Rome, or at least are sympathetic to it. On the TGC web page "Should Christians Be Ecumenical," we find the following: "Can evangelicals and Catholics truly be together? ... Jesus' prayer for unity in the Body obligates me to see the ecumenical task as important for Christianity" (by Trevin Wax, a Southern Baptist Wheaton College professor who associates with the Gettys). This is false. Jesus' prayer in John 17 has nothing to do with ecumenism. In fact, Christ emphasized obedience to God's Word and the importance of truth (Joh. 17:6, 8, 14, 17, 19), which are *incompatible* with ecumenism. Lou

Martuneac makes the following observation, "What has BJU president Steve Pettit shown us by taking an active role in this conference, with these speakers? First, he has removed any lingering doubt of having led the University to embrace Reformed Theology. Second, The Gospel Coalition (TGC) includes men in its leadership who are some of the most egregious of ecumenical compromisers among the so-called 'conservative' evangelicals. ... To any objective observer surely enough has been seen to erase any lingering doubt that BJU has abandoned its foundational, separatist principles. ... The University has always been theologically broad. So--that's not new. What is new is the association with compromised denominations that have *never* espoused fundamentalism" ("This Is Not Your Father's Bob Jones University, A Continuation," *In Defense of the Gospel*, Nov. 14, 2019).

MR. ROGERS, THE NICE CHRISTIAN

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The true Jesus doesn't smile at sin or overlook sin. He suffered and died for sin to make the atonement required by God's holy law for sinners to be saved. He doesn't offer "universal" salvation or preach the Fatherhood of God. He says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and He repeated it for emphasis (John 3:3, 7). The true Jesus isn't all-positive, all-accepting. He said, "I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," and He repeated it for emphasis (Luke 13:3, 5). The true Jesus doesn't preach heaven for all. He said, "And if thy hand offend thee,

cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" and He repeated it five times for emphasis (Mark 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 48). The true Jesus called men evil (Luke 11:13). The true Jesus called some men fools and blind, full of hypocrisy and iniquity, serpents, generation of vipers (Matthew 23:13-33). This generation is in love with a false christ. It is the Hillsong christ, the Joel Osteen smiley-face christ. But it is an idol that is not real and cannot save and will be an eternal disappointment.

KEITH GETTY CONDEMNNS “MODERN WORSHIP MOVEMENT”

In a recent interview with *The Christian Post*, Keith Getty gave a strong warning about the “modern worship movement.” He called it “a movement for cultural relevance,” “a de-christianizing of God’s people,” and “utterly dangerous.” He said, “This idea that Christianity is cool or easy is not biblical. It’s a misnomer for our generation. ... An authentic generation doesn’t begin with catharsis; it has to begin with an authentic picture of the God of the Bible” (“Keith Getty: Modern worship mov’t is ‘utterly dangerous,’” *The Christian Post*, Nov. 9, 2019). We agree with this 100%, as far as it goes, but it is an ineffectual warning. **It is ineffectual, for one thing, because it is spoken in generalities.** Is Keith Getty talking about Bethel Church? Calvary Chapel? Casting Crowns? Steven Curtis Chapman? Christ for the Nations? Delirious? Kirk Franklin? Gateway Worship? Hillsong? Hosanna? Integrity? International House of Prayer? Maranatha? MercyMe? Newsboys? Michael W. Smith? Vineyard? Worship Central? The answer is, No one knows. In typical New Evangelical fashion, Getty’s strong-sounding warning is too vague to be effective. But then, to sound *clear* warnings would narrow a big tent ministry. **Keith Getty’s warning is also ineffectual because of his radical ecumenism.** He says this generation needs “an authentic picture of the God of the Bible,” but how does his friend Matt Maher give such a picture by believing in transubstantiation and praying to Mary the Queen of Heaven? How does Getty’s oft-quoted hero C.S. Lewis give such a picture by his rejection of Christ’s substitutionary atonement and eternal judgment? This list

could be expanded greatly. **Keith Getty’s warning is also ineffectual because of his eclectic, “use any music you please,” approach to music.** He says, “Part of our campaign is to get our generation to know the great hymns of



Keith Getty

the faith.” That sounds commendable, but the Gettys have jazzed up the great hymns with a modern sound that doesn’t match the message of the words. Their concerts, even their Christmas concerts, such as *Sing! An Irish Christmas*, are out-and-out rock & roll fests with a pounding back beat and Irish dance music. It is sensual entertainment. It is highly emotional, but not holy. What do darkened auditoriums and floodlights and stage musicians and female worship leaders and big screen monitors and Christmas trees and Irish dancers and pounding drums have to do with the worship of a thrice holy God? I can’t imagine David putting on such a performance at the Tabernacle or Solomon at the First Temple or Nehemiah at the Second Temple or Paul at the church at Ephesus.

KANYE'S JESUS DIDN'T COME TO MAKE BAD MEN GOOD

Massively influential rapper Kanye West has professed a Christian conversion experience and is now preaching Jesus. West was a terrible blasphemer. He appeared as a thorn-crowned Jesus on the cover of *Rolling Stone* in 2006. His 2013 album was titled *Yeezus*, which is a play on West's nickname *Yeezy* and the name *Jesus*. The cover art depicted West being crowned king by angels. In the song "I Am a God," he raps, "I just talked to Jesus, and he said, 'What up, Yeezus?'" We would hope that this man has indeed been born again, but as a spiritual babe, at best, he has made a great error by keeping himself in the limelight and conducting church services. When he considered giving up hip hop because "that's the devil's music," he was given the very bad advice by his pastor, Adam Tyson, that "you can rap about God." At a recent concert with Kendrick Lamar, Kanye had a conversation with a man dressed up as Jesus. West said, "Jesus, I'm so sorry. I've been such a bad man." The Jesus figure replies, "Kanye, don't you know I didn't come here to make bad men good. I came here to make dead men alive." That is half-truth, and half-truths are extremely dangerous. While making bad men good is not the way of Christ's salvation, making bad men good is most definitely the *objective* of salvation. The way of salvation is to receive the free gift of God's grace without works, but the free salvation thus received produces good works. Ephesians 2:8-10 clarifies this

common error in simple, clear, and precise language. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS UNTO GOOD WORKS, WHICH GOD HATH BEFORE ORDAINED THAT WE SHOULD WALK IN THEM." The present era is characterized by heaps of teachers who confuse the grace of God with moral license. It is a fulfillment of the prophecy of 2 Timothy 4:3-4, "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." The apostle Paul defined the true grace of God as follows: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS" (Titus 2:11-15). Kanye would do well to heed Paul's divinely-inspired teaching and reject every voice that speaks contrary to it.

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.