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# FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

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## THE ELON MUSK ERA OF TWITTER



On October 27, Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter was finalized. When Musk announced his intent to purchase the company for \$44 billion in April, he made the following statement, "Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated." He also said, "My strong intuitive sense is that having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization." Upon taking ownership last week, Musk tweeted, "The bird is freed" and began making changes in the social media giant, firing its top executives, including CEO Parag Agrawal and policy head Vijaya Gadde. Musk tweeted the following statement to the company's advertisers: "The reason I acquired Twitter is because it is important to the future of civilization to have a common digital town square, where a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner, without resorting to violence. There is currently great danger that social media will splinter into far right wing and far left wing echo chambers that generate more hate and divide our society. In the relentless pursuit of clicks, much of traditional media has fueled and catered to those polarized extremes, as they believe that is what brings in the money, but, in doing so, the opportunity for dialogue is lost. That is why I bought Twitter. I didn't do it because it would be easy. I didn't do it to make more money. I did it to try to help humanity, whom I love. And I do so with humility, recognizing that failure in pursuing this goal, despite our best efforts, is a very real possibility."

## ELON MUSK

Elon Musk (b. 1971), a South African immigrant, is in the long lineage of American inventors and entrepreneurs. He is CEO of Tesla, the electric car and battery company, and founder and CEO of SpaceX, which has created a reusable rocket (the *Falcon*) that has been resupplying the International Space Station since 2012. In 2020, SpaceX became the first private company to place astronauts into orbit and to dock with the space station. In 1999, Musk was a co-founder of the online bank X.com, which eventually became PayPal. Musk is currently the world's wealthiest person. He is not a Bible-believing Christian. In fact, he is not especially very conservative politically. In the matter of Twitter, it appears that he simply loves liberty and wants America to continue to be a land of liberty. A large portion of the country passionately shares that sentiment.

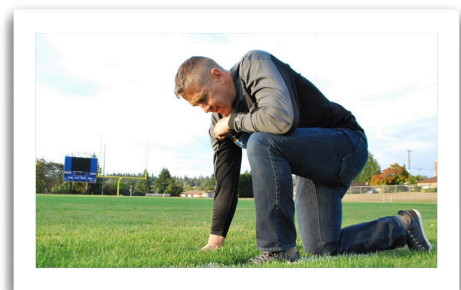
## TWITTER'S HISTORY OF LEFT-WING CENSORSHIP

Twitter, launched in 2006, is “an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets.” It is called “microblogging.” The messages are limited to 280 characters (originally 140), but they can include photos and videos and links to web sites, social media accounts, etc. Twitter has become the most popular forum for live news and firsthand reports from ongoing events. But over the past few years, Twitter has increasingly acted as a totalitarian censoring agency aimed at restricting the speech of political and religious conservatives. After putting repeated warnings on President Donald Trump’s tweets (including a pro-life video featuring smiling babies in Jan. 2020 and tweets concerning mail-in balloting and racial violence in Minneapolis in May 2020), Twitter infamously banned the president of the United States in January 2021. When the ban occurred, Trump’s Twitter account was in the top ten most popular, with about 70 million followers. In June 2020, Twitter banned comedy writer Graham Linehan for making the outrageous statement that “men aren’t women.” Twitter banned Christian media companies *The Babylon Bee* and *The Christian Post* for calling Rachel Levine--a transgender Biden official who serves as the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services--a man. Project Veritas released undercover footage of Twitter employees discussing “shadow-banning,” which secretly reduces the visibility of an individual’s tweets. In Oct. 2020, Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf labeled Twitter a threat to America’s security, warning that the tech giant’s quick trigger finger in censoring government agencies could deny people information they need to be safe.

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## U.S. SUPREME COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF COACH FIRED FOR PRAYING

The following is excerpted from “Fired Football Coach Joe Kennedy to Be Reinstated,” *Christian Headlines*, Oct. 28, 2022: “Former Washington state high school assistant football coach Joe Kennedy, who was fired in 2015 for praying on the field after games, will be reinstated at the school in March 2023. Following a years-long legal battle with the Bremerton School District, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Kennedy’s favor with a 6-3 decision in late June. On Tuesday, attorneys from both parties filed a joint stipulation in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington stating that Kennedy will be reinstated to his former position by March 15, 2023. ... In June, the Supreme Court ruled that the football coach was within his constitutional right to pray on the field after the games. **‘Here, a government entity sought to punish an individual for engaging in a brief, quiet, personal religious observance doubly protected by the Free Exercise and Free Speech Clauses of the First Amendment,’** Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote in the majority opinion. ‘And the only meaningful justification the government offered for its reprisal rested on a mistaken view that it had a duty to ferret out and suppress religious observances even as it allows comparable secular speech,’ he continued. ‘The Constitution neither mandates nor tolerates that kind of discrimination.’”



*Coach Joe Kennedy*

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## SOUTHERN BAPTIST PASTOR CALLS FOR BANNING CHURCHES WITH FEMALE PASTORS

In October 2022, Pastor Mike Law of Arlington Baptist Church, Arlington, VA, published a motion to amend the SBC Constitution “to include an enumerated 6th item under Article III, Paragraph 1 concerning ‘Composition,’ to read: ‘Does not affirm, appoint, or employ a woman as a pastor of any kind.’” Pastor Law continues, “Personally, I felt the need to offer this amendment because five Southern Baptist churches, roughly within a five-mile radius of my own congregation, are employing women as pastors of various kinds, including women serving as ‘Sr. Pastor.’” In February 2021, it was reported that five churches approved by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the SBC have women pastors (“NAMB Caught with More Women Pastors in Churches,” *Capstone Report*, Feb. 8, 2021). One of these SBC churches, Echo Church of southern California, lists five women as pastors. In May 2021, Saddleback Church, pastored by Rick Warren, announced on Instagram that it had ordained three

female pastors. “Yesterday was a historic night for Saddleback Church in many ways! We ordained our first three women pastors, Liz Puffer, Cynthia Petty, and Katie Edwards” (May 7, 2021). Saddleback is the second largest congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention. Petty said in an interview, “This is a new day for women in ministry and I am honored and blessed to help carry the mantle of being a Pastor and have the title as NextGen Ministries pastor at Saddleback Church!” (Al Mohler, “Women Pastors ... and the Looming Test,” May 10, 2021). In October 2022, Saddleback’s new pastor, Andy Wood (formerly of Echo Church), announced that his wife, Stacie, is the newest “teaching pastor” at Saddleback (“New Saddleback pastor sees women clergy in church’s future,” Associated Press, Oct. 24, 2022). A 2020 study of the 500 largest SBC churches, found that 10% have female pastors and another 10% or more have female ministers in various roles, such as “Youth Minister,” “Singles Minister,” or “Ministry Director.”

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## 200 MILLION UNDER COVID LOCKDOWN IN CHINA



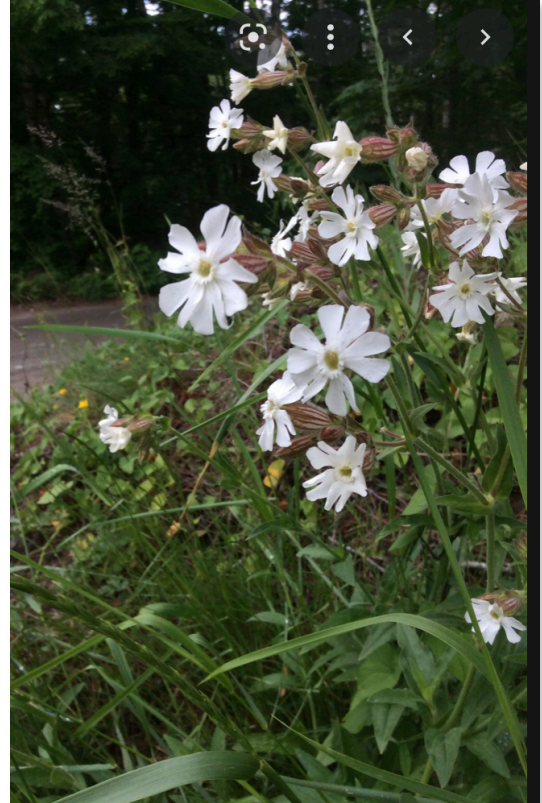
A delivery worker at an entrance to a neighborhood placed under lockdown due to Covid-19 in Shanghai, China, on Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2022. credit: Qilai Shen/

The following is excerpted from “Millions in China Are Back under Lockdown,” *PJMedia*, Oct. 28, 2022: “China is one of the few nations remaining that is clinging to the ‘Zero Covid’ policy of massive testing and draconian lockdowns whenever an outbreak of the virus is detected. And with winter coming, Chinese citizens are bracing themselves for more unprecedented measures to try and stop the outbreak in its tracks. **Currently, more than 200 million people are under total lockdown--no shopping, no work, not even a walk in the park.** ... [On the] occasion of the party congress that ended last week ... President Xi made it clear that the nation would redouble its efforts to control the pandemic by locking down the county and isolating its people ... Aside from maintaining a policy that has failed everywhere else it’s been tried, China is stuck in Covid hell.”



# DEVIOUS FUNGUS

The following is from creationmoments.com, December 2, 2020: "Parasites, especially fungi, are usually written off by evolutionary biologists as simple, primitive organisms. However, whether they choose to recognize the Creator or not, biologists are learning that nothing in God's creation is simple or primitive. Parasites seem to display some of the most clever planning or scheming--depending on your point of view--in all creation. A parasitic fungus that infects a roadside weed called catchfly *seems* to do nothing harmful to the plant. After infection, a profusion of white blossoms will open--even a few weeks earlier than normal. Bees and butterflies will arrive to collect the grains from the flowers. However, the grains they are spreading aren't pollen but fungus spores. The fungus has not only turned female flowers into males, but has transformed the stamens into spore factories. This is not the only trick played by the fungus. It also coaxes the catchfly into producing far more flowers than usual, making the plants it infects more attractive than surrounding catchflies. As a result, pollinators come first to the infected flowers before going to the uninfected plants. This is but one example among many showing that nothing from God's hand is carelessly done. Author: Paul A. Bartz. Ref: Cowen, Ron. 1990. 'Parasite power,' *Science News*, v. 138, October 6. p. 200."



Night-Flowering Catchfly

## 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](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org).