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# FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

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## BALM OF GILEAD AND INCENSE FOR THE THIRD TEMPLE

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(Friday Church News Notes, September 15, 2023, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org) [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), 866-295-4143) - The following is excerpted from "Farmer Revives," *Israel365 News*, Aug. 30, 2023: "One very special farmer in the Holy Land is raising rare and endangered plants in an effort to bring back the Biblical Balm of Gilead and the Temple incense. In 2008, Guy Ehrlich was driven to recreate the Biblical Balm of Gilead, renowned for its healing properties. Incredibly rare even in Biblical times, growing only in the extreme heat and saline soil of the Dead Sea area, it disappeared from the region in the sixth century. ... Ehrlich's passion for this semi-mythical balm led him to name his farm after it: the Balm of Gilead Farm. Today, his Balm of Gilead Farm has the world's largest private collection of Biblical plants. ... The balm was made from the tree known scientifically as *Commiphora gileadensis*. The sap of the balsam tree is released by cutting the bark. 'I focus on plants that few other people in the world cultivate. That's how I have a chance to succeed in the years to come,' he said. 'These are also very important plants, and if they're not cultivated, they'll disappear.' ... In Roman times, it was grown only in Jericho and Ein-Gedi, and it generated much revenue both for the Hasmoneans and King Herod. ... Ehrlich's is the only farm in existence that cultivates *Boswellia* trees, an endangered species that is the source of the frankincense that constituted one of the eleven ingredients of the Temple incense. ... His trees have been certified by the Temple Institute for use in the Third Temple, which want to make sure the raw materials of the incense will be available when the Temple is rebuilt."



*Commiphora gileadensis*



*Paivi Rasanen*

## FINLAND PROSECUTING CHRISTIANS FOR QUOTING THE BIBLE

The following is excerpted from "Newest NATO Country," *The Federalist*, Sept. 1, 2023: "In an appeals court Thursday, Helsinki's top prosecutor said publicly quoting the Bible and publishing a booklet about Christian sexual ethics violates Finland's 'hate speech' law. The appeal escalates this U.S. ally's prosecution of dissidents from leftist politics, a marker of repressive regimes. The prosecutor has charged Member of Parliament Paivi Rasanen and Bishop Juhana Pohjola for writing and publishing, respectively, a booklet supporting natural marriage. 'This [case] is a God-given wake up call for Christians and others worried about the direction our society is going,' Pohjola said in a post-court press conference Friday morning U.S. time. He noted

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## OKLAHOMA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL HIRES DRAG QUEEN AS PRINCIPAL

The following is excerpted from FoxNews, Sept. 7, 2023: “The principal of John Glenn Elementary School, Oklahoma City, Shane Murnan, is a drag queen who goes by the name ‘Shantel Mandalay,’ *Fox News Digital* can confirm. ... Dressed as a drag queen, Murnan has read books to children to celebrate Pride for the Metropolitan Library System. According to the Facebook page, Murnan was employed as a drag queen at a venue called ‘The Boom.’ Ryan Walters, superintendent of [education for] the State of Oklahoma, called on Western Heights School District to immediately terminate Murnan. ‘It’s outrageous to have a drag queen running a school, you know, here in Oklahoma that doesn’t line up with Oklahoma values, This individual is not fit to lead a school district,’ Walters

“They want kids to turn on their parents and only listen to their leftist ideology.”

said. ‘What they are doing is injecting this ideology for an end goal here. Their end goal is to absolutely break down a child’s mind, break down the classroom, break down the family, and you see the results that have come from this. They want kids to turn on their parents and only listen to their leftist ideology.’” Earlier, *Newsweek* reported, “The hiring drew further attention when Libs of TikTok, an account on X, formerly Twitter, on Wednesday posted photos of Murnan’s personal Facebook page, his alleged drag queen persona, and past news stories of the child pornography allegations he was charged with. Murnan’s personal Facebook page has appeared to have been deactivated” (“School Investigated,” *Newsweek*, Sept. 1, 2023).

## FINLAND PROSECUTING CHRISTIANS FOR QUOTING THE BIBLE

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convicting a religious leader for publishing theological documents would in effect criminalize Christianity in Finland and encourage similar oppression worldwide. Rasanen is also criminally charged with posting a Bible verse to X (formerly Twitter) and stating Christian theology in a radio interview. The prosecutor wants all recordings of the radio interview taken down and the booklet to be unavailable online, and fines levied against both Christians. ... “The content of my writings and my speeches represents the classical Christian view of marriage and sexuality, the same as the Churches have generally taught for two millennia,” Rasanen said in a statement. ‘I do not condone insulting,

threatening or slandering anyone, and my statements have not included content of such a nature. I consider this matter to be a theological discussion that should not be in a courtroom.’ ... Friday morning, [prosecutor Anu] Mantila argued, ‘There is material in the Bible that contradicts principles in our society. This is why the interpretation of the law against discrimination must be applied effectively.’ ... Due to Communist influence, much of the West has enacted speech restrictions similar to Finland’s. That includes dozens of U.S. states and cities. All it would take is courts to interpret hate speech laws the way these Finnish prosecutors are arguing to criminalize Christianity across the West.”



## FEEDBACK ON THE SATANIC ATTACK ON SACRED MUSIC SERIES

“My wife and I are missionaries currently ----- We have recently completed your course, ‘The Satanic Attack on Sacred Music.’ We thoroughly enjoyed the material! Additionally, we are now nearly finished with Pastor Tim

Kelly’s music retreat videos. Your course created a thirst to study this issue out in more depth. Our intent is to learn more music theory so as to be wise

concerning these things and to teach others in our ministry these things. My prayer is that even more people would see the issue as a serious issue in the church today and not dismiss it as a ‘non-essential’ doctrine (not that there is such a thing). Music is an incredibly subtle way Satan is drawing people away. Unfortunately, this issue is such an emotionally based issue it cannot be discussed rationally very often, so we simply wait for opportunities to share these truths with others. ... Lastly, I also wanted to say that your investment into our lives and ministry has been tremendous in other ways as well. ... Thank you for devoting decades of study and work into helping disseminate the truth found only in God’s Word. It has not been, neither is it in vain!” -- <https://www.wayoflife.org/satanic-attack/>

## HILLSONG MUSICIAN SAYS GOAL OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP MUSIC IS TO “ENTER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD”

In an interview, Matt Crocker, worship leader and longtime musician for Hillsong United, said, “My goal is to create an atmosphere for people to be able to enter into the presence of God and then hear the message of God through the actual speaking of it. I love the idea of teaming up with someone to create that atmosphere. It allows people to encounter His presence” (“Seeing the World in Wonder with Hillsong United’s Matt Crocker,” *WorshipMusician.com*, Jul. 21, 2017). This is a clear and accurate description of the objective and essence of contemporary worship. It’s about a feeling, which is why it incorporates the backbeat, beat anticipation, and other forms of rock & roll dance syncopation, as well as unresolving chord sequences



*Matt Crocker*

and other musical elements that have a sensual effect. Contemporary worship music’s objective is in great contrast to sacred music, which works through the edification of the mind and heart. In the New Testament’s teaching about worship music, there is not a hint of “entering into an experience with God,” which is a nebulous thing that can easily lead to spiritual deception. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

# THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

The following is from CreationMoments.com, August 25, 2023: "One would never expect to find any insect sharing living arrangements with a spider. That's why scientists were amazed to find a tiny fly in the rain forests of Central America who shares both room and board with a spider! The fly spends most of his time on the back of the golden web spider, who does not seem to object. This spider does not deal with its victims in the same way most spiders do. When a large insect gets caught in the tough web of the spider, the golden web spider injects the victim with digestive juices to prepare it for eating. The fly keeps track of meal preparations from the spider's back. Just before the meal is liquefied to the spider's satisfaction, the fly buzzes over and drinks its fill in a few seconds. By the time the spider approaches lunch, the fly is back napping on the spider. Both the spider and the fly are designed with special features to make this most unlikely arrangement work. If the golden web spider's eating habits were like most spiders', there would be no liquefied meal for the fly. The fly itself has a mouth that is specially designed to allow it to drink a full meal in seconds. This helps keep him out of the

spider's way. How can a spider and a fly live together? God can design a solution to any problem. Why design an arrangement between a spider and a fly anyway? So that we would know there is a Creator and that He can meet any challenge! There is nothing you cannot take to Him in the name of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ref: 'Random chance or intelligent design?' *Associates for Biblical Research Newsletter*, Jan.-Feb. 1991, p. 2."



*Golden Silk Orb Weaver*

"It is a poor sermon that gives no offences; that neither makes the hearer displeased with himself nor with the preacher"  
(*George Whitefield*).

"Satan may build a hedge about us and fence us in and hinder our movements, but he cannot roof us in and prevent our looking up"  
(*J. Hudson Taylor*).

## 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).