

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

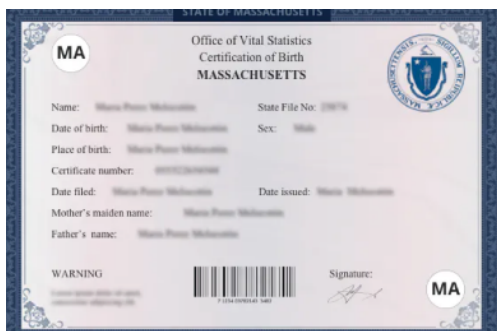
EVANGELICALS AND THE PRAYER CIRCLE

The prayer circle is a practice adapted from Jewish mysticism and paganism that is growing in popularity within the dangerous waters of “evangelicalism.” It was practiced at the 2012 *Revive Our Hearts* conference in Indianapolis. (Conference speakers: Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth, Joni Eareckson Tada, Joy McClain, Janet Parshall, Mary Kassian, and Priscilla Shirer.) A circle was drawn around the speaker’s podium in the belief that prayer within the circle brought special concentration, protection, and power. This is derived from the myth of a Jewish miracle worker rabbi named Honi HaMe’agel that is mentioned in the Jewish Talmud. (There is also an account of Honi sleeping 70 years.) To cause rain, he drew a circle around himself and from within the circle demanded that God bring rain. The practice has been popularized by Mark Batterson, pastor of National Community Church, Washington, D.C., in *The Circle Maker* (2011 audio, 2012 book). The book, which has sold more than 1 million copies, promises to “show you how to claim God-given promises, pursue God-sized dreams, and seize God-ordained opportunities.” Batterson commits a massive error by interpreting Scripture by a Jewish myth instead of interpreting the myth by Scripture (and thus rejecting it). The only sure protection in this age of frightful apostasy is to have a biblical testing mindset: to be born again, to be a serious Bible student, and to test everything by the Word of God. This is described in Hebrews 5:12-14.



*Mark Batterson, author of *The Circle Maker*, demonstrating how to cast a circle*

MASSACHUSETTS ERASES “MOTHER” AND “FATHER” FROM BIRTH CERTIFICATES



The following is excerpted from “Removes ‘Mother’ and ‘Father,’” *PJMedia*, July 31, 2024). “Up in Massachusetts, House Bill 4750 just passed the state Senate and was headed for the governor’s desk to be signed into law as of yesterday. What this bill does is replace the words ‘mother’ and ‘father’ on new birth certificates with ‘person who gave birth’ and ‘other parent.’ ... Back in May, Illinois passed a similar law turning plain language into clunky, awkward mouthfuls, by rebranding offenders, as in, you know, criminals, into ‘justice-impacted individuals.’”

ANOTHER HOMOSEXUAL CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP LEADER

In July, black gospel singer/evangelist Seth Pinnock of the United Kingdom announced his homosexuality by posting a poem on social media declaring he was “Black, Queer, Christian, Here.” Like others, Pinnock blames the condemnation of homosexuality for his depression, self-hatred, and drug addiction. He says he has found liberty through “progressive pastors” who helped him understand that God does not condemn him. “[They] helped me unlearn and relearn scripture, and to see this as a justice issue” (“This is right,” *The Guardian*, Jul. 28, 2024). They helped him “approach scripture with a modern, critical lens.” He told the *Guardian*, “[J]ust as churches have come to apologise for their entanglement with slavery, I can see a time when they will apologise for distancing and silencing queer people.” He is referring to the black Pentecostal churches in which he grew up. He said the young generation has been positive toward his “coming out.” “Younger people are listening to movements that are more inclusive. Will black churches continue to be as influential on younger people? No. ... There are hundreds of thousands of young people who will now feel they can too be free. I know of churches that are already beginning to discuss LGBT+ issues because of my action.” (For more on this, see the report “Homosexuality and CCM,” www.wayoflife.org.)



Seth Pinnock

CHRISTIANS AND SUNDAY SPORTS THEN AND NOW

Prior to the onslaught of the rock & roll pop culture, most Christians in America were opposed to Sunday sports. In 1927, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled by a vote of 7 to 2 that Sunday baseball was “unholy” and “worldly employment.” The 1958 book *Ten Famous Christian Athletes*, authored by a Youth For Christ leader, featured only athletes who refrained from Sunday play. As late as 1960, an editorial in *Christianity Today* lambasted Christian athletes who played professional football and thereby “yielded to the lure of money and added fame, and joined in the desecration of the Lord’s Day” (“How Billy Graham Made Peace with Sunday Sports,”

Athletes in Action, a Cru Ministry, nd.). “By the 1960s, however, Graham’s views on Sunday sports had shifted. By then, athletes like Bill Wade, Don Shinnick, and Bill Glass (football), Bobby Richardson, Al Worthington, and Felipe Alou (baseball), had entered the professional ranks, playing on Sundays even as they expressed support for the born-again evangelistic message that Graham espoused. Graham’s insistence that athletes maintain their Christian testimony by refraining from Sunday play weakened, and he began featuring Glass, Richardson, and other well-known professional athletes and coaches at his revivals” (Ibid.).

JONI EARECKSON TADA AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

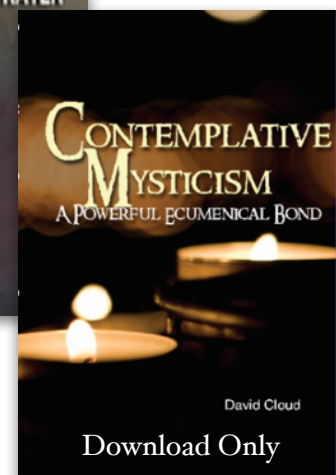
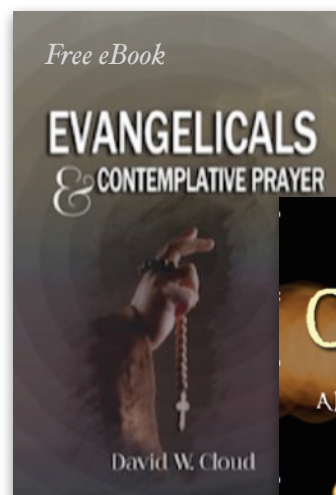


Joni Eareckson Tada

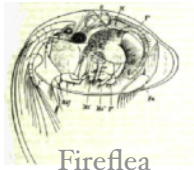
“Evangelicalism” today is filled with dangerous heretical practices promoted by seemingly “safe” people. Consider Joni Eareckson Tada, author of more than 40 books and extremely popular in evangelical circles. In 2023,

she published *The Practice of the Presence of Jesus* to promote the contemplative prayer techniques of Nicholas Herman (c. 1611-1691), known as “Brother Lawrence.” He was a Roman Catholic monk (“lay brother”) who preached Rome’s false gospel of sacraments and works, worshiped Mary as Queen of Heaven, and practiced mind-emptying meditation. He lived in a monastery in Paris called the Discalced Carmelite Priory, which is devoted to Mary. A century before Brother Lawrence, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross had reformed the Carmelite order with their mystical practices and extreme asceticism. Deceived by Rome, Lawrence thought that his own works atoned for sins. He labored under a terrible legalistic bondage of Roman asceticism rather than the wonderful freedom of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. He considered sacrifice and suffering as *a means of* salvation. Priest Joseph de Beauford, compiler of Lawrence’s teaching, observed, “His one desire was that he might suffer something for the love of God, FOR ALL HIS SINS, and finding in his last illness a favorable occasion for suffering in this life, he embraced it heartily.” “Lawrence encourages readers to listen to ‘the voice of God,’ chant mantras, empty your mind in order to be filled, and thus ‘experience God.’” The Bible, to the contrary, instructs the believer to be sober-minded and vigilant, which means to be in full control of one’s mind. Emptying the mind is an exceedingly dangerous occult practice that enables demons to influence one’s thinking and allows error

to run unchecked. It is a recipe for spiritual delusion. That Lawrence was dealing with demons is obvious from his own experience. When something would take his mind away from God he would receive “a reminder from God” that moved him to “cry out, singing and dancing violently like a mad man” (Gerald May, *The Awakened Heart*, HarperCollins, 1993). Joni (pronounced Johnny), who quotes from “Brother Lawrence” throughout her book, is drawing thousands of unsuspecting Christians into the very, very dangerous world of contemplative prayer. The practice almost invariably leads to ecumenical sympathy with Roman Catholicism, and often it leads to the heresies of universalism and even pantheism (God is everything) and panentheism (God is in everything). For more on this subject, see the free eBook *Evangelicals and Contemplative Prayer*, www.wayoflife.org. A more comprehensive eBook, *Contemplative Mysticism: A Powerful Ecumenical Bond*, is also available from Way of Life Literature.



A GLOWING BALLET



Firefly

The following is from CreationMoments.com, July 25, 2024:

“Many creatures have complex and beautiful mating rituals. However, few are more wondrous or dramatic than the fireflies’ ritual. The firefly is a

marine crustacean about the size of a sesame seed. They are found in the Caribbean. Fireflies, as the name implies, are capable of generating light. The light is used to signal danger and for their mating ritual. When attacked, fireflies generate a cloud of light in the water, helping some fireflies escape and drawing the attention of larger predators to the fireflies’ attacker. There is enough light-generating chemicals in one firefly to give ten minutes of light bright enough to read by. During the mating ritual, only the males emit light. However, this is not simply random lighting. The males produce differing dot and dash patterns in the water as they try to gain a female’s approval. Some species produce vertical lines of dots while others make horizontal lines. One species swims in packs, producing large dotted patterns by coordinating their release of light with each other. The firefly is a tiny and seemingly unimportant creature. The meaning of its complex light displays went unnoticed until just the last 20 years. Though unknown to man for thousands of years, the firefly has continued to praise its Creator by doing what He created it to do. Are you doing what your Creator created you to do? Notes: ‘Romantic Lighting,’ *Discover*, Feb. 1988, p. 16.”

ANCIENT BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET DYED FABRIC FOUND IN SOUTHERN ISRAEL

Since the 1950s, ancient samples of the three colors of dyed fabric mentioned in connection with the tabernacle have been discovered in southern Israel (though there is no connection between these fabrics and the actual tabernacle). The three colors are mentioned in Exodus 26:36--“blue” is the Hebrew *tekhelet*; “purple” is *argaman*; and “scarlet” is *tola*. Tiny swatches of blue dyed wool were found in the 1950s in a cave near the Dead Sea. The dye, made from the mollusk *Murex trunculus*, dates to about the time of Herod the Great (*Bible History Daily*, Jan. 2, 2014). The swatch of royal purple, also made from Mediterranean mollusks, was found at Timnah in 2020. It is Carbon-14 dated to about 1000 BC, the time of David and Solomon (*Bible History Daily*, Jan. 31, 2021). The piece of scarlet fabric was discovered this year in a cave near Masada (*Bible History Daily*, July 26, 2024). This dye was produced from a scale insect named *Kermes vermilio* and is Carbon-14 dated to about 1,800 BC, which is the time of Abraham.

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.