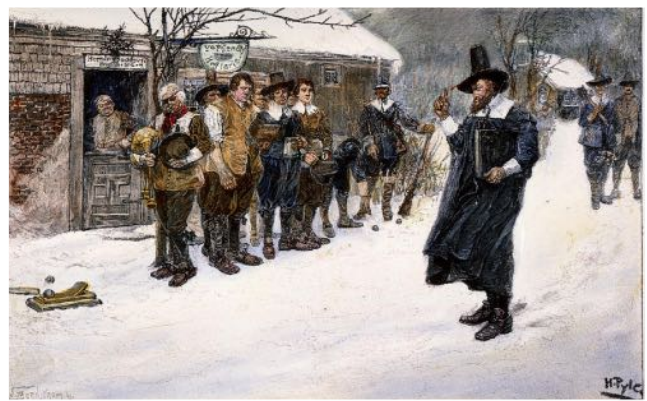


FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

A FEW TIDBITS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS IN AMERICAN CHURCHES

The Pilgrims (arrived 1620) and the Puritans (arrived 1630s) were opposed to the celebration of Christmas, finding no support for it in Scripture, believing it to be “popish” and to have pagan roots, and loathing the worldly partying they had witnessed in England. “Christmas was banned in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1659, and anyone caught celebrating the holiday would be subject to a 5-shilling fine” (Plymouth400inc.org). The book *A Testimony Against Several Profane and Superstitious Customs* (1687), by Harvard College president Increase Mather, had a chapter “Against Profane Christ-mass Keeping.” Back in England, Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans banned the celebration of Christmas and the singing of carols in 1647 because it was considered a pagan festival. Hugh Latimer, Anglican bishop who was burned at the stake by Queen Mary, complained that “men dishonor Christ more in the 12 days of Christmas than in all the 12 months besides” (“How Lottie Moon changed the way Southern Baptists viewed Christmas,” Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Dec. 24, 2021). Methodists recognized December 25 as the day of Jesus’ birth and Charles Wesley wrote Christmas hymns



"The Puritan Governor interrupting the Christmas Sports," by Howard Pyle c. 1883 Photo Credit: Public Domain

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AI-GENERATED CHRISTIAN ALBUM NO.1 ON ITUNES



“Solomon Ray”

The album *Faithful Soul* by Solomon Ray was the No. 1 Christian music album on iTunes in November. The music was produced by artificial intelligence, and nothing is known about Solomon Ray, if that is actually his name. The entire project is artificial. “The guitars, the drums, the vocals, and even the lyrics were generated entirely by AI.” The music is described as “a soulful, gospel-centric sound that feels straight out of a big-budget Nashville studio” (“Forrest Frank sounds alarm on AI Christian Music,” *Crosswalk*, Nov. 20, 2025). This exposes the emptiness and worldliness of Contemporary Christian Music. It can be imitated by a mindless robot. We want holy, sacred music in the churches. We don’t want to be conformed to the world; we don’t want the stirring of the flesh by dance rhythms. We recommend *Transforming Congregational Singing for the 21st Century*, available from the Books section of www.wayoflife.org.

A FEW TIDBITS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS...

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(“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”), but their strong emphasis on holy living did not allow Christmas partying. **The situation changed in the 1800s.** “In the 19th century, Christmas was reborn through literature and popular culture. Authors like Washington Irving and Episcopal minister Clement Clarke Moore helped reimagine it as a season of generosity and family warmth. Moore’s ‘A Visit from St. Nicholas’ (better known as “Twas the Night Before Christmas”) popularized the image of Santa Claus and the tradition of gift-giving” (“Christmas in the United States,” The National Museum of American Religion, Dec. 1, 2025). Most Baptists did not celebrate Christmas until the late 1800s. “Nineteenth century newspaper and local church records indicate that probably few Baptist congregations formally celebrated Christmas prior to the 1880s. ... By the 1890s, however, Christmas celebrations were common among Baptist congregations. Rather quickly, Christmas evolved into a time of special music and events within many Baptist churches” (Bruce Gourley, “Baptists and Christmas”). President Ulysses Grant signed a law making Christmas a national holiday in 1870. Through the influence of missionary Lottie Moon, Southern Baptist churches began taking a Christmas offering for missions in 1888, which led to an increased emphasis on all aspects of Christmas, including trees, feasting, gift giving, and carol singing. “Over time the Southern Baptist embrace of a Christmastide offering to support missions made it respectable to incorporate additional Christmas themes in Southern Baptist churches” (“How Lottie Moon changed the way Southern Baptists viewed Christmas”). Christmas practice blossomed in England, too, during the Victorian era. In 1871, the publication of *Christmas Carols New and Old* (Henry Bramley and John Stainer) increased the popularity of carol singing. It was in the 1800s and early 1900s that most of the popular Christmas carols were written: “Silent Night” (1818), “The First Nowell” (1823), “Once in Royal David’s City” (1849), “Away in a Manger” (1895), “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (1906).

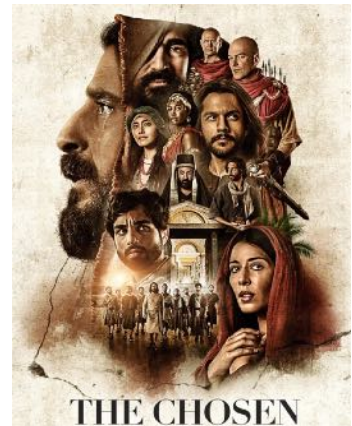
NICARAGUA BARS TOURISTS FROM BRINGING BIBLES

The following is excerpted from “Nicaragua Bars,” *Christianity Daily*, Dec. 16, 2025: “Travelers entering Nicaragua are now prohibited from carrying Bibles, a newly enforced rule that has raised alarm among religious freedom advocates. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), warning signs posted at Tica Bus stations in Costa Rica indicate that items such as Bibles, newspapers, magazines, books, drones and cameras are forbidden for passengers, listed alongside typical contraband like sharp tools and perishable goods. ... The measure comes amid a multiyear pattern of tightening control over civic life and religious expression in Nicaragua, where authorities have shut down thousands of independent groups and frequently targeted churches and clergy. Since major demonstrations erupted in April 2018, the government has revoked the legal registrations of more than 5,000 civil society organizations, including over 1,300 religious bodies. Media outlets have also been squeezed. Customs blockades on basic supplies like ink and paper forced the closure of *El Nuevo Diario*, once one of the nation’s leading newspapers, in 2019.”



THE CHOSEN AND THE BIBLE

The Chosen and the Bible: 20 Questions to Ask Yourself is available at spiritualresearchnetwork.org. Following is an excerpt: “Author William Paul Young’s 2007 novel *The Shack* was a number one New York Times best-seller, selling over twenty million copies worldwide. The book has been read and loved by both Christians and the world. It eventually became a Hollywood movie and a twenty-week series on Christian television. For years, any criticism of *The Shack* was usually countered by Shack fans with—‘Hey, it’s just a novel!’ Yet in 2017, ten years after its original publication, and in the midst of his TV series, author William Paul Young openly declared what many had long-suspected—that he was a universalist. He had also gone on record stating that *The Shack* was more than ‘just a novel.’ He said, ‘*The Shack* is theology. But it is theology wrapped in story.’ Today, *The Chosen* TV series has been viewed by millions of people around the world. Its devoted fans have also donated millions of dollars to the series’ record-breaking crowdfunding campaign. Any biblical criticism of *The Chosen* is usually countered by Dallas Jenkins and Chosen fans with—“Hey, it’s just a TV show!” However, Jenkins seems to already be following William Paul Young’s *Shack* universalism path as he uses his highly visible Chosen platform to introduce mystical New Age Catholic universalists like Richard Rohr and Brother Lawrence to his ever-growing fan base. Obviously, the lesson Christians should have learned from *The Shack* has been lost amidst all *The Chosen* fanfare. And the lesson is that fictional false Christs can be used by our Spiritual Adversary to cleverly condition and deceive people. In short, what seems to be ‘just a novel’ or ‘just a TV show’ can turn out to be something else entirely. ... **Given that Dallas Jenkins admits that 95% of *The Chosen’s* content is not from the Bible, and you are told to watch the series as if the Bible didn’t exist--how much truth will you ever learn from this multi-season series?** As one watches episode after episode, season after season, you are learning more about fictional backstories than anything that is actually true. You will be ever viewing, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. The Bible warns about things that have ‘a form of godliness’ but lack the true power of God and His Word. It says, ‘from such turn away.’” [2 Timothy 3:5] *The Chosen and the Bible: 20 Questions to Ask Yourself* can be viewed online or ordered as a booklet at Thelighthousetrailresearch.com.



HOW TO LOSE YOUR TEENAGER BEFORE HE IS FIVE YEARS OLD

The best time to train a teenager is when he or she is a toddler. Pastor J.B. Buffington, said, “I’ve heard people say, ‘Everything went along alright until my children became teenagers and then something happened.’ But I beg your pardon, that’s not the case. Most of it happened before five years old. That’s why I exhort mothers, ‘Don’t let anybody be a baby sitter of your children except you and other godly people.’ In those first five years, attitudes, security, goals, and many other things are already developed, and they will come into full blossom in the teenage years. A child is like a computer. What you put in comes out. You can put something into a computer and pray that something else will come out, but it won’t happen. I urge you not to waste time, to start early” (*How to Lose Your Teenager before He is Five Years Old*). (This sermon can be found at www.wayoflife.org by means of the search engine.)

SPIDER HYDRAULICS



The following is from CreationMoments.com, November 24, 2025: “Hydraulic machines are part of our everyday lives. When you step on the brakes in your car, brake fluid, which cannot be compressed, is forced from a cylinder into the braking mechanism attached to your wheels. Hydraulic mechanisms work because fluid cannot expand, but it will easily flow to areas where there is less pressure. However, humans were not the first to invent uses for this principle. The spider uses it all the time. The spider has his skeleton on the outside of his body and his muscles inside his skeleton. Since our muscles are outside our skeleton, we can use muscles both to bend our legs and stretch them out. However, the spider’s arrangement allows his muscles only to bend his leg. When he wants to straighten out his leg to take another spidery step, he pumps fluid into his leg, and the leg joint hinges open. The North American dwarf mistletoe builds up hydraulic pressure equal to that found in a truck tire. It uses that stored pressure to catapult its seeds up to 50 feet at a speed close to 60 miles per hour. The squirting cucumber, found in the Mediterranean area, uses the same principle to propel its seeds up to 40 feet. Who would believe that the brake system in an automobile came together by chance and natural forces? Neither does it make sense to believe that spiders, other animals and plants came about without a Designer and Creator. Ref: Tributsch, Helmut. ‘How spiders stretch,’ *Science Digest*.”

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.