

**AND THE PEOPLE CAME...**

- Week of June 30, 2024 -

Sunday School -----	16
Sunday Morning Service -----	35
Sunday Evening Service -----	20
Wednesday Eve., 07/03/24 Service -----	14

**AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...**

- Week of June 30, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 2,362.44
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund -----	\$ 130.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/30/24:</b>	<b>\$ 2,492.44</b>

- Week of June 23, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,116.47
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/23/24:</b>	<b>\$ 1,116.47</b>

- Week of June 16, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,417.21
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/16/24:</b>	<b>\$ 1,417.21</b>

- Week of June 9, 2024 -

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 853.31
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/09/24:</b>	<b>\$ 853.31</b>

- Week of June 2, 2024 -

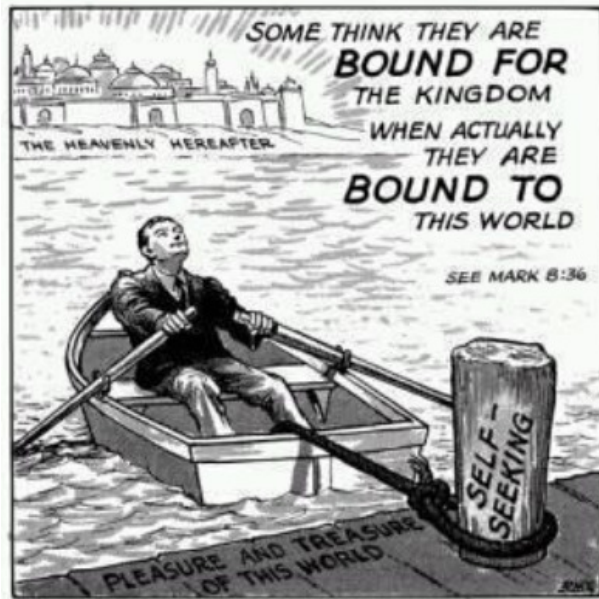
<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 3,169.51
Sign Repair -----	\$ 2.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 06/02/24:</b>	<b>\$ 3,171.51</b>

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed for church operating expenses EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,600.00



**WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED**

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.



REMINDER

**EVANGELICALS QUESTIONING HELL**

by Evangelist David W. Cloud



Those who call themselves “evangelical” (a term that has become almost meaningless) are increasingly questioning and modifying the biblical doctrine of an eternal, fiery hell. A fundamental element in the neo-evangelicalism founded in the 1950s by men such as Harold Ockenga and Billy Graham was the “repudiation of separatism.” This was actually a repudiation of Bible Christianity, which demands separation (e.g., Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 15:33; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:11; Colossians 2:8; II Timothy 2:16-18; 3:5; II John 1:8-11). It is no surprise that evangelicalism has been infiltrated with heresies of every sort and weakened spiritually, doctrinally, and morally.

**“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (I Corinthians 15:33).**

Consider the following examples of the evangelical downgrade of hell:

- ❑ In October 1966, George Ladd, professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, told the Los Angeles Times that hell will simply “be an eternity outside of fellowship with God and the enjoyment of the blessings of God.” This is a half truth which ignores the Bible’s description of hell as conscious and eternal torment in fire.
- ❑ In 1971, Fuller Theological Seminary published a new edition of its doctrinal statement which “departs from its original position on eternal punishment for unbelievers, simply saying that the wicked shall be separated from God’s presence” (F.E.A. News & Views, May/June 1971). This leaves room for false views of hell.
- ❑ In an interview with McCall’s magazine, January 1978, entitled “I Can’t Play God Any More,” Billy Graham said: “I used to believe that pagans in far-off countries were lost—were going to hell—if they did not have the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. ... I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God—through nature, for instance—and plenty of other opportunities, therefore, of saying ‘yes’ to God.”
- ❑ In 1980, Eerdmans published Neil Punt’s *Unconditional Good News: Toward an Understanding of Biblical Universalism*, which claims that men can possibly be saved apart from faith in Christ. Punt “encouraged ministers not to warn sinners about the dangers of eternal damnation” (The Christian News, March 23, 1987).
- ❑ In 1985, Billy Graham reaffirmed his belief that those outside of Christ might be saved. Reporter David Colker asked Graham: “What about people of other faiths who live good lives but don’t profess a belief in Christ?” Graham replied, “I’m going to leave that to the Lord. He’ll decide that” (Los Angeles Herald Examiner, July 22, 1985). While this answer might appear reasonable to those who do not know the Bible, in reality it is a great compromise of the truth. God has already decided what will happen to those who die outside of faith in Jesus Christ, and He has revealed the answer to us in Scripture. The book of Ephesians describes their condition as “children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), “having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). This is why the gospel of Christ must be preached. Men without a saving knowledge of Christ are condemned already (John 3:18). **“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).**

Words could not be plainer. There is no mystery about this matter, because God has spoken.

- ❑ In 1987, Verdict Books published Edward Fudge’s *The Fire That Consumes*, a book that denies everlasting torment. The book was praised by leading evangelical leaders Clark Pinnock and F.F. Bruce. In Christianity Today, March 20, 1987, Pinnock said: “The fire of hell does not torment, but rather consumes the wicked.” Pinnock later called the traditional doctrine of eternal torment in hell “an outrageous doctrine,” claiming that “a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God.”
- ❑ In 1988, John R.W. Stott, prominent British evangelical leader, stated in A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue (InterVarsity Press) that the torment of hell is not eternal in duration.
- ❑ In 1989, Eerdmans published *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* by Philip Hughes, which promotes

(continued inside)

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**Church Directory**

Todd W. White -----	Pastor
Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell, Lois Mae Floyd -----	Pianists
Derek Quinnelly -----	Greeter
Kim Phillips; Shirley White/LeAnna White; Berdena Bergman/Debra Carlton; Daniel Avery/GiGi Avery; & Keith Shufelt -----	Teachers
Larry & Mary Byars -----	Outreach
Keith Shufelt -----	Men’s Prayer Group
GinaMarie Shufelt -----	Ladies Bible Study/Flowers
Seth White -----	Sound/Video
Larry Byars, Derek Quinnelly, David Smith -----	Trustees

the false doctrine of annihilation.

❑ In 1990, the Radio Bible Class published Herbert Vander Lugt’s *What Does the Bible Say about Hell?*, in which the author states that “*a hell in which all burn in a literal fire does not allow for significant degrees of punishment*” and postulates that the fire of hell might be symbolic.

❑ In 1991, Kenneth Kantzer, former editor of *Christianity Today* and head of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, said that “*when Jesus spoke of flames ... these are most likely figurative warnings*” (U.S. News & World Report, March 25, 1991).

❑ In 1991, prominent Anglican evangelical leader J.I. Packer, former senior editor of *Christianity Today*, said that he does not believe that the essence of hell is “*grotesque bodily discomfort*” but is rather “*an inner misery of helpless remorse.*” Of course, that is not the hell described by the Lord Jesus Christ.

❑ In 1992, Baker Books published *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, in which John Wenham defended the doctrine of “conditional immortality.” This is the false idea that unsaved men will not suffer eternally in hell. It confuses immortality and eternal life with eternal existence.

❑ In 1993, Michael Van Horn resigned from the Grand Rapids Baptist College and Seminary because he denied the traditional biblical doctrine of hell. When confronted by 22 Michigan pastors, Van Horn denied that there was a literal heaven or a literal hell and especially denied the literal fire of hell.

❑ When drawing up a resolution on hell, the Council of Eighteen of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) refused to state in their resolution on hell that there was “literal fire.” “*Dr. Clay Nuttall was present as a witness. In his written report, he mentioned that when a man suggested ‘literal fire’ be inserted in the GARBC resolution on hell, a Council of Eighteen member said they couldn’t do that because MANY OF THE PASTORS AND PEOPLE of the GARBC fellowship do not believe there is ‘literal fire’ in hell*” (D.A. Waite, Four Reasons for Defending the King James Bible, 1993, pp. 20, 21).

❑ In 1993, in an interview with David Frost, Billy Graham repeated his position that it is possible for men to be saved without faith in Christ. “*And I think there is that hunger for God and people are living as best they know how according to the light that they have. Well, I think they’re in a separate category than people like Hitler and people who have just defied God, and shaken their fists at God. ... I would say that God, being a God of mercy, we have to rest it right there, and say that God is a God of mercy and love, and how it happens, we don’t know*” (The Charlotte Observer, Feb. 16, 1993).

❑ In 1994, Paternoster Press republished a defense of annihilation in *The Fire That Consumes: The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality* by Edward Fudge.

❑ In 1996, Zondervan published *More Than One Way?* which presented four “evangelical” views on “salvation in a pluralistic world.” Three of the views deny that salvation is exclusively through personal faith in Christ and that those who die without this faith will spend eternal in hell. The book was edited

by Dennis Okholm and Timothy Phillips, associate professors of theology at Wheaton College. They observed that a large percentage of students in evangelical colleges no longer believe that those outside of Jesus Christ are lost.

❑ “*The new willingness to subject revelation to contemporary sensibilities has eroded the theological underpinnings for a missionary faith. Hunter’s questionnaire found that only two-thirds of the students in evangelical colleges believe that the sole hope for heaven is through a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Increasingly students in Christian colleges are affronted when hearing the traditional claim that salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone*” (editors, p. 11).

❑ Clark Pinnock says:  
“*Scripture encourages us to see the church not so much as the ark, outside of which there is no hope of salvation, but as the vanguard of those who have experienced the fullness of God’s grace made available to all people in Jesus Christ. ... I welcome the Saiva Siddhanta literature of Hinduism, which celebrates a personal God of love, and the emphasis on grace that I see in the Japanese Shin-Shu Amida sect. I also respect the Buddha as a righteous man (Mat. 10:41) and Mohammed as a prophet figure in the style of the Old Testament*” (More Than One Way? pp. 110-111).

❑ In his interview with Robert Schuller in May 1997, Billy Graham again stated that he believes people in other religions can be saved without consciously believing in Jesus Christ.

SCHULLER: Tell me, what do you think is the future of Christianity?

GRAHAM: Well, Christianity and being a true believer--you know, I think there’s the Body of Christ. This comes from all the Christian groups around the world, outside the Christian groups. I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they’re conscious of it or not, they’re members of the Body of Christ. And I don’t think that we’re going to see a great sweeping revival, that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time. I think James answered that, the Apostle James in the first council in Jerusalem, when he said that God’s purpose for this age is to call out a people for His name. And that’s what God is doing today, He’s calling people out of the world for His name, WHETHER THEY COME FROM THE MUSLIM WORLD, OR THE BUDDHIST WORLD, OR THE CHRISTIAN WORLD OR THE NON-BELIEVING WORLD, THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST BECAUSE THEY’VE BEEN CALLED BY GOD. THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW THE NAME OF JESUS but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don’t have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they’re going to be with us in heaven.

SCHULLER: What, what I hear you saying that it’s possible for Jesus Christ to come into human hearts and soul and life, even if they’ve been born in darkness and have never had exposure to the Bible. Is that a correct interpretation of what you’re saying?

GRAHAM: Yes, it is, because I believe that. I’ve met people

in various parts of the world in tribal situations, that THEY HAVE NEVER SEEN A BIBLE OR HEARD ABOUT A BIBLE, AND NEVER HEARD OF JESUS, BUT THEY’VE BELIEVED IN THEIR HEARTS THAT THERE WAS A GOD, and they’ve tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they lived.

SCHULLER: [trips over his tongue for a moment, his face beaming, then says] I I’m so thrilled to hear you say this. There’s a wideness in God’s mercy.

GRAHAM: There is. There definitely is (Television interview of Billy Graham by Robert Schuller, broadcast in southern California on Saturday, May 31, 1997).

❑ In April 2000, a commission of the Evangelical Alliance of Britain published a report titled *The Nature of Hell*, which states that evangelicals have agreed to disagree about the doctrine of hell. It admits that “conditional immortality is a significant minority evangelical view” claiming that “the debate on hell should be regarded as a secondary rather than a primary issue for evangelical theology.”

This reminds us that modern evangelicalism has wrongly put unity above doctrine. The Bible plainly teaches that hell is eternal fiery torment. (See the Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity.) This is not a “secondary” issue. The faith once delivered to the saints is given to us in the Scriptures (Jude 3), and our job is to earnestly contend for it, and that means all of it and not merely that part of it which we consider “primary.” Timothy, who was taught doctrine by the Apostle Paul, was instructed not to allow “any other doctrine” to come into the churches under his care (1 Timothy 1:3). Timothy was instructed to pass along exactly the same doctrine to the next generation (2 Tim. 2:2). Nowhere was he told that some of the doctrine was secondary and therefore not very important.

❑ In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, Rob Bell redefines hell as a present reality on earth. He says the statements in Bible about hell being a place of fire and torment are mere poetry. He calls the preaching of eternal hell “*misguided and toxic,*” a “*cheap view of God,*” and “*lethal*” (Love Wins, Kindle location 47-60, 2154-2180). He implies that this God is not a true friend and protector; he says there is something wrong with this God and calls Him “*terrifying and traumatizing and unbearable*” (location 1273-1287, 2098-2113). He even says that if an earthly father acted like the God who sends people to hell “*we could contact child protection services immediately*” (location 2085-2098). Bell’s god is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as “*a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events*” (*Love Wins*, location 1710-1724). Bell also worships a false christ. His Jesus is “*supracultural ... present within all cultures ... refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one culture ... He doesn’t even state that those coming to the Father through him will even know that they are coming exclusively through him ... there is only one mountain, but many paths. ... People come to Jesus in all sorts of ways ... Sometimes people use his name; other times they don’t*” (*Love Wins*, location 1827-1840, 1865-1878,

1918-1933).

In Love Wins there is a photo of a painting that hung on a wall in Bell’s grandmother’s house. It depicts heaven as a shining city on the far side of a dark, burning, fearsome chasm. Bridging the chasm is a cross upon which people are walking toward safety. Bell has rejected the doctrine of God, salvation, heaven, and hell that his grandparents held.

## ***C.S. LEWIS’S INFLUENCE ON THE EVANGELICAL DOWNGRADE OF HELL***

C.S. Lewis (1898-1963) has been called a “Superstar” by Christianity Today. A 1998 CT poll rated Lewis the most influential evangelical writer, and In light of the wretched spiritual-doctrinal-moral condition of “evangelicalism” today, that is a very telling statistic and certainly no praise for C.S. Lewis.

One of the ways that Lewis has influenced evangelicalism is in the fundamental issues of hell and the exclusiveness of salvation through the name of Christ.

He said that it would not be very wrong to pray to Apollo, because to do so would be to “address Christ sub specie Apollonius” (C.S. Lewis to Chad Walsh, May 23, 1960, cited from George Sayer, Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis, 1994, p. 378). Lewis elsewhere claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without personal faith in Jesus Christ (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, pp. 64, 208, 209). In the popular Narnia series, which has influenced countless children, Lewis taught that those who sincerely serve the devil (called Tash) are actually serving Christ (Aslan) and will eventually be accepted by God. “But I said, ‘Alas, Lord, I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash.’ He answered, ‘Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me.’ ... Therefore, if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath’s sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him” (The Last Battle, chapter 15, “Further Up and Further In”).

It is not surprising, then, that Lewis has been cited as a major influence by evangelicals who are soft on hell.

Clark Pinnock said, “*When I was a young believer in the 1950s, C.S. Lewis helped me understand the relationship between Christianity and other religions in an inclusivist way. Because I trusted him as an orthodox thinker, I was open to hear him say that he could detect God’s presence among other faiths and that he believed people could be saved in other religions because God was at work among them*” (*More Than One Way?* Zondervan, 1996, p. 107).

In the acknowledgements section of *Love Wins*, Rob Bell writes, “... to my parents, Rob and Helen, for suggesting when I was in high school that I read C.S. Lewis.”

Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary and a supporter of Rob Bell’s position on hell, says, “*If I were given the assignment of writing a careful theological essay on ‘The Eschatology of Rob Bell,’ I would begin by laying out the basics of C.S. Lewis’s perspective on heaven and hell*” (“The Orthodoxy

of Rob Bell,” Christian Post, March 20, 2011).

**Beware of C.S. Lewis!** That he is loved with equal fervor by “conservative evangelicals,” hell-denying emergents, Christian rockers, Roman Catholics, Mormons, and even some Atheists is a fact that speaks volumes to those who have ears to hear.

## ***WILL PEOPLE BE SAVED APART FROM CONSCIOUS, PERSONAL FAITH IN CHRIST?***

Whether or not all men without personal faith in Christ go to hell, the nature of that hell, and whether or not their judgment is eternal in duration is extremely important for the preaching of the Gospel.

Will God “save some who have not explicitly professed faith in Jesus Christ”?

The Bible says certainly not! Ephesians chapter two tells us the condition of every individual outside of regenerating faith in Jesus Christ. He is dead in trespasses and sins (v. 1), controlled by and living according to the working of the devil (v. 2), a child of disobedience (v. 2), dominated by the flesh (v. 3), by nature the child of wrath (v. 3), without Christ (v. 12), an alien and stranger from the covenant of God (v. 12), without hope (v. 12), WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD (v. 12), far off from God (v. 13).

***The Bible gives absolutely NO HOPE for those who die without personal faith in Christ.***

The Lord Jesus Christ had already settled this matter before the penning of Ephesians. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Christ said categorically, ***“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).*** Nicodemus was a very sincere and religious Jew, and if any category of person could have gone to heaven without being born again, it would have been people like him. Jesus Christ said that it will not happen. In that same conversation Jesus said, ***“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18),*** and, ***“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).***

Praise God for the full salvation that was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ for all that will call upon him in repentance and faith! Let us who know the Lord not be guilty of being lazy in getting the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

## ***NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS***

❑ ***ROCK & ROLL’S BILLION DOLLAR DEAL*** - The music catalog of the rock band *Queen* has been purchased by Sony Music for US \$1.2 billion, exhibiting the immense influence of music in the global pop culture. I

t isn’t just music or entertainment; it is a philosophy of live as you please. It is global rebellion against God and His Christ. It is Psalm 2. It is the people vainly imagining that they can break God’s bands asunder and cast away His cords, referring to His holy laws.

That Queen’s music is of such immense financial value is telling. The name “queen” refers to a homosexual. The band’s lead singer, Freddy Mercury (real name Frederick Bulsara), was queen incarnate. He said, “We want to shock and be outrageous” (Circus, April 1974), and many of their songs are appropriately filthy. He whipped “concert audiences into a frenzy with erotic body contortions” (Larson’s Book of Rock, p. 179). Mercury said he felt like a devil on stage (David Noebel, The Legacy of John Lennon, p. 100).

Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody” is a proclamation of the band’s bankrupt philosophy: “I’m easy come, easy go, little high, little low, any way the wind blows doesn’t really matter to me. ... Beelzebub has a devil set aside for me, for me, for me.”

Some of Queen’s hard-rocking songs are used as rock anthems in sports stadiums, revealing the intimate connection between filthy rock and sports. These include “We Will Rock You,” “We Are Champions,” and “Another One Bites the Dust.” “We Are the Champions” is an unofficial anthem of the homosexual liberation movement.

Mercury lived extravagantly on the wages of sin in a \$6-million-dollar, 28-room mansion but died of AIDS at age 45. Five months after his death, 72,000 fans of this lascivious rock musician gathered for a memorial at London’s Wembley Stadium that featured Elton John, David Bowie, Annie Lennox, Axl Rose, and other anti-God, anti-Christ rock stars. It was estimated that one billion people viewed the event on television worldwide. At the time it was the “largest ever worldwide viewing audience” for a televised event.

Biblical repentance entails renunciation of evil, and if rock & roll isn’t evil, nothing is. Pastors who are silent in the face of this evil will answer to the holy God they profess to serve. A shepherd’s fundamental job is to feed the flock and protect it from wolves.

***“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).***

❑ ***SPORTS “LIKE A DRUG”*** - A Washington Times June 20 report on the surging popularity of sports in America is titled ***“Like a Drug.”***

“Ticket prices are soaring, leagues are expanding, legalized betting is exploding, and ratings are higher than ever. Sports are everywhere, all the time, and Americans still can’t get enough. Ninety-three of the top 100 TV broadcasts last year were NFL games.

... Ms. Gerber’s group [Hadassa Gerber, chief research officer of the Television Bureau of Advertising] reported that 82% of February survey respondents said they watched sports on local television at least once a week. This didn’t account for the added viewers on cable channels or streaming services.

... The current trends mirror the Roaring ‘20s, said George Washington University sports management professor Lisa Delpy Neirotti. After staying inside for two years because of the 1918

influenza pandemic, Americans enthusiastically ushered in the 1920s with lavish parties and new music” (Washington Times, June 20, 2024).

CONCLUSION: The comparison to “a drug” is instructive. Sports is addictive and therefore must be handled with extreme caution by those who want to redeem the time for Jesus Christ. Professional sports is also intertwined with ***“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” which is the Bible’s definition of worldliness (1 John 2:16).***

The “roaring 20s” was the big party before the financial crash of the 30s and the military crash of the 40s. Well, the Crash of Crashes is on the horizon, and it will make the previous crashes seem like child’s play in comparison, and the world is blissfully partying, as are most churches.

The world has no excuse, because the world abides in darkness, but God’s redeemed people should know better than to waste fleeting hours on vanity. ***Yet that’s exactly what we see in most “Bible-believing” churches: The church members are as crazy for sports and social media vanity as their unsaved neighbors.*** And while God’s people party, the families grow ever weaker and the youth are in terrible shape, spiritually. Most churches have only a vague semblance to the New Testament assembly. Instead of a holy, pilgrim, discipling program, it is a party program with a veneer of Christianity. Listen to the people’s conversation before and after the services, and you will see where their hearts really are. Pastors must wake up and do a lot of repenting and changing of directions.

***“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:8-10).***

❑ ***ANTIOCH SUFFERS DESTRUCTION FROM EARTHQUAKE*** - Antioch, the location of the first missionary-sending church, was devastated by the powerful earthquake that struck southern Turkey and northern Syria in February 2023. T

he ruins of the city of Paul’s day lie mostly beneath the modern city of Antakya. Destroyed were the 7th century Habib Najjar Mosque and the 14th century St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church. The Hatay Archaeology Museum, which houses Roman mosaics and other artifacts from ancient times, survived largely intact (“Devastation in Antakya,” Biblical Archaeology Society, June 19, 2024).

Antioch, located about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, is situated on the bank of the Orontes River about 15 miles from the Mediterranean Sea and the port city of Seleucia. In Paul’s day, Antioch was a prominent city in the Roman province of Syria. It was a major center of commerce located on the main north-south and east-west roads that connected India and Mesopotamia (Persia, Babylon, Assyria) in the east with Asia Minor and Greece and Italy in the west and Africa and Egypt to the south. Overland

caravans and ships provided the city with goods from across the world.

With a population of 100,000 to 300,000, Antioch was the third largest city in the empire, after Rome and Alexandria. It was the seat of the Greek Seleucid dynasty, which produced Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC), the Antichrist forerunner who desecrated the Jerusalem temple in 168 BC. The church at Antioch remained an important church for 500 years, though it eventually left its founding doctrine. After the fourth century, when the Christianizing of the Roman Empire and the apostasy produced territorial bishops, Antioch was one of the five major centers of Christianity, together with Jerusalem, Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople.

Though most of the ruins of the ancient city are buried beneath thick deposits from the flooding of the Orontes River over the centuries, archaeological work was carried out from 1932 to 1939 by Princeton University’s Department of Art and Archaeology. Discoveries include ruins of the Roman theater, the Cardo Maximus, the temple of Aphrodite, the temple of Jupiter, the Tetraptylon, and a large number of fine mosaic floors from private and public buildings in the Roman era.

❑ ***ENGLAND BECOMING A MUSLIM NATION*** - The following is excerpted from *“World-Historical Transformation Is Taking Place in Britain,”* PJMedia, June 8, 2024:

“A world-historical societal transformation is taking place before our very eyes, and yet few have taken notice. Britain, the erstwhile leader of the Western world and the foundation and source of English-speaking civilization, is in its last days as a free society, and will soon become an Islamic state.

... The English actor-turned-political-activist Lawrence Fox recently noted what was happening: *‘The Mayor of London is a Muslim. The mayor of Birmingham is a Muslim. The Mayor of Leeds is Muslim. Mayor of Blackburn is a Muslim. The mayor of Sheffield is a Muslim. The mayor of Oxford is a Muslim. The mayor of Luton is a Muslim. The mayor of Oldham is Muslim. The mayor of Rochdale is Muslim. All this was achieved by only 4 million Muslims out of 66 million people in England.’*

Fox continued: *‘Today there are over 3,000 mosques in England. There are over 130 sharia courts. There are more than 50 Sharia Councils. 78 percent of Muslim women do not work, receive state support + free accommodation. 63 percent of Muslims do not work, receive state support + free housing. State-supported Muslim families with an average of 6 to 8 children receive free accommodation. Now every school in the UK is required to teach lessons about Islam. Has anyone ever been given an opportunity to vote for this? .. Muslim rape gangs ... victimized thousands of non-Muslim girls for years, and still operate with relative impunity.*

*‘The BBC reported in 2014 that at least 1,400 children were subjected to appalling sexual exploitation in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013, and British officials did nothing.’”*

❑ ***“THE CHOSEN” & THE BIBLE*** - Lighthouse Trails has published a new booklet *The Chosen and the Bible: 20 Questions*

to Ask Yourself. 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 as well. 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.’” [II TIMOTHY 3:5]

❑ **WHEN THE POPE SPOKE THE TRUTH** - Did you know that the Roman Catholic Church has identified herself with Revelation 17?

“In 1825, Pope Leo XII struck a medal, bearing on the one side his own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a ‘Woman,’ holding in her left hand a cross, and in her right a CUP, with the legend around her, ‘Sedet super universum,’ ‘The whole world is her seat’” (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*).

**“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed**

**fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Revelation 17:1-6).**

❑ **AMERICANS CAN NO LONGER AFFORD A SUMMER VACATION** - A significant number of Americans have given up on going on vacation this summer due to the high cost of living, according to an exclusive poll for *Newsweek*.

Forty-four percent of respondents to a survey conducted by Redfield & Wilton Strategies on behalf of *Newsweek* between June 27 and 28 said they won’t be traveling anywhere in the next three months, with a majority of 53 percent saying they would have gone on vacation had the cost of living been cheaper. The survey was run among 2,500 eligible U.S. voters.

Among those who said they intend to travel abroad (17 percent), domestically (29 percent) or both (10 percent), a majority of 64 percent said their plans had been affected by the high cost of living. Fifty-five percent said that they’re now traveling to a cheaper destination than they would have otherwise visited; 45 percent said they’re using a cheaper way of transportation; 30 percent said they’re staying in cheaper accommodation.

Gen Xers were the most likely to say they would have gone on vacation if it was cheaper (57 percent), followed by millennials (54 percent), and boomers and Gen Zers (50 percent each).

Despite negative perceptions on the state of the economy, inflation is now much lower than its June 2022 peak of 9.1 percent. As of May, the latest data available, core inflation in the U.S. had increased by 2.6 percent year-on-year, the smallest hike since March 2021. In April, it had risen by 2.8 percent year-on-year. The consumer price index increased by 3.3 percent from a year earlier and held still from April. While it has cooled down significantly, inflation remains higher than the Federal Reserve’s goal of 2 percent.

“Life has gotten a lot more expensive in recent years, which is why so many people are struggling to afford vacations,” Ted Rossman, senior industry analyst at Bankrate, told *Newsweek*.

“For example, a collection of common household expenses costs about 20 percent more now than it did in early 2022,” he said. “With so many people spending so much more for housing, food, gas and other essentials, there’s less money to go around for other things such as travel.

“Higher interest rates have pinched buying power as well, especially for the roughly half of credit card holders who carry debt from month-to-month at an average rate of 20.71 percent

(close to a record high set a few months ago). Credit card debt is easy to get into and hard to get out of.”

The survey’s findings are backed by previous studies which concluded that many Americans can’t afford to go on vacation this year. A March survey by Skift, a company that analyzes global travel data, found that 19 percent of 1,001 polled Americans thought their dream trip was not affordable in the last quarter of 2024, and were reconsidering their plans. Forty-three percent said it was as financially challenging as it had been before the pandemic in 2019.

A majority of Americans made changes to their travel plans throughout the year, according to Skift, for a total of 72 percent in the first quarter, 76 percent in the second, 66 percent in the third and 68 percent in the fourth and last. Forty-seven percent of all respondents were planning on staying put this summer, avoiding taking a vacation, with 65 percent saying they couldn’t afford it. Among these, Gen Xers were more likely to cite affordability as an issue (67 percent) followed by millennials (62 percent), boomers (61 percent) and Gen Zers (53 percent).

In 2023, when inflation was higher than it is now, 58 percent of Americans who were not planning on going on a summer vacation said they couldn’t afford it.

“Even though travel costs have fallen over the past year (for example, rental car prices are down 9 percent year-over-year according to the latest CPI, airline fares are down 6 percent and hotel prices are down 2 percent), this hasn’t been enough to offset the higher cost of living in other areas,” Rossman said.

❑ **THOMAS JEFFERSON, THE BAPTISTS, AND A GIANT BLOCK OF CHEESE** - Despite having a widespread reputation for irreligious beliefs, President Thomas Jefferson was a hero to many Baptists in America because he was arguably the nation’s greatest champion of religious liberty.

Baptists wanted to convey how delighted they were with his election as president in 1800. A big block of cheese played a major role in the effort. The cheese was four feet wide and 1,200 pounds, made by the Baptist “Ladies” of Cheshire, Massachusetts. They made it, a Republican newspaper noted, “as a mark of the exalted esteem they had of [Jefferson] as a man of virtue, benevolence, and a real sincere friend to all Christian denominations.” Written on the rind was the Jeffersonian motto, “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.”

The cheese’s escort from Cheshire to Washington was the Baptist preacher John Leland, one of the era’s most influential spiritual leaders and a Jeffersonian zealot. Leland was eleven years younger than Jefferson and a native of Massachusetts. He had experienced conversion and became a Baptist in the early 1770s. Thereafter he began preaching and relocated to Virginia, where he served Baptist churches and the cause of religious liberty. In Virginia he became an ally of James Madison and Jefferson. Madison and Leland reportedly met in 1788, with Leland urging Madison to support a religious liberty amendment to the Constitution. (The original Constitution in 1787 did not include a Bill of Rights.) Leland agreed to back ratification of the

Constitution if Madison would promote the amendment in the First Congress. When Leland returned to New England in 1791, he directed his political energies against the established, tax-supported Congregationalist churches of Connecticut and Massachusetts while pastoring in Cheshire.

Critics lambasted the “MAMMOTH CHEESE,” while newspapers punned incessantly about all things mammoth and cheese. This moniker was an allusion to Jefferson’s fascination with mastodon bones recently discovered in New York and his assumption that woolly mammoths still lived in the American interior. One Federalist watched as Jefferson’s supporters paraded with the cheese in a “ludicrous procession, in honor of a cheesen God.” The cheese moved down the Hudson River to New York, then by sea to Baltimore, and finally to Washington, where it arrived at the end of 1801. Jefferson himself had adopted the “mammoth cheese” label when he noted its arrival, saying it was “an ebullition of the passion of republicanism in a state where it has been under heavy persecution.”

We would know less about that religious liberty weekend in Washington were it not for a letter by a hostile Federalist representative, Manasseh Cutler, who disliked both Jefferson and Leland. The congressman reported that Leland delivered a sermon before Jefferson and members of Congress on January 3, 1802. Cutler had reluctantly visited the President’s House on New Year’s Day, where the staff treated members of Congress with “cake and wine” and allowed them to view the mammoth cheese. The Yale-educated Cutler, who was also a Congregationalist minister, thought that the “cheesemonger” Leland’s sermon two days later was a travesty. Leland, a “poor, ignorant, illiterate, clownish preacher,” spoke on Matthew 12:42: “behold, a greater [one] than Solomon is here.” To Cutler, the oration was a “farrago, bawled with stunning voice, horrid tone, frightful grimaces, and extravagant gestures.” No “decent auditory” had ever heard anything like it, Cutler scoffed.

Until the cheese became too maggot-ridden to keep, Jefferson made a viewing of it a standard experience for visitors to his home. He even had a special frame built to hold the cheese together as it aged. But the memory of it reminds us how important religious liberty was to the often-persecuted Baptists of the American founding era.

