
"Trends"

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. [2 CHRONICLES 7:14] [KJV]

March 10, 2007

"The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; And to have the two as close together as possible. **George Burns**

~Boldness~

I'm not much for New Year resolutions, but this year with God's help, one of my goals is to proclaim the Gospel with added boldness. As Paul recorded in Philippians;

"God has a boldness Gospel, not a bloodless Gospel."

according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

[PHILIPPIANS 1:20] [NAS] We are not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. [ROMANS 1:16] "God has a boldness Gospel, not a bloodless Gospel."

~A Changing World~

I keep saying that the world is changing, and not necessarily for the better.

There is a changing trend, in that; we are trying to do everything on our own, without



God's help. And it cannot be done without His help and guidance. We are not consulting God and the Biblical Scriptures in all of our ways and decisions, and we are failing, big time. *Trust in the LORD with all your*

heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. [PROVERBS 3:5-6] [NAS]

The whole world and especially the United States are still looking for that political savior. It is the same today as it was in the time of Christ. Over 2000 years ago Christ came, the people then were looking for a king for their kingdom, not a lowly humble Jesus Christ. (Yeshua) What if we would spend as much time talking about Jesus Christ as we do talking about some politician getting elected and what he or she can do for us? Looking back in retrospect, we haven't changed that much over the

years; we are still looking for an earthly savior. And by the way, this earthly savior cannot save us from anything. All this earthly savior can do is cause us more problems. I'm glad to know that my future and my salvation does not hinge on some elected politician. I know who holds my future; it's the great almighty God and the God we are to depend on. The creator of this universal, He's YHWH, Jehovah, Abba, our Father.

~Message – Today's Sinful Trends~

At this point, let me say that every part of this church's worship service is

“We are to lead people to God, not to ourselves.”

important to God. I don't think that one part is more important than the other. Most churches have the main attraction as the preaching, but I don't think we should cut anyone short. The whole church

service is important and what I say is probably not any more impressive to God as what anyone else has said today. We are to worship YHWH in spirit and truth. [JOHN 4:24] Our objective is to point everything we do to God, not ourselves. It doesn't matter how much money we have or how poor we are, what age we are, how talented we are, how short or tall we are, how skinny or how big we are, we are all the same at the foot of the cross. *For there is no respect of persons with God.* [KJV] [ROMANS 2:11]

Today I would like to review some of these ungodly trends with you. We



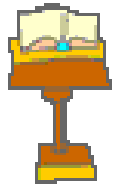
will compare what is happening and what the Bible says about these trends. We and this nation continue to get further and further away from God in our life. We are to the point now that God is no longer a part of our

spiritual life, but of course we call upon Him when we need or want something. Some treat God as “The Genie in the Bottle, just call out His name and He will perform for us and give us every little wish or want.” This message on “trends” may seem a little negative to you, but I'm only trying to speak reality. The way we live spiritually is a daily life and death matter. We are to keep ourselves holy in this sinful world.

Let us set the tone for today's message with Paul's writing to the Church in Galatia, with reading of the first chapter. Where some in the Galatians Church was distorting the Gospel of Christ that Paul had preached to them.

~Galatians 1:1-24~ American Standard Version~

- (1) *Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead),*
- (2) *and all the brethren that are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:*
- (3) *Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- (4) *who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father:*



(5) *to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

(6) *I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel;*

(7) *which is not another gospel only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*

- (8) *But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.*
 - (9) *As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema.*
 - (10) *For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.*
 - (11) *For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man.*
 - (12) *For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.*
 - (13) *For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it:*
 - (14) *and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*
 - (15) *But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace,*
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- (16) *to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood:*
- (17) *neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus.*
- (18) *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and tarried with him fifteen days.*
 - (19) *But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.*
 - (20) *Now touching the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.*
 - (21) *Then I came unto the regions of Syria and Cilicia.*
 - (22) *And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:*
 - (23) *but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc;*
 - (24) *and they glorified God in me.*

~Materialistic World~

The almighty dollar is king anymore. Every trouble, problem or situation has a



cost to it. Look at the government programs! Every time there is a problem, they allocate more money to fix the problem. There has not been a problem yet that has been fixed by money. Look at the other

countries we throw money at and the social programs we have here in the U.S. Our answer to any situation is, “Oh, if we had more money we could fix more problems?”

In Randy Alcorn’s book, “Money, Possessions and Eternity,” he notes the following comments on materialism. “Materialism is an attempt to find meaning in a universe that has been stripped of meaning through the denial of its Creator. He goes on to say that it’s a society where people know the price of everything, but the value of nothing--where people have a great deal to live on, but very little to live for. While God created us to love people and use things, the materialist loves things and uses people.”¹

On more of a local level; looking at the pursue of the dollar. You can now go into almost any Christian bookstore and get secular books as well as books on other religions including new age. It’s now all about the bottom line, not necessarily about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many Christian book publishers now print other types of books and some of the books they print may be questionable as to Godly literature.

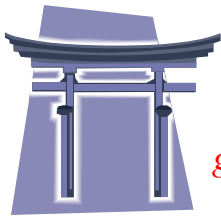
It is partly our fault that the secular is becoming mixed in with the Christian for the sake of money. Let me ask you a question? Would we support and shop at a super grocery market that didn’t sell alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and questionable magazines, if our grocery bill is \$5.00 more each week? The grocery store may have to sell their products for a little more because they didn’t have the additional revenue on alcohol and cigarettes. I think the answer would be NO, we would only look at the bottom line; it’s costing me more. We may not consider the good moral example they would be representing and bringing forth to the public. There is more to it than saving a dollar, when good and evil are compared and part of the system of the world.

The Passion of Christ made 400 million dollars for Mel Gibson and he was later arrested. It’s a movie made in Hollywood for money. We all flocked to this catholic

¹ From Randy Alcorn’s book Money, Possessions and Eternity, Revised 2003 from Eternal Perspectives, Winter 2005

movie which was not all true. The Bible nowhere records Jesus being thrown off a bridge while on the way to His crucifixion. The movie was endorsed and supported by most churches and denominations. The movie was based mainly upon your emotions. I may be by myself on this one, (and that is okay) but I just have a problem with people making large sums of money, all in the name of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Chances are, that if the whole world or most of the world is following after something or someone or endorsing it, it's probably not of God ...we had better watch out for mainstream secularism, sometimes called "Christianity." For Jesus said, "*Enter*



through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. [MATTHEW 7:14-15] [NAS] Folks, we want to be on that

narrow road that leads to eternity.

A survey from the Barna Group said that...."Education and income are negatively correlated with belief in heaven and hell. In other words, the more education a person gets or the more income they earn, the less likely they are to believe that heaven and hell exists."² In other words, the more affluent we become, the less we think we need God. This is very true today, especially in the United States, as well as many other countries.

The Prosperity Gospel goes along with this materialistic world. As



one writer defined it; "It is the belief that those who have faith in Jesus will get rich, have good health, and every circumstance of their lives will fit together in harmony. It also suggests that those who suffer tragedy, endure physical pain, and experience disappointment must lack faith."³ Let me tell you what Paul said about living a godly life.

He said it wouldn't be easy. In the book of Timothy he said, "*Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*"⁴ [2 TIMOTHY 3:12] [NAS]

² Barna Research Group, October 21, 2003

³ An Arrow Pointing to Heaven, by James Smith, page 105.

Rich Mullins, in his devotional biography, *An Arrow Pointing to Heaven*,” written by James Bryan Smith and taken from one of Rich’s radio interviews said, “I think there’s a big problem in the church. I think everyone thinks if you have struggles in your life it’s because you’re not really filled with the Holy Spirit, or you’re not really reading your Bible daily, or you’re doing something wrong. I think life, by nature, is a struggle. You know, whether or not you believe in the health, wealth, and prosperity doctrine, the ideas of that....have polluted almost all of our thinking about Christianity -- where we think that a really great Christian is someone who does not struggle.”

But the apostle Paul was a man who was obviously filled with the Spirit, a man who obviously had studied the Scriptures, a man who had had an authentic encounter with the living Christ, and he prays to God and says, Lord, I beg You to take this thorn from my flesh. Paul says, Lord, I’ve been praying for You to take away this infirmity of mine, and You haven’t.

Rich continues saying. And God looks down at him and doesn’t say, ‘yeah, it’s because you’re spiritually immature!’ God didn’t look down at him and say, ‘Well, it’s because you don’t have enough faith.’ God didn’t look at Paul and say, ‘Well, you know, if you would just get up earlier and pray a couple more hours in the morning or if you would just memorize another ten psalms.’ He didn’t say any of that. He merely said to Paul, Hey, ‘My grace is plenty. My grace is sufficient.’⁵ [II Corinthians 12:7-11]

A Christian brother was telling the story sometime back. They were asking for church members to come up to the front of the church if they needed prayer. And when the brother asked one member, what he could pray with him about, his reply was, “for more minutes on his cell phone.”

Another incident happened while I was working in the food distribution center in Morganton; where we take out the participant’s groceries and then pray for them at their point of need. When I asked for prayer requests, this one lady responded by wanting me to pray for her a house and it to be paid for. I was set back by this request because most

⁴ [2 Timothy 3:12] [NAS]

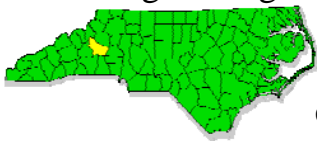
⁵ *An Arrow Pointing to Heaven*, by James Smith, page 105, 106.

of the prayer request I receive are for sickness, salvation and other spiritual matters. I prayed for her but I didn't feel right about it. I'm not making fun of these people, but it seems to be material things and conveniences above the spiritual calling out to God.

The only people I know that are getting rich in this so-called prosperity gospel are the preachers that are preaching it. I don't think the prosperity gospel lines up with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at Jesus and His apostles; "Jesus did not have a place to lay His head." [MATT 8:20] The apostles left all and followed Jesus. [MATT 4:19-20]

~Legalized Gambling~

Legalized gambling is now in North Carolina and everyone seems to think it is okay since the sin is for the sake of raising money, supposedly for education. What kind of education is it? When you educate people to sin? And not even have a guilty conscious about the sin. Well, the attitude seems to be; why not, everyone else is doing it, it's okay. Are we to keep up with the world?



The North Carolina lottery is disguised as an "Educational Lottery." This is just a big fancy name for sin. It's still sin any way you want to say it. I know so many people that play the lottery and think there is nothing wrong with it. The government allows it and it's legal for them to have a lottery, but no one else in the state can have a gambling



lottery. The state has this monopoly on this gambling sin. You can gamble, but only with the state, you can commit this sinful act and it's okay. If the state can commit evil deeds and cover it up as un-sinful? What then are the people in the state to do? They will sin and cover it up, wash it aside and talk themselves into believing that the sin is not sin at all. This is an awful example of leadership.

We are becoming immune to this sinful act allowed by the state. It starts with the higher-ups; they are the leaders and should be setting the example. It then goes down the ladder. When the state is setting this type example, the unfaithful and evil people will follow. For some in the state, the end justifies the means. This is why we are to go with the precepts of God and the Bible. What if Jesus had set this type example?

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." [EXODUS 20:17] [NAS]

~Cheating In Sports~

NASCAR penalized Robby Gordon for intentionally causing a caution flag at Atlanta Motor Speedway that affected the races' outcome. He was docked 50 driver points and 50 car owner points, and fined \$15,000 for throwing a piece of roll bar padding onto the track. It affected his standing and the outcome of the race. Then at Daytona Speedway this year several people were removed from the garage area due to just outright blatant cheating in setting up the specs for the race cars. They were given a chance to correct their rule breaking, but did not.



Sprinter Justin Gatlin received an eight-year ban from track and field avoiding a life time penalty. He will forfeit the world record he tied in May. He ran the 100 meters in 9.77 seconds. Gatlin tested positive for doping.

Bicycling Tour de France winner Floyd Landis has failed two doping tests after being declared the winner of the 2006 race. This is a twenty-one day bicycle race



through France and surrounding countries. Doping is where you have your blood or someone else's blood drawn earlier and it goes through a process that increases the oxygen levels and is later given to the rider for increased performance. Landis has appealed the decision that has stripped him as the winner of the prestigious 2006 Tour de France race.

The fame, glory, prestige and money are just too enticing and some athletes will

"Sports do not build character. They reveal it."
Haywood Hale Brown

do just about anything to win. What ever happen to what one writer said, "It's not that you win or lose, but how you play the game." Apparently this is not true anymore. Winning is everything, no rules and no regulations. As you know, we only remember the winners, so winning is everything and the only thing to this world.

It's the same today in following Christ; we make our own rules, manmade. Yeshua is the great rule maker and we are to follow after Him, not this world. We are mistakenly trying get to heaven by following our own rules instead of YHWH's.

Whatever happened to the good old days, when honestly and integrity meant something?..... Where the best person won without cheating or drugs. Why is it that we have to continuously have someone to police sports to keep the athletes from cheating or breaking the rules? The heart and morals of the individual have to change, "one by one," you cannot police sin. *Incline my heart to Your testimonies And not to dishonest gain.* [PSALM 119:36] [NAS]

~Tolerance and Intolerance~

Tolerance and Intolerance; I hope to prepare a sermon or article to this one sometime in the future. I'm always asking myself the question, when should I be tolerant of certain situations and other religions? At what point should tolerance become intolerance? But for now let me give a few brief comments.

We are approaching the day and in some areas and countries it is already happening. Preachers and others are being jailed and persecuted for calling sin, sin.



Many are preaching against the sins of the people; such as, but not limited to the pulpit preaching of the gay lifestyle. It's just not politically correct to call sin for what it is. Laws are being changed where you cannot preach the Gospel or talk against a sinful lifestyle without being charged with hate crimes. The liberal teachings of homosexuals water down the Gospel, falsely letting people think they are okay with this sin and that they will not be judged in the final judgment.

Should we be preaching to this lost world? Jesus said in His instructions to the apostles, in Matthew, *"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.* [MATTHEW 10:7-8] [NAS]

Some say, Dewey you're too preachy. I've found out over the years that people usually say that when you tell them something they don't want to hear. But what did Paul say in Romans 10:13-15? *for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE*

LORD WILL BE SAVED." How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" [ROMANS 10:13-15] [NAS]

I had a sister a while back tell me that I was preaching to people too much. But when someone wants to discuss the Bible and Christian traditions I try to tie in the Bible with the discussion. When they ask me a question that I think may be a questionable tradition, I point them to the Bible. With such questions as, "did Jesus do that?" Or can you show me that in the Bible? Now all of a sudden I'm too preachy. I only pointed them back to the Bible and the Bible only.... *Sola Scriptura – The Bible Only.*

I'm self-employed and have a business dealing with the public. I usually keep spiritual booklets, pamphlets on my desk and in the office to give to clients. I also give them Christian literature to take home with them; each and every client. I received the following email from one of my clients a couple of weeks ago.

When I got home, and reviewed my tax return, I found several religious papers and fliers inside my tax booklet. I don't want to seem callous, what people want to believe is their own business, but when it comes to my taxes I find the fliers that were in my folder to be pushy, and a blatant disrespect of my personal views. I came to your establishment to buy a service, not to be preached to. I hope that every customer that comes into your establishment doesn't get treated with the same attitude. K.M.



What do you do with these type people? I first thought, I guess I will quit putting Jesus information in my packets and remove the religious materials from the office so I could stay neutral. Then I thought; I have my opinion just like he has an opinion. But, I have the Savior, Jesus Christ and I shouldn't be ashamed of the Gospel. It's up to us to proclaim the Message to everyone. What was so surprising about this is that when we found the email writer on "My Space," on the internet, there were Bible scripture verses on the site. Figure that one out!

~Come as you are, but Change, Become a New Person~

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. [2 CORINTHIANS 5:17] [NAS]



It's amazing now-a-days how easy it is to get saved. Some will say just repeat after me these lines of words and you will be saved. There is nothing as far-fetched as this. Did Jesus ever say this to someone? "Come over here and repeat these words after me. According to the Bible he said, "Come and follow me." We should have a real "hunger for God." Instead of having to spoon feed new converts. If they are truly saved, and repented of their sins, I believe they will have a hunger for God and His ways. They will be searching for the truth that YHWH has to offer.

~In Conclusion~

Guys, it's all written in God's Word, we just have to follow it and do what it says. We, with all of our education, know-how, knowledge and wisdom think we know more than God. It may be that we think God doesn't know what He is doing and needs our help. Maybe the Word of God and his teachings are too simple for us. Yeshua and YHWH said to keep their commandments and when we do what the Good Book tells us to do, we can let the world go by. *The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. [JOEL 3:16] [KJV]*

Be Ready

The Lord wants us to live all the time, "as if today would be our last." I believe it

"Do you know God's address? It is at the end of your rope."

was John Wesley who was asked at one time, "What would you do if you knew that tonight you would die?" That great preacher of years gone by said, "I would do exactly what I have scheduled to do."

Could we all say that today?

I have gotten some information for this article from a number of different sources; internet, Bibles, dictionaries, and study materials from several different authors, etc. I do not take full credit for these writings since there are many. I did not keep up with this information in most cases in order to give proper credit. My comments, writings and rewriting of the sources are in this article. I therefore cannot take full credit for this writing. The full credit would have to go to Jesus Christ, the creator of all things.



March 2007

Dewey E. (Obed) Fox, Bond Servant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
