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Are We A Christian Nation?

An Analysis of the Faith of Our Fathers

March 2010

By Gregory Koukl
Stand To Reason Ministries
www.str.org

There's been a lot of debate about the faith of the Founding Fathers and the status of the United States as a "Christian nation." Home schooling texts abound with references to our religious heritage, and entire organizations are dedicated to returning America to its spiritual roots. On the other side, secularists cry "foul" and parade their own list of notables among our country's patriarchs. They rally around the cry of "separation of church and state." Which side is right? Oddly both.

Who Were the Founding Fathers?

Historical proof-texts can be raised on both sides. Certainly, there were godless men among the early leadership of our nation, though some of those cited as examples of Founding Fathers turn out to be insignificant players. For example, Thomas Paine and Ethan Allen may have been hostile to evangelical Christianity, but they were firebrands of the Revolution, not intellectual architects of the Constitution. Paine didn't arrive in this country until 1774 and only stayed a short time.

As for others--George Washington, Samuel Adams, James Madison, John Witherspoon, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, John Adams, Patrick Henry, and even Thomas Jefferson--their personal correspondence, biographies, and public statements are replete with quotations showing that these thinkers had political philosophies deeply influenced by Christianity.

The Constitutional Convention

It's not necessary to dig through the diaries, however, to determine which faith was the Founder's guiding light.

There's an easier way to settle the issue. The phrase "Founding Fathers" refers to a specific group of men, the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention. There were other important players not in attendance, like Jefferson, whose thinking deeply influenced the shaping of our nation. These 55 Founding Fathers, though, made up the core.

The denominational affiliations of these men were a matter of public record. Among the delegates were 28 Episcopalians, 8 Presbyterians, 7 Congregationalists, 2 Lutherans, 2 Dutch Reformed, 2 Methodists, 2 Roman Catholics, 1 unknown, and only 3 deists--Williamson, Wilson, and Franklin--this at a time when church membership entailed a sworn public confession of biblical faith. This is a revealing tally. It shows that the members of the Constitutional Convention, the most influential group of men shaping the political foundations of our nation, were almost all Christians, 51 of 55--a full



93%.



Benjamin Franklin

Even Franklin the deist is equivocal. He was raised in a Puritan family and later adopted then abandoned deism. Though not an orthodox Christian, it was 81-year-old Franklin's emotional call to humble prayer on June 28, 1787, that was the turning point for a hopelessly stalled Convention. Franklin's appeal contained no less than four direct references to Scripture.

Three of the four cornerstones of the Constitution--Franklin, Washington, and Madison--were firmly rooted in Christianity. But what about Thomas Jefferson? His signature cannot be found at the end of the Constitution, but his voice permeates the entire document.

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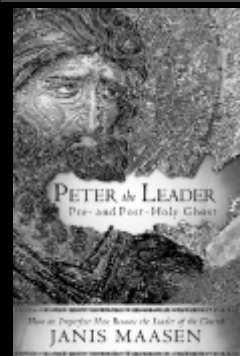
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Odor Elimination

By Paula McBride - Yuba City

How much money have you spent on products to eliminate odors in your home or workplace? Do you like candles, gels, aerosols, or those little plug-ins that greet you as you walk by? What's your brand preference: Glade, Arm & Hammer, Lysol, or Renuzit? Have you tried Febreze's home decorator package or their X-Sweat product that you can spray on your stinky workout gear? Does your product do what the advertisements say it will?

It's hard to admit that so many manufacturers benefit by the way we smell or because we smell, but that's the hard truth. But what causes odors? So many times odors are masked. How can we really eliminate them?

The simple answer is bacteria eat stuff we wouldn't and emit odor molecules we don't like. The elimination program includes thorough washing (antibacterial soaps help) and drying. The feet, for example, benefit by making sure shoes and socks are always dry.

The prophet Isaiah faced some odor problems. As Judah's watchman, he appealed to the Lord on the people's behalf. In a prayer of penitence, he admitted, "we are all like an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6). That verse reminds me that there are very stinky areas of my life that need more than masking over. They need a thorough sin elimination regimen. How does that happen?

Since our acts of righteousness fall short, God offers, by His mercy a thorough "washing of regeneration and a renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). David knew this when he cried out, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me; and I shall be whiter than snow. Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me (Psa. 51:7, 10). All we need to do is ask for that same cleansing, and we'll be made brand-new.

Just as socks protect the feet from odor causing bacteria after their thorough washing, we need protection from lapsing back into sin. Rather than dressing in the filthy rags of our own righteousness, we dress in the righteousness of Christ Himself and celebrate in garments of praise. We have access to the arsenal of God's Word and His spiritual armor.

There's more to this story for squeaky-clean believers. The odor of our sin is not masked; the blood of Christ eliminates it. We then become a sweet fragrance--the fragrance of Christ and His transforming power. That fragrance is far better than any store-bought brand!

We can't afford to be smelly when the world needs a breath of fresh air. Let's do our part to eliminate the odor of our hurting world and refresh others by sharing the cleansing work Christ has done in our lives. Oh, and when we get smelly again? Cry out to God for fresh cleansing! His price is right--FREE!

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NATION

cont. from cover

Thomas Jefferson

Though deeply committed to a belief in natural rights, including the self-evident truth that all men are created equal, Jefferson was individualistic when it came to religion; he sifted through the New Testament to find the facts that pleased him. Sometimes he sounded like a staunch churchman. The Declaration of Independence contains at least four references to God. In his Second Inaugural Address he asked for prayers to Israel's God on his behalf. Other times Jefferson seemed to go out of his way to be irreverent and disrespectful of organized Christianity, especially Calvinism.

It's clear that Thomas Jefferson was not evangelical, but neither was he an Enlightenment deist. He was more Unitarian than either deist or Christian. This analysis, though, misses the point. The most important factor regarding the faith of Thomas Jefferson--or any of our Founding Fathers--isn't whether or not he had a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The debate over the religious heritage of this country is not about who is ultimately going to heaven, but rather

about what the dominant convictions were that dictated the structure of this nation.

Even today there are legions of born-again Christians who have absolutely no skill at integrating their beliefs about Christ with the details of their daily life, especially their views of government. They may be "saved," but they are completely ineffectual as salt and light.

By contrast, some of the Fathers may not have been believers in the narrowest sense of the term, yet in the broader sense--the sense that influences culture--their thinking was thoroughly Christian. Unlike many evangelicals who live lives of practical atheism, these men had political ideals that were deeply informed by a robust Christian world view. They didn't always believe biblically, having a faith leading to salvation, but almost all thought biblically, resulting in a particular type of government.

Thomas Jefferson was this kind of man. In *Defending the Declaration*, legal historian Gary Amos observes, "Jefferson is a notable example of how a man can be influenced by biblical ideas and Christian principles even though he never confessed Jesus Christ as Lord in the evangelical sense." [4]

cont. on pg. 6 - NATION

Study Your Map – Then Have Faith

By John Imler - Citrus Heights

I was working the registration desk at our RV park some years ago when a young couple approached to register. One of them said, "You are hard to find!" Our park was located on the west side of an Interstate, laying between it and a paved county road. As cars traveled south they passed the park and were directed by signs to the entrance. I replied, "Did you miss the signs? There was one at every turn." Their reply, which amazes me to this day, was, "Oh, we saw the signs, but we couldn't see the park."

This brought to mind my experience in planning our trip to Alaska in our RV. I studied the map and planned all 44 days of our trip well in advance of our departure. I knew where we would stay each night and how far we would drive each day. But when we pulled the truck with the travel trailer onto the road I, like the young couple, could not see the park we were going to stay in later that day.

Unlike the young couple who appeared to have been unsure if they could trust the signs, I had faith in the map that I had used to plan the trip.

I have chosen the Bible as my map for this trip called life and as the way to arrive at the right destination. Since my return to my faith, I am constantly amazed at how it prepares me for each day of my life's journey.

However, just as planning any trip by vehicle, after studying the map, I must exercise faith in the road signs I see along my route. If I fail to follow

the directions of those signs, I soon become lost. God has promised to direct my way: "And now I show you the most excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31 NIV).

The signs God brings to us along our way are often not obvious to us. Sometimes they are partially hidden by some bush or tree—just like highway signs. Unless we are aware of God's traveling with us, we can overlook them or not recognize them as God's direction of our way.

I have found that the circumstances in life are often God's direction signs, as He seeks to direct our ways. We need to be fully aware that He is traveling with us and pause to ask Him to teach us the meaning of those circumstances. Because circumstances are, as the dictionary says, one of the facts that must be considered in determining our course of action.

Like the young couple who could not see our park the entire way into it, we cannot see our final destination at the end of our road of life. However, if we use His Word to plan our journey of life, then by faith in Christ as our constant Guide we travel toward our destination, carefully watching our circumstances, we shall successfully reach our glorious and beautiful destination, where He will meet us with those marvelous words: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Matthew 25:23 (NIV).

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NATION cont. from pg. 5

What Did the Founding Fathers Believe and Value?

When you study the documents of the Revolutionary period, a precise picture comes into focus. Here it is:

* Virtually all those involved in the founding enterprise were God-fearing men in the Christian sense.

* The Founders were deeply influenced by a biblical view of man and government. With a sober understanding of the fallenness of man, they devised a system of limited authority and checks and balances.

* The Founders understood that fear of God, moral leadership, and a righteous citizenry were necessary for their great experiment to succeed.

* Therefore, they structured a political climate that was encouraging to Christianity and accommodating to religion, rather than hostile to it.

However...

* The Fathers sought to set up a just society, not a Christian theocracy.

* They specifically prohibited the establishment of Christianity--or any other faith--as the religion of our nation.

A Two-Sided Coin

We can safely draw two conclusions from these facts, which serve to inform our understanding of the relationship between religion and government in the United States.

First, Christianity was the prevailing moral and intellectual influence shaping the nation from its outset. The Christian influence pervaded all aspects of life, from education to politics. Therefore, the present concept of a rigid wall of separation hardly seems historically

justified. Virtually every one of the Founders saw a vital link between civil religion and civil government.

Second, the Founders stopped short of giving their Christian religion a position of legal privilege. In the tradition of the early church, believers were to be salt and light. The First Amendment insured the liberty needed for Christianity to be a preserving influence and a moral beacon, but it also insured Christianity would never be the law of the land.

This ought to call into serious question a common tactic of the so-called Religious Right. "We were here first," their apologists proclaim. "Our country was stolen from us, and we demand it back." Author John Seel calls this "priority as entitlement."

The sad fact of the matter is that cultural authority was not stolen from us; we surrendered it through neglect. Os Guinness pointed out that Christians have not been out-thought. Rather, they have not been around when the thinking was being done.

Choosing cultural monasticism rather than hard-thinking advocacy, Christians abandoned the public square to the secularists. When the disciples of Jesus Christ retreated, the disciples of Dewey, Marx, Darwin, Freud, Nietzsche, Skinner, and a host of others replaced them.

The faith of our Founding Fathers was Christianity, not deism. In this regard, many secularists--and even some Christians--have been wrong in their assessment of our history. On the other hand, many Christians have also been mistaken in their application of the past to the present.

Christians have no special privileges simply because Christianity was America's first faith. "If America ever was or ever will be a 'Christian nation,'" Seel observes, "it is not by conscious design or written law, but by free conviction."

Success for the Christian cannot be measured in numbers or political muscle, but only in faithfulness. Our most important weapon is not our voting power, but the power of the truth freely spoken and freely heard.

Your Body- Your Temple

By Dan Duran - Yuba City

Consider the following passages:
1 Corinthians 6:15- Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20- Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

What does this mean to you? What is a temple? A temple is a holy place where God and man connect. It is a place where God meets with his people. Therefore; if our body is a temple, a meeting place with God and owned by God, shouldn't we take care of it? Keep it strong, clean and healthy? My question to you is what have you done for your temple lately?


A temple has a wide foundation and it slopes upward to a point, usually

a cross. These three corners can be seen as a triad, or triangle. A triad is stable and difficult to push over. Our temple's three sides are composed of the mind, body and spirit. We must keep our minds clean and spirit strong with the word of God and fellowship with other Christians. How do we keep our body strong?

In the months to come, I hope to help answer this question with tips about health and nutrition. I welcome your comments, questions and suggestions and look forward to being a part of the Ambassador and it's mission of being the voice of the Christian Community.

Dan (and his wife, Jennifer) are the owners of Duran Health Solutions Inc. and Curves. Dan is a Certified Personal Trainer and may be reached at Coachdan@yubahealth.com.





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Mom to Mom by Jo Lynne Keough - Yuba City Needing Space



Have you ever noticed that words we use for stress are heavy, crowding words? We say we are burdened, pressured, depressed, heavy-hearted, overwhelmed and weighed down. Our schedules are tight, packed, and pressing in on us. On the other hand, compare words we use for feeling relaxed. We are lighthearted, carefree; we unwind, have room to breathe with schedules that are wide open, cleared, and free and easy. Feeling at peace involves spaciousness.

I experienced the roominess of relaxing once last week. After days of rain, the sky cleared one afternoon, so I took my basset hound to the park behind the Sutter County Museum. We criss-crossed the brown winter grass without another soul in sight. Just before leading my dog back to the car, I lingered.

Next I did something I haven't done in years. I lay down on the bare grass. I watched the bright blue sky, saw a hummingbird darting above and higher still, a soaring hawk. God was putting on a nature show just for me. His presence was as real as the sun warming my face. For those minutes, God brought me to a spacious place.

The Bible has a Hebrew word that means spacious place—merchab (mer khawb). David used it in Psalm 18:19.

"He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me." Our God rescues. Isn't that what your heart craves—space from your crowded, busy life for just a few moments? My heart craves it, too.

We can love our families, our jobs, and our lives yet still long for space. If you have young ones at home, space can be rare, but don't let that stop you from asking God for it. Remember, he rescues you because he delights in you. Ask, "Lord, will you give me a merchab today?" Then be watchful. Don't squander an opportunity when the baby is napping so that you can "get some more done."

My fifteen minutes of merchab were so refreshing, the peace lingered the rest of the day. When my husband came home from work, he could tell I was different, not only from the brown grass clinging to the back of my sweater, but from the contented smile on my face.

May God lead you to your own spacious place today. And may you be blessed with the peace that comes with grass on your sweater.

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CALENDAR

WWW.AMBASSADORNEWSPAPER.COM

ONGOING EVENTS

Christian Business Alliance Luncheon

Every 1st Tue @ Noon
Bonanza Inn, Yuba City
Join us for Lunch, Fellowship and God's Word! For info contact Dave Kugelman 530-632-9292

Right to Life Monthly Meeting

1st Wed., 7pm (1st Wed of every month)
St. Isidore's Community Parish Hall Conference Room

Business Meeting open to the all interested in pro-life issues. For more info, visit www.ystrl.org

ME Dessert (Marriage Educators)

Mon 12/14, 6:30-8PM (Monthly 2nd Monday)
@ The Cookie Tree, YC

1st timers Welcome! Have a cup and a cookie while listening to what others are & planning to do to strengthen relationships and families. If you have an interest in strengthening relationships, we can fan your flame. Call Robbie @671-6069 or visit www.YubaSutterMarriage.com

Souper Mondays

First United Meth. Church, YC
Monday's 12-1pm
Enjoy a free car wash while you have a BBQ lunch on us"

WISE (Women In Search of Excellence)

Bible Study
Cornerstone Church
Tue. 7pm

FREE Karate Classes

First Baptist Church of Olivehurst
Tue 6:30pm
FREE karate classes taught from a Christian perspective. 743-1831 for info, Pastor Miguel.

Divorce Care

Church of Glad Tidings
Every Wed. 7pm - 8:30pm
A weekly seminar/support group for those separated or divorced. A place where people understand your experience. Learn how to deal with the pain of the past and look forward to rebuilding your life. Reg./Info: 671-6069 robbie@yubasuttermarriage.com
www.yubasuttermarriage.com

Celebrate Recovery

Yuba City Nazarene Church
Wed 6:30pm
Join us for this Christ-centered recovery group that provides a safe place for you with people who will love you through your pain, and celebrate with you during your victories. The group meets weekly, so visit us any time. Contact Sean Blount at 329-3485 for more info.

Weekly Recovery Groups

Crossroads Community Church
Sundays 7-8pm and at Noon on Thursdays.
We also offer a Grief Recovery Group on Wednesday Evenings from 7 to 8 p.m. For more information, please call Joyce Jordan at: 674-3441.

Celebrate Recovery

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Tues 7pm - 674-9210

Celebrate Recovery

Loma Rica Community Church - Moy Hall.
Fri., 7pm.

Call church office for more information 743-5435.

Crossroads Clothes Closet

Crossroads Community Church, YC
Shop at our - FREE Clothes given away! Open weekdays 10-noon & 2:00 -4:00 pm

Follow Jesus Services

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Prayer Meetings Daily 7pm
For more info visit www.followjesusservices.org
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paulbawalker@followjesusservices.org

AWANA

Wed's, 5:45-7:45 PM during the school year
Evangelical Free Church
3785 Olive Hwy., Oroville
For information please call 533-6866
Awana is a boys and girls club consisting of small group time, games, large group time. Awards are given for Bible verse memorization and handbook achievement. For ages 2 through the eighth grade.

Prayer Vigil for LIFE!

Last Wed of each month, 4-5pm
Join us as we gather with people of faith throughout our area, as we peacefully pray on the sidewalk at the Yuba City Planned Parenthood. We meet on the last Wednesday of the month. For more info, please contact Hope Ithurburn at (530) 301.0380.

WestWord Riders Motorcycle Ministry

NEW LOCATION Gridley Grill
(Old Crossroads Rest.), 484 Hwy 99, Gridley
March 20 at 8:30am
The WestWord Riders motorcycle fellowship meets the 3rd Saturday of each month. Meetings are followed by a planned ride so dust off that helmet and join us! For any other information contact Willy Alongi at 701-1045.

Celebrate Recovery (NEW)

Yuba City Nazarene Church, YC
Wed's, 6:30pm
Join us for this Christ-centered recovery group that provides a safe place for you with people who will love you through your pain, and celebrate with you during your victories. The group meets weekly, so visit us any time. Contact Sean Blount at 329-3485 for more info.

Celebrate Recovery (NEW)

Gridley Nazarene Church (in the Grace Lutheran Church Bldg), 150 Ford Avenue, Gridley
Fri's, 6:30pm
Join us for this Christ-centered recovery group that provides a safe place for you with people who will love you through your pain, and celebrate with you during your victories. The group meets weekly, so visit us any time. Contact Jim Myers at 635-4688 for more information.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Men's March Advance

Theme: Call Upon The Lord
Fri, March 5th 7p.m. and
Sat, March 6th - 9a.m. - 1p.m.
Speaker: Jason Clark
Cost \$15.00 Men - \$5.00 Each Son
Call the church office for more info: 751-9168

The Nelons (FREE Concert)

Crossroads Community Church, Yuba City

CBA MARKETPLACE MONTHLY

Bok Kai Festival vs. The National Day of Prayer

By Dave Kugelman - Marysville

On March 20th, thousands of Yuba - Sutter residents, as well as thousands of out of town visitors will flock to downtown Marysville to celebrate the annual Bok Kai festival. "Bok Eye is considered the god of the North and is said to be the Chinese god of water whose powers have successfully prevented Marysville from being flooded when all surrounding communities have sustained near-ruinous flooding as recently as 1997." (*information from official Bok Kai festival website). For those who are followers of Jesus Christ we believe that God controls all things and not a Chinese water god. Remember the second commandment; you shall not make for yourself an idol.

I bring this to your attention for this reason. Why is it that the Bok Kai festival can draw thousands and the National Day of Prayer events are poorly attended? Granted, the National Day of Prayer breakfast has had solid attendance but the prayer gatherings at the Yuba County courthouse and City Hall in Yuba City have had pathetically poor attendance. (Generally just a few

dozen people). The National Day of Prayer is one of the only Christian events where we can lay down our denominations to gather publicly to call on Jesus on behalf of our community. The huge attendance at the Bok Kai festival is an indication that attendees are making the event a priority. Let's make this year's National Day of Prayer a major priority too. Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 6th. The day will start with a prayer breakfast at 7:00 a.m. (location and further details to be announced). There will be noon events in both Marysville and Yuba City. The April edition of the Ambassador will have complete details.

Also, please consider attending the Christian Business Alliance lunch meetings which are held every Tuesday at noon at various locations. To be included in the weekly email reminders, email Seth Halpern at editor@ambassadornewspaper.com. For more information about the Christian Business Alliance contact David Kugelman at 632-9292.

Sat, March 6th - Preconcert at 6:30pm

While some of the Nelons' songs and arrangements may be decidedly modern-day, the second act of a Nelons concert takes a page from the very beginnings of gospel music itself. The people love to hear the old songs and the old hymns. Call the church office for more info: 751-9168

The Kingsmen (FREE Concert)

Crossroads Community Church - Yuba City
Fri, March 26th - Preconcert at 6:30pm
With countless records sold, Grammy nominations, Dove Awards and an induction into the "Gospel Music Hall of Fame" & "The Christian Music Hall of Fame", The Kingsmen are gospel music's most successful quartet. Call the church office for more info: 751-9168

Mexican Dinner

Loma Rica Community Church - Loma Rica
Sat, March 6th 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm
and Sun, March 7th after both morning services.
Come enjoy a Mexican Dinner for a free will offering that will support the Mexico Missions Team made up of youth and adults who will be serving in Mexico during Spring Break 2010.

Mexico Missions Yard Sale

Loma Rica Community Church - Loma Rica
Fri, March 5th - 7am - 5pm & Sat, March 6th - 8am - noon
This event is to raise funds for the youth to spend Spring Break helping out in Mexico with Azusa Pacific University with building projects and Vacation Bible School.

St. Patrick's Day Service

Riverbend Elementary School
March 14, 10am
There will be a church service in the Auditorium at 10am and the potluck will follow in the Multi-purpose room.

Living Last Supper

First United Methodist Church - Yuba City
Apr 6th starting at 6pm
Have you ever wondered what the disciples were thinking and feeling during their last gathering with Jesus? Develop a new understanding about how they began their ministry as one of the twelve, and how that experience made them the Men of God they became to carry on the Christian movement.

Ray Allen Band

LIVE ALBUM RECORDING & CONCERT
Yuba City Nazarene Church
Fri Mar 26, 7pm
Join us for this unique opportunity to be part of a live recording. Doors open at 6:30pm and close at 7pm Late admittance will not be allowed due to recording. Event is FREE. Childcare available for 5 & under, no children under 5 allowed in the show. A free will offering will be taken. Contact the church office at 671-1130 for more details.

Creative Light Theater- "Beauty for Ashes"
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Mar 17-19, 24-46, 6:30pm
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Insulin or Ice Cream? By Greg Koukl

Recently, I opened my talk before a group in Southern California with an observation: There's a difference between ice cream and insulin.

When choosing ice cream, you can choose what you like.

When choosing medicine, you must choose what heals.

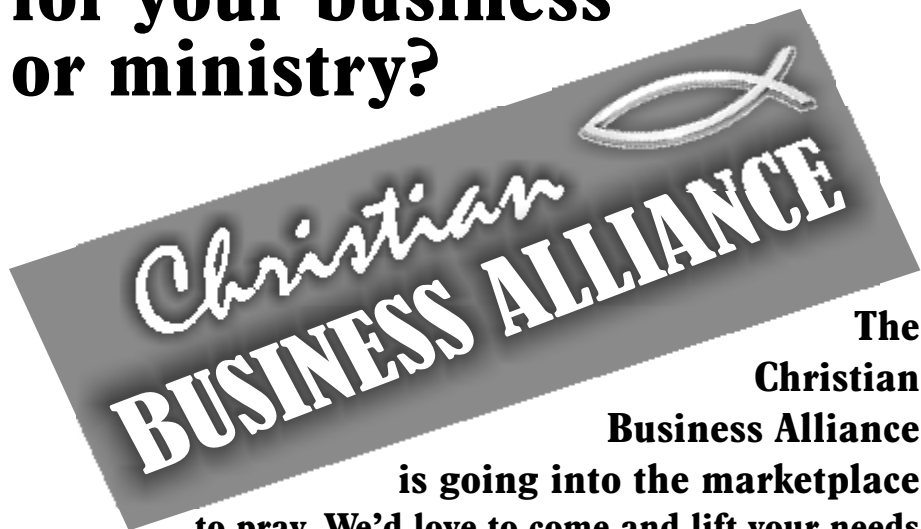
When choosing ice cream you can choose what's true for you.

When choosing medicine you must choose what's true.

There is significant confusion on this point. Americans think of God, religion, and morals like ice cream and not like insulin. They choose religious views according to tastes, according to what they prefer rather than according to what's true.

Non-believers view religion like ice cream. Remarkably, Christians often do the same thing.

Would you like prayer for your business or ministry?



The Christian Business Alliance is going into the marketplace to pray. We'd love to come and lift your needs up in prayer. If you are interested in having a small group of committed Christians pray for your business please contact Dave Kugelman at drkug@comcast.net or Seth Halpern at editor@ambassadornewspaper.com



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POLITICS/CULTURE

'Islamophobes' unwelcome at Fox News

Chad Groening - OneNewsNow

A former member of the Palestine Liberation Organization who has converted to Christianity says a Saudi prince is now the second-largest shareholder in Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, the parent company of the Fox News Channel.

For years the Fox News Channel has described itself as "fair and balanced," free from what some consider the "Kool-Aid" of liberalism and political correctness of other national news agencies. But Walid Shoebat, former Palestinian terrorist who is now a Christian, says ever since Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal became a major stockholder in Fox's parent company, he has been able to influence its news content.

"He himself said, 'I just had to make a phone call to [tell them to] stop using the word Muslim' regarding the rioting in France," Shoebad notes. "Bill O'Reilly says to Ibrahim Hooper, the head of the Council on American-Islamic Relations

(CAIR), that he is an upstanding citizen. Since when was the head of CAIR an upstanding citizen?" he wonders.

The former terrorist adds that viewers will no longer be seeing any so-called "Islamophobes" on Fox.

"Today, I'm not invited at Fox News. Neither is Robert Spencer or Brigitte Gabriel," he laments. "But Ibrahim Hooper is invited to speak at Fox News. It used to be that experts on terrorism who are critical of the Islamic views [were] able to get a voice on Fox News. Those days are gone."

Shoebat concludes that instead of airing those critical views of Islam, Fox News now legitimizes Hooper, the spokesman for CAIR, a group which he maintains is a front for the terrorist group Hamas.

In recent years, Alwaleed bin Talal, 54, has been among Forbe's list of the world's richest people. He is #22 on the 2009 list.

Prop. 8 judge encouraged to step down

Charlie Butts - OneNewsNow

More controversy surrounds the federal judge presiding over the legal challenge to California's Proposition 8.

Prop. 8 was approved by California voters in November 2008 to overturn an earlier state Supreme Court ruling that legalized homosexual "marriage," but a San Francisco newspaper recently "outed" Judge Vaughn Walker as a homosexual. Matt Barber, attorney and director of cultural affairs at Liberty Counsel, believes Walker ought to resign from the case if the allegation is true.

The Liberty Counsel attorney cites from federal law that "a judge shall disqualify himself when he knows that he has a financial or any other interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the proceeding," and he argues that if Walker is a homosexual and

overturns Prop. 8, he would benefit by granting himself the right to marry a man. Given that effect, Barber decides that hardly represents impartiality.

He goes on to report that Judge Walker has been silent since the newspaper claim was published. "Well, the judge has said, 'No comment' when asked about his sexual lifestyle," explains the Liberty Counsel attorney. "I think he needs to comment. If in fact he is engaged in the homosexual lifestyle, there is a clear conflict of interest here under federal law."

Barber notes a number of rulings in the trial that favored homosexual activists and diminished efforts of Proposition 8 supporters to present their case.

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ENTERTAINMENT/MEDIA

Christian Music Stars Unite for Haiti

Release 'Come Together Now'

Kevin P. Donovan - Christian Post Reporter

While the star-studded cast of "Valentine's Day" was helping the romance flick snag the box office's No. 1 spot with its \$52.4 million debut, another star-studded crew released its highly anticipated project over the same weekend but with a different aim.

Two weeks after Christian music star Michael W. Smith gathered a who's-who list from the Christian and Country music communities to record "Come Together Now," the song was released on iTunes and Amazon for purchase along with the mission to support quake-devastated Haiti by having all proceeds from the song's sales benefit relief efforts there.

In total, over 100 artists were brought on board for the project, including Aaron Shust, Brandon Heath, Chris Sligh, Everlife, Francesca Battistelli, The Katinas, Mandisa, Mark Hall, Matthew West, Melinda Doolittle, Natalie Grant, Nicole C. Mullen, Phil Stacey, Point of Grace, PureNRG, Rachael Lampa, Steven Curtis Chapman, and TobyMac.

The song - penned by Smith, David Mullen and Cindy Morgan - was written to remind people of the need to help those in Haiti following last month's 7.0-magnitude earthquake.

"The crisis in Haiti has left us all trying to figure out how we can help," said Smith as he assembled the award-winning group artists.

"We wanted to create something that the community could support, for the

greater good of those in Haiti," he added.

For the project, Belmont University opened the doors of its Ocean Way Studios to the artists and the musicians donated their time with the intent to have all proceeds from the song to go to designated charity/relief work through The American Red Cross and Samaritan's Purse.

In addition to lending their voices in song, several artists also recorded PSA's for The American Red Cross and Samaritan's Purse for use in upcoming months.

"It's incredible to be part of something that is going to help so many people," commented Smith.

In the days leading to the song's release, a website (cometotheternowhaiti.com) was created, as well as a Facebook page and Twitter account.

Through these and other media, the artists behind "Come Together Now" are encouraging their fans to help spread word of the project and to also call their local radio stations to request for the song to be played.

The cost to purchase the song on iTunes and Amazon.com is \$1.29. The project's website also provides a way for supporters to make direct donations to Samaritan's Purse and The American Red Cross.

The full title of the 4:15 song is "Come Together Now (Music City Unites for Haiti)."

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A Peek At My Bookshelf

Recommended Reading by Deena Peterson, Olivehurst

"Forgotten God" by Francis Chan

While it isn't as great and mind-blowing as "Crazy Love", Francis Chan's new book is definitely worth the read. He examines the Biblical passages dealing with the Holy Spirit and adds dimension to an often forgotten person of the Trinity.

"Forgotten God" discusses how the church has neglected the teachings on the Holy Spirit and is lacking in the power she could be walking in. Francis backs up his writings with Scripture, and gives a lot of food for thought.

Some of the points he makes are ones I've thought of before, but he also gives new ideas to roll around. For instance, we are often guilty of referring to the Holy Spirit as 'it' rather than 'Him'. And we forget that we can grieve Him, that the Holy Spirit has emotions.

Many of his analogies hit home. Would you ever buy a treadmill, hoping to lose weight, and not even take it out of the box? Then return it, claiming that you didn't lose any weight, even though you had the thing for two months? The church often claims to be walking in the Spirit, but we won't let Him out of the box!

And the reasons for that are multiple: something Francis also talks about. Fear, lack of knowledge, and misunderstanding are just a few excuses we use to limit the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

But most powerful, to me, are the real-life testimonies Francis shares about people who genuinely walk in the Spirit. Many of them moved me to tears, and all of them inspired me to want more of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Then again, Francis challenged me to ask myself "Why?" Why do I want Him in my life--for selfish reasons, or to better build up the Body of Christ? Even that can be tricky to discern, but Francis helps us to uncover our motives for doing what we do--or NOT doing it!

In all, this is an engaging book that is well worth reading, and will most definitely spark some good and healthy conversation within the church. I recommend adding this one to your "keep and read often" shelf.


So, I'm giving "Forgotten God" five out of five bookmarks, with a high-lighter as a charm. You really can't read a book like this without something to mark

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“The Peter Principle” (part 2) - By Janis Maasen - Forbestown

Jesus knew Peter would turn away from, then turn back to faith in Him. "But I have prayed especially for you [Peter]; and when you yourself have turned again, strengthen and establish your brethren" (Luke 22:31-32, Amp) In fact, Jesus foretold the time all his disciples would leave Him (John 16:32). However, it was to Peter that Jesus expressly instructed 'strengthen and establish' the other disciples after he himself re-established his own faith.

Peter was gifted to be a leader even though his betrayal of Jesus appeared to disqualify him from continuing to be a disciple. The angel who appeared at the empty tomb of our Lord instructed Mary "tell the disciples AND Peter... (Mark 16:7) - distinguishing Peter from the disciples. Thankfully, God gives us gifts in spite of who we are and what we are capable of doing! "For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. [He never withdraws them once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom

He sends His call.]" (Romans 11:29 Amp).

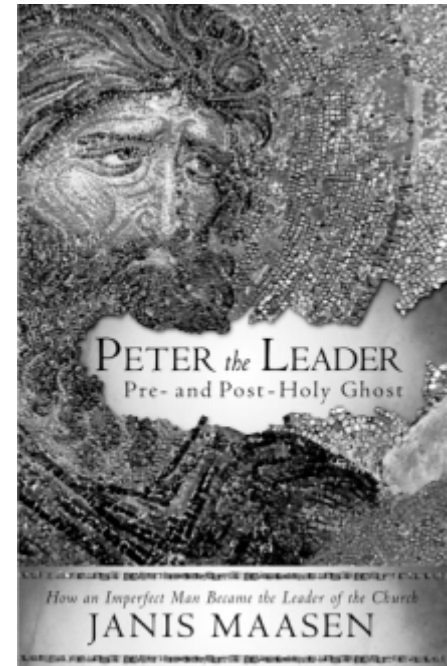
A leader among the disciples throughout Jesus' three years of earthly ministry, the disciples respected Peter and often times communicated with the Lord through him. However, God's giftings require the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be effective and useful for Kingdom purposes. "No one discerns (comes to know and comprehend) the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have received the [Holy] Spirit Who is of God, [given to us] that we might realize and comprehend and appreciate the gifts bestowed on us by God (Amplified)" 1 Corinthians 2:9-12. "The Holy Spirit will teach you all things..." John 14:26. The Holy Spirit will "endue" or clothe you "with power" Luke 24:49.

The transformation of Peter's life is astounding after he was filled with the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost! In the Gospels, we last see him denying he even knew Jesus, denying he was one of the disciples. In Acts, chapter 1, Peter shows leadership among the disciples and other

believers awaiting the promise Jesus gave after His resurrection. After the Father sends His promised Holy Spirit to those awaiting Him, they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" astonishing the Jews who'd come to Jerusalem from 14 regions to celebrate Passover. Astonished because these (simple) Galileans were speaking in each of the visiting Jews' own language. The newly spirit-filled believers were then accused of being drunk! This accusation excited Peter who immediately addressed those making accusations against the believers. "Listen to me!" Peter said as he addressed the men of Judea and all those living in Jerusalem (Acts 2:14).

To be continued in the April Issue of The Ambassador

Peter the Leader: Pre and Post Holy Ghost is a book that details the inspirational life of the Apostle Peter as recorded within seven New Testament books. The book begins with the historical record of the Apostle Peter, followed by four phases of his journey



from ordinary to extraordinary: From hysterical to heretical, Peter goes on to become "hero"ical and lives out the remainder of his life honorably.

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Community Profile

Tom Harris Big T's Trees Service

The first thing you will notice when meeting Tom Harris is why his tree service is named Big T's. That's "Big T" for Tom. As he towers over me (I know, most people do!), I was struck by the gentleness of his manner. Tom has known trouble. He grew up in a family that did not lead him to God but according to Tom, was "pretty normal". Born in the Bay Area, Tom moved to Hawaii at the age of ten with his mother recently divorced from Tom's father. They moved back to the "mainland" settling in Yuba City at the home of his grandfather.

Attending Yuba City High School, Tom saw himself being unproductive and mostly getting into trouble. After graduating, he continued a downward spiral that led him into trouble with the law. Tom found himself in Sutter County Jail and within weeks he knew that he needed to make a change. He saw that his "friends" were nowhere to be found, but his family, whom he was estranged from, were there to visit and support him. As his head "started to become clear" Tom says, he saw that he needed help. A fellow inmate recommended that he start reading the Bible, so he began reading in Matthew. As he read, Tom's soul resonated with the words of Jesus. He began spending more time in reading and prayer. According to Tom, "plenty of guys reading the Bible, but it seems that most of them go back to their old friends and their old ways when they get out". He did not want to fall into the same trap. He



found new hope and new grace and people saw that he was more excited and upbeat than he was before entering jail.

When he finished serving his time, he continued his journey by participating in a transitional program outside the area sponsored by the Salvation Army. Through their discipleship, Tom's faith deepened. Then he came back to Yuba City where he continued his "new" life at Buddy's House Sober Living Facility. Through wonderful mentoring and friendship, Tom had truly seen what life change can bring. He met and married Amy and together they have a 17-month-old son.

Tom learned how to cut, trim and do everything else with trees from his father, for whom he worked on and off since he was young. In 2006, he started Big T's Tree Service. He has three employees and today he encourages them to show the love of Christ to those they serve. Tom may be big in stature, but he is also big in heart. He wants to "do right" by people. He shares that it's not about just securing the bid through the lowest price, but while his rates are fair, he makes sure that his customer is satisfied. What I found in

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Everyone is encouraged to come and participate as we join as one body to consider the magnitude of what Jesus suffered on behalf of mankind. Also, join with other believers in quiet worship and prayer. For more info, call (530) 673-7709 or (530) 673-3671

talking with Tom is that although his stature and heart are big, his "ego" is not. Tom displays the kind of humility and non-religious honesty that is refreshing. I love to meet with someone who is not just excited about what God can do, but is excited simply to know him. Big T's Tree Service is a Ministry Partner with The Ambassador and Tom feels that his investment in The Ambassador is of greater value (eternally) than other advertising venues he's been participated in.

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By what it takes
to discourage
him.



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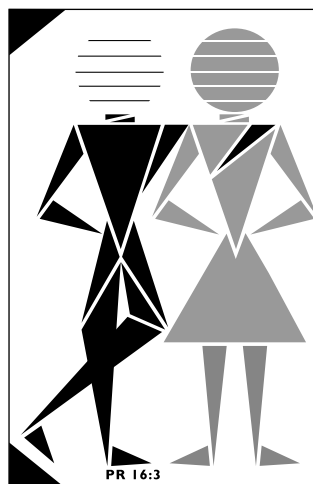
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Tiger's Tale

Will someone explain to me why Tiger Woods owes you or me an apology? What he did was wrong- inexcusable, unjustifiable. He knows that. We know that. He owes his wife and children an apology. He might even owe his friends or business associates an apology. For that matter, anyone he had any relationship with to whom he broke trust. But me and (dare I say) you? I don't really understand a culture that requires an apology from an athlete for sinning against his family. Now if we are talking about an elected official, that is a completely different story. We were rightfully outraged at the behavior and cover-up of former President Bill Clinton. Now, here was someone who was given the public trust, to the point of voting him as our leader! Isn't he some sort of ambassador or diplomat now? Funny how we forget. Or how about Eliot

Spitzer, Ted Stevens, John Edwards, Mark Sanford, Rod Blagojevich... the list is too long to put here. These men need to answer to us. Tiger Woods needs to answer to his family and to God. Worse, what about Church and religious leaders like Ted Haggard, Jimmy Swaggart or the countless other fallen leaders of our Christian faith. They truly owe an apology to those who have trusted in them to lead them to God. Until Woods takes Brit Hume's advice, repents before God and seeks His forgiveness, he will suffer the consequences of even the most "moral" unbelievers. It is our celebrity-addicted culture that has created "moral or spiritual role models" of people who have athletic or artistic talent. The media has made Tiger larger than life. He, like Brittany Spears and others, cannot stand up to the scrutiny that comes as a result of undue adoration. Tiger Woods is a great golfer. He is not and should not be considered anything more.

He who angers you, controls you!

NO GROWTH, NO GAIN

By Jon Skillman - Oroville

By now, most of our New Year's Resolutions have found their way to the scrap heap of good intentions. I no longer bother with resolutions because I have realized that my will cannot stand up to that of an apple fritter.

In our old house there was a wall upon which we had recorded the growth of our two sons. That growth record has been covered over by numerous coats of paint of many colors, but is indelibly marked on my memory.

I tell you this because in lieu of resolutions, I have decided to use New Years to mark my spiritual growth. You know, evaluate where I am this year, compare it to where I was last year and plan for where I want to be next year. After a few years I can connect the dots to form a mental graph that plots my spiritual growth. Kind of like a graph plotting the return on my investments...but prayerfully, one that charts a more positive gain.

Spiritual growth is hard to measure because it is subjective and at the mercy of our perception. Some folks are

satisfied with simply attending church, while others go to church, attend Sunday school, read the Bible and work in church ministries. Some may even venture into the mission fields. These are all good things that good Christians do.

But herein lies the rub; no matter where we may be spiritually, we should never feel spiritually satisfied. Oswald Chambers wrote; "It is not a good thing to be spiritually satisfied." Why? Because being a Christian is an ongoing process, and being spiritually satisfied would be an indication that we have stopped growing.

Spiritual satisfaction should be perpetually just beyond our reach so that God can continually draw us out of our comfort zone and into His service... It's kind of like dangling a fritter just beyond my reach. I'd be off in a heartbeat, and you'd better not get in my way.

We all travel different roads to salvation. But arriving at salvation doesn't mean we simply shift ourselves into park and wait to be glorified. There's a little more to it than that.

AS WE SEE IT

Lessons From A Friend - A Tribute To Peter Hegarty By Seth Halpern



Seth Halpern - Editor

I've recently had the "unfortunate privilege" to speak on behalf of a good friend. Peter was just that to me: A Friend. But I'm not talking about "Facebook-type" friends here or any other acquaintance-type friendship. I'm talking about the rare relationship where two people not only care for each other, but are "cut from the same cloth". It's easy to find a "friend" who has similar interests or the same favorite TV shows. I'm talking about the relationship where you understand the predicaments, the trials and the triumphs, of another human being; Those things that are too deep to articulate, yet resonate inwardly in a sort of "spooky" likeness. A true kinship. Such was my friendship with Peter. When I found myself "busy" with the things of life and apologized to Peter for the delay in responding to his voice mail message, his response was simply "I love you and if I don't hear from you until a year from now, I'll still love you" Remember, we're not talking about spouses or even biological family. This is "friendship" This is what Proverbs means when it says "There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother"(Prov 18:24) We don't get too many of these in our lives. Peter showed me what it means to be a friend. To exhort gently, to receive humbly, to forgive completely. My friend Peter fought a lot of "demons". Some of these may have been spiritual enemies of his soul and others quite possibly were his own bad choices (which he would

readily admit). That aside, Peter was a man of conviction and worship. His God (thankfully, my God as well) is one worth knowing and worthy of our worship, regardless of what He gives to us or takes from us. Peter and I would spend hours at a time pondering the "mysteries" of this incredible God we serve. One of his favorite verses "Though He slay me, yet will I trust him"(Job 13:15) kept him going through the trials of and victory over alcohol as well as the nearly constant physical ailments in his "beat-up" body, and finally, total blindness along with a colostomy. I can't see how I would be as faithful a servant of God as Peter was while enduring that misery. Yet, one thing I know: Peter saw MORE Blind than most of us do with our full vision. I learned another lesson through Peter, if not by him. That is that we are too busy with life. I told Peter that I would take him to Christian Business Alliance meetings, but I was too busy. I told him that I wanted to interview him on my radio show, but I never got around to it. I can't go back in time, but I can go forward with different priorities. Well, finally, Peter was given his pass, his diploma, his retirement watch from this life, so to speak, so that he could be with his Daddy in Heaven, in an unhindered, undistracted time of fellowship. I'm thankful for Peter that he's enjoying the streets of gold and I know that his "Irish Eyes are Smiling"

Although salvation does bring a sense of contentment, we shouldn't confuse that contentment with satisfaction... Why, because we haven't reached our destination yet.

God gives each of us spiritual gifts to help us fulfill His purpose for our life. And trust me, he expects a return on His investment. Your rate of return is very important because, that is what you will be judged on, on "That Day."

So, load up your spiritual gifts, shift

into spiritual overdrive, get on the Sanctification highway and head for God's Kingdom. There are no mileage markers, and we know not the time of our arrival.

But, on "That Day," I pray my spiritual growth chart will reflect a rate of return worthy of my Lord saying,

"Well done good and faithful servant... Be Glorified!

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Understanding Faith



“You will never learn faith in comfortable surroundings.”

~ A.B. Simpson

“Faith is saying “Amen” to God.”

~ Merv Rosell

“A simple childlike faith..solves all the problems that come to us.”

~ Hellen Keller

“The only way to learn strong faith is to endure strong trials.”

~ George Mueller

“Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation.”

~ Elton Trueblood

“Faith never knows where it is being led
but it loves and knows the one who is leading.”

~ Oswald Chambers

“Faith is knowing there is an ocean because you have seen a brook.”

~ William Ward

“Faith is to believe what you cannot yet see; the reward for this faith
is to see what you believe.”

~ Saint Augustine

“Faith is the highest passion in a human being.”

~ Soren Kierkegaard

“What is faith?

It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen.
It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see.”

~ The Holy Bible (Heb 11:1 NLT)