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FEATURE ARTICLE – THE DEADLY INFLUENCE OF HOLLYWOOD IN OUR CHURCHES - PART 2



(This is the second in a series of articles on movies. Hughie Seaborn is a member of [Coastline Baptist Church](#) in Cairns, Qld. He often writes articles that show much discernment regarding Hillsong, CCM, the Ecumenical Movement, and others. A friend asked for counsel regarding movies, especially religious movies, with the result that he wrote the following article. - Ed.)

FACING THE GIANTS – RELIGIOUS MOVIES

"¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:15-16).

Recently, I had the opportunity to discuss the subject of religious movies with a young Independent Baptist friend. We were specifically discussing the "Noah" movie, produced by Paramount Pictures and starring Russell Crowe, which was released into the theatres on Thursday, 27 March, 2014.

Directed by filmmaker Darren Aronofsky, who openly professes to be an atheist, and who stated that *"Noah" is "the least biblical biblical film ever made"* and that he is proud of the fact that he has *"taken a story inspired by God's Word and turned it into something so secular,"* the movie has generated much debate within professed Christian communities, some enthusiastically claiming that it is a great door of opportunity to bring the Bible story of Noah into our discussions with the unsaved, and others claiming that it is heretical and blasphemous, presenting a distorted and deceptive picture of God's character and His dealings with mankind, and that the movie will do more damage than good.

At the outset, I need to confess that I definitely belong to the second camp, believing that using deceitful lies and pretence in the form of a religious movie, in an attempt to convince the unregenerate to be saved, is a futile exercise in the extreme. Considering that the unbelieving, atheistic producers, directors and actors who took part in creating *"Noah"* never so much as mentioned such a virtuous purpose for their handiwork, it amazes me that such a crowd of admired leaders in the churches would be courageous enough to do so.

In my opinion, the *"Noah"* movie is just one more calculated and well-organized device coming from the enemies of the Evangelical church, which can now be added to a long succession of previous devices, which demonstrate to the world at large that the church denies its claim to the sufficiency of Scripture. In other words, it's not good enough for us to instruct the unsaved about Noah and the Flood exclusively through the words of the Lord Jesus and His Apostles and Prophets, as recorded in the closed canon of Scripture, but we need the help of a movie - a movie which presents an entirely different account of events from that recorded in Scripture, and which has been produced by unbelievers with an agenda to make lots of money.

For some reason, an increasing number of modern Christians have been fooled into believing that they can sanctify an unholy, and blasphemous movie as an object that can lead people into a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They imagine that contemporary Christianity needs the assistance of a lie to initiate discussion about the Truth as found in God's Word, and that somehow, this will miraculously lead a lost sinner to salvation.

Some supporters have claimed the movie a great opportunity to get people talking about the Bible. Those who view the movie will now be open to discussing the events as presented in 'Noah' and will be eager to compare them with the teachings as found in the Bible, they say. They suppose that an open door will be

provided for a clear and accurate presentation of the Gospel to be offered to the people who have just had their minds polluted with the fantasy, disinformation and outright blasphemy that has been dished up to them on the big screen by a group of people who demonstrate that they have no love for the Bible, and who openly profess their hatred of the Lord Jesus Christ. My comment to my friend, who, I might add, demonstrates through the testimony of his life that he has been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord by God-fearing, Independent Baptist parents, and who also exhibits a very real desire to honour and serve the Lord through his life, was that I really didn't believe there was even one so-called Christian movie that has been produced by Hollywood that doesn't disobey the solemn warnings found in Scripture that we mere humans are not to add to, or diminish from God's Words. And those warnings weren't written only to Bible believers who like to go to church on Sunday, but to all of mankind, whether he believes in God and what God has said, or whether he doesn't. All mankind includes movie producers, directors and actors whose vain appeals to "artistic license" for the purpose of adding interest or effect will have absolutely no standing on the day they give account for their deliberate actions to the God of the Bible.

The question was asked, "What about that hugely popular Christian movie *'The Ten Commandments'* starring Charlton Heston? That movie has been enthusiastically endorsed in all streams of Christendom as a true and accurate expression of the biblical story."

But that question can only be answered in the affirmative if, during a bit of research, you read only reviews written exclusively by those who approve of unregenerate movie producers and actors creating fictitious and exaggerated depictions of factual, historic, biblical accounts, in a manner that makes them entertaining.

Since its release by Paramount Pictures in 1956, however, there have always been those "voices in the wilderness" who have criticised the movie, accusing for instance, that considerable liberties were taken with the scriptural account which clearly compromised the movie's claim to biblical faithfulness.

Having not watched the movie personally, I cannot give an assessment of its scriptural accuracy, but I do know that faithful, Bible believing critics have sufficiently proved that, rather than follow the historical account from the Scriptures, much of the movie's story line was adopted, by the director, Cecil B. DeMille, from ancient extra-biblical sources, such as the writings of *Josephus*, the *Sefer haYashar* (a 16th-century book of Jewish

legends covering the period from the creation of man to the first wave of the conquest of Canaan) and the *Chronicle of Moses* (a Jewish midrash, legendary "history" of the life of Moses).

So, rather than being a factual account of the Exodus as according to Scripture, *"The Ten Commandments"* movie, however appealing, and however celebrated it may be in the professing churches throughout the lands, is nothing more than an imaginary elaboration of truth mixed with error. Or to put it another way, it is a mixture of leaven and meal, the very thing that the Lord our God repeatedly warns us to avoid at all cost.

So my friend asked me another question, which really is the one that motivated me to write this article. He could see, and accept why I think like I do with regard to Christian-themed movies that have been produced by non-believers and painted with broad brushes of heretical artistic license, but what about Christian movies that have been produced by professing Christians, with the purpose of not only entertaining, but also for inspiring particularly young Christians in godly living and in overcoming the temptations of the flesh and maintaining a good testimony?

He asked me if I had ever seen the movies *"Facing the Giants,"* *"Flywheel,"* *"Courageous"* or *"Fireproof"*? The names were vaguely familiar to me, but I had to admit that I had not watched any of the movies. He said he would appreciate my opinion of them, so I offered to do a bit of research some time and let him know the outcome.

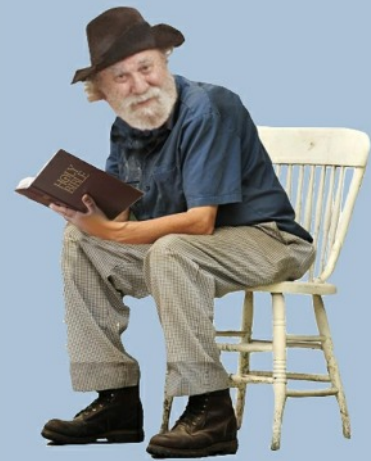
Curiosity got the better of me and later that night I jumped on the Internet. I was alarmed and disappointed at what I soon discovered.



FACING THE GIANTS – THE MOVIE

"¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? ¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:13-17).

DEACON TRUE SEZ -



We had a nephew drop in for a visit last week. He's a member of one of them there "Megachurches" in the big smoke. At supper last night we asked him what it's like, though we already knew a few things from what our preacher has told us. After while he lit on what seemed to be his favourite subject and that was that us old fashioned churches have got too many rules. He reckons there needs to be more "freedom and flexibility", on most everything.

You can tell what's important to a feller by what he gets fired up about, so I'm figurin' this was pretty important to him, the way he carried on like a porkchop.

Me and ma sat still and heard him out without sayin' a word. It took him most of two hours to get it all out of his system and head off to bed.

This mornin' we was standin' on the front porch shakin' hands goodbye when I told him, "You're prob'ly right about us old timers bein' too strict and havin' too many rules. I'm havin' a cup of coffee with the mayor this mornin'. Maybe I could put the idear to him that we start takin' down all the stop signs in town. And after that we could pull down the speed limit signs, and I guess we could do without our one stoplight. It would save the county a lot of maintenance money if we took down the road signs that tell which way to go to get to the next town and how far it is. You know, I reckon it might even liven things up if we put up a sign on the edge of town that says, 'Since we ain't racist, folks, you can drive on whichever side of the road you like in our town.' After all, in England and Australia they drive on t'other side of the road. We prob'ly shouldn't change things too quick, though. Maybe we should let trucks drive on left side of the road for six months and see how they go, and if that works out alright, then we can all move across if we want to. Of course, there will always be some old fashioned people that are too strict and just can't change....."

He looked at me sort of funny for a full minute, but didn't say anything, just got in his car and drove off.

But I did notice he was drivin' on the right hand side of the road.

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Released to cinemas in September 2006, "*Facing the Giants*" is an American Christian drama movie themed around American football. The movie is produced by [Sherwood Pictures](#), a ministry arm of contemporary, Southern Baptist affiliated, [Sherwood Baptist Church](#) in Albany, Georgia (US). The brainchild of the church pastoral staff, the supporting cast is composed of volunteers from within the church.

It was the second movie that Sherwood Pictures produced, the first being "*Flywheel*." "*Facing the Giants*" was released on DVD in early 2007 and made its television debut in September, 2008, on Paul Crouch's liberal, heresy infested Trinity Broadcasting Network. The movie relates an underdog story about American football.

[Provident Films](#) became involved when Sherwood Baptist Church approached [Provident Music Group](#), a Nashville-based music company, for permission to use songs by Provident musicians. What began as a routine viewing for publishing approval led to Provident's president opening discussions with Sherwood to oversee the movie's distribution. Provident Films, which is a joint venture between Provident and Sony, showed the movie to Sony Pictures, who loved it. Through its relationship with Sony, Samuel Goldwyn Pictures agreed to distribute the movie nationally, beginning September 29, 2006.

A search of the Internet produces page after page of results revealing that "*Facing the Giants*" is hugely popular, particularly among the youth, and is promoted in both Evangelical and Catholic churches.

The Sherwood Pictures website offers enticements such as high resolution posters and special pricing for bulk purchases of all of the Provident Films range of products. Site licences for their movies are also available for purchase for churches, and other interested organizations, that want to present public screenings to their people for motivational purposes.

On the "[Facing the Giants](#)" page of the official Provident Films website under the heading "Suggested Use" church leaders are encouraged to "*Host a church movie night that reaches beyond your core, equipping your members to invite friends and family who might not be willing to come to a traditional service. The Facing the Giants movie license is great for sports ministries or motivational business team development.*"

Also on that page under the heading "What Church Leaders Are Saying" are three glowing testimonies (quoted below) of huge successes, the result of taking Provident Films up on the "suggested use" of their movies.

*"As a church of only 80 people, showing the **Facing the Giants** movie at our church was a testament that with God all things are possible. We spread the word of the movie word of mouth and invited our local high school and middle school football teams, but we were amazed at what God did when more than 275 packed into our sanctuary! On top of that, 6 young people that gave their life to the Lord that night."* - Barry Bumgardner, Missionary Wesleyan Church, NC.

*"In a community of less than 5000, 230 people packed into our church to see the **Facing the Giants** movie. It was great as the crowd would cheer but even more incredible; at the end of the night 4 people gave their lives to Christ!"* - Jim Ayers, Lake Almanor Community Church.

"Because of our location in the mountains, winter months are our lowest attendance for normal services so to have 230 people show up for a "New Year's Eve-Facing the Giants Movie Night" was exciting. But what was more exciting were the 3 adults who gave their heart to Christ right after the movie." - Todd DuBord, Lake Almanor Community Church.

I have a number of problems with these testimonies, which probably won't have everyone agreeing with me, but I'll mention them anyway.

Firstly, Barry Bumgardner claims that the movie was "...a testament that with God all things are possible." Does anybody else out there think that there is perhaps something just a little bit wrong with our Christianity when the churches need movie actors to perform imaginary parts in imaginary stories in order to convince the unbelievers that Christians are people who believe, that with their God, all things are possible?

If unbelievers are unable to observe that kind of faith being demonstrated in the life of the Christian who invited them to come see the movie, then why would they be caused to believe that all things are possible with God by watching someone play acting that supposed faith on the big screen? The real flesh and blood example is sitting beside them.

Unless, of course, like what happens when churches decide to bring in a rock band to create a bit of excitement, they got all caught up in the emotional experience of the event, equating the game of football with living the Christian life, and deciding they might give it a try?

Secondly, it seems to me that attracting a crowd is a large part of the real purpose for doing a public screening of a movie about a game of football in the sanctuary of the

church. Inviting the local high and middle school football teams to a free movie about football is a no-brainer, to me.

Actually, it reminds me of my days in the AOG back in the 1980's when a group of local Pentecostal pastors had a brain storm about how to get more young people to come to church. They believed that the Holy Spirit had told them to rent out the local showgrounds and bring an American group called "The Power Team" to town. It was a miracle! Huge crowds turned up for the public event to watch a group of muscle bound strongmen bend iron bars, smash bricks on their heads, and do all kinds of remarkable things, accompanied by flashing lights, clouds of smoke and loud rock music. At the end of their performance they gave a Pentecostal style altar call. Quite a number of people responded, probably half expecting that if they prayed the Sinners Prayer with one of the strongmen present they would be miraculously transformed into Mr Hercules.

Perhaps we shouldn't be amazed, but The Power Team, like Sherwood Baptist Churches suite of movies, were enthusiastically promoted on Paul Crouch's heretical Trinity Broadcasting Network.

Thirdly, it is an amazing thing to me that any normal person, during all the noise and excitement of the crowd cheering and shouting all around them, could seriously contemplate the disturbing and thought provoking subject of eternal damnation, and the urgent need to call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to rescue them. The idea that anyone can be genuinely converted while he is occupied and distracted with the goings on of some imaginary hero in a football movie is, in my mind, gross deception. The Gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to all who hear it, believe it, and respond to it in the biblical manner, not some emotional scene in an fictional movie about football projected onto the big screen in the company of a couple of hundred distracting, shouting and cheering teenagers.

FACING THE GIANTS – WORLDLY "CHRISTIAN" WORLDVIEWS

"² For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. ³ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ". (2 Corinthians 11:2-3).

Promoters of the movie claim that it depicts American football from a Christian worldview. But really, we need to take into consideration, not so much the *professed* Christian worldview which is promoted by the people who produced and distribute the movie, but more their

demonstrated worldview. Their Christian worldview, just like ours, will be a direct reflection of their view of Scripture - what they believe doctrinally and how they act and live out their beliefs in their church, as well as in their community.

As mentioned above, Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia, claims to be "contemporary," and is affiliated with the very liberal Southern Baptist Convention. Contemporary in their vocabulary means that they are modern and pragmatic in their outlook about how church should be conducted, and they have a vastly different Christian worldview and assessment of the Scriptures than do Independent Baptists, particularly those Independent Baptist church leaders who are determined to obediently defend the faith and stand against the liberality and ecumenical bridge building to false religion and worldly entertainments that is currently well under way.

Of great concern to me is that churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist movement also have a vastly different view of Scripture than what my young Independent Baptist friend has. He has been carefully nurtured by his parents in their hope that he will survive the temptations and lusts of the world and mature into a strong and faithful Christian who wants to serve and honour God with his life and be a useful witness for Him. However, like some modern version Pied Piper brandishing a large banner emblazoned with the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, church leaders of a different biblical persuasion and with a vastly different Christian worldview than ours, are boldly marching into our congregations, speaking perverse things and drawing away our young people to themselves. They are influencing young IB Christians with a compromised and mostly apostate Southern Baptist worldview.

FACING THE GIANTS – FOOTBALL

"¹⁰ He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. ¹¹ The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." (Psalm 147:10-11).

I have an opinion about football, and I would claim that a Christian worldview of football does not include anything in favour of football, nor does it include anything in favour of the type of Christianity that promotes it. In fact, quite the opposite, I would say.

My article "[*Football – Should Christians Be Involved?*](#)" which I began writing around 1983, gives my unpopular view of football and it's adverse effect upon young Christians. I was only a young Christian myself at the time, but I noticed something unusual - a repeating

pattern of events that seemed to be taking place among a number of new converts in our church. From the little I had learned from my Bible in my short time as a Christian, I knew something wasn't right. Young Christians who, as part of their salvation experience, had been convicted that the culture of football was something they needed to quickly forsake, seemed, soon after, to struggle with the temptation of returning to that ungodly environment. From being saved from their lost estate, to joyfully worshipping the God Who had saved them and being in regular fellowship, to returning to their former life of debauchery, seemed to me to be not such an uncommon thing.

So I investigated this phenomenon in the light of Scripture and my provocative article was the result.

I'm not going to rehash my article here, it is available on the Internet, for anyone interested enough to read it at the link provided above, however, in the article I list eight reasons why I believe Christians who want to serve and honour God should avoid organised, competitive football at all costs.

For the purpose of this article I am only going to ask one question. It is up to you, the reader, to decide upon your answer. However, knowing in advance that your answer will reflect either an Independent Baptist influenced Christian worldview, or a SBC influenced worldview, or perhaps even a Catholic worldview, I will, never-the-less, appeal to you, that whatever answer you do arrive at, please make sure you have come to it from what you read in, and understand from your Bible.

The question I want you to carefully consider is this: *"Should a Bible believing, God honouring Christian, or a Bible believing, God honouring church, for any reason whatsoever, have any companionship, or unity, with the environment of organised, competitive football?"*

I can only go by what I have seen on the odd occasion on news reports of Super Bowl on TV to evaluate what American Football is like, but from the little I have seen it is not that much different from the Australian version, only a bit more grandiose in its presentation, which I might add the Australians are trying to copy.

The same idol worship, blasphemy and cursing of God's name are there. The same worldliness is there. The same gambling, drinking, filthy language, immodest dress, smoking, drug taking, competitiveness and violence are there. The same ego and pride are there. The same fornication and adultery and other sexual sins are there. The same forsaking of the assembly of the saints on the Lord's Day is there, just as it is in the Australian version, so I feel safe in saying that the American version of

football, and its godless environment, wouldn't be much different from the Australian version, and from what I read in my King James Bible, I can only come to the conclusion that the God who calls His people to holiness and separation, and who commands us to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" would not be happy with us pretending that He is happy about us having companionship and unity with such an environment, either as a player, or as a spectator.

And to use the excuse that we are only using the football environment for a good cause, to teach our young people to overcome adversity and strengthen their character, only helps to confirm our lack of trust in God, and the lie of our claim that we believe in the Sufficiency of Scripture and that the Bible is the final authority in everything we believe and do in our lives.

So, when, at the request of my Independent Baptist friend, I went and took a look at what the *"Facing the Giants"* movie was about, and I immediately discovered that the theme was American football, I was disturbed, to say the least. And I was disturbed even further when I realised that, like everything else in the modern church throughout the world, where compromised, liberal and pragmatic religious groups have seeming unhindered access into congregations, not of their own, to peddle their tainted goods and worldly views, the *"Facing the Giants"* movie has apparently already proven wildly popular. From what I can discover with just five minutes of research, the movie has been watched by, and has therefore influenced enormous numbers of young Independent Baptist Christians, who I know mostly have parents and Pastors who are valiantly, but frequently unsuccessfully, standing against the rising tide of worldly compromise.



FACING THE GIANTS – CCM (M = MUSIC - NOT MOVIES)

"¹⁷ And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. ¹⁸ And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for

being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.” (Exodus 32:17-18).

Unfortunately, my disappointment and concern about the “Facing the Giants” movie didn’t stop at football. There was more. And I expected there would be. You see, even from the days of silent movies, at the very inception of the vast movie industry we see today, there has always been the accompaniment of music with what was being shown on the screen. It used to be someone playing appropriate, mood setting music on an old honky-tonk piano down the front giving the viewing experience a more pleasurable and memorable feel.

Today, however, with the digital sound technology we have available, movie going is altogether a whole new thing. Sound effects and music are used very expertly, and are nearly as important to the success or failure of generating public endorsement for the movie as the actual movie itself. So I knew this “Facing the Giants” movie was going to have some kind of music score that was complimentary to the American style footy theme. I had my suspicions, so I went looking.

It wasn’t long before I came across the statement on Sherwood Film’s website that Sherwood Baptist Church approached Provident Music Group, a Nashville-based music company, for permission to use songs by Provident CCM artists Third Day and Casting Crowns.

On another page I discovered the list of songs that were used in the movie, and who the songs were sung by. Among the names I found listed were some very prominent and highly influential Contemporary Christian Rock musicians, such as Third Day, Casting Crowns, Bebo Norman, Ana Laura, Mac Powell (Third Day lead singer) and Josh Bates.

I also stumbled across a Christian Post news article dated July 1, 2013, where I learned that Sherwood Baptist Church held a “Freedom Festival” to celebrate American Independence and Freedom in Christ where a calculated 6000 people were entertained with live music. The organizer excitedly reported that “We had a number of different types of music, music from the 60’s, 70’s, and 80’s. There was a Beatles’ Tribute Band, and of course patriotic music as well.”

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/ga-megachurch-draws-6000-people-for-freedom-festival-ahead-of-fourth-of-july-99189/>

CCM is a cause for much controversy and is having a huge impact upon all churches in our day. Many churches have recognised that CCM is a very effective tool for attracting crowds of young people to their services. CCM is also

being used as a tool to attract an ever increasing crowd of young people from Independent Baptist churches to attend services at liberal Evangelical churches, and even Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Contemporary liberal churches using CCM are a bit more alive and entertaining than their own dull old hymn-singing churches.

To compensate for the potential youth drain, many Independent Baptist churches are employing CCM in their services, even vigorously defending their right to do so when challenged about their compromise by other concerned Christians.

CCM is also being used to further ecumenical fellowship between Evangelicals and Catholics. For example, when Hillsong, the famous Australian Pentecostal church band, performed for the Pope’s World Youth Day event in Sydney, Australia in 2008, Darlene Zschech, Hillsong’s most venerated and adored singer, was recorded as saying, *“We see World Youth Day as a great opportunity to serve the Catholic Church in its vision to present the Gospel and reach out to our city, our nation, and our world in unity.”*

This is a breathtaking example of dangerous scriptural ignorance that, because of her vast influence upon millions of young church goers, will have the disastrous consequence of convincing people that Roman Catholics are genuine brothers and sisters in Christ who do not need to hear the Gospel and be saved. In fact, they will be led to believe that Roman Catholicism is a genuine expression of biblical Christianity, and, as is already happening, they will consider attending Roman Catholic churches.

CCM can lead people into religion, but it is not an acceptable method for leading people into the truth of the Gospel. It is also not sufficient for Hillsong, Third Day, Casting Crowns or any other CCM group to quote passages of Scripture in their songs to justify the use of their contemporary rock music in churches. Satan quoted Scripture to Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:1. He also quoted Scripture to the Lord Jesus in Matthew 4:6. And he’s still quoting and misquoting Scripture today through CCM musicians, modern translations of the Bible and the multitude of false teachers who seem to have free and ready access through the front doors of just about any and every church they so desire to influence. Attempting to sanctify their worldly rock music with verses of Scripture only serves to reveal the CCM artists’ scriptural ignorance.

Recently, I read a quote from the June 24, 2008 issue of Relevant Magazine that should strike at least some fear into the heart of any genuine Christian parent, and any

Pastor of a Bible believing church. The quote should motivate all of us to be very sober and vigilant regarding our choice of music and the spiritual safety of the youth in our families and in our churches. Taken from the article *“Chris Tomlin: Paving the Way”* and cited in the April 2014 issue of David Cloud’s *“O Timothy”* Magazine, the author of the article wrote that *“Whether he’d claim it or not, Chris Tomlin is a prophet. As quickly as he records an album, it becomes the lyrical theology of our generation. His songs are sung in churches around the world, sculpting our doctrine and shaping our ideas about God.”*

At least Relevant Magazine is being honest about how CCM can influence the doctrinal understanding of those who choose to listen to it, even if the multitude of churches that are now employing CCM as part of their worship services, are unwilling to do so.

Alarming, in our apostate day, ever increasing numbers of influential Independent Baptist churches and associated universities and colleges, don’t want to be honest about the adverse effect CCM will have upon the doctrinal understanding of their youth and the shaping of their Christian worldview. Their agenda is much more important to them than the spiritual safety of the young Christians they influence.

CCM is a music style that is clearly contrary to the kind of music God has stipulated in His Word should be used in worship to Him, but CCM is not just about music – it is also about the message it presents. And more often than not, that message contradicts Scripture. Even when the message does agree with Scripture – and it can even be a direct quote from the Bible – it is mostly quoted out of context to support the CCM artist’s false understanding of Scripture and his confused, so called, Christian worldview.

FACING THE GIANTS – SEPARATION

“²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isaiah 8:20).

“³ If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴ He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵ Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” (1 Timothy 6:3-5).

My final comment on the *“Facing the Giants”* movie will be confined to the hated subject of separation.

During my visits to the various websites that promote the movie, I took a look at the “About Us” page on the Provident Films site. Here I found biographies of three people who are promoted as the Leadership Team for Provident Films.

Not surprisingly, I discovered that each of these three people have strategic roles in the promotion of CCM artists and the permeation of their music into the modern churches - it’s actually their job.

A number of artists that they promote to the Christian public are named on the page. These include Michael W. Smith, Casting Crowns, Third Day, Brandon Heath, Red, Leeland, Tenth Avenue North, Fireflight, Jars of Clay, Brian Littrell, and Pillar.

Information on a number of the CCM idols mentioned above is documented in David Cloud’s instructive *“Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians.”* The information provided in the book clearly demonstrates that CCM musicians are no friends of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, despite however they might be endorsed by misguided friends, church leaders and other religious groups. The book is downloadable from the Way of Life website at the following location:

http://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/directory_of_contemporary_worship.php

Two of the leadership team at Provident Films are quoted as having also been involved in key management positions with [Big Idea Productions](#), former home of leading children's productions, VeggieTales. VeggieTales videos, music and assorted children’s teaching products are enthusiastically used in many Children’s Churches through the world, including in Independent Baptist Children’s Churches.

The question we should be considering, perhaps with some nervous apprehension, is this: “Why should it come as a shock to us, when this crop of children, who have been conditioned to the type of music promoted in their Children’s Sunday School classes, through the use of Veggie Tales music, when they become teenagers, they demonstrate a dissatisfaction with worshipping God with dull old hymns, and start glancing across town towards the nearest Pentecostal/Charismatic church where all the CCM excitement is taking place?”

Maybe that’s a question we’d rather blot out of our minds as too hard to deal with? Maybe we can just pretend that the commercially motivated religious organizations we naively allow to access our kids in our Sunday Schools, and the youth in our churches, are on exactly the same

Bible page as us and that they really do share our Christian values – our Christian worldview? After all, they do name the name of Christ, don't they?

CONCLUSION

In light of all that I have discovered about the "Facing the Giants" movie, as well as all the other movies produced or promoted by any of the above mentioned churches or organizations, I will advise my IB Christian friend that he should get away from these movies, get away from the musicians promoted by them, and also get away from the people who would promote the worldly idea that Bible believing Christians can include football and CCM in their worship of God, providing they do it from a Christian worldview. And I will recommend that he advise all his friends to do likewise.

Religious movies about football, accompanied by loud CCM music, are not the weapons we use to motivate and inspire us when facing the giants that oppose us during our personal walk with the Lord. Along with our own worldly lusts, they are the giants!!! And they are giants that will only be overcome by a thorough knowledge of, and obedience to the Word of God.

"³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,

but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)" ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

"¹¹ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; ¹² Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:11-12).

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MOHAMMED TIGHTENS THE SCREWS ON CHRISTIANS -

BRUNEI INTRODUCES DEATH PENALTY FOR DECLARING ONESELF A NON-MUSLIM

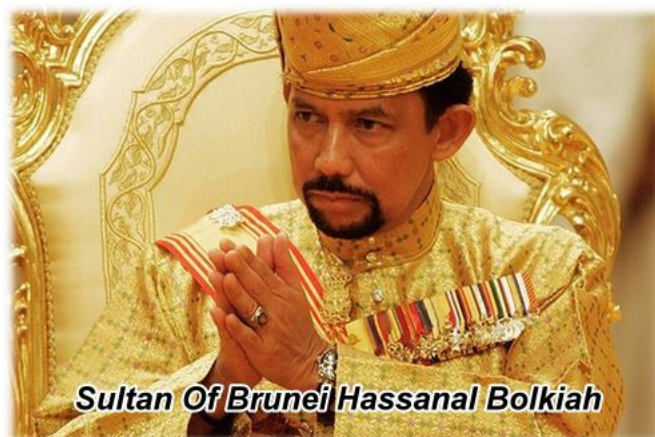
Geneva (AFP) - The UN human rights office on Friday criticised Brunei's planned introduction of the death penalty for a raft of new offences, as part of a shift to harsh Islamic punishments in the oil-rich sultanate.

UN criticises Brunei over tough new Islamic law

"We are deeply concerned about the revised penal code in Brunei Darussalam, due to come into force later this month, which stipulates the death penalty for numerous offences," said Rupert Colville, spokesman for the UN high commissioner for human rights.

He told reporters these offences include rape, adultery, sodomy, extramarital sexual relations for Muslims, but also crimes such as robbery and murder.

The death sentence could also be imposed for defamation of the Prophet Mohammed, insulting any verses of the



Koran and Hadith, blasphemy, and declaring oneself a prophet or non-Muslim, he said.

<http://www.european-freedom-initiative.org/index.php/world-news/world-news-middle-east/904-brunei-introduces-death-penalty-for-declaring-oneself-a-non-muslim>

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GERMANY OPENS FIRST LESBIAN-ONLY CEMETERY

Canberra Times - April 7, 2014



Activists listen to the recital of a poem as they attend the opening ceremony of a lesbian-only cemetery in Berlin. What may be Europe's first lesbian-only burial place has opened in a forested Christian Lutheran graveyard in the German capital.

The final resting place will give gay women a place to share in the afterlife, said Astrid Osterland of Safia, an association primarily for elderly lesbians.

The burial ground is part of the 200-year-old Georgen Parochial cemetery in Prenzlauer Berg, a district in the east of the once-divided city near Alexanderplatz square.

"The idea emerged four years ago in the lesbian group Safia, whose members, advancing in age, asked themselves where they want to be buried," said Ms Osterland, 69.

"We wanted to stay together, to be close to those with whom we lived, we loved, we worked, we fought," she told AFP, adding that she has already reserved a burial plot for herself.

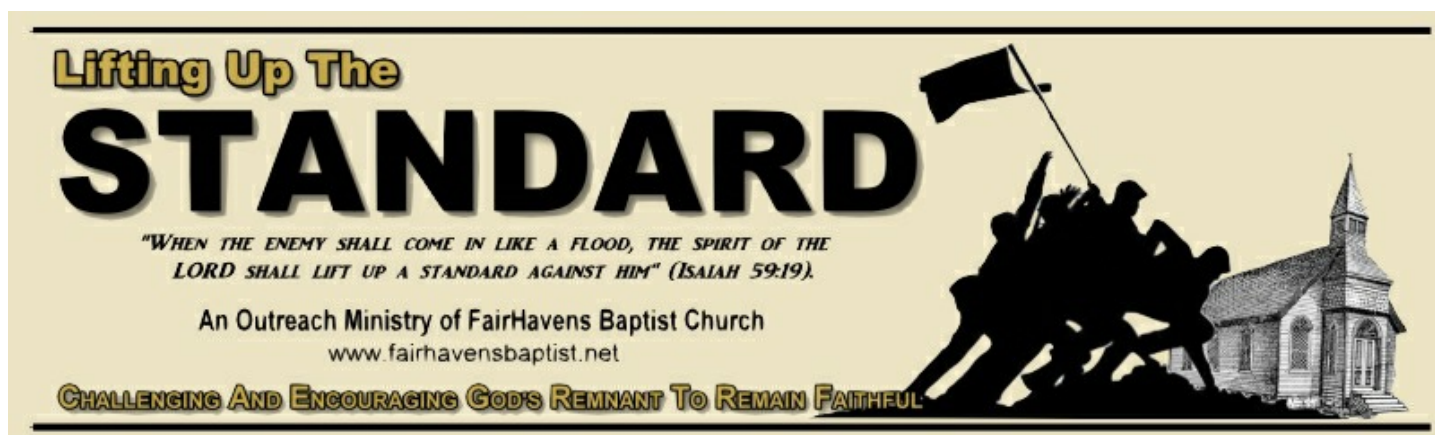
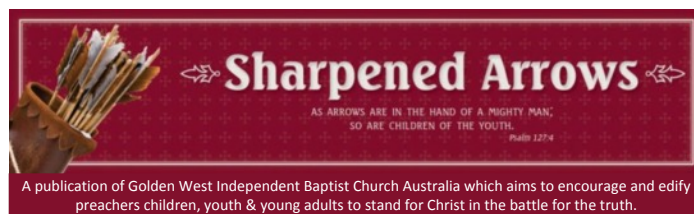
Astrid Osterland of Safia; "The final resting place will give gay women a place to share in the afterlife.

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NOTABLE QUOTES AND QUOTABLE NOTES -

- "Science is subject to Scripture!"
- "Scripture is either absolute or obsolete"
- "We must NEVER edit God" ~ A.W. Tozer
- "To appraise things with a heart of love and then to act on the results is an obligation resting upon every Christian in the world. And the more as we see the day approaching." ~ A.W. Tozer
- "Has God really gotten what He has purchased with His own blood?"
- "All is full of criminality and vice; indeed much more of these is committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of abandoned wickedness is carried on. The lust of sin increases daily; and shame is daily more and more extinguished. Discarding respect for all that is good and sacred, lust rushes on wherever it will. Vice no longer hides itself. It stalks forth before all eyes." ~ Seneca, 4 BC to AD 65

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In Nazareth, we read in Luke's account of the gospel that Jesus came into the synagogue and read the Scripture for the Sabbath service from the book of Isaiah. We read in [Luke 4:18](#) that He read, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because he hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."*

There is a very interesting word that the Scriptures use for the word POOR. Jesus also used the same word in [Matthew 5:3](#) in the sermon on the mount when He declared, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

The word that Holy Spirit uses is the word **PTOCHOS**, which means "reduced to beggary, destitute of wealth, influence, position, honor." The derivation of **PTOCHOS** is said to be from the word **PTOSSEIN** which speaks of a cowering or a crouching. This is speaking of absolute poverty, and one that is nearing starvation. It is one that is depending upon others to live. **PTOCHOS** is the same word that is used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) in the passage in Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1). Again, the idea of the word is that of deep destitution.

PTOCHOS is derived from the Hebrew words **EBION** and **ANI**. In particular, the word **ANI** points to the idea of humility. The one who is **ANI** lived from day to day, was defenseless and was subject to constant oppression. Both words are used to describe those who are poor, such as in Deuteronomy 15:4, and both carry the connotation of being downtrodden. But the position of the one who is **ANI**, is of such that he can no longer look to men for help. The only One to which this one can look is God Himself. God is seen as and is the Protector and Deliverer of this one who is **ANI** or poor.

In light of the derivation of **PTOCHOS**, then, we get a better idea of what it means to be a poor one in the

verses we are considering. Here is one that is not looking to himself, his friends, other people, nor any possession. He has the sense of his own complete destitution in the sight of the Almighty God, because this one is able to see Who God is. Such a one comes to the place of only being able to utter, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." It is he who puts his complete trust in the Lord alone. Such a one knows that he is helpless and yet looks to the only One that can help. This one sees the Lord as the Possessor and Giver of the riches of His grace.

Thus, this is the work described in Luke 4:18. Christ was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor. Only before the gospel can have any effect in the life of a person is when that person comes to the place of seeing that they are completely destitute. There is nothing good about them at all. There is not any way at all that person can help themselves to come to the Lord. Religion teaches, as opposed to truth, that a person can help themselves come to the grace of God, through rites, rituals, ceremonies and works. But the reality of the matter is that all of those things keep a person from coming to the Lord. All of those things say that a man can do a work of some sort of himself, and that there is a sort of wealth that he has so as to gain salvation. But the Bible says that, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8, 9). This one is spiritually destitute and the only One that can do anything about that condition is the Lord Himself.

We all must become poor in spirit before we can come to Christ. We become conscious of our desperate need and that answer to that need can only be found in Christ alone. It is then that we can come to Him, repenting of sin and putting our complete trust in Him alone.

Indeed, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That is us, beloved.

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Sympathy for the Devil

What the NOAH Film is all About

Dr. Brian Mattson

Dr. Brian Mattson (A Reformed theologian associated with the The Center for Cultural Leadership)

In Darren Aronofsky's new star-gilt silver screen epic, *Noah*, Adam and Eve are luminescent and fleshless, right up until the moment they eat the forbidden fruit.

Such a notion isn't found in the Bible, of course. This, among the multitude of Aronofsky's other imaginative details like giant Lava Monsters, has caused many a reviewer's head to be scratched.

Conservative-minded evangelicals write off the film because of the "liberties" taken with the text of Genesis, while a more liberal-minded group stands in favor of cutting the director some slack. After all, we shouldn't expect a professed atheist to have the same ideas of "respecting" sacred texts the way a Bible-believer would.

Both groups have missed the mark entirely. Aronofsky hasn't "taken liberties" with anything.

The Bible is not his text.

In his defense, I suppose, the film wasn't advertised as such. Nowhere is it said that this movie is an adaptation of Genesis. It was never advertised as "*The Bible's Noah*," or "*The Biblical Story of Noah*." In our day and age we are so living in the leftover atmosphere of Christendom that when somebody says they want to do "Noah," everybody *assumes* they mean a rendition of the *Bible* story.

That isn't what Aronofsky had in mind at all. I'm sure he was only too happy to let his studio go right on assuming that, since if they knew what he was really up to they never would have allowed him to make the movie.

Let's go back to our luminescent first parents. I recognized the motif instantly as one common to the

ancient religion of Gnosticism. Here's a 2nd century A.D. description about what a sect called the Ophites believed:

"Adam and Eve formerly had light, luminous, and so to speak spiritual bodies, as they had been fashioned. But when they came here, the bodies became dark, fat, and idle." —Irenaeus of Lyon, *Against Heresies*, I, 30.9

It occurred to me that a mystical tradition more closely related to Judaism, called *Kabbalah* (which the singer Madonna made popular a decade ago or so), surely would have held a similar view, since it is essentially a form of *Jewish* Gnosticism. I dusted off (No, really: I had to dust it) my copy of Adolphe Franck's 19th century work, *The Kabbalah*, and quickly confirmed my suspicions:

"Before they were beguiled by the subtleness of the serpent, Adam and Eve were not only exempt from the need of a body, but did not even have a body—that is to say, they were not of the earth."

Franck quotes from the *Zohar*, one of *Kabbalah's* sacred texts:

"When our forefather Adam inhabited the Garden of Eden, he was clothed, as all are in heaven, with a garment made of the higher light. When he was driven from the Garden of Eden and was compelled to submit to the needs of this world, what happened? God, the Scriptures tell us, made Adam and his wife tunics of skin and clothed them; for before this they had tunics of light, of that higher light used in Eden..."

Obscure stuff, I know. But curiosity overtook me and I dove right down the rabbit hole.

I discovered what Darren Aronofsky's first feature film was: *Pi*. Want to know its subject matter? Do you? Are you sure?

Kabbalah.

If you think that's a coincidence, you may want a loved one to schedule you a brain scan.

Have I got your attention? Good.

The world of Aronofsky's *Noah* is a thoroughly Gnostic one: a graded universe of "higher" and "lower." The "spiritual" is good, and way, way, way "up there" where the ineffable, *unspeaking* god dwells, and the "material" is bad, and way, way down here where our spirits are encased in material flesh. This is not only true of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, but of fallen angels, who are explicitly depicted as being spirits *trapped* inside a material "body" of cooled molten lava.

Admittedly, they make pretty nifty movie characters, but they're also notorious in Gnostic speculation. Gnostics call them *Archons*, lesser divine beings or angels who aid "The Creator" in forming the visible universe. And *Kabbalah* has a pantheon of angelic beings of its own all up and down the ladder of "divine being." And fallen angels are never totally fallen in this brand of mysticism. To quote the *Zohar* again, a central *Kabbalah* text: "All things of which this world consists, the spirit as well as the body, will return to the principle and the root from which they came."

Funny. That's exactly what happens to Aronofsky's Lava Monsters. They redeem themselves, shed their outer material skin, and fly back to the heavens. Incidentally, I noticed that in the film, as the family is traveling through a desolate wasteland, Shem asks his father: "Is this a *Zohar* mine?" Yep. That's the name of *Kabbalah's* sacred text.

The entire movie is, figuratively, a "Zohar" mine.

If there was any doubt about these "Watchers," Aronofsky gives several of them names: Semyaza, Magog, and Rameel. They're all well-known demons in the Jewish mystical tradition, not only in *Kabbalah* but also in the book of *1 Enoch*.

What!? *Demons* are redeemed? Adolphe Franck explains the cosmology of *Kabbalah*: "Nothing is absolutely bad; nothing is accursed forever—not even the archangel of evil or the venomous beast, as he is sometimes called. There will come a time when he will recover his name and his angelic nature."

Okay. That's weird. But, hey, everybody in the film seems to worship "The Creator," right? Surely it's got that in its favor!

Except that when Gnostics speak about "The Creator" they are *not talking about God*. Oh, here in an affluent world living off the fruits of Christendom the term "Creator" generally denotes the true and living God. But here's a little "Gnosticism 101" for you: the *Creator of the material world* is an ignorant, arrogant, jealous, exclusive, violent, low-level, bastard son of a low level deity. He's responsible for creating the "unspiritual" world of flesh and matter, and he himself is so ignorant of the spiritual world he fancies himself the "only God" and demands absolute obedience. They generally call him "Yahweh." Or other names, too (Ialdabaoth, for example).

This Creator tries to keep Adam and Eve from the true knowledge of the divine and, when they disobey, flies into a rage and boots them from the garden.

In other words, in case you're losing the plot here: *The serpent was right all along*. This "god," "The Creator," whom they are worshiping is *withholding* something from them that the serpent will provide: divinity itself.

The world of Gnostic mysticism is bewildering with a myriad of varieties. But, generally speaking, they hold in common that the *serpent* is "Sophia," "Mother," or "Wisdom." The *serpent* represents the *true* divine, and the claims of "The Creator" are false.

So is the serpent a major character in the film?

Let's go back to the movie. The action opens when Lamech is about to bless his son, Noah. Lamech, rather strangely for a patriarch of a family that follows God, takes out a sacred relic, *the skin of the serpent from the Garden of Eden*. He wraps it around his arm, stretches out his hand to touch his son—except, just then, a band of marauders interrupts them and the ceremony isn't completed. Lamech gets killed, and the "villain" of the film, Tubal-Cain, steals the snakeskin.

Noah, in other words, doesn't get whatever benefit the serpent's skin was to bestow.

The skin doesn't light up magically on Tubal-Cain's arm, so apparently he doesn't get "enlightened," either. And that's why everybody in the film, including protagonist and antagonist, Noah and Tubal-Cain, is worshiping "The Creator." *They are all deluded*. Let me clear something up here: lots of reviewers expressed some bewilderment over the fact there aren't any likable characters and that they *all* seem to be worshiping the same God. Tubal-Cain and his clan are wicked and evil and, as it turns out, Noah's pretty bad himself when he abandons Ham's girlfriend and almost slays two newborn children. Some thought this was some kind of profound commentary on

how there's evil in all of us. Here's an excerpt from the *Zohar*, the sacred text of *Kabbalah*:

"Two beings [Adam and Nachash—the Serpent] had intercourse with Eve [the Second woman], and she conceived from both and bore two children. Each followed one of the male parents, and their spirits parted, one to this side and one to the other, and similarly their characters. On the side of Cain are all the haunts of the evil species; from the side of Abel comes a more merciful class, yet not wholly beneficial -- good wine mixed with bad."

Sound familiar? Yes. Darren Aronofsky's *Noah*, to the "T."

Anyway, everybody is worshiping the *evil* deity. Who wants to destroy *everybody*. (By the way, in *Kabbalah* many worlds have already been created and destroyed.) Both Tubal-Cain *and* Noah have identical scenes, looking into the heavens and asking, "Why won't you *speak to me*?" "The Creator" has abandoned them all because he intends to kill them all.

Noah had been given a vision of the coming deluge. He's drowning, but sees animals floating to the surface to the safety of the ark. No indication whatsoever is given that Noah is to be saved; Noah conspicuously makes that part up during an awkward moment explaining things to his family. He is sinking while the animals, "the innocent," are rising. "The Creator" who gives Noah his vision wants *all the humans dead*.

Many reviewers thought Noah's change into a homicidal maniac on the ark, wanting to kill his son's two newborn daughters, was a weird plot twist. It isn't weird at all. In the Director's view, Noah is worshiping a *false, homicidal maniac* of a god. The more faithful and "godly" Noah becomes, the more *homicidal* he becomes. He is becoming every bit the "image of god" that the "evil" guy who keeps talking about the "image of god," Tubal-Cain, is.

But Noah fails "The Creator." He cannot wipe out all life like his god wants him to do. "When I looked at those two girls, my heart was filled with nothing but *love*," he says. Noah now has something "The Creator" doesn't. Love. And Mercy. But where did he get it? And why now?

In the immediately preceding scene Noah killed Tubal-Cain and *recovered the snakeskin relic*: "Sophia," "Wisdom," the true light of the divine. Just a coincidence, I'm sure.

Okay, I'm almost done. The rainbows don't come at the end because God makes a covenant with Noah. The

rainbows appear when Noah sobers up and *embraces the serpent*. He wraps the skin around his arm, and blesses his family. It is not *God* that commissions them to now multiply and fill the earth, but Noah, in the first person, "I," wearing the serpent talisman. (Oh, and by the way, it's not accidental that the rainbows are all *circular*. The circle of the "One," the *Ein Sof*, in *Kabbalah*, is the sign of monism.)

Notice this thematic change: Noah was in a drunken stupor the scene before. Now he is sober and "enlightened." Filmmakers *never* do that by accident.

He's transcended and outgrown that homicidal, jealous deity.

Let me issue a couple of caveats to all this: Gnostic speculation is a diverse thing. Some groups appear *radically* "dualist," where "The Creator" really is a different "god" altogether. Others are more "monist," where God exists in a series of descending emanations. Others have it that the lower deity "grows" and "matures" and himself ascends the "ladder" or "chain" of being to higher heights. *Noah* probably fits a little in each category. It's hard to tell. My other caveat is this: there is no doubt a *ton* of *Kabbalist* imagery, quotations, and themes in this movie that I couldn't pick up in a single sitting. For example, since *Kabbalah* takes its flights of fancy generally based on Hebrew letters and numbers, I did notice that the "Watchers" appeared to be deliberately shaped like Hebrew letters. But you could not pay me to go see this movie again so I could further drill into the *Zohar* mine to see what I could find. (On a purely cinematic viewpoint, I found most of it unbearably boring.)

What I can say on one viewing is this:

Darren Aronofsky has produced a retelling of the Noah story without reference to the Bible at all. This was not, as he claimed, just a storied tradition of run-of-the-mill Jewish "Midrash." This was a thoroughly pagan retelling of the Noah story direct from *Kabbalist* and *Gnostic* sources. To my mind, there is simply no doubt about this.

So let me tell you what the real scandal in all of this is.

It isn't that he made a film that departed from the biblical story. It isn't that disappointed and overheated Christian critics had expectations set too high.

The scandal is this: of all the Christian leaders who went to great lengths to endorse this movie (for whatever reasons: "it's a conversation starter," "at least Hollywood is doing something on the Bible," etc.), and all of the

Christian leaders who panned it for “not following the Bible”...

Not one of them could identify a blatantly Gnostic subversion of the biblical story when it was right in front of their faces.

I believe Aronofsky did it as an experiment to make fools of us: “You are so ignorant that I can put Noah (granted, it's *Russell Crowe!*) up on the big screen and portray him literally as the ‘seed of the Serpent’ and you all will watch my studio’s screening and endorse it.”

He’s having quite the laugh. And shame on everyone who bought it.

And *what a Gnostic experiment!* In Gnosticism, only the “elite” are “in the know” and have the secret knowledge. Everybody else are dupes and ignorant fools. The “event” of this movie is intended to illustrate the Gnostic premise. We are dupes and fools. Would Christendom awake, please?

In response, I have one simple suggestion:

Henceforth, not a single seminary degree is granted unless the student demonstrates that he has read, digested, and understood Irenaeus of Lyon’s *Against Heresies*.

Because it's the 2nd century all over again.

Postscript

Some readers may think I'm being hard on people for not noticing the Gnosticism at the heart of this film. I am not expecting rank-and-file viewers to notice these things. I would expect exactly what we've seen: head-scratching confusion. I've got a whole different standard for Christian *leaders*: college and seminary professors, pastors, and Ph.Ds. If a serpent skin wrapped around the arm of a godly Bible character doesn't set off any alarms... I don't know what to say.

UPDATE - 4/2/2014

I've posted a short follow-up video [here](#).
And an important follow-up post [here](#).

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In 1 Samuel 30 we find a very important missionary principle. Taking a few moments to familiarize with the chapter will prepare the heart for the following comments...

Of the 600 men following David, at one point 200 of them were so faint that they could not pursue the enemy (v10). In the midst of a sad, serious, and sobering situation (vs1-6), David responded correctly, realized the necessity of God’s intervention, and relied totally on Him (vs7-8). The saving of others from the clutches of the enemy involved both a “saviour” (ie. David, v9) and many soldiers (vs9-10) with 400 pursuing and 200 protecting. Spoils were gathered and garnered due to both types of soldiers. The majority could not have gone out to fight had the

minority not stayed behind to protect what they had already found.

Obviously David can represent the Lord Jesus, the captain of...salvation (Heb 2:10). Without this Captain the Lord’s army of missionaries will accomplish nothing (Jn 15:5) in their purpose of pursuing people. The 400 soldiers might symbolize missionaries out on the front lines engaged in the heat of the battle for souls.

But let the 200 represent those back in the home country or home church each of which tarrieth by the stuff (v24). Those who stay by the stuff represent faithful believers in the Lord’s churches who may not be out on the front lines, but have a very important function nonetheless.

Due to the faithfulness and watchfulness of those at home, the soldiers on the front lines are able to devote themselves to the combat without distraction.

The 200 in David's army could not go (v10); it wasn't that they would not go. Some would aspire to be missionaries on the foreign front but simply cannot leave their station, perhaps due to sickness or suffering, service elsewhere, scars from a prior marriage or ministry failure, spouse not saved or a shortage of support.

These are not to be belittled; for they have an essential ministry of staying by the stuff.

If you are one of the 200, on behalf of every other God-called missionary (the 400) may I say, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU! Your investment in praying, writing, making a telephone or Skype call, preparing care packages, giving of your finances, winning souls, training new converts, taking a stand, helping prepare others for frontline service, leading your families, supporting your pastor, and entertaining missionaries when they come home on furlough are some of the ways the 200 can encourage the 400. What a blessing for missionaries to have individuals who stay by the stuff!

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The slide at Liberty University has been going on for at least 30 years. How did it get started? Was it when Jerry Falwell got into politics with his Moral Majority? Was it his love for new evangelicalism? Was it the honouring of Elizabeth Taylor and her latest husband? Was it his attempt to control Jim Bakker's PTL club and Heritage theme park? Was it when DC Talk began performing their rock band music at Liberty? Was it when Falwell took the church and university into the Southern Baptist Convention?

No, it was when Jerry Falwell decided that his ways and thoughts were higher than God's.

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

It is always downhill from there. - Ed.

LIBERTY CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY NOW HIRING OPEN HOMOSEXUALS - NTEB News Desk - 10 April 2014

Liberty University, which is considered the world's largest Christian university, has hired an open homosexual advocate to choreograph its upcoming Broadway-style presentation of Mary Poppins.

The university recently published an article regarding the production, which it celebrates as being the school's "largest to date." The article notes that Alluvion Stage Company, an arm of the university's Department of Theatre Arts, "has hired a guest music director, a flight director, and a Broadway choreographer" to assist with the presentation.

"We are very excited to have all of these guest artists join us ... They bring a whole new level of excellence," stated artistic director Linda Nell Cooper. "Our goal with Alluvion is for every show to raise the bar somehow; they have helped us to do that."

The selected choreographer is Geoffrey Goldberg, a New York City-based artist who has been involved with professional theatre for over a decade, and travelled the country for five years assisting with the production of Mary Poppins, among others. His social media pages indicate his support and advocacy for the homosexual agenda.

Director Linda Nell Cooper; "We do not ask about their personal life."

Goldberg's social media pages also indicate his support and advocacy for the homosexual agenda, posting "Happy pride, everyone" in June of last year, which was designated as Homosexual Pride Month by Barack

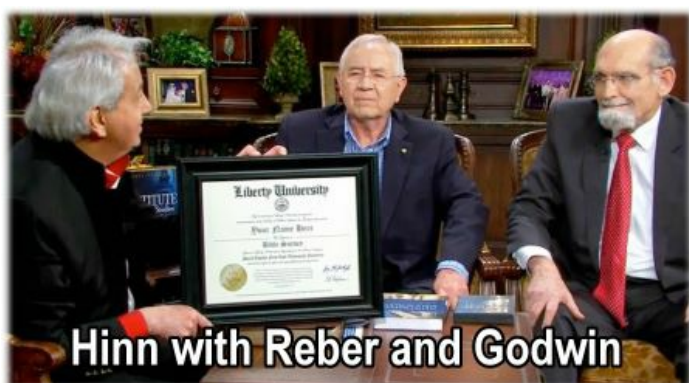
Obama. Goldberg is also a member of the Facebook group Marriage Equality New York.

Goldberg's Pinterest page likewise features a board dedicated to weddings, which includes pins for "gay wedding cake toppers," "custom modern groom invitations for gay weddings or same-sex ceremonies" and a "gay wedding cake" with rainbow stripes.



Director Linda Nell Cooper told Christian News Network that Alluvian/Liberty University was not aware of Goldberg's beliefs about homosexuality, but stated that one's "personal life" is not a factor in the hiring process.

"He was hired based on his professionalism and his talent like everyone else," Cooper explained. "It never came up in the conversation, nor would it have. ... We do not ask about their personal life. We work under professional guidelines. No one knows anything about anyone's personal lives," she reiterated.



FOLLOW UP ON LIBERTY UNIVERSITY AND BENNY HINN
(Friday Church News Notes, April 18, 2014, www.wayoflife.org
fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

In last week's Friday Church News Notes we reported on a video clip posted at Benny Hinn's web site featuring Hinn and two men identified with Liberty University: Dan Reber, Director of Liberty University Institute of Biblical Studies, and Ronald Godwin, Liberty University Provost.

The three men announced an alliance between Liberty University Institute of Biblical Studies and Hinn's World Healing Fellowship.

I wrote a report about the alliance, queued it up to go out last week, and then left on a two-week preaching trip to the States. The day we published the report, Liberty University's President, Jerry Falwell, Jr., posted a statement denying that the school is partnering with Hinn. The statement says that Dr. Godwin made a mistake in appearing with Hinn and that though Liberty "transferred the operations of Liberty Home Bible Institute ... to Mr. Dan Reber in 2011," he wasn't authorized to form an alliance with Hinn.

I find this move by Liberty curious for a number of reasons. Reber and Godwin are long-time employees of Liberty, going back to the time of Liberty's founder, Jerry Falwell, Sr., and they learned their compromise directly from him.

Is Jerry Falwell, Jr., now renouncing what his father did when he tried to rescue Jim Baker's PTL Club? Or what Falwell, Sr., did in 2004 when he praised Pat Robertson and Rod Parsley as "courageous and brilliant evangelical mega-leaders" (fundraiser mailer for the Faith and Values Coalition, "a 21st Century Moral Majority," Nov. 16, 2004).

These men are as heretical as Benny Hinn. In fact, does this mean that Falwell, Jr., is renouncing Falwell, Sr.'s close association with Roman Catholics and Mormons and with cult leader Sun Myung Moon who helped rescue Liberty University from bankruptcy in the early 1990s? ("The GOP's Own Asian Connection," Los Angeles Times, Nov. 16, 1997, articles.latimes.com/1997/nov/16/opinion/op-54375).

Why draw the line with Benny Hinn, Liberty?

(For further documentation of Liberty's compromise see "[Jerry Falwell: Should We Warn or Praise](#)" at the Way of Life web site.)



HAVE YOU SEEN THE HARLEM SHAKE YET?

(Fewer and fewer pastors are willing to oppose CCM, and prohibit it from coming into their churches. Most times it comes in via their youth watching it on YouTube, learning it, and bringing it into their youth groups, and then into the churches. Where does it lead? Well, we haven't seen the end of it yet, but the Harlem Shake is one of its latest incarnations.

According to one source, it was originated by a Harlem resident named "Al B". He is quoted as saying that the dance is "a drunken shake that will make you die if you ever attempt it, and you could easily go to jail anyway. It's a dirt bag troll that is really hardcore and will make you have seizures ..." (It is quite significant to note that it seems to always begin with a chant of, "Con las terroristas." which simply means, "With the terrorists!"

One of my dear old missionary friends said to me in the 1980's that The church did in the 60's what the world did in the 50's, and what the world did in the 60's the church did in the 70's, etc. So what the world did in the decade between 2000 and 2010, the "churches" are doing in this decade.

I am afraid to ask what the world is doing in this decade. - Ed)



THE WORLDLY INSANITY OF CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC

(Friday Church News Notes, April 5, 2013, www.wayoflife.org
fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143)

Since -my first article on the subject in 1987 I have been warning that Contemporary Christian Music creates and feeds an appetite for the things of the world, and this becomes more evident with each passing year.

Bible-believing churches that are messing with this music in any way are playing with fire, and the pastors will give account for not protecting their people. The words "holy" and "spiritual" mean separated unto God and separated from the filthiness of this world, but CCM musicians love secular rock; they listen to it in their private lives; they perform it in their concerts and record it for their albums. They even become so drunk on the world and so spiritually insane that they use secular rock in the alleged service and worship of a thrice-holy God.

The most recent example is the popularity of the "Harlem Shake" at "evangelical" churches and schools, including



Liberty University, Cedarville University, and Rick Warren's Saddleback high school.

These and others "have uploaded footage online of their youth breaking out dancing--sometimes with sensual and suggestive moves, and little clothing" ("Controversy Erupts Over Explosion of Church, College Groups Gyrating," ChristianNews.net, Mar. 7, 2013).

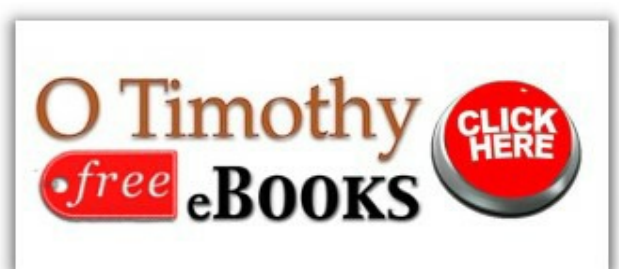
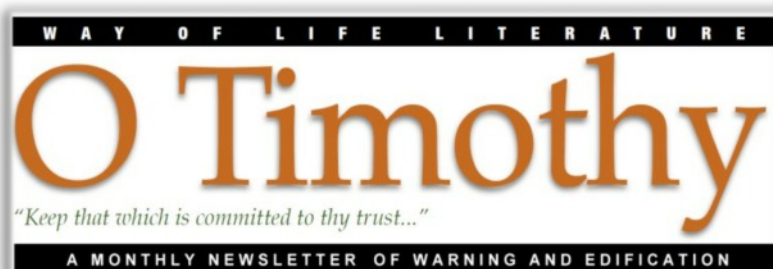
The youth ministry of Jacksonville, Florida's Bethel Baptist Church is using their rendition of the Harlem Shake as an "evangelism" tool with their pastor's blessing ("Florida Megachurch's Youth Group Draws Peers with Music, Harlem Shake," Christian Post, Mar. 23, 2013).

In 2011, **Northpoint Church of Springfield, Missouri, performed "Sympathy for the Devil" by the Rolling Stones and "Thriller" by Michael Jackson; Proclaimers Church in Norwich, England, performed Lady Gaga's "Telephone"; and The Church by the Glades in Miramar, Florida, performed "Calling All the Monsters."** In 2009, **NewSpring Church in Florence, South Carolina, performed "Highway to Hell" by the wicked rock band AC/DC for Easter service. In 2007, Granger Community Church in Granger, Indiana, featured Beatles Music as their Christmas theme.**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pPFy7gB5wk>

<http://standupforthetruth.com/2013/03/christian-colleges-and-churches-shaken-by-pagan-craze/>

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THERAPY FOR THE FUNNY BONE

- "I plucked my eyebrows and attempted to apply some new make-up tips this week. Obviously this hasn't happened for a very long time. Little William came into the room while the plucking was happening...

"What are you doing Mum?"

"Something that ladies do to look beautiful."

"Hey, you don't need to do that!"

He got a kiss!!

Later, he came back to find me applying make-up.

"What are you doing Mum?"

"Something else that ladies do to look beautiful."

"I told you you don't need to do that!"

He got hugged and kissed.

Later I asked my hubby, Russ, if he'd noticed my make-up.

"Yeah, I did," he said "looks like someone punched you in the face and gave you two black eyes."

He did NOT get a kiss." ~ from Sharon W.

- Old preacher Jones was not happy on the way home from church, and his wife watched him out of the corner of her eye. When he said nothing for several blocks, she finally asked him, "What's upset you so

much?" He looked at her, and replied, "I could have got a lot more mileage out of that sermon, if you hadn't said, 'Humph!'"

- My wife gave me a twenty year supply of Vegemite for my birthday, and squeezed it all in one small jar. Amazing!
- Two Irishmen were working on a road crew. One would dig a hole and the other would follow along behind and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working hard all day without a break, one man digging a hole, the other filling it in again.

An old man sitting on his porch called out to the one doing the digging, "Why do you dig a hole, and your partner fills it up again?"

The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, "We're normally a three-man crew. But today the chap who sticks the trees in the ground called in sick."

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EDDY-TORIAL - SO WHICH VERSION DOES YOUR CHURCH USE? - By Pastor Buddy Smith

There are more versions out there than we can count. I used to think that there were new versions coming out every week, until I realised that they were just old versions that were being revised, recycled, rehashed, and refurbished. Upon reflection, I can now see that they all fit into the following categories:

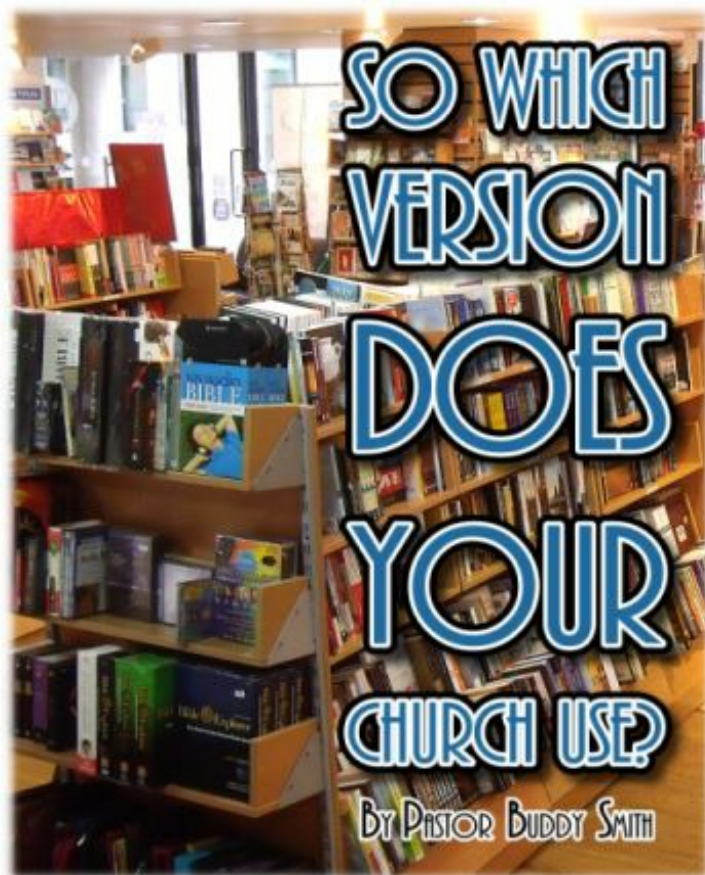
1) THE ECLECTIC VERSION - The advocates of this version are very selective, and discourage wide and varied input.

2) THE PROFIT DRIVEN VERSION - This version focuses on what will generate the most income.

3) THE SUCCESS ORIENTED VERSION - The objective of the promoters of this version is to achieve impressive portfolios, compile thick resumes, acquire a great self image, and abound in creature comforts.

4) THE CULTURALLY RELEVANT VERSION - The aim of this version is to adapt their product to the latest fads and norms of modern culture.

5) THE MOD/POP VERSION - This version is designed for teens and twenties especially, and is reportedly very



successful, though some reports indicate that there is a high dropout rate.

6) THE FIDEISTIC VERSION - This version has very ancient origins, and . It involves the "faith approach to the Scriptures" rather than the "critical approach". It is widely criticized, but seems to be gaining favour again in smaller churches as the other versions fall out of fashion.

So there you have it. (Fideistic is pronounced "fee-day-iss'-tick")



Oh, I forgot to mention that I am not thinking of **Bible Versions**. I am referring to **Versions of the Great Commission**.

So Which Version of the Great Commission Does Your Church Use?

IS IT NUMBER 1?

Calvinists love the **ECLECTIC VERSION**. It's all about election and predestination, about salvation only being for a few. Its advocates believe that not everyone can be saved. In the long run the eclectic version of the Great Commission always sees the offer of salvation as being only for the elect, and since they tend to suspect that the sinner in the hospital bed next to theirs doesn't look like a good prospect, then they don't offer him the gospel (based on an actual event in the Cairns hospital.) Though this version is increasingly popular among the intelligentsia, it is apparent that its promoters have to depend on the other versions for converts in order to survive. In the final analysis, this version is a form of proselytizing.

IS IT NUMBER 2?

Televangelists love the **PROFIT DRIVEN VERSION**. It is formatted to bring in lots of money to spend on their mansions and bizjets and Rolls Royces. The password for all their bank accounts is *bringthebling*. Their catchcry is not "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already unto harvest," but "Behold the suckers, and tell them to raise their hands while we lift their wallets."

IS IT NUMBER 3?

Pragmatists love the **SUCCESS ORIENTED VERSION**. They are found in every camp, Independent Baptists, Southern Baptists, Charismatics, Seeker Sensitive's, almost anywhere you look. They get a glazed look in their eyes when they preach about SUCCESS. You can always tell if their churches use this version by the absence of the word "repentance" in their preaching. Both of the "Jack's"

of Hammond loved this one. Most Independent Baptists prefer this one. Its goal is NUMBERS! (Be sure to turn up the volume on the speaker system when you chant the NUMBERS mantra!!!!) Some pastors are even advocating that little churches shut down and migrate to THEIR town to inflate the NUMBERS as they aspire to have a megachurch.

IS IT NUMBER 4?

Emergents love the **CULTURALLY RELEVANT VERSION**. It means that they can invite their friends to their "Beer Brewing Classes" or to see the latest Gnostic flick from Hellywood, or to discuss the merits of X-rated media. This version combines Contemplative Prayer, Beatles Music, and New Age speakers with Gay Marriage.

IS IT NUMBER 5?

The **MOD/POP VERSION** of the Great Commission is noisy, flashy, and its fans say it is "COOL!" It is most often communicated at 135 decibels or above. Its message sounds flat if the speaker stands still or speaks plain English, and especially if the rock band crashes and burns.

It appeals to children who are from 3 years old to 65. (After that, their hearing aids tend to burn out and are too expensive to replace.) Video clips of this version appear to show large crowds, but it is impossible to get an accurate count since they wiggle and jump non-stop.

OR IS IT NUMBER 6?

THE FIDEISTIC VERSION is used by biblicists (previously known as fundamentalists). Having become disenchanted with false brethren, the unethical, devious, deceptive, and adulterous "fundamentalists," they fled to Holy Scripture and discovered there that the **FIDEISTIC VERSION** of the Great Commission contained in the Bible does not resemble any of the above. With fear and trembling they read that the gospel of Christ is to be preached to every creature, and that without concern whether or not the hearers look like they might be the "elect."

Fideists (who are commonly known as **Bible Believers**) also found that the Great Commission would cost them dearly to preach it. If they preached it as they should, it would never make them rich, but may cost them everything they own, and even cost them their lives. The **FIDEISTIC VERSION** is characterized by sacrificial giving, and so much so, that its promoters are ever seeking more funds to invest in reaching precious souls.

Fideists have very little interest in how large a crowd they can accumulate into the center of their endeavour, rather they are ever seeking to enlarge the circumference. They

are lovers of maps and are known to pray over them on their knees, crying out to God for labourers for an unseen harvest that lies over the horizon. They are reported to use the last cent they have to go as far with the gospel as they can and then kneel down to pray for more funds to go farther.

Fideists soon learn that the gospel of Christ confronts every culture, making it impossible for a biblicist to be culturally relevant. Culturally offensive, certainly, but never culturally relevant! Christ crucified offends (man's) philosophies, traditions, vain deceits, and the rudiments of the world.

The **FIDEISTIC VERSION** of the Great Commission always opposes Wall Street, Nashville, Hollywood, and

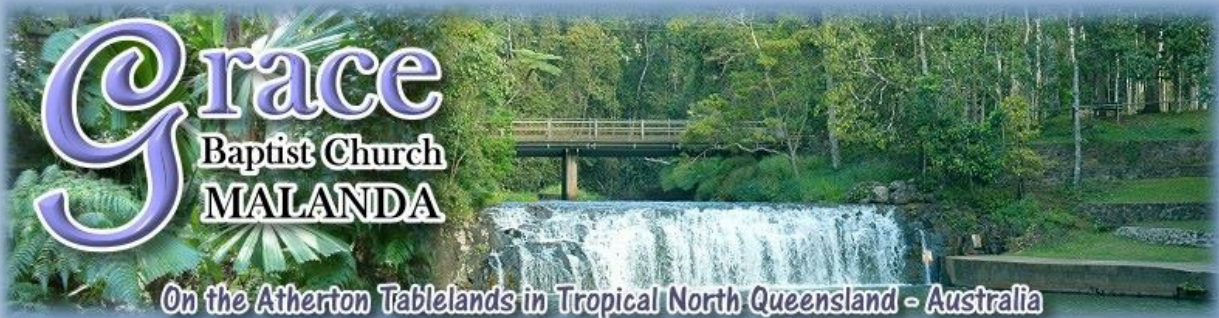
Washington. It exalts the Stone rejected of all the builders.

The **FIDEISTIC VERSION** of the Great Commission laughs at the vain prancings of the Mod/Pop version and sees them as simply the newest edition of the prophets of Baal leaping upon their altars and cutting themselves with knives. While they scream and shout out their Hillsong anthems and do the Harlem Shake, Fideists faithfully preach the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

That's the Saviour's version of the Great Commission.

So, Which Version Does Your Church Use?

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Heads Up!

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