

LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

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CHRISTIAN IDIOCY

One of Webster's definitions of idiocy is: "something notably stupid and foolish." The Oxford Dictionary defines it as: "something incongruous inviting ridicule." We are applying the word to both statements and actions of some Christians. This may be illustrated by some examples from Scripture. When Peter, James and John witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount Peter suggested "we make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Concerning this statement the Scripture states: "he did not know what else to say" (Mark 9:5,6). Another time when Jesus revealed to the Apostles that he must go to Jerusalem where he would be killed, "Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying 'God forbid it, Lord! This will never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me Satan!' you are a stumbling block to me for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's" (Matt. 16:22). When James and John came to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you," and he said to them "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to him, 'Grant that we may sit in your glory, one on your right, and one on your left.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking for. . . this is not mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared'" (Mark 35-40). It was only after the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit were they cured of this idiocy.

This article is not an apologetic that endeavors to answer the skepticism and denial of the truths of the Bible advocated by many scholars in modern colleges and universities. They produce works of theology the average Christian never sees. Rather we want to point out some of the idiocies that the average Christian is exposed to today. Some of the most blatant examples of this idiocy are seen in the statements and writings of some prominent Christian leaders. At the risk of being accused of unjustified criticism and judgment of others we simply let them speak for themselves.

A popular mega-church preacher declared to his television audience that "If Jesus was simply walking down the streets in Jerusalem and suddenly fell dead, his death would still have saved us." This contradicts the many statements of Jesus saying he "must" be crucified and "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22).

Kenneth Copeland: Popular Tele-evangelist. The following quotes have appeared both in his monthly magazine and live on his popular television programs. "God is very much like you and me...having a body, complete with eyes, and eyelids, ears, nostrils, a mouth, hands, fingers and feet. The Bible says God measured out the heavens with a span. Well my span is eight and three quarter inches long. So God stands somewhere around 6'2" weighs in the neighborhood of a couple hundred pounds...I was shocked when I found out who the biggest failure in the Bible is...the biggest one is God...He lost His top-ranking most anointed angel; the first man He ever created; the first woman He ever created; the whole earth and all the fullness *therein*; a third of the angels, at least—that's a big loss. Now the reason you

don't think of God as a failure is He never said He's a failure. And you're not a failure till you say you're one." His wife, Gloria, stated that the Apostle Paul did not receive the healing he asked for in II Corinthians 12:8 because he asked God to heal him when in reality he could have done it himself.

It seems that in the political world if someone in a high position makes a mistake some popular figures in the religious world must comment on it. Following is two examples.

When General Petraeus, married to his wife for forty years, was exposed for having an affair with his biographer, Paula Broadwell, Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Broad-casting Network and host of *The 700 Club* had this to say concerning Broadwell and Petraeus: "She is an extremely good looking woman, the man's off in a foreign land, and he's lonely, and here's a good looking lady throwing herself at him. I mean, he's a man." On the subject of Bill Clinton's infidelity during his presidency, leading to his impeachment, Billy Graham stated: "I forgive him because I know the frailty of human nature, and I know how hard it is and especially for a strong vigorous young man like he is. He has such a tremendous personality. I think the ladies just go wild over him." In William Bennett's *Book of Virtues* he quotes Wendy Kaminer, a feminist author, as saying: "There is something childlike and potentially dangerous in expecting a president to have high moral standards."

Foreign based evangelist Rodney Howard-Brown proclaims that he is "*God's Holy Bartender*."

Max Lucado, a remarkable writer and speaker, writes in his book *It Began In a Manger*: "Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper...she touches the face of the infant God, and asks: 'how long was your journey?'"

I Peter 4:11 says: "Whoever speaks, let him speak as it were, the utterances (oracles KJV) of God." When any speaker (or writer) attempts to explain any subject in Scripture, they should never go beyond what is written (I Cor. 4:6). To do so results only in confusion. The Nicene creed, which establishes the belief in the trinity and is the basis of much Christian belief, describes Jesus as "the son of God, begotten from the Father, only begotten, that is from *ousia* (substance) of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God, begotten not made, *homoousia* (same substance) with the Father ...God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made" The Athanasian Creed states "we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity. Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. So the Father is God, the son is God and the Holy Ghost is God, yet they are not three Gods but one God." Confusing?

A church Elder stated: "I do not care if there are three Gods; because if there is three, I can praise him three times as much." This is Christian idiocy gone to seed. So are the many inane definitions of God given by many pulpiteers today: "God is like water, ice and steam" or "He is like cherry pie, top crust, bottom crust and filling in between" or "God is like a boiled egg, shell, yoke and albumen (white)."

Benny Hinn, popular Tele-evangelist, proclaimed that God is not three persons but nine, “the Father is three, the Son is three, and the Holy Spirit is three.” The doctrine of the trinity is confusing enough without adding this idiocy. No wonder people are confused.

Bumper stickers: “If it isn’t the King James version it isn’t the Bible”...“In case of the rapture this vehicle will be unoccupied”... “My boss is a carpenter”... “Honk if you love Jesus”... “Tithe if you love Jesus, anyone can honk” ... “God is my co-pilot”... “Put Christ back in Christmas.” These are only samples of the inane ways some try to express their faith.

Edgar Wisenant’s statement concerning his prediction that the end of the world would be in 1988: “Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong.”

John Haggee, mega-church pastor on his TV program preached that we are living in *the generation* of Christ’s return and the end of the world, then closed his program by offering for sale a Bible “that will be treasured in your home for *generations to come*.”

A few years ago in *The Living Waters Newsletter* we carried an article entitled *JESUS JUNK* that illustrates this subject of Christian idiocy. We are reprinting the following excerpts now as a part of this article.

Warren Smith, editor of *The Christian World* recently wrote a provocative editorial entitled *The Christian Industrial Complex*. Following is a quote from the article: “In his farewell address to the nation, Dwight Eisenhower gave a speech that became famous because it used the expression ‘Military Industrial Complex’ in it. Eisenhower warned of a great danger if the military preparedness of our nation came to be seen as a mere ‘market’ for private industrial interests. Eisenhower feared we would expand our military and the size of our government for all the wrong reasons. He viewed the relationship between the military and industry as not merely symbiotic, but parasitic and pathological.

“I use this historical example,” he said, “so that it might be easier to see a similar pathological relationship emerging between the Christian retail industry and the Christian church, what I call the Christian-Industrial Complex. Examples of the Christian-Industrial Complex are easy to see. The Women of Faith conferences, for example, rake in more than \$50-million per year and are part of a for-profit publicly traded company. The Christian retail industry topped \$4.5-billion last year. (A bit of context: \$30 per month can support many ministers in developing countries. That means that Americans spend enough annually on ‘Jesus junk’ to support 250-thousand Third World ministers for 50 years.)”

Newsweek magazine carried an article entitled “He Moves the Goods in Mysterious Ways” which stated: “Christian marketers have always profited by imitating pop culture. The faithful share in mainstream’s fun, the faithless are reminded that God is relevant. After tripling sales of more than \$3-billion a year since 1980 religious retailers are hoping to snare soul-searching baby boomers with less preachy, hipper products...” It then shows pictures of items for sale, such as: “Bible Pogs” (whatever that is), Nintendo and Sega games, Bibleopoly, clothing (for every

secular logo there’s an evangelical echo on caps, ties, tees and romance novels). Quoting Newsweek again: “love triangles mean him, her and Him. Secular publishers buy in as the genre booms, and last but not least, a new woman’s magazine called ‘Clarity’ and a Hearst-distributed ‘Aspire’ aimed at luring Cosmo readers who are sick of trash talk and lipstick tips.” We wonder why the Scriptures could not do this and why are Christian women reading Cosmo in the first place?

When *Christianity Today*, a popular religious magazine started back in the 50’s, advertising took up about 3 to 7 percent of the space. Today advertising takes up almost 50 percent of the space. Along with the expected fare of books and educational institutions there are advertisements for jobs, media professionals, fund-raisers, Sunday School peanut butter, Pioneer Clubs grape jelly and a handy mini-catalog for at home shoppers. One issue had a half page spread in which a book club was advertising Rush Limbaugh’s latest book along with a full page ad for full life-size bronze statues of Jesus for only \$60,000.00 with a number of smaller ones in bronze, pewter and porcelain ranging in price from \$500.00 to \$40,000.00. Some time ago a Seattle machinist, Sean Pinkerton, after having what he describes as a near-mystical experience, created a touch-feely doll he called “Huggy Jesus” and offered it for sale on the internet for \$29.95 plus \$7.00 shipping and handling. The advertisements describe the doll as a “collectible, soft and cuddly doll through which young children can enjoy the warmth and comfort of snuggling up to this blue-button-eyed, yarn-mustachioed Messiah.” Columnist Joel Miller in commenting on Huggy Jesus said: “this one-dimensional toy Jesus is not even appropriate as spiritual training wheels for the very young. By reducing the founder of Christianity to an infantile physical play thing, ‘Huggy Jesus’ seduces children into something verging on I-doll-etry.” Running a close second to the “Huggy Jesus” doll are other items that have high jacked the name of Jesus in order to profit from the gullibility of Christian people. Just to mention a few from the average Christian Bookstore and religious fund raising advertisements: Scriptural candy (faith mints), Jesus breath mints, evangelical caps, ties and tees. Jelly bean prayers, regenerate water bottles, Jesus ceramic candy trays, Jesus coffee mugs, and WWJD bracelets. Shades of Martin Luther and the sale of indulgences during the middle ages!

Add to all this other high powered, high financed marketing products offered in our so called Christian bookstores today. Examples: Joel Osteen products, Rick Warren products, Jabez prayers and Jabez wall hangings. Left Behind books and games, Joyce Meyer products, Max Lucado books and products, and on and on we could go. Jimmy Swaggart spends about half his broadcast time hawking his Bible translation and commentary, offering a whole set to those sending an offering of \$1-thousand dollars. Consider how many religious bookstore cash registers rang up enormous profits with the sale of the angelology books that crowded the shelves a few years ago, the tantalizing sales of books on *The Bible Code*, *The Prayer of Jabez* craze, the birth of a red heifer in Israel, the Y2K scare plus the outlandish prophesy books on when Jesus was supposed to come. (end of reprint)

Warren Smith was right; the Christian-Industrial Complex is the right description for it all. This is also a prime example of Christian idiocy, not only the peddling of such nonsense, but the purchasing of it.

