

Newsbytes

The First Watch

November 6, 2019

No. 946

Since 2001

Newzbytes is a ministry of Calvary Chapel of Appleton

www.ccapleton.org

“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

Erdogan's Summit With Putin Should Ring Alarm Bells For NATO

Con Coughlin/Gatestone Institute October 25, 2019

With Turkey seemingly intent on forging an ever-closer relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the time has come to give serious consideration to Ankara's continued membership of the NATO alliance.

When the Turks first became members of NATO back in 1952, it was because their country was seen as a vital bulwark against the Soviet Union. Having Turkey in NATO meant it was easier to monitor the activities of the Soviet Black Sea fleet, and limited Moscow's ability to spread its tentacles into eastern Europe and the Middle East.

Now, thanks to the increasingly anti-Western conduct of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, none of these considerations remains relevant.

These days, the Soviet Union might be no more, but Russia under Mr Putin's autocratic rule is just as determined to undermine the West and its allies, and Mr Erdogan, to judge by his successful summit with the Russian leader on October 22 at the Black Sea city of Sochi, is proving to be Moscow's useful idiot in accomplishing these goals.

Relations between Ankara and Moscow have improved considerably since Turkish warplanes shot down a Russian military jet that had strayed into Turkish air space in 2015.

Thanks to the close rapport that exists between Mr Putin and Mr Erdogan, Russia's Black Sea fleet is able to operate freely, to the extent that Russian warships based in the area were used to attack rebel forces in Syria fighting the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

Now, following the success of the Sochi talks, the two countries have agreed to work together on the post-conflict carve-up of Syria, one that is designed to bolster the interests of both Russia and Turkey at the expense of the Syrian Kurds who were, until recently, regarded as vital allies of the US and other NATO member states in the fight against ISIS.

This means that Mr Erdogan can persist with his offensive against the Syrian Kurds, who commanded the pro-western Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the battle to destroy ISIS, as he seeks to establish what he calls a "safe zone" in northern Syria which, to judge by the appalling casualties the Kurds are suffering at the hands of the Turkish military, is anything but safe.

Nor is Mr Erdogan's marriage of convenience with his Russian counterpart the first time that the Turkish leader has acted in a way that is directly contrary to NATO's interests.

Earlier in the summer, Mr Erdogan drew heavy criticism from Washington after he did an arms deal with Moscow that enabled Ankara to purchase Russia's S-400 anti-aircraft missile system, which was specifically designed to shoot down NATO warplanes. The Trump administration responded by saying it would exclude Turkey from the F-35 stealth fighter programme.

At a time when NATO is reconfiguring its resources to deal with the threat Russia poses to European security, from protecting the Baltic states from Russian aggression to dealing with cyber attacks, the cosy relationship that Mr Erdogan has embarked upon with Moscow can hardly be said to be in NATO's interests.

The time has come, therefore, for the alliance to give serious consideration about whether Ankara should be allowed to retain its NATO membership, or whether to abandon Turkey to pursue its pro-Russian stance.

A number of prominent Republicans, such as US Senator Lindsey Graham, have already called for Turkey's suspension from the alliance, and he has been the driving force behind attempts in Congress to impose sanctions against Ankara over its treatment of the Syrian Kurds.

Now the time has come for other NATO members states to weigh up whether it really is in their interests to allow the alliance's only Muslim state to retain its membership.

In the past it has been argued that ending Turkey's association with NATO would be a gift to Mr Putin, who would like to see nothing more than the NATO alliance collapse.

There is, though, a contrary argument to be made, namely that the alliance is already being weakened by allowing Turkey to retain its membership while at the same time pursuing policies which are directly opposed to NATO's interests.

Consequently, to my mind NATO would be far stronger, and better-equipped, to deal with its adversaries if it did not have to contend with a fifth columnist state like Turkey operating within its ranks.

Next up: Think 2Peter 2:1-2. Yep, and Copeland too, I can't believe these guys are still around - whistling in the darkness till judgment comes...MD

The Most Evil Man You've Never Heard Of

Rapture Ready / Apologetics

If you asked 100 people whom they thought was the most evil man who ever lived, the majority of them would give the title to Adolf Hitler. The one-time dictator of Germany earned the distinction by being history's most documented despot.

Hitler is the one who started World War II – the most costly war in human history, which left 60 million people dead. He also implemented the Holocaust – the systematic persecution and genocide of the Jews and other groups he deemed “racially inferior” or “undesirable.”

All evil springs from a revolt against God. Satan is the leader of this rebellion. Hitler sought to destroy the

Jews because the devil knows that redemption history works around the Jews. If he could eliminate the Jews, then the plan of God could be derailed.

The next most recognized evil man is Joseph Stalin. At one point, he was the head of the largest dictatorship in history. While Hitler let other people do his dirty work, Stalin was directly involved in the death of millions of people.

How To Get To the Top of the Evil List

The most shocking examples of evil are always attacks against the most innocent members of society. It is always an outrage to hear of children being molested, elderly ladies being mugged and the mentally handicapped being abused.

God is the most powerful being in the universe. He is also the most innocent, being completely free from sin. Anyone who attacks the Lord is committing the most evil act possible.

Someone can wallow in the pig sty of lust, greed, and debauchery and be evil. But until they pick up a lump of mud and fling it at the Creator, they have not truly been to the dark side. Why else would it be so common for people to use the Lord's name as a curse word?

Satan loves to use men who claim to represent God as vehicles for defaming the Lord. Because the devil knows how holy God is, he may be hesitant to defame the Lord on a personal level. I don't recall anywhere in the Bible where a demonic being attacks God directly. The devil leaves this task up to man. It is like the old saying, "fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

James Eugene Ewing

I recently discovered a man who has excelled in defaming the Lord. Over a 40-year period, he has rubbed mud in God's face, and he has helped prevent millions of people from finding eternal redemption. His name is James Eugene Ewing.

Unless you found his page by doing a Google search for "James Eugene Ewing," I'm sure you have never heard of this man. You would have a better chance of catching Santa Claus coming down the chimney than you would of finding footage of Mr. Ewing. He is the type of person who likes to hide in the shadows.

According to statements from his own ministry, Ewing was born in Texas in 1933, the son of south Texas sharecroppers. He served four years in the Air Force, claiming through his magazine that "many soldiers gave their lives to Christ with Bro. Ewing kneeling by their side in airplanes, in barracks or anyplace." After his stint in the military, he chartered Camp Meetings Revivals in the Dallas area.

Ewing's tent-revival crusades were focused on healing and liberation. A full-page ad in the 1963 Tulsa World announced a "Deliverance revival: Gene Ewing coming under one of the world's largest tents."

Despite having little formal education, Ewing managed to build a massive direct-mail empire from his mansion in Los Angeles. All his ministry mail is directed to a Tulsa post office box. Ewing's computerized mailing operation, Saint Matthew's Churches, mails more than 1 million scam letters per month, many to low-income, uneducated people, while Ewing lives in a \$2.2 million, 6,400-square-foot home above Beverly Hills and drives a small fleet of luxury cars.

The Germination of Seed Faith

If you watch much Christian television programming, you may have heard a preacher talking about the

“seed faith” principle. This modern movement can be traced back to a meeting that Ewing had with Oral Roberts.

In 1968, donations to Roberts’ ministry had plummeted after Roberts alienated many of his supporters by joining the United Methodist Church. To raise money, Roberts decided to sell the ministry’s corporate airplane.

Ewing came to see Oral about buying the plane. When he arrived at the ministry headquarters, he had something to sell to Roberts. The first thing out his mouth was, “Oral, you are in trouble, and I can help you.” And did he ever.

According to Wayne Robinson, then the vice president of public affairs for the Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association, “Gene laid out one of the most sophisticated fund-raising campaigns I had ever seen. He said, ‘Oral, I want you to write your supporters and tell them you are going in the prayer tower, and you are going to read their prayer requests and pray over them.’ He stayed there three days. I forget how many hundred thousands of letters we had, but it was huge.”

The core of Ewing’s advice to Roberts was the seed-faith philosophy. “You give to the ministry, and God will reward you with a financial blessing.”

By the following year, income to Roberts’ ministry had doubled, going from \$6 million to \$12 million. Roberts was so happy with Ewing’s guidance that he gave him the plane.

“God’s Ghostwriter”

Just by helping with Oral Roberts’ ministry, Ewing could be regarded as the father of the modern-day ‘seed-faith’ concept. Many preachers joined the health-and-wealth gospel bandwagon by emulating old Oral.

Unfortunately, Ewing did not stop the Roberts. Once word got out about his magic touch, several other ministers sought his services. T.L. Osborn ran into Ewing at an airport and hired him to direct his fundraising.

“We were down to counting pencils and paper clips until Gene came along,” boasted Osborn.

Ewing’s flair for effective, dramatic direct-mail appeals won him jobs writing for evangelists including Robert Tilton, Rex Humbard and “Rev. Ike.” In many cases, the letters were identical but contained different signatures.

The Trinity Foundation, which is run by Ole Anthony, was the first to dub Ewing as “God’s Ghostwriter.” Anthony managed to find a single letter that nine different televangelists had claimed as their own. The only difference was the signature.

“We had nine different televangelists essentially sending out the same letter,” Anthony said. “He (Ewing) makes most of his money by selling these packages to televangelists.”

Never mind the fact that many of the letters speak of revelations that God directed the sender [insert name] to give the recipient. The only name that matters to these hucksters is the one on the seed-faith check.

“Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter” (Isa. 56:11).

A Skunk by Another Name Still Stinks the Same

The most obvious evidence that Ewing is crook at heart is the number of name changes for his ministry. The vast majority of religious organizations stick with the same name; Ewing goes through a new one every few years.

Here are a few examples of ministry names that have been linked to him:

Church of Compassion
Rev. Ewing's Evangelistic Ministries Inc.
Church by Mail Inc.
Church and Bible Study in the Home by Mail
Twentieth Century Advertising Agency
Saint Matthew's Churches

The frequent name change seems to be designed to ditch the IRS. When the Feds begin to investigate one of his corporate entities, he relocates his operations under a new one.

Over the years, the IRS has questioned the legitimacy of many of Ewing's organizations, but has failed to take any action. In one court filing, the IRS argued that funds generated by Church by Mail "inure to the benefit of private individuals." Another IRS brief stated that, "Ewing and McElrath (his partner) sit at the top of a very lucrative set of organizations which they totally control without interference."

The listed address for two of Ewing ministries points to the headquarters of his lawyer, J.C. Joyce. His current ministry, Saint Matthew's Churches, was also incorporated at Joyce's Tulsa law office.

Every Gimmick Under the Sun

When I first came to faith in Jesus Christ, I spent much time listening to Christian radio. Being eager for information, I wrote to all the programs that invited listeners to contact them. Many of the men on these programs were clients of Ewing who sent me an endless series of appeals for money.

Even as a baby Christian, I could tell that these prosperity preachers were wolves in sheep's clothing. Their only purpose in writing me was to get money.

To them, the Bible is just a tool for extracting funds. While Bank jobbers use guns, they utilize Scripture to pull these heists.

Ewing came up with an endless number of gimmicks to be mailed out by ministries. What made them appealing was their context to Bible verses. Some mailings would contain items like prayer cloths, "Jesus eyes" handkerchiefs, fake golden coins, miracle water or oil, communion wafers, a prayer rug made out of paper, and "sackcloth billfolds."

To conceal these letters from family members who might have better financial sense, the recipients were told to open the letters in private and not discuss them with others: "Try to take it to a room or somewhere where you can be alone with the Lord." Other mailings asked for a donation before opening a second letter marked "Personal and private."

One mailing from Ewing included a \$10,000 "faith check." The bogus check was from the "Bank of Heaven." Of course, the bank president was God, the Father, the vice president was Jesus, and the secretary and treasurer was The Holy Ghost.

"Place the faith check in your wallet and keep it there until the blessing unfolds," the letter states.

“Whisper the name of Jesus three times as you write your name on the back of your Faith Check.”

A lot of Ewing’s ideas seem as if they were inspired by a book of witchcraft. The Bible does not tell us to make practice of “repetitious” prayer. The Lord is not like a slot machine; you don’t keep blindly pulling His arm until He finally pays off. We receive God’s blessing by seeking Him on a personal level.

The Day of Reckoning

I’ve never been tempted to go down the prosperity path. Even as I read of the wealth some of these folks have raked in, and of the luxurious lives they lead, I want nothing to do with it.

No amount of money is enough to make it worth losing your eternal soul. I can’t imagine how someone who preys upon the poorest and most desperate people in our society can be regarded as Christian brothers or sisters.

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 16:25).

The funny thing about men who are truly evil: They tend to envision themselves in a positive light. Somehow they manage to find a way to view their evil deeds as helping their victims.

I imagine that James Eugene Ewing someday expects the doors of heaven to swing wide open for him. After all, he is the one who brought great hope to people who replied to his prosperity mailings.

The reality is that Ewing has done a huge amount of damage to the Kingdom of God. The teachings that he set in motion decades ago have grown in monstrous organizations. The Trinity Broadcasting Network is a haven for evangelists who have adopted his principles. It reaches tens of millions of people around the globe.

I recently talked to one pastor from Zambia who testified that the prosperity teaching has been very destructive to the church in Africa. He confirmed that many Christians have become inactive in the faith, choosing rather to sit around and listen to American preachers.

If Ewing had any concept of the massive hole he was digging for himself, he probably would have long ago retired from the business. He continues to add to his judgment because he obviously likes swindling people.

In the end, the main anguish of hell for people like Ewing will not be caused when they roast in an eternal flame. Their ultimate pain will be when they realize how easy it would have been to do the right thing. After all, they had the word of truth, they had the ambition, they had the financial resources, and they had the organization—but they did nothing to advance the name of Jesus.

“Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!” (Mat. 18:7).

Israel Watch

28 Oct 2019 Jim Fletcher

No Time Like the Present

The present moment is a time to savor, as Israel is still led by a good man, and the White House is friendly. But political and military realities are liable to shift at any time.

First, we have the ongoing chaos in Israel's political system, with neither Benjamin Netanyahu or Benny Gantz able to form a government. They are that evenly divided. It is rumored that Gantz's Blue and White Party is willing to bring Arab blocs into a coalition, and as one writer noted this week, can you imagine them having access to classified information?

Then we have the American Democrat Party, a now-radicalized community holding frightening views both domestically and abroad.

Writing in Israel Hayom, Caroline Glick noted the danger lurking for Israel in Washington:

"The radicalization of the Democratic Party and party members in the media and government should be deeply worrying to Israel because as the party has radicalized it has shifted ever farther away from Israel."

"With the Democrats in the media and the federal bureaucracy now full partners in their party's radical actions and initiatives, there is every reason to expect that after they finish with Trump, they will turn their attention to Israel."

Enjoy this moment, while Donald Trump still sits in the Oval Office! Once he leaves office, Israel might face someone even worse than Barack Obama.

Then there are the military threats to Israel, both in the north and the south. The shifting sands of Syria bring new challenges. From the Times of Israel:

"The winds of war are blowing into Israel again, an event as common as an eastern Mediterranean 'medicane' [hurricane] is rare. On Thursday, IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kohavi warned that Israel is facing a threat of conflict in both the north and the south, forcing the military to rapidly prepare for war.

"While it is the job of military leaders to keep their guard up and constantly warn of conflict (you don't want to be the general who says everything is fine before war breaks out — just ask Eli Zeira), Kohavi was described by Channel 13 news as 'very worried' following the announcement, and some are taking him a little more seriously than usual.

"The level of alarm varies according to the person speaking, but the underlying message is the same. It doesn't matter if it's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi, or Mossad chief Yossi Cohen (who recently used an event for retired Mossad officials to sound the alarm over the Iranian threat) — all are warning of the looming danger rising up against us from the northeast," writes Yoav Limor in Israel Hayom.

"A possible conclusion is that the next round of clashes between the two sides is imminent. This could be a result of pre-emptive Israeli action against an Iranian retaliatory attack or a deliberate IDF strike against growing Iranian power in the region or the smuggling of weapons to Hezbollah," Haaretz's Amos Harel writes.

While Israel has been dealing with and meeting threats for several years—witness the bold airstrikes that have set back Syria’s chemical and nuclear ambitions—the U.S. withdrawal from the region has left room for both Turkey and Iran to move in. Iran of course is the main threat.

Rather than fret about these realities, I think it’s really important right now to pray as never before. Pray for all Israelis as they navigate a potential third election in the spring. Pray for their military leaders, that they make good decisions. Pray that the Lord would blind Israel’s enemies. And pray that America will continue to be a friend to the Jewish state.

Finally, pray for opportunities to be a witness for Christ. The prophetic landscape is a perfect tool for this, so be sure to have confidence and be bold when you can discuss Bible prophecy with an unbeliever.

There’s no time like the present.

Someday you’ll be very glad you did.