

# New Bethel Christian Life Commission Report – October 2008

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## Quote of Month

“If you wish to live without struggle, without storm... do not seek a friend and do not call yourself anyone’s friend.” Apollon Maikov, Russian Poet

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### Jesus on Facebook: Churches use social networking sites on internet

*Baptist Standard* (10-13-08): 17, by Rachel Mehlhaff, *ABP*, material in quotes are exact quotes; edited by M. G. Maness

“Internet social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace are redefining the way many Americans build and maintain relationships—and also how their churches communicate.” Such networking is pervasive in the under-30 crowd and is reaching other generations. “Christian leaders are realizing that sites can be useful tools, particularly for youth ministry and college groups” – chances are, their youth are *already* using it and will be networking throughout their vocational lives. The sites enable “group members to reach other consistently and instantaneously.” They are the coffee houses of the 21st century. Several youth ministers and pastors have found the sites useful for “keeping touch” with their students and “what is going on in their lives.” Dale Tadlock, 41-year-old assoc. pastor at First Baptist Waynesville, Va., “believes it’s more effective for Christians to reach out to the culture around them by taking the best of that culture and adapting it to holy causes.” One site, MyChurch.org, is built around congregations and includes 21,000 churches across the U.S. and Canada, from Baptist to Salvation Army participants.

### Dads create clean, Christian version of MySpace

*Baptist Standard* (10-13-08): 17, by Chris Welch, *Religion News Service*, edited by M. G. Maness

Randal Brown helped create Christianspaceonline.com as an alternative and wanted to avoid the advertising spam that can relate to porn on secular sites. Even so, Brown said, “We’re never going to be 100 perfect ... There’s no guaranteed safety at church or school. We try to keep it as clean as possible.”

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### Gay-rights Group Targets Baptist schools, including DBU and Southwestern Seminary

*Baptist Standard* (10-13-08): 19, by Vicki Brown, *ABP*, material in quotes are exact quotes; edited by M. G. Maness

“A group that promotes equal rights for homosexuals in religious organizations appears to be targeting Baptist schools in its third annual tour of faith-based educational institutions.” The group, Soulforce Q’s Equality Ride, has scheduled stops a DBU, SWBTS, Liberty University, Ouachita Baptist University, Central Baptist College, Columbia International, Heritage Christian University, Southwestern Assemblies of God University, among others. Soulforce Q’s mission attempts to “end political and religious oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people through relentless nonviolent resistance.” They send requests for meetings, and a negative response does not prevent a visit. DBU has allowed dialogue sessions, “with the understanding that we disagree with where they stand,” said DBU Dean of Student Life Jay Harley. Students had an impact on the decision to allow discussions. DBU Student Government Association President Leigh Caron said, “Our students have a strong commitment to good character and morals. We as Christians ... can show the selfless love that Christ would have us show.”

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### Church of England apologizes to Darwin

*Baptist Standard* (sidebar, did not write the date), edited by M. G. Maness

An official apology has been issued to naturalist Charles Darwin of its own 19th-century *misunderstanding* over his theory of evolution. Darwin’s 1859 *On the Origin of the Species* sparked controversy that continues today. The Church of England vilified Darwin in the 1800s for questioning the sole creation of the earth by God around 6,000 B.C. But Church of England Director of Missions and Public Affairs Malcolm Brown, on the church’s website, said to Darwin that his church “owes you an apology for misunderstanding you, by getting our first reaction wrong.” Brown likened the Darwin controversy to the Vatican’s 1633 trial of Galileo who angered the RCC by asserting the earth revolved around the sun.

PERSONAL COMMENTARY—*Hmmmhm*, says Maness, so if the earth’s circling the sun is in the same league as the origins of life, is the industrial age, the steam engine, and nuclear fusion in the same scientific category as UFO’s, SETI and ESP *university* research?<sup>1</sup> I think probability statistics would favor the existence of UFO’s as a more likely reality over the chances of human life developing by chance. Little green men on Mars *appears* more likely than men from amebas, but – then again – I *have* met some ameba-like mentalities.

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<sup>1</sup> SETI – Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence; ESP – Extra Sensory Perception.

## Right-to-die pushes envelope

*Southern Baptist Texan* (10-6-8): 15, sidebar, edited by M. G. Maness

Australia's upper house of Parliament in the state of Victoria defeated (25-13) a bill that would have legalized assisted suicide. The foes of the bill rejoiced, indicating that some of the language was foreboding, including "incurable illness" which could "encompass many afflictions, whether paraplegia, ... HIV ... could even be construed to apply to mental illness," said bioethics specialist Wesley Smith on his weblog: "Assisted suicide/euthanasia is not really about terminal illness, but about an ideological quest for near death-on-demand as an essential aspect of human freedom, sometimes called 'the ultimate civil liberty' within the movement. Once euthanasia consciousness is accepted, assisted suicide will expand to active euthanasia and a broad applicability, just as it has in the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland."

PERSONAL COMMENTARY—*Hmmmhm*, says Maness, in the case of terminal illness, a vegetative state or great unbearable pain, is the freedom to *allow* death a civil right? A biblical right? Seems so, in practice and in part, in that most of us *would – yes –* allow a hospital to shut off a life-sustaining ventilator to a vegetative loved one. I have given such a right to my family in a personal medical directive/power of attorney. We all believe that death is a natural part of life, and *allowing* death by the removal of a ventilator is a mercy, many of us believe. But where is the line between allowing the "shutting off" of a ventilator and acquiescing to the request of a loved one to end unbearable pain or to die with the dignity of a sane mind? If we possess the freedom to *allow* death as a civil right, can we allow the *time* of death too? The ethical line is most unclear and we fight it with all our heart, ethically and biblically, when the question is reversed – properly said to be the *other* side of the *same* coin – when we ask, Are we ever permitted to take life? We do in war. Many will if the mother's life is threatened in pregnancy. And many of us will allow such as the penalty for a murderer, especially a vicious serial murderer. If we *allow* a loved one to die, and will *permit* the taking of life, should we *allow* and *permit* a loved one the freedom to die in the case of clear terminal illness and clear down-the-line loss of mind? Do you (or I) want the freedom to possess "the ultimate civil liberty"? We already have, in the US, to the degree that we *do – yes –* have final medical directives should we become veggies. The questions for the 21st century revolve around whether we should *allow* a person to make the choice *before* that person loses the ability and *before* he or she becomes a vegetable. At the risk of making light a very serious topic, would you call that discussion "pre-veggy ethics"? Regardless – this is a heartrending issue that needs the utmost sensitivity by those *not yet* having a loved one in such dilemmas.

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## English Sailor Sporting in Foreign Port

From Spurgeon Sermon #3075, Looking for One Thing and Finding Another, 1-16-1908, pp41-41, Vol. 54; 1 Samuel 9:3, 20

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Isaiah 55:6

**H**e who would gain riches must find them in the appointed way. So, all of the remarkable interpositions of God go to prove the rule that he who would have mercy must seek it. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found," is the *fixed* rule. Even if God comes to some who seek him not, yet the rule still holds good. I heard a story of an English sailor in a foreign port. When the foreigners were manning the yards and performing their maneuvers in honor of a royal personage, our countryman wanted to show them up. Our sailor wanted to show what an Englishman could do. So he climbed to the top of the mast, and stood there on his head. On a sudden, the ship lurched, and he fell; but, by a happy providence, he caught a rope as he fell, and descended safely to the deck. "There," said he, "you fellows, see if you could tumble down like that." Are you surprised that no one accepted the challenge? Who but a fool would have thought it worth his while to imitate the example? Because here and there a man runs risks, and by the interposition of divine grace is saved from his folly, is that a reason why you should run those hazards yourself? God does interpose, nobody can doubt it. But God's his sovereign rule is, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found." His gospel cries daily, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Trust the merits of Jesus Christ. Our gospel is not, "Sit still, and wait for divine interpositions." No! "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Sport *not* and wait *not* with your eternal life!

From M.G. Maness, *Ocean Devotions—From the Hold of C.H. Spurgeon, Master of Mariner Metaphors* [2008], [www.PreciousHeart.net/ocean](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/ocean).

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