

## Trends

The share of U.S. adults who say they believe in God, while still remarkably high by comparison with other advanced industrial countries, has declined to 89%. The share of Americans who say they are "absolutely certain" God exists has dropped even more to 63%. A growing share of Americans are religiously unaffiliated, including some who self-identify as atheists or agnostics as well as many who describe their religion as "nothing in particular." Altogether, the religiously unaffiliated now account for 23% of the adult population.

—via Pew Research Center

**Matthew 22:37:** "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

## Sentence Sermons

"I do not believe in God. I'm an atheist. I consider myself a critical thinker. And it fascinates me that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century most people still believe in, as George Carlin puts it, 'The invisible man living in the sky.'"

—Seth MacFarlane, actor/comedian

**Psalm 14:1:** "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt..."

## News & Notes

Please pray for Mike Thomas and his family. Mike's wife, Laura, was killed in a tragic car accident last week near Plainfield. Thankfully she was a faithful Christian. But such a loss is still very difficult.

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help? Let me know.

Please let us know of any in need of our prayers! We'll announce it and post it.

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Please direct questions and comments to the editor.

# Words of Life

Westside  
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You  
have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



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## A Separate People

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The divine idea of separation in religion is as old as the Jewish race. Abraham was chosen of God to be the father of the chosen race. But idolatrous Ur of the Chaldees was not a land to nourish such a race. Influences were overwhelmingly against God's purpose to raise up a separate people. Hence, the call of God came to Abram to abandon country and kindred and seek a home in an unknown land. And that is the beginning of a separation—a separate family.

Years afterwards the posterity of Abraham, through a series of varied providential circumstances, settled in the land of Egypt. There they grew into a numerous race. Time developed that they could not serve God in Egypt. Separation was essential. God called them out of Egypt. A peculiar nation was formed at Sinai, with peculiar laws, a peculiar government, and peculiar life and relations. In keeping this law and maintaining this separation Israel was blessed. But when they departed, changed their government (1 Samuel 8), served other gods (Deuteronomy 8:19), and formed alliances, they were rejected by God and subjected by their enemies. And only after reformation did God grant them restoration. (Ezekiel 10:10-11) The lesson of the story is separation—a separate nation.

But that is not the end of the story of separation. God still requires it—a separate church. As fleshly Israel was called out of Egypt, God has called the church, spiritual Israel, out of the world. And to retain the favor of God, the church must maintain that separation distinct and peculiar.

The church must maintain separation in speech. "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard in me" (2 Timothy 1:13). The power of a united language is demonstrated in the Tower of Babel. It became the bond of an apostate union which God had to break up in a confusion of tongues. And it is so that unity and purity of speech—calling Bible things by Bible names—is a bond among Christians that will triumph over error and bring order out of confusion.

The church must maintain separation in doctrine. Paul's admonition to "speak thou the things that become sound doctrine" needs constant emphasis today. The New Testament command to "touch not, taste not and handle not," does not refer

to strong drink, but to “the commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:21-22). It is a warning against flirting with error and fraternizing with denominationalism. The growing idea that the “church of Christ” is just a church among churches will prove fatal, and it must not prevail. It is the church or nothing. It is one way or none. Any participation on the part of members of the church of Christ in denominational functions can only compromise the church and is detrimental to the cause of truth.

The church must maintain separation in worship. The Old Testament injunction to “take heed lest ye turn aside” has its counterpart in the New Testament counsel: “Let no man beguile you.... intruding into those things which he hath not seen.... and not holding the Head, . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship” (Colossians 2:18-23). Self-devised worship is condemned along with man-written creeds and man-made doctrines. The New Testament Pattern must be adhered to.

Christians must maintain separation in life. Terms of dignity are applied to Christians. The church is “a chosen generation;” it is “a royal priesthood” and “a holy nation.” Christians are to “show forth the praises (or excellencies)” of God who called them.

The demand of the Bible upon Christians is to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts” and to live “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

Bible Banner, December, 1941

### “Hear Ye Him”

Larry Hafley

On the mount of transfiguration, God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).

In effect, God said, “It is time to turn from Moses and the prophets. Listen to my Son; ‘hear ye him.’” Indeed, at various times and in many ways, God had spoken “unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb. 1:1). Now, though, God is saying, “I am speaking to you, not through the prophets, but through my Son; ‘hear ye him.’”

We all know this, but what does it mean? What are the consequences of the command to hear the word of Christ?

First, of course, as previously noted, it means that we no longer turn to the Old Testament as our guide. The New Testament is the constitution of the kingdom of Christ (Acts 3:22, 23; Heb. 12:25).

Second, we may not hear and heed another (Cf. Jn. 10:5). We are to hear the Lord Jesus, not Mohammed and the Koran, not Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, not the councils, catechisms, conclaves and creeds of men as expressed in Catholicism and Protestant denominationalism. In short, “hear ye him,” and him only shalt thou hear (Jn. 12:48).

Third, all alike are amenable and accountable to hear. None are ex-

empt (Mk. 16:15). That my wife or my mother have heard benefits me not in the least. I must hear, and so must you.

Fourth, to hear comprehends, not merely to register sounds on auditory faculties, but to obey. “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Lk. 6:46)? “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas. 1:22).

Finally, one may devoutly hear and devotedly heed all the best and noblest sentiments of mankind, but if he hears them and ignores that one singular, spiritual voice, he is stone deaf to all that matters or has meaning. “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn. 6:63). “Thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn. 6:68). One may know every subtle nuance of Shakespeare, weep at the quaint poignancy of Lincoln’s speeches, or soar on the eloquence of Churchill’s histories, but if he misses the sweet syllables of the Savior’s breath, he may as well have been born without sense or senses. In view, therefore, of all that is high, holy, and heavenly, “hear ye him.”

### “Mite” God Be Our Creator?

Larry Hafley

Tiny mites infect and inhabit the ear of the *Leucania* moth. Yes, I said, “the ear,” singular. In which ever ear the mites first locate, the other is left free. Hence, if the left ear of the moth is indwelt by mites, the right ear will remain clear of mite invasion.

Now, it so happens that bats love to feast on the *Leucania* moth, but the moth has an ultrasound detector in its ears which allows it to evade attacking bats. (Men put radar detectors in their cars--who put ultrasound detectors in the ears of the moth?) When mites invade the moth’s ear, the moth loses the service of its detector in that ear. However, with one ear still free of mites, it can successfully escape a preying bat. If the bat eats the moth, it will also eat the mites in the moth’s ear; so, the mites only dwell in one ear and leave the other one free and clear. It is a nice, clever design. The mite has a home, and the moth maintains his security system.

What keeps mites from using both ears? Do mites or moths have zoning laws, or what? Did blind, mindless, lifeless evolution design and implement such a system of housing and mutual protection as exists between the moth and the mite? Or, could it be that such a marvelous arrangement testifies to the existence of a Divine engineer, director, and builder (Psa. 19:1-4)?

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

**Psalms 19:1-4**