

Navy Heeds Christian Calls to Replace Bibles

The U.S. Navy instructed housekeepers to remove Gideon-placed Bibles from every hotel room on its military bases after it received a letter from the atheist group Freedom From Religion Foundation, Charisma News reported earlier this week.

After thousands of Christians contacted the Navy, it reversed its order and Bibles are now allowed to stay.

Atheists had cheered a victory after a complaint prompted the exchange to begin moving the Bibles to its lost-and-found bins this summer, reported, but the Navy said the decision was made without consulting senior leadership.

“That decision and our religious accommodation policies with regard to the placement of religious materials are under review,” Navy spokesman Cmdr. Ryan Perry wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes. “While that review is under way, religious materials removed from Navy Lodge rooms will be returned.”

The American Family Association (AFA) sent an online Action Alert to its friends and supporters Tuesday, encouraging them to take action. It worked.

“This is great news! I know thousands of AFA supporters voiced strong objection to the purging of Bibles by the Navy from their lodges,” says American Family Association president Tim Wildmon.

“We must be alert to what the secularists are doing inside the military but this reversal proves that those who believe in religious freedom can make a difference when we take action.”

Hillsong: From Humble Beginnings to Hollywood Feature Film

“Why would anyone want to see a movie about us!?!?” That’s how Hillsong’s leader Brian Houston starts out a recent blog post.

In fact, he says that was his response when some Hollywood producers approached him late last year with a proposal for a Hillsong movie. It’s the story about the band Hillsong United, and the beginnings of what was once a small church in Australia.

“From then until now; much time, thought, preparation and prayer has gone into the journey—and as of today I can tell you that Warner Bros. and Alcon Entertainment have joined with these producers in expressing their desire and excitement to put a feature film into theatres next April that tells the story of God’s faithfulness on this 30 year journey,” Houston wrote in a blog post.

Houston describes the goal of the movie this way: to give people the world over the opportunity to experience the praise and worship that has been birthed at Hillsong.

“We aren’t naive enough to believe that it’s all going to be a ‘walk in the park,’ but we have faith to believe that opening up our lives and portraying the journey with authenticity may just point people to the One we live for and long to glorify—Jesus,” Houston says.

“Already we’ve seen God do what only He can by stirring the hearts of influential people in the film industry to

‘spiritual curiosity’ and opening doors of opportunity that we have never sought and could never have imagined.”

Houston hopes the movie will paint a picture of the power of the local church and the unfathomable grace of an almighty God.

Hardee’s Uses ‘Soft Porn’ to Sell Burgers, Moms Cry

I’ve never been a fan of Hardee’s or Carl’s Jr. fast food—but their latest commercials leave a worse taste in my mouth than the greasy burgers.

The fast food chains are airing all-out disgusting ads for the latest product: a Texas BBQ Thickburger. The commercial puts a spotlight on a model’s sweaty chest and offers several suggestive shots of her legs. One Million Moms got it right when they called it “degrading to women” and launched a campaign to have it pulled from the air.

“Not long after One Million Moms contacted the company about its advertisement starring Kate Upton making out with a burger at a drive-in movie wearing only skimpy lingerie, the company aired three different commercials all with the same theme,” One Million Moms writes on its website.

“The restaurant is using sex to sell its burgers with scantily-clad models licking sauce seductively in provocative poses. IMM has had enough with their soft porn ads! We will politely, but sternly let them know that we are not giving up on protecting our families.”

One Million Moms then offered a review of the restaurants' consistent use of sex to sell its product: In 2003, Hardee's (Carl's Jr.) featured Hugh Hefner as a poster celebrity; Hardee's used an erotic ad featuring a mechanical bull and a scantily clad female; in 2005, Hardee's used a pornographic ad with Paris Hilton using sleazy movements to sell burgers; in 2009, Hardee's featured their new "Biscuit holes." In the ad, various customers individually name them using such verbiage as B holes, A holes, dingle balls, and biscatles (as in testicles); and in 2014, Carl's Jr. has just launched its newest in a series of raunchy sex-laden ads.

One Million Moms is suggesting concerned citizens call owner CKE Restaurant's consumer relations department at 800-422-4141. Press "0" for the operator and ask for the guest response line, then press 1 for TV ads. Here are some suggested talking points from the moms:

"Your advertising continues to offend me and my family. You have shown no respect for common decency, values or women. If you continue to advertise in this manner and refuse to remove your recent ad, my family will no longer eat in your restaurants. I also plan on telling everyone I know never to visit your restaurant again unless you pull the Texas BBQ Thickburger ad off the air and remove it from your website immediately!

"In the past, your reply has been that men are your target market, but women, especially moms, make the majority of meal decisions. Not to mention a majority of the men you are 'targeting' have wives and daughters which they love and respect and are offended by your advertising choice that is degrading to women. These fathers also have sons they do not want exposed to your sexually explicit content that is considered soft porn by many families."

When You Feel Alone

Years ago I attended a national mothering conference. A lot of women had gathered together to have fun, bond with friends, and learn how to be better mothers. Unfortunately, I didn't attend with other women.

The truth was I've never felt so alone in my life.

I had a hotel room to myself. I sat alone during the speakers' presentations, among 5,000 women. I remember looking around and thinking, "Nobody knows me. Nobody understands." They didn't know who I was. They didn't know about my life or about my children or my ministry.

It made me think about our desire to be known. We want to feel appreciated. If we're attending a Bible study or we're taking our child to a new school we don't want to be the one that nobody knows.

It made me think of a woman in the Bible who thought she was alone. Abraham's concubine, Hagar, had a son named Ishmael, and when she was sent into the desert with her son she had no one who cared for her--at least that's what she thought. She carried much when she left Abraham's tent. She carried the harsh words of her mistress, weighing deep in her heart. She also was weighed down with worries about her son. How would she find food and water? How would they survive?

Yet God saw her.

He reached out to Hagar and showed her His love. She cried to Him with thanksgiving.

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"You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Gen. 16:13).

I don't know about your life today. I don't know if you're alone ... or if you feel alone even as you're surrounded by people. Maybe you woke up today without having anyone you looked forward to seeing. But God sees you, even though you may feel like you're alone, like I did in that crowd of women. God is there. God cares.

Tricia Goyer has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31 and HomeLife Magazine.

Missing Amish Sisters Found Alive After Kidnapper's Shocking Behavior

Two Amish sisters who were abducted from their family farm stand near New York's border with Canada were found alive following a massive day-long hunt on Thursday, the county

district attorney said.

The girls, 12-year-old Fannie Miller and 6-year-old Delila Miller, were returned home in good health following their disappearance on Wednesday night, said St. Lawrence County District Attorney Mary Rain.

Rain said the girls' captor dropped them off in front of a stranger's home in the hamlet of Bigelow, then fled. The man living inside recognized the pair as the missing girls and drove them back to their family farm stand in the rural Amish community of Oswegatchie, some 10 miles from the Canada border, she said.

"We were just elated that they showed up at home. It was shocking that their captor or captors just dropped them off, and away they went," Rain said.

"Now we start the work of finding out who did this," she said.

The Amish, who live throughout the United States, with the nation's largest community in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, are known for their old-world ways. Shunning electricity and other modern conveniences, they drive horse-drawn buggies.

*Reporting by Barbara Goldberg and Curtis Skinner in New York;
Editing by Gunna Dickson and Jeremy Laurence*

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Mark Driscoll, Spiritual Abuse and Cultish Ministries

Spiritual abuse. I've endured it, so I know what it looks like.

As I've said in the past, **spiritual abuse**, cultish churches and controlling ministries are less often exposed than pastors who coerce teenaged boys and unsuspecting church secretaries to have sexual relations.

Mark Driscoll may pour out crude sermons about oral sex and sex toys in sermons—he's long been ultra-controversial—but the spiritual abuse allegations are most troubling. Jim Henderson, a Mars Hill watcher who took part in a demonstration to raise public awareness of the problems at the Seattle-based megachurch earlier this month—before the Acts 29 network he co-founded disassociated itself with him and the church, and before LifeWay pulled his books off the shelves—described the way Driscoll runs the church like this:

“Malicious, it's spiritual abuse, it's damaging to people's lives, it's jeopardizing the reputations of Christians—it's already difficult in Seattle for people to take Christians seriously,” reports. “Now we have to contend with this guy.”

What Is Spiritual Abuse?

I had never heard the words “spiritual abuse” until I escaped a controlling ministry where the subtle practice ran rampant. Someone close to me who had observed the behavior in the church I attended recommended a book called *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*.

Jeff VanVonderen, co-author of the classic book, explains spiritual abuse this way: “Spiritual abuse occurs when someone in a position of spiritual authority ... misuses that authority

placing themselves over God's people to control, coerce or manipulate them for seemingly godly purposes which are really their own."

I can tell you from firsthand experience that victims of abusive church authority structures may not even realize what they are enduring until they escape its grip. Spiritual abuse is often subtle. Christian cult leaders don't always operate like Jim Jones. **Controlling ministries** tend to hide behind the guise of spiritual coverings. And far too many outsiders are not willing to even question the messages and practices of such churches. It takes lovers of truth with spiritual discernment to recognize the sometimes-subtle signs of abusive churches. And it takes courage to confront it.

Spiritual abuse is hardly a new phenomenon. You can find instances in the Bible of spiritual leaders exploiting people to build their kingdoms. In Jeremiah 8, the Lord called out the abuse of prophets and priests, saying, "They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious" (v. 11, NIV).

The root problems of people in the "church" were treated superficially. In other words, the pastor put a Band-Aid on the problem so things looked good from the outside but the wound was festering on the inside. The pastor's prominence was more important than the legitimate needs of the congregation.

Modern-Day Spiritual Abuse

Today, this manifests as spiritual leaders recruiting volunteers to build their ministries while neglecting to minister to the real needs of hurting people. In such cases, churches become like businesses. The pastor is more like a CEO than a spiritual leader. Staff meetings center on marketing initiatives that will bring more people—who will bring more tithes and offerings—into the sanctuary. Church services become about external appearances, but the whitewashed tombs

are full of dead men's bones.

Jesus addressed spiritual abuse in His day. Beyond His warnings about the Pharisees, Jesus also pointed out ravenous wolves. These ravenous wolves look much like anointed prophets, but their motives are dastardly. Today, the spiritually abusive Pharisaical pastor has a long list of rules and demands and little grace for those who don't rise to the occasion.

Entire books have been written on spiritual abuse. Those books will help you see spiritual abuse for what it is, how you got sucked into the cycle, how to break free from spiritual abuse and how to recover from spiritual abuse once you've escaped its clutches.

Power-posturing is a telltale sign of spiritual abuse. "Power-posturing leaders spend a lot of time focused on their own authority and reminding others of it," writes Dave Johnson and VanVonderen in their book on spiritual abuse. Johnson and VanVonderen say this is necessary because those leaders' spiritual authority isn't real—based on genuine godly character—it is postured.

In practical terms, this might manifest as a leader who likes to remind the congregation that he can excommunicate people or that any anointing you are flowing in comes from the head (him). This leader can never be questioned, and is usually not accountable to anyone. Those around him are usually mere "yes men" who do his bidding in exchange for delegated authority to lord over others.

Performance preoccupation is a sign of spiritual abuse. Johnson and VanVonderen note that obedience and submission are two important words often used in abusive church structures.

Don't get me wrong. Obedience and submission are important. But spiritual abuse often shames or scares people into

obedience and submission. True obedience is a matter of the heart. Spiritual abusers apply undue pressure that is not from God. That pressure is usually applied to get you to do the leader's will, not God's will.

Unspoken rules are common in instances of spiritual abuse. In abusive spiritual systems, Johnson and VanVonderen offer, people's lives are controlled from the outside in by rules, spoken and unspoken.

"Unspoken rules are those that govern unhealthy churches of families but are not said out loud. Because they are not said out loud, you don't find out that they're there until you break them," Johnson and VanVonderen write. It often seems these "rules" hold more power than Scripture.

The "Can't Talk" rule is seen where spiritual abuse is present. Johnson and VanVonderen explain that the "can't talk" rule blames the person who talks, and the ensuing punishments pressure questioners into silence.

I'll never forget the day I realized that if you voice a problem you become the problem. If you question why the church no longer picks up the poor kids in the ministry van but has shifted its focus to more affluent neighborhoods, you are removed from your role as a volunteer driver. Others see your fate and decide they'd better not rock the boat. It's a form of intimidation.

Lack of balance and extremism is often present where spiritual abuse lives. This manifests as an unbalanced approach to living out the truth of the Christian life. Johnson and VanVonderen explain that in these systems it is more important to act according to the word of a leader who has "a word" for you than to act according to what you know to be true from Scripture, or simply from your spiritual-growth history.

The truth is prophetic words don't carry the same weight as Scripture, and you can hear from God for yourself. When you

rely on other people to tell you what God is saying, you open the door to control and manipulation.

It's not possible to fully expose the inner workings of spiritual abuse, Christian cults and controlling churches in a single article. My goal is to raise awareness of a troubling issue and get you thinking—not to send you on a witch hunt for spiritual abusers.

If you think you are part of a spiritually abusive cult-like or controlling church, ask the Lord to break any deception off your mind and show you the truth. The truth could be that you are in a healthy church and you just need to die to self. But it could be that you are in an abusive system and you need to break free. If your heart is purely seeking the truth, the Holy Spirit will surely guide you there (John 16:13).

Jennifer LeClaire is news editor of Charisma. She is also director of Every Nation Prayer Room in Fort Lauderdale and author of several books, including The Making of a Prophet and The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel. You can email Jennifer at @ or visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter.

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'Why I'm Not Afraid of Satan'

I believe in the existence of Satan. But I'm not afraid of him. Satan may be the prince of this world, but Jesus is the king. Frankly, the only reason I believe Satan is real is because Jesus talked to him and about him so many times.

It's true that Satan roams about looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). He's on a mission. Jesus said, "The thief's purpose (referring to the devil) is to steal and to kill and to destroy" (John 10:10). So we underestimate him at great peril.

But an alert Christian has absolutely nothing to worry about. Satan is a spiritual pipsqueak compared to Jesus: "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Frankly, Satan is only as powerful as we let him be.

Here are two biblical approaches to dealing with the devil ...

- *First, tell Satan about Jesus.* Jesus rebuked Satan, and we can too (Matthew 4:10). Just say, "Satan, I rebuke you in the name of Jesus." That is enough. James 4:7 promises, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
- *Second, tell God about Satan.* How? Just pray the Lord's Prayer every day, which includes: "Do not let us yield to temptation. Deliver us from the evil one." Do that, and you're covered.

Telling Satan about God is good, but telling God about Satan is even better. Wouldn't you rather be in the presence of God telling Him about Satan, than in the presence of Satan telling him about God?

So let's hang out as closely as we can to the shepherd king. He will beat back the attacks of the wolf prince.

Patrick Morley is the chairman and co-CEO of *Man in the Mirror Ministries*. For the original article, visit [.](#)

Prepare to Be Blown Away by 'Holy Ghost'

Darren Wilson's upcoming film *Holy Ghost* is poised to set the world on fire. A globe-spanning project that captures the Holy Spirit at work in the unlikeliest of places and in people from all walks of life, including well-known celebrities. Check out the trailer below for a taste of what's coming:

Study: Neck Manipulation Connected With Stroke Risk

Blood vessel tears that lead to strokes may be associated with—but not necessarily caused by—treatments involving neck manipulations, researchers say.

The blood vessel tears, called 'cervical artery dissections'

account for about two of every 100 strokes overall, and from eight to 25 of every 100 strokes in young and middle-aged adults.

“What happens with the dissection is that there is a tear in one of the layers of the artery wall in the neck that can result in (a) stroke if a blood clot forms,” Dr. José Biller told Reuters Health in a phone call.

Biller, a neurologist with the Loyola University Chicago Strich School of Medicine, was lead author of a joint statement on neck manipulation and stroke risk from the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association. The statement was published in *Stroke*.

Biller said cervical artery dissections have been reported after blunt or penetrating injuries and also in association with a variety of other conditions.

They can occur after “a sudden movement that can hyperextend or rotate the neck that may happen with certain sporting activities, with whiplash or violent coughing or vomiting movements, or with neck manipulation therapy,” Biller said.

Healthcare providers sometimes use neck manipulations, or “cervical manipulative therapy,” to treat musculoskeletal conditions of the neck and upper back. Most are performed by chiropractors, but osteopaths and physical therapists use these maneuvers as well.

To assess the associations between neck manipulations and stroke risk, Biller and colleagues focused on four large studies that were mainly associated with strokes involving the arteries of the neck.

They found that people who had these types of strokes were more likely to have had some type of neck manipulation.

But, the authors point out, the studies they looked at

couldn't determine what caused people's strokes. It's possible, they say, that people may have sought neck manipulation therapy for symptoms that were really the early stages of stroke.

Biller said patients with these tears often have pain in the back of the neck that may be misinterpreted by both the patient and a healthcare provider.

"Patients may already have begun to have a cervical artery dissection and therefore seek treatment to relieve the neck pain."

Biller and his coauthors concluded that health practitioners should inform patients of the associations between cervical dissection and cervical manipulation therapy before performing manipulation of the cervical spine.

Keith Overland, immediate past president of the American Chiropractic Association, told Reuters Health he applauds the American Heart Association for its effort to address stroke risk.

But, he said, somewhere between 22 and 77 percent of the U.S. population has neck pain at some time, and cervical manipulation is one of the safest choices when compared to other treatments such as drugs and surgery.

Dr. Justin Sattin, a neurologist with the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in Madison, Wisconsin, told Reuters Health by phone, "As the guideline points out, the data are inconclusive—my personal opinion is that cervical manipulation is probably one of many different traumas that could provoke or exacerbate a dissection in someone who is harboring one or predisposed."

"Having said that, the absolute risk is probably low, especially with increased attention to the problem now in the chiropractic community," said Sattin, who was not involved

with the study.

“And there’s this causality issue of how do you know for sure the manipulation was the cause as opposed to the idea that the headache and neck pain that brought the patient to the chiropractor was actually the dissection, and the subsequently diagnosed dissection was attributed to the manipulation as opposed to something that occurred spontaneously or due to some other trauma that preceded the patient coming in for medical attention,” he said.

Sattin added that it’s difficult to tease these things out of the results, but he thinks it’s fair to say there is some evidence that cervical manipulation may be a potential cause dissection and that patients should know that when they go to see a chiropractor, and the chiropractor should know that and disclose it to the patients.

“That doesn’t mean one shouldn’t pursue chiropractic therapy, it’s just incumbent on everybody to know what the actual risks are. It’s not like (regular) medicine is devoid of risks either. Everything we do carries potential risks and benefits,” he said.

“In general, stroke symptoms happen suddenly—a sudden onset of weakness on one side of the body, numbness on one side of the body or tingling, visual loss which could be in one eye or to one side of one’s visual field, sudden loss of coordination, sudden onset of a language disturbance—either difficulty speaking or difficulty understanding what’s being said,” Sattin said.

“And the last one that we usually see is the sudden onset of a terrible headache unlike any headache of the persons had before, which is a cardinal symptom for hemorrhage in the brain,” he added.

Sattin added that symptoms for a stroke due to dissection may include pain in the head or neck, or sometimes behind the eye,

along with the other neurological symptoms of stroke.

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