

# CLIFF'S NOTES

RANDOM MUSINGS ABOUT "WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?" PAST AND PRESENT...  
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GBF is now 5 months old! Being a part of a church plant from scratch is a once in a lifetime opportunity. And so far, the experience has been tremendous. We are learning to depend on God in new ways that stretch our faith like never before. To date, the baby is healthy with good vital signs: we averaged 79 people a week in January, we've had 270 folks come at least once, we have had a first time visitor every Sunday since we started, we baptized 11 saints in January, and God opened the door for us to start meeting in the morning beginning today—Super Bowl Sunday!

## Make 'em laugh, make 'em laugh!



"preach the Word ... for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2 Timothy 4:2-4)

*Singin' In the Rain*, starring Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds and Donald O'Connor, is considered by many to be one of the best musicals ever produced (1952). It is filled with classic and memorable songs. It's also got some of the most entertaining dance scenes ever seen on film. Gene Kelly was a versatile and consummate entertainer. But the most memorable scene of all from the movie is when O'Connor does an impromptu comedic dance montage called 'Make 'em Laugh.' It is hilarious and amazing. Check it out on U-Tube. I own the video. Every time I see this dance scene I think of the church in America today—more and more people just want to be entertained at church. The hue and cry seems to be at times, "make 'em laugh, make 'em laugh." Amazingly, that is exactly what Paul predicted would happen some day in the Church. Notice his specific prophecy in 2 Timothy 4:2-4. Paul says that a time will come when "Christians" will want their ears "tickled" at church—that means they will want to hear only things that soothe, pacify, entertain, humor and make them feel good. They will want to go to a church that will try to "make 'em laugh." I actually candidated at a church once where I was told I would not get the job because I "was not funny enough." Kid you not! I thank God that He prevented me from going there. As a pastor I want to obey God's command to "Preach the Word," rather than cater to people's hedonistic compulsions. I thank God for His holy Church....not His comedy club. It's the Holy Spirit, not the happy Spirit. Yet, I maintain a hearty sense of humor in daily living...I just keep it in context.

## Dirty Words!

No doubt you have heard of Mike Rowe and his TV show called "Dirty Jobs." He showcases real people who, vocationally, have dirty, messy jobs...but important ones. Somebody has to do the dirty work. Well, the Bible has words and concepts that are necessary, but more and more people today, professing to be Christians, don't want anything to do with them—they disparage these biblical truths, calling them "dirty words" to be eschewed and forgotten. Here's the dirty word of the month I'd like to note: "**Judge**"—The most misused verse in the Bible has to be Matthew 7:1, which says, "**Judge** not, that ye be not **judged**." Jesus said this as He was warning His disciples. If you look at the context Jesus was NOT saying that we should never **judge**! As a matter of fact, in the same passage Jesus **judged** the disciples by calling them "evil" (7:11) and He even went on to tell His followers to **judge** false prophets by examining their actions and words. Read the Gospels and you will find Jesus regularly **judging**, or condemning hypocrisy. Jesus' point in Matthew 7:1 was that as humans we cannot **judge** another person's motives. But we can, and are commanded to **judge**, or evaluate people's actions and words. Jesus said, "you will know them by their fruits" (7:16) That means we are accountable to others for our actions and to God for our motives.



## Islam: Alive and Well in America

For the first time ever, in the recent November elections, a Muslim (a pro-choice Democrat) was elected to the United States Congress. He's from Minnesota. Remember that all 19 hijackers on 9-11 were Muslims. Since that time, amazingly, Islam has flourished in America. Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in America. Currently there are almost seven million Muslims in the US. At the current growth rate there could be 14 million by 2014. There are over 1,200 mosques. There are more than one billion Muslims worldwide—one out of every 6 people on earth. Gone are the days in America when a man like Rev. John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian pastor who signed the Declaration of Independence, is allowed to have sway in the public arena based on biblical convictions. Today, everything is permissible except Christianity. To understand the implications of where we are headed as a nation, just consider the last words uttered by Jesus at the time of His unjust crucifixion when He prayed for His enemies, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34) versus the last words of Muhammad, who on his deathbed in June 632, said, "Allah destroy the Jews and the Christians!"

**Congratulations:** Last month on January 14 we baptized 11 of our saints at GBF. We are proud of those of you who submitted to Christ in obedience by being baptized publicly as He has commanded all Christians to do. Be in prayer for the following saints asking God to help them to continue to grow in their faith: Timmy Beckmann, Grant Douglas, Paige Douglas, Jessica Kim, Melissa Kim, Stephanie Kim, Jake Nunley, Allison Wong, Kimberly Wong, Michelle Wong, Victoria Yao