A Disclaimer:

I want to keep my word with you. I know you understand that I receive interesting and timely news items from friends all over the world. Most of these items appear to have prophetic relevance. Others are of particular interest in the field of Science, Health & Nutrition, Devotional themes and some touches of Humor.

With a bit of hesitation, I am forwarding some of these items to friends like you via email. My concern is this: some persons who will receive or read the items I choose to forward will assume that I endorse, approve or believe every "iota," and that I am endorsing the author or source. This simply is not true! As you read, you must be discerning, choosy, discriminating and use common sense. If you are going to quote someone, quote the source -- I am not the source, I am the reporter . . . --CW

-CW Says, "What can I say? This appears to be an overt attempt to goad Iran into striking first!"

Israeli Jets Prepare In Iraq to Strike Iran

"Israeli jet fighters have reportedly conducted drills at a military base in Iraq in order to strike targets inside Iran.

"A considerable number of Israeli warplanes were seen at al-Asad base in Iraq, reported a source close to prominent Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sader's group.

"The warplanes carried out their week-long exercises at nights, the same source added.

"Iraqi officials had not been notified of the exercises, which were conducted in
collaboration with the US military."

Wal-Mart: Our Shoppers Are 'Running Out of Money'
By: Parija Kavilanz / CNN Money.com / April 28, 2011

NEW YORK (CNNMoney) -- Wal-Mart's core shoppers are running out of money much faster than a year ago due to rising gasoline prices, and the retail giant is worried, CEO Mike Duke said Wednesday.

"Wal-Mart shoppers, many of whom live paycheck to paycheck, typically shop in bulk at the beginning of the month when their paychecks come in.

"Lately, they're 'running out of money' at a faster clip, he said.

"Wal-Mart (WMT, Fortune 500), which averages 140 million shoppers weekly to its stores in the United States, is considered a barometer of the health of the consumer and the economy.

"Wal-Mart has struggled with seven straight quarters of sales declines in its stores."

Church Touts Homosexuality As a Gift, Not a Sin
By: Eryn Sun / Christian Post.com / April 27, 2011

"That's the message that Central United Methodist Church is spreading throughout their community via a digital billboard, launched on Monday.

"This 'simple statement,' the church announced, is 'intended to be a gift to those who have experienced hurt and discrimination because of their real or perceived sexual orientation.'

"Central UMC wants to offer words and acts of healing to those hurt and marginalized," the website states.

"Jeff Buchanan, the director of Exodus Church Equipping & Student Ministries, agrees that the Church must display love and compassion for those in the LGBT community. But he opposes the message that CUMC is sending through their "Being Gay is a Gift from God" campaign."
Give Me Something Nice!
Back to Mardi Gras in New Orleans

If there were no other evidence to tell us how close we are to the end of all things, it would be the rate at which time is hurtling into the past. It does not seem like a year since we were in New Orleans giving away books at Mardi Gras. But there again came the call, "Are you going to give away books during the parades?" And our response, once again: "Absolutely!"

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'Israeli jets prepare in Iraq to strike Iran'
Mon May 2, 2011 10:29AM

Israeli jet fighters have reportedly conducted drills at a military base in Iraq in order to strike targets inside Iran.

A considerable number of Israeli warplanes were seen at al-Asad base in Iraq, reported a source close to prominent Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sader's group.

The aircraft reportedly included F-15, F-16, F-18, F-22, and KC-10 jet fighters.

The warplanes carried out their week-long exercises at nights, the same source added.

The drills were reportedly aimed at preparing to strike Iran's air defense systems, disrupt Iran's radars and attack targets deep inside Iran.

Iraqi officials had not been notified of the exercises, which were conducted in collaboration with the US military.

The United States maintains numerous bases in Iraq, and the Baghdad government is not involved in any of the military deployments taking place there.

NN/TG/HJL/HRF

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Wal-Mart: Our shoppers are 'running out of money'

"Purchases are really dropping off by the end of the month even more than last year," Duke said. "This end-of-month [purchases] cycle is growing to be a concern.

Wal-Mart (WMT, Fortune 500), which averages 140 million shoppers weekly to its stores in the United States, is considered a barometer of the health of the consumer and the economy.

To that end, Duke said he's not seeing signs of a recovery yet.

With food prices rising, Duke said Wal-Mart is charging customers more for some fresh groceries while reducing prices on other merchandise such as electronics.

Wal-Mart has struggled with seven straight quarters of sales declines in its stores.

Addressing that challenge, Duke said the company made mistakes by shrinking product variety and not being more aggressive on prices compared to its competitors.

"We're seeing core consumers under a lot of pressure," Duke said at an event in New York. "There's no doubt that rising fuel prices are having an impact."

Wal-Mart shoppers, many of whom live paycheck to paycheck, typically shop in bulk at the beginning of the month when their paychecks come in.

Lately, they're "running out of money" at a faster clip, he said.

"What's made Wal-Mart great over the
decades is 'every day low prices' and our [product] assortment," he said. "We got away from it."

Now, with its strategy of low prices all the time back in place, Duke said making Wal-Mart a "one-stop shopping stop" is a critical response to dealing with the rising price of fuel.

Americans don't have the luxury of driving all over town to do their shopping.

Other than competing on prices and products, Duke said Wal-Mart is focused on leveraging technology -- especially social networking -- more aggressively to drive sales.

"Social networking is much more a part of the purchasing decision," he said. "Consumers are communicating with each other on Facebook about how they spend their money and what they're buying."

Elsewhere, Duke said Wal-Mart is exploring a number of e-commerce initiatives to grow the business such as testing an online groceries delivery business in San Jose.
Church Touts Homosexuality as a Gift, Not a Sin

Wed, Apr. 27, 2011 Posted: 09:47 PM EDT

Being gay is a gift from God, asserts one church in Ohio.

That’s the message that Central United Methodist Church is spreading throughout their community via a digital billboard, launched on Monday.

This “simple statement,” the church announced, is “intended to be a gift to those who have experienced hurt and discrimination because of their real or perceived sexual orientation.”

“The Church seeks nothing less than the healing of the world, and Central UMC wants to offer words and acts of healing to those hurt and marginalized,” the website states.

Jeff Buchanan, the director of Exodus Church Equipping & Student Ministries, agrees that the Church must display love and compassion for those in the LGBT community. But he opposes the message that CUMC is sending through their “Being Gay is a Gift from God” campaign.

“Why would God bestow this ‘gift’ only to condemn it throughout the Bible? This would seemingly contradict His character as a God who is loving and just.”

The Toledo church’s controversial billboard ad is directly connected to a long month-long sermon series by its new pastor, Bill Barnard. The church is hoping that the ad will move the public towards tolerance, reported ABC 13, and not perpetuate anti-gay attitudes and behaviors, which were harming the LGBT community.

The purposes of their recently launched campaign are threefold: to offer welcome to all persons who are gay; to challenge the larger Church to fully accept persons who are gay into the life of the Church; and to call on all people to bring all the gifts of who they are to God.

“By welcoming and living in community with faithful Christians who happen to be gay, we have come to understand that being gay is part of who God made them to be,” CUMC proclaims on their site. “And by gay Christians bringing all that they are to God, the body of Christ has been strengthened.”

“In fact, we would experience the body of Christ as incomplete without LGBT persons.”

Barnard told ABC, “We really believe that being gay is a gift from God, and it’s not anything that anyone has to apologize for or be ashamed about. So that’s how [the campaign] came to be.”

Believing sexuality to be a “good gift from God” – or as they declared yet another way in God’s infinite diversity – CUMC defines sin as denying who God created them to be.

“The overwhelming scientific evidence is that people are born with their sexual orientation, that it is not a choice,” the church contends. “Fully accepting one’s sexual orientation and identity is key to leading a normal and healthy life.

“Forcing people to act against their God-given sexual orientation will lead to disordered lives.Allowing people to act in accordance with their God-given sexual orientation leads to reconciliation.”

While deeming the marginalization of LGBT persons as “unjustified” – mentioning that Jesus did not speak directly regarding homosexuality – the Toledo church recognizes that the Church today continues to be divided over interpretation of Scripture related to homosexuality.

Just two months ago, 33 retired United Methodist bishops urged the denomination to remove its ban on homosexual clergy, prolonging the undying debate within the church body.

CUMC hopes to unify believers by focusing more on “things that [they] agree on, such as kindness, justice, and humility,” instead of contributing to hate and discrimination, which they believe leads not to reconciliation, but to self-destructive practices within the LGBT community.

“Holding people responsible for matters in which they have no control is irrational and immoral,” the church declares. “We believe that both those within and without the Church are hungry for dialogue about homosexuality that reflects compassion and humility rather than intolerance and strife.”
Buchanan contends that CUMC’s message “tells people that the only option they have is a gay identity.”

But “people need to understand that thousands of men and women have found there is another way and have found freedom from homosexuality through the power of Christ,” he says.

Even if there was conclusive evidence supporting the theory that people were “born this way,” Buchanan stresses that Christians were called to be “born again.”

“While we may not choose our desires, we do have the ability and responsibility to choose whether or not we act on those desires. Our goal should be living a life that is congruent with Scripture,” he says.

“Genesis describes the fall of man and the permanent effects that sin has on us spiritually, mentally, and physically. Just because something may be inherent does not mean it was intended.”

Despite the outcry of many from the Christian community against CUMC’s campaign, Barnard continues to proclaim that homosexuality is a “gift” and has people come and remain just “as they are.”

Working to accept persons who are gay into the full life of the Church, CUMC is a founding member of the Reconciling Ministries Network, which is the United Methodist movement for gay equality in the denomination.

Two of the volunteer staff members at their church, including the music director and lead team chair, live with their partners and have served the church for over seven years.

Grieved over the misinterpretation of Scripture and false teaching that is being promoted by CUMC and many other churches like them, Buchanan encourages churches to deliver the message of Christ with love and grace, but also with accuracy and uncompromised truth.

“We must always remember that authentic love is built upon a foundation of grace and truth.”

Eryn Sun
Christian Post Correspondent
Give Me Something Nice!
Back to Mardi Gras in New Orleans

If there were no other evidence to tell us how close we are to the end of all things, it would be the rate at which time is hurtling into the past. It does not seem like a year since we were in New Orleans giving away books at Mardi Gras. But there again came the call, “Are you going to give away books during the parades?” And our response, once again: “Absolutely!”

The rolling and packaging of the books commenced. We planned to take thousands of books to an event which realistically could have accommodated hundreds of thousands more; but you do what you can as God makes provision for your efforts—right?

This year we decided to try a new tactic: we packaged a couple of boxes of books, then stood a bagful at bus stops along the parade route of the satellite community of Metairie. Once the parade began, we began our distribution to the crowds; once our supply ran out, we exited the parade and grabbed another bagful at the next bus stop, then went right back into the crowd. Within a couple of hours we had given away thousands of books to the crowds pleading, “Me! Me! Me! Give me something nice.”

A long-time veteran of book distribution, Emile Spalitta, made the suggestion that we try something similar the next day in New Orleans. So we devised a plan to place similar bags of books along the Saint Charles Avenue parade route once the cleaning regiment had gone through. At midnight that night we stood a bag at the corner of each block for almost a mile (the parade was scheduled to travel seven miles, with an estimated attendance of a million people). By 2 A.M. we were ready for bed.

The next day we parked in New Orleans and walked through the teeming crowds to where our first stack of books was waiting for us. The method again worked perfectly. The books were protected inside the big plastic bags, and simply blended in with the paraphernalia that campers and attendees of the parade had left overnight. As the floats started their procession, we began our distribution as the night before. Again, within a few hours we had successfully given away thousands more publications.

Our thanks are due to you, without whom our work would not be possible—thank you!

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