

In Other Words...

A RESEARCH SERVICE OF FACTS & HUMOR FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

April 2025

BELIEF: In one of his last interviews, Timothy Keller gave a beautiful paraphrase of Jonathan Edwards' thoughts about belief. Keller contemporized the Puritan pastor's words like this: "It's one thing to *believe* that honey is sweet, it's another thing to *taste* it." Experiencing the sweetness of Christ is infinitely different than having a belief about it. *Outreach, March/April 2021, p.70*

EASTER: Jesus conquered the ultimate Escape Room when He came out of the tomb. We must decide if we want Him to rescue us from the inescapable prison of sin, or try to get comfortable where we were never designed to live. *Freedom Starts Today, John Elmore, 2021, p.241*

EASTER: An Opinion Page cartoon showed a decorated Easter basket filled with eggs, candy and a chocolate rabbit. Lying beside the basket in its shadow was a cross. These words were written at the top: "I can't help but think we're leaving something out." *Houston Chronicle, 4/22/19, p.A15*

EASTER: In his first book, Earl McClellan turned a phrase that pierces the heart of all things. He noted that even though something may *involve* you, it doesn't *revolve* around you. Pondering that thought changes our perspective on everything, not the least of which is Easter. It *involves* us but it *revolves* around Christ and what He's done. *Get Your Spirit Back, Earl McClellan, 2024, p.47*

EASTER: Frederick Douglas was speaking at an event against slavery in the 1850s but his speech and countenance reflected discouragement. Sojourner Truth, another former slave turned abolitionist, was in the crowd that day and sensed the need for encouragement. She stood nearly six feet tall and had a booming voice. Truth called out, "Frederick, is God dead?" Douglas paused, reflected, and then rallied with renewed strength. He recalled that moment in his memoirs and that question is etched on Truth's gravestone: Is God Dead? Jesus' resurrection gives us the confidence to know God isn't dead and that truth changes everything. *World, 6/25/22, p.28*

FAITH: Physicist David Deutsch is an atheist who has explained the complexities of science in a way that actually highlights the necessity of faith: "We can understand things better. We can never understand things fully." We either take by faith what we cannot fully understand about God, or we forfeit the privilege of knowing our omniscient Lord & Savior. *The Week, 7/2/21, p.17*

REPENTANCE: Augustine stated, "God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination." Scripture repeatedly warns us to not procrastinate in responding to God's offer of salvation. *Freedom Starts Today, John Elmore, 2021, p.104*

SALVATION: In 2024, Citigroup mistakenly put \$81 trillion into a customer's account. For 90 minutes, this unnamed person was rich enough to pay off the national debt more than twice with plenty left over to be the wealthiest one on the planet. It was corrected to the intended \$280. A 2025 report notes that less than half of Americans will inherit anything. So, you could get \$81 trillion for an hour & a half or you might not get anything at all. Thankfully, every Christian gets an inheritance and it's enough to last forever. *The Week, 3/14/25, p.32, USA Today, 3/18/25, p.A1*

SALVATION: Pete Maravich was a basketball sensation who never won an NBA championship. He dazzled crowds, set scoring records, and was one of the youngest players to be inducted into the Naismith Hall of Fame, but he wasn't a team player. After he retired from the NBA in 1980, he became so enraged over his life's emptiness that he destroyed all of his memorabilia and turned to alcohol. He would drive down country roads at 140 mph in hopes of a fatal crash. During a

sleepless night in 1982, he called out to God saying, “If you don’t save me, nothing will. Take over my life.” Maravich became a transformed man as he followed Christ. The brash arrogance was replaced with a quiet & compassionate humility. On January 5, 1988, Maravich was in Southern California for an interview with James Dobson so they put together a pickup game at a church gym near the Focus on the Family studio. Pistol Pete once again mystified people with his talent and Dobson suggested he should come out of retirement. Maravich said he hadn’t played in a while due to chest pains so Dobson asked him how he felt today. The former NBA star replied, “I feel great!” Those were his last words. Moments later he collapsed and died at the age of 40. An autopsy revealed such a serious heart problem that the coroner wondered how he survived a career in basketball. Maravich was right...if God doesn’t save us then nothing will. But when He does, we’ll never be the same. *Today’s Christian Living, January 2016, p.20*

SIN: On January 9, 2023, during the first year of war between Russia & Ukraine, surgeon Andrii Verba removed an unexploded grenade from the chest cavity of a 28-year-old Ukrainian soldier. The explosive was embedded below the young man’s heart. After it was surgically removed successfully, Ukraine’s internal affairs spokesman Anton Gerashchenko said, “I think this case will go down in medical textbooks.” The VOG grenades can be fired like an artillery shell from a quarter mile away and explains this bizarre occurrence. Romans 6:23 offers a similar X-ray for us all. The wages of sin are embedded in us and will fatally explode unless we allow Christ to rescue us from certain & eternal death. *BBC.com, 1/12/23*

SURRENDER: Carole Lewis’ life changed with a simple prayer of surrender. John Bisagno was the pastor of Houston’s First Baptist Church and he made this challenge in December of 1984: “If you’re not willing for Him to do the work that needs to be done in your life, you can pray this prayer today: ‘Lord, I’m not willing, but I’m willing to be made willing.’” Carole voiced that prayer and it led to a remarkable life. She was the National Director of First Place 4 Health before retiring in 2014 after serving 33 years. She’s written 15 books and led conferences around the U.S. She’s experienced the loss of her husband to cancer, her daughter to a drunk driver, and her home to a hurricane. Yet she says, “I absolutely love everything I do. I love my life.” God offers the same joy to anyone willing to be made willing. *Southern Baptist Texan, March 2024, p.40*

TRUTH: On May 31, 2022, a court in California ruled that through a loophole, bumblebees can qualify as fish and thus receive protection from the state’s Endangered Species Act. Truth stands whether we acknowledge it or not...bees can’t swim and fish can’t fly...and Jesus is the only One who can make us right with God. *Time, 7/4/22, p.16*

EVERYDAY HUMOR

CHRISTIANITY: A headline in February 2025 wasn’t designed to be funny, but it could have been in the comic section. These words from Penske’s IndyCar team president Tim Cindric were in huge print across the sports page: “Penske drivers need to ‘minimize bad days.’” Whether you race cars, sell tacos or raise kids, we all need to minimize our bad days, and faithfully following Jesus is the best way to do that. *USA Today, 2/28/25, p.C5*

DIRECTION: Alan told his therapist about a recurring nightmare. Each night he found himself trapped in a room because he couldn’t open the door. He said, “No matter how hard I push, the door never budes.” The counselor probed for any subliminal messages and asked if anything was written on the door. Alan said, “Yes! It says ‘Pull.’” *Reader’s Digest, March 2021, p.109*

EASTER: On the way to church the kids were so excited because as one child said, “I like that we get to sing Easter carols today!” *Houston Chronicle, 3/30/24, p.A11*

MONEY: Jay Leno quipped, “The United States has developed a weapon that destroys people but leaves buildings standing. It’s called the stock market.” *Reader’s Digest, September 2009, p.105*

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