

Praise for *Dispatches from Bitter America*

A self-proclaimed gun-toting, chicken-eating son-of-a-Baptist, Todd Starnes uses Southern sensibilities mixed with homespun humor to take us along his journey across America. In *Dispatches from Bitter America* this “Great American” finds that not only is our American way of life under attack, but also that most Americans do in fact love God, this country, their families and are anything but bitter!

—Sean Hannity, *New York Times* best-selling author, host of the syndicated *Sean Hannity* radio show and FOX News’ *Hannity*

Todd Starnes is a masterful storyteller. In *Dispatches from Bitter America*, he offers commentary on today’s current events through the lens of a self-proclaimed gun-toting, fried-chicken-eating son of a Baptist. Todd has always been one of my favorite news personalities and good friends. Now he is one of my favorite storytellers. Warning: don’t start reading this book unless you are prepared to finish it. It’s just that good.

—Thom S. Rainer, President and CEO,
LifeWay Christian Resources

In the great tradition of Mark Twain’s classic essays, Starnes’s *Dispatches* are alternately filled with belly laughs and bellicose observations, riveting stories and troubling revelations, as well as patriotic pleas and everyman advice. *Dispatches* is a free-wheeling blend of journalism and editorial opinion, with an added shot of satire blended into the mix.

—Dr. Gene Fant, a dean and English professor, Union University

Todd Starnes’s newest book, *Dispatches from Bitter America*, is everything I thought it would be. Todd uses his classic biting humor and sarcasm to drive home his points. He is merciless when writing about the insane and irrational decisions being made in America today. He may make you uncomfortable, but what he says is true. *This book is the antithesis of political correctness, which is why I couldn’t put it down.* Every page is a reminder that we are losing touch and the favor of God in the land that we all love.

—Michael Catt, senior pastor, Sherwood Church, Albany,
Georgia, executive producer, Sherwood Pictures

Todd Starnes combines sound research with his signature wit to tell the stories of regular Americans who are standing up to a secular movement that seeks to remove all religious expression from the public square. This is a compelling book that puts our entire existence into the perspective of eternity.

—Tony Perkins, president, Family Research Council

Todd Starnes knows how to take any story and make me want to listen on FOX News. *Dispatches from Bitter America* shows that Todd can also write from the heart and make me want to read more! Classic Starnes!

—Matt Patrick, morning talk-show host,
News/Talk 740 KTRH, Houston, Texas

In the spirit of getting better—not bitter—Todd's *Dispatches from Bitter America* is a masterpiece that appeals from the boardroom to the trash truck in it's humorous appeal to our good sense. He takes us on a wild ride across America, snagging blue collar workers right along with corporate CEOs, to ask, "What is this world coming to?" A journalist with an eye for detail, his words had me laughing out loud in places I shouldn't have, while praying earnestly for the ridiculously desperate corner we have gotten ourselves into as Americans and as evangelical Christians.

—Joni B. Hannigan, managing editor,
Florida Baptist Witness

Todd Starnes captures the sentiments many Americans feel as they helplessly watch the traditional values they grew up with being stomped out and overruled by political correctness. Todd's stories will strike a chord, whether it's "The War on Christmas," "Tag—You're Out," or "The Chocolate Czar." Brownies now banned from school? Bah hum-bug.

—Gretchen Carlson, cohost of *Fox and Friends*

Dispatches from Bitter America features Todd Starnes at his best. With his trademark wit, Todd tackles questions being asked by Americans who wonder what is happening to our country.

Todd manages to get to the heart of the matter in a way that is both packed with information and sprinkled with humor. He is a man of immense faith, madly in love with our country, and endowed by his creator with the unique talent to tell a story like very few can. *Dispatches from Bitter America* is the best book I've read this year.

—Jeff Katz, morning host, Talk Radio 12000, Boston

DISPATCHES FROM
BANNER
AMERICA



TODD STARNES

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Introduction



I am a gun-toting, chicken-eating son of a Baptist.
And according to the president of the United States,
I am a bitter American.

President Obama delivered the diagnosis for my condition during the 2008 presidential campaign. In one of his rare, unscripted moments, then Senator Obama vented to a group of supporters in San Francisco about white, working-class voters.

“So it’s not surprising then that they get bitter. They cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations,”¹ he said, according to a transcript on *The Huffington Post*.

What a relief! I can pack away the antacid tablets. I always thought that bitter feeling in my belly was an upset stomach. But I don’t have acid indigestion. I’m just a bitter American. I can’t begin to tell you how indebted I am to the president of the United States for diagnosing my condition.

The antithesis of bitter Americans, I imagine, would be our countrymen who’ve been educated in Ivy League schools, who listen to highbrow music, and who dine on arugula and fermented soy. They are well-bred men who marry high-society women named Babs and Muffy. They are Americans who believe the only free speech should be their own. They are Americans who would rather the criminals have guns than law-abiding citizens. And

they are Americans who believe mankind created the heavens and the earth and that man created God in his likeness.

But I do wonder about my prognosis for recovery. Will I have to turn my guns over to the federal government? Will I need to repent for the mass slaughter of innocent chickens to satisfy my bloodlust for finger-licking good food? Will I need to renounce my faith in the King of kings and instead bow my knee to whoever Oprah Winfrey ordains as “The One”?

Kind readers, these are lofty questions far above my pickup truck-driving, country music-listening, Paula Deen-loving pedigree. So I decided to hit the road in search of answers. What does it mean to be a bitter American? Is there a cure? And if so, do I want to take the medicine?

My search for answers took me through the cornfields of Iowa and the waters of South Carolina’s low country; I traversed the Mississippi Delta and braved the scorching heat of the Nevada deserts. I was nearly mugged in Detroit and caught flu in Chicago, but I pressed on toward the prize. And one day it suddenly hit me. I was somewhere between a red state and a blue state when I had something of a political epiphany.

It happened at a small diner tucked away on a side street in the picturesque town of Manchester, New Hampshire. The Red Arrow Diner has been serving up blue-plate specials on Lowell Street since 1922. And it’s also become a mandatory stop on the campaign trail for anyone who wants to take up residence at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

It was a cold, snowy day, just before the New Hampshire primary. I peeled off my winter coat and grabbed the first stool I could find. The waitress told me they made the best cheeseburger in town so that’s what I ordered—along with a root beer.

As I was waiting for my meal, I thought about my epiphany. The network television reporters like to tell us we are a divided people—that most Americans don’t buy into God and country. But that’s not what I discovered along my journey. I found a nation

with a lot more in common than the network news agencies would admit.

Most folks across the fruited plain really are alike. We work hard, tend backyard gardens, go to high school football games on Friday night, and go to church on Sunday. In a way that's what makes our country so wonderful and the fabric of our freedom so strong.

Consider our countrymen in New Hampshire. They understand the cost of freedom. It's emblazoned on every car in the state: "Live Free or Die." As soon as I crossed the state line from Massachusetts, I found a Cracker Barrel restaurant, picked up a country music station on the radio, and found a NASCAR race-track. For a minute I thought I made a wrong turn and ended up in Alabama.

In between bites of my all-beef cheeseburger, I contemplated the American narrative—wondering why God chose to shed His grace on this land, on this people. I came up with five reasons.

1. *Country music.* Country music is American music. Johnny Cash, Reba, Dolly, Gretchen, Alabama—the list goes on and on. There's a certain reality to the songs and the singers. I remember after the towers fell on September 11, 2001. There was a lot of frustration and anger in this nation. And it fell to Toby Keith to put all that anger, all that hurt into a song. To this day, "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue"² is in my iPod. Another thing I appreciate about country music—the women look like women, and the men act like men. I doubt we'll see Charlie Daniels walking around with a man purse.

2. *Guns.* I grew up in the South so I know a thing or two about guns. Unfortunately I live in New York City, where the policies of our elected officials would make one think they'd prefer only the criminals be armed. So these days I have to make do with a can of pepper spray. Thank goodness our forefathers had the wisdom to ensure all Americans have the right to defend themselves, their property, and their nation. And I can only imagine how many countries have thought twice about invading

us, knowing that grandmas across the fruited plain are locked and loaded. In the words of Scarlett O'Hara, "I can shoot straight if I don't have to shoot far."³

3. *Barbecue*. A country that knows how to smoke a pork butt is a country worth defending. Friends, our nation is as diverse as the meat it smokes. In the North they smoke hams. In the South we smoke pork. In Texas they smoke beef. In California they smoke pot. Barbecue is not just food; it's a state of mind.

4. *The military*. A few weeks ago New York City celebrated Fleet Week. Hundreds of sailors and Marines were in town to see the sights and reunite with their families. It was a uniquely American moment. Our nation is home to the greatest volunteer military on the planet. How reassuring it is to know young men and women understand our freedom comes with a price. And every day they gladly stand tall so we might stand free.

5. *Freedom*. We are a free people. I'm able to write these words because I am free. We can go to church on Sunday because we are free. We gather in courthouse squares and protest the government because we are free. Sometimes I wonder if we've forgotten about this unique and wonderful gift God has given us. We read the newspapers and magazines and learn America is supposedly in decline—a country that has lost its footing on the international stage. We've seen President Obama stand on foreign soil and apologize on our behalf. Well, quite frankly, who cares what the French or Russians think about us? I'm reminded of the words of Commodore Stephen Decatur. "Our country," he once proclaimed. "In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but right or wrong, our country."⁴

So there. There we are.

Yet they call us bitter Americans—people who love this country unconditionally, people who pledge allegiance to the flag, people who believe in God, people who go to church, people who volunteer to take up arms and defend our nation against evil, people who believe English should be the nation's official language,

people who believe marriage is a covenant before God between a man and a woman. Since when were these such bitter ingredients?

Meanwhile, back inside the Red Arrow Diner, I was polishing off the last bites of my cheeseburger when the waitress suggested I try some dessert.

“Sure. How about some sweet potato pie?”

“Honey, that’s a southern dessert. You’re in New Hampshire.”

“What would you suggest?”

“How about some whoopee?” she asked.

“Excuse me?” I asked, nearly choking on my burger.

The waitress gave me a distressed look and then whacked me on the head with a menu. “It’s a pie,” she said. “Whoopee pie.”

I ordered the pie—with extra whipped cream.

As I sipped on a cup of coffee, I was reminded of the lyrics from that great Lee Greenwood song, “Proud to Be an American”:

And I’m proud to be an American, where at least I know I’m free. . . . And I gladly stand up, next to you and defend her still today. ‘Cause there ain’t no doubt I love this land, God bless the USA.⁵

And that’s how I came up with the idea for this book. It’s a collection of stories from my travels across this country—conversations I’ve had with regular folks who have deep concerns about the direction we are going as a nation.

May God bless America, and may He also bless whoopee pie.

Dispatches from DC

Laus Deo



As dawn breaks over the eastern seaboard and the morning sun begins to spill its light across the waters of the Atlantic, there stands a monument of marble and granite rising high above our nation's capital.

The beacon rises more than 555 feet and provides a perfect panoramic of the sixty-nine square miles that comprise the District of Columbia. To the north is the White House; to the south, the Jefferson Memorial; to the west the Lincoln Memorial; and to the east, the Capitol. But no building is as tall as the obelisk.

At its pinnacle is a capstone made of aluminum. It was the intention of her architect, Robert Mills, to carve tributes on all four sides of the capstone; but the message he carved on the eastern side of the monument holds the most importance.

The words have weathered time and turmoil, war and peace. To this day the seven letters Mr. Mills carved into the aluminum capstone remain.

Laus Deo

When morning comes to America, the first rays of light illuminate the capstone and Mr. Mill's testimony for the ages. The obelisk may celebrate a man, but it gives glory to a higher power—*Laus Deo*—praise be to God.

I thought about the Washington Monument awhile back when I heard the president of the United States deliver a stunning message to the nation and to the world.

President Obama set the record straight on the campaign trail. “America is no longer just a Christian nation,” he told the Christian Broadcasting Network.

It would not be the last time he made such a declaration.

“I think that the United States and the West generally, we have to educate ourselves more effectively on Islam,” he told a French television station in 2009. “And one of the points I want to make is, that if you actually took the number of Muslim Americans, we’d be one of the largest Muslim countries in the world.”

Did you catch that? The president said we’d be one of the largest *Muslim* countries in the world. Wait just a second—I thought the president said the United States was a secular nation?

Obama reiterated his position in Turkey, where 98 percent of the nation is Muslim. The president, standing on foreign soil, declared the United States is not a Christian nation.

“I’ve said before that one of the great strengths of the United States is, although as I mentioned we have a very large Christian population, we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation, or a Jewish nation or a Muslim nation,” he said. “We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.”

The American public, though, disagrees with the president. A Gallup survey found that 78 percent of Americans consider themselves Christian. To be sure, the president has his defenders. Among them is Michael Lind, the editor of *New American Contract*. In a column that appeared in Salon.com, he writes: “President Obama, then, is right. The American republic, as distinct from the American population, is not post-Christian because it was never Christian. In the president’s words: ‘We consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values.’ And for that we should thank the gods. All 20 of them.”¹

For what it's worth, John Adams, the second president of the United States, was pretty clear which of the "gods" to thank.

"July 4th ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty," he wrote in a letter to his wife, Abigail, on the day the Declaration of Independence was approved by Congress.

Obama's declaration stands in stark contrast to comments once made by former President Ronald Reagan.

"The Founding Fathers believed faith in God was the key to our being a good people and America's becoming a great nation," he said.

And during a National Prayer Breakfast, Reagan did not hesitate to lay out the source of our nation's success. "I also believe this blessed land was set apart in a very special way, a country created by men and women who came here not in search of gold, but in search of God," he said. "They would be free people, living under the law with faith in their Maker and their future. Sometimes it seems we've strayed from that noble beginning, from our conviction that standards of right and wrong do exist and must be lived up to."

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to the men who wrote our Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to George Washington. He used fifty-four biblical terms to describe God in his various writings. "While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian," he once wrote.

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to John Jay, the first chief justice of the Supreme Court. "Providence has given to our people

the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers," he wrote.

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to James Madison, our fourth president and a signer of the U.S. Constitution. "A watchful eye must be kept on ourselves lest, while we are building ideal monuments of renown and bliss here, we neglect to have our names enrolled in the Annals of Heaven," he once wrote.

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to Daniel Webster who once argued before the Supreme Court in favor of teaching religious instruction to children. "What is an oath? [I]t is founded on a degree of consciousness that there is a Power above us that will reward our virtues or punish our vices . . . [O]ur system of oaths in all our courts, by which we hold liberty and property and all our rights, are founded on or rest on Christianity and a religious belief."

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to Patrick Henry, the voice of liberty. "Being a Christian . . . is a character which I prize far above all this world has or can boast," he once said.

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to the father of the American Revolution—Samuel Adams. "I conceive we cannot better express ourselves than by humbly supplicating the Supreme Ruler of the world . . . that the confusions that are and have been among the nations may be overruled by the promoting and speedily bringing in the holy and happy period when the kingdoms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be everywhere established, and the people willingly bow to the scepter of Him who is the Prince of Peace," he declared in a Fast Day Proclamation in 1797.

Not a Christian nation? Tell that to Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the father of public schools under the Constitution. "The only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible," he wrote.

Secular humanists may one day be successful in the religious

cleansing of American history. There may come a time when Christian values will be banished from the marketplace of ideas and expelled from our public schools. On the horizon a day fast approaches when Americans could pay a price for following the teachings of Jesus Christ.

And while the winds of change may sweep across the nation's capital, there stands a beacon of hope—a reminder that this nation of immigrants was built not on sinking sand but on a firm foundation, girded by Almighty God. And unless someone has a really tall ladder and a blowtorch, the first rays of morning light will shine down upon these United States of America, illuminating an eternal truth and a grateful nation's prayer. Praise be to God!

Laus Deo.

“But,” the pastor chastised the crowd, “sex is only good within the boundaries set up by the Lord.”

That’s all well and good, but I wonder if the pastor really made his point, especially to the throngs of teenage boys in attendance. Judging from their reaction to his sex declaration, their brains shut off just after he said “sex is amazing.”

If I may take a moment of personal privilege, I’d like to send a message to preachers who seem determined to preach about the greatness of intercourse. On behalf of all the Christian singles in your congregation, we get it. We understand sex is great, but we don’t need to be reminded of it every Sunday. It’s like the leader of Weight Watchers showing up to class with a Double Whopper. We get it.

I need to be honest, folks. I’m not all that comfortable with preachers delivering such frank talks on sex. I’m a Southern Baptist; we don’t even hold hands during “Kum Ba Yah.” We’re more likely to speak in tongues than kiss in tongues. I was a freshman in college before I realized babies were not the product of spontaneous combustion.

All this talk about sex reminds me of an incident that occurred in the summer of 1982. I was in junior high school, and a group of us were attending our church youth camp somewhere in the wilds of Louisiana.

It was late at night, and as most junior high boys are prone to do, we were looking for trouble. But as luck would have it, trouble found us—inside a run-down, clapboard cabin at a Baptist campground. One of the guys pulled out a book wrapped in brown paper. We were half intrigued, half scared to death.

“You won’t believe what I found,” he said. Judging from the brown paper wrapper, I knew it couldn’t have been spiritually edifying.

“It’s another book of the Bible.”

We all lurched away from it—afraid we might get hit by a bolt of lightning. Since childhood, I had known there were sixty-six books in the Bible, but for some reason, we only studied sixty-five.

My friend's revelation was stunning. We slowly gathered around the book. Someone flicked on a flashlight, and my friend began unwrapping the paper.

"It's called . . ." he said, "The Song of Solomon. And you won't believe what it says."

We exchanged curious looks as he started reading from the ancient texts, and it didn't take us long to figure out those mountains of myrrh and hills of frankincense weren't geological anomalies. By the time he got to the part about gazelles and sheep, Bobby Donald's voice changed.

About that time our camp counselor came walking up the steps, and we flicked off the light.

"What's going on in there?" he hollered.

"Nothing, sir. We're just reading the Bible."

"Really? Well, praise the Lord, boys! It's important to gird your loins with the gospel!"

Praise the Lord, indeed.

And that brings us back to Relevant Church in Ybor City, Florida. I'm not all that keen on uttering prophecies, but I'm willing to predict the building committee might want to start drawing up plans for a larger church nursery. They may need one in about nine months.

The Worship Wars



A battle is being waged in the choir lofts of America's churches. Troops adorned in flowing robes are mounting a vocal assault on contemporary praise and worship music armed with only a pitch pipe and the revered *Baptist Hymnal*.

It's being billed as this century's "worship war," and it usually involves a frazzled minister of music trying to please those who enjoy traditional hymns as well as those who do not. I'm not too sure who coined the phrase, but it sadly represents both sides in this ongoing struggle of man versus organ.

In my best guess, it comes down to a fairly simple question: Should our Sunday morning worship experience be filled with great songs of the faith, or should we orchestrate elaborate stage shows that employ musicians who use Backstreet Boy theatrics to bring honor to God? Or is it possible to have both?

I'm not sure where I stand on the issue of worship style. As a generation Xer, I feel a certain urge to slap a guitar riff or drum solo in the middle of "Holy, Holy, Holy." But as a lifelong Southern Baptist, my heart also finds comfort in the traditional songs of my childhood, songs like "Amazing Grace," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," and "It is Well with My Soul."

Yet modern worship songs, unlike some hymns, are filled with passionate lyrics that breathe reality into church services. Like the lyrics to "You Are My King":

I'm forgiven because you were forsaken,
I'm accepted, you were condemned,
I'm alive and well,
Your spirit is within me
Because you died and rose again.¹

Hymns don't always engender that kind of clarity. I never understood what "sheaves" were, for example, or where I was supposed to be "bringing" them. I only knew that I should "come rejoicing" wherever they were brought.

There's also not that much spontaneity with traditional worship. The service starts with an organ prelude, followed by the call to worship, the deacon's prayer, a welcome by the preacher, a few hymns, the offertory prayer, and then that moment of a lifetime for choir members—the offertory solo. Services like these are now headed the way of the dinosaur in this new church age of television lighting, pulsating video shows, professionally choreographed worship teams, and other high-tech gadgetry.

But honestly some days I truly miss those moments when the soloist would clear her throat, asking us to intercede on her behalf. You just knew your ears were in for three minutes of joyful noise—emphasis on the noise. Yet no matter how awful the singing was, you somehow knew she was wailing from the top of her lungs and the bottom of her heart.

There's still something special in that.

I believe the true victims in this battle over worship styles aren't the ones in the choir loft or behind a set of drums. They're the ones in our homes—our children.

A few summers ago I was at a church camp and came across a group of folks sitting in rocking chairs heartily singing some of the great hymns of the faith.

In my heart there rings a melody, there rings a melody of
love!

A few teenagers passing by stopped, listened, and marveled at the lyrics.

“Is that a new chorus?” one of the kids asked. “I’ve never heard it before.”

Could it be? Have we produced a generation of believers who’ve never heard the hymns that have sustained our forefathers through sorrow and heartache, through happiness and joy?

Maybe not.

Last week young Cousin Billy informed me that he and his college roommate, along with two girls, were going to sing in church. They formed an impromptu quartet. I wondered if they would be performing a contemporary Christian song and was genuinely surprised when Billy shook his head.

No, they chose to sing, “How Great Thou Art.”

“Why that song?” I asked.

“I’m not exactly sure what I like about that song,” Billy told me over cheesesteak sandwiches in Philadelphia. “It just strikes a chord in my heart. I like how it describes various scenes of nature and how great God is for creating it.”

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee.

How great Thou art, How great Thou art.

Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee

How great Thou art, How great Thou art.²

But for Billy the true gem of the song lay in the final verse. “It’s the one about Christ’s coming and the joy that will fill my heart,” he said. “That’s what makes it a really beautiful hymn.”

When Christ shall come, with shouts of acclamation

And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!

Then I shall bow in humble adoration

And there proclaim, “My God, how great Thou art!”³

So with both sides laying claim to the title of my-way-of-worship-is-better, what’s a back-row Baptist to do? For starters,

we could have a little give-and-take. To be honest, trying something new in the worship service every now and then sure couldn't hurt. Even "Jesus Loves Me" started out as a contemporary tune.

Maybe, just maybe, God is more interested in *why* we worship than *how* we worship.

As for those of you who still desire a worship service on the cutting edge, check out this Christian tune:

So I'll cherish the old, rugged cross,
'Til my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.⁴

You want cutting edge? Now, that's cutting edge.

A Christmas Eve Miracle



It was a husband and father's worst nightmare. Mike Hermanstorfer's wife went into labor on Christmas Eve. As Tracy Hermanstorfer prepared to give birth, Mike held her hand, and without warning the unthinkable happened. Tracy went into cardiac arrest. She stopped breathing. Her heart stopped beating. Tracy Hermanstorfer was gone.

A team of doctors at Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs furiously worked to save the unborn child, but the baby was delivered lifeless with barely a hint of a heartbeat.

In a matter of moments, Mike's Christmas Eve was filled with sorrow. His wife and newborn son were gone. Doctors were eventually able to revive the little boy, but his mother—not even so much as a pulse.

Then something strange happened—something that to this day puzzles the medical experts. Nearly four minutes after her heart stopped beating, she came back to life.

"We did a thorough evaluation and can't find anything that explains why this happened,"¹ Dr. Stephanie Martin told the Associated Press.

But Mike and Tracy believe they know exactly what happened. It was "the hand of God," Mike told reporters. "We are

both believers, but this right here, even a nonbeliever—you explain to me how this happened. There is no other explanation.”

The doctor said she wasn't sure if she had help from on high but acknowledged, “Wherever I can get the help, I'll take it.”

The story of the Hermanstorfers reminds me of a survey published in the journal *Sociology of Religion*. It indicates that most Americans believe God is involved in their everyday lives.² The survey also reveals Americans believe God is concerned with their personal well-being. An impressive 82 percent said they depend on God for help and guidance in making decisions.

Even more interesting, to me, is this one little nugget: 71 percent believe when things happen, good or bad, it's part of the Lord's plan for their lives.

Interestingly enough the survey reports people who make more money or have more degrees behind their names are less likely to believe in divine intervention. In other words, the smarter you are, the dumber you become.

I'm sure the experts will try to find some sort of scientific explanation for what happened to the Hermanstorfers, and there will certainly be naysayers who refute any sort of divine intervention on that Christmas Eve in Colorado Springs. But I'm not too sure the Hermanstorfers will be swayed.

One of my favorite George Strait songs, “I Saw God Today,” addresses this very issue.

I've been to church,
I've read the book.
I know He's there,
But I don't look
Near as often as I should.
His fingerprints are everywhere
I just slow down to stop and stare,
Open my eyes and, man, I swear,
I saw God today.³

And then I think about the Hermanstorfer family. I think about the day God saw fit to bless them with a miracle. And in the years to come, as they watch their little boy grow into a man, one day they will tell him about a miraculous birth on a Christmas Eve—not in Bethlehem but in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The night a husband and wife saw the hand of God.

It's the End of the World as We Know It



President Obama believes people who cling to their guns and religion are bitter Americans. Maybe the reason we cling to our guns and religion is because we're afraid he might take them away. And for that matter, it's not so much that we are bitter Americans. I just think we have a bad case of indigestion.

The mainstream media and the ruling class treat us like children. They preach the gospel of civility but mock us with disdain and condescension.

"They're too stupid," said HBO host Bill Maher on TBS. "They're like a dog."

John Hickleoper, the Democratic mayor of Denver, called us "backward thinkers."

Actress Janeane Garofalo called the Tea Party racist, saying, "This is racism straight up and is nothing but a bunch of teabagging rednecks."

Attorney General Eric Holder called us a "nation of cowards."

First Lady Michelle Obama said, in noting the kind of changes that backlight and support much of what I've discussed in this book, "For the first time in my adult life, I am proud of my country."

Perhaps one of the most telling examples of this hatred toward our nation came from an Obama nominee to the federal court, Judge Edward Chen. The following paragraphs appeared in *The Washington Times* in 2009.

Judge Chen's words speak for themselves. When the congregation sang "America the Beautiful" at a funeral, Judge Chen told the audience of his "feelings of ambivalence and cynicism when confronted with appeals to patriotism—sometimes I cannot help but feel that there are too much [sic] injustice and too many inequalities that prevent far too many Americans from enjoying the beauty extolled in that anthem."

In a speech on Sept. 22, 2001, he said that among his first responses to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on America was a "sickening feeling in my stomach about what might happen to race relations and religious tolerance on our own soil. . . . One has to wonder whether the seemingly irresistible forces of racism, nativism and scapegoating which has [sic] recurred so often in our history can be effectively restrained."¹

Funny, when I hear people sing "America the Beautiful," I have feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving that God would shed His grace on a people so undeserving.

Paula Deen knows about that grace. One of the most wonderfully kind and generous chefs in the nation had a difficult lot in life. "I didn't have two nickels to rub together," she told me. "So it makes me very appreciative and very grateful for everything."

Miss Paula is proof that anyone can achieve the American dream. "I have worked hard. But God, in turn, has blessed that hard work. And it's important when we're blessed that we pay it forward and try to help someone else."

It's that type of spirit that built a nation—a nation of free men and women who trusted God and not the government. If

you believe liberal lawmakers and the mainstream media, we are a nation who no longer believes in God. But that's just not true.

Congressman Randy Forbes, a Republican from the Commonwealth of Virginia and chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, addressed this issue in *U.S. News & World Report*.

So, if America was birthed upon Judeo-Christian principles, at what point in time did our nation cease to be Judeo-Christian? It was not when a small minority tried to remove the name of God from our public buildings and monuments. It was not when they tried to remove God from our veterans' flag-folding ceremonies or to take the motto off our coins. Nor was it when this small minority fought to banish prayer from our schools, strip the 10 Commandments from our courtrooms or remove the phrase "one nation under God" from the new Capitol Visitor Center.

No, the answer is clear: While America has always welcomed individuals of diverse faiths and non-faith, we have never ceased to be a Judeo-Christian nation. That small minority could tear references of faith off every building and document across our nation, but it would not change the fact that we were built on Judeo-Christian principles.²

According to Gallup, 78 percent of Americans consider themselves Christian. So what does that tell us?

It tells us President Obama was off the mark when he told the Christian Broadcasting Network in 2007 that the United States was "no longer just a Christian nation." On the contrary, Mr. President, I say again—the United States is overwhelmingly a Christian nation.

Friends, I hope you know that Christ alone is the author of our freedom. Without Him, without His guiding hand, our nation will cease being free.

Throughout my travels across this great nation, I've discovered some wonderful people—my fellow countrymen. I've met police officers and firefighters, nurses and school teachers. I've

met soldiers and veterans, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. I've met pastors and journalists, farmers and construction workers.

I've watched them pledge allegiance to the flag, to one nation under God. I've heard their stories of defending our nation from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli. They go to work. They go to church. They go hunting and fishing. They go to Little League games and Sunday dinners on the grounds.

I've watched the sun rise over Egg Harbor Township in New Jersey and watched the sun set over the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. I've taken a riverboat ride on the mighty Mississippi and climbed the Great Smoky Mountains.

I've had barbecue in Memphis and gumbo in New Orleans, deep-dish pizza in Chicago and a hot dog from a street cart in New York City. I've dined on Moon Pies in Chattanooga and Sonora Dogs in Tucson.

I've watched a stickball game in Brooklyn and a baseball game in Atlanta. I've run the New York City Marathon and welcomed in the new year in Times Square.

This is the America I know. This is the America I love.

But our nation and our world is at a precarious point in history. Many folks, Christian and non-Christian, are asking the same question: What is this world coming to?

According to the Bible, this world is coming to an end. For generations we've heard the prophecies—earthquakes, fires, floods, famine, wars. There is turmoil and unrest in the land. There is sadness and sorrow. A sense of hopelessness seems to grip the country. But, friends, as I write these words, I do so from a heart filled with joy. That's because this world is not my home. And if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, it's not your home either. We're just passing through.

The Bible calls us aliens in this world. Aliens are people who have placed their hope and trust in Jesus Christ. There's a song made famous by R.E.M. called "It's the End of the World as We Know It."³ There's a bit of truth in that tune. It is the end of the world as we know it. And you know something? I feel just fine.

When I was a little boy growing up in the South, I walked down the aisle of a Southern Baptist church and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Romans 10:13 tells us, “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”

And one day, perhaps soon, Jesus is going to return to take His people home. One of my favorite gospel songs talks about a “Great Gettin’ Up Morning.” And on that glorious day, I don’t know about you, but I plan on getting up and going somewhere special.

The End



Wolf Blitzed: This is breaking news on the Global News Network. Strange events are happening across the country both in the sky and on the ground. New York City's 911 system was overwhelmed just moments ago by complaints of loud horn sections blasting across the boroughs. We tried to reach city officials but were unable to hear their responses because of what sounded like trumpets sounding in the distance. Civil defense sirens have sounded in most American cities, and people are being urged to take shelter immediately. Live on the phone with us is General John Bigguns from NORAD. Sir, what can you tell us?

General Bigguns: Wolf, we've never seen anything like it. Our radar systems are overwhelmed right now. We're tracking hundreds, if not thousands of targets.

Wolf Blitzed: Dear Lord! Are we all doomed? Which cities will be hit first?

General Bigguns: Uh, I think you might have misunderstood, Wolf. These aren't incoming targets.

Wolf Blitzed: I'm confused, General.

General Bigguns: Wolf, these are outbound targets.

Wolf Blitzed: We'll get back to the general in just a few moments, but right now I want to bring in Dr. Rashad Guppie,

GNN's chief environmental reporter. According to eyewitness accounts the clouds are rolling back, and it appears the sky is opening. Got any answers for us?

Dr. Guppie: Wolf, it's pretty obvious what is happening. Former Vice President Al Gore has just released a statement, and he believes the parting of the clouds is a direct result of climate change. Mr. Gore said it's imperative Americans immediately reduce their carbon imprint.

Wolf Blitzed: Certainly makes sense to me, Dr. Guppie. In the meantime let's go live to Washington, DC, where our sexy blonde reporter is standing by.

Sexy Blonde Reporter: Wolf, I'm at the Tomb of the Unknowns, and I've gotta tell you, my surgically enhanced body is shivering all over. Just moments ago the ground started shaking, and the grave markers began falling over.

Wolf Blitzed: An earthquake, Sexy Blonde Reporter?

Sexy Blonde Reporter: That's what I thought at first, Wolf. But then the lids on the coffins started opening up and . . .

Wolf Blitzed: Tell us, Sexy Blonde Reporter, tell us what you see.

Sexy Blonde Reporter: Wolf, I see dead people, and I think they're alive.

Wolf Blitzed: I don't mean to interrupt you, but we're now getting reports of breaking news onboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavor*. Let's listen in to this live feed from the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Endeavor: Uh Houston, we've got a problem.

Houston: All systems appear to be functioning normally, *Endeavor*.

Endeavor: It's not mechanical, Houston. We're picking up some unidentified flying objects.

Houston: Could you repeat that, *Endeavor*. Your last transmission was a bit garbled. Sounded like you said some UFOs were flying around up there.

Endeavor: Affirmative, Houston. Unidentified flying objects, and there are a lot of them.

Houston: You boys drinking something up there?

Endeavor: That's a negative, Houston. The objects appear to be human in nature and seem to be fairly docile. We've observed many of them smiling—sweet mercy, Houston!

Houston: What is it, *Endeavor*? What's going on up there?

Endeavor: I could've sworn I just saw Jerry Falwell floating by the shuttle bay. He was holding a sign.

Houston: A sign? What did it say?

Endeavor: "I told you so."

Wolf Blitzed: Obviously something delusional is happening onboard the shuttle. We will keep you posted. We're also monitoring developments overseas in Europe. Correspondent Jacques LePew is live in Paris. Jacques?

Jacques: Bonjour, Wolf. Seems like a normal day in gay Paris! Nothing out of zee ordinary to report.

Wolf Blitzed: Thanks, Jacques. We're getting similar reports from London, Moscow, and most of western Europe. We've also tried reaching out to some of the nation's religious leaders, but so far no one has returned our calls. Wait just a moment—I'm being told the president is about to address the nation. Let's go live to the White House.

POTUS: My fellow Americans, we are witnessing extraordinary events across the nation. There are reports of citizens simply vanishing into thin air, of four massive creatures on horses galloping across the plains of Texas. It's unclear what is behind these disappearances, but you can rest easy knowing that the top minds in my government are on top of this. My team is fired up and ready to go. So far, most of the disappearances have occurred in the South and Midwest. Most of our major cities—Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and New York—appear to be largely unscathed. At this point I believe it is prudent to stay home, listen to the instructions of your local authorities, and find solace with a politically correct, government-sanctioned deity. Thank

you and may the aforementioned politically correct, government-sanctioned deity bless America.

Wolf Blitzed: I believe we now have a reporter set to go live from Times Square. Do we have the shot? Excellent. Let's go live to Times Square and reporter Todd Starnes.

Wolf Blitzed: Todd?

Wolf Blitzed: Todd?

Wolf Blitzed: Todd?

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