

## **THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL**

By Roelf L. Ruffner

“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 14:10).

Monday, January 11, 2016, I was listening to the news and two glaring events dominated the newscast: the death of David Bowie and the profane, vulgar Golden Globe Awards Show the night before.

David Bowie was a rock star. I remember when he burst onto the music scene in the late 1960s. He was known back then for being “bisexual.” He sometimes claimed to be homosexual but the last twenty years he lived as a heterosexual, married man with three children. His death was treated by the media as if a great and noble personage had passed into eternity.

The Golden Globe Awards show is an annual event honoring acting which I never watch. But by all accounts this year it was a vulgar exhibition of profanity and sexual innuendo, with much of the dialogue bleeped out. This took place in a time slot which used to be known as the “Family Viewing Hour” or 8-9 p.m. EST. Most of the reporting centered on the various states of nudity actresses exhibited in their attire for the show.

Our once vibrant society has descended to the depths of lasciviousness in the last two generations. I am ashamed of the pseudo-culture of the United States and it tears at my heart to see her in such a state. The moral, spiritual and ethical vacuum grows deeper each day.

Yet what can the Christian do about it? Handwringing, article writing and complaining goes only so far. Fill that vacuum with Christ - live, think and act as Jesus would! In the face of an ungodly world become Godly! “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that

they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:14-16).

We must begin by purging sin from our own lives. The Apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit viewed the rotting Gentile world of the First Century A.D. and exclaimed, “Wherefore God also gave them up...” (Rom. 1:24). In his epistle to the Roman church he pivoted to the religious Jews and wrote, “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things” (Rom. 2:1). He was condemning them for their hypocrisy in shaking their heads at the Gentiles while tolerating sin in their own lives. To bring the Light do a godless culture one must first rid themselves of sin. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin...Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:6, 12, 13).

The ONLY hope for our dying world is the Gospel. Why not show the above mentioned verses (or other verses) to your lost neighbor, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, friend, enemy, etc? They might pull a knife on you (Unlikely!) or just turn away with rolled eyes or they might begin to think. Many people do not know a single Bible verse and yet they still are repulsed by sin in their lives when it is humbly pointed out to them (Acts 2:36-37; 24:24-25; Rom. 7:24). Why not give the Bible a chance to do its work and produce the hope of the Gospel in this world? “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:11). “And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh” (Jude 22, 23).