

FAITH BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

145 IROQUOIS ROAD, OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE 37830
(865) 482-5119

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An open letter to Justin Timberlake, Janet Jackson, Nelly, Kid Rock, P.Diddy, CBS, MTV, Viacom Inc., the NFL, and Superbowl advertisers, including Anheuser-Busch, Bayer Inc., and Eli Lilly:

You have probably been getting a lot of angry letters and phone calls for the way you represented yourself and/or your products during last Sunday's Super Bowl. I for one would like to thank you for clarifying a very important issue, and for actually making my job easier.

The issue that you helped clarify concerns what we Christians call "the world." You see, our holy book, the Bible, often uses the term "world" to describe the whole society of men in their fallen condition, separated from God and at enmity with Him. The relationship between a Christian and "the world" can get confusing. On the one hand, the Bible teaches that adopting this fallen world's values and ways amounts to hostility toward God.¹ On the other hand, it is into this same "world" that we have been sent to shine as lights in the darkness, as living examples of God's love for fallen people.² So it can be tough sometimes for us Christians to know how to maintain a culturally relevant and winsome witness *in* the world, without becoming ourselves an indistinguishable part *of* a world that has set itself against God.

All of you have helped many of us realize as never before that the world's tastes in entertainment have become entirely incompatible with our faith, which commands us to fill our minds with

*"whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise."*³

And it wasn't that the now infamous flash of flesh spoiled an otherwise wholesome evening of family-style fun watching the Super Bowl. The "costume reveal" (as Ms. Jackson has called it) or "wardrobe malfunction" (as Mr. Timberlake has called it) had a unifying and crowning effect on a telecast that was truly of one piece – a football game liberally punctuated by vulgarities in song and prose, simulated and suggested sexual acts (including some that would be criminal in "the real world"), ungentlemanly posturing of the rudest kinds, a fit of equine flatulence, and embarrassingly brazen advertisements for medical products of a very personal nature.

In fact, while the Super Bowl half-time show and commercials may have pushed the envelope, they were not altogether unlike typical television programming over the 364 days or so since the last Super Bowl. You helped me personally to see more clearly that while I have been paying one company to take garbage away from my curb, I have been paying another to deliver garbage right into my living room. No more, thanks to your work last Sunday.

I also wanted to thank you for making my job easier. You see, I'm a pastor and a preacher, and my job is to teach and encourage people to follow Christ, turning away from the corrupting influences of "the world." Pastors like me have been saying for years that slow moral decline is like boiling a frog to death over a low heat. Although it has never been clear to me who found this out (or why), it is said that if the heat is increased slowly and gradually enough, the frog will not realize its danger, and will not try to escape. I think you may have made my job a little easier because you increased the heat too much this time, and more and more people are beginning to notice. It'll be easier to persuade them to jump out of the pot, before it's too late. So thanks for that, too.

Sincerely (in part),

Chris

¹ James 4:4

² Philippians 2:15

³ Philippians 4:8