



**April 29, 2026**

# MESSENGER

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COME WORSHIP WITH US

**Sundays at 1 PM**

**942 Altadena Dr.**

**Altadena, CA 91001**

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On the web: [www.altadenabaptist.org](http://www.altadenabaptist.org)

## Contact Information:

Due to the fires, our mail has been forwarded. Please send mail to PO Box 91055, Pasadena, CA 91109. You may still call the church phone at 626-797-8970;

general office communication:  
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## LEARNING TO LIVE IN A CURVED WORLD

I woke up this morning and opened my eyes to get oriented. I noticed a small bright thing across the room that stood out. Since I was still half asleep, it took me a moment to realize it was not a light, but the reflection of the morning sun off of a shiny object. (Later I would learn that this was the edge of an electronic gadget stored in the corner.) Even in my blurry half-consciousness I identified it as something manufactured by humans because it was *shaped in a straight line*. I intuitively knew *that humans make straight lines; God makes curved lines*.

By this time I was sitting up and getting my bearings. I scanned the room for other straight lines: the chest of drawers – a bunch of perpendicular straight lines; the top of the wall along the ceiling – another straight line; the closet doorway - four straight lines; the books on table – straight line pieces of paper bound together. Everywhere I saw straight lines I realized I was looking at something man-made. When I glanced over into the mirror I saw *my first curve of the morning, my own image, God-made*.

When I got to my computer, my first search of the day was “straight lines in nature.” AI explained to me that straight lines are very rare in the natural world: maybe crystals formed by some minerals, a strand of a spider’s web hanging down under the force of gravity, light rays that seem to travel in a straight path. But all of these seem to break down when you analyze them further. For instance, that “straight-line” light ray is actually moving in a wave all along its route. Even the sharp edge of a mineral crystal turns out to be irregular on closer inspection.

So, by this time I’m standing on the flat floor of my bedroom, and I realize that it’s not literally flat; it follows the subtle curve of the earth because our house’s concrete foundation dried under the influence of the gravity from the center of the curved earth. About this time, I discovered online discussions among architects about how “Nature Abhors a Straight Line” and why it’s important to bring some of nature’s curves into the design process.<sup>1</sup>

Continued next page)

# April 29, 2026

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I turned to the Bible to see if I could find anything on the subject. The Prophet Amos talked about God using a “plumb line” to judge people, and there are some intriguing references to following a “straight path” (Proverbs 3:5-6, Hebrews 12:13) and staying on the “straight and narrow way” (Matthew 7:13-14). But I also found some intriguing curve references. In meditations on Creation, the phrase “circles of the earth” appears in Proverbs (8:27) and in Isaiah’s prophecy (40:22), indicating that the curvature of nature was in the popular consciousness (see also Job 22:14, 26:10).

I found one particular proverb that throws this curve challenge in the face of unbelievers:

**“Consider the work of God:  
Who can make straight what he has made  
curved?”**

(Ecclesiastes 7:13)

The picture you get is that humans keep trying to correct God’s curved “mistakes” by drawing straight-line houses, straight-line streets, straight-line cities, straight-line lives. Maybe God’s little joke is that he keeps **re-curving** our phony straight lines! Jesus called out the straight-line Pharisees for drawing sharp regulations, angles and corners that separate people artificially (Matthew 23:13-39).

I looked in the mirror again and saw myself as another version of God’s ironic sense of humor. I started as a totally helpless little baby. I grew and became smarter, taller, stronger. I was never really “chiseled,”<sup>2</sup> but I worked at being a classic self-sufficient, straight-up American male. But then, gradually, through life experiences, God kept *rebending me*. Now in my later years, I’m have a harder time walking in a straight line, and I can see that “old man curve” in my posture. Someday I’ll be back to the fetal position, the ultimate curve. That’s when I’ll be ready for God to wrap his arms around me in his total embrace. He doesn’t like to hold chiseled, hard, sharp-pointed, straight-line, prickly

creatures. He’s recurring me into a shape he prefers to hug. Thank you, Lord.

**“Consider the work of God:  
Who can make straight what he has made  
curved?”**

Pastor George Van Alstine

<sup>1</sup> An example is this article:

<https://www.timagesgallery.com/blog-2/nature-abhors-a-straight-line>

<sup>2</sup> The American illusion of a “man’s man” as one who has worked at becoming “chiseled” into straight lines and sharp angles, with no tolerance for any gentle (“feminine”) curves. Kind of like a cartoon super-hero.