

Friday Church News Notes

The following is another installment of the Friday Church News Notes designed especially for use in churches. It is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service.

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HOW TO BE A POPULAR PREACHER TODAY



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Joel Osteen, pastor of America's largest church, is a living example of how to be a popular preacher in this apostate age. The key is to preach a positive message that doesn't deal plainly with sin, repentance, and judgment. About 38,000 people attend his Sunday services in Houston, and his sermons are broadcast in more than 200 markets in the United States as well as on major networks in Canada, Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East. He fills massive arenas throughout America, and his 2004 book *Your Best Life Now* has sold 4 million copies. Recently he was in Tampa, Florida, and the *St. Petersburg Times* ran a front-page report on the meetings entitled "God's Cheerleader." There is no way that a major secular newspaper in America today would run such an affirmative report on a preacher who is faithful to the Word of God. Notice how Osteen's message is described: "Osteen's easy-going, all-inclusive gospel has made him a spiritual rock star. He's unrelentingly positive, more Norman Vincent Peale than Pat Robertson. His deliberately nonjudgmental sermons ... have made him into a bestselling author who is even popular among agnostics and atheists. Osteen's positive messages--recent sermon topics include 'Having Confidence in Yourself' and 'Stop Listening to the Accusing Voices'--have helped make him a religious everyman. He touts a loving God. There is no condemnation. No talk of judgment or damnation" ("God's Cheerleader," *St. Petersburg Times*, Nov. 26, 2006, p. 10A). Osteen is no doubt sincere in what he is doing, but he is sincerely and terribly wrong. The Lord Jesus Christ was a fire and brimstone preacher, and every God-ordained preacher is commanded to preach the Word with reproof, rebuke, and exhortation" (2 Timothy 4:2). The Scriptures warn that many will turn away their ears from the truth in the last

days and after their own lusts will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Timothy 4:3-4). Sadly, that is exactly what America's favorite pastor is doing. He is scratching the itching ears of those who have rejected the plain teaching of the Bible and desire, instead, a new type of Christianity, one with a smiley face, one that allows them to live pretty much as they please, to follow their own lusts, and still feel that they are right with God. Significantly, Osteen's nickname is the "smiling preacher."

RICK WARREN'S EVIL ASSOCIATIONS



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Rick Warren of Purpose Drive Church fame invited pro-abortion, pro-homosexual politician Barack Obama to speak in his church on December 1. The occasion was the second annual Global Summit on AIDS conference at Warren's Saddleback Church in southern California. Obama, a Democratic senator from Illinois, not only supports abortion, he supports "partial birth abortion," a procedure whereby a living baby's head is



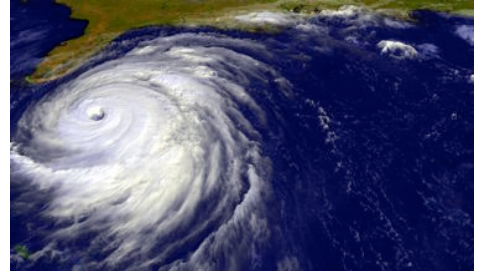
pulled out of the womb and its brain suctioned out before the dead body is birthed. He also supports the homosexual agenda ("Why Is Obama's Evil in Rick Warren's Pulpit?" *WorldNetDaily*, Nov. 17, 2006). Jim Brown, a reporter with the American Family Radio who attended the summit, said Obama was given a standing ovation when introduced, and when Obama stated that just promoting abstinence was not enough, that condoms needed to be handed out, Rick and Kay Warren nodded and joined in the applause. Bill Gates and U2 frontman Bono also sent messages to the conference by video. In an interview with David Frost on the Public Broadcasting Network, November 1995, Gates said he does not believe in "the specific elements of Christianity" and does not know "if there's a god or not." Foul-mouthed Bono was named "premier male sexpot" in 1992. I have read dozens of U2 interviews, but I have never heard any of them give a clear testimony of the new birth or warn that those who are without Christ are on their way to eternal Hell. Rick Warren replied to his critics by saying, "Jesus loved and accepted others without approving of everything they did. That's our position too, but it upsets a lot of people, so we get attacked from both sides." Thus he misinterprets reproof as persecution, and he grossly misrepresents Jesus Christ. Though Christ loved all men, He did not yoke together with wicked men and false prophets to accomplish supposed good deeds. The Lord solemnly warned His people to beware of false prophets and warned about those who make false professions of faith (Matthew 7:15-23), and Obama and Bono, who claim to be Christians, are indeed false prophets. Christ further instructs His people to mark and avoid those who teach contrary to the apostolic faith (Romans 16:17) and not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). In his zeal to fulfill a man-made agenda, Rick Warren disobeys the plain teaching of the Holy Scripture.



HURRICANE PREDICTIONS MISS THE MARK

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When the 2006 hurricane season was officially over on November 30, it was obvious that the National Hurricane Center's prediction was far off the mark. In May the Center announced that the season would be very active, predicting 13 to 16 named storms, with 8 to 10 becoming hurricanes, of which four to six could become "major" hurricanes. In fact, there were nine tropical storms with only two evolving into major hurricanes. This failure reminds us that even though weather science has made amazing progress in the past 50 years, weathermen are not gods and their tools in trade remain very imperfect. Some of them even admit it. Ned Guttman, a scientist with the national Climatic Data Center in North Carolina, said recently: "We can look at the weather. We can forecast to the best of our ability. But we still don't know as to why things happen and why they don't" ("Polk Enters Dry Season Thirsty," *The Ledger*, Lakeland, Florida, Dec. 2, 2006, p. A1). This should cool the global warming fervor, but it won't. In a couple of decades it will be obvious that global warming was a figment of man's imagination, but by then draconian measures will probably be in place to prevent the non-existent phenomenon and these measures will take decades more (if Jesus has not come by then) to dismantle (if they ever are).



CATHOLICS AND MUSLIMS TOGETHER



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For the second time in five years a pope has attended worship in an Islamic mosque. On November 30, 2006, Benedict XVI prayed with Muslims in the Blue Mosque in Turkey. The pope stood with Muslims facing toward Mecca and prayed silently. In 2001 John Paul II visited a mosque in Syria. Following Benedict's visit to the Blue Mosque, the head Islamic mufti in Istanbul, Mustafa Carici, said there is "a spring ahead for this world." The peace sought by the pope is a false one. There will be no peace in this wicked world until Jesus Christ, the Price of Peace, sits on the throne of the world, and that will not happen until after the fierce judgments of the Day of the Lord. Pope Benedict also used the visit to Turkey to further unity between Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy. After visiting the Hagia Sophia, which has been an Orthodox church as well as a Muslim mosque, the Pope wrote: "In our diversity, we find ourselves before faith in the one God." Unity in religious diversity is not the mark of the New Testament Christian faith; it is the mark of the great whore of Revelation.

RODNEY HOWARD-BROWNE SAYS HOSPITALS WILL BE EMPTIED

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During a visit to Florida recently I attended a service at Rodney Howard-Browne's church in Tampa. The occasion was the 10th anniversary of the congregation, which is called "The River at Tampa Bay Church." Howard-Browne is a South African but he came to the States in the late 1980s allegedly at God's bidding to be at the head of a great revival. He was ushered into prominence in 1993 when a "revival" broke out during his meeting at Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Florida. People began to laugh hysterically and to get drunk "with the spirit." Howard-Browne calls himself the "Holy Ghost Bartender." At the recent 10th anniversary

services he said God is going to raise up an army of Christians that will operate in supernatural apostolic miracle power and that hospitals and mental institutions will be emptied. This is a figment of his imagination, because it is nowhere taught in Scripture that a generation in the last days of the church age will do such things. That type of thing was not even done in the apostolic age. He is teaching Pentecostal Latter Rain heresy. The only “miracle” that I witnessed at Howard-Browne's meeting was a bit of “holy laughter.” While he talked, some of the people laughed hysterically. He touched some of them on the forehead and the belly, and they laughed even more. If this is biblical Christianity and apostolic miracles, I am the pope. Further, if “holy laughter” is a sign of God's blessing, Howard-Browne doesn't have it, because during these meetings he doesn't roll in laughter; he only encourages others to do so.

THE DANGER OF MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM

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The following is by the late Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard and who wrote *The King James Version Defended* in 1956: “... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to complete modernism, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn't it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn't it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn't it right to ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch? ... Impelled by this remorseless logic, many an erstwhile conservative Bible student has become entirely modernistic in his thinking. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. He has merely traveled farther down the same path which he began to tread when first he studied naturalistic textual criticism of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New Testament textual criticism and then drop it most illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study.”

CONCLUSION: Friends in Christ, do not be discouraged by any of this. It is God's will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. These things remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ day by day? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service list. To **SUBSCRIBE** or **UNSUBSCRIBE** or **CHANGE ADDRESSES** go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbis/subscribe.html>. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. David Cloud is the director of Way of Life Literature and author of the Friday Church News Notes.