

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.

December 15, 2006

Vol. 7, Issue 49

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S HATRED OF ISRAEL

Friday Church News Notes, December 15, 2006, <http://www.wayoflife.org>

The deposed dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, is an avowed hater of Israel. His Ba'ath party came to power in 1963 with the goal of unifying Arab people and elevating them as a race. Hussein rose to the presidency in July 1979. Soon thereafter he had 22 of his rivals executed, becoming the sole ruler of Iraq. In the 1980s he began rebuilding the city of Babylon, and by 1987 he conducted the first Babylon Festival for thousands of visitors. The festival's official seal featured Hussein's likeness next to that of Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient king of Babylon, and the festival's theme was "From Nebuchadnezzar to Saddam Hussein, Babylon undergoes a renaissance." Hussein's love for Nebuchadnezzar and the rebuilding of Babylon stemmed from his hatred of Israel. "Saddam had always been one of Israel's most recalcitrant enemies" (Charles Dyer, *The Rise of Babylon*, 2003, p. 37). Hussein opened the 1987 Babylon Festival with these words: "Nebuchadnezzar the national hero ... was able to defeat the enemies of the nation on the land of Canaan and to take them as prisoners of war to Babylon. What we need now is to increase awareness in this regard." Hussein desired to be the modern

Nebuchadnezzar who would unite the Arabs and create a unified Arab nation extending from Saudi Arabia through Syria and Jordan (Mohammed was an Arab and began his career in what is today Saudi Arabia) and lead them in victory over Israel so that their kingdom would extend to the shores of the Mediterranean. Murals that appeared on the outer courtyard walls of the Nebuchadnezzar Museum in Babylon depicted Nebuchadnezzar leading his army against Jerusalem. Hussein pledged \$25,000 cash to the families of PLO suicide bombers who targeted Jews. Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's birthplace, was also the birthplace of Saladin, probably the greatest Muslim warrior in history. In the 12th century he captured Jerusalem. Hussein was raised by an uncle named Khayrallah Tulfah, who was made mayor of Baghdad after Hussein came to power. Hussein married one of Tulfah's daughter's. Tulfah was the author of a booklet entitled "Three Whom God Should Not Have Created: Persians, Jews, and Flies." Hussein published this vicious pamphlet after he became a leader in the Ba'ath Party. (Most of the information in this report is from two books: *The Rise of Babylon* by Charles Dyer, Moody Press, 2003, and *Judgment Day: Islam, Israel, and the Nations* by Dave Hunt, The Berean Call, 2005.)



VENERATING JOHN LENNON

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December 8 was the 26th anniversary of John Lennon's death, and a crowd gathered at the "Imagine" mosaic in the Strawberry Fields section of New York City's Central Park to pay tribute to their rock & roll hero. While preaching on Long Island in November I visited the Imagine memorial and saw people affectionately placing flowers on the round dark and light gray mosaic that is set into the pavement of the walkway. The monument is across the street from the Dakota building where Lennon was murdered in 1980. The "Imagine" monument is



named after the song that Lennon published in 1971. The lyrics say: "Imagine there's no heaven ... No hell below us, above us only sky ... no religion too/ You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one/ I hope some day you'll join us, and the world will live as one." Millions of people throughout the world have followed John Lennon in this delusive dream. The Beatles have done more to further the Devil's program in this generation than any other music group.



ATM TITHING

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A new company has begun placing ATM-style tithing machines in churches in America and expects to have 15 in place by the end of the year. They are Automatic Tithe Machines. SecureGive was formed by Church of God pastor Marty Baker who found that tithing increased when he placed a tithing machine outside of his church in Augusta, Georgia, in 2005. His church has seen an 18% jump in offerings. The first time that I saw this was at City Harvest Church in Singapore. They had three ATM-style tithing machines in place in the lobby area when I visited there in February 2003. There is nothing wrong with this, of course. It is simply a reflection of this electronic age. We study the Bible on computers and send out prayer letters by e-mail and record sermons on mps, so we might as well pay tithes via ATM.

PELVIC THRUST DANCE AT SADDLEBACK CHURCH

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The following is from the Extreme Theology website for December 9, 2006:

"This is a video of a Saddleback Worship Concert. There are teenage girls doing dance moves that include Pelvic Thrusts. Is this really worship to the one true God of the Bible or is this worship to one of those pagan sex gods? You be the judge? (*The link to this video has been posted and removed from various web sites, so we are not going to link to it.*) After seeing this, Is there any wonder why Saddleback's worship is so appealing and attractive to unbelievers?

Saddleback is offering jiggly-dancing and sexual stimulation at church and calling it worship. 'Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire' (Matthew 7:17-19)."

CONCLUDING NOTE FROM BRO. CLOUD: Recently a Southern Baptist state association made a ruling that churches supporting homosexuality are not welcome. That is commendable, as far as it goes, but why is immoral dancing in the name of worshipping a holy God any less wicked than same-sex relations? Where is the Southern Baptist Convention when it comes to such things? The silence is deafening.



CHRISTIANS KILLED IN IRAQ

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Professing Christians continue to be targeted and killed in Iraq. This year alone 14 Assyrian Christian women in Baghdad were kidnapped and murdered on August 13, an Orthodox pastor was kidnapped on October 9 and decapitated two days later, a car bomb targeted Christians on October 4, and one 14 year old boy was crucified in Albasra and another was decapitated in Baquba on October 21. It is not only the “extremist” Al Qaida types of Muslims that persecute Christians in the Middle East; it is also the “ordinary” Muslims who take the Koran seriously. And Muslims in the Middle East not only hate Christians and Jews; they hate one another. In Iraq the Sunni Muslims (Saddam Hussein's Baath party is mostly Sunni) hate the Shiite Muslims and the Shiites hate the Sunnis, and the Sunnis hate the Kurds and the Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds all hate Christians and Jews. Christians in Iraq have petitioned President Bush to help them against the oppression of Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds alike.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE



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In 1788 Edward Gibbon wrote *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Though Gibbon was not a Bible-believing Christian, he had considerable insight into the conditions that led to the fall of mighty Rome. He set forth five basic reasons, and I summarize these from the late Theodore Epp's commentary on the book of Revelation: First, there was the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of marriage and the home, which is the basis of human society. Second, there were higher and higher taxes and the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace. Third,

there was a mad craze for pleasure, with sports becoming every year more exciting, more brutal, more immoral. Fourth, there was the building of great armaments when the real enemy was within; the decay of individual responsibility and sacrifice. Fifth, there was the decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, losing power to guide the people. England followed this path to near obscurity, and America is not far behind.

THE LAODICEAN CHURCH AGE

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The following is a description of the Laodicean church age by Joseph Augustus Seiss, who published his lectures on Revelation in the late 19th century: “It is *Laodicean*,--conformed in everything to the popular judgment and will,--the extreme opposite of Nicolaitan. Instead of a Church of domineering clericals, it is the Church of the domineering mob, in which nothing may be safely preached except what the people are pleased to hear,--in which the teachings of the pulpit are fashioned to the tastes of the pew, and the feelings of the individual override the enactments of legitimate authority. It is lukewarm,--nothing decided,--partly hot and partly cold,--divided between Christ and the world,--not willing to give up pretension and claim to the heavenly, and yet clinging close to the earthly,--having too much conscience to cast off the name of Christ, and too much love for the world to take a firm and honest stand entirely on His side. There is much religiousness, but little



religion; much sentiment, but very little of life to correspond; much profession, but very little faith; a joining of the ball-room to the communion-table, of the opera with the worship of God, and of the feasting and riot of the world with pretended charity and Christian benevolence. And it is self-satisfied, boastful, and empty. Having come down to the world's tastes, and gained the world's praise and patronage, the Laodiceans think they are rich, and increased with goods, and have need in nothing. Such splendid churches, and influential and intelligent congregations, and learned, agreeable preachers! Such admirable worship and music! Such excellently manned and endowed institutions! So many missionaries in the field! So much given for magnificent charities!

Such an array in all the attributes of greatness and power! What more can be wanted? ... Can any man scrutinize narrowly the professed Church of our day, and say that we have not reached the Laodicean age?" (J.A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*).



THE CONDITION OF THE WORLD

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The following is excerpted from Adam Clarke's commentary on the Bible: "The whole world is embraced in the arms of the devil (1 John 5:19), where it lies fast asleep and carnally secure, deriving its heat and power from its infernal fosterer. What a truly awful state! And do not the actions, tempers, propensities, opinions and maxims of all worldly men prove and illustrate this? Yes, their ACTIONS are opposed to the law of God; their CONVERSATIONS shallow, simulous, and false; their CONTRACTS forced, interested, and deceitful; their QUARRELS puerile, ridiculous, and ferocious; and their FRIENDSHIPS hollow, insincere, capricious, and fickle:--all, all the effect of their lying in the arms of the wicked one; for thus they become instinct with his own spirit: and because they are of their father the devil, therefore his lusts they will do."

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.