

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.

January 12, 2007

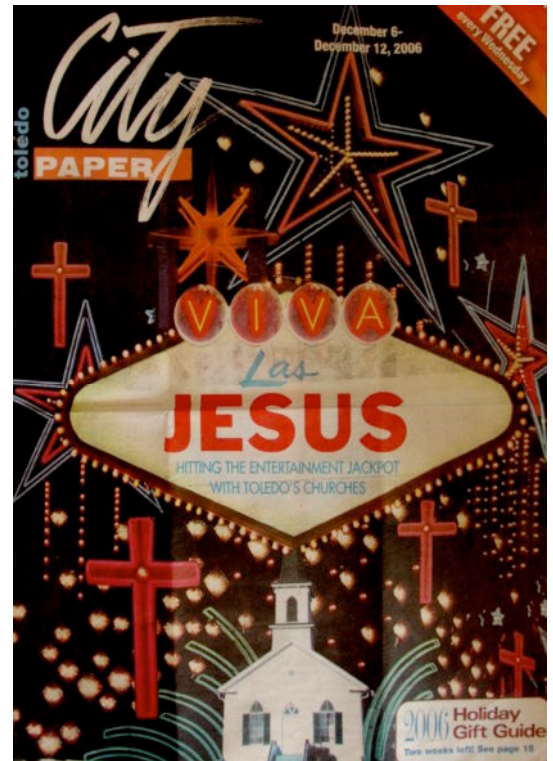
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VIVA LAS JESUS

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The feature report in Toledo, Ohio's *City Paper* for December 6-12, 2006, was "Viva Las Jesus: Hitting the Entertainment Jackpot with Toledo's Churches." The paper's reporters visited several area megachurches "in an attempt to gauge the entertainment value of these salvation supernovas." The result was an enthusiastic appraisal by a secular publication. Note how the music at these contemporary churches was described: "kickin ... great sound system that wouldn't be out of place on a Vegas stage ... intense electric guitar jams, Bowie-worthy synth riffs and drum solos from a percussionist who could've been a member of the Blue Man Group ... area-like concert stage complete with booming speakers, fog, strobe lights and spotlights ... a rockin' Christian rock sextet that'll make even the most sin-happy soul shout 'Hallelujah!' ... light, folksy rock, like an unpretentious bar band ... loud and heavy on the electric guitars, yet strangely mesmerizing ... the guitar went straight to the soul, the drumming was profound ... everyone grooving to the music ... the atmosphere of a casual rock concert."

The reporters even liked the sermons because they were "short but sweet" and "sprinkled with a dose of comedy" and "hilarious personal anecdotes" and especially because there was no "fire and brimstone." One preacher used "props to that great theologian Eminem." An objective of the contemporary church movement is to make unbelievers feel comfortable and entertained, and it is obvious that they have achieved that goal. Lacking in the responses by the news reporters, though, was any mention of conviction of sin. They were entertained and satisfied with the experience but they were not converted. I have attended many of these churches to write reports and while there is power present, it is the power of the flesh and not the power of the Spirit. It is the power of a rock concert, not the power of holiness and the uncorrupted Word of God. It is blasphemy to yoke together a holy Christ with the things of this world. The Bible says that friendship with the world is spiritual adultery (James 4:4). Those are the type of strong words that are found throughout the Bible but that you will not hear at a contemporary church. The very idea of "Viva Las Jesus" is blasphemy, yet this shallow generation sees no problem with it. Jesus Christ would not be accepted in these churches for He preached oftentimes on hellfire and judgment. "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Jesus Christ, Mark 9:43-48).



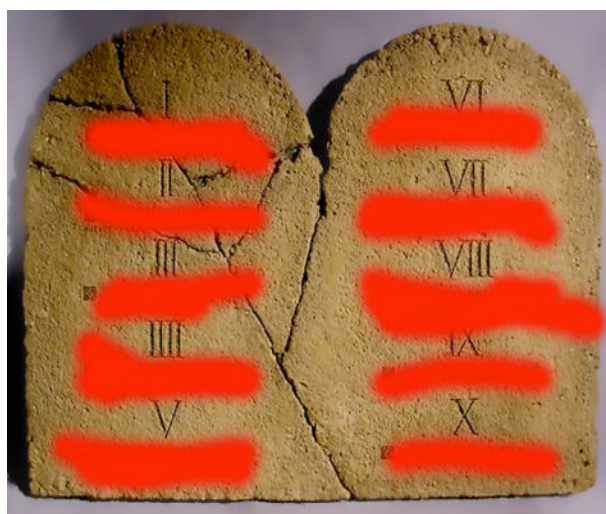
51 ANGLICAN PRIESTS IN SAME-SEX PARTNERSHIPS

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A new report claims that 51 Anglican priests are living in homosexual relationships. These include Jeremy Davies, worship leader at Salisbury Cathedral and Paul Collier, (*right*) a chaplain at Goldsmiths College in London. The report by a homosexual-rights group called Changing Attitude will add fuel to the fire that is burning in this denomination. Several congregations and entire parishes have voted in recent months to leave the Episcopal Church USA due to the ordination of homosexuals and other liberal leanings. The “straw that broke the camel's back” was the ordination of Vicky Gene Robinson as the Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire in 2003. Anglicanism is more akin to the religious Harlot of Revelation 17 than the pure virgin Bride of Christ.



FORMER ANGLICAN PRIEST REWRITES THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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Former Anglican vicar Simon Parke has rewritten the Ten Commandments in a more positive light in his book *The Beautiful Life*. “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” for example, becomes “Prepare for truth.” Parke complains that the old Ten Commandments are “negative and external rather than internal.” In fact, Jesus Christ taught that God's commandments are both internal and external. He taught, for example, that committing adultery is not merely a physical act but is an act of the heart. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).



LOS ANGELES CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE CREATES RAINBOW FISH SYMBOL

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The Los Angeles archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church in America has combined the homosexual rainbow symbol with the generic Christian fish symbol in its ministry of encouragement to homosexuals (“Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese,” Christiannewswire.com, Jan. 8, 2007). The Diocese' website states: “See in the fish pin a sign of recognition of our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers. The pin signals solidarity with all people of faith who promote justice and inclusivity for every person in their faith communities.” This is contrary to the Catholic Church's own teaching on homosexuality, which sees it as a matter of “grave depravity” and

“intrinsically disordered,” but it is no surprise since so many of its own priests are, by its own definition, gravely depraved. Well over \$1 billion has been paid out by the Roman Catholic Church in the USA in the last 20 years because of the immorality of its priests, and the number of cases is increasing. A conservative Catholic organization documented this wretched business in the fall/winter 2002 issue of the magazine *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, observing that “THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF SEXUAL ABUSE CASES IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH--ABOUT 90%--INVOLVE HOMOSEXUAL PRIESTS PREYING ON TEENAGE BOYS. The major media and the U.S. culture at large want to deny or spin the homosexual factor out of the scandal.” This publication estimated that the abuse involves “somewhere between 2,500 and 6,500 priests and an estimated 100,000 victims.” Biblical compassion to homosexuals involves calling them to repentance, because Jesus twice warned, “... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).



CHARISMATIC TELEVANGELIST SUED OVER FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT HEALING

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Darlene Bishop, a televangelist with a nationwide following, is being sued by her relatives over false claims pertaining to the healing of her brother. In her book “Your Life Follows Your Words,” which teaches the Word-Faith doctrine, she claimed that the brother, Darrell Perry, was healed of throat cancer. The reality is that the brother died of his cancer, which is a strange type of healing. Perry's children who have sued in a wrongful death claim, alleging that she persuaded Perry to stop chemotherapy and rely wholly on divine healing (“Televangelist Sued,” *The Guardian*, Jan. 2, 2007). We have seen this type of thing time and again in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement and have documented many cases in our book “The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: The History and Error.” William Branham has been exalted as the greatest Pentecostal faith healer of the last century, but when our friend Alfred Pohl, a former Pentecostal, assisted in a Branham healing crusade in Saskatoon in the late 1940s he was shocked to discover that many people died of their diseases after Branham had pronounced them healed. Another acclaimed Pentecostal healer was Kathryn Kuhlman. In the book *Healing: A Doctor in Search of a Miracle*, Dr. William Nolen dedicated an entire chapter to his investigation of Kuhlman's healing crusades. Though sympathetic to Kuhlman as a person, Nolen was unable to document even one case of physical healing. At the time of his investigation, Nolen was chief of surgery at Meeker County Hospital in Litchfield, Minnesota. Another acclaimed healer was Aimee Semple McPherson, but when Arno Gaebelein examined McPherson's healing claims he did not find any genuine healings. His report appeared in the 1925 book *The Healing Question*. We give many other examples in the previously mentioned book. If physical healing is indeed a part of Christ's atonement in this life, it would be evident in the lives of those who claim it, but in fact they get sick and die just like the rest of us, because there is no such promise in Scripture.

A WARNING ABOUT JOHN PIPER

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A 2005 survey of roughly 1,100 “young fundamentalists,” found that John Piper has a significant influence. Almost 50% agreed with the statement, “John Piper's ministry has been a help to me.” Piper is a popular Evangelical author and the senior pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, but though he pastors a church that is called Baptist he wanted to allow non-immersion “baptisms” for church membership. In

2002 Piper proposed to the church that the constitution be amended to allow a candidate to reject believer's baptism by immersion if he "sincerely and humbly believes that it would be contrary to Scripture and conscience--and not just contrary to family tradition or desires--to be baptized by immersion and thus to count his infant 'baptism' or his adult sprinkling as improper or invalid." The proposal was not passed, but the fact remains that Piper was willing to allow non-immersion "baptisms." This is a heretical and strange position for a so-called Baptist pastor to take. Piper, a Calvinist, believes the strange heresy that regeneration precedes faith. Note the following statement: "God begets us anew and the first glimmer of life in the newborn child is faith.



This new birth is the effect of irresistible grace, because it is an act of sovereign creation" (John Piper, quoted from John MacArthur, *Faith Works*, 1993, p. 199). Piper is also a New Evangelical ecumenist. For example, he was a speaker at the 2004 National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, joining hands in that forum with Franklin Graham, James Dobson, Ted Haggard, and Pat Robertson, all of whom have a close relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Three Roman Catholic organizations were active at the 2004 NRB conference. The Global Catholic Network ran an ad in the NRB newspaper each day and rented exhibit space. Priests for Life handed out packets of their material; and Catholic Answers, which promotes Roman Catholic dogma, also participated. Piper even supports the heretical Charismatic Spirit-slaying phenomena. After taking his staff to a "Toronto-style" meeting he admitted that "a whole bunch of my staff went down" ("John Piper: Hedonist Theologian?" *Faith and Freedom* magazine, Dec. 2006). Piper said: "I simply know of too many

people's lives who have been profoundly helped for good by lying on the ground for forty-five minutes in a kind of laughter or peace" (tape of Question and Answer Session at a conference in Minneapolis, Jan. 31, 1996). Regardless of any good thing that he might teach, John Piper should be avoided. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

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.