

# 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.

February 2, 2007

Vol. 8, Issue 5

## BAPTIST CHURCHES HOLDING SUPERBOWL SERVICES

Friday Church News Notes, February 2, 2007,  
<http://www.wayoflife.org>

Many Baptist congregations are turning their churches over to football, one of America's real Gods, on Super Bowl Sunday, February 4.

Pastor Luis Acosta of Pines Baptist Church, Pembroke Pines, Florida, says, "It's a way of showing people we're regular Joes like they are" ("Churches Gear Up for Super Bowl Sabbath," *Christian Post*, Jan. 27, 2007). Believers are not supposed to be regular Joes; they are supposed to be "a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Acosta says there won't be as much as a prayer at the Super Bowl Sunday event at Pines Baptist because he doesn't like the "heavy handed approach" to evangelism. I wonder what the bold apostle Paul would think of this? At Carrollwood Baptist Church in Tampa, Florida, some attendees bring their recliners from home to the Super Bowl gathering. Jim Waters, associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Milton, Florida, says they have the choice of hosting a Super Bowl event or holding church, but if they do the latter, "no one's going to come." That's a fearful reflection on the worldliness and nominalism of this congregation. Instead of hosting a Super Bowl event this church should be on its knees confessing its sin and seeking revival. William Baker, who has written books about sports and religion, says sports, religion, and patriotism form the "American trinity." He says that a visitor from Mars on Super Bowl Sunday would say, "These people believe, MAYBE in God ... BUT MOST SURELY they believe in sports." The Lord Jesus Christ did not exalt sports, but He did exalt the church, saying, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). James 4:4-5 says God is jealous over the affections of His people and calls "friendship of the world" spiritual adultery. It is carnal folly to think that God would be pleased with a church that replaces or supplements the preaching and worship of Jesus Christ with the carnality and hero worship that surrounds a Super Bowl football game. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21).



Super Bowl halftime shows have included 'wardrobe malfunctions', women in lingerie playing football and the occasional streaker and the whole raunchy party is served up with hard rock music, like the Rolling Stones at left. Is there anyone left who blushes at watching this in church?

# RICK WARREN TEAMS UP WITH ALPHA INTERNATIONAL

Friday Church News Notes, February 2, 2007, <http://www.wayoflife.org>

Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren, of Saddleback Church in California, has teamed up with Alpha International and the Billy Graham Association in the My Hope India project. The *Alpha International Newsletter*, published December 4, 2006, contains Warren's high recommendation of Alpha. He calls it "one of the most effective evangelism tools for the 21st century" and says that you can use it to win the lost and "revitalize your church." He says his 40 Days of Purpose and Alpha "fit together like hand in glove," claiming that both programs are "inspired by the Holy Spirit to deepen and develop the Church." He concludes, "I, Rick Warren, want to tell you that Alpha has my 100% endorsement." This exposes the radical nature of Warren's ecumenical philosophy. The Alpha program was birthed out of the "Toronto Blessing" that broke spread from Canada to the Holy Trinity Brompton Anglican parish in London in the early 1990s. I visited a service at Holy Trinity in March 1997 and witnessed firsthand their charismatic error, including "spirit slaying" and "holy shaking." The Alpha program consists of 15 sessions and runs for ten weeks, covering some of the basic teachings of the gospel and Christian living. Its broad denominational appeal is the product of its doctrinal shallowness and charismatic orientation. It refers to the points of the gospel in such a general way that false doctrine is not refuted. It says salvation is by grace, for instance, but it does not say that salvation is by grace ALONE by faith ALONE through the blood of Christ ALONE without works or sacraments. It refers to the Bible as God's Word in a general sense, but it does not explain that the Bible is God's inerrant, infallible, supernatural Word, the SOLE authority for faith and practice. Alpha refers to man's need, but it does not describe man as a depraved sinner by nature. If Alpha were that specific, it is certain it would not be ecumenically popular in this apostate hour. The reason Rick Warren recommends this shallow approach 100% is because it mirrors his own, which a quick reading of *The Purpose Driven Life* will prove. About half-way through the 10-week Alpha program, the leaders conduct "Holy Spirit Day" or even have a "Holy Spirit Weekend Away." The leader "takes them through the experience of receiving the Holy Spirit." Those who take the courses are urged to open themselves to the "slaying in the spirit" and other unscriptural experiences. The participants are taught that "tongues speaking" can be learned. They are taught to expect extra-biblical revelations from God through dreams and "words of knowledge." THE ALPHA PROGRAM HAS BEEN USED WIDELY IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SINCE THE 1990s. In fact, there is a Roman Catholic division of Alpha. In the latest edition of the *Alpha International Newsletter*, the one containing Warren's 100% endorsement, Catholic priests praise Alpha after the same fashion. There is a report on the activities of "Alpha for Catholics" in various parts of Asia and South America. Alpha founder Nicky Gumbel, who Warren calls his "friend," spoke in Rome in May 2006 at the Catholic Charismatic Renewal's 40th anniversary. Rick Warren has been called "America's pastor," and it is for good reason. He is so shallow in his teaching, so positive in his approach, so slighting of repentance, so neglecting of unpopular doctrines such as hell and judgment, so tolerant of heresies, so enthusiastic of rock music, so soft-spoken on that nasty subject of worldliness, that apostate America can't help but love him.

**Rick Warren holding up a sign that says "Whatever It Takes," perfectly summing up his entire ministry, which is based on pragmatism.**



# CHURCH OF ENGLAND HOSTS U2-CHARIST



Friday Church News Notes, February 2, 2007, <http://www.wayoflife.org>  
A Church of England bishop will preside over a U2-charist, a communion service featuring music from the rock band U2 instead of hymns (“Hymns Replaced by Bono,” *London Telegraph*, Jan. 29, 2007). “In what is more rock concert than Book of Common Prayer, a live band will belt out U2 classics such as *Mysterious Ways* and *Beautiful Day* as worshippers sing along with the lyrics, which will appear on screens. The atmosphere will be further enhanced by a sophisticated lighting system that will pulse with the beat...” The U2-charist is scheduled for May at St. Swithin's parish church in Lincoln. Bishop Timothy Ellis, who will preside, said, “Rock music

can be a vehicle of immense spirituality” (“U2 Service Brings Rock to Religion,” BreitBart.com, Jan. 29, 2007). He is right, but there are spirits in this world other than the Holy Spirit. Rock & rollers have long described their music in religious terms. Craig Chaquico, guitarist for Jefferson Airplane, said, “Rock concerts are the churches of today. Music puts them on a spiritual plane” (*Why Knock Rock*, p. 96). Jimi Hendrix said, “The music is a spiritual thing of its own” (*Life*, Oct. 3, 1969), and, “We're making the music into electric church music, a new kind of Bible you can carry in your hearts” (*Crosstown Traffic*, p. 161). Grateful Dead concerts have been described as “a place to worship” (*Not Fade Away: the Online World Remembers Jerry Garcia*, p. 42). Jim Morrison of the Doors said, “I feel spiritual up there performing” (*Newsweek*, Nov. 6, 1967), and Doors' guitarist Robbie Kreiger said, “[We] wanted our audience to undergo a religious experience” (*Break on Through-- the Life and Death of Jim Morrison*, p. 190). The religious experience and the spirit at a Doors concert or an Anglican U2-charist is the same.

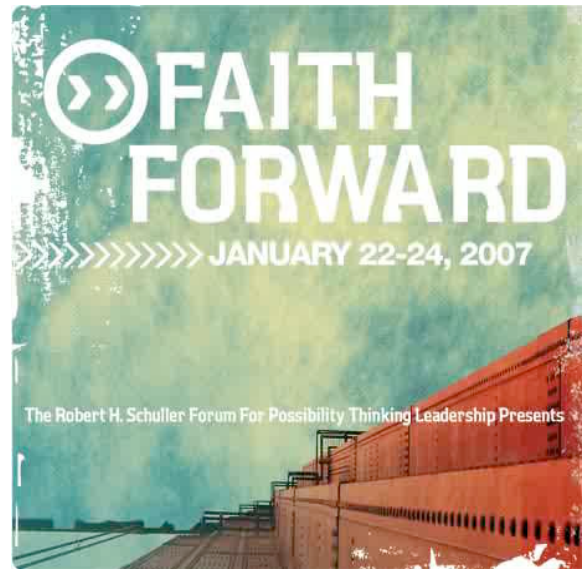
## CHRISTIAN IDOL - IMITATING THE WORLD

Friday Church News Notes, February 2, 2007, <http://www.wayoflife.org>  
In light of the worldliness of today's churches it is no surprise that a Christianized version of *American Idol* aired on January 26. Called “Gifted,” the two-hour special was the conclusion of a talent search that involved 16,000 contestants. The host was Brian Littrell of the morally filthy Backstreet Boys rock group. Littrell claims to have been a Christian since he was eight years old, but his music and influence have been anything but Christian. The Backstreet Boys, who have sold more than 55 million albums in their 10-year career, have polluted the hearts and minds of countless young people. *Entertainment Weekly* described them as an adolescent “sexual awakening” and many of their songs call upon youth to “do what feels good” regardless of its morality or legality. Their song “I Need You Tonight” says, “I know, deep within my heart/ It doesn't matter of its wrong or right.” The judges of *Gifted* are Michael Sweet, Eddie DeGarmo, and Andrae Crouch. *Gifted* was produced by Trinity Broadcasting Network through an alliance of Johnny Wright of Wright Entertainment Group and Matthew Crouch, son of Paul and Jan Crouch. Wright Entertainment's roster has included such morally debauched artists as Janet Jackson. Our friend Jeff Royal observed: “Littrell still tours with the Backstreet Boys. I wonder if one of the *Gifted* contestants will have the nerve to sing the Backstreet Boys' song 'Get Yourself a Bad Boy'?”



# ROBERT SCHULLER'S ECUMENICAL BABEL

Friday Church News Notes, February 2, 2007, <http://www.wayoflife.org>  
On January 22-24 Robert Schuller hosted a grossly mis-named Faith Forward Forum that brought together 34 speakers. The meeting was otherwise titled “The Robert Harold Schuller Forum for Possibility Thinking Leadership.” The objective was “to bring the classical, contemporary, and emerging churches together.” Advertised as “the broadest group of thinkers ever brought together,” the speakers definitely formed a diverse group, including Pentecostal Brian Houston of Hillsong Church in Sydney; Southern Baptist Pastor Ed Young, Jr.; Emerging Church leader Chris Seay; Todd Hunter, president of Alpha USA and former president of the National Association of Vineyard Churches; Fuller Seminary professor Eddie Gibbs; female pastor Judah Smith of Seattle; United Church pastor Michael Ward of Calgary; Catholic priest C. Lou Martin of Baltimore; and Kevin Mannoia, former president of the National Association of



Evangelicals. This is clear evidence of the widespread apostasy within evangelicalism today, but you will wait in vain to hear a clear warning from the syndicated radio speakers and authors such as Chuck Swindoll or Max Lucado. Robert Schuller is a dangerous heretic who has redefined the gospel to fit his Norman Vincent Peale-inspired theology. He put this theology into print for all to see in his 1982 book “Self Esteem: The New Reformation,” a book he has never repudiated. To Schuller, sin is “any act or thought that robs me of self-esteem.” He says it is insulting to define sin as rebellion against God. His Christ is a psycho-savior who “was self-esteem incarnate.” To be born again is to “be changed from a negative to a positive self-image.” Hell “is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God.” In *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1984, Schuller said, “I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and, hence, counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition.” If Robert Schuller is not a false teacher and heretic, under the curse of Galatians 1, there is no such thing. But evangelicalism today, for the most part, considers heresy an interesting intellectual problem rather than damnable error.

**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](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org). David Cloud is the director of Way of Life Literature and author of the Friday Church News Notes.