

# 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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## BRUCE METZGER DIES

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<http://www.wayoflife.org>

Bruce Metzger, one of the most prominent textual critics of the 20th century, died on February 14 at age 93. Metzger, a professor at the liberal Princeton Theological Seminary for 46 years, was one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.

Metzger was a radical ecumenist. He was at the forefront of producing "the Ecumenical Edition" of the Revised Standard Version in 1973 and personally presented a copy to Pope Paul VI. Metzger also presented a Bible to Pope John Paul II. Metzger was rationalistic in his approach to the Bible's text. Like most of the fathers of textual criticism, Metzger did not believe in the divine



Metzger with Pope Paul VI

preservation of the Scripture. In fact, he claimed that it is possible that we do not have sufficient manuscript evidence to recover the original text, because the manuscripts that exist might not represent the text of the early churches. "... the disquieting possibility remains that the evidence available to us today may, in certain cases, be totally unrepresentative of the distribution of readings in the early church" (Metzger, *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, 1979, p. 188). Metzger's denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture was evident in the notes to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*, which he co-edited with Herbert May. According to these notes the Pentateuch is "a matrix of myth, legend, and history"; Job is an "ancient folktale"; and Jonah is a "popular legend."

## ROCK MUSIC INDUSTRY INCAPABLE OF TAMING THE MONSTER IT HAS CREATED

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The rock music industry is vainly attempting to tame the monster it created. For half a century rock & roll has been teaching the individual that he is free to do what he wants "any old time." The rock philosophy is narcissistic. It is all about me, and it is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves..." (2 Timothy 3:1-2). Today the selfish rock & roll monster is eating its own. The pop music industry has lost millions of dollars in income in recent years from illegal downloads of copyrighted music. Now MTV and other rock music television networks are

losing money from the illegal free sharing of video clips on the internet. Recently Viacom, the parent company of MTV, demanded that YouTube pull all of its copyrighted video clips. Users download more than 70 million video clips per day from YouTube, which is owned by Google. Google makes money through advertising income based on the massive number of hits to the site, even though the music videos are owned by musicians and producers who do not receive any income from their labor. Those clips are posted by people who ignore copyright laws, because they think they can do what they want any old time.



**A billboard for a rock radio station in Europe uses a slightly modified version of the rock motto, “Sex, drugs and rock and roll.” The message is still clear: if it feels good - do it.**

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## **SWISS HIGH COURT ALLOWS EUTHANISIA FOR MENTALLY ILL**

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Switzerland's high court has ruled that doctors may help mentally ill patients kill themselves. According to the February 2 ruling, a doctor can prescribe sodium-pentobarbital for a mentally ill patient who has a “death wish based on an autonomous decision which takes all circumstances into account.” The doctors are required to make a distinction “between a death wish which is an expression of a curable, psychiatric disorder and which requires treatment, and (a death wish) which is based on a person of sound judgment's own well-considered and permanent decision, which must be respected” (“Swiss High Court Ruling Opens Possibility of Assisted Suicide for Mentally Ill,” Associated Press, Feb. 2, 2007). This statement by a court of brilliant but deluded individuals creates more questions than answers. How can a person who is mentally ill be judged “a person of sound judgment” and be deemed capable of making life and death decisions? How can a doctor, a mere fallible human being, make such an incredibly complicated determination, being unable to know the patient's very heart and soul? How can the field of psychology, which has demonstrated an astonishing level of fallibility, provide the tools demanded by this decision? Further, such a decision intrudes into God's domain. Jesus Christ is the One who has the keys of hell and death (Rev. 1:18). This generation has bought into John Lennon's lie that there is no hell and thus nothing to fear beyond death itself.

## **THE DANGERS OF MARIJUANA**

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An article warning of the dangers of marijuana appeared in the February 6 issue of *USA Today*. Entitled “Caution: Marijuana May Not Be Lesser Evil,” the article described the possibility that marijuana use can break down inhibitions to harder drugs. This is exactly what marijuana did for me when I began using it as a soldier in Vietnam in 1970. Following is an excerpt from that article: “Yasmin Hurd, professor of psychiatry, pharmacology and biological chemistry at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, says: 'All of the studies clearly show the earlier someone starts taking marijuana, the greater their vulnerability to addiction disorders and psychiatric disorders. I'm so shocked still that so many parents are not considering enough the dangers of early drug use.' Marijuana use by adolescents in the USA declined slightly from 2005 to 2006, but it's

still more common than it was 15 years ago ... In 2006, 11.7% of eighth-graders said they had used marijuana during the past year, compared with 6.2% of eighth-graders in 1991. Among 12th-graders, 31.5% said they had used marijuana in the previous year; in 1991, 23.9% said they had. ... Research shows marijuana users are significantly less satisfied with the quality of their lives than non-users. ... Rachel Kinsey, who started smoking marijuana at 15, says that if she had to do it all over again she never would have started smoking marijuana. 'You never know where it's going to lead you. You don't know that you're not going to become an addict, so it's not worth the risk.'"



## **MADONNA WANTS TO BE LIKE JESUS AND LENNON**

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Rock star Madonna says she wants to be like Jesus and John Lennon. Speaking of the controversy surrounding her “Confessions” tour, in which she wore a crown of thorns and was “crucified” on a cross, Madonna said, “For me we all need to be Jesus in our time. Jesus' message was to love your neighbor as yourself. I hope that people got that message” (“Madonna,” *Christian Post*, Feb. 16, 2007). In the same interview with Sirius Satellite radio, the confused rock singer also said she also wants to be like Gandhi and John Lennon. This reflects the “both-and” philosophy of the rock & roll age, but it is impossible to believe the Jesus Christ of the Bible and John Lennon at the same time, because they taught conflicting messages. Jesus Christ taught that hell is a real place of fiery torment, while Lennon taught that it is a myth. They cannot both be right. “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” (Jesus Christ, Mark 9:43-44).

## **SOME SOUTHERN BAPTISTS CALL FOR HONESTY AND BIBLICAL REALITY IN CHURCH MEMBER STATISTICS**

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Some Southern Baptists are calling for honesty and biblical reality in church member statistics. The denomination claims to have more than 16 million members, and that is impressive, unless you look carefully at church member statistics. It is typical for Southern Baptist churches to report terrifically bloated membership numbers. It is not uncommon for a church that has 500 members on the roll to have 50 people attending a Wednesday night service. A survey taken a few years ago found that of the 16 million “members,” only 6 million (37%) attend Sunday morning services and only 2 million (10%) participate in anything else. At the Baptist Identity II conference at Union University this month, professor Gregory Thornbury said, “There should not be people on our membership rolls who never come to church, show no discernable evidence of conversion or holiness, and who are not currently participating in a local body of believers” (“Baptists Denominationally Disillusioned,” *Christian Post*, Feb. 19, 2007). To that we say, Amen. Thomas Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Coral Gables, Florida, plans to introduce a resolution at this year's convention “to ensure integrity in church membership.” One of the Baptist principles is a regenerate church membership. This is what we see in the New Testament. Those who joined the first church at Jerusalem were those that “gladly

received” the gospel and were baptized and “continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:41-42). They were saved people who gave evidence of their salvation. It is not only the Southern Baptist Convention that needs to take a fresh look at the doctrine of regenerate church membership; many independent Baptist churches also have bloated membership rolls that contain the names of people who give no evidence of the new birth.

## THE GLOBAL WARMING TALIBAN

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The following is an excerpt from an Op/Ed piece by James Spann, who has worked in the field of meteorology for nearly 30 years. It is entitled “The Weather Channel Mess” and was published January 18, 2007: “Well, well. Some 'climate expert' on The Weather Channel wants to take away AMS certification from those of us who believe the recent 'global warming' is a natural process. So much for 'tolerance,' huh? I have been in operational meteorology since 1978, and I know dozens and dozens of broadcast meteorologists all over the country. Our big job: look at a large volume of raw data and come up with a public weather forecast for the next seven days. I do not know of a single TV meteorologist who buys into the man-made global warming hype. I know there must be a few out there, but I can't find them. Here are the basic facts you need to know: First, billions of dollars of grant money is flowing into the pockets of those on the man-made global warming bandwagon. No man-made global warming, the money dries up. This is big money, make no mistake about it. Always follow the money trail and it tells a story. Even the lady at The Weather Channel probably gets paid good money for a prime time show on climate change. No man-made global warming, no show, and no salary. Nothing wrong with making money at all, but when money becomes the motivation for a scientific conclusion, then we have a problem. For many, global warming is a big cash grab. Second, the climate of this planet has been changing since God put the planet here. It will always change, and the warming in the last 10 years is not much different than the warming we saw in the 1930s and other decades.”



**James Spann is a well-respected television weatherman in Birmingham, AL.**

**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.