

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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ANGLICAN PRIEST SAYS THE DOCTRINE THAT CHRIST DIED FOR MAN'S SINS IS "INSANE"

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In an interview with BBC Radio 4 that aired on April 4, Anglican priest Jeffrey John said the idea that Jesus died in our place is "insane." John, the dean of St. Albans, is a homosexual who was "married" to his male partner last August under the new British law. He rejects the traditional Bible doctrine of "substitutionary atonement," that says that Christ died on the cross to pay the price demanded by God's law for man's sin. He calls it "repulsive as well as nonsensical," saying, "It makes God sound like a psychopath" ("Idea Christ Died for Sins 'Insane,'" *WorldNetDaily*, April 1, 2007). It is not surprising, by the way, to see the British Broadcasting Network (BBC) airing blasphemy. In 2001 BCC World Service interviewed the author of "God: A Biography," in which he stated that the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God is "rubbish" and that he believes that God himself is not perfect. The BBC interviewer treated this blasphemy with great respect and tenderness, agreeing with the author that the Bible can be "true" even though its history and theology is (allegedly) fictional. In December 2002 the BBC aired a documentary questioning Jesus' virgin birth. In 2004 the BBC ran a comedy show called *Cyberdelic*, which included "a sexually explicit reference to Jesus" and a crucifix covered in dung. Well did Peter prophesy: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:1-2).



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CATHOLIC CHURCH COLLECTS MONEY FOR MOSQUE

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St. Theodore Catholic Church in Cologne, Germany, recently took up a collection to help build a new Islamic mosque in the city. The mosque will be one of Germany's largest, with room for more than 3,000 worshippers. This event is not surprising in light of Rome's new openness to pagan religions since Vatican Council II in the 1960s. Beginning in 1987 the late Pope John Paul II conducted the annual Day of Prayer for World Peace, which brought together representatives of Buddhist, Hindu, Shinto, Bahai, Muslim, Zoroastrian, and other religions, with those of Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, and Protestant denominations. We are told that Rome is no longer the apostate institution it was in the sixteenth century. Not only is that not true, but THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR DAY IS ACTUALLY FAR MORE UNSCRIPTURAL THAN IT WAS IN LUTHER'S DAY. It still holds all of its



Joachim Meisner, Bishop of Cologne, seeking a handout for Muslims

ancient heresies that were condemned by Baptists and Protestants of old, such as the pope being the head of all churches, the mass being the re-sacrifice of Christ, Mary being the ever-virgin Queen of Heaven, prayers to and for the dead, and the sacraments being a channel for salvation. In addition to traditional Catholic heresies, the Roman Catholic Church of our day is filled with many gross errors which were almost unknown to the Catholic Church of the sixteenth century, such things as Evolution (even the late pope declared his belief in it), New Age faith and practice (i.e., a seminar at Catholic Quigley Seminary in Chicago in 1988 featured messages by Matthew Fox and other New Age speakers on “the cosmic Christ within”), universalism (Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II believed all men are children of God), and modernistic theology (Rome's theological schools are largely given over to the modernistic approach to Scripture that denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, etc.).

MUSLIMS KILL CHRISTIANS IN ETHIOPIA AND NIGERIA

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Two Christians were murdered in Ethiopia and Nigeria the last week of March. In Gombe, Nigeria, on March 21, Muslim students lynched a female Christian teacher to death after accusing her of desecrating the Koran (*Berean Call*, March 30). On March 26 an Ethiopian preacher named Tedase, who was sharing the gospel on a public street, was murdered. He was walking in front of a Wahabbi Mosque in the town of Jimma when a group of Muslims confronted him, pulled him into the mosque, and savagely beat him to death (“Evangelist Beaten to Death,” *Christian Post*, March 30, 2007). There is speculation that the murder was an effort to scare Christians in the area who are in the midst of an evangelism campaign. International Christian Concern, a persecution watchdog organization, ranks Ethiopia 3rd in its “Hall of Shame” list of the world's top ten persecutors of Christians.

DOES THE CHRISTIAN MUSIC GENRE STILL EXIST?

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A recent conference on “Music and Media” at Biola University discussed “how Christian music fits in today's mainstream media” and posed the question, “Does the Christian music genre still exist?” Jay Swartzendruber, the editor of *CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) Magazine*, spoke with the attendees by teleconference and explained that he is changing the official name of the magazine because “the genre has disappeared” (“Does the Christian Music Genre Still Exist?” *Christian Post*, March 29, 2007). The focus of the discussion was on the “artists and bands that are unashamedly Christian” but are “SUBTLE ABOUT THEIR APPROACH TO LYRICS.” In other words, they do not plainly teach biblical truth in their music. The lyrics are vague, but this is nothing new. It has been a characteristic of Contemporary Christian Music since the 1980s. Writing in 1985 Ric Llewellyn observed: “Perhaps it is true that music is an art form. But as Christian musicians become more and more 'artistic' the lyrics of Contemporary Christian Music become more and more obscure until they retain virtually no substantial spiritual value. Lyrics become so allegorical that a truly spiritual lesson is imperceptible” (“Christian Rock?” *Foundation* magazine, Vol. VI, Issue 2, 1985). Stan Moser, one of the most influential producers of CCM until his retirement in 1995, testified: “But to be candid, I look at the majority of the music I hear today and think it's virtually meaningless” (Moser, “We Have Created a Monster,” *Christianity Today*, May 20, 1996 p. 27). God has not called His people to imitate the world and entertain the world with abstract lyrics; He has called them to be peculiar in their holiness and to preach the Gospel to every creature. The apostles did not hide the truth, nor did they instruct the early churches to do so. Paul said: “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12). When truth is presented vaguely, truth becomes vague. Beware of Contemporary Christian Music!

MISGUIDED CHRISTIAN APOLOGY TO THE ISRAELI KNESSET

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On March 28 some 200 Christian leaders issued an apology before the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem “to ask forgiveness for centuries of Christian anti-Semitism.” (Only three Knesset members were actually present.) The event was hosted by the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus (KCAC), which facilitates cooperation between Christian supporters of Israel and the Jewish state (“Christian Leaders to Knesset,” *Israeli Insider*, March 29, 2007). The apology said, in part, “On behalf of millions of Christians who love Israel and pray for her, we would like to repent before you for crimes committed against the Jewish people throughout history in the name of 'Christianity.' We have sinned against God and against you. ... May God grant you the ability to forgive us and may we be brothers and sisters again.” The misguided statement implied that crimes against the Jewish people were committed by Christians in general and that Christians in general therefore need to apologize, but in fact they were not committed by true Christians at all but by apostate “Christians,” particularly Roman Catholic. Let the Pope go to Jerusalem and plainly apologize for what his “church” did to the Jews. Furthermore, born again Christians and unregenerate Jews who have rejected Jesus the Messiah are not “brothers and sisters.” Jesus said to the Jewish leaders of old, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...” (John 8:44).



It is impossible to repent for others, especially if they are unrepentant for themselves. Bible believing Christians have never used the sword against Jews or anyone else, though Rome often has.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMERCIALISM

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William Newell, in his commentary on the book of Revelation in about 1935, listed the following characteristics of modern Commercialism, particularly world commerce: “First, it enables man to avoid as far as possible God's command to till the earth and to live by the sweat of his brow. Second, it tends to unify the humanity that God has definitely divided into nations, for the very purpose of covering the earth with the spirit of self-confidence and rebellion as before Babel (Gen. 11). Third, it enables individuals, cities and nations to become unduly swollen with riches. It begets universal covetousness, which is idolatry--in that the man who has money, can be independent of God. Fourth, it is contrary to God's will that each man live beneath 'his own vine and fig-tree,' content with such things as he has. 'Big business' is an abomination. It will be the ruination of the world. We scarcely know how far we have drifted. Our forefathers were content with their living. They had domestic ties, 'family reunions,' quiet church affiliations, gladly worshipping in the same old church, generation after generation. They had deep, kind, loving patriotism. But the



forgetting of God is fast falling upon earth under the soul-stifling power of universal greed. Everybody wants to be rich--which damns its tens of millions! 'Get up in the world.' 'Get on in the world!' What lies! what will-o'-the-wisps of Satan to be followed by folks whose feet shall shortly stumble into open graves! Fifth, it is an excuse most common in the thoughts of men for not serving God (and yet shortly they will stand before God!). Millions of men really think that 'business' has a real claim upon them. Sixth, it is atheistic; it is self-indulgent; it is self-confident. Seventh, it is fast blotting out real human ties (home, church or country). The difficulties experienced by God's dear saints of all days on account of 'business' claims are proverbial. The spirit of commercialism has seized upon the human race. Eighth, it brings spiritual deadness and insensibility as nothing else does. Once consent in your heart that 'business' has a claim upon you and your spiritual life begins to shrivel. For a man to do an honest day's work is not to yield to the claims that 'business' makes upon humanity. God told us to work, to work with our hands, to do with our might what our hands find to do, to do the humblest tasks, even those of a slave, as unto the Lord. The thing called 'business' has to be discerned distinctly by you if you are to understand the hideousness into which the whole world will leap, and alas, how shortly!"

BUT I AM NOT CONVICTED ABOUT MODEST DRESS

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The following is excerpted from the book *The Fall and Rise of Christian Standards* by David Kidd (Xulonpress.com or 866-909-2665): "It may sound spiritual to say, 'God is not leading me to change the way I dress. As soon as I am convicted about it, I will change.' But when we look at ourselves in the mirror, and see upon our body the styles that are peculiar to the world's standards and which cannot be scripturally defended, nor in any way serve to announce Christ as Lord of our life, neither does it distinguish us from an unregenerate world, then pick up our Bible and read, 'And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed...' (Rom. 12:2), upon what logical, biblical reasoning can we say, 'OK God, I understand what your Word says, now if you will convict me about my dress, I'll know that you really mean for me to change'? ... Relying upon a feeling of conviction as a prerequisite for obedience to what the scripture teaches is not only an evasion of responsibility, but a reversal of divine order. Obedience is not the result of conviction. Conviction is the product of obedience" (David Kidd, *The Fall and Rise of Christian Standards*, pp. 66, 67).

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.