

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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HOMOSEXUAL WINS DISCRIMINATION CLAIM AGAINST THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

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In a landmark case, a homosexual man has won a job discrimination claim against the Church of England. After John Reaney was turned down for a youth worker's post in Cardiff, Wales, he complained to the government that he was being unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of his sexual orientation contrary to a new law. The employment tribunal has agreed and will next set the amount of monetary compensation that the Church of England must pay. Homosexual activists rejoiced at the ruling. One said that the "church must learn that denying people jobs on the ground of their sexuality is no longer acceptable" ("Gay Christian Wins Job Tribunal against Church of England," *Daily Mail*, July 18, 2007). Reaney had the backing of Stonewall, an influential homosexual rights organization. This shows the danger of the Hate Crimes legislation that is currently moving through the U.S. Congress. Homosexual activists will not be content until they shut down every church that opposes their agenda.



HEAD OF ANGLICAN CHURCH IN IRELAND SAYS DIVISION IS GREATER SIN THAN HERESY

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Alan Harper, Archbishop of Armagh and "Primate of All Ireland," recently said that "division is a greater sin even than heresy" (*Christian Post*, July 24, 2007).

This idea is based on a popular but bogus interpretation of John 17 and

a heretical doctrine of the church. The Anglican Church today is more akin to the harlot of Revelation 17 than to the biblical church of Jesus Christ. In the high priestly prayer of John 17 Jesus was not praying for the unity of professing Christians or of those in any one denomination; He was praying for the supernatural unity of all born again Christians, and that prayer was answered. Further, Christ was praying for those who keep the truth (John 17:6, 8, 14, 17, 19). He was praying for those who love and obey the Word of God and keep its sound doctrine. This is certainly not a prayer that envisions the Church of England with its multitudes of unregenerate members, rampant sin, theological modernism, and loads of heresies.



NUMBER OF ORDAINED WOMEN IN BAPTIST CHURCHES INCREASES

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According to a new report the number of ordained women among Baptist churches in the United States has increased 20% since 2005. There are now 607 women serving as pastors, co-pastors, interim pastors, and church planters in the American Baptist Convention, the Alliance of Baptists, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and other groups. This is according to a report entitled “State of Women in Baptist Life” issued by Baptist Women in Ministry. “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:12).

NO PREACHING AT SOUTHERN GOSPEL FESTIVAL

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The annual three-day Songfest, in Jackson, Tennessee, which draws thousands of southern gospel listeners, features 20 music groups and a comedian but no preaching. Event sponsor Frank Arnold said, “There is no preaching at Songfest. We just let the songs carry the message, and people listen to it. And that's what keeps us going. ... The majority of the artists are age 40 or younger, singing positive music” (“Thousands to Hear Southern Gospel Music,” *Christian Post*, July 19, 2007). One of the hallmarks of the Contemporary Christian Music philosophy is a rejection of biblical preaching that is characterized by reproof and rebuke (2 Timothy 4:2), and this has bled over into contemporary Southern gospel circles. It is music that entertains rather than convicts, that creates a smile rather than repentance. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:2-3).



CHINA EXPELLING MISSIONARIES



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The following is excerpted from “China Sweeping Christians Out,” *WorldNetDaily*, July 14: “More than 100 foreign Christians in China have been accused of being involved in illegal activities and have been expelled in just a 90-day period, the biggest assault on the presence of Christianity in China since 1954, according to a new report from the Voice of the Martyrs. Most of those who have been expelled are from the United States, South Korea, Singapore, Canada, Australia or Israel, and had been working in or visiting Xinjiang, Beijing, Tibet and Shandong, according to the VOM report. A Christian who had worked in Xinjiang for 10 years told a VOM source that more than 60 foreign religious workers, many who had served people

in the area for more than 15 years, were expelled from Zinjiang alone. As WND reported a week earlier, officials also are reporting an increase in arrests of Chinese house-church pastors and leaders, who have been accused of being 'suspects using evil cults to obstruct the enforcement of the law.' VOM reported that the campaign against Christians is called Typhoon No. 5, and 'is part of the Chinese government's efforts to prevent foreign Christians from engaging in mission activities before the Beijing Olympics in 2008.' ... 'This is the largest expulsion of foreign missionaries since 1954 when the Chinese Communist government expelled all foreign religious workers after taking power in 1949,' reported a VOM source. 'At least five different mission agencies and sources within the Chinese government report that in February, the government launched a massive expulsion campaign against foreign Christians. In spite of the public face of religious freedom the Chinese government tries to convey through its state run system, the arrests of Chinese Christians, and now the expulsion of active Christian visitors is a demonstration of their true nature,' said Tom White, executive director for Voice of the Martyrs.”

MUSIC EXPERT DEBUNKS MYTH THAT WESLEYS USED DRINKING SONGS

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The following is excerpted from the United Methodist News Service, August 13, 2002: “An oft-heard myth about the Methodist tradition is that founders John and Charles Wesley used drinking and tavern songs as the melodies for hymns. 'The Wesleys did no such thing,' says Dean McIntyre, director of music resources at the United Methodist Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tenn. 'Given their aesthetic and theological sense, it would (have been) unthinkable for them to do so.' ... McIntyre decided to set the record straight after returning from this summer's jurisdictional and chapter convocations of the Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts. At each event, someone referred to the 'long-held and oft-repeated untruth that John and Charles Wesley made use of tavern or drinking songs as tunes for their texts,' he says. He adds that some people have used the myth as an excuse for importing secular influences into worship. McIntyre says the legend began when a seminary or music student became confused over the musical term 'bar tune' or 'bar form'--a medieval pattern for poetry consisting of three or more stanzas--which became the pattern for songwriting. Someone with no knowledge of medieval poetry heard 'bar form' in connection with John Wesley, and the songs became tavern songs, he says. ... 'In no hymn book or other publication of the Wesleys can there be found any example of or encouragement to use drinking songs to sing hymns,' he says. ... 'Rather, the issue is why Wesley did not use them.' Noting that Wesley found drinking songs unacceptable, he asks if worshippers today should use music from the local bar for worship. 'If Wesley's reasoning for the Methodists of his time remains valid for our own, then the answer is no.' He suggests that those who 'justify' the use of secular culture and influences in United Methodist worship by repeating the Wesley legend 'should be called to account.’”



FARRAKHAN SAYS HE BELIEVES BOTH THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN

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Former Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, speaking at a Catholic church in Chicago, said he believes both the Bible and the Quran. Appearing at the St. Sabina Catholic Church on May 25, Farrakhan preached from the Bible and said: "I hate the division ... between people who believe in God. I love the Bible, I love the Quran and I don't know how I can come in a Christian church with a Christian pastor and not speak from the book that Christians believe in, because I believe in it as well" ("Former Nation of Islam Leader Speaks," Associated Press, May 28, 2007). In fact, Farrakhan believes neither the Bible nor the Quran. Following is an overview of his strange beliefs: "The Nation of Islam, which has mosques or temples in 120 American cities, was founded in Detroit by Wallace D. Fard in 1930. Farrakhan became its leader in 1975 upon the death of Elijah Muhammad, the man followers believed to have been the most recent 'messenger from Allah.' In the 1960s the movement came to public attention through the conversion of the world heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay (who consequently changed his name to Muhammad Ali) and the assassination in Harlem of its spokesman, Malcolm X. ...

Farrakhan's speeches, published in a volume titled *Back Where We Belong*, are an alarming mix of bogus scholarship, black racism and Islamic fundamentalism. He teaches that the white race was created six thousand years ago by a black scientist called Yakub in order to test the mettle of the black race. The white race won, and ever since then the black race has been in bondage. The time has come, Farrakhan says, for blacks to escape from captivity and become the master race again. The Jews, the World Bank and the Club of Rome are among the enemies he singles out" (Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, 1995 ed., pp. 199-202).



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.