

# Friday Church News Notes

## Texas Baptists Appoint Former SBC Female Missionary As President

**Friday Church News Notes, November 9, 2007, [www.wayofflife.org](http://www.wayofflife.org)**

On October 29 the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) showed its liberal colors by electing a woman as president in open defiance of God's Word. The other state convention in Texas is the Southern Baptists of Texas, which was formed in 1998 and is more conservative than the BGCT, but there are clear links to the Southern Baptist Convention from the BGCT. The new president, Joy Fenner, served as a missionary with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board for 13 years and was a leader in the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) of Texas from 1981 to 2001 ("Texas Baptists Name First Woman President," *Christian Post*, Oct. 30, 2007). The WMU is an arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, which is an unholy mixture of New Evangelicals, Modernists, Masons, and Worldly Rock & Rollers.

## FAMOUS ATHEIST PUBLISHES BOOK DESCRIBING HIS "CONVERSION"

The following is from "Former Atheist Darwinian Philosopher Explains His 'Conversion,'" Lifesite.net, Nov. 2, 2007: "Former Darwinian atheist philosopher Antony Flew has published a new book, 'There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind,' to explain his move from being one of the world's leading exponents of the pure materialist Darwinian philosophy to belief in the existence of a personal deity who created the universe. Flew, an Oxford educated philosopher described by some as 'legendary,' first announced his discovery of 'a god' in 2004. Flew had been one of the 20th century's leading proponents of the pure atheistic Darwinian doctrines that categorically reject any possibility of a creative divine being. His ideas paved the way for thinkers such as Richard Dawkins, the UK's most virulent opponent of religious belief. ... 'It was empirical evidence,' he told an interviewer, 'the evidence uncovered by the sciences. But it was a philosophical inference drawn from the evidence.' Flew told Dr. Benjamin Wiker that two factors in particular 'were decisive.' 'One was my growing empathy with the insight of Einstein and other noted scientists that there had to be an Intelligence behind the integrated complexity of the physical Universe. The second was my own insight that the integrated complexity of life itself--which is far more complex than the physical Universe--can only be explained in terms of an Intelligent Source.' ... He told Wiker, 'I believe that the origin of life and reproduction simply cannot be explained from a biological standpoint despite numerous efforts to do so. With every passing year, the more that was discovered about the richness and inherent intelligence of life, the less it seemed likely that a chemical soup could magically generate the genetic code.' ... Emphasizing that he remains a Deist, not a Christian, he told Wiker that he does not 'accept any claim of divine revelation' but is continuing to study them, particularly those of Christianity."

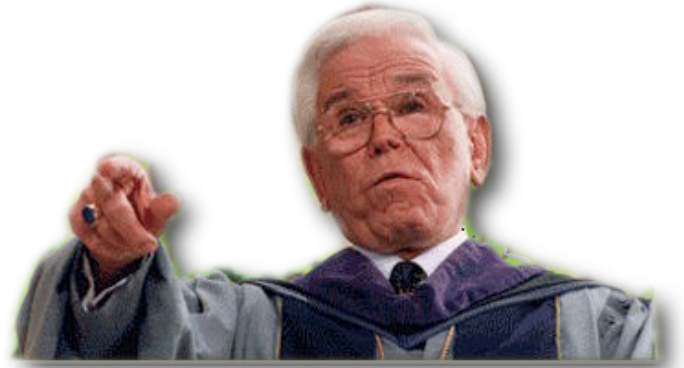


## FINNISH PASTOR CHARGED WITH CRIMINAL DISCRIMINATION

A Lutheran pastor in Finland has been charged with criminal discrimination for refusing to work with a female pastor and the court date is set for November 16. Ari Norro was scheduled to preach at a church in southern Finland in March, but refused to participate in the service when a female minister showed up. The town's Church Council filed a request with the police to investigate the case and was subsequently charged by the district court. "Finland's laws prohibit any discrimination either in the workplace or in public based on race, language, age, family ties, health, religion, political orientation, work, sexual orientation, or gender" ("Pastor Charged," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 1, 2007). The Finnish state Lutheran church has been ordaining women since 1986, and in 2006 it ruled that male pastors do not have the right to refuse to work with female pastors.



# Robert Schuller and the New Age



The following is excerpted from "Rethinking Robert Schuller" by Warren Smith, *WorldNetDaily*, October 30, 2007: "As a former New Age follower, I could hardly believe it. On Oct. 17, 2004, more than 20 years after his first appearance on the *Hour of Power*, New Age leader Gerald Jampolsky was once again Robert Schuller's featured guest. ... I was very familiar with Gerald Jampolsky. When I was exploring New Age teachings, he was the first one to introduce me to the New Age Christ and to the New Age/New Gospel teachings of 'A Course in Miracles.' Widely reputed in New Age circles to be the closest thing to a New Age bible, 'A Course in Miracles' taught me that 'there is no sin,' 'a slain Christ has no meaning' and 'the recognition of God is the recognition of yourself.' On this *Hour of Power* program, Schuller praised Jampolsky and recommended all of his 'fabulous' books--in spite of the fact that every one of them was based on the New Age teachings of 'A Course in Miracles.' He also stated that Jampolsky's latest book, 'Forgiveness,' was available in the Crystal Cathedral bookstore. Amazingly, Schuller had begun the year as a featured speaker at the annual convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. He was now closing the year by featuring a prominent New Age leader as his special guest. As usual, no one in Christian leadership was holding him accountable, or even seemed to care. Over the years, Robert

Schuller had obviously done a good job of softening up the church. Schuller's latest move is to hold a 'Rethink Conference' at his Crystal Cathedral. With an unusual mix of Christian and non-Christian speakers, the conference will take place Jan. 17-19, 2008. He is co-hosting the conference with Emerging Church movement leader Erwin McManus. Schuller's 'rethink' website states the purpose of the conference: 'Our aim is to bring together a cross-section of the key leaders in today's culture so we can grapple with what's truly happening in our world.' ... While Rick Warren has tried desperately to deny his spiritual ties to Schuller, his wife's presence at the conference speaks volumes. ... Meanwhile, Lee Strobel, a former Saddleback pastor, makes no apologies for aligning himself with New Age sympathizer Robert Schuller. ... From my perspective as a former New Age follower, I believe that Robert Schuller's mission has always been to 'rethink' and 'change' biblical Christianity into something 'new'--as in New Age/New Spirituality. ... There is a reason Gerald Jampolsky and so many other New Age leaders go out of their way to praise Schuller. They know that Robert Schuller has always been open to spiritual compromise."



Jampolsky

## THREE ANGLICAN PARISHES TRYING TO JOIN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

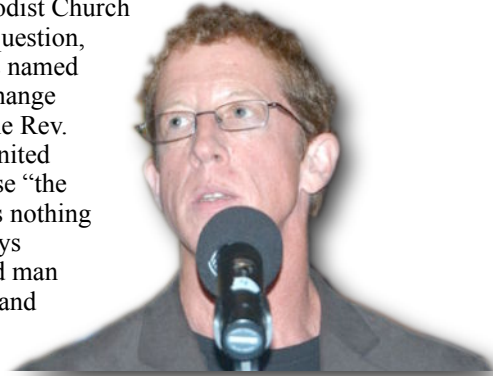
The Traditional Anglican Communion has petitioned to join the Roman Catholic Church (Catholic News Agency, Oct. 26, 2007). The TAC is an umbrella organization for Anglican parishes in Ireland and elsewhere that have refused to follow the more liberal direction of the Anglican Church at large. It claims to have 400,000 members. A statement issued by the TAC said that "the bishops and vicars-general unanimously agreed to the text of a letter to the See of Rome seeking full, corporate, sacramental union." This is not a surprising move, as the Anglican Church today is not far removed from Rome.



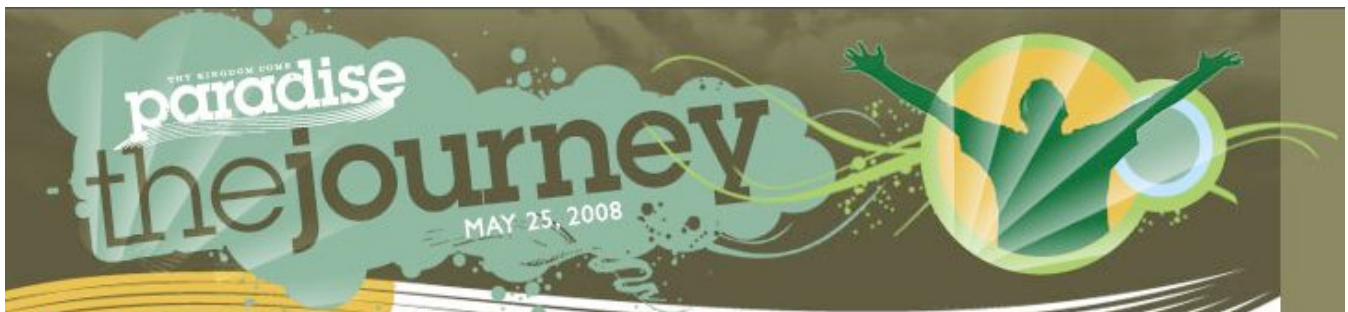


## METHODIST CHURCH ALLOWS TRANSGENDERED MINISTER TO KEEP JOB

The Judicial Council of the United Methodist Church recently voted to allow a “transgendered” man/woman to keep his/her job as pastor of St. John’s United Methodist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. The pastor in question, the “Rev.” Drew Phoenix, was previous named Ann Gordon before undergoing a sex change operation and hormone therapy. Now the Rev. Ann is the Rev. Drew, and the liberal United Methodist Church is fine with it, because “the denomination’s Book of Discipline says nothing about transgender clergy.” The Bible says something about it, though. God created man male and female, and sexual confusion and crossover is the product of a reprobate mind (Romans 1:26-28).



## Paradise Gathering Another Ecumenical Rock and Roll Fest



In June I became aware of the Paradise Gathering when a pastor friend received an announcement of it in the mail and informed me of it. The Paradise Gathering is a youth “awakening” that is scheduled to congregate on a one-mile square field in Paradise, Kansas, on May 25, 2008. The objective is to spur a spiritual awakening in America and to “accelerate Christ’s kingdom purposes” through a massive gathering of young people aged 15 to 22 to pray and worship by means of loud contemporary music and Scripture verses displayed on jumbotrons (with no stage or live music). Though thousands are expected to participate, many important things about the Paradise Gathering are vague in the extreme. It is allegedly the outgrowth of a “vision” by an experienced youth worker, and 18 collaborators, but at first none of their names were given nor was their denominational affiliation revealed, except to say that they “include most of the major streams of the church.” Now we have learned that the “youth worker” is

Richard Ross, a professor of student ministries at the Southern Baptist affiliated Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Paradise Gathering has no doctrinal statement and there is no warning about the apostasy, carnality, and worldliness that is rampant in “youth ministries” today. More than 80 Christian leaders have signed on as “advocates” of the organization’s objective. These include representatives of radically ecumenical organizations such as Youth for Christ (which often works hand-in-hand with the Roman Catholic Church), Youth With A Mission (which also works closely with Roman Catholics), Episcopalian, Nazarene, Assemblies of God, Saddleback Church, and Willow Creek. Pentecostal denominations and organizations are represented, including Assemblies of God and Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee. There are female church leaders such as Virginia Ward, associate pastor of Abundant Life Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And

PARADISE, Continued from previous page.... many Southern Baptists in addition to Ross have signed on with this unscriptural hodgepodge, including Merrie Johnson (Baptist State Convention of NC), Kelly Davis (International Mission Board), Joe Ball (Kentucky Baptist Convention), Terry McIlvain (Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists), Scott Stevens and Paul Turner (LifeWay Christian Resources), Allen Jackson (New Orleans Seminary), Joe Bailey and Norm Flowers (North American Mission Board), Doug Fields (Saddleback Church), and Steve Rohrlack (South Carolina Baptist Convention). The Paradise Gathering's ecumenical philosophy is evident on its website. It says, for example, that "Christ commands oneness in the church and grieves when it is not present." This idea is based on a popular but bogus interpretation of John 17 and a heretical doctrine of the church. Most of the various denominations today are 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 all professing Christians; He was praying for the supernatural unity of all born again Christians, and that prayer was answered and accomplished. 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 modern evangelical-charismatic crowd that downplays and ignores doctrine for the sake of a broad "unity," nor does it envision an interdenominational unity of any sort.

## 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.