

Friday Church News Notes

Baptists Continue Dialogue with Rome

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The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) continued its dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church with a second round of talks at the Vatican this month. The plan is to “examine” issues such as Scripture and tradition, baptism and the sacraments, the role of Mary, and the primacy of the pope. Pope Benedict XVI told the Baptist representatives that “the lack of unity between Christians openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and harms the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature” (“Pope calls Catholics and Baptists to Common Witness,” Dec. 7,

2007, Catholic News Agency). To the contrary, Christ did not pray for any sort of unity between truth and error. His prayer in John 17 was a prayer for God’s blessing on those who keep God’s Word, so it applies neither to the BWA nor to the apostate Roman Catholic Church. “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ... For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:6, 8, 17). Christ exhorted His people to

“beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). The believer is obligated to preach God’s Word, not dialogue with error.



POPE OFFERS INDULGENCES TO SHORTEN PURGATORY

Pope Benedict XVI is offering plenary indulgences to those who make a pilgrimage to the Mary shrine in Lourdes, France, sometime during the next year (“Trips to Lourdes to cut time spent in purgatory,” *London Telegraph*, Dec. 7, 2007). The indulgence allegedly cuts down on the time that a Roman Catholic has to spend in purgatory being purged of his sins and the deal is available until December 8, 2008. The heresies involved in this one act are manifold. There is the heresy that the pope has the authority to grant forgiveness of sins, the heresy of praying to Mary, and the heresy of purgatory, to mention three. The true place of purgation was the cross of Christ. There He made atonement and propitiation for man’s sins, and those who believe on him are justified freely and His righteousness applied to their accounts. Those who believe in a Catholic purgatory do not believe in the perfect sufficiency of Christ’s atonement and believe, rather, in a false grace-works gospel. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

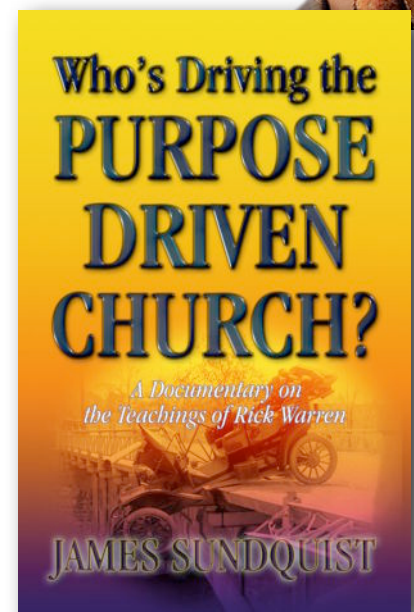
Book Recommended by Rick Warren Calls Purpose Driven Opponents “Leaders from Hell”

Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change, a book by Dan Southerland and highly recommended by Rick Warren, calls those who oppose the Purpose Driven philosophy “leaders from hell.” Southerland is “the leading expert on implementing the Purpose Driven paradigm in existing churches” (Church Transitions web site), and Warren sells Southerland’s book at his web site. Southerland says they have experienced two major sources of criticism as they have transitioned churches to the Purpose Driven model: Christians from traditional backgrounds and traditional pastors. He hastens to add that not all of the traditionals oppose them, “just the meaner ones” (p. 116). On page 115 he likens Purpose Driven opponents to Sanballat who resisted the building of the walls of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah. Southerland says, “Sanballat is a leader from hell. We all have some

Continued, page 2

Southern Baptist Pastors Not Interested in Rick Warren's Heresies or Victims

The following is excerpted from "SBC President Not Interested in the Victims of Purpose Driven," Nov. 19, 2007, Christian Research Net: "James Sundquist, author of *Who's Driving The Purpose Driven Church* has been sounding the alarm regarding the false teachings of Rick Warren and the victims of division The Purpose Driven Church program creates. Sundquist sent an open letter to Dr. Frank Page, President of the SBC, regarding these concerns. The letter went to several hundred SBC pastors and leaders. Consider an excerpt: 'Your own church conducts Rick Warren's teachings and programs. So you should already know that Rick Warren has trained 400,000 pastors worldwide how to get rid of what he calls *resisters*, which I have documented below and in both of my books on Rick Warren and is well known, thanks to several other books and discernment ministries around the world who have exposed him. Even some secular media such as the *Wall Street Journal* has rightfully sounded the alarm about Rick Warren. And it is the Southern Baptist Convention that is leading the pack in dismembering churches and destroying the brethren, thanks to Rick Warren. So your call for unity is the height of contradiction. If you are really interested in transmitting any credibility to your statements, you could begin by marking Rick Warren as a false teacher, renouncing the Personality Temperament Profiling divination you have promoted, reach out to all of the SBC members throughout the U.S, ask for their forgiveness for those who have been purpose-driven from their churches, offer restitution for their losses.' A follow up email exchange between Sundquist and Dr. Frank Page resulted in Dr. Page's request: 'Please do not send any more of your material to my staff or to me.' Sundquist replied in conclusion: 'Not one single SBC pastor responded with even an iota of concern for the SOS calls and emails I received from all over the world from Purpose Driven victims. Not one single SBC pastor responded with any concerns about Rick Warren's false teachings. However, a host of them asked to be removed from my mailing list and a few dozen actually retaliated, too, but NONE could refute my facts, and only one tried to reason from Scripture by saying that I was sowing discord among the brethren which the Lord hates. But I am just the messenger. It is Rick Warren who has sown discord among the brethren by attacking them as resisters and removing them from church after church through his training...a true devourer of the Lord's sheep! And of course, NONE of them repented!'"



Leaders from Hell, continued...

Sanballats in our churches. This is the guy who opposes whatever you propose. ... You cannot call this guy a leader from hell to his face--but you could call him Sanballat" (p. 115). In reality, Sanballat was an unsaved opponent of God's Word, God's work, and God's people. To liken Bible-believing Christians who love the Lord Jesus Christ and who are trying to stand for His Word in this apostate age to Sanballat is a vicious slander, and Rick Warren is guilty of recommending this slander. Isn't it interesting that about the only time that the Warren crowd talks about hell is when they mis-apply it to fundamentalists and evangelicals of a stricter stripe! It is a sad fact that Southerland has trained 100,000 people in the transitioning principles in the last seven years, but it is a sign of the times. "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; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

left, Dan Southerland

Grapes & Giants



The following is by Missionary Buddy Smith of Malanda, Queensland, Australia <smiletex@bigpond.net.au>:

“We have been reminded again just recently that grapes and giants are most often found in close proximity. They just seem to go together. When the spies brought back from Canaan a great cluster of grapes, they also brought back reports of giants living in walled cities. In fact, the Bible dictionary I use indicates that the grapes came from the very location, Hebron, where the giants lived. I must confess that I would rather it were not so. My flesh is a lover of grapes, but has no affinity for giants. I would like for them to be found far apart so that I could rest in peace under the shadow of the grapevine and eat to excess the grapes of Eshcol, all the while avoiding all contact with the giants. The apostle wrote to the Corinthian church this very truth when he penned the words, ‘There is a great door and effectual opened to me, AND there are many adversaries. (16:9). Great door, many adversaries! Opportunities and Opposition, Doors and Difficulties, Blessings and Burdens, Grapes and Giants! This is God’s plan for His servants. The very fact that they are found together teaches us to be optimistically realistic and realistically optimistic. If there are giants who are harassing you at this moment, then there must be large clusters of grapes nearby! It is God’s way to plant them in close proximity. If there are grapes growing in abundance in your life, then you must be ever so watchful for giants! And just here you will see one of those Bible portraits of the servants of Christ. In one of his

hands is a cluster of the very largest, lushest grapes, sweet and rich, blest of God. And in the other hand he holds a sharp sword, with which he fights off the giants. While he tastes the sweetness of God’s richest blessings, his eye is sharp and his arm is strong and he holds the Sword of the Spirit, because the giants, the enemies or God, are ever near. We have been enjoying many wonderful grapes of blessing in the church planting work here, and there are also giants. Over the past few months our church has been under severe attack from many quarters. False accusations, slander, threats of lawsuits, unrest in the homes of our members, dissatisfaction on the part of some, and a thousand other difficulties have come our way. These are our giants.”



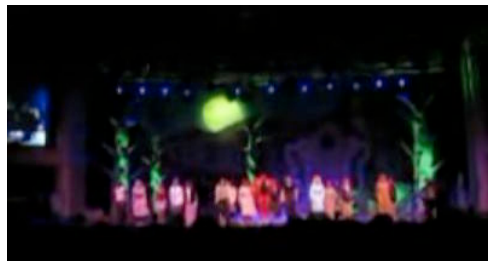
LOVE THAT CAN HATE

The following is excerpted from a message entitled "Love that Can Hate" by Alexander MacClaren (1826-1910) -- "It needs ever to be insisted upon, and never more than in this day of spurious charity and unprincipled toleration, that a healthy hatred of moral evil and of sin, wherever found and however garbed, ought to be the continual accompaniment of all vigorous and manly cleaving to that which is good. Unless we shudderingly recoil from contact with the bad in our own lives, and refuse to christen it with deceptive euphemisms when we meet it in social and civil life, we shall but feebly grasp, and slackly hold, that which is good. Such energy of moral recoil from evil is perfectly consistent with honest love, for it is things, not men, that we are to hate; and it is needful as the completion and guardian of love itself. There is always danger that love shall weaken the condemnation of wrong, and modern liberality, both in the field of opinion and in regard to practical life, has so far condoned evil as largely to have lost its hold upon good." "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:128).



CHURCH FEATURES MICHAEL JACKSON THRILLER DANCE

The following is from *Slice of Laodicea*, Nov, 16, 2007: "In an apparent wave of nostalgia for sin from the 80's, the Free Chapel in Gainseville, Georgia staged a Michael Jackson Thriller dance for worshipers on a Sunday morning a few weeks ago. Yes, evangelicals have come a long way from singing 'The God of Abraham Praise' in worship on Sunday morning. If the, um, pastor is looking for musical suggestions, perhaps Highway to Hell by AC/DC or even Hells Bells might make a good offertory. For the anthem, maybe Woman in Black, and as a closing hymn, Losing My Religion would round things off rather well. The entire scene reminds me of a haunted house--the house of God turned into a haunted house. This is the logical end of man-centered churches and anthropology posing as theology."



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.