

# Friday Church News Notes

## Emerging Church Leaders Reject the Rapture

Friday Church News Notes, February 15, 2008, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

The emerging church rejects dispensational theology, confusing the church with Israel, interpreting prophecy allegorically, and getting its commission from Genesis 1 and Isaiah 2:4 and Matthew 5-7 instead of Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8. The emerging church considers the Rapture doctrine to be dangerous because it interferes with their “kingdom building” and environmental activities. In an interview with *Time* magazine, N.T. Wright says: “If there’s going to be an Armageddon, and we’ll all be in heaven already or raptured up just in time, it really doesn’t matter if you have acid rain or greenhouse gases prior to that. Or, for that matter, whether you bombed civilians in Iraq. All that really matters is saving souls for that disembodied heaven” (“Christians Wrong about Heaven, Says Bishop,” *Time*, Feb. 7, 2008). Brian McClaren mocks the “fundamentalist expectations” of a literal second coming of Christ with its attendant judgments on the world (*A Generous Orthodoxy*, p. 305). Jonny Baker of Grace Church in London, England, ridicules dispensationalism as

“escapology theology” (*Emerging Churches*, pp. 78, 79). Tony Campolo says: “... the ‘Left Behind’ books are false theology and unbiblical to the core. I mean all of this stuff comes out of not only fundamentalism. It comes out of dispensationalism, which is a weird little form of fundamentalism that started like a hundred fifty years ago. ... That whole sense of the rapture, which may occur at any moment, is used as a device to oppose engagement with the principalities, the powers, the political and economic structures of our age” (“Opposition to women preachers evidence of demonic influence,” Baptist Press, June 27, 2003). The early Christians interpreted prophecy literally and were looking for a literal millennial kingdom and a literal fulfillment of God’s covenants with Israel (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 11:25-27). It was not until centuries later that the heresies of amillennialism and allegoricalism arose. William Newell observed: “The early Church for 300 years looked for the imminent return of our Lord to reign, and they were right” (Newell, *Revelation*). (See the *Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies* course on “Understanding Bible Prophecy” for more on this subject.)



Jonny Baker

## ANGLICAN BISHOP SAYS CHRISTIANS DON’T GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE

N.T. Wright, Anglican bishop of Durham, says that Christians do not go to heaven when they die and but are asleep in God and inactive. In an interview with *Time* magazine he said: “In the Bible we are told that you die, and enter an intermediate state. St. Paul is very clear that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead already, but that nobody else has yet. ... At no point do the resurrection narratives in the four Gospels say, ‘Jesus has been raised, therefore we are all going to heaven.’ ... the period after death is a period when we are in God’s presence but not active in our own bodies” (“Christians Wrong about Heaven, Says Bishop,” *Time*, Feb. 7, 2008). In fact, the Bible says the believer’s conversation or citizenship is in heaven (Philippians

3:20). Paul said that death is to “depart and be with Christ” (Phil. 1:23) and “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8), and he was not talking about sleeping. In Revelation 5 we see the souls of the martyrs worshipping in heaven before the throne of God and wearing white robes (Revelation 5:9-11). James says it is the body that sleeps at death, while the spirit departs (James 2:26). After their decease, Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and conversed with Him (Matthew 17:3). We don’t know what type of body the saints have in the intermediate stage, but it is some kind of body (though not the final resurrection body) and they are not sleeping in any sense. N.T. Wright is supposed to be an evangelical, but he

is sitting in the seat of the one of the most notorious liberals of all time. David Jenkins, former bishop of Durham, denied practically every tenet of the Christian faith, including Christ’s virgin birth. Jenkins said that Christians “don’t have to believe in miracles to believe in God” and he described the resurrection as “a conjuring trick with bones.” Two days after Jenkins’ installation as bishop lightning hit his cathedral and set it afire.



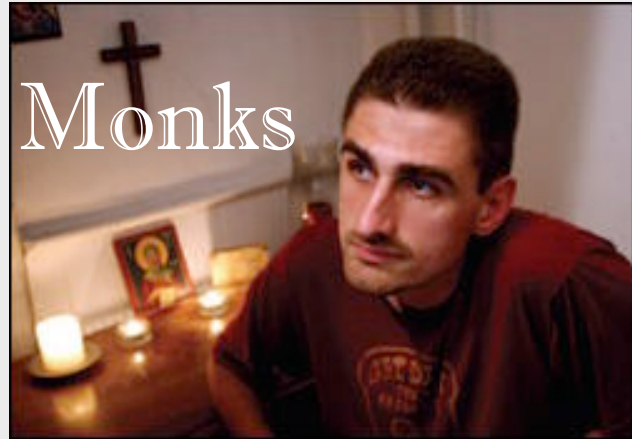
## HIGHLAND PARK BAPTIST CHURCH, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, JOINS SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

I attended Highland Park Baptist Church for three and a half years as a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s, and though we do not find the following report surprising, we do find it very sad. This is excerpted from "The Rise and Fall of Highland Park Baptist Church" by Don Boys, *Preacher Helps* #96, 2008: "Dr. Lee Roberson was called to be pastor of Highland Park Baptist in November of 1942 and under his leadership it reached a high attendance of 10,000. Dr. Roberson died April of 2007 at age 97. The church, having been weak and in declining health for a few years, is on life support as of 2008. There are charges that the pastor, Dr. David Bouler, is slowly killing the church. His decision last year for HPBC to join the Southern Baptist Convention is thought to be a potential deathblow. According to my informant at the Tennessee Baptist Convention, HPBC is now supporting the SBC Cooperative Program! ... On Jan. 15, my birthday, I received information from the Tennessee Temple University alumni association with a shocking but not totally unexpected announcement. In the information was an unobtrusive paragraph announcing, 'At the recent Tennessee Baptist State Convention, Highland Park Baptist Church was accepted as an affiliate church of the Tennessee Baptist "Convention.'" ... Dr. Vines said, 'I believe Tennessee Temple would be a valuable addition to the Southern Baptist educational "family.'" ... I called the SBC in Nashville and asked if HPBC was in fact, a member of the SBC. A kind lady told me they are. ... The school was founded in 1946 reaching 4,200 enrollment. Today, 425 students are enrolled! ... I knew there was a 'Back to Rome' movement but it seems there is a 'Back to Nashville' movement among Independent Baptists. However, I'm not going! I'd rather fight than switch. I must not be misunderstood. I do not consider SBC pastors (or laymen) my enemies. ... I would not be a member of a SBC church because, while they have made some progress in recent years, their schools are still corrupt. Their much touted missions program is incredibly impersonal with most SBC members knowing the name of one "missionary--Lottie Moon, a very committed, brilliant lady who died in 1912! ... Right in Chattanooga there is Central Baptist Church whose members babble in tongues, a problem rampant throughout the SBC churches across the nation. ... Furthermore, HPBC is now associated with a group that has refused to deal with the ecumenical evangelism of Billy Graham for 50 years. Now, they are refusing to deal with people like Rick Warren... I wrote Dr. Bouler on Feb. 7, 2006 an e-mail about TTU's plummeting into heresy by having a lecturer who believes that a person does not need to know Christ in order to get in Heaven! My biggest concern is with Dr. Dallas Willard. I addressed these concerns in an email to Dr. Danny Lovett and later sent a copy to you. I did not hear

from you or Danny but I did get two calls from [Vice President] Dr. Roger Stiles. His response was that Willard would be asked to avoid those controversial subjects, and I was assured that he had signed the TTU statement of faith. However, that is not impressive. It only shows how capable Willard is in running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. He can get along with anyone. A good friend of mine Clay Nuttall (D.Min) [Professor at Piedmont Baptist College] recently said: 'My premise is that to cover theological error is, in reality, to support that error. It is sinful to trample on Scripture and fully as wicked to cover up that error.' The usual response to something like this is to attack the person pointing out the error. We are often called 'haters,' 'divisive,' 'trouble-makers,' and worse. However, the New Testament is clear that we have a responsibility to stand for truth in love and against error. It is not love to defend error in order to declare truth. Paul commands us in Eph. 4:15: 'But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.' You can have truth without love but never love without truth. Love never withholds criticism of serious doctrinal error for the sake of unity. Paul told us in 2 Tim. 1:13: 'Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.' 1 Corinthians tells us that love 'rejoices in the "truth," therefore it will not tolerate doctrinal error.'



# Evangelical Monks



Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove in Rutba House's prayer space.

Catholic “contemplative spirituality” continues to make inroads into evangelicalism. A February 3 report in *The Boston Globe* entitled “The Unexpected Monks” documented the “new monasticism.” Evangelicals are visiting Catholic monasteries and nunneries to learn contemplative practices such as sitting in silence, meditation, centering prayer, and guided imagery, and they are forming monastic groups of their own. There is the Rutba House in Durham, North Carolina, and Dogwood Abbey in Winston-Salem. *The Boston Globe* says: “Some 100 groups that describe themselves as both evangelical and monastic have sprung up in North America, according to Rutba House’s Wilson-Hartgrove. Many have appeared within the past five years. Increasing numbers of evangelical congregations have struck up friendships with Catholic monasteries, sending church members to join the monks for spiritual retreats. St. John’s Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in Minnesota, now makes a point of including interested evangelicals in its summer

Monastic Institute. ‘I grew up in a tradition that believes Catholics are pagans,’ said [Zach] Roberts [of Dogwood Abbey], who was raised Southern Baptist and serves as a pastor in a Baptist church. ‘I never really understood that. Now I’d argue against that wholeheartedly.’ ... Father Jay Scott Newman, a priest in South Carolina, said that the New Monastic movement suggests a profound shift in evangelical identity. ‘Until very recently, an evangelical of whatever stripe included in his self-definition not just opposition to, but violent rejection of everything Catholic,’ he said. ‘That’s no longer true—that’s dramatic, revolutionary, and, I think, lasting.’” I also believe it this new-found friendship between evangelicals and Rome is a lasting phenomenon and it will eventually blossom into the religious harlot of Revelation 17. The Roman Catholic Church is as pagan as ever (see <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/in-the footsteps-bibletrans/Page-4.htm>). Rome hasn’t changed, but evangelicalism certainly has!

## SEPARATION AND CHILD TRAINING

The following is excerpted from *Training Your Children to Turn out Right*, an excellent book by David Sorenson (Northstar Ministries, 1820 W. Morgan St., Duluth, MN 55811, 218-726-0209, [www.northstarministries.com](http://www.northstarministries.com), [dhs.northstar@charter.net](mailto:dhs.northstar@charter.net)) -- “The closer the Christian family gets to the world, the greater the chances are of the world getting your children. You are playing with fire, and the worst losers will be your children. You see, the world is the devil’s system. It may be defined as the society and culture of the ungodly. ... Many Christian parents may claim to distance themselves from the world, but they still like to flirt with the things that are in the world. The things in the world are the bait that Satan uses to catch your children. Beware! ... For years, I dutifully accepted the principle of separation in a perfunctory fashion. I knew the Bible taught we were supposed to be holy. Growing up in a fundamental Baptist pastor’s home, I knew all of the standard ‘can’t do this and can’t do that’s, ‘cuz they’re worldly.’ However, little by little the Lord opened my eyes to the practicality and love of God in the principle of separation. When I became a parent, I became aware of a whole new spectrum—how practical the principle of separation was in rearing my children. ... In Deuteronomy 5:29 Jehovah God spoke directly through Moses to Israel. ‘O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!’ I began to understand that the principles and commandments in God’s Word for His people were not just arbitrary ‘Thou shalt not’s.’ They were for our good and particularly the good of our children” (*Training Your Children to Turn Out Right*, 1995, pp. 91, 94).

## 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.