

Friday Church News Notes

Southern Baptist Leader Admires the Pope

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Al Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a prominent example of the SBC's recent conservative renaissance, says evangelicals should admire the pope even while they disagree with his theology. The pope, we are told, should be admired for standing for theological absolutes in a relativistic world and for boldly promoting Catholic doctrine. Referring to the pope's statement last year that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true church, Mohler said: "Benedict was restating the tradition and teachings of his church--and he did so because he cared for those he believes are outside the blessings of grace he is certain are given to those in the communion of his church--and to that communion alone" ("Mohler: Pope Benedict's Convictions Underscore Catholic-Protestant Divide," Baptist Press, April 16, 2008). I would like to know how Mohler knows the motives of the pope's heart. Further, where does the Bible instruct us to praise a man who preaches a false gospel and who is therefore leading people to eternal hell? Paul didn't praise the Judaizers. He said they were under God's curse (Galatians 1:6-8). When Barjesus tried to turn men from the truth in Acts 13, Paul didn't say, "You know, I really admire Barjesus for standing up for his convictions, though I can't agree with him on doctrinal issues." Rather, he said, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10). When Peter warned about false teachers, he didn't mince words, nor did he spend any time at all admiring them. He called their heresies "damnable" and their ways "pernicious" and their words "feigned" (2 Peter 2:1-3). He likened them to "natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed" and called them "cursed children" (2 Peter 2:12, 14). The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest non-Catholic denomination in America (though its membership statistics wildly exaggerate the reality of active participation), and the vast percentage of its preachers are guilty of beating

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STUDY SHOWS THAT MORAL FILTH INCREASING ON TELEVISION



A new study by the Parents Television Council found that cable channels MTV and BET, which are popular with children and young people, are simply spewing out moral filth, including "sexually charged images, explicit language, portrayals of violence, drug use, and drug sales" ("Study Reveals shocking Content," Baptist Press, April 14, 2008). The study found that some shows have an instance of "offensive or adult content" every 38 seconds. Actually, if we were to measure it by a biblical standard, everything on MTV is offensive and immoral, starting with the immodest clothes that the actresses and dancers wear. God's definition of the wickedness of the world is "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16), and if that standard is applied to pop music and television programming, there is not much left. Yet studies have found that 70% of eight-year-old children in America have a television in their own rooms. There are few things that parents could do that would be more destructive to their children. I am convinced that the wise path is for Christian parents and grandparents to get rid of the television (at least for commercial programming and Hollywood movies). I have never met a Christian that regretted getting rid of the television, but I have met many who regretted keeping it. "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3).

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around the bush about spiritual matters. They aren't biblical prophets and do not boldly and without compromise preach the fear of the Lord and warn of sin and error in a plain manner. They therefore share much of the blame for making "Christian America" what it is today. If you don't believe this I challenge you to go to the heart of the South--to Birmingham, Alabama, or Atlanta, Georgia, or Nashville, Tennessee, or Charlotte, North Carolina, or Louisville, Kentucky--where there is a Southern Baptist congregation on nearly every corner, and examine the moral and spiritual condition of the people. Start by examining the condition of the average Southern Baptist church member, then you will understand what I am talking about. The wretched moral condition of America can be traced back to the great compromise in the pulpits, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is training men for those pulpits. Shame on Albert Mohler for his illegitimate regard for the pope of Rome.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY CONTINUES ITS LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE POPES

The American Bible Society has had a close relationship with the Roman Catholic Church for many decades and has repeatedly honored the popes. For Pope Benedict XVI's recent trip to America the ABS printed a special edition of the Gospel of Luke with a picture of the pope on the cover. Each person attending the papal masses received a copy. The ABS funded radio announcements welcoming the pope, and Paul Irwin, ABS president, attended a Catholic mass at Yankee Stadium marking the conclusion of the papal visit ("American Bible Society Welcomes Pope," Assist News Service, April 15, 2008). In 2002 ABS leaders were part of the delegation of Bible Society representatives that met Pope John Paul at the Vatican. The pope

commended them for their ecumenical approach to Bible translation (*Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Record*, Jan.-Mar. 2003). In 1995 the ABS printed a papal edition of the Gospel of John for Pope John Paul II's visit to the States. In 1985 ABS representatives were among those who presented the pope with a new "interconfessional" Italian Bible during a papal audience at the Vatican. Laton Holmgren told the pope, "For the first time in four centuries the Bible is a bond of unity rather than a source of division" In 1975 the United Bible Societies (of which the ABS is a member and to which it contributes almost half the funding) prepared a special edition of the Epistle of James for Pope Paul VI to distribute during his personal

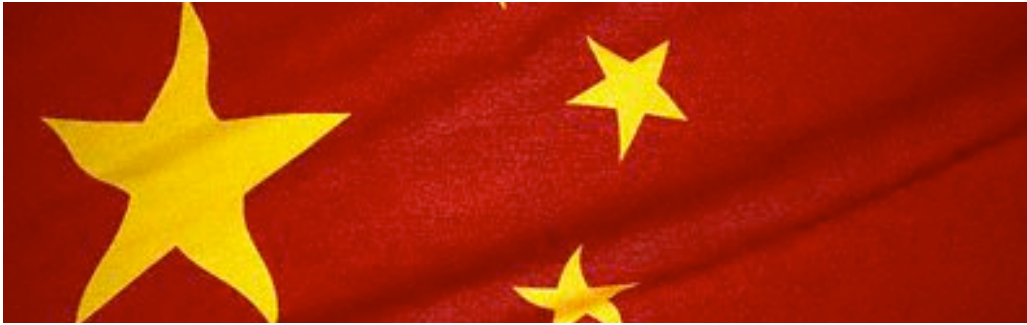
audiences (*TBS Quarterly Record*, Jul.-Sep. 1978). In 1966 the Today's English Version, which is owned by the American Bible Society, was officially approved by the Roman Catholic Church. It is plain that the American Bible Society is fully committed to an unholy ecumenism. It matters not that the Roman Catholic Church preaches a false gospel that leads multitudes to Hell. It matters not that it is filled with all sorts of doctrinal heresies. The ABS intends to "serve all churches" no matter what the Bible says! "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

Bruce Metzger with Pope John Paul II. Metzger was associated with the American Bible Society for more than 50 years and was a Trustee Emeritus at his death last year.



An audience with Pope John Paul II

PERSECUTION INCREASING IN COMMUNIST CHINA



The following is excerpted from “China Ratchets up Christian Persecution,” WorldNetDaily, April 10, 2008: “A Chinese man has been taken into custody and faces a possible sentence of death for charges alleging ‘subversion of the national government and endangering national security.’ But several Christian organizations that monitor human rights activities in China say Alimujiang Yimiti could face the penalty simply because he is a Christian. ... ‘In the months now leading up to the Olympic Games, we actually see things getting worse,’ said Todd Nettleton, a spokesman for Voice of the Martyrs. ‘There are more raids, foreign Christians are not having their visas renewed and are being forced to leave the country. There are numerous circumstances where the churches are under attack by the government.’ ... ‘Christians who refuse to come under the communist control are subject to arrest, imprisonment, harassment by the police at any time,’ Nettleton said. ‘There are places where Christians are facing very serious

persecution.’ ... ‘China has thousands of Internet policemen,’ he continued. ‘Their job is to monitor information and keep in the information they want to keep in, and keep out the information they want to keep out.’ ... Ashley Dingler, regional manager for East Asia for International Christian Concern says: ‘We’ve seen a huge increase in the numbers of house churches that are being raided, especially the leaders of the house churches are being taken into custody. In early March, there were 70 [leaders] taken at one time.’ A few are released occasionally, but the arrests are so many it’s hard to keep track, she said. Some of those taken into custody simply have vanished, she said. ... Bob Fu, founder of China Aid Association, said, ‘In the past two years, we found more than 3,000 underground pastors were arrested, detained, some sentenced.’ Those sentences were up to and including the death sentence.”

Parents, Demand Obedience

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, dhs.northstar@charter.net) -- “Let me suggest to you three major, absolute, axiomatic rules for your family. Do not tolerate any deviation from these basic rules. Each is based in biblical precept and each goes to the very heart of doing right. (1) We always obey. Few things in family life are more fundamental than teaching children to obey. We positively, absolutely always expected our children to obey when they were given clear instructions (Ephesians 6:1). ... If children are consistently disobedient, it means that the parents, at some point, have not trained them to be obedient. ... We positively demanded that our children obey us. If they did not obey, there were immediate and consistent consequences. Every time. Every single time! Obedience is critically important. Not only is obedience important to maintain order in a child’s life, but it also has a

profound spiritual implication. ... when children become accustomed to disobeying their parents and getting away with it, they are likely to adopt the same attitude toward doing God’s will. ... Parents, you will do your children a great spiritual favor by insisting on obedience. You are establishing a precedent in their lives for them to obey God as they mature and become independent. ... Insisting on obedience is a basic way of training a child to subordinate his or her old nature to standards of right. ... In our home, when one of the children was directly and overtly disobedient, it was dealt with immediately. There were no ifs, ands, or buts. ... There was no debate. ... If one of the children was punished for having been disobedient, we always made very sure that she understood her punishment was because she disobeyed” (*Training Your Children to Turn Out Right*, 1995, pp. 62-64).

WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO DIE WITHOUT BELIEVING ON JESUS CHRIST?

Is there any possibility of hope for the person who dies without believing on Jesus Christ? Not according to the Bible. It divides men into only two categories, saved or lost, depending on whether they believe in Jesus Christ. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). See also John 3:36 and 1 John 5:12. Jesus said that only those who are born again will see the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5). Ephesians chapter two describes the condition of all men who are not born again. They are dead in sins (v. 1), dominated by Satan (v. 2), children of disobedience (v. 2), children of wrath (v. 3), without Christ (v. 12), aliens and strangers (v. 12), having no hope (v. 12), without God (v. 12), and far off (v. 13). The Bible gives absolutely no hope of salvation to those who die without faith in Jesus Christ, but it also says that God gives light to every man, and



when a man responds to the light he is given more light. Jesus is the *"the true Light, which lighteth EVERY MAN that cometh into the world"* (John 1:9). There is the light of creation (Romans 1:20), the light of conscience (Rom. 2:14-15), and the light of the Bible (Rom. 3:1-2). When Cornelius responded to the light that he had in the Old Testament and in Judaism, God sent Peter to preach the gospel to him and he was saved (Acts 10). When the Ethiopian eunuch was making an attempt to understand the Bible, God sent Philip to preach Christ to him and he was saved (Acts 8:26-39). God wants to save men (1 Tim. 2:4). He has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to show men their lost condition (John 16:7-8). The Spirit of God convicts men and draws them. If a man goes to hell, it is because he hardens his heart to God's light.

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.