

Friday Church News Notes

ISRAEL TURNS SIXTY

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This week the modern state of Israel celebrated its 60th anniversary. At 12am on May 14, 1948, the fledgling nation announced its statehood with the following declaration: "Our call goes out to the Jewish people all over the world to rally to our side ... and to stand by us in the great struggle for the fulfillment of the dream of generations for the redemption of Israel." Eleven minutes later U.S. President Harry Truman announced his recognition. Jews celebrated throughout the world. In Rome they paraded under the ancient Arch of Titus, which was built almost 2,000 years ago to celebrate the conquest of Jerusalem by the Roman armies in 70 A.D. and which features depictions of Jewish captives and articles from the Jewish temple. After two millennia of persecution, the Jews were back and they still spoke their ancient language! This is one of the most amazing events in history and proves the divine inspiration of the Bible, which predicted it 4,000 years ago. Israel's entire history was prophesied by Moses and recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. God warned

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The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts the sacking of Jerusalem, which fulfilled God's warning to the Jews. Their restoration to their land also fulfills God's word.

Apostasy and Christian Bookstores



The Bible warns of a great turning away from the faith among professing Christians. "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). This prophecy describes the rejection of sound Bible teaching and the desire to create a new type of Christianity that allows people to live after their own lusts. That is a strange type of Christianity, but we are seeing its fulfillment before our very eyes. The prophecy says there will be heaps of teachers who will give the people this new type of

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HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVISTS TARGET CHURCHES

Soulforce, a homosexual activist group, continues to try to push its agenda on churches, schools, and Christian organizations. Its current program, The American Family Outing, targets six megachurches, including The Potter's House (T. D. Jakes), Willow Creek Community Church (Bill Hybels), and Lakewood Church (Joel Osteen). One high profile member of Soulforce is Jay Bakker, son of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker of PTL infamy. Before her death in 2007 Tammy Faye became an activist for homosexual rights. Soulforce is pressuring churches to welcome homosexuals in a non-judgmental way. Jay Bakker says, "Let's put our differences aside and share the love and hope of Christ" ("Gay Group Reaches out to Lakewood," *Houston Chronicle*, May 8, 2008). Sharing the love of Christ is one thing, but being non-judgmental toward sin is something entirely different. Churches should welcome any sinner to hear the gospel, but church membership is only for those who have been born again through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21), and the new birth changes one's attitude toward sin. Among the members of the church at Corinth were some who had been involved in homosexuality, but they had been converted and changed (1

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that if Israel broke His law she would be “plucked from off the land” and scattered “among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other” (Deut. 28:63-64). There the Jews would “find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life” (Deut. 28:65-66). This is an accurate description of the last two millennia of Israel’s history. Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman armies under Titus and in 135 A.D. Jerusalem was plowed under by order of Emperor Hadrian in response to the Jewish rebellion led by Bar Kochbar. The Jewish people were scattered to the ends of the earth and found no rest. They were hated by the Muslims and hounded and persecuted by the Greek Orthodox Byzantines and the Roman Catholic Church for a thousand years. Hitler tried to destroy them. Giving preference to the Arabs, England tried to keep them from returning to their land after World War II. Most of the world is still opposed to Israel and the reporting in secular publications about the Middle East crisis is generally slanted against her. But Bible prophecy foretold that Israel would be brought back into her land and that she would remain a nation even after all of this, and that is exactly what happened in 1948. Never before in the history of the world has a race of people been scattered throughout the world and persecuted for 2,000 years and then come back together as a nation. Bible prophecy describes the restoration of Israel in two parts. First, she would return to the land in a state of unbelief. Then she would be converted. The amazing prophecy in Ezekiel 37:1-14 describes these two stages. Israel is depicted as a valley of bones that are resurrected. First the bones are given sinews and flesh and they stand up but with no breath in them, and next God breathes upon these dead bones and they live. The first part of the prophecy has been fulfilled. Israel is back in her land as a nation, but she is there in unbelief. She continues to reject her Messiah, Jesus Christ. She has no temple or priesthood and no true worship. During the Great Tribulation God will grant repentance unto Israel and will breathe spiritual life into her and she will live. The continued existence of Israel is a very great miracle and an irrefutable evidence of the divine inspiration of the Bible, and it reminds us that we need to be ready for Christ’s return.

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Christianity, and that is exactly what we see. Christian bookstores are filled with books and the Internet is filled with Christian articles and blogs, but the majority of this material does not contain the straightforward preaching and teaching of God’s Word that reproveth, rebukes, and exhorts (2 Timothy 4:2). Rather, we find doctrine that scratches the itching ears of those who have rejected the Bible. We find pop novelties, psychology, self-esteemism, charismaticism,

pampering of the ego, friendship with the world, heresies, questionings, boastings, doubtings, illicit fellowship with error (e.g., evangelicals and contemplative spirituality, evangelicals and Rome, evangelicals and modern textual criticism), railings against “legalism” falsely so called, fairy tales, fictional romance, reconstructed history, fascination with ancient heretics called “church fathers,” and many other such things.

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Corinthians 6:9-11). Tammy Faye Bakker appeared at “gay-pride” events nationwide, including a Tammy Faye look-alike contest in Washington, D.C., where she was “surrounded by men in falsies and pancake makeup” (*Charisma News*, November 2002). She told them that “there’s a God who loves them and cares for them,” but she did not tell them that homosexuality is a sin or that God demands repentance. After Tammy Faye’s first husband, Jim Bakker, went to prison for defrauding his followers out of \$158 million, she divorced him and married Roe Messner, a family friend whose company helped build PTL’s Heritage USA complex. Referring to critics who said she should speak plainly against homosexuality, Tammy Faye said, “I thought the church was supposed to be a hospital and not a courtroom.” In fact, it is both. The New Testament church invites “whosoever will” to receive Christ’s free salvation and be born again, but the church also judges professing believers who walk in darkness (1 Corinthians 5).



American Bible Society Assists Roman Catholic Church

The American Bible Society continues to assist the Roman Catholic Church in preaching its false gospel. Its current Spanish campaign, *La Biblia Es Mi Guia* (The Bible Is My Guide), features Catholic priest Alberto Cutie, a member of the ABS's board of trustees. "Padre Alberto" will participate in a series of radio and internet advertisements (Assist News, May 7, 2008). Last year the ABS honored Cardinal Jaime Alamino, Archbishop of Havana, Cuba, during its Bible in Hispanic America Gala. The ABS is also sponsoring Roman Catholic *Lectio Divina* programs. *Lectio divina* is not simple Bible reading; it is a mystical practice that was developed within Rome's dark monastic system. Richard Foster, who has had a far-reaching influence in popularizing Catholic contemplative practices among evangelicals, quotes Catholic mystic Madame Guyon as follows: "Once you sense the Lord's presence, THE CONTENT OF WHAT YOU READ IS NO LONGER IMPORTANT. The scripture has served its purpose; it has quieted your mind; it has brought you to him. ... You should always remember that YOU ARE NOT THERE TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT YOU HAVE READ; rather you are reading to turn your mind from the outward things to the deep parts of your being. YOU ARE NOT THERE TO LEARN OR TO READ, BUT YOU ARE

THERE TO EXPERIENCE THE PRESENCE OF YOUR LORD!" (*Devotional Classics*). The Bible warns that those who assist heretics become partakers of their evil deeds (2 John 8-11).



Alberto Cutie

PARENTS, TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN TO READ THE BIBLE

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, 2 1 8 - 7 2 6 - 0 2 0 9 , www.northstarministries.com, dhs.northstar@charter.net) -- "Dear parents, the most important habit you will ever teach your children is the habit of going to the Word of God day and night. You will notice that I used the word 'habit.' That is on purpose. This matter of going to the Word of God is something that must be developed as a habit. Habits are developed through repetitive actions, but for children to develop the habit of going to the Bible each day, you, the parents, must take steps to insert this practice into their lives. You cannot just tell them to do it and expect them to follow through. You must set up a program, a schedule, and incentives to

help motivate them to be in the Book. ... Over the years, I have had people say, 'Well, I think we should read the Bible because we want to, not because we have to.' Between the world, the flesh, and the devil, there will be many more days that we do not feel like getting into the Word than days in which we want to. Anytime we do what we do simply because we feel like it or want to, we are living a very shallow life spiritually. However, we should read God's Word because we ought to, because it is right, and because it is God's will. How we feel about it on a given day is irrelevant. ... We also need to instill that attitude and philosophy into our children. ... When we started our girls into their daily Bible reading plan we placed a book mark at 1 John. When they first began, we set a goal for them to read one verse in the morning and then one verse in the evening. Initially, we did

the reading with them and helped them with it. ... As they progressed in their reading, we increased the goal to three verses a day in their first grade year. ... In about third or fourth grade, they began to read a chapter a day. When they became sixth-graders they were to read two chapters a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. When they reached junior high school, they went to reading four chapters a day. This basically will take anyone through the Bible in a year. That regimen continued throughout their high school years. ... The burden of seeing this habit developed in our children falls directly upon us, the parents. As parents, we must check on the matter regularly" (*Training Your Children to Turn out Right*, 1995, pp. 15-19).

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.