

Friday Church News Notes

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS APPROVE STATEMENT ON REGENERATE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

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Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting approved a resolution urging congregations to maintain a regeneration membership and accurate membership rolls." The resolution, "On Regenerative Church Membership and Church Member Restoration," stated that "only 6.1 million of the reported 16.2 million Southern Baptist church members attend the primary worship service of their church in a typical week." Thus, only a third of SBC church members show up on Sunday morning, but the picture is even much worse than that. Only a little more than one-tenth of the members on SBC rolls show up for anything other than a Sunday morning service. "These figures suggest that nearly 90% of Southern Baptist church members appear to be little different from the 'cultural Christians' who populate mainline denominations" (Jim Elliff, *Founder's Journal*, Feb. 7, 1999). After the new resolution was approved, Tom Ascol, executive director of Founders Ministries, said: "The problem is that we are in bad shape, and a lot of our churches are in bad shape. It's hard to admit and once you admit it, it's hard to know what to do. This resolution won't solve anything but I've had many pastors tell me they have wanted a resolution like this passed so they can go back to their churches and use it, saying, Look, this is not just your pastor's idea. The whole convention is on record now. This is a problem we need to look at and address" ("SBC Adopts Regenerate Membership," Baptist Press, June 11, 2008). That is no doubt a true statement, but it is so very sad to think that pastors could be so cowardly that they would draw back from something as basic as maintaining a regenerate membership roll. Perhaps Sister Complain-a-Lot and Brother Half-Backslidden would get upset if the pastor tried to remove

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The Parable of the Woman and the Meal

"Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matthew 13:33). The leaven that Jesus described in this parable is not peace; it refers to the apostasy that will increase throughout

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Wife of Northern Ireland's First Minister Accused of Hate Crime



The following is excerpted from *WorldNetDaily*, June 12, 2008: "Iris Robinson, considered Northern Ireland's first lady as the wife of First Minister Peter Robinson, has been accused of 'hate crimes' and is facing both a police investigation and the possibility of a civil complaint, according to reports. A report in *An Phoblacht*, an online political weekly in Ireland, said Robinson had been invited onto the BBC Radio Ulster's 'The Stephen Nolan Show' to talk about a recent physical assault on a homosexual by a team of thugs described by the reporter as 'gay-bashing.' She condemned the violence,

then described homosexuality as 'disgusting, nauseous, shamefully wicked and vile.' Now, the report said, a government agency has confirmed it is investigating complaints that have been filed against her, and one homosexual activist said he's contacted a lawyer about the situation. The reports said complaints against Robinson have been lodged by Andrew Muir, vice-chair of the Gay and Lesbian Across Down, as well as John O'Doherty, a member of the South Belfast District Policing Partnership. ... On the radio program, Robinson said, 'Homosexuality is not

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SOUTHERN BAPTISTS, Cont.

their dear relatives from the membership roll just because they live like the devil and never come to church. Well, so be it. Each and every day we preachers need to take a long hard look back at the cross of Christ and forward to the judgment seat of Christ, and fearing God more than man go out and do those things that are required of us by Holy Scripture.

IRIS ROBINSON, Cont.

natural. My Christian beliefs tell me that it is an abomination and that is very clear. It is an offense to God, and offensive act and something God abhors.' ... She went on to urge homosexuals to seek psychiatric counseling, because of the success of various programs that offer to help them re-focus their sexual lifestyles. 'I have a lovely psychiatrist who works with me in my office trying to turn homosexuals away from what they are engaged in,' she said. 'I'm happy to put any homosexuals in touch with this gentleman. I have met people who have turned around and become heterosexual. They are married and having families.' The report said she was describing one of her health policy advisers, Paul Miller. ... The comments from both Robinson and Miller were condemned immediately by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which holds 'lesbian, gay and bisexual people should be regarded as valued members of society who have exactly the same rights and responsibilities as others.'"

PARABLE OF LEAVEN, Cont.

the church age and leaven the whole "visible church." Compare 2 Timothy 3:13. Leaven in the Bible is always a symbol of sin or error. The woman of the parable "hid" the leaven in the meal, indicating deception. The first time we see leaven mentioned in Scripture is in Exodus 12:15. Beginning on the day of the Passover, which signified salvation through faith in the blood of Christ, there was to be no leaven in the Jewish homes for a full week. This signified the putting away of sin after salvation. The only offerings that had leaven were the two loaves of the feast of 50 days or Pentecost (Lev. 23:17), and this is because those loaves signified the

Jews and Gentiles united in one body in the church and the fact that they are not sinlessly perfect in this present world. On the other hand, the other offerings signified the sinless Christ and were thus made without leaven (Ex. 29:2; Lev. 6:17). Jesus warned the disciples to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees," referring to their hypocrisy and heresies (Mat. 16:11-12; Luke 12:1). Paul warned the churches that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," referring to the leaven of sin (1 Cor. 5:6-8) and the leaven of doctrinal error (Gal. 5:9).

THE EMERGING CHURCH'S ENVIRONMENTALIST AGENDA

The emerging church's agenda is not just to keep the air clean and the streams pure; it goes far beyond that to a position that is akin to earth worship. In May 2008 Pastor Jeffrey Whittaker attended Brian McLaren's *Everything Must Change* tour at Goshen College in Indiana, and he witnessed the environmental frenzy first hand ("A Pastor Reports on McLaren's Everything Must Change Tour," June 2, 2008, <http://herescope.blogspot.com/>). The very first session was titled "Focusing on the Wounds of Our Planet." They sang a song based on Francis of Assisi's poem "Brother Sun, Sister Moon" and watched a DVD by the Sierra Club "exposing the immoral mining techniques used by energy companies in West Virginia." Then they were treated to a song that cried out against "our rape of Mother Earth." The second day's session began with another environmentalist song that said mining is a "scar cut across the face of Mother Earth." They were constantly reminded that "catastrophic consequences due to global warming are upon us." Another session opened with the "Hymn of Remorse," which bewailed the supposed desecration of the earth. "We repent for covering your colorful earth with gray cement ... for cutting down trees ... for scarring your earth ... Lord, have mercy, can we be restored?" By no stretch of the imagination can such a position be supported by the Bible. From the very beginning God gave man the right to use the earth. "And God blessed them, and God said

unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air; and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Man has a divine right to subdue the earth and use its resources, to cut its trees and mine its ore and pump its oil. This does not mean he has the right to destroy the earth and turn it into a filthy cesspool; no one in his right mind is in support of polluting the air and water and wiping out the animal species. But God has given man the right to use the earth's resources in a responsible manner. The environmentalist movement is not based on proven science; it is not merely the push for reasonable conservation; it is a blind religious faith. Its most zealous proponents are gullible tools in the hands of one-worlders who intend to use the environmentalist cause to increase their authority at a local, national, and global level. When Marxist globalists jump on the environmentalist bandwagon, you have to know that something other than love for a clean earth is driving the agenda. Jonah Goldberg has wisely observed: "At its core, environmentalism is a kind of nature worship. It's a holistic ideology, shot through with religious sentiment. ... Environmentalism's most renewable resources are fear, guilt and moral bullying" ("The Church of Green," *Los Angeles Times*, Op-Ed, May 20, 2008).

Discipline or Disorders

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) -- "I make no pretense of being a psychologist. However, I am convinced that much of what is diagnosed by modern child psychologists is just a figment of their professional imagination. It seems that decade by decade and almost year by year new 'psychological' disorders are 'discovered' in children. ... I am convinced that some of these 'disorders' are things that psychologists have invented to describe children who are just lacking in self-discipline. ... My wife, particularly, has worked with children for over 27 years and in my estimation is a master in working with them. ... In

later years as the nature of our ministry changed, Pam has continued to work with children. Though the group size she has worked with in more recent years is smaller, parents still come to her and tell her that 'Johnny' is hyperactive, or 'Susie' has an attention deficit disorder, or little 'Billy' is learning disabled. Our experience usually has been that these children have had very little encouragement in self-discipline. ... I have watched Pam work with children who are 'hyperactive.' The psychologist's solution to the problem was to prescribe behavior modification drugs to essentially sedate the children. Their parents would come to Pam and warn her that little Susie had this disorder and that they could not do anything with her. ... Pam would work with these children in junior church or in some other children's program and would let little

Susie know in no uncertain terms that her word was law, and that she was going to obey, period. There was kindness, a positive incentive to cooperate, and a fun atmosphere about the program, but above all she demanded and taught behavioral discipline. And she got it. I have watched many of these children over the years. Even though they were a terror at home and diagnosed as hyperactive at school, they would sit up straight, pay attention, behave, and learn the lesson or story in junior church. ... Pam teaches discipline and she demands it. Yet the children love her. And the Sunday School bus kids, who for the most part come of their own volition, come back week after week" (*Training Your Children to Turn Out Right*, 1995, pp. 38, 39).

DOLLY PARTON'S NEW ALBUM MIXES JESUS WITH MORAL TRASH

In a fashion that is typical for country music, Dolly Parton's new album, *Backwoods Barbie*, mixes a vague Jesus with moral debauchery. The song "Jesus and Gravity" says, "Jesus, I've got Jesus/ He's my everything ... He gives me hope and He gives me strength/ And that's all I'll ever need..." Yet the same album has songs about drinking, carousing, breaking one's sacred marital vows, and sleeping with someone outside of marriage, all from a very "non-judgmental" perspective. This is 2 Timothy 4:3 Christianity. *"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."* Parson dresses immodestly and has played the madam in an R-rated movie about a house of prostitution. She has covered Led Zeppelin's occultic song "Stairway to Heaven" and John Lennon's atheist song "Imagine." She joined

the Dixie Chicks, Carole King, Yoko Ono, and others to record a benefit album in support of the Human Rights Campaign, a radical homosexual rights organization. Parton's Jesus is not the one revealed in Scripture. She says, "God isn't the monster in the sky that I grew up with [in the Church of God]. He's a feelin' within you" (*Parade*, Nov. 2, 1980). For the stage production for her song "Go to Hell," she used 12 dancers. She said, "We do this with six dancers on the devil's side and six on the Lord's side. At the end of the song, they all merge and we all go into the light" ("Dolly's Flame Worthy Streak Continues," Country Music Television, April 21, 2004). This would appear to depict the New Age-Hindu concept that everything is one, that good is evil and evil is good, that everything is evolving and merging into one. In spite of this, Dolly is popular with the Southern Gospel crowd. The Southern Gospel

Hall of Fame is located at the Dollywood entertainment center and they host a 30-day Southern Gospel Jubilee each year. This is another example of the worldliness and unscriptural "judge not" philosophy that permeates much of Southern Gospel today.

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.