

Friday Church News Notes

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY SAYS ANTI-CATHOLIC SPEECH IS UNCHARITABLE AND HARMFUL TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

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The spiritually-dangerous nature of Focus on the Family (FOF) was evident in a reply that was given to a Christian who wrote to them about having Anne Rice, the Roman Catholic author of occultic horror novels, on the Focus radio program. In a reply dated December 3, 2008, Timothy Masters wrote the following for Focus on the Family: "Your quotations from the canons of the Council of Trent, though perfectly legitimate as regards the theological aspects of this issue, fail to take account of the fact that, from a strictly evangelical perspective, a saving relationship with Jesus Christ is an intensely personal and individual matter. In the final analysis, it's not a question of church membership or doctrinal orientation. ... It's arguable that many individual Roman Catholics--Anne Rice included--have a very real and lively faith in the Lord Jesus. ... It's worth adding that anti-Catholic sentiments like those you've expressed are more than just uncharitable and un-Christlike. They're also harmful to the richness of your own Christian experience. ... To dismiss the Roman Catholic Church wholesale is to obliterate the first fifteen centuries of Christian history. It's to deprive ourselves of the contributions of such great leaders and thinkers as ... Francis of Assisi, and Thomas Aquinas. You may be willing to throw treasures like these out the window, but we aren't."

CONCLUSION FROM BRO. CLOUD: This statement reflects gross ignorance both of the Bible and of church history. The Bible plainly teaches that it is impossible to be saved apart from the one true gospel of the grace of Christ (Galatians 1:8-9). Since the Roman Catholic Church teaches a false gospel of sacramentalism (e.g., the Council of Trent, which has never been rescinded, cursed those who say that salvation is by God's grace alone), it is impossible to be saved if one believes what Rome teaches. The Bible warns of

BEWARE OF "TWILIGHT SAGA"

The following is adapted from the report "Occultic Twilight Movie Praised by Christian Groups" by Caryl Matrisciana: *The Twilight Saga* is a series of novels by Stephenie Meyer describing an illicit romance between a teenage girl and a vampire. The four books have sold more than 17 million copies, been translated into 20 languages, and spun off a new movie that grossed \$70 million in its first week. *Twilight* has become a pop culture phenomenon hotter than Pottermania, promoting midnight release parties and vampire proms, obsessed fans called Twi-hards, and spawning more than 350 fan sites online that claim more than 100

million hits. The series is about a sophomore teenage girl named Bella who moves to a new town and falls in love with a handsome vampire named Edward. Though 108 years old, he appears to be 17. The story is about their intoxicating infatuation for each other and the consequences of a lustful vampire/mortal romance. Edward is a member of a "coven" of vampire family members that are depicted as "good." The two eventually have a sexual relationship and a baby out of wedlock. The shocker is that many Christians are attracted to this spiritually dysfunctional romance and are attempting to give Christian

EXPERTS RECOMMEND DITCHING THE TELEVISION

A new secular study concludes that heavy exposure to the pop media through television, Internet, video and MP3 players is harmful to children. The study, which analyzed 173 research papers, found that the vast majority agree that heavy exposure "increases the risk of harm, including obesity, smoking, sex, drug and alcohol use, attention problems and poor grades" ("Report: Mass Media Harms Kids," *USA Today*, Dec. 1, 2008). The *USA Today* article said that "experts" advise parents to "consider ditching cable or TV altogether," to not allow children to have computers, TVs or other media in their bedrooms, to not rely on the rating systems, and to set limits on how media devices are used. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6), and, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33).



FOCUS ON THE FAMILY, from page 1

false christ, false gospels, and false spirits (2 Corinthians 11:1-4). Rome's christ is a consecrated wafer. Its gospel is the sacraments. Its spirit is one that leads men to pray to a mythical Mary. As for Francis of Assisi and Thomas Aquinas, they worshipped Rome's false christ, held to its false gospel, and followed its false spirit. Focus on the Family may be willing to follow in their footsteps, but we thank God for the light He has shined into our formerly-darkened hearts to give us the spiritual wisdom to follow the path of truth rather than that of popular error. We don't reject the first 1,500 years of church history, but the New Testament prophesies two streams of "churches," the false and the true, and we thank God that He has shown us the difference.

**TWILIGHT, from page 1**

applications to its demonic premise. No matter how resplendent the "vampire" is portrayed in mythology and fiction, in Scripture blood drinking and creatures of darkness are judged as despicable by God. Distortion of the purpose of blood is a satanic mockery of God's intent for the sacredness blood represents. Scripture teaches, "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life..." (Deut. 12:23) and in the shedding of blood is the remission of sins. Meyer "received" the story of *Twilight* in a dream on June 2, 2003. The vision compelled her to start writing the story immediately. She says she had an additional dream after *Twilight* was finished when her vampire character Edward came to speak to her. Her latest novel, *The Host*, is about demon possession. The *Twilight* books and movie have been recommended by the Christian Stay at Home Moms website, Focus on the Family's *Plugged In Online*, ChristianityTodayMovies.com, and Campus Life's *Ignite Your Faith* Christian teen magazine.

DIRECT LINK BETWEEN ABORTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

The following is excerpted from "New Study Shows Direct Link," LifeNews.com, Nov. 28, 2008: "A new research study featuring numerous controls and a national data set finds a link between abortion and psychiatric disorders. The study refutes the report the American Psychiatric Association released in August claiming abortion causes no mental health issues for women. The research team found induced abortions result in increased risks for a myriad of mental health problems ranging from anxiety to depression to substance abuse disorders. The number of cases of mental health issues rose by as much as 17 percent in women having abortions compared to those who didn't have one and the risks of each particular mental health problem rose as much as 145% for post-abortive women. ... Dr. Priscilla Coleman, a professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Bowling Green State University, led the research team that conducted the study. Together with Catherine Coyle of Edgewood College, researcher Martha Shuping and psychologist Dr. Vincent Rue, they published their results online today at the *Journal of Psychiatric Research*. The researchers found women who had abortions, compared with those who didn't had a 120% risk for alcohol abuse, with or without dependence, a 145% increased risk of alcohol dependence, 79% increased risk of drug abuse with or without dependence and a 126% increase in the risk of drug dependence. For mood disorders, the experience of an abortion increased risk of developing bipolar disorder by 167%, major depression without hierarchy by 45% and major depression with hierarchy by 48%." The Bible says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

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RICK WARREN SAYS TRY JESUS FOR 60 DAYS

The following is from *A Little Leaven*, Dec. 4, 2008: “Rick Warren’s December 3, 2008 appearance on Hannity and Colmes was a mixed bag. We’ll give Warren props for not caving in on the issue of Jesus being the only way. But, once again Warren stoops to new lows in his quest to remove the offense of the cross by asking Alan Colmes to give Jesus a 60 day trial and ‘see if he won’t change your life.’ Warren, like a bad used car salesman is trying to sell the gospel via bullet point benefits. Once again Warren skirts the issue of man’s sin and rebellion against God and he doesn’t call men to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ but instead asks non-

believers to ‘give Jesus a 60 day trial,’ claiming that ‘if Jesus doesn’t change your life then you can get your money back.’ Is there a way for us to have a recall on Rick Warren? We want a different representative. We want one who is not ashamed of the Gospel and will boldly condemn men’s sins, call men to repentance and placard Jesus Christ’s death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. Warren’s seeker-sensitive, mushy, non-offensive approach to ‘selling’ Christianity is truly embarrassing.”

EMERGING CHURCH LEADER VOWS TO PROSELYTIZE OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

Nothing has made me more conscious of the vicious battle that is raging for the very life and soul of Bible-believing churches than my research into the emergent church. It is frightful, because so many are falling into the devil’s trap and so many more will doubtless fall in the coming days. Emerging church leaders have the objective of proselytizing our children and grandchildren. In his 2008 book *Finding Our Way Again: The Return of the Ancient Practices*, Brian McLaren describes his plan to infiltrate churches and Christian institutions that are currently rejecting the emerging church. He says: “But over time, what they reject will find or create safe space outside their borders and become a resource so that many if not most of the grandchildren of today’s fundamentalists will learn and grow and move on from the misguided battles of their forebears [Biblicist Christians]” (p. 133). McLaren is saying that emerging church teachers will infiltrate Biblicist churches from without through “resources” such as books, videos, and web sites. That is exactly how New Evangelicalism has so deeply infiltrated fundamentalist and independent Baptist churches over the past two decades and it is doubtless how the more radical emerging church doctrines will infiltrate over the coming decades. It is more imperative than ever that pastors train their people to discern the error of these heresies and that they exhort them to avoid the writings of false teachers. It is imperative that fundamentalist Bible Colleges and Institutes prepare their students to resist this tide of error. Too often it can be said of Bible-believing churches today what was said of Israel of old, “*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*” (Hosea 4:6). The average member of a fundamentalist Bible-believing church is not equipped to deal effectively with the spiritual dangers that lurk on the shelves of the typical Christian bookstore and on the

airwaves of the typical Christian radio station. The average church member receives little practical warning from his pastors and teachers and has no interest in building a library of material that can help protect him from spiritual dangers. If this situation is not rectified, the Brian McLarens of this world will doubtless devour many of our children and grandchildren. (For more about the emerging church see our new book *What Is the Emerging Church*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.)



The Woodpecker's Amazing Tongue

The following is excerpted from Creation Moments, <http://www.creationmoments.com/radio/transcript.php?t=2205>:
 “The beautiful creation in which we live is not only filled with testimonies to the wisdom of God, it is also filled with special designs that deny the possibility of mindless evolution. Consider the woodpecker. Its tongue can stretch from three to five times its normal length in order to fish bugs out of trees. Of all places, that tongue is rooted in its right nostril. Going backwards, the tongue splits into two parts, wraps around its head between its skull and the skin, passes on either side of the neck bones and then comes up through its lower jaw and exits through the beak. This gives the woodpecker a long enough tongue that will stretch far enough to do an effective job of pest control on bug-infested trees! Now how could that happen by blind evolutionary chance?”

“How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psalms 36:7-9).



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