

Friday Church News Notes

Emergent Church on the March at National Pastors Conference

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In February 2009, Brian Snider and I covered the 2009 National Pastor's Convention with media credentials. Attended by 1,500 pastors and Christian leaders, the conference was sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity Press and featured influential voices such as Leighton Ford, Bill Hybels, Brian McLaren, and Rob Bell. It represents what is being called the emerging church, and it is all about change. Society is changing, so the churches must change, and these publishers are major change agents. Their objective is to move traditional Bible churches into the new emerging model. They have many tactics, and they are willing to be patient. In his 2008 book "Finding Our Way Again," Brian McLaren described the plan to infiltrate churches and Christian institutions that are currently rejecting the emerging church.



Shane Claiborne (see bio, next page)

They are targeting our grandchildren. The Christian book publishing industry is a lot like the Christian music industry. Doctrine does not matter and there are a lot of rock stars being made through the use of slick marketing materials, but when you strip away the slick packaging and cool marketing gimmicks, what you find is the continual disintegration of evangelicalism as it is pulled further and further into the emergent church movement. The attendees represented a bewildering range of views, including Methodist, United Church of Christ, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Pentecostal. The speaker lineup included an agnostic Jew (A.J. Jacobs), a Roman Catholic priest (Emmanuel Katongole), and a man who depicts God as a woman (William

NEW AGE GOD OF "THE SHACK" FEATURED PROMINENTLY AT PASTORS CONFERENCE

At the National Pastor's Conference in San Diego, William Young, author of *The Shack*, was a featured speaker. He had his own break-out session and was interviewed in one of the general sessions by Andy Crouch, senior editor of *Christianity Today*. It was said that 57% of the attendees had read "The Shack," and Young was enthusiastically received. "The Shack" is a fictional account of a man who is bitter against God for allowing his youngest daughter to be murdered and who returns to the scene of the murder, an old shack in the woods, to have a life-changing encounter. The "God" that he encounters, though, is not the God of the Bible. Young depicts the triune God as a young Asian woman named "Sarayu" (supposedly the Holy Spirit), an oriental carpenter who loves to have a good time (supposedly Jesus), and an older black woman named "Elousia" (supposedly God the Father). God the Father is also depicted as a guy with a ponytail and a goatee. Young's god is the god of the emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-

HINDUS TO LAUNCH COW URINE SOFT DRINK

The same Hindu organization that is behind the persecution of Christians in India is preparing to launch a new soft drink made from cow urine. Called "Gau Jal" (Sanskrit for *cow water*), the drink is undergoing laboratory tests by the Cow Protection Department of the RSS, Indian's biggest Hindu nationalist group. It will be launched "very soon, maybe by the end of this year" ("India to Launch Cow Urine," *London Times*, Feb. 11, 2009). Om Prakash, head of the department, says, "Don't worry, it won't smell like urine and will be tasty, too." *The Times* observes that the drink "is the latest attempt by the RSS--which was founded in 1925 and now claims eight million members--to cleanse India of foreign influence and promote its ideology of Hindutva, or Hindu-ness." Many Christians were slaughtered by Hindus in Orissa and other Indian states last year, and hundreds of homes and churches were destroyed. The new cow water will be mixed with Ayurvedic herbs. Ayurvedic is an alternative health care practice based on the Hindu scriptures that is becoming popular in North America. We have written about it extensively in the book "The New Age Tower of Babel," available from Way of Life Literature.



Emergent Church, from page 1

Young). The first half hour of every general session started out with a 30-minute comedy routine by a stand-up comic, some of it pretty crude. One comedian, Michael, Jr., did a mocking send up of people who were “oversaved,” or those who were zealous for the Lord. One of the standards for being “oversaved” was that you were not willing to laugh at off-color jokes. The apostasy of this day is astonishing, when you consider the wickedness that faces our nation and world on every hand and then you have a gathering of Christian leaders beginning their meeting with stand-up comedy; surely the Lord is at hand. The comedy routines were followed by rock concerts. On display at this meeting was the blending that has been at the heart of the evangelical movement since the early days of Billy Graham. Old school evangelicals like Leighton Ford, Graham’s brother-in-law, were on hand, and on the far left were men like Brian McLaren who are willing to reject the doctrines of the infallibility of Scripture, substitutionary atonement, and an eternal fiery hell. There seem to be no limits as to how far Christian book publishers will go in being agents of change and moving churches away from the Bible into dangerous and uncharted waters. We have posted a brief video overview of the conference at the Way of Life web site, and soon we plan to publish an extensive written report. Our new book “What Is the Emerging Church” deals with this subject in depth. Our purpose in doing this research is to warn Bible-believing churches that might be tempted to move in a more contemporary direction and to adopt the “judge not” philosophy. This is exactly what the New Evangelicals did 50 years ago, and we see where they are today. The Bible says, “Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners.”

New Age God, from page 1

judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require the new birth, puts no obligations on people, doesn’t like traditional Bible churches, does not accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God, and does not mind if the early chapters of the Bible are interpreted as “myth.” Note the following quotes from Young’s god: “I don’t need to punish people for sin. Sin is its own punishment, devouring you from the inside. It’s not my purpose to punish it...” (“The Shack,” p. 120). Contrast Isaiah 13:11. “Those who love me come from every system that exists. They were Buddhists or

Mormons, Baptists or Muslims ... and many who are not part of any Sunday morning or religious institutions. ... I have no desire to make them Christian” (p. 182). Contrast Acts 4:12; 26:28. “The Shack’s” god is suspiciously similar to the one described in the books of the more liberal branch of the emerging church. Young’s god also has a strong kinship to the New Age god promoted by Oprah Winfrey. “The Shack” is another building stone of the end-times Tower of Babel.

Heresies Abound at Zondervan Pastors Conference



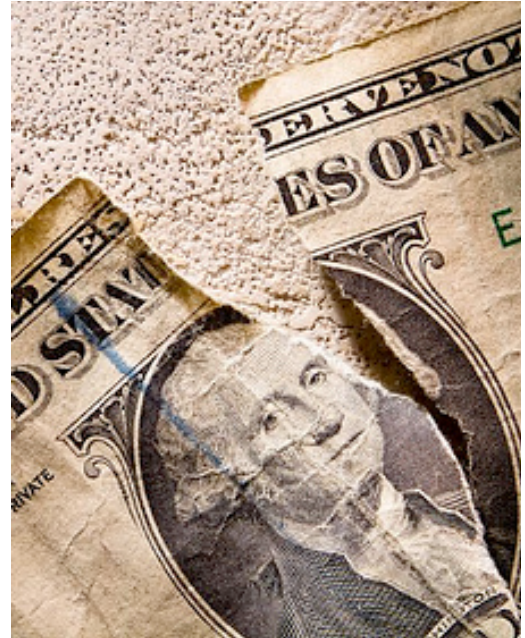
The roster of speakers at Zondervan’s Pastors Conference shows the shape of the evangelical movement today. A mainstream evangelical view was downplayed at this meeting in favor of far left theology and politics. In fact, even the Southern Baptist Convention was at times ridiculed as being a restraining force against these enlightened newcomers.

L-R: Andy Crouch, a Sr. Editor of Christianity Today, interviews Roman Catholic Priest Emmanuel Katongole at the conference. Brian McLaren, who was featured prominently, denies the substitutionary blood atonement and the existence of eternal fiery hell and believes people of other faiths are saved. Shane Claiborne, who spoke several times, is an ascetic who has spent time with Mother Teresa and promotes a works-oriented gospel and leftist politics. William Young, author of *The Shack*, believes in a judge-not God who does not require faith in Christ for salvation. Young’s false god is extremely popular but wildly different than the God presented in the pages of Scripture.

HIGH ROLLERS COMMITTING SUICIDE

An MSNBC report dated February 14, 2009, was titled “ruined financiers committing desperate acts.” In the past year, more than 10 high rollers have committed suicide and others have tried to fake their own death in order to avoid creditors and get a new start. German billionaire Adolf Merckle jumped in front of a train. Patrick Rocca of Ireland and Steven Good of Chicago, real estate investors, shot themselves. At least two men who lost fortunes to Bernie Madoff’s schemes, which have swallowed as much as \$50 billion in investments, have killed themselves. In 1933, at the height of the Great Depression, the suicide rate of Americans stood at 17 per 100,000, the highest in history. Many others today are in despair over lost life savings. Robert Chew, who lost \$1.2 million to Madoff, says, “My life is over. I’m 56. We find ourselves at night, with the lights out, crying, asking, ‘What are we going to do?’” The answer is repent of your sins and put your

faith in Jesus Christ, and reject greed and the pursuit of wealth. God has promised to take care of His own. The Psalmist David said, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Psalm 37:25). That was one of my maternal grandmother’s favorite verses, because it encouraged her during the Great Depression when she waited on the Lord and He faithfully provided for her large family. The Bible also warns, “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness” (1 Timothy 6:10-11).



GOOGLE’S WATCHING YOU

The following is excerpted from “Google’s G1 Phone Makes It Easy to Track Surfing Habits,” *USA Today*, Feb. 8, 2009: “The new Google phone, dubbed the G1, has been touted as a working man’s smartphone--a cheap, Web-friendly wireless device that can make life easier for millions of consumers. The G1, as it turns out, also stands to make life a whole lot easier for Google--by making it a snap to track your movements on the mobile Web and send you ads as it does on the desktop. The device, sold exclusively by T-Mobile, gives Google access to your e-mail, instant messages, contact lists, Web-search history and geographic location. By keeping tabs on your mobile life, Google can quickly figure out what sort of ads to send your way, and when. ‘It’s like a walking surveillance device,’ says Jeffrey Chester, executive director of the Center for Digital Democracy, a consumer watchdog group. It’s never been easier to get information on the run. Smart devices such as the G1 and Apple iPhone let you put the Internet in your pocket and go--down the block or across the country. But this convenience could cost plenty in lost privacy, consumer advocates and tech analysts say. Once data have been collected and warehoused, you lose control of it forever. ... the sheer size and scope of Google’s data-mining operation--the Web giant performs more than 80% of all desktop searches worldwide--makes it a uniquely pervasive presence, says Chester. ... One thing everybody agrees on: The mobile Web is exploding. ... Total number of wireless devices worldwide: about 3 billion. ... Once your information has been collected and stored, there’s no way to get rid of it. You can’t see what’s been collected or have it expunged. It’s Google’s for as long as it wants to hold onto it.”

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STIMULUS BILL CREATES GOVERNMENT DATABASE OF MEDICAL RECORDS

The following is excerpted from “Final Stimulus Bill,” CNSNews.com, Feb. 12, 2009: “The final version of the stimulus bill, negotiated by the Democratic leaders of the House and Senate, includes a provision creating a federal database that will hold the personal medical records of every American, Katie Grant, spokeswoman for House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) told CNSNews.com Thursday. ... the bills that passed both the House and Senate created an ‘Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology’ and called for the coordinator to create a national database and a plan for ‘the utilization of an electronic health record (EHR) for each person in the United States by 2014.’”

YOGA PRACTICE INCREASES IN AMERICA

According to the *Yoga Journal*, the number of Americans trying yoga has tripled since 2004, to 18 million. Yoga is a Hindu practice and its growth is evidence of the spread of the New Age. This philosophy has permeated the self-help, personal transformation field; it has leavened education and reached deeply into business, health care, psychological counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, politics, government, sports, even the military. Neil Anderson says: “It is safe to say that the prevailing religion in America ... is no longer Christianity but is instead New Age” (*Christ Centered Therapy*, 2000, p. 61). A trip to the average national-chain book store will verify this. New Age philosophy is found not just in the religious, spiritual, and metaphysical sections, but in the self-help, business, and other sections.

SOCIAL WORK AND ENVIRONMENTALISM DRAWING BAPTISTS AND ORTHODOX TOGETHER IN EASTERN EUROPE

Earlier this month the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic, hosted a four-day dialogue between Baptists and Orthodox. The basis for the ecumenical rapport is social work and environmental concern or “creation care.” The Baptists and Orthodox exchanged gifts as “a sign of the continuing partnership” (“Baptist, Orthodox Leaders Hold Groundbreaking Conference,” Associated Baptist Press, Feb. 13, 2009). Baptist World Alliance head Neville Callam called for ecumenical cooperation between Baptists and Orthodox on visits to Russia and the Republic of Georgia in 2008. According to the Bible, the only basis for unity between Christians is spiritual reality (e.g., the new birth) and doctrinal purity. Those who preach a sacramental gospel that begins with infant baptism do not hold the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). They have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof, and should therefore be rejected (2 Timothy 3:5).



CONCLUSION: The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature’s Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. 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. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? “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 mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, UNSUBSCRIBE, or CHANGE ADDRESSES go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.