

Friday Church News Notes

The following is another installment of the Friday Church News Notes designed especially for use in churches. It is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service.

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CHRISTIANS STANDING TRIAL FOR QUOTING BIBLE VERSES TO HOMOSEXUALS

Friday Church News Notes, Dec. 24, 2004, <http://www.wayoflife.org>

The following is from the American Family Association, Dec. 16: "After a federal appeals court denied an emergency appeal to stop prosecution of 11 Christians on Tuesday, Philadelphia Municipal Court Judge William Austin Meehan ordered four of the Christians to stand trial on three felony (criminal conspiracy, ethnic intimidation, and riot) and five misdemeanor charges. If convicted, they could face up to 47 years in prison. The Christians were arrested on October 10 for praying, singing, and reading scripture during an annual 'gay pride' event known as 'Outfest' in Philadelphia. The federal appeals court in Philadelphia denied emergency relief despite video footage Fahling calls 'undisputed evidence' that shows the Christians cooperating with police and continually being harassed by the Pink Angels, a group of homosexuals organized to impede the gospel message. Philadelphia city prosecutor in the case, Charles Ehrlich, attacked the Christians as 'hateful' and referred to preaching the Bible as 'fighting words,' the judge agreed. Charges were dropped against the remaining seven apparently because they were not seen quoting scripture on the videotape."



Queer Nation? Sodomites receive special protection while Christians are denied even basic civil rights, like freedom of speech and assembly.

CHRISTIANS CONVICTED OF HATE CRIME AGAINST MUSLIMS IN AUSTRALIA



Nalliah

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On Dec. 17 a state tribunal in Victoria, Australia, found two pastors guilty of inciting hatred against Muslims. The case stems from a seminar that Daniel Nalliah and Daniel Scott of Catch the Fire Ministries conducted in March 2002. The two pastors lectured on the differences between Christianity and Islam and quoted information about Islam directly from the Quran. They were accused by the Islamic Council of inciting hatred, and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal has now sided against the Christians. Todd Nettleton of Voice of the Martyrs says the pastors are on trial for simply telling the truth, and that the situation should be a wake-up call for Christians because the two men are not accused of telling lies about Islam, but of hurting Muslims' feelings. The judge has the power to levy an unlimited amount of fines, and he will make that determination in January.

THE LATEST IN THE SHROUD OF TURIN SAGA

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The Shroud of Turin is a piece of cloth alleged to be Christ's burial shroud. Kept in a Roman Catholic chapel in Turin, Italy, since the 14th century, it seems to bear an impression of a wounded, longhaired man. The Shroud has been the object of much veneration, speculation, and research. Radiocarbon tests by three separate laboratories in 1988 dated it to the 13th or 14th century, but this has stopped neither the adulation nor the speculation. The latest twist is the theory that the samples tested were from a portion of the cloth that was repaired during the Middle Ages and thus not properly representative of the original cloth. This theory appeared in *National Geographic* in April 2004. For a Bible believer, it is not difficult to reject the Turin Shroud as bogus. The very fact that it is owned by the Catholic Church and is held forth as an object of "veneration" is testimony enough. This is direct disobedience to the second commandment. Second, the wrapping is wrong. The Turin Shroud is one garment that was wrapped over both the body and head of the victim, but the Bible says Jesus was wrapped in clothes, plural (Jn. 19:40) and His head was wrapped separately from the body clothes (Jn. 20:5-7). Third, the image's long hair proves that it was not the Lord Jesus Christ. Contrary to religious art and popular myth, Christ did not have long hair. The Bible says it is a shame for a man to have long hair (1 Cor. 11:14). The only Jewish men that had long hair were Nazarites such as Samson (Num. 6:2-5; Jud. 13:5-7) and rebels such as Absalom (2 Sam. 14:26); but Jesus Christ was a Nazarene (because He grew up in Nazareth), not a Nazarite. Had Jesus been a Nazarite, He would have violated His vow when He touched dead bodies (compare Num. 6:6 and Lk. 8:54) and drank of the fruit of the vine (compare Num. 6:3 and Mat. 26:29). Further, priests were specifically forbidden to have long hair (Ezek. 44:20), and the Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a priest but the great High Priest.



TURNING THE HOUSE OF GOD INTO A COMEDY CLUB



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An article in the *Christian Science Monitor* for Dec. 16 documented the growing acceptance of comedy in church services, noting that churches are trying to "tap the nation's culture of humor to promote spiritual gain." The New England Bible Church recently used a television game show style routine during its worship service that pitted the elders against the deacons to create a "mood of levity." Church outreach ministries now include Christian comedy shows to draw a crowd. A forthcoming book, *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching* (Zondervan, 2005), "dedicates an entire chapter to humor as a homiletic device." Joseph Webb, author of *Comedy and Preaching*, says, "It is going to be impossible to preach without using humor." Where, I ask, do we see all of this humor in the Bible? The Lord Jesus Christ preached a lot about hell fire but I don't recall a lot of humor in the Gospels. The same is true for the sermons recorded in Acts and the apostolic messages to the churches. Of course, preaching hell fire doesn't get a lot of laughs and doesn't draw a big crowd; so the preachers described in 2 Tim. 4:3-4, who scratch the ears of those who want to be entertained with a new kind of Christianity, avoid it like the plague.

CHINA STILL ENFORCING ONE-CHILD POLICY

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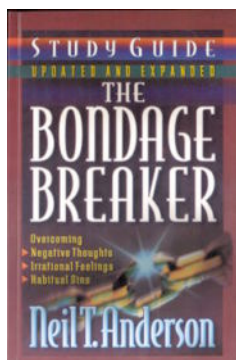
The following is from "U.S. says China forces abortions," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Dec. 15: "Despite some changes, China's one-child family planning program remains a source of coercion, forced abortions, infanticide and perilously imbalanced boy-girl ratios, State Department officials said Tuesday. Testimony before the House International Relations Committee focused on a Shanghai woman who, since her second pregnancy in the late 1980s, has been assigned to psychiatric wards, coerced into an abortion, and removed from her job. She is reportedly subject to torture in a labor camp. Mao Hengfeng, said Rep. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.), 'is the most egregious example of China's mistreatment of women who do not comply with China's draconian policies, but there are thousands of other victims.' China in the 1970s launched a one-child policy to slow the growth of its population, now at 1.3 billion. Couples who have unsanctioned children have been subject to heavy fines, job losses and forced sterilization. There have been some modifications, allowing second children for ethnic populations and rural families whose first child is a girl. In 2002, under U.S. pressure, Beijing enacted a national law aimed at reducing coercion."



BEWARE OF NEIL ANDERSON AND FREEDOM IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

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Neil Anderson, founder and President Emeritus of Freedom in Christ Ministries, wields considerable influence through his books, seminars, and daily devotionals. While some of what Anderson teaches is scriptural and helpful, the truth is intermingled with very dangerous errors. He teaches that believers do not possess a sin nature, that they can be demon possessed, that they should speak directly to the



devil, that generational and demonic curses are real for the child of God, that ritual prayers can be effective, that demonized believers must pursue a seven-step deliverance plan, etc. The refutation of these errors is not difficult, for the simple fact that the New Testament gives absolutely no support to such things. When the apostles address the problem of sin in the Christian life, which they do in most of their Epistles, they never raise the issue of such things as demonization or generational curses or multi-step deliverance plans. The reason that generational curses and such are not dealt with in the apostolic epistles is that they were dealt with once for all at Calvary and the believer is complete in Christ! It is that simple. When we see that a man is not teaching according to the Word of God the wise path is to avoid him (Rom. 16:17; Prov. 14:15). An extensive report on Anderson's ministry is available at the Christian Research Institute's web site -- <http://www.equip.org/free/DA080.htm>.

BRIAN SNIDER AND THE GRAPHICAL FRIDAY NEWS NOTES

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<http://www.wayoflife.org>

We want to thank Brian Snider for the excellent work he is doing on the graphical edition of the Friday Church News Notes. Bro. Snider has worked with us since 2000. He produced the Way of Life video series and has traveled with me on many preaching and research trips both in North America and overseas. Recently he also started doing the typesetting for the monthly *O Timothy* magazine. If you want to comment on the Friday News graphics, Bro. Snider's address is briansnider@charter.net.

(To view the graphical edition of the Friday News, go to the Friday News section of the Way of Life web site, click on the desired issue, and download the graphical PDF.)



David Brown, Brian Snider and David Cloud in Italy, Apr., 2002. On this trip, we took several thousand photos and many hours of videotape for a number of projects dealing with history of the English Bible. Note the Leaning Tower of Pisa over Bro. Snider's left shoulder.

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? Are you in the perfect will of God for your life and bearing fruit for His glory? "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).

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