

# 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.

October 7, 2005

Vol. 6, Issue 40

## LENNON'S FIRST WIFE WRITES BIOGRAPHY

Friday Church News Notes, October 7, 2005, <http://www.wayoflife.org>

John Lennon's first wife, Cynthia Lennon, is publishing a memoir called "John." She is scheduled to arrive in New York City to promote the book on October 8, which would have been Lennon's 65th birthday. He was murdered in New York in 1980. Lennon was married to Cynthia for ten years and left her for his mistress Yoko Ono. Excerpts from the book have appeared in the British press. Cynthia says that Lennon hit her once and that after she came home one day and found Yoko there and filed for divorce, the multi-millionaire Lennon told her to take 100,000 British pounds as a settlement because "That's all you're worth." Lennon didn't see his son Julian at all between 1971 and 1974, which is when he wrote the popular song "Imagine" and hypocritically called for peace among men. After Lennon died, it took 16 years for his son by his first wife to receive any inheritance because of Yoko's lack of cooperation. The song "Imagine" is an atheistic anthem. Lennon himself described it as "an anti-religious, anti-nationalistic, anti-conventional, anti-capitalistic song." Note the words: "Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try/ No hell below us, above only sky/ ... Chorus. "You may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one/ And some day I hope you'll join us/ And the world will be as one" ("Imagine," John Lennon). "Imagine" is the deluded musings of a man who despised the God of the Bible. No amount of imagining will do away with heaven or hell. The very fact that so many Contemporary Christian Musicians admittedly love the Beatles and even play their music is irrefutable evidence that CCM is worldly and spiritually dangerous.



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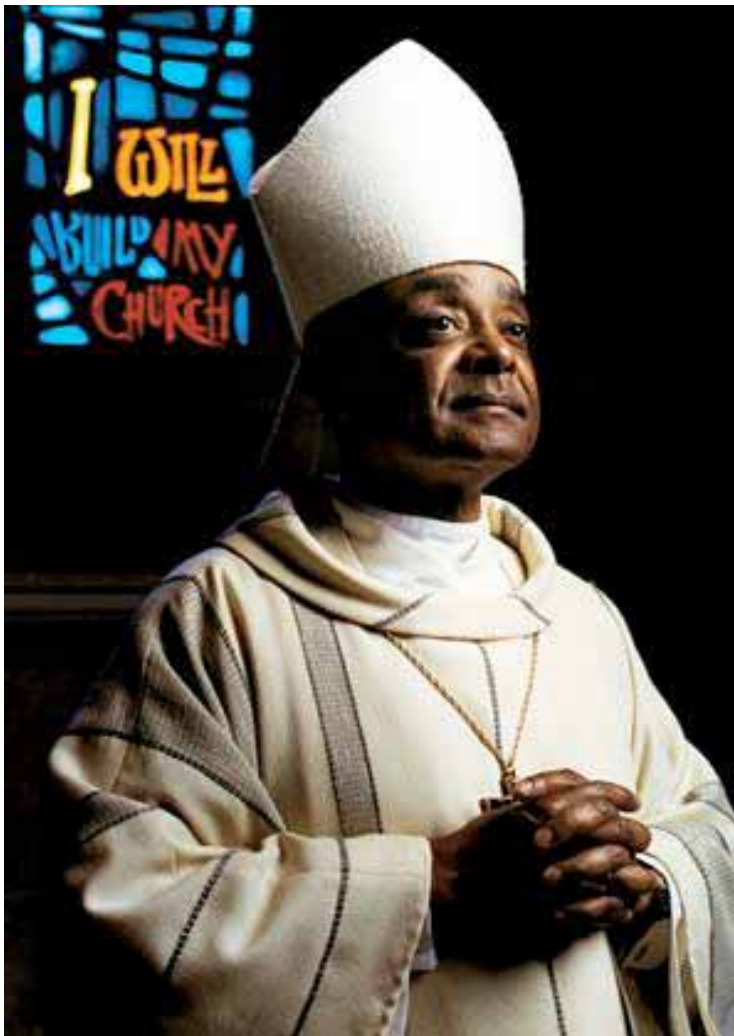
## INDONESIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN A DIRTY PRISON

Friday Church News Notes, October 7, 2005, <http://www.wayoflife.org>  
The following is from BosNewsLife, Sept. 30: "Three Indonesian Christian women who have been jailed for inviting Muslim children to attend their church's Sunday School, are forced to bribe guards to receive clean water in a 'a dirty' overcrowded prison where they also face a lack of adequate food and sleep deprivation among other abuses, investigators said. Officials of Christian Freedom International (CFI), an influential human rights group for religious liberty, expressed their concern to BosNewsLife after meeting the 'wrongly convicted' Dr. Rebekka Zakaria, Eti Pangesti and Ratna

Bangun, who were sentenced to three years in prison each this month in a case that gained international attention. A local Islamic group was successful in bringing charges against the three for violating the 'Child Protection Act,' but CFI and other human rights groups maintain the women only invited Muslim minors to their Sunday School with the consent of parents. CFI President Jim Jacobson, a former White House official, said their sentence and the human rights abuses his organization established while visiting the prison in Indramayu show that 'under the Children Protection Act and other regulations, no Christian is safe in Indonesia,' the world's largest Muslim nation. 'This case should be a wakeup call for all caring Christians,' he said."



The three Indonesian women in court



Gregory Wilton

## CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP SPEAKS AT SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH

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<http://www.wayoflife.org>

Catholic Archbishop Wilton Gregory spoke at the Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, on Sept. 28 and said there is a new cooperation among Baptists and Roman Catholics. He called this "God's new thing." Gregory said Baptists and Catholics have "a mutual heritage of faith." In fact, there is no mutual heritage whatsoever, because they have a different faith. Sound Baptists follow the faith once delivered to the saints in the New Testament Scriptures (Jude 3) and hold to the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice and to salvation by grace alone through faith alone without works or sacraments and to believer's baptism by immersion, none of which the Roman Catholic Church accepts. The pastor of this Southern Baptist-affiliated church, David Sapp, said, "The world is put off by Christian division. It is a stumbling block for evangelism, for Christian influence in the public arena and for our own spiritual growth" ("Atlanta Archbishop Calls for Closer Baptist-Roman Catholic Relations,"

Associated Baptist Press, Oct. 3). In fact, God has commanded the division between true and false doctrine, between sound and apostate churches. Paul rebuked the church at Corinth for "bearing with" those who bring false gospels, false christ, and false spirits (2 Cor. 11:1-4).

# THE CONTEMPORARY DIRECTION OF TRINITY BAPTIST OF JACKSONVILLE

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I have been aware for some time of the contemporary direction that Trinity Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, has taken under the pastorate of Tom Messer. This is a prominent church in the Southwide Baptist Fellowship. Former pastor Bob Gray led this church out of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1960s. I recall his testimony about that during one of his sermons at Tennessee Temple when I was a student there in the mid-1970s. In those days, Trinity was a strong fundamentalist church and had high standards for sacred music and separation from error, but that is no longer the case. A friend sent the following information recently: "I wanted to share some sad information with you. As I visited the Trinity Baptist website, I found them doing what Dan Lucarini refers to as 'blended' song services. Bryant Shipton is referred to as the 'worship pastor.' The two songs that I heard were 'Lord Reign in Me' by Brenton Brown of the Vineyard U.K. and 'Call on Jesus' by Nicole C. Mullen. Over the last two Sundays they have used 'Rise Up and Praise Him' by Paul Balouche, 'I Am friend of God' by the non-Trinitarian Philips, Craig and Dean, and 'Shout to the Lord' by the charismatic Darlene Zschech. When you see them using these radically ecumenical groups and musicians, it is obvious that they are headed away from their former position." *CONCLUDING NOTE FROM BRO.*

*CLOUD:* It is important to understand that a move toward contemporary worship music is not a mere change in music. It is accompanied by a change in a church's overall philosophy. In the case of Trinity Baptist, Pastor Messer is a prominent member of the "progressive" wing of the Southwide Baptist Fellowship (actually the old paths wing has largely flown the coop to the newly formed Nationwide Independent Baptist Fellowship), with its New Evangelical philosophy, a lowering of the guard, a move toward a more positive focus, a move away from separatism, an acceptance of error and worldliness not formerly accepted. Only nine years ago Southwide Baptist Fellowship, meeting at Trinity Baptist in Jacksonville, published a statement warning against Promise Keepers and its "unholy music" (see <http://www.wayoflife.org/special/spec0022.htm>). How quickly things have changed! Today Trinity uses that same music, and if it was unholy nine years ago, it is unholy today. Trinity Baptist epitomizes what is happening in far too many independent Baptist churches. Of course, another great problem is the Quick Prayerism methodology which has always permeated the Southwide Baptist Fellowship in particular, as well as some of the other groups of IB churches. See <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/fundamentalbaptists.htm>. We beseech the new Nationwide Independent Baptist Fellowship to renounce this error in no uncertain terms.



**Pastor Tom Messer is presiding over Trinity's move to contemporary praise music.**



**Philips, Craig and Dean represent the heretical "Jesus Only" wing of the charismatic movement. They also write music being used in churches like Trinity Baptist.**

# MOST AMERICANS DON'T BELIEVE HURRICANES ARE FROM GOD

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In a poll taken by *ABC News* and the *Washington Post*, only 23% of Americans believe that hurricanes are “a deliberate act of God” and only 8% of these believe that hurricanes are a judgment of God (“Most Say God Was Not Factor in Hurricanes,” *ABC News*, Oct. 2). This is an instructive survey. A large percentage of Americans claim to be Christians, but the Christianity held by most has no real meaning because it has changed neither their lives nor their thinking. Even when the survey focused on “evangelical Protestants” it found that only 33% believe that hurricanes are a deliberate act of God. For a Bible believer, a hurricane could be nothing other than a deliberate act of God. We certainly don't believe in Mother Nature!

# JAZZ'N FOR CHRIS T

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Later this month Christ Church United Methodist of Birmingham, Alabama, is hosting two sessions on “Christianity and Jazz” and “Theology of the Blues” by Eugene Lowry. The announcement says: “Dr. Lowry takes the listeners through the story of the birth of jazz, particularly as it relates to Christianity and the black experience in America. ... Dr. Lowry plays the blues and talks about the blues -- its theological foundations, its musical means of evocations, and its connections to the church.” In fact, jazz and the blues were two types of sensual dance music that prepared the way for rock & roll. From their inception these styles of music were intimately and inextricably associated with immorality, drugs, drunkenness, gambling, and rebellion. Like boogie-woogie and ragtime, jazz and the blues were born in the sleazy bars, honkytonks, juke joints, and whorehouses. It was music *designed* to accompany gambling, drinking, dancing, and sensual partying. The very name “jazz” refers to fornication. “The origin of the word 'jazz' is most often traced back to a vulgar term used for sexual acts. Some of the early sounds of jazz were associated with whore houses and 'ladies of ill repute’” ([www.jazzhistory/introduction](http://www.jazzhistory/introduction)). Blues historian James Dickerson notes: “Sex was inextricably linked with blues and jazz. It was not a prejudice: it was a fact of life. ... IN TRUTH, BLACK PARENTS WERE ALSO DISAPPROVING OF BLUES AND JAZZ MUSIC, AND OFTEN PULLED OUT THE BROOMSTICK WHEN THEIR DAUGHTERS SHOWED AN INTEREST IN THE 'DEVIL'S MUSIC’” (Dickerson, *Goin' Back to Memphis*, pp. 29, 30).



**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](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org).