

Friday Church News Notes

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POPE SAYS NONBELIEVERS CAN BE SAVED EVEN WITHOUT FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

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<http://www.wayoflife.org>

In his general audience on November 30, Pope Benedict XVI said that whoever "seeks peace and the good of the community with a pure conscience and keeps alive the desire for the transcendent," will be saved even if he lacks biblical faith ("Nonbelievers Too Can Be Saved, Says Pope," Zenit, Nov. 30). The Pope quoted Augustine, one of the "fathers" of the Catholic Church, who claimed that even pagan Babylonians would be saved if "they have a spark of desire for the unknown, for the greatest, for the transcendent, for a genuine redemption." This, of course, is pure heretical nonsense. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that men are condemned already because they are born estranged from God because of sin and that the only way to heaven is to be born again through faith in Him (John 3). The apostles taught the same thing. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).



VATICAN BANS HOMOSEXUALS FROM PRIESTHOOD



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On November 29, the Vatican released a document that bans practicing homosexuals from the priesthood. It says, "One cannot ignore the negative consequences that can stem from the ordination of people with deeply rooted homosexual tendencies." The document requires that someone with "homosexual tendencies that are merely the expression of a transitory problem" must overcome the problem for at least three years before ordination. We have no doubt that this was issued in an attempt to stem the flood of lawsuits that have bankrupted some American dioceses and have cost the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S.A. at least a billion dollars. We also have no doubt that the restriction will be widely ignored, because homosexuality is deeply rooted within the Catholic priesthood. Donald Cozzens, a former seminary rector and author of "The Changing Face of the Priesthood," has stated that the number of homosexual priests in America might be as high as 50% ("Vatican Says Active Gays Unwelcome in Priesthood," FoxNews, Nov. 22, 2005).

JOHN PIPER'S BAPTIST CHURCH ALLOWS NON-IMMERSION BAPTISM



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John Piper, popular author and senior pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, allows non-immersion “baptisms” for church membership. In 2002, Piper proposed to the church that the constitution be amended to allow a candidate to reject believer's baptism by immersion if he “sincerely and humbly believes that it would be contrary to Scripture and conscience--and not just contrary to family tradition or desires--to be baptized by immersion and thus to count his infant 'baptism' or his adult sprinkling as improper or

invalid.” This is heretical and is a very strange position for a so-called Baptist church to take. The Greek word “baptizo” means immersion and baptism is called a burial in Scripture (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). There is not one example in Scripture of an infant being baptized. To the contrary, the requirement for baptism is faith in Christ and an infant is clearly incapable of that (Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:36-39; 16:30-33). I have no doubt that many today sincerely believe that their infant baptism or adult sprinkling is a genuine baptism, but they are sincerely misled and should in no wise be encouraged in their error by Baptist preachers. Regardless of the good things that he might teach, John Piper is a New Evangelical Calvinist and despises Scriptural baptism and should be avoided (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6). Yet a survey taken earlier this year of roughly 1,100 “young fundamentalists,” found that Piper has a significant influence. Almost 50% agreed with the statement, “John Piper's ministry has been a help to me.” This might help to explain the high number of Calvinists and the New Evangelical leanings among the responders. The unscientific survey largely represented graduates of Bob Jones University (29% of those surveyed), Maranatha Baptist Bible College (22%), and Northland Baptist Bible College (21%). For more on this see “A Survey of Young Fundamentalists” at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/survey-young-fund.html>.

DEATH PENALTY MILESTONE IN AMERICA



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There have been 1,000 executions of convicted murderers in America since the Supreme Court allowed the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976. The 1,000th case was Kenneth Lee Boyd who received a lethal injection in North Carolina on December 2 for murdering his estranged wife and her father in March 1988. Death penalty opponents argue that the judicial system is not fail proof, yet death row inmates are allowed decades of reviews and appeals, all at taxpayer expense, while the loved ones of their victims suffer terribly. It is Almighty God who has commanded that murderers forfeit their lives, and this has been His law since the days of Noah. “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Gen. 9:6). Like anything else in this sin-cursed world, capital

punishment has been misused and abused in unjust nations, but it remains the law of God. Even in this New Testament dispensation, the secular government is charged with bearing the sword against evil. “But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:4).

TERRIBLE PERSECUTION CONTINUES IN NORTH KOREA

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The following is excerpted from “North Korea Crushing Churches,” *National Post*, Canada, Nov. 18: “A U.S government report says North Korea is raising religious persecution to the same heights as ancient Rome. While the Romans threw Christians to the lions for sport, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom says North Korea's leaders settle for snap trials followed by firing squads or simply crushing the heads of underground church leaders under a steamroller. ... The reports says there are only three formal churches in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, but they are primarily for show and are visited only by foreigners and the elderly. Everywhere else, the North Korean government is engaged in the forceful suppression of religious and intellectual life. Relying on eyewitness accounts from 40 recent refugees who fled to South Korea via China, the commission says North Korea has created a reign of terror to crush any religious belief that might challenge the god-like authority of leader Kim Jong Il. The mere possession of a Bible can bring a death

sentence, while attending a secret underground church service can result in gruesome public executions. One eyewitness told commission investigators he witnessed five Christian church leaders being executed by being run over by a steamroller in front of a crowd of spectators. The underground church leaders were told, 'If you abandon religion and serve only Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, you will not be killed,' said the witness, a soldier in a local construction battalion. 'None of the five said a word. Some of the fellow parishioners [who were] assembled to watch the execution cried, screamed out or fainted when the skulls made a popping sound as they were crushed beneath the steamroller.'”



Kim Jong Il

BEWARE OF THE SADDLEBACK PHILOSOPHY



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The church growth philosophy is sweeping through most denominations and is even effecting fundamentalists; and in part it teaches congregations to reach the world with worldly music and methodologies. The following is from the web site operated by Saddleback Community Church, a Southern Baptist congregation pastored by church growth guru Rick Warren of *Purpose Driven Church* fame: “[Teens] don't need to wait until they are adults to make their life count! We use cutting edge videos, fun games and music that rocks to shatter the stereotype that church has to be boring. We offer an exciting church experience geared specifically for either your junior high or high school

teens.” While churches need to reach teens with the gospel, and far too few are doing anything effective toward this end, this worldly methodology is certainly not the answer. God has commanded us not to love the world neither the evil things in the world and has warned that those who love the world are spiritual adulterers. How foolish, then, for churches to use the world's sensual music for “evangelism”! A wise saying observes, “What you win them with, you win them to.”

PAGANISM IN LEWIS'S *CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*

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The following is excerpted from "The Paganism of Narnia,"
Nov. 24, CanadianChristianity.com: "*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* comes to movie theatres December 9, and when it does, many Christians will be watching it eagerly to see if director Andrew Adamson has respected the story's Christian elements. Some of us, however, will be watching just as closely to see if the film has preserved those bits in C.S. Lewis's book that are a little more, shall we say, pagan. Presumably, the centaurs and fauns will look more or less like the mythological creatures depicted in ancient Greco-Roman art. But will, say, Mr Tumnus regale Lucy with stories of how the Roman god Bacchus filled the streams with wine when he feasted with the forest people? ... Narnia is liberated with help from Bacchus and his drinking buddy Silenus, figures from Greco-Roman myth who were associated

with drunken, mystical celebrations in the forest called 'bacchanals'. Bacchus and Aslan even dance together, along with Lucy, Susan, the nymphs and the maenads. And as they pass through Narnia, they destroy a boys' school and a girls' school where the children are taught a politically approved form of 'history.' Lewis even seems to flirt with something like astrology. In more than one book, Narnian centaurs look for signs in the stars. In *Dawn Treader*, Eustace meets a man who is a 'retired' star, and says, 'In our world, a star is a huge ball of flaming gas.' The star replies, 'Even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is but only what it is made of.' Scenes like these might have been shocking to the early Christians, who saw themselves in direct competition with paganism, and sometimes condemned the gods as demons in disguise. ... To be sure, Lewis 'baptized' these pagan elements, by situating them in a context where Aslan, the Christ-like creator of Narnia, is firmly in control. When the dance with the maenads comes to an end, Susan says, 'I wouldn't have felt very safe with Bacchus and all his wild girls if we'd met them without Aslan.' Lucy replies, 'I should think not.'"



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.