

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.

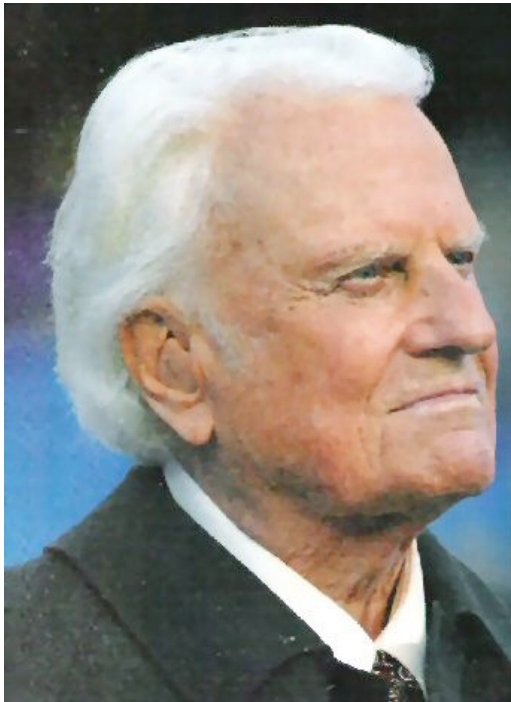
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BILLY GRAHAM CONFIRMS HIS OPINION THAT UNBELIEVERS MAY BE SAVED WITHOUT FAITH IN CHRIST

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In an interview published in *Newsweek* magazine, August 14, Billy Graham confirmed his misguided opinion that men might be saved without faith in Jesus Christ. When asked whether he believes heaven will be "closed to Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus or secular people," Graham replied: "Those are decisions only the Lord will make. It would be foolish for me to speculate on who will be there and who won't ... I don't want to speculate about all that. I believe the love of God is absolute. He said he gave his Son for the whole world, and I think he loves everybody regardless of what label they have" ("Pilgrim's Progress," *Newsweek*, Aug. 14, 2006). No one would disagree that God will make the decision about man's eternal destiny, but the fact is that He has already made that decision and has revealed it in the Scriptures. It is not speculation to believe the Bible. God does indeed love all sinners and Christ died to make it possible for them to be saved, but the other side of the coin is that only those who repent and trust Christ will be saved. Nothing is more plainly stated in Scripture. "He that



believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:26). "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). "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). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Hebrews 2:3). "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Hebrews 12:25). The second chapter of Ephesians describes the condition of every individual apart from

regenerating faith in Jesus Christ. They are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1); they walk "according to the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2); they are "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3); they have "no hope" and are "without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Without faith in Jesus Christ, there is no hope. That is the teaching of God's Word, and it is every evangelist's responsibility to warn the people to be saved before it is eternally too late.

ALARMING CHURCH DROP OUT STATISTICS AMONG YOUTH

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Frank Page, the newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, says he is disturbed by the high number of young people who drop out of church (“SBC Leader Alarmed,” Faith News Network, August 8, 2006). In 2002, the SBC's Council on Family Life reported that roughly 88 percent of evangelical children are leaving church shortly after they graduate from high school. That is a frightful statistic! A major problem is that so many young people who grow up in churches are Christianized rather than born again, and in many cases there is no separation from the world, so that they are influenced by the world more than they are influenced by the Word of God. This is what happened to me. I grew up in Southern Baptist churches, made a profession of faith at age 10 or 11, was baptized and became a church member; but there was no repentance toward God, no radical change of mind that results in a change of life, and therefore no salvation. Biblical salvation is not merely believing; the devils believe and even tremble; a so-called “faith” in Christ that does not result in holiness is not saving faith (James 2:17-20). Biblical salvation is “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Most “evangelical” and even fundamentalist churches are not careful enough about whether or not children and young people are truly regenerated, and they are too busy pampering and entertaining them to disciple them in a biblical fashion. Another major problem is the strange practice of sending children from Christian homes to the public schools to be brainwashed in humanism and immersed in sin. The education in sin that I received in public school far exceeded that which I received for righteousness in the church. By God's mercy I was converted at age 23, but only after I had drunk deeply of the dregs of sin, which left deep and permanent scars, spiritual, physical, and emotional.



Frank Page

U2 AVOIDS TAXES

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The rock band U2 has moved a portion of its multi-million dollar business out of its native country of Ireland for tax purposes. Following the example of the Rolling Stones, U2 has moved a large part of its business to Holland to avoid paying higher taxes in Ireland. U2's lead singer, Bono, has lectured governments on the necessity of giving more foreign aid to Africa. He pushed his socialistic agenda at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C., on February 2 of this year. He is browbeating the developed nations to forgive the debts of African nations, ignoring the fact that the major part of Africa's problem with poverty and AIDS is demon worship, rampant immorality, and political corruption, none of which can be changed through foreign aid. Socialists like Bono want to use the government to do their good works with other people's money, but when it comes time to step up and pay his own taxes, the multi-millionaire rock star runs to the nearest tax haven. Joan Burton, Irish Labour's finance spokesman, said: “Having listened to Bono on the necessity for the Irish Government to give more money to Ireland Aid, of which I approve, I am surprised that U2 are not prepared to contribute to the Exchequer on a fair basis along with the bulk of Irish taxpayers” (“U2 Move Their Assets out of Ireland,” *London Telegraph*, August 8). Indeed.



METHODISTS SIGN JOINT DECLARATION ON JUSTIFICATION

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On July 23 representatives of the World Methodist Conference, meeting in Seoul, South Korea, signed the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,” an agreement that was reached in 1999 between the



Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church. This declaration, which is the product of ecumenical dialogue, is a cleverly worded document that defends the false Catholic sacramental gospel in every point. The Roman Catholic Church is changing absolutely nothing it has professed to believe about justification. The 16th-century Council of Trent cursed anyone who would dare to say that justification is by faith alone through grace alone by Christ's completed atonement alone, and this ecumenical declaration does not draw back from that one iota. Notice Canon 12 and 24 from Trent's Canons Concerning Justification: “If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canon 12). “If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are

merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA” (Canon 24). If the Roman Catholic Church were suddenly to agree with non-Catholics that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone by Christ's complete and all-sufficient sacrifice alone WITHOUT WORKS OR SACRAMENTS OR BAPTISM OR PRIESTHOOD, it would bring the curses of its own popes and councils upon its head. It has not done that. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification does not teach that “justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us” nor does the Joint Declaration deny that justification is “increased before God through good works.” That the majority of Lutherans and Methodists now agree with Rome's false gospel is clear evidence of their complete apostasy. (For more on this see “Liberal Lutherans and Roman Catholics Agree to Deny the Gospel,” <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/jointdeclaration.htm>).

WHY DOESN'T GOD ANSWER PRAYER IMMEDIATELY?

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It is possible to get discouraged in one's Christian life due to the fact that answered prayer does not always come quickly, but there is a reason for this. Primarily, it is to test our faith. God has ordained that the Christian live this present life by faith and not by sight. Hebrews 11:6 says that “without faith it is impossible to please him.” In Romans 8:18-25, Paul mentioned the sufferings and corruption of this present life and concluded that the believer is subject to these things because “we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope” (Romans 8:24). The Lord Jesus Christ said to Thomas, who refused to believe unless he saw the resurrected Christ with his own eyes: “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). Five times in the Gospels the Lord Jesus warned about those who have “little faith.” James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7 teach us that the sufferings of this life try our faith and produce patience. This is why prayer is not answered immediately. If God answered the believer's prayers immediately, he would never suffer or have any lack and would not, therefore, have to live by faith. We always cry out to God as soon as trouble comes, when we are sick or have a financial need or desire a change in the weather, and if God always answered immediately we would never suffer or have any lack and would therefore

live by sight rather than by faith. Further, if the believer's prayers were answered always and immediately, unbelievers would see this and would be saved by sight rather than by faith. But the Bible says that salvation is by faith (John 20:30-31; Eph. 2:8-9). Happily, there is one prayer that God does answer quickly, and that is the prayer of Psalm 138:3. "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Observe that this is a zealous, earnest prayer. The Psalmist says that he "cries" out to God, and in the very day that he does this God answers by strengthening him with strength in his soul. God doesn't always take away the believer's problems and sufferings, but He always gives strength to go through the problem if we look to Him in steadfast faith and earnestly seek His grace.



OLD-TIME CONVERSION COMES THROUGH OLD-TIME PREACHING

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The following is excerpted from Harry Ironside's Commentary on Revelation: "What is needed everywhere is a great revival of decided gospel preaching, pressing home on the consciences of men and women their lost condition, despite church membership, if they have not personally received the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word says, 'Break up [the] fallow ground' (Jer. 4:3; Hos. 10:12); sow not among 'thorns.' We often hear people say that they would like to see more old-time conversions. Well, first there must be the old-time preaching of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the lost condition of all men by both nature and practice, until the old-time conviction will seize upon the souls of Christless men and women, and then the old-time gospel will be hailed as the only relief."

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.