

Friday Church News Notes

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JERRY FALWELL TO SPEAK AT SOUTHWIDE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

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Jerry Falwell is slated to speak at the 51st Southwide Baptist Fellowship, which is scheduled to be held October 22-25, 2006, at Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. This is further evidence of Southwide's deeply compromised direction and the fact that it has left its original moorings. As a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s I attended three Southwide conferences, and there was no contemporary music, no modern Bible versions, and no sympathy for ecumenism and New Evangelicalism. All of that has gone by the wayside, though, and the current leaders are to blame. Tom Messer is the pastor of Trinity and the host of this year's conference, and the speakers include David Boulter (Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, TN), Dino Pedrone (New Testament Baptist Church, Miami, FL), Gary Coleman (Lavon Drive Baptist Church, Garland, TX), Gordon Godfrey (Marcus Pointe Baptist Temple, Pensacola, FL), George Grace (First Bible Baptist Church, Rochester, NY), Tim Lee (evangelist), Bradley Price (King's Way Baptist Church, Concord, NC), Jerry Vines (former pastor of the SBC First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL), Jerry Walls (Southside Baptist Church, Warner Robins, GA), and Johnny Pope (Christchurch Baptist Fellowship, Houston, TX). The music at this year's Fellowship will be led by Mike Speck. His choral book "Everlasting Praise"



features many songs that are on the CCLI list of top 25 contemporary "praise and worship" songs in America, including "Shout to the Lord" by the radical ecumenist and charismatic Christian rocker Darlene Zschech. Jerry Falwell well represents Southwide's new direction and philosophy. In the late 1970s he formed the Moral Majority, and by February 1986 he told *Christianity Today* that Catholics made up the largest constituency (30%). In his autobiography *Strength for the Journey*, Falwell referred to the "Catholic brothers and sisters in the Moral Majority" (p. 371). Falwell was one of the speakers at the April 1980 "Washington for Jesus" Rally. Fellow speakers were Catholic priests John Bertolucci, John Randall, and Michael Scanlon, self-esteem guru Robert Schuller, and a host of radical Charismatics, including Jim Bakker of *PTL*, Pat Robertson of the *700 Club*, and Demos Shakarian of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. In an interview with the *National Catholic Register*, published in the May 9, 1982, issue, Falwell listed Pope John Paul II as one of the two "greatest men in my lifetime." He did not give any warning about the pope's false gospel that is cursed of God (Gal. 1:6-8). In fact, Falwell made the amazing and ridiculous statement that Roman Catholics accept "the new birth experience." Falwell endorsed Chuck Colson's 1992 book, *The Body*, which urges Evangelicals to join forces with Catholics and Charismatics. Colson said, "...the body of Christ, in all its diversity, is created with

Baptist feet, charismatic hands, and Catholic ears--all with their eyes on Jesus” (*World*, Nov. 14, 1992). Billy Graham was the commencement speaker at Falwell's Liberty University in 1997, and in the October 1995 issue of the *National Liberty Journal* Falwell praised Graham for his “long and faithful ministry.” Billy Graham, who accepts degrees from Catholic colleges and says the Catholic gospel is the same as his own; who has turned thousands of converts over to apostate churches; who thinks the previous Pope was a great evangelist; who believes there is special power in infant baptism; who doubts that Hell is a place of literal fiery torment; who invites Catholic bishops onto his platform to bless those who come forward at his invitations; who praises Christ-denying Modernists; who has promoted practically every perverted Bible version to appear in the last five decades--Billy Graham has had a faithful ministry? This statement is evidence of Jerry Falwell's spiritual blindness, which is the result of his downward spiral through wrong associations (1 Cor. 15:33), and it is sad to see the Southwide Baptist Fellowship honoring such a man. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

OPRAH WINFREY'S SELF-ESTEEM PHILOSOPHY

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Oprah Winfrey is not only a television entertainer, she is an entire industry, and her massive following has made her one of America's richest people with a net worth of \$1.3 billion. Called “the Queen of Talk,” her secret is the self-esteem philosophy that encourages people simply to believe in themselves and follow their heart.

Earlier this month, in a conversation with Naomi Judd over weight issues on her television program, Winfrey said: “When you're really inside yourself -- you don't need a book, you don't need a psalm, you don't need a song, but you know that you are worthy because you were born. The moment you get to the point where you really do feel worthy and, 'I deserve it, I deserve all the happiness and abundance that God is willing to give me,' it will be over” (“Oprah Winfrey Told Naomi Judd Her Life Changed for Better Once She Came to Realization that She Deserved It,” *Best Syndication*, Oct. 2, 2006). The Bible, on the other hand, says that each and every one of us have sinned against God and that we deserve eternal hell, but through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (and through nothing else and nothing less) we can receive God's grace, which is the opposite of what we deserve. Beware of Oprah Winfrey's self-esteem, “follow your heart” philosophy. The Bible warns: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).



ALLEGED MEMBERS OF JEWISH TRIBE OF MANASSEH GOING HOME AFTER 2,700 YEARS



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 Indian citizens who claim to be descendants of the Jewish tribe of Manasseh are preparing to return to Israel 2,700 years after being taken captive by the Assyrian army. There are seven or eight thousand of these people, who call themselves Bnei Menashe [children of Manasseh], living in the northeastern Indian states of Mizoram and Manipur, and they have been trying to return to Israel since soon after the Jewish state was formed in 1948. They claim that their forefathers were taken captive when Assyria conquered the northern 10 tribes of Israel in about 721 B.C. This event is recorded

in 2 Kings 17:5-23. After being exiled from Israel they eventually traveled through Afghanistan and settled in the border regions of China and India. For almost three millennia they have kept many of the Jewish customs, such as the Sabbath, kosher dietary laws, and circumcision. In the 1950s, thousands of the Bnei Menashe people set out on foot to Israel, but they were stopped by Indian authorities (“Lost Tribe of Israel Returning Home,” *WorldNetDaily*, Oct. 6, 2006). Following visits by Jewish rabbis who have begun converting some of the Bnei Menashe to orthodox Judaism, the door is opening for them to return to Israel. (Other rabbis do not believe they are Jewish descendants.) The first group left in 2003, and another 218 are scheduled to immigrate in November 2006. Regardless of whether or not the Bnei Menashe are true Jewish descendants, the continued existence of Israel as a people and a nation after thousands of years of exile from their homeland is a great miracle and an irrefutable evidence of the authenticity of the Bible, which prophesied these things long before they happened. The return of Israel to her homeland also reminds us that the hour is very late and that the horrible events described in Revelation 6-18 are likely on the near horizon.

YOUNG SOUTHERN BAPTIST PREACHERS REJECT STRICT DOCTRINAL STANCE

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Two groups of young Southern Baptist preachers have spoken out against a strict Biblical doctrinal stance. While affirming the inerrancy of Scripture and their desire to stand on the denomination's doctrinal statement, the “Baptist Faith and Message,” they do not want to make an issue of the whole counsel of God. A group calling itself “The Joshua Convergence” presented seven “Principles of Affirmation” during a meeting in Florida in September. Principle number 5 is on “Unity,” and it calls for “full cooperation” on the basis of the Baptist Faith and Message and acceptance of differences outside of this. In particular, the statement mentions “diverse positions on the doctrines of grace, aspects of eschatology, approaches to worship, and missions and evangelism strategy.” In other words, they do not believe it is proper to make an issue of things such as Calvinism or Reformed theology, allegorical interpretation of prophecy, amillennialism or post-tribulationism, contemporary worship, ecumenical evangelism, or adding social-political work to the Great Commission. In May another group of Southern Baptists issued the “Memphis Declaration,” expressing their displeasure over “narrowing of cooperation through exclusionary theological and political agendas.” This group is opposed to making an issue of anything beyond that which is stated in the Baptist Faith and Message. They are opposed, for example, to the International Mission Board's year-old policy that forbids missionaries from speaking in tongues. Both of these groups are expressing a New Evangelical philosophy. Instead of the infallible Bible being upheld as the full and sole basis for practice and fellowship, they have replaced this with a man-made statement of faith, which is not only fallible but also insufficient. Why would the God who went to the trouble to give us the whole Bible be pleased with those who replace it, in practice, with an abbreviated authority and standard? The Apostle Paul's standard for faith and practice was different. He himself kept and taught “*all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27), and he taught the “younger preachers” of his day to keep the Word of God “*without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Tim. 6:14). Of course, if one is zealous for the whole counsel of Scripture and intent upon keeping it without spot, one would cause trouble in such a deeply compromised denomination as the SBC.

THE EFFECTUALNESS OF PRAYER

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“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” (Revelation 5:8). We see here that the believer's prayers are effectual, are reserved in heaven, are a part of the heavenly worship, and

are associated with the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. They are a sweet odor unto the Lord. See Psalms 141:2. The devil fights against prayer most viciously because it is so powerful. Prayer is a necessary part of our spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-13, 18). See also Luke 18:1; Acts 6:4; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 2 Timothy 1:3. William Newell, in his commentary on Revelation, observes: "Would our Lord have commanded His disciples to pray 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,' if God had not meant to bring this to pass, and if the prayers of the saints were not a vital factor in bringing about this glorious result? Some day it will be found that every soul that has been saved, every blessing any saint has received, every thwarting of Satan, every victory for God, as well as this final consummation of our Lord's taking over the book of the kingdom--all have been brought about through the saints' prayers, inspired of God, as essential elements in His great, all-comprehensive purpose."



BEWARE OF HASTY EVANGELISM

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The following was stated in 1905 by G. Campbell Morgan: "I would rather have a dozen people constrained, convicted, and converted, than a hundred caught in some emotional movement, in which movement there is no real depth of conviction and result. ... The inquiry room is simply for inquiring souls to come that they may be intelligently dealt with about the spiritual perplexities. And that makes necessary the training of inquiry room workers. You cannot deal intelligently and correctly with a hundred at once. Every case has an individual problem, and there are two words that cover the ground of such work, and these are the words *diagnosis* and *direction*. ... We have no business to tell any man he is saved. There's a point where we have to stand aside and let God and the man deal alone with each other. We can help, lead, point, counsel, warn, plead, but at last, regeneration is the coming of God to the soul that comes to Him, and we have to draw aside and leave the individual to God."

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. David Cloud is the director of Way of Life Literature and author of the Friday Church News Notes.