

# 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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## EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH CONSIDERS DROPPING PREMILLENNIAL BELIEF

Friday Church News Notes, November 3, 2006, <http://www.wayoflife.org>

The Free Church in America (EFCA) is considering dropping its Premillennial statement of faith. The EFCA Board of Directors accepted the second draft of the revised statement on October 19, 2006, and if approved at the next Board meeting it will go to the Convention for a final vote in February 2007. The current statement says: "We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this 'Blessed Hope' has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer." The revision would remove the words "premillennial and imminent" as well as the statement that this blessed hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. Even if the revised statement is not approved by the denomination, the very fact that it has been proposed and twice approved by its board of directors is evidence of a growing rejection of Premillennial theology. The EFCA has 1,278 churches. It is enlightening that the proposed new EFCA statement of faith removes both the imminency of Christ's return and the thought that Christ's coming has a vital bearing on the believer's life and service. We are convinced that the doctrine of the imminent return of Christ is not only Scriptural but it is also the only position on Bible prophecy that produces a vital bearing on Christian living. Thus, giving up Premillennialism has huge ramifications. It will be interesting to see if the current spread of Reformed theology among Baptists will result in the growth of amillennialism.



## EMBOLDENED EVOLUTIONARY ATHEISTS

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The number of atheists in the world is very small, but some of them are increasingly vocal in their crusade against religion in general and the God of the Bible in particular. Richard Dawkins of Oxford University, a passionate defender of evolution, is an example. His best-selling book "The God Delusion" blasphemously proclaims: "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully." Atheists such as Dawkins believe that religion is hindering the evolutionary advancement of humanity and that an individual can be an atheist "who is happy, balanced, moral



Richard Dawkins

and intellectually fulfilled” (“The New Atheists,” Spiegel Online, Oct. 26, 2006). In fact, if evolution is true, nothing matters. If evolution is true there is no intelligent design, no meaning to life, no absolute rights and wrongs, no supreme definition of morality, no existence or judgment beyond death. So if evolution is true it simply does not matter what a man does or does not do, whether he is religious or non-religious, violent or non-violent, intellectual or stupid; and Dawkins is uttering complete nonsense when he speaks of “morality” and purpose without God. As for the Bible, it has no more respect for the atheist than the atheist has for it, proclaiming, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good” (Psalm 14:1).

## **SOUTHERN BAPTIST PROFESSOR SAYS CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS “THE CANARY IN A COAL MINE”**

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Speaking at a conference at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at the end of September, Gregory Wills compared church discipline to “the canary in a coal mine.” He said, “When the canary in a coal mine keels over, catastrophe impends. When church discipline is lost, catastrophe impends” (“Scholars: Baptists Must Reclaim Church Discipline,” Baptist Press, Oct. 27, 2006). Wills, who is a professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, observed that church discipline began to decline among Baptists in the late 19th century. By 1998 Dean Register, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, testified: “It’s very unusual for Southern Baptist churches to take disciplinary action against an individual” (*The Sun Herald*, Biloxi, Mississippi, Sept. 13, 1998). There can be no doubt that this is true. Across the length and breadth of the land there are unrepentant moral reprobates and heretics on the rolls of Southern Baptist churches. Furthermore, it is common for a large percentage of the members of Southern Baptist congregations to habitually neglect themselves from the assembly and to live no differently than their unsaved neighbours. According to a 1997 study by the Strategic Information and Planning department of the Sunday School Board only 32.8% of the 16 million SBC church members even bother to show up on a given Sunday morning and only 12.3% participate in any further aspect of church life. “These figures suggest that nearly 90% of Southern Baptist church members appear to be little different from the ‘cultural Christians’ who populate mainline denominations” (*Founder’s Journal*, Feb. 7, 1999). Thus, if church discipline is indeed the “canary in a coal mine,” then the Southern Baptist convention is long dead. Fundamental Baptists need to pay careful heed to this loud warning. Those who are saying that the Southern Baptist Convention has “been rescued from liberalism” are not giving us the whole story. They are not telling us how deeply compromised and corrupt the Convention is at the local level. In my experience church discipline is still practiced by most independent Baptist churches to this day (excepting many of the largest ones, which rarely operate after the apostolic fashion), and this is only one of the many serious differences between the independent and the denominational systems.

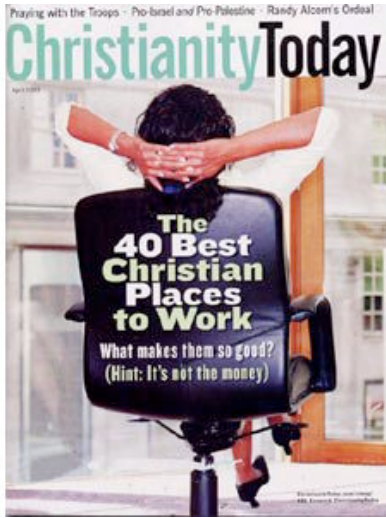


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## **NEW EVANGELICALISM'S PATHETIC EFFECT ON SOCIETY**

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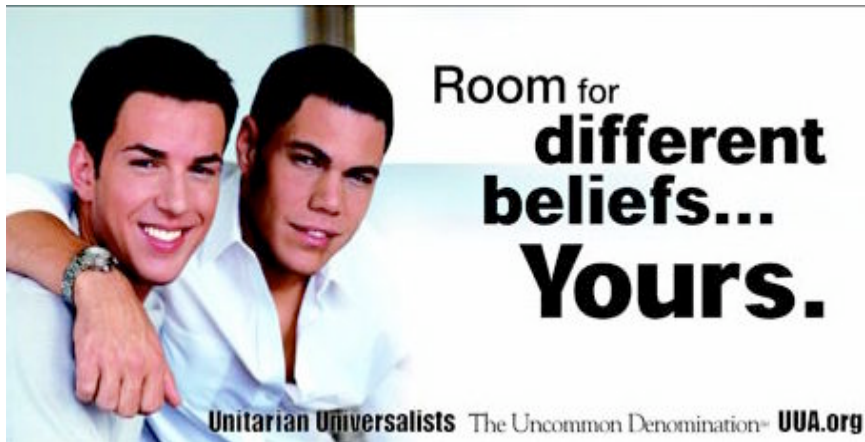
When New Evangelicalism blasted on the scene in the 1950s it repudiated the separatism of Fundamentalism, not only ecclesiastical separation but separation from the world. Claiming that Fundamentalism had maneuvered Bible-believing Christianity into the backwaters of society and had lost its influence because of its separatist stance, it proposed a new plan to influence society by engaging it rather than withdrawing from it. What has been the result? Rather than the world being influenced powerfully by Evangelicalism, Evangelicalism has been influenced powerfully by the world. This is not surprising, since the Word of God warns: “Be not deceived: evil



communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). A recent article in *Christianity Today*, a chief New Evangelical mouthpiece, was entitled “How the Character of Religion in America Has Changed Since the Founding of Christianity Today.” Comparing Christianity in the 1950s with Christianity a half century later, the article, while trying to remain upbeat, is forced to admit that things have changed for the worse in many areas. For example, in 1963 the percentage of those who said the Bible is the Word of God and should be taken literally was 65% (it would doubtless have been much higher in the 1940s), whereas in 2006 the figure is only 28%. In the areas of morality, it is obvious that American society has taken a severe plunge. The levels of divorce, unmarried cohabitation, out-of-wedlock births, venereal disease, abortions, violence, and other signs of unrestrained evil are off the charts compared to the 1940s. Whatever New Evangelicalism has done, it has not influenced society toward righteousness. The situation was much better when

Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism were synonyms and both practiced biblical separation. Iain Murray had it right when he said: “Christians are not to be sheep in wolves' clothing. The Christian faith is rather at its strongest when its antagonism to unbelief is most definite, when its spirit is other-worldly, and when its whole trust is not 'in the wisdom of men but in the power of God' (1 Cor. 2:5)” (*Evangelicalism Divided*, 2000, p. 212). “And be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2). “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good work” (Titus 2:13-14).

## UNITARIANISM'S NEW MARKETING CAMPAIGN



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 Positing itself as the non-dogmatic religion for thinking people, the Unitarian Universalist “church” has launched a new advertising campaign. Over a three-year period it has spent \$750,000 on media campaigns in five major cities. William Sinkford, head of the Unitarian Universalists, says, “[We’re] coming out of the closet by being more present in the religious landscape” (“Bearing Witness to

a Sea Change in Unitarian Practice,” *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 28, 2006). The campaign features such things as a mailer depicting a homosexual couple with the slogan, “Imagine a religion where people with different beliefs worship as one faith.” Created in 1961 through a merger of the American Unitarian Association (which originally denied the Trinity and the divine inspiration of Scripture and gradually deteriorated into a mere free-thinking society) and the Universalist Church in America (which originally denied eternal judgment and followed the same path as the Unitarians), the group's chief platform is broadminded tolerance in religious thinking. It is the “church” for those who believe there are many paths to God or who believe in no God at all. A 1981 survey of the Unitarian Universalists in San Luis Obispo, California, found that more than 90% were either humanists, agnostics, atheists, or “frankly, not sure” (*Foundation* magazine, Nov.-Dec. 1981). Unitarianism is simply the logical and consistent result of the judge-not philosophy.

# BEWARE OF THE BBC

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<http://www.wayoflife.org>

Last month senior figures in the BBC admitted in an internal memo that it is “guilty of promoting left-wing views and anti-Christian sentiment” (“BBC Confesses Bias on Religion, Politics,” WorldNetDaily, Oct. 23, 2006). “Most executives admitted the corporation's representation of homosexuals and ethnic minorities was unbalanced and disproportionate, YnetNews.com said.

The British news agency, the report said, leaned too strongly towards political correctness, the overt promotion of multiculturalism, anti-Americanism and discrimination against the countryside.” We have long observed this extreme bias on the part of BBC, and it is sad that it has such a large influence in many parts of the world; but CNN and most other mainstream news agencies are guilty of the same thing. Consider how they portray America's war against terror (or America in general) or the abortion issue or the Bible or Jesus Christ or Israel or environmentalism or homosexuality or animal rights or communism or any of a number of other issues. Two better sources for secular news are WorldNetDaily.com and CNSnews.com.



# THE ME GENERATION

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The internet and the pop culture are giant reflections of the self-esteem mad “me generation” that was prophesied in the infallible Scripture 2,000 years ago. Two of the most popular web sites are MYspace and YOUTube, and there is also MyYahoo, MyWay, MyStuff, and a myriad of other me-centered sites. And don't forget the Ipod on which to play MYmusic. The very theme of pop music today is “me.” “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 4:1-5). “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24).



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