

Friday Church News Notes

TRADING FACTS FOR FANTASY

Movie Viewers Don't Want to Leave Imaginary World

Friday Church News Notes, January 15., 2009, www.wayoflife.org

It is reported that some fans of the movie *Avatar* are experiencing potent withdrawal symptoms because they don't want to leave the film's imaginary world. *Avatar*, which is on track possibly to become the highest grossing film of all time, is a science fiction movie about a world called Pandora populated by a race of "humanoids" called Na'vi. Its powerful 3D graphics immerse the viewer in this fictional world where the peace-loving citizens commune with nature. The writers even developed a Na'vi language consisting of 1,000 words. The fan forum site has received more than 1,000 posts pertaining to people experiencing obsessive thoughts about the film ("Audiences Experience 'Avatar' Blues," CNN, Jan. 11, 2010). One said, "I can't force myself to think that it's just a movie, and to get over it." Another, "Ever since I went to see 'Avatar' I have been depressed. Watching the wonderful world of Pandora and all the Na'vi made me want to be one of them. I can't stop thinking about all the things that happened in the film and all of the tears and shivers I got from it. I even contemplate suicide thinking that if I do it I will be rebirthed in a world similar to Pandora." The human imagination is a great spiritual battleground and must be guarded jealously. The Bible admonishes, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The modern entertainment

CONTINUED, PAGE 2....

THE LABYRINTH: NEW AGE MYSTICISM

The labyrinth continues to grow in popularity both in secular and "Christian" society. The labyrinth is a circular pattern with a path that winds its way to the center and that is used as a tool for prayer and meditation. The labyrinth was borrowed from paganism and "Christianized" by the Roman

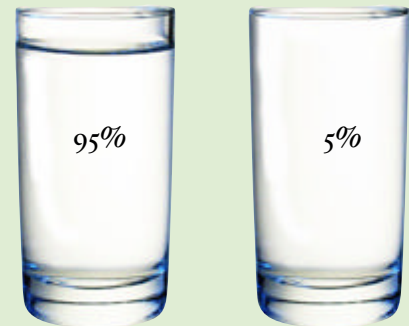


Catholic Church as part of its desperate search for spirituality apart from the new birth and commitment to Scripture. Today it is a mystical tool for unity, both secular and "Christian." The modern resurgence of labyrinth practice has positioned them in Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Emerging, even Baptist churches (e.g., Millbrook Baptist in Raleigh, NC, and Weatherly Heights Baptist in Huntsville, Alabama). Lauren Artress, a priestess at Episcopal Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and a major promoter of labyrinth,

says the goal is "to facilitate the transformation of the Human Spirit." Observe that Human Spirit is capitalized, testifying to the New Age view that man finds divinity within himself. Artress says that she discovered the

CONTINUED, PAGE 2...

JUSTIFYING 95% FALSE PROFESSIONS



The following is excerpted from *The Technique Catastrophe: An Explanation of the Multitudes of False Professions in the Independent Baptist Movement* by Bob Creel (865-712-4537): "Many years ago, in order to answer the criticism of the mounting number of false professions, I heard a brother say, 'I would rather lead 100 souls to Christ, knowing that 95 of them were false professions, and see five of them go to heaven, than to not attempt to be a soul-winner.' The first tragedy of that statement is assuming that those are the only two options: either to rack up false professions while winning a few, or to not witness at all. How about the option of being a witness within the guidelines of scriptural teaching, which produces very few false professions! The second tragedy is the flippant attitude about the 95 people to whom you gave assurance of salvation that will one day wake up in hell! Most of them will not allow a genuine witness to approach them about their souls, because they're banking on that false assurance that you gave them."

AVATAR, Continued...

industry aims its heavy guns at man's imagination. Satanic-influenced entertainment creators (Ephesians 2:1-2) want to corrupt the imagination through sensuality and turn it from the living God through the creation of vain worlds. There is particular danger for believers in the genres of science fiction and horror, which are typically devoid of truth and reality. Pandora does not exist, but Heaven and Hell do. No one will ever be rebirthed into Pandora, but Jesus promised that men can be born again to eternal life through repentance and faith in Him and live forever in a place that is exceedingly more beautiful than any Hollywood script writer or graphics guru can ever imagine.

LABYRINTH, Continued...

labyrinth in 1991 through Jean Houston's Mystery School, a New Age organization. Recently Artress said that the labyrinth assists the individual in drawing wisdom from himself. "We're always told what to believe, what to do. We're told. We're told. We're told. The labyrinth evokes our own deep intuitive wisdom about ourselves" ("Ancient Labyrinths Enjoying a Resurgence," *The Denver Post*, Jan. 9, 2010). Notice the rebellion toward absolutely authority that literally drips from the lips of this New Age Episcopalian priestess. The Bible says man cannot find wisdom in himself because "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). The mystery of iniquity, which is the devil's program to put the antichrist on the throne of this world, is operating at full steam today, but we must not forget that there is one who is restraining this program and will continue to restrain until he is taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8). That One is the Holy Spirit, and the reason that Christ is waiting is the salvation of souls (2 Peter 3:9).

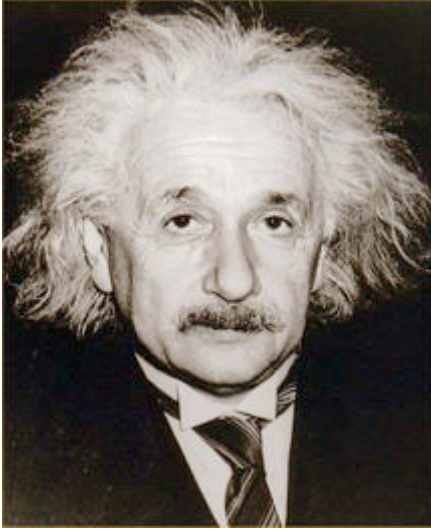


Dr. Elizabeth Newman, far right in this photo.

BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE AND ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

Since 2006 the Baptist World Alliance has been conducting annual dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church. The representatives have considered the subjects of Scripture, tradition, Mary, and the papacy, and this year they intend to publish a joint document. Doubtless it will whitewash and misrepresent the differences and call for further steps toward "unity." Beth Newman, a professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary and a member of the dialogue team, claims that Jesus desires unity between Baptists and Catholics (*Associated Baptist Press*, Jan. 5, 2010), and she bases this on John 17:21. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." In the context, though, Jesus was not giving a commandment for men to follow; He was praying to the Father and His prayer was answered. Those who are born again are one in Christ because they have been adopted into God's family and made partakers of the Holy Spirit. This has nothing to do Roman Catholics, who believe that baptism and sacraments are necessary for salvation, or with unregenerate liberal Baptists who do not believe the Bible is the verbally-inspired Word of God. The "unity in diversity" promoted by the ecumenical movement is based on human thinking rather than God's Word. True Christian unity is to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10), and this is only possible among those who are born again and who are committed absolutely to the infallible Scriptures.

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature's Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this does not imply an endorsement. For instructions on how to unsubscribe to this list or to change mailing addresses, please consult the information paragraph at the end.



THE EINSTEIN GULF

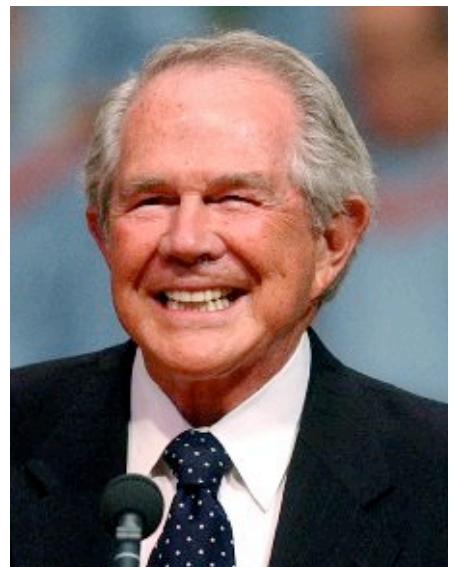
The following is excerpted from John Baumgardner, Ph.D. in geophysics, chapter 24 of *In Six Days: Why Fifty Scientists Choose to Believe in Creation*: “Einstein pointed to the nature and origin of symbolic information as one of the profound questions about the world as we know it. He could identify no means by which matter could bestow meaning to symbols. The clear implication is that symbolic information, or language, represents a category of reality distinct from matter and energy. Linguists today, therefore, speak of this gap between matter and meaning-bearing symbol sets as the ‘Einstein gulf.’ ... From whence, then, does linguistic information originate? In our human experience we immediately connect the language we create and process with our minds. But what is the ultimate nature of the human mind? If something as real as linguistic information has existence independent of matter and energy, from causal considerations it is

not unreasonable to suspect that an entity capable of originating linguistic information is also ultimately non-material in its essential nature. ... The evolutionary assumption that the exceedingly complex linguistic structures which comprise the construction blueprints and operating manuals for all the complicated chemical nano-machinery and sophisticated feedback control mechanisms in even the simplest living organism--that these structures must have a materialistic explanation--*is fundamentally wrong*. But how, then, does one account for symbolic language as the crucial ingredient from which all living organisms develop and function and manifest such amazing capabilities? The answer should be obvious: an intelligent Creator is unmistakably required.”

PAT ROBERTSON MAKES ANOTHER PROPHECY

In spite of a long string of false prophecies, Charismatic preacher Pat Robertson has made another prediction, that America will become bankrupt in 2010. Actually, he fudged the timing by saying, “it’s coming, and it’s a question of how fast.” Anyone can make a prediction, and that one might be a pretty safe bet somewhere down the road, but Robertson’s error is in claiming that God tells him these things. He proved long ago that he is deceived in this. He prophesied for 2007 that America would suffer a “mass killing” at the hands of terrorists. He prophesied for 2006 that major storms would hit the American east coast and possibly a tsunami in the Pacific Northwest, but no major storm hit either coast that year for the first time in over a decade. For 2005 he predicted that President Bush would experience victory after victory in his second term, when in fact it was a disaster. For 2004

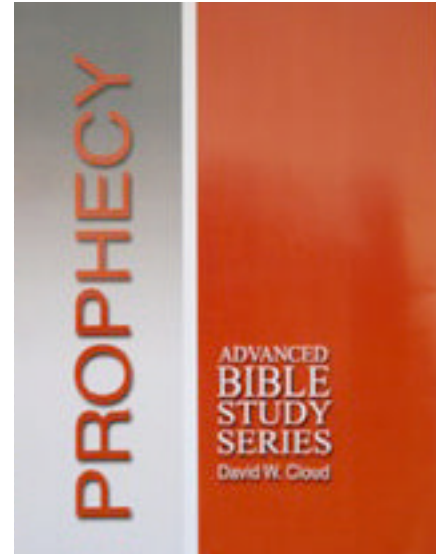
he prophesied that Bush would win the presidential election “like a blowout,” when in fact he squeaked by with 51% of the vote. For 1988 he prophesied that he would be the next president of the United States; for 1985, a worldwide economic collapse; for 1982, that Russia would invade Israel; for 1980, an economic depression and a major war in the Middle East. None of this happened. The Charismatic movement perpetually discredits itself. It is as much ridiculous as it is heretical, but with truth and eternal souls at stake it must be taken seriously. The Bible says, “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him” (Deuteronomy 18:22).



THE MANIFOLD BENEFIT OF THE WAY OF LIFE ADVANCED BIBLE STUDIES SERIES

Way of Life's Advanced Bible Studies Series is a serious set of Bible studies, equivalent to a complete Bible College curriculum. We don't believe that you will find better quality, more truly life-changing Bible courses from any other source. We are continually revising the courses, and with each new edition they become more mature. There are currently 20 volumes averaging 265 pages each. The subjects are Acts, Bible History and Geography, The Bible Version Issue, Defense of the Faith, First Corinthians, The Four Gospels, Genesis, Give Attendance to Doctrine, Hebrews, A History of the Churches from a Baptist Perspective, How to Study the Bible, James, Job, The New Testament Church, Pastoral Epistles, Proverbs, Psalms, Revelation, Romans, and Understanding Bible Prophecy. (We recommend students to start with "How to Study the Bible.") The courses are based upon the King James Bible and the powerful word studies assist in the understanding of the KJV but do not cast doubt upon it. They are thorough and comprehensive, yet they are laid out in outlines that are easily comprehended and taught. They are very practical and have the objective

of producing well-equipped Christian soldiers that have a solid understanding of the Bible and God's perfect will. They stress holy and obedient Christian living and separation from worldliness and error. They magnify evangelism and the New Testament church and promote world missions. They emphasize the essential differences between law and grace, the church and Israel, positional and practical sanctification, and they continually fortify the student's understanding of life-changing doctrines such as justification by grace, substitutionary atonement, and eternal security. The courses are non-Calvinistic and interpret Bible prophecy from a literal pre-tribulational perspective. The diligent student can be prepared to stand against the wiles of the Devil and to refute the major theological heresies of our day. One pastor said the books "are extremely helpful for any Christian, no matter where they are spiritually; the practical application is extremely helpful and edifying." For more information see the online catalog at the Way of Life Literature web site, <http://www.wayoflife.org>



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.