

FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

CHINA'S WAR ON CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

The following is excerpted from Elizabeth Yore, "China's War on Children," Breitbart, Sep. 12, 2019: "While the youth of Hong Kong march for freedom and democracy, the Communist Party of China (CPC) subjects China's youth to a brutal campaign of oppression and tyranny, barring Chinese youth from any and all religious practice and venues. ... The insidious Chinese Communist Party has declared that religious venues, churches, practices, education, and worship are no-go zones for all Chinese children under the age of 18. Chinese

continued on NEXT PAGE



BAPTIST CHURCH CALLS TRANSGENDER PASTOR



Erica Saunders recently lead her first service at the Peace Community Church in Oberlin, Ohio.

The following is excerpted from "Baptist Church Makes History," *Baptist News Global*, Aug. 23, 2019: "Members of an Ohio congregation are inviting the community to a Sept. 8 worship service officially welcoming one of the few openly transgender Baptist ministers as their new pastor. Erica Saunders, a 2019

graduate of the Wake Forest University School of Divinity ordained to the gospel ministry this spring by Wake Forest Baptist Church, began July 1 as pastor of Peace Community Church in Oberlin, Ohio. Founded in 1866 as the First Baptist Church of Oberlin, the congregation today describes itself as a 'small, but active and social action-oriented congregation' that is 'very involved' in the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, the Alliance of Baptists and the American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region. The pastoral search committee said in a letter to church members that the group received 16 candidates to replace the couple and narrowed the field to five and eventually down to a final two. 'Both candidates were very strong candidates, but Erica stood out as a candidate with unique strengths,' the search team said. 'Bright, compassionate, faith-filled and spirit-led with a loving presence, she showed as much interest in each of us as we did in her. At the end

continued on NEXT PAGE

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youth are being denied the right to religious freedom—a right enshrined in the Chinese constitution and a human right embodied and protected under Articles 2, 14 and 30 of the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child, signed and ratified by the People's Republic of China in 1992. So much for the Chinese honoring international treaty obligations! ... According to the U.S. State Department, 'The revised religious regulations implemented in February (2018) and policies enacted by the Chinese state-sanctioned religious associations inhibit children under the age of 18 from participating in religious activities and religious education.' ... Religious freedom and human rights watchdog groups such as Save the Persecuted Christians, Bitter Winter, Open Doors, and China Aid are tracking and reporting on Xi's country-wide crackdown prohibiting children from attending and participating in any religious services and worship. ... The no-go zones for Chinese children extend to all phases of the child's life, from school to summer camps to the home. ... As primary and secondary Chinese schoolchildren broke for summer holidays between June and August, the Communist Party wasted no time enforcing the no religion rule. CPC officials sent letters to parents,

reminding them to prevent their children from going to religious places for Bible study classes or any other religious study. The enforcement grew increasingly aggressive as religious-sponsored summer camps were raided and closed down by the police. ... The indoctrination campaign employs school teachers to advise their impressionable students that as good Chinese citizens, they are not to believe in God. This past June, Congressman Chris Smith (R-N.J.) testified at a congressional hearing on religious freedom and warned that 'under *Sinicization*, all religions and believers must comport with and aggressively promote communist ideology—or else.' Smith acknowledged that 'it's never been worse than it is right now.' Rep. Smith also cautioned that the Chinese government has imposed facial recognition cameras, restricted religious expression online, and prohibited people under the age of 18 from participating in religious services ... Plus, the government is rewriting the Bible. ... The UN Human Rights High Commissioner has not moved to enforce the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. There is largely silence from international governance groups on this insidious campaign of spiritual genocide."

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of our time together on Sunday, when we formed a circle and said a departing prayer, I think we felt and she felt a sense of calling to our church.' ... 'With God's help, together we can follow the example of Christ and create a beloved community marked by abiding peace, expansive love and radical justice in Oberlin and beyond,' said Saunders, one of the first openly trans individuals to be ordained by a Baptist church in the United States. The church, which adopted the name Peace Community Church in 2000, decided by consensus to welcome and affirm LGBTQ persons in 2005."

ROMANCE NOVELS

Romance novels exploded in popularity in the 1970s. By 2008, sales reached 74 million. Many romance novels have a strong sexual content. A recent example is *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which even delves into sadomasochism. “These novels were written to be titillating, and I really don’t think there’s a huge difference between this and porn. It’s ‘soft porn,’ and indeed many women find themselves far more aroused by reading something like this than they would be watching porn on a computer. So women who devour novel after novel like that aren’t that much different from men who watch porn all night” (“Romance Novels: Dangerous, Harmless, or Just Fun?” Jan. 16, 2012, tolovehonorandvacuum.com). Even G-rated romance

novels take the reader into an unrealistic world typically populated by strong, beautiful heroines and handsome, caring men who “fall in love.” They can create addiction to a fantasy world and dissatisfaction with real life. In 2011, the *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health* in Britain reported that romance novels “are a cause of marital breakdown, adulterous affairs and unwanted pregnancies.” As with anything of an addictive nature, there is the danger of progression. “I’ve known so many Christian teens who just devoured all the romances in the church library, and then headed to the public library for more, and ended up almost addicted to really steamy stuff” (“Romance Novels: Dangerous, Harmless, or Just Fun?” Jan. 16, 2012).

TEENS ANXIOUS/DEPRESSED AFTER THREE HOURS A DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The following is excerpted from “Teens are anxious,” *MIT Technology Review*,” Sep. 11, 2019: “A study published today in the journal *JAMA Psychiatry* suggests that teenagers who spend more than three hours a day on social media are more likely to develop mental health problems including depression, anxiety, aggression, and antisocial



behavior. The study: Nearly 6,600 12- to 15-year-old Americans self-reported how much time they spent per day on social media, as well as whether they had any mental health problems. ... The effects of social-media consumption on teens manifest in two main ways, according to the study’s authors: internally (depression and anxiety, for example) and externally (aggressive behavior or antisocial behavior). The latter were essentially nonexistent among teens who reported that they didn’t use social media. ... Teens today are way less likely to use Facebook and more likely to flip through TikTok. They’re also using social media differently, Snapchatting or Instagram DMing pals text-message style, which could explain why some teens are on social media so much in the first place. ... It’s the study’s broader point that Kira Riehm [a PhD student at Johns Hopkins and the lead author of the study] says is worth remembering: excessive time on social media doesn’t help people’s mental state.”

GOD BELIEVES IN “SECOND DEGREE” SEPARATION

Countless times over the years I have heard “second degree” separation mocked as unscriptural and extremist. For example, to separate from Billy Graham because he associated with modernists and Roman Catholics or to separate from Jerry Falwell or Ed Stetzer or whoever for similar associations is labeled “second degree separation.” As long as a man holds sound doctrine himself, we are not supposed to reprove him on the basis of his associations, but this is not what we see in Scripture. A prophet of God was sent to reprove king Jehoshaphat solely on the basis of his wrong associations. Jehoshaphat followed the true and living God and even had enough zeal for the truth to destroy idols, but because he joined hands with an enemy of the truth, Ahab, he was reprovved sharply and judged. “And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is

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wrath upon thee from before the LORD. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God” (2 Chronicles 19:2-3). If Jehu the son of Hanani were to exercise his ministry of godly reproof today, he would be labeled an extremist, a trouble maker, perhaps even a “fruitless blogger.” He would be told to “take off the gloves and pick up a towel,” as I was told by Warren Wiersbe in the 1980s. The “Jehoshaphat camp” would say, “Doesn’t Jehu know that Jehoshaphat is a good man who loves the Lord and does many wonderful works? Who does he think he is? And how many souls has this Jehu led to Christ? He’s probably jealous of the king’s ministry.” And if Jehoshaphat were a big-name Independent Baptist leader, he would just ignore “the criticism,” stay above the fray, treat it like bubble gum, perhaps pray for Jehu to get rid of the “critical eye.”

INFORMATION

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 obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. 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. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? “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 mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click “Manage My Subscription.” Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.