

## WEBSITE OFFERS POST-RAPTURE MESSAGING SERVICE

Worried about getting caught up in the Rapture and not being able to bestow to your unsaved family members one last call to the Gospel — or, at the very least, a means for them to recover all your earthly treasures? A new website may well be the answer to such concerns. YouveBeenLeftBehind.com identifies itself as a “Document storage and ‘Rapture’ triggered email messaging system,” and says its “purpose is to get one last message to the lost, at a time, when they might just be willing to hear it for the first and last time.”

Subscribers to the online service will be able to store encrypted documents containing personal private correspondence, including essential information about financial holdings and other assets. Six days following the Rapture, the documents will be emailed to a dozen of your closest family and friends — those who have been “left behind.” A second, unencrypted, level of files will be dispatched to another 50 email addresses of your choosing. The initial cost is \$40 for the first year, but the cost for resubscriptions is expected to decrease as more subscribers sign on to the service.

According to the website, the company is “programmed and run by Christians, for Christians.” An overview of the services says the corporation has “set up a system to send documents by email, to the addresses you provide, 6 days after the ‘Rapture’ of the Church. This occurs when 3 of our 5 team members scattered around the U.S. fail to log in over a 3 day period. Another 3 days are given to fail safe any false triggering of the system.”

—MKG

ministry and your life.” All of this sounded quite impressive; however, the only thing missing from the conference was the Word of God.

“It was the exception and not the rule when God’s Word was referred to in any way. A few speakers mentioned the need of receiving Jesus Christ, but very few. The subjects of ‘sin’ and ‘Hell’ apparently were off-limits,” said Ralph G. Colas, Executive Secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches.

Schuller, who is described as “the godfather of doing church differently,” acquired acclaimed speakers for the three days of meetings including former president George H.W. Bush, broadcaster Larry King, emerging church leaders Erwin McManus, Dan Kimball, and Miles McPherson, pollster George Barna, clinical psychologists Henry Cloud and John Townsend, apologist Lee Strobel, economist Ben Stein, former heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman, Nancy Ortberg, former teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church, and Kay Warren, wife of Rick Warren of Saddleback Church.

Colas described the event as “a mishmash of liberalism, New Age teaching, self-esteem philosophy with a lot of psycho-babble thrown into the mix.” It was reported that 2,500 attended the conference, with tens of thousands of others viewing via satellite simulcast to 44 cities in the U.S.

“Believers do not need to ‘rethink’ God’s truths but should ‘rethink’ accepting the multiplied errors offered by those like Robert Schuller,” Colas said.

—MKG

## PORN FILM GETS “THUMBS UP” FROM CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

For many believers, the thought of a Christian publication giving an enthusiastic review to a movie laced with all types of debauchery is unthinkable. Yet that’s just what *Christianity Today* magazine did for the summer theatrical release of *Sex and the City*, the big-screen version of the HBO television series.

In the critique, posted on the magazine’s website in late May, the film was given three stars out of a possible four. Camerin Courtney, who wrote the review, opined that the cable network series, which ran for six seasons

(continues on page 21)

## STRANGE — AND NOT SO STRANGE — BEDFELLOWS

Robert Schuller pledged that his “Rethink Conference,” held last January, would be “an unprecedented convergence of influential Christian and global leaders” where attendees would learn from cultural icons and experience “30 Aha! Moments from 30 Leading Influencers.” It was “about getting into the minds of the most influential thinkers, innovators and leaders” to develop “fresh perspective and new directions for your work, your

years doing that and there is no indication he was doing anything wrong. It may not have been Sunday church, but it was religious church activity.

Long before Constantine, early Church Fathers like Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) said clearly, "It is not the place but the assemblies of elect that I call the church." It could not be much clearer than this. To the early Church where they met was not the issue, but rather who met. The Church was the people and the gathering place inconsequential and unimportant.

We know that in Cappadocia early Christians met in cave structures, which are neither a house nor a large building. All of that history and those meeting places can be viewed in Ray VanderLaan's DVD series, *In the Dust of the Rabbi*.

One of the early — and documented — Christian complaints before Constantine was that Rome prohibited, for a time and in certain areas, the construction of churches. Apparently someone forgot to tell the early Christians they were forbidden to meet anywhere but in house churches.

Barna and Viola also have missed the Jewish milieu into which the Church was born. The early Church throughout Israel — and especially in Jerusalem — was Jewish to its core. These were children of the synagogue and it can be established that some early churches were simply converted synagogues. The Church was born in the synagogue and in some cases remained.

There have been early buildings excavated and it can be shown that a church either existed in or was built over a synagogue by Christians and used as a church. These were buildings and not homes. This precedes Constantine and was accepted in the spirit that it is not the place but the people. These facts have been commented on by Dr. Jack Finegan in his *The Archaeology of the New Testament*, and in Hershhal Shanks' *Judaism in Stone*.

The house church movement is elitist and therefore divisive. Christians should have no problem with those who wish to meet in homes or have house churches, but should never say it is the only way or that it is the more spiritual way. Where the body of Christ gathers is inconsequential. The leadership structure of the Church is mandated in the New Testament, but there is liberty as to the place of meeting, whether it is a home, a converted synagogue, a school hall, or a building built for the purpose of meeting.

Charges of paganism against those who do not meet in homes is wrong and unbiblical. True, there were pagan elements and heresies that infiltrated the Church after Constantine, but where people met was not one of them.

The exclusivity of house churches is a view that will always remain in the subculture. Hopefully, most Christians know too much to be taken in by it.

—GRF

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NEWS UPDATES

(continued from page 3)

and provided a continued plotline for the movie, was "a phenomenon even for many Christians." She went on to write, "For years, good churchgoing friends of mine secretly raved about *Sex and the City*. They told me that I, a 30-something single woman (and a singles columnist to boot), would appreciate the randy little show. I was a late adopter [to viewing the show] only because I didn't have cable. ... it was refreshing to have a single woman's sexuality acknowledged."

Courtney further applauded the movie's central characters, while demeaning "many Christians," saying that the women depicted in the film "show how challenging it really can be for intelligent, accomplished, and admittedly neurotic women to find lasting love. They, unlike many Christians, don't insult my intelligence."

Courtney apparently was an avid fan of the television series, observing that in the movie one particular character "As usual ... offers the weakest plot line." She further admitted the program to be "soft-core porn" and that "many viewers were no doubt drawn by the sex."

The magazine's review drew a firestorm of response from its readers; however, less than half of the posted letters were critical. One, who chided the review, said the periodical "should either abandon [its] stated Christian aims and mission statement, or stop condoning pornography." Another asked, "Are you guys really serious about Jesus, the Bible, holiness, and biblical truth?" The magazine countered with: "to slam us for reviewing the film makes no sense. Our mission statement is to help readers make discerning choices about movies — not to make the choices for people." *CT* also offered, "But we'd like to again reiterate that our star ratings do NOT imply an 'endorsement' or 'recommendation.' The star ratings have nothing to do with the film's 'moral value,' because such an assessment can vary widely from person to person."

The *CT* review also informed readers that the movie contains "several scenes with nudity, including a brief glimpse at frontal male nudity, a brief guy-to-guy kiss, and several graphic sex scenes, including a threesome. The language is colorful at times, but not as problematic as the sex and nudity. This isn't a movie for children or teens, and due to the content, not even for some adults."

—MKG