

Evangelist: Witches Need Jesus Too

The leader of Ancientcrossroads.org and ex-witch.org says many people involved in occultism are looking for spiritual fulfillment.



[10.28.08] As some people gear up for Halloween celebrations, ministries such as ex-witch.org and ancientcrossroads.org are helping those trapped in an occultist lifestyle find freedom. Mark Bishop, the president of Coracle Ministries, which oversees both Web sites, says people following paganism are really searching for spiritual fulfillment.

“A lot of people that are involved in witchcraft or Wicca or any of the pagan paths, they’re searching spiritually,” said Bishop, who once was involved in the occult. “When they don’t find what they need in the church, then they look elsewhere.”

Bishop said he once rejected Christ himself after seeing inconsistencies between the gospel and the lifestyles of some professing Christians. He says many of the people who venture onto the Web sites also have been wounded by religion.

“Ancientcrossroads.org’s main mission, in my mind, is to help people that have been hurt spiritually and emotionally by either the church or whatever path they were on before they came to Jesus,” Bishop told *Charisma*.

He says that ex-witch.org focuses more on evangelism, as many witches stumble onto the site because of its name. “It’s amazing to me that witches come on and talk all day long about Jesus,” said Kathi Sharpe, founder of ex-witch.org. “It’s just phenomenal.”

The Web sites also contain information to help Christians

better understand the occult, as well as teachings about Christ for those involved in paganism. Visitors are free to ask questions, and give and receive support.

“We don’t water down the gospel. But we present it in truth and love,” Bishop said. “I don’t know of many ministries trying to reach [witches]. There are many out there that have written them off.”

Bishop says that although some visitors come to the sites because they are angry and want to incite an argument, many others are seeking a refuge from a dangerous lifestyle. He believes too few Christians realize how deeply witches long to know the love of Jesus, and he hopes more believers will reach out to them.

“Witches are people too, and Jesus loves them,” Bishop said. “The pagans need to know that Jesus loves them, and they need to be treated with the respect due to all people.” –**Felicia Mann**

Pre-Election Prayer Held in California

Three days before America decides its next president, TheCall will hold 12 hours of prayer and fasting in a San Diego stadium.



[10.28.08] As a historic U.S. presidential race enters its final week, Christians are being implored by one of the nation’s leading prayer organizers to fast and pray for abortion and gay marriage to end, and for the nation’s next president to govern with godly principles.

Lou Engle, who founded a prayer movement called TheCall, will convene a massive rally at 10 a.m. this Saturday at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego. California's recent Supreme Court ruling that legalized gay marriage was a major source of motivation for Engle's choice of venue.

In a statement on his Web site, Engle called gay marriage "a reflection of how far down the line we have come in removing the very moral foundations that preserve society."

"The moral levies in America are breaking, and once marriage is redefined, it will be a matter of time before the entire structure of morality collapses within our nation," he said, referring to the California court's decision. "In one sense, [gay marriage] mirrors our own inward moral concessions as a church to the prevailing culture, and it is the fruit of a compromising silence that has failed to confront the rising spiritual and political contenders."

Engle has been credited in recent years with spawning a national anti-abortion movement, especially among Christian youth. His followers peacefully protest the silencing of infants in the womb by taping their mouths shut with red tape that has "life" written across it.

Engle has said the blood of nearly 50 million babies slaughtered since Roe v. Wade legalized abortion in the U.S. is piling up to the heavens and "crying for justice."

Next Tuesday's general election ballot in California includes Proposition 8, an initiative titled "Eliminates Rights of Same-Sex Couples to Marry," which if passed would amend the state constitution to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

Along with thousands of other Christians, Engle for 12 hours will plead for God to show mercy on America in the midst of its moral decline. "This is not a time for hiding in caves," he said ahead of the event. "This is a time to resist mightily

the spirit of peaceful coexistence and apathetic resignation in the face of this prevailing darkness.”

Admission to the stadium event on Saturday is free, but registration is required (thecall.com). –**Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

Robert H. Schuller Takes Son Off Air

Rift at Hour of Power leads the founder of Crystal Cathedral Ministries to remove his son from 38-year-old TV show.



[10.27.08] Nearly three years after becoming host of his father's *Hour of Power* TV program, Robert A. Schuller was taken off the air this past weekend.

“It is no secret to any of you that my son, Robert, and I have been struggling as we each have different ideas as to the direction and the vision for this ministry as we move into the future,” said Robert H. Schuller, founder of Crystal Cathedral Ministries, in a statement posted on the ministry's Web site. “For this lack of shared vision and the jeopardy in which this is placing this entire ministry, it has become necessary for Robert and me to part ways.”

Robert A. Schuller has served as senior pastor of Crystal Cathedral, a stunning all-glass architectural masterpiece built in 1980, since 2006, when his 82-year-old father also appointed him host of *Hour of Power*.

The elder Schuller announced plans for the TV program, which

began airing in 1970, to extend its pulpit to “the greatest preachers in the world.” He said some of those preachers would be former students of his Institute for Successful Church Leadership, such as megachurch pastors Bill Hybels and Kirbyjon Caldwell. “No longer will the Hour of Power be the voice and face of just one or two individuals,” Schuller said.

Though the 54-year-old son of one of America’s most well known televangelists did not comment publicly regarding his father’s announcement over the weekend, the California Classis of the Reformed Church in America, of which both men are affiliated, released a statement acknowledging the split.

“Persistent and very real differences in vision for the ministries between these two leaders has led to an apparent need for Classis’ help in furthering ministry objectives,” stated the denomination.

“Our goal here is to first seek what is best for the overall ministries ... our next goal is to see both Robert A. and Robert H. given any assistance they may need to continue to be passionate about their individual visions and remain harmonious in their relationships, not just as father and son, but also as co-laborers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” **–Paul Steven Ghiringhelli**

Messianic Ministry Wins Case

A Florida Supreme Court ruling limits a lawsuit filed against Jews for Jesus by woman who said the organization falsely reported she converted to Christianity.



[10.24.08] A ruling by the Florida Supreme Court on Thursday

significantly limited a lawsuit brought against Jews for Jesus by a Jewish woman who said the organization falsely reported her conversion experience in a ministry newsletter that also appeared on the Internet.

The Florida high court ruled that state law does not recognize "false light invasion of privacy" as a cause for legal action in the case that disputed the validity of a West Palm Beach woman's salvation testimony.

"We conclude that false light is largely duplicative of existing torts but without the attendant protections of the First Amendment," wrote Justice Barbara Pariente for the 5-0 majority in *Jews for Jesus v. Edith Rapp*. Two justices did not participate.

The case stems from a lawsuit Edith Rapp filed after her husband's death in 2003. Her stepson is a Jew for Jesus missionary, and after a visit with his terminally ill father he wrote in an organization newsletter that he had persuaded his Jewish stepmother to pray with him, ask for forgiveness and accept Jesus.

The newsletter also appeared on the Internet. "Pray for Edie's faith to grow and be strengthened," he wrote. "And please pray for my father Marty's salvation."

Rapp denied the events ever took place and said she and her husband were traditional Jews opposed to his son's involvement in Jew for Jesus. She accused the organization of falsely portraying her as a convert and doing so without permission. She alleged false light invasion of privacy, defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

A lower court dismissed her claims, but Rapp appealed, and the appeals court asked the Florida Supreme Court to rule on whether false light is recognized in Florida. Because the court rejected false light but four of the five justices agreed to quash the lower court's dismissal of Rapp's defamation claim, the case will return to the appeals court for further proceedings.

Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel, which is representing Jews for Jesus, called the ruling “a landmark decision for free speech.”

“The First Amendment needs breathing room,” said Staver, who is also dean of the Liberty University School of Law. “False light invasion of privacy claims choke the First Amendment. To remain alive and well, speech needs to be free and robust. To allow one person to silence another, merely because truthful words offend, would result in no freedom at all.”

Although Rapp’s defamation claim is back in play, Staver said he is confident his client will prevail. He argues that Rapp’s attorney can’t prove that she never made those statements to her stepson or that her character and reputation were damaged as a result of the comments published in the newsletter. –**Amy Green**

Sapp Leads Stellar Nominees

Marvin Sapp picked up nine nominations for the 24th annual Stellar Awards, including Male Vocalist of the Year and Song of the Year for “Never Would Have Made It.”



[10.24.08] Marvin Sapp led all nominees for the 24th annual Stellar Awards—announced earlier this week—with nine nominations, including Male Vocalist of the Year and Song of the Year for “Never Would Have Made It.” Other leading nominees named for the best African-American artists in gospel music in 2008 were Jonathan Nelson with eight nods, while Dorinda Clark-Cole and Kirk Franklin each earned five nominations.

Sapp, Clark-Cole and Franklin were nominated in the Artist of the Year category along with Beverly Crawford and Ricky Dillard & New G. Crawford and Clark-Cole were nominated in the Female Vocalist of the Year category with CeCe Winans, newcomer Jessica Greene and Shirley Caesar.

To be hosted by comedian Sinbad, the Stellar Awards will be held Jan. 17 at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, which will be taped for broadcast by the Gospel Music Channel.

[Click here](#) for a complete list of 2009 Stellar Award-nominees.

Christian Voters in Dead-Heat

A Barna survey released Thursday found that John McCain and Barack Obama are neck and neck among born-again Christian voters.



[10.23.08] A Barna Group survey released Thursday found a statistical dead heat among born-again voters, with 45 percent planning to vote for John McCain and 43 percent supporting Barack Obama. Unless the statistics change within the next two weeks, the researchers say Obama is likely to win the presidential election by a significant margin.

“Anything can happen, but the election is clearly Obama’s to lose,” said Barna Group President David Kinnaman, who conducted the survey. “If Obama goes on to win, one of the significant stories will be the profile of the faith vote. People will wonder whether he won because of effective

outreach by Democrats to the Christian community, ineffective efforts of Republicans, or shifts in the voting priorities of Christians, especially younger believers. Whatever the case, compared to when the names Kerry and Bush were on the ballot, the Democrats are poised to make up significant ground among born again and evangelical voters.”

The national telephone survey of 1,005 likely voters Oct. 11-15 found that even if McCain won all 10 percent of undecided voters, he is unlikely to reach the 62 percent who supported President Bush in 2004. The Barna researchers estimate that 48 percent of voters are born-again, which they define as those who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that remains important in their life and believe they will go to heaven when they die because they confessed their sins and accepted Christ as savior.

If the election were held among only born again voters, it would be a tight race. But Obama leads among likely voters 50 percent to 37 percent, which includes a majority of voters who identify themselves as Christian but are not classified as born-again supporting Obama. The Illinois senator also leads among voters who do not identify themselves as Christians 74 percent to 14 percent. Atheists also prefer Obama 50 percent to 28 percent.

The Barna study also found born-again Christians divided along generational lines, with those in their 40s and 50s preferring McCain 48 percent to 43 percent and those 60 and older favoring McCain 47 percent to 37 percent. Born-again voters in their 20s and 30s, however, prefer Obama 51 percent to 39 percent.

“At the beginning of the summer, the Christian community was moderately engaged in the presidential campaigns, but they are now much more interested in and willing to vote in the election, Kinnaman said. “Yet the problem for the McCain campaign is that their increased enthusiasm for the election has not translated into support the way it did leading up to 2004. Even conservative evangelical voters—while still solidly in McCain’s column—are surprisingly willing to consider

Obama's candidacy."

ORU Lawsuit Settled

Oral Roberts University settled a wrongful termination lawsuit Wednesday that was filled by three former professors last October.



[10.23.08] Late Wednesday evening, Oral Roberts University (ORU) announced that it had settled a wrongful termination lawsuit filled a year ago by three former professors.

"This matter is now resolved and we are pleased to have it behind us," said ORU interim president Ralph Fagin in a statement.

The professors—Tim Brooker and his wife, Paulita, along with John W. Swails, who settled in January and has now been reinstated—filed the lawsuit against former ORU President Richard L. Roberts, his wife Lindsay, and some of the school's administrators in October 2007.

Roberts was accused of mismanaging the school's finances and using some of the money to fund his family's lavish lifestyle. He resigned from his post in November 2007 though he denied the charges in the lawsuit.

The Tulsa World reported that the Brookers originally requested a \$2.5 million settlement, which ORU initially rejected. The

terms of the settlement accepted Wednesday in the court ordered mediation were not disclosed.

Richard Roberts said he supported the university's decision, according to the newspaper. "The university decided to settle the lawsuit with the Brookers, and I support the university. I cannot comment any further at this time," Roberts said.

Despite the controversy that has surrounded ORU for the last year, school officials say the school has turned a new page with the start of the new school year.

"ORU is moving forward into a new era of fiscally focused, mission-minded, whole-person education," said Mart Green, founder of the Christian supply-store chain Mardel, who pledged \$70 million to help the debt-ridden school "restore its broken trust."

A fundraising campaign raised \$5.8 million from more than 6,000 donors.

Numerous buildings have gotten new carpeting, wiring, paint and furniture in the last year.

The Prayer Tower, ORU's landmark building, was to have undergone significant repairs before opening during the fall semester with a new Student Prayer Initiative. Funds will also be used to upgrade academic programs.

"Our best asset is our students," Green said.

Prayer Day for Economy Called

Intercessors are being asked to pray at fiscal institutions on Oct. 29, the 79th anniversary of Black Tuesday.



[10.21.08] Cindy Jacobs, a Texas-based prayer network leader, is asking intercessors to pray at financial institutions around the globe on Oct. 29, the anniversary of the 1929 stock market crash. She hopes the collective petitions will turn the tide of the global economic crisis.

Jacobs, co-founder of Generals International along with her husband, Mike, said that since the beginning of 2008 intercessors have been hearing that the global economy will increasingly worsen if God doesn't intervene.

"At the beginning of 2008, intercessors began to hear from the Lord that without divine intervention, a major shaking was coming to Wall Street," Jacobs said on her Web site. "This would spread until there were food shortages. In fact, we heard that 2009 would be worse than 2008!"

On the 79th anniversary of the economic crash that catapulted the nation into the Great Depression, intercessors will meet at the New York Stock Exchange, United Nations, Federal Reserve and at its 12 branches around the United States. In addition, Jacobs is asking prayer groups to host meetings at financial institutions in their local communities.

"We are also going to intercede at the site of the statue of the bull on Wall Street," where she says she will "ask God to begin a shift from the bull and bear markets to what we feel will be the 'Lion's Market' or God's control over the economic systems."

On her ministry's Web site, *generals.org*, Jacobs lists prayer points that include repenting of personal greed, national

greed and excessive credit card debt, and praying that the economy be based on biblical principles and for revival to start in the marketplace.

Jacobs says that Satan wants the U.S. economy to crash as it did in 1929 but that God wants to avert that plan, through intercessors who are “proactive through prayer.”

Gang Hangout to Be a Church

Church of God pastor Collin Green said he is not intimidated by the Winter Hill Gang's infamous past



[10.21.08] Purchased in January from former gang boss Howie Winter, the auto body shop in Somerville, Mass., is best known as a place where James “Whitey” Bulger and Stephen “The Rifleman” Flemmi forged a partnership in the 1970s that led them to the top of Boston’s underworld and the center of an FBI scandal.

But the Rev. Collin Green of Somerville Church of God, which is affiliated with the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), said he is not intimidated by the garage’s sordid past. “The memories are there, but the people will see there is a transformation,” Green, 51, told the *Boston Globe*. He said he purchased the facility because his 50-member congregation needed more space; he learned of the garage’s history only recently.

The garage served as a command center for the gang, which from the 1970s until 1994 fixed horse races along the East Coast, corrupted the Boston office of the FBI and provided the basis for the film *The Departed*, which was loosely based on Bulger’s role as an FBI informant, the *Somerville News* reported. Bulger has been a fugitive since 1995, wanted for racketeering and 19 killings. Winter was released from prison in 2002, and Flemmi

is currently serving a life sentence for 10 murders.

Referring to a trap door thought to be used to dump bodies into the basement, Green told the *News* that he had “already rebuked anything in there in the name of Jesus.”

Former gang member John Martorano, a hit man-turned-government witness who confessed to killing 20 people, was amused by the garage’s new purpose. “Hallelujah,” he told the *Globe*. “I think it’s great. I’m all for religion.”

But Winter admits the idea of people praying in a building that once housed the gang’s loan sharking and gambling businesses is “kind of odd.”

“I was just looking to sell it, and I had no clue who was buying it,” said Winter, who sold the property for \$330,000. “I just wish the guy luck, whatever he does.”

Green said the church doors are open to any gang members who want to repent. “If they need Jesus, then we’re here to present Him to them.”

Pastor: Prayer Can Turn Election

Dutch Sheets calls for bold, passionate prayer to elect pro-life candidates.



[10.22.08] A nationally recognized prayer leader is calling on Christians to pray “faithfully, passionately and boldly” over the next two weeks to shift the presidential election in favor of the pro-life candidate.

In a letter e-mailed to prayer supporters Monday, pastor Dutch Sheets of Freedom Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., asked intercessors to pray for the elections "like you've never prayed for any in the past."

With prayer, he said, Republican candidates John McCain and Sarah Palin will win the election, but without it they will lose. "Lose some sleep, miss some meals—pray!" he wrote. "Pray like never before for these elections."

He said the next president may appoint two U.S. Supreme Court justices, and Democratic candidates Barack Obama and Joe Biden would likely nominate liberal judges if elected. "Make no mistake about it, the two of them do have a litmus test for Supreme Court justices, and a major part of that is *Roe vs. Wade*," Sheets said, noting that both Obama and Biden voted against conservative justices Samuel Alito and John Roberts.

He said McCain and Palin have "very strong" pro-life positions, a fact that on its own "makes the choice for president simple."

Sheets gave a similar call to prayer in 2000, when he said that without enough prayer "God's person" would lose the election. In his current appeal, which he says surpasses the 2000 letter as the most important prayer call of his life, Sheets said prayer turned the tide of that election, adding that President Bush's appointment of Justices Roberts and Alito confirmed that he was "God's choice."

Although he wants to see a first black president, Sheets wrote that Obama is not that man. "To allow that noble desire [to see an African-American president], the economy or one's position on the war to trump this issue of life and death for the innocent unborn is simply wrong," he said. "The scriptures teach that if we choose *first* to exalt righteousness and turn from evil, God promises to heal our land."

He said the prayer efforts will require concerted spiritual warfare, as the Republican ticket faces opposition like that described in Daniel 10, when the prince of Persia fought with

the angel assigned to deliver God's answer to Daniel's prayer. "The spiritual warfare in this election is incredibly fierce," Sheets said, "and just as it was in Daniel's day, it is all about restoration of a nation. And also like Daniel, we must keep praying until we win the battle in the heavens."

In August, Sheets said the month of September would mark a shift in the election's momentum. He believes that happened with the nomination of Palin, whom he described as a "true Esther in our generation," but the momentum was not sustained. "We can see it turn again if we approach this battle as the spiritual warfare it truly is and bind the evil forces involved," he wrote. "The reality is that this election can be the breakthrough we need to fully shift the Court (and ultimately our nation) or it will be an immeasurable setback that could take many years to reverse—if ever."

To read Sheets' entire prayer call, visit dutchsheets.tumblr.com. - **Adrienne S. Gaines**