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Christian teens on YouTube are standing for Christ against an ongoing campaign that encourages teens to deny the Holy Spirit.



Teens and young adults are sharing their faith on the popular video Web site YouTube in an effort to counter an ongoing campaign that urges people to blaspheme God. The Praise the Lord Challenge was launched roughly a month after a group of atheists began the Blasphemy Challenge in mid-December. The \$25,000 blasphemy campaign encourages people to post videos of themselves on YouTube committing the unpardonable sin by denying the existence of the Holy Spirit. Participants receive a copy of the documentary "The God Who Wasn't There." Since mid-January, Christian youth have been countering the blasphemy campaign by posting videos of themselves praising God on YouTube. "What happens when we take a stand for the Lord?" asked Praise the Lord Challenge founder Michael Mickey on a YouTube video. "The Word of God will bring people to faith in Jesus Christ." Some Praise the Lord Challenge participants have posted videos of themselves reading Scripture; others share their testimonies. One man posted a video of his young son, who he said died three times as an infant and was brought back to life and healed because of Christ. Another responder affirmed his faith in Christ, saying: "My purpose is to spread the Word and Him with every part of me. I've given Him my life, my heart, my soul. I will never deny my Lord, my Father, my very reason to live." According to One News Now, Mickey hopes youth leaders and pastors will encourage Christian teens and young adults to participate in the campaign. "When we fail to stand, no good thing comes," he said. "Christians, it's time to take a stand for the Word of God." -Felicia Mann

Students Spread the Message of Purity

On Valentine's Day students are encouraged to celebrate by committing themselves to sexual purity in honor of the fourth annual Day of Purity.



Students across the nation and world are being encouraged to celebrate Valentine's Day by committing themselves to sexual purity in honor of the fourth annual Day of Purity. The Feb. 14 event was launched by Liberty Counsel, a Florida-based nonprofit law firm that specializes in religious liberty issues. "We encourage students to choose sexual purity to drown out the persistent message of sexual promiscuity promoted through television, the Internet, movies, video games and even in some school sex-education programs," said Rena Lindevaldsen, Day of Purity international coordinator. Events are being organized in schools, churches and communities at which youth will distribute flyers and wear Day of Purity T-shirts and LivePure wristbands. Organizers are encouraging the young participants to use the Day of Purity to raise awareness about the risks associated with premarital sex. "More than 3 million American teens are infected each year with sexually transmitted diseases, and the United States has the highest teen pregnancy rate of developed countries," Lindevaldsen said. As a precursor to the Day of Purity, Liberty Counsel founder Mathew Staver on Monday will discuss the significance of sexual purity during an event at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

Churches Mobilized to Combat

Modern Forms of Slavery

On Feb.18, churches across the globe are expected to participate in Amazing Grace Sunday by singing the hymn.



“Amazing Grace” isn’t just the title of a beloved hymn and an upcoming motion picture. It’s also the name of a new movement aimed at combating human trafficking around the world. On Feb.18, churches across the globe are expected to participate in Amazing Grace Sunday by singing the hymn in remembrance of William Wilberforce and other evangelicals who more than 200 years ago fought for abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire. Wilberforce’s mentor, John Newton, wrote the lyrics of the hymn “Amazing Grace.” The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is sponsoring the event in hope of uniting churches to fight modern occurrences of slavery. Today an estimated 27 million people across the globe are forced into child labor, bonded labor and sex trafficking, the NAE reports. The Amazing Grace Sunday campaign will precede the Feb. 23 release of the *Amazing Grace* film, which chronicles Wilberforce’s fight to end the British slave trade. Look for full coverage of the film in the February issue of *Charisma*.

Photo Credit: Kevin Belmonte, historic consultant for *Amazing Grace*.

FeedBack

Vibes

Charisma News –

W. Todd Bassett, former commander of The Salvation Army, named executive director.



In mid-January, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) named W. Todd Bassett, former national commander of The Salvation Army, as its executive director. The NAE said Bassett would oversee the organization's administrative, financial and communications activities, and help develop and implement the organization's vision and strategy. "Todd Bassett brings the highest level of leadership and experience to his new position as executive director," said Leith Anderson, who was named NAE president after Colorado pastor Ted Haggard resigned from that position in November. "He is well known and respected among evangelicals and the broader religious community of America. I am thrilled to have him join our leadership team." Bassett and his wife, Carol, have served as officers in The Salvation Army for more than 40 years, with Bassett serving as national commander from 2002 until last April.

Charisma News –

The award-winning gospel trumpeter was sentenced Jan. 25 after being convicted last June on charges of conspiracy and federal income tax evasion.



Award-winning gospel trumpeter Phil Driscoll was sentenced Jan. 25 to a year and a day in a federal prison after being convicted last June on charges of conspiracy and federal income tax evasion. The indictment accused Driscoll of conspiring with his wife, Lynne, and her mother, the late Chris Blankenship, who was the ministry's bookkeeper, to avoid reporting more than \$1 million in personal income between 1996 and 1999, the Associated Press (AP) reported. Lynne Driscoll was acquitted on the conspiracy charge, and the tax-evasion charge against her was later dismissed. Driscoll acknowledges that some accounting mistakes occurred, but he said they were not intentional. "I certainly did not at any time ever conspire with my family or anyone else for that matter to misrepresent anything to the government," Driscoll said in a statement. His Mighty Horn Ministries, now based in Eatonton, Ga., was targeted for investigation when the Driscolls could not return \$3.5 million in donations the ministry received from David Mobley Sr., a hedge fund operator who was sentenced to federal prison for defrauding investors of \$59 million. During Driscoll's sentencing, his unpaid tax total was reduced to between \$30,000 and \$80,000. The musician was not fined, and U.S. District Judge Curtis L. Collier said no restitution was due, the AP reported. The judge gave Driscoll 45 days to report to prison and said he would decide by March 12 whether Driscoll could remain free while he appeals his conviction.

Charisma News – Christian Reality Talent Search to Debut

'Gifted' to debut Jan. 26 on TBN.



Gifted, a Christian solo-artist talent search, will debut Jan. 26 on TBN. The two-hour prime-time special will showcase eight final contestants battling it out to receive the grand prize of a recording contract with EMI Christian Music Group. The show will also feature a performance from host and former Backstreet Boy Brian Littrell, and an overview of the 16,000 national auditions. Sometimes compared with the hit reality show *American Idol*, the record label says there will be “no idol worship” on *Gifted*. “Unique to the competition was the emphasis to create a nationwide talent search for Christian solo artists with a desire to display the gifts that God gave them and to give back that gift by sharing with others through their music and message of hope in Christ,” an EMI press release stated. An estimated 95 million viewers are expected to tune in to watch the finalists’ performances ranging from gospel, praise and worship to contemporary Christian. The judges will include Michael Sweet, lead singer of Christian rock band Stryper, Eddie DeGarmo, founding member of Christian duo DeGarmo & Key and now president of EMI CMG Publishing, and André Crouch. On Feb. 20 EMI is set to release the *Gifted: Season One* CD, a compilation of performances from the top eight finalists, and a DVD, featuring the two-hour special, behind-the-scenes footage and much more.

Charisma News – Megachurch Pastor Says Christians Can Win Global AIDS Fight

Pastor Rick Warren believes “ordinary” people hold the key for curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS worldwide. “There are not enough health professionals in the world to get the job done,” Warren told the 2,000 attendees at his second Global Summit on AIDS and the Church held Nov. 30-Dec.1. “It must be done by ordinary people empowered by God.” Held at Warren’s Saddleback

Community Valley church in Lake Forest, Calif., the conference drew pastors, social workers and medical professionals from 18 nations. During the two-day summit, which ended on World AIDS Day, Warren and Sens. Sam Brownback, a Republican from Kansas, and Barack Obama, a Democrat from Illinois, were tested for HIV/AIDS. "I challenge every pastor to be publicly tested for AIDS so that you can encourage the people in your church to do the same," Warren said. During the summit roughly 100 volunteers from Saddleback assisted those who are HIV-positive in their community by painting, building fences and supplying food to local food pantries. In addition, students led education and awareness campaigns in 12 area high schools. "This global pandemic is the church's greatest opportunity to serve," Warren said. "With more than 2 billion members worldwide, the church has the largest distribution network on the planet. If we can teach the church how to minister to those with HIV/AIDS and extend a helping hand in local communities and around the world, we can win this life-threatening battle."

Charisma News – Christians Begin 25 Days of Prayer and Fasting for Believers in Iraq

A group comprising mostly U.S.-based Assyrian Christians has begun a 25-day prayer and fasting campaign to draw attention to a humanitarian crisis among Christians in Iraq. Christians for Assyrians of Iraq (CAI) led a demonstration at the White House yesterday, calling on U.S. politicians to "Stand for Iraq's Assyrians and Save the Nineveh Plains." Nina Shea of the Center for Religious Freedom, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that defends religious freedom around the world, and the Rev. Keith Roderick of Christian Solidarity International, spoke at the rally that drew several dozen

people. Known as Assyrians or Chaldeans, Christians in Iraq make up roughly 5 percent of the population but roughly 40 percent of those fleeing the nation, CAI reported. In recent months, Christians have faced heightened persecution, including the October crucifixion of a 14-year-old Assyrian boy in Mosul; the beheading of the Rev. Paulis Iskander, a Syrian Orthodox priest, the same month; and the kidnappings and murders of 13 Assyrian Christian women in Baghdad in August. CAI leaders believe the creation of an autonomous zone for Assyrians and other Christians in Iraq could help reverse this trend. They say the formation of the Nineveh Plains Administrative Unit would allow Assyrians and other Christians to practice their faith, speak and teach their language, and work their land without fear of persecution.