

Charisma News Service

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CHRISTIAN POP ARTIST ARRESTED ON SEX CHARGES Ja'Marc Davis of the Christian dance band Raze has been arrested on sexual charges involving a 13-year-old girl. The 25-year-old singer is alleged to have had a sexual relationship with the girl, a former backup singer for the group, in 1998 and 1999, The Tulsa World reported. Davis has been charged with five counts of lewd molestation, three counts of rape by instrumentation, and three counts of forcible sodomy, the newspaper said. He was arrested March 1 following opening night of a planned 30-city "Amazing Pop Invasion" tour, which has since been cancelled. He pleaded innocent to all charges during an initial court appearance, reported the Associated Press.

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE OFFERS BENEFITS TO GAY PARTNERS Administrators at Dallas-based Southern Methodist University will offer medical benefits and reduced tuition to the same-sex partners of employees starting next year, The Dallas Morning News reported. The same-sex controversy also surfaced

in the Presbyterian Church USA, which in March rejected a ban to

prohibit clergy from officiating at commitment ceremonies for same-sex couples. The defeat means clergy can conduct same-sex rites, although they are not considered marriages.

BLACKS SUE CHRISTIAN COALITION OVER ALLEGED BIAS The Christian Coalition was hit with a racial discrimination lawsuit Feb. 28 by 10 African American employees in the organization's Washington, D.C., headquarters. The suit alleges that the office prohibits black workers from using the front door and maintains segregated eating facilities, The Washington Post reported. Two former employees of the activist group have since joined the suit, The Washington Times said, and a white employee filed a \$39 million lawsuit claiming he was fired for refusing to spy on black workers. Executive director Roberta Combs issued a statement contesting the discrimination allegations.

SURVEY REVEALS SEXUAL ABUSE OF MISSIONARY CHILDREN A major study by a group of leading missionary organizations found that 7 percent of workers' children reported being sexually abused, mostly when they lived at boarding schools while their parents served elsewhere. The dark secret of missionary service was revealed in a survey by eight major organizations that collaborated on the largest investigation of its kind ever, The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer reported March 18. Although the survey was conducted in 1993, the data relating to sexual abuse has only now been released for the first time. The

newspaper said that the results “puncture a hole in the wall of silence that has kept secret much of the data on evangelical sex abuse.”

COLLECTION CELEBRATES

ELVIS' SPIRITUAL ROOTS

Elvis Presley's Christian roots are celebrated in a new five-CD collection of the singer's gospel work. Although he achieved success through his music and movies, Presley, who was reared in Assemblies of God churches in Mississippi, garnered coveted Grammy awards only for his gospel recordings and live performances, Religion News Service reported.

ATHEIST LEADER

CONFIRMED DEAD

Bones found at a remote Texas ranch have been positively identified as those of the founder of American Atheists who led the fight to have school prayer banned in the 1960s. The Federal Bureau of Investigation March 15 confirmed the remains unearthed in January to be those of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, her son and granddaughter, who disappeared in 1995, The New York Times reported.

REGGIE WHITE

RETIRES AGAIN

Pro football star Reggie White has retired for the third time, but this one will stick because he says the Lord told him so. The future Hall of Fame defensive end ended his comeback with the National Football League's (NFL) Carolina Panthers, the Associated Press (AP) reported. White, who is an ordained minister and has a home in Charlotte, N.C., hopes to open a religious theme park in the area in the near future, the AP reported. A 15-year NFL veteran, White, 39, recorded 198 sacks in his career, more than any other player in NFL history.

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