

Charisma News Service

News Service Briefs

The following reports were released during the last month by Charisma News Service. Go to our Web site at www.charismanews.com to subscribe to the free weekday service or to access full-length versions of each day's stories. The site also includes a search engine so you can access archived news.

ESSENCE MAGAZINE SPOTLIGHTS JUANITA BYNUM

Author and preacher Juanita Bynum discussed her hard-hitting challenge to sexual purity in the May issue of Essence, the best-selling lifestyle magazine for African American women. In "The Passion Issue," Bynum said too many women run from one man to the next when they should take time to heal from past hurts. Essence said Bynum's "forthright [and] fiery" "No More Sheets" sermon, recorded in 1998 at a T.D. Jakes conference, has "shown millions of single sisters a spiritual path toward personal integrity, self-respect and living in fulfillment and peace with our God-given sexuality."

PRAYER INITIATIVE SEEKS CATHOLIC 'SPIRIT OUTPOURING'

A Catholic renewal movement wants the church to call on God for a "new outpouring of the Spirit," reported the Catholic news agency Zenit. The "Burning Bush" prayer initiative has been launched by the Renewal in the Spirit group, which drew 30,000 people to a recent meeting in Rimini, Italy. In a letter to Italian bishops, Renewal in the Spirit has offered to promote a "return to the Upper Room" to help Christians

rediscover the beauty and power of prayer, Zenit said. The proposal has been welcomed by Archbishop Stanislaw Rylko, secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, who spoke at the Rimini gathering. Rylko said many laypeople had rediscovered “the beauty of prayer” through charismatic renewal groups.

ASHCROFT CRITICIZED FOR DAILY BIBLE STUDY

Attorney General John Ashcroft’s daily Bible study with staff has drawn criticism from some who say it breaches the constitutional mandate for separation of church and state. In a front-page story May 14, The Washington Post reported that some Justice Department employees who do not share Ashcroft’s Pentecostal beliefs “are discomfited by the daily prayer sessions.” The Post said Ashcroft’s Bible study is part of a religious awakening of sorts on Capitol Hill, citing a recent Charisma magazine story that reported Congress members and staff attend 30 weekly Bible study and prayer groups. Ashcroft’s aides said all employees are welcome but not required to attend.

AMERICANS TROUBLED BY COUNTRY’S ‘MORAL CONDITION,’ STUDY SAYS

Many Americans are fretting about the future, according to a nationwide study by the Barna Research Group (BRG) based in Ventura, Calif. Six hundred and fifty of 1,000 adults questioned said they were “concerned” about the days to come, with 74 percent of them saying they were troubled by the “moral condition” of the country. That revealed that there is a window of opportunity for strong leaders, Barna said. The BRG survey found highest levels of concern among women, people aged 55 or older, and those living in the South—with 80 percent of each group saying they were “concerned.” Sixty-seven percent of 17- to 35-year-olds registered concern.

PASTOR RAY McCAULEY ANNOUNCES PLANS TO REMARRY

Ten months after the end of his 24-year marriage, Ray McCauley, pastor of the 27,000-member Rhema Bible Church in Johannesburg, South Africa, announced plans to remarry. He told the church of his engagement to Zelda Ireland, a twice-divorced mother of three, in early May. A church news release said the ministry's pastoral leadership approved of the couples' decision. A wedding date is to be set soon.

NRB LEADER DIES

E. Brandt Gustavson, president of the 1,400-member National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), died May 14 at age 64. He had been diagnosed with cancer of the liver and pancreas less than two months before his death. Formerly with the Moody Broadcasting Network and Trans World Radio, Gustavson joined the NRB as chief executive in 1990. Married with two adult children, Gustavson also worked with a number of other Christian organizations. A memorial service was to be held at Manassas Assembly of God in Manassas, Va.

BOB DAVIES TO RETIRE

Bob Davies, executive director of Exodus North America, announced in late May plans to retire from the ex-gay ministry where he has worked for 22 years, effective Sept. 30. Davies said he consulted several Exodus leaders in the last two years about the decision and sees it as part of a broader trend of God raising up a new generation of leaders. Davies said he will remain in the Exodus office indefinitely on a part-time

basis to train his successor, who has not been selected.