

Charisma News Service

News Service Brief

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.

BISHOP MACK TIMBERLAKE DIES

Bishop Mack Timberlake, who co-pastored Christian Faith Center in Creedmoor, N.C., with his wife, Brenda, died in the hospital Jan. 29 after he was taken there for breathing problems. He was 52. Church spokesman Willie Hodges said the official cause of death is unknown, "but it wasn't cancer because he's been cancer-free for five years." Hodges said Timberlake's death was "totally unexpected" because he appeared to be in good health. He was in church the Sunday before his death and ministered at a luncheon the previous Friday. In 1997, Timberlake was diagnosed with severe throat cancer and, though given four weeks to live, was healed after undergoing radical surgery. Funeral services were held Feb. 4. He is survived by his wife and six children.

GOSPEL ARTISTS HONORED AT MUSIC AWARDS

Yolanda Adams became the first recipient of an American Music Award in the new inspirational category Jan. 9. Adams was nominated alongside Steven Curtis Chapman and Donnie McClurkin, who received six Stellar Awards three days later in Atlanta. Among the other Stellar Award winners were Kurt Carr, Yolanda Adams and Kirk Franklin. Also in Atlanta, the Fellowship of Holy Hip Hop honored 12 hip-hop ministers Jan.

19, including Corey Red and Precise, GRITS, and BB-Jay. Bishop Eddie Long was given an Ambassador Award for his support of Christian hip-hop.

NATIONAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHTS CAPTIVE MISSIONARIES

The national media spotlight turned to a kidnapped American missionary couple in late January as observers anticipated a military effort to free them. Several hundred U.S. troops were in the Philippines to help local army units pluck Martin and Gracia Burnham from the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim guerrilla group said to have links to Osama bin Laden. Only the Burnhams remained of 20 hostages taken in May, CBS' 48 Hours reported. The others have been freed, with one American hostage killed. The Burnhams have served in the Philippines with New Tribes Mission for 16 years. The couple's three children are living with their grandparents.

SCHOOL COURSE PROMOTES ISLAM

Seventh-graders in a California public school were required to attend an intensive three-week Islam course, during which they had to learn the religion's tenets, study its important figures, wear a robe, adopt a Muslim name and stage their own jihad. According to Assist News Service (ANS), parents in Byron, Calif., were shocked when students came home with handouts detailing the course that began, ironically, on Sept. 11. But school officials reportedly ignored their complaints. Across the Centuries, the textbook used for the course, is described as a social studies-history book. In it, Islam is "presented in a totally positive manner," while Christianity is shown negatively, ANS said.

Graham's 'Best Preacher' Dies

A longtime Baptist leader once praised by Billy Graham as “the best preacher I ever heard” died Jan. 10 at 92. Willie Amos Criswell, revered as the “pope” of the Southern Baptist Convention, was pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Dallas. Criswell had been in frail health for more than a year and had been hospitalized several times for digestive and cardiac problems, The Dallas Morning News reported.

Christian Pioneer Broadcaster Dies

Christian radio news pioneer Forrest Boyd died of a heart attack Jan. 5 at a Baltimore hospital, Assist News Service (ANS) reported. He was 80. Boyd was a newscaster and commentator with Mutual Broadcasting Network, Voice of America, United News and Information, and other news services. “He’s been a real pioneer in religious news,” National Religious Broadcasters president Wayne Pederson said of Boyd. “A lot of us stand on his shoulders.”

End-Times Thriller Reaches Milestone

Donna Camby started a party Jan. 12 when she purchased the 50 millionth product in the Left Behind series co-authored by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. The Pacolet, S.C., high school English teacher received \$500 gift certificates from Christian Supply in Spartanburg, S.C., for herself and her church and an autographed hardcover set of the nine-book series. She will receive the remaining three books as they are released.

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