

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 access full-length versions of each day's stories. The site also includes a search engine so you can access archived news.

EX-PRESIDENT CARTER AND WIFE BREAK WITH SBC Former President Jimmy Carter has cut his ties to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), saying the group was becoming "increasingly rigid" in its policies toward women. Carter, who has been a lifelong Southern Baptist, expressed dissatisfaction with the SBC's June decision to adopt a statement that prohibits women to serve as pastors and requires that wives be submissive to their husbands. He told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution: "I personally feel that women should play an absolutely equal role in service of Christ to the church." Days later Texas Baptists proposed to reduce funding to the SBC by \$4.3 million partly because of its stand on women pastors.

FLORIDA CHURCH WRESTLES WITH MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR GIFT A congregation in St. Mary's, Ga., is expected to receive close to \$60 million next year—what is believed to be the largest-ever single donation made to a U.S. church. The late Warren Bailey bequeathed the bulk of his estate to St. Mary's United Methodist Church despite not having attended in more than 20

years. Co-founder of the Camden Telephone Co., the 88-year-old man who died in July had donated thousands of dollars each year to church projects. "We're going to worship Jesus now and count dollars later," pastor Derek McAleer told The Jacksonville Times-Union. Church members have tentatively agreed that none of the windfall will go toward the church's annual \$330,000 operating budget.

EVANGELIST DRAWS HISTORY-MAKING CROWDS IN NIGERIA Close to 6 million flocked to hear German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke in Lagos, Nigeria, in mid-November, smashing all his previous records. Hundreds of thousands of people prayed to receive Christ during the services, with the vast majority of a million-plus crowd one night praying to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Thousands more claimed to have been healed after Bonnke prayed for the sick. The crusade was Bonnke's fourth in Nigeria after being banned from the country in 1991 when riots broke out over a crusade planned for Kano, in the Muslim north. Bonnke was granted permission to return to the country last year. His first crusade, in Benin City, drew large crowds but was marred by 16 deaths in a crush outside the venue on the opening night. Two more crusades have been held since, with four more to come.

MORMONS FASTEST-GROWING FAITH GROUP IN U.S. HISTORY Mormonism is the fastest growing faith group in American history according to U.S. News & World Report, which predicts that if present trends continue there could be 265 million members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) worldwide by 2080. Mormons have launched a major expansion

program to keep up with growth, opening 32 temples across the country this year.

MARILYN MANSON ALBUM COVER BANNED

The artwork for Marilyn Manson's new CD Holy Wood (In the Shadow of the Valley of Death)—which depicts him crucified like Jesus—has been banned by two retailer outlets, Circuit City and Best Buy. Circuit City is stocking the album with a cardboard sleeve and alternate art of a close-up of Manson's face, while Best Buy is carrying the original CD art but featuring the replacement design in its advertising campaign, Rolling Stone magazine reported. On his Web site, Manson said those offended by his album proved his point, that "the crucifixion of Christ is, indeed, a violent image."

PASTORS SEEK TO HELP DARRYL STRAWBERRY

Randy White of Without Walls International Church in Tampa, Fla., and T.D. Jakes of The Potter's House church in Dallas plan to be involved at a pastoral level in the recovery of New York Yankees slugger Darryl Strawberry, who was transferred Nov. 15 from a Tampa jail to a residential drug treatment center. Strawberry, 38, who says he was filled with the Holy Spirit in 1988, is under two years' house arrest for drug possession and soliciting a prostitute.

Other stories featured on the Charisma News Service Web site:

Closes Down Abruptly

Black TV Network Criticized for Airing Programs by Robert Tilton

Christian Wins Paralympic Gold Medal in Sydney

Intercessors Wage Spiritual Battle During Palm Beach Vote Recount

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