

News Briefs

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PASTOR GOES ON HUNGER STRIKE TO PROTEST STRIP CLUB

When a gay strip club set up shop next to his rescue mission and Christian school, San Francisco pastor Roger Huang went on a 30-day hunger strike, refusing to eat or drink anything besides a cup of coffee in the morning and water the rest of the day. Sitting on a chair in front of City Hall, Huang called for, among other things, closure of the Chez Paree strip club and a ban on liquor licenses in the area, the San Francisco Examiner reported. Ending his strike on May 6, Huang said progress had been made. Local officials were looking at ways to limit liquor licenses, increase police patrols and clean up the area, the Examiner reported. Huang also said the owner of Chez Paree offered to sell him the building for \$1.4 million, which the ministry is working to raise.

BLACK PASTORS DENOUNCE GAY MARRIAGE

Pentecostal Bishop Paul Morton and charismatic pastor Fred Price were among a group of African-American ministers to denounce Massachusetts' move to legalize same-sex marriage beginning May 17, the anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education, which desegregated U.S. public schools. At a Washington, D.C., press conference May 17, the leaders criticized efforts to liken the push for gay rights to the gay civil rights movement. They called on the Congressional Black Caucus to oppose civil unions and support legislation declaring marriage to be between one man and one woman.

DEFAMATION CASE AGAINST JEWS FOR JESUS DISMISSED

In May a West Palm Beach, Fla., judge dismissed a lawsuit filed against the nation's largest Messianic Jewish organization that arose out of "a praise report" in a Jews for Jesus (JFJ) newsletter. Circuit Court Judge Catherine Brunson threw out the suit filed by Edith Rapp, who claimed that JFJ defamed her in a July 2002 newsletter by saying she was a "Jewish believer." In the newsletter, her stepson, JFJ employee Bruce Rapp, said Rapp accepted Christ while the two were visiting his dying father. On Dec. 11, Edith Rapp sued JFJ, claiming the conversion account was fictitious and that JFJ knew the account was false when it published the newsletter. Liberty Counsel, which represented JFJ, filed a motion to dismiss the case, arguing that it was not defamatory to call someone a Christian. Liberty Counsel president Mat Staver said the lawsuit was an attack against JFJ because of its evangelism activity among Jews.

CHURCH RECONCILES AFTER 50-YEAR-OLD RIFT

The reconciliation of a Pentecostal church in Texas that mended a 56-year split has reportedly empowered members to influence the community. According to the Assemblies of God News, Family Worship Center was Full Gospel Assembly of God when it opened in 1935 in McKinney, now part of the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area. But 12 years later, half its members left because of leadership differences. The group that departed formed Southside Assembly of God, which later changed its name to DaySpring Christian Fellowship. In 2003, both congregations voted unanimously to reunite and combine staffs. Since the merger last fall, the church has registered a record-high attendance of 316 during a January service, at which 11 people received Jesus.

Andraé Crouch Honored With Star on Walk of Fame

Hollywood has a new star—on its legendary Walk of Fame. Eight-time Grammy-winner Andraé Crouch was to become the third gospel artist to be honored with a star on the famous Hollywood Boulevard walkway, joining singer Mahalia Jackson and the Rev. James Cleveland. Best known for songs such as “My Tribute” and “Just Like He Said He Would,” the pastor of New Christ Memorial Church of God in Christ was to be honored in a ceremony June 4.

James Dobson Launches Political Group

In April, Focus on the Family founder James Dobson launched a political sister organization called Focus on the Family Action, aimed at lobbying for socially conservative causes, the New York Times reported. Dobson has been making speeches across the country supporting bans on same-sex marriage, and this summer his group plans to begin a voter-registration drive targeting young Christians. Dobson said he will endorse conservative candidates as a private individual, the Times reported.

Shock Rocker Receives Honorary Ph.D.

Legendary shock-rocker Alice Cooper was awarded an honorary doctor of music from Grand Canyon University on May 8. A longtime supporter of the Phoenix-based Christian university, Cooper, 56, accepted Christ 13 years ago and launched the Solid Rock foundation to help youth avoid gangs, guns and drugs. Cooper, who has been married for 28 years and has three children, said he is honored by the recognition. “So they’re making me a doctor of music? A Ph.D.? Dr. Cooper? I guess school’s never really out!”