

News Briefs

ANGLICAN CHURCH CRITICIZES EPISCOPALIANS ON GAYS

An Anglican commission report released Oct. 18 criticized the Episcopal Church USA for consecrating an openly gay bishop and called the U.S. and Canadian churches to stop ordaining gay clergy and blessing same-sex unions. The 93-page Windsor Report, released by the 17-member Lambeth Commission, also proposed that the 38 national churches constituting the Anglican Communion sign a covenant supporting what it called current Anglican teaching, the Associated Press said. A 1998 conference of Anglican bishops opposed gay ordinations and declared homosexuality "incompatible with Scripture." The report invited the Episcopal Church to express regret for consecrating V. Gene Robinson in November 2003 as a sign that it wished to remain within the 77 million-member Anglican Communion.

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR TEN COMMANDMENTS CASE

The Supreme Court announced Oct. 12 it would consider the constitutionality of Ten Commandments displays on government land and buildings, the Associated Press (AP) reported. Previously, the justices refused to revisit issues raised by their 1980 decision barring the posting of the Ten Commandments from public school classrooms and rejected an appeal from former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who was fired for refusing to remove a Commandments display from the Alabama statehouse. Early next year, the justices will separately consider whether a Ten Commandments monument on the Texas Capitol grounds violates the separation of church and state, and whether a lower court wrongly barred the Commandments from display in Kentucky courthouses. Barry Lynn of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State said he hopes the displays are found unconstitutional. Mathew

Staver of the Liberty Counsel, which is representing the Kentucky counties, said this could be “the blockbuster religious liberty case that the Supreme Court has seen in a really long time.”

NORTH KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS BILL PASSES IN CONGRESS

In a move that supporters say will help bring some relief to North Koreans, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 on Sept. 29, two months after the House passed a more moderate version of the bill. The legislation allows the government to supply up to \$20 million in humanitarian assistance and will make it easier for North Korean refugees to gain asylum in the United States. The North Korean government decried the bill, saying it rendered nuclear weapons talks meaningless because the United States was determined to topple the communist state, Reuters reported. Korean Christians, however, have been praying that the bill would pass and say they want dictator Kim Jong-Il’s regime to end, the Los Angeles Times reported.

BIBLE PUBLISHER CONFRONTED OVER CHINA PRINTING

One of the nation’s leading producers of Bibles has come under fire for printing some of its material in China, where Christians are often persecuted for their faith, AgapePress reported. Al Kerkstra, senior vice president of operations for Zondervan Publishing Company, said the company found a lower printing price in China and believes it can help improve the living and human-rights conditions of the people and companies with whom it works. Yet human-rights advocate Steve Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute, said Zondervan—a subsidiary of Harper Collins, which is owned by media mogul Rupert Murdoch—should not put profit over principle, AgapePress said. Mosher has called for a boycott of all products made in China, including some Bibles published by Tyndale House Publishers, which also does some printing in

China.

New McCartney Ministry Continues to Build Bridges

Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney has launched a new ministry aimed at forging stronger ties between Gentile Christians and Messianic Jews. Dubbed the Road to Jerusalem (), the ministry was to host a conference Dec. 3 in Palm Springs, Calif., that will seek to address misunderstandings on both sides of Jewish-Christian relations. "Many have misunderstood that belief in Yeshua ['Jesus' in Hebrew] as Messiah required a separation from Jewish heritage," said ministry president and CEO Raleigh B. Washington. "The truth of the matter is that through Jesus Christ, God grafted the Gentile believers into the Jewish believers. We want to help both groups live in that dynamic."

Charles and Frances Hunter Honored by Mayor

On the night of their final healing crusade, held at the Astrodome in Houston Oct. 2, Charles and Frances Hunter were awarded a plaque by Mayor Bill White proclaiming the day Charles and Frances Hunter Day. The couple's Healing Explosion attracted participants from around the world. Both in their 80s, the Hunters have led dozens of international healing crusades and are well-known for their teaching on divine healing.

Billy Graham to Hold Final New York Crusade

Evangelist Billy Graham announced in September that he will host his final New York crusade June 20 at Madison Square Garden. Chaired by New York pastor A.R. Bernard, the Greater

New York Crusade will be Graham's seventh campaign in the area. More than 2 million people attended his first crusade there in 1957, which lasted 16 weeks. The 86-year-old evangelist has been in frail health but planned to finish out the year with crusades in Kansas City, Mo., and Pasadena, Calif. The events had been postponed to allow Graham to heal from hip-replacement surgery.