

News Briefs

RICK JOYNER PURCHASES FORMER HOME OF HERITAGE

USA MorningStar Ministries founder Rick Joyner recently finalized the purchase of 52 acres of land on property that used to be home to Jim Bakker's Heritage USA to create a new headquarters for his Charlotte, N.C., church, The Charlotte Observer reported. The site also will house a 5,000-seat auditorium for conferences and an education center. Now host of a TV show shot in Branson, Mo., Bakker praised Joyner for making the purchase. "He mainly restores people, but right now he's going to restore the old grounds," Bakker told the newspaper. "I believe Heritage USA belongs to the church world." Widely known for writing on prophetic issues, Joyner is author of such books as The Final Quest and leads conferences on prophetic ministry.

INDIANA WOMAN SAYS GOD LED HER TO VAN THAT HIT HER SON

A Greenwood, Ind., woman whose son was killed Oct. 26 in a hit-and-run accident says that on the eve of Thanksgiving, God guided her to drive into a mobile home park, where she eventually stopped by a white van, The Indianapolis Star reported. Joy English notified police of the vehicle, and days later the authorities confirmed that the 1993 Dodge van English found was the one that hit her son. Police arrested 19-year-old Israel Cardenas Nov. 30. "I had no control over my car," English told the newspaper. "It just makes me know that God is truly with us in our mourning, sorrow and trials, and this is proof He is truly with you. There is a God, and He does exist."

MATT CROUCH TO HEAD NEW ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY

Matthew Crouch, son of Trinity Broadcasting Network founders Paul and Jan Crouch, was recently named CEO and chairman of

the board of CDMI Productions. The independent entertainment company plans to develop, finance, produce and distribute family-based films, TV shows, animated features and documentaries. Crouch, founder of Gener8Xion Entertainment, which produced such Christian films as The Omega Code, Megiddo and China Cry, will spearhead the California-based company's foray into family-based entertainment. CDMI, in turn, acquired exclusive distribution rights to Gener8Xion's forthcoming films, One Night With the King, which is based on Tommy Tenney's popular novel, Hadassah, and set to release March 25, and the animated project The Prodigal Son. Crouch and his wife, Lorie, will become CDMI's majority shareholders, receiving more than 8 million shares as "consideration for the purchase of the assets" and as partial compensation for Crouch's accepting the CEO position.

METHODIST JURY DEFROCKS LESBIAN MINISTER

A jury comprised of United Methodist Church clergy convicted a lesbian minister who was openly living with her partner of violating church law, the Associated Press (AP) reported. As a result of the Dec. 2 decision, the Rev. Irene Elizabeth Stroud had to give up her ministry license. Methodist law forbids "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals" from ministry, the AP said. Stroud, 34, said she expected to be convicted and said the case shows "how divided we are" over the role of homosexuals in the Methodist Church, the AP reported.

Frank Houston Dies

Frank Houston, considered by some to be the father of the Pentecostal churches in Sydney, Australia, died Nov. 8 after suffering a massive stroke, the Sydney Morning Herald reported. He was 82. After being baptized in the Holy Spirit and miraculously healed during an Assemblies of God revival, Houston went on to found Sydney Christian Life Centre in

Australia. In 1999 the congregation merged with Hillsong Church, pastored by Houston's son, Brian. Frank Houston later admitted to having sexually abused a boy in New Zealand more than 30 years before, which resulted in Brian Houston, president of the Assemblies of God in Australia, permanently removing his father's ministry credentials. Funeral services were held Nov. 12. Brian Houston told those gathered that his father was the greatest evangelical preacher he had ever seen, the Sydney Morning Herald reported. "In my biased opinion, he was in a class of his own," Houston said, the newspaper reported.

Stephen Shakarian Dies

The youngest son of Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship (FGBMFI) founder Demos Shakarian died Dec 5 in Southern California of a rare kidney disease. Stephen Shakarian, 57, served as CEO of the international network of charismatic businessmen. In January 2004 he joined the global council of Business Men's Fellowship and the board of the U.S. organization, led by former FGBMFI treasurer Ronny Svenhard. Shakarian is survived by a son, Stephen II; a daughter, Stephanie; a brother, Richard, now president of FGBMFI; and a sister, Geraldine. His wife, Debra, died of cancer in 2002.

Global Day of Prayer Planned for May

Prayer leaders from 240 nations are teaming up to lead a Global Day of Prayer () May 15, which is Pentecost Sunday. The International Prayer Council, which is helping to convene the event, expects 200 million Christians to join together in prayer. As part of a three-part plan, the network is asking people to pray for their churches, cities or regions around the clock from May 6-15, leading up to larger prayer

gatherings in cities around the globe on May 15. The event is to be followed by 90 days of outreach and evangelism.