

# News Briefs

## ORU SETTLES PROFESSORS' LAWSUITS

Oral Roberts University (ORU) announced on Oct. 22 that it had settled a wrongful termination lawsuit filled by three former professors. Tim Brooker and his wife, Paulita Brooker, along with John W. Swails, who settled in January and has now been reinstated, filed the lawsuit against ORU former president Richard L. Roberts, his wife, Lindsay, and some of the school's administrators. Roberts was accused of mismanaging the school's finances and using some of the money to fund his family's lavish lifestyle. Roberts resigned from his post in November 2007 though he denied the charges in the lawsuit. "This matter is now resolved and we are pleased to have it behind us," said Ralph Fagin, ORU interim president, who also said the school would not disclose the terms of the settlement. According to the Tulsa World, Richard Roberts said he supports the university. Days after the settlement, ORU announced that it had named two new members to its board of trustees-W. P. Bartlett, founder and CEO of Callidus Technologies; and Cameron Strang, founder of Relevant magazine and a 1998 ORU graduate.

## 'HEALER' SONGWRITER REMOVED FROM DVD

Hillsong Music re-released its popular This Is Our God DVD in November without footage of worship leader Michael Guglielmucci, who admitted in August that he lied about being diagnosed with terminal cancer to hide a longstanding pornography addiction. Former youth pastor at Planet Shakers church in Melbourne, Australia, Guglielmucci had said the illness inspired him to write the popular worship song "Healer," which was recorded by Hillsong Church and became an

international hit. Guglielmucci hid the truth even from immediate family members, including his wife, and often wore an oxygen mask when he sang. "It was a two-year, Academy Award-worthy performance as far as I am concerned," Hillsong Church pastor Brian Houston wrote on his blog in September. Guglielmucci said he was sorry for the two-year ruse. "I'm sorry for a life of saying I was something when I'm not," he told Australian media last summer. "From this day on I'm telling the truth." Australian police said Guglielmucci is not likely to face legal charges for accepting donations to cover medical costs under false pretenses.

### **CHRISTIANS ASK UN TO INDICT IRANIAN PRESIDENT**

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) is leading a campaign to indict Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for incitement to commit genocide against Israel. In recent years, Ahmadinejad and other senior Iranian officials have made repeated calls to "wipe Israel off the map," and have described Jews with terms reminiscent of Nazi propagandist slander, ICEJ Executive Director Malcolm Hedding said. Some 60,000 Christians from 128 nations signed petitions that the ICEJ presented to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon days before Ahmadinejad was to address the U.N. on Sept. 23. "Christians today [sense] an inescapable moral duty to earnestly speak out whenever another genocidal campaign threatens the Jewish people," Hedding said. "We are concerned that just such a genocidal campaign is taking shape in the form of Iran's repeated threats to eliminate the Jewish state and its quest for the nuclear means to carry out these threats."

### **FAITH HEALING PUT ON TRIAL**

A couple from Oregon City, Ore., who allegedly used prayer instead of professional medical care to treat their ailing 16-

year-old son, both pleaded not guilty in October to charges of criminally negligent homicide after their son died in June from complications involving a urinary tract blockage, ABC News reported. Jeffrey Dean and Marci Rae Beagley belong to a religious sect known as the Followers of Christ Church, which reportedly rejects medical treatment in favor of prayer. According to ABC News, doctors claimed the illness that ultimately took Neil Jeffrey Beagley's life was easily treatable. Though laws vary widely, most states contain religious exceptions to child abuse laws for parents who prefer praying for healing rather than administering medicine.

#### **CONSERVATIVE EPISCOPAL BISHOP REMOVED**

Bishop Robert Duncan was deposed as a leader in the Episcopal Church in September on charges of "abandoning the communion" of the church. By deposing him, Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori stripped Duncan of the right to perform sacraments and terminated his position as head of the Pittsburgh diocese. Duncan, who has been an outspoken critic of liberal moves within the Episcopal Church, was immediately named a bishop-at-large of the Argentina-based Southern Cone led by conservative Archbishop Gregory Venables, who declared Duncan "a bishop in good standing." The leaders of six dioceses in the Church of England, as well as the archbishops of Nigeria, Kenya and the West Indies all condemned the deposition and said they would continue to fully recognize Duncan as an Anglican bishop.

#### **AMERICAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION ENDS MCDONALD'S BOYCOTT**

The American Family Association (AFA) ended its boycott of McDonald's in October, saying the fast-food giant had agreed to "remain neutral in the culture war regarding homosexual marriage." The conservative Christian organization called for the boycott in May after McDonald's joined the National Gay

and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC). In a letter to supporters, AFA Chairman Donald Wildmon said that McDonald's Vice President Richard Ellis had resigned his position on NGLCC's board and that McDonald's would not renew its membership with the organization when it expired in December.