

News Briefs

The following reports were released during the last month by Charisma News Service. Go to our Web site at [to subscribe to the free weekday service](#) or to access full-length versions of each day's stories. The site also includes a search engine so you can access archived news.

CARLTON PEARSON LOSES MAYORAL BID

Carlton Pearson, founder of Higher Dimensions Family Church, lost his bid to become the first African American mayor of Tulsa, Okla. Pearson finished third out of nine candidates in the Feb. 5 Republican primary, receiving about 3,800 votes compared with 14,000 votes for winner Bill LaFortune. Pearson could be chosen as deputy mayor by LaFortune if he wins the March 12 general election, but Pearson says he doesn't know if he will run again.

AIDS AWARENESS GROUP CRITICIZED FOR GAY APPOINTEE

Balm in Gilead (BG), an organization that promotes AIDS awareness among African American churches, has come under fire for appointing a gay man as the director of its faith-based program. Atlanta pastor Darryl Foster, leader of a ministry to homosexuals, spoke out after Maurice O'Brian Franklin told the The Washington (D.C.) Blade, a gay weekly, that his selection was "a statement." Seventeen religious groups listed at BG's Web site as endorsees of the organization included the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion), the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), National Baptist Convention USA (NBC, USA) and T.D. Jakes Ministries. A spokesman for T.D. Jakes Ministries said his ministry had not had any

contact with BG since 1999. Representatives of the NBC, USA; COGIC; and AME Zion did not return calls.

NRB PRESIDENT RESIGNS OVER 'POLITICAL RIGHT' FLAP

National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) accepted the resignation of President Wayne Pederson Feb. 16. Pederson upset some members when he told The Minneapolis Star-Tribune in January that the NRB's conservative views caused the association to be "typecast" and lessened its spiritual effectiveness, The (Nashville) Tennessean reported. Jerry Falwell and Focus on the Family founder James Dobson threatened to leave if the organization changed direction—emphasizing only the spiritual rather than the socio-cultural-political issues that have partly characterized the NRB in recent years, WorldNet Daily reported. NRB chairman Glenn Plummer said plans to replace Pederson had not been made.

FORMER 'KILLING FIELDS' HARVESTED BY MINISTRY

Cambodia's "Killing Fields" have become harvest fields. According to Christian Aid Missions (CAM), 37,787 people last year heard the gospel for the first time through Kampuchea for Christ (KC), a Cambodian evangelistic and church-planting ministry. As a result, 4,866 people accepted Jesus. Aaron Lee and his wife, who survived the so-called Killing Fields—the mid-1970s reign of terror that claimed some 3 million lives in Cambodia—started KC in 1995. Lee told CAM that unprecedented evangelistic opportunities have included the prime minister allowing KC to hold a "Jesus Millennium Celebration" in 1999 that drew 50,000 people.

JAMES BLACKWOOD DIES

James Blackwood, the last original member of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet and a Southern gospel music pioneer, died Feb. 3 of complications of a stroke, the Memphis Commercial Appeal reported. He was 82. Blackwood

suffered from several health problems the last few years, including colon cancer, the Associated Press said. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Miriam; two sons; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

LAMAR VEST MARRIES

Church of God overseer Lamar Vest married Vickie Underwood Feb. 16 at Westmore Church of God in Cleveland, Tenn. Widowed in 1997, Underwood is a former pastor's wife, teacher and mother of three. Vest's wife, Iris, died in January 2001. The two had been married 42 years.

HEROES OF SEPT. 11 ENDORSE VIDEO CAMPAIGN

A special edition of the evangelistic Jesus movie remembers the victims and heroes of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Three New York firefighters talk about how their faith sustained them at Ground Zero in a new introduction to the video being widely distributed to homes nationwide. Jerry Sillocks tells how he felt afraid when he stood atop the rubble soon after the collapse of the World Trade Center towers but that he "remembered Psalm 34, and the Lord took the fear away." Copies of the 9-11 Remembrance edition of the film, produced by Campus Crusade for Christ, were to be given to 8,000 congressional members and their staffs in February.