

# News Briefs

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## **CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL COUNSELOR LARRY BURKETT DIES**

Well-known Christian radio personality Larry Burkett died July 4 from a heart-related illness. He was 64. The co-founder of Gainesville, Christian Financial Concepts, which merged with Crown Financial Ministries in 2000, had battled kidney cancer and heart disease since 1995, the Associated Press reported. A week before his death, Burkett had been declared cancer-free, but he had suffered a heart attack a month before. Burkett spent the last 27 years sharing his Bible-based financial advice with readers and listeners nationwide and abroad. He is survived by his wife, Judy, four children and nine grandchildren.

## **'TEN COMMANDMENTS JUDGE' LOSES APPEAL**

A federal appeals court ruled July 1 that Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, known as the "Ten Commandments Judge," must remove his God's Laws monument from the lobby of the state judicial building. A three-judge panel unanimously upheld a lower court order that said the display violates the Constitution's prohibition on government promotion of religion, the Associated Press reported. Tom Parker, a spokesman for Moore, said the chief justice would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

## **HANK HANEGRAFF INVESTIGATED BY FINANCIAL COUNCIL**

In June the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) declared Hank Hanegraaff's Christian Research Institute (CRI) compliant with ECFA standards. In March CRI had been found in violation of three of the group's seven codes—board governance, financial controls and policies, and use of ministry resources—prompting a compliance review. Among the ECFA's concerns were payments totaling \$3,141 to Hanegraaff's wife for personal expenses and \$3,100 in dues to the country club in the Hanegraaffs' gated community, Christianity Today reported. ECFA President Paul Nelson said CRI had been fully cooperative, though the review remains open.

### **CHRISTIAN LEADERS ENDORSE MEL GIBSON'S FILM**

Some prominent Christian leaders have enthusiastically endorsed actor Mel Gibson's new film depicting the last 12 hours of Jesus' life. In June, Gibson showed *The Passion* to leaders at Focus on the Family and to hundreds of pastors and lay leaders, including Ted Haggard, president of the National Evangelical Association, *The Colorado Springs Gazette* reported. Haggard said the film "conveys, more accurately than any other film, who Jesus was." Focus on the Family President Don Hodel described the movie as "historically and theologically accurate" and said it was "certainly the most powerful portrayal of the Passion I've ever seen or heard about." Gibson co-wrote the script, and directed and produced the \$25-million film, which stars James Caviezel, a devout Catholic, as Christ. Gibson also screened the film to several Christian leaders at the annual Christian Booksellers Convention in Orlando, Fla., in July.

### **Navy Chaplain Appointed Senate Chaplain**

Rear Adm. Barry Black was appointed Senate chaplain June 17, becoming the first African American, the first military chaplain and the first Seventh-day Adventist ever to hold the

post. His predecessor, Presbyterian minister Lloyd Ogilvie, retired in March. Black, 54, was among three African Americans to be considered, one of whom was Pentecostal pastor George McKinney of St. Stephen Church of God in Christ in San Diego. Assemblies of God minister Richard Foth, a longtime "missionary" on Capitol Hill, reportedly was considered for the post.

### **Roberts Liardon Back to Regular Preaching**

After stepping aside from ministry due to an admitted moral failure, pastor and writer Roberts Liardon has returned to regular pulpit preaching. Liardon, who founded Embassy Christian Center in Irvine, Calif., 10 years ago, resumed Sunday-morning preaching in June. Liardon confessed to a short-term homosexual relationship with the church's youth pastor. Since his admission in 2001, several Embassy members have left, and Sunday church attendance has dropped from 700 to about 100.

### **Evangelist Achieves Historic Military First**

Col. Sheila R. Baxter, a licensed evangelist in the Church of God in Christ, became the first woman in the Army Medical Service Corps to be appointed a brigadier general. A native of Virginia, Baxter, 48, has relocated to San Antonio to work for the surgeon general of the Army.

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