

News Briefs

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FOURSQUARE PRESIDENT, TREASURER RESIGN

The head of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel voluntarily resigned after the denomination lost \$14 million by investing in two allegedly fraudulent organizations. According to a statement from the denomination, President Paul Risser and Treasurer Brent Morgan resigned March 10 during Foursquare's annual cabinet meeting. Risser, 66, led the denomination in the sale of a Los Angeles radio station, and invested almost 6 percent of the \$250 million profit in Financial Advisory Consultants Inc. and International Product Investment Corp. Both companies were shut down recently by federal authorities, who described them as Ponzi schemes. Risser had hoped the proceeds would enable Foursquare to "advance the kingdom of God," the statement said. But leaders were divided on whether he had the authority to invest the money. Foursquare officials said there was no criminal intent on either man's part, adding that Risser would "continue to be available to serve the church family."

U.S. MISSIONARIES KILLED IN IRAQ

Four Southern Baptist missionaries who had been working on a water-purification project in Iraq were killed March 15 in a drive-by shooting in Mosul, northern Iraq, Baptist Press reported. Larry T. Elliot, 60, and his wife, Jean Dover Elliot, 58—both of Clary, N.C.; and Karen Denise Watson, 38, of Bakersfield, Calif., died at the scene. David E. McDonnall,

28, of Rowlett, Texas, died in a military hospital the next day. At press time, his wife, Carrie Taylor McDonnall, 26, remained in critical condition.

POSTAL CAMPAIGN TO HONOR WILLIAM SEYMOUR

A Florida evangelist has started a grass-roots effort to have the U.S. Postal Service recognize the black pastor who led the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906. Larry Martin, the academic dean at the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry in Pensacola, wants to honor William Seymour with a postage stamp. On Aug. 1, Martin plans to submit a formal petition asking the postal service to issue a stamp in April 2006 to honor the 100th anniversary of the Azusa Street Revival, which is credited with sparking the Pentecostal movement. For more information about Martin's stamp campaign, visit .

HOLLYWOOD PONDERES RELIGIOUS FILMS AFTER PASSION SUCCESS

Hollywood is rethinking films of faith after the success of The Passion of the Christ. According to The New York Times, producers and studio executives are asking "whether the movie industry has been neglecting large segments of the American audience eager for more openly religious fare." At press time, Mel Gibson's dramatization of Christ's final hours had been the top film for three consecutive weeks, pushing its total to \$264 million in the United States and Canada, the Associated Press (AP) reported. With support from a large number of churches, The Passion was on track to gross between \$350 million and \$400 million, the AP said.

Karl Strader Marks 50 Years in Ministry

Well-known for hosting what was dubbed the "laughing revival" at his Carpenter's Home Church, pastor Karl Strader will celebrate 50 years in ministry next month during a reception

June 6 in Lakeland, Fla. An Assemblies of God minister, Strader joined the church's staff in 1966. It grew to 5,000 members at Sunday services in the early 1990s when Rodney Howard-Browne led revival services there. Today the ministry has approximately 2,000 members. The anniversary also marks 50 years of marriage for Strader and his wife, Joyce.

Marlin Maddoux Dies at 70

Christian talk-radio pioneer Marlin Maddoux died March 4 in an Irving, Texas, hospital due to complications from heart bypass surgery, the Associated Press reported. He was 70. Best-known as the host of the Point of View radio talk show, Maddoux was the founder of USA Radio Network, which has 1,300 stations across the country. Maddoux is survived by his wife of 49 years, four children and 10 grandchildren.

Tammy Faye Messner Faces Lung Cancer

In an interview with CNN's Larry King March 18, Tammy Faye Messner, 62, announced that she has inoperable lung cancer. The ex-wife of televangelist Jim Bakker said she plans to seek alternative cancer treatment in addition to chemotherapy. Since she divorced Bakker in 1992, Messner has become a personality in her own right, writing a book, *I Will Survive ... And You Will Too*, and appearing on the reality show *The Surreal Life*.

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