

Charisma News Service

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CHARISMATICS HAVE HIGHEST LEVELS OF BIBLICAL ACCURACY, POLLSTER SAYS

Pentecostals are often accused of being theologically lightweight, but a recent Barna Research Group (BRG) study found that charismatics are "the most biblically astute people." Evaluating people's opinions on eight faith-related perspectives, the BRG study found "a clear-cut pattern" within the data: "Individuals associated with charismatic or nondenominational congregations were more likely than adults from other types of churches to possess biblical views on each item." The California-based organization conducted a nationwide survey of 6,000 adults from the 12 largest denominations in the United States.

CROSS-WALK EVANGELIST SAYS HE LED PRESIDENT TO CHRIST

Evangelist Arthur Blessitt, who has carried a 12-foot wooden cross to every country in the world, says he led President George W. Bush to Christ during a private meeting in Midland, Texas, on April 3, 1984. In his autobiography, Bush told how an encounter with evangelist Billy Graham planted the seeds of faith in his life, but did not detail how he came to salvation. Blessitt wrote on his Web site in late June that Bush, then a businessman, requested a private meeting while the evangelist was in Texas for a "Decision '84" crusade.

Blessitt says Bush told him: "I did not feel comfortable attending the meeting, but I want to talk to you about how to know Jesus Christ and how to follow Him." Blessitt says he went on to explain how Bush might become a Christian, and the two prayed.

NEWSWEEK HIGHLIGHTS GROWTH OF CHRISTIAN MUSIC

According to the July 16 issue of Newsweek, contemporary Christian music (CCM) is "now the hottest genre in the entire music industry," generating millions of dollars in record sales. The cover story—featuring the headline: "Jesus Rocks! Christian Entertainment Makes a Joyful Noise"—says "with big best sellers, new movies and religious rock, the \$3 billion Christian entertainment industry is exploding." Last year, CCM sold \$747 million—7 percent of the overall sales in the American music industry.

BROAD-BASED ALLIANCE SEEKS GAY MARRIAGE AMENDMENT BAN

A broad group of pro-family advocates—including several prominent black ministers, Roman Catholic officials, representatives of Jewish and Muslim groups and professors from Princeton, Harvard and Notre Dame—have rallied together to support an amendment to the Constitution that would ban gay marriage, The San Francisco Chronicle reported. At a press conference July 12, leaders of the Alliance for Marriage (AFM) presented the Federal Marriage Amendment, which says: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman." Pro-gay organizations blasted the proposed legislation, which must be ratified by two-thirds of both houses of Congress and the legislatures of 38 states.

JIMMY CARTER CHALLENGES BAPTISTS

Former President Jimmy Carter says moderates need to get over the battles that have divided Southern Baptists in the last 20 years. Speaking June 29 at the annual meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) in Atlanta, Carter encouraged more than 7,000 delegates of the largest network of moderate Baptists "to link independent groups in a common cause," The Dallas Morning News reported. Last year Carter cut his ties with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Carter wrote a letter in October to the denomination, decrying the SBC's "increasingly rigid" creed, especially rules restricting women ministers.

WHITE PASTOR GETS POST WITH AME ZION

In August, Ed Schneider of St. Louis will take over as senior pastor of Spottswood African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church in Denver, making him one of the first white Americans in 150 years to lead a church in the predominantly black AME Zion denomination. Schneider, who is charismatic, says his appointment is the denomination's first overt attempt at racial inclusion.

MISSIONARY LEADER DIES IN PLANE CRASH

A small plane created and piloted by Robert Helmer, founder of Missionair Inc. of Kissimmee, Fla., crashed July 11 minutes after takeoff from the ministry's 10-acre base camp, the Orlando Sentinel reported. Helmer, 52, was the missions pastor of

Heartland Community Church in Kissimmee. Missionair has helped 80 churches nationwide reach remote areas in countries such as

Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala.