

News Briefs

The following reports were released during the last month by Charisma NOW. Go to our Web site at www.charismanow.com 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.

INTERCESSION URGED FOR OLYMPIC GAMES IN GREECE

Prayer leaders from Greece are calling on intercessors worldwide to pull down the spiritual stronghold over the host nation of this summer's Olympic Games. According to Joel News, a Dutch-based prayer and revival news service, the Olympic fire was lit March 25 in Olympia, Greece, during a religious ceremony led by a high priestess who dedicated the Games to Greek gods. The ceremony marked the start of a 46,800-mile relay across all five continents that will culminate on Aug. 13 in Athens with the opening of the Games. "The main ceremonies and symbols of Athens 2004 are dedicated to idols [or spiritual powers], and the dates and rituals have been carefully chosen," observed Joel News, which urged intercessors "to resist Satan's evil schemes and to pray God's destiny" for Greece in the coming months and during the Olympics.

PASTOR WANTS TO 'SPIRITUALLY' HELP TEENS HELD IN CROSS BURNING

A Pentecostal pastor in Washington state says he hopes he can help the teens who admitted to burning a 3-foot-by-5-foot cross March 24 in front of his home in Arlington, a predominantly white community about 40 miles north of Seattle. Jason Martin, who leads 150-member, nondenominational Jesus Is Lord Life Tabernacle in Marysville, said he's not angry at the two 16-year-old boys who turned themselves in to police March 27, the Associated Press (AP) reported. Martin, 38, said if

the boys are willing to hear him out, he hopes to tell them that he forgives them. "I would like to help them spiritually, of course," said Martin, who is black, "to help them know that Jesus loves them, that He died for their sins, and that no one has not committed a sin," the AP reported.

NORTHERN CANADIAN TERRITORY EXPERIENCES CHRISTIAN REVIVAL

Pentecostalism is reportedly spreading among indigenous people living in a remote territory of northern Canada. According to The Winnipeg Sun, a Pentecostal revival is growing in Nunavut, which means "our land" in the Inuit language. The region covers an area roughly the same size as Western Europe. The Canadian newspaper observed: "After years of patient work, fundamentalist religious leaders across the eastern Arctic are about to join hands and [expand] their rapidly growing flocks to form a new church that combines speaking-in-tongues, cast-out-the-devil Christianity with Inuit cultural pride."

ADULT FILMMAKER HELPS CHRISTIAN ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY GROUP

A pornographer and a Christian anti-pornography group have become unlikely allies in a crusade against explicit material. James DiGiorgio has joined forces with in an effort to keep children away from pornography, the Los Angeles Times reported. DiGiorgio and his crew recently produced a public-service announcement for , founded by youth pastors Craig Gross of Fireproof Ministries and Mike Foster of Crossroads Christian Church, both based in Corona, Calif. The production featured puppets and a wholesome message urging parents to keep their adult videos and magazines from falling into children's hands. DiGiorgio, who has directed more than 100 adult films, has received harsh criticism from his industry, but the father of two said he believes the industry has to take responsibility.

Church on the Way Selects New Senior Pastors

On April 4, pastor Jack Hayford named Jim and Alice Tolle as the new pastors of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, Calif. Hayford has been serving as interim pastor since the death of his son-in-law and the church's senior pastor Scott Bauer on Oct. 24. Tolle asked that Hayford remain as teaching pastor "while I seek to put my arms around this wonderful ministry." A formal installation service is to be held in September.

Southern Gospel Artist Admits to Gay Struggle

Southern Gospel artist Kirk Talley canceled all further concerts after admitting to a 30-year battle with "feelings of loneliness and depression, all stemming from the struggle of homosexuality," according to a statement he posted on his Web site. Talley said he is seeking restoration, and described being "set free" from his struggles after an intense prayer and counseling session. He said he plans to take a six-month break from the music industry.

Organist Gives One-Handed Easter Concert

Less than a year after severing his left arm in a car accident, organist Mark Thallander received a standing ovation for his one-handed performance of "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" during an Easter service at Central Assembly of God in Springfield, Mo., AG News reported. Today the noted musician uses a prosthetic arm. "So many people around the world were praying for me," Thallander said of his recovery, AG News reported. "I felt those prayers and Jesus sustained me through the entire event."