

News Briefs

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CHRISTIAN LEADERS URGE BOYCOTT OF TNIV

More than 100 pastors, theologians and ministry heads—including Christian Broadcasting Network founder Pat Robertson and senior Foursquare leader Jack Hayford—have united to sign a statement saying Today's New International Version (TNIV) is not "sufficiently trustworthy to commend to the church." They object to the TNIV's replacing masculine references with gender-neutral expressions in places where they maintain that important meaning is lost. The International Bible Society dismissed the statement as an attack that "continues to misrepresent" the TNIV, and pointed to its own "continually growing" list of supporters, which includes pastors Jim Cymbala and Ted Haggard, and author Philip Yancey.

AMERICANS ATTEND CHURCH WEAKLY, NOT WEEKLY

Fewer than 1 in 3 adults attends worship weekly, according to the latest findings of the Barna Research Group (BRG). And despite much talk about spiritual awakening, BRG has found little overall change in the state of the church in the last decade. One significant area of growth is among the unchurched—identified as people who have not attended a service in the last six months other than for a special event. Their numbers have grown from 24 percent to 34 percent since 1991.

SECOND-GRADERS 'ADOPT' MICHAEL ENGLISH

Shunned by many after scandals that included an affair, a divorce and drug use, one-time Dove Award-winner Michael English says the second-graders at Immaculate Conception School in Dayton, Ohio, are "leading the way" in modeling Christian restoration. The youngsters in Connie Siders' class "adopted" English after their teacher introduced them to his music. They pray for him each morning, play at least one English song in the classroom, and send him gifts and letters, The Dayton Daily News reported. "They are showing [Christians] how to react and behave," English said. "God is working in my life right now through these youngsters."

CALIFORNIA CHURCH BARS CONVICTED CHILD MOLESTER

Members of the Church of the Brethren in La Verne, Calif., have decided not to allow a convicted child molester to attend their worship services, citing concern for the safety of their children. Around 120 people attended a Brethren meeting May 19, rejecting the request by Kristian Rosvold for a welcome at Sunday services, The Los Angeles Times reported. Twice convicted of molesting children, Rosvold told the newspaper he wanted to attend a church as part of his recovery as an alcoholic and sex offender. He approached the Brethren congregation after being turned down by another church. Church leaders plan to discuss how Rosvold might be involved, perhaps in a men's group, Brethren pastor Chuck Boyer said.

AFGHAN MISSIONARIES REGRET DISHONESTY

Heather Mercer and Dana Curry say they feel guilty for lying when interrogated by the Taliban during their three-month imprisonment. Arrested for telling an Afghan family about Jesus, the pair share their full story for the first time in Prisoners of Hope (WaterBrook/Doubleday), which recounts how their relief work in Kabul gave them opportunities to discreetly share their faith. Both women say they still

struggle with their decision to protect the family to whom they showed part of the Jesus film and gave a copy of the New Testament. "I wish I had said, 'Yes,' and then just not said to whom," Curry said.

ROBERTSON DECRIES MAGAZINE'S 'BIGOTRY'

Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) founder Pat Robertson accused Fortune magazine of "factual inaccuracies and unalloyed bigotry" in its June 10 report that he lost \$78 million investing in Liberian gold and California oil refinery projects as he looked for ways to offset dependency on donations. In his letter of protest, Robertson said the claim was "without documentation and is factually untrue" adding that it seemed deliberately intended to be "more incendiary and damaging than the facts warranted."

WORLD'S LARGEST CHURCH PLANNED

A South Korean pastor plans to build the world's largest church, which will accommodate 200,000 and feature TV monitors in the back of each seat, Assist News Service said. Once a heavy drinker, Jae-Rock Lee was dramatically healed when he visited a Christian meeting. He founded Manmim Joong-ang Church in Seoul with 13 members. Today it numbers 75,000 and has seven sanctuaries, with 177 branch churches in 18 countries.

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