

News Briefs

Diane Knippers Dies

Diane Knippers, president of the Institute for Religion and Democracy, a conservative think-tank in Washington, D.C., died April 18 of complications from colon cancer. She was 53. Named by Time magazine as one of the nation's most influential evangelicals, Knippers was an outspoken critic of liberal moves within mainline Protestant churches, especially the Episcopal Church, and was an advocate of persecuted Christians around the world. She is survived by her husband, parents and brother.

Florida Pastor Clint Brown Faces Legal Battle

Dennis Leonard, pastor of Heritage Christian Center in Denver, has filed suit against Florida minister Clint Brown, saying Brown has refused to repay a \$100,000 loan he sought to help buy a building for his church, the Orlando Sentinel reported. Leonard's attorney, Howard Marks, said the pastors made a verbal agreement that FaithWorld would repay the loan. The suit claims that Leonard has not received the money and seeks compensatory damage and interest, the Sentinel said. At press time, neither attorneys for FaithWorld or Brown had commented on the suit. Brown also has been sued by a former member who claims he owes her \$200,000. Brown says the money was a gift.

Gospel Artists Recognized At Dove Awards Show

A cross section of Christian music artists were recognized April 13 at the Gospel Music Association's 36th annual awards show in Nashville, Tenn. Among the Dove Award recipients was Casting Crowns, which was honored with seven awards, including Group of the Year and song and songwriter of the year awards for lead singer Mark Hall. Switchfoot received four awards, including Artist of the Year. Jeremy Camp and Nicole C. Mullen were awarded male and female vocalist of the year awards respectively. The Crabb Family received four awards, including recorded song of the year honors in the Southern Gospel, country and traditional

gospel categories. Awards show co-host Israel Houghton received Doves for best contemporary gospel song and album.

'PREACHER BUSH' SHARES FAITH WITH REPORTERS

President Bush talked to the seven reporters traveling with him on Air Force One about Jesus after attending the pope's funeral in Rome April 8. For 47 minutes, Bush and the journalists had an intimate, friendly chat largely about the pope, his legacy and Bush's own "walk with Christ," The Washington Post reported. Bush said attending Pope John Paul II's funeral strengthened his faith, his belief in a living God and in how religious faith is a lifelong journey. "I think a walk in faith constantly confronts doubt, as faith becomes more mature," Bush said. "And you constantly confront, you know, questions. My faith is strong. The Bible [says] ... you've got to constantly stay in touch with the Word of God in order to help you on the walk." Bush told the pool of reporters who travel with the president that it is necessary to find ways to strengthen one's faith. "It's called a 'walk,'" he said "It's not called a moment or a respite. It's a 'walk.'"

PASTOR SPEARHEADS CAMPAIGN AGAINST HUGE GAY EVENT IN JERUSALEM

Joining forces with ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel and rabbis from the U.S., a charismatic pastor has launched an international campaign against the 10-day WorldPride Parade scheduled to take place in Jerusalem this summer. Leo Giovinetti, who leads 2,500-strong Mission Valley Christian Fellowship in San Diego, is seeking 1 million signatures for a petition () against the mid-August gay-pride festival, the Associated Press (AP) reported. Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox Jewish mayor, Uri Lupolianski, opposes the event but said he is powerless to interfere because the police, not city hall, license public events. Giovinetti planned to hand-deliver the petition to each member of the Knesset. Meanwhile, the Jerusalem Prayer Team () has also started a petition against WorldPride.

OREGON SUPREME COURT NULLIFIES GAY MARRIAGE LICENSES

In a unanimous ruling the Oregon Supreme Court nullified nearly 3,000

marriage licenses issued to same-sex couples by Multnomah County in Portland last year, the Associated Press (AP) reported. In its April 14 decision, the Court said a county cannot defy state matrimonial law, which bans gay marriage, and noted that voters approved a constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex unions even more explicitly. Democratic Gov. Ted Kulongoski said April 13 that he will push to allow same-sex couples to form civil unions, giving them many of the legal rights of marriage. The Oregon Court's ruling came a day after Connecticut became the second state to offer civil unions to same-sex couples. Massachusetts is the only state that permits gay marriage.

AMERICAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION ENDS PROCTOR & GAMBLE BOYCOTT

The American Family Association (AFA) has suspended a four-month boycott of Proctor & Gamble (P&G) products, claiming the company has backed off efforts that were supportive of homosexual lifestyle. The AFA reported that 400,000 people signed pledges to boycott P&G after the campaign was launched in November and endorsed by Focus on the Family. "Insofar as we can tell by our monitoring, P&G has stopped their sponsorship of TV programs promoting the homosexual lifestyle, such as Will and Grace, and they have stopped their sponsorship of homosexual Internet sites," AFA chairman Donald Wildmon said. His organization claims P&G has sponsored gay pride parades and gay workshops, and has required its employees to participate in sensitivity training that promotes acceptance of homosexuality.