

News Briefs

Ted haggard considers Senate Run

Ted Haggard, senior pastor of 11,000-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., and president of the National Association of Evangelicals, said he would consider a run for Congress in 2006 if Republican Rep. Joel Hefley retired and he couldn't comfortably support another candidate, the Associated Press (AP) reported. "I love this region of the country, and the people here need to be represented the way Joel has represented us," Haggard, 49, said. But he said he is not itching for a new job. "Colorado Springs is used to me being a pastor, and I am very comfortable in the role I currently fill," he told the AP. "I am not restless."

Christian Films Win Awards

George W. Bush: Faith in the White House received three of the highest awards offered by the International Christian Visual Media Association, which recognizes TV shows and films that present family values. The documentary, produced by Grizzly Adams Productions, received Crown Gold Awards for Best Picture, Best Screenplay and Best Documentary over \$50,000. Meanwhile, a seven-minute documentary about Rachel Scott, who was murdered during the Columbine High School shootings, received the grand prize in the Tribeca Film Festival's Short Film Competition. Jon Lindgren, who runs ViaMedia in Midland, Texas, was awarded the \$50,000 prize for Rachel's Challenge based on an Internet audience vote. Lindgren's upcoming projects include a documentary about contemporary Christian martyrs.

Taizé founder stabbed at prayer service

Brother Roger, the 90-year-old founder of the French religious Taizé Community, was stabbed and killed by a mentally disturbed person during evening prayers Aug. 16, members of his community told Agence France Presse (AFP). At press time, police had detained a 36-year-old Romanian woman as a suspect. The Taizé movement started during World War II, when

Swiss-born monk Roger Schutz, living in Taiz , located near Cluny, in the eastern Burgundy region, provided a refuge for those fleeing the conflict, regardless of their religion, AFP said. Roger, a Protestant with a degree in theology, was committed to seeing reconciliation between Christian groups.

Florida pastor settles Lawsuits

Pastor Clint Brown and his 6,000-member FaithWorld church in Orlando, Fla., have settled two lawsuits filed by a former member and a prominent Denver pastor, the Orlando Sentinel reported. On June 15 the ministry reached an agreement with former member Deborah Mitchell, who claimed the 42-year-old pastor refused to repay a \$200,000 loan. On June 22, church attorneys "amicably resolved" a similar lawsuit in which Bishop Dennis Leonard charged that Brown hadn't repaid a \$100,000 loan from his Heritage Christian Center. Meanwhile, Florida minister Clark Whitten has resigned as senior pastor of Calvary Assembly in suburban Orlando. During his 10-year tenure, Whitten, 55, helped the 2,200-member church eliminate an \$11 million debt on its facility, which is one of the largest structures in the Assemblies of God. Whitten plans to write and speak, the Orlando Sentinel reported.

Lutheran Church Votes Down Gay Clergy Proposal

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) rejected a proposal Aug. 12 that would have allowed homosexuals to serve as clergy in certain situations, the Associated Press (AP) reported. The proposal, which was rejected in a 503-490 vote, would have retained the church's ban on ordaining sexually active homosexuals but allowed exceptions for candidates in long-term relationships. The ELCA, which represents some 4.9 million members, also upheld a 1993 statement that bans blessing ceremonies for same-sex couples. Despite the statement's prohibitions, it is generally acknowledged that some Lutheran pastors have been presiding at such ceremonies without consequence for years, the AP said.

Chinese House Church Pioneer Dies

Chinese house-church leader Allen Yuan died Aug. 16 in a Beijing

hospital. He was 91. Yuan was one of 11 preachers, including Watchman Nee and Wang Ming Dao, who refused to join the Three Self Patriotic Movement after Mao Tse-Tung's communist rule began in 1949, Open Doors reported. In 1958, Yuan was arrested because of his "counter-revolutionary" faith and sentenced to life in prison with no hope of parole. But due to policy changes over the next few decades, Yuan was released in 1979. As recently as 2003 Yuan was baptizing 300 new converts each year. He is survived by his wife and six children. His second son, Yuan Fu Sing, continues to lead his church.

Habitat for Humanity Names New CEO

Jonathan T. Reckford has been named head of Habitat for Humanity. The 42-year-old is a former executive pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina, Minn., and previously served as president of stores for the Musicland division of Best Buy. Reckford's appointment comes six months after the nonprofit home-building organization's founder and CEO, Millard Fuller, was fired in the wake of a sexual harassment investigation. The board found "insufficient proof of inappropriate conduct," according to a January statement from the organization, but fired Fuller because he made comments the board considered critical despite an agreement he made to keep quiet.