

News Briefs

Carlton Pearson's Church Goes Into Foreclosure

Higher Dimensions Family Church has gone into foreclosure, causing the congregation led by Carlton Pearson to hold Sunday services at an Episcopal church in downtown Tulsa, Okla. Higher Dimensions has experienced a 90 percent decline in membership since Pearson began preaching what he calls his "gospel of inclusion," the Tulsa World reported. The doctrine teaches that all people are saved, even if they don't acknowledge Christ. With only 500 members, down from 5,000 a few years ago, the church has been unable to make mortgage payments on its 30-acre property, which at press time the ministry was trying to sell. Rev. Stephen McKee, pastor of Trinity Episcopal Church, where Higher Dimensions was to meet for 1 p.m. services for three months beginning in November, said he is comfortable with Pearson's doctrine, the World reported. "[I believe] that God became a human being, and if He loved us enough to do that, I have difficulty believing in a God that's going to put my colleagues in hell," McKee told the newspaper.

Israel Newspaper to Print Christian Edition

The Jerusalem Post plans to begin printing a Christian edition this month, The Guardian reported. The newspaper planned to partner with the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem to produce a monthly Christian edition that would be distributed among U.S. evangelicals. The publications will highlight a range of subjects, including archaeology, tourism and ideological arguments, Post editor David Horowitz told The Guardian. But he added that the Christian editions would not

be permitted to seek conversions. Meanwhile, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism has gone public with its plans to build a Christian theme park on 125 acres of land being donated to evangelicals. The \$60 million Holy Land Christian Center would focus on the places Jesus walked and include a Sea of Galilee Amphitheater overlooking the mouth of the Jordan River, and a Christian Experience Auditorium and Multimedia Center, the Christian Science Monitor reported. It would also include an online broadcast center that would allow ministers to address their constituents back home live from a location near the Sea of Galilee.

Voters Oust School Board Members in Favor of Intelligent Design

All eight members of a Pennsylvania school board that had been sued for introducing intelligent design into science classrooms were removed from office in early November, the New York Times reported. Dover, Pa., voters elected a slate of challengers who opposed the teaching of intelligent design. In October 2004, the Dover school board voted to require ninth-grade biology students to hear a brief statement that there were "gaps" in the evolution theory and that intelligent design was a viable alternative they could learn about by reading *Of Pandas and People*, which would be kept in school libraries. Eleven parents later sued the board, arguing that intelligent design was essentially creationism in disguise and that the board was trying to impose religion on students, the Times said. Some observers say the election result was a sign that voters were weary of the controversy surrounding the trial. A verdict in the case is expected this month.

Texas Voters Cross Party Lines to Support Gay Marriage Ban

Texas voters overwhelmingly backed their state's ban on gay

marriage in November, with African-Americans and Hispanics crossing party lines to support the amendment, the Houston Chronicle reported. Proposition 2 passed with 76 percent of the vote. The election had the highest voter turnout of a constitutional amendment election since 1991. Observers say minority voters don't necessarily see gay marriage as a party issue, but as a religious and cultural matter.

Baptist Leader Adrian Rogers Dies

Adrian Rogers, Ph.D., pastor emeritus of 28,000-member Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., died Nov. 15 after battling cancer. He was 74. Rogers served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention three times, and his Love Worth Finding broadcast aired on more than 14,000 TV and cable outlets and 2,000 radio stations. After serving as Bellevue pastor for 32 years, Rogers retired in 2005, but he planned to continue his broadcast ministry and leading the Adrian Rogers Pastor Training Institute. Funeral services were to be held Nov. 17. He is survived by his wife, Joyce; four adult children; nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Texas Pastor Electrocuted in Baptismal

The pastor of University Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, was electrocuted Oct. 30 after grabbing a microphone while partly submerged in water, the Associated Press reported. Kyle Lake, 33, was a leader in the emerging church movement and had written *Understanding God's Will: How to Hack the Equation Without Formulas* and *(re)Understanding Prayer: A Fresh Approach to Conversation with God*, both published by Relevant Books. Roughly 800 people were in attendance at the church, which was founded in 1995 by author Chris Seay and Christian musician David Crowder, the Waco Tribune-Herald reported.

Funeral services were held Nov. 1 in Waco. Lake is survived by his wife, Jennifer, a 5-year-old daughter and two 3-year-old sons.