

News Briefs

Hal Lindsey Pulls Show From TBN Lineup

Christian broadcaster Hal Lindsey pulled his International Intelligence Briefing (IIB) from Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) in January, claiming the network asked him to stop making negative comments about radical Islam on his show. "I ... know your heart for evangelism of the Muslims," Lindsey wrote in a letter to TBN founders Paul and Jan Crouch. "But I don't agree with your reasoning that warning about the dangers of 'radical Islam' is a hindrance to the Gospel to all Muslims." Lindsey claims TBN pre-empted IIB, which analyzes current events in light of end-times prophecy, in December in an attempt to censor him. TBN spokesman Colby May said several shows were pre-empted that month for Christmas specials. Noting that Trinity began broadcasting a 24-hour Arabic channel in January 2005, May said the network in December asked all programmers to be careful about how they discuss Islamic terrorism. He said TBN wants to make the gospel accessible in the Muslim world, "and you're not accessible if you are inartful in the way in which you make the segregation between Islam ... and terrorists." Lindsey planned to air IIB on Daystar and Sky Angel.

Megachurches Name New Senior Pastors

John and Carol Arnott stepped down as senior pastors of Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, effective Jan. 22. Senior associate pastors Steve and Sandra Long were selected to lead the church, which has been home to the Toronto Blessing revival since 1994. The Arnotts said they planned to focus their attention on Catch the Fire Ministries, a church

outreach that oversees thousands of “soaking prayer centers” worldwide. Jan. 22 also marked the installation of Robert A. Schuller, 51, son of Los Angeles pastor Robert H. Schuller, 79, as senior pastor of the Crystal Cathedral. The elder Schuller said he planned to remain chairman of the board of international ministries and stay active in the church, the Los Angeles Times reported. Meanwhile, South Korean pastor David Yonggi Cho said he would not leave the helm of his 750,000 Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul. Though he had previously announced plans to retire on his 70th birthday in February 2006, Cho said he would remain in the pastorate until he turns 75, the Korean Times reported. The Jan. 1 announcement sparked a controversy among some Protestant groups who worry that church members deify Cho and that the ministry is too dependent on him for its survival, the Korean Times said.

Southern Baptists Bar Missionaries From Speaking in Tongues

During a Nov. 15 meeting, trustees for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) International Mission Board (IMB) voted to no longer appoint missionaries who practice a “private prayer language,” widely understood to mean speaking in tongues, the American Baptist Press (ABP) reported. The IMB already bars people who speak in tongues during public worship from serving on the mission field. The new policy also prohibits those who speak in tongues privately. Some observers say the vote was an attempt to undermine the leadership of IMB President Jerry Rankin, who acknowledges having spoken in tongues for many years, ABP reported. IMB spokeswoman Anita Bowden told the news service the new policy was not connected to Rankin, as it does not apply to missionaries appointed before Nov. 15.

Harvest House Libel Action Dismissed

The Court of Appeals of the First District of Texas has dismissed a multimillion-dollar libel lawsuit brought by The Local Church and its publishing arm, Living Stream Ministry (LSM). The suit alleges that Harvest House Publishers defamed The Local Church by including it in its Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions by John Ankerberg and John Weldon. In its decision, the appeals court said the group's inclusion in the book with "others who may have committed [immoral, illegal and despicable] ... actions does not give rise to a libel claim." Chris Wilde, spokesman for LSM, which publishes the writings of Watchman Nee, said an appeal would be made to the Texas Supreme Court.

Michael W. Smith to serve on president bush's service Council

The White House nominated contemporary Christian musician Michael W. Smith to serve a two-year term on the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. President Bush established the council in 2003 on the first anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps to promote volunteer service. Chaired by former football pro Darrell Green and co-chaired by former senators Bob Dole of Kansas and John Glenn of Ohio, the council includes members from the private and nonprofit sectors, entertainment, sports, education and government. Smith was sworn in Jan. 14.

Cable Companies Offer Family Bundles

Responding to pressure from the Federal Communications Commission amid growing concerns about indecency on TV, the nation's leading cable providers announced plans to offer family-friendly programming tiers. Beginning the first quarter of this year, Time Warner, Comcast and Cox Communications will offer mostly sex-and-violence-free bundles that include such

channels as Disney, CNN Headline News and HGTV, while excluding networks such as FX, Comedy Central and MTV. Time Warner and Comcast bundles include Trinity Broadcasting Network, while Cox will allow local systems to tailor packages to include religious channels.