

News Service Briefs

POWER TEAM FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

The embattled Power Team ministry founded by Christian strongman John Jacobs is now in Chapter 11. Filed Aug. 20 in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas, the move obligates the ministry to come up with a plan of action to pay off its creditors and gives them the necessary time to do so. Jacobs attributed the ministry's financial problems to a nationwide decline in giving after 9/11. The Power Team has held about the same number of meetings this year as last year, but Jacobs said ministry revenues have been about half of what they were before the terrorist attacks. Jacobs, whose salary will be slashed, said he hopes to repay creditors within three years.

CHURCHES SKIP COLLECTION PLATE

More and more congregations are doing away with collections because they think passing the plate is offensive to people who think churches are just after their money, The Christian Science Monitor reported. At Emmaus Road Church in Seattle, worshipers can donate via a small white box at the rear of their meeting room. The church ditched the traditional collection six years ago, but still covers its annual \$100,000 budget. Pastor Chris Mitchell of New England Chapel in Franklin, Mass., said he believes going back to passing the plate would reduce his church's income. The church has met its \$300,000 budget each year since doing away with the collection in 1997.

'GOD TV' BROADCASTS FROM THE HOLY LAND

Christian TV programming is beaming from the Holy Land round-the-clock since the United Kingdom-based GOD TV network relocated its broadcast center to Jerusalem. The July move has

broadened the network's reach to 80 percent of the world, with millions of homes in India now able to tune in to the GOD Channel via cable. The GOD Revival Channel is also carried from Israel by satellite. A South African who launched GOD TV with his wife, Wendy, in 1995, co-founder Rory Alec said the move is both strategic and prophetic. He said it is the first time in history the gospel is being broadcast 24 hours a day from Israel.

PHILADELPHIA SAME-SEX LAW OVERTURNED

A Pennsylvania court overturned a Philadelphia ordinance Aug. 29 that recognized same-sex "life partnerships," ruling that the statute supplanted the power of the state to regulate marriage. The Commonwealth Court declared invalid the 1998 city law that amended the definition of the term "marital status" to include "life partner," which granted benefits to same-sex partners of city employees who signed a partnership affidavit, the Associated Press reported. A group of seven city taxpayers sued, charging that the city did not have the power to create a new marital status. The court agreed, saying that under Pennsylvania state law only the General Assembly has the authority to legislate regarding family relationships.

National Baptists Reduce Leader's Power

Two years after its last leader, the Rev. Henry J. Lyons, went to prison for stealing millions, the 5 million-member National Baptist Convention, USA, has voted to decrease the number of board members appointed by its president, thus reducing his power, the Associated Press reported. The Rev. Wendell L. Griffen, who headed the revision committee, said the changes were in the works long before Lyons' problems and are unrelated. The denomination's president, the Rev. William J. Shaw, backed the overhaul.

Scottish Praise Music Pioneer Dies at Age 71

Simon Cameron, founder of The Singing Camerons, who shared their pioneering praise music on television and at meetings across the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, has died in his native Scotland at age 71. In 1974 he founded The New Hope Trust, a Bible college in Peterhead, in the United Kingdom, and in the 1990s he launched a relief ministry to Romania. He is survived by his wife, Wendy, and four children.

Texas Woman Still Pastoring at Age 90

Celebrating her 90th birthday Sept. 28, Claytie O. Searcy says God has given her "unusual energy" to pastor 100-member House of Love in Dallas. Searcy was 68 when she planted the church, and though she recently tapped the Rev. Ted Harris as her successor, she has no plans to retire. The church recently completed a family life center, and Searcy says she expects God to open more doors for ministry.