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FREE



Radio Bendición broadcasts for 57 hours each week on Spirit FM 107.5.

‘Birthed in the very heart of God’ Radio Bendición is only Christian Spanish family-oriented radio station in Twin Cities

By Scott Noble

LAKEVILLE — Eleazar Perez felt a burden on his heart, a burden for a Christian Spanish-language radio station in the Twin Cities. More than 210,000 Latinos currently live in the metro area, making it a viable ministry opportunity for those who wish to reach Latinos for Christ and to provide them with Christian programming.

So Perez began to pray in April 2000 about whether God wanted him to start a radio station. By October of that year, Perez felt God had given him the answer.

“We had our first program, and it was just for one hour down in Owatonna,” Perez said. “It was pretty steep in cost. It was like

\$200 an hour. Then we went to four-hour long programming, and by then we were paying about \$1,400 for the four hours. We just kept praying to the Lord, and one day we just ran out of money.”

When the money ran out, Perez began to ask God, “Where are your promises?”

After wrestling with the situation, Perez felt God telling him his faith was not strong enough. And sure enough, shortly after that, God provided another means for the radio ministry to take off.

“God told me I was about to be visited by a gentleman in that very same parking lot where I was crying out to the Lord at that particular moment,” Perez recalled. “And when this gentleman approaches me, God tells me I need

to listen to what he has to say. Fifteen minutes later, while I was praying, this person comes up to me and I followed him as God had instructed me. So we went into this apartment” not knowing that there was a FM radio station in the apartment building.

After talking with the gentleman, Perez found out that it was too expensive to purchase programming on this man’s FM station. However, Perez left him his business card and went back home.

Later that night, the gentleman called Perez and told him he couldn’t sleep and asked if they could meet the following day. The next day, after talking, they worked out an agreement

See RADIO, page 2

The Minnesota Christian Chronicle will be re-branded as

Minnesota Christian Examiner

A New Name for an Old Friend

Coming next month

Group files lawsuit against school district

Claims it denied pro-life organization ‘official’ status

By Scott Noble

SAINT MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE — The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) filed a lawsuit last month against St. Michael-Albertville Public Schools for denying official status to a student-led pro-life club. The group claims the school district has recognized more than a dozen other similar student-led groups but denied “official status” to the All Life Is Valuable (ALIV) club because, according to the ADF, the club “does not support the student body as a whole.”

“Pro-life students should not be discriminated against for expressing their beliefs,” said ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman via a news release. “As the Supreme Court has noted, students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate. School officials do not have the authority to trump the constitutionally protected rights of

students, and by denying the ALIV Club official status on campus they are doing exactly that.”

According to the ADF, the student-led club addresses a variety of issues related to students, including faith and religion, abstinence, abortion, leadership, community service and several others.

In the lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, the ADF claims the actions by the school are in violation of the Equal Access Act, the Free Speech Clause, the Equal Protection Clause, the Due Process Clause and the Free Exercise of Religion Clause.

The lawsuit also alleges that the school deems other clubs, including the Diversity club, the Environmental club and the Anime club as “support[ing] the student body as a whole.”

For more information on this case, visit www.adfmedia.org.

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Local nonprofit extends global reach in war on poverty, disease and hunger

By Carra Carr

MINNETONKA — Lines stretched out and away from the white tents, winding through dusty streets and bleached landscapes that offered no protection from the Ugandan sun. From miles around the people came, some walking for hours, anticipation and excitement lighting their eyes as they waited for their turn—for their chance at a new future.

Underneath the white canopies, workers bustled to and fro from sun up until past sundown, their hands carrying what they traveled half a world over to give

away: a small, delicately curved hearing aid, the symbol of a future with hope.

In all, more than 22,000 state-of-the-art hearing aids were given to hearing-impaired children and adults across Africa in just 24 days. The tour, initiated and led by the Starkey Hearing Foundation, an Eden Prairie-based company devoted to improving the quality of life for the hearing-impaired, was studded with celebrity volunteers like Adrian Peterson and Bryant McKinnie from the Minnesota Vikings.

But there was another Twin Cities organization serving alongside the athletic and hearing pro-

fessionals—and without whose help the six-day stop in Uganda might not have happened.

Founded more than 10 years ago, Hope for the City has been fighting poverty, disease and hunger in Minnesota, the United States and the world through distributing corporate surplus. What started as a conviction to utilize the resources God had given them grew into something no one ever imagined.

“My wife and I felt we were giving generously,” said Dennis Doyle, executive chair and founder of Hope for the

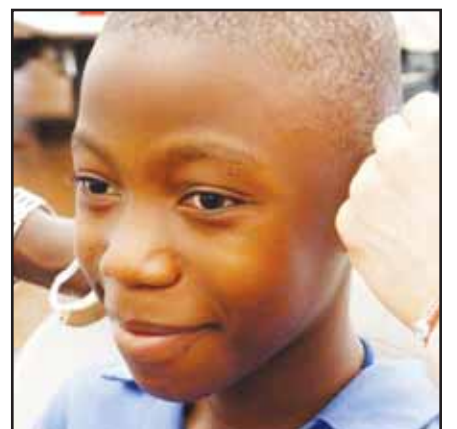


PHOTO COURTESY OF STARKEY HEARING FOUNDATION

Hope for the City helped the Starkey Hearing Foundation bring the gift of hearing to thousands of hearing-impaired children and adults across Uganda.

See UGANDA, page 8

Group claims taxpayers paid for more abortions

SAINT PAUL — Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL), citing a report from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, said 32 percent of all abortions in Minnesota in 2009 were paid by taxpayers at a cost of nearly \$1.6 million.

MCCL also said abortion claims were up 4.8 percent over the previous year, payments rose more than five percent and the average cost

of an abortion increased to \$403.

“There appears to be no limit to the abortion industry’s marketing of abortion to poor women,” said Scott Fischbach, executive director of MCCL via a press release. “It is time to end abortionists’ money grab at the expense of vulnerable women and their unborn children.”

The new pro-life majority in the state legislature is working

on two pieces of legislation that would ban taxpayers from funding abortions.

“Polls continue to show that most Minnesotans and most Americans are opposed to taxpayer-funded abortions, yet they continue to be forced to pay for them,” Fischbach said.

For more information on MCCL, visit www.mccl.org.

MCCL supports movement of pro-life bills in legislature

MCC Staff Report

SAINT PAUL — Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL) recently praised the advancement of two bills in the state legislature. The first bill would prohibit abortions of unborn babies who can feel pain and the second would ban taxpayer-funded abortions.

“Lawmakers are carrying out the will of Minnesotans by hearing and approving these sensible bills,” said MCCL Legislative Associate Andrea Rau via a news release. “Only the most extreme opponents of

protecting life object to these measures, but they represent only a small minority of citizens.”

According to MCCL, the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (S.F. 649 and H.F. 936) would prohibit abortions after the point where an unborn baby can experience pain. Some estimates put this at 20 weeks after conception.

The ban on taxpayer-funded abortions (S.F. 103 and H.F. 201) would prohibit Minnesota taxpayers from paying for elective abortions.

“Today nearly 32 percent of all abortions performed in Minnesota

are paid for with taxpayer dollars,” said MCCL Legislative Associate Jordan Marie Bauer via a news release, who testified in support of the bill. “Minnesota taxpayers, a strong majority of whom don’t want government funds being used for abortion, have essentially helped to end the lives of nearly 55,000 unborn children—a number that grows every day.”

Both bills are currently advancing through the committee process.

For more information on MCCL, visit www.mccl.org.



Eleazar Perez believes Radio Bendición was ‘birthed in the very heart of God.’

RADIO... Continued from page 1

for Perez to purchase programming on the FM station.

Radio Bendición (Radio Blessing) now broadcasts for 57 hours each week on Spirit FM 107.5. Its audience is about 145,000 listeners each month, and its broadcasting area covers most of the Twin Cities to approximately Albert Lea (north to south) and from Mankato to Winona (east to west).

The programming is “primarily evening hours from 10:00 p.m. on,” said Edwin Adorno, Radio Bendición’s assistant director. “We want Radio Bendición, as the title suggests, to be a blessing to the local community.”

Adorno said of the more than 210,000 Latinos in the Twin Cities metro area, 85 percent of them are unchurched—and that gives them motivation for preaching the Word of God over the air. For those 210,000 Latinos, there are only 257 Latino churches in the metro area, according to Adorno.

Radio Bendición programming includes Christian music, news, church and community announcements and preaching.

The station also has people answering the phones during their programming.

“We have people calling us all hours of the night” primarily asking for prayer, Adorno said. Callers are not only from Minnesota but also from around the country and the world, as the station also broadcasts on the Internet.

“We know people are getting

saved, broken families are coming together again, people that have been cured of cancer and different diseases,” Perez said.

He believes that what they do is a mandate from the Lord.

“We just feel that people, number one, need the Lord,” he said. “Number two, people need direction. Maybe they need a friendly word of advice, friendship, someone to come alongside them. People have many issues.... Mark 16:15 tells us clearly to go out and preach the Word, so we want to follow that mandate and to reach the souls for the Kingdom of God.”

Radio Bendición is not only committed to the Latino community, but Adorno said they are committed to helping other cultures in the Twin Cities, including the Asian, Hmong and Somali communities. They hope to help break down walls and bring the church together throughout the metro area.

Looking back on his 10-year journey of following God’s leading into radio programming, Perez is amazed at how many people have come alongside him in the journey.

“At first I thought I was going to be alone in this effort,” he said. “But God started to bring me all kinds of people from all walks of life, and to this day I am totally surprised and shocked. So it confirms to me that this station was not born in my heart; rather it was born in the very heart of God.”

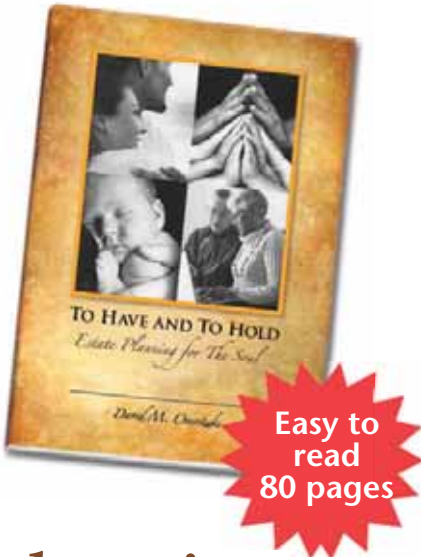
ACTIONPOINT

For more information on Radio Bendición, call (612) 327-5126, email edwin@spanishnow-mn.com or visit www.radiobendicionspiritfm.com.

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Journey of Hope - Summer 2011

Thousands of children pass through the orphanage system in Ukraine each year. There is little chance for these children to have opportunity to experience a happy and nurturing family life.

European Children Adoption Services (ECAS) is working in partnership with a Kiev-based charity foundation to bring a group of orphan children, ages 7 to 13 from Ukraine for respite. These children will travel to USA in August 2011 and stay with host families in the USA for four weeks. Some of the children may have younger siblings that will not be participating in hosting.

The hosting program requires a tax deductible donation of \$2,800 per child to cover their trip to USA and all other expenses associated with the escort traveling with the group. These expenses cover airfare, travel passport, trip insurance, ground transportation in Ukraine and all other costs associated with the trip and program costs.

ECAS is looking for families in MN and neighboring states who would like to host an orphan child from Ukraine for four weeks in August 2011.

If you are this family, please contact Judy Dahlin at ECAS for information:

European Children Adoption Services
763-694-6188 • 763-694-6131

E-mail: info@ecasus.org • Website: www.ecasus.org



Coming
next month

The Minnesota Christian Chronicle
will be re-branded in our June issue as

Minnesota Christian Examiner®

In 1978 Christian journalism professor Terry White founded the *Twin Cities Christian* newspaper. In the early '80s, a talented editor was hired named Doug Trouten who, over nearly two decades, would lead the *Twin Cities Christian* — renamed in 1993 as the *Minnesota Christian Chronicle* — into national prominence as an award-winning community newspaper, with a reputation on par with the best Christian publications anywhere.

In 1983 a Christian newspaper was started in Southern California. By the early '90s the *Christian Times*, as it was then known, had grown to become the largest regional Christian newspaper in the U.S. and had developed a successful model for publishing multiple regions in multiple states simultaneously. In 2003 that newspaper became known as the *Christian Examiner*.

Five years ago, the *Christian Examiner*, with the largest Christian newspaper operation in the nation, and the *Minnesota Christian Chronicle*, the best overall such newspaper, came together for the first time under the ownership of Selah Media Group. Although a part of the *Christian Examiner* newspaper group since 2006, the *Minnesota Christian Chronicle* retained its own brand.

With digital communications becoming a dominant factor in modern media, the award-winning ChristianExaminer.com website has become a major player in delivering breaking news on a regular basis. To take full advantage of the electronic presence of the *Christian Examiner*, it is time for the *Minnesota Christian Chronicle* to be re-branded as part of the *Christian Examiner* newspaper group. From now on we will be able to provide Minnesota readers not only the best in print, but also the best in electronic media.

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A
New Name
for an Old Friend

Bill highlights the still-prevalent issue of human cloning

Proponents hope to prohibit funds for cloning research

By Scott Noble

SAINT PAUL — Fifteen years after Dolly the sheep was born—being the first mammal to be cloned—the debate over the ethics of cloning and its myriad of related procedures continues to be waged on both sides of the issue.

The Minnesota Legislature is currently considering House and Senate omnibus bills that include language that would ban state funds from being used for cloning. The House bill (House File or H.F. 1101) would prohibit federal or state funds for human cloning or “any expenses incidental to human cloning.”

Both omnibus bills passed; the House and Senate now must work out the differences before voting on a final bill that, if passed, would then be sent to Gov. Dayton.

For the purposes of the bill, “cloning” refers to “generating a genetically identical copy of an organism at any stage of development by combining an enucleated egg and the nucleus of a somatic cell to

make an embryo.”

Dr. David Prentice, who is senior fellow for Life Sciences at Family Research Council and who served for nearly 20 years as professor of Life Sciences at Indiana State University, believes a cloning funding ban like the one proposed in the Minnesota Legislature is important because “Unfortunately, there are still some scientists who think they want to make human clones.”

However, Prentice wants to make clear what human cloning constitutes.

“When we say ‘making a clone,’ often people have this science fiction view that you all of a sudden run into your full-grown clone, like looking in the mirror,” he said. “All of this starts where we all started back as an embryo. The technique that they want to ban the funding for—or just prohibit outright—is called somatic cell nuclear transfer. A somatic cell is a body cell ... you take that nucleus, you transfer it into an egg that has had its own chromosomes removed and you have a clone.”

This process is how Dolly the sheep and various rats and mice were cloned.

“And then it’s just like making an embryo the old fashioned way with an egg and sperm,” Prentice continued. “What happens to the embryo after that? You can implant that into the womb and try and gestate for a live birth, or you can use it for experiments—rip it apart, get the cells and so on.”

Opponents of cloning and embryonic stem cell research believe there are a variety of ethical and religious issues raised by these procedures.

Prentice asks, “Why would we use taxpayer funds to create new human life simply to use it for experiments? It’s a scientific but also an ethical marker that says as a society we’re not going to condone or pay for making some human beings just for experiments.”

In Minnesota, Prentice believes that’s the heart of the issue in the Legislature: whether or not we should be allowed to make an embryo for whatever purposes we de-

sire.

For those familiar with this debate, embryonic stem cell research is always closely tied to the cloning issue, as both processes can involve the destruction of an embryo.

House File 1101, as it currently stands, does not affect the issue of stem cell research in the state.

In addition to the ethical problems posed by embryonic stem cell research, Prentice believes there is also a practical problem, one that has begun to garner more attention.

“They [scientists] have worked with embryonic stem cells for 30 years now—first with mice and then with human embryonic stem cells—and no human being has actually been improved by them, and in fact, there aren’t that many mice that are better,” he said. “Embryonic stem cells like to grow because that’s what they do normally at the early embryonic stage where they come from.”

In fact, proponents—like Prentice—of using adult stem cells instead of embryonic stem cells argue

that the results are much better as well. They say adult stem cells have shown more positive outcomes in treating a variety of conditions, and the process used to extract them doesn’t involve the destruction of a human being.

Adult stem cells “are in our body actually from the point we are born, but they are a mature type of stem cell,” Prentice said. “These cells, their function is repair and maintenance, so whether it’s from bone marrow—the good old bone marrow transplant for cancers—or some of the newer treatments where they are actually repairing heart damage, juvenile diabetes, stroke, spinal cord injury—all of those successes with human patients come from adult stem cells.”

The Minnesota Legislature will likely move on these omnibus bills in May.

 **ACTIONPOINT**

For more information on stem cells, visit www.mcccl.org or www.stemcellresearch.org.

High Court upholds tax credits for scholarships to religious schools

By Bob Allen

WASHINGTON (ABP) — The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 last month against Arizona taxpayers who claimed that a state law allowing tax credits to fund scholarships for students who attend private schools violates the separation of church and state.

“This is a disappointing decision,” said Hollyn Hollman, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty. “A state legislature should not be able to avoid a legal challenge by simply using an alternative tax mechanism.”

Arizona’s tax code includes a program that allows individuals to direct up to \$500 of their state income tax bill to a state tuition organization that awards scholarships primarily to religious schools. The taxpayers contended that indirect use of public

funds to support religious institutions violates the First Amendment’s ban on state-sponsored religion.

The Supreme Court never got around to the Establishment Clause argument, however, deciding that the plaintiffs lacked legal standing to sue in federal court.

Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy said that in order to make an Establishment Clause claim, plaintiffs must demonstrate direct harm, such as mandatory prayer in a public school or a tax benefit conditioned on religious affiliation and not just “conjectural” or “hypothetical” harm.

The Arizonans had hoped to prevail under a narrow exception to a general rule that being a taxpayer alone is not enough for standing established in *Flast v. Cohen*, a 1968 Supreme Court

decision that a taxpayer can under some circumstances sue the government to prevent an unconstitutional use of taxpayer dollars.

The majority decided that the ruling applied only to expenditures of tax funds and not to tax credits.

“Few exercises of the judicial power are more likely to undermine public confidence in the neutrality and integrity of the Judiciary than one which casts the Court in the role of a Council of Revision, conferring on itself the power to invalidate laws at the behest of anyone who disagrees with them,” Kennedy wrote. “In an era of frequent litigation, class actions, sweeping injunctions with prospective effect and continuing jurisdiction to enforce judicial remedies, courts must be more careful to insist on the formal rules of standing,

not less so.”

The Baptist Joint Committee, which joined a brief by Americans United for Separation of Church and State asking the court to protect the rights of taxpayers to bring the suit, said standing is increasingly cited in court decisions regarding the establishment of religion.

The Supreme Court ruling in *Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn* overturned a finding by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that the challengers had legal standing to sue and restored a district court’s ruling that they did not.

Hollman said the decision “denies citizens the right to fight for strong protections against a governmental establishment of religion.”

Joining Kennedy in the majority were Chief Justice John Rob-

erts and Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito. Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Sonia Sotomayor joined in a dissenting opinion written by Justice Elena Kagan.


“[A]ssume a state wishes to subsidize the ownership of crucifixes,” Kagan wrote. “It could purchase the religious symbols in bulk and distribute them to all takers. Or it could mail a reimbursement check to any individual who buys her own and submits a receipt for the purchase. Or it could authorize that person to claim a tax credit equal to the price she paid.”

“Now, really—do taxpayers have less reason to complain if the state selects the last of these three options?” she continued. “The Court today says they do but that is wrong. The effect of each form of subsidy is the same.”

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National ministry plans to launch pro-life maternity hospitals

Morning Centers will serve urban populations

By Lori Arnold

PEORIA, Ill. — America’s pro-life movement, bolstered in recent decades by the opening of thousands of pregnancy care centers and clinics, will be elevated to the next level with the formation of charitable maternity hospitals in major cities.

Samaritan Ministries International announced on April 4 its intention to establish full-service hospitals, called The Morning Centers, beginning as soon as late of 2012. Medical services are not new to Samaritan Ministries, a nonprofit health care sharing ministry that was founded in 1994.

“We are hoping to expedite it,” said James Lansberry, vice president of Samaritan Ministries. “We think this ministry is long overdue.”

The executive said a short list of possible debut cities has been developed and that final selection of the first hospital site should come within three months.

“Our vision is to provide first-class, quality maternity care for the under-served and the poor, mostly in the urban areas,” he said.

Those areas, Lansberry said, are especially vulnerable to expecting moms because many doctors and obstetricians are leaving the urban cores because of rising malpractice rates.

Lansberry praised the work of the pregnancy care centers and clinics, which provide vital life-affirming, pre-natal services for free, but said mothers need support beyond the pregnancy stage.

“We take that one step farther by actually delivering the child,” he said, adding that they plan to tap into the local flavor of each community, using as many existing resources as possible.

“We want to be partners with the pro-life movers that are already operating in the areas.”

When it comes to the birthing experience, as many as 41 percent of childbirths are paid for through Med-

icaid, according to 2007 stats from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The same study showed Medicaid paid for 41 percent of childbirths and maternity care nationwide. Lansberry calls that care second-class.

“Why do we want to pass them on to a government that would just as soon abort their child,” he said. “We will be providing a high-quality, first-class birthing experience as a gift in the name of Jesus.

Instead of taxpayer funding, The Morning Center will rely exclusively on private donations and funding.

“We are looking to provide not just quality care, but care that mirrors the image of Christ,” he said.

Among the resources the hospital plans to provide to mothers in crisis:

- Complete prenatal care, counseling, mentoring and professional photography that celebrates the joy of new life will be provided.
- A birthing center that offers mothers flexibility in making birth choices—from providing facilities for water birth, and space for family, to highly trained staff and equipment needed for any medical situation.
- Staff members will have a clear sense of God’s calling to demonstrate the Good News of Jesus Christ in compassionate and practical ways as they care for each mother and baby.

Lansberry said their plan is not to focus on the monetary issues that surround health care as much as it will be to center on serving people in need.

“There could be a chance of abuse, but the goal is to offer the gospel of Jesus Christ,” he said. “The more opportunities we have to share the gospel, the more people will hear.”

For more information on The Morning Center, including a blog that will chronicle the journey, visit www.morningcenter.org. For more information about Samaritan Ministries, visit www.samaritanministries.org.

Textbook law advocating gay leaders progresses

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A new law requiring California social studies textbooks to include the contributions of homosexuals in society as role models is one step closer to implementation after the state Senate approved the bill April 14.

The bill, approved 23-14, now advances to the Assembly and, if successful there, would go to Gov. Jerry Brown for his signature. Brown has not indicated how he stands on the measure, but has historically championed for gay and lesbian causes.

Pro-family advocates are lobbying against the measure, saying it further erodes parental rights in determining what children are taught.

“Never before has sexual orientation, of any kind, been a mandated factor to consider when selecting which significant figures to cover in social science textbooks,” said Ron Prentice, executive director of the California Family Council.

“SB 48’s passage will advance a pro-homosexual worldview in the public classroom, and marginalize all worldviews that conflict with

such a view.”

According to an analysis of the bill by Concerned Women for America, the measure “prohibits instruction or school-sponsored activities that ‘reflect adversely’ upon persons because of their sexual orientation, prohibits a governing board from adopting instructional materials that contain any matter ‘reflecting adversely’ upon persons because of their sexual orientation, requires that when adopting instructional materials for use in the schools, governing boards shall include materials that accurately portray the role and contribution of LGBT persons. Alternative and charter schools are to ‘take notice’ of these requirements.”

Randy Thomasson of Save California said the bill amounts to student brainwashing.

“SB 48 micromanages public schools by forcing teachers, administrators, local school boards, textbooks, and instructional materials to promote a gaggle of sexual lifestyles that disturb parents and confuse kids,” he said.

Federal court affirms National Day of Prayer

By Lori Arnold

CHICAGO — A 2010 district court ruling declaring the National Day of Prayer unconstitutional has been overturned by a federal appeals court which determined that feeling alienated was not enough to merit the suit.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit—based in Chicago and representing the states of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin—ruled April 14 that the plaintiffs, including the Freedom From Religion Foundation, were not harmed by the annual event.

In her ruling a year ago U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb determined the observance violated the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

“In this instance, the government has taken sides on a matter that must be left to individual conscience,” Crabb said, adding, “The same law that prohibits the government from declaring a National Day of Prayer also prohibits it from declaring a National Day of Blasphemy.”

The Obama administration appealed her ruling to the Circuit Court a week later.

Writing for the appeals court, chief judge Frank Easterbrook disagreed with Crabb, saying the proclamation imposes no requirement on a person and therefore no one is hurt by a request that can be declined.

“Those who do not agree with a president’s statement may speak in opposition to it, they are not entitled to silence the speech of which they disapprove,” Easterbrook, an appointee

of President Ronald Reagan, wrote, later adding, “Plaintiffs have not altered their conduct one whit or incurred any cost in time or money. All they have is disagreement with the President’s action. But unless all limits on standing are to be abandoned, a feeling of alienation cannot suffice as injury in fact.”

New review sought

Officials with the Freedom From Religion Foundation said after the decision that it plans to ask the appeals court to review the decision *en banc*, which means by a full panel.

“We are very troubled by the court’s conclusion that congressionally mandated endorsements of religion by the president amount to no more than ‘hurt feelings,’” said Richard L. Bolton, the foundation’s litigation attorney.

Foundation co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor said she believed the ruling was “cowardly” by not focusing on the merits of the case.

“Our challenge is so strong, our claim is so correct,” Gaylor said. “The First Amendment says, ‘Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.’ ‘No law’ should mean no law!”

The Alliance Defense Fund, which represented the task force in court disagreed, arguing that the observance was voluntary.

“Public officials should be able to participate in public prayer activities just as America’s founders did,” ADF Senior Counsel Kevin Theriot said in a statement. “The 7th Circuit has clearly understood that the Freedom From Religion Foundation simply had

no legal standing to attack the federal statute setting a day for the National Day of Prayer simply because the group is offended by religion.”

The latest ruling means the 60th annual observance planned for May 5 can continue without interruption. The National Day of Prayer was enacted in 1952 by an act of Congress. The theme for this year is “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” and is based on Psalm 91:2: “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Shirley Dobson, chairwoman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, lauded the ruling.

“Since the days of our Founding Fathers, the government has protected and encouraged public prayer and other expressions of dependence on the Almighty,” she said. “Prayer is an indispensable part of our heritage, and as citizens, we must remain faithful in our commitment to intercede for our nation during this pivotal and challenging time.”

Michael Calhoun, director of strategic communication for the prayer task force, said the ruling endorsed the concept of religion freedom as envisioned by the Founding Fathers, a concept that he believes is becoming increasingly threatened.

“I can’t think of a time in recent memory when it has been more important to pray for wisdom and direction for our country and its leaders... I hope millions will join the ongoing efforts of our NDP Task Force to that end.”

For information on the observance, visit www.nationaldayofprayer.org.

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EDITORIAL

‘You are living in an unchurched, dechurched culture’

That statement stood out to me recently when I was reading an article in “The Christian Post” about reaching people for Christ in our ever-changing world. It was made by missiologist Alan Hirsch, who is also the founding director of Forge Mission Training Network.

We hear a lot about the changing patterns and techniques needed to reach people for Christ in the 21st century. Many wonder if the days of door-to-door witnessing, stadium-sized evangelistic events and utilizing tracts are effective any longer. Some can barely even imagine a culture where those efforts were effective.

Yet, they were. However, the foundational religious knowledge in the U.S. has eroded, and new strategies and methods are needed to reach a people considerably more alienated—at least culturally—from the Gospel than their parents and

grandparents.

Decades ago, basic scriptural knowledge was prevalent among most Americans. When you mentioned Moses, Abraham, King David, the disciples, the Apostle Paul, the problem of sin and the Book of Revelation, people had at least a basic understanding of those foundational biblical characters, themes and books.

We no longer live in that world. Today’s world is more interested in “story.” We hear this a lot from those who argue we are living in a postmodern culture. We can define that term in a variety of ways, but one of the main components of postmodernism is the prevalence and power of “story.” This takes shape in many ways.

We hear that many young people—and others—aren’t as interested in hearing about facts and arguments based on proving one view or position better than an-

other. They are more interested in hearing about you and your story, what things are important to you and how those things have impacted your life.

When I’m reminded of this, I can’t help but get excited, because the story of creation, sin, redemption, forgiveness and restoration is the greatest “story” the world has ever witnessed. In addition, this “story” also happens to be based in truth—the truth of history and the Truth of Christ.

Unbelievers today—and their numbers are large and getting larger in this country—might not want to hear about spiritual laws or whether a certain worldview makes more sense than another. That’s the world we live in; it doesn’t make it right or wrong.

However, people are interested in hearing your story, the story of what’s important to you, the story of who is important to you and the sto-



Editor’s Note: Scott Noble

ry of why you think it’s important. Those “stories” are directly related to our relationship with Christ—how He pursued us, redeemed us, restored us and is actively preparing for the time when we will spend our lives with Him.

In fact, I can’t think of a better time in which to be a follower of Christ. While many are disappointed and downtrodden over our world and its many problems, many others—including myself—are excited about the position we believers find ourselves in.

We now find a world eager to hear a “story” about something that will give their lives meaning, that will help them to heal their pain, will help them to restore their relationships, will help them to overcome the sin that is disguised as pain and hurt and will help them to find their true home in Christ.

Wow! What an opportunity that Christ has presented to those who are currently alive.

Are you eager to tell your story?

Be sure to check us out on Facebook and Twitter for updates, breaking news and concert and event news.

Finding the right words, pictures, music, art, actions

Literacy is not a simple idea. When I was in elementary school, I can remember teachers saying things like, “If you know how to read, you can do anything you set your mind to.” Generations of us believed the prevailing wisdom that literacy opens doors of opportunity.

In case you haven’t been paying attention, those teachers were only partially right. And the difference lands squarely in the field of leadership. We’re generally pretty good at taking in information, but as far back as 1987 (before the Internet age) academic types coined the phrase “information overload.” They recognized that there was far too much information available to be handled and understood—and that’s all the more true today.

It is not a problem for us to find the information we are looking for. All sorts of ideas have found a home on the Internet or even in our more traditional media outlets. You can find everything from serious research, honest



Sam Helgerson

reporting, preconceived notion, personal bias or hair-brained ideas. Finding information is not the problem.

True literacy involves several factors and being able to gather information from written sources is only one of them (the fact that you are reading this newspaper right now attests to your mastery of this skill). John Taylor Gatto calls this “passive literacy.” In Gatto’s mind, the more important skill is in “active literacy,” which amounts to reorganizing and making sense

of what you have taken in, adding personal context to it and being able to communicate it clearly to others.

This idea of “active literacy” is critical to leadership because those we serve expect us to be able to make sense of circumstances and clearly communicate what is important. We have developed terms for this, such as “vision casting,” “coaching” and “strategic planning.” Each of these require taking in information from a variety of sources, learning to adapt it both to situation and to audience and express it in a way that makes a difference.

I’m not convinced that active literacy is enough, however. There is a next step, and my term for it is “practical literacy.” This is the ability to take what we learn, develop the ability to communicate it but most importantly, allow it to make a difference in our lives. In the medical world, the model is “see one, do one, teach one,” and that model is very good—but it needs to be expanded to “learn, apply,

model.”

Leaders need to take on what they have learned in a way that others can understand it and know what it looks like in practice. The Apostle Paul lays out these ideas quite well. He gets to both passive and active literacy in 2 Timothy 1:13 as he encourages Timothy to “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (ESV). In Philippians 3:17, Paul gets to the core of practical literacy when he says, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (ESV).

The idea of taking ideas, making sense of them and putting them into practice is at the core of leadership, but it is also at the core of discipleship. People around you are struggling to make sense of the world. If you do the hard work of making sense of things from a Christ-centered, biblically focused point of view, they will ask questions and they will follow.

The world is starved for leaders, and those who desire leadership will follow those who hold that uniquely Christian balance of humility, confidence, compassion and trustworthiness.

In an age of ever-increasing information overload, it is a rare person who knows how to gather his or her thoughts, articulate them well and live them out in ways that can be understood and followed. We have the opportunity to do all of this in the blazing light of an eternal perspective. Take your pick: “See one, do one, teach one” or “learn, apply, model.” Either way, this is the nature of real leadership, and the only way to build effective followers. It is also the only way to get people to move from gathering information to living out what has been entrusted to them.

Now: Go be literate.

Sam Helgerson, PhD, serves as a lead instructor in Organizational Leadership at Bethel University and at Great Ridge Group, Inc. (www.greatridge.com).

Do we really need a marriage amendment in Minnesota?

Historically, the political climate here in Minnesota has been extremely liberal. It seems like even our “conservative” politicians have had a thick liberal streak in their ideology. After all, we are the home of Carlson and Coleman.

Of course, there are some exceptions; but as a whole, this has proven to be true. However, in the last elections, some of that has changed. It appears that last November we have elected a Minnesota Legislature that has some real conservative values. Although this new legislature is still wet behind the ears, so far they have proven to take conservatism seriously.

Both the conservatives in the House and the Senate are working hard at balancing the budget and bringing us back to our fiscal senses and for that, they are to be applauded. Nevertheless, to me, a conservative is not only someone who is fiscally responsible; it also means that someone is socially responsible.

That is why I’m asking the question: Will the Minnesota House and Senate take the social issues seriously, or is this new “conservative” legislature just another example of Republicans that cower at the social issues.

One issue that will be the deciding factor in answering that question is the Minnesota Marriage Amendment. We have seen Minnesota Republicans squirm at the idea of defending marriage before. For some reason, there is a reoccurring attempt among Minnesota “conservatives” to skirt the social issues. Quite frankly, it is up to us as evangelical Christians to keep them on track. If we don’t, who is?

Do not forget that evangelical Christians were 30 percent of the voting block in the 2010 elections. That is the largest group of voters in the entire election. So our voice counts in a big way, and they should listen. We have already seen some Republicans in the current legislature get soft



Brad Brandon

and try to abandon the issue. So it looks as if we may have our work cut out for us in this fight to allow the people the right to vote on the issue of same-sex marriage.

But there is a grave danger in the Marriage Amendment issue. The danger is that if people are not given the opportunity to decide by a vote, activist judges and liberal legislators will be happy to step in and make that decision for us. According to a poll done by the Minnesota Family Council last month, 74 percent of Minnesotans

want the right to vote on the issue of how our state will define marriage.

With that in mind, this is obviously something that the people are mandating. Knowing this, all the legislators would do well for the state and their political careers if they do not stand in the way of the voice of the people.

Personally, I am enough of a libertarian to see the fallacious reasoning behind a Federal Marriage Amendment. I mean, do we seriously need the federal government telling us how to deal with marriage in our own state? The 10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

It essentially is telling us that when the U.S. Constitution is silent on an issue (i.e. marriage), the responsibility is passed on to the state level or to the people. We often complain when liberals trample

the Constitution to advance their agenda. Is it any less an offense when we conservatives trample the Constitution for our agenda?

With that said, I am completely opposed to the idea of a marriage amendment on the federal level, but the Constitution gives us as an individual state the jurisdiction to decide for ourselves.

That is why the Minnesota Marriage Amendment represents a strong Constitutional authority and a perfect example of individual state’s rights. It is up to us to steer our legislators in the Minnesota Capitol to do the right thing.

Remember, we do not work for them, they work for us. Look up your legislators and let them know you want Minnesotans to have the civil right to vote about the issue of same-sex marriage in the next election.

Brad Brandon is the host of “The Word of Truth,” heard Monday through Friday from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on AM 980 KKMS.

EDITORIAL

The importance of memorizing Scripture?

Dallas Willard, professor of Philosophy at the University of Southern California, wrote: “Bible memorization is absolutely fundamental to spiritual formation. If I had to choose between all the disciplines of the spiritual life, I would choose Bible memorization because it is a fundamental way of filling our minds with what it needs. This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth. That’s where you need it! How does it get in your mouth? Memorization” (“Spiritual Formation in Christ for the Whole Life and Whole Person” in *Vocatio*, Vol. 12, no. 2, Spring, 2001, page 7).

One of the reasons Martin Luther came to his great discovery in the Bible of justification by faith alone was that in his early years in the Augustinian monastery, he was influenced to love Scripture by Johann Staupitz.

Luther devoured the Bible in a day when people earned doctorates in theology without even reading the Bible. Luther said that his fellow professor, Andreas Karlstadt, did not even own a Bible when he earned his doctor of theology degree, nor did he until many years later. Luther knew so much of the Bible from memory that when the Lord opened his eyes to see the truth of justification in Romans 1:17, he said, “Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory,” in order to confirm what he had found.



John Piper

So here are a few reasons why so many have viewed Scripture memorization as so essential to the Christian life:

1. Conformity to Christ

Paul wrote that “we all ... beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” If we would be changed into Christ likeness, we must steadily see Him. This happens in the Word. “The LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD” (1 Samuel 3:21). Bible memorization has the effect of making our gaze on Jesus to be steadier and clearer.

2. Daily triumph over sin

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word I have stored up your

“We do not experience God in the fullness of our emotional potential. How will that change?”

word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:9, 11). Paul said that we must “by the Spirit ... put to death the [sinful] deeds of the body” (Romans 8:13). The one piece of armor used to kill with is the “sword of the Spirit,” which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17). As sin lures the body into sinful action, we call to mind a Christ-revealing word of Scripture and slay the temptation with the superior worth and beauty of Christ over what sin offers.

3. Daily triumph over Satan

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He recited Scripture from memory and put Satan to flight (Matthew 4:1-11).

4. Comfort and counsel for people you love

The times when people need you to give them comfort and counsel do

not always coincide with the times you have your Bible handy. Not only that, the very word of God spoken spontaneously from your heart has unusual power. Proverbs 25:11 says, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.”

5. Communicating the Gospel to unbelievers

Opportunities to share the Gospel come when we do not have the Bible in hand. Actual verses of the Bible have their own penetrating power. And when they come from our heart, as well as from the Book, the witness is given that they are precious enough to learn.

6. Communion with God in the enjoyment of His person and ways

The way we commune with God is by meditating on His attributes and expressing to Him our thanks

and admiration and love, and seeking His help in living a life that reflects the value of these attributes. Therefore, storing texts in our minds about God helps us relate to Him as He really is.

I used the word “enjoyment” intentionally when I said, “communion with God in the enjoyment of His person and ways.” Most of us are emotionally crippled—all of us really. We do not experience God in the fullness of our emotional potential. How will that change? One way is to memorize the emotional expressions of the Bible and speak them to the Lord and to each other until they become part of who we are.

For example, in Psalm 103:1, we say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” That is not a natural expression for many people. But if we memorize this and other emotional expressions from the Bible and say them often, asking the Lord to make the emotion real in our hearts, we can actually grow into that emotion and expression. It will become part of who we are.

There are other reasons for memorizing Scripture. I hope you find them in the actual practice.

John Piper is past or for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis.

Mentoring future pastors and leaders for a globalized world

There is a tension at the heart of the Christian faith. Jesus points it out when He instructs His disciples, “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

The tension is between a trusting childlike faith and a critical discernment that navigates one’s time and place appropriately. It is common for emerging young leaders to enter seminary with a naïve enthusiasm for work in the local church, only to graduate years later with a critical distance that benefits more the work of an academic than it does the shepherd of a congregation.

Historical criticism, a close and honest reading of church history, changing theological views, disillusionment with the church as it is and a coming to realization of one’s own relational woundedness and dysfunction can all contribute to this.

How does one come to live in the tension between a faith that is passionately alive yet also critical and discerning of oneself, the church and the world around? How can we nurture a faith that is wide awake, adaptable, resilient and responsive

in the future leaders of our church?

These questions are especially pertinent today as we struggle to figure out how to do ministry in a rapidly changing society and world. “Globalization” is one word that has been used for the pace and scope of this change. While it has different meanings in different contexts (e.g. political, economic, cultural, technological), I understand it here to point to a future that we can neither predict nor control—post-Western, post-colonial, post-patriarchal, post-modern, post-denominational, etc. We may know where we have come from, but we don’t know exactly where we are going.

The problem is our seminaries tend to prepare leaders for “what is”—stable institutions, secure knowledge, practical skills and time-tested techniques. That is to say, we’re too often preparing future pastors and leaders for a world and a church that no longer exists, rather than that which does not yet exist but is coming toward us.

These are the issues that we struggle with in our Parish Internship Program at Church of All Nations, a mid-sized family-like Presby-

terian Church (USA) congregation with people from over 25 nations and no ethnic majority, along with significant socio-economic, theological and generational diversity.

In our congregation, there is little common knowledge or experience that can be assumed, no “how to” manual for how to make life together run smoothly and certainly no roadmap for the future. As a result, we have had to take on seminary graduates and retrain them for a church that is coming but not yet here, refounding the basis of their authority from academic degrees or leadership gifts to the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. It is the nurturing of Christian character that enables one to lead in the midst of tension without seeking easy resolve, responding adaptively and learning anew as the Spirit leads.

The local church is ideally suited for this kind of training if we are willing to reclaim the Christian practice of intensive discipleship. Ministerial training shifted from an apprenticeship model to an academic model over the last 200 years. In apprenticeship, a pastoral mentor opens his or her life up to



John Nelson

the mentee as a model, including the many layers of his or her relationships—family, congregation, community and the larger church. The mentor’s success and failure, visionary leadership and honest confessions of falling short, are processed practically and theologically as a learning opportunity.

In return, the mentee’s own life is opened fully before the mentor, who is granted the access to speak hard words of truth and correction into the younger leader’s life. And since Christian character cannot be programmed, this relationship often took up to eight years, relying on a sustained period of active

trust, submission and discernment.

Seminaries will continue to play their role of teaching knowledge and skills, but the work of character development and pastoral formation belongs to the local church, where people live, serve and worship together day in and day out.

In our congregation, we have even started to form community houses, where interns and congregation members live together intentionally as a gateway to deeper discipleship. In this arrangement, there is no quick fix or easy word spoken—only fruit borne slowly but steadily through deep engagement in each other’s lives. This in tandem with active pastoral mentoring is the crucible that shapes and forms future leaders to live confidently in the tension of faith that our changing church and society requires—discerning adaptability, faith-filled resilience and an innocent winsomeness that can build intimate and diverse Christian community out of what may seem like dry and barren land.

John Nelson is coordinator of the Internship Program at Church of All Nations.

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Truck-stop ministry adapting to social networking realities

By Joe Winter

HUDSON, Wisc. — The Transport For Christ ministry to truckers at a Hudson, Wisc. truck stop, which was among the first in the country to serve drivers that include those going to the Twin Cities, has seen major changes in its operation because of social networking and new federal regulations.

The latter factor has meant that truckers usually will use their entire allowed 11-hours-per-day on the road in one or two stretches, rather than breaking it into segments; therefore, truckers don't always find time to stop for a visit and pray with Transport for Christ Chaplain Tim Sackett.

These truckers are far more likely to check out Sackett's ministry online while on the road, which means that they don't get face-to-face contact. Therefore, their spiritual growth can be stunted because of a lack of follow-up Bible study and prayer opportunities with him, Sackett believes.

But many truckers do, however, still show up for a regular Sunday morning service at his truck stop chapel.

"We don't always start on time because of their [differing] schedules," Sackett said. "The truckers often interject their own thoughts during the homilies," he added, saying they often become dialogues.

Coffee and fellowship follow the service.

Sackett has done this ministry for 19 years out of a semi-trailer with a chapel and office, which is located in the parking lot filled with dozens of rigs at the Transport America truck stop. The truck stop is open 24 hours at an Interstate 94 exit just east of Hudson; and after going through the Twin Cities,

the next nearest Transport For Christ chapel is in Seattle, Wash.

"The website is a substitute but not a great one," Sackett said of the newer facets of the ministry.

The online site features a 16-page monthly magazine that has messages of the Gospel and Bible verses, as well as links to daily devotionals and health and wellbeing articles that have a spiritual component.

"I spend my time in the [trailer] chapel or inside the truck stop," Sackett said. "I talk to the truckers over coffee or in the TV room. I try to meet up with and talk to three or four a day."

The most common topics are broken families, custody battles and child support issues, he said.

Sometimes truckers stop in the chapel because they've been reading the Bible or have a specific question about a Bible verse.

"I'll pray for them and eventually that relieves the stress. I know it does," Sackett said, adding that truckers have their share. "You need to get that stuff out."

He is on duty at the truck stop from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. five days a week but has a flexible schedule.

"I'll meet up with my wife for supper, and I have a daughter who is into plays, so I go to them," he said.

Two other facets of Sackett's work are aiding a Twin Cities doctor who is trying to set up badly needed health clinics at truck stops across the country and also providing local help to a national group that is trying to stop human trafficking via trucking corridors.

➔ ACTIONPOINT

For more information on Transport for Christ, visit www.transportforchrist.org.



Hope for the City is fueled by volunteer power; 20 people are needed each day to help fight the local—and global—war on poverty and hunger.

UGANDA...

Continued from page 1

City. "But not strategically—not enough to make a substantial difference. What had God put into our hands? What could we do differently?"

That's when the couple heard of a friend in California gathering companies' surplus to send to those in need in his home country—and it resonated in their hearts. As founders of the largest full-service commercial real estate firm in Minnesota, the Doyles had the resources to make a similar operation work.

"We were perfectly set up to do this," said Doyle. "We could use our business contacts to get the surplus and our warehouse to operate out of. At the time, we had no idea how big God would allow our tiny operation to grow."

These days, not only does Hope for the City meet the needs of the poor, but it also stops corporations from throwing out millions of pounds in needless waste each year.

"In over 10 years, we've given away over \$500 million worth of

surplus resources," he said. "A significant amount of what we receive is food, but we've also given non-food items, such as office and school supplies, which we send to the schools we are helping to start in Ghana."

They also receive old medical equipment, which they send to developing countries, like the Republic of Uganda, where they are helping to start clinics and hospitals.

"We give a second life to valuable equipment," Doyle said. "Even if it's 10 years old here, it's state-of-the-art overseas and can help save people's lives."

It was ultimately their medical connections in Uganda that landed Hope for the City on Starkey's African hearing mission.

"Starkey is a wonderful organization that we had done work with in the past," Doyle said. "We were looking for a way to work together again, and they were looking for someone with people on the ground in Uganda."

Using their medical contacts, Doyle and Hope for the City went ahead of the tour to search out the deaf in the Ugandan cities of Kampala and Gulu and do the necessary

leg-work—like taking molds of patients' ears—so that hearing aids would be ready for Starkey's people when they arrived.

"It was a real blessing to be able to help Starkey in this way," said Doyle. "I thank God for people like Bill and Tani Austin [founders of Starkey Hearing Foundation]; they're doing amazing work—and their people are awesome. In Uganda, they wouldn't stop until everyone was helped, even when over 1,000 patients stood in line."

Back on the home front, Doyle still marvels at the way God is using Hope for the City—and at the companies and volunteers that make it operational.

"It takes 20 volunteers a day to do what we do—and we're always looking for more help," said Doyle. "The companies in Minnesota are very generous, but our supporters are our real strength—without them our important work couldn't get done."

➔ ACTIONPOINT

For more information on Hope for the City, including how to volunteer or donate, visit www.hopeforthecity.net.

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From Plymouth to Zambia

Woman follows God’s call to help street children

By Scott Noble

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA — Carol McBrady had a comfortable life. She lived in the suburbs and worked as a school social worker for 14 years and then as a teacher in alternative education with adjudicated youth.

About 10 years ago, after reading an article about AIDS in Africa, she commented to a friend that when she retired she was “going to rock babies until I die,” referencing her desire to move to Africa and care for orphans and the sick.

What McBrady didn’t realize, however, was that God was already planning her next step in life, and it wouldn’t wait until retirement. But the first step would be small.

That friend’s husband knew of a ministry organization in South Africa that could help McBrady fulfill her desire, albeit only on a temporary basis.

Her friend told her, “I can hook you up; you can go there.”

But McBrady laughed and replied, “I can never afford that. I’m a teacher for heaven’s sake. I can’t do that.”

Within two days, McBrady’s neighbor came over and said his photography studio would pay for her to take the trip.

So she left for South Africa and Zambia during her summer off.

Summer mission

On her first trip to Africa, McBrady spent two weeks working in a mission center, training and understanding the unique situation. She eventually did some pediatric AIDS work and then worked in squatter’s villages doing death planning.

“We would talk to the people in the huts and the shacks and the shanty [towns] who were dying, and we’d record their last wishes, basically,” she said. “When they did die, the mission center buried them.”

McBrady also spent some time in Zambia at the Mother Teresa home for HIV/ AIDS patients and also at a drop-in center for street children.

Everything changed

She returned home to the Twin Cities in August 2001 shocked at what she had just witnessed.

“Everything you hear does not prepare you for how truly bad it is and the destitution people are living in,” she said. “I kind of figured I’d sort of seen the worst Minneapolis had to offer [working in juvenile corrections and at inner-city missions]. It doesn’t even come close to how bad it is. I mean children living in rubbish piles, and they think that’s OK.”

That’s when the realization of

the situation grabbed hold of her, and God began to direct her to full-time ministry in Africa.

“My question when I came back was, ‘These are God’s babies, and what on earth as a Christian should the response be?’”

This began in McBrady a season of wrestling with what God was preparing her for. She did a lot of praying and a lot of thinking.

She resumed her teaching profession in September. A month later, in October, “just about every time I opened the Bible,” she recalled, “I kept coming to Isaiah 54 [which includes references to expanding your tent]. I kept slamming it shut, going ‘Oh no, I’m not doing that.’ I knew that I was supposed to do something, but I was just not willing to say, ‘OK, I’m going to give up cappuccino and hot water and electricity and go work in rubbish heaps.’”

God’s timing

McBrady continued to go back to Africa each summer for the next three years. In the summer of 2004, however, she was hired by the University of Zambia to do a two-week seminar on orphans and vulnerable youth.

Scheduled in September to come back to the Twin Cities and resume her teaching position, McBrady decided to stay in Africa and she formed Action for Children – Zambia (AFCZ).

She decided to sell her house and use that money to help fund her mission, because she didn’t want to fail with donor money, if in fact she failed. She didn’t, however.

Now, several years later, Action for Children – Zambia works with destitute children in Zambia, providing medical care, crisis counseling, intervention and burials to those who pass away.

AFCZ also manages Kulanga Bana Farm, where children have the opportunity to cultivate crops. The farm currently provides a permanent home for 12 teenagers who are attempting to make the farm entirely self sufficient.

In addition, in Zambia’s capital city of Lusaka, McBrady runs Salvation Home, a shelter for 35 children. The children live in a family environment, and AFCZ offers a full education scholarship to each child who completes the treatment program.

The children in Salvation Home live by a schedule. From 5:00 a.m. to 5:30 a.m. each day, they engage in prayer and Bible study. After that, the kids do their chores and then they have breakfast. The remainder of the day is filled with school, counselor visits and medical appointments.

At night, about half the kids participate in the church choir

so they have choir practice and sports practice, in addition to homework.

Street children

In Salvation Home, the typical child is one who has been abused, McBrady said.

“We are completely isolated to street children,” she said. “We do not have other orphans Generally, they have been sexually abused and assaulted or beaten, and there is some sort of family abandonment either through death or they have been thrown out because they are too big or there is no place for them to sleep or there was no food so they needed to go to the streets and beg.”

In addition to the treatment the kids receive and the structure of their lives, Salvation Home also acts as a family unit.

“We function as a family,” she said. “You are part of our family for life.”

That’s something most of these children have not experienced before in a healthy way—and something that will positively impact their lives in the future.

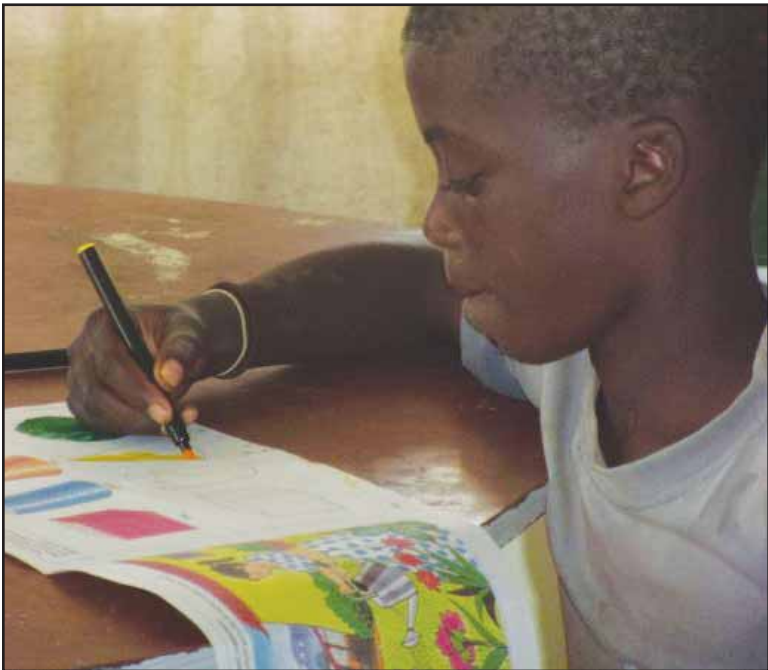
When she was younger, McBrady had three children who either died through miscarriage or died at birth. She says that now God has given her a family of hundreds of children.

ACTIONPOINT

For more information on Action for Children – Zambia, visit www.afczambia.org.



Through Action for Children – Zambia, Carol McBrady helps street children in Zambia find help and hope.



Action for Children – Zambia gives street children a family in which to grow, something many of them do not have.

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A song for the ages

Review by Matthew Lee Moberg

EDEN PRAIRIE — If you are one whose fingers aren't consistently on the pulse of the arts in the Cities, let this be your official slice of breaking news: The Twin Cities' music scene is one of the most vibrant and diversely talented cultures in the country. Top to bottom, the Twin Cities is littered with brilliant minds making gorgeous sounds and filled with well-orchestrated venues to harbor them all.

As a proud card-carrying member of this scene, I have grown so much in my perspective as a musician by being among this culture. Perhaps, though, out of all the shows I've played and all the talents that I've been able to sit and soak before, my heart toward music has never grown the way it did recently in the basement of a nursing home.

I was asked to do a piece on Gloryland Gospel Band (GGB), a group comprised of more than 15 musicians that sing gospel music. When I contacted the band, they

graciously invited me to a practice session that was being held at a nursing home.

When I first pulled up at the nursing home, I was pointed to the basement by the secretary. At the bottom of the stairs and down the hall, sounds of guitars being slapped and voices being meshed were filling the tiny corridor.

After following the sounds and arriving in the room, I was taken aback by the scene that was unfolding before me. Members of the nursing home filled the chairs that were lined from wall to wall, treating this practice session as if they were listening to God himself playing a set at the Grand Ole Opry.

Trying not to cause a riot by being the only person in the room under the age of 30, I sank into the shadows of the back row next to a man who kept his eyes closed tight. The man wore a red button-up shirt and his hands moved to the music as if he were conducting the whole scene. In the row ahead of me, a woman with silver-white hair



The Gloryland Gospel Band sings old Gospel favorites and helps its listeners remember the past.

sang along to the old hymn "I'll Fly Away," as a tear moved slowly from her eye to her chin.

The band played with passion and purpose; the crowd that gathered listened with the same. The longer I sat in the presence of this music and these people, the more moved I became by it all. This music was unlike anything I had seen or

heard before. It wasn't being driven by desires for popularity, wealth or anything else of that nature. These sounds were simply a gift—a bridge that connected the audience to their yesteryears, a place only open for visits in these moments.


"When I first came to the group, one of the first things I noticed was who we were singing to," said Mark Mosier, one of the leaders of GGB. "Senior citizens were sitting in front of us crying as they were getting lost in their memories. They were laughing, singing, clapping; some of them would even get up and dance."

In today's culture where the elderly are easily forgotten and cast aside, GGB sings for the purpose of remembering and bringing them back. Their music is powerful and transformative, gently ushering

their audiences to a better place than the world we offer them now.

"These people enjoy our music because we're happy," Mosier said. "People that live in nursing homes have a whole different appreciation of happy than we do."

With all of my pre-conceived notions left far behind me, I walked away from the nursing home that night completely blessed and indebted to the Gloryland Gospel Band, for I came to realize that their gifts were not for the elderly alone: I too was carrying one home with me that night.

 **ACTIONPOINT**

To hear more of the Gloryland Gospel Band and to find out when and where they are playing next, visit www.glorylandgb.com.

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‘The Salvation Poem’ portrays an Argentine-born rocker who came to Christ

By Scott Noble

TWIN CITIES — "The Salvation Poem," which producers describe as the "first Latin American faith-based film to open in theaters in the United States and to enter the top 40 Box Office charts," will premier in select theatres in the Twin Cities on May 6.

The movie, which is in Spanish with English subtitles, is the true life story of Argentine-born rocker Pablo Olivares, and it focuses on his praying mother who watches her son fall away from his faith and become involved in drugs and the world of the occult.

Olivares and his heavy-metal band were popular in Latin America, and the band was kidnapped after a concert in Mexico some years ago. After that experience, Olivares began to re-evaluate his life, eventually coming to Christ. Olivares' mother prayed for him for more than 10 years.

Released in November 2009 in Buenos Aires, "The Salvation Poem" has since been seen by more than 425,000 people. To date, the movie has been shown in more than 100 theatres in the United States, including in Miami, where it played for nearly 20 weeks.

Arturo Allen, producer of "The Salvation Poem," believes its message has touched many lives; they have received more than 5,000 emails from people who have seen the movie.

"[I have] seen everything from mothers who after watching the movie have been inspired to con-



tinue praying for their kids, families that have been restored, fathers who have understood the need of being present in the life of their kids [and] young people coming to realize that the decisions they make have consequences," Allen said.

The film has been nominated by ARPA as the best film of the year, and producers say thousands of churches across the country and the world have used it as an outreach tool.

"The Salvation Poem" is the first feature film of CanZion Films.

Marcos Witt of CanZion Films is pleased that they can provide family-friendly films.

"It is an honor to provide through CanZion Films movies that can edify and uplift," he said via a news release, "movies that are wholesome and that contain values that our children can follow and learn from."

The May 6 premier in the Twin Cities will be at the AMC Block E Stadium 15 theatre in Minneapolis and at the Camike 15 theatre in Apple Valley.

 **ACTIONPOINT**

For more information about "The Salvation Poem," visit www.poemadesalvacionlapelicula.com or email sapha@canzion.com.

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PHOTO BY JIM HOFFMAN

Redeemer Covenant Church sees soccer as a great way to interact with its community.

Church uses soccer—and an unused field—to reach out to its community

By Scott Noble

BROOKLYN PARK — Many churches are blessed with large properties, expansive fields or parking lots that can go largely unused for much of the week. One church in Brooklyn Park saw the seldom-used softball diamond on its property as an opportunity for outreach, so they turned it into a soccer field.

In addition to the new soccer field, Redeemer Covenant Church established the Kickin’ Kids Soccer Camp in the summer of 2010 as an opportunity to interact with its neighborhood. The church recruited volunteers with backgrounds in soccer from several nationalities—Ecuadorian, Columbian, Nigerian and those from the United States—to help reach out to its diverse community.

The Rev. Steve Larson, pastor of Redeemer, said via a media release: “Redeemer Covenant Church is striving to be a community learning compassion and worship that is centered on Christ. The joint soccer program with La Bendición Covenant Church creates an appreciation between the congregations as we learn more about each other. Then, through the strength of our work together, we compassionately engage the community that is so close to our door. The soccer program continues to make us into the bouquet of people who represent the community Christ has called us to serve.”

Redeemer has partnered with



PHOTO BY JIM HOFFMAN

Starting with just 20 kids on the first day of soccer camp, Redeemer Covenant Church saw more than 80 kids participate by the end of the summer.

La Bendición Covenant Church for the past three years in an effort to reach the Latino community. La Bendición means “the blessing,” and the church meets in Redeemer’s facility.

After the idea for the soccer camp was first discussed, it took just eight days for the financial need to be met, which included money for goals, nets and field-marking equipment.

At the inaugural soccer camp last summer, which ran from mid-June to mid-August on Tuesdays and Thursdays, approximately 20 children showed up the first evening. By the end of the summer, more than 80 kids had participated in the camp.

After attendance is taken by the coaches, each day’s camp begins with a prayer and short devotional.

Karen Williams, corporate sec-

retary for Redeemer and volunteer at the camp, sees hospitality as a way to interact with parents at the camp and invite them to other church activities.

“I believe the hospitality piece is strategic in making this an outreach ministry,” she said. “The players are brought by adults who often stay and watch, so we engage them in casual conversation as we offer information about additional events and programs for children.”

Those efforts seem to be effective, as Keith Weiman, one of the coaches, said they have seen additional people at Redeemer’s events.

“Several families have started going to our church, and many kids came to our summer VBS,” he said. “We even had some new kids in our AWANA program on Wednesday nights in the fall. That is awesome to hear!”

This summer will mark the second soccer camp for Redeemer. The church will be adding an additional age group—three to five year olds—this year and alternating sessions to ensure the field doesn’t become too congested. In anticipation of more participants, Redeemer is already recruiting additional volunteers.

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ACTIONPOINT

For more information on Redeemer Covenant Church and its soccer program, visit www.redeemercov.org.



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Golf event to support Kenyan children's home

OAK GROVE — The Fourth Annual Hagman Golf Classic will be held Monday, June 27 at The Refuge Golf Club in Oak Grove. The event will raise money for the Hes-hemia Children's Center in Nairobi, Kenya. The Center helps give hope and dignity to disabled children, according to organizers. Last year's event raised more than \$22,000 for the Center's expansion plans.

This year, Betsy King will take part in the event. King is a member of the LPGA and winner of six major championships and 34 LPGA victories. She is also a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The tournament is a scramble format, and placement prizes will be distributed so that any team will have an opportunity to win prizes.

For more information on the Golf Classic, call John at (612) 751-2663.

Organization to hold introduction to Bible class

ARDEN HILLS — Youth Leadership will present the seminar "Intro to the Bible" from May 2-4.

Organizers say, "Come and gain a better understanding of the story, themes and flow of Scripture so you can gain confidence as you use the Bible in your ministry."

Jennifer Scott, adjunct assistant professor in Biblical and Theological Studies at Bethel University, will join assistant professor of Religion at Augsburg College Hans Wiersma in teaching the seminar, which will meet at the ministry's Arden Hills training center at 3490 Lexington Avenue North, Suite 360.

For more information or to register, visit www.youthleadership.org or call (651) 484-9400.

'Ladies Day at the Arboretum' set for June

CHANHASSEN — The 12th Annual Ladies Day at the Arboretum will be held Friday, June 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. According to organizers, the Arboretum is "the perfect place to slow down and enjoy God's good creation."

This year's theme is "Secret Garden: Invitation to a Fruitful Life." Speakers include Betsy Lee, Mary Beth Carlson and Jonna Franz.

Lee, president of Prayer Ventures, the group hosting the event, said via its website: "I'm thrilled to invite women to enjoy this special day. It just gets better and better every year. The Arboretum is at its best in June. I love being there with 300 of my closest friends."

For more information on the event, including registration, call (952) 942-9016 or visit www.prayer-ventures.com/events/2011/ladies_day.html.

Group to hold lecture on technology and theology

SAINT PAUL — Heart of the Matter, a nonprofit organization that sponsors lectures that reflect a Christian worldview, is sponsoring the lecture "Theology and Technology: Does What We Build Matter as Much as What We Believe?" on Thursday, May 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Jennifer Alexander, an associate professor at the University of Minnesota and author of "The Mantra of Efficiency: From Waterwheel to Social Control" will speak. She is a cultural historian with a special focus on modern industrial Europe.

The lecture will be held at Cen-

tral Mission in St. Paul, located at 1632 Charles Avenue.

For more information, call (612) 919-0584, email ron@hotm.org or visit www.hotm.org.

Gospel Choirs United to hold annual concert

MINNEAPOLIS — Gospel Choirs United will hold its 37th annual concert "King of Glory Shall Come In" on Sunday, May 15 at 5:30 p.m. at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis.

The choir was founded in 1974 by Phyllis Williams and Sam Davis, and today more than 100 people sing in the choir.

Admission to the concert is \$14 for adults and \$7 for children.

For more information, including tickets, visit www.gospelchoir-sunited.org or call (651) 291-7623 or (952) 935-6474.

Fellowship group to hold supper and concert

MINNETONKA — The Single Parent Christian Fellowship will hold its monthly social on Friday, May 20 at 6:30 p.m. This month's social will include a potluck supper followed by accordion player Steve Nelson.

The group meets at Faith Presbyterian Church in Minnetonka.

For more information, call (612) 866-8970.

Jeff Deyo to hold worship institute

MINNEAPOLIS — Worship leader and songwriter Jeff Deyo will hold the Pure Worship Institute from June 19-24 at North Central University in Minneapolis. Deyo is currently associate professor and Worship Arts specialist at North Central University.

The Institute will offer "high level training and growth for attendees both spiritually and practically in their area of musical gifting," according to organizers.

For more information on the Pure Worship Institute, email Melissa at mlenger@northcentral.edu or call (612) 343-4132.

Newt Gingrich and Michele Bachmann to appear at group's annual dinner

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Family Council and Institute are hosting Former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich at its 2011 annual dinner. Minnesota Congresswoman Michele Bachmann will be a special guest at the dinner, which is titled "Reconnecting Faith, Family and Freedom."

The dinner will be held on Tuesday, May 11 at the Hilton Minneapolis on Marquette Avenue. Various events begin late afternoon, with the dinner and program beginning at 7:00 p.m.

For more information, including ticket prices, call Cheryl at (612) 789-8811 ext. 202 or email cheryl@mfc.org. The Minnesota Family Council website is www.mfc.org.

Gabe Lyons to headline Lift Conference

LAKEVILLE — Hosanna Lutheran Church in Lakeville will host the Lift Conference: A Fusion of Church and Culture on June 5-6. Gabe Lyons, author of "The Next Christians: How a New Generation Is Restoring the Faith" will be a keynote speaker at the event. Organizers believe the conference

will help encourage leaders about the future.

Registration is \$59 before May 8 and \$79 after May 8. Student and group discounts are available.

For more information on the Lift Conference, visit www.liftconference.org, call (952) 898-9120 or email nathanl@hosannalc.org.

Concordia University names new president

SAINT PAUL — Concordia University recently named the Rev. Tom Ries of Burnsville as the ninth president in the school's 118-year history. Ries will assume his role June 1 after the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Robert Holst.

"Rev. Ries brings with him a wealth of experience in administration, financial management and fundraising within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod that will allow him to build on the significant enrollment and campus growth Concordia has seen during President Holst's 20-year tenure," said Brad Hewitt, chair of Concordia's Board of Regents via a news release. "He also has a longstanding relationship with Concordia and a strong affinity for the institution that gives him a unique perspective and ability to lead the University in this new era."

Prior to his new appointment, Ries served as a pastor for 12 years, as president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Foundation and as vice president for Finance and Operations at Concordia University.

"I am very pleased and honored to be called to serve as the ninth president of Concordia University," Ries said. "I have a longstanding passion for the mission of preparing students for thoughtful and

informed living, dedicated service to God and humanity, and the enlightened care of God's creation. I look forward to helping shape Concordia's vision for the best way to live out our mission in the years to come. I am eager to help engage and inspire many others to join us in pursuing this vision."

For more information about Concordia University, visit www.csp.edu.

Faith-based fishing organization to hold tournament

MINNEAPOLIS — Full Throttle, a faith-based fishing organization, is holding its fourth annual walleye fishing tournament circuit this year. In 2011, the tournament circuit will make stops on the Mississippi River May 21 and on Lake Mille Lacs June 18 and Aug. 13.

Organizers say the tournaments are family-focused yet competitive.

For more information on this year's walleye fishing circuit, visit www.ftwalleye.com.

Church to hold annual arts festival

MINNEAPOLIS — Hope Lutheran Church in Minneapolis is hosting the 38th Annual Festival of the Arts beginning in May. The event began with a music festival and has since expanded to a week-long series of events that emphasize the arts.

The opening festival will take place Sunday, May 1 at 10:00 a.m. with "A Gospel Experience" featuring The Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir. An art exhibit show-

casing the photography of Doug Ohman will be on display until May 15 at Hope. A music festival including musicians from the church will be held Sunday, May 8, and a renaissance dinner will take place Friday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m.

For more information on the variety of events included in this year's festival, visit www.hopempls.org.

Event to donate livestock to World Vision

SAINT PETER — The fourth annual Livestock event will be held Saturday, June 4 in St. Peter. The free event endeavors to bring together the community for a one-day celebration and to give back through the donation of a livestock animal to World Vision.

Jill Hass, along with her husband Alex, came up with the idea for the event several years ago.

"I remember receiving a copy of the World Vision gift catalog and thinking how great it would be to have a potluck in our backyard and invite all of our friends and neighbors over to raise money for livestock animals," Jill Hass said via a news release.

Since the first Livestock, more than \$31,000 has been raised in animal donations.

This year's event will feature Sara Groves and several other bands and musicians. A 5K walk/run will kick off the day's activities at 8:00 a.m.

"I believe it's fair to say that we are all looking for a way to make a difference in the world and on June fourth we provide the perfect opportunity to do just that," Jill Hass said.


For more information on Livestock, visit www.livestockmn.org.

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Billy Sunday in New York in 1917
Photo courtesy of Grace College in Winona Lake, Indiana



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Is Jesus coming back May 21?

By Rusty Wright and Meg Korpi
Assist News Service

We understand that Jesus is coming back this year on May 21 to be precise—our wedding anniversary!
We read it in *The Washington Post*.

Perspective

It seems that Harold Camping, a Christian radio broadcaster in Oakland has determined the date through a complex analysis involving biblical prophecies, numerical codes, and his calculated date of Noah’s flood. Jesus, he says, will return May 21 to take believers to heaven and begin judging the world. “Save the Date!” advise billboards and signs on supporters’ cars. Forget all that Mayan-prophecy/ movie stuff about 2012 being the apocalyptic year. Camping says 2011 is when the real end-times action begins. According to his website, “The Bible Guarantees It.”

Guaranteed? Whoa! What’s that about?

Camping calculates that Noah’s flood occurred in 4990 BC. (The Bible doesn’t state the year, so we guess one needs faith in Camping’s calculations.) The Bible does indicate that God gave Noah seven day’s warning to board the Ark; elsewhere it says that with God, one day is like a thousand years. So, according to Camping, seven days warning for Noah means seven millennia for us. (The connection’s complex; if you’re like us, you’ll need more faith.)

Now add 7,000 years to 4990 BC/ BCE (including an extra digit because there’s no year zero) and you get 2011 AD. Whew!

There’s more. Writes Camping: “Amazingly, May 21, 2011 is the 17th day of the 2nd month of the biblical calendar of our day. Remember, the flood waters also began on the 17th day of the 2nd



month, in the year 4990 B.C.”

Puzzled? We empathize.

But wait. 2011. Twenty eleven. “Eleven” rhymes with “heaven.” And May 21, 2011, is our eleventh anniversary. Whoa! Spooky!

Maybe there is something to this May 21st thing.

If Jesus is coming that day, maybe we should invite him to our anniversary. It’s on a Saturday this year—wonder if he could make it?

Renewed vows

On most anniversaries we return to the small mountain chapel where we wed, and renew our vows. It’s a private celebration, just the two of us ... and, of course, God as our witness. Make’s a great refresher. We highly recommend it.

Sometimes, the chapel door is locked. A few years ago, we couldn’t get in, so we renewed our vows in our car across the street in front of the post office. Not the memoried locale we’d hoped for, but it was romantic all the same.

Of course, Jesus wouldn’t have a problem with locked doors, if his past is any indication. But he does have a history of attracting crowds, and that could be awkward in a small chapel. Plus, would he even have the time if he’s busy judging the world that day?

More concerns

There’s another concern. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that Camping once promised Christ would return on Sept. 6, 1994. When that didn’t happen, he allowed he might have made a mathematical error.

Bigger problem: Jesus said there would be signs of his second coming, but “no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.”

Oops. What about Camping’s “biblical guarantee”? Guess you have to be careful in what—or whom—you believe.

Camping and his supporters may mean well, but somehow we think that Jesus knows more about this one. His prophetic track record is better anyway.

Think we’ll plan on a quiet, private anniversary celebration on May 21. Jesus can watch, of course, but we’re guessing it will be from heaven.

Rhymes with eleven.

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer. His wife, Meg Korpi, is a senior research scientist who studies character development and ethical decision-making through the Character Research Institute.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Jim Daly to speak at pastors’ appreciation event

BROOKLYN PARK — Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, will be the special guest at the Pastors’ Appreciation Luncheon on Wednesday, May 11 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at The Northland Inn in Brooklyn Park.

Organizers want to “honor, recognize and express our appreciation for the pastors in our community.”

Spouses are welcome, and a complimentary lunch will be provided.

For more information or to RSVP, visit www.kkms.com/content-pages/1549/.

Conference to address needs of medium-sized churches

BLAINE — Dr. Gary McIntosh, a church consultant, will be the special guest at the Interaction Conference, to be held Tuesday, May 10 at Bridgewood Community Church in Blaine. The conference is designed to help medium-sized churches with their specific needs and challenges.

Breakout sessions and Q&A will be available during the conference.

The event registration is \$50, which includes lunch.

For more information, including registration, email tom@theinteractivechurch.com, call (763) 780-2500 or visit www.interactionconference.com.

J. P. Moreland to speak at Bethany Church

BLOOMINGTON — Rivendell Sanctuary is hosting J. P. Moreland as part of its lecture series on Thursday, May 5 at 7:00 p.m. He will speak at Bethany Church in Bloomington.

Moreland is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Talbot School of Theology and author of several books.

His lecture is titled “The Nature and Existence of the Soul.”

For more information on the event, visit www.rivendellsanctuary.com or call (952) 996-1451.

Breaking Free to sponsor anti-human trafficking event

SAINT PAUL — Breaking Free, along with Men Against the Trafficking of Others (MATTOO) will sponsor the Demand Change Project May 13 and 14 in St. Paul.

On Friday, May 13, an abolitionist seminar will take place, along with the VIP Launch Party and awards ceremony. On Saturday, May 14, a survivors panel will occur, along with a men’s rally/ walk and a benefit concert by Nicole C. Mullen.

For more information on the event, including registration, visit www.demandchangeproject.org or email hcaillier@breakingfree.net.

‘Resurrection Chant’ becomes popular Easter anthem

TWIN CITIES — When Dan Adler wrote “Resurrection Chant” nearly a decade ago, he initially experienced rejection from publishers. This past fall, however, WORD Music “took a chance” on the song and made it into a choral arrangement for Easter.

Since then, Adler said, more than 27,000 copies of the sheet music have been sold.

“We are praying that the power of the music with the lyrics will especially draw those ‘Christmas and Easter’ Christians who tend to only come then, with the power of the life-changing truth of the Gospel,” Adler said in an e-mail announcement.

For more information about Adler and Heart of the City, visit www.heartofthecity.org.

Robert Robinson to perform at Mother’s Day brunch

MINNEAPOLIS — Gospel singer Robert Robinson will perform at a Mother’s Day brunch on Sunday, May 8 at Scalzo’s Italian Grille in Minneapolis. Robinson will perform with accompaniment between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

The cost for the event is \$19.95 for adults and \$12.95 for kids; children under five years old get in free.

For reservations, call (612) 455-6311.

Local writers receive honors

MAPLE GROVE — Delores Topliff (who regularly contributes to the “Minnesota Christian Chronicle”) was recently named semi-finalist in the Genesis Contest in the Contemporary Fiction category, a program of American Christian Fiction Writers (ACFW). In addition, three other Minnesotans made the semi-finals in other categories: Chawna Schroeder in Young Adult; Stacy Monson in Contemporary Romance; and Michelle Lim in Romantic Suspense.

“The Genesis is the premier contest in the Christian Booksellers Association for the unpublished. It’s the place to get noticed by a publisher,” said Colleen Coble, CEO of ACFW via a press release.

More than 500 entries were submitted for this year’s contest. Winners will be announced in September at the ACFW annual conference in St. Louis.

ACFW noted that many of the Genesis Contest finalists in the past have gone on to achieve publication.

“Among them are authors who are now multi-published, and whose books appear consistently on CBA and ECPA bestseller lists, and those whose published works receive recognition through readers’ choice and industry-awarded honors,” Coble said. “That speaks highly of the role of the Genesis Contest in helping launch author careers.”

For more information on ACFW, visit www.acfw.com.

Nation Day of Prayer observance at state capitol

SAINT PAUL — This year’s National Day of Prayer is on Thursday, May 5 and an annual observance of the day will be held at the state capitol from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Lars Carlson from The Salvation Army will lead a worship team composed of members from around the Twin Cities, and the MN Teen Challenge Choir will also perform. Ray Buchner will sing the National Anthem.

This year’s theme is “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” taken from Psalm 91:2.

For more information on the National Day of Prayer event at the state capitol, visit www.ndptf.org and search for “Minnesota” events or call (320) 291-9038.

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➤ CLASSIFIEDS

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➤ MUSIC&ENTERTAINMENT

Battistelli wins 3 Dove Awards, including Artist of the Year

By Holly Wilson

Francesca Battistelli continues to balance “the stuff” of being a new mom, nurturing a young marriage to her band’s drummer, former NewSong percussionist Matthew Goodwin, and maintaining tour dates.

The native New Yorker’s latest hit “This Is the Stuff,” talks about the everyday annoyances that alter attitude. Battistelli explains on her website that simple daily frustration grows character. “The Lord uses every circumstance in our life, even the small little things, to make us better, to refine our character, and to make us more like him.”

On April 20, Battistelli won Christian music’s top award when she won “Artist of the Year” from the Dove Awards. She also took home awards for “Female Artist of the Year” and “Pop/ Contemporary Recorded Song Of The Year” for the smash hit “Beautiful Beautiful.”

Battistelli will perform at the Sonshine Festival at the Willmar Civic Center Grounds on July 16.

Other big Dove winners included Chris August, who earned honors for New Artist of the Year, Best Male Vocalist and pop-contemporary album for “No Far Away.” Other three-award recipients were Point of Grace and Jason Crabb, whose Song of the Year entry “Sometimes I Cry,” was written by his father Gerald Crabb.

Free to Live Tour raising support for orphan care ministry

The Desperation Band and Meredith Andrews have teamed up with Children’s HopeChest for their two-month Free to Live Tour.

Desperation Band, known for rock infused worship music such as the anthem “I Am Free” has recorded five albums. Their 2009 album, *Light Up The World*, reflects the band’s partnership with the orphanage building through Heartwork Uganda.

Melodic piano reflections give Meredith Andrews a distinctive sound. Two songs on her 2010 album “What It Means to Love” were inspired the artist’s mission trip to Haiti.

Children’s HopeChest is an in-

ternational orphan care network combating poverty, violence, and sex trafficking. Speaker Tom Davis heads the Colorado Springs-based ministry. He has authored five books, including *Fields of the Fatherless*.

Venue information is available at www.freetolivetour.com

Musicians aim for 66,000 pounds of flour

If there is a founding father of contemporary Christian music, his name is John Fischer. Many baby boomers first heard “Have You Seen Jesus My Lord” and “Love Him in the Morning” at Sunday folk masses or around a bonfire at church camp.

Fischer has joined an international humanitarian outreach to war-torn Libya.

Sales of the just released musical compilation *When Morning Comes: (Music for Libya)* will purchase 66,000 pounds of Egyptian flour. The funds, administered by The Humanitarian International Services Group, will provide Libyan bakeries with flour for crucial bread production.

Fischer’s contribution is entitled “Matthew’s Blues.” Choir vocals intertwine with his trademark vocal simplicity.

Download selections at www.musicforlibya.bandcamp.com

Larnelle Harris achieves distinction in three categories

Gospel singer/ songwriter Larnelle Harris is a barrier breaker. He was the first Christian artist to perform inside the Kremlin after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Early in his 30-year career, he often was the first African American artist to sing before all white church audiences.

In April, the native son was welcomed into the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame. In 2007, the Gospel Music Association awarded Harris with Hall of Fame recognition. Between these two honors came another less well-known milestone.

The multiple Grammy and Dove award winner is a 2008 inductee into the CQ VHF Ham Radio Above 50 MHz magazine’s Amateur Radio



New mom Francesca Battistelli won top honors at April’s Dove Awards, including Artist of the Year and Female Vocalist of the Year.

Hall of Fame. Harris’ ham radio operator peers are as diverse as his music fans. Honorees include Elvis Presley’s wife Priscilla, legendary American actor Marlon Brando, and King Hussein of Jordan.

Greater selection of movies with a faith message

HuffPost film critic Scott Mendelson called the debut of TriStar’s “Soul Surfer” as a “surprising success ... a low-on-the-radar” film. Publicists Lovell-Fairchild report an opening weekend gross of \$10.6 million.

This true story of a surfer’s faith and recovery from a shark attack reflects a strong national buzz that Mendelson apparently missed. “Soul Surfer” proves the increased market viability of faith themes.

“The 5th Quarter:” The Omaha Film Festival gave this Rocky Mountain Pictures production its seventh festival award just before the film’s March release. Directed by Rick Bieber, the movie opens at California theaters in May.

Andie MacDowell and Aidan Quinn star as the real life parents, Jon and MaryAnne Abbate, who must remove their brain-dead son from life support after an auto accident. Their surviving son, played by newcomer Ryan Merriman, experi-

ences a surprising season of Wake Forest football that enables the Abbate family to heal.

MaryAnne Abbate told CBN’s Lori Johnson that “God’s insulating grace” got her through the funeral. After the initial shock, MaryAnne asked God to use her pain. She believes this movie gives voice to the deep pain of bereavement.

“I’m in Love With a Church Girl:” Grammy award-winning artist/producer TobyMac makes his acting debut in this Reverence Gospel Media film directed by Steve Race. This story about a former drug trafficker is now in post-production and slated for fall release.

“Lion King” composer Bruce Fowler wrote the score, with contributions by renowned jazz trumpeter and pianist Arturo Sandoval.

“Of Gods and Men:” Written by Xavier Beauvois and Etienne Comar, this film is loosely based on the 1996 kidnapping and murder of seven Cistercian monks in Algiers. Lambert Wilson and Michael Lonsdale have star roles.

Dr. Miroslav Volf, author of “Allah: A Christian Response” and founding director of the Yale Center for Faith & Culture said, “Here

you have an authentic Christian response both to violent Muslim extremism and to genuine Islam.”

The Sony Pictures release grapples with the question of peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims, showing the dangers of extremism, the place of Christian martyrdom, and challenges to Christian commitment.

“The Grace Card:” The theme of this Provident Films release is forgiveness and reconciliation. Veteran Hollywood writer Howard Klausner wrote the screenplay after moving home to Tennessee. The film was directed by David Evans and stars Academy Award winner Louis Gossett, Jr.

The film’s examination of race relations reportedly attracted Gossett to the film, a creative project by Calvary Church in suburban Memphis. The drama follows a man’s longstanding unresolved bitterness from the loss of a son in an accident.

“Get Low:” This 2010 Zanuck Independent production that portrays transcendent truths about mortality, secrets, forgiveness, and grace is finally available on DVD.

Dean Zanuck, grandson of legendary filmmaker Darryl Zanuck, produced the compelling film; directed by Aaron Schneider and starring Robert Duvall, Bill Murray, Sissy Spacek, Gerald McRaney, and Bill Cobbs.

Lutheran pastor Scott Seeke wrote the original story told by his wife’s grandfather, a retired undertaker and witness to the 1938 event. Duvall portrays the recluse who comes out of a self-imposed 40-year exile in the Appalachians to attend his own “living funeral.”

The movie has rewarding musical touches beyond original music by Academy Award winning composer Jan A.P. Kaczmarek. The SteelDrivers, a Nashville-based bluegrass band makes an on screen appearance during the funeral. The sweet voice of bluegrass artist Alison Krauss overlays the final scene.

‘Soul Surfer’ movie has strong opening

LOS ANGELES—“Soul Surfer,” the inspiring true story of teenager Bethany Hamilton who lost an arm in a shark attack and returned through courage and faith to the top levels of competitive surfing, scored big in opening weekend box offices and drew a rare A-plus in CinemaScore exit polls.

According to box office numbers, the movie collected \$10.6 million for its initial weekend, making it the No. 4 film in the nation. It retained the same ranking the second week, and after the third weekend had more than \$28.5 million in total ticket sales. Another strong indicator was its online presence on opening day when the movie began “trending” on Twitter, meaning it was among the top 10 tweeted items, worldwide.

“From the beginning, this was God’s film, and we’re delighted with it,” Cheri Hamilton, Bethany’s mother, said on behalf of the Hamilton family. “As the story goes out, we’re trusting God to bless other families through the incredible way he’s taken care of us.”

“Audience support is phenomenal,” Rich Peluso, vice president



Bethany Hamilton’s surfboard shows the large bite left by the 15-foot tiger shark on that fateful day, Oct. 31, 2003, off Kauai’s north shore, when Bethany was just 13 years old.

of Affirm Films, said. “Ticket sales exceed expectations and 96 percent of audiences rate it ‘excellent’ or ‘very good.’ That’s a whole lot of families and teens having a great time at the movies.”

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REVIEWS

Does ‘love’ win in the end?

Review by Scott Noble

“Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived,” by Rob Bell, HarperOne, © 2011, 202 pages, \$22.99

“Will everybody be saved, or will some perish apart from God forever because of their choices? Those are the questions, or more accurately, those are tensions we are free to leave fully intact. We don’t need to resolve them or answer them because we can’t, and so we simply respect them, creating space for the freedom that love requires” (page 115).

For such a small book (200 pages and with only a couple hundred words on many of them), “Love Wins” has caused a lot of controversy. Much of it has centered on whether Bell, who is the founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., is a universalist—whether he believes that in the end all people will go to heaven—and whether he believes in a literal hell.

Debate originated before the book was even printed, as people commented on pre-publication excerpts or what they heard from others about what Bell wrote. The publisher even moved up the release date of the book in order to take advantage of the increased buzz.

The book, as a whole, is a quick read; it won’t take readers more than a couple of hours to read it cover to cover. Bell writes in a conversational manner, and the book doesn’t include any footnotes. However, with such significant topics—heaven, hell, life, death—one wishes at times Bell would delve into a particular topic more completely, citing more biblical references and sources for his beliefs.

To the main question of universalism, the book raises some provocative questions about whether all with be saved and hoping that God might save all.

Ronn Johnson, adjunct professor of Bible at Northwestern College and senior pastor of Coon Rapids Evangelical Free Church, stresses that there is a difference between the two concepts.

“The former is a statement of

belief that God will, in the end, save all,” Johnson said. “Bell never claims that he knows this will be God’s choice for The Story, and he makes this clear. But he openly is frustrated with any story in which God’s love for a living person is so drastically changed at death that eternal punishment is the result. ‘Why Would God’s Love Change?’ may be a good subtitle for the book. Bell knows that the challenge is to place the boundaries of love where Scripture places them, but he is also working with an assumption that love must ultimately match what the audience believes love to be. That’s a tall order in our Western approach to the concept of love.”

Greg Boyd, senior pastor of Woodland Hills Church, who wrote one of the endorsements for “Love Wins” also believes there is a difference.

Boyd said: “Miroslav Volf, who is one of the world’s premier theologians and most ardent defenders of God’s final judgment once wrote: ‘I am not a universalist, but God may be.’ That is the difference between embracing universalism as a doctrine and merely hoping all might eventually be saved. A universalist feels certain all will eventually be saved. People like Volf and Bell merely deny we can be certain some cannot eventually be saved.”

One of the frustrating aspects of “Love Wins” is its lack of thoroughness with such significant topics. Writing a theological tome was most likely not Bell’s intent; nevertheless, there are times when readers will leave a topic a bit confused and unsure about where Bell’s teaching is leading.

For example, during his discussion of heaven, Bell tries to communicate that our current understanding of heaven in an eternal timeframe is not what the biblical writers had in mind.

He writes: “Let me be clear: heaven is not forever in the way that we think of forever, as a uniform measurement of time, like days and years, marching endlessly into the future. That’s not a category or concept we find in the Bible. This is why a lot of translators choose to translate *aion* as ‘eternal.’ By this

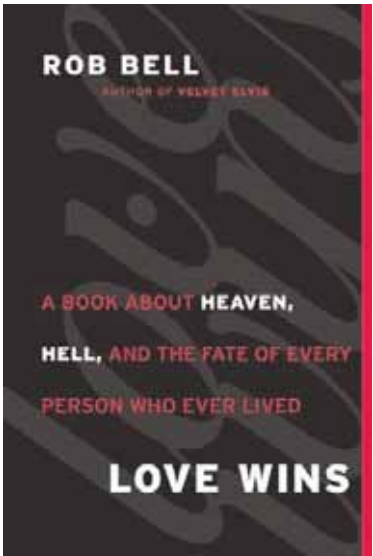
they don’t mean the literal passing of time; they mean transcending time, belonging to another realm altogether” (page 58).

He goes on to discuss the concept further, but one is left unsure of where he is taking the reader.

“Love Wins” is partly written as a polemic against what Bell constructs as an invisible cohort of religious leaders who believe only their way is the correct way. Some of the stories and anecdotes use red herrings in this manner—propping up outdated or rare occurrences in order to use them as examples of how The Story has been hijacked.

When the issue of universalism was first raised about Bell and “Love Wins,” many evangelicals were quick to respond, as this topic has for many years been debated among believers.

“Rob Bell certainly believes Jesus is the only way to salvation and that those who reject Jesus end up



in hell,” Boyd said. “He just holds out hope that some who don’t consciously know Christ have not consciously rejected Him and that hell will turn out not to be endless.”

Johnson knows that many over the years have wondered how to match the words “God” and “love” to each other.

“Evangelicals know they belong

together (‘God is love’ and ‘For God so loved the world’), but we know that hell is at the end of the story too—an odd way for it all to end,” he said. “Annihilation or some kind of short-term punishment makes far better sense, but the evangelical cannot use the Bible to defend either. So we’re stuck, and the world is watching.”

In the end, “Love Wins” is an engagingly written book about important topics that not only Christians discuss, but nonbelievers also debate and think about them as well. And some of their beliefs about the Christian faith—especially if they are not properly understood—can be a major stumbling block for them in embracing Christ.

However, the book’s willingness to talk about important topics is often overshadowed by its brevity and its lack of theological depth. That may have been intentional in order to attract a certain type of reader. Regardless, such important topics require intentional, careful and thorough analysis. “Love Wins” falls short in that respect.

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