
News Updates

PFO NAMES TWO NEW DIRECTORS

Personal Freedom Outreach recently added two new members to its staff. In April, Dr. James Bjornstad and Mr. Philip Cetnar were appointed to PFO's Board of Directors.

James Bjornstad is professor of philosophy at Cedarville College in Cedarville, Ohio. He is a recognized scholar and author in the field of cults, the occult and apologetics. Bjornstad has spent nearly 40 years in religious research. In addition to his proficiency in the field of alternate religions, he has been a pastor, an academic dean and college president. He has been on PFO's Board of Reference for the past 10 years.

Also named to PFO's Board is Philip Cetnar. He is the director of PFO's Philadelphia area office and the son of directors Joan and the late Bill Cetnar. He co-founded a local training and witnessing counter-cult ministry and is responsible for maintaining PFO's web site. Cetnar, his wife, Priscilla, and two children live in Mount Laurel, N.J.

Also in April, PFO accepted and announced the resignation of Edgar L. Havaich from its Board. Havaich resigned as director because of time constraints. He faithfully served on PFO's Board since his appointment in 1989.

—MKG

NEW NAME FOR RLDS CHURCH

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) has adopted a new name: "Community of Christ."

RLDS delegates met in April at the church's world conference in Independence, Mo., to discuss a name change for the denomination. While "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" will remain the denomination's legal name, the new name by which they will be identified, Community of Christ, will be instituted after the end of the year. The two-thirds majority vote needed to approve the change was easily surpassed; 1,979 (77%) voted for and 561 voted against.

Among the issues discussed was the church's problem with frequently being mistaken for the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mark A. Scherer, world church historian, told the *Kansas City Star*:

"Primary to the existence of the reorganization was the desire to distance the church from the Utah Mormons for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the Utah Mormons were practicing polygamy, which the reorganized church membership felt was heresy."

The RLDS church is only one of more than 100 groups that splintered from the church founded by Joseph Smith Jr. after his death in 1844. While Brigham Young led the majority of Smith's followers to Utah, others believed that a descendant of Smith should head the church as prophet. In 1860, Smith's son Joseph Smith III, was accepted and installed as president of the church. During the rest of the 19th century, the sect moved its headquarters around Illinois. In the early 1900s, the church established its formal headquarters in Independence.

The RLDS denomination has a membership of less than 250,000 and is the second-largest of the Mormon sects. The Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints counts more than 10 million members.

—AMG

FOUR DIE AT HINN'S KENYA CRUSADE

Four people, including two young children, died while attending healing evangelist Benny Hinn's crusade in Nairobi, Kenya, last May. The report from the Reuters news service said police told a local newspaper, the *Kenya Times*, that "the four had been released from a hospital to be cured at Benny Hinn's 'Miracle Crusade.'"

In addition to the four deaths, it was reported that "Ten other people suffered serious injuries including broken jaws after falling from trees they climbed to get a view of the American preacher."

An earlier news article, which appeared in the *Daily Nation*, identified one of the deceased as Clondin Adhiambo, "an ailing four-month-old baby." The infant was taken to Hinn's meeting by her mother. The newspaper reported that according to police, "the baby's condition worsened at the prayer venue and she was taken to MP Shah Hospital where she was pronounced dead on arrival."

The Reuters story noted that faith healing in Kenya has become a well-received enterprise. "Preachers promising miracle cures from ailments ranging from AIDS to blindness have become increasingly popular in recent years in Kenya, a country where health care is out of the

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