
News Updates

PFO CONTINUES TO GROW

Growth prompts the need for change. Personal Freedom Outreach was a counter-cult, apologetic ministry conceived in the mid-1970s, when several of the mainline cults were experiencing tremendous gain. It was also during a time when the Church was giving way to the advancing of aberrant theologies.

PFO saw its "infancy" in the late 1970s, its "childhood" in the 1980s, its "teen years" were in the 1990s, but now — for the 21st century — the ministry has grown to "adulthood" and with it, added responsibilities and demands.

During the past couple years, PFO has sought that each of its directors become more involved in their personal devotion and duty to help realize its goals. At a recent board meeting, it was determined that PFO would add two new members to its Board of Directors. Appointed to serve on PFO's board are Dr. Robert L. Griffin and Dr. David M. Tyler.

Robert Griffin has served as pastor of Parker Road Baptist Church in Florissant, Mo., since 1992. He earned his Doctor of Ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1973. His ministry opportunities include preaching, teaching, writing, mission work, and Bible Camp direction throughout the world. Bob served as the Executive Director of the Bible Memory Association International from 1977-1989. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

David Tyler has pastored churches in Illinois and South Carolina. He holds a B.A. in Theology, a M.A. in Pastoral Ministry, and a Ph.D. in Biblical Counseling, all from Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Ind. Presently, David is a Regional Director for Church and Community Ministries for the Illinois Baptist State Association. He is a member of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors and the Southern Baptist Association of Biblical Counselors. He co-edits, along with fellow PFO director Kurt Goedelman, SBABC's *Quarterly Newsletter*.

Both men have been active in and supportive of PFO prior to their appointment as directors, including participation in a teaching capacity at its *Saint Louis Conference on Biblical Discernment* held last April.

—MKG

U.S. NEWS SPOTLIGHTS McPHERSON HOAX

What do Aimee Semple McPherson, Piltdown Man, and crop field circles have in common? They all earned recognition in a recent edition of *U.S. News & World Report* dedicated to "The Art of the Hoax" (Aug. 26-Sept. 2, 2002, special double issue). The magazine stated, "Our team of writers presents the best deceptions, scams, and gags, past and present."

McPherson weighed in as the magazine's Hoax #10, being "the evangelist [who] was tried for a tall tale." On May 18, 1926, at age 35, the celebrated female evangelist and founder of the International Church of the Four-square Gospel went swimming in the Pacific Ocean at Venice, Calif. When she did not return, her flock feared the worst. For weeks there was no sign of McPherson. Then, five weeks after vanishing without a trace, McPherson turned up in the Arizona desert. She claimed that she had been abducted by three people who held her prisoner. However, news reports disclosed quite a different scenario. Reporters stated McPherson "had joined the one-legged engineer from her radio station in a cycle of sin at a Carmel, Calif., 'love nest.'"

Despite the reports, McPherson insisted the abduction was legitimate and said it was "my story" and that she was "sticking to it" — a pronouncement later echoed by Mae West on the big screen and President Bill Clinton during the Monica Lewinsky episode. McPherson was charged with a felony, obstructing justice by falsely reporting a crime. Finally, litigation against McPherson was dropped as "the state's key witness altered an account once too often."

McPherson stuck to the story until her death in 1944.

—MKG

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE?

Less than a decade ago, *The Liberty Flame*, a periodical on religious liberties published by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, called into question the life, practice, and theology of popular television preacher John Hagee. The May 6, 1994, *Flame* displayed a bold, front page headline asking, "John Hagee: Heretic?" However, more recently, Falwell's view of the San Antonio-based minister has apparently

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