

National Digest_61404

June 11, 2004

Posted: 6/11/04

National Digest

Coalition issues blueprint for ending hunger. National Anti-Hunger Organizations, a coalition of 13 faith-based and other hunger activist groups, has proposed a "Blueprint to End Hunger in America." The group called on the federal government to cut hunger in half by 2010 and eliminate it by 2015, the goals the United States set for itself at the World Food Summit in 1996. It also said the Senate must pass the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation, which would continue funding existing programs and also expand summer food programs and fresh fruit and vegetable pilot programs for low-income children. The blueprint calls on state and local governments to expand nutrition programs and make applying for food stamps easier. It says schools and community organizations should help increase awareness of programs that already exist for easing hunger.

Graham released from hospital. Evangelist Billy Graham was released from an Asheville, N.C., hospital June 7 after undergoing a procedure to stabilize a pelvic fracture. He sustained the fracture when he fell at home, where he was recovering from a partial hip replacement. Graham's physicians said they were greatly encouraged by his progress. He will continue intensive therapy at home for at least three months.

Senators urge reversal on stem cell research. Fifteen Republican Senators—including Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas—have joined 42 Democrats and one independent in the Senate in urging President George W. Bush to revise his order prohibiting federal funds for stem cell research

involving human embryos. The leaders of the effort pointed to former President Ronald Reagan's death after a 10-year battle with Alzheimer's disease in appealing for the policy change. Many researchers contend embryonic stem cells offer the greatest potential for treating or curing Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, diabetes and other diseases, but pro-life groups oppose using human embryos.

Magazine lists best Christian workplaces. Dallas Theological Seminary and the Gospel Music Association in Nashville, Tenn., were among the organizations named "Best Christian Places to Work" in a nationwide survey released by Christianity Today magazine. The Best Christian Workplace Institute commissioned the second annual survey, in which more than 10,000 employees from 107 Christian organizations were polled on their companies' employee practices.

Winners included:

Large university, college or seminary:

Whitworth College, Spokane, Wash.

♦ Medium university, college or seminary:
Dallas Theological Seminary.

♦ Small university, college or seminary:
Phoenix Seminary, Scottsdale, Ariz.

♦ Media organization:
Howard Publishing, West Monroe, La.

♦ Large service and product organization:
>Cogun, North Lima, Ohio.

♦ Small service and product organization:
Gospel Music Association, Nashville.

- ◆ Church-related organization:
Fellowship Church, Grapevine.
- ◆ Large mission and parachurch:
Coalition for Christian Outreach, Pittsburgh.
- ◆ Medium mission and parachurch:
Medical Ambassadors International, Modesto, Calif.
- ◆ Small mission and parachurch:
Apartment Life, Euless.

Survey says spirituality sells. A survey by the trade magazine Publishers Weekly shows 18 percent of consumers bought books dealing with religion or spirituality in the past year. Using the Internet, the magazine surveyed 10,000 representative consumers. Most religion/spirituality book buyers-59 percent-are female, with an average age of 38. Forty percent identified themselves as evangelical Christians, while 10 percent identified themselves as spiritual but not religious. More than one-quarter of religion book buyers were between the ages of 25 and 34, and another quarter were in the next age tier of 35 to 44.

Only 11 percent of spirituality book-buyers were older than 55. The survey also measured what kinds of books respondents had purchased. More than two-thirds-68 percent-said they had purchased fiction. Of types of nonfiction, the largest category-practical life-was purchased by 35 percent. The next largest, purchased by 28 percent, was Bibles.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.