

## INSP NETWORK DROPS CULT'S PROGRAM

After receiving protests for nearly a year, the Inspiration Network has removed an anti-Christian program from its airwaves. The *Armor of God* broadcast, the program canceled by the network, is produced by the Church of God International, the Tyler, Texas-based church founded by the late Garner Ted Armstrong.

In a letter to those who had objected to the program, John E. Roos, Senior Vice President of Marketing for the network, said his company "took the action after it conducted an extensive review of the program in response to the concerns."

According to James Kieferdorf, airing of the *Armor of God* program over the INSP Network ended last September. Kieferdorf was responsible for sounding the alarm that a heretical sect was being allowed to air its programs over a Christian network, and for rallying ministers and ministries to voice complaint for such a lack of discernment by INSP.

The Church of God International promotes a number of unorthodox teachings, including a vigorous denial of the Trinity and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Armstrong, who died in 2003, developed much of his theology from his father, Herbert W. Armstrong. The younger Armstrong was exiled from the group in 1997, stemming from charges of sexual misconduct. The following year he established the Intercontinental Church of God. Two decades earlier, he had suffered the same fate, having been excommunicated from his father's Worldwide Church of God amid charges of sexual improprieties.

The INSP Network is headed by David Cerullo, son of healing evangelist Morris Cerullo, and is based in Charlotte, N.C.

—MKG

## JESUS SEMINAR MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

The Jesus Seminar marked its 20th anniversary at its annual meeting last fall. The controversial group of New Testament scholars, founded by Robert Funk, first met in 1985 to subjectively determine the validity of the words and conduct of Christ.

The group concluded that of all the words attributed to Jesus in the four Gospels, only 15 sayings (or 2 percent) could be authentic. The group further concluded that about 82 percent of what is in Scripture and attributed to Christ was not actually spoken by Him and that the other 16 percent was probably not authentic. The Jesus

Seminar, based upon its judgments, claims to present the historical Jesus as opposed to the Jesus of faith.

The council is made up of liberal Catholics and Protestants, Jews, and atheists. The work of the body has long been criticized. Jesus Seminar board member Andrew Scrimgeour has noted that "fundamentalists and even evangelicals are hostile to the work of these scholars" and that "books, conferences, and Web sites [are] devoted to debating and debunking the work of the Seminar."

Verdicts issued by the group have been published in two books, *The Five Gospels* and *The Acts of Jesus*. The group said it also will make future evaluations of the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's epistles. In addition to its annual meeting, which is open to the public, the group presents more than a dozen weekend seminars annually in churches and on university campuses across the country.

—MKG

## A "LIAR" WHO STAYED TO HELP?

Brennan Manning, author of the best-selling book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, and the contemplative prayer guru whom *Christianity Today* labels as "evangelicals' favorite Catholic," was lauded by the magazine for his heroic deeds in the wake of hurricane Katrina.

In a published interview titled "A 'Coward' Who Stayed to Help," Manning described how he sat out the hurricane in his apartment, 15 minutes south of the French Quarter in New Orleans. "The whole issue of staying ... I don't mean it to sound heroic. Because I'm not, I'm basically a coward. But I thought maybe I could help somebody who stayed through the hurricane," Manning told the magazine.

And help is just what he did. "I did see an elderly black woman, somewhere in her 80s, standing on a street corner. I stopped and asked where I could take her. She said, 'Please take me to my sister's house.' I drove her out there and reassured her of how proud I was of her and what a gift it was to be her neighbor," he said in the interview. Manning also says he was able to contact authorities to help identify a child whose picture was broadcast on television and who was one of many children who had become separated from their parents. It's all the conduct of which heroes are made. The only problem is that it wasn't true.

One week after publishing the initial interview, *Christianity Today* posted on its web site a brief editorial note at the beginning of the article. It read, "We regret to inform our readers that, following this on-the-record conversation, Brennan Manning called our office to