

Swaggart to stop preaching until investigation ends

BATON ROUGE, La. — Television evangelist Jimmy Swaggart, who reportedly was photographed with a prostitute, confessed Sunday that he had sinned and said he would stop preaching until church officials complete an investigation.

"I do not plan in any way to white-wash my sin or call it a mistake," he told his tearful but apparently forgiving congregation. "I call it a sin."

The Assemblies of God denomination has been investigating Swaggart,

reportedly for allegations of sexual misconduct. A church official said the evangelist had shown "true humility," and another minister said the door was open for Swaggart to remain in the ministry.

"I will step out of this pulpit for an undetermined, indeterminate period of time," Swaggart said. "We will leave this in the hands of the lord."

Swaggart, who a year ago had scathingly denounced fellow Assemblies of God evangelist Jim Bakker

for committing adultery, did not describe his misconduct.

"Every time I have stood before a congregation, before these television cameras, I have met and faced the issues head on. I have never skirted or sidestepped unpleasanties," he said. "I can do no less than this morning."

Forest H. Hall, secretary-treasurer of the Louisiana District of the Assemblies of God, told the 7,500 people at Swaggart's sprawling family worship center that the evangelist

had confessed to church officials and his family."

"He confessed to specific incidents of moral failure," Hall said. "In the opinion of the officers of the Louisiana District, he has shown true humility and repentance and has not tried to blame anyone else for his failure."

District church officials would determine "appropriate disciplinary procedures after hearing all the facts and circumstances," Hall said.

He urged Swaggart "to resist the urgings of those outside the church to respond to questions" and called on church members "to regain from speculation and imagination about this matter."

Amid gasps and streaming tears, the congregation gave Swaggart a standing ovation after Hall turned to him and said, "Brother Swaggart, would you come here? I believe I bring you to a group of people who love you."

Cause of Amtrak fire disputed

OMAHA — A fire aboard Amtrak's California Zephyr that killed one man and injured 19 people may have been caused by luggage or some other flammable material placed near a heater in a crew car, an Amtrak spokesman said Sunday.

Amtrak investigators didn't find evidence of an electrical short in the heater, John Jacobsen said in a telephone interview from Washington.

Nebraska Deputy State Fire Marshal Chuck Hoffman said Saturday that an electrical short in the wiring of the crew car heating unit caused the fire. He said the heater was in a storage area under the crew sleeping quarters and that the short ignited the car's wood floor.

State Fire Marshal Wally Barnett said the wiring showed wear and tear but did not say Amtrak was negligent.

No one answered the telephone at Hoffman's or Barnett's home or office Sunday. But Hastings Fire Department Capt. Henry Park said he believed the state fire marshal's investigation ended Saturday and they stood by their report.

Passengers aboard the Amtrak

train complained that they received no warnings or instructions from crew members when the smoky fire broke out in Hastings.

"To the best of my knowledge, the crew members did nothing about the passengers," said Margaret Etheridge of Grand Island. Ms. Etheridge said she had talked with others on the train who said the same.

Jacobsen said the crew's first priority was to make sure passengers weren't in danger and then get people in the crew car to safety. He said many of the crew were incapacitated by the smoke and several lives may have been saved by the actions of a conductor and his assistant.

Conductor J.P. Jones, of Arvada, Colo., and assistant conductor Todd M. Wtaker of Denver separated the crew car from the train's baggage car and engine to reach people endangered by the smoke, Jacobsen said.

"We could have easily had four or five employees killed in that dormitory car yesterday," Jacobsen said.

Ms. Etheridge also said she was concerned about the lack of smoke detectors on the train.

Jacobsen said the fire would

probably prompt Amtrak officials to renew their search for an effective smoke alarm for their trains. But no model works now because they are often set off by the constant vibrations of trains, he said.

Asked if an effective smoke alarm might have saved the life of the Amtrak employee, Jacobsen said there was no way to answer that question.

Jacobsen said the Amtrak investigation was continuing, and that no disciplinary action had been taken against any crew members. National Transportation and Safety Board spokesman Alan Pollock said that agency also was investigating the incident.

The fire aboard the 14-car west-bound train carrying 294 passengers and a crew of 18 was reported about 3 a.m. as the train was pulling into Hastings for a scheduled stop. Hastings Fire Chief Jim Mitera said the blaze was under control about 90 minutes later.

Adams County Attorney Gary Anderberg said an autopsy showed that the Amtrak employee died of smoke inhalation.

In Brief

First Nebraska uranium mine may cause problems

Mining company officials say Nebraska's first uranium mine may be operational in 1989, and a citizens' group is questioning the company's ability to ensure groundwater quality.

Rich Sommer, a board member of the Western Nebraska Resources council, said the group questions the ability of Ferret Exploration company of Nebraska, Inc. to restore the groundwater near the mine to its original condition, especially if the company is allowed to go into commercial production.

The mine is located five miles southeast of Crawford near the Crow Butte landmark.

The company's pilot project is testing the feasibility of mining uranium commercially and the ability to extract uranium without contaminating the aquifer beneath the mine.

World record, double gold medalist in Games

Calgary, Alberta — Tomas Gustafson of Sweden set a world speed-skating record and became the Winter Olympics' first double gold medalist Sunday, while America still basked in the triumphs of its own two skaters.

Franck Piccard won the super giant slalom and gave France its first ski racing gold since Jean-Claude Killy took Grenoble by storm in 1968. Anita Wachter of Austria won the women's combined.

With spring-like temperatures lingering in the Rockies, Brian Boitano and Eric Flaim were America's men for all seasons — Boitano with a gold in figure skating, Flaim with a silver in speed skating.

Flaim, who won his silver in the 1,500 meters, finished Sunday's 10,000 in fourth place — his third No. 4 finish at these games.

America had three medals, and its hockey team tried to stay in contention for another one Sunday night in a game against West Germany that would decide the third and final team advancing from the B pool into the medal round.

Article sends JAMA to court

CHICAGO — One of the nation's leading medical journals is headed for court in what may be its most serious editorial controversy — the publication of an anonymous article by a doctor who described committing a mercy killing.

The Cook County state's attorney's office wants the name of the doctor, but the Journal of the American Medical Association, citing a state free-press law, says it will be in court Monday seeking to quash the subpoena.

Letters to the journal have been about evenly split on whether JAMA should have printed the anonymous essay.

It's not the first time in recent years the 105-year-old journal, the official publication of the country's largest organization of physicians, has found itself in a clash over its contents.

In 1984, a U.S. Army medical expert charged that AMA officials killed a story he had submitted on smoking so they could win favor with politicians in tobacco-growing states.

Two years earlier, the journal was accused of publishing an article on heart medicine to placate a major drug company that was an advertiser.

JAMA officials denied the charges in both cases.

The latest case involves the broader issues of press freedom and mercy killing.

In the Jan. 8 essay, titled, "It's Over, Debbie," a doctor described injecting a lethal dose of morphine into a woman dying of ovarian cancer. He wrote that he did not know the patient, but was asked to check on her and moved by her plea of "Let's get this over with."

Hezbollah backs kidnappers

BEIRUT, LEBANON — Iranian-backed Hezbollah extremists clashed Sunday with Shiite militiamen searching for a kidnapped U.S. Marine and declared support for his abductors.

A Hezbollah leader said he believed Lt. Col. William R. Higgins had been smuggled out of south Lebanon.

"We declare solidarity with, and full support for, the strugglers against America who confront the plots of the great Satan," said a statement from Hezbollah, or Party of God. "The demands of the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth are just."

The Organization of the Oppressed on Earth on Friday claimed responsibility for Higgins' kidnapping, charging he was a CIA spy. U.S. and U.N. officials denied the charge.

Higgins, a decorated Vietnam veteran and a one-time military assistant to former U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, heads a 76-man observer group attached to a U.N. peacekeeping force in south Lebanon. He was kidnapped Wednesday near the ancient port city of Tyre.

Hezbollah is believed to be the umbrella organization for pro-Iranian groups holding foreign hostages in Lebanon.

Police said Hezbollah and Justice Minister Nabih Berri's mainstream Shiite Amal militia clashed in a brief firefight in the southeastern Lebanese village of Ein el-Tineg. No casualties were reported.

Hezbollah militiamen opened machine-gun fire on an Amal patrol near the village in the western sector of the Bekaa valley and the patrol fired back with rocket-propelled grenades.



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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. (except holidays); weekly during the summer session.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Don Johnson, 472-3611.

Subscription price is \$35 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb.

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