

AMERICANS NOW SEE HOMOSEXUALITY AS "MORALLY ACCEPTABLE"

According to a recent Gallup poll, 52 percent of Americans now view homosexuality (gay or lesbian) as morally acceptable. The numbers have been making slight gains since first being asked nine years ago on surveys of different behavior and social practices. The new poll marks the first time a majority of Americans condone homosexuality. The poll also determined that those who view homosexuality as "morally wrong" is at an all time low of 43 percent.

In spite of gaining a slight majority in accepting same-sex relationships, 53 percent of Americans still say that they oppose legalization of homosexual marriages. Forty-four percent of those polled said they favor legalizing same-sex marriages. In 1996, when the question of homosexual marriage first was asked by Gallup, 68 percent of Americans opposed it, compared to just 27 percent who favored it.

The poll also indicated that 60 percent of Democrats and independents view homosexuality as acceptable, in contrast to 35 percent of Republicans. The numbers were based upon telephone interviews with 1,029 adults and is said to have a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent.

According to apologist Ron Rhodes, it is often claimed that 10 percent of the population is homosexual. However, Rhodes notes that figure as being inflated and based upon the faulty and outdated methodology of sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, and which has been debunked by numerous scientific polls. He says that in reality, only 1 to 2 percent of the population is homosexual.

—MKG

HAGGARD LAUNCHES NEW CHURCH

Ted Haggard is finding himself on a fast track back into the pastorate. In May, the disgraced pastor incorporated the name "St. James Church," and then a few days later he made an official announcement that he was beginning a new church. The first church service, held in a barn next to his Colorado Springs, Colo., home, drew about 160 people. The church is an outgrowth of prayer meetings started last November and hosted in his home.

Within six weeks of the inaugural service, Haggard's attendance had increased to 230 people. The growth has caused him to move the church from his barn into rented facilities in his city's Pikes Peak Center for Performing Arts. The first worship service at the Center was held July 25.

According to *The Denver Post*, "Haggard is taking a weekly salary of \$300." Excess funds from the worship service offerings are going to a variety of other mission and ministry endeavors, including water-well drilling in Africa and medical assistance in Mexico. Haggard told the newspaper that his return to ministry has revived him and his wife, Gayle. "We're more happy than we've ever been. We are supremely satisfied in every dimension of our lives right now," the *Post* reported.

In November 2006, it was disclosed that Haggard had a relationship with a male prostitute and had made purchases of illicit drugs. The revelations led to his resignation as pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, being excommunicated by the church, and a subsequent move from the state. He returned to Colorado in June 2008. Haggard founded New Life Church about 25 years ago and grew the congregation to about 14,000 members, making it the largest in Colorado.

—MKG

SCHULLER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

After 55 years in the pulpit, the Rev. Robert H. Schuller, 83, is giving up his position as the lead pastor of the Crystal Cathedral. Schuller founded the Southern California, 10,000-member megachurch, building it from humble beginnings. In the mid-1950s, Schuller reached the unchurched and casual-minded culture when he began holding Sunday worship services at a drive-in theater in an Orange County suburb. His weekly sermons made their way to television airwaves in 1970 with the popular *Hour of Power* broadcast, which he hosted for more than three decades.

Built upon a message of positive and possibility thinking, Schuller's life and ministry has been less than positive during the past few years. In October 2008, Schuller removed his son, following a decade of grooming him as host of the *Hour of Power* broadcast, resulting from a family rift that made headlines announcing, "Schuller's TV empire crumbling" and "Televangelism

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