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Spirit World: Baptists award 'wellness grants'

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Compiled by Peggy Fletcher Stack
The Salt Lake Tribune

The American Baptist Churches USA have awarded 35 "wellness grants" to ministerial leaders to use toward such health-related activities as a membership in a local fitness club.

The \$300 grants were distributed during what the denomination's Ministerial Leadership Commission called "Clergy Appreciation Season."

That season, from October to November, is part of the commission's Clergy Health Initiative that has sought to make clergy health a priority for American Baptists.

"The ministerial leaders cannot be healthy by themselves," said the Rev. Ivan George, the commission's executive director, in a statement. "Providing the wellness grant and performing other acts of support during Clergy Appreciation Season and throughout the year are ways in which the local congregation or other American Baptist agency becomes a partner with the ministerial leader in the pursuit of healthy lifestyles."

-- *Religion News Service*

Missing Chinese Catholic bishop found

SHANGHAI, China -- A Roman Catholic bishop in China who had been missing for six years was hospitalized under police guard, a U.S.-based monitoring group reported. The church is illegal in China.

Su Zhimin, recognized by the Vatican as bishop of Baoding, was taken to that northern city's Central Hospital around Nov. 15 for an eye operation and treatment of a heart ailment, the Cardinal Kung Foundation said.

Su was guarded by 20 plainclothes police officers and not formally

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registered as a patient, the U.S. group said. It was not known whether he remained hospitalized.

The bishop has spent more than 20 years in prison for rejecting Communist restrictions on religion. No information about him has been released since he was arrested in 1997 after appealing for religious rights to the National People's Congress.

-- *The Associated Press*

Ignorant about freedom of religion

The nation's undergraduates are mostly ignorant about the First Amendment's proclamation about freedom of religion, a survey shows. A survey released by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education found that 30 percent of students overall named freedom of religion when they were asked to name any of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment.

But when asked to specify which freedom is addressed first in the amendment, only 10 percent of public college students and 5 percent of private college students correctly said freedom of religion.

"If the American experiment in liberty is to survive, citizens must both keep alive and cherish the free exchange of ideas, values and convictions," said Alan Charles Kores, president of the foundation, in a statement. "These survey results are disheartening, but they unfortunately are not surprising."

Far more students overall -- 73 percent -- mentioned freedom of speech when asked to name any specific right guaranteed by the First Amendment.

The Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut surveyed 1,037 students at 339 colleges and universities. The margin of error was 2.8 percentage points.

-- *Religion News Service*



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