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**Miniature golf course
offers holy recreation**

By Linda Sickler

DU QUOIN, Ill. (ABP) -- The Road of Life is uphill and bumpy, and that's just the way the developers of the Man-Ark miniature golf course at Du Quoin, Ill., intended it to be.

Situated at Hole 16, "The Road of Life" is just one of 18 holes at this recreation complex with a biblical theme. The course was created by two devoutly Christian couples, Henry and Fay Clark and Dave and Jeannie Ullman, who wanted to offer wholesome entertainment for folks of all ages.

"We didn't think about having a biblical theme at first," Jeannie said. "But what better way could we talk about our best friend?"

The name of the course comes from the last three letters of the couples' last names. While it is still under construction, the course is playable and has been open to the public since May 20.

At the first hole, appropriately titled "In the Beginning," you will play through the Garden of Eden. No. 3 is "Samson's Revenge," while No. 5 is the "Tower of Babel."

At No. 7, you must decide whether to play through the narrow or wide gates. "Noah's Ark," complete with animals and Noah himself, is at No. 8.

One of the favorites with players is the serpent at No. 9. "If you make it through the mouth of the serpent, you can make a hole-in-one," Henry said.

The hole at No. 11 doesn't have a biblical theme, and in fact portrays three skunks. "This hole is a little stinker," Henry said. "It is a complete S-curve. It is a little tricky, but it can be done in two strokes."

The Clarks consider "Jacob's Ladder" at No. 12 to be one of the most difficult holes on the course. At No. 14 is "The Lighthouse." "As the sign says, 'Jesus is the Light,'" Henry said.

A church that will sit at No. 18 is under construction. Players who go through the church will ring the bell, signaling the end of the game. "Once you go through the door of the church, your worries are over," Henry said.

That is, unless you decide to go again. The cost is \$3 for the first game and \$1.50 for every game thereafter.

The couples designed and built the course themselves, including a fountain with Moses on top, striking the rock to bring forth the water. While the fountain was not intended to be a wishing well, people have been tossing coins in it.

For those who tire along the way, there is "Half Way Haven," a shady spot halfway along the course with benches. "People like to sit there and just watch," Fay said.

There also is a snack bar and restrooms. The course is on old Illinois 14 between the Crabapple Bread Shop, which is owned and operated by the Ullmans, and the Old Du Quoin Baptist Church, which the couples both belong to.

Construction of the course began last October. "We went to play miniature golf and stood around under a tree and said, 'We ought to build one,' so we did," Jeannie said.

"We started playing and liked it," Henry said. "There are no places to play without driving to Carbondale or Murphysboro, so we thought we ought to build our own. It seemed like a logical thing to do."

The first consideration was the amount of space available. Then Henry and Dave sat down with graph paper and spent two weeks designing the course.

"We had so many layouts until we finally came up with this one," Henry said. "All four of us liked it."

Although it has a biblical theme, the course is designed to appeal to all miniature golf fans, regardless of faith. "It is open to the general public, not just church groups," Henry said.

After the design work was completed, Henry and Dave started on the construction. "The weather didn't always cooperate," Fay said.

Every hole was tested before it became a permanent part of the course. "We set up the Tower of Babel so we could shoot through and see if we wanted to keep it," Henry said.

Even after the church is in place, the course won't be finished. "We are going to add more to it," Jeannie said. "We are going to put in more signs so people can read all the signs as they go through. Eventually we will have pavilions. And we are going to have a place for washer pitching."

Even after designing and constructing the course, the Ullmans and Clarks still enjoy playing it. "I think all the different greens are fun and challenging," Henry said.

"I still have a lot of fun shooting. It's been a lot of fun to think of new obstacles, then put them in and shoot through. So far, all the comments have been positive."

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-- Linda Sickler writes for The Southern Illinoisan in Carbondale, Ill. This story is reprinted with permission.

Worship should incorporate best of traditions, leader says

By Ken Camp

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- It makes as much sense for a church to reject all worship traditions of previous generations as it would for a physician to ignore the accumulated medical knowledge of the ages, according to Marvin Jolly, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Cleburne, Texas.

At the same time, it is pointless for churches to cling to rituals that have lost all meaning and have no teaching value for the current generation, he added.

Jolly led a seminar on "Preserving the Best of the Past -- Rediscovering the Meaning of Tradition" as part of the Texas Baptist Church MusiConference. The July 26-28 conference at Baylor University was sponsored by the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The proper role of the worship leader is "assimilating the best of all time (and) adding our verse to the song," he said. "We are called to synthesize and assimilate a new worship formula."

Worship leaders need to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of various worship styles -- liturgical, traditional, blended, praise and worship, seeker-sensitive and alternative, he said. For example, while the traditional-revivalist style emphasizes a personal relationship with God, both the very formal liturgical style and charismatic-influenced praise and worship stress God's majesty and holiness.

He noted that while baby boomers and the bustle generation behind them tend to find the praise-and-worship style meaningful, early indicators reveal that the "millennials" -- the younger teenagers of today -- crave a return to the contemplative mystery of formal liturgy.

"The church of the new millennium will call for worship that is very meaningful ... has substance ... is true to the biblical model ... that celebrates, meditates and transforms," Jolly said.

The key, he said, is to evaluate each tradition to determine if it still communicates biblical truth.

"If it's dead, bury it. If it's alive, keep it," Jolly said.

A tradition is alive and worthy of preserving, he said, if it meets four criteria:

- It serves as an effective teaching tool for the next generation.
- It meets the needs and provides support for the church's mission statement and future ministries.
- It dialogues with other worship styles and influences.
- It is about Jesus Christ.

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Churches must adapt worship to reach postmoderns, pastor says

By Ken Camp

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- Meaningful worship for the postmodern generation engages the senses and dialogues with the culture, according to Generation X church planter Chris Seay.

Seay, founding pastor of University Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, and now pastor of Ecclesia Christian Community in Houston, led a seminar on "Worship in a Postmodern Context for a New Generation" during the Texas Baptist Church MusiConference.

The Church Music Department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas sponsored the conference, held July 26-28 at Baylor University in Waco.

Seay characterized modern thought as linear and scientific, grounded in Western rationalism and focused on the individual. Postmodernism, on the other hand, is experiential and holistic, values mystery and Eastern thought, and emphasizes the role of community.

"Christianity and Westernism have become so synonymous that we don't know how to untangle them," he said. "As long as we are tied to Westernism, we are going to sink with it."

The postmodern generation hungers for spirituality, Seay said. He cited a survey revealing that 99.4 percent of MTV viewers profess a strong belief in God.

Seay said Christianity needs to reclaim its Eastern, Hebraic roots or it will lose postmoderns to Buddhism, Hinduism and Eastern philosophies.

"There's a strong spiritual current driving our nation, and we're not even in the same stream," Seay said.

Christianity needs to avoid the twin perils of becoming either indistinguishable from the larger culture or divorced completely from it, he said.

Worship leaders should take their cue from the Old Testament prophet Daniel, Seay advised. Daniel studied the pagan philosophies of Babylon until he was "10 times better than all the magicians" in Nebuchadnezzar's court, but he risked martyrdom rather than compromise godly standards.

Seay said music ministers should become serious students of contemporary culture, but they should pray for discernment. "Understand the culture," he suggested. "Every music pastor should read Rolling Stone."

Seay said his churches rarely use drama or "special music" because the postmodern generation wants to experience worship, not watch a performance. "There's no reason to put on a show for them," Seay said. "This generation is longing for a true worship experience."

Music is the language of the postmodern generation, and members of that generation are interested in a worship experience that involves all of the senses -- sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, he said.

Seay said a holistic worship experience may involve the use of incense, poetry readings and meditation on works of art by members of the faith community, along with music that involves all of those who worship.

Musicians in the churches that he has served write much of their own music, creating new settings for historic hymns and prayers from ancient and medieval sources.

"The answer is not to be contemporary. The answer is to be historical," he said. "Believe it or not, Christianity existed before Martin Luther. Look to the desert fathers."

At the postmodern churches he has served in Waco and Houston, Seay said the talents of gifted artists and musicians were valued highly.

"The artists have the power," Seay said. "Truth is embodied through community, art and music."

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