

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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Easter traditions traced to varied sources

By David Winfrey
News Director

LOUISVILLE—If you think the Easter bunny is a distraction from Christian worship this holiday, wait until you learn about its origins.

Beyond the central focus of the cross and Resurrection, fertility gods, solar calendars and Constantine are among the influences for the Easter traditions that Christians recognize today, say church historians.

Perhaps the most noteworthy is the origin of the Easter bunny and of the very word "Easter," according to Jim Chancellor.

"The historical record of this is somewhat fuzzy," said Chancellor, a professor of world religions at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "But it appears that when the Saxons were Christianized by force in the 8th to 9th century that they fused their traditional religion that they had with their new Christianity that was forced upon them."



That traditional religion included a fertility myth, he said. "Their myth went like this: Every year in the spring, a sacred rabbit would come into the land and the sacred rabbit would lay a sacred egg," Chancellor said. "The egg would hatch and out of the egg would hatch

the fertility goddess, and she would emerge from the egg and rise up to the clouds and hover over the fields during the growing season to care for the fertility of the fields to ensure a good harvest. And in the fall with the harvest she would die.

"It appears that the Saxons fused that with their new religion, which also had a dying and rising God that they didn't understand completely," he said. "That's where you get the Easter bunny, the Easter egg."

Furthermore, he added, "the name of that goddess was Eostre, and that's where we get the term Easter, from that Saxon fertility goddess."

Languages that are based on the Saxon heritage—English, German and some Scandinavian languages—have Estra as the basis for their word meaning Resurrection Sunday, he said. *See How do we get ..., page 9*

Church nearly blows generous missions gift

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LEXINGTON—This story begins with a burden. Fortunately it didn't end with a boom.

On Sunday, March 22, Tanya Koch was concerned that Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington had raised just one-third of its \$17,000 goal for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

So Koch, a member of the church's Woman's Missionary Union, addressed the church quoting a phrase from a familiar chorus.

"We sing, 'Lord, you are more precious than silver; Lord, you are more costly than gold,'" she told the congregation. "We need to put action to those words."

Somebody took her seriously. When Pastor Craig Loscalzo arrived at church the next morning, several staff members asked him about a black attaché case sitting by a secretary's desk.

Professing ignorance, he went to investigate. On top of the case was written, "Deliver to Craig Loscalzo." Inside the attaché sat a box, tightly wrapped in tape.

With no note or explanation and the mysterious package weighing about 70 pounds, the staff decided to call the police. Then they carried the box outside and waited.

Both firefighters and police responded.

"The interesting thing is police said if anything seems wrong with a package they take it out and blow it up," Loscalzo said.

Since the box already had been moved, they decided it probably wasn't dangerous. An *See Church nearly ..., page 3*



RIOT ACT A youth drama team performs a skit during the youth revival at Beaver Dam Baptist Church. The 10th annual event drew teens from throughout the region for RIOT—Radical Impact on Teenagers. Recently a second church picked up the idea. This year the combined effort resulted in 75 youth making professions of faith in Jesus as Savior. *Story on Page 7.*

Russian Baptists seek growth & equality with Orthodox Church

MOSCOW (RNS)—Russia's largest Protestant denomination—the Union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists—has called on its members to promote further growth of the denomination and demanded that Russian authorities give it the same respect as the nation's dominant Russian Orthodox Church.

The twin calls were made at the union's 30th congress, held in Moscow March 17-20.

While stressing the call for parity with the Orthodox, the delegates to the union's congress also called for peace between Russia's churches. They stressed the Russian history of their faith, rejecting the charge that Russian Baptists belong to a "foreign" religion.

The congress brought together 374 delegates and more than 200 guests, most of them Baptist pastors, reported Ecumenical News International, a religious news agency.

Kentucky Baptists are in the last year of a five-year partnership with Russian Baptists. During that time Kentucky and Russian Baptists have cooperated in projects ranging from church construction and evangelistic events to medical missions and prison ministry.

Dominating the congress was the issue of Russia's new Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, which many people believe discriminates against the country's minority churches.

But Pastor Pyotr Konovalchik, who was re-elected as the union's president during the congress, said the law was not aimed at Russian Baptist churches and does not infringe upon their freedom.

"We do not see how we can be persecuted on the basis of this law," Konovalchik said. But he added that much would depend on how the re-

registration of religious communities, required by the new law, is carried out.

Baptists often are viewed—by Russian nationalists both within and outside the Russian Orthodox Church—as a "sect." Although the Orthodox Church's Moscow Patriarchate maintains official contacts with the union, many Orthodox priests and lay activists are highly critical of Baptists.

In a message to President Boris Yeltsin, the union's pastors declared their loyalty to him and to Russia, but complained of discrimination.

They said they were "profoundly saddened" by violations by local officials of the rights of freedom of conscience and of church equality before the law. They referred to refusals by officials to give them time on television and radio, as well as places for worship.

Russian authorities also have re-

fused to return churches in several cities seized during the communist era.

Foreigners kept a low profile at the congress and were present only as guests. It reflects a general trend among Russia's evangelical churches to put Russian nationals in charge of all church operations. While foreigners continue to work for these churches, they do so—at least officially—in subordinate positions only.

The new law on religion allows foreigners to carry out religious activities in Russia only within the framework of recognized Russian religious organizations.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of communist rule, Russia has seen an influx of foreign Baptist missionaries. But Russian Baptists also claim a rich local tradition dating back to 1867, when a Russian merchant in Tiflis was baptized by a German preacher.

Moving? See page 4 (0407)

Carter brings conservatives & moderates together

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

"Acknowledging that there are unresolved issues among us, the signatories to this declaration wish to overcome differences that may impede our mission, which is to bring about a spiritual awakening in our nation and around the world."

From a declaration signed by conservative and moderate Baptists

ATLANTA (RNS)—More than 20 Baptist leaders—including oft-feuding conservatives and moderates—have signed a declaration fashioned by former President Jimmy Carter expressing their mutual respect for one another and voicing a common concern about racial reconciliation and religious persecution.

The statement was the result of two private meetings hosted by the former president in recent months at the Carter Center in Atlanta.

Moderates met with Carter in November and conservatives in February. Later, Carter drafted the statement designed to "encapsulate what we considered to be a consensus of the two meetings" and submitted it to participants for suggestions and ultimate approval.

"Acknowledging that there are unresolved issues among us, the signatories to this declaration wish to overcome differences that may impede our mission, which is to bring about a spiritual awakening in our nation and around the world," the declaration says.

Signers included some of the architects of the conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention—the nation's largest Protestant denomination—as well as leaders of the convention's moderate wing and a number of Baptist officials from outside the SBC.

For more than a decade during the late 1970s and '80s, Southern Baptists fought over conflicting views concerning the inerrancy of the Bible and what conservatives charged was a "liberal" theological drift in the SBC's seminaries and agencies.

Carter, a Southern Baptist with ties to the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, said in an interview March 30 that his goal was not to try to bridge Baptists' theological differences but rather to find common

ground on issues on which they agree.

The two areas on which the leaders found consensus were religious persecution and racial reconciliation.

"We covenant to exert our maximum efforts to end religious persecution in all nations and to encourage unfettered religious liberty for all peoples," the declaration reads.

The declaration also calls on Baptist congregations to form partnerships with congregations of different cultures and ethnic groups as a specific way of fostering a "spirit of racial reconciliation."

Carter, echoing the declaration, said he hoped to foster efforts to build positive race relations among congregations. "I would like to see every Baptist church in the world as a matter of fact—whether it's African-American or Hispanic or basically white—to reach out to a neighboring church of a different ethnic group and say, 'Why don't we get to know each other?'" Carter said.

He said he planned to help his own predominantly white church, Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., reach out to nearby African-American Baptist congregations.

But Carter said he was not going to attempt to eradicate theological differences that have divided Baptists.

"I think it's quite presumptuous of anyone to think we could change theological commitments," he said. "Nobody can change my basic beliefs, and I wouldn't try to change anyone else's."

He said he hopes other Baptists will sign on to the declaration.

"I intend to try to ascertain from both moderate and conservative and liberal and fundamentalist Baptists some common commitment on how we can implement the racial reconciliation commitment," Carter said.

Signatories from a variety of Baptist perspectives welcomed the declaration.

Tom Elliff, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said the state-

Signers of Carter document

- Jimmy Allen, the last moderate president of the Southern Baptist Convention
- Dan Arial, pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., where Carter attends
- Patricia Ayres, a past moderator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Lawrence Edward Carter Sr., dean of the chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta
- Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee
- Mark Cortis, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C.
- David Dockery, president of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.
- Jimmy Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and a former SBC president
- James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs
- Tom Elliff, SBC president
- Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School
- Kirby Godsey, president of Mercer University
- Bill Leonard, dean of Wake Forest Divinity School at Wake Forest University
- Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance

- Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., and a former SBC president
- Reginald McDonough, executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia
- Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union
- Omar Pachecano, president of Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary in San Antonio, Texas
- Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and one of two architects of the conservative capture of SBC leadership
- Elaine Smith, president of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.
- Deen Day Smith, a Southern Baptist layperson and donor to missions causes from Atlanta
- Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, and past president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas
- Daniel Weiss, general secretary of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

ment affirmed basic feelings of Baptists from a variety of perspectives.

"When you talk about being a catalyst for spiritual awakening and the importance of reaching out to people in a spirit of love, seeking racial reconciliation and, of course, calling for an end to religious persecution, I think all Baptists can join hands in that," said Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla.

James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said if anyone could bring Baptists together, Carter could.

"Anybody who can pull off Camp David ain't bad at reconciling," said Dunn, who is based in Washington and has been a frequent target of conservative criticism. "The challenge remains to be seen if warring Baptists are any more amenable to reconciliation than Arabs and Jews, but hope springs eternal and we do have many

things in common."

Lawrence Edward Carter Sr., dean of the Martin Luther King Jr. Chapel at Morehouse College in Atlanta, said it was important to demonstrate unity among Baptists.

"If we are not united while we claim to march under the banner of Christ, we're not very believable," he said. "The highest form of spirituality in the Kingian tradition is cooperation, and the things that divide us are really very petty and very superficial."

Despite the differences among Southern Baptists and members of other denominations, Carter said he is optimistic about the common ground individual members share in their Christian beliefs. "The principles of Jesus Christ are overwhelmingly more important than the publicly expressed differences that exist among us."

With additional reporting by Bob Allen of Associated Baptist Press



"When it comes to 'turning the other cheek,' which one should I turn? The one that's bruised or the one that's scratched?"

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Seminary adds Islamic studies.** Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has appointed a full professor of Islamic studies, the only program of its kind among Southern Baptist schools. Samuel Shahid was elected to the faculty post March 10. He has taught Islamic courses as an adjunct professor at the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, since 1988. Administrators said his appointment will enhance the seminary's ability to equip Christians to reach Muslims for Christ and create an awareness of the impact of Islam in the West.

■ **Wake Forest names board.** One Kentuckian is among 14 men and women appointed to the first board of visitors for the new divinity school at Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Suzanne McElwain, chief chaplain at Luther Lockett Correctional Complex in La Grange, is one of the first appointees to the oversight board.

■ **Chapman lauds Mohler.** Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, had strong words of praise for Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. During a recent chapel address at the seminary, Chapman commended Mohler for his contribution to turning SBC agencies and institutions in a more conservative direction. "I'm praying that your president lives for a long, long period of time ... because I believe that as historians look back over this period of time in Southern Baptist life, he will be the one individual who will be spoken about the most as a leader and contributor to who Southern Baptists are," Chapman said.

■ **BWA asks U.N. to aid refugees.** The Baptist World Alliance has appealed to the United Nations to help solve a political crisis between the military government of Burma and Karen refugees. More than 100,000

Baptist refugees live under constant attack on the Thai/Burma border, according to the BWA. The BWA's most recent appeal on behalf of the Karen refugees came after the news that, on March 11, 1,600 huts in the Huay Kalok refugee camp were burned by the Democratic Buddhist Karen Army, supported by the Burma military government.

■ **Small churches offered deal.** The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is seeking to help young or struggling churches get their ministers started in the Church Annuity Plan, through its Wyndolyn Royster Hollifield Mission/Church Assistance Fund. Through the endowment, mission congregations and other small churches can apply for up to \$1,500 for the retirement accounts of eligible ministers during a five-year period. For information, contact Don Spencer in the Kentucky Baptist Convention annuity department.

Church nearly blows generous missions gift

Continued from page 1

officer gently slit it open with a penknife. Inside lay a typed note directing the pastor to use the contents for the Annie Armstrong offering and a missionary from another denomination.

The donor scribbled this postscript: "William McDonald's book 'Where Is Your Treasure?' is the most expensive book I have ever purchased."

"Once they opened the box and found the note, police started opening it further and said, 'Gosh, there's coins in here,'" Loscalzo said.

An inventory showed nearly 1,100 ounces of silver, packaged in several 100-ounce and 10-ounce bars, and numerous one-ounce coins.

The box also held 20 krugers, South African gold coins worth approximately \$300 apiece, he said. "I'm glad they didn't (blow it up) or we'd be digging through the mud to find all the gold and silver."

The church had its new treasure appraised on April Fool's Day, but the value is no joke: approximately \$12,000.

Loscalzo said the church had not determined what percentage will go to the missionary, but the majority will be given to the Annie Armstrong offering. He declined to identify the missionary, saying they have not had a chance to talk yet.

Immanuel will obtain two more appraisals before selling the precious metals, he added.

"It's been extremely exciting and positive to find that God moves people's hearts in magnanimous ways," he said. "It just goes to show the Lord uses all of us in a variety of ways, to be able to provide resources to do missions. It enables our church to bless (the offering) by having this gift given through us."

But the Sunday after the discovery he told the congregation the donor's generosity does not negate the value of other gifts.

Loscalzo called this a reminder to never underestimate what God is doing in their midst. The Sunday morning Koch spoke she wondered how the church could meet its goal, he said, but in 24 hours they had exceeded it.

And by the end of March, Immanuel had raised another \$5,000 for the offering.

Loscalzo said he is pleased with the recognition the unusual offering provides for domestic evangelism.

"As committed as Southern Baptists are to foreign missions, what we're doing in our cities and rural areas in the U.S. does not capture the excitement, sometimes, that foreign missions does," he said.

Honeycutt promotes Christian colleges

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Christian higher education is worthy of support because it "promotes Christian values and prioritizes persons," Roy Honeycutt told a group of ministers March 26.

Honeycutt, former president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, is co-chairman of Partnership 2000, a joint fund-raising effort for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's three liberal arts schools. He spoke at a ministers' luncheon at Campbellsville University.

About 75 people attended the luncheon, designed to explain the importance of supporting Christian higher education and donating to the campaign for Campbellsville, Cumberland College and Georgetown College.

Honeycutt, along with Campbells-

ville President Ken Winters, encouraged those in attendance to commit financial resources to ensure a secure future for the three Baptist institutions.

"I believe in these three colleges and universities because Baptist schools are values schools," Honeycutt said. "Christian higher education ought to be permeating the whole of our society as it preserves national ideals and perpetuates our Christian heritage."

"Kentucky Baptists have a great heritage and history undergirded by the treasures of Christian higher education," he continued. "We need to link arm-in-arm and heart-to-heart to support these schools."

"I found my pilgrimage at a Baptist college, and I invite you to join the pilgrimage of Partnership 2000."

Winters explained that the goal of Partnership 2000 is to raise \$45 million over three years to fund capital projects and endowments. The money will be divided equally among the three colleges, with the endowment funds managed by the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

"There is no way we can accomplish our goal without your help," Winters told the pastors.

In the current phase of the campaign, partner churches are being sought. Partner churches will commit to give a certain amount to the campaign over a three-year or five-year period. Churches contributing in \$5,000 increments will receive one \$1,000 certificate that may be applied toward the cost of a student from that church attending one of the schools.

Couple wants to help save other marriages

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

CRESTWOOD—Having navigated through troubles in their own marriage, Penny and David Hudson now want to help other couples strengthen their relationships.

The Hudsons, members of Crestwood Baptist Church in Louisville, have helped organize five Coupletime groups in Crestwood and Middletown. Each group of six couples meets monthly to reflect on various marital issues.

While members are Christians, many are still trying to understand the marital applications of Christ-like love, said Mrs. Hudson, a magazine distributor and freelance writer.

"Most of us pick up the habits of our parents," she said. "We have to study how Christ loved and how we can apply that to our marriages. Christians are having as many problems in our marriages as the world."

Her husband added: "Couples going through the exercises see they have to love their spouses unconditionally. If people don't understand that concept, we don't see how a marriage can work."

The Hudsons speak from experience. Trouble developed 10 years into their partnership. Problems became so serious they went to a counselor, who finally shrugged and said, "I don't know if I can make this marriage work."

But they resolved the tension at a marriage-enrichment seminar at a

church in Middletown. Hudson rededicated his life to Jesus, and Mrs. Hudson made a first time profession of faith in Jesus, becoming a Christian.

The following year, 1987, they formed their first Coupletime group at their former church, First Baptist of Middletown. After moving to Crestwood five years ago, they became affiliated with the Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment.

While promoting communication, the groups aren't meant to replace needed counseling, said Mrs. Hudson. But the groups do give couples a way to open up and resolve conflicts, she said.

"If not for the marriage enrichment program our marriage might not be together," she said. "That's my passion for this. This is our ministry; this is what we feel called to."

One of its advantages is helping men appreciate the need women have for deep communication, Hudson added.

"Over time I discovered I needed it, too," he said. "I enjoy sharing with her on a deep level. But it took me forever—about five years—until the light turned on."

Participants in the program say it has strengthened their marriages.

Phil Potratz, minister of education at Crestwood Baptist, and his wife, Karen, assumed leadership of a group a year after joining the Hudsons' circle.

The most dramatic example of its impact is a once-separated couple eventually reunited after problems

surfaced during a meeting, Potratz said. But most of what goes on is more routine, he added.

"It's designed to make good marriages better," he said.

Sharon Shapanus, a member of the original Middletown group, said it helped her and her husband, John, deal with the problems of a blended family.

"We got into the group and another couple had the same exact situation," she said. "That was comforting and reassuring because we thought maybe we weren't handling this too well. And we found out others were handling it the same way."

Coupletime is the type of ministry any church can sponsor, said John Lepper, director of the family ministry department for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"When we got the Sunday school movement started, we allowed people to teach the Bible because we believe in the priesthood of all believers," said Lepper. "That's what this is, empowering people to enhance and enrich relationships."

Among resources the Hudsons have used are a 12-week study called "Communication & Intimacy," another called "Home Builders" and videos produced by counselors Gary Smalley and Gary Chapman.

Mrs. Hudson said she hopes to have a training program for leaders organized within the next three months. More groups are needed, she added. Her church has a waiting list with 11 couples on it.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children** has established a new vice president position for religious life. Mike Dixon, formerly director for religious life, has been named to the new post. He will coordinate a statewide effort to enhance spiritual growth opportunities and support for the child care agency's clients and staff. Eventually, Dixon said, he wants to have regional directors of spiritual life who will implement programs of Bible study, pastoral counseling and spiritual aftercare.

■ **The Kentucky Baptist Convention** will host new pastors and church staff April 27-28 for an orientation to learn about the ministries and resources of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The "Welcome to Kentucky" conference will be held at the Louisville Airport East Holiday Inn. For more information, call the convention at (502) 245-4101, or toll-free outside the Louisville area (888) 254-5702.

■ **Georgetown College** has received a \$100,000 gift from Lexington philanthropist Lucille Little for the school's theater programs. Georgetown College works with the Georgetown Children's Theatre, St. John's Elementary School and Scott County Elementary School's gifted and talented program.

Lexington Theological Seminary to divest its tobacco stock

LEXINGTON (RNS)—The trustee board of Lexington Theological Seminary has voted to divest its stock in major tobacco manufacturing companies.

The action fits into a larger effort to consider social responsibility when determining investment choices, said officials of the school affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

After an animated debate March 9, the board decided the seminary should not support tobacco manufacturers.

The vote was based on a determination

that tobacco has no redeeming value and that research shows that tobacco is a contributing factor in the early deaths of about 400,000 Americans each year, board members said.

Officials also said they were concerned about reports that companies had been involved in targeting young people in their advertisements and in placing additives in tobacco products.

"Lexington Theological Seminary is deeply concerned about what is happening, and what is likely to happen, to tobacco

farmers and their families over the next few years," said Richard Harrison Jr., seminary president.

"It seems to me that those who profit from the work of tobacco farmers should help them out of their economic and moral dilemma," he added. "Governments have received billions of dollars in taxes from the labor of these farmers, and the manufacturing companies have made hundreds of billions in profits."

Harrison also voiced support for strengthening compensation for farmers.

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*Earnestly contend for the
faith which was once for
all delivered to the
saints.—Jude 3*

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Will you help us share Real Life with Kentucky?

The primary thing that unites Kentucky Baptists is a vision for reaching our commonwealth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This desire to spread the Easter message and help our neighbors live life more abundantly motivates us to cooperate.

For 173 years, the Western Recorder has been a partner with Kentucky Baptist churches in this endeavor. As the Scripture on our masthead clearly states, our goal is to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

While the weekly editions of the Western Recorder still accomplish this goal with excellence and still serve a vital role in Kentucky Baptist life, changing times present additional opportunities.

And so it is that the Western Recorder's board of directors and staff have gone out on a limb to create a second vehicle of gospel communication in Kentucky. We call it Real Life magazine.

The first issue, published last fall, featured a cover story on Cameron Mills, an outstanding Christian who just finished his senior year playing basketball for the University of Kentucky. The current issue features a cover story on William DeVries, the pioneering heart surgeon and Baptist layman who practices medicine and lives by faith. Beyond the covers, both issues include many practical

resources for Kentucky families—all presented in a highly attractive format like you would expect from a national magazine.

The primary difference between the Recorder and Real Life is that the Recorder is intended to communicate news and features to Kentucky Baptists, while Real Life is designed as a family helps piece and outreach tool for churches.

Every issue of Real Life includes an evangelistic message on the back cover that can be customized with your church's own information. Real Life is the kind of product your church could give out proudly to prospects, visitors and the community at large.

While many churches would like to have a product like Real Life, few—if any—would be able to produce such a product on their own. But that's where the strength of our cooperative effort makes a difference. Together, we can do all across our state what no one

church can do alone.

We're working hard to make such a resource available, and now we need your help to complete the process. Whether you are a pastor, a church staff member, a deacon, Sunday school teacher or an average layperson, here are several

ways you could plug in to make this new ministry effective all across our state:

1. Lead your church to subscribe to Real Life in bulk quantities. The absolute best way to use this new resource is distribution through and from the local church. Put it in the budget just like Sunday school literature.

2. Lead your Sunday school class or

evangelism committee or WMU organization or men's ministry to purchase bulk copies of Real Life for use among your own members, for distribution in your community, for outreach to prospects.

3. Lead your church's preschool, kindergarten or school to give Real Life as a helpful

resource to parents of the children enrolled. This is an excellent way to show these families that your church cares about real life issues they face.

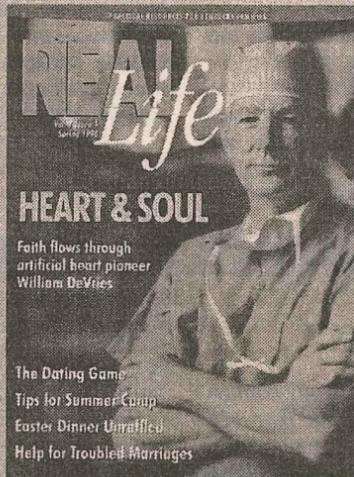
4. Become a statewide underwriter for sending Real Life to key audiences across Kentucky.

For example, we want to get Real Life in the waiting room of every doctor's office in the state, and we're looking for a donor to underwrite this excellent outreach opportunity. We want to get Real Life in hospitals across the state, and we're looking for a donor to underwrite this opportunity. We want to get Real Life in the offices of Christian counselors across Kentucky, and we're looking for donors to make this possible.

You may not have the gift of teaching a Sunday school class or singing a solo. You may be timid about knocking on doors or doing cold-call evangelism. But you might be just the right person to help send the message of God's love through Real Life. Think about your own professional connections, as a doctor, nurse, mechanic, teacher, counselor or whatever and imagine how together we can tell our state about real life in Jesus.

If you'd like to know more about Real Life, or if you'd like to become a partner with us in getting Real Life out across the state, please call me personally at (502) 244-6472.

—Mark Wingfield



For a free preview copy of Real Life, call toll-free (888) 254-5728 statewide or 244-6470 in the metro Louisville area

We want to get Real Life in the waiting room of every doctor's office in Kentucky and in every hospital

The high price of denial

By Dale Hanson Bourke

It all started with Eve. The mother of all sinners initiated the rest of us with a one-two punch: disobedience followed quickly by denial.

Thousands of years of experience have resulted in surprisingly modest improvements on her technique. The disobedience seems to come naturally; we're still perfecting the denials.

Our training starts early, as every parent knows. Even toddlers protest innocence, often with the evidence smeared all over hands and face.

Children quickly move on to diversionary tactics, pointing to a sibling or playmate in an effort to dodge blame. And as adults, even when confronted with overwhelming evidence, we often come full circle to some version of "the devil made me do it."

We are aided in our fumbling attempts by a legal system that upholds our innocence and dares accusers to prove us guilty. And we are further abetted by an individualistic society that makes community disapproval a meaningless threat.

But the media-enhanced view we

have of famous denials has begun to create a surprisingly disconcerting collage of the whole messy business.

From O.J. Simpson to the Ramseys to President Clinton, we have watched televised protestations of innocence with cynical disbelief. On one hand, we uphold the rights of these individuals to be considered innocent until proved guilty.

On the other hand, we have learned from personal experience that remarkable acting abilities seem to be a by-product of sin. Anyone who has doubts about this needs only remember the sobbing Susan Smith and her televised plea to the fabricated abductor of her children that came hours after she had drowned them.

And what cost is a lie coming on the heels of a more unthinkable transgression? Do we expect someone who is guilty of infidelity or murder to get caught up in a newfound sense of morality and come clean in public?

Humanly speaking, that would be suicide. And the problem is that from

Eve on down, we think very humanly whenever we get caught up in sin.

God laid out the terms from the start: Eat the forbidden fruit and you will die. Eve ate the fruit, gave some to Adam and lived to tell about it.

At first, the whole thing seemed like a misunderstanding. God was being controlling and Eve had found a way around him.

But God wasn't mistaken then and he isn't any more off-track today. There are consequences to disobedience and denial.

The two go hand in hand. But spiritually, the first affirms our flawed mortality, while the second does the greatest damage: Denial separates us from God.

We don't know what might have happened if after disobeying, Eve had quickly confessed and asked God for forgiveness. We do know the Old Testament is full of examples of godly grace, even after murder and adultery.

Had Eve been less stubborn and more repentant, we might all still be living in the garden. But our sister in denial taught us well and so we con-

tinue to hone our skills, believing that if we fool a jury or the public or our spouse or a parent, we have somehow gotten away with it.

And maybe we have, humanly speaking. But with God, you can run but you sure can't hide. If you do, you are likely to end up with a wardrobe of fig leaves and a stiff neck from looking over your shoulder.

There is only one antidote to such a foolish and exhausting condition and that is the terrifyingly simple act known as confession.

The Bible makes this equation incredibly clear: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Confession in a court of law can bring heavy punishment. Just look at the late Karla Faye Tucker. Yet confession also can bring a peace that defies understanding; the ability to calmly sing hymns as lethal drugs take away your last breath.

From a legal point of view, denial makes perfect sense. But from a spiritual view, it is the absolute worst option. The Bible makes the stakes abundantly clear: "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (RNS)

COMMENTARY



Dale Hanson Bourke

HE SAID/SHE SAID

Childhood memories of pets create a doggone dilemma

This week we offer a repeat from the archives. And by the way, the question addressed still hasn't been resolved.

SHESAI



Alison Wingfield

"I've got a great idea for our next He Said/She Said," he said. "What?" I asked with great anticipation (well, OK, maybe with a little interest).

"Dogs," he said. "Dogs??" I was puzzled. "You know, our debate over whether we should get a dog," he said. "What debate?" I replied. "Of course we're going to get a dog—when the boys get older."

It was news to me that there was any bone of contention. I guess my assumptions were ill-founded.

Actually my pet preference would be a cat, but since allergies (his) rule that out, a dog it will be.

We had a wonderful, loving, stubborn, slobbering old basset hound when I was growing up. Chief, short for Indian Chief, was his name, because of his red color (we weren't into p.c. language in the '60s). He was a great companion and let us use him as a pillow when we watched TV. He went on campouts in the mountains with us. Mother had to give him dramamine before our trips so he wouldn't get carsick in the back seat. When he tried to follow us hiking and couldn't get over an obstacle, he would howl only as bassetts can until one of us went back to get him.

After Chief passed on, we had two cats, but since this column has already gone to the dogs, I won't tell you about them.

A pet is an experience no child should be without. I know I'm crazy, because as the mother, I realize who will actually be caring for this animal: Me. Maybe I learned to be stubborn from Chief, because I'm going to dig in my paws and howl until I get my way on this one.

HE SAID



Mark Wingfield

I understand all the reasons children benefit from having pets around the house. But I also understand the unique trauma pets can thrust upon children, because every dog I ever had as a child died an untimely death.

I also know who had to bury every last one of them: Dad. Those are shoes I don't want to fill.

First there was the dog we think was named Floppy. The trauma of his fatal encounter with a moving car remains

forever lodged in the family's collective mind, even though we can't recall the poor dog's name for sure.

Then there was the beautiful stray Husky we adopted, which I promptly named Henry, only to learn later that Henry would have to be short for Henrietta. This discovery foreshadowed the beginning of the end. While spending the night at the veterinarian's office after having "female surgery," Henrietta got so worked up with anxiety that she keeled over and died. Or at least that's what the vet said. Enquiring minds still want to know.

Next came Peanuts, a feisty little pup of mixed breeding. Although we didn't keep close records, I think Peanuts lasted the longest of the pack—until he was struck by cancer of the rump, or something more technical than that. Dad carried him off to be put to sleep, rounding out our record as the Kevorkian family of the canine world.

By this point, the family was so distraught over losing another dog that we had Peanuts buried in a doggy cemetery.

Just a string of bad luck, perhaps? I don't think so. We're obviously carrying a family jinx on dogs, because even the neighbors' dog chose our front yard as his deathbed. So as a second-grader, I made my first death notification to the family across the street. Maybe I should have been a chaplain.

Church could learn from Tubby's team

What would happen if the church operated as well as the University of Kentucky men's basketball team?

Granted, this is not a perfect analogy, because churches clearly aren't intended to be like sports teams. But there is much any organization—including churches—could learn from UK's championship team.

For example:

■ **Teamwork.** Over and over again we've heard the commentators remark that what's remarkable about this year's UK team is the absence of any one star player. Kentucky won the championship not by passing the ball to one or two stars who made all the baskets but by keeping all the players active and working together.

In the church, this would mean not depending on the pastor or chairman of deacons or one star volunteer or soloist to carry the load. It would mean making sure that everyone who's on the team is in the game and making a contribution.

This truth applies well to the church, because you don't have to be a star to be on God's team. In fact, God has a way of using walk-ons to make crucial plays. There's a time for sitting on the bench, and a time for being in the game.

■ **Not being afraid to try.** Sadly enough, Kentucky had a hard time making three-pointers throughout this tournament. But they did pretty well with two-pointers from under the goal. So that's where they concentrated their energy. And occasionally, they even got off a good three-pointer.

But the important thing is that they never stopped trying to make the goal. They attempted perhaps twice as many shots as they actually made.

So where have we gotten the idea in the church that one failed program, one failed attempt at change, one failed idea means we should never try anything like that again? That's ludicrous, yet it's the driving force behind staleness and decline all across the land.

I'm reminded of a comment made by Rick War-

ren, pastor of the highly successful Saddleback Community Church in Southern California. Although Saddleback is known for its innovative approach to reaching the unchurched, Warren explained that for every successful idea they had implemented, three or four unsuccessful ideas had been tried before.

Their secret is in not being afraid to take a risk, to try something new. If it fails, they pick themselves up and move on to the next idea.

■ **Perseverance.** Watching any of Kentucky's games in this year's playoffs was an exercise in nail-biting. In the first half, you'd swear they were headed for defeat. But they always pulled it out in the end.

Part of the reason for that is perseverance. Kentucky wore down the opponent and kept pushing toward the goal. And incidentally, they were able to do that because half the team didn't sit on the bench the whole game while only some of the players actually played.

In church terms, this is what the Apostle Paul was talking about in his letter to the Philippians, when he said he would "press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." He explained that his singular goal was this: "Forgetting what is behind and straining for what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

The difference between a basketball game and the game of life is we know how the game of life ends: God wins. No matter how desperate things may look at half-time, we know the final score.

Yet so often the church accepts defeat at mid-game and stops playing. If a basketball team can press on to victory before knowing the final outcome, surely we ought to be able to press on through failure and obstacles knowing God already has settled the final score.

After all, that's what Easter is about. Jesus has won the championship by defeating death and the grave. He is the victor.

—Mark Wingfield

EDITORIAL

Are you then the Son of God?

By Rodney Burnette

They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied: "You are right in saying I am." Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips." (Luke 22:70-71)

It had been a tumultuous night. The time had come for our Lord to fulfill the will of the Father. The night began with a surrendering prayer time in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then came the betrayal by one of his own, followed by the denial from Peter. The others had scattered for fear of their own lives.

Throughout the night, he endured the buffeting of the guards as they blasphemed his character, as they would a hardened criminal. Dawn had broken and the religious ones came to try him before the council.

No public defender was appointed, no defense council was called, just

a gruesome prosecutor who went straight to the point: "Are you the Son of God?"

Why not believe him for his works? After all, no man had ever changed so many lives with his message and touch. Why not believe him because of the testimony of others? Many gave evidence of changed lives.

Remember Lazarus?

What about the quality of his life? He had never stolen, slandered or cheated on his taxes. And what about all those stories he told? No one could tell a more heart-gripping story than Jesus.

But that was not enough, nor was it the

real reason behind the question. They wanted a deliverer who would rally the people and overthrow the Roman domination of their land. They wanted a king who would restore the glory of Israel like David or Solomon. One who could crown the established religious leaders with approval and acceptance, rather than challenge and rebellion. One who would join in and

be an asset to the establishment, rather than calling for repentance and surrender.

Now they must find testing to silence this rebel once and for all. They just needed him to admit his identity. After all, they already had made up their minds that they would not believe, accept or surrender to his declaration to be the Son of God. Not even if he said it straight out.

Jesus knew that already. Their hearts already were hardened to their own aspirations, and change was not in their vocabulary. If he was the Messiah, as they all had been taught from the Old Testament Scriptures, they certainly would be challenged to change.

Jesus answered the question affirmatively and the council continued his journey to Calvary. They rejected him as Messiah and lost the blessing of God.

Men and women still ask the question today, and the answer is still yes, he is the Son of God. What will you do with him?



Rodney Burnette is pastor of Ninth & O Baptist Church in Louisville.

RESOURCES

This week's questions:

■ I have been advised to get a "reverse mortgage" on my home. Would you explain simply what that is?

■ What should I expect of my child during worship?

Q. I have been advised to get a "reverse mortgage" on my home. Would you explain simply what that is?

A. It is difficult to explain all the implications and possibilities of the reverse mortgages. You need to consult an accountant or attorney for the full details as it may apply to your individual need.

Simply explained, however, a homeowner arranges for a home mortgage which, instead of building up equity, will systematically decrease the equity. At the end of the mortgage, you do not own your home nor have any equity in it. You will not leave a house for your heirs to squabble about.

The advantage is that you have access to your equity now, either in a lump sum or decreased monthly payments. The obvious disadvantage is you may outlive your mortgage; but you should make sure there are provisions for you to live in your home as long as you live or until you choose to move.

There are many variations of this short, inadequate explanation. If you seriously are interested, ask your pastor or a trusted friend to point you to

professional help to guide you through all the questions, so you can determine what is best for you.

But be careful. There are many companies getting into this field, some of which are charging excessive closing costs and interest rates. —*Al Shackelford*

Q. What should I expect of my child during worship?

A. The expectations we establish for our children's behavior in worship speak volumes about the importance of worship. Keep your standards high.

Children should not be allowed to leave worship except in emergencies.

Drinks of water and trips to the bathroom often are excuses and usually can wait. Letting a child wander in and out of the sanctuary distracts others and shows disrespect for worship and for worship leaders.

Wallowing in the pew also distracts. Younger children occasionally will put their heads in parents' laps and drift off, but older children should not be tired to sleep. The child that is too tired to sit up in worship should be required to take a nap after lunch instead of going out to play and should

be given an earlier bedtime the following Saturday.

Children should be allowed to sit with friends, but only if they can behave.

Although most children will discontinue to a great extent during the sermon, they should be expected to participate in the more active elements of worship. Boys and girls can find and follow songs and Scripture. They can bow their heads and close their eyes during prayer; they can listen to instrumental and vocal music; they can stand when the congregation stands; they can be reasonably still at other times—and they should be expected to do so.

Your pastor may be willing to partner with you in discovering ways to encourage young listeners during the sermon. If you allow your children to read, look for books and stories with Christian content. —*David Garrard*

Family Forum writers are David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; John Lepper, director of family ministries with the Kentucky Baptist Convention; Wade Rowatt, director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville; and Al Shackelford, editor of *Mature Living* magazine. Send questions for *Family Forum* to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@ntr.net.



CHURCH

What about designated giving to my church?

By Doug Strader

In the early part of this century Baptist churches practiced designated giving because there was no central organization that budgeted money for mission work, hospital ministry, education ministry and so forth. Speakers representing the interests of these and many other causes would show up in the church and ask permission to make an appeal for money to support their cause.

Many times the speaker who had the best story to tell, or the one who was the best salesman, could collect the larger offering. This method did not prove to be the best way to do our work.

The Cooperative Program was born out of this struggle to find the best way to do all mission work in a cooperative way.

The cycle seems to have returned in our day for designating their tithes and offerings. Those who do not agree with the direction a particular entity is going, including their church, will designate their tithes and offerings be spent according to their wishes.

This raises several questions that need to be explored.

Should you ever designate your tithe? If you designate the tithe (which belongs to God) around the church's general budget, have you really given the tithe? If you have a particular tithe for one ministry, does that make that ministry more deserving than all the other ministries that are supported cooperatively? If you designate tithes, does that indicate you have no confidence in the ministry the church is doing?

As Southern Baptists we have many opportunities to designate our financial resources. We have special offerings for international missions, North American missions, state missions, children's home, associational missions, world hunger, Oneida Institute, hospitals and many others.

Any and all of the above are legitimate ways to designate offerings, but not the tithe.

Can I designate? Yes. Can I designate my tithe? Most Kentucky Baptist churches will allow it, but maybe the more important question is, Should I designate my tithe? My personal feeling is that anytime I designate my financial resources it should be over and above my tithe.

Doug Strader is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department.



It's important to tell children about trusting Jesus

By Barbara Denman
Florida Baptist Convention

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)—In an age of rising drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, divorce and broken homes, reaching children for Christ at an early age has never been more critical.

"By the time a person becomes a teen, all thinking processes and morals have been concretized," said Don McCutcheon, director of the Florida Baptist Convention's mass evangelism department and a specialist in children's evangelism.

By age 16 or 17, values have been set. "Their decision-making habits have been concretized. By that time, they have already decided to accept or avoid behavior that is not in keeping with God's word."

When children are reached for Christ, McCutcheon said, "they can be taught how to live, pray, study the word and how to apply the word in their lives."

Evangelism is more than a decision; it is the beginning of discipleship, he said. "Discipleship gives tools so children can understand why they make decisions and choose to walk with God. Discipleship teaches them how to make decisions. Children fall back on what they have learned."

Children in today's society, in their desire to gain love, are at risk of mental manipulation and other pressures, McCutcheon pointed out. "We need to give them hope. If we are going to win the world, we need to show children there's more to life than Nintendo, television and the ways of the world.

There is someone who cares for them."

Last year, Westside Baptist Church in Titusville, Fla., reported more than 30 professions of faith from children. William Dillenbeck, minister of education and outreach, noted the church makes a deliberate effort to confront children with the gospel.

"Statistics show that more than 80 percent of all people who make professions of faith do so between the ages of 8 and 12," he said. "It is essential to reach out and share with children at that age. Those who receive him will have years to serve him."

He suggested churches employ a minister to children even before a youth minister. "If you get a children's minister who is committed to soul-winning and discipleship, you will eventually have youth who are solid Christians with a foundation. They will be your future leaders."

In the past, Southern Baptists were more aggressive in evangelizing children, McCutcheon said. This was replaced by a desire not to pressure children and a concern that children are not old enough to sincerely make a decision to accept Christ.

"Children need to know they are loved by God," he said. "When they are old enough to understand God's way of salvation, they need to be told lovingly and honestly in a language they can understand. Children must be given the opportunity to choose whether or not to accept Jesus as Lord. They need to be able to choose without feeling they have disappointed significant others in their lives. They must not be pressured or manipulated."

At what age is a child able to make a profession of faith?

McCutcheon cites Ruth Graham Bell and Corrie ten Boom as two who have stated they were converted at age 5. He calls such examples a "rare occurrence," but adds children reared in a strong Christian environment and a Bible-believing church will respond with understanding at a much earlier age.

A child 9-10 years old is able to comprehend the gospel if it is presented in language he or she can understand, McCutcheon said.

He acknowledged some children make a conversion decision that is for the wrong reason, either because they are trying to please significant adults in their lives, out of curiosity or from peer pressure.

In talking with children about conversion, McCutcheon recommends adults take care that a child is not answering questions just to please the adult. He suggests those who provide this type ministry love children, be well-trained and understand developmental stages. The background of leaders must be screened and policies formed to protect the children, he said.

McCutcheon recommended several resources for churches wanting to be more deliberate in children's evangelism. "God's Special Plan for Children," published by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, includes a training video, a manual, a witnessing booklet and a user's guide for the witnessing booklet.

"First Steps" by Camille Hamilton is a discipleship manual, and "The World's Greatest Adventure" is a personal commitment guide for decision counselors.

Two West Kentucky churches want help starting RIOTs

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

BEAVER DAM—Two RIOTs occurred in West Kentucky recently, but with positive results.

RIOT stands for Radical Impact On Teenagers, a pair of youth revivals in which about 75 teenagers accepted Jesus as Savior and more than 100 teens rededicated their lives to Christ March 23-26.

"Our altars were full every night," said Doug King, minister of youth and activities at Beaver Dam Baptist Church. "One of the neat things is seeing kids coming and praying, and praying for their friends."

RIOT started in 1989 at Beaver Dam Baptist. This year a second revival was held at Hawesville Baptist Church. Youth Pastor Chris Dortch is a former member of Beaver Dam's youth group.

"This has been a dream and vision of mine since I was a teenager under Doug," he said. "I'd love to see other counties involved in starting a RIOT."

Nightly attendance averaged 500 at Beaver Dam. The 57 professions of faith boosted the estimated total number to more than 250 during its nine-year history.

Youth groups from 10 other churches helped stage skits, interpretive movements and singing. The week's featured performer was Billy Wayne, a contemporary Christian singer and dramatist from Kingsport, Tenn.

The variety of denominations from which youth came included "every one you can imagine," King said.

The event breaks down barriers by promoting cooperation, added Steve Fleener, pastor of Hartford United

Methodist Church.

"The entire focus of this ministry is different," he said. "It wasn't lifting up Beaver Dam Baptist Church, it was lifting up Jesus Christ. RIOT has been one of the greatest influences to help the ministerial association work together here."

Fleener said that in addition to four Hartford Methodist youth who committed their lives to Jesus, the rally made an impact by involving his youth in leadership.

One evening 14 teens from Hartford Methodist helped stage a puppet-ry act.

"We saw a lot of growth in our youth in doing that," he said. "They weren't just spectators, they were participants in ministry."

Student involvement is one of the keys to staging an exciting, high-energy event, King said.

"This concept is different than a youth revival," he said. "It's not just having someone coming in to speak. The big secret is having someone to lead worship and close it out, and in between letting kids lead themselves."

Another unique feature is its emphasis on drawing unchurched teens, King said. In spite of a vicious fight that broke out near the church a few years ago and a rumor last year that someone had flashed a gun at the rally, they continue reaching out to non-Christians.

"We didn't have a single problem this year," he said, "and we saw some gang leaders come to Christ."

Pastor Glenn Armstrong, who has been at Beaver Dam for nearly 31 years, said RIOT has strengthened the youth group and is something adults gladly support.

"Our church sees this as a way of outreach and a way of presenting the

gospel to young people in Ohio County who need to hear it," he said.

Rodney Albin, former youth pastor at Hartford Baptist Church who does supply preaching in the area, said RIOT impacts the local schools.

A teacher at Ohio County's vocational school, he visits the high school each morning to participate in prayer and leads a weekly devotion for students.

Teens start talking about the event six weeks in advance, he said, and the promotional items they wear become popular on campus.

He said he also observes changes after RIOT concludes.

"I have seen increases in attendance for prayer and devotions from the end of it through the rest of the year," Albin said.

"I've seen growth in our youth group, too. I've seen borderline Satan worshipers come to Jesus and go into missions," he said. "Kids have made vows of abstinence and kept them. I've seen young people carrying Bibles at school."

In Hawesville, crowds averaging 320 teenagers packed the church's sanctuary. Dortch said he had expected 200 people. The enthusiastic response means they need a larger venue for next year's rally, he said.

Nineteen youth made first-time professions of faith, 11 on Wednesday night when adults devoted their midweek service to praying for the teens.

Tennessee youth evangelist Shane Putty led praise and worship, with concerts by Nashville musicians Paul Q-Pek and Peter Penrose. One night youth speaker Beto Chapa discussed abstinence, sharing how he remains a virgin at age 24.

The rallies call for a church-wide



commitment because of the expense. Hawesville's budget totaled \$5,000 and Beaver Dam Baptist spent more than \$6,000.

The expenses include purchasing hundreds of T-shirts. The churches lost money on the shirts by selling them for less than it cost to make them. But they were valuable promotional items. So were laminated cards, labeled "Backstage Pass," which students wore on necklaces.

At Hawesville, a pair of fund raisers helped generate more than half the money.

RIOT began with a vision among Beaver Dam Baptist's youth 12 years ago. While the group only averaged eight students, the teens wanted to do something to draw kids from around the county, King said.

Three years later, their numbers had mushroomed to 70. Now they average between 90 and 100 on Wednesday nights.

For more information, contact Doug King at Beaver Dam Baptist, (502) 274-7174, or Chris Dortch at Hawesville Baptist, (502) 927-8787.

RIOT SOUNDS A musical team leads worship during this year's RIOT—Radical Impact on Teenagers. "Our church sees this as a way of outreach and a way of presenting the gospel to young people in Ohio County," said Glenn Armstrong, pastor of Beaver Dam Baptist Church.

Ethicists call for Christians to address issues facing America

LOUISVILLE (BP)—From cloning to abortion to health care, Christians must address the variety of ethical issues being faced in America, ethicists said recently.

They spoke at a conference sponsored by a consortium of theological institutions and held at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The cloning of the Scottish sheep "Dolly" and the subsequent clamor in some corners for human cloning is a crucial moral question Christians must address, said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

"We will look back on the cloning issue on the same way our parents looked back on the world before and the world after the explosion of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima," he said. "We live now in the post-cloning age. Science fiction has indeed become science fact."

As a Baptist Christian, Land said he seeks the answers to developing social and legal issues in Scripture. He said the value of sanctity of human life present in Western civilization comes directly from the Bible.

Land condemned the "culture of death" that he said is evidenced in the 25 years following the Roe vs. Wade decision which legalized abortion on

demand in the United States.

The acceptance of legalized abortion has proved to be symbolic of "an emerging new ethic" which directly challenges the Judeo-Christian ethic that values all human life, he added.

"The acceptance of Roe vs. Wade by this society made Jack Kevorkian inevitable," he said. "It made physician-assisted suicide inevitable. It made the rationing of health care to seriously ill and elderly and infirm people inevitable."

Land said the brutal devaluing of human life by the German Nazi regime was an example of the carnage that follows the jettisoning of Christian truth claims.

"The German intellectuals launched a savage attack on Scripture and took away from the German people any confidence or any belief or any acceptance of Holy Scripture, and they began to worship themselves rather than the Creator, and God gave them over to a reprobate mind," he said. "Nazism couldn't have happened in the Germany of Luther. Christianity had to be done away with first."

Decisions regarding such issues as cloning cannot take place in a vacuum, said Carla Sanderson, dean of the school of nursing at Union University, a Baptist college in Jackson, Tenn.

Such decisions must begin with an examination of one's fundamental value systems played out in school yards and neighborhoods, she said.

Citing surveys that show little difference in moral attitudes of church-going youth and their unchurched peers, Sanderson warned parents not to expect moral development to spontaneously appear as a result of a regular Sunday and Wednesday church schedule alone.

Sanderson traced a pronounced moral shift between older generations and those who came of age after the tumult of the Kennedy assassinations, the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal.

"It's like someone whispered that little tiny saying 'You only go around once' in our ears to us as children and it got stuck there in our subconscious," she said.

Sanderson prescribed a renewed commitment to objective, absolute truth, along with a strong cadre of parents, community leaders and Sunday school teachers committed to a Christian world view, as necessary for the moral development of the coming generations who will weigh the ethical dilemmas in the biomedical field.

Jim Thobaben, a medical ethicist at Asbury Theological Seminary,

probed the impact managed health care can have on religious health-care institutions.

While noting some benefits of managed health care, the greatest danger is utilitarian reasoning which reduces human beings to "the tumor in (hospital room) 401."

Thobaben sharply criticized as reprehensible the inclusion of physician-assisted suicide options in the state of Oregon's public health system.

"I want you to imagine somebody who is poor, who is already suspicious of the health-care system coming into a hospital, and having somebody try to tell them this is one of their health-care options," he said.

"An alternative is a virtuous community, a community that tries to protect outliers, that views itself as having a special obligation to the people it serves by simultaneously saying the community matters and the individual matters and we can do both of these things at the same time," he said.

The conference was sponsored by a group of institutions known as TEAM-A, including Southern Seminary, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Asbury Theological Seminary, Saint Meinrad School of Theology and Lexington Theological Seminary.

"The acceptance of Roe vs. Wade by this society made Jack Kevorkian inevitable."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

Cross remains central symbol for Christians' faith

By crucifying him on a T-shaped cross, a form of capital punishment usually reserved for non-Roman citizens, the authorities intended to publicly humiliate Jesus and his followers, and to discredit his new-found movement.

By Ursula Hull
Religion News Service

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (RNS)—For Christians, the cross remains the central symbol of faith, a sign of spiritual rebirth and renewal.

But in Jesus' time, the cross was a despised means of execution and symbolized betrayal. Only the lowest of criminals—robbers, deserters, traitors and rebels—were forced to "bear" it.

By crucifying him on a T-shaped cross, a form of capital punishment usually reserved for non-Roman citizens, the authorities intended to publicly humiliate Jesus and his followers, and to discredit his new-found movement.

But the original intent of the Romans has been reversed over time as Christians have come to revere the cross as a representation of eternal life and forgiveness for sin.

The practice of physically making the sign of the cross—by touching the head, then the chest and finally each shoulder—as a profession of faith originated before 200 A.D.

Before the time of Jesus, the cross was revered by many ancient cultures. To the Egyptians, the cross symbolized life; to the Greeks, it was a metaphor for the four elements of creation—Earth, air, fire and water.

A number of rituals and supersti-

tions have evolved around the symbol of the cross. In religious practice, it may be used as a defense against demonic forces; in fiction it's said to ward off vampires.

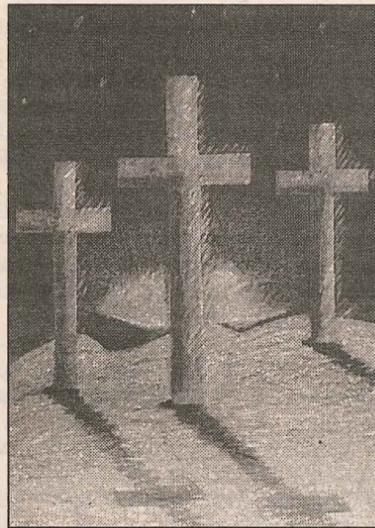
The cross, in its various forms, has played significant roles in world history. It's been imprinted on battle shields and is used still as an award for valor, such as the famed Iron Cross given by Germany and the Victoria Cross given by Great Britain. Two of the highest military honors given by the U.S. Congress include the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

To Middle Eastern Muslims in the 11th

through 13th centuries, the cross was a terrifying symbol of European domination as Crusaders attempted to recapture the Holy Land from them. And the now-infamous swastika, an X with bent end bars, once was a symbol of good luck until it became the dreaded emblem of the Nazi regime during World War II.

The Latin cross, with its upright longer than its transom, is most commonly found in Western culture. The Greek cross has equal length arms. St. Andrew's cross is an X and the tau cross is a T. The cross used by Eastern rite Christians has two transoms and a slanted crosspiece below.

Ornamental crosses remain popular among both the devout and non-



PREVALENT SYMBOL The original intent of the Romans to humiliate Jesus on the cross has been reversed over time as Christians have come to revere the cross as a representation of eternal life and forgiveness for sin. (RNS illustration)

believers alike. Gems and rhinestones, wood and precious metals forged into crosses often are used to make fashion statements or simply to express personal piety.

A tour through any community in America is nearly certain to uncover some unique crosses with rich histories. Take, for example, the Sacramento Valley of Northern California.

In 1975, the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California constructed its 10-foot Pilgrimage Cross from indigenous California redwood. Afterwards, the Pilgrimage Cross was car-

ried to 64 Episcopal churches throughout the diocese's 53,100 square miles, said Canon Grant Carey of Sacramento's Trinity Cathedral, where the cross is now permanently housed.

At Sierra Hills Cemetery in Sacramento, an 8-foot wooden cross has become the centerpiece for an annual Easter sunrise service that is attended by more than 600 people each year.

And each year, the city's St. John's Lutheran Church carves the remains of its 26-foot Christmas tree into a cross.

"We keep it until Easter and decorate it with calla lilies," said David Peters, the pastor of St. John's. "The tree turned into a cross represents the life of Jesus Christ, from the incarnation to the crucifixion."

Carmichael Presbyterian Church in suburban Sacramento formed a special bond with a church in Mexico with its cross, which is made of iron and is decorated with a sculpted, lacy ring of metal around its intersection in the fashion of a Celtic cross.

During the 1980s, a youth group from Carmichael helped build a church in Chorizo, Mexico, said Jimmi Mishler, the church's historian. Wanting to form a tangible link with their new Mexican friends, the group left the church an exact replica of Carmichael's cross.

"It was very important to the group to bring something from home to the project," said Mishler.

Carmichael Presbyterian continues to send youth workers to the same Mexican church each year. "That cross is a reminder of youth groups that have gone before them," she said.



CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Brooks Baptist Church has an opening for a youth minister. Flexible 10-15 hour weekly schedule. Responsibilities include teaching Sunday school, Bible study and other youth activities that will encourage spiritual growth. If you are interested, please call the church office at (502) 955-6792 or the pastor at 957-5659.

NEEDED: Part-time youth minister, 20-25 hours per week. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40214.

FOR SALE: Nine-foot Baldwin grand piano, black, fully restored, \$17,000. Call (502) 437-4432.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Eastern Gate Baptist Church. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 6686, Shepherdsville, KY 40165.

WANTED: Part-time music director. Contact: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 548 West Short St., Lexington, KY 40507. Phone: (606) 252-4808.

SEEKING: Executive director, Fairhaven Rescue Mission, Covington, Ky. Please send resumé to 260 Pike St., Covington, KY 41012-0761, or fax to (606) 491-7075.

FOR SALE: 1985 Ford 25-passenger bus, 55,000 miles, \$10,250. Days: (502) 885-4961.

SEEKING: Crestwood Baptist Church in Crestwood, Ky., invites applications for the position of associate pastor. This full-time position will have primary responsibility for immediate followup with first-time visitors, invite and support small-group leaders, assimilate new members/attendees into small groups and provide preaching support for the senior pastor. Crestwood Baptist Church is a rapidly growing congregation with 760 in average weekly worship. Qualified applicants shall be an ordained Baptist minister, hold a seminary degree and have at least five years experience in ministry as a pastor or associate pastor. Submit resumé to: Associate Pastor Search Committee, Crestwood Baptist Church, P.O. Box 70, Crestwood, KY 40014.

NEEDED: Part-time music minister, 20-25 hours per week. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40214.

SEEKING: Jeffersonville Baptist Church is accepting resumé for full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Bob Willoughby, 1305 Shadelawn Drive, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353.

SEEKING: Pastor, Park Avenue Baptist Church, Madisonville, Ky. Send Resumé to: Park Avenue Baptist Church, c/o 37 South Avenue St., Madisonville, KY 42431.

SEEKING: Morehead First Baptist Church is currently seeking a full-time associate pastor of youth and music or youth and education. The church is seeking a mature Christian who is dedicated to ministry. Persons interested should send a resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 123 East Main St., Morehead, KY 40351. Call (606) 784-5768 for more information.

SEEKING: Full-time administrative secretary. Experience in management or administration helpful. Word processing experience helpful. Salary negotiable and benefits are available. Submit resumé to: Personnel Committee, Lyndon Baptist Church, 8025 New LaGrange Road, Louisville, KY 40222. No phone calls please.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for dynamic, growing church in Frankfort, Ky. Come work with a well-established program and a great group of teens. Good salary and expense account for the person God calls. Send resumé to: Evergreen Baptist Church, 2698 Evergreen Road, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Full-time secretary. Send resumé: Personnel Committee, Farmdale Baptist Church, 1238 Durrett Lane, Louisville, KY 40213-2080.

TOUR: 10-day Turkey tour, Sept. 16-25; 7 churches of Revelation, plus Troy and Istanbul. Call Pastor Studie for brochure, (502) 247-8331.

SEEKING: Foreign-language teacher—French or Spanish—for Christian school in Lexington. Part- or full-time, degree required. Call (606) 272-1217 for application.

SEEKING: The Personnel Committee of Fern Creek Baptist Church is accepting resumé for a bookkeeper and for child-care workers. Mail resumé to: Personnel Committee, Fern Creek Baptist Church, P.O. Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291. For more information, contact Linda Barnes, (502) 239-0316.

SEEKING: Liberty Baptist Church, Auburn, Ky., is seeking a minister of music. If interested, please send resumé and tape (if possible) to: Music Committee, c/o Nicholas S. Stamps, 86 Howlett Drive, Auburn, KY 42206.

RETREAT: Glorieta Conference Center. Stay with family spring, summer, fall or winter. Call (800) 797-4222 to make reservations or for information.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Rockford Lane Baptist, 2006 Rockford Lane, Louisville, KY 40216, Attn: Helen Abell.

RETREAT: Myrtle Beach Ocean View Retreat. Youth, seniors and musical groups (groups of up to 50). 307 1st Ave., Myrtle Beach, SC 29577. Leave message: (803) 626-7069.

EASTER

Ministers: Help kids celebrate an age-appropriate Easter

By David Winfrey
News Director

PADUCAH—Churches can teach children about Easter without scaring them with the gruesome aspects of Jesus' crucifixion and rising from the dead, according to Kentucky specialists in ministry to children.

"For preschoolers, they understand spring. They understand new life," said Wendy Dever, preschool-children associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Sunday school department.

Dever recommends that children's Easter lessons focus on God's love more than the actual details of the cross and grave. "They can be scared to death by that."

Easter egg hunts can be a good learning opportunity for kids, Dever said, although she recommends that they be held on a day other than Easter Sunday.

"You also go in and have story time. And the stories might just be

about new life, spring time, butterflies. They might go to a puppet show, they might do arts and crafts type things," she said. "Then we just remind them that God made the world and God made spring."

"We're building foundation so that later on when they begin to learn about Jesus they know that God loves them, that he loves them so much that he sent Jesus. And then later on they can understand what went on during Jesus' life."

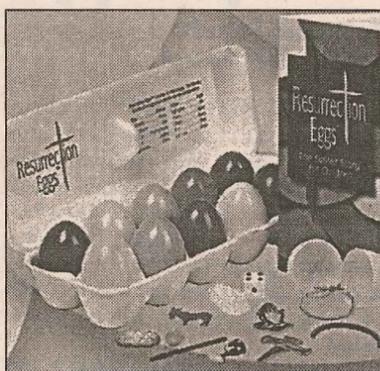


Easter pageants and egg hunts can be learning opportunities for children, said Mark Buchanan, director of children at First Baptist Church of Paducah.

That church's egg hunt is held the Saturday before Easter Sunday and includes a praise service with songs and a 10-minute illustration, Buchanan said.

The event usually attracts about 350 people.

Buchanan also teaches children about Easter through an annual pageant and a Thursday morning praise service for children whose mothers meet for Bible study.



EASTER EGGS Resurrection Eggs are colorful plastic eggs with items inside symbolizing the events surrounding Jesus' death and Resurrection. (RNS photo)

"What I always try to do is let the parents know what we're going to talk about so they can be able to answer questions," he said.

"I don't really spend a lot of time on all the specifics of Jesus' suffering," he added. "We talk about it, but I really emphasize that he was resurrected whole and free from all of that."

Carrie Beth Tonks, minister of childhood education at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington, said she works to help children "see the real from the fantasy."

"We don't want when they grow out of things like the Easter bunny to think they grow out of their understanding of Jesus," she said.

"A lot of young children come up with a lot of misunderstandings," she added. "One child's misinterpretation of Easter was that the reason we dyed Easter eggs was because of Jesus' blood."

Her church distributes Holy Week booklets with devotions for families and activities for children related to each daily devotion. For example, one day children are encouraged to make an Easter card for an older church member or someone who is sick, following God's commandment to love one another.

Buchanan and Tonks both recommended "Resurrection Eggs." A carton holds one dozen colorful plastic eggs that have items inside symbolizing the Easter story.

"The last egg is empty to symbolize that the tomb is empty," Buchanan said.

"We don't want when they grow out of things like the Easter bunny to think they grow out of their understanding of Jesus."

Carrie Beth Tonks, minister of childhood education at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington

Hot cross buns an Easter treat for those who give up sweets

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Throughout the 40 days of Lent— from Ash Wednesday until Easter Sunday—many Christians do their mortal best to give up their favorite cookies and cakes as an act of penitence.

Nonetheless, many of the faithful nag their local bakers for a special sweet that they, ironically, can get only during this holy season of self-deprivation: hot cross buns.

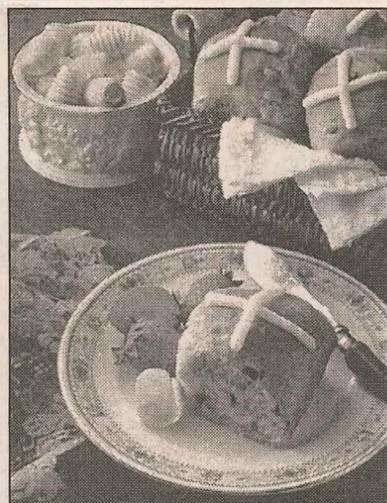
The buns got their name because they're scored with the sign of the cross before baking or embellished with a cross of icing after they come out of the oven.

The origin of these tasty treats, which are studded with raisins, currants and/or candied fruit, may go back even further. Some believe they are descendants of ancient pagan sacramental cakes eaten by Anglo-Saxons in honor of Eostre, the goddess of spring and fertility. When early clergymen couldn't get the masses to give up their heathen buns, they supposedly gave them a Christian significance by blessing and decorating them with the cross.

To this day, in various parts of England, some clergy distribute hot cross buns to the poor on Good Friday.

One popular belief held that the dried fruit entrapped in the yeast-based dough represented the nails of the Crucifixion; another that if the buns were not imprinted with the cross, the devil would sit on them, thereby cursing them.

Others maintain the buns "derive from the cross-marked Communion wafers consecrated on Good Friday, which Anglo-Saxon priests are known to have kept as medicine for the sick," writes Charles Kightly in "The Cus-



Easter season delight

toms and Ceremonies of Britain: An Encyclopedia of Living Traditions."

Even though the British rarely consume hot cross buns before Holy Week, in 1995 Mediawise Statistics found that if all the hot cross buns eaten in Britain were stacked in a pile, it would be almost 400 times taller than Mount Everest.

Margaret Wallis, a London native and regent of her local Daughters of the British Empire in the State of New Jersey, says the buns baked on Good Friday weren't frosted. Rather, they were imprinted by a metal cross-shaped form.

"When they're baked, the metal cross prevents that section of the bun from browning," she explains.

An old English recipe for hot cross buns reprinted in her organization's cookbook, "Commonwealth Cooks," devoutly instructs the user to "read the 27th chapter of St. Matthew (the passion and death of Jesus) while waiting for the dough to rise."

How do we get the Easter Bunny from resurrection?

Continued from page 1

said. "In other languages it either has to do with Passover or just simply Resurrection Sunday."

Shortly after Jesus' Resurrection Christians began worshipping on Sunday, said Glenn Hinson, professor of church history at Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va.

"You have already in the book of Acts evidence that the gathering on the first day of the week and observing the Lord's Supper were directly tied to Resurrection," he said. "It was called the Lord's day because that was when they gathered to remember the Resurrection."

A transition was occurring as Jewish Christians continued to worship on the Sabbath, or Saturday, Chancellor noted.

"In the first century as the church became increasingly Gentile, and separating itself from Jewish practices, Sunday became the day of worship," he said.

"But—and I think this is an important observation to make—while it became a Christian day of worship, it did not become the Sabbath as in a day of rest because Sunday was a day of work in the Roman Empire, equivalent to Monday for us," Chancellor said. "And Christians in the first 300 years of the church either worshipped early in the morning or late at night."

It's not until the 2nd century A.D. that there are records of an annual Resurrection celebration, Hinson said.

"We do know that by the middle of the 2nd century, about 150 (A.D.) they were particularly paying attention to this observance and baptizing on Easter Sunday," he added. "Before that time we can't say for sure what they were doing."

Baptizing on Easter Sunday had special significance given its interpretation for Jesus' burial and Resurrection, Hinson noted. "You would have very vivid and dramatic symbols."

A noteworthy debate arose concerning when

Resurrection Sunday should be observed, Hinson and Chancellor said.

"Rome always observed resurrection on Sunday, and that would come the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, which is how we observe it now," Hinson said.

During the second century, however, churches in Asia Minor were celebrating the Resurrection on a specific date on their calendar, he added.

"That came to the attention of the bishop of Rome who was somewhat upset by that, and he was going to excommunicate the Christians from Asia Minor," Hinson said. Only a visit by Polycarp, bishop of the church in Smyrna, to the Roman bishop kept the disagreement from leading to a split.

At the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., Christians agreed on a date, Chancellor said.

"They eventually settled on celebrating Easter on a Sunday and gave the bishop of Alexandria the responsibility of setting the date," he said. "He would send out a letter every year to the churches informing them of the date for the celebration of Resurrection Sunday."

Both Chancellor and Hinson noted that early Christians' primary religious event was remembering Jesus' Resurrection.

"The celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus was the earliest of the celebrations and the most significant event of the Christian calendar, not Christmas," Chancellor said. "Easter was, and I think should be, the central celebrating event in Christian worship."

Hinson agreed. "It was really with Constantine in 335 that we have Dec. 25th mentioned as the date of the birth," he said. That date was chosen to substitute for another pagan holiday, he said.

"You really have no close parallel in the Roman calendar for this Christian observance of resurrection," he added. "It shows how important it was."

Churches seek to offer hope to Jonesboro shooting victims

JONESBORO, Ark. (BP)—The Sunday after the middle school shooting March 24 in Jonesboro, Ark., which left four students and a teacher dead and eight wounded, ministers sought to offer hope and the proper response to the tragedy.

Bruce Tippit, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, led a "moment of affirmation" for doctors, nurses, law enforcement officials, counselors and others involved in aiding victims and their families.

"I have never seen a community perform at such a level of compassion and excellence as this community did this week," he said. "May all that you have done and will do enable us to say, 'Never, never again.'"

Rodney Reeves, pastor of Central Baptist Church, said "the presence of God shines brighter in the darkness."

Although "our homes, our schools and our community have been violated," Reeves said, "God can take something so evil as the slaughter of innocents and turn it for good. ... We have a hope that is steadfast and sure because of who God is."

Tommy Snyder, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church, noted "in the midst of confusion and chaos, God is good."

"Wrong choices affect innocent people," he added, but "God is at work."

Acknowledging "there's still a lot of healing that all of us need to experience," Snyder emphasized the need to "take our pain and heartache and difficult days ... to the Lord."

Walnut Street was among churches in the area that provided counseling services for several days following the shootings.

The Westside Middle School crisis "has touched so many people," said Jean Smith, whose niece was the slain sixth-grade teacher Shannon Wright. "I'm not a strong person but my strength is in the Lord. That's what I'm clinging to. That's the only way I can make it."

Groups oppose gay workers' rights bill

By Michael Paquette
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A gospel music duo and other Christians were on Capitol Hill April 2 to tell lawmakers they are being harassed for taking public stands against homosexuality, while urging Congress to reject a proposed anti-discrimination bill that would establish rights of gays and lesbians in the workplace.

Angie and Debbie Winans, the youngest siblings of the Grammy-award winning gospel duo BeBe and CeCe Winans, said they have come under fire from gay rights groups and others since the release last September of their song "Not Natural,"

which says homosexuality, pornography, murder and abortion are "not the way God planned."

"As Christians, we have a right as well as a responsibility to stand by our convictions and address the wrongs in our society," said Angie Winans. "We have made a conscious decision to become active Christians."

The proposed bill that has caught the Winans' attention and that of many Christian advocacy groups is the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, legislation designed to prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

If passed, ENDA would create laws distinct from Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which cur-

rently protects workers on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, religion, age and disability.

"ENDA is by far the broadest discrimination statute ever proposed. ... It would protect (gays) to a broader degree than any other class," said Dudley Rochelle, an attorney who has analyzed the bill on behalf of the Traditional Values Coalition, the Washington-based conservative group hosting the news conference.

The bill defines sexual orientation as "heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual ... whether ... real or perceived." Such a vague definition, Rochelle said, "will protect every person in the workplace. ... There are no exceptions for deviant behavior."

Methodists strained by homosexuality debate

OMAHA, Neb. (RNS)—Jimmy Creech is back in the pulpit at First Methodist Church in Omaha, Neb., acquitted on charges he violated church rules by performing a same-sex blessing ceremony, but the congregation remains divided over the pastor's action.

And activists on both sides of the issue plan not only to push their views but to escalate their actions and ratchet up their tactics.

While many Methodists had hoped the highly visible Creech trial would help resolve the homosexuality issue and put an end to what some fear

could lead to a schism in the 8.5 million-member denomination, reaction to the verdict seems likely only to further polarize the church.

"We're all weary of being preoccupied with the issue of homosexuality, but that is the issue the church is preoccupied with, and to ignore that is to ignore what is going on out there in the church," said Maxie Dunnan, president of Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky.

The crisis may well deepen as 92 more clergy publicly have announced their intention to perform same-sex unions and opponents, such as Good

News, the church's conservative caucus, threaten to find "ways of expressing conscience that will be financially disruptive to church programs at every level."

Good News and another group have called on the church's bishops to convene a special meeting of the General Conference—the denomination's top legislative body—which is not set to meet until 2000.

Current church rules forbid the ordination of gays to the ministry and declare active homosexuality "incompatible" with Christian teaching while still welcoming gays as members.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Religious leaders address poverty.** An interfaith panel of 17 religious leaders—representing the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths—sounded "a moral alarm" about millions of Americans living in poverty despite the nation's current high-octane economy. Eradicating poverty must be a top priority on the national agenda, said Pat Robertson. He said the focus on poverty was vital "so that we don't have two Americas—but we have one America with a sharing in the riches and blessings of this nation." The roundtable discussion about poverty in America was conducted by the Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

■ **Grahams honored.** Evangelist Billy Graham and his daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, have received the 1998 Golden Word Award from the International Bible Society. The first joint presentation was made March 20. Graham was honored for his worldwide preaching efforts during the last 50 years. Both he and Lotz, a Bible teacher, were recognized for their commitment to Scripture. Lars Dunberg, international president of IBS, said Graham was recognized for his ministry and for passing his legacy on to his five children, who are all involved in Christian service.

■ **Groundbreaking held for shelter.** Wiley Drake, a Southern Baptist preacher convicted of breaking zoning rules by

aiding the homeless at his Buena Vista, Calif., church, lifted the first shovel of dirt March 29 in a groundbreaking ceremony for a long-awaited shelter next to his church. "We are very relieved that we can officially start building," Drake said at the ceremony. Drake and his congregation, First Southern Baptist Church, were convicted and placed on three years probation last year for violating building and zoning codes for allowing homeless people to sleep in an enclosed patio behind the church and in cars in the church parking lot.

■ **"Nothing Sacred" ends early.** The controversial ABC-TV drama "Nothing Sacred" has filmed 20 episodes instead of the originally scheduled 22 this season, but ABC officials insist they have not yet canceled the show. The show about a priest has drawn criticism from some Catholics and others. Its perpetually low ratings have regularly left the drama far behind other major network shows and the subject of speculation that it would be ended. The premature ending of production furthered those rumors. The show was taken off the ABC lineup during the crucial February sweeps.

■ **UCC leaders warn on cloning ban.** Leaders of the United Church of Christ are warning that a total ban on human cloning research would foreclose any scientific and medical benefits that might come from

such research. Congress is considering such a ban, but some scientists and a handful of lawmakers oppose making it as sweeping as the proposed bill. The church leaders said the liberal mainline denomination opposes the "reproductive use of human cloning" but leaves the door open for non-reproductive uses, including pre-embryo research through the 14th day of fetal development.

■ **Church group tackles weighty subject.** Some folk at Evangel Baptist Church of Taylor, Mich., are wondering why a women's group is half its former size. Fact is, however, they haven't lost a single soul, just a lot of excess baggage. From January 1997 to January 1998, members of the First Place weight-loss classes at the suburban Detroit church dropped more than 1,200 pounds and 695 inches off their collective bodies. "We don't need a building program because we naturally have more room," said Senior Pastor Ron Graef, jokingly.

■ **Casino political donations jump.** Casino gambling interests have more than quadrupled their contributions to the Democratic and Republican parties and to congressional candidates since 1991, according to an analysis reported March 22 in the New York Times. Casino gambling interests donated \$7 million to federal-level campaign coffers in 1995 and 1996, up from the \$1.7 million they gave

in 1991 and 1992, according to the analysis conducted for the Times by the Campaign Study Group, a research company in Springfield, Va.

■ **Court rejects worker's pilgrimage.** A federal appeals court said last month that while a woman was entitled to time off from her retail job to go on a religious pilgrimage, she couldn't do it during the store's busy holiday season. Mary Tiano, a Roman Catholic, said she had a "calling from God" in August 1988 to attend a pilgrimage planned that October to Yugoslavia. She asked for unpaid leave but was turned down because the store prohibited leaves during the October-December holiday season. She left anyway. When she returned two weeks later, she was told she had resigned voluntarily. She was out of work more than a year.

■ **Alabama prayer order appealed.** Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor last month filed an appeal to overturn portions of a federal court order restricting state-sponsored prayer and religious activity in the public schools in DeKalb County, Ala. The appeal challenges portions of a ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Ira DeMent, who in October 1997 issued an order barring "religious activity in class, including vocal prayer, Bible and religious devotional or scriptural readings" and other forms of public religious activity in the schools.

Persecution bill passes despite concerns

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A bill aimed at curbing religious persecution abroad passed its first legislative hurdle March 25 by a wide margin, belying a host of congressional concerns that remain to be ironed out if the measure is to win final approval.

Following a full day of procedural wrangling and debate over a slew of friendly and unfriendly amendments, the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act passed the House International Relations Committee 31-5 with one abstention.

The vote came after a host of specific references to nations that allegedly persecute religious believers was stripped from the bill because of concerns that relatively milder expressions of religious discrimination were being lumped together with more violent forms of religious persecution.

Only Sudan—where there was consensus that Khartoum's Islamic government violently persecutes its Christian minority—was named in the

bill. Passage of the bill would trigger automatic economic sanctions against Sudan.

Also, the White House was given expanded veto power over the measure's stipulated economic sanctions against nations other than Sudan found to be persecuting on the basis of religious belief.

But while the margin of support in the committee for the bill was large, much of it was conditioned on resolving panel members' concerns about the legislation's impact on trade and diplomatic issues prior to a final vote.

"This is just the first step in a long and arduous process," said Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif.

For supporters—among them a broad range of religious groups—this means the end product could be a bill far removed from the strongly worded stand against religious persecution abroad first introduced nearly a year ago by Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., and Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa.

"We've already made some major concessions on this one," said Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., a supporter of the measure on the international relations committee. "But clearly there's more give and take to come. Our key is that we want to get religious freedom seriously considered."

Religious persecution abroad has become a marquee issue for conservative Christian activists and their congressional allies, making it tougher for opponents to vote against the legislation.

Christians living as minorities in some Muslim and communist and former communist nations, say bill supporters, constitute the single largest group of religious believers facing ongoing persecution because of their faith.

But Tibetan Buddhists, Iranian Baha'is, Chinese Muslims and others also face severe persecution, add the bill's supporters.

But the bill still faces considerable opposition, most notably from the White House. The Clinton administration opposes it because it fears having its hands tied when choosing between national security and trade concerns and a nation's persecution of its religious minorities.

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Promise Keepers lays off more than 300 workers as planned

DENVER (RNS)—More than 300 Promise Keepers staff members earned their last day of pay for the foreseeable future March 31.

Layoffs of the ministry's entire paid staff are occurring as planned, said Steve Ruppe, director of public affairs for the evangelical men's ministry.

Promise Keepers officials announced Feb. 18 that their 345 paid workers would be laid off March 31.

Ruppe said that as of March 31, 323 employees still were working full-time. The 22 employees who were no longer working "have already found other employment or have left the ministry," he said.

About 100 of the 223 workers employed at the ministry's Denver headquarters have said they will continue to work in a volunteer capacity, and an additional 75 volunteers from the community are planning to work there as well.

"We have more than 100 Denver staff members who have indicated they will be in the office sometime in the month of April, if not every day, to volunteer for the ministry," Ruppe said.

Ministry officials still expect the layoffs to be temporary, he added. "The expectation is that it will be a fairly short period of time but ... months, weeks or days, I cannot give you."

The ministry has received numerous pledges of financial assistance, but Ruppe did not have a figure on how many of those pledges have been followed with actual donations.

"We do know that donations are up and we have very strong donations and are extraordinarily appreciative of the giving that has gone on to this ministry," said Ruppe. "It has given us the ability to become current with all our vendors."

Ruppe said the number of registrations for the ministry's 1998 men's conferences is "approaching about 100,000." Nineteen events have been scheduled from May to October.

Promise Keepers gained international attention when it brought hundreds of thousands of men to Washington for the "Stand in the Gap" rally last October. At that rally, Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney announced it would not charge admission fees to upcoming conferences in the hope Christians and non-Christians alike would attend.

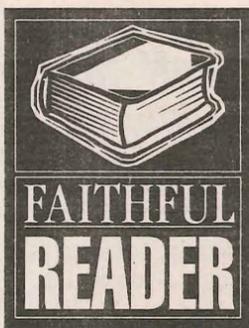
Ministry officials said the decision to rely on donations and no longer charge conference fees led to the layoffs.

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BOOKS



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Midlane Park Baptist Church in Louisville, and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville. Holladay and Hager welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: docholladay@juno.com or jwhager@juno.com

The Board Member's Guide to Strategic Planning. Howard H. Williams III. Jossey-Bass, 1997. 114 pages. \$19.95. ♦♦♦ (out of five)

Fisher Howe argues that most board members of non-profit organizations resist getting involved with strategic planning because they do not understand the process and are not aware of the benefits. "The Board Member's Guide" is his attempt to present the process of strategic planning in a form that will appeal to and be usable by members of non-profit corporations' boards of trustees.

The strength of this book is not as a thorough-going workbook on strategic planning. Rather it is a type of annotated, extended outline of the hows and whys of the strategic planning process.

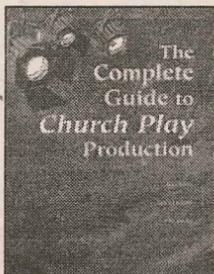
I found his definitions of mission, values, mission statement and vision more helpful than any I have read.

He observes that some terms, such as objectives, goal and policy, have lost all meaning in today's world. That was both a challenging and helpful insight. The warning he gives about not confusing ends and means in the planning process will challenge many of our assumptions about what makes for a good strategic plan.

Howe's book will be helpful in orienting board members and church members to the process of sound planning. His emphasis on carefully planning to plan is a good word for many of us who lead congregations. A whole lot of long-range planning doc-

uments are gathering dust because not enough attention was given to preparing the church for the planning process. - Jim Holladay

The Complete Guide to Church Play Production. John Lewis, Laura Andrews and Flip Kobler. Convention Press, 1997. 350 pages. \$59.95. ♦♦♦♦



As the authors point out, drama is nothing new in worship. In fact, drama as a part of worship is no where near the level it was in the days of King David. But drama in the church, and in worship in particular, is at an all-time high level in the American church. From small rural churches to large urban mega-churches drama is the "new" ministry.

The authors have produced a comprehensive guide to drama in the church. It does not try to convince you to use drama, but assumes you want to use drama well. The material covers everything from maintaining production values to working with the actors and the props to how to economize with professional results.

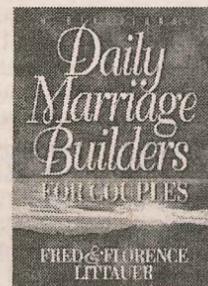
A full play is the most involved church production and the guide moves through all the steps of putting on a play. In the process, the guide covers the subjects in such a way as to make the information easily applicable to small-scale dramatic efforts. The advantage of this play guide over a general guide is its understanding of the limits and the opportunities of drama in the church. - Wayne Hager

Daily Marriage Builders for Couples: A Devotional. Fred and Florence Littauer. Word Publishing, 1997. 387 pages. \$16.99. ♦♦♦

This devotional is written by a couple for couples. For more than 30 years the Littauers have worked to help couples improve their marriages. This latest offering is their attempt to aid couples in doing some intentional work on communication in marriage.

The 120 devotions are divided into 24 five-day sections. Each section sticks with a theme and develops it throughout the week. The devotions are designed to be done at the same time by both partners and usually take 10 minutes. Each devotion begins with a Bible verse or famous quotation, includes some narrative, a suggested activity for the couple to do to explore the theme and concludes with a suggested prayer. As would be expected from their previous writings, there is a heavy dose of determining and using personality types.

The Littauers provide ample illustrations from life together. They readily admit that their marriage has not been perfect and they have had to learn to work at their marriage. They are fellow strugglers on the journey and have found that the time spent working on their marriage is worth it. - Wayne Hager



A Case for Calling: Fulfilling God's Purpose in Your Life at Work. A Case

for Serving: Responding Selflessly to the Needs of Others. A Case for Character: Authentic Living In Your Workplace. A Case for Skill: God's Standard for Excellence. Thomas Addington & Steven Graves. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 62 pages each. \$5.99 each. ♦♦♦

The four books in this series are designed to answer the question: "What is the difference in the behavior and experience of a Christian in his work compared to that of a non-Christian?" Though published by Broadman & Holman, the series is co-sponsored by the Life@Work Co., whose mission is "to help Christians integrate their work world and spiritual world. The authors are co-founders of a business consulting company.

Each book follows the same format. The theme is defined. Then its application to the Christian in the work world is described. In three of the books, some real life examples illustrate the theme. At the end of each book, a series of questions is provided for guided study.

The authors write in a simple, direct and straightforward style. Each book offers at least one thought provoking insight into its theme and how it applies to living out one's faith in the world of work. A significant omission was the lack of women included in the real life examples. Overall, they do a good job and provide a good resource for prayer groups, Bible studies or individual reflection. - Jim Holladay

Spring break missions

By Robert Dunston

Usually spring break is a time to relax, sleep late and forget about classes. For some of our staff and students this year, spring break was far more.

Dean Whitaker, Cumberland's campus minister, his wife, Jane, and Lucy Tuttle, our Baptist Student Union intern, led 17 students from Cumberland College to participate in BreakOut '98 in Panama City Beach, Fla. Cumberland students involved in the ministry were Staci Alder, Karen Barr, Brad Collins, April Dutton, Nadia Ghoughi, Bridgett Hamilton, Elizabeth Iles, Matt Joyce, Jeremy Lynch, Stephanie Mahler, Matt McKee, Roni Beth Minix, Kelly Richards, Bill Roberts, Brian Smith, Ryan Stelk and Travis Wills.

Sponsored by the National Student Ministry of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, campus evangelism department of the Southern Baptist North American Board and the Florida Baptist Convention, BreakOut '98 provided students both training and opportunities to share their faith in Christ with fellow students with love and care.

Students from Cumberland College joined almost 350 other stu-

dents from colleges in Kentucky and across the nation during the week of March 14-20 to make a difference in the lives of people who need Christ.

Panama City Beach has become known as one of the great spring break party places. Our Christian students entered this self-indulgent atmosphere with the love and message of Christ.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Cumberland's students joined with fellow Christian students to provide free van rides until 3 a.m. for those who were in no condition to drive themselves or who felt endangered by the environment. Our students also helped serve a free pancake breakfast late each morning that pro-

vided a good meal and good conversation for all who came. Copies of the Gospel of John were distributed along with other tracts. People who had passed out on the beach were taken to their hotels and others who had tried to replace the vacuum in their souls with parties were counseled. When the week was over, 60 people had accepted Christ as a result of the ministry of our students and their fellow workers.

Robert Dunston is chairman of the religion department at Cumberland College, 6000 College Station Dr., Williamsburg, Ky. 40769

Resurrection hope

Easter is my favorite Christian celebration. One reason is because Easter is not a retail extravaganza like Christmas.

Yes, they sell goods and we do replace the tree of Christmas with the bunny of Easter. Yet, the commercial hoopla of the Resurrection pales in comparison to that of the Incarnation.

The most important reason I prefer Easter is because it is a celebration of our hope.

The Christian faith hinges on the death and resurrection of Jesus. If God has not raised him, we are no different from any other world religion.

"Up from the grave he arose" is more than a verse we sing; it is the hope of our lives.

Hope is powerful. Without it, life degenerates to valueless despair. With it we overcome our greatest obstacles.

Tragically, children who should be filled with hope and the inquisitive nature to live life often want out of life itself. Kids as young as 10 are in our care after psychiatric hospitalizations for attempted suicides.

It is difficult for me to imagine how a child this young loses all hope and sees no reason to live any longer.

"What does hope look like? What does it feel like? Does it last? How can a dead Jesus on a cross and the belief in a living Jesus risen from a cave-like grave help me?" a child asks.

He, the living Jesus and the hope of the world, comes to our kids and families through the consistent care of our residential staff, foster families, Cornerstone counselors, in-home workers and other specialists who bring the touch of God to reality.

They do so through unconditional love, persistent care for those whose actions make them unlovely, and by never, never giving up on any child or family.

The cross reminds us we all are sinners, people in need of love and forgiveness, and that God never gives up on even the most distant of us.

The Resurrection assures us good can overcome the most evil thing we have ever done or have had done to us. Our ministry is one of the Resurrection and of hope.

Bill Smithwick president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. KBHC's Internet address is: <http://www.iglou.com/kbhc/>

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Pact derails Israeli anti-missionary effort

By Ira Rifkin
Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—An unprecedented statement by Christian groups in Israel has virtually derailed proposed anti-missionary legislation that would have criminalized the possession of materials intended to induce religious conversion.

The legislation—aimed primarily at evangelical Protestant missionaries—had caused consternation among Christians in Israel, some of whom argued the bill was written so broadly it would have made it illegal in the Jewish state to possess a New Testament.

The statement pledges “respect” for the “identity and integrity” of the “Jewish people” and not to engage in activities “which have as their intention to alienate (Jews) from their tradition and community.”

In return for the statement, liberal Israeli lawmaker Nissim Zvili of the Labor Party agreed to withdraw his support for the proposed legislation he co-sponsored with Moshe Gafni of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism Party.

The proposed legislation would outlaw the importation, reproduction or distribution of religious materials used in conversion efforts and carried a one-year prison term for violators.

Gafni was not a party to the agreement but without Zvili's support the bill is given virtually no chance of passage. Further diminishing its chances is the opposition of Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who said last June he “strenuously” objected to the bill and would “act to ensure that it does not pass.”

In Israel, Zvili was quoted as saying the Christian statement “is better than a law. This is a very big accomplishment.”

About 50 Christian groups—both Protestant and Roman Catholic—have endorsed the statement, hammered out in meetings during the past eight months and which was formally unveiled April 1 in Jerusalem.

Messianic Jewish groups also have endorsed the statement, said Clarence Wagner Jr., Jerusalem director of Bridges for Peace, a Christian group seeking to better relations between Jews and Christians and build support for Israel.

Messianic Jews, who say belief in Jesus as the Messiah does not cut their ties with the larger Jewish community—a position adamantly rejected by mainstream Jewish leaders—are at the center of the controversy over Christian missionary efforts in Israel.

Israel's Messianic Jews, who number an estimated 3,000 to 6,000, viewed the proposed legislation as an effort to undermine their future growth and were among the bill's most ardent opponents.

The bill was introduced in the Knesset (Israel's parliament) early last year following a mailing sent to hundreds of thousands of Jewish homes in Israel by San Diego-based evangelist Morris Cerullo.

The well-financed mailing urged

accepting Jesus as the Messiah and enraged Israel's Orthodox Jewish religious leaders, who are particularly sensitive to any Christian efforts to lure Jews away from Judaism.

Wagner said in an interview March 31 that the proposed bill would have curtailed religious freedom in Israel without preventing a repeat of the foreign mailing that prompted the writing of the legislation.

“The kind of intrusive and disrespectful proselytizing work that the bill sought to end does not exist among Christian groups in Israel,” said Wagner. “This was a problem that came from the outside.”

Current Israeli law allows missionaries to operate in Israel but makes it a crime for them to offer material inducement to potential converts or to try to convert minors. At the same time, Christian groups who do offer material assistance to Israeli Jews are prohibited from engaging in open evangelism.

The statement also pledges Christian groups not to “exploit, for the benefit of our denominational interests, such economic, social or psychological needs as may emerge.”

The statement was drafted and endorsed by local clerics affiliated with a wide spectrum of churches ranging from Baptist and Lutheran to Anglican and Catholic, said Clarence Wagner, international chairman of Bridges for Peace.

But at least one U.S.-based group—Jews for Jesus—rejected the statement.

David Brickner, executive director of Jews for Jesus, said it is virtually impossible for anyone who believes the Bible not to engage in missionary activity.

WORLD VIEW

■ **Egyptian persecution overstated?** Reports of Christians being murdered, raped and tortured by Muslim extremists in Egypt are “grossly overstated,” according to a report released by a delegation of New York religious leaders who visited Egypt earlier this month. But clearly there is deep disagreement about the severity of discrimination in Egypt, home to as many as 10 million Christians, most of them Copts, one of Christianity's oldest denominations. At the news conference American Copts challenged the reports and engaged in a shouting match with Egyptian government representatives.

■ **Persians focus of prayer.** The Persians of Iran, a predominantly Muslim people group in the Middle East, will be the focus this year for an annual day of prayer and fasting for a people group without free access to Christianity. A video and other materials are available free to Southern Baptists participating in the 24-hour emphasis, which begins at 6 p.m. May 29. For information, call (800) 866-3621 or write Customer Services, International Mission Board, Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230-0767.



“CARNAVAL” CRUSADE Marcia Ellis (left), a Southern Baptist missionary in Salvador, Brazil, shares Christian witnessing material with a member of the Sons of Gandhi, a Brazilian cult. About 300 Brazilian Baptists, Southern Baptist missionaries and Southern Baptist volunteers witnessed during the “Carnaval” festival. A total of 1,059 decisions were registered. (BP photo)

Scholarships: A lasting difference

“Helping you make a lasting difference” for the cause of Christ is the motto of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. We take very seriously our mission to help individuals like you make financial stewardship decisions that result in the establishment of permanent endowments and trust funds for the benefit of one or more Baptist causes through which to “make a lasting difference.”

Establishing scholarship funds to assist students is one of the most fulfilling ways to “make a lasting difference.” The scholarship issue is a current front-page story as the Kentucky General Assembly considers a bill to use lottery profits to pay for college scholarships. The provision of scholarships is a critical issue for Kentucky Baptists and the development of Christian leaders in the future of our churches, communities and state. It was the motivation that prompted Partnership 2000.

If you believe in the importance of educating students for Christian leadership and service, and if you want to “make a lasting difference” in the world for the cause of Christ, then give us the privilege of helping you accomplish those purposes, God's purposes, in your life.

There are existing endowments to which you can contribute, or you may desire to establish your own endowment in your name or in the name of a loved one.

How fortunate we Kentucky Baptists are to have a variety of quality Christian education institutions to which to send our students, the beneficiaries of these scholarships. Our students and our church-related institutions deserve our financial support. Those institutions for which donors have established student scholarships are: Campbellsville, Clear Creek, Cumberland, Georgetown, Mid-Continent, Oneida and Southern Seminary.

Some have added a dimension to reflect a special interest. Some give priority (a) to young people served by Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, (b) to children of international missionaries and (c) to young people of their church, association or county.

Please call Laurie Valentine or me at (888) 254-5701 to see how you can “make a lasting difference” with scholarship endowments.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

GLORIETA™

1998 National Sunday School Leadership Training Events

.....CONVENIENT SCHEDULES.....

Friday–Monday: Begins with Friday dinner and goes through Monday breakfast.
Monday–Friday: Begins with Monday dinner and goes through Friday breakfast.

BENEFITS

Quality training for every Sunday School leadership position; Compact schedules; Special conferences for pastors, ministers of education, Sunday School directors, and general outreach directors; Renewed emphasis on evangelism through the Sunday School; Introduction to a new evangelism training system; Preschool care provided; Day Camp, SummerTrek, and Y.U.C. for children grades 1–6; Impact for youth

Pastors/Bible Teachers

EVENT 1	EVENTS 2 & 3	EVENT 4
June 12–15	June 15–19 and June 19–22	June 22–26
Don Guthrie	Sal Sberna	D. L. Lowrie
First Baptist Church San Antonio, TX	Metropolitan Baptist Church Houston, TX	First Baptist Church Lubbock, TX

- ❖ Smaller membership church track Events 3 & 4
- ❖ Special education lab school Events 1 & 2
- ❖ Special education leadership training Events 1, 2, 3, & 4

Guest faculty at each event:

Bobby Welch, Pastor, FBC, Daytona Beach, FL describing how to do effective evangelism through the Sunday School and introducing FAITH.

For reservations call 1-800-797-4222.
For program info call Larry Ware 1-615-251-2183.

Sponsored by the Bible Teaching-Reaching Division, the Sunday School Board of the SBC.

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Russia and New England:

■ Safe travel for Kentucky volunteers traveling to Russia this year.

■ Russian interpreters who work with Kentucky volunteers.

■ Two semester missionaries needed to serve with Huntington Street Baptist Church in New London, Conn., this year.

■ Randy Fearon, Baptist Convention of New England president and pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Hanover, Mass.

■ Ernie and Barbara Beevers who serve as house managers of the Craft House for volunteers in Waltham, Mass.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **ASHLAND**—Shawn Crump has joined the staff of Cornerstone Counseling. Crump previously facilitated individual, group and family therapy at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital in Ashland and was supervisor of the psychosocial rehabilitation unit of Shawnee Mental Health Center in Ironton, Ohio.

■ **COVINGTON**—Immanuel Church and the Upper Room ministry team will hold sunrise services April 12 at 7 a.m. at the Garden of Hope on Edgecliff Drive. For more information, call (606) 431-3476 or (606) 491-1777.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Ballardsville Church will present a Living Last Supper April 9 at 7 p.m. and a service of shadows based on the seven last words of Christ from the cross April 10 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 222-9165. Tommy Purvis is pastor.

■ **DEMOSSVILLE**—Wilmington Church recently called Bryan Cobb as minister to youth and children. Cobb is a student at Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights. John Justice is pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Isaac McDonald recently completed an eight-month interim at Calvary Church in Glasgow. McDonald is available for supply, interim and revivals. He can be contacted at Box 2072, Elizabethtown, Ky. 42702 or (502) 737-7731.

■ **HENDERSON**—Community Church will hold "He is Risen" sunrise services April 12 at 6:30 a.m.

John Dunaway is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Jeffersontown Church called Darryl Glass as minister of youth. He previously was minister of youth at First United Methodist Church in Radcliff. He began his new ministry April 1. Sanford Hill is pastor.

Living Hope Church will present "Arise, My Love" Easter cantata April 11 at 6 p.m. and April 12 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 231-5361. Jack Naylor is pastor.

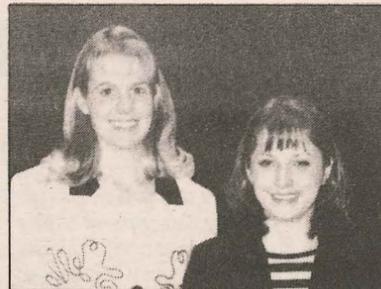
Cloverleaf Church will host Perfect Heart of Brownsville in a gospel music concert April 23 at 7:30 p.m.

■ **NICHOLASVILLE**—Edgewood Church will hold revival services April 19-22. Dan Garland, pastor at Zion Church in Henderson, will be guest evangelist. For more information, call (606) 885-6211. Gayle Toole is pastor.

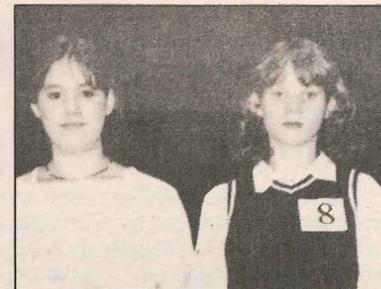
■ **PADUACH**—West End Church recently called Brian Denker as associate pastor. Denker began his new ministry March 22. Tim Stonecipher is pastor.

■ **SOUTH SHORE**—Fellowship Chapel recently called Jay Adkins as pastor. He previously was minister of music and youth at Ashland Church in Ashland.

■ **WAYNESBURG**—Fairview Church will celebrate its centennial anniversary May 24. Special events are planned. For more information, call (606) 365-2116.



Kuder (left) and Kingery



Jackson (left) and Davenport



Riddle



Mann



Haynes



Jeffries

Winners named in drills, tournaments

Students recently competed in state youth Bible drill and speakers' tournament competitions March 20-21 at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore assemblies.

Laura Riddle of Unity Baptist Church in Ashland won the Bible drill at Cedarmore. Katrina Mann of Campbellsville Baptist Church was runner up.

Mary Beth Haynes of Unity Baptist Church in Ashland won the speakers' tournament at Cedarmore. Holly Jeffries of Calvary Hill Baptist Church in Stanford was runner up.

Amanda Jackson of First Baptist Church of Arington won the Bible

drill at Jonathan Creek. Lyndsey Davenport of Keysburg Baptist Church in Olmstead was runner up.

Krista Kingery of Charleston Baptist Church in Dawson Springs won the speakers' tournament at Jonathan Creek. Sarah Kuder of Yellow Creek Baptist Church in Owensboro was runner up.

Cedarmore winners will represent Kentucky at Ridgecrest this summer during Discipleship and Family Development Week, July 4-10.

Jonathan Creek winners will represent Kentucky at Glorieta during Discipleship and Family Development Week, July 18-24.

Burying baby pigs in the cornfield

I want to share part of a letter that came recently from a student.

When this young man came to Oneida, he signed up to work on the farm. The farm manager at that time was Jack Tillman. Tillman was loved and respected by the boys who worked with him. For health reasons, he had to retire in the summer of 1995. God blessed us with another man to take charge of our farm program. It is not easy to follow in the footsteps of someone who has been a leader, mentor, teacher and father figure to 15 teenage boys.

The new farm manager was Ken Martin. I warned him that several of the boys on the farm would have a hard time adjusting to a new leader. Most of them adjusted reasonably well, but a few had a much more difficult time.

This letter came from one of the boys who had a harder time adjusting. He recently wrote to Martin. I would like to share part of that letter with you:

"Hey how's it going? This is Bob (not his real name) and I'm writing this letter and I wanted to say two things, I'm sorry and thank you.

"I'm sorry for the way we were to you when you started on the farm. We had all grown close to Mr. Tillman, and when you came we thought you were trying to replace him so we reacted instinctively. We shut you out and gave you a hard time, but through it all you toughed it out and taught us ... about life and ended up becoming a mentor.

"I wanted to say thank you for sticking with us through all we put you through and for teaching us how to go from being teenagers to responsible young adults.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

"One thing that sticks out in my mind is the scale Tim and I built in front of the hog barn. You gave us the scale set and told us to build a scale, then left and went to other work that needed to be done.

At the time we were like 'Gee, thanks for all the help.' But when we got finished we were so proud of that scale because we made it. We figured out what to do to build it. That helped to prepare us for when we need to figure stuff out as adults. To this day I would show someone that scale with the same type of pride Leonardo da Vinci must have felt showing off the Mona Lisa.

"I also thank the Lord that we were lucky enough to have someone as good as you to help us through those rough times. I only wish that I could have been a little better to you.

"I thank you for showing me the Lord while burying baby pigs in a cornfield. It was one of the best days in my lifetime. Maybe the Lord put you on earth to save me, but I hope you still keep on cranking out a lot more Bobs.

"I am proud to have had you as my teacher, mentor and my friend. Keep up the good work ... Bob."

Needless to say, this letter was a great blessing to Martin and others who do not always see the results of their efforts.

It is only natural for us to want to see the fruits of our efforts. Over the years, many letters like this one have come telling us how much Oneida has impacted a young person's life. Paul said it best: "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, Ky. 40972

How does Clear Creek compare?

When people compare Clear Creek with a typical college, it is like comparing apples with oranges. How do we stand with other Bible colleges?

A recent report from 89 institutions that belong to the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges offers some encouraging data.

We retain students and see them graduate better than other schools. Our program completion is 68.9 percent compared to 40 percent among all AABC colleges. The grade point average on our campus is 2.87, slightly higher than the national average.

Other schools our size have a faculty-student ratio of 1-11.7; ours is 1-13.

Seventy-one percent of our instructors hold an earned doctorate compared to 35 percent in other AABC schools.

The Clear Creek library contains about 1,500 more volumes than other schools our size and nearly twice the periodical resources.

The book value of our plant fund is \$5.8 million compared to \$2.3 million in our category.

The average debt for AABC schools stands at \$1.8 million, but Clear Creek has no debt. Because we operate on a "pay as we go" policy, we intend to remain debt

free.

Thanks to an upgrade a few years back and a strong benefits program, a Clear Creek professor earns about \$3,100 more than professors at other AABC schools. However, our scale is almost \$10,000 less than the scale for all Kentucky colleges.

With the exception of instructors, all faculty ranks at Clear Creek receive less than other private four-year Kentucky schools.

The cost per student at Clear Creek, \$15,548, runs \$3,500 higher than schools our size. Larger institutions cut the cost nearly \$2,000, which should be our experience as enrollment climbs.

We have the facilities and staff to accommodate more students.

Two recent comments sum up this comparison.

A 45-year-old father recently checked us out for possible admission and said, "There's far more involved here than I realized."

A financial supporter wrote, "Clear Creek really makes the dollars I give go far."

This unique work has no comparison.

Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky. 40977

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Christian music gains movie exposure

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—In an early scene in Robert Duvall's "The Apostle," a song called "I Will Not Go Quietly" plays briefly on a truck radio. In less than 30 seconds, the sounds of the song sung by Steven Curtis Chapman drift away.

Likewise, at the end of the recent film, "Hard Rain," a song fittingly called "Flood" by Christian alternative rock group Jars of Clay plays as actor Christian Slater says his final lines and the credits start to roll.

Brief though they may be, the appearance of these songs by Jars of Clay and Chapman, one of the most popular Christian music artists, is being greeted with elation in the Christian music industry because they have gone where few other Christian artists have—into mainstream movies and onto their soundtracks released to the secular world.

"I hope that it has the obvious effect of educating, or maybe informing, more people about this thing called Christian music," said Chapman. "It helps (Christian music) make strides in terms of ... accessibility and connectability ... to a mainstream audience of people."

The musical strides by these artists, however, are unusual, according to experts. For the most part, Hollywood executives don't even know the names of Christian artists, let alone what their music sounds like.

But Christian artists and promoters hope a door has opened allowing contemporary Christian music to be introduced as another possibility to filmmakers rather than merely a category of music that is stereotyped and automatically rejected.

"The acceptance of religious mu-



MUSIC & MOVIES Songs by Christian artists Jars of Clay (left) and Steven Curtis Chapman (pictured with Robert Duvall) recently have been used in movies, but the long-range impact remains uncertain. "I think we should make ... incredibly good music and people pay attention when we do that," says Jonathan Watkins, manager of music publishing for 20th Century Fox. (RNS photos)

sic, especially in film usages, has usually been a very parochial usage," said Frank Breeden, president of the Gospel Music Association in Nashville.

He sees the use of Christian songs in more secular film settings—rather than their being confined to scenes inside a church—as a boost for his industry.

Even as they overcome some barriers, artists like Jars of Clay must make decisions about the kinds of movies in which they are willing to play a part. "Hard Rain," for example, is rated R.

"You have to weigh out the pros and cons of the benefits of exposure ... versus almost giving an endorsement of the film by Jars of Clay being involved," said Nina Williams, the band's publicist.

John Huie, the executive producer for "The Apostle" soundtrack and Chapman's agent, said Christian labels weren't that excited about the movie, which he described as "an honest portrayal of a human struggle."

But he said the promotion of Christian artists to movie production companies is more a matter of convincing Hollywood about the attributes of a particular artist rather than an entire

genre of music.

"I don't think we're trying to promote a format as much as we're trying to promote individual artists," he said. "I think Steven was inspired with a song that fit the theme of the movie that had a statement that ... spoke to the heart of what the film was about."

Jonathan Watkins, manager of music publishing for 20th Century Fox, said Hollywood executives are looking for talent, not a particular faith perspective.

"Everybody's looking for just great material and great songs and stuff that moves people," said Watkins. "I've always been of the opinion that we shouldn't get preferential treatment just because we're talking about God," he said. "I think we should make ... incredibly good music and people pay attention when we do that."

Chapman agreed, saying he hopes the opportunities given him and Jars of Clay might help people give Christian music a chance.

"It's not people beating them over the head with the Bible," he said. "But it's people writing very creative, very well-crafted, artistic songs that are illuminated by their faith."

Church has prescription for high drug bills with pharmacy

DAVIS, Okla. (BP)—The sometimes high cost of prescriptions has led one Baptist church to do something about it by opening its own pharmacy.

"One family in our area mortgaged their house to try and pay their medication bills," said Lonnie Lee, pastor of First Baptist Church of Davis, Okla.

"The idea for the pharmacy came out of left field," he admitted. "I didn't know anything like this was possible."

But W.T. Young, who grew up in Davis and moved back there for his retirement years, had done volunteer work at the Baptist Mission Center in Oklahoma City and knew about the pharmacy work done there.

He and fellow church member Wayne Webb built shelves for the medications in a room formerly used for preschoolers.

The pharmacy is fully licensed, insured and incorporated under the name Davis Charities. Two local pharmacists, Randy Moore and Mike Lee, staff the church-sponsored pharmacy, alternating every other Tuesday night.

In seeking to fill a void in the Davis area for meeting the physical needs of people, Lee noted, "We're doing what we can to reach the community and also to improve the image of the church in the community."

Medicines for the pharmacy come from doctors' samples, while the pharmacists donate their time and volunteers sort the pills into glass jars and label them.

Lee said those asking for their prescriptions to be filled have to fill out forms making sure they really need the ministry.

"We don't fill prescriptions of people who are insured or can afford the medicines," Lee said. Local pharmacists were against the program when it was first mentioned, thinking they would lose business, but it actually has helped them, Lee said.

"They told us they were writing off about \$50,000 a year in unpaid prescription bills," he said. "We told them, 'That's the business we want.'"

Lee emphasized the church wants the pharmacy to be a community ministry. "We are not as concerned with what church people attend as we are that they come to know Christ. This program has given us the opportunity to touch lives we otherwise could never have touched."

Freedom sought for New Tribes missionaries held in Panama

CAMDENTON, Mo. (BP)—The last time Patti Tenenoff saw her husband, Rick, was the night a group of men stormed the house and kidnapped him.

"Very soon. We will arrange it," said one of the intruders, referring to information about a ransom transfer.

That was five years ago.

Today, Patti and two other wives still wait the return of their husbands. New Tribes Mission missionaries Rick Tenenoff, Dave Mankins and Mark Rich were kidnapped Jan. 31, 1993, from their homes in a Kuna village in southern Panama, 12 miles from the Colombian border. Their wives believe a guerrilla group in Colombia continues to hold the three men hostage.

"I have never asked God why this has happened," Patti Tenenoff said. "I have asked him, 'Why so long?'"

She and her three children live on the Camdenton, Mo., campus for New Tribes Mission, a non-denominational missionary-sending organization based in Sanford, Fla. They attend Concord Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo.

"How she copes is nothing short of the divine work of the Holy Spirit," said Annie Merchen, a friend of

the Tenenoffs for six years.

Tenenoff said some words shared with her a few years ago have helped her deal with being separated from her husband. "This friend said, 'God picked three special men to be missionaries to this guerrilla group.'"

"I didn't see it as a privilege, but then, through time, I realized you're not going to get people to volunteer to go to a guerrilla group."

"But I think after five years, I'm at a crossroads with God," she continued. "I don't doubt his sovereign plans for us, but after five years, I sometimes (ask God), 'Do you really know what you're doing?'"

A crisis team for New Tribes Mission has been working since the kidnapping to resolve the situation with the guerrilla group, known as FARC, an acronym for the Spanish name Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

"As recently as Christmas, we've heard of high-level FARC representatives talking to high-level government (representatives) and saying that our men are alive and well," said Scott Ross, New Tribes attorney and crisis team member.

Today, New Tribes Mission does not send missionaries to southern Pan-

ama because the area is deemed too dangerous. But five years ago, there was no cause for concern.

"I need prayer," Tenenoff said. "It's harder now. There's no closure. I need to know how he's doing."

New Tribes Mission's policy is not to meet ransom demands. Radio contact continued with the guerrillas—who were convinced the missionaries were government agents—during the next several months, but the guerrillas cut it off in 1994. There has been no contact since.

"Guerrillas are very hard to influence—it's not like they're a government organization," Ross said.

That is why, now, New Tribes Mission and the three families are traveling around the world to make people aware, particularly in Latin American nations and the United States, of the situation.

Since last June, the wives have visited government officials in Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica. They also have met the queen of Spain and the president of Colombia. And they testified last week in front of the House International Relations Committee in Washington.

"We want to put international pressure on this guerrilla group," Tenenoff

said. The guerrilla group believed to be holding the men is the largest in Colombia.

"FARC wants to be a legitimized political group in countries around the world," she explained. "We want the nations to see they are holding three innocent American missionaries hostage. Then, maybe the nations can apply pressure to have our husbands released."

"Pray our congressmen will be hearing what we say and will take action," Ross said. He also encouraged readers to write letters to their congressmen.

"I asked the Lord to help me create a stable family, and that the children would not be angry or bitter," said Tenenoff.

"They talk like Daddy's coming home tomorrow. But I didn't pray that for me, and now after five years, I've got to work on not allowing anger or bitterness in my life."

Tenenoff clings to the hope that somebody, somewhere, holds the key to what can be done to free her husband and the others.

"We know God is sovereign, but he wouldn't have us sit around, either," she said. "Please pray. We don't want our husbands to be forgotten."

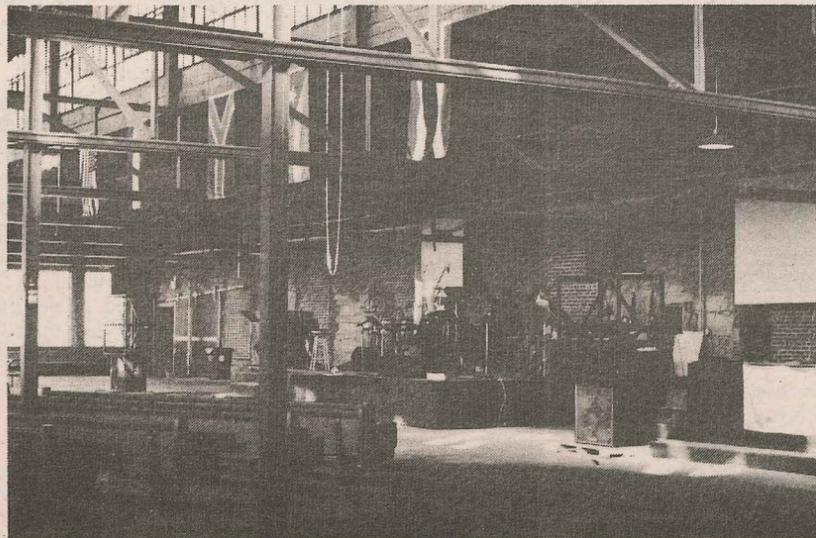
Cumberland College Mountain Outreach Helps Atlanta Inner-City Community

While many students were enjoying their Christmas Vacation at home, several Cumberland College students were spending their nights in sleeping bags on cold, concrete floors and their days on the streets of Atlanta.

Cumberland's annual SPOTS (Special Projects Other Than Summer) trip took 10 students along with Mountain Outreach Director, Al Laird, to Atlanta for a week of mission action with Blood and Fire ministries of Vineyard Church.



Mountain Outreach student volunteers Brian Smith, Matt Gabhart, Jeremy Lynch, Crystal Matrav, April Vermillion, Lucy Tuttle, Christina Miller, Jessica Kitzmiller and Jessie Williams are shown before leaving for Atlanta inner city for a week of ministry.



The Vineyard Church, Atlanta, meets in an abandoned warehouse. The building was the bed and breakfast location for Cumberland's Mountain Outreach student volunteers during their week in Atlanta.



Cumberland College students, Lucy Tuttle, Christina Miller and Crystal Matrav along with Vineyard Church members participated in a Gospel March and distributed bags of food to residents along the way.



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