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No Western Recorder will be published next week.**YouthFest '98 encourages godly decisions**

MURRAY—It was bigger than youth camp. Louder than a church service. And more positive than a pep rally.

YouthFest '98, the Kentucky Baptist youth evangelism conference, nearly blew the doors off the Regional Special Events Center at Murray State University last weekend. It was the first event ever held at the new center, and the deluge of enthusiastic teenagers put the structure to the test.

Spirits ran high and the bands were loud, but the Christian message was crystal clear. More than 3,000 teenagers from across Kentucky were challenged to live holy lives and make

wise decisions today to safeguard their futures.

"I was in awe," said Karen Popp, a chaperone from Centerfield Baptist Church in Oldham County. "I looked around and over 3,000 teenagers were engrossed in praising God."

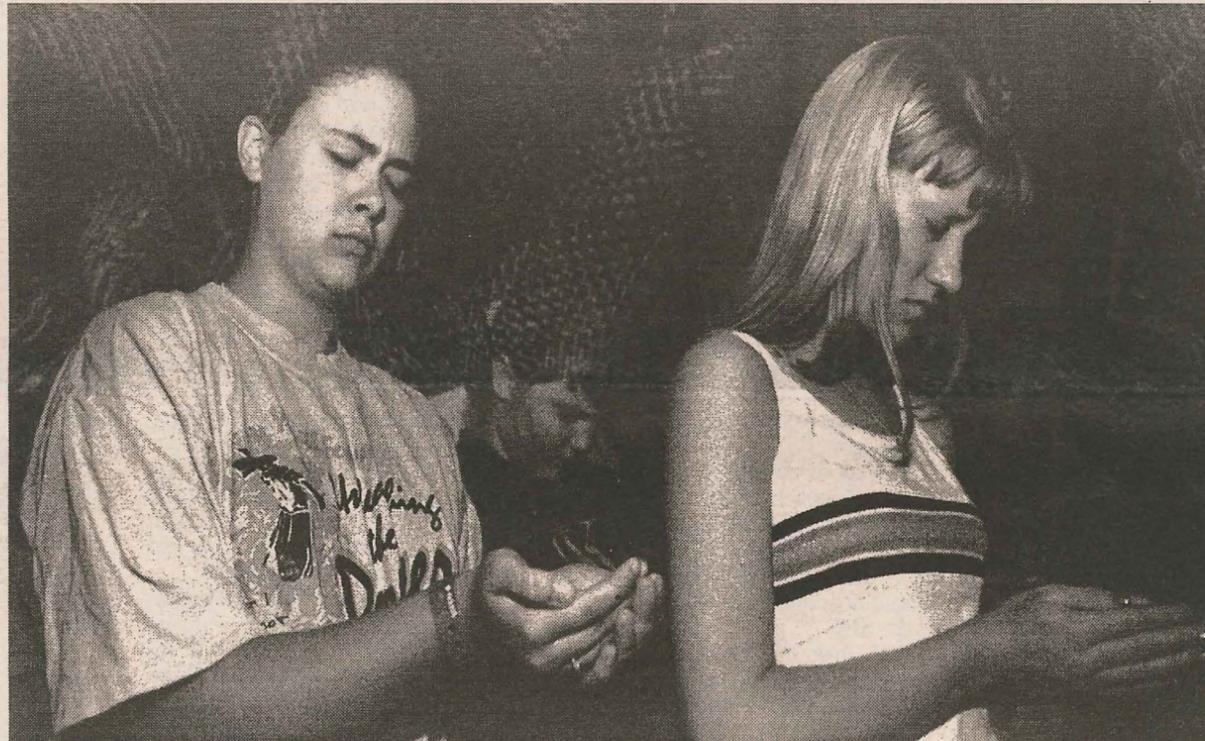
The two days of worship were led by Kentucky Baptist Student Union Son teams and the musical group Soul's Desire from Houston.

Keynote speaker Dave Edwards, an evangelist from Oklahoma City, used humor to get the attention of the teenage audience. He opened each session reading funny things from the backs of shampoo bottles, deodorant

packaging and toothpaste tubes.

But funny words moved into serious business as Edwards called the teens to know the God of the Bible and live in a way that will please God. He talked about the need of trusting in Jesus Christ as the way to restore a broken relationship with God, and he urged everyone present to make that initial commitment or renew that commitment if it had grown stale.

At the Friday night session, teens flooded the altar, with 63 making first-time professions of faith in Christ. Throughout the conference, a total of 316 decisions of all kinds were registered. *See YouthFest ..., page 10*



YOUTHFEST '98 Devany Hooks (left), Resa Harris (background) and Kristin Peebles cup their hands to symbolize troubles they are lifting up to God after a message by evangelist Dave Edwards at YouthFest '98. More than 3,000 people attended the annual youth evangelism event, held June 26-27 at Murray State University's Regional Special Events Center. Hooks and Harris are from Benton, and Peebles is from Elizabethtown. (Copyright 1998 Billy Suratt/Apex Media)

The right tack: Kentuckians minister during Equitana event

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—Leaders of the Kentucky-based Christian horse ministry network said they both spread word of their work and saw demonstrations of God's power during the recent international horse show in Louisville.

This was the third year Louisville hosted the Equitana USA horse show, held June 18-21. The show at the state fairgrounds draws exhibitors and visitors from all 50 states and more than 20 other nations.

This diverse crowd has proven fertile ground for spreading awareness of Equestrian Ministries International. Thanks to its Equitana booth, during the three years it has grown from eight people in Kentucky to a nationwide mailing list of about 1,400.

"We're finding much more of a grassroots movement existed than we imagined," said Larry Martin, chairman of the Equestrian Ministries steering committee. Martin also is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions and evangelism division.

Surrounded by an array of horses and exhibits ranging from European carriages to saddle racks, Martin described how the four-day event primarily helped the ministry build relationships.

Before the show concluded, he said, ministry members also led two dozen people to become Christians and gained affirmation. *See The right tack ..., page 8*

Smoke defectors: Church gets needed windfall, but from tobacco

By Greg Jaffe
The Wall Street Journal

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BRYANTSVILLE—Tobacco was long a blessing for Bryantsville United Methodist Church. Last winter, it became a burden.

The congregation had dug deep into its pockets to buy a 93-year-old farmhouse for use as a parsonage. Buried in the fine print of the deed, and unknown to the church before the purchase, was a valuable commodity: a permit to grow 1,850 pounds of tobacco.

Such permits, known as "allotments," are vestiges from the 1930s, when the federal government wanted to limit tobacco farming as a way to bolster the crop's price. With minor exceptions, a farmer can't sell tobacco without one.

The previous owners of the farm-

house never grew tobacco on the property. They leased their allotment to others and collected about \$1,000 a year.

That isn't a huge sum. But for this 75-member congregation, which pays its pastor just \$9,000 a year, it would make a welcome windfall—which explains why the first church members to hear about the allotment were overjoyed. "It was like somebody told me we had running water on the property," says James Baker, a factory worker who serves on the church board of trustees and owns a small tobacco allotment himself.

But what began with excitement grew into a painful dispute over emphysema, cancer and the responsibilities of churchgoing Christians regarding tobacco—topics once taboo in Bryantsville, a town of about 500.

The debate resonated deeply in a part of the country where some locals say, "Jesus is Lord and tobacco is king." And similar discussions are reverberating through much of the

South, where tobacco money helped build and still sustains hundreds of churches.

Last March, Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky sold its shares of tobacco stocks after three years of debate. "Tobacco farmers are an important part of our churches," says Richard L. Harrison Jr., president of the seminary. "But for us as an institution, there is simply no justification for choosing to invest our funds in tobacco manufacturing."

Last April, an antitobacco proposal introduced at a meeting of North Carolina's Presbyterian churches triggered a three-hour argument. The proposal, which called for churches to disseminate to parishioners former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's report to Congress on tobacco, lost by two votes out of 98 cast.

In Bryantsville, the debate was more personal, engulfing two men, both devoted to their church, and both profoundly opposed to the other's stand.

James Williams, a 29-year-old part-time pastor, never doubted what the church should do: "We just cannot be in the business of raising a crop that is harmful to people's health," he says.

Grover Drew Jr., 65, a member of the church since 1946 and a tobacco farmer himself, bristles at this notion. By Drew's reckoning, tobacco helped build every pew and every brick of the church. "If you took the tobacco money out of that church, there wouldn't hardly be anything left," he says.

Drew, a rail-thin man with long, gray sideburns, was raised on a small tobacco farm, in a white house with a rusted tin roof. When he was growing up, tobacco farmers were revered. They were the engines of the economy, leaders of the church and skilled artisans in their own right. "To be recognized as a 'tobacco man' was to be accorded an honor such as cultures bestowed on the finest hunters, warriors or poets," says Kentucky essayist. *See Church gets needed ..., page 9*

BAPTISTS

CBF declines to rebut SBC view on family

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

HOUSTON (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, though on record as affirming women, last week declined to formally oppose a recent Southern Baptist Convention statement urging wives to "submit graciously" to their husbands.

The Fellowship deliberately has no mechanism for passing resolutions during its annual meetings. So participants who desired for the organization of Baptist moderates to position themselves against the stance taken by the SBC earlier in June presented their request in the form of a motion during the annual General Assembly in Houston June 25-27.

Jennifer Scarborough, Stacey Simpson and Jim Strickland introduced a motion asking the Fellowship to go on record affirming that "the family exists wherever God has called people together in a loving covenantal relationship," that marriage partners are "to be mutually submissive to each other" and that children "are a gift of God, to be loved, nurtured and guided by home, church and community."

In accordance with CBF rules, the trio submitted the motion for review by the advisory council of the Fellow-

ship's Coordinating Council. The advisory group concluded the motion "sounded much like a resolution," council member Robert Whitten reported during a plenary session.

After meeting with the makers, the advisory council suggested an alternative motion that the Coordinating Council "study and report on issues surrounding family and children," said Whitten, pastor of Westwood Baptist Church in Springfield, Va.

During a breakout session to discuss the advisory council motion, Strickland, pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Cartersville, Ga., complained the original motion had been "emasculated by leadership" out of a desire not to confront the SBC.

David Waugh, pastor of Metro Baptist Church in New York City, proposed an amendment asking that the Coordinating Council "study the impact of the recently approved article to the 'Baptist Faith & Message' on families" and report findings back to the 1999 General Assembly.

"What has happened is one body has spoken for the whole, which we are part of, but we don't affirm (the statement)," said Waugh, a former Coordinating Council member.

During a 55-minute discussion, the 70 participants in the breakout group first rejected Waugh's amendment 55-14 and then voted nearly unanimously against the advisory council motion. Later, the advisory council concurred with the breakout group, opting not to recommend its motion to the full General Assembly.

During discussion in the breakout session, opponents argued the Fellowship should not set a precedent of passing motions that have the effect of a resolution and that the group should not concern itself with actions of the SBC.

Still, makers of the original motion contended the Fellowship needed to make some kind of statement.

"No matter what the SBC says or CBF or anyone else, I have a large group of secular friends to whom I have to apologize for what Baptists have done," said Jennifer Scarborough, a sponsor of the original motion. "They're not coming into our

church because of what that (statement) represents."

Though the Fellowship balked at taking an official stance on the SBC statement on family, the group's top executive offered his views on the subject in a statement written prior to the General Assembly.

"As I understand Scripture, marriage is a companionship between husband and wife, not a hierarchy," Fellowship Coordinator Daniel Vestal said in a news release. "It requires mutual submission and sacrifice. It calls for shared responsibility and respect, not the exercise of authority and control."

Aside from this, the assembly lacked a heavy business agenda.

The meeting, themed "Celebrate the Spirit," included 14 workshops on spiritual formation and an extended general session with Richard Foster, author of the best-selling "Celebration of Discipline" and other books.

The General Assembly adopted a 1998-99 budget of \$14.8 million, up from \$14.3 million this year.

Sixty-three percent of expenditures in the spending plan are earmarked for global missions. Fourteen percent goes to Baptist principles, which includes seminaries. Four percent is for church resources, 6 percent for communications and marketing, 2 percent for "networking" with state CBF organizations, 1 percent for the CBF Foundation, 9 percent for administration and 1 percent for reserves.

Other business included the adoption of bylaw changes aimed at increasing ethnic representation on the Fellowship's Coordinating Council and the establishment of a retirement and annuity program for ministers and employers of member churches.

The plan would offer an alternative for ministers who do not desire or are ineligible to participate in retirement programs of the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board.

Sarah Frances Anders, a retired sociology professor at Louisiana College, was elected moderator-elect to lead the Fellowship in 1999-2000. John Tyler, a communications executive from Webster Groves, Mo., will be moderator the coming year.

Falwell praises 'fundamentalist' SBC seminaries

LYNCHBURG, Va.—The Southern Baptist Convention now has six "fundamentalist" seminaries, according to Jerry Falwell.

Falwell, the lifelong independent Baptist who recently became a Southern Baptist, used the word with a positive meaning when endorsing the six SBC schools on the front page of the July issue of his National Liberty Journal newspaper.

Southern Baptist conservatives long have shunned the term "fundamentalist" as an accurate description of their movement, which fought from 1979-1991 to capture control of the SBC's leadership. But Baptist moderates, whom the conservatives often call "liberals," often have categorized their political opponent as fundamentalists.

Falwell's article, titled "Southern Baptist Convention Defies Prophets of Doom," gives a glowing endorsement of the SBC, its seminaries and agencies.

"All six SBC seminaries now have fundamentalist presidents and faculties," he wrote. "All its agencies now have fundamentalist leadership. The overwhelming majority of its pastors are Bible-believing men of God."

What has happened in the SBC since 1979 was not a takeover by conservatives but a "spiritual revolution," Falwell explained.

"I was taught by sincere and godly men during Bible college days, over 45 years ago, that a denomination which goes liberal can never be recovered theologically," he continued. "Most evangelicals in those days believed that apostasy could be remedied only by judgment. I preached that philosophy myself."

But changes in the SBC have proved otherwise, Falwell said.

In the article, Falwell explains to his newspaper audience that he and other members of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., attended the recent SBC annual meeting as messengers for the first time. And he predicted that more independent Baptist churches will follow his lead and join the SBC.

"While Thomas Road Church continues its relationship with and support of Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries and other independent Baptist missions, we have also officially thrown our enthusiastic support behind the historic and unprecedented conservative 'revolution' which has taken place within the SBC during the past 20 years. Many of our sister churches have done the same and many more will in the months and years to come."



If Michelangelo had been a Baptist

BAPTIST BITS

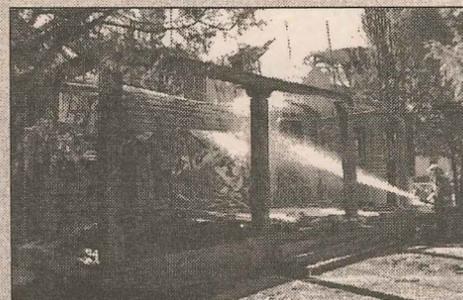
■ **True Love Wait goes golden.** The next phase of the "True Love Waits" sexual abstinence campaign will include a display at the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The Southern Baptist campaign, which calls teens and college students to pledge sexual abstinence until marriage, has been embraced by many other religious groups. The signed pledge cards will be featured in a national display at the Golden Gate Bridge Oct. 2, 1999.

■ **Prof wants gay support group.** A professor at William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., has said he'll seek formal recognition of a support group for homosexual students at the Baptist college. Although no formal request yet has been made, German professor Mark Cadd recently told the Kansas City Star he

intends to seek formal standing for the group. Administrators have responded that should such a request be made they likely will take the issue to trustees.

■ **Fire destroys Glorieta lodge.** A fire started by a faulty electric blanket destroyed Cedar Lodge at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center in New Mexico June 21. The 65 teenage girls and their sponsors staying in the lodge were evacuated safely. The blanket blamed for the fire was brought by a guest; Glorieta does not provide electric blankets. The building was a total loss, with only a few walls left standing.

■ **Missionary dies in sleep.** Philip Workman, a Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionary to Ecuador, died



LODGE DESTROYED A firefighter sprays water on smoldering "hot spots" on the remains of Cedar Lodge at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center June 21. (Photo by Stan Abbott)

in his sleep June 20 in Quito, Ecuador. He was 46. The cause of death was unknown. He is survived by his wife, Sylvia, and two children, David, 14, and Sarah, 9.

Ambulance service drives church to care for others

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

IRVINGTON—Sometimes when Jerry Shacklett is in the middle of his Sunday morning sermon, Jeff Guter-muth gets up and walks out.

But that's OK with Shacklett, pastor of Irvington Baptist Church.

After all, Guter-muth is on his way to serve the community. He is volunteer director of the Irvington Area Ambulance Service.

But sometimes when an emergency call comes in, it's not just Guter-muth who walks out. Nine other members of the church are on the 15-member squad as well. Six of 12 board members also are members of the Irvington congregation.

That's OK, too, said Shacklett.

After all, the volunteers' care for the community is rubbing off on the church, he said.

"Because of their involvement in the volunteer ambulance service, we are starting to minister," he said.

And because of them, two patients and an emergency medical technician have made professions of faith in Christ as Savior and have been baptized since November, he said.

"I think the camaraderie and witness of the ambulance crew drew (the technician)," said volunteer Sandy

Fegenbush. "When you're riding in the back of an ambulance for an hour or more on the way home from a run, there is plenty of time to talk. He had seen the 'what' of what we do and became interested in the 'why.'"

For the 99-year-old Fort Knox-area church, which had not had a baptism in four years, that has spawned "a passion for evangelism through servant ministry," Shacklett said.

Fegenbush agreed. "Helping people is what it's all about," she said.

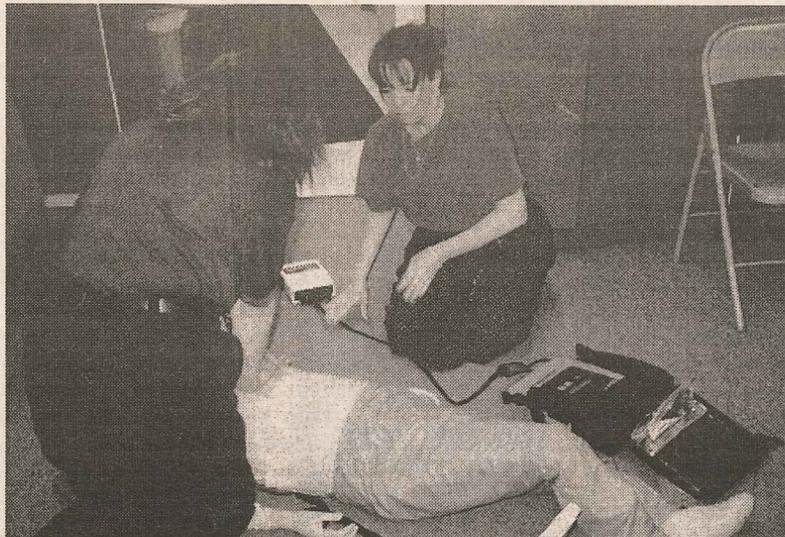
"A lot of people feel scared when they are critically ill," she said. "It is a comfort to be there to be able to pat them on the hand and say we will pray for them."

Plus, Guter-muth added, working on the service keeps members of Irvington Baptist in touch with the elderly in the community of 1,200 people. "In a community that is getting older, it is good to see the ones we often forget," he said.

The ambulance service has been a great way to show the community the church really cares, Guter-muth said.

When it began in September 1993, the nearest ambulance service was 25-45 minutes away, he said. Now, no person in the eight-mile ambulance service area is more than 10-15 minutes away, he said.

The service makes about 35 runs



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY Debbie Guter-muth (left) and Pam Sears, both members of Irvington Baptist Church, continue their education as workers with the Irvington Area Ambulance Service. Ten church members are on the volunteer ambulance squad. Pastor Jerry Shacklett said their volunteer work has gotten the church more involved in ministry work.

per month, with the average taking more than three hours. About 50 percent of the runs are made to the local county hospital 15 miles away. The remainder are 35 miles away to Elizabethtown or 50 miles away to Louisville. Volunteers work weekdays from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. and 24 hours on week-

ends.

Now the church, which averages 72 people in Sunday morning worship, is looking for more ways to reach into the community, Guter-muth said. Recently, work began on a family life center which will be open to the community.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ Joann Toole, wife of Kentucky Baptist Convention President Gayle Toole, is home and being treated by a nurse after being in the hospital with a strep infection contracted during surgery. Recovery is expected to take at least two weeks, according to Jim Hawkins of the KBC executive office.

■ Edward Cunningham, former Kentucky pastor and mountain missions director, will be honored July 19 by his current church, Oakhurst Baptist in Decatur, Ga. Friends are asked to send a letter for a book of remembrances. Letters can be mailed in care of Harry Rezzemini, 319 Fayetteville Road, Decatur, Ga. 30030.

Central Kentucky churches join forces to start Hispanic ministry

By Vicki Stevens
Danville Advocate-Messenger

DANVILLE—Carlos De la Barra knows how it is to live in a community where no one speaks your language.

Natives of Chile, De la Barra and his family lived in Tigerville, S.C., when they first came to the United States in 1991. Tigerville, a small burg near Greenville, was so tiny it had no traffic lights. The post office and a gas station were about the only things there.

"We were the only ones who spoke Spanish in this area, so it was learn English or die," he says.

De la Barra, who lives in Louisville now, speaks English fluently these days and works as a Baptist missionary to migrant workers and members of Kentucky's Hispanic population, many of whom speak little English.

His job is to "plant" churches that are trying to minister to a growing segment of their population in areas such as Garrard and Mercer counties.

"The key to reach these people is trust. We need to become friends of these people and that is the key. They will not come to my church because I am Carlos. They will come to my church because they trust in me. We try to show them that we are friends and that we love them, that we come to help them, and for no other reason," says De la Barra. "We need to become not only friends, but brothers and sisters."

The ultimate goal is to lead people "to trust in Christ," adds Bob Hammons of Garrard County, moderator of South District Baptist Association, an organization of Baptist churches

around Danville and Lancaster.

De la Barra is working with a new non-profit corporation called Mercer, Nelson and South District Hispanic Ministries Inc., which will involve churches in the area as well as a huge chunk of Central Kentucky. Mark Baldauff, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, is director of the corporation.

The goal is to establish Hispanic missions that will offer church services in Spanish, Bible study, English classes, meals and fellowship.

In Nelson County, where migrant workers come from Mexico to work in tobacco eight months of the year, De la Barra helped start a Hispanic mission three years ago at Chaplin Baptist Church. The mission averages 75-80 people every Sunday night during tobacco season and about 20 during the winter.

"Ninety percent of the people are from one town in Mexico," he says.

The workers are picked up by van and brought to the mission about 5 p.m. each Sunday. After Bible study or English class, a hot meal is served in the fellowship hall. For many of the workers, it is the only real cooking they will have that week.

Then after the food is cleared away, a worship service is held. De la Barra says the service is like any you'd find in a Baptist church, except that it's in Spanish. Many of the migrants have a Catholic background.

Finding seasonal workers who live in the community from April-December or who have taken up year-round residence is fairly easy. The hardest part is finding churches willing to open their doors or participate, he says.

In Garrard County, Hyattsville

Baptist Church and Lancaster Baptist Church have committed to the Hispanic ministry, although it's not been determined exactly what each will do.

"We have several churches that are committed," says Hammons.

De la Barra's goal is to maintain the mission point in Nelson County and try to establish another one in this area this year.

Initially, the funding will come half from the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and half from the three district Baptist associations. After five years, the funding from KBC and NAMB will cease.

And because De la Barra can be in only one place at a time, one of the

challenges will be finding people who at some point can take on the task of preaching and leading the missions.

In Chile, De la Barra was a computer programmer with a master's degree in business administration and a businessman for many years.

He earned a master of divinity degree at the Baptist seminary in Louisville and has worked for Kentucky Refugee Ministry as well as NAMB.

"In the same way they were looking to do something with Hispanics in this area, I was looking to do something also in a full-time way," he says.

With the Hispanic population in this country growing, "the future of the church will be to gain all of these people," says De la Barra.

CUMBERLAND CONNECTION Cumberland College and contemporary Christian music group Truth recently announced a recruiting partnership. The Nashville-based singers, shown here during a recent concert at Cumberland, will promote the school during their concerts. "We talk about Cumberland every night in our concerts," said Roger Breland, director of Truth. "Cumberland College is an easy product to sell."



WESTERN RECORDER

P.O. Box 43969
Louisville, Ky. 40253
(ISSN 0043-4132)

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

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 244-6470. Fax: (502) 244-6474. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

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A beautiful word

My mother was standing on the front porch of an old-fashioned farm house telling me, a child of 9, to come in out of the rain. I loved the rain and would have stayed if it were my choice.

However, now I was a "new creature," as I traveled back in memory to Sunday night when I gave my life to following Jesus. Now, my mother was calling and I had to obey. I could no longer be the willful child who liked to hide in the top of the old Maple tree where I was out of sight and ruler of my world.

As my feet hit the floor of the porch, there was a flash of lightning where I had stood. Mother was quick to point out the danger, but I was in a state of awe. I thought God had given me a special token of his approval, not to frighten but to encourage. It is a prism I have carried in my heart that glows with many more colors as life goes on.

"To love and obey"—the words of the minister flowed over me and into my heart. We were standing on holy ground as God was making us one. I had no trouble with that word, "obey." I was joining my husband's world, and I was secure in his love, his strong faith.

Now time has moved on, and I am alone in my home. Yet, not alone. There is such a thin line between this world and the next. It reminds me of the veil in the temple that Christ's death, his obedience, tore. Obedience that was costly, but uplifting—not only for him but for others to know Christ's joy hammered out in pain.

*Edith Carpenter
Shelbyville*

Making problems

As a Southern Baptist of many years, I fail to understand why our convention must vote upon what is already Scripture. It's redundant, sort of like voting to honor the flag when that is assumed of us as Americans.

In recent years Baptists have embarrassed themselves and brought ridicule to our denomination by nit-picking over the Scriptures. Christ admonished us to "go and tell all nations," but we seem content to just tell ourselves. We've become so interested in how we work inwardly as a denomination that we've forgotten to reach outward.

There's so much to be done. Please, can we not just get on with what we're supposed to be doing? Let our institutions of higher learning and our religious theologians debate these minute matters among themselves, and let's be about the business at hand, saving souls. There's a world waiting for us, indeed dying for us to tell them the good news. And it's not just overseas, it's right here on our doorstep.

As for scriptural understanding, we're never going to be completely of one mind, not unless we somehow learn to clone our thoughts. But this shouldn't divide us. As long as we adhere to the basic tenet of our faith, as long as we believe that Christ died to save us from sin, then there isn't a

problem. Not unless we make one.

Let's stop making problems. It's as simple as the plan of salvation itself.

*Cheryl Watts
Beaver Dam*

'Family values'

The passage of the statement of faith's additional article on the family represents a high level of accomplishment in Baptist life. For years, many historians, such as Rufus Spain and John L. Eighmy, have critically examined the history of our denomination, citing that it was in a state of "cultural captivity," responding to social pressures in only a most reactive, not proactive way. Their books about the social stands of Baptists, written in the 1960s and 1970s, argued that on most social issues, the secular society around the denomination shaped Baptist policies and stances, not vice versa.

Now, that claim rings hollow. Southern Baptists have issued a statement about the family that goes against the grain of culture's contours, and instead establishes a biblical standard.

Furthermore, what seems most significant about this move is that Southern Baptists have succeeded in finally giving some substance to the political catch-phrase "family values." It is so popular and easy to bandy about that expression, with no one going on record with what "family values" really means. Southern Baptists have now, in clear language, indicated that "family values" should definitely mean "biblical values concerning the family."

As a couple sharing interests both inside and outside the home, (Kasey works as a staff writer for a local newspaper and as a public relations consultant for a counseling firm, and I am a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky in addition to my pastorate) we find the charges that this amendment is sexist or "non-essential" unfortunate.

Thank you, Southern Baptists, for having the courage to adhere and adopt a biblical perspective on the family, rather than a mere culturally compliant one.

*Christopher and Kasey Beckham
Flemingsburg*

Keep it in context

I hardly view the SBC guideline as a call for abuse and discrimination. Those who would use Paul's words to justify hurting women or validate slavery are clearly missing the point. When read in its entirety, as it should be quoted, the statement is far from demeaning to women.

When one considers the widespread failure of men in our society to take on a leadership responsibility in their homes, you quickly see the intent of the guideline. Perhaps we should ask the widow, the fatherless child or the abused wife what they think of the guideline. I suggest that there are many women who would indeed cherish being loved as Christ loved the church. How many women would drop dead to see their man ac-

tually be a leader, provider or protector in their home?

Why do we not see an emphasis on the part which says women are in the image of God and equal to their husbands?

The guideline is an ideal, a goal if you will. In the ideal world, it would provide the best balance and the most efficient utilization of time for running the home.

By being better organized, those in the home would have more time to devote to being a follower of Christ. Is not that the true purpose of Paul's writing when he addressed relationships?

For me, this is a call to be a better husband and father, not a dictator. For you females, you need not submit anything, unless somehow your husband lives up to the demand placed on him. I think it is safe to say that most men fall short in their portion of the guideline.

Common sense says the real world calls for compromise. Lighten up out there.

Remember, to be fair, we must read and quote the guideline in its entirety. To grab a portion out of context does not seem to do justice.

*Ed Hayman
Louisville*

Automotive sin

After reading of Tony Campolo's address to Woman's Missionary Union (June 16, page 12), I am envious of his spiritual discernment. Imagine how convenient it must be for Campolo to determine someone's eternal destiny by examining their automotive buying habits.

However, Tony needs to elaborate: What about a Taurus with leather upholstery? Is an Accord OK as long as I specify hubcaps and an AM radio? Or is hell reserved only for the owners of German cars? Perhaps a guidebook would be in order. How about "Highway Heretics: A Spotters Guide"? Help us out, Tony!

Seriously, even Campolo should be intelligent enough to realize that mere ownership of a certain kind of vehicle is not a reliable indicator of one's Christian commitment. On the other hand, maybe he's just jealous. As national president of the BMW Car Club of America, I have seen hundreds of members devote time and effort to raise money and volunteer for charities such as God's Kitchen, the American Cancer Society, the Brain Injury Foundation, etc. Ask me about the Connecticut Valley chapter that raised money to provide a support dog for a handicapped little girl, or the Chicago chapter that has contributed thousands of dollars to Make A Wish. Yes, a real bunch of self-centered heathens. Don't tell anyone, but I even know some pastors who are club members.

Oh well, why should anyone listen to me? I've committed Tony Campolo's Unpardonable Automotive Sin.

*Bailey Taylor
Mount Washington*

Clear Creek's vision

Being a graduate of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, I believe being there was the greatest years of my life. The school had one goal, to

teach preachers and train others for the ministry. Is Clear Creek losing its vision for training people for the ministry? Have they set their goals on being accredited as a liberal arts school?

I agree with the five professors who were against this move but may have been hushed by a constitution of the school: That they had to go along with the trustees. The school's leaders need to pray and visit the other schools that have gone to liberal arts. Is the Bible now their main focus?

I am very proud of Clear Creek. My daughter went there and I recommended others to go there.

Please write the school and let the trustees know that we have enough liberal arts schools. Pray that it goes back in the direction in which it began and was founded upon: Training people for the ministry, to go out into the world and not to bring the world into the school.

*Alonzo J. Dixon
Beattyville*

Silent ministry

When my wife, Charlotte, died in 1953, my two small sons and I rode in a limousine from the funeral home to St. Matthews Baptist Church for the funeral service.

At the church, a lone figure, an elderly man, opened the car door for us. After the service, that same elderly man opened the door for us again. No word was spoken. A few months later, he died.

That "doorkeeper" was William Owen Carver, who was 85 years old and ill. He had ventured out to share his love and care for a bereaved colleague and family.

Carver was one of the most brilliant members of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty. He was the founder of the first department of missions in a seminary in this country. He was a person who cared for his colleagues, not just in word but in deed.

When I moved to Louisville in 1951 and joined the faculty of Southern Seminary, Dr. and Mrs. Carver were the first to visit us in our home. My first wife, Charlotte, and second wife, Helen, were friends of the Carvers for as long as they lived.

Mrs. Carver knitted a little cap for Charlotte's forthcoming baby who died with her in Baptist Hospital. Along with it was a little poem by Mrs. Carver. I remember the following lines: Purl one, purl two; The little cap is done.

Today, Carver is being charged with "theological apostasy" for undermining the Calvinism of the founding fathers of the seminary. How glad we are that Carver rejected the Calvinistic theology of Boyce and Manly, a theology that sanctioned racism and sexism, assigning women to the status of second-class citizens not only in society but in the church.

Carver's more consistent biblical theology became the basis for the liberation of women and the growth of worldwide missions among Southern Baptists.

*Henlee Barnette
Louisville*

HE SAID/SHE SAID

Fourth of July brings memories of family, fireworks & fashion

SHE SAID



Alison Wingfield

Like many holidays, the Fourth of July brings memories of family get-togethers.

My extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, you-name-it) often celebrated the Fourth either at my parents' or my grandparents' house. One of my most vivid memories is of everybody sitting on my grandparents' old-fashioned hand-crank ice cream freezer, taking their turn at cranking. As it got harder and harder to turn, my Dad, Granddad or one of my uncles would have to do the honors.

The great thing about July 4 in New Mexico was that, unlike Kentucky, you can be outside without being miserably hot and sticky. My more recent memories of July 4 are understandably tainted with thoughts of mosquito bites and unbearable heat.

Speaking of heat, I'm sure we did a lot of stupid things with fireworks (or at least my brother did). All I remember is sitting on the front lawn at my grandparents' house watching the fireworks the older kids and grown-ups set up in the street. After the appropriate "Ooos and Aaahs," I was ready for the sparklers. I used to spell my name and make as many designs as I could before the stick burned out.

I love watching the Boston Pops on July 4, because they play the wonderful patriotic tunes, that, at any other time of the year might not affect me that much, but choke me up with emotion on this one night.

What is it about fireworks that mesmerizes us? Even watching on TV, my emotions stir at the sights and sounds. Wow! Maybe fireworks gives us a small inkling of what it will be like when Jesus returns in a "cloud of glory."

HE SAID



Mark Wingfield

The main association I have with Fourth of Julys past is times when I've been in some musical group doing a special Independence Day presentation. The sad truth is that few people look good decked out in red, white and blue.

Looks good on the flag, but it loses something when translated to polyester blouses, shirts, pants and skirts. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I've worn straw hats, styrofoam hats intended to look like straw hats and even red, white and

blue scarves in such pageants of independence.

A sidenote here is that 1976 was sort of July Fourth all year long. I was in a school singing group that spent the entire year performing a sweet little musical about the founding of America for every civic organization in town. And, yes, we wore red, white and blue. Just imagine teenage boys wearing red neck scarves. Years of therapy probably couldn't undo scars of this stripe.

The other place where I've noticed it seems like the Fourth of July all year long is that stretch of Tennessee that borders Georgia and Alabama. Have you ever seen such big fireworks stands in all your life? And who do they sell all those fireworks to the other 11 months of the year?

It's true, though, that fireworks are the quintessential symbol of July Fourth. You can tell a lot about a person's personality by watching fireworks with them. Some people Oooh and Aaah at every little sparkler; you'd think they've never seen so much as a lit match before.

Others of us aren't so easily impressed. I reserve my admiration for the whopper displays. If it doesn't erupt in three colors cascading like a waterfall or spelling out words, it's not worth seeing.

But isn't that what makes America great? We're free to offer something for everyone, and everyone can like or dislike what they will.

Thank God we have something so great to celebrate.

TV ratings system fails to stop violence

Here's the latest news from Hollywood: The new ratings system intended to help parents know what shows their children should watch isn't working.

Actually that's hardly news, because it should not come as a surprise to anyone that this voluntary, blip-on-the-screen ratings scheme never was intended to help. Many television critics, children's advocates and religious leaders predicted as much when the new system was announced last year.

But now we have hard evidence, in the form of a study done by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center. The study found that neither parents nor television stations know how to use the system.

For example, three-fourths of the programs that should receive an "FV" rating, for three or more scenes of fantasy violence, don't get it. Once again, that shouldn't be surprising, since the people who determine the ratings are the same people who produce the shows and sell advertising on them.

One of the researchers on the study summarized the problem well: "What producers are doing here is they're all pretty much using their own standards of what is violent and what's not." Obviously, the adults who create these shows have a much higher threshold for what constitutes violence than professionals who know something about child development.

After a year of gun violence in our public schools, what additional evidence do we need that our culture is sending children all the wrong messages about how to deal with anger and how to solve problems?

But the blame must not fall entirely on Hollywood. The fact is, lots of children must be watching these violent shows or they wouldn't still be on the air.

The question is, why are so many children watching this rubbish? Is it because their parents can't understand the new ratings? Not likely.

Some parents don't care. Others haven't stopped long enough to think about the impact TV has on their kids. Some are too dependent on TV as a babysitter to worry about program content. And others have just caved in to the peer pressure their children feel; if everyone else is watching it, it must be OK.

Further, it's not just TV that's the culprit. Video games are the often silent co-conspirators in this assault on children. The object of the vast majority is to see

how fast and how frequently you can maim, kill or blow to smithereens an opponent.

Why can't we see that this repetitive cycle of pounding, shooting, squashing, hitting, stomping and chomping stimulates a child's brain with rewards for violent behavior? The message isn't even subtle, yet most adults act as though these video games have some intrinsic educational value. The only thing most teach is violence.

So what does all this have to do with Christians and the church? Here are several connections:

■ Jesus himself taught us the importance of caring for children. And this is a message found throughout the Bible. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," Proverbs warns us.

■ The way of Christ is the way of love, not the way of violence and aggression. It is our responsibility to teach children the way of love from birth on.

■ Parents are struggling for help today. They need not only advice on how to raise children but encouragement to follow through. The church should be a place where constructive help is given to withstand the pressure to conform to our culture's violent ways.

■ At the same time, the church must be an authentic voice that applies this gospel help with precision. This is not a call to return to the old days of preaching in vague generalities against the evils of television and movies. The medium itself is not evil; what we allow to be done with it can be.

■ We must realize that the consequences of failing to act are far-reaching.

Remember the old TV commercial against drugs, the one that showed a raw egg and then that same egg frying in a skillet? The caption for the egg was "This is your brain." The caption for the egg frying in the skillet was "This is your brain on drugs."

Perhaps we need a knock-off on this ad to help parents and other caretakers understand what age-inappropriate TV shows and movies will do to a child's mind. "This is your child's brain. And this is your child's brain influenced by TV violence."

Or actually, since our children are our future, the caption should be "This is our future. And this is our future shaped by TV."

— Mark Wingfield

What must I do to inherit eternal life?

By Kevin Ezell

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25)

A very educated and religious man asked this question of our Lord: What must I do to inherit eternal life? It's an intriguing question because you don't do anything to inherit something, except wait.

Perhaps he was asking, "How do I know that I am in the family?" or "How do I know that I am in line to inherit the Kingdom of God?"

I think he had his argumentative ducks all in a row and was attempting to set Jesus up. This expert in the Old Testament was mentally salivating at the juicy prospect of this opportunity to expose his brilliance.

Jesus responded to his question with a question when he said, "Well, you're the expert in the Bible, what

does it say?"

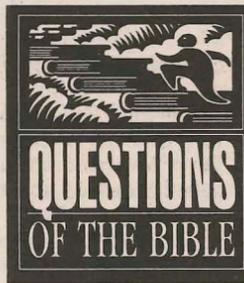
How disappointing an answer this must have been to the man. He was looking for stimulating and dazzling discussion, and Jesus asked him a

question that any 6-year-old kid in the county could have answered. There was nothing for him to do but eat his crow and blurt it out: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your

neighbor as yourself."

Jesus said, "That's a good answer, do that and you will live." The law expert realized he had sprung his own trap. He was like a schoolboy who had made up his own test and flunked it. But he did have a quick mind and, acting as though this was the way he was headed all the time, he looked bemused, winked at his friends and asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

Salvation is a precious gift that God has sovereignly initiated and



completed. We do not merit or earn this inheritance, but graciously receive it. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

God demonstrated his love toward us and we are to in turn love him supremely and love our neighbor as much as we love ourselves. No one can love like this without the help which God gives through faith in Christ. God's people do not have to learn a list of rules or face prophetic judgment. We have to let God plant his love so deep within us that we respond to every situation in love, seeking God's will and the best for those around us. Acting in self-giving love is obeying God. As we act in love, we will fulfill the law's deepest demands.

Jesus' command to love God means to esteem God, regard him above all else, give him unchallenged first place and give his claims unquestioned priority. How thankful we should be for the inheritance of eternal life.



Kevin Ezell is pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville.

'Submitting graciously': What would Jesus do?

Editor's note: The article at right is an abstract of a sermon preached by Pastor Leslie Hollon at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville on Sunday, June 21. The sermon text is Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-6:4.

MINISTERIALLY SPEAKING

"This passage, which was meant to be a passage of liberation and hope for family life, has been abused. Paul's own words, inspired by God, were kidnapped and taken to mean something they were never meant to mean."

The Apostle Paul, a great leader of the church, wrote letters about how we are to live as Christians. There is a caricature that went around American circles a few years ago about Paul arriving at port, greeted by women with posters saying "Male Chauvinist Pig" and "We're for Women's Rights" and "Down with Paul." He got off the boat snickering, "So I see you got my letter."

Well, it would be more accurate if we said, Paul, getting off the boat and with the sense of humor that keeps us all sane, said, "I see you got some people's interpretations of my letters. Oh, well, let's talk about it." And they would do it.

"The word of God is so quick and alive and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing asunder soul and spirit, bone and marrow." So said the author of Hebrews. And it is true. The word of God which is Jesus Christ, the word of God which is Scripture, really is a good word from God for our lives.

My commitment as pastor is to let God's word be that which shapes my life, that I'm underneath the lordship of Christ. I'm to be obedient to God's ways and to God's word and to the best of my humble abilities let this word be shared. It is my responsibility not to simply see the Scriptures as a 43-year-old white American male who grew up in a small Texas town.

You see, I would miss so much of the gospel and I could lead you astray if I only saw what comes naturally to me out of my own cultural experience. Since we all are shaped by culture, we always have to work hard to be aware of how our culture influences how we read the Bible. Always we need to be who we are where we are as Christ Jesus is working in our lives.

But this Bible is more than any one perspective in knowing how to interpret it. One can't come to the Scriptures and read it as a feminist and get the whole gospel. One can't come to the Scriptures and read it as a fundamentalist and get the whole Bible. One can't come as whatever and get all of God's message.

It is a word that is quick and powerful, and as God shapes and grows us, God also creates awareness for us of a filter across our eyes that distorts or blocks some of the meaning from us. Haven't you had that experience?

For instance, you may have read the Good Samaritan story all your life. But every year or so something new catches your eye. Same words, but as you were ready the Holy Spirit showed you something which had been there all along. The story didn't change, but your ability to grasp it had grown.

Nowhere is this more true than understanding the letters of Paul. Nowhere is that more controversial today in America than the story in Ephesians 5. Today's sermon is more than simply a response to a statement passed by a vast minority of Southern Baptists in Salt Lake City as they amended the "Baptist Faith & Message."

Much in that article on the family was good. We live in a time when what the world needs is for our local churches to stand up, stand out and speak forth. To write and to talk and to live in such a way as to create a model, a liberating model of being in Christ Jesus with a biblical understanding of the Scriptures

as we enter the next millennium.

What does all this have to do with Ephesians 5? A great deal. For what Paul was saying is just the opposite of what many people have taught he was saying about submission and about the husband being the head of the wife or the head of the family.

How did this happen? Well, it happened because Paul wrote in Greek, the common Greek of the day. The koine Greek that Alexander the Great spread across the Mediterranean world through all his conquests. Paul wrote in koine Greek, and there was an understanding to his Greek audiences of what the Greek words meant.

Some people today, instead of interpreting Paul in the Greek of his day, interpret Paul through the views of Aristotle, who lived 400 years before Paul and had a very different view of women than Paul. Aristotle was scintillating in much of his thinking but also was very wrong in much of his thinking, including his view that women were inferior to men. Aristotle maintained the belief, held by the influential city of Athens, that women simply can't cut it equal to men.

Demosthenes, who was the great speaker of Athens during Aristotle's day, said all women are good for is to be prostitutes, courtesans and wives to raise the legal children. Women were not to be educated. They were not to be respected in their gifts or their talents. They were not to be seen and not to be heard.

Pericles, the great leader and founder of much of the building program in Athens, such as the Parthenon, believed the very same thing about women. In the culture of Greece, which Athens helped dictate, women were considered not having legal rights or intellectual rights.

So Paul comes along and gives a liberating word to women in particular and the family in general. But his message was so challenging to the dictionaries of the day and the cultures of the day, that the meaning of his words got changed.

In Ephesians 5, Paul is first talking to the church. He's talking to men and women who are Christians, who are coming out of the Greek culture. They lived in or near Ephesus, where worshipping in the great Temple of Diana was their practice, where prostitution was part of the scene.

He's writing to them and opens in verse 1 by saying, "Be imitators of God." He means don't be imitators of all the idols and don't practice the ways of thinking, feeling and acting which came from worship of idols.

Instead, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

That word "children" applies to all of us and calls us to live in a sense of sacrifice, of awareness of how God gave in sacrifice to us.

Jesus Christ gave his life so that we might live. It required his actual life on the cross. In Luke, Jesus said, "I have come to seek and to save the lost." He came as "a ransom and a gift for many," according to Mark. So Paul is highlighting Christ. Christ is the one Lord, the one person we all are to submit to as Lord.

In verse 21, Paul says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." To everyone he says to submit to Christ

and submit to one another, like carrying one another's burdens.

Then he uses these words, "Wives submit to your husband as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church." There are two key words I want to focus on, "head" and "submit."

The word "head," used when describing who was the most important or who came first, was "arche." Archeology, being the first or archbishop or archangel, that which is most important. So when Greek writers, including Paul, were wanting to communicate who was most important, they would use "arche," pronounced "arkay."

But Paul deliberately doesn't use that word for head. He uses a different word, "kephale," pronounced "kefalay." This word doesn't designate the boss, the director or who is most important. This is the word for one who clears the way, like a soldier going into battle. The first one who helps to make it possible for others to come. It is a term of equal importance. Everyone is of equal importance, of equal value and has equal importance of responsibility. One is not designated as the director for everyone else.

This was a radically different teaching than Aristotle's approach, which so shaped the Greek culture, where the men were to be the rulers over women, husbands the rulers over the wives.

Husbands in a Christian marriage and family do have the responsibility to help clear the pathway so each one in that family may have a life of blessedness. The husband helps clear the way by setting values and standards that allow the whole family to be influenced by God. That's what Paul is describing.

Paul's inspired message from God challenged the Greek mindset to repent. And the early church, which grew up in this culture, was tempted to tone it down. Not in the first generation, nor the second, but in about the third generation some church fathers began to change the meaning for the words that Paul was using. Unfortunately, the distortion got a boost from the influential Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas, who wrote that a husband-wife relationship is like that of "a master to his servant, insofar as the latter ought to be governed by the commands of his master."

You've heard the phrase, "Let's go back and meet the real Jesus, the original Jesus." In this case, go back and feel the liberation of what Paul was saying in this setting, go back and feel his first words of love.

The word "submission" which Paul doesn't use for the wife-husband relationship is "hupokato." That is the one whom we are to actually kneel before, as to the conqueror, like the lord over our lives. He doesn't use that word here for submission, for the wife to husband, but instead he used "hupatasso" in the middle voice.

This is critically important because this passage, which was meant to be a passage of liberation and hope for family life, has been abused. Paul's own words, inspired by God, were kidnapped and taken to mean something they were never meant to mean.

It's time to have this message freed and to be released from the challenge of what it has altered. So in this gift of covenant marriage Paul is talking about an equal and mutual submission.

There are three kinds of voices in

Greek. There's the active, middle and passive voice. Paul uses the middle voice, and here's why that's important.

As John Temple Bristow clarified in his book "What Paul Really Said About Women," when one says you teach, that's active. When you say you were taught, that's passive. But if you say you were teaching yourself, that's a middle voice. You were receiving and you were also doing it. You're receiving and doing simultaneously.

Paul used the middle voice in describing the word of submission of wife to husband. What that means is in a Christian marriage there is to be a mutual learning, a mutual work, a mutual respect, a mutual submission and an equal responsibility.

Now the wife is not to be what the author of Proverbs warned, someone who is as aggravating as a leaky faucet or is filled with an anger that will not be healed. And a husband is not to be a boss over the wife. But they are to help each other to complete the vows of "I take you to be my lawfully wedded wife/husband, to love and to cherish, to have and to hold from this day forth, for better, for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and health till death do us part. Forsaking all others, unto you I commit my love."

These vows, used in our American wedding, are words of equality and equal commitment. As the husband is to lead the way of a model, and as a husband and wife work together for mutual empowerment and as the husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church, the family is freed to work from the powerful model of knowing and loving each other.

We all have a responsibility to correct someone who is leading the wrong way, clearing the wrong path. In family life, we have the responsibility of helping each other see the truth.

When a couple are parents, they are to be the leaders in the family through love and moral living. They are to help empower the children, by encouraging them to grow in Christ and make moral decisions. This way of parenting forms a covenant with the children based on love and respect.

That's what Christ did for the church. It was Christ's involvement which birthed the church, and family is a microcosm of the church via Paul's example.

The family, in Greek culture, was not taught to love ("agape") each other. Paul's language called for a family revolution. Truly loving each other, truly respecting each other and truly working on each other's behalf was to be the family way for Christians.

Some of what's happened through the ultra-right's conservative language is for a good reason. They fear that the biblical values are going to be lost. For what we see so often in the American family is a tug-of-war, a power struggle where the husband is on one side and the wife is on the other side and the two are pulling in opposite directions.

But the cure comes from the work of love and wisdom as seen by Paul and not Aristotle. Mutual submission pulls together a husband and wife to the same side.

God's word is good, and God's ways are the best. As we travel in God's ways we learn the answers to "What would Jesus do?" Jesus would love the people of the church and the family. Are we to do any less?

RESOURCES

CHURCH

Avoid a summer slump; plan for summer jump

By Doug Strader

Most churches are about to complete the first half of their budget year. This is always a good time to take a look at how well the church is doing financially. Many churches subconsciously plan for a "summer slump." Since most people live up to, or down to, expectations, a summer slump easily becomes a reality. However, the "summer slump" can be avoided with proper planning, much work and a healthy prayer life.

Since most churches have their budget promotion or emphasis in the fall, it has been seven or eight months since stewardship has been highlighted. The summer provides an excellent time to once again give stewardship a boost. Vacation Bible school and many youth activities usually take place in the summer, providing a wonderful opportunity for highlighting these and other ministry benefits provided by the gifts of faithful stewards.

The summer offers a good time for the church to say "thanks" to all the people who have been faithful stewards this budget year. It also is a good time to teach stewardship to new church members. All new members do not automatically begin to give a tithe. Do not assume that all new members understand the biblical teaching of tithing, or the way your church finances ministries. While teaching stewardship/tithing to new members, many of the older members will benefit as well.

If receipts have fallen behind budget for the year, have a special "budget catch-up Sunday" and ask all members to make a sacrificial offering on that day. The pastor could preach a sermon on sacrifice; the children, youth and adults could study a Sunday school lesson on sacrifice or tithing. Lessons can be ordered from the church stewardship services office of LifeWay Christian Resources. Stewardship testimonies could be given by some of the members during the worship services.

Do not plan for a slump during the summer, rather, plan for a "summer jump." Challenge the people to be faithful during the summertime, plan some special activities and ministries that will call for commitment on the part of the entire congregation.

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



Q. As a Christian, I know I shouldn't be afraid of death, but I am. I think about it constantly. What is wrong with me?

It might help if you can determine if you are afraid of death, or if you fear how and when your death will come. As senior adults we often see the physical pain and emotional depression that comes before a person dies, and we do not want to see ourselves in these situations. Perhaps because we have been blessed with long life, we want to hold on as long as we can. Related to that could be the realization that we have not accomplished all those goals and dreams we set for ourselves along the way.

Another possibility is that you are not so much afraid of your own death, but the death of your mate or your friends, and you fear the loneliness that will result.

I urge you to seek help from your pastor or some other counselor who is a Christian. They can help you discover the reason for your fear and help you find some relief from the mental anguish you are facing.

Hold on to this verse from Psalm

34:4: "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." — Al Shackelford

Q. My husband and I are in our 60s and would like to help out with single adults. In what way could we really make a difference?

Scripture is very strong that the church should care for those with pressing needs. The groups specifically mentioned several times are "widows and orphans in distress" (James 1:27). Today's single-parent families often have many of the same needs that widows and orphans of the first century had.

"Para-parenting" ministry takes place when help is given to single parents in a variety of ways. In his book "Helping Single Parents with Troubled Kids," Greg Cynaumon offers many resources for this type of ministry.

In a well-organized matching system, interested people like yourself complete forms giving your interests and hobbies and other pertinent information so that you can be matched to the appropriate single-parent family.



There is an agreed term of a six-month commitment to spend some time each week with the single-parent family.

Another avenue would be to work among unmarried mothers who have chosen not to have abortions. This is an excellent way to be "pro-life" beyond the birth of the child, as you care for a new family unit, modeling Christian love through child care, Bible studies, aerobics classes or any number of ways to meet the needs of young women in distress.

Finally, I suggest you find a way to mentor young adults. In the transient world we live in, most of our unmarried "twentysomethings" would love to have folks in their grandparents' age group who would walk alongside them and share their wisdom. — James Stillwell

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; Susan Howell, assistant professor of psychology at Campbellsville University; 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.

This week's questions:

- I'm a Christian, but I fear death. What's wrong with me?
- How can seniors help singles?

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The right tack: Kentuckians minister at major horse event

Continued from page 1
from others who believe in God.

The conversions occurred June 21 during a musical worship service in Freedom Hall. Dave Davis, who attends Evangel Temple in Louisville, led the music.

Afterward Davis shared his testimony and prayed for those who wanted to receive Jesus as Savior. When he asked for a show of hands, 24 people indicated first-time decisions, according to Martin.

An hour earlier, Martin preached at a worship service, and two women recommitted their lives to God, he said.

Equally impressive was an immediate answer to prayer Saturday afternoon when seven members of Equestrian Ministries gathered for a half-hour meeting, Martin said. During the session, one person asked God to move in a special way during the weekend. Then another prayed God would show his power in an unusual way.

While that group was praying, renowned horse trainer John Lyons was giving a demonstration in Freedom Hall. During his performance, he discussed his Christian beliefs.

Randy Jones, director of the KBC's town and country missions department, was attending the show. He said Lyons pointed out that many horse owners who are Christians probably felt they are alone. To show they aren't, the trainer asked everyone who knew Christ and had accepted him as their personal Savior to stand.

After about three-fourths of the huge crowd stood up, Lyons added, "I don't know where all of this came from. I wasn't planning on saying any of this."

"I told Larry (Martin) and he said that was almost the exact time they were praying," Jones said. "Was that a coincidence or the power of the Holy Spirit? I think prayer impacted Lyons and I know it impacted the people there."

There were other reports of spiritual stirrings during the weekend. Bob Morrison, director of missions for Little Bethel Baptist Association, reported good response to evangelism that weekend at Land Between the Lakes.

At Land Between the Lakes' Wranglers campground, several equestrian groups stage weekly worship services, gospel sings and other events.

"Bob said he feels we've turned the corner from being an event to being a ministry," Martin said. "One woman there recently asked if she could join. She was coming up every weekend and it was church to her."

Several visitors to Equestrian Ministries' booth commented on the need for this outreach, including Carrie Hershberger of Miami. A Christian school teacher, she said most of her contact with non-believers comes through a trail riding club.

"I'm encouraged by this," said Hershberger, a member of First Baptist Church of Westwood Lake, Fla. "The horse industry needs the stabilization of Christian influence. There's so much 'dog eat dog' out there."

Len Yule, a professional trainer and saddle maker, said he tries to share his faith as a natural part of his conversations with other horse owners. "I think it's important Christ's will be yours," said Yule, a member of Carrollton Methodist Church. "If there's any reality in your life, it will come out. If Christ is in you, it should be obvious."

Shelbyville residents Reed and Mary Birtles, two of the 12 volunteers who worked at the booth, like the ministry's non-sectarian makeup. The couple attend the inter-denominational Living Waters Church. Birtles serves as Equestrian Ministries' secretary-treasurer. They own a horse farm where they mix gospel presentations with riding lessons. They also offer a summer camp for poor children who have not had an opportunity to ride.

Equestrian ministry is a wide-open field, Mrs. Birtles said, encompassing trail riders, rodeo clowns, hunters and jumpers, and other specialized show events.

"The common interest here is horses, which serves as a springboard to minister," Birtles said. "We have an opportunity to talk to people who otherwise wouldn't walk inside a church. There are all kinds of ways to minister besides church."

Horse ministries growing nationwide

LOUISVILLE—While Equestrian Ministries International primarily has been an informal network, Larry Martin said he hopes to see more local and state chapters organized in the coming year.

The ministry's board of directors will hold its annual meeting Sept. 17-19 at Asbury College in Wilmore. Expansion will be discussed, including formation of a Kentucky chapter.

Local groups have formed in Louisville, Madisonville, Waynesburg, Greensburg, Graves County and Gray Hawk. Although many started in Kentucky Baptist churches, most are inter-denominational, said Martin, chairman of the steering committee.

"At some point we may have a

national meeting, but that's a few years away," he said. To date, activities have centered around trail rides and worship services. The most active in Kentucky has been at the campground at Land Between the Lakes. Sunday worship services are offered from Memorial Day weekend through late October.

People from 20 states have been involved in Equestrian Ministries, with the most active from Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The latter organized the first state chapter last year. There are also two local fellowships, with overall involvement of 45 families, according to South Carolina chapter president

Phil Bryson.

"Our goal is to train people who have a love for horses in ways to minister and share the gospel with other horse owners," said Bryson. "In South Carolina we have 1,200 horse events a year. We want to have chaplains to work as many of these as possible."

While he hasn't been involved in the ministry, the founding president of the Kentucky Horse Council applauded its influence.

"I've seen changes just in the past few years in the value system of the horse industry," said Dick Lockhart, a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Covington. "There is so much need. I've been around an awful lot of (industry) people who aren't Christians."

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Church gets needed windfall, but it's from tobacco

Continued from page 1
ist Wendell Berry.

Drew's father was just such a tobacco man. He was also a lay preacher and superintendent of the church's Sunday school. Money from his farm helped pay for the church's stained-glass windows, bought just after World War II.

Today, the younger Drew tills the same field his father worked; he serves as an usher each Sunday where his father prayed. His life, however, is full of contradictions that his father never faced. He quit smoking 20 years ago. "I could see it wasn't doing my health any good," he concedes.

But he can't quit growing tobacco. Although Drew plants corn and raises cattle, it is tobacco that keeps his 150-acre farm running.

Williams, who spent much of his childhood moving from Florida to Texas to South Carolina, brings a different perspective. "James wasn't raised up on tobacco," Drew notes.

Three years ago, the would-be minister was working as an account executive for an advertising firm in Greenville, S.C. He and his wife had purchased a four-bedroom brick house in the suburbs. "We thought we would spend the rest of our lives in that house," he says.

Then, he began to feel restless. "I knew I had to serve God," he says. "There is just no way to explain it. It's a feeling you have."

He quit his job and enrolled at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore. In the fall of 1995, he was assigned to Bryantsville United Methodist Church; he also does administrative work for a local retirement community.

Though this was his first ministerial job, the preaching came easily. Before each sermon, Williams would touch each of the church's empty pews. "Lord, do not allow my own inadequacy to interfere with your message," he would pray.

After services, the congregation gathered on the front steps of the church. Drew always strode up to the young pastor and extended a blistered hand.

"Have a good week, James," he would say softly.

The tobacco controversy began last December, when Baker, who heads the church's board of trustees, approached Williams with a letter from the federal Farm Services Agency.

The letter informed the church that the parsonage and surrounding land it had just bought came with a tobacco allotment. Baker was thrilled. "We're going to be able to pay off that parsonage faster than we thought," he said. (At the time, the church owed \$60,000 on the mortgage.)

Williams froze. The church had no business dealing with tobacco, he felt.

Neither the pastor nor the trustees knew of the allotment while negotiating to buy the property. Mary Sandford, one of the sellers, says she and her husband didn't mention it because they thought they could keep it.

Since the church hadn't intended to buy the allotment, Williams concluded the congregation should give it back. Together, the Sandfords and two members of the church went to



"I GREW UP ON THAT CROP" Many members of Bryantsville United Methodist Church remember when tobacco farmers were the engines of the economy and leaders of the church. "To be recognized as a 'tobacco man' was to be accorded an honor such as cultures bestowed on the finest hunters, warriors or poets," says Kentucky essayist Wendell Berry. (Reuters file photo)

the Farm Services Agency to clean up the matter.

The agency, however, had a different view. The law requires that tobacco allotments go with the land in a sale. And in any case, after the sale the Sandfords no longer owned the minimum amount of land required to hold an allotment.

Williams needed time to think the allotment through. So at a church board meeting the next day, he suggested tabling the issue for a few months. The trustees quickly agreed.

"I knew what we had to do," Williams says. "I just had to find a way to explain it to the congregation."

He talked with the church's district supervisor and pored over the Methodist Book of Discipline, a guide for ministers that covers the church's views on topics ranging from alcohol to homosexuality.

On page 176, paragraph 306, footnote 2, he found an answer: "In light of the developing evidence against smoking, the use of tobacco is in no way a morally indifferent question," reads the passage.

"Too often we don't stand for anything anymore," Williams recalls thinking as he read the footnote to his wife, Natalie, a social worker. "The church is different."

His church had to decide whether to lease or sell the allotment before the spring growing season. If it didn't, the allotment would expire and return to the government, which would sell it elsewhere.

The trustees met again in early March. This time Williams said his piece: The church shouldn't benefit from a crop that causes premature death. Initially, no one spoke—not even two church members who had previously told Williams that they wanted to get rid of the allotment.

Finally, parishioner Carmen Miniard broke the silence. Her mother-in-law had smoked for years—and died of emphysema. "The last three years she was just drowning for a breath of air," Ms. Miniard recalls saying. "I love the people of this church. I don't want to offend anyone, but I don't believe the Lord would support tobacco or smoking."

Other church members chimed in. Sheila Price, Bryantsville's postmaster, had already argued with her own husband, a smoker who wanted to keep the allotment. She, too, felt uncomfortable with the tie to tobacco: "The body is the temple of the soul," she says.

Frances Ruble, who could remember a time when their pastor would pray for rain for tobacco crops, thought too much had been made of the health risks. "I don't believe tobacco is worse than alcohol or the pesticides they spray on food," the 77-year-old grandmother told the group.

Yet even she worried that keeping the allotment would drive young people from the church. After all, most newcomers to the area don't make their living from tobacco. They work at the Toyota plant in Georgetown, or in other jobs 50 miles away in Lexington.

No one came to tobacco's defense until Drew, who rarely speaks up at church meetings, rose from his chair. He knew that at least nine of the 12 trustees had been raised on tobacco farms—and that three still received income from farming or leasing allotments. So, he asked, were their tithes tainted because they came from tobacco money?

"I must be doing wrong because I am growing tobacco," Drew said, gazing at his work boots. "I must be committing a sin."

He looked around the room, waiting for someone to take his side. No one spoke. "I was left out there on a limb," Drew recalls.

Minutes later, it was time for a vote. Those who wished to sell the allotment were to call out "Amen." Those who wanted to keep it were to say "No."

Three trustees abstained. Andy Arnold, a retired truck driver, was one of those who couldn't bring himself to vote. "Tobacco is a bad thing," he said later. "But I grew up on that crop. It's hard to pull away from your roots."

Drew was the lone vote of opposition. The church decided it would sell the allotment to a member, rather than offer it to the public. "We just wanted

someone to take it off our hands," says Williams. "It was easiest to just offer it to someone from the church."

Only one farmer had enough time and land to take on the extra tobacco. Paul Ballard offered \$1,800 — what he could afford, but a fraction of its market value. "We would have given the allotment to him for \$100," says Williams.

How does the church reconcile getting paid for the allotment? "We would have given it away, but that wasn't an option. . . . There is no way a farmer would take a tobacco allotment for nothing." And the church didn't want to let the allotment simply revert to the government; that would mean Bryantsville would lose tobacco revenue that some other town would get, the pastor says.

After the meeting ended, Drew climbed into his Ford pickup truck with his wife and headed home. He passed Pleasant Grove Christian Church, a small brick sanctuary with a 2,000-pound tobacco allotment and a sign out front that reads "Forgiveness." That church's allotment, inherited 30 years ago, has never been an issue.

"Maybe I would be better off at Pleasant Grove," he told his wife.

As Williams walked home from church, he had misgivings as well. The young minister had visited Drew when the congregant was recovering from surgery. The two had met over coffee several times. Their families had shared Sunday dinners.

Williams knew that tobacco was the only crop that could pay the bills on Drew's farm. These days, Drew's small crop is barely doing that.

"I felt like I had done the right thing as a pastor," Williams says. "But I also felt as if I had done the wrong thing as a friend."

A few days after the meeting, Williams drove to Drew's mobile home. Drew was eating a bowl of pinto beans and bacon.

"I don't think you're a bad person because you grow tobacco," Williams recalls saying. "But we can't be involved in something that is potentially harmful to the body."

Drew just listened. "I had no idea whether I would see him again," Williams says.

The next Sunday morning, before the congregation arrived, the pastor circled the pews, touching each one. He paused by the third pew, where Drew usually sits, and prayed for him.

Meanwhile, back at his home, Drew prepared for church. He studied his Sunday school lesson at the kitchen table and rose to get dressed. As he slipped on his navy suit, the church that nourished his spirit and the crop that fed his family seemed permanently at odds.

"I guess the people at the church settled the tobacco issue," Drew says now. "Someday, I think we'll regret giving it away. I try not to have hard feelings about it. It's better not to talk about it anymore."

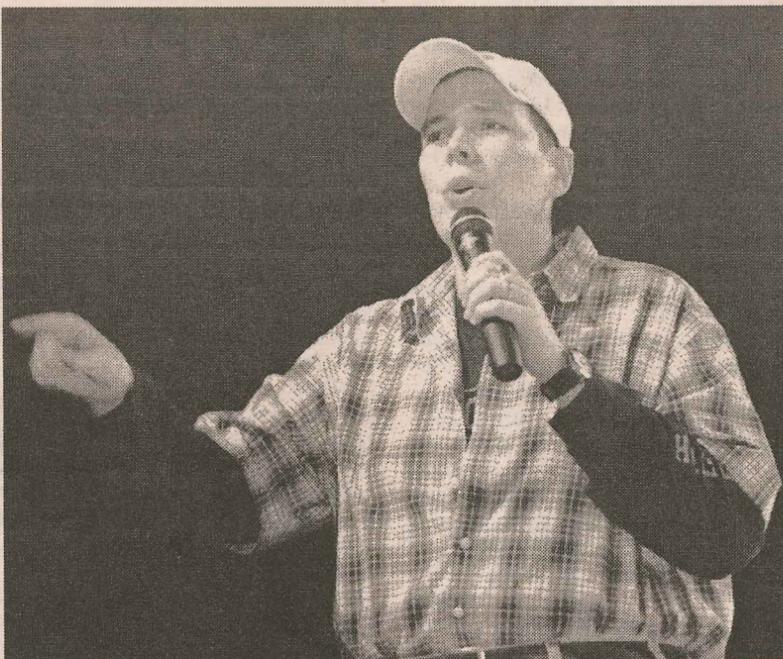
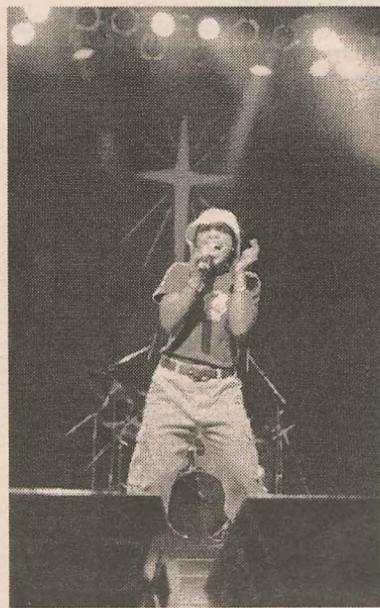
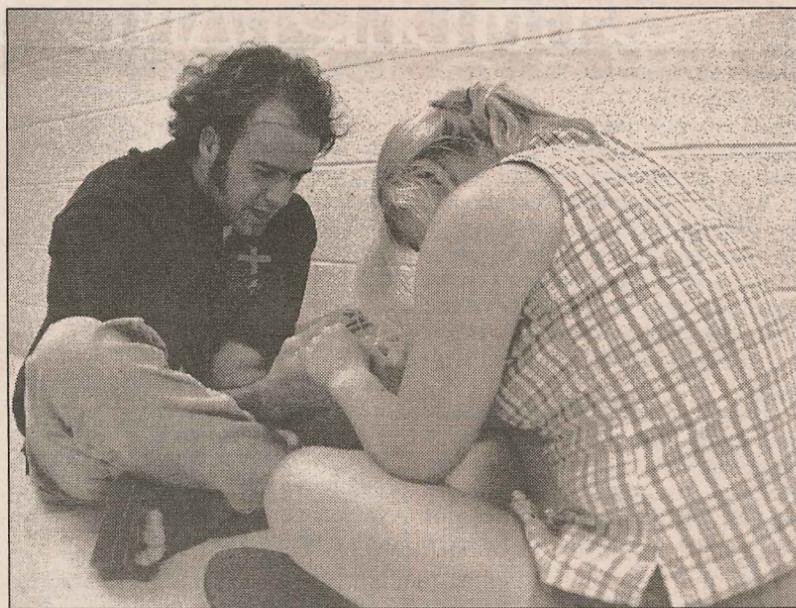
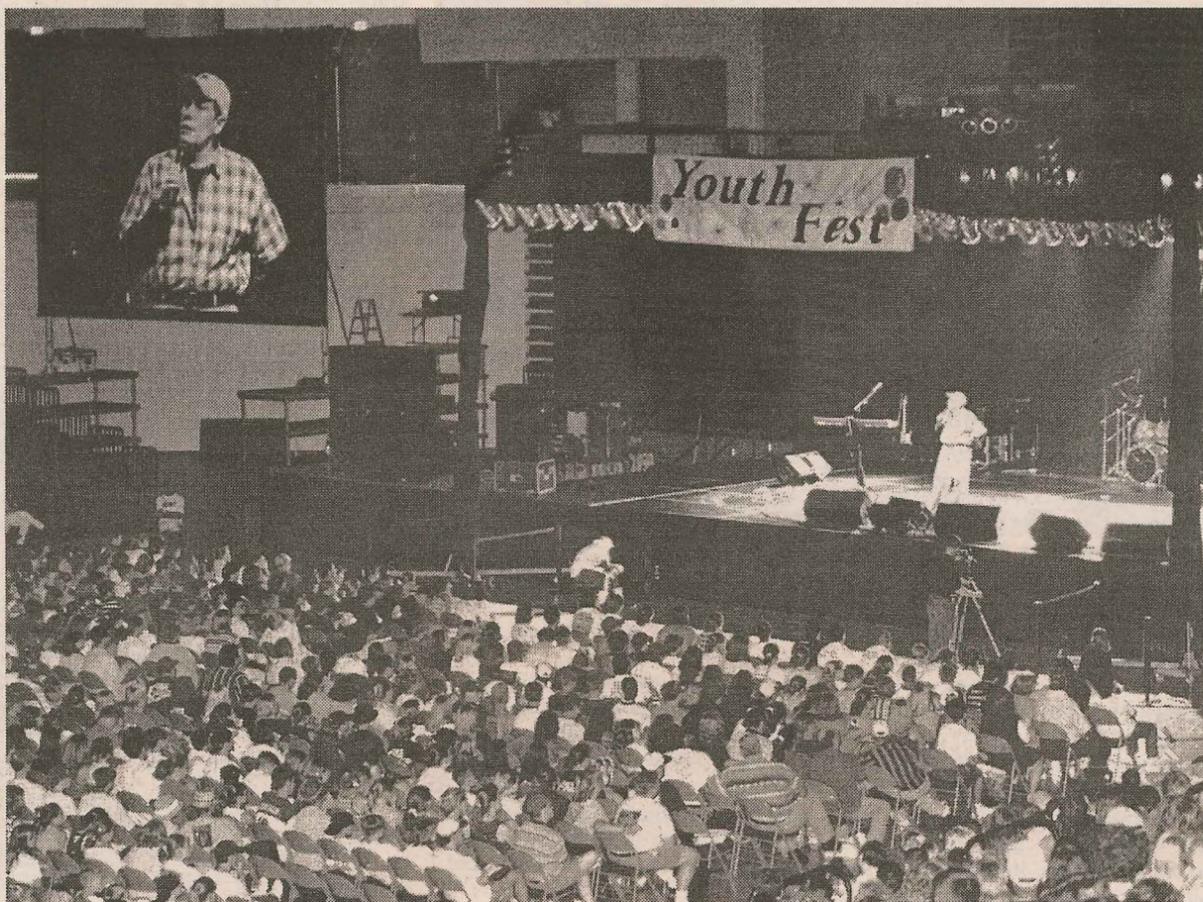
After the service, a handful of church members stood outside on the steps. Drew walked up to the young pastor and extended a hand.

"Have a good week, James," he said.

The debate resonated deeply in a part of the country where some locals say, "Jesus is Lord and tobacco is king."

EVANGELISM

YouthFest '98 urges teens to make godly decisions



YOUTHFEST '98 More than 3,000 people attended YouthFest '98, June 26-27 at Murray State University's Regional Special Events Center. ■ **Top right:** YouthFest was the first event to be held in the new facility. ■ **Top left:** The weekend was high-tech with video screens and loud music. ■ **Bottom left:** Event coordinator Sheldena Johns addresses the crowd. ■ **Above:** Alex Parrish a member of the SonShare mission team, prays with Anna Gray of Bowling Green. A total of 316 teens made decisions concerning their Christianity. ■ **Above right:** Lisa Bragg of the music group Out of Eden hits a high note. ■ **Right:** Oklahoma evangelist Dave Edwards encourages teens to make godly decisions. (Photos copyright 1998 Billy Suratt/Apex Media)

Continued from page 1

tered. On Saturday, Edwards encouraged the youth to ask one question about everything they do: "Is it holy?"

"It may be legal," he explained. "But is it holy?"

New Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Secretary-treasurer Bill Mackey also encouraged the youth to listen to and follow God's desire for their lives.

"Life is made up of decisions," he said. "We learn to listen to God so we can make the right choices. ... Jesus living in you will enable you to make the right choices."

Participants not only had an opportunity to profess faith in Christ themselves but were given help in knowing how to talk to their friends about Christ as well.

This year's conference was high-tech and high-powered. Two jumbo video screens projected everything that happened on the platform so everyone could see. Words to songs also were projected on the screens.

Also, the Son teams performed creative skits and interactive learning experiences throughout the conference. In one skit, three characters named "Tim," "Tate" and "Shun" appeared in the audience. They explained how doing their work of temptation is getting easier with the help of television, movies and the Internet.

The music also was high-energy, ranging from arrangements of traditional Christian hymns to contemporary Christian rock.

Friday night featured the female trio Out of Eden singing tight harmony. They were called back for an encore and sang a rendition of "His Eye is on the Sparrow" that drew yet more ovations.

The conference ended Saturday afternoon with a concert by contemporary Christian artist Clay Crosse, accompanied by the Christian band Sunday Drive. Singing from his new CD, titled "Stained Glass," he explained that "until we let God shine through us, we're not as beautiful as we can be."

He told the youth how he used to be a Federal Express truck driver but had a vision to be able to sing Christian music. He told them that whatever they are doing now, be careful because "things you do one moment can affect the rest of your life. You must consider the choices."

YouthFest is an annual event sponsored by the KBC's evangelism office. In recent years it has been held in Louisville. Previously it was held for many years in Frankfort. This was the first time for YouthFest to be held in West Kentucky.

Event coordinator Sheldena Johns said she was pleased with the results. This was her first YouthFest to direct entirely.

What stands out most in her mind is "the spirit of the entire weekend," she said. "Our kids just seemed to be excited. The adults seemed to be working together to help us do our best to give to these kids what we wanted to accomplish."

Reported by Karen Brown; written by Mark Wingfield

Teacher's firing causes outrage

NEW YORK (RNS)—Some members of Congress and a New York tabloid are protesting that a public school teacher who prayed in class has been treated more harshly than a member of a national pedophile support group.

Mildred Rosario, 43, was fired after a June 8 incident at a Bronx middle school. The teacher was asked by an 11-year-old girl whether the girl's friend, a recent drowning victim, was in heaven, the Washington Times reported.

Rosario, a self-described "born-again" Christian, told her class the child was indeed in "heaven" and also said "Jesus, our Savior" came to "save all the human race."

Ron Davis, spokesman for the New York City United Federation of Teachers, told the newspaper: "She then proceeded to pray, although she told the class anyone

who did not want to participate could read a book or work at the computer. Supposedly she touched every student in the class on the head as she said a prayer."

A June 17 editorial of the New York Post complained that Rosario was treated more harshly than Peter Melzer, a teacher who is a member of the North American Man Boy Love Association. Melzer was transferred to a non-teaching position when his membership in NAMBLA was discovered.

"Guess which one is still on the public payroll?" wrote the Post. "If you guessed (the NAMBLA member), you guessed right."

"This is disgusting," said Sen. Robert Smith, R-N.H. "It's everything that's wrong with our public schools and a perfect example of how we've lost our moral compass."

Presbyterians debate guns & tobacco but avoid sex

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (RNS)—Delegates to the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) took up the divisive issue of homosexuality and ordination only long enough to say they didn't want to deal with it in the coming year.

By an overwhelming margin of 412-92, the commissioners, as delegates are known, rejected a proposal from the church's Milwaukee Presbytery that would have sent to the denomination's regional presbyteries for debate and vote yet one more ordination standard amendment to the church's rule book.

In other action at the assembly, which ended June 20, delegates also called on Presbyterians to "intentionally work toward removing handguns and assault weapons from our homes and our communities" and, meeting in the heart of tobacco country—Charlotte, N.C.—adopted a resolution calling for stiff taxes on cigarettes and strong curbs on cigarette advertising.

The rejection of the overture from the Milwaukee Presbytery—or group of local churches—would have asked Presbyterians if they wanted to remove a recently adopted amendment

to the church's Book of Order that requires church officers—clergy, elders and deacons—to uphold standards of "fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness."

Delegates also called for a national conference of Presbyterians to be convened "to address the theological and ethical issues in the current crisis" over the role of gays in the church's clergy.

On smoking, the General Assembly easily adopted a resolution backing a \$1.10 per pack tax on cigarettes and calling for strong, government-enforced curbs on the advertising, marketing and worldwide distribution of tobacco products, especially to children.

The gun control resolution, aimed at both hand guns and assault weapons, passed by a more than 3-1 margin. It was somewhat unusual in that it called on church members to take action in removing guns from their homes rather than merely calling for new national, state or local legislation.

The assembly also voted to set up a committee to study the denomination's stance on legal abortion and to report its finding in two years.

Court decision on arts cheered

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Conservative religious groups are cheering a Supreme Court ruling that the government can deny cash grants to artists if their work is considered indecent.

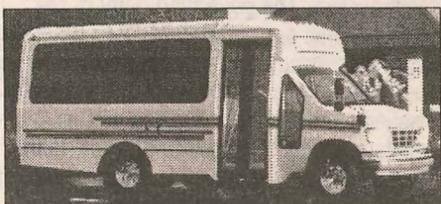
In the 8-1 decision issued June 25, the justices said the policy allowing the National Endowment for the Arts to consider decency when it distributes public money does not violate the free-speech rights of artists.

The law "neither inherently interferes with First Amendment rights nor violates constitutional vagueness principles," wrote Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for the High Court.

She said the law represents "advisory language"—rather than a categorical requirement—that "admonishes the NEA merely to take 'decency and respect' into consideration."

The decision was welcomed by conservative groups who were particularly disturbed by certain works of art, such as Andres Serrano's photograph of a crucifix immersed in urine and Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic images.

The Family Research Council, which generally argues for defunding of the NEA, called the ruling "a step in the right direction."



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Our churches have a real responsibility to produce practicing Christian stewards, but I am concerned our churches are not fulfilling that responsibility as effectively as they should. Too often Christian stewardship has been relegated to fund raising, which focuses on financing annual local budget needs to the neglect of the broader perspective of the meaning of money in the life of a Christian.

The call to responsible financial stewardship is to let God be God in

our lives versus letting money be our god. It's a call to shift our priorities and to change the way we relate to money. The Bible is clear, if we ascribe to money the highest possible value for total satisfaction in life, we shall go through life dissatisfied and unfulfilled. One can not find in money what can only be found in God. Money is a means by which we live, but not the end for which we live.

May our churches be more intentional in teaching men, women, boys and girls how to stop worshipping money and start investing it in the lives of people. And what better way to invest than through one's church and church-related organizations. In that way money is transformed into ministry, and we become a

part of doing for others in the name of Christ what we can not do by ourselves.

If you or your church needs assistance in fulfilling more effectively your stewardship education responsibility, call Doug Strader at the Kentucky Baptist Convention toll free at (888) 254-5708 or me, (888) 254 5701.

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

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Dr. Bob Dunston, Cumberland College, Professor and Chairperson of the Department of Religion and Philosophy; Conference Bible Teacher, teaching the book of Joshua, subject of the 1999 Winter Bible Study.

Rev. Bill Clark, Independence, Ky., Associate Pastor, Minister to Students, Hickory Grove Baptist Church; Conference music coordinator/performer.

Dr. Steve Hadden, Crestwood, Ky., Pastor, Crestwood Baptist Church; Conference seminar leader along with his wife, Joy.

For more information, contact: Rev. Wes Roy, Office of Church Relations, 7934 College Station Drive, Williamsburg, KY 40769. (606) 539-4154.

1998 Pastor/Staff and Family Conference

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Abortion fear kills welfare legislation.** Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., a lead congressional opponent of legal abortion, has introduced legislation that would scrap the much-touted "family cap" in the 1995 landmark welfare reform bill. Smith's legislation was prompted by fears the so-called family cap—the denial of benefits to women who have additional children while on welfare—could lead to an increase in abortion. A new study by Rutgers University researchers suggested that abortions had increased in New Jersey since it imposed a family cap in 1992. "I was saddened and angered over the results of the Rutgers study," Smith said. "But frankly, I was not surprised."

■ **Donation-protection bill signed.** President Clinton signed legislation June 19 protecting charitable and religious contributions made by people who later file for bankruptcy. The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act, also known as the "tithing bill," adds language to the federal bankruptcy code ensuring institutions cannot be forced to give the contributions of a bankrupt donor to creditors. The act also gives debtors the right to tithe and make charitable donations after declaring Chapter 13 bankruptcy.

■ **School prayer appeal rejected.** Alabama Gov. Fob James' appeal of a judge's order restricting prayer and other forms of religious expression in public schools has

been rejected without comment by the U.S. Supreme Court. The court acted June 22 in a case involving DeKalb County, Ala., schools. James—who is in the midst of a tight re-election race during which he has stressed school prayer and other religious issues—had challenged a U.S. District Court decision that overturned an Alabama law allowing "non-sectarian, non-proselytizing, student-initiated, voluntary prayers" at school-related events.

■ **Congress backs education tax breaks.** Congress has passed legislation to give parents a tax break for education expenses, including tuition at religious and other private schools. But President Clinton has threatened to veto the bill. Under the bill, families, employers and others could contribute as much as \$2,000 a year to tax-free savings accounts on a child's behalf. While Republican members of Congress say the measure will give parents more control over education expenses, Democrats claim it will hurt public schools.

■ **Study: TV rating system not working.** Neither television stations nor parents know how to use the new TV ratings system—especially when it comes to reflecting violence in children's programming, according to a new study. Many shows that should receive a "FV" rating—for fantasy violence—slide by. The study also found that while the Federal

Communications Commission requires commercial broadcasters to air at least three hours of educational and informational programming—signified by the "E/I" symbol—most parents did not know the symbol's meaning.

■ **Abortion "North American atrocity."** After first deciding to make no further statement on abortion, the Christian Reformed Church, in the closing hours of its annual meeting, adopted a statement June 19 labeling it "a North American atrocity." In an unexpected move in the closing hours of their weeklong conference, delegates revived an earlier proposal on which they had decided to take no action. But they stripped from it the word "holocaust" as offensive to Jews and distracting to their intent to strongly condemn abortion.

■ **Methodists start new congregation.** A group of disgruntled United Methodists who boycotted their Nebraska church after the pastor performed a same-sex union ceremony last fall have decided to form a congregation of their own. Gays and lesbians will be welcome at the new church, but ordination and union ceremonies for homosexuals will not, said Mel Semrad, spokesman for the 175 parishioners who voted unanimously June 17 to formally end their ties with First United Methodist Church of Omaha by forming a new congregation. About 450

parishioners have boycotted the 1,900-member church since the ceremony was performed last September.

■ **Church unemployment claim rejected.** The U.S. Supreme Court June 22 turned aside without comment a Rhode Island woman's contention that she was illegally denied unemployment benefits after she was laid off from her job with the Salvation Army. The court's action left intact the Federal Unemployment Tax Act's exemption for religious organizations. The act allows states to exempt some employees from coverage, including ministers and members of religious orders, and their employers from having to pay into the unemployment benefits fund.

■ **Lutherans stop condemning Catholics.** The Lutheran World Federation, in a vote aimed at healing a 450-year-old rift with the Roman Catholic Church, lifted Reformation-era condemnations hurled at the pope and Catholicism. The governing body of the international organization of 124 Lutheran churches around the world voted unanimously to approve a statement to be issued jointly with the Vatican on the schism-producing issue on the role faith and works play in salvation. The declaration goes a long way to ending one of the nagging scars of the Reformation, but Lutheran-Catholic unity remains far off as the two churches continue to have sharp differences over authority in the church.

Full scholarship recipients

By Robert Dunston

Three young people from Kentucky Baptist churches have received full Pastor Recommendation Scholarships from Cumberland College.

The scholarships provide full tuition for four years at Cumberland College. Criteria for selection include scholarship and high school involvement, but the emphasis is on Christian ministry in and through the local church.

Laura Denney, daughter of Darrell and Sandra Denney of Whitley City, is an active member of First Baptist Church in Stearns where Thomas Hughes is pastor. Denney has been

very active in the youth program of First Baptist, serving on various committees and providing leadership as vice president and secretary. During the summer months she has participated in church mission trips and in the vacation Bible school of her own church. Denney also sings in the choir and plays the piano when the church pianist is out of town. She hopes to pursue a career in the medical field focusing on children.

Jennifer Dyer, daughter of Michael and the late Rhonda Dyer of London, is an active member of

Corinth Baptist Church in London, where James Blaylock is pastor. Her service at Corinth has included singing in the youth choir, participating in the praise team and creative ministries team and providing special music for morning worship services. Dyer has participated in church mission trips to Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri and

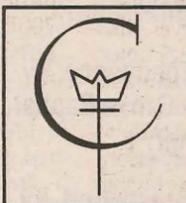
Jamaica. She plans to be an elementary school teacher in the public school system where she can provide a Christian influence.

Andrea Honeycutt, daughter of Roger and Anna Honeycutt of Somerset, is a member of First Baptist Church of Somerset, where Bob Browning is pastor. She is in-

involved in youth council and youth choir but has been most involved in Acteens and Big A Club. As Acteens president she recruited workers, gathered materials and coordinated the program for Big A Club. She is an Acteens state panelist and has been selected as one of the top 20 Acteens in the nation. Honeycutt is undecided regarding career plans but hopes whatever God calls her to, she can be involved in missions.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Kids vs. coffee pots

At one time or another, anyone involved in ministry will be asked, "How do you know if you're making a difference?"

Those of us in the "business" of intervening in people's lives don't have mechanisms or formulas in place that can answer that question clearly.

Sometimes I wish ministry was like making coffee pots: take it home, plug it in and if it works, the manufacturer was a success. Unfortunately kids and families aren't like that.

But on the flip side, coffee pots cannot give testimony to God's love and compassion demonstrated by people who care when they don't have to.

Coffee pots can't do what one of our young men did recently.

Todd (not his real name) attended First Baptist Church of Middletown in Louisville while he lived on our Spring Meadows campus. He was active in the church, volunteering for vacation Bible school, helping out Wednesdays during fellowship supper and doing other "random acts of kindness and senseless beauty."

As graduation approached, and with it Todd's departure from his Spring Meadows and church fami-

lies, so did the groundbreaking for the church's expansion project.

On a Sunday morning prior to the groundbreaking, Todd stood up and told his church how much their love and support had meant to him during his years in Louisville.

Because of that, he wanted to make a gift toward the building fund. This part-time employee of a pizza restaurant gave \$50, and then challenged the other youth in the church to do the same.

"This church has given so much to me, why shouldn't I give something to the Lord in honor of that," Todd said later.

Todd's testimony tells me that Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children works. I know that because this young man chose to do the right and generous thing. A child wrapped up in the shame, self-pity, mistrust and pain brought about by abuse and neglect could not make such a choice.

That's how I know we've made a difference.

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

Great Commission meets golden rule

WASHINGTON (RNS)—It's the Great Commission vs. the golden rule in many countries now opening to globalization, said speakers at an Emory University-sponsored luncheon June 19 in Washington.

Continued religious conflict is virtually assured in Russia and other once-closed societies now opening to free-market economics, they said.

John Witte Jr., director of the Atlanta school's law and religion program, said "the soul wars of the '90s" have seen established faith groups in Russia and elsewhere close ranks against what they see as an "onslaught" of well-financed foreign religious groups coming to their nations in search of converts.

This effort to proselytize has "bred considerable resentment" among the established groups who, because they have no history of Western-style religious freedom, are "not used to competition" and also are unable to compete financially, he said.

In Christian terms, said Witte, the conflict reflects "the tension between the 'Great Commission' (to evangelize the world) and the 'golden rule' (of respecting others)."

Another dynamic fueling religious conflict today is the "intense nationalism" currently prevalent in the international arena, said David Little, a senior scholar at the United States Institute of Peace. Viewed through the prism of nationalism, dominant religious cultures who connect their faith with national identity are prone to seeing religious minorities as political threats, he said.

Little cited the Orthodox Church in Russia as an example.

Jeremy Gunn, a member of the International Advisory Board for the World Report on Freedom of Conscience, Religion and Belief, said an

Russia's religion law challenged

MOSCOW (RNS)—In the first significant legal challenge to Russia's controversial new law on religion, a group of lawyers representing four Protestant congregations have filed a complaint in the country's highest court.

The long-awaited suit, submitted June 10, takes issue primarily with the part of the law denying religious groups in existence less than 15 years the right to do such things as distribute literature or hold services in hospitals, said Vladimir Ryakhovsky, a lawyer with the Moscow-based Christian Legal Center who helped draft the complaint.

The law requires the reregistration of religious institutions in Russia. Institutions that cannot prove they have operated legally in Russia for 15 years are denied the right to reregister under the law.

The first hearing could be in October. "The most important thing right now is that we become one of 500 cases that they consider out of the 10,000 which are submitted every year," Ryakhovsky said.

If the complaint—filed by two Pentecostal, one Presbyterian and one Lutheran congregation—does make it that far, Ryakhovsky said he is confident the court would undo the work of the Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament.

"The Duma is a political body. They didn't have to take things like the constitution into account," said Ryakhovsky. "They can pass a law saying that white is black and black is white."

The court challenge by the individual congregations comes at a time when, on the national level, some of the denominations that had been most fearful of the law have in recent weeks cleared the first big hurdles toward attaining legal status.

Religious leaders have predicted the process in the hinterlands will proceed more slowly because of conflicting provincial laws and local officials who are sometimes hostile or ignorant of the federal law. Such alleged discrimination on the local level provoked the current suit.

increasingly common response of governments aligned with faith groups to bolster national identity is the establishment of "two-tier structures."

Such a system generally requires the registration of religious groups, which, in turn, results in creating a class of favored faiths and another class of groups who experience discrimination.

Such systems—in effect in Russia, Greece and elsewhere, are "clear violations of human rights standards and laws," Gunn said.

Another speaker, Lauren Homer, president of the Law and Liberty

Trust, said education and dialogue are preferable to confrontation in seeking to get Russia and such nations to accept Western norms of religious freedom.

Today, she said, "people in many of those countries (that limit religious freedom as a matter of policy) just don't understand what we're talking about."

But imposing economic or other sanctions—an idea favored by some congressional and religious conservatives—could well worsen the situation by prompting crackdowns by skittish governments, she said.

Saudis allegedly arrest 11 Christians for evangelism work

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Saudi Arabian government is holding 11 Christians in an unknown location, and might be torturing them for information about other believers in the country, according to sources close to the underground church in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Those being held—primarily Filipinos—allegedly were arrested for distributing biblical materials to homes in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, according to Baptist Press and Human Rights Without Frontiers, an international rights agency based in Brussels.

Freedom House, a Washington-based religious rights group, urged President Clinton to get involved in the case.

"Saudi Arabia is a close U.S. ally, and the United States should be making a demarche at the highest levels to protest this outrageous persecution of Christians for religious reasons," said Freedom House's Nina Shea.

One of those arrested was said to be a pregnant woman who "went into labor after being tortured and upon delivery was forcibly separated from her newborn," according to Freedom House, which cited "reliable sources" for the information.

In Washington, the Embassy of Saudi Arabia repeatedly claimed last week it had no information about the alleged arrests.

According to reports, those arrested had distributed 500 packets of Arabic-language "biblical materials" at homes in Riyadh. The materials were reportedly hung on doorknobs early in the morning.

The U.S. State Department, in its 1997 report on religious freedom abroad, said "freedom of religion does not exist in Saudi Arabia," and noted that foreigners who attract attention for non-Muslim religious activities "risk arrest, lashing and deportation."

The report also noted that "most" non-Muslim religious services conducted clandestinely are not interfered with, including Christian services for U.S. government employees and private American citizens held at U.S. diplomatic facilities.

"Every (Christian) believer in Arabia is scared," said Wally Magdangal, a Filipino pastor who was tortured and sentenced to die in 1992, then deported to his homeland.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 1994 Toyota Camry XLE (owner received company vehicle). V-6; power sunroof, windows, locks, mirrors; cruise control; 100,000-mile extended warranty transferable to new owner. Mint condition, 68,700 miles, \$14,000. Call evenings: (502) 895-9594.

SEEKING: Part-time music/youth director for Emmanuel Baptist Church. If interested, send resumé to: Music/Youth Director Committee, Emmanuel Baptist Church, 108 Hillcrest, Marion, KY 42064.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and activities. Growing county seat church with excellent recreational facilities. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Columbia Baptist Church, 201 Greensburg St., Columbia, KY 42728.

NEEDED: Experienced nanny for Louisville family. Avg. \$9/hour. CPR cert., TB test, references required. (502) 423-1562.

NEEDED: Experienced daycare workers. Lynn Acres Baptist Daycare, (502) 363-3300.

SEEKING: Part-time custodian (days). Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway (40214). (502) 368-2521.

SEEKING: Minister of Music. The First Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tenn., is presently searching for a minister of music. This historical congregation has a strong music ministry. This position will be one of six full-time pastoral ministers. FBC is a regional congregation averaging 600 to 650 on Sundays with a resident membership of 1,400. Inclusive in its theology and creative in its approach to ministry, FBC is seeking a high-energy person who reflects this perspective. Applicants should be comfortable with liturgical and contemporary services. Resumes should be mailed to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 401 Gateway Ave., Chattanooga, TN 37402.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director; 15-20 hours per week. Good potential for growth in youth department. Position available immediately. Send resumé to: Russell Cave Road Baptist Church, 3179 Russell Cave Road, Lexington, KY 40511, or call (606) 299-4611 Tues.-Fri., 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

SEEKING: Part-time or interim minister of music. If interested, contact: Parkway Baptist Church, 1915 N. Broadway, Lexington, KY 40505. Phone: (606) 299-8445.

RETREAT: Gatlinburg Waterfall Retreat: Enjoy sight and mesmerizing sounds of 50-foot waterfall from your private 6-BR, 7-bath log lodge. Sleeps 18, plus big carpeted playroom for sleeping bags. Hot tub, 2 Jacuzzis, Kimball electronic organ, 6 TVs, 2 VCRs, ice maker, washer/dryer, dishwasher, fax, Canon copier, 2 fireplaces, Air Hockey, Foosball, Bumper Pool, Nintendo. 2-1/2 miles from water rafting. Church groups, family reunions, singles getaways. Very affordable, unforgettable, heavenly. Owner: (800) 538-6126.

SEEKING: Part-time children's coordinator for Russell Cave Road Baptist Church. Please send your resumé to: Russell Cave Road Baptist Church, 3179 Russell Cave Road, Lexington, KY 40511, Attn: Veronica Tichenor. Phone: (606) 299-4611.

SEEKING: Pastor, Oak Grove Baptist Church, Monticello, Ky. Mail resumé to: Chester Ramsey, chairman, Pastor Search Committee, 806 Spruce Drive, Monticello, KY 42633.

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

FOR SALE: Ninth and O Baptist Church has two organs available for purchase and music to be given to any church on a "first-come, first-serve" basis. Rogers 990 organ recently refurbished with new speakers and amplifier; excellent condition. Rogers 700B organ used in chapel on a limited basis; like new. For more information, contact: Jim Parsons, minister of music, at (502) 636-5576.

NEEDED: Vineyard laborers. Come plant seeds of "love, joy, peace ... and self-control," and watch them grow in children's lives. Make a difference with your life. Come join our caring professional team. Florida Baptist Children's Home, Tallahassee, needs a Christian couple without children. Excellent pay and benefits (base salary for each house parent: \$14,635). Call Doug McWhirter at (850) 878-1458 for information. Pray for us.

FOR RENT: Sanibel Island, Fla., 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo available for vacation rental. Large pool, tennis courts, screened porch, lovely secluded beach, bikes, canoe, kayak. Weekly rates—May through mid-December: \$615. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752 (home), or 897-5079 (office).

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Kentucky construction/evangelism teams in Dyatkova, Klintsy, Kolpino and Gatchina, Russia, June 24-July 7.

■ Wisdom for Ginny Parish in Moscow about what ministries she needs to be involved in this summer.

■ Gallup Hill Baptist Church, Ledyard, Conn., in their search for a pastor.

■ Summer camps conducted by Maine Baptist Association.

■ Summer day camps conducted by Greater Boston Baptist Association.

■ Mike Huffman, Maine Baptist Association director of missions.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ DANVILLE—Calvary Church called Assistant Pastor **Doug Wesley** as pastor. He began his new ministry June 14. Former Pastor **Ernest Martin** retired April 12.

■ LOUISVILLE—Bethany Church ordained **Michael Nicholson** to the gospel ministry June 26. **Bill Groover** is pastor.

Cloverleaf Church will host the Heartland Boys of Nicholasville in concert July 18 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacey** is pastor.

Fern Creek Church ordained **Ralph Beard** to the gospel ministry June 28. He is pastor at Shrewsbury Church.

Jim Cobban recently celebrated 14 years as director of family ministries at Walnut Street Church. Also, **Cathy Heberer** recently celebrated two years

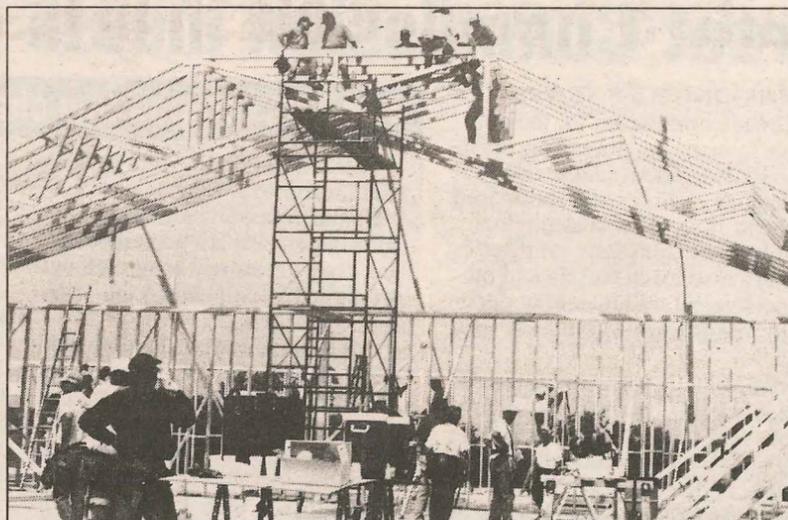
as director of media ministries.

Bethlehem Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary July 4-5. A church social will be held July 4 from 7-9 p.m. An all-day event is planned July 5. Speakers will include former pastors **David Jicka**, **Ralph Hodge** and **Ercil Barker**. For more information, call (502) 964-6403. **Jon Bishop** is pastor.

■ MADISONVILLE—First Church called **Steene Young** as minister of youth and activities. He previously was minister of youth and recreation at First Church in Gatesville, Texas. He began his new ministry June 21.

MCKEE—Old Orchard Church celebrated its 10th anniversary May 3. **Kenneth McCain** is pastor.

■ OWENSBORO—Bellevue Church recently called **David Atcher** as interim music and worship minister.



LOTS OF HELPING HANDS About 130 volunteers from seven states and 20 churches recently helped frame a new sanctuary for Ballardsville Baptist Church in Oldham County. Carpenters for Christ helped start the \$1.4 million structure. Pastor Tommy Purvis said subcontractors will be needed for plumbing, wiring and other jobs before the building is finished next year. (Photo by Tommy Purvis)

Owensboro church helps children's home with work and worship

BRONSTON—Brotherhood members from Yellow Creek Baptist Church in Owensboro were among the volunteers from across the state to help Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children build cabins and lead revival services recently.

The construction occurred at the site of the agency's wilderness camping treatment program in Bronston.

Brotherhood from the church led worship services on the Lake Cumberland property June 21-23.

During the day, Baptist Builders

and other volunteers built three rustic cabins for the 24 young men participating in the wilderness program.

The program uses hiking, camping and outdoor work projects to help young victims of abuse and neglect come to terms with their pasts and find hope for the future.

"These cabins mean a lot to the wilderness program," said George Page, administrator of KBHC's southern region services.

A lodge for dining, group meetings, recreation and administration

was raised in October 1997 by volunteers and is nearing completion. "Without the work of these skilled volunteers, we would be months away from completing this facility," he said.

The combination of work and worship is one that the Yellow Creek Brotherhood have embraced since 1990, according to Mike Melloan, president of the church group.

"It works for us because it allows us to involve more people," he said. "Some people who might not be as gifted in construction can still come

along and help and then be a part of the revival services."

The group has done construction projects for churches and Baptist organizations, such as Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and Oneida Baptist Institute. "Two years ago we framed a church in Corbin and planned a revival for Sunday night through Wednesday night," he added. "On Wednesday night we had church members come to us and say they didn't want it to end, so we had another service on Thursday."

School's out, school's in

Is it really possible that the school year just ended and now we are already back in summer school? Where does time go?

Yes, the students are back. We have about a 10 percent increase in the number of students who enrolled in the summer program. Students attend the summer session for a variety of reasons. The most common is the simple fact that they failed a class during the regular school year.

Though not required, making up a class is often easier during summer school. Many students prefer to take the class now rather than next year when they might already have a heavy academic load.

Another group of students who attend summer school are doing so because they are working for an advanced diploma. In order for a student to receive an advanced diploma, he or she must meet all the requirements for a standard diploma, including algebra 1 and 2 and geometry. They must take an extra year each of science, social studies and the fine arts plus two years of a foreign language. It was my great pleasure to give more than half of the 1998 class advanced diplomas. When you consider that a very large percentage of our students come to us with failing grades, it is really remarkable that so many in the 1998 class earned advanced diplomas.

A third group of students attend summer school either because they would rather spend the summer here instead of at home, or because they live so far away they can't afford to travel back and forth.

The last group of students who usually attend summer school are new students who are enrolling at Oneida Baptist Institute for the first time.

Like the first group, they normally have failed a class or two in previous schools and need to make up the work. But there is a far greater reason for new students to attend summer school. The simple fact is that it is much easier to adjust to dormitory life during the summer than in the fall. We enrolled 62 new students for summer school. During the first two weeks of the fall term, we normally enroll more than 150 new students. It is much easier for our faculty and staff to get to know

a young person when fewer students are here. It also is easier for us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student when we have a smaller group.

Frequently new students come to us with failing grades. We know the vast majority can do much better academically. The question is, which ones are really weak academically and which ones are just not trying? During the interview process I ask students with low grades why they are making such poor grades. The most common answers are "I'm just lazy," "I don't understand the materials," "I don't like school" or "The teachers and I just don't get along." The

challenge for us is to see that those who are really weak get the attention they need; a much easier job when we have fewer students. By the end of summer school we usually clearly understand which students are just being "lazy" and which ones really need the extra tutoring we provide.

Summer is also a good time for new students to get through homesickness while we have fewer students to work with. If we have done a good job during summer school, these new students will have fewer problems adjusting.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Let the fire fall

Fire is a significant biblical symbol of God's presence and power. Second year student Steve Madison prays for God to powerfully manifest himself among youth. That hope finds expression in the name of his weekend outreach work—Fire Ministries.

Madison's life testifies to the power of God. At age 17 he quit high school. His rebellious spirit brought involvement in drugs and fighting.

The night he met Melissa included a major fight that almost landed him in jail. "I told him he had to choose. I didn't want to be part of that," she stated. "Neither would I marry him until he earned a GED."

They married at age 19 and a year later became Christians. God's cleansing fire started to work on Madison in a visit with his grandparents. "I wanted them to meet my new bride. Granddaddy said God had plans for us. We were saved the following week and joined an Assembly of God congregation."

As a grocery store manager Madison paid expenses for the two of them to be "on the road" and lead youth rallies, retreats and weekend revivals. In 1994-95 God took them to inner-city Pittsburgh, ministering

to 200 youth. Two years followed at Pioneer Community Baptist Church in McMinnville, Tenn.

"The youth group exploded in size, and I had regular opportunities to preach. My pastor, Donny Stewart, a Clear Creek graduate, told me I needed more Bible training. I didn't think we could afford school, but Clear Creek's low tuition made it possible," Madison said.

The Madisons anticipate the birth of a child in February to join 3-year-old Jessica. Mrs. Madison holds a workshop position as campus switchboard operator and Madison lifeguards at the family life center pool. They appreciate the great care Jessica receives at the campus child development center.

In December 1997 their account balance needed to be cleared for second semester registration. "I didn't know how we could do it. The Lord came through with a Vance Havner Scholarship," Madison remembered. "We haven't had a credit card in five years. We wait and save, or we don't get it." Lord, more of us could use that result of your holy fire.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Faith & freedom clash in issue of 'preventable' deaths

By Mark Larabee & Peter Sleeth
Religion News Service

OREGON CITY, Ore. (RNS)—Shielded by state laws that are among the nation's most liberal at protecting faith-healing parents, an Oregon church has amassed one of the largest clusters of child deaths recorded among America's spiritual-healing churches.

More than a fourth of the deaths related to the Followers of Christ Church were likely preventable with routine medical care, medical experts say.

Dozens more probably could have been prevented, but spotty death investigations make that impossible to determine.

The deaths of three Followers children this year in Oregon City have rekindled debate about whether laws protecting religious freedom should continue to override the state's duty to protect every child's basic right to life.

Deaths among Followers children in Oklahoma and Idaho also have attracted attention from medical experts and government officials.

An investigation by The Oregonian newspaper of child deaths among the Followers found:

■ Of the 78 children buried since 1955 in the Followers of Christ cemetery just outside Oregon City, at least 21 probably would have lived with medical intervention, often by using simple antibiotics.

■ Thirty-eight children buried in Oregon City died before reaching their first birthday, many within hours or days of birth. Little is known about most of the children's illnesses because investigations of at least three-fourths of the deaths either have been inconclusive or no investigative records exist.

■ Clackamas County (Ore.) officials list 15 infants as stillborn. But doctors don't know whether many of the babies were dead before delivery,

died during birth or took a breath and died later. They say the lack of prenatal care and trained assistance during the deliveries probably contributed to the deaths.

■ In the past 10 years, three mothers in the Oregon City church have died giving birth with only church midwives attending. That's about 900 times Oregon's rate of maternal deaths, according to conservative estimates by the Oregon Health Division.

Children are dying from a lack of medical care in dozens of faith-healing churches in the United States, according to Dr. Seth Asser, who co-wrote a national study on faith-healing child deaths published in the April edition of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The Oregon City Followers have one of the worst records given the number of deaths among their 1,200 members, said Asser, a pediatric intensive care specialist in San Antonio.

Oregon law allows the state to take charge of a child who is known to be at risk of injury or death. But the state's laws are so vague that no consensus exists among prosecutors about when parents can be charged.

As a result, Oregon cases are rarely prosecuted, including the February death of an 11-year-old Followers of Christ boy who died of painful complications from treatable diabetes.

For decades, Oregon officials, Clackamas County law enforcement authorities and Oregon City residents have known of preventable deaths within the church. Records show that as early as 1965, legislators were told of Followers children going to school with poorly set broken bones and in one case of a family removing their child from a hospital.

"People treated the children of religious objectors almost as throwaways," said Terry Gustafson, Clackamas County's district attorney. "I don't think it was intentional on anyone's part. It just kind of worked out



POST-MORTEM QUESTIONS For decades, Oregon officials have known of preventable deaths within the Followers of Christ Church. Records show that as early as 1965, legislators were told of Followers children going to school with poorly set broken bones and in one case of a family removing their child from a hospital. (RNS photo)

that way."

Church members in Oregon City declined to comment.

Since the 1940s, the Oregon City Followers of Christ have worshipped in a one-story, tan church complex that looks like a small school. Most outsiders who know them characterize Followers of Christ members as hard-working, honest citizens who love and care for their families and friends. Yet they live in a separate world.

The only way to become a member is to be born into the group. They socialize only among themselves and shun members who seek medical care or otherwise betray church teachings, even ostracizing members of their own families for breaking the rules or leaving the church.

Dean Nichols, 63, and a former Oregon City mayor, left the church in the early 1960s. Five of his brothers and sisters are still in the Followers, none of whom will say anything more than hello when he meets them by chance.

For Nichols, and anyone else leav-

ing the Followers, departing the church means departing everything they have known.

"It took me 12 years to get my wife and children out of there," he said.

The Followers believe they are the direct spiritual heirs of the Apostles and interpret the Bible literally. When a child or adult is ill, the Followers reject medical care, instead asking elders and church members to pray and anoint the sick person with oil, according to biblical practices described in James 5:14, which says: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

"Faith healing works. There is no question in my mind," said Russell Conger, an elder in the Followers of Christ congregation in Caldwell, Idaho.

The Followers' faith, he says, is "strong to the point of death. We put our bodies as a living sacrifice upon the altar."

"People treated the children of religious objectors almost as throwaways."

Terry Gustafson,
Clackamas County (Ore.)
district attorney

This church is always outside traditional walls

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—On the weekends, downtown Memphis slows its pace to that of the nearby Mississippi River.

Court Square, except for the occasional flurry of pigeons, invites a stroll by its ornate fountain graced by lifelike figures. The park's benches offer a site for conversation and rest.

Visitors are sparse until Sunday afternoon, when Court Square becomes almost as busy as it is during the week. That's when the Church Without Doors meets.

About 150 people gathered for a recent service led by Chris McNairy, former pastor of Westhaven Baptist Church, which founded the ministry. And once again, though rain was forecast, it didn't rain during the service. In the three years Church Without Doors has been meeting, it has rained only three times during the service, McNairy said. That's just one of many blessings God has given to the congregation, he added.

A short message on God's forgive-

ness and his offer of help to humans was presented by another pastor.

After a final prayer, a line quickly formed with women and children in front. Steam rose from a pot of soup on the park's gazebo-type structure which was used as a serving area.

"Thank you" was heard again and again as servers, mainly youth from a local church, distributed soup, cornbread, dessert and coffee. About 20 churches support this ministry.

On any given day, Memphis has about 10,000 people who have no permanent home, McNairy said. Most of them aren't "lazy and shiftless," he noted. They simply can't find affordable housing.

McNairy has met people who are working 40-50 hours a week and still can't find housing for themselves or their families. And many homeless people face problems that are incomprehensible to most people, he added. McNairy has met people who sleep on concrete floors in parking garages and then walk to jobs.

To help these people, Westhaven

started the outdoor church. It may not seem like a church, but it is, said McNairy, because the people who attend "are a part of the body of the Christ." Soon it will be observing church ordinances, taking offerings and planning weekday programs for members.

Many have learned about God or renewed their relationships with God during the ministry, McNairy said. One Sunday a tourist made a profession of faith.

Another day a homeless man whose family had endured much talked to McNairy for more than an hour. A Christian, he finally laid his head on McNairy's shoulder and cried, telling him it had been about 15 years since he had shed tears in someone else's presence.

A young man who was attending a service was helped recently when the congregation was featured on a regional TV news show. A family member in Mississippi saw the homeless man. Through the TV station and McNairy, the family member was able to contact the relative.

Fall won't scare away workers

SALEM, Mo. (BP)—"Run the prayerline, the trusses have fallen."

That call was the first indication to Sandy Bowers, secretary at New Harmony Baptist Church in Salem, Mo., of a construction accident at the church's building site.

Seven members of First Baptist Church of Kingston, Tenn., including pastor Roy Graves, were injured when the trusses fell "like dominos" atop the new fellowship hall.

When it happened, 10 workers were on the 81-foot-long trusses. They fell nearly two stories to the ground. Seven were injured and three received only bruises. Those injured were treated and released from a hospital with various injuries from dislocated shoulders, sprained and broken ankles, cracked ribs to broken arms.

"It was a miracle from God that nobody was more seriously hurt or killed," Bowers said.

"We're banged up a little bit," Graves said, noting those injured "were finding new sore spots."

Even though the trusses and scaffolding had to be rebuilt, the Kingston team used the incident to motivate workers. "We're not dwelling on the accident, but on the providence of God," Graves said, noting that the church looks forward each year to a missions trip and will "not let anything like this keep us from going."

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