

PRactical RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

# WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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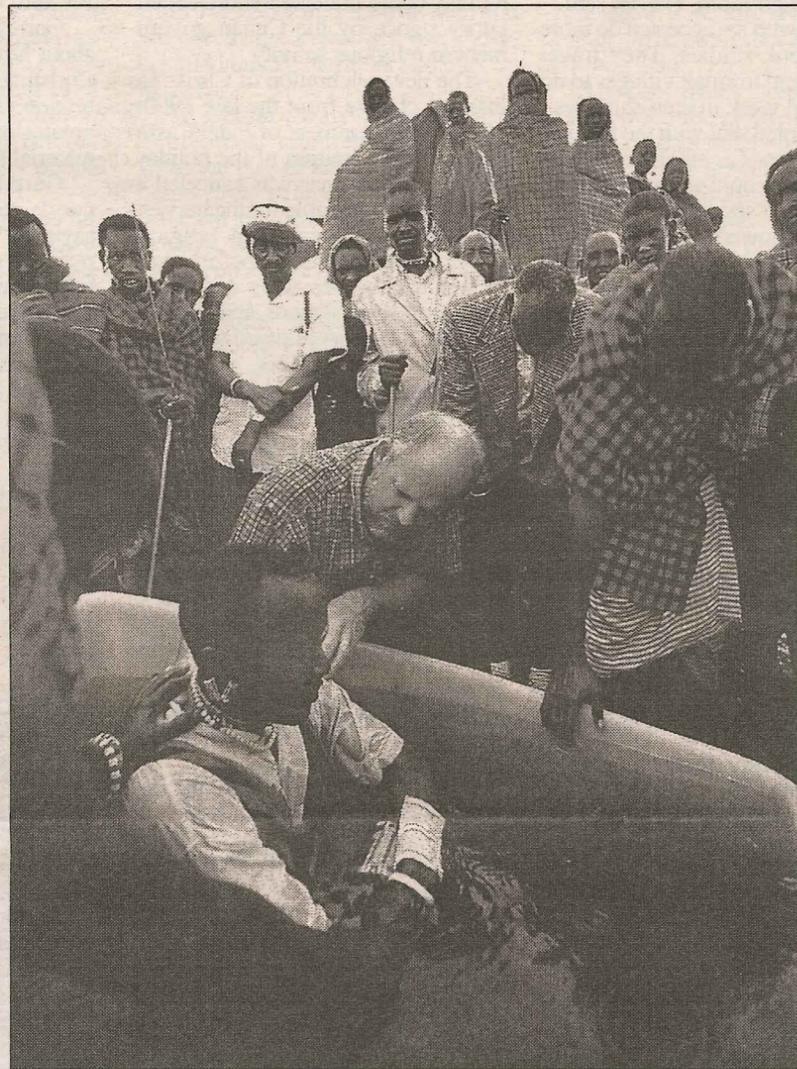
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## Tanzania missionaries see their dedication pay off



**BAPTISM TIME** Tim Tidenberg, a Southern Baptist missionary to Tanzania, baptizes a member of the Maasai people group. Through feeding projects and other ministries, he and his wife, Annie, have seen more than 3,000 people become Christians in the past two years. Kentucky Baptists are beginning a partnership this year with Baptists in Tanzania. See stories on pages 7-9. (IMB photo by Matt Jones)

By Norman Miller  
SBC International Mission Board

MAASAINI, Tanzania—It is a land where distance is measured by time, not miles. Where the only water source is a mountain spring. Where a diesel-powered generator provides electricity. Where the "phone" is a two-way radio. And where the people, who are suspicious of outsiders, speak two languages—neither is English.

In such a land, missionaries Tim and Annie Tidenberg live, work and share the love of God.

Not long after sunrise, their day begins. The generator rumbles to life. Its dull roar competes with the radio's garble as Mrs. Tidenberg fixes breakfast. Eight-year-old daughter Jamie emerges from the hallway, hairbrush in hand, battling the night's tangles. Tidenberg is in the back yard, strapping a bathtub-like luggage carrier to the top of his Nissan Patrol.

A dust cloud trails the Tidenbergs as they leave their oasis of Western amenities in the shadow of Longido Mountain in Tanzania. They're headed for the heart of Maasaini—where they say they see God at work among northern Tanzania's Maasai people.

An animal menagerie that would impress Noah scurries behind scrubby brush as the Patrol negotiates the landscape. The Tidenbergs' destination lies barely 20 miles from home, but the trip to Kitumbeine Baptist Church takes almost two hours.

Beneath the thick foliage of an aca-

cia tree, about 30 Maasai have gathered for worship. They don't stop singing when the Tidenbergs arrive. The men keep jumping up and down, their rhythmic thuds accenting the song's beat. The women's colorful beads and metallic bracelets comprise a jeweled tambourine that keeps time with each clap.

It's just after noon on a Friday, and the Maasai who are Christian preach and pray and sing and sway.

"Sunday's just another day to many of these people," Tidenberg says. "So whenever a group of Maasai Christians gets together, they'll have a worship service."

Soon Tim stands with his back to the tree's trunk and preaches in Swahili. Strains of a Maasai hymn waft in from a nearby valley. The voices grow louder

until members from a nearby church join the service. In small groups they come, bands of Christians from bomas, or villages, in the area.

After a two-hour service, the crowd—now numbering about 150—treks a few hundred yards to a water source. A dozen hands unload the car-top carrier, put it on the ground and form a bucket brigade to fill the make-do baptismal pool.

One by one, 43 new Christians take the ice-water plunge. There's as much exuberance for the last as for the first. Most became Christians through the work of pastors and evangelists trained by Tidenberg. He's having a tough time keeping up with the converts. More than 3,000 people have

□ See *The Tidenbergs ...*, page 7



## Angels losing sacred reputation as secular world embraces them

By Kim Lawton  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Angels have always been important to the stories of Christianity. According to the Christmas story, it was a heavenly host of angels that first announced the birth of Jesus.

But angels aren't just for Christmas—or Christians— anymore.

They've become one of the most remarkable pop culture trends of the 1990s. Long after Christmas decorations are taken down, pop angels will still be around.

There's "Touched by an Angel," the hit CBS television program. There are movies, from "Angels in the Outfield," to "Michael," to "City of Angels"—all stories of angels taking human form on earth.

There are scores of angel books. More than 2,000 angel titles currently are for sale on the Amazon.com Web site. And there are angel collectibles and trinkets, even entire stores dedicated to angels.

Princeton University sociologist Robert Wuthnow said the high interest in angels reveals something impor-

tant about contemporary American spirituality.

"Many people are uncertain about traditional religious teachings, and they may feel for personal reasons that God has been very distant in their lives. Angels are much friendlier. Angels are more approachable," Wuthnow said.

Angels have long been the domain of established religion. Both Hindu and Buddhist cultures have a tradition of winged deities intervening in human affairs. Muslims believe the angel Gabriel brought the revelations of the Koran to the Prophet Muhammad. The Judeo-Christian tradition has a complex theology of angels as messengers and guardians from God.

Likewise, traditional religion has played a role in the mass popularity of angels. Evangelist Billy Graham wrote a book about angels, and the Vatican organized a traveling exhibit of angel art.

But much of the current interest is occurring outside established religions.

Phyllis Tickle, contributing editor in religion for "Publishers' Weekly," said that while the current angel trends

began almost 10 years ago with an emphasis on traditional spirituality, the majority of the interest now has shifted to an alternative, "almost psychic" spirituality.

That's the case for Linda Rose Levenberg, who describes herself as an "intuitive coach." She consults with clients in her home and over the telephone about messages she says she hears from angels.

She also gives free "angel readings" over the Internet, often using her deck of angel tarot cards.

"My philosophy really is that we are all one, that I am a fragment of God, and you are a fragment of God and that the angels are just working really hard for us to embrace that," Levenberg said.

That disturbs traditionalists such as Douglas Connelly, pastor of the evangelical Cross Church in Flint, Mich., and author of the book "Angels Around Us." He believes you cannot have angels without the entire biblical package.

"Angels never in Scripture are independent sources of spirituality. No one in the Bible ever prays to an angel or appeals to an angel," Connelly

said. "It is always God who is the source of the spirituality, the spiritual life."

Tickle argues that one reason for the heavy New Age interest in angels is that many established religions do not emphasize the mystical, spiritual side of faith that many long to experience.

Tickle said she worries about the cultural impact when angels become too commercialized and too popularized. "I think a steady diet of pop angels is very dangerous for a culture," she said. "It domesticates a part of what was divinity."

When that happens, Tickle continued, "angels become a personalized, non-demanding way to not think about the realities of theology."

But others, such as Sophy Burnham, author of the 1990 surprise best-seller, "A Book of Angels," argue that trivialization comes, not from putting an angel on a mug, but from failing to treat angels as a serious spiritual experience.

"The real question is, are they experienced with as much reverence today? And that, each person has to answer for himself or herself," she said.

# BAPTISTS

## Despite challenges, Cuban churches 'vibrant,' Baptists say

**"People are looking for answers to ultimate questions in Cuba. There's a tremendous spiritual vitality in believers. If those two factors could unite, there could be a great spiritual revival."**

Robert Garrett, director of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's World Missions Center

By Cory Hailey  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Christians in Cuba celebrated Christmas for the first time in three years, not with overshopping or gluttony, but with a positive witness of the holiday's true meaning.

That's the report from two Baptist seminary professors who spent a week before Christmas teaching at the Baptist seminary in Havana.

This year, the Christmas holiday was reinstated by the Communist government after an absence of three decades.

Despite the challenges it faces, the church in Cuba is growing and maintaining a positive witness, according to Robert Garrett, director of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's World Missions Center, and professor Steven Stookey.

Part of that witness is celebrating Christmas, not with great physical wealth but in the hearts of the faithful in the church, they said.

"It's a very vibrant church," Garrett said. "There's a newness and freshness about the church."

The growth that Baptists have experienced is reflected in the size of the Havana seminary's student body. With 46 students, the seminary had to turn away approximately two-thirds of its applicants this fall because there was not enough room, Garrett said.

Students who are accepted do more than just book studies. They travel every weekend to small villages to do mission field work in area churches.

Garrett noted that with the restoration of Christmas as an observed holiday, churches could apply for licenses to conduct special ceremonies. Stores were allowed to display Christmas-related advertisements, and employers could give the day off from work, he said. Still, Cubans wondered how far the reinstatement of the holiday would go, he added.

With curiosity in Cuba about the gospel and about spiritual issues, there is great potential for more people to become Christians, Garrett said. "People are looking for answers to ultimate questions in Cuba," he said. "There's a tremendous spiritual vitality in believers. If those two factors could unite, there could be a great spiritual revival."

A Southwestern professor who

worked in Cuba as a missionary agreed that the church is growing despite restrictions on religious activity.

David Fite, who oversees the seminary's continuing education department, said the reinstatement of the holiday could indicate a more conciliatory stance by the Cuban government to religious activity.

The new celebration of Christmas marks a change from the late 1960s, when the government of Fidel Castro ended the recognition of the holiday. Although Christmas was canceled in 1969 to muster people for the harvesting of the sugar cane crop, religious activity was controlled before then. Fite said churches were not closed despite other restrictions, and religious activities still were allowed within the confines of the churches.

It was the efforts of missionaries such as Fite that struck a chord with Cuban Baptists, Garrett said. The Christians he and Stookey encountered in Cuba expressed gratitude for their presence, he added.

"It was rather awesome to realize they identified us so closely with the missionaries whom they remember so fondly and with deep gratitude for their sacrifices in teaching them the

gospel and Christian way of life," Garrett said.

In addition to teaching at the seminary in Havana, Garrett and Stookey also traveled to the town of Pinar del Rio to attend regional meetings of the Western Cuba Baptist Convention.

Garrett said that what struck him about how Cuban Baptists approach Christmas is that, for them, the celebration of Christ's birth is not made greater or lesser by the presence of material things.

Garrett remembered the seminary's rector, Leoncio Veguillo, as saying, "We have always had Christmas and we always will, whether we have a chicken to cook or not, because Christmas is Christ and we celebrate him in our hearts."

Stookey said he was impressed by the fact that despite their dearth of material possessions, the Cuban Christians "have an abundance of spiritual riches. They have a deep, deep faith in God, a deep faith in Christ."

He contrasted it with the celebration of Christmas in the United States, saying the expression of faith displayed by Cuban Christians "is unlike anything I've seen" in America.

## Family amendment tops editors' 1998 news list

By Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—A family amendment added to the Southern Baptist Convention's official doctrinal statement led a ranking of top news stories in 1998 by Baptist editors.

In an informal survey conducted by Associated Baptist Press, editors ranked the June adoption of a family amendment to the "Baptist Faith and Message" as the top story of the year.

The family statement, the first amendment to the "Baptist Faith and Message" since its adoption in 1963, captured widespread attention in national media with its call for wives to

"submit graciously" to their husbands' "servant leadership."

Ranking second among editors was the November constitution of a new conservative state Baptist convention in Texas alongside the moderate-led Baptist General Convention of Texas. Leaders of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention said they would be more loyal to the direction of the conservative-led Southern Baptist Convention than the 2.5 million-member BGCT, which has exerted greater autonomy in response to disagreements with SBC leadership.

Reaction to President Clinton's admission he had an "inappropriate" relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky came in third in the editors' ranking.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Albert Mohler, sparked a debate on local-church autonomy when he criticized Clinton's home church, Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., for failing to exercise "biblical discipline" against its most famous member.

The election of North Carolina seminary president Paige Patterson as SBC president and Congress' rejection of Ernest Istook's Religious Freedom Amendment tied for fourth in the survey.

Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was one of two men generally credited with engineering the "conservative resurgence" which gradually gained control of the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group beginning in the late 1970s.

The Istook amendment would have allowed religious practices that courts have ruled violate the First Amendment's requirement of the separation of church and state. The proposal won a majority in a June 4 vote by the House of Representatives but fell short of the two-thirds vote required to

amend the Constitution.

Rounding out the editors' rankings of the year's top ten stories were:

■ A mandate that current faculty at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary must sign the new family amendment to the "Baptist Faith and Message." Professors at the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, have long been required to pledge to teach in accordance with and not contrary to the doctrinal statement.

Three professors announced they were leaving the seminary, citing the new requirement as a factor in their decision.

■ Republicans and the Religious Right suffered a surprising setback in November elections, losing seats in Congress and key state elections. Many observers had expected gains by the GOP in light of President Clinton's sex scandal and other problems plaguing top Democrats.

■ Some current and former missionaries joined the China Christian Council in denouncing the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's "dual-track" approach in China. In the past, Southern Baptists in China worked with full communication with the nation's official Protestant body. In recent years, however, the IMB has moved into more work with China's unregistered "house" churches without informing the China Christian Council or government officials.

■ Jerry Falwell, a prominent independent Baptist, attended the Southern Baptist Convention as a messenger for the first time. Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church earned the right to be represented at this year's meeting after giving \$10,000 to Southern Baptist causes through a new conservative state convention in Virginia.

■ Passage of a bill in Congress protecting churches against having members' tithes and offerings seized under federal bankruptcy laws.

## Charismatic worship gets church expelled

MARSHFIELD, Mo. (ABP)—A Missouri Baptist association has kicked out a church which split last year over practices including speaking in tongues and being slain in the Spirit.

Webster County Baptist Association voted last fall to withdraw fellowship from Calvary Baptist Church in Marshfield over its charismatic worship practices, according to a recent report in the Missouri Baptist newspaper.

John Shuler, the association's director of missions, said he supported the action, which passed by a vote of 102-2.

Calvary pastor Roger Hicks said the association's vote violated the Baptist principle of local-church autonomy. While Hicks acknowledged his views on charismatic worship have changed, he said they do not violate teachings in the Bible or the "Baptist Faith and Message."

The vote to expel passed with little discussion following a report by a doctrinal-review committee appointed by the association's executive board in April.

The committee said Hicks confirmed that the church accepts speaking in tongues, being slain in the spirit and miraculous healing since a revival last January which he described as a "powerful outpouring" of God's spirit.

Hicks said his views began to change radically two years ago, when a professor talked about revivals in Shantung, China, in a class he took at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.



## Center proud of return on investment from association

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—Talk about a return on investment.

Jefferson Street Baptist Center in Louisville recently used a \$2,500 boost in funding from the local Baptist association to secure nearly \$75,000 in other grants during 1998.

"That's a pretty good return on our money," said Randall Harvey, executive director. "A lot of people would like to do that well."

This 30-to-1 investment also has paid off in human capital by boosting the stock of homeless people, Harvey said.

After minimal increases the previous four years, last January Long Run Baptist Association in Louisville committed to increase funding for the 1998-99 fiscal year, which began Sept. 1.

Harvey said the show of support immediately helped the center secure a \$20,000 hunger grant the same month from the Christian Life Commission of the Texas Baptist Convention.

Half the funds were used to buy food. The other half helped hire a

social worker who helps people develop the skills to become self-supported.

In March the non-profit Coalition for the Homeless gave the center \$20,000 to operate a day shelter from 7-11:30 a.m. It allows men and women to get breakfast, use showers and laundry facilities and pick up mail.

A second award of \$12,300 in September, coupled with \$7,500 from the city of Louisville, allowed hours to be extended to 3 p.m. The program is important, Harvey said, because the area has 11,500 homeless people and only 2,600 shelter beds.

The homeless coalition also gave the center \$15,000 to add a wheelchair ramp to the basement, where the cafeteria is located. Construction should begin early this year.

The increase in funds came as the refined its emphasis. Its mission now is helping homeless people who have mental illness or substance abuse problems.

When Harvey came in 1994, the center operated ministries for senior citizens, youth and children as well

as the homeless. Its social services outreach primarily provided emergency financial assistance for low-income people.

The board of directors approved the change of direction, acting on a consultant's report that stated the center suffered from a lack of focus, Harvey said.

That followed a key change in 1997, when the center incorporated and elected an independent board of directors. All members come from churches belonging to Long Run Baptist Association, so the change primarily was a policy move, he said.

Harvey lauded interim association director Charles Barnes and Ed Boyd, pastor of Chapel Park Baptist Church, for helping steer the center through the organizational shift.

In early December, the center secured additional funding from Seven Counties Services, a state mental health agency.

Under the agreement, Seven Counties will provide an annual \$24,000 operating subsidy, plus \$220 a month for each resident. The funds eventually will increase the

number of people housed there from 14 to 20.

To accommodate new residents, next March the center will begin renovating a large room that currently houses a low-income clothing store.

An agency that does not want to be identified yet has pledged \$50,000 for the work, and Harvey is seeking other sources for another \$50,000.

Another grant expected soon will allow the center to participate in the "white flag" program.

The name refers to white flags that fly from shelters when winter wind chills drop below 35 degrees, allowing increased numbers to seek temporary refuge.

Harvey also said he is pleased about the increase in volunteers who serve meals on weekends and during holidays.

For Thanksgiving, 55 volunteers from 14 churches, five of them non-Baptist, helped serve 210 clients. Those were the largest numbers in the center's history.

"One of the things I'm happiest about is, even though we're separated from Long Run legally, our relationship with the churches has never been better," Harvey said.

**"Even though we're separated from Long Run (association) legally, our relationship with the churches has never been better."**

*Randall Harvey, executive director of Jefferson Street Baptist Center in Louisville*

## 'Shepherd' speaker wants couples to celebrate differences

By Brenda Smith  
KBC Communications Department

LOUISVILLE—The key to making marriages work is to celebrate the differences between partners and not in trying to change each other, says Christian psychologist and pastor Charles Lowery.

Lowery, pastor of Hoffmantown Church in Albuquerque, N.M., the largest Protestant congregation in the state, said that even pastors and their spouses need to hear that message.

He'll be bringing it to that audience as a keynote speaker for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Shepherd in Lexington Jan. 21-23.

The conference, a marriage and ministry enrichment retreat for Baptist ministers and their spouses, recently closed registration after filling up all spots, according to organizers.

Lowery, who laces his straight talk about relationships with ample doses of humor, said couples in ministry face the same kinds of relationship struggles as other couples but might be less inclined to admit that

they have difficulties.

"Most pastors try to keep marital trouble to themselves" because they might be worried about what church members will think," Lowery explained.

Lowery said people often enter marriage thinking about how wonderful their mate is going to make their life but soon discover the differences that make their mate seem "weird."

"We all go into marriage expecting the other person to make us happy," he said. "How do we deal with the reality of two imperfect people getting along?"

Lowery said everyone views the world in different ways but that it is often not until marriage that individuals are forced to confront the fact that other people do not think and feel quite the same way they do.

"It's not just your mate that's weird. It's everybody," he said.

"Opposites attract, but after marriage, opposites attack," he continued. "Most of the time, we are attracted to people who don't have the things that we have. Incompatibility is why we get married, but it's also used as a reason to divorce. In-

compatibility is just a lack of communication."

Lowery, an extrovert, said he finds that if he needs to discuss an important issue with his wife, Penny, it is best to write out what he wants to say. Penny, an introvert, needs time to process the issue.

"If we just try to love (a spouse) the way we want to be loved, we are in trouble," Lowery said. "Unless you communicate, it's difficult to know how to love another person."

Lowery's own marriage is a typical illustration of the "opposites attract" principle in other ways as well.

"Penny thinks cleanliness is next to godliness," Lowery said. "I think cleanliness is next to inability."

But the Lowerys, who recently celebrated their 29th anniversary, have turned their differences into an opportunity to grow and learn, he said. "I'm a lot more organized and clean than I used to be."

The key is understanding the goals for marriage, says Lowery. The focus of one's goals too often is getting the other person to change.

"They may never change," Lowery said. Trying to change someone

often results in stress, tension and disappointment. Such an effort is a power goal, he said, not a process goal.

Power goals deal with things over which one has no control, he said. "If you try to make power goals come true, you will always be under stress."

Focusing on a process goal, however, is likely to produce the desired results, he added. A process goal deals with situations over which we have complete control, Lowery said.

For example, he said, a child might not be able to achieve high grades, but he has complete control over the amount of studying he does.

"Power goals you pray about," Lowery said. "Process goals you work on."

Lowery said he hopes to motivate ministry couples to examine their relationship in a different light.

"When my mate needs love the most is when it's the hardest to love her," he said. "I have a higher commitment to love her because of my relationship with Christ. That's the spiritual basis of marriage—the closer we grow to God, the closer we will grow to each other."

**"Opposites attract, but after marriage, opposites attack."**  
*Charles Lowery, pastor of Hoffmantown Church in Albuquerque, N.M.*

## New video helps explain Kentucky Baptist ministries with Hispanics

LOUISVILLE—A new video describing Baptist work with Kentucky's Hispanic residents is now available from the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"When the World Comes to You" is a 16-minute video produced by the KBC Communications and Media Department.

The video is designed to educate Kentucky Baptists about the needs of Kentucky's Hispanic population and shares how Baptist churches throughout the commonwealth are getting in-

volvement in meeting those needs, said Tony Hough, director of the KBC Metropolitan Missions Department which sponsored the production.

The video offers viewers an overview of the range of ministries being provided by Kentucky Baptists. The most basic ministries provide food, clothing and personal care items. Others offer English-as-a-second-language classes, Bible study and recreation. Still others help establish Hispanic mission churches or fully integrate Spanish-speaking members into

the congregation of an established Baptist church.

Approximately 20,000 Hispanics now call Kentucky home. Every year roughly 10 percent of the Hispanics who come to Kentucky as migrant laborers choose to remain.

"We need to have permanent, life-changing ministries," Hough said. "This video will give churches a chance to see what others are doing."

Hispanic ministries sponsored in the video include those sponsored by South Elkhorn Baptist Church in Lex-

ington; First Baptist Church of Lexington; Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah; First Spanish Baptist Church of Oak Grove; Nueva Vida Baptist Mission in Mayfield; New Life Baptist Church in Mayfield; Pleasant View Baptist Church in Waynesburg and others.

The video can be borrowed from any Kentucky Baptist association office as well as from the KBC video lending library. Call (502) 254-4731 or (888) 254-5713 to receive the video.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## What 'The Prince of Egypt' won't tell you

By Philip Yancey  
*Christianity Today magazine*

Hollywood, having had its fill of religious boycotts, is bending over backwards with the new DreamWorks production about Moses, *The Prince of Egypt*.

I felt privileged to be invited not once, but twice to a private screening of the animation in process—until I learned that several hundred other people had made the same pilgrimage to meet with Jeffrey Katzenberg at DreamWorks.

What an industry! For four years, 400 people, many of them skilled artists, have been working on a project that cost well over \$100 million. They'll know soon whether it will make or lose a bundle. No wonder they want the religious community on their side.

*The Prince of Egypt* is a fine film by any standard and takes surprisingly few liberties with the biblical story. Impressed, I agreed to write a chapter for "Destiny and Deliverance," the book that will serve as a companion to the film, with the proviso that I could write about Deuteronomy, the recap of Moses' life. That book, often overlooked, contains personal outpourings by Moses as poignant and heart-rending as anything in the Bible.

Consider, for example, Moses' depiction of the horrors awaiting those who disobey the covenant:

"Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. ... There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. In the morning you will say, 'If only it were evening!' and in the evening, 'If only it were morning!'—because of the ter-

ror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. The Lord will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you" (Deuteronomy 28:64-68).

As the Israelites stepped across the Jordan River, curses like these rained down on them from a choir standing on a mountaintop. Antiphonally, another choir shouted out potential blessings. In this natural amphitheater, the two choirs loudly vocalized the stark alternatives of obeying or disobeying the covenant with God.

In addition, Moses set up large stones coated with plaster on which were written the words of the law. God longed for the covenant to succeed: "Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!"

Repeated rebellions in the wilderness had taken a toll, however. After Sinai, even God spoke of the future with a tone of resignation, like the parent of a drug addict helpless to stop his own child from self-destructing.

Two staged memory lessons were not enough. Write down a song, God said, and teach it to the Israelites as a witness to history. Laws written on stone and plaster, curses and blessings broadcast from the mountain tops—these sights and sounds will fade away. Make them learn my words by heart. Drill the message inside them.

Thus, at the birth of their nation, euphoric over the crossing of the Jordan River, the Israelites premiered a kind of national anthem, the strangest national anthem that has ever been sung. It had virtually no words of pride or hope, only doom.

When I submitted my chapter to

the readers at DreamWorks, they were scandalized. Why this pessimism, this fatalism, this latent anti-Semitism in a book celebrating the grand miracle of the Exodus? In the margin beside some of the strongest passages, a Jewish proofreader wrote, "Where is this from!?" I pointed out that each questionable quotation came directly from Deuteronomy, part of the sacred Torah.

Modern readers, excited by the thrill of the Exodus, pay little attention to the 400 years of misery that preceded it, or the abysmal failures that followed. Which is why the Bible includes Deuteronomy in the first place, and why we optimistic Americans ought to pay it more mind.

Others have borrowed parts of Moses' message, but no one has quite got it right. Liberationists of all stripes have appropriated the language of Exodus, yet all lack Moses' unstinting realism. They drift into utopian promises of a promised land that has never been—and will never be—realized this side of eternity. Often these utopians end up creating a political system more tyrannical than the one they sought liberation from.

Likewise, pietist Christians have borrowed Moses' vision to describe a victorious Christian life on the other side of Jordan. The last seven chapters of Deuteronomy should forever disabuse us of that notion. Life with God is never so easy, so settled. Not for the Hebrews then, and not for us living today. The pilgrim must ever progress, uphill, meeting new enemies around every bend.

The Old Testament should come with a warning: Don't read Exodus without also reading Deuteronomy. It would save a lot of disillusionment—for movie makers, for politicians and also for preachers.

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## ANNUITY

### Every investor can avoid these two mistakes

By Don Spencer

Too many beginning investors have failed to ignore these two fundamental rules:

■ **If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.** This statement sounds so obvious.

Most folks would readily agree with the truth of this adage.

But, as P.T. Barnum once said, "There's a sucker born every minute." When it comes to investment schemes, this appears to be so true. Most people are curious about an investment that promises above-average returns for little or no risk.

Financial planners can cite many cases of advising clients against a particular investment because it appeared to be a scam. The appeal of higher income in an investment promoted as safer than stocks caused the client to disregard the advice. After investing, they realized some months or years later that all or most of their money was lost.

It has been proven over and over that risk and reward go together in investing. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Get good, competent advice before investing.

■ **If you don't understand it, don't invest in it.** Financial companies are adept at creating and marketing investments that appeal to the average citizen looking for a higher return. Each new product has a particular spin and promises of higher returns. Many are derivatives or hybrids of the underlying true investments. With all the spins and names, it becomes difficult for the average person to determine if the investment is appropriate for their needs.

A few years ago, sophisticated investment derivatives caused major problems for Orange County, Calif. Recently, problems with a noted hedge fund came close to causing major economic problems in Jefferson County. The lesson for you: even professionals can be fooled. If so, it's more likely the average person can be fooled by a little-understood investment strategy.

Perhaps you don't understand a product, but a trusted financial professional feels strongly that it is the right one for you. Insist that your adviser continues to explain the product until you have at least a reasonable understanding. Until you do, you probably should avoid it.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department



## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

### Partnership missions

Kentucky Baptists are to be commended for their outstanding participation in partnership missions. The Russian partnership has been a model for all Southern Baptists, according to Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board.

I believe Russian Baptists will be encouraged and strengthened for generations due to the investments of Kentucky Baptists. Bill Marshall, Benton Williams and Calvin Wilkins are due much credit for their vision for this partnership. A number of churches and associations continue their commitments and involvement with Russian churches.

Also, many Kentucky Baptists have been involved with New England Baptists, a partnership that will last through the year 2000. Requests for 1999 include 10 construction projects, seven vacation Bible school projects, cataloging a school library, backyard Bible clubs, evangelism and other projects.

The Baptist Union of Poland has a bold commitment to reach their country for Christ. With few missionaries

and just 64 churches, they'll need strong support from Kentucky Baptists to achieve this objective. Religious freedom provides an open door.

Fourteen construction projects have been requested in Poland during

1999. Other requests include vacation Bible school, two basketball camps, creative evangelism, age group camps and prayer walks. This is a wonderful opportunity for Kentucky Baptists to get involved early in partnership, especially in construction. These projects will open doors, build relationships, create a positive image in their communities and provide space for growth.

The Tanzanian partnership provides an opportunity to work with career missionaries and committed Tanzanian Baptists. Sharing the gospel with the unreached and strengthening the churches will have a powerful influence on the future development of Tanzania. There still are many people groups who have never heard the gospel. Churches and witnesses are needed in all areas.



Bill Mackey

## What are mom & teenage kids to do about an absentee dad?

**Q: My husband doesn't seem too interested in spending time with me and our teenage children. He would always rather be doing something else. What can I do?**

The first thing I always suggest in a situation like yours is to talk to your husband about your feelings, specifically stating what you would like for him to do differently.

It's possible that he doesn't realize he's not spending as much time with you as you'd like, or the extent to which you are hurt by his absence. He also might not be thinking ahead to the time when your children will be grown and out of your home. Bringing to his attention the fact that your teenagers are growing up and he's missing some important moments might be all that's necessary for him to change his behavior.

If talking with him has no effect, however, I would continue planning activities that you and your teenagers find enjoyable, then enjoy every minute of them. By doing so, you will ensure that you and your teens don't let his lack of involvement ruin your good times and might actually get him interested in being part of the fun.

But regardless of whether or not he ever joins in, you and your children will have made the most of your time together.—*Susan Howell*



**Q: Got any words of wisdom I can use to start the new year off right?**

Missionary Jonathan Goforth had these seven "rules" written on the flyleaf of his Bible. I include them with comments after each rule:

- *Seek to give much. Expect nothing.* Your degree of frustration in life nearly always is the result of unrealistic expectations. Be a giver, not a taker.

- *Put the very best construction on the actions of others.* Rarely do we understand the complex motives of others. Positive approaches are much more likely to produce positive results.

- *Never let a day pass without at least a quarter of an hour spent in Bible study.* The "love letter from God" is waiting to be read. Neglect its wisdom at your peril.

- *Never omit daily morning and evening private prayer and devotions.* In our hectic world, spending time with God and God alone is more important than ever for correct focus.

- *In all things, seek to know God's will, and when known, to obey it at any cost.* The Bible provides the principles. We provide the obedience. Then God provides the blessings.

- *Seek to cultivate a quiet, prayerful spirit.* A Spirit-controlled temperament is a powerful and effective source of strength.

- *Seek each day to do or say something to further Christianity.* Be a contagious Christian. Move someone a little further in the right direction each and every day.

And from Harold Ivan Smith: Live as though you are passionately in love with yourself. Then you will treat yourself with the same respect you would for the most important person you could meet. After all, that's the way God feels about you, too. Care enough about yourself to practice the disciplines Goforth outlined above. God says you're worth it.—*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](mailto:wesrec@ntr.net).

## Moving beyond Y2K parties & paranoia

By Carey Newman

Jan. 1, 1999, marked the countdown for the year 2000. Two symptomatic responses (beyond that of just yawning) appear—a bad case of communicable anticipation and an anxious dis-ease.

First, anticipation. While in the course of the next 12 months some of us will grow sick of all the hype, many will see the dawning of a new millennium as an unparalleled opportunity to celebrate. The turning of the millennium is a special moment in world history, and we are lucky to be alive to experience it.

Madison Avenue knows this all too well. The turning of the millennium is a marketing department's dream come true—"Year 2000" T-shirts, coffee mugs, tote bags. You name it, we will have it. The air waves likewise will be saturated with retrospectives galore. And the parties—celebrations to end all celebrations. Better order your funny-looking hats and noise makers now.

Now, the dis-ease. To some, the prognosis for the new year does not appear to be so promising. By now we are painfully aware of the little cold many of our computers have caught. That the simple way in which our computers reckon time might well be the undoing of us all is more than slightly ironic. What's worse is that no one really knows what is going to happen in the first days, weeks and months of the year 2000. Despite efforts at full compliance and assurances by government and industry alike, some say there will be drastic problems. Such dire predictions of near or total collapse have many worried.

While some will be eating, drinking and making merry, others will spend the night stuffing cold hard cash into their beds.

Christians, too, seem to have caught this Y2K bug. Some well-intending Christians are predicting the return of Jesus in the year 2000 and are finding predictions of the Y2K computer bug on every page of the Bible. All this, and more, despite the fact that the way we reckon years is off by at least four and, consequent-

ly, the new millennium actually began in 1996. (Did you notice? I didn't.) If the web sites devoted to the subject are a thermometer at all, Christian anticipation and anxiety are at a fevered pitch, hopeful that Jesus is coming back to rescue his faithful but fearful of the awful accompanying events the Bible predicts.

What should believers think about the turning of the new millennium and, more importantly, how should we prepare for it in 1999?

First, the Bible warns about getting caught up in such predictions. While there are some who confidently spout off about how certain events are a direct fulfillment

of biblical texts predicting Jesus' return, we must all remember that the Bible set no timetables at all. When asked directly about the end, Jesus refused to be specific (see Acts 1:7). We should do the same.

Second, we should revel in the fact that whatever transpires in the year 2000 (or any other year), we are in the hands of a loving God. The resurrection of Jesus means God already has delivered the death blow to the real enemies of his purposes and he already has begun the process of transforming us into what we originally were meant to be. The resurrection signals that the beginning of the end already has occurred.

Third, even if these predictions prove true and Jesus does return sometime in 2000 (and there is no one who can say whether he will or won't), we still are to be God's people now. God has not revoked his commission of Matthew 28; nor has he relented in his desire for us to give a cup of cold water to those who are thirsty. The very best response to the prospects of Jesus' return is to be busy about kingdom work, not to sit idly by, speculating on how this or that may or may not be a fulfillment of some biblical text. A true biblical vision of the future prescribes the transformation of this earth, not escape from it.

The Great Physician's recommendation for a persistent Y2K fever? "Take one healthy dose of gospel discipleship and check back in the new millennium." *Carey Newman is editor of academic books for Westminster John Knox Press in Louisville*

## How can it be made salty again?

By Jim Holladay

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men" (Matthew 5:13 NIV).*

Men who spend their lives at sea become known as "old salts." While many sailors are known for their salty language, being called an "old salt" has little to do with their language, and much to do with their identity.

A person whose life is spent at sea begins to develop characteristics that distinguish him or her from "landlubbers." A sailor develops sea legs, allowing him to maintain balance on a surface in constant motion. A sailor's skin adjusts to the constant barrage of wind and salt water by taking on a weather-beaten look. Deep in a sailor's character is the love of adventure and the thrill of harnessing, and sometimes overcoming, the forces of nature to make that adventure a reality. No one is more frustrated than a

sailor forced to retire from the sea. Retired sailors rarely distance themselves totally from the trappings of life at sea. It might be said that one can take a sailor off the sea, but one can never remove the sea from a sailor.

Matthew 5:13 is tucked inauspiciously between the Beatitudes, which describe Christian character, and the ethical demands of the Christian life. Yet it serves to emphasize the necessity of taking on the characteristics of a disciple. More than prescribing a course of action, this verse pictures a state of being.

We do not become Christians simply by doing Christian things. We become Christians when our legs become so accustomed to walking the Christian way that we feel awkward on any other path. We become Christians when we love the adventure of following Jesus. We become Christians when our bodies and souls begin to bear the scars of suffering with Jesus.

Perhaps Jesus knew that we always would be tempted to put doing over being. So, as he moves into the dis-

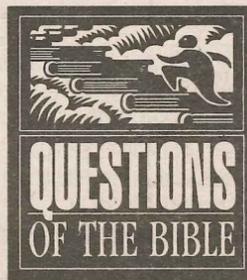
course on kingdom ethics, he reminds us that the proper focus is on who we are becoming. Authentic discipleship does not consist of the sum total of good deeds and moral acts. Authentic discipleship involves a transformation of our personhood. We allow Christ to reconstruct the sum and substance of who we are.

For that reason, this first of two analogies on Christian identity not only compares Christians with salt, but asks a crucial question. If a Christian abandons his or her Christ-formed self, can he or she ever regain that identity?

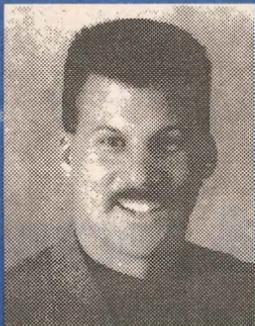
The clear implication of Jesus' response to his question is that while it is possible, it is also intensely difficult. One not only should count the cost before deciding to follow Jesus, but one also should consider the consequences of abandoning the Christian life.

Restoration is not simply a matter of picking up where one left off. Saltiness can be restored only if one is willing to submit again to the transforming power of God to re-form one's person.

*Jim Holladay is pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville*



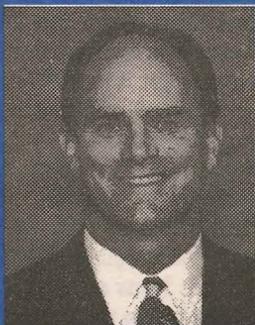
FEATURED SPEAKERS



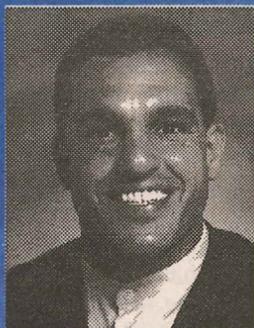
**Steve Ayers, Pastor**  
Hillvue Heights Church  
Bowling Green, KY



**E. K. Bailey, Pastor**  
Concord Missionary  
Baptist Church  
Dallas, TX



**Steve Cloud, Pastor**  
Northside Baptist Church  
West Columbia, SC



**Saleim Kahleh,**  
Coordinator of  
Student Affairs at  
Houston Baptist University



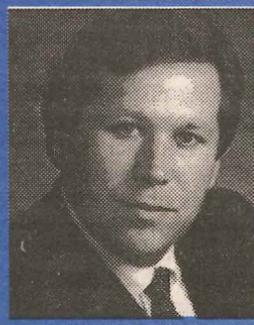
**Cliffe Knechtle,**  
Pastor  
Hope Church  
Wilton, CT



**John Ed Mathison, Pastor**  
Frazer Memorial United  
Methodist Church  
Montgomery, AL



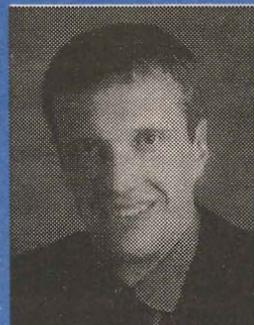
**Herb Reavis, Pastor**  
North Jacksonville  
Baptist Church  
Jacksonville, FL



**Jay Strack**  
Vocational Evangelist  
Orlando, FL



**John O. Yarbrough**  
Vice President of  
Evangelization at NAMB  
Alpharetta, GA



**Ed Young, Pastor**  
Fellowship Church  
Grapevine, TX

# Restoring a PASSION for Evangelism

## Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference

Porter Memorial Baptist Church  
4300 Nicholasville Road • Lexington, Kentucky  
Monday-Tuesday, February 22-23, 1999

**1. Best Western Regency**

2241 Elkhorn Road  
I-75 at US 60 Exit 110  
(606) 293-2202  
All rooms \$44.00  
Free continental breakfast

**2. Campbell House Inn**

1375 Harrodsburg Road  
(606) 255-4281  
All rooms \$75.00  
Reservation deadline:  
February 1, 1999  
Indoor pool, golf, dining room

**3. Comfort Inn**

2381 Buena Vista Drive  
(606) 299-0302  
Single \$55.95 2P, 2 dbl beds  
\$55.95, 3P \$60.95 4P \$65.95  
Free continental breakfast  
indoor pool

**4. Comfort Suites**

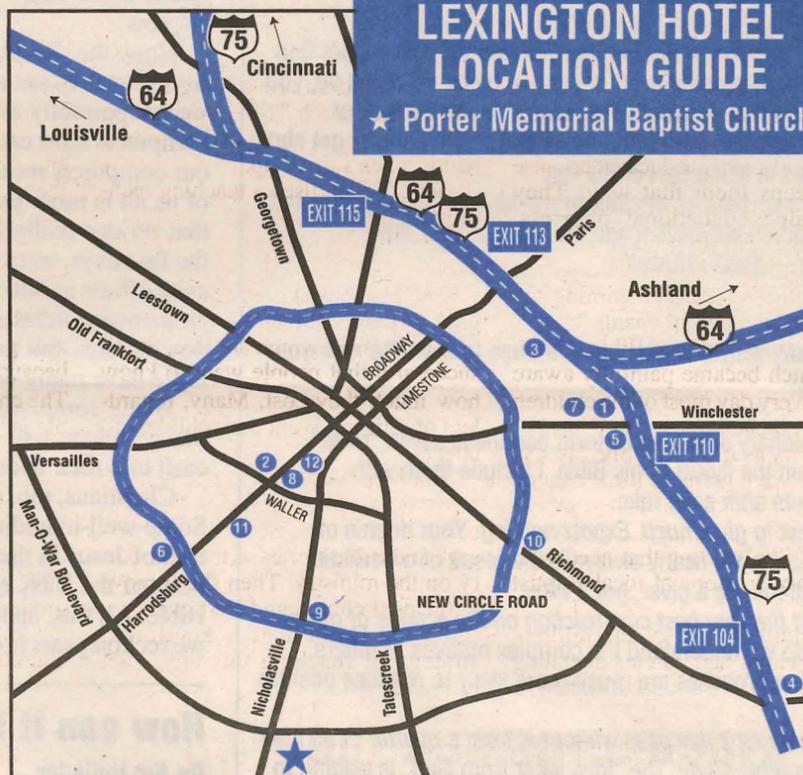
Beaumont Center  
3070 Fieldstone Way  
(606) 296-4446  
Harrodsburg Rd. at New Circle  
Free continental breakfast

**5. Country Inn Suites**

2297 Executive Drive  
Exit 110 Highway 60  
(606) 299-8844  
Free continental breakfast

**6. Fairfield Inn-Marriott**

3050 Lakecrest Circle  
(606) 224-3338  
2P, 2 dbl beds \$65.00  
Reservation deadline:  
January 22, 1999  
Free continental breakfast



**LEXINGTON HOTEL LOCATION GUIDE**

★ Porter Memorial Baptist Church

**7. Hampton Inn I-75**

2251 Elkhorn Road  
(606) 299-2613  
Single \$69.00  
All others \$79.00  
Free continental breakfast,  
indoor pool, exercise room

**8. The Kentucky Inn**

525 Waller Avenue  
(606) 254-1177  
Single \$47.00  
2P, 2 dbl beds \$52.00  
3P \$57.00 4P \$57.00

Reservation deadline:  
February 1, 1999  
Dining room

**9. Red Roof Inn-South**

2651 Wilhite Drive  
(606) 277-9400  
All rooms \$49.99

**10. Sheraton Suites of Lexington**

2601 Richmond Road  
(606) 268-0060  
All rooms \$69.00

Reservation deadline:  
February 8, 1999  
Restaurant

**11. The Springs Inn**

2020 Harrodsburg Road  
(606) 277-5751  
All rooms \$50.00  
Reservation deadline:  
January 22, 1999  
Restaurant

**12. Waller House Inn**

1229 South Limestone St.  
(606) 278-6625



For more information, call the KBC Office for Evangelism at 502-254-4737 or Toll Free 1-888-254-5722.  
Childcare available for pre-school age during conference sessions. To make reservations call Marilyn Huffman at 606/272-3441, ext. 222. Limited space! First come... first served! Reservation deadline: Thursday, February 18, 1999

# MISSIONS

## Missionary's stories teaching children basic Christianity

By Norman Miller  
SBC International Mission Board

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania—Children held a special place in Jesus' heart. He seemed to reprimand the disciples when they tried to shoo the little ones away from him.

Darla Veitch remembers that same love for children every time she tells Bible stories to the kids of Dar es Salaam, where she and her husband, Brad, are missionaries.

Like so many missionary wives, Mrs. Veitch's official assignment is "church and home" ministry. The "home" part she takes very seriously. It's important to her to "provide an oasis for Brad," whose assignment is church development.

But when it comes to her ministry outside the home, that's where the dark-eyed innocents become vitally important.

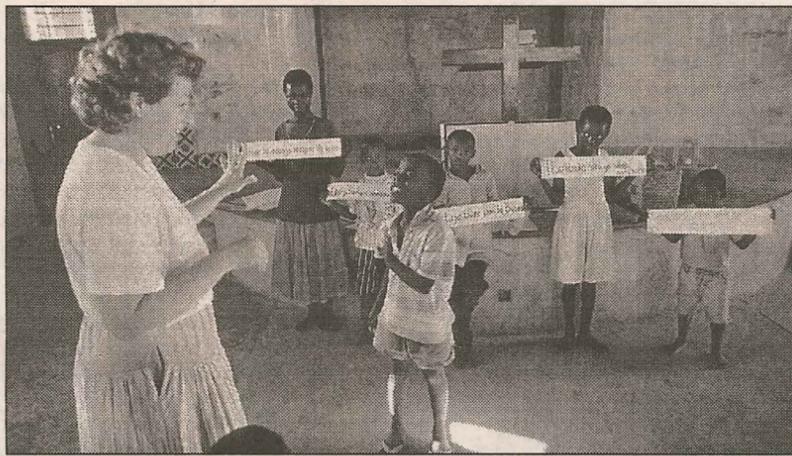
"I have a burden for the children," she says.

That's because she knows their spiritual condition. About 70 percent of Dar es Salaam are uneducated because Islam keeps them that way. They don't value educational progress. When other children are in school, Islamic mosques are full of children studying the Koran and learning the religion's "worshipful chants."

During one backyard Bible school, Mrs. Veitch became painfully aware of this. Every day most of the children she was ministering to ran off just before 2 p.m., as if on cue. She discovered they were going to the mosque.

"That broke my heart and awakened me to a great need they have," she says. She's filling that need with Bible story sessions at local Baptist churches.

She started with seven children, none of whom had parents attending the church. In a few weeks, 40 neigh-



**STORY TIME** Missionary Darla Veitch has attracted a following of children who come to hear her tell stories about the Bible. She also is teaching other church workers to do the same so she can take the project to many churches in Tanzania. "I have a burden for the children," she says. (IMB photo by Matt Jones)

borhood children were awaiting her arrival for each session. All but one had no other connection to the church.

"The children are waiting for me outside the church," Mrs. Veitch says. "They jump and clap their hands when I show up."

Mrs. Veitch uses a teaching technique called "storying," essentially paraphrasing in understandable terms Bible stories.

She also has started teaching English as part of the ministry.

The classes, which are free, are so successful that people want to know how much they cost. Many, regardless of religion, want their children to attend.

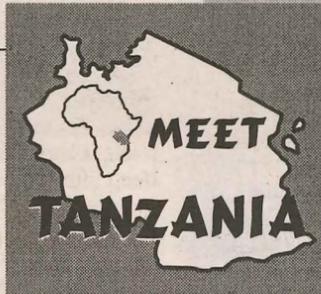
But Mrs. Veitch is one person. So she's working to teach church members how to "story" the Christian message and Bible stories so they can carry on the ministry. Then she'll move to the next church and start over.

"What Darla does is key to our strategy of reaching this city," her husband says.

"Many churches are discarding contributions young people might make. So if we start when they are 6- and 7- and 8-years-old, then when they turn 16 and 17 they can benefit the church, utilizing the background Darla has given them," he says.

The Veitches say that when the kids grow up they'll love the church because it has given them so much. The children might want to attend Bible college and seminary.

"With this kind of plan, 10 to 15 years from now our churches will be exploding with solid, theologically trained young men and women who are ready to serve because they will have gotten that service idea from the ground up," Veitch adds. "Instead of having the mindset of 'What can the church do for me,' they'll ask, 'What can I do for God?'"



### Mission projects

Mission projects needed in Tanzania include bookkeepers, computer teachers and people to help with evangelism and a Bible conference.

The partnership between Kentucky Baptists and Baptists in Tanzania is scheduled to begin late next month, according to the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions office.

Participation costs \$2,495 for the 14-day projects.

Below is a partial list of projects the office has received from missionaries and Tanzania Baptists:

■ Inventory work for 10 workers at the Baptist mission in Dar es Salaam during spring break.

■ A computer basics teacher to work in Kigoma, Feb. 24-March 9.

■ A computer basics teacher to work in Kigoma March 10-23.

■ A bookkeeper or accountant to work in Kigoma March 24-April 6.

■ A bookkeeper or accountant to work in Kigoma April 7-20.

■ A three-member evangelism team to work in Kitumbi April 28-May 11.

■ Five workers for a Bible and evangelism conference June 30-July 13.

For more information, contact Calvin Wilkins, Ken Murphy or Carla Purvis at the partnership missions office, (888) 254-5724 or (502) 244-6462.

## The Tidenbergs see their work among the Maasai people pay off

Continued from page 1  
accepted Christ in the last two years.

Times weren't always this good in Maasaini.

By January 1997, two years of drought and subsequent famine had exacted a tragic toll. Livestock littered the land, dehydrated and dead. Without goats, sheep and cattle, the Maasai had no source of income. They were thirsting and dying, too.

When the Tidenbergs planned a water project in early 1997, many locals were skeptical. The dairy goat project Tidenberg began in 1996 had opened some doors for ministry, but not enough. "On the first day of the project, we pulled up with a lorry (truck) with 6,000 liters of water on the back," he recalls.

The water project threw open floodgates of spiritual ministry, he said. "The love of Christ was shared and the Baptist name went down in the long-term memory of the Maasai. Plus, we were able to share the message of Christ and the importance of 'living water.'" In one area, more than 200 people accepted Christ as their personal Savior, he says.

By Easter 1997, rainfall had alleviated the water problem, but not the

famine. Families were starving.

The Tidenbergs requested enough money from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's human needs office to feed 40,000 people for about a month. The gargantuan task of distributing 320 tons of maize proved exhausting, but it also proved evangelistically successful.

"What a blessing it was to share the love of Christ in the shape of a five-gallon bucket of corn," Tidenberg says. That love was underscored in the preaching of the gospel by Maasai pastors at each distribution point, and the inclusion of a pamphlet explaining Christianity with almost every container of corn.

The project gave credibility to the Tidenbergs as members of a mission organization that loved the Maasai. And it opened up areas of Maasaini that were closed before.

"Since the project, I've not been in one boma where the people didn't know who we are, personally, and the Baptist name as well," Tidenberg says. "We are welcomed to tell them about Jesus."

The famine relief project helped plant several churches, encouraged other ones and influenced more than

### Ministry brings sacrifice & success

LONGIDO, Tanzania—In the midst of Tim Tidenberg's ministry, one thing kept nagging him. His father, James—an 18-year veteran of east Africa missions—was at home in Oklahoma battling cancer.

Every time he could reach a phone, Tidenberg would call his dad and share how well the project was going. "I'd ask if he was ready for me to come home," he recalled. "Each time the response was the same: 'We're fine, Son. You stay right where you are.' Having been on the field, he knew the urgency of the mission."

Halfway into a feeding project with the Maasai people group, James Tidenberg took a turn for the worse. His son finally had to leave. His wife, Annie, daughter, Jamie, some Maasai pastors and 10 Southern Baptist volunteers continued without him.

500 Maasai to become Christians.

In one region near the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, people are "begging" not for food but for churches to

While Tidenberg was en route to Oklahoma, his father died.

When Tidenberg returned to Longido, he found the project complete. The team had spent some nights literally sleeping on bags of corn to prevent theft. They spent other nights in the bush with the truck stuck in a mud bog.

Despite the difficulties, the Maasai saw Christ's love in the gifts of water and food—and in Tidenberg's act of staying as long as he could. Many of the Maasai knew about his father, and their response brought joy to the Tidenbergs in a time of loss.

"One elderly man told me, 'Now I am your father,'" Tidenberg recalled.

"They came bearing words that they could now trust us," he said. "They know we'll be here, even in the most difficult times."

be planted, Tidenberg says. "But we just don't have the time or personnel to get to all the areas that need to hear the gospel."

### About the writer

Norman Miller wrote these stories, which originally appeared in The Commission magazine, a publication of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board.

Miller has since become director of news and information at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

# MISSIONS

## Tanzania at a glance

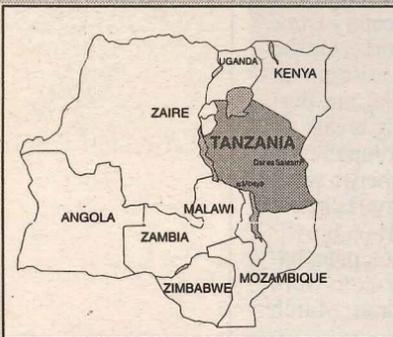
- **Location:** Eastern coast of Africa.
- **Size:** 198,456 square miles; roughly as big as Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia combined.
- **Population:** 29.4 million.
- **Primary Languages:** Swahili and English.
- **Capital:** Dar es Salaam, population about 3 million.
- **Religions:** One-third Christian; one-third Muslim; one-third indigenous beliefs, according to the International Mission Board.

■ **History:** According to the New York Times Almanac, the mainland, formerly known as Tanganyika, gained freedom from British administration in 1961. Tanzania was formed from the union with the island of Zanzibar in 1964.

The country invaded Uganda in 1979 in an effort to depose Idi Amin. During the 1980s, however, Tanzania strengthened ties with Uganda and Kenya.

Tanzania has economic potential because of its extensive natural resources and one of Africa's best educational systems.

In 1994-95, more than 700,000 refugees fled into Tanzania from civil wars in Burundi and Rwanda. The government closed its Burundi board in 1995.



## Maasai leader goes from bottle to Bible

LONGIDO, TANZANIA—Lazaro Orpusongu walked three days from his village to Tim and Annie Tidenberg's house just to meet the new Southern Baptist missionaries.

"We are so glad you are here," he told Tidenberg, "because we are a hungry people."

Tim explained his main purpose in Longido was not to provide food.

"Oh, you misunderstand me," the headman of a Maasai village replied. "I am not asking for food. I am asking for the bread of life. We are hungry for God's word."

Orpusongu had another urgent need. Alcoholism clutched him.

Alcohol in Tanzania's bush country comes from a homemade corn beer that packs quite a punch. A blind-side hook is more like it. That hook sank deep into Orpusongu.

Orpusongu became involved with the Tidenbergs and their work. Keeping his habit hidden, he began to lead a church as pastor. But the beer still enslaved him.

"Then God did something one day

to bring great change in my life—something I had not planned," Orpusongu said.

A friend invited Orpusongu to a celebration where there would be plenty of beer—the Maasai custom. But the party was on a Sunday, and Orpusongu was convicted about that.

To avoid the conflict, he held church early and then went to the party.

Orpusongu planned to do his drinking in the friend's hut, hoping to remain unseen by any church members. The plan went awry when he staggered from the hut and passed out in the broiling African sun.

Church members did pass by. They carried him to some shade. Orpusongu awoke to the disgrace of being carried by the very people his life's example was supposed to uplift.

"I felt great shame and covered my eyes," he recalled.

Coming out of his stupor, Orpusongu said, he remembered Psalm 139:7-12.

The next afternoon, Orpusongu got his Bible and hid in the bush. He read

and prayed for hours—asking God to rid him of his addiction.

"I saw God's power and strength in my life, and I left alcohol. Since then, I have known his peace," Orpusongu said. "Now, when I smell alcohol on someone else, it makes me sick."

Tidenberg said, "It's very unusual for men in this culture to even consider leaving alcohol. It's a big problem."

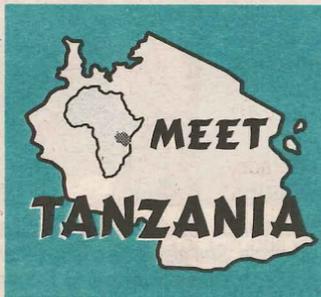
Orpusongu uses this victory to tell others about the power of God.

"Even though the work in Maasai land is very hard, the work that I do for God gives me great joy and happiness," he said.

That work now includes traveling a 35-mile circuit to five churches he planted in one year. It also includes the work assigned to him as part of the pastoral training he gets in the Tidenberg's Bible school.

Orpusongu said his hunger to learn and serve comes not only from God's power, but also from Tidenberg's influence. "If it weren't for Tim, I would be in a major state of darkness.

"Because of his life, I have seen many lives changed. There are now many followers of Jesus Christ in my homeland," he said. "The light has come to my homeland because of Tim."



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- March 15 (evening) . . . . . Louisville, Saint Matthews Baptist Church
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# MISSIONS

## Link with past adds sense of destiny to church starters

By Norman Miller  
SBC International Mission Board

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania—The lifeless body bobbed in the jade wake at Kunduchi Beach. A ravenous riptide had sucked the life out of him. His heart was no match for the evil current.

A close-knit group of missionaries had planned a picnic on the white sand near Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Now they'd plan a funeral.

After feverish, futile attempts to revive the victim, two of the missionaries—both doctors—pronounced the city's first church developer from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board dead.

Halfway around the globe, in Oklahoma City, Okla., other doctors worked feverishly. But their efforts weren't futile. They brought a future missionary into the world. On the day church developer W.O. "Wimpy" Harper died—Sept. 4, 1958—Brad Veitch was born.

Thirty-six years later, Veitch stood with Darla, his wife, at Harper's grave site in Dar es Salaam. Solemnity hung thick in the air, like the coastal city's humidity. The couple read the tomb-

stone and stood stunned by the significant date.

When the Veitches came to Tanzania's capital in 1994, it was much more populous and modern than what Wimpy knew, but Islam still wielded a powerful grip. The city was once about 95 percent Muslim. Today, 70 percent. The reason? Dar es Salaam has the world's second highest urbanization rate, doubling its population every 10 years.

In the last decade, the population swelled from about 1.6 million to about 3 million. That influx diluted Islam's influence somewhat. But it really hasn't made Veitch's job much easier. It has, however, made him think.

"I look to the ministry of the apostle Paul," he said. "Paul's missionary journeys took him to urban centers. Then the gospel spread from them.

"And if you think about it, you never hear of a fad starting in 'Bugtussle,' Okla., and then sweeping into L.A. It's the other way around."

Islam spread in this region of Africa by following trade routes out of the port city and into Tanzania's hinterlands. Islam landed in Dar es Salaam in the 1500s, followed by Roman Ca-



tholicism about 300 years later. Protestant Christianity began making inroads in the late 1800s.

"Consider, then, that we are generations behind others in the dissemination of religious thought and ideas here," Veitch said. "So, our work is cut out for us."

"But what if Christianity were to take hold of this Muslim city?" he asked. "And what if it spread from Dar along those same old paths as Islam did?"

"Dar still is a place of great influence, so if Christianity could take hold here, it could dispel and disperse Islam. That's my vision for what I want to happen."

In the first 35 years of Southern Baptist ministry in Dar es Salaam, five churches were planted. But since the Veitches' arrival, 11 more have been planted—each the result of a successful church planting project implemented by the Tanzania Baptist Convention and the Baptist Mission of Tanzania.

The joint church planting project required research, planning and tact—a formula the Veitches know well—because the variety of tribal peoples in Dar es Salaam is diverse.

"People of the same tribes live in pockets in the city, so we try to match leaders and tribes together," Veitch said. Even though the project was successful, Veitch doesn't have enough qualified leaders for such a customized approach to church planting and leadership.

There are several pastors and evangelists whom Veitch trains weekly, who are eager to get involved in min-

istry in their city. "But I can't afford to start with some of those who are long on enthusiasm and short on biblical theology. I'd have a mess then," Veitch said.

While he wants to start a seminary branch in Dar es Salaam, he's not waiting to educate others. "I've got five in the seminary at Arusha right now. When they get out, things will really take off around here."

Tribalism and a lack of trained leaders are just two considerations in church planting. "We have the urban rich, the upper middle class, the educated and uneducated, the urban poor and street people," Veitch said. Each group requires a different approach.

But the Veitches are reaching hundreds through a water well project in a community where inhabitants once had to walk more than a mile to a polluted river to get their water. Or they had to pay a substantial fee to a water vendor.

"We used to walk to the river and get nasty water," said one woman. "We got very sick from that water. Now we have good water for our families."

Discipleship is the kind of ministry Veitch most enjoys, he said, because it can have the greatest impact. When he became a missionary, he didn't see himself as a church builder. "It's certainly a great and necessary activity. I enjoy it, but it eats up so much of my time.

"I'd rather find ways of reaching the Muslims and this city," he added, "and then hand that off to the local leaders, teaching them to do the same."

**CHURCH STARTERS** Brad and Darla Veitch (center) hope their church starting work in the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam will spread Christianity throughout the area. "If you think about it, you never hear of a fad starting in 'Bugtussle,' Okla., and then sweeping into L.A.," Veitch said. "It's the other way around." (IMB photo by Matt Jones)

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## Representatives from 3 faith groups plan summit on civility

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Warning that meanness and strident partisanship are taking a heavy toll on American politics, Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders announced plans for a series of summits to promote civility in the public arena.

A national summit scheduled Jan. 26 in Washington, D.C., is designed to highlight the importance of civil discourse in public life and ways the religious community can foster "a more civil debate and a more tolerant society." The national summit will be followed by local forums at various sites around the country.

"Incivility must be stopped before it completely stops the progress of our nation," said Welton Gaddy, executive director of the Interfaith Alliance and one of the organizers of the summit.

Gaddy, pastor of Northminster Baptist Church in Monroe, La., said the country is "reaping the bitter fruits of politicizing faith and defining morality in terms of a partisan agenda. It's time for that to stop."

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said public discourse has "reached an alarming low" and that the politics of personal attack is "chasing away the best and the brightest from the call of public service."

Among participants at the planned summit will be Martin Marty of the University of Chicago; James Forbes, senior minister of Riverside Church in New York; and Robert Drinan, a Catholic priest and former member of Congress who now teaches law at Georgetown University.

The religious leaders said their message is directed at both parties and rejected a suggestion that the effort was a shot at Republicans. Local forums will be convened in New York City; Des Moines, Iowa; San Francisco; Atlanta; Orlando; Manchester, N.H., and Nashville.

## Web is latest target in abortion lawsuits

PORTLAND, Ore. (RNS)—A Web site that targets doctors who perform abortions is the subject of a trial that opened last week in Oregon.

Meanwhile, a Florida abortion clinic owner has sued two online services claiming they provided anti-abortion activists with personal information about visitors to her clinic.

The Portland, Ore., trial centers on a Web site called "The Nuremberg Files" and whether it is a threat to physicians or a protected form of free speech, USA Today reported.

The trial is the result of a suit by the Portland Planned Parenthood chapter, a Portland clinic and five doctors who sought \$200 million in damages from Advocates for Life Ministries, the American Coalition of Life Activists and other individuals who

disseminate information about the Web site and distribute fliers and wanted posters criticizing abortion providers.

Monica Miller of Milwaukee, the leader of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society and a former defendant, said the plaintiffs "want to suppress pro-life speech" that groups like hers use to "expose the reality of abortion."

The plaintiffs state the Web site and posters could incite violence that is banned by the 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinics law.

"Sites like 'Nuremberg' are a threat to doctors because the anti-abortion movement in the United States follows up ... with violence," said Bonnie Jones, an attorney for the New York-based Center for Reproductive Law and Policy.

On the Web site, the names of four

doctors and two clinic workers who have been killed since 1993 are crossed off.

The Florida suit, filed this week in Orlando, names CompuServe and TML Information Services, which anti-abortion activists allegedly used to get names and addresses from license plate numbers of cars driven to the clinic.

The lawsuit seeks an injunction to stop the activities of abortion opponents who observe the Aware Woman Center for Choice clinic from a house across the street in Melbourne, Fla., Associated Press reported.

Visitors to the clinic have received letters from anti-abortion opponents. In one case, the activists learned the identity of a clinic visitor, trailed her to a hospital and also followed her in a department store, the suit states.

## Congregation wins church-state property lawsuit

MONTPELIER, Vt. (ABP)—The Vermont Supreme Court has ruled that the separation of church and state is not violated by a state law exempting churches and other charitable organizations from "adverse possession" claims against their property.

The Vermont court's ruling was applauded by Brent Walker, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel.

"It was important for the court to understand that not every accommodation of religion amounts to an impermissible establishment of religion," he said.

The ruling came in a dispute over a driveway separating a Methodist church and an adjacent business. Surveys showed that the driveway, which had been used for years by Cold Hollow Cider Mill, was owned by Waterbury Center Community Church.

In most cases, Vermont law sets a 15-year time limit for property owners to assert exclusive possession and use of property that is being used by others. But the 15-year limitation does not apply to property owned by "public, pious or charitable" organizations. The owners of the cider mill, ar-

gued that exempting churches from the time limitation unconstitutionally advances religion.

But a trial court and Vermont's highest court sided with the congregation. The state Supreme Court said the challenged law provides no support for religious activities but instead, "provides an exemption from a law that might inhibit religious activities."

The exemption's purpose and effect, the court said, are "not to advance religion but to shield real property devoted to charitable purposes from adverse ownership claims."

## Busy every weekend of every month

Our first column of the new year finds us with some real winter weather. It's a challenge to deal with snowy, icy conditions at Cedarmore. With the hills and long walks, the combination of snow and ice makes it hard to get around.

But it also turns the place into a winter wonderland. The beauty of the place with a blanket of fresh snow is spectacular. We do all we can to overcome the snow, and most of the time we do fine, but we lost the battle last week to the ice storms. Snow's beautiful, ice is something else.

But even as we find ourselves in the midst of winter weather, we stay busy with retreats and conferences. This once was a season in which we spent most of our time getting ready for spring, but now we have guests every weekend of every month, including January and February.

It's a great time for staff retreats, Sunday school class getaways and any other function you can plan to break the monotony of winter. So give us a call at Cedarmore or Jonathan Creek. Don't forget we're open year-round now for your conference convenience.

And while we're in the midst of winter, we're already looking ahead

to spring and summer. Camp season will be here quickly, and we have many improvements that we are striving to make before then.

As I always remind folks, we're making progress, but sometimes it doesn't come as quickly as we would like, due to the financial pressure that we will continue to deal with in the foreseeable future.

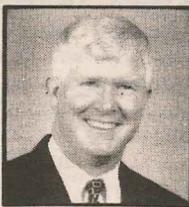
While we are doing far better than we hoped or projected, we don't have a fraction of the funds to do what needs to be done in the years ahead.

If you haven't made your summer camp plans for your youth or children, consider the camps that are facilitated by Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood and student ministries of the Kentucky Baptist Con-

vention. These camps are outstanding values that run throughout the summer at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore. There is information headed your way right now that details these opportunities, so take a look when it comes. We hope to see you soon at either of your Kentucky Baptist Conference Centers.

Rusty Ellison is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Box 37, Bagdad, Ky. 40003. Call (502) 747-8911

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Rusty Ellison



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## American 'doomsday' sect members deported from Israel

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher  
Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Moving to head off the possibility of millennium-induced violence, Israel has ordered the deportation of 14 U.S. citizens believed to be members of the Denver-based Concerned Christians "doomsday" sect.

Police said they believed the detainees all were members of the Colorado group Concerned Christians led by Monte Kim Miller, and that they intended to commit an "extreme and violent act in the streets of Jerusalem toward the end of the year 1999, in order to hasten the second coming of Jesus."

An estimated 78 members of the group disappeared from Denver in October, according to news accounts at the time, after Miller allegedly told them he expected to die and be resurrected in Jerusalem just before the turn of the millennium. In the past, Miller has described himself as a character in the New Testament book of Revelation.

Miller was not in Israel, police said. Associated Press, meanwhile, quoted a lawyer for three of the detained men as saying they had told him Miller was in London.

The lawyer, Eran Avital, said his clients wanted to go to Greece because other group members already are there and they believe the United States would be destroyed soon.

AP quoted a "senior police source" as saying the sect members were plan-

### Tape offers insight into controversial group's views

JERUSALEM (RNS)—An audio tape found on the doorstep of a house rented by alleged members of the doomsday sect Concerned Christians and raided by Israeli police Jan. 3, provides a graphic insight into the group's beliefs.

The "Time of the End" taped message, dated June 25, 1997, is labeled No. 30, series 18, and bears the title "I am the Lawmaker"—a reference to a phrase convicted murderer Charles Manson used in a 1988 interview to describe his 1969 killing spree.

An Israeli expert on millennium groups said the tape resembles other messages issued from time to time by the Denver-based sect's leader, Monte Kim Miller, who is said to have predicted his death and resurrection on the streets of Jerusalem sometime in the coming pre-millennial year.

The taped message, delivered by a soft-spoken but unidentified voice, offers an intricate and frightening insight into the sect's beliefs and teachings, which appear in large part to be centered on the

personal history of Manson and his supposed role as a divine "lawmaker," or "son of man."

In the message, the United States is described as a "dragon kingdom" that will receive "double the judgment" Japan incurred when it was hit with two atomic bombs at the end of World War II.

President Clinton is described as a "counterfeit son of man"—false messenger—for his involvement in the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian interim peace treaty and the subsequent Israel-Jordan peace accords.

The message, accompanied by printed materials illustrating the points made on the tape, begins with an announcement:

"This is looking to be like the final message of our time together, at least as it concerns the Manson murders."

Throughout the past century, according to the tape, false messengers and "counterfeit" religious and political figures have clouded the true meaning of biblical prophecy about God's final judgment of the earth and Jesus' Second Coming.

The message seems to equate the life of Manson with that of Jesus. Manson is repeatedly referred to as the "Man Son," an apparent allusion to the biblical reference to Jesus as the "Son of Man."

According to the speaker on the tape, the 1969 Manson family killings of pregnant actress Sharon Tate and four friends accomplished a kind of divine judgment by killing Tate's fetus, who the speaker claimed was the "anti-Christ."

Underlying the message is the messianic prophecy of Isaiah 2:3, which foresees a final end of the days of judgment followed by an era of peace in which "men will beat their swords into plowshares."

The tape also assigns a mystical significance to the number 23.

The dark vision of the tape concludes with an equally stern prayer: "Lord, we pray that as your judgments come forth, we are worthy to be judges with you. ... Lord, help us not to judge in the world's ways now, so that we may judge in your ways later."

ning violent acts in Jerusalem's walled Old City, and one possible location was the Temple Mount, site of Jewish-Muslim tensions in the past.

Israel's security services recently set up a special task force to try to head off millennium-related incidents of violence, and are cooperating with the

FBI in the identification of potentially dangerous cults or cult leaders, reports here indicate.

But Hebrew University's Ehud Sprinzak, an Israeli expert on extremist religious groups, expressed concern about Israel's inexperience in dealing with U.S.-style sects.

Such inexperience, he said, could lead to the kind of confrontation between group members and Israeli police that erupted in the deadly 1993 conflagration at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, after a standoff with federal law enforcement agencies.

### Matt McKee

By Robert Dunston

Matt McKee, son of Eddie and Sandy McKee of Richmond, spent summer 1998 as part of the Son-Bound sports team. The team taught young people how to play and improve their skills in basketball, volleyball, soccer and aerobics. More importantly, the team spread God's love and message.

During the summer, the team led sports camps and worship services in 12 to 14 churches. One highlight was making a special presentation at the Youth Evangelism Conference in Murray. There the team dressed up as goalies and performed a soccer drill before an audience of 3,000 youth.

Background music for the drill was "Heaven Bound" by dc Talk. McKee described the experience as "great and exciting."

At the church sports camps, each team member taught his or her sports specialty. During water breaks, a team member presented a devotional. McKee's devotional was based on Hebrews 12:1-3 and was titled "Don't Give Up."

One of the most special weeks of camp occurred when McKee's younger brother was a camper. The two brothers spent a lot of time together in meaningful conversation.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Another summer experience found the team in Paducah leading a Bible study for young people whose lives had been jolted by the shooting at Heath High School. McKee and the others felt a great responsibility as they attempted to offer hope and good news to those so affected by the tragedy.

McKee, a junior with a major in communication and theater arts and a minor in religion, said he hopes to become the chaplain of a professional sports team and a motivational speaker. He encourages anyone considering being part of a summer missions Son team to apply. He found the summer to be a life-changing experience as he reflected

upon his own relationship with God and his ministry goals.

He said he learned the need for patience and humility in serving Christ as well as the need to recognize Christ is in everyone and is working differently in each person.

Christ does have a place of service for each Christian. Kentucky Baptist student work and Cumberland College are helping McKee prepare for his place of service.

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

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## Franklin leads gospel stars in Grammy nominations

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—Gospel music star Kirk Franklin has racked up a number of Grammy Award nominations, including Song of the Year.

The nominations were announced last week by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

"Lean on Me," a track from "The Nu Nation Project" album, is performed by Franklin with Mary Blige and R. Kelly, Bono, Crystal Lewis and the Family.

That song also was nominated for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals and Best R&B Song. The album also was nominated for Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album and Best Engineered Album, Non-classical, the Gospel Music Association reported.

A song that has been featured on the soundtrack from the "Touched by an Angel" television program also is a Grammy nominee.

Nominees in gospel music categories are as follows:

### Best Rock Gospel Album:

■ "Some Kind of Zombie," by Audio Adrenaline.

■ "Amplifier," by Big Tent Revival.

■ "You are There," by Ashley Cleveland.

■ "God Fixation," by Petra.

■ "Sixpence None the Richer," by Sixpence None the Richer.

### Best Pop Contemporary Gospel Album:

■ "Mission 3:16," by Carman.

■ "Supernatural," by dc Talk.

■ "Steady On," by Point of Grace.

■ "Live the Life," by Michael W. Smith.

■ "This is My Song," by Deniece Williams.

### Best Southern Gospel, Country Gospel or

### Bluegrass Gospel Album:

■ "They Gave the World a Smile: The Stamps Quartet Tribute Album," by James Blackwood Quartet and the Light Crust Doughboys.

■ "Faithful," by the Cathedrals.

■ "Down by the Tabernacle," by Bill and Gloria Gaither and their Homecoming Friends.

■ "Just as I Am," by Andy Griffith.

■ "The Apostle: Music From and Inspired by the Motion Picture," by various artists.

### Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album:

■ "Just Right for a Miracle," by Rance Allen and the Soul Winners' Conference Choir.

■ "Now That I'm Here," by Beverly Crawford.

■ "He Leadeth Me," by Cissy Houston.

■ "Live! My Soul Feels Better Now," by Della Reese.

■ "Been There Done That," by Timothy Wright and the B/J Mass Choir.

### Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album:

■ "Songs from the Heart," by Yolanda Adams.

■ "Finally Karen," by Karen Clark-Sheard.

■ "The Nu Nation Project," by Kirk Franklin.

■ "Pages of Life—Chapters I and II," by Fred Hammond and Radical for Christ.

■ "Everlasting Love," by CeCe Winans.

### Best Gospel Choir or Chorus Album:

■ "Just Churchin'," by Bobby Jones and New Life with the Nashville Super Choir.

■ "Love Alive V — 25th Anniversary

Reunion," by the Love Center Choir.

■ "Pastor Hezekiah Walker presents the LFT Church Choir—Live at Love Fellowship

Tabernacle," by LFT Church Choir.

■ "Reflections," by The Associates.

■ "Strength," by New Life Community Choir.

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## A lot of work and a lot of play (Part III)

Ashley is in her second year at Oneida Baptist Institute and is a sophomore from Tennessee. Like many students who come to OBI, Ashley was having real problems at home. We know we cannot make students do anything, but we can give them the opportunity to develop and grow in various areas of their lives. Ashley is one of those students who has taken advantage of many opportunities, including being on the honor roll. We are so pleased with her progress that it was no surprise when she received the Most Changed Girl Award.

Jared might be our smallest student on the farm at 75 pounds. He came to us this year from Florida and is a sixth grader. When we enrolled him, he told us he wanted to make better grades and a lot of friends. His grades are coming along, and his smile wins him a lot of friends. Though he is only 11 years old, he has impressed us with his ability and received the Decision Maker Award.

Erin is another one of our staff children who loves to be part of the farm program. She is one of several students and staff who attended Future Farmers of America camp this summer. Though she is too young to be an official part of the FFA program this year, she will be eligible next year. Erin received the Wait 'Til Next Year Award. She is a hard worker and has a sweet spirit.

Chris came to us from Lexington last year as a seventh grader for the second time. Chris was typical of many of our students in that he was not doing well at home. He had a short temper, did not want to go to school, was having major problems with a sibling and had an overall bad attitude. His grades and attitude are improving very well. One of our greatest joys is seeing the im-

provements our students make. Because Chris is one of those students, he received the Most Changed Boy Award.

Time does not permit me to tell about all the students who were honored during the Harvest Banquet. However I do want to mention a few others. Scott earned the Coming Along Award, and Ryan received the He-Man Award. Bruce got the Splitter Award, meaning he can organize things in such a way as to get things done. Will was given the Growing Up Award. Another award went to Hunter, who received the Cattleman Award because of his ability to work with cattle. Josh was named our Henry Revel Wannabe. Henry is one of our most outstanding students overall, and an excellent worker on the farm. Unlike the smaller students I told you about earlier, Henry is, well let me simply say, not one of our smaller students. Josh is following in Henry's footsteps, both in his actions and his size.

Speaking of Henry, let me tell you more about him. Henry came to us as a sixth grader in 1993 from Boston, Ky.

He had lost his father to cancer and as a result was having family problems trying to deal with his emotions. Henry is an honor-roll student and completely trustworthy. If you need someone to guard \$1 million or protect your daughter, Henry is your man.

I hope you have enjoyed these articles. Our many friends help make our work possible, and you share in the success these young people have made. Thanks so much for helping to change lives.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, Ky. 40972. [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org)

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Welcome to new students

Fifteen new students had orientation Jan. 5-6. We expect others to enroll for night classes. It was encouraging to meet them and share a challenge from Joshua 1:1-9 on how to succeed in God's calling.

The ages of new students range from 19 to 42, with an average age of 27. Eleven are married, and they have 12 children. The youngest child is five months and the oldest is 15. Lara and Joshua Brown married in October.

Students came to us from seven states: Tennessee sent five, Kentucky three, Ohio and Virginia two, and one student each from Missouri, South Carolina and Oklahoma. Most of them heard about Clear Creek from an alumnus, and several of them have a pastor who graduated from Clear Creek.

Thirteen of the new class will live on campus. Three commute from Virginia or Tennessee. Commuters are encouraged by a flexible class schedule. Two attended previously as non-degree students and now enroll to seek a bachelor's degree. One of those, Judy Edwards from Harrogate, Tenn., works as a legal assistant. She seeks Bible training to prepare for mission opportunities. Edwards and her 15-

year-old son, Bradley, joined our December tour group to Israel.

Previous employment experience of the entering class includes food service, packing, cabinet making, tractor operation, legal assistance, lifeguard, housekeeping, lamination installation, factory work, scale house, military, mechanic, nursing assistant and fire fighting. Each student holds a high school diploma, and 12 have college experience.

When Timothy Sweetheart retires from the army at age 39 to begin classes, he certainly will change dress requirements. For 20 years, he has been stationed in Virginia as part of the U.S. Army ceremonial fife and drum corps. His uniform dates from the Revolutionary War, including the white wig.

Toni Hearrin said, "I want to secure an associate degree to help and encourage my husband as we serve together in ministry." Forrest and Toni Hearrin came to us last year from western Kentucky. Their children are Forrest, 9, and Jacob, 7.

Pray that these new students will have a good adjustment.

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

# BOOKS

**Just As I Ham: Over 100 Heavenly Recipes For Covered Dish Cooking.** Jane & Mark Jarrell. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 164 pages. \$11.99. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

The holidays are over, but potluck church dinners will continue into the next millennium.

If you're like me, you have one or two dishes you're famous for at your church. Most take little brain work, as long as you have the ingredients in the pantry. I am always on the lookout for something new and delicious for those infamous potluck dinners. "Just As I Ham" is just what I was looking for.

Not wanting to experiment on the church folks, I tried out a few recipes on the family. Three recipes got thumbs up from everyone. The orange sherbet salad is an easy-to-make light salad, perfect for Thanksgiving, with its orange color. The three-cheese casserole is a plus if your family loves pasta or if you're having company. With total preparation time approximately one hour, it is simple and serves 12. Last, but not least, is chili corn casserole. I made this recipe at Christmas, but left out the chilies. Another hit.

One of the best parts of this cookbook is the section on Feeding The Flock. If you've ever been given the task of cooking for the Wednesday night fellowship or planning the homecoming dinner on the grounds, this chapter is for you. In simple 1, 2, 3-step descriptions, you have all you need to plan and prepare a dinner for large numbers.

If you want a cookbook to renew your interest in potluck dishes or help you with the next food committee as-

signment, pick "Just As I Ham" as your reference.

Patty Holladay is the wife of reviewer Jim Holladay

**Let's Pray: Everyday Prayers for Kids.** Compiled by Sue Box, with pictures by Leon Baxter. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 128 pages. \$9.99.

**God's Word for Me: The Bible for Kids.** Pat Alexander, with pictures by Leon Baxter. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 480 pages. \$14.99.



"Let's Pray" is a compilation of prayers mostly written by children. The prayers show that children don't need to use special words when speaking to God. Because of their simplicity, the prayers do speak to a child's heart and provide good models for children learning to pray. The prayers are arranged

according to the outline of a child's day and are accompanied by colorful, somewhat comedic-looking drawings that will appeal to young children.

"God's Word for Me" follows the usual pattern for children's Bible story books, in that it begins with the creation story and concludes with the promise of the new world in Revelation.

The Bible stories are retold in a child's vocabulary and are accompanied by Leon Baxter's entertaining comedic drawings. Stories, on average, are less than eight pages, only half of which is text, as an illustration shares each page. Story length is good for a child who is just gaining confidence as a reader.

One weakness in the book's layout is that that scriptural reference should be given with each story, not

just in the table of contents.

Both books join most other children's prayer and Bible story books which, while taking the spiritual development of children seriously, provide only an average, not exceptional, resource to aid parents in this important task. Wayne Hager

**Until He Comes: Daily Inspirations for Those Who Await the Savior.** Calvin Miller. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998. 384 pages. \$19. ♦♦♦♦

For years Calvin Miller has walked in the literary world where other Christian writers have not. His work has been inspirational and challenging. From fiction to theological treatises to sermons, Miller has been faithful to Scripture and to his own Christian pilgrimage.

He continues this tradition with this new collection of devotions.

In "Until He Comes," Miller records his own journey with the ministry of Jesus and his reflection of what Jesus would say to him today. Over a period of years, Miller studied Jesus' ministry as recorded in Scripture. In the course of this study, Miller began to record what he thought Jesus would say to him now.

Miller admits he has entered a risky area, "putting words into the mouth of Christ that are not biblically his." Miller is, however, no more guilty than any preacher or Sunday school teacher who attempts to relate Scripture to our modern setting.

Each of the 365 entries begins with a Scripture, followed by the reflection in Jesus' voice, and concludes with a prayer. The devotions take the reader on a year-long journey through the ministry of Jesus and issues a call to take the ministry and teachings of Jesus seriously in one's own life. Wayne Hager

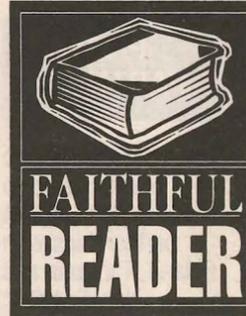
**Time Apart for My Soul: Daily Readings & Reflection for the Christian Year.** Mary Zimmer. Dimensions for Living, 1998. 235 pages. \$12. ♦♦♦♦

Many Kentucky Baptists will remember Mary Zimmer from her days as a member of the Christian education faculty at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Currently, she serves as pastor of Church of the Savior in Austin, Texas. A significant part of her life has been devoted to the faith development and spiritual formation of Christian ministers and laypeople.

"Time Apart for My Soul" is a solid contribution to the world of devotional aides. Zimmer describes two purposes for the book. The first is to deepen the believer's experience of prayer. "There comes a time for all of us to withdraw from the everyday schedule in order to seek God's presence in our lives," she writes. In seeking God's presence, she affirms that "prayer is always a place of possibility," because "a heart open to the Spirit of God is a heart open to possibility."

The daily readings—which include a Psalm selection, another reading from Scripture, a brief meditation and a brief "guided prayer" exercise—are designed to shepherd the user into daily times of withdrawal and possibility.

The second purpose is to introduce people to the seasons and themes of the Christian year. The book moves the reader through the gospel story, from the hope of Advent to the life of the disciple in ordinary time. Those not familiar with this way of organizing church or devotional life might find it a bit strange. But I agree with Zimmer that allowing the gospel story to infuse the seasons of the year greatly enriches our Christian walk. Jim Holladay



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C., and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville. Holladay and Hager welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: docholladay@juno.com or jwhager@surry.net

## Richard Foster encourages Christians to wade deep into the waters of their faith

By Dale Hanson Bourke  
Religion News Service

In the church of my childhood, other faiths were viewed with considerable suspicion. A good portion of my early theological education was devoted to spotting unorthodox or heretical symptoms.

Thus, I learned to be suspicious of those who were too emotional in expressing their faith, and those who were too logical. I was warned about those who spent too much time looking inward as well as those who got caught up in social work and forgot to look upward.

At times it seemed to me that I knew more about the foibles of other groups than what was right about my own denomination.

And then I went to college and became friendly with some of these heretics. I even attended their churches and participated in their worship services. And before long, I began to realize that we had a great deal in common. I was even surprised that I was drawn to many of the traditions missing in my own background.

Thus began the stitching of my own patchwork spiritual life, one that borrows

heavily from several Christian traditions without ever really discarding the essential fabric of my childhood faith.

When I travel, I make a point of worshipping in different types of congregations and am almost always surprised to hear God's voice in a new way.

Some scholars call me and others like me post-denominationalists. But Richard Foster, author of the newly published "Streams of Living Water" might just say I have started swimming in the main river instead of treading water in one of its tributaries.

Foster, perhaps best known for his book "Celebration of Discipline," now celebrates the great traditions of the Christian faith. His new book looks at the ways distinct practices now are flowing together into one remarkable river of faith.

Respectfully defining each group, Foster looks at five different movements: the contemplative, or prayer-filled life; the holiness, or virtuous life; the social justice, or compassionate life; the evangelical, or biblically centered life; and the

incarnational or sacramental life.

"Streams of Living Water" is both educational and inspirational. Foster has worked hard to document the historical facts forming each stream. He provides a timeline for each tradition, and begins each with Jesus, whom Foster views as incorporating all the traditions into his faith and life.

"When we carefully consider how Jesus lived while among us in the flesh, we learn how we are to live—truly live—empowered by him who is with us always even to the end of the age," Foster writes.

After describing and documenting each stream of faith, Foster devotes a section to celebrating all the good that comes from the particular tradition. Then he offers another section on how that tradition can go astray and how its strengths can become weaknesses. Finally, he offers practical ways to participate in that tradition or incorporate its practice into your own spiritual life.

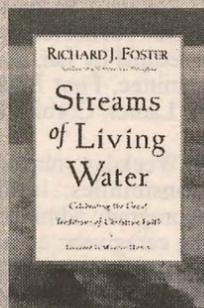
For example, Foster suggests that if you are interested in incorporating the charismatic tradition into your spiritual life,

you might ask someone to lay hands on you and pray for you to "enter more of the life and joy of the Spirit."

Foster's explanations of potential weaknesses in each tradition might be one of the most important aspects of this book. By showing how basic teachings or tendencies can be corrupted, Foster helps those of us who have looked at each tradition as embodied by flawed mortals see why we shouldn't judge the entire movement by individual interpretation.

Clearly moved by the people he has met as he researched this book, Foster concludes with a passionate tribute: "Right now we are largely a scattered people. ... But a new thing is coming. God is gathering his people once again, creating of them an all-inclusive community of loving persons with Jesus Christ as the community's prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant. This community is breaking forth in multiplied ways and varied forms."

If this "new thing" is a movement, Foster will be credited with advancing it greatly. For "Streams of Living Water" provides the chart for negotiating through the shallows and narrows, the rapids and bays that make up a remarkably diverse and rich body of faith.



## PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Poland, Tanzania and New England:

- Haven of Peace Academy in Dar Es Saalam, Tanzania, new teachers this term and doors to open to purchase additional property.
- The staff of the Baptist Hospital in Kigomara, Tanzania, as they share the gospel and heal the sick.
- Gary Hathcock, interim business manager of the Warsaw, Poland, mission, asks for prayer that he might be more sensitive to the needs of the missionaries he serves.
- Marc and Annie Byrd, missionaries in Warsaw, Poland, ask for prayer that their daughter, Rachael, might find a friend her age who will be "patient enough to play with her with her limited Polish."
- New churches slated to begin in 1999 in Amherst, Mass.; Salem, N.H.; Waterboro, Maine; and Burlington, Vt.
- Garden City Baptist Church, a congregation begun last year in Cranston, R.I.
- Four new churches started last year in New Hampshire by students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina.

## Minister to juvenile killers 'part of God's salvage team'

By Trennis Henderson  
Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

ALEXANDER, Ark. (ABP)—Much has been written recently about ministry to victims, families and communities in the wake of a seeming epidemic of youth violence.

But Greg Kirksey faces the unusual opportunity and challenge of reaching out to perpetrators.

Kirksey, a former pastor, began serving in August as director of Covenant Connections at Arkansas' Alexander Youth Services Center, a state juvenile-detention center. Covenant Connections is a national pilot project "between the juvenile-detention facility and Boys and Girls Club of America to bring the community and the corrections effort into partnership."

Ten days after he started working at the facility, the two kids convicted of killing four fellow students and a teacher in Jonesboro, Ark., were transferred to Alexander. The deadly March 1998 ambush at West-

side Middle School—one of several recent school-shooting rampages—attracted widespread media coverage throughout the nation.

Kirksey described Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, as "two of the most notorious killers in the history of this state." Their actions "have left scars on Jonesboro that will last for a lifetime," he said.

Kirksey recalled that former Department of Youth Services Director Paul Doramus asked if he would consider serving as "those two Jonesboro boys' pastor."

"I choked with emotion, because somehow I knew in the back of my mind that was why I was there," said Kirksey, who also is a volunteer chaplain in the facility's serious-offenders unit.

"I don't want to minimize the pain or hurt in any way that they have inflicted upon that community," Kirksey said as an introduction to his next statement.

But, "I don't look at Mitchell or Andrew as monsters," he added. "Jesus was not willing that any should perish."

Kirksey compared ministry among juvenile offenders to the example set in the Bible story about Christ healing a leper. "The world saw a leper; Jesus saw a man who needed to be touched."

Kirksey said he is stunned at the hatred in the world but even more

"stunned and ashamed of the meanness in our churches.

"We banish people, we isolate them, we shun them because they don't fit into our world," he said. "They are not our kind. ... We must guard against becoming hard and cruel. If anything, we need more of the grace of compassion."

In his first meeting with Mitchell Johnson, Kirksey was introduced as a Baptist pastor who had recently joined the staff.

He said Johnson's immediate response was: "You are the answer to my prayer."

"I said, 'Mitchell, what do you mean by that?' He said, 'When I came, I asked if there was a preacher or a chaplain that I could talk to, and they said we didn't have one. So I started praying that God would send somebody that I could talk to about him, and you are the answer to my prayer.'"

Reflecting on that experience, Kirksey asked, "Who is going to reach out to a love-starved guy like Mitchell if not the Christian community? Where does he turn? Where does he go if he repents? Is there any hope, or is he damned forever? Has he committed the unpardonable sin? Do we throw him in the dumpster for life, for eternity?"

Kirksey noted that some people expressed concern that he was "leaving the ministry" when he moved from the pastorate to his cur-

rent position.

"It is troubling because it reflects a narrow perspective of ministry held by a growing number of Christians," Kirksey said.

"If we continue to confine our Christianity to Christian radio, Christian television, Christian businesses and Christian gatherings, we will eventually choke the gospel to death," he said.

Describing himself as "part of God's salvage team" Kirksey said he is pleased that God "strategically located me in a place far removed from the squeaky-clean atmosphere many associate with ministry to work with juveniles for whom the gospel really is good news."

Today's church "is missing a grand opportunity to proclaim the gospel to our nation," Kirksey said. "Grace is something that is easy to talk about and sing about in church. It is easy to study and teach.

"But when we personalize it and we put a face on it, then it becomes another matter. We say, 'Not in this instance,' and we begin to make it a conditional thing," he said. "When you make grace conditional, that is not New Testament."

**Correction:** A picture on this page last week incorrectly identified Marc Whitt. He is vice president for advancement at Campbellsville University.

**Mountains to the Mississippi, a weekly collection of news from Kentucky Baptist churches throughout the state, will return next week.**

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Bivocational minister of music, able to lead hymns/choruses in worship, and conduct adult and children's choirs. Some music training/experience desired. Send resumé to: Music Minister Search Committee, Moreland First Baptist Church, 501 Old Danville Pike, Hustonville, KY 40437.

**SEEKING:** First Southern Baptist Church of Floyds Knobs is seeking to employ a part-time, permanent music director. Pay and responsibilities will be determined by education, level of experience and ability. If interested, please send resumé: First Southern Baptist Church, 4631 Lakeview Drive, Floyds Knobs, IN 47119.

**SEEKING:** Fee Fee Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo., prayerfully seeks your referral for a minister to students and church outreach. Located in north suburban St. Louis County, we average in excess of 650 in two morning services, over 500 in Sunday school. Fee Fee is a strong traditional Southern Baptist church. Responsibilities include directing ministry programs for youth and college-age students. Will also administer the church-wide outreach program. Strong Christian character and experience a must. Send referrals to: Minister to Students and Church Outreach, Fee Fee Baptist Church, 11330 St. Charles Rock Road, Bridgeton, MO 63044.

**WANTED:** Experienced daycare director, southend location since 1969. Resumé to: Leanne Whitlock, Lynn Acres Baptist Church, 5007 Southside Drive, Louisville, KY 40214.

**SEEKING:** Minister of adult education for a rapidly growing suburban SBC church with a multifaceted ministry 15 miles east of St. Louis, Mo. Seminary degree or equivalent; professional experience preferred, but willing to accept those eager to be trained. Send resumé to: Dr. Larry Richmond, FBC, 1111 East Highway 50, O'Fallon, IL 62269.

**SEEKING:** First Baptist Church of Corbin is currently seeking a full-time associate minister with primary responsibilities in the area of student ministry (K-12). Seminary degree and experience preferred but not required. Please forward resumé by Jan. 31 to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 401 N. Laurel, Corbin, KY 40701.

**SEEKING:** Weekday ministries director. Responsibilities: leading Christ-centered program; administration; supervising caregivers; curriculum development; ministry to children and families. Program: 2- and 3-year developmental daycare; 4-year preschool; summer camp for grades 1-6. Healthy budget, over 20 qualified staff members. Minimum qualifications: Must meet Kentucky state licensing requirements (seminary degree a plus). Resumés and inquiries: First Baptist Church, 1400 South Main, Hopkinsville, KY 42240, Attn: Keith Stillwell. (502) 886-1216.

**SEEKING:** Parkway Baptist Church of Lexington, Ky., is seeking a pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Parkway Baptist Church, 1915 N. Broadway, Lexington, KY 40505.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational minister of youth. Godly and mature minister needed to reach out to youth in growing community through discipleship, fellowship, missions and training. Some training/experience desired. Send resumé to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Moreland First Baptist Church, 501 Old Danville Pike, Hustonville, KY 40437.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to students. The position will require the ability to provide strong leadership, direction and training for our youth and children's educational programs, plus assist the pastor with the overall ministries of the church. Send resumé to: Morganfield First Baptist Church, 200 North Morgan St., Morganfield, KY 42437, Attn: Search Committee.

**SEEKING:** Highland Baptist Church of Shelbyville, Ky., is seeking a director for its weekday child care program. Interested applicants should send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Highland Baptist Church, P.O. Box 104, Shelbyville, KY 40066-0104.

**SEEKING:** WMU associate for youth and college. Position requires knowledge of WMU; commitment to missions education; master's degree; experience with youth. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. In order to be given full consideration, applications should be received by Jan. 15. Send resumé with references to: Personnel Committee, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253.

**SEEKING:** Afterschool/summer care director; 30 hours/week during academic year, full-time summers. Send resumé or call Dr. Ron Sisk, (502) 896-4425, Crescent Hill Baptist Church, 2800 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206.

**SEEKING:** Full-time associate pastor of worship/music gifted in leading contemporary praise/worship-style services in seeker-sensitive environment. Significant experience/education expected. Send resumé to: Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 W. Byers Ave., Owensboro, KY 42303, or fax (502) 685-5134.

**SEEKING:** Audubon Baptist Church is currently seeking a part-time minister to children. The church seeks a mature Christian who is committed to children's ministry; experience preferred. Interested persons should send a resumé to: Audubon Baptist Church, 1046 Hess Lane, Louisville, KY 40217, Attn: Personnel Committee, or call the church office at (502) 635-6750.

**SEEKING:** High Point Baptist Church of Mayfield, Ky., is accepting resumés for a part-time minister of youth. Interested applicants should send resumé to: Minister of Youth Search Committee, High Point Baptist Church, 220 West Farthing St., Mayfield, KY 42066.

**SEEKING:** Victory Baptist Church of Lexington, Ky., is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Victory Baptist Church, 2261 Armstrong Mill Road, Lexington, KY 40515.

## Roadside markers pose dilemmas for property owners

By Jeff Kart  
Religion News Service

BAY CITY, Mich. (RNS)—There's a memorial in Roy DeLorge's front yard, but not for anyone he knew.

DeLorge came home one day in October to find white and purple artificial flowers stuck in the ground by his fence. A month later, a small cross appeared with a pine wreath and red ribbon on it.

He doesn't know what to do, he said. No one asked him if they could put the memorial there, but he doesn't feel right disturbing it.

The memorial is for John Harris, 78, of Saginaw, Mich., who was crossing the road across from DeLorge's house when he was struck by a truck and killed Oct. 10. Harris' family declined comment on the memorial.

"I guess I don't mind (the family) leaving it there for a period of time, but I guess I don't think it should be there indefinitely," DeLorge said.

His dilemma is not unique. Experts say roadside memorials have become increasingly popular throughout the United States in the last 10 years, creating uncomfortable issues for people and government agencies.

"At times we feel we're caught between a rock and a hard place," said Gary Naeyaert, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Transportation. "We are caught between the competing desires of our department to both enhance safety and to be compassionate."

Families are grieving when they erect the crosses and usually don't think to ask permission from property owners.

When the memorials appear on local or state rights of way, as they usually do, county road commissions and state departments of transportation tend to leave them alone—an exception to normal policy.

"It's a difficult thing. It's a new thing," said Chris Tina Leimer, a Texas writer who's spent the last four years researching American funeral

customs. "There are not prescribed rules for how to do it and who's responsible. So all those things need to be negotiated or they happen by default."

Roadside memorials are becoming more popular because traditional funerals just aren't enough for people anymore, Leimer said.

"They (funerals) don't have enough of the right elements in there to start the grieving process for many people," she said.

Roadside memorials let people express themselves.

"They need to participate," Leimer said. "They don't want to sit back and let some minister who may not have known this person very well deliver a eulogy. We're inventing a new way of saying goodbye."

Just up the road from the Harris cross, Elgin Nichols removed a roadside memorial placed at the front of his business.

The family of John Steward put four concrete blocks topped with a cross in front of Nichols' Appliance & Kitchen Gallery warehouse, where Steward landed in a fatal motorcycle accident in 1995.

The memorial was secured with screws to a concrete median in the parking lot, Nichols said. He had workers remove it after about five months.

Nichols said people told him the memorial was distracting.

"I don't have a problem with people in terms of wanting to remember their loved ones," Nichols said. "But when I get a couple of calls from people that said there was almost an accident there, I said, 'I've got to do something.'"

Art Carmona, a friend of the Stewards who lives just south of Nichols' warehouse, volunteered to put the Steward memorial in his back yard, overlooking the scene.

Leimer said roadside memorials provoke strong feelings on both sides. Those who erect them have a strong drive to honor the person who died and mark the accident that killed them. Others might find the memorials too morbid.



"We don't tend to want daily reminders of death in our life," said Leimer, who runs the Tombstone Traveller's Guide, an Internet Web site.

The memorials are an especially touchy subject for governments, which routinely remove other objects, like political signs, from road rights of way.

Nationwide, governments that remove roadside memorials are the exception, Leimer said. Homemade crosses and other memorials have been banned in California and Florida.

The Florida Department of Transportation, however, will replace unauthorized memorials with standardized ones upon written request. The memorials are 2 feet tall, white, circular and plastic, with the words "Drive Safely" and the name of the deceased.

The state of Texas erects 2 1/2-foot, white wooden crosses through a program with Mothers Against Drunk Driving. A plaque on each cross gives the name of the victim and a date of birth and death.

Florida's program started with crosses in 1997, but the design was changed after some complaints that the state was violating the First Amendment by supporting religion.

The Texas program has been challenged in the Legislature for similar reasons and at the local level as "visual pollution," Leimer said. But the program remains in place after at least 10 years.

Overall, Leimer said she thinks the ritual of road memorials is a good thing.

"It helps people to face the reality of what happened by trying to understand, by seeing the spot where it happened, and that's part of initiating grief, of getting the grieving process going ... accepting and facing the reality of death."

"It also has a social message because it's letting the world know that someone died here, that they were important to someone, that bonds were broken, that it's a dangerous world," she said. "It's a message to beware."

**DEARLY DEPARTED** Judy Clancey, sister of John Steward, places a kiss on a marker to remember Steward's fatal motorcycle accident in 1995. Such markers represent what one person said is a desire by the grieving to do something extra to remember lost loved ones. (RNS photo)

## Church's prayer partner project unites members across barriers of age & grudges

By Ferrell Foster  
Illinois Baptist

WEST UNION, Ill. (BP)—The church that prays together not only stays together but also improves the communication of members across such boundaries as age and old grudges.

That's the report from Pastor Donald Russell, of West Union Baptist Church in West Union, Ill.

Four years ago, Russell launched a monthly Sunday evening service to link prayer partners. The service "has been a miracle and a blessing in this church," he said. "It's got people praying for one another and caring for one another."

People who attend the service, the first Sunday night service of the month, get the name of a person they are to pray for every day throughout the month, Russell said.

The service starts with singing, followed by testimonies of answered prayers during the previous month. Deacons pass out slips of paper to everyone in attendance, including visitors, for people to write their names on.

The pieces of paper then are collected, and the congregation prays about the selection of the names that people will get to pray for, Russell said. The names then are passed out, and people go find the person they will be praying for throughout the month.

"Some have to ask who this person is," said Russell, who has led the church about 12 years.

The service ends with people in a huge circle around the auditorium, and they sing the hymn "All Day Long."

Prayer partner night has become the church's most-attended Sunday night

service, he said. About 60 people attend.

Russell came up with the prayer partner idea after counseling a young couple about marriage. He told them about the importance of communication in a relationship, and he realized good communication, with God and each other, could help relationships in the church.

The congregation needed better communication due to disagreements in the past, and also because a number of young people had begun to attend. Russell said he wondered, "what can we do so this row of old people can be comfortable with this row of young people," pointing to different sections of the auditorium.

Prayer partners have helped both situations.

For some cases in which people haven't spoken to each other in years, one of them got the other's name and now they are

talking, Russell said. It hasn't solved all problems, "but it has brought a sweeter spirit" into the church, he said.

Across generations, older members have supported teens in prayer, and the young people have reached out to their elders as well, Russell said.

About a third of the people attending on prayer partner night are teenagers.

Last year, the congregation baptized 16 people, and 11 of those were young people, mostly teenagers. On the other end of the age spectrum, the church baptized three people in their 70s.

Russell said he doesn't usually preach on the first Sunday night of each month. "There's more to being a pastor than preaching a message," he said, adding that it's good to allow other people to communicate with one another and with God.

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