



WESTERN RECORDER

NEWSPAGE
EDITION

February 16, 1999
Vol. 173, No. 7

FOR THE RECORD

Baptists

SBC President Paige Patterson wants to recruit a group of business people who can buy a block of Manhattan for a Southern Baptist church start. *Page 2.*

Jim Hawkins

The executive associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention announced he will retire this year. *Page 3.*

Deaf Ministry

The KBC executive board administrative committee approved a new deaf ministries consultant and pay scale increases for KBC employees during a meeting last week. *Page 3.*

Editorial

What does the yellow light mean this time? *Page 5.*

Cooperation

State Baptist leaders in the South are considering a new way to help their Northeast counterparts. *Page 6.*

Issues

Gambling study is proving the negative impact the industry has, according to James Dobson. *Page 10.*

Travel

A museum near Memphis brings perspective to biblical artifacts and history. *Page 11.*

Moving? See page 4 (02/16)

Churches are facing more legal hurdles, attorney says

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Raising the money to build a church might be easier than finding a place to put it, a law professor told a recent conference on restoring religious freedom in the states.

Douglas Laycock, a professor at the University of Texas law school, discussed the impact of zoning laws on churches at the Restoring Religious Freedom in the States Conference at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington.

The conference, sponsored by the Council on Religious Freedom, addressed the recent push to pass state versions of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a 1993 federal law that bolstered protection for religious liberty.

Laycock, who defended RFRA before the Supreme Court, said passing state RFRAs is difficult because of, among other things, the impact such laws have on zoning for churches.

Residents can oppose church construction for reasons ranging from hostility toward a specific faith group to increased traffic, he said.

Cities are more likely to give special-use permits to banquet halls, fraternal organizations, funeral homes, libraries and museums than to churches, he noted.

Existing laws allow churches to buy houses in a residential neighborhood and tear them down to build a church, but churches often find a catch 22 in trying to find a suitable location, he said.

Neighborhoods try to block church construction because they generate heavy traffic on Sunday, he said, and business districts often oppose churches because they generate traffic only on Sunday.

"But people often oppose churches in their neighborhood because of prejudice against the church's denomination or religion," he added.

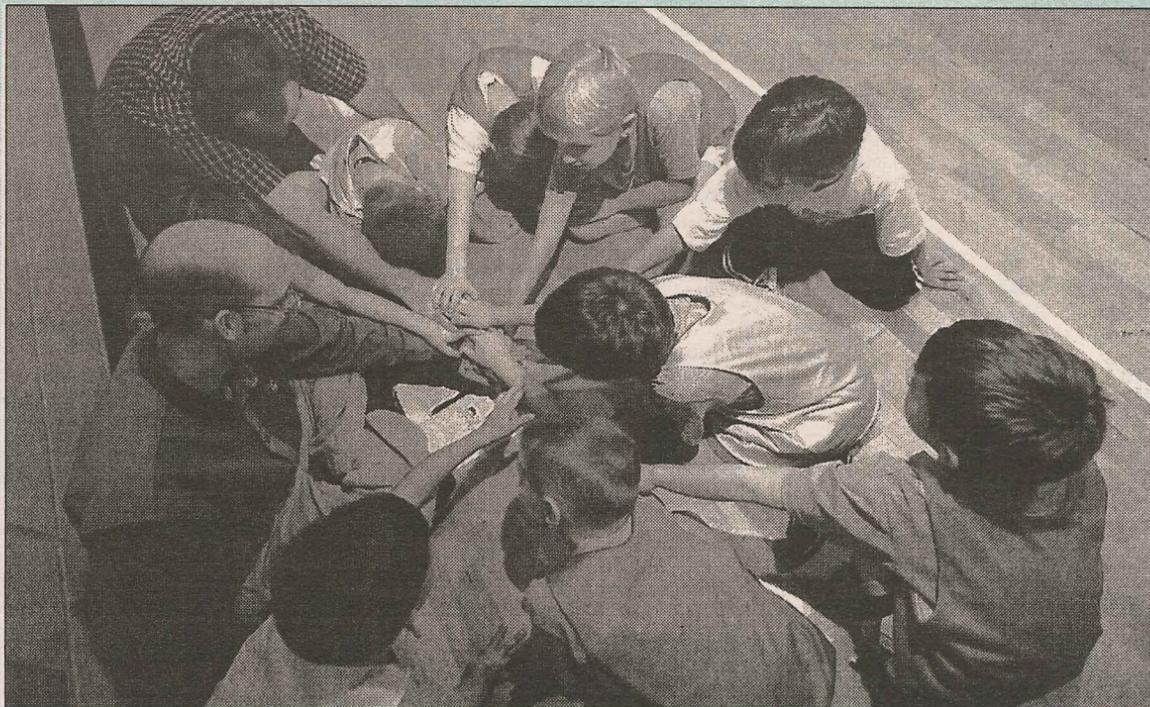
Laycock quoted a Gallup Poll in which 30 percent of respondents said they do not want religious fundamentalists in their neighborhood, and 62 percent said they do not want a minority sect or cult in their neighborhood.

Laycock said small churches are "overwhelmingly overrepresented" in church zoning cases. Denominations that comprise nine percent of the population total more than 50 percent of such litigation, he said.

"Every faith is a small faith somewhere," he added.

Another trouble spot for zoning, Laycock said, is that churches often provide such ministries as daycare or food banks that neighbors may not understand. "They understand sermons and hymns and prayers," he said. "Everything else may require a special permit."

Good sports



PRAYER TIME Coach Kevin Brimner leads his team in prayer during the devotional portion of weekly practice in Owensboro's Upward Basketball. The league draws almost 900 participants and resulted in more than 100 professions of faith last year. **Below:** Matt Taylor (left) puts into practice skills learned by dribbling the ball down court during a scrimmage. (BP photos by Jim Veneman)

Upward Owensboro links churches for outreach

By Charles Willis
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

OWENSBORO (BP)—Owensboro is a basketball town, according to Jacqui Eckdahl.

"We're supposed to know what to do with a basketball," said Eckdahl, recreation and family ministry director at Bellevue Baptist Church.

"But we've learned if you let the Lord get hold of a basketball, he will show you what to do with it," she added.

Lives were changed, she said, when the goal changed from winning games to winning people for Jesus.

Last season more than 100 children said they became Christians during an evangelistic presentation at the end of the Owensboro Upward Basketball season.

Upward Basketball, which also is popular at other Kentucky Baptist churches, is just one model of ministry that ties sports to an opportunity to share Christianity.

Three years ago Eckdahl attended a recreation conference where she heard a presentation about Upward Basketball and its goal of intentional outreach.

She said three things convinced her to try Upward Basketball: the evangelistic perspective, equal playing time for all participants and everyone gets an award.

"I thought, 'Look where God is



already working.' This offers real growth and development for the average child who just wants to

play," she said.

Participation has exploded from 230 children in 1997 to nearly 900 children this year. Of this year's group, about 10 percent indicated on registration forms that they have no church affiliation.

While children in many churches across America have been exposed to the gospel and a positive sports experience by Upward in recent years, the Owensboro program appears to be among the first to emerge as a cooperative effort among several churches and the local YMCA.

Brian Crall, chief executive offic-

Inside:

■ Olympic-sized ministry planned for Australian Summer Games. *Page 8.*

■ Sports ministry authorities tell how to do it right. *Page 9.*

■ Sports federation works with Baptist missionaries to make lasting impact. *Page 9.*

er for YMCA, Owensboro, said the Y had conducted a basketball program for many years, but "as this [Upward] program emerged, ours became smaller. When I saw what Jacqui was doing with Upward, I decided to join up with what I saw as a movement of God."

Crall said he was impressed with the approach of Upward in reaching children "at the point of felt need and

□ See Owensboro's ministry ..., page 8



BAPTIST BITS

■ **Volunteers** are needed for partnership evangelism campaigns in Hong Kong. Orientation meetings are scheduled for Feb. 25, March 25, April 15 and May 13 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. For more information, call the seminary at (817) 923-1921, Ext. 4870 or e-mail 110657.330@compuserve.com.

■ **LifeWay Christian Resources** plans to end publication of two magazines this summer—*Look and Listen*, a preschool magazine, and *Stewardship Journal*. The agency also plans to launch two new resources in the late summer and fall—music compact disks for *Preschool Life and Work* and a new believer's monthly devotional magazine.

■ **William Pinson** announced he will retire Jan. 31 as executive director of the 2.7 million-member Baptist General Convention of Texas. Pinson, who will turn 65 this year, has served as the convention's executive director since 1983. The convention's executive board will elect a search committee Feb. 23 to find Pinson's successor.

Patterson: Let's get a block of Manhattan for SBC church

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—Partnerships between associations, more missionary involvement by mega-churches and the private purchase of a city block in Manhattan are among the challenges SBC President Paige Patterson plans to place before convention messengers in June.

Meanwhile, the director of missions for the metropolitan New York Baptist association questioned whether any group could buy a city block in Manhattan and said he hopes such work is coordinated with local leadership.

Patterson shared his plans with trustees of the North American Mission Board as part of their Feb. 1-3 meeting.

"As a challenge to Southern Baptists, we are going to focus all that happens in that convention on the great cities of America," Patterson said.

Baptist associations of 60 or more churches will be challenged to adopt another American city that is similar in size, Patterson said, "and make a commitment that within 10 years they will see to it that there are as many churches in that city as there are in the sponsoring association."

For example, Dallas has about 365 Southern Baptist churches in its association, while other large cities might have only four or six, he said.

"How on earth can we stand before the judgment seat of Christ having been given the resources that we have and report such a thing to God?" he said. "I don't want to be a part of that report. We have got to do this, and it's going to take the associations to do it."

Southern Baptist mega-churches also must play a role, he said. "I'm going to challenge the mega-churches of our country to be more missionary, not only in their giving but also in their direct missionary involvement," he said. "In so doing, I am going to risk some friendships, but I am going to do it anyway."

Because of the strategic importance of New York City, Patterson floated a proposal for establishing a Southern Baptist mega-church in Manhattan. He is praying God will provide 12 to 20 businesspeople "with enormous resources" who jointly could buy an entire city block in the middle of the island.

The property could be given to NAMB with the understanding that the agency has 10 years to establish a church, Patterson suggested. Otherwise, he said, the land would return to the buyers, who could get their money back.

The North American Mission Board's challenge during that time would be to plant a large church from the ground up, Patterson said, initially supplying a complete leadership staff.

"I believe we can have a church in

New York City running 5,000 or 6,000 in Sunday school in a matter of two or three years at the most," he said. "And you say, 'Why would you want to do that, particularly there?' Because almost every visitor from around the world who comes to this country comes to New York City. ... And folks, we have little witness."

Patterson told of his own habit when he's in New York City of taking time at about 6 p.m. to "just hang around the streets and talk to people about Jesus. In the evening, when the sun goes down, everybody has something to do, but still they'll stop and talk to you."

He told of one person in Greenwich Village who began shouting at him and asking for money but later became baptized and joined a church.

"The thing I keep thinking about is there are about 8 or 9 million more just like him in New York City," Patterson told NAMB trustees. "Can we actually avoid the risk of accountability to the judgment seat of Christ because we are comfortable in the confines of Southern Baptist churches?"

But buying a city block in Manhattan probably could exceed the reach of any group, said David Dean, director of missions for New York City's Baptist association.

"Nobody's going to buy a city block in Manhattan," he said, noting that one building site can cost as much as \$50 million.

"I don't see anything wrong with

the idea," he added. "The concern I would have is is that the best use of \$10 million?"

Dean said Baptists do have a strong witness in Manhattan, but it is in ethnic congregations, including Hispanic and Jamaican churches. He agreed that Manhattan could use another strong Anglo church, such as the one the Presbyterian Church (USA) helped start eight years ago.

He added that his association a year ago started another of the models Patterson outlined—a link with Dallas Baptists.

Dallas congregations have helped New York churches build churches and conduct missions projects. New York City Baptists, meanwhile, have helped Dallas congregations reach out to newer ethnic groups in that city, Dean said.

"The strategic importance of New York City—I'm not going to disagree with that," he said. "I don't think Southern Baptists have ever really given New York its due."

The New York association includes 200 congregations and covers everything within 50 miles of Times Square, including Southern Connecticut and most of New Jersey.

Dean said he's excited that the president of the convention is interested in promoting work in New York. "I just hope they'll check with some of the local people as far as strategic planning is concerned."

With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey

LifeWay trustees OK statement, curriculum & building renovation

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A new vision statement, a "flagship" Bible study curriculum and a facilities facelift were approved by trustees of LifeWay Christian Resources during their semiannual meeting Feb. 8-9 in Nashville.

The new statement "raises the bar as we commit ourselves to being agents of transformation in the world of the 21st century," said LifeWay President Jimmy Draper Jr.

The statement reads: "As God works through us ... We will help people and churches know Jesus Christ and seek his kingdom by providing biblical solutions that spiritually transform individuals and cultures."

The previous Sunday School Board statement was: "We will assist

local churches and believers to evangelize the world to Christ, develop believers, and grow churches by being the best worldwide provider of relevant, high-quality, high-value Christian products and services."

Beginning in September 2000, LifeWay will introduce "Family Bible Study," a new series containing a core curriculum for all age groups based on a common Bible study theme and, as often as possible, using the same Scripture passage.

When introduced, LifeWay will discontinue three series—*Life & Work*, *Youth Explore the Bible* and the *Family Bible Series*.

The subtitle for the new Family Bible Study is "Building the Family of Faith to Live by God's Truth." One

of the goals of the new series is affirming the home as the center of biblical guidance, said Bill Taylor, director of LifeWay's Sunday school group.

"If we're going to make any real difference in our culture, we have to get parents more involved in teaching their children biblical truth," he said.

Other series features include:

■ A more intentional focus on evangelism, including support for LifeWay's FAITH evangelism strategy.

■ Lessons that encourage people to study the Bible at home during the week.

■ Translation options for all age groups in either the King James Version or New International Version.

In regard to LifeWay's offices,

trustees approved a plan to spend \$24.7 million to provide offices, parking, warehouse/distribution space, a cafeteria/kitchen and conference space. The project should be completed by 2005.

Factors cited for the new construction included the fact that LifeWay's existing office space is almost filled to capacity and parking is available for only 72 percent of employees.

In other matters, trustees:

■ Approved an average price increase of up to 3.5 percent for literature and magazines effective with the winter 2000 issues.

■ Re-elected trustee Chairman Ken Speakman, director of the international division of the Gideons International in Nashville.

Gay policy places American Airlines in SBC no-fly zone

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention recently dropped American Airlines as a recommended airline for travel to the annual meeting in Atlanta.

At issue is a claim by SBC officials that American Airlines broke a pledge to discontinue corporate support of homosexual activists' organizations.

Bill Merrell, SBC Executive Committee vice president for convention relations, said American Airlines last spring "gave explicit assurances to Southern Baptists and others of the evangelical Christian community that it would not lend support to movements destructive of the family and

society."

American Airlines officials met in 1997 with six evangelical leaders, including Richard Land of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, after they purchased full-page newspaper ads in Washington and Dallas urging the airline to abandon policies that "promote homosexual behavior."

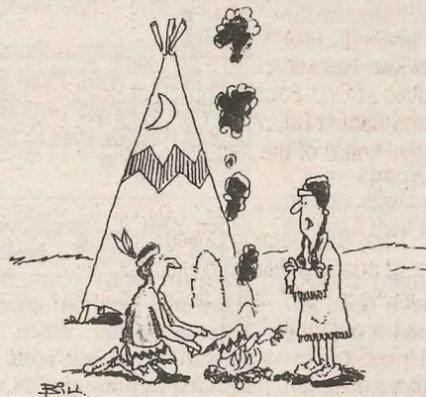
"Contrary to those assurances, American Airlines gave \$50,000 to the media awards of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation," he said. "American Airlines gave another \$25,000 to the Human Rights Campaign, whose agenda includes legalizing same-sex marriage."

In January, SBC leaders announced that American and Delta Airlines would both serve as official carriers for the 1999 Southern Baptist Convention, scheduled June 15-16 in Atlanta.

An airline spokeswoman denied any promise was broken.

"I can tell you that the corporation never made a pledge to drop its support of any organizations," said Andrea Rader, a spokeswoman for American Airlines. Rader said American is "disappointed that the Southern Baptists will not be flying with us."

With additional reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Religion News Service



"The Northern Tribe's having a hard time following your King James smoke signals—they'd like you to switch to the NIV if it's not too much trouble."

Event speaker likes being 'link' to Jesus

By Brenda Smith,
KBC Communications

LOUISVILLE—A person who becomes a Christian is like a chain with many links, according to Cliffe Knechtle, senior pastor of Hope Church in Wilton, Conn.

"There are many influences and conversations that precede a person's decision to convert to Christ," Knechtle said. "I know the joy of being the first link at times, a middle link usually and occasionally the last link."

Knechtle is one of the scheduled speakers at the 1999 Kentucky Baptist Convention's evangelism conference Feb. 22-23 at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington.

Knechtle said much of his ministry has been as a "first link" in the chain. As a seminary student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Knechtle frequented rough-and-tumble blue collar bars—not as a patron, but as a witness for Christ.

"I wanted to share my faith with people who weren't Christians," he said. "Every time the Celtics or the Bruins lost a game some half-drunk guy would stand up and curse God at the top of his lungs. So I figured, 'Gentlemen, I demand equal time. If you get to curse God at the top of your lungs then I can say something positive about God at the top of mine.'"

Sometimes Knechtle was tolerated. Other times, the bartender would

take him by the arm and lead him out of the bar. Knechtle's friends would stay behind and try to follow up with bar patrons. He does not remember any bar patrons becoming Christians as a result of his efforts.

"During those early days in the bars, I was never the last link," he said. "God has not called me to only be the last link. He has called me to be faithful and to love all people."

After seminary, Knechtle continued his open-air evangelism style as a staff member with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

In 1980 Knechtle preached a spring break service on the beach at Ft. Lauderdale. Midway through the service, Knechtle threw away his notes and started fielding questions from the group.

Since then, Knechtle has used this open-air question-and-answer format on more than 50 college campuses. The forums also developed into a television show aired on BET network.

Evangelism is the most intimidating part of being obedient to God because the event is out of the evangelist's control, Knechtle said. People involved in evangelism don't know where the conversation will go; the person being witnessed to might take the conversation in any direction.

"Our society emphasizes appearance, and in evangelizing you risk looking foolish, being rejected," Knechtle said. "The thought of shar-

ing Jesus terrifies me. Now, do I allow my fear to paralyze me or does it make me trust God more?"

Knechtle is among a dozen speakers scheduled for the two-day event.

Other speakers include John Ed Mathison, senior pastor of Frazer Memorial United Methodist Church in Montgomery, Ala., the fastest-growing United Methodist congregation in America.

Also scheduled are Jay Strack, founder of the Jay Strack Evangelistic Association in Orlando, Fla.; Steve Ayers, pastor of Hillvue Heights Baptist Church in Bowling Green; E.K. Bailey, pastor of Concord Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas; Craig Loscalzo, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; Ed Young, pastor of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas; and John Yarbrough, vice president of evangelism for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Missions Board.

For more information about the conference, call the KBC evangelism growth team office at (888) 254-5722.

Knechtle is one of the scheduled speakers at the 1999 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference Feb. 22-23 at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington.

Child care for preschool-age children will be available. Child care slots can be reserved by calling Marilyn Huffman at (606) 272-3441, ext. 222 no later than Feb. 18.

Help offered for second coming doctrine study

The 1999 doctrine study for Southern Baptist churches will offer insight for Christians facing speculation about the second coming of Christ and the approaching end of the millennium.

The study, for which leadership training is available through the Kentucky Baptist Convention's discipleship training department, will be based on the book "Our Christian Hope: Biblical Answers to Questions About the Future" by David Dockery.

Dockery, a former professor and administrator at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, is president of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

Recommended dates for churches to conduct the study are April 19-23, although it can be taught at any time, according to Jim Clontz, discipleship training associate director.

Clontz said the doctrinal study is offered by the Southern Baptist Convention each year to help Baptists better understand the denomination's beliefs.

"The annual doctrinal study helps retain church members because they become grounded in their faith," Clontz said. "It also helps folks to become more enthusiastic about their faith."

In the introduction to the book, Dockery says the "study focuses on

the end times and seeks to answer questions surrounding issues such as death, the return of Christ, the millennium, heaven and hell."

Kentucky Baptist associational directors of missions can contact the KBC discipleship training department to arrange for leadership training in their associations.

The discipleship training department then will schedule a trainer, or associations can request a specific trainer. All travel, honoraria and expenses for trainers will be paid for by the discipleship training department.

For more information, contact the discipleship training department at (502) 254-4716 or (888) 254-5708.

Committee approves deaf consultant, pay increases

A new deaf ministries consultant and salary increases for Kentucky Baptist Convention employees were approved Feb. 9 by the administrative committee of the KBC executive board.

The new consultant, Timothy Bender, 45, has been serving as pastor of Louisville Baptist Deaf Church since 1992 and is the first hearing-impaired person to fill that position, according to Larry Martin, KBC director of missions and evangelism.

Though not fully deaf, Bender's impairment will help deaf people better identify with him, Martin said.

A native of Portland, Ore., Bender has a master's degree in religious education from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

In addition to serving as a liaison

between the KBC and deaf ministries, churches and fellowships, Bender also will be responsible for helping set up training opportunities for deaf people. That will include creating seminary extension sites throughout the commonwealth.

There are five deaf congregations associated with Kentucky Baptists, Martin said, and several churches have deaf ministries.

A section in Eastern Kentucky has the second highest concentration of congenitally deaf residents in America, behind an area in Utah, Martin said.

Regarding salaries, committee members adjusted the pay grades for all job levels.

Following the recommendations from last year's salary study for executive, professional and supervisory

positions, the committee raised the pay scale 4.6 percent, or 3 percent above the consumer price index.

KBC business manager Lowell Ashby said the last pay study for that group was in 1978, and salaries had fallen behind the consumer price index. This year's increase is scheduled to be followed by two more years of 2 percent increases above CPI.

The pay scale for secretarial, clerical, fiscal and manual staff was increased 2 percent by the committee. That group's salaries were last studied in 1994 and have kept pace with CPI Ashby said.

The minimum salary for a full-time secretarial, clerical, fiscal or manual staff is \$13,306; the maximum is \$35,176. The minimum salary for a professional level position is \$29,068; the maximum is \$88,114.

Jim Hawkins to retire this year as KBC executive associate

LOUISVILLE—Jim Hawkins, executive associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, announced last week he will retire June 1 after 14 years of service in that position.

Hawkins, 62, announced his intention to the KBC executive board's administrative committee Feb. 9, saying he's ready to slow down after 41 years in administrative management.

As executive associate, Hawkins has been a key KBC leader, providing day-to-day administrative support for the convention's Executive Board staff and often playing important behind-the-scenes roles in supporting convention committees and planning major events such as the KBC annual meeting.

Hawkins also served a year as interim KBC executive secretary-treasurer before Bill Mackey was elected a year ago.

Hawkins was praised by both past and present KBC leadership. "Through the years, KBC staff, institutional leadership and folks across the state reminded me of the diamond I had mined when I was able to coax him to join the executive board

team," said Bill Marshall, former executive secretary-treasurer. "He was and is special."

Mackey agreed.

"In his 14 years of ministry, Jim Hawkins has endeared himself to the Kentucky Baptist Convention staff and all Kentucky Baptists because of his love for the Convention, Kentucky Baptists and our Lord," Mackey said. "In a short year he has provided incredible assistance to me personally in my new role as executive secretary-treasurer and has become a personal friend, confidant, and mentor."

Convention President Charles Barnes, himself a layman, called Hawkins "an outstanding example of what God can do through a committed Christian layman."

Hawkins said he's leaving the convention's work in able hands.

"I am totally supportive of and grateful for the leadership of Bill Mackey," says Hawkins. "I consider him a dear friend and colleague. God did a wonderful thing for us and all Kentucky Baptists when he called Bill back to the commonwealth."

A Bowling Green native, Hawkins began his career working at the family business, Hawkins Upholstery. He went on to serve on the administrative staff of Kentucky Southern College in Louisville from 1963-67.

In 1967, Hawkins was a founding administrator for the opening of Jefferson Community College in Louisville. Hawkins served there for the next 17 years, as registrar, assistant director for academic affairs and associate director of academic affairs.

Hawkins also served as a consultant and vice president for training for the Hindman Company before taking the KBC executive associate position in May 1985.

"My job and my call has always been to be in the background, offering administrative support to those in front-line leadership," Hawkins said.

Hawkins has served as a lay leader in a number of capacities at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green and Highland Baptist Church in Louisville. He also served on the executive board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention from 1981-1983.

After receiving his bachelor of science in commerce degree from Georgetown College in 1958, Hawkins earned a master of arts in political science degree from the University of Louisville in 1967 and a doctorate in education from Indiana University in 1979.

After retiring, Hawkins said he is considering joining other Christian leaders in opposing legislation that would expand gambling in Kentucky, particularly video slot machines. Hawkins will also continue to provide volunteer support for the KBC executive board staff.



Hawkins

OPINION

WESTERN RECORDER

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

MAURI SMITH
Interim Executive
Officer

DAVID WINFREY
News Director

C.R. DALEY
Editor Emeritus

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

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

To subscribe: Send \$10.60 for a one-year, individual subscription. Group subscriptions on the church budget plan are \$8.50 per year. An additional church newsletter service is available for churches of all sizes. All subscriptions are payable in advance, except church accounts, which require a tax exemption number.

To register change of address: Send the mailing label from page 1, along with your new address, to the subscription department at the Western Recorder address.

To give news tips: Call (502) 244-6471, fax to (502) 244-6474 or write the editor or news director.

To submit a letter: Letters on any subject will be considered for publication, provided they do not make a personal attack on anyone. Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for length. Submit by mail or fax or by e-mail to: wesrec@ntr.net

To place an advertisement: Rates are available upon request by calling (502) 244-6470. Institutional columns on an inside page are paid space. Claims made by advertisers are not necessarily those of the Western Recorder's staff and directors.

Directors: Tom Curry, Louisville, chairman; Barry Howard, Corbin, vice chairman; Jim Abernathy, Covington, secretary; Laura Beville, Bowling Green; Mark Boes, Cecilia; Mike Harmon, Princeton; Frank Hatfield, Shepherdsville; Bill Marshall, Louisville; Charles Midkiff, Greenville; June B. Rice, Paintsville; Don Mantoath, Morehead; Kenneth Wells, Somerset.

The return of a biblical jubilee

By Robert Parham

An almost forgotten biblical ideal is being resurrected, thanks partly to the fast-approaching new millennium. After years of neglect, the word jubilee is resurfacing in the substantive religious discourse and the practice of jubilee is being taken seriously.

When Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt, he gave them an economic blueprint that included the observance of the year of jubilee. At the sound of the ram's horn, jubilee was launched, a 50-year cycle at the end of which land remained fallow, debts were cancelled, slaves were freed and property reverted to the original owner.

The purpose of jubilee was to remind the Hebrews that creation really belonged to God and to recommit them to trusting God for their well-being and to justice for the weak in the land. The intended result was economic transformation.

Today, even groups outside the mainstream Judeo-Christian tradition have latched on to the idea of jubilee.

On the New Age front, The Jubilee 2000 Web site promises the creation of "a virtual global society in cyberspace to demonstrate the supe-

riority of cooperation over competition as a guiding social principle."

The National Council of Catholic Bishops identified deepened Christian unity as one of the goals in its jubilee plan. They challenged Catholics to intensify their spiritual journey through repentance and forgiveness.

A mainline Christian coalition also has a jubilee 2000 agenda. About 40 American Catholic and Protestant organizations are campaigning to get wealthy nations by the year 2000 to cancel the unpayable debts owed by the world's poorest countries.

With the word jubilee hitched to so many religious initiatives, people of faith and others deserve some talking points on the revolutionary nature of this transformation.

Jesus spoke of the jubilee agenda in his first recorded synagogue sermon. He said that he had been commissioned to proclaim liberty to captives and to set those in bondage free. He closed with the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord, an allusion to the year of jubilee.

As soon as the hearers realized his agenda, they "were filled with wrath." They rose up to destroy him, not an uncommon reaction when moral commitments and economic interests butt heads.

The jubilee theme resurfaced in

Jesus' teachings. In his model prayer, he taught his followers to ask for debt forgiveness even as they had forgiven their own debtors.

Jesus told of a king who called for the payment of an enormous debt. Unable to pay, the king ordered that the deeply indebted man and his family be sold into slavery and their property seized. After the man pleaded for more time to repay, the king practiced jubilee and forgave the man's debt.

The debt-free man, however, did not extend similar forgiveness when he encountered a man who owed him a slight amount. Hearing of the injustice, the king arrested the debt-free man and demanded repayment in full.

Christian bodies are faithfully seeking a contemporary implementation of the biblical concept of jubilee. Yet the response of individual Christians to its radical socio-economic agenda is far from certain.

Interpersonal forgiveness and ecumenical unity may be more knotty problems than international debt cancellation. The ongoing intricacies of human relationships can be even more complex than a series of public policy decisions. Nevertheless, the goals of jubilee deserve the best efforts of all Christians. Indeed, the ram's horn has sounded.

Robert Parham is the executive director of the Nashville-based Baptist Center for Ethics, www.baptists4ethics.com

CHURCH

Why should you have a will?

By Laurie Valentine

"You own stuff. ... You will die. ... Someone will get your stuff." Jane Bryant Quinn



Making a will allows you to choose who gets your "stuff" and how and when they

will receive it after your death. The "stuff" that passes under your will is your individually owned assets and assets payable to your estate or executor. Distribution of jointly owned property, life insurance proceeds and retirement survivorship benefits is not, generally, controlled by your will.

Will distribution provisions can include specific bequests of particular assets or amounts, as well as general bequests of personal property and the residue of your estate.

By making a will, you may include non-family beneficiaries, such as your church or other Baptist causes, in your distribution plan. If you have not made a will, Kentucky law provides for distribution only to your relatives.

Making a will also allows you to provide for special needs of your beneficiaries. Children or grandchildren may be too young, or your spouse or other adult beneficiaries may not be capable of managing what you want to leave to them. If you have not made a will, Kentucky law provides only for outright distribution of your estate to your heirs, even if some are too young or otherwise not capable of managing what they are to receive. A trust provision in your will may be just the answer. The beneficiary will receive the benefits of your gift without the burden of its management.

At your death, someone must determine what you own, settle your final debts, file tax returns and then distribute your estate. You may choose who will handle these important duties by making a will and naming one or more persons to serve as executor.

If you do not make a will, the court and your heirs will select an executor. This might cause delays in getting the estate open and in handling certain matters that could arise during the estate administration process.

Most importantly, making a will enables you to practice your Christian stewardship not only during life, but also at your death.

Reprinted from WR, Jan. 6, 1998

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

Backing KBHC

Below you will note a resolution adopted unanimously by the Christian County Baptist Association during its executive board meeting in January. As requested by the executive board, this is being forwarded to the letter to the editor section of the Western Recorder.

Resolution in Support of KBHC
Whereas, the Christian County Baptist Association Executive Board met on January 11, 1999 at the Baptist Center in Hopkinsville, Kentucky,

Be it Resolved, that we, the Executive Board of the Christian County

Baptist Association, express our support and gratitude for the recent courageous action taken by Dr. Bill Smithwick and the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in the firing of a lesbian employee;

Be it Further Resolved, that we, the Executive Board of the Christian County Baptist Association, will continue support for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children and other institutions and agencies of the Kentucky

Baptist Convention who uphold morality and clear biblical teaching;

Be it Finally Resolved, that we, the Executive Board of the Christian County Baptist Association, will continue to pray for and love all persons regardless of their sin and endeavor to lead them to repentance, obedience and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted,
Ross Littlepage, Moderator
W.L. Larry Baker, Director of Missions
Christian County Baptist Association



PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

True Love Waits

Youth today are facing many challenges to their Christian values. A promiscuous society, peer pressure and too many poor examples from adults all send the message that God's law just isn't very important anymore.

Yet, despite all the obstacles, there is a new level of commitment among youth today. I have worked with statewide youth events for 20 years, and in the last five years I have seen youth in great numbers taking seriously their commitment to Jesus Christ.

One example is the "True Love Waits" movement. Many thousands of Christian young people have accepted the challenge of maintaining sexual purity through this special Southern Baptist youth emphasis.

These young people are to be commended for doing so because the Bible is clear that Christians should flee all sexual immorality (1 Corinthians

6:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4). The Bible describes a psychological, emotional and spiritual bonding that takes place in physical intimacy that must be reserved for marriage (1 Corinthians 6:15, Mark 10:6-9, Ephesians 5:31). I am afraid many youth who are promiscuous sexually are going to carry a lot of baggage into marriage that will hinder "the two becoming one" fulfillment God designed for a man and woman.

This is not to say that all is lost for those who may have fallen in this area. God forgives, and a person who has stepped across the line can repent and make a commitment for the future.

I am grateful for youth leaders who have led their youth to make authentic commitments and have provided a much-needed support system. I want to challenge church and youth leaders to provide the best in Christian example and teaching. Our young people deserve the best influence of adults with high moral

values, the best in Christian thought and teaching and genuine peer accountability.

My daughter, Beth, was fortunate to be in a local church youth ministry that established accountability groups. After a 12-week study, the eight teenage girls formed a prayer and accountability group that has continued for 10 years. They agreed to pray for one another and to be accountable to maintain moral purity and to affirm each others' spouses. Four of them now have married outstanding Christian men.

Benny Walker, a former coach and youth minister, has developed an accountability process for youth at school and in the local church called First Priority. It is in place on 80 high school campuses in central Alabama, and youth are coming to Christ on a regular basis.

Please join me in praying for our young people. Pray for their commitment of their bodies to God and to the one he is preparing for them.

Bill Mackey is executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



Bill Mackey

Reminders of God's love help kids face fears of growing up

Q. How can I help my child deal with fears about growing up?

Children need to feel safe and secure, and while boys and girls are young, most parents and homes provide plenty of both. But as children begin to grow and interact more with the world, they become more and more aware of ways in which the world is a dangerous and constantly changing place. Here are some tips for helping your child deal with these fears:

- Explain to your child that God's plan for people includes growing. Read Luke 2:52 together, and talk about the ways Jesus grew.

- Reassure your child of your presence and protection as they grow.

- Talk about growing as an exciting adventure, full of unexpected surprises and experiences. Help your child look forward to future stages of development, without hurrying through and missing the joy of the present.

- Remind your child of God's love and watch care. Read Proverbs 3:5-6 together and talk about how God promises to guide us and help us make good decisions as we grow. The story of Joseph can help children see how God remains faithful through the various stages and struggles of life.

—David Garrard

Q. How should we tell our children that we are divorcing? I guess they'll ask questions, but I'm not sure how much to tell them. They are 6 and 7.

It's difficult to know just how much to say and how to say it, yet talking with your children about what is happening is important for them to deal with your divorce most effectively.

Not providing any information might lead them to imagine things that simply are not true. ("I was really bad yesterday, then Daddy left. This is my fault.") However, you don't want to overload them with too much information either. Given their ages, I would suggest the following:

- If possible, you and your spouse might want to talk with your children together to communicate that both of you are still their parents and will continue to be active in their lives. But if your relationship with your spouse would make such a discussion difficult, talking with your children separately might be better.

- Begin by asking them what they already know. Sometimes children know more than we realize, but sometimes what they think they know is inaccurate. Asking them what they already know will help you decide where to begin and whether any inaccurate information exists that you need to clear up.

- Keep it simple without going into a lot of details they may not be ready to hear. But allow as much time as your child needs to talk about it and ask questions.

- Try not to damage the child's respect and love for the other parent. Whatever you feel for your spouse, your children will fare better if they can continue to love and respect both of you. It would be better to say, "We have problems we can't work out" rather than, "We're divorcing because your father/mother is too selfish."

- Any explanation you provide should be age-appropriate. Six and seven-year-olds are not likely to understand some adult issues, such as sexual problems, infidelity, two people having different needs, etc. But they can understand such issues as the difficulty in getting along (particularly if they have had fights with any of their own friends) and the need to quit fighting so that everyone can live more peacefully.

—Susan Howell

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 Shackleford, 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.



What does yellow light mean this time?

By Don Mantoath

During the past year, we as a nation have come face to face with a moral and ethical dilemma. What should we do with a president who had admitted to an affair with a White House intern and was "less than honest" with us about it?

The polls showed that a clear majority of us believed the president was guilty of most of the charges against him; however, the same polls indicated a clear majority did not feel his actions warranted removal from office.

For the last few weeks we watched as House managers and White House lawyers presented their cases to the Senate. And we watched as senators struggled with what might be the biggest decision of their political careers. But they are not the only ones struggling to know the truth and what to do about it. Regardless of who we are and where we live, we are involved, and all of us will be affected by the decision made last week.

I live and minister in a relatively small town—a town now divided along the same lines as revealed by the national polls. We may not have all the amenities of a large city, but we do have opinions on matters of politics and religion. And we do express those opinions when given an opportunity.

I have always thought the best measure of the size of our town lies in the fact that we have only eight traffic lights. Those eight traffic lights, however, provide some degree of civility for those of us who drive on our narrow streets. Like everywhere else, red means stop and let the other person go. Green means it's your turn.

And yellow? Yellow can mean what you want it to mean. It's that yellow circle that allows you to make a decision about what you are going to do. It's not a big decision. You'll either speed up to get on through, or you'll slow down and prepare to stop. It's a troublesome freedom because you know that the other driv-

ers at the intersection have the same choice.

So this is where we are. For most of us, the big decisions in life are made in the caution of the yellow circle. With the absolutes of red and green on either side of us, we are trapped in the middle. On one side we have the absolute of divine law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and "Thou shalt not lie" are clear and unarguable. But a word of caution from inside the yellow circle. Since the coming of Christ into our world, grace has become an equal absolute. Those of us asking, "What would Jesus do?" should remember that he rebuked the accusers of the woman caught

in the very act of adultery and sent her on her way with a call to "sin no more."

While most of us like to reserve the right of judgment, Jesus offered a word of caution that we "judge not that ye be not judged," and that we remove the beam from our own eye before attempting to remove the speck from the eye of another.

This grace is not found only in the New Testament. When Ham, one of the sons of Noah, found his father in a drunken and disgraceful condition inside his tent, he broadcast the news to the rest of the family. But when Shem and Japheth heard the news, they backed into their father's tent with a garment draped over their shoulders. Without looking at their father, they dropped it over him, and in so doing, they covered his shame and redeemed the situation.

Perhaps if all issues could be discussed in terms that are red or green, decisions would be easier to make. But most of life is carried on in the yellow circle of caution, and the decisions we have to make generally are made by drawing from the absolutes on either side of the issue. To turn your back on either absolute of law or grace may limit the scope of truth necessary for good decision making.

Don Mantoath is pastor of First Baptist Church of Morehead and a member of the Western Recorder board of directors

"Why do you speak in parables?"

By Joe Phelps

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" Matthew 13:10.

Jesus tells the parable of the sower, wherein a farmer scatters seed in various places with predictable results. When he finishes the story, the disciples question their master's teaching technique.

"Why parables?" they ask, and I hear an undertone of frustration or disapproval in their question. Like many today, the disciples would prefer the clarity of prose to the poetry of preaching.

Jesus answers them by paraphrasing from Isaiah 6, "This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand."

In today's parlance, this response sounds like "dodging the question." But what if Jesus' answer, like parables themselves, is intended to lead listeners to explore life at a deeper lev-

el than the two-dimensional, question-and-answer plane we usually inhabit, where "this equals that" and reality is experienced as wooden and flat? Could it be that his answer isn't straightforward because the gospel he embodies cannot be reduced to facts and formulas?

There is a way of seeing that is blind to what is there. There is a way of hearing that tunes out the important. Like Star Trek's Mr. Spock, people who live in a world of facts and logic get some things right, but in doing so miss the nuances that bring the facts to life—a danger for today's liberals and fundamentalists alike.

Jesus' parables serve as a correction by moving the listener from facts and formulas to stories and poetry. Parables are to be told and experienced, not decoded or dissected. The hearer's role is less interpreting and more listening courageously to what the parables reveal about God's desires for us. We learn how life looks from the vantage point of Jesus. And we are invited to join him, to transcend

the limits of our view and to explore what it means to be whole and holy.

Facts, including many doctrinal statements, are important, but go only as far as our brains. Parables, on the other hand, penetrate our hearts. They leave room for mystery, for an encounter with a truth we do not fully understand. Like great music, they speak to our souls and invite us to join in. They take us somewhere—somewhere deeper—where there is less concern about regulating the meaning and more concern for participating in the Spirit of the words.

Perhaps this is why Jesus' parables do not reveal the riches of the gospel to our equation-driven, rule-obsessed culture—not because Jesus is coy or cruel, but because the gospel of God simply does not fit into wooden formulas with fixed variables chosen by the qualified few.

Jesus' story of the loving father who invites the older, rule-bound brother to join the party for the prodigal reveals God's heart. There is plenty of room and ample joy for all of us who would come to the parabolic party.

Joe Phelps is pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville



GUEST EDITORIAL

BAPTISTS

Several states looking for new Baptist model in Northeast

CBF reports end to 2-year slowdown

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's global missions office reported it has ended a two-year slowdown in the appointment of missionaries.

Leaders of the Atlanta-based group said they plan to appoint at least four missionaries in February and at least eight in June.

"We have specialized needs in missions overseas and in the U.S. and want to match up people with those needs," said Keith Parks, global missions coordinator.

CBF leaders expect to reach a \$5 million goal for the 1998-99 Global Missions Offering, setting the stage for growth in the group's missionary force.

Financial Coordinator Gary Skeen said the offering had surpassed \$1.3 million as of Dec. 31, 1998—or 17 percent ahead of the same point last fiscal year.

The Fellowship ended 1998 with 126 career and short-term missionaries—down from its peak of 151 in June of 1997.

An unexpected plateau in giving, combined with large numbers of new missionaries, forced the organization to cut back on missionary appointments, leaders said.

Overall gifts to the Fellowship between July and December were up 13 percent, officials said.

Total contributions approached \$6.6 million, including designated gifts that are forwarded to state and regional CBF organizations, CBF partner organizations and some state conventions.

The number of churches contributing to the Fellowship, meanwhile, grew to 1,478 in 1998, with 138 new contributing churches.

By Robert Dilday
Virginia Religious Herald

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP)—Baptists in several Southern states are exploring a new strategy of evangelizing the American Northeast in partnership with Baptists in that region.

A general sketch of the undertaking—tentatively called the Northeast Project—was outlined Jan. 26 at a meeting in Richmond, Va.

Attending were representatives of state Baptist conventions in Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland/Delaware, Minnesota/Wisconsin, New England, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania/South Jersey and Texas.

Also attending were Bobbie Patterson, associate executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Woman's Missionary Union, and Earlene Jessee, executive director of Virginia WMU.

The Religious Herald, newsjournal of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, was allowed to attend the meeting under background rules which permit it to report a general sense of the discussion and any action taken but prohibit direct quotes of participants.

The forum was the third connected with the project, but many details remain to be settled, participants said.

But those attending the all-day session expressed a deep desire to accelerate the spread of an evangelical witness in the Northeast, one of the most secularized regions of the country and home for nearly a quarter of the nation's population.

A tentative set of priorities discussed Jan. 26 focuses on strengthening the base of evangelical ministry by starting new congregations, aiding the growth and development of existing churches, developing a ministry to college and university students, and offering leadership training.

Future meetings will be March 29 in Baltimore and possibly in June in Atlanta, when the group gathers in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

A scheduling conflict kept Mississippi Baptists from attending the

Richmond meeting, but it and the Baptist General Association of Virginia already has budgeted funds for the project.

Participants said other state Baptist conventions have expressed interest in the project.

To maintain momentum, the group agreed a full-time coordinator would be necessary, perhaps guided by a steering committee representing participating state conventions.

Traditionally, Southern Baptist ministry in the Northeast has been led by the SBC's North American Mission Board, which provides substantial partnership assistance to churches, district associations and state conventions in the 11-state region.

Additional support has been provided by one-on-one partnerships between established state conventions in the South and smaller state conventions in the Northeast.

The Northeast Project will provide a new dimension to partnerships through its multistate approach.

Participants at the Richmond meeting were careful to say their efforts did not conflict with NAMB nor were they motivated by ill will toward the agency or its denominational parent.

"In no way are we trying to undercut NAMB work in the Northeast," said Reginald McDonough, executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. "The NAMB has begun to focus on large metropolitan areas through its strategic-focus-city strategy. That's a good focus, but there is much more that needs to be done, and this [the Northeast Project] will

fill in some of the gaps.

"We're trying to fit into the overall picture to have an impact."

Participants also stressed their commitment to a cooperative approach that avoids what some call a "Baptist-welfare system," in which large sums of money channeled through the NAMB are transferred from Southern state conventions to Northeastern ones, often with strings attached.

Northeastern representatives said they were seeking a "truly reciprocal partnership" that gives them wide latitude to determine priorities in their region and allows them to offer their experience in ministry to churches in the South.

The Northeast Project will build on the state-to-state partnerships that are widely seen as successful and have attracted thousands of volunteers engaged in evangelism and social ministries.

Part of the success of the North-

east Project will be its ability to attract a continuing stream of volunteers to implement ministry, evangelism and church planting goals. The leader of one Southern state convention said people in his state will be looking for "creative and innovative" ministries that will excite them. A Northeastern representative responded that Baptists in his region are open to creativity and innovation, which he said may be refreshing to some churches which have felt compelled to work within established frameworks.

A possible enthusiasm-builder will be the 300th anniversary in 2007 of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, to which many Southern Baptist state conventions and churches can trace their heritage. "This could be seen as returning to our roots," said one participant.

One plan discussed envisions a seven-year emphasis beginning in 2000 and culminating in the "celebration" year of 2007.



20' to 37' Buses • 12 to 43 Adult Capacity

CHURCH BUSES

Nation's #1 Church Bus Dealer

- Used buses for sale—We buy used buses
- El Dorado, Champion, Krystal Koach & Federal Coach
 - Collins school buses
 - 15-passenger vans



CARPENTER BUS SALES, INC.

Brentwood, TN 37027

(800) 370-6180

(615) 376-2287

www.carpenterbus.com



15-passenger (No CDL license required)
(13 with rear storage compartment)

Workers needed for in-home seniors for personal care and cleaning. Must have own car, one year experience. We serve all of Jefferson County. Call Joanne, (502) 778-0913.

ELDERSERVE

Family Treasures Handled With Care

Let Allee Harmon develop and market an auction plan for your family. With more than a decade of experience, Louisville families have trusted his counsel and performance. Call today for a consultation at no charge. This service is also available for church benefit auctions.



Allee Harmon,
Auctioneer

WARDLOW
AUCTIONS inc.

1702 Stevens Avenue (502) 451-5235
Louisville, KY 40205 www.wardlowauc.com

Family 1999 Fest

March 6
Bellevue Baptist Church
Owensboro, KY

March 13
Immanuel Baptist Church
Lexington, KY

If you are willing to invest 7 hours in the families who belong to your church,
You don't want to miss this event!

Professionally trained counselors experienced in working with families, couples, and individuals will provide their expertise and insight into some of the most **challenging issues** facing families in our churches.

You will leave *Family Fest* with **new tools and resources** for effective ministry with families who need it now and who will need it in the future.

For more information on *Family Fest*...
Contact the Family Ministry Department at
1-888-254-5704
Or valerie_vincent@kybaptist.org

Registration
\$15
(includes lunch)

This event is co-sponsored by the Family Ministry Department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Cornerstone Counseling of the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Robertson back with Coalition.** Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson will again become the organization's president, replacing the departed Donald Hodel. Robertson served as the organization's president until 1997, when Hodel assumed the post. Since then, Robertson had been a senior adviser to the conservative lobbying group. Spokeswoman Molly Clatworthy said Hodel left to return to the retirement he had begun before joining the coalition. Randy Tate, a former Republican congressman from Washington state, remains executive director, responsible for day-to-day operations.

■ **Web site on abortionists shut down.** A controversial Web site that depicted doctors providing abortions as criminals has been pulled off the Internet. The absence of the Nuremberg Files site was called "a temporary setback" by Neal Horsley of Carrollton, Ga., its creator. On Feb. 2, a Portland, Ore., jury ordered anti-abortion activists held responsible for listing the doctors on the site to pay \$107 million in damages to the doctors and clinic operators, who had sued them.

■ **Schools add anti-evolution books.** A Detroit-area school district will add books questioning the validity of evolution to its junior and senior-high school libraries for voluntary use. The Mevindale-Northern Allen Park School Board endorsed the move last week. Board President John Rowe, a self-described creationist, defended the texts as legitimate works of scholarship. "The books are scientific textbooks that offer scientific evidence that evolution may not be true." But critics called the books "religious" and "bad science."

Being a Woman of Faith

Women's Lifestyle Evangelism Conference

Dates/Sites

March 15 (day) Lexington, Porter Memorial Baptist Church
March 15 (evening) . . . Louisville, Saint Matthews Baptist Church
March 16 (day) Bowling Green, Living Hope Baptist Church

Registration Information

Registration deadline is March 1, 1999. On-site registrations permitted, but will be limited to available space. Group registrations are preferred, and should be coordinated by your church women's missions leader/designee.

Cost

Registration - \$10 per person (On-site - \$15)
Lunch (day attendees only) - \$5 per person

Sponsors

Office for Evangelism, Kentucky Baptist Convention
Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union
Woman's Missionary Auxiliary, General Association of Baptists
Central District, General Association of Baptists



Ken and Beth Perkins
International Missionaries



Mamie McCullough
Writer and Humorist



Alma Randolph
Gospel Singer



Pat Ashley
Writer, Teacher, and Humorist

For More Information, Contact:
KBC Office for Evangelism
1-800-266-6477
or 1-502-245-4101, ext. 330

Olympic ministry gets athletes to share platform with God

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

HURST, Texas (BP)—When Olympic athletes go for gold, Sam Mings aims for glory.

He seeks glory not for himself nor for his country, but for Jesus.

Mings heads Lay Witnesses for Christ International, a ministry he founded two decades ago. Its goal is to lead athletes to faith in Jesus Christ

and to help them use their visibility to share the Christian message with admiring fans.

These days, Mings is training for an evangelistic equivalent of a marathon—recruiting 2,500 to 3,500 Baptists to participate in “Reach-Out 2000,” a ministry to the Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, Sept. 15-Oct. 1, 2000.

“We have a chance to touch the world and to evangelize Australia,” said Mings, a mile-a-minute talker who waves his arms in excitement as he describes the opportunities associated with his mission.

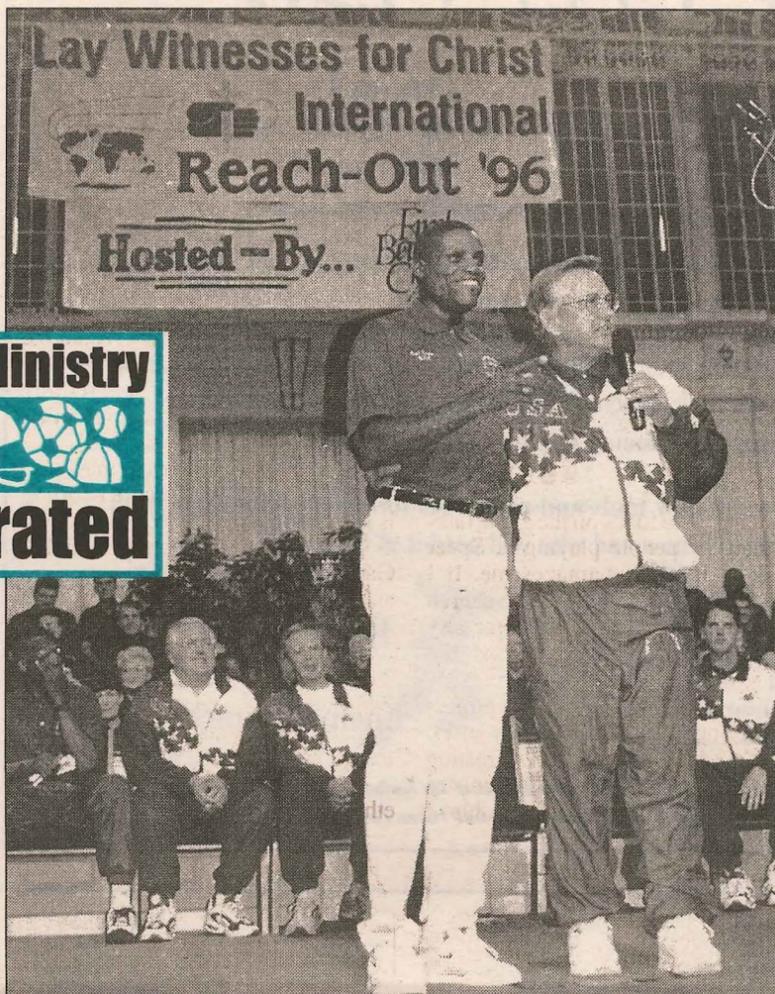
“We need God to touch the hearts of athletes and fans from around the world and also to touch the hearts of Australians,” he said. “Australia is a non-Christian nation. Less than 4 percent of Australians are Christians.

“But Australians love sports. Forty percent of Australians worship sports,” he continued.

That’s an attitude Mings has seen countless times as he’s traveled the globe providing ministry at sporting venues.

Lay Witnesses for Christ has ministered at four Olympics—Los Angeles, Seoul, Barcelona and Atlanta—as well as numerous track-and-field championships and other sports events.

The organization works in two primary spheres: One set of ministries serves athletes, seeking to lead them



MORE THAN GOLD Sam Mings (right) stands with Olympic track star Carl Lewis during a rally at the Atlanta Summer Games. Mings is recruiting 2,500 to 3,500 Baptists to participate in ministry work in Australia, Sept. 15-Oct. 1, 2000.

to Christ and encouraging Christian athletes to live out their faith. The other capitalizes on sports fervor, showcasing the testimonies of Christian athletes who tell fans that their relationships with Christ are more valuable than gold medals.

Lay Witnesses for Christ has attracted a pantheon of Olympic stars. Foremost is Carl Lewis, the sprinter/long-jumper who dominated the Summer Olympics for years.

Mings also has worked with other

track stars such as world-record setters Leroy Burrell and Florence Griffith Joyner, swimmers such as Olympic gold medalist Josh Davis and thousands more athletes in various sports.

During the Olympics, Mings’ organization has produced local “More Than Gold” rallies and televised “Evening with the Olympians” media galas, which were broadcast around the world.

“We think ‘multiplication,’” Mings said of the media-saturated

ministries connected with the Olympics. “These athletes are covered by the media from around the world. If we can encourage an athlete to say, ‘I’m running for the Lord,’ stop to pray on the track after a race or wear a Christian T-shirt, that message will be shown around the world.

“God has given these athletes a platform to speak his name,” he said.

Mings will work with Lewis and other world-class athletes in Sydney during Reach-Out 2000, but he’s recruiting an army of Baptist volunteers to fill out the rest of the ministry.

“We need people uniquely gifted in any way,” he said. “We can use mimes, puppeteers and singers, as well as people to share their faith one-on-one, distribute literature and work with athletes. We need doctors and nurses and people with the gift for hospitality who can make athletes feel welcome.”

Some volunteers will go door-to-door with Christian athletes, telling Australians about Jesus. Others will minister to non-Christian athletes.

Christian athletes also will lead clinics and demonstrations, visit hospitals and “draw crowds” for volunteers who share their faith, he said.

Beyond skills, “We need people who are prayed up and ready to make a difference” in people’s lives, he said. The ministry needs volunteers of all ages, as well as ethnic diversity. A large contingent of volunteers is expected to comprise what Mings calls the “God Squad,” senior citizens who travel around the world and pitch in wherever they’re needed.

Participation will cost about \$2,500, he said. That amount includes airfare, two meals per day, housing and uniform shirts.

Because of the cost, he’s encouraging churches and other groups to consider sponsoring volunteers who can join the ministry.

For a volunteer application or more information, contact Reach-Out 2000 at Box 127, Hurst, Texas 76053-0127; phone, (817) 284-3594; or e-mail, lwfc@msn.com.

“If we can encourage an athlete to say, ‘I’m running for the Lord,’ stop to pray on the track after a race or wear a Christian T-shirt, that message will be shown around the world.”

Sam Mings, head of Lay Witnesses for Christ International



TEAMWORK Three sponsors of Upward Owensboro’s 1999 season talk while players practice in the background. From left are Bob Farmer of First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Brian Crall of the YMCA and Jacqui Eckdahl of Bellevue Baptist Church. Other sponsors are Settle Memorial United Methodist Church and Owensboro Christian Church. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)



Owensboro’s ministry linking churches to teach kids about Jesus

Continued from page 1
then exposing them to the real need in the person of Jesus Christ.”

In choosing to merge the Y program into Upward, Crall said “there was a larger issue—getting churches to work together. There was no reason for us to have segregated programs. With Upward, there is nothing sectarian. It’s about basketball and Jesus.”

The growth of Upward Basketball in Owensboro is mirrored nationwide.

Since Upward’s first official season in 1996 with 1,300 participants, enrollment has increased at a rapid pace. In 1997, 13,000 children signed up. Last year 28,500 children played Upward Basketball, and this year the total is expected to reach 50,000. Projections for next year are for 100,000 children.

In Owensboro, 180 coaches from 25 different churches worked with children in Owensboro Upward this season. Coaches are not only from Baptist, United Methodist and Christian congregations. They also come from the Catholic church.

Devotional materials are included in the Upward Basketball Handbook, published by LifeWay Christian Resources, so straying from the materials or addressing denominational differences has not been an issue, Eckdahl said.

“Coaches are shown the materials and asked if they have any problem

using them and giving their personal testimonies,” she said.

After assessing the gifts of each coach, volunteers are paired, teaming coaches who have strong basketball knowledge with coaches who are most comfortable presenting the devotion and praying aloud.

Bob Farmer, minister of activities and senior adults at First Baptist Church of Owensboro, said he found Upward’s foundation to be “very spiritual. You have prayer partners developed in each participating church, so we know this year we have more than 300 persons praying for the program, which is pretty remarkable.

“The program has developed a strong community-based approach,” he added. “We get the brochures [advertising Upward] into the school system.”

Scholarships are provided so that the \$40 fee doesn’t stop anyone who wants to participate but has little money.

“There is a lot of ministry going

on,” said Mark Dickenson, associate minister at Settle Memorial Methodist. “We get past the denominational things and just reach kids for Christ.”

Dickenson said the impact on the Owensboro community has impressed him.

“A person recently told a co-worker that their child was involved in Upward. The child kept telling the parent how neat the devotions were. The family had never been in the church and didn’t own a Bible,” Dickenson said. “As a result of the child’s comments, the parent bought the family their first Bible.

“Upward will be a memory-maker for a lot of kids,” he continued. “They’ll develop a lot of self-esteem and will accomplish more later in life, because Upward is developing and stretching them.”

Resources, including player jerseys, awards, coach’s shirts and training videos and manuals, are available from Upward Unlimited at (800) 585-4721.

SPORTS

Experts: Good sports ministries focus on changing lives

By David Winfrey
News Director

NASHVILLE—If all you want to do is host a good game of basketball or softball, sports ministry specialists have a word of advice. Leave the church out of it.

Too many churches compete with city recreation leagues rather than use sports as a true Christian ministry or outreach tool, say three men with more than 75 years of experience between them.

"Most churches just throw it together and don't think it through," said John Garner, director of the church recreation program at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"A rec ministry can be one of the best ministries you can have in your church, or it can be one of the worst. It all goes back to that intentionality," he said.

Robbie Speer, director of Sports Reach in Campbellsville, and David Lewis, former director of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's recreation and aerobics center, agreed.

"Many, many of our churches have

a sports program and don't have a clue what ministry is," said Speer, who has organized teams to take both sports and Christianity to Europe and the Far East.

But Speer doesn't demand that sports go overseas to be a ministry. In fact, he thinks churches should give greater thought to what he calls the "theology of competition."

"Some churches have stronger requirements to play on their sports teams than they have for their deacons," he said.

Too many church people focus on the game rather than the people playing it, Speer added. "It always amazes me. If I bring somebody to play on the church basketball team and he's not any good, it's outreach. If he's good, it's recruiting."

Lewis, who was an adjunct professor at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas, and now is a recreation minister in Atlanta, insisted ministry depends on on-on-one relationships.

"If a church is an evangelistic church, then their recreation ministry will be evangelistic," he said. "If they're building a building to have their own country club, unless leadership changes, it probably isn't worth it."

Too many churches focus on building a gym or other sports facility before they have a ministry, both Garner and Lewis said. They recommend focusing on the ministry, using the social hall for aerobics or renting school courts and fields until the ministry grows so big that a building is unavoidable.

"It's like starting a new church," Garner said. "You start where you are and grow to the point where you need a new recreation facility."

Equally important, Garner said, is someone with the vision for evangelism who can constantly remind church participants the main reason for the sports ministry.

Americans today have a "leisure-ethic" that's ripe for Christian influ-

ence, Garner said.

"That's where they spend their money. That's where they spend their time," he said, quoting a Gallup poll reporting 70 percent of Americans participate in sports every week. "When they find something that's meaningful, they're going to want to plug into it."

Furthermore, Speer added, Christianity is a lot more genuine when modeled on the basketball court than in a Sunday school class.

He said he'd like to see pastor and deacon ordinations postponed for all candidates until they've spent a season playing church-league softball and basketball. "There'd be some people who would not become deacons."

"In sports, you don't have time to paint the picture pretty for everybody. ... The real me comes out," he said.

The flip side, he added, is that a real sports ministry can have people who provide guidance for maturity when a Christian doesn't turn the other cheek on the court. "That's what sports ministry in church should be all about because that changes lives. That helps Christians. But all that involves work and a lot of patience."

Got game?

ERLANGER—Be it prison teams or international competition, opponents usually want to see what you can do on the court or field before they care about what's in your heart, says Andy Mays.

"If you're competitive and you're an athlete, that's the kind of person they relate to anyway," says Mays, recreation minister at Erlanger Baptist Church and a member of several Sports Reach mission teams.

Win or lose, earning the respect of an opponent often results in a chance to talk about Christianity, he said. "They're more willing to listen to why you're that way and things that are important to your life."



Federation links athletes with Southern Baptist missionaries

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Just as a basketball in the hands of Michael Jordan is elevated into a work of art, a basketball in the hands of a missionary can be transformed into a tool for sharing Christianity.

"In many countries, it is illegal to carry a Bible—nowhere is it illegal to carry a basketball," explained Cheryl Wolfinger, president of the International Sports Federation.

Working with Southern Baptist missionaries under the auspices of the International Mission Board, the federation helps plan, recruit and coordinate sports evangelism missions trips.

Because sports is a "universal language" between people of different cultures, Wolfinger said, team visits aren't seen as a threat in countries that prohibit Christian witness.

"It's an incredible platform," she said. "Everyone [in a foreign country] will come to watch Americans play basketball."

Sports evangelism drew Wolfinger's interest when she played professional basketball in Europe. While there, she saw evangelistic teams come and go without coordinating their work with that area's missionaries.

"We needed to do something," Wolfinger said, to combine the willingness and capability of those interested in sports evangelism with the resources and follow-up of a country's established missionaries.

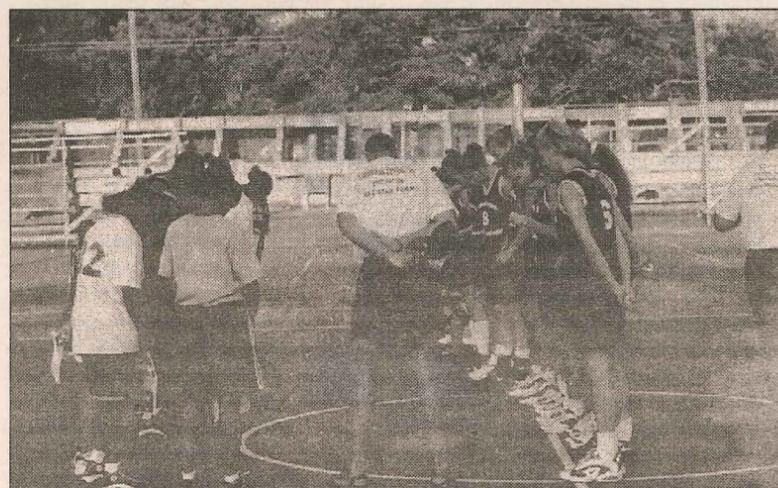
Her vision was later reinforced by a missionary to Madagascar, who voiced his desire for a "networking organization," linking prospective missions groups to workers in the area.

That first year, ISF took three teams to work with missionaries abroad.

Last summer, more than 40 projects shared the Christian message with about 6,000 citizens of foreign



SPORTS FEDERATION The International Sports Federation links evangelistic teams with Southern Baptist missionaries to deepen the impact of athletes who visit countries to share their skills and faith. ■ Above: A boy gets a hand in Mexico. ■ Above Right: Missionaries play the first organized baseball game with boys in Bosnia. ■ Right: ISF athletes pray with Antigua's national women's team. (ISF photos)



countries.

"I am overwhelmed daily at how much has been done," Wolfinger said.

Those involved with ISF raise their own money—often thousands of dollars—to participate in a summer project.

Recruits learn about the program through an ISF newsletter sent to Fellowship of Christian Athletes' groups on college campuses or through requests made to the International Mission Board.

Recruits attend a two- to three-day training session in Dallas, during

which ISF attempts to "close out their American way of thinking," Wolfinger said.

Afterwards, they are sent out to the field, or the court, or the diamond. "We've had people from all sports—boxing, swimming, softball, you name it," she said.

The team members, who usually are complete strangers before their training session, put on clinics, compete against local or national teams and travel to schools or parks to put themselves in a position to witness. Through the clinics especially, many

one-on-one opportunities arise for athletes to share their faith.

And one doesn't have to be an athlete at a major college to participate.

"We had one girl go with us, she hadn't played much basketball before," Wolfinger remembered. Rather than sit idly during games, she drew her own crowd on the sidelines teaching children songs like "Jesus Loves Me."

More information about the ISF can be obtained from the International Mission Board at (800) 999-3113, ext. 1512.

Promise Keepers posts 1999 schedule for 15 stadium rallies

DENVER (RNS)—Promise Keepers, the evangelical Christian men's ministry, has announced plans for 15 men's conferences across the United States this year.

The theme of the meetings, which will be held in arenas and stadiums, will be "Choose This Day," based on a verse from the biblical book of Joshua which says, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. ... As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

"It's a pretty clear challenge to see men ... lead a godly family in an ungodly world," said Steve Chavis, national spokesman for the Denver-based ministry.

Continuing a tradition started last year, the conferences are free of charge. The decision to drop the admission fee of \$60—which organizers hoped would draw more Christian and non-Christian men to the rallies—has caused the ministry to have to cut back its staff and rely even more on volunteers. Each of the 1999 conferences is expected to be run by 1,000 to 2,000 volunteers.

The planned dates and locations are:

- Memphis, Tenn., June 4-5.
- Detroit, June 25-26.
- Indianapolis, July 9-10.
- Denver, July 16-17.
- Philadelphia, July 23-24.
- Tacoma, Wash., July 30-31.
- San Antonio, Aug. 6-7.
- Charlotte, N.C., Aug. 13-14.
- Hartford, Conn., Aug. 20-21.
- Stockton, Calif., Sept. 10-11.
- Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 24-25.
- East Rutherford, N.J., Oct. 1-2.
- St. Petersburg, Fla., Oct. 8-9.
- Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 15-16.
- Phoenix, Oct. 22-23.

Dobson: Study proves gambling's effects

WASHINGTON (BP)—James Dobson said his service on the federal panel studying the impact of gambling has convinced him that gambling is a "destroyer" and the lobby behind it is the "most powerful force in government today."

Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, made that assessment in his January newsletter, which is sent to 2.4 million constituents.

Dobson is one of nine members of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission, which will issue a report in June after a two-year investigation.

His 19 months on the panel have caused him to "remain radically opposed" to gambling, said Dobson. Gambling fever "threatens the work ethic and the very foundation of the family," he wrote.

"Thirty years ago, gambling was widely understood in the culture to be addictive, progressive and dangerous," Dobson wrote. "Parents taught their children about its evils, and some families, including my own, would not even permit playing cards in the home."

But gambling has given itself a facelift, often using the less offensive term "gaming," he wrote. "Most Americans now think of gambling not as a vice or unsavory habit, but as harmless entertainment."

Dobson cited statistics, newspaper accounts and testimony before the commission. Among them:

- Americans spend more money each year on gambling than on groceries.
- Five to 8 percent of adolescents are addicted to gambling.
- More money is spent in Mississippi on gambling than on all retail sales.
- Children 4 years old may put money legally in South Carolina's 30,000-plus video poker machines as long as they don't accept any winnings.

Nevada, which legalized gambling nearly 70 years ago and is the country's leading gambling state, ranks first in several social ills, Dobson wrote—suicide, divorce, high-school dropouts, homicide against women and gambling addiction.

American Gaming Association President Frank Fahrenkopf said Dobson's letter proves he "never had any intention of taking a fair and unbiased look at gaming."

"It's unfortunate that after 19 months as a commissioner he still cannot accept the fact that the gaming industry provides more than 1 million well-paying jobs with benefits and is an entertainment choice for millions of other Americans," Fahrenkopf said in a written statement. "Instead, he has

chosen to rely on old stereotypes and anecdotes, ignoring official state and local records documenting the positive economic and social impact" of gambling and the testimony of public officials and religious leaders.

Dobson, in his letter, contended the gambling industry has extended its influence through its sizable spending on elections. The anti-gambling governors of Alabama and South Carolina lost their re-election races in November to candidates supported by gambling forces, Dobson said. The industry spent \$10 million in Missouri and more than \$70 million in California to win gambling initiatives, he wrote.

Congress "rarely opposes anything desired by the gambling industry," including denying the gambling panel the authority to subpoena witnesses, Dobson wrote.

The latest meeting of the National Gambling Impact Study Commission was scheduled Feb. 8-10 in Virginia Beach, Va. The panel was expected to start discussing its report, which is to be issued by June 20.

The commission was established in 1996 to study the social and economic impacts of gambling. The panel has held field meetings since the beginning of 1997 at such locations as Atlantic City, N.J.; Boston; Chicago; San Diego; Biloxi, Miss.; and Las Vegas.

REAL FRIENDLY

Real Life magazine helps your church make a great first impression. Ask us how.

Call (502) 244-6470 to subscribe or to learn how Real Life can help your church with outreach.

Church cemeteries

More and more Kentucky Baptist churches are turning to the Kentucky Baptist Foundation for investment management of church funds, including those with church cemeteries.

Churches that are responsible for maintaining their cemeteries in perpetuity have a sacred duty which deserves the very best stewardship available. Since the foundation provides such a stewardship service for the perpetual care and management of funds, we are the perfect solution for a church with the responsibility of providing funds for the perpetual care and maintenance of its cemetery.

If your church has a cemetery, it probably has at least the following concerns: How can it better assure there will be enough funds available to care for the cemetery in the future? Where can the church invest the cemetery fund to receive a better rate of return and also provide a hedge against inflation? And who can advise the church, the cemetery committee or trustees about planned giving ideas to support the cemetery fund?

The solution to these concerns is the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. Each church cemetery situation is unique, and we would be pleased

to respond to your specific concerns. Let us show how our investment management service can help you. Let us show how we can help the church implement a planned giving program for the cemetery that complements the church's regular stewardship education program.

No minimum balance is required to establish an account, and our investment performance has been excellent. Annualized total returns through Dec. 31 for equities were: one year, 33.9 percent; three years, 31 percent; five years, 25.5 percent. For fixed income, returns were: one year, 9 percent; three years, 7.1 percent; five years, 7.4 percent. Your account can be invested in equities and fixed income securities in whatever asset mix meets your investment objectives. While past performance is no guarantee of future results, we shall continue to use the same care, skill and prudence we have in the past.

Please give me the opportunity to present our church cemetery services at no cost. Call me toll-free at (888) 254-5701.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Are you serious about the Word? We are.

KATA IQANNHN

The Word Became Flesh



The Boyce College offers the B.A. and A.A. degrees in Biblical Studies to God-called men and women with these distinctives:

- **Confessional.** Committed to historic Baptist convictions
- **Focused.** Provides classical biblical and theological studies
- **Relevant.** Addresses worldview issues of the 21st century
- **Practical.** Dedicated to local church ministry, evangelism, and biblical preaching and teaching



James P. Boyce College of the Bible

a school of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
2825 Lexington Road • Louisville, Kentucky 40280
1 800 728-7044 • Visit us on the web: www.sbt.edu

Bible museum brings perspective to artifacts & history

By Yvonne White
Religion News Service

COLLIERVILLE, Tenn. (RNS)—Replicas of biblical artifacts such as the Rosetta Stone, as well as real items dating back thousands of years, are drawing tourists to a museum in a small community just east of Memphis, Tenn.

The nonprofit, nondenominational Biblical Resource Center and Museum offers a wealth of biblical archaeological information and artifacts.

"This has shown me the Bible is inextricably connected with the historical context out of which it grew," said Don Bassett, who manages the museum with his wife, Nancy. "There is nothing mythical about it. It shows how closely related the Bible was to the lives of people in Bible times."

Don Bassett is an ordained minister in the Church of Christ. He retired from the pulpit ministry after 35 years to direct the center, which has drawn several hundred visitors since officially opening in June 1997.

Many religious groups tour the museum to view replicas of the Rosetta Stone and Taylor Prism, as well as real artifacts, including a tiny 2,000-year-old oil lamp.

The Rosetta Stone is an inscription written on a gigantic black stone in three languages by priests in ancient Memphis honoring King Ptolemy V Epiphanes of Egypt in 196 B.C.

The Taylor, or Assyrian, Prism is a hexagonal baked clay prism that contains accounts of the events in the

reign of King Sennacherib of Assyria (705-681 B.C.). Both replicas were acquired from the British Museum Company in London.

"People asked why we go to the expense of getting replicas, but not everyone is able to go to the Louvre or the British Museum to see the (originals), and we want to make them available to as many people as possible," Bassett said.

He not only travels frequently to Israel on digs searching for artifacts, but also visits museums throughout Europe and the United States to learn more about biblical archaeology.

"To go to the Bible lands and see an Arab shepherd with sheep and goats in Galilee, and to know Jesus was talking about something that people would see every day is incredible," he said.

Hill Roberts, a physicist from Huntsville, Ala., has toured the museum.

"The significance of the fact Don has replicas is that most research is done with the use of replicas," Roberts said. "The originals are usually too fragile or have been destroyed from being exposed to people touching them."

"Don is a wonderful curator and is great at explaining why the items are important, and not just telling about their background. I think most clergy would probably know about the Rosetta Stone, but many probably don't know its significance."

Bassett trains Sunday school and religious teachers in biblical archae-



BIBLE MUSEUM Located just east of Memphis, Tenn., the Bible Resource Center and Museum has archaeological finds and replicas related to the Bible and its history. "Our mission is to present ... an appreciation of the historical and cultural context in which the original documents that comprise the Bible were written," said manager Don Bassett. (RNS photo)

ology at the center. He also teaches junior and senior high school students the basics of archaeology and how it relates to the Bible.

More than 20 young people between the ages of 8 and 14 are enrolled in individual biblical study at the center. They spend one or two hours weekly studying maps, charts and other information. The center is developing biblical archaeological games for children.

"We are in no way trying to take the place of a church's training," Bas-

set said. "Our mission is to present to the public in general, and young people in particular, an appreciation of the historical and cultural context in which the original documents that comprise the Bible were written."

The center is funded privately by donors and is open weekdays and by appointment on Saturdays. No admission is charged, but donations are accepted.

For more information, call (901) 854-9578 or visit the museum's Web site at www.biblical-museum.org.

"This has shown me the Bible is inextricably connected with the historical context out of which it grew."

Don Bassett, manager of the Biblical Resource Center and Museum.

April Vermillion

By Robert Dunston

For most students, Christmas break is a time to rest before the onslaught of the spring semester. For April Vermillion, Christmas break was an opportunity to travel and experience missions firsthand.

For the past several years, Vermillion has been friends with Ena Borkova, a student from Nizhny Novgorod, a city approximately eight hours southeast of Moscow. Borkova graduated in December and returned home, inviting Vermillion to visit her, her church and its mission. The Light of Christ Church, Borkova's home church, also issued Vermillion an invitation, so she raised the necessary funds and spent 10 days helping with youth and evangelism in Russia.

Vermillion's first few days were spent at a youth camp sponsored by the Light of Christ Church. She helped the youth prepare a Christmas program (Christmas is celebrated there on Jan. 7), which they planned to present at an orphanage. Worship services at the camp were held indoors and outdoors. One particularly memorable service was a spontaneous outdoor service as worshipers huddled around a fire surrounded by tall evergreens.

The Life of Christ Church rents a hall for Sunday worship and has 20 different home group meetings during the week for Bible study, worship and evangelism.

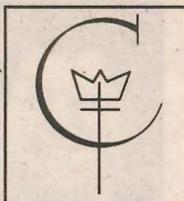
Vermillion returned amazed at the faith and active involvement of the church members. Her call to missions, which she has had since the age of 18, also was affirmed.

The trip provided a refreshing time for her as she witnessed God at work as she had never seen before. She says, "I learned a lot about how his power can move people."

Not that long ago, Kentucky was partnered with Russia. Many of our ministers and laypeople invested their time and talents in Russia. Some of their musicians and leaders ministered across our state, and two of their young people came to Cumberland College. Although we have moved on to new partnerships, God is still working through old relationships to touch the lives of all of us. We know Vermillion and others like her will keep our eyes focused on missions abroad and at home.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



He's going to make it!

To many people, Dan probably seemed to be just another teenager rejecting authority and looking for ways to prove it.

They might have said, "He's out of control!" If he was, it was only because his life had been out of control since he was a boy.

He never knew his father. His mother was debilitated by mental illness. Unable to understand what she was going through, Dan's response was typical; he blamed himself. "Whatever's wrong must be my fault," he must have said to himself.

The responsibility for Dan's upbringing went to his grandmother. She did the best she could, but was unable to provide the consistent parenting an adolescent needs.

Eventually this troubled boy's life spiraled out of control, and he was placed in a psychiatric hospital in the hopes that treatment would help him deal with his demons. The day he was to return to his grandmother's care, he was told that she had died in a house fire.

When Dan came to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, it was clear that his past was controlling how he responded to the present and would rob him of a real future.

At the Ranch, he worked on

these issues and developed meaningful relationships with our staff.

While he was with us, word came that Dan's mother had died.

It seemed that a combination of poor choices and circumstance had worked together to make family the thing that had let Dan down the most. That made his next step all the braver.

We had contacted Dan's uncle and asked him to become involved in his nephew's treatment, and perhaps become his guardian. Could Dan set aside such trauma and trust his uncle? Yes!

Dan is doing well in school; he also is on the basketball team.

When he visited the Ranch over the holidays, he talked about how good it was to be part of a family again.

For a while, you were the family he could not see, helping him reconnect with his own family. We think Dan's going to make it, and, most importantly, Dan thinks he's going to make it, too.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Carter willing to be transparent in writings about faith

The more deeply I got involved into it, the more I realized the book wouldn't be meaningful ... if I just preached to them and covered up my own mistakes."

President Jimmy Carter

By Yvonne White
Religion News Service

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (RNS)—The wrinkles in his face have stolen some of his youthful looks. His sparkling blue eyes have lost some of their luster. But the infectious smile—his trademark—remains.

As former President Jimmy Carter sat autographing copies of his books recently in Memphis, he smiled at virtually all of the hundreds of people who were swiftly herded past his table as the ever-present Secret Service agents watched carefully.

"Do you have writer's cramp yet?" one person near the end of the line queried.

"It's about to set in," he answered, with a smile, of course.

Thanks to his writing, Carter may be more popular today than he was as the 39th president of the United States. Hundreds of people—young and old, rich and poor, black and white, Republican and Democrat—stood in a long line here just to get his autograph.

Carter was on a promotional tour for his book, "Living Faith," first published as a hardback in 1997. Almost immediately, it made the New York Times' Best Seller list. It recently was released in paperback by Random House.

Carter said he believes "Living Faith" has done well because "there was a kind of hunger in this nation to realize there are things that don't change in a fast-changing world of turmoil and political dissension.

"Although the primary faith that we generally envision is our faith in God—our religious faith—I tried to point out in this book how our priorities in life and our foundations for living come from a series of faith, or confidences in the entities of life (which includes parents, spouse, friends, colleagues, etc.)."

In the book, Carter admits questioning his own faith at times.

"All of us will have setbacks and disappointments in life when our faith in certain foundations are shaken," he said during a teleconference with reporters. "I've been through the same things myself. I describe events in the book when even my own faith in God and in myself was shaken."

He credits his wife, Rosalynn, and other friends for helping renew his faith while standing beside him during difficult days, both as a politician and as a private citizen. Carter reveals in his book many intimate details of his life, such as his conflict with his son, Jack.

"When I started out, I didn't intend on putting all that stuff into the book," he said. "My original thought was to extract from my Sunday school lessons I've taught since I was 18 (at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga.), and a few little homilies or sermons. But the more deeply I got involved into it, the more I realized the book wouldn't be meaningful to people if I just preached to them and covered up my own mistakes, tribulations and sorrows and talk about other folks."

He said Rosalynn was "taken aback" by the book when she read the first draft and asked if he really wanted to reveal so much of his personal life.

"One of the interesting things about 'Living Faith' is the outpouring of response and the personal letters I've received about how things have changed their lives," he said. "Had I not put in the highly personal family events, the book would not have been so meaningful to other people, and probably would not have been so successful."

Carter has lived the American dream, but believes success only comes at a price.

"There have been a number of friends in my life that meant an awful lot to me, (but) when I went off to be governor, president or a submarine (officer), I basically ignored that friendship and didn't stay in touch with those people," he said. "If I had to do it over again, I would have dwelled on strengthening that friendship."

He also said he regrets some of the mistakes he made with members of his own family.

"There have been a few times in my own family with my two sisters and brother—and particularly my father—when the intimacy of our relation could have been much greater," he said. "It wasn't until I became a father and realized I was treating my own son in the same way I resented my father treating me, that I was able to correct some mistakes I was mak-

ing with my own children."

Carter said he is dismayed by the current level of political animosity in Washington.

"I think the whole realm of political sensitivities or environment has changed in the last 20 years or so," he said. "It has brought out not the best in our political system, but the worst in our country."

While in the White House, Carter said he "prayed more those four years than any other four years in my life," daily asking for "wisdom to make sound judgment" as he made decisions affecting the American people.

After his defeat in his second bid for the presidency in 1980, Carter could have followed in the footsteps of many former presidents who retire to a life of tranquility, collecting their government pension and serving on corporate boards.

Not so with Georgia's favorite son. Carter serves as a spokesperson for Habitat for Humanity, a Christian ministry. He also founded the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta, a conference and research facility dedicated to promoting democracy and solving global problems.

"We all need to work toward alleviating social injustices," Carter said. "It would be nice if every Christian in the nation would reach out to the poor, the afflicted, the outcast and the despised. But very few effectively reach out to poverty-stricken people. The only thing that should guide us, as St. Paul said, is justice, fairness, equality, humility, compassion and service."

Friends, family and much more

Two events took place this week that reminded me why so many of our students think of Oneida as friends, family and much more. While we have our share of failures and disappointments, generations of students have considered Oneida home.

Not only have they been given three meals each day, a warm bed and an education, but a vast majority of students consider us family. When students who are no longer enrolled here ask permission to return, their letters will often begin with, "I want to come back to Oneida because all of my friends are there." They often say they miss the attention they received from our faculty and staff and they miss the students who have become like brothers and sisters.

This past Saturday during a home basketball game, I was thinking about two boys on our team. Both are now juniors. One came to Oneida in the seventh grade. The other boy was in the eighth grade. Every time I watch them play ball, I am reminded how very important it is for our faculty, staff and me to be there. I remember when the first young man came as a rather small boy.

Nearly every time I watch him in a game, I wonder how he must feel knowing that no family member is ever there to see him play. This is his fifth year to play basketball, and during all those years he never has had the excitement of looking up in the stands and seeing a father, mother or grandparent. Frankly, I have never had the courage to ask how it affects him, but I am sure it has had some effect. Both of these young men live here in Kentucky, so it is not that family members live too far away.

The second young man is in his fourth year at

Oneida and has almost the same situation, with one slight difference: this boy's father watched him play for the first time Saturday night. I had heard his father might come to the game, but I was not able to meet him. When I asked this boy if his father came to the game, he smiled really big and said, "Yes!" He did not have to say anything else; his face said it all. This young man has little contact with his mother, and until just recently had not seen his father in years.

Something else happened this week that reminded me of the responsibility we have as faculty and staff. One of our most painful experiences is telling a student that a family member has passed away. Over the years, we have had this agonizing responsibility many times. This week it happened again. Early Monday we received word that the father of one of our boys had passed away very unexpectedly in the early morning hours. Unlike the first two boys, this young man's mother and father visited and called often. When our choir has been in their area, they've brought grandparents and other family friends

to hear the choir and see their son. Just two weeks ago I wrote about this boy in one of my Western Recorder articles. He has been very active in our agriculture program, and received the Most Potential Award during the Harvest Banquet. Several faculty, staff and students went to the funeral home to express sympathy.

Yes, Oneida Baptist Institute faculty and staff are more than teachers, house parents, cooks and support staff. We are friends, family and more.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Trip results in heart for world missions

"Before I went to Russia, my missions concept centered on what a church could do at home. God used the trip to open my mind and heart for world missions," third-year student Ralph Reagan said.

He and first-year students Mark Lukens and Mark Ayers accompanied New Testament assistant professor Bill Helton to Russia in December. While Helton

taught in the pastor/church planter school, the students did evangelism work. They rented a one-bedroom apartment from a church member. They shopped for groceries at the market next door, and Reagan did the cooking. "We got some fresh meat that looked and tasted different than beef, but it didn't matter that night because we were really hungry. It was horse. From then on we bought from the frozen meat section."

As students, visa restrictions limited the trio's work. Novgorod Pastor Anatoli cleared projects with local authorities. In a government building, they went from office to office with the interpreter, distributing Bibles and witnessing. Some responded, "There is no God, and your book is no good." Most of the workers wanted a Bible and "begged us for additional copies for

family members," Reagan said.

Pastor Vasiliun, leader of a congregation about 130 miles from Novgorod, heard about the Bible distribution and asked the students to visit his church. He told them of God's revelation that "he would not die until missionaries came to his church with Bibles." The visit with the 30-member congregation was

the highlight of Reagan's trip. Vasiliun told of repeated persecution and suffering under communism. Helton and each of the students preached short messages. "The people listened with glad hearts; we were the first Americans to be in the church," Reagan said.

The group was first turned away from a college, but the interpreter knew the English instructor and told her about the group's bilingual material. She readily invited the students to teach her class and opened the entire college to their witness. At a tuberculosis hospital, patients stood and listened to the gospel and pleaded for extra Bibles. Reagan observed, "I'll always have that mental picture of the people's hunger for God's word."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

PEOPLE

Yard-sign evangelist reaches motorists throughout U.S.

BAY MINETTE, Ala. (BP)—Depending on which way one is traveling down State Highway 193 in south Alabama, a small sign in a resident's yard can either give passersby a message of God's goodness or wrath.

Those driving south might be encouraged by the warm, uplifting words of David found in Psalms 40:4, "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust."

Northbound travelers, however, could receive a much different message, such as Proverbs 13:13, "Who-

soever despiseth the word shall be destroyed."

Malcolm Dickman estimates he has made more than 50,000 of the nearly waist-high yard signs since he started Wayside Scriptures 20 years ago.

A polarized presentation of God's Word is intentional.

"I make sure that one side is positive and the other side is negative, to tell everything God said to tell," said Dickman, 70.

His signs have graced yards in all

50 states and 18 countries—in five different languages, including German and Bulgarian—around the world.

The 24-by-18-inch signs, containing Scripture only, are given free to anyone who calls or writes to request one.

Dickman's encouragement-spreading enterprise is funded by church and individual donations. The signs are framed, packed and shipped by volunteers from Bible Baptist Church in Beeville, Texas.

Dickman said he purposely made the signs changeable in the hope that owners will display fresh verses—he currently uses about 100 in his signs—every month or so.

By placing them in front of a house, business or church, Dickman, who lives in Bay Minette, Ala., sees his signs as a ministry reaching commuters for Christ.

"It's something to get the word out," he said. He and his wife, Peggy, use a silkscreen process to make up to 300 signs per day.



Falwell: Teletubby might be gay

LYNCHBURG, Va. (RNS)—Jerry Falwell suggests a popular "Teletubbies" character might be a gay role model, and his newspaper has warned parents about the rotund "Tinky Winky."

The Lynchburg, Va., Baptist pastor said in a statement that the "subtle depictions" in the children's show are intentional.

"As a Christian I feel that role modeling the gay lifestyle is damaging to the moral lives of children," he said Feb. 9.

The February issue of the National Liberty Journal, which Falwell edits and publishes, contains an article alerting parents that Tinky Winky may be a gay role model.

The publication says the character has the voice of a boy but carries a purse.

"He is purple—the gay-pride color; and his antenna is shaped like a triangle—the gay-pride symbol," it says.

A spokesman for Itsy Bitsy Entertainment Co., which licenses the Teletubbies in the United States, said the purse is actually the character's magic bag.

"It's a children's show, folks. To think we would be putting sexual innuendo in a children's show is kind of outlandish," said Steve Rice.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Clear Creek Baptist Bible College announces an opening on the faculty for the 1999-2000 academic year. This is a full-time position to teach Bible, theology and ministry courses. A Ph.D. in Bible or theology, and five years full-time ministry experience in a Southern Baptist-related ministry are required; publishing record and/or college-level teaching experience would be helpful. Rank and salary to be determined by experience and educational background. Send credentials, including a statement of educational philosophy, to the Academic Dean, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977. Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention with a mission to provide theological training to adults called into Christian service.

SEEKING: Civil engineering firm is seeking a civil engineering designer with AutoCAD experience. The designer should have experience in the design and layout of drainage systems, sanitary sewer systems, highways and layouts for residential, commercial and industrial properties. Send a resumé in confidence to: Richard Moore, R.W. Moore Consulting Engineers, Suite 3, 10213 Linn Station Road, Louisville, KY 40223. (502) 426-9842. Equal opportunity employer.

SEEKING: Bullitt Lick Baptist Church of Shepherdsville, Ky., is seeking to employ a pianist for church worship. If interested, please call (502) 543-2483, toll-free (888) 748-1991, or e-mail broeddie@alltel.net.

SEEKING: Male singer needed for tenor part in local gospel group. Traditional and contemporary music. (606) 299-2870.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth. Please send resumé and references to: Personnel Committee, Cloverleaf Baptist Church, 4401 Manslick Road, Louisville, KY 40216.

SEEKING: Latonia Baptist Church of Covington, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of youth/children. Resumés may be sent to: Latonia Baptist Church, P.O. Box 15013, Covington, KY 41015, Attn: Paul Curry, Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Minister of church evangelism (full-time position). FAITH training in partnership evangelism will be provided if not already certified. If interested, please contact First Baptist Church East Bernstadt, P.O. Box 266, East Bernstadt, KY 40729, (606) 843-6211, or fax: (606) 843-2080.

SEEKING: Walnut Street Baptist Church is currently seeking individual to fill part-time pianist position. Send resumé to: Chris Kihn, Walnut Street Baptist Church, Suite A, 1143 S. Third St., Louisville, KY 40203.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music; lead worship services, adult choir, children and handbells. Send resumé to: South Elkhorn Baptist Church, 4867 Versailles Road, Lexington, KY 40510.

SEEKING: Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Beaverdam, is seeking a full-time minister of youth & children. Ideal candidate is responsible for coordinating ministries to youth and assisting Children's Ministry Council in ministry to children. Send resumé to: Search Committee, 15583 Coatesville Road, Beaverdam, VA 23015.

SEEKING: Graves County Baptist Association is a gathering of 44 churches and missions in the western area of Kentucky. The association is currently conducting a search for the position, director of missions. The successful candidate will have high administrative gifting with a visionary approach to missions in the local, small-town, county setting. Preference will be given to those who have prior experience as a DOM, or to those who have an education background and experience from large, multi-staff churches. Resumés currently are being received; closure date for this opening will be Feb. 28. Address all correspondence to: Director of Missions Search Committee, Graves County Baptist Association, Rev. Bob Swift, chairman, 108 West South St., Mayfield, KY 42066.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Bardwell, Ky., is seeking a full-time youth minister and Christian outreach center director. Send resumé to: Bardwell Baptist Church, P.O. Box 147, Bardwell, KY 42023, Attn: Chris Rigby.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Ashby Lane Baptist Church, 6617 Ashby Lane, Louisville, KY 40272.

SEEKING: Full-time music minister for rapidly growing Baptist church (400 average attendance). Traditional music. Experienced in leading choirs and congregational singing. Send resumé to: Mt. Elmira Baptist Church, 3644 Mt. Elmira Road, Shepherdsville, KY 40165, Attn: Pastor.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Brandenburg, Ky., is seeking a pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 325 Monroe St., Brandenburg, KY 40108.

SEEKING: Mt. Zion Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister of music. Average worship: 100-120. Duties: Lead Sunday worship, adult choir, special occasion children and youth. Salary to be discussed. Send resumé and inquiries to: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, 350 Mt. Zion Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701, Attn: Music Committee.

SEEKING: Salvisa Baptist Church, Salvisa, Ky., looking for full-time ordained Southern Baptist pastor. For info, call: (606) 865-2212, Tuesdays-Thursdays, 8:30-3:00, or send resumé to: Pulpit Committee, c/o Chris Bryant, 178 Christina Drive, Salvisa, KY 40372.

SEEKING: Child care director. Energetic, enthusiastic, detail-oriented, budget-minded, authoritative w/ TLC, able to deal with cultural diversities, possessing cooperative attitude, knowledge of licensing regulations, degree in education/early childhood. Resumé to: Dr. Long, 1143 So. 3rd St., Suite A, Louisville, KY 40203.

SEEKING: Our pastor is retiring. The church has membership of more than 1,000 in a growing area of central Kentucky and a budget of approx. \$450,000. Person should have a master's in divinity, seven years experience as a senior minister and an excellent reputation. Candidate should send resumé, work experience, associational membership and a brief outline of philosophy of ministry by April 15 to: Pastor Search Committee, EBC, 717 South Main, Nicholasville, KY 40356.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children. Send resumé to Burlington Baptist Church, P.O. Box 48, Burlington, KY 41005, Attn: Search Committee, or fax: (606) 586-6599.

SEEKING: Church secretary. 32 hours per week. Southside Baptist Church, 804 Camden Ave., Louisville, KY 40215. Please send resumé Attn: Personnel Committee.

AVAILABLE: Full-time evangelist. Wyman Copass will be available March 1, 1999, for revivals, Bible seminars and conferences. Phone: (502) 683-6040; fax: (502) 688-8359; e-mail: wcmmin@aol.com; Web site: www.centralcityfbc.com/copass; or write to: Wyman Copass Ministries, Box 21224, Owensboro, KY 42304-1224. Now scheduling for 1999 and 2000.

FOR SALE: Queen-size brass bed with 10-year warranted Ortho Firm mattress set and frame. All new—still in original factory containers. Must sell \$275. Phone: (502) 566-6540.

FOR SALE: Two lots in "Garden of the Apostles," Floral Hills Cemetery in Covington. \$800 for both. Call collect: (502) 267-6383.

SEEKING: Grace Baptist Church of Lexington, Ky., is seeking a part-time youth minister to work 10-15 hours a week. Send resumé or call Dr. Terry Freeman, (606) 252-1119, Grace Baptist Church, 811 Bryan Ave., Lexington, KY 40505.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, Ky., is seeking a full-time youth pastor and Christian life center director. Send resumé to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 207, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342, Attn: Ronnie Fields, youth pastor search committee.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Sturgis, Ky., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Interested applicants should send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 802 N. Adams St., Sturgis, KY 42459, or call (502) 333-2691.

SEEKING: Director of missions (DOM) needed for Lincoln/Casey County Baptist Association. We are located in central Kentucky, and have 40 Baptist churches in our association. We have a beautiful association office building located south of Stanford on U.S. 27. Send resumé and inquiries to: Lincoln/Casey County Baptist Association, 4160 Highway 27 South, Stanford, KY 40484, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor, Springfield Baptist Church, Springfield, Ky. Please send resumé to: Springfield Baptist Church, P.O. Box 286, Springfield, KY 40069.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Middletown, Ky., is prayerfully seeking applicants for pastor. Please send resumé to: John Vaughan, FBC Pastor Search Committee, 109 Wooded Falls Road, Middletown, KY 40243.

SEEKING: Growing Southern Baptist church seeks full-time associate pastor with experience or training to assist in fulfilling church's ministry of pastoral care, preaching and discipleship. If gifted for youth ministry or worship leader, the same should be noted. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church of Allen, P.O. Box 541, Allen, KY 41601.

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.

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for these people and projects, which are part of Kentucky Baptists' partnerships with Baptists in New England, Poland and Tanzania:

■ Missionaries in Dodoma, Tanzania, who are distributing food in a famine-stricken area.

■ Missionaries in language school in Tanzania ask that they will learn the language in order to begin their ministry.

■ Rob and Lisa Moor who work with the Maasai people in Minjingu, Tanzania.

■ Stephen Edworthy, son of missionaries Mark and Susie Edworthy in Warsaw, Poland, who was robbed on his way home from school. He was not injured. He travels three hours a day to and from school.

■ Follow-up to the recent annual spiritual/prayer retreat of the missionaries who serve in the Baltic region held in Riga, Latvia.

■ Bob Brindle, missions leader for the Baptist Convention of New England.

■ The church planting partnership between Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. and New Hampshire Baptist Association.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ EAST BERNSTADT—Arthur Ridge Church called Gary Messer as pastor. Messer was formerly with Mt. Zion Church, Brodhead.

■ EUBANK—Pulaski called Jonathan Lewis as pastor.

■ HENDERSON—David Phelps, lead singer of the Gaither Vocal Band, will be in concert Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m. at Immanuel Temple. For information, call (502) 826-9522. Joseph Ticquet is pastor.

Zion Church called David Hankins as interim pastor. Hankins serves as vice president for the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

■ LA GRANGE—DeHaven Church called Lisle Drury as youth minister.

Drury recently graduated from Southern Seminary. Anthony Rose is pastor.

■ LANCASTER—Lancaster Church called Al Gisler, Nicholasville, as interim pastor and Steve Fegenbush, Danville, as interim minister of music.

■ LONDON—Slate Hill Church called Dallas Riggs as pastor. Riggs was formerly at Hart Church, London.

■ LOUISVILLE—Bethany Church called Todd Robertson as pastor. Robertson currently serves as multi-housing ministry consultant for Kentucky Baptist Convention and as assistant to the associate dean of the Billy Graham School at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

John Gribbins resigned as minister with youth at Highland Church. Joe Phelps is pastor.

■ MAYSVILLE—Central Church will host Oneida Baptist Choir in concert Feb. 28 in the morning service. Robert Donovan is pastor.

■ PADUCAH—David Melber, director of activities at Paducah First Church, resigned to attend Southern Seminary. Melber also accepted a staff position at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly. Kevin McCallon is pastor of Paducah First.

Reidland Church will host a reception honoring Deward Hurst for his 50 years in the ministry Feb. 28, 2 p.m. Hurst served as pastor of Lovelaceville Church, Southside in Princeton, Mounds (Ill.) Church, Bandana Church, White Sulphur Church, Barlow First church and Zions Cause Church. He was associate pastor of Lone Oak First Church until he be-

came director of Jonathan Creek Baptist Camp. He has served as interim pastor of Reidland Church since August. For information, call (502) 898-6243.

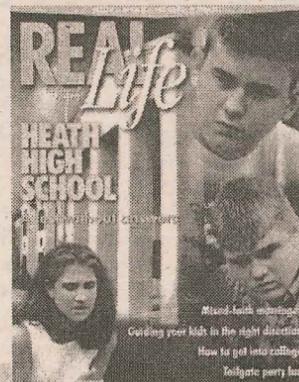
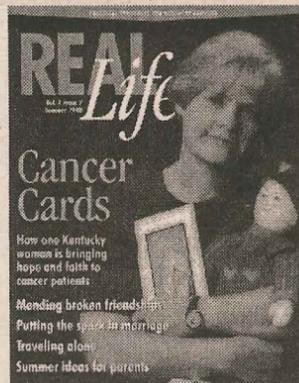
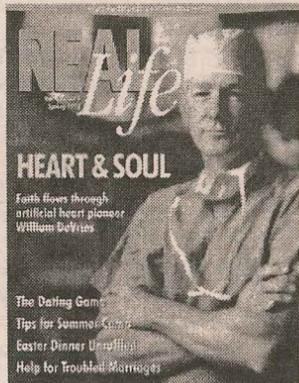
Reidland Church called Larry Lewis as pastor. Lewis will begin his pastorate March 1.

Twelfth Street Church called James Holloway as pastor. Holloway comes from a pastorate in Carlinville, Ill.

■ ROCKHOLDS—Steve Mayle resigned as pastor at Goldbug Church. Mayle accepted the pastorate at First Church, Jenkins. Gene Young is serving as interim at Goldbug.

■ SOMERSET—Johnnie Helton resigned as pastor of Pleasant Run. Helton is available for supply.

■ VERSAILLES—Glens Creek Church called Mickey Hyder as pastor. Hyder also manages the Baptist Bookstore in Lexington.



How are you going to let your visitors know your church cares about them this Easter?

- All the Easter eggs they can find.
- Bunnies for every third guest.
- Marshmallow duck eating contest.

All kidding aside, we know friendly faces and the gospel message are the most important things you want visitors to remember when they visit your church. We just believe Real Life can help you reinforce both of those.

Filled with stories from throughout Kentucky, Real Life offers information about family, finance and fun from a Christian perspective. When you give someone Real Life, they'll see that you care about the issues that are important to their lives. And our cover stories show how Christianity makes a difference in the lives of other Kentuckians.

Give us a chance to show you how Real Life can help you reach out to your community. Call (502) 244-6470.

In the spring issue: Darrell Waltrip

The former NASCAR champion from Owensboro shares what keeps his life on track and how losing his racing team might be one of the best things to ever happen to him. Also:

- ◆ Why marriage mentors are growing in popularity
- ◆ "So, when are you going to get married?"
- ◆ How to prepare now for next years' tax time
- ◆ Cooking for a crowd while retaining your sanity
- ◆ Antique hunting in Kentucky



CHURCHES

What does your church sign say to people passing by?

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

DALLAS (ABP)—Does your church have anything to say?

People outside your church probably are answering that question based on what's on the sign out front instead of what's being said behind the pulpit, according to a number of church-communication experts.

While most churches have outdoor signs with changeable message boards, few churches use those signs effectively, consultants said.

The first impression people often have of a church is from its sign, said Mike Townsend, sales director for J.M. Stewart Corp.

The Sarasota, Fla., -based manufacturer of church signs works with LifeWay Christian Resources to serve Southern Baptist congregations.

Research by the Church Growth Institute found 10 percent of people who join a church attended there the first time as a direct result of the church sign, Townsend said.

"Stop and think about what the average sign in front of a church is," Townsend said. "They're not all that attractive. If churches would just give due diligence to their signs, they would increase the number of people who come in."

One of the worst things a church can put on its sign is weekly sermon titles, Townsend and other experts said. Such messages mean more to the pastor's ego than to passing motorists, they added.

Asked about the effectiveness of posting sermon titles, veteran church communication consultant Floyd Craig groaned. "You've got to be really good to put a sermon title up there," he said. "If a sermon title is appealing to the audience rather than to just the preacher, then it might be worth putting on there."

A more effective alternative might be a money-back guarantee, Craig

said, only partly tongue in cheek. "Guaranteed: Sermons 15 minutes. That would get attention."

Most pastors wouldn't make that particular offer, but Craig's suggestion illustrates the type of creative thinking behind effective church signs, experts said.

Dan Pryor, a Dallas communication and leadership consultant, said churches should approach their sign decisions first by asking a basic question: "Who are you trying to communicate to?"

Using an outdoor sign for messages that are relevant only to those inside the fold isn't just ineffective; it might actually repel visitors, he suggested.

"We have found the best way to use a marquee sign is to view the sign as the communication that exists between the church and the people who drive by, the people we call the drive-by congregation," Townsend said.

Thus, clever sayings, Scripture quotations, uplifting thoughts and timely announcements are appropriate.

"Think about what would cause people to smile," Craig said. "Do that over a long period of time, and people will begin to have a good impression."

If churches will meet the needs of passersby in such simple ways, those strangers will be more inclined to have a positive impression of the church as a place to find help, he added.

Providing helpful information to motorists is the key to any sign success, said Phil Hester, a former Houston advertising executive who 10 years ago moved to San Diego to become a pastor and start an innovative church.

To illustrate, he recalled an account from his advertising days. A Texas-based stock market investment firm wanted to build an image through billboards. Hester's agency recommended producing electronic billboards

Brainstorming attracts sign readers

DESOTO, Texas (ABP)—On a recent Sunday morning, an unfamiliar woman dropped off her children at the nursery of Southwest Baptist Church in Desoto, Texas.

The nursery worker asked her how she heard about the church.

"It was your sign," the woman said, somewhat sheepishly.

The messages on the church's outdoor sign had intrigued her so much that for several weeks she made a point to drive by and read them, she explained.

Ultimately, that caused her to visit the church, the first time she had been to any church in a long time.

Her story doesn't surprise Pastor Brian Waite. The marquee-type sign has become the church's trademark in the community, he said.

Response cards in each Sunday's bulletins ask worshippers what brought them to Southwest. "You'd be amazed at how many times people put down the sign," he said.

with a running Dow Jones average.

The campaign was a huge success and firmly associated in the public's mind the name of the investment firm with helpful information about the stock market, Hester said.

"I've thought about this many times in terms of churches," he added. "Signs, unless they are speaking to a need in the community, become like trees: invisible. They're there, but you don't see them or read them. You just drive by them."

When concocting clever messages, churches walk a fine line between being prophetic and being offensive, said Townsend, the sign salesman. "You don't want to shy away from what you stand for, but you certainly want to be prudent."

It's no accident that the church's sign is generating so much interest. Waite and other church leaders intentionally focus on using the sign effectively. A creative team holds regular brainstorming sessions to think up the catchy phrases to be displayed.

"We want to make people stop and look," Waite said. "We're trying to get away from the cutesy-type things to something that's going to attract a non-Christian or non-church type person."

Here are some of Southwest's recent offerings:

■ Our Sundays are better than Baskin-Robbins.

■ Free faith-lifts on Sunday morning.

■ Open Sunday.

■ Early-bird special (advertising early service).

■ Come learn to live without fear.

■ You're the reason we're here.

■ We're pro-Jesus.

■ Our sermons are fat-free.

To illustrate, Townsend draws upon Jesus' declaration that he would make his disciples "fishers" of men. "The sign is a hook, and you want to put an attractive bait on there."

That means churches also must be honest in what they advertise on their signs, added Monty Carter, a South Carolina pastor who previously worked for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Better to go without, or just cover the basics, than to run the risk of making a false identity statement about the church," he warned.

If a church wants to advertise itself as a friendly place, it had better be friendly to those who visit, Pryor added. "You've got to live up to your promises."

Franklin Graham: Pastors need hooks to go fishing with sermons

By Greg Carpenter
Southeastern Seminary

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Too often, preachers sabotage an inspirational sermon by concluding with a confusing call for decision, Franklin Graham said recently.

"I've heard some of the great preachers in our country, and when they get to the invitation, they lose it," said Graham, son of renowned evangelist Billy Graham.

Many pastors are prone to confuse people by broadening the invitation to include a call for commitment, prayer requests or transfer of church membership, Graham told a chapel audience at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"I never mix the invitation with anything else," he said. "If they feel that they need to rededicate their life, they'll get up and come. I'm talking about salvation."

Graham, 46, is president of Samaritan's Purse, a nonprofit evangelistic ministry based in Boone, N.C., with a stated mission of helping "alleviate suffering and earn a hearing for the gospel."

Graham also serves as first vice chairman of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and leads several national and international evangelistic crusades each year. His son, Will, is a student in the master of divinity program at Southeastern Seminary.

Graham said preachers should begin their sermon with an invitation that challenges people to make a decision to either accept or reject the gospel and then continue providing "little hooks" throughout the message aimed at calling people to decide what they are going to do with Christ, he said.

The "hooks" are illustrations from Scripture that encourage people to respond, Graham said. The audience should be reminded re-

peatedly that they will be given a chance to become Christians during the invitation at the end of the message, he added.

"Little hooks, we've got to have them," Graham said. "Hey, (Jesus) called us to be fishers of men."

Graham cited several elements necessary for every sermon that calls for a response. "First, you've got to let them know that they are sinners and have broken God's law," he said.

The sermon and invitation, Graham said, must publicly acknowledge Jesus' atoning death on the cross for mankind's sin, Christ's resurrection from the dead and the sinner's need for repentance and acceptance of Christ for salvation through faith, not works.

"That has to be in every message, and it has to be repeated," he said.

Graham encouraged preachers to not avoid well-known Scripture passages in an effort to sound fresh.

"When you give the gospel, just

stay with the basics because the person that is sitting there who has never heard the gospel has never heard John 3:16," Graham said.

"Don't be afraid to use John 3:16 every time," Graham said. "Every time you quote the Scripture, you're hitting them in the head with a spiritual claw hammer."

Ultimately, Graham said, giving an effective invitation after a sermon comes with practice.

Graham said he once asked his father for preaching tips, and the elder Graham responded: "Franklin, you learn how to preach by preaching. So every opportunity you get to preach, preach."

Many preachers are uncomfortable giving an invitation because they fear no one will respond, Franklin Graham said.

But he said he's learned during his ministry to stop being concerned with the response. "That's not my responsibility. It's the responsibility of the Holy Spirit of God."

Sign pointers

What do you say? Make the message relevant to the needs of people who drive by the church.

How much, how fast? Most outdoor signs must be read in five seconds. That means 10 words or less. Avoid long lists and schedules.

How often? Outdoor signs should be changed at least once a week.

Twice a week is better. For example, it may be easiest to change the message on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Who changes it? "The best person to change the sign is a newly saved person," suggested Mike Townsend of J.M. Stewart Corp. "They may

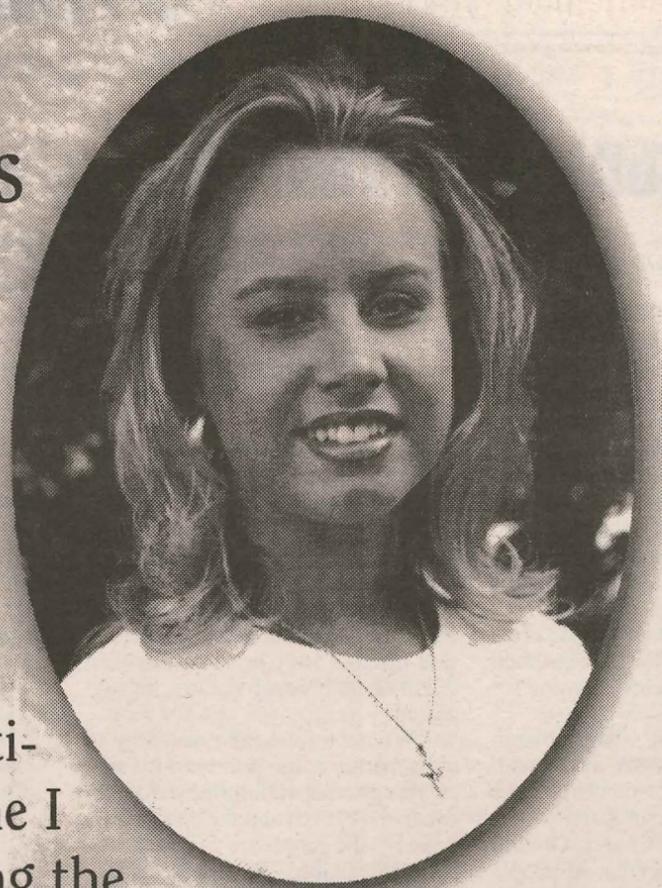
not be equipped yet to teach or do a lot of the things in the spotlight, but they do have a lot of commitment to the Lord and enthusiasm."

Sources: The daily devotional guide "Our Daily Bread" has pithy statements at the bottom of each page. Books include "More Bulletin Borders," "Quotable Quotations" by Lloyd Cory, "14,000 Quips and Quotes" by E.C. McKenzie, "Book of Great Thoughts and Funny Sayings" by Bob Phillips. Dan Pryor produces a newsletter, "Speedbumps."

Check please. A new outdoor sign costs \$3,000-\$6,000 for an average church. "If you use it right, it will pay for itself in a short period of time," Townsend said.

Shaping Lives Across Generations

“Campbellsville University offered me an environment to grow intellectually, socially and spiritually. From nationally acclaimed athletic programs to challenging academics, this beautiful Southern Baptist campus is one I have grown to call home. Following the wise footsteps of my great-grandparents, grandparents and mother, I am certainly proud that I will one day be a fourth generation alumnus of this leading educational institution. Campbellsville offers a Christian education and atmosphere like no other and is constantly evolving to present the most current facilities and opportunities to its faculty, staff and students. It has proven to be more loving and giving each new day, and I thank God for Campbellsville University.”



Kelli Ann Corbin, Sophomore
Biology Major

CAMPBELLSVILLE UNIVERSITY

Office of Admissions

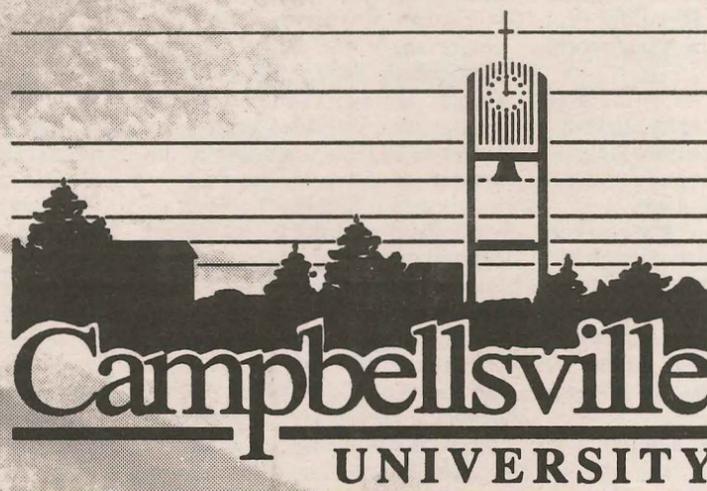
1 University Drive

Campbellsville, KY 42718-2799

(800) 264-6014

(502) 789-5220

www.campbellsvil.edu



The small University with a BIG reputation