

Kentucky ministries seeing more needs among poor

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

FLEMING-NEON—Fleming Baptist Church's outreach ministry to low-income residents is only three months old, but business already is booming.

Helping the poor in an area where technology has drastically decreased coal mining jobs has been an eye opener, said Pastor Winston McCarty.

"We're definitely seeing an increase" in needs, he said. "The thing that's shocking is how much the welfare system has reduced the amount of income people are supposed to live on. People are living on \$500 a month or less, including food stamps. There's a family of five out here living on a little over \$1,000 a month."

McCarty and other Baptist ministry workers throughout Kentucky say they are concerned about the impact of welfare reform. Besides setting a limit of five years for some benefits—which will start eliminating some clients in fall 2001—Congress offered states incentives to reduce welfare rolls.

As a result, Baptist ministry leaders said they are seeing significant increases in requests for assistance.

Greg Whitetree of Freda Harris Center in Lookout said reducing dependency on public funds might be a good policy, but the law needs some flexibility.

"The idea was good, but the application leaves a little to be desired," said Whitetree, who has seen the requests for food and clothing rise 30-40 percent compared to a year ago. "There are ex-

ceptions. If you're not a male, it's hard to get a job in the coal business. It's traditionally been a male's job and many women depend on men or the welfare system to take care of 'em."

A lack of good-paying jobs is common throughout southeastern Kentucky, said missionary Lynn Wagoner in nearby McDowell.

The main employers are the county's hospital and school system, he said, with most other jobs paying minimum wage. Residents can be worse off taking a minimum-wage job if they lose food stamps and other benefits, he said.

A volunteer with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, Wagoner moved to McDowell last June to organize GAP (God's Appalachian Ministry) through First Baptist Church.

His home church in Florida and several others also support the ministry.

Since October, GAP has given away \$45,000 worth of food and Christmas toys and an undetermined amount of used clothing. The ministry has a list of 200 needy people, and Wagoner expects that number to increase.

At the Caney Baptist Center in Pippa Passes, requests for food baskets are up from 70 a month last January to 90 now. But an equally serious need is for money to pay utility bills and other expenses, said director Lawrence Baldrige.

Most poor people are suffering at the end of the month when they run out of resources, he said. Baldrige, who is also pastor of Caney Baptist Church, said he senses more people are getting

□ See Baptist ministry ..., page 3

Woman's Missionary Union

Wanda Lee of Georgia was elected Jan. 22 to be the seventh executive director of the national missions organization. Page 2.

Financial Forum

Know the facts about making a will. Page 3.

Editorial

Personal action promotes pro-life position. Page 5.

Missions

Pineville native Tina Slusher splits her time between a pediatrics practice in Chicago and missions service in Nigeria. Page 6.

Books

Reviews include a revision of "Concentric Circles of Concern," a comprehensive book on Paul by a Southern Seminary professor and Leonard Sweet's "AquaChurch." Page 13.

Youth specialist: Don't yell so loud you miss teens' cries for help

By Shannon Baker
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Too many Christian adults are attacking the way youth express themselves without hearing their cries for help, an author and youth specialist told a conference recently.

Popular music, tattoos, body piercing and sexual exploration are among the ways youth respond to daily pressures and frustrations, said Walt Mueller, founder and president of the Center for Parent/Youth

Understanding and a 25-year authority on youth culture and family issues.

"These are the cries of the hearts of youth," Mueller told a recent Youth Ministry Institute, held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "Are we listening?"

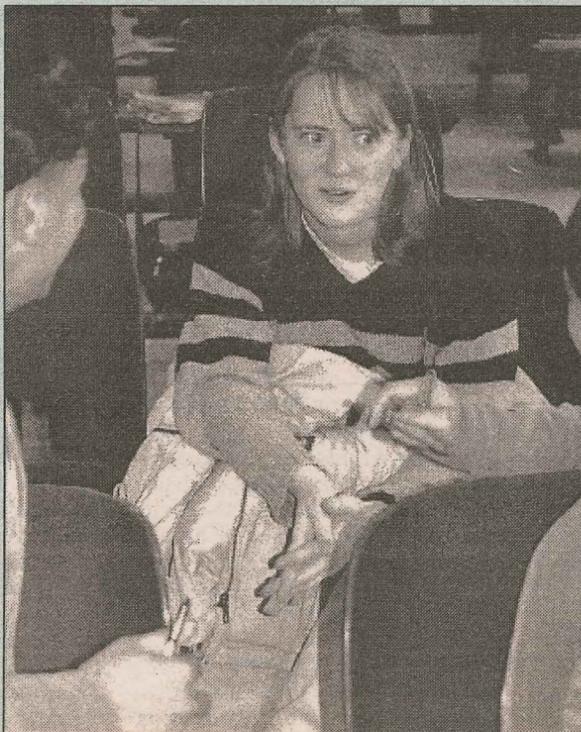
An extensive writer, Mueller is the author of "Understanding Today's Youth Culture," a critically acclaimed book. Mueller also has studied adults' responses to today's youth.

Mueller said he has been criticized as worldly, unholy and compromising of his faith for affirming youth workers who take the time to share an interest in the music, art and literature of today's youth.

"Go ahead and listen to Kid Rock," he told 50 youth ministers and students at the institute earlier this month. "Read Entertainment Weekly and Rolling Stone from cover to cover. Watch at least one World Wrestling Federation event, and go to some of

□ See Specialist: Learn ..., page 8

Missions Abroad



Eight Kentucky Baptist students recently returned from a two-week mission trip to Jordan where they taught English and found opportunities to talk about their Christian faith. Christian evangelism is illegal in the predominantly Muslim country, but people can discuss their faith when asked. "I've had to depend on God to speak through me and use little words to get the point across," said Sarah Daugherty, a sophomore at Campbellsville University. ■ Above: Megan Basham, a senior at Campbellsville, talks to students during an English class at Philadelphia University in Jordan. Most students in Jordan study English from the fifth grade. The Kentucky students talked about everything from American culture to their Christian faith during the lessons. "Although we didn't see anyone accept Christ here, we know God has been working planting seeds," Basham said. ■ Left: Labreeska Hensley, a junior at Campbellsville, talks to several students. Hensley said she already had felt called to full-time career missions, but this trip opened her to a whole different part of the world. "Muslims are loving, accepting people, but they need Christ," she said. Other schools represented on the team were Kentucky Wesleyan and Western Kentucky. See story on page 3.

YOUTH
MINISTRY
SPOTLIGHT

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, Jan. 26

BAPTISTS

Wanda Lee elected national WMU executive director

By Teresa Dickens
SBC Woman's Missionary Union

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.—Wanda Lee, president of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union since 1996, was elected Jan. 22 as the seventh executive director of the 111-year-old missions organization.

Lee, 50, succeeds Dellanna O'Brien, who retired Sept. 1, 1999, after 10 years at the helm of WMU. Lee, who currently lives in Columbus, Ga., with her husband Larry, will assume her new position March 1.

In announcing Lee's unanimous election, WMU Executive Board leaders pointed to her exemplary leadership as national WMU president, especially during the interim period after O'Brien's retirement. As chairman of the WMU Executive Board, Lee accepted more leadership of the national headquarters after O'Brien's departure.

CONGRATULATIONS
Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union President Peggy Hicks (right) greets Wanda Lee (center) and search committee chairman Ann Coffman after Lee's Jan. 22 election as national WMU executive director.



"Wanda Lee brings to the position her experience as president both at the state level and national level," said search committee Chairman Ann Coffman of Sanford, Fla. "She has experience as a pastor's wife and an international missionary."

"She also has a heart for missions," Coffman added, noting that Lee has used her nursing skills on several missions trips during her WMU presidency.

"Wanda's vision and leadership will determine the direction of Woman's Missionary Union as it enters the new century," Coffman noted.

Agreeing that Lee has provided effective leadership as national WMU president, Kentucky WMU President Peggy Hicks said, "Her experience in the church, associational and state level, along with her overseas missionary service, will enable her to understand the full range of Southern Baptist missions."

Hicks, who served on the WMU Executive Board that elected Lee, added that the new executive director "is a warm, caring person with a great heart for missions."

Lee's involvement with WMU began in the 1970s during her husband's first pastorate at Gilgal Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Ala., where she worked with Acteens and Baptist Young Women. She also held several associational leadership positions during that time, including WMU director.

After moving to Columbus, Ga., in 1981, she held similar positions during her husband's pastorate at Waldrop Memorial Baptist Church and currently serves as Acteens Advisor at First

Baptist Church of Columbus.

From 1993-96, she served as president of Georgia WMU. She also served on the Administration Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention during that time.

Lee and her family served as Southern Baptist missionaries in St. Vincent, Windward Islands, from 1979-81. The family returned to the U.S. due to the asthmatic problems of their youngest child, Matthew.

Currently, Larry Lee is director of Pastoral Care for the Columbus Regional Health Care System. He is an endorsed chaplain by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. Their children, Allison and Matthew, both live in Birmingham.

Lee, a native of Alabama, holds a nursing degree from Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. Since 1982, she has worked as a registered nurse at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus, Ga.

Gert Quzack has supervised Lee during her 18 years at the hospital. "Wanda is a natural leader," she said. "I've seen her walk into acute situations and organize the staff to find a quick resolution. She is firm yet compassionate. People want to follow her because she first takes the time to listen to them and hear their concerns."

"There is no question for me that Wanda and her family are letting God's will drive them," Quzack said. "We are happy for Woman's Missionary Union, but it is a great loss for us."

In accepting the position, Lee recounted the events of the past year in the life of WMU. She spoke specifically of the spiritual journey she and her family had traveled and her struggle in

recent weeks with the sacrifices that her election would bring for her husband and children.

But, she said, "I remembered another time in our lives when He asked us to do that very thing, and I was reminded of how God provided everything we needed during our time as missionaries. I knew He would do it again."

"Woman's Missionary Union in the local church and in my association made it possible for me to learn about missions and try my hand at leadership," she said. "Because of WMU, I heard God's call to missions and was appointed. I am who I am today because God was able to use this organization to teach me and create the atmosphere where I could hear Him speak."

"I don't believe for one moment that we have completely accomplished the task He has called us to do," she added. "As a matter of fact, I believe God is issuing that call more loudly than ever before and He is waiting to see if we will allow Him to work through us to accomplish His will. I believe He is asking us to recommit ourselves to follow His direction for this new day."

Addressing WMU Executive Board members, and national and state WMU staff members, Lee concluded, "Right here in this room is all the talent and knowledge that is needed to make this organization in the years ahead an even more useful tool in God's hands. We can move ahead into a new century if we will commit ourselves to join hands and work together in new and creative ways. We can accomplish great things for God because He has called us and set us apart to tell the good news around the world."

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Baptist university declares independence.** Trustees of Grand Canyon University in Phoenix voted Jan. 13 to end the institution's formal relationship with the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention. The convention's Executive Board, scheduled to hold its regular quarterly meeting next week, "will explore all options open to us," said Steve Bass, state convention executive director. He said board members will formulate a response to the trustee action, which he described as having been taken unilaterally. Grand Canyon trustees said they hope to continue a "close, cooperative relationship" with the state convention.

■ **Registration opens for SBC Day Camp.** Children attending the Southern Baptist Convention Day Camp in Orlando, Fla., June 13-14 will explore the theme "Kidz 2000—Celebrate." The camp is held each year during the SBC annual meeting for children who will have completed grades one through six by June. The day camp schedule is Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Wednesday, 8 a.m. to noon. Registration begins immediately, and will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis through June 1. The cost is \$75 per child, which includes a T-shirt, snacks, the noon meal on Tuesday and field trips. Registration information is available by contacting Duane Ortego at (770) 704-0267 or via e-mail at dpaco@juno.com.

■ **American Baptist leader announces retirement.** Daniel Weiss, general secretary of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. since 1988, announced he will retire Aug. 31. Weiss, 62, will step down after completing his third four-year term as the top paid executive in the 1.5 million-member denomination.

Mohler defends outreach to Jews on CNN 'Larry King Live' panel

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist efforts to evangelize Jews are not based on anti-Semitism or intolerance but on a mandate from Jesus Christ, Al Mohler told a national audience Jan. 12.

Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was one of four guests on CNN's "Larry King Live" talk show who debated the issue of recent Southern Baptist evangelism efforts, especially to Jews.

"In this endeavor, Southern Baptists are about what we've always been about from the beginning, and that is sharing the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ to all persons, Jew and gentile, rich and poor, young and old," Mohler said. "Our prayer is that all persons would hear the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and respond in faith. We believe that the gospel is for all persons, regardless of any kind of ethnic identity."

Joining Mohler on the program were two Jewish rabbis—Marvin Hier, founder and dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Schmuley Boteach, executive director of the Oxford L'Chaim Society—and David Brickner, executive director of Jews for Jesus.

Hier claimed Baptists were being deceptive, pointing to the use of Jewish symbols in the "Days of Awe"

prayer guide published by the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board.

"If you have something to sell, be straight about it," Hier said.

"We're very up-front about what we're doing," Mohler said. "And the prayer book you held up was intended for Baptist Christians to use in praying for their Jewish friends. It wasn't even intended to present to the Jewish people directly at all."

Brickner, an ethnic Jew who believes in Jesus as the Messiah, expressed support for Baptists. "I'm proud of them," Brickner told King. "I applaud their efforts, because they care enough to love my Jewish people. And the most loving thing that you can do is share the love of God in the Messiah, Jesus."

Boteach accused Southern Baptists of "intolerance," even branding Baptist actions as anti-Semitic.

"I am absolutely against any religion that says that one faith is superior to another," Boteach said. "I don't see how that is anything different than spiritual racism."

Mohler called Boteach's anti-Semitism charge "especially disappointing, since American evangelicals are the best friends in many ways that the Jewish people can have. We defend their right of religious liberty," Mohler said.

Court of appeals decision favors Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE—The Kentucky Court of Appeals has voted to uphold an earlier order favoring Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in a dispute with former student Henry Judy.

The three-judge panel affirmed a Nov. 29 order by Court of Appeals Judge William Knopf that stayed enforcement of a temporary injunction filed on Judy's behalf. Judy, who was suspended by seminary officials after being accused of cheating, had sought to return to classes while a lawsuit against the seminary is pending.

The appeals court ruled that the injunction against the seminary "significantly and adversely affects the internal operations of an ecclesiastical organization."

"We are certainly thankful for the decision and see it as a vindication of the seminary's position," said Southern President Al Mohler. He called the ruling "a victory for all Kentucky churches and Christian institutions for our right and responsibility to uphold a code of conduct and moral discipline."

Attorneys for both parties said they will continue to pursue legal options in the original lawsuit.

Kentucky students discover spiritual needs in Jordan

By Tobin Perry
SBC International Mission Board

AMMAN, Jordan (BP)—Tears dripped from the face of Labreeska Hensley as she walked out of a simple home in a small village just outside of Salt, Jordan.

Saying good-bye to the family that all evening had called her sister was difficult. But it wasn't just the thought that she would never see the family again that bothered her.

"I knew that when we left that unless God brought someone to tell them about Jesus, I wouldn't be spending eternity with them," said Hensley, a junior at Campbellsville University.

But this wasn't the experience that Hensley expected. Several months earlier, while a group of Kentucky Baptist college students was deciding where they would go, Hensley was adamantly against going to the Middle East.

Hensley said she believes God has called her to full-time missions in South America and she couldn't understand why God would call her to a region of the world known for terrorism.

"God reminded me that He didn't call me to a particular area, but He called me to the entire world and that meant Muslims too," she said.

Hensley and five other students from Campbellsville University, one Kentucky Wesleyan student and a Western Kentucky student spent about two weeks in Amman, Jordan, and learned firsthand about the difficult task of reaching Muslims in the Middle East with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The trip was first proposed as Hensley and Steve Blan, a sophomore at Campbellsville, were seeking to help fellow students get involved in interna-



WITNESS Matt Rogers (left), a senior at Campbellsville University, talks to students during an English class at Philadelphia University in Jordan. Christian evangelism is illegal in Jordan, but if someone is prompted by a question about faith, it is legal to openly share. "We've learned a lot about being bold witnesses. You have to be bold here," Rogers said. (IMB photo by Tobin Perry)

tional missions. After getting a list of mission opportunities from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, the duo chose Jordan.

But as they got closer to their planned Christmas trip to the Middle East, tensions in the region grew more intense. A potentially explosive mix of Christmas, New Year's and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan all were scheduled during the two weeks they would be in Jordan. In early December, the Jordanian government expelled 13 suspected terrorists whom the government said were targeting Americans. The U.S. State Department issued extensive travel warnings throughout the Middle East for the holiday season.

As this news reached the States,

Blan got several calls from concerned parents asking how this news would affect the upcoming trip. In the end, he said, the group felt God's calling outweighed terrorism concerns.

"We were very sure that God had called us here," Blan noted. "And if He had called us here, He would protect us. And He has."

The team spent two weeks in Jordan talking with students, spending time in Jordanian homes, touring and, when asked, sharing Christ. It is legal for Christians to share their faith in Jordan only when they are asked.

The Jordanian government estimates that Christians make up nearly 5 percent of the population. But Southern Baptist representatives there estimate

that less than half a percent of the population has a personal relationship with Christ.

"It broke my heart to know most of these people do not have saving faith in Jesus Christ," said Campbellsville sophomore Darrin Pollock.

That heartache inspired the students to share their faith when opportunities arose. When Megan Basham and Janet Brown sat beside a young Muslim student named Rana at a college in Amman, natural curiosity prompted the three to discuss their religious beliefs.

But Rana, like many Muslims, had difficult questions about Christianity and the Bible. "She couldn't understand why God would kill His Son," Basham said. "We tried to explain to her that it was because of our sins."

Neither Rana nor anyone else in Jordan made a profession of faith during the Kentucky students' trip, but many of them said God opened doors during their two-week stay.

"Even though we haven't led anyone to Christ on this trip. I know we've planted seeds and God will use that," Brown said.

The students also said the trip had a significant impact on their lives.

"I had to depend on God much more on this trip than any other time in my life," said Sarah Daugherty, a sophomore at Campbellsville. "I had to begin each day in prayer."

Several students said the most important thing they learned on the trip was the importance of taking the gospel into the Muslim world.

"We have been called to tell everyone about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and that means the Muslim people as well," Brown said. "They need to have a relationship with Him too."

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children** will co-sponsor a Louisville adoption fair Feb. 6 at 1 p.m. at the University of Louisville's Shelby Campus. For information, call (800) 928-5242.

■ **Kentucky Baptist Foundation** announced that its total funds managed exceeded \$200 million for the first time effective Dec. 31, 1999. The foundation closed its books in December with a total of \$203.8 million, according to president Barry Allen. "It took 53 1/2 years to reach the \$100 million mark, which was reached in October 1998," he said. "The next \$100 million was attained in 14 months." The foundation also reported that its equity investment performance exceeded the Standard & Poor 500 for the fifth year in a row. The foundation's investments earned 24.1 percent, compared to 21.1 percent for the Standard & Poor 500, Allen said.

Baptist ministry directors: Welfare reform causing more needs

Continued from page 1
discouraged.

Social service workers point to people who are returning to school for nursing degrees or training for better jobs, Baldrige said, but those who can't "make it out" are doing worse.

"We need jobs," he said. "Most people on welfare would rather be working. But there's no industry or jobs here. There's a lot of mining but there's so much technology they don't need many people."

However welfare reform's impact goes beyond Appalachia. At the Baptist Fellowship Center in Louisville, director William Blackford IV said needs are growing "exponentially."

The center provided food, clothing and emergency assistance for 9,000 people last year, up 50 percent from the previous year. In addition, its child care center has reached its capacity and has more than 15 people on a waiting list.

In Lexington, Elkhorn Baptist Association is seeing increased demand at its food closet, located at Calvary Baptist Church, and its feed-the-hungry program.

The latter offers free sack lunches two days a week to poor and homeless people. A year ago, the 10 churches involved handed out between 400 and 500 bags a week. Today volunteers distribute between 600 and 700 meals each week, said Sandra Williams, director of church and community ministries.

"We are seeing a large increase in the Hispanic population," she added, explaining many work in unskilled, low-paying jobs. "It's growing because of people who are settling here and those who decide to stay a while when the harvest is over."

The needs don't seem to be as great in Owensboro, according to David Marlow, director of Christian education and family ministry for Daviess-McLean Baptist Association.

Requests to churches for help with rent, food and utilities have remained level, he said. But the money taken in by the Baptist Center's clothes closet—which sells items for 25 cents apiece—rose by nearly 50 percent a month between last February and December.

"Mission organizations are becoming more aware of the situation, of more needs from welfare reform," Marlow said. "Everyone should get involved and be concerned."

McCarty said churches should seize the opportunity to fill a gap that is growing wider. When members of Fleming Baptist decided to focus on helping the community, they were surprised at how many people needed help, he said.

"We can't even start to meet what we see," the pastor said. "It was a matter of the church turning outward and ... seeing the needs of people, basically who are on welfare. We asked, 'Why are they there and what we can we do to help them build a quality life?'"

How to help

Baptist ministry directors offered a variety of ways individual Baptists and churches can support ministries and help meet the growing needs of Kentucky's welfare recipients:

■ **Support Christian Women's Job Corps.** The first training class in Georgetown graduated in November. Groups are forming in Louisville, Florence, Cadiz and Pike County. Contact the Woman's Missionary Union leader for your association or Kentucky WMU at (888) 254-5726.

■ **Support existing community ministries** with donations of food, clothing and money. Volunteers also are needed to sort donations, answer phones and handle other tasks.

■ **Volunteer at Christian-operated child care and after-school programs.**

■ **Form one-on-one mentoring relationships** with people who are in need of guidance and support.

■ **Network with government agencies** and others to see if there is a specific social need the church can meet.

■ **Organize a program to offer grants or other help to low-income people** with utility bills and items that aren't traditionally covered, including health and car insurance or school books.

■ **Offer employment to someone who needs extra income.**

Some specific needs listed by Baptist ministries in Kentucky include:

■ **Fleming Baptist Church** in Fleming-Neon, Winston McCarty, (606) 855-4205. Volunteers willing to do one-on-one interviews to discover more local needs. Also needed are doctors and dentists to conduct clinics for low-income residents who don't qualify for state medical cards.

■ **God's Appalachian Ministry** in McDowell, Lynn Wagoner, (606) 377-0332. Financial assistance and mission groups who can help solicit donations of canned goods and other items, pack boxes and handle office tasks.

■ **Caney Baptist Center** in Pippa Passes, Lawrence Baldrige, (606) 368-3427. Mission groups to renovate mobile homes in Knott County.

■ **Freda Harris Center** in Lookout, Greg Whitetree, (606) 754-7414. Food and cash to help the center buy low-cost food at an area food bank.

■ **Baptist Fellowship Center** in Louisville, William Blackford IV, (502) 774-2734. Financial donations, volunteers for child care and after-school programs, and plumbers, carpenters and construction workers to help build a new children's play area. Also, donations of office equipment and supplies and toys.

■ **Baptist Center** in Owensboro, David Marlow, (270) 684-2377. Volunteers for an after-school tutoring program.

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

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Sound-bite evangelism

I listened recently to the debate between Dr. Al Mohler, a couple of Jewish rabbis and someone from the Christian Jews group. One rabbi was quite animated. One could hardly disagree with Dr. Mohler's position that we believe God has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ and He is the way, the truth and the life.

The real problem, and I believe the basis of their objection and Billy Graham's, was the public targeting of a particular religious group that was to be evangelized.

Have we wanted to win all people to Christ? Yes. Are we to fulfill the Great Commission? Sure. But the problem is we have publicized what we are trying to do and have released this information on their Holy Days.

This places us in a bad light nationally, not because we believe Christ is the way to the kingdom, but because we belittle the faith of others.

Jesus taught us the way of salt and light and love as the way to open the doors to people's hearts.

I believe our leadership has made the mistake of sound-bite evangelism. I hope and pray that we simply go about our business of offering the gospel to whosoever will and not designate the religious bodies we are concentrating on.

Billy Graham has been successful and I believe we have in the past without confrontational evangelism. I hope we will reconsider our new approach. I believe the old way is both scriptural and better.

John Dunaway
Henderson

Prophetic perspective

True to its founding purpose and enlightening mission through many decades, Western Recorder still stands

firm in this transition from one millennium to another. As the Jan. 4 editorial indicates, dire predictions of violent ends of society, on the one hand, or of some supernatural rapture did not happen.

The Jan. 4 issue of the paper deals in a prophetic way with related subjects. I write mainly of former editor Mark Wingfield's article citing the scholars' list of seven changes in Southern Baptist theology toward the end of the last century and the related article addressing the state of millennialism. This is a good capsule account of the doctrine of last things as held by Baptists.

Kentucky has been characterized as "a weak

state" by one of the kingpins of the takeover group of the Southern Baptist Convention. In this sense, may we ever be so weak. Against the onslaughts of conniving and religious politics, it seems Kentucky Baptists don't quite conform to the manipulations of man.

Good speed ahead. Shalom.

Don Cassidy
Premium

Parental responsibility

I was troubled by an item that appeared in the Family Forum column in the Jan. 4 issue. A concerned parent asked if it is healthy for a 14-year-old girl to spend two or three hours on the Internet every night when her chores and homework are suffering.

It tells us something about the judgment of parents when such a question is even asked.

It also is disappointing when a professional counselor will not (or cannot) give a direct answer to such a question.

I believe it is unhealthy for any teenager to spend two or three hours on the Internet every night, especially when homework and chores are go-

ing undone.

In my opinion, the counselor should have addressed the "two or three hours every night" issue since that was, after all, the primary question.

Families should spend time together. When teenagers spend two or three hours every night apart from their family, whether the time is spent on the Internet or in some other activity, interaction among family members will be greatly diminished.

In the midst of all this, however, let us not forget that parents are responsible for providing an atmosphere in the home which will be attractive to their children.

Cordell Day
Owensboro

Keys to forgiveness

Forgiveness is an action word involving at least two people. One has to follow Jesus' leadership. To be forgiven by Jesus for the sins we commit, He requires people to repent or say they are sorry. If one does not repent, it leads to punishment, death or loss of rewards in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

In the human realm, when one is wronged by another, the Bible tells us to rebuke them and if they say they are sorry, forgive them. (Luke 17:3-4). If someone does not forgive his brother, then Matthew 6:14-15 says our heavenly Father will not forgive that person's trespasses.

If after being rebuked, a person still refuses to say I am sorry, the Bible tells us to treat that person like a heathen and a publican (Matthew 18:17).

On the other hand, if we do not do our duty and rebuke those who do us wrong, it is our job to put it behind us and forgive what they have done. Because if someone has done a wrong and is not aware of it, then he does not know to say I am sorry. Therefore it should not be held against him. This is between you and God.

Wanda Howard
Penrod

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Take time to care for the children

Colson Baptist Church in Letcher County was constituted Jan. 2. This congregation is a wonderful example of how caring for children has led to the birth and growth of a church.

The Colson church started as a mission Sunday school in 1972 all because J. Don Collins, a layperson who grew up in that community, cared about the children. In winter he started the fire in the wood stove before he made two or more trips in his car to bring the boys and girls whom he had enlisted.

Later, people in the area who were reached for Christ became workers. First Baptist Church of Whitesburg provided buses and vans. Summer mission teams helped with vacation Bible schools and tent revivals. Eventually worship services were added and a new building was constructed with volunteer labor. Attendance grew

to more than 100 as another layman gave his Saturdays to enlist the children. A college and later seminary student, Steve Hogg, was pastor of the mission and served as coordinator of six highly successful summer vacation Bible schools.



Bill Mackey

The mission struggled in recent years but then God called another layman, Joe Walters, as pastor. Joe shared with me that he had been called to preach as a young person but did not respond. Instead he became an active Christian layman and successful businessman. Joe shared that he is the happiest he has ever been now that he has surrendered to God's call and is serving as the church's pastor.

Now I hear reports that the Colson church has one of the best youth ministries in the county. The youth have a significant influence on the high school campus through a student-led Bible club.

Among the active youth workers is a young adult who as a child observed his father laying concrete blocks and bricks for the building. Through the years many others have demonstrated concern that the children might know God's love and gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

More of our churches need to be reaching out to children in the same way that Colson Baptist Church is doing. I am convinced that hundreds of mission Sunday schools could be started this spring and summer. All that is needed is compassion for children and a willingness to say "yes" to Jesus. Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

Please pray about what your church is doing to reach out to children. Commit now to working to extend Christ's love to them through your church's ministries. I know you and your congregation will be just as blessed as Colson Baptist Church has been!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Important facts to know about making a will

By Laurie Valentine

Did you know:

■ Between 60 percent and 70 percent of all adults in the United States have never written a last will and testament? Making a will is part of our Christian estate stewardship responsibility.

■ For those who have not written a will, the state in which they reside has a plan of asset distribution written for them? Here in Kentucky that plan is called the "Kentucky Intestate Succession Statute." There is a good possibility that Kentucky's "will" sets up a plan of distribution that doesn't meet your family's needs.

■ The state court will decide who will rear any minor children if both parents are deceased and they have not made a will or included a nomination of guardian provision for their children in their will? This is a far more important issue than where your assets will go.

■ Kentucky's plan for asset distribution does not include your church or any other Christian ministry? You also forfeit the option of creating provisions that will benefit both your family and the Lord's work.

■ Without a properly drawn will, the death taxes and cost of administering your estate may be higher, thereby reducing what will be available for your family?

■ By having a properly drawn will, you get to choose who serves as executor, guardian for your children and trustee? You also get to decide who gets what and when they get it!

■ By having a properly drawn will, you are helping ease family friction at your death? This is especially important at a time when your loved ones are grieving your loss.

■ The Kentucky Baptist Foundation is the trust agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and can help you design an estate plan that includes family and Christian ministries?

If you did not know, but would like to know about the benefits of making a will or other estate and incapacity planning documents, give Barry Allen or me a call at (888) 254-5701.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



Wedding plans offer chance for couples to work together

Q: My fiancé and I can't seem to quit fighting over our wedding plans. We can't agree on anything, and it's causing a lot of arguments. Isn't the wedding supposed to be the bride's day? Shouldn't my wishes be most important?

While the wedding traditionally has been planned by the bride, and for the most part in accordance with her wishes, there are many men who want to be actively involved in the plans and want their wishes taken into account. This may be more true today than in the past because today's couples are more likely to seek equality in decision making.

You might do better to think of this event as one of the first opportunities you have as a couple to work together for something of importance. Compromise with each other where you can, and try to allow for those times when one of you feels strongly about a certain aspect of the ceremony.

As in marriage, the most important thing shouldn't be getting your own way, but working together for something that will be better than what either of you could have done on your own. Let your wedding reflect who you are as a couple, rather than being a source of strain and bad feelings under which you begin your marriage.—*Susan Howell*

Q: I have heard that one of the most helpful spiritual disciplines is journaling. As a single person, my fear is that something will happen to me and then others will read and know my deepest thoughts. How do I get beyond this fear?

Journaling is an especially effective way to pray, meditate and record your spiritual journey. King David thought so, and today we have the Psalms. But his words often were meant to be sung as an act of corporate worship. Yours probably are not. So then, here are some specific suggestions to guard your privacy and enable you to journal:

- Keep your journal in an "out of the way" place so children and others will not "accidentally" come upon your journal and read it out of curiosity.

- Try writing especially sensitive items in code. You can write names backwards or in other ways that only you know who you're talking about.

- You can write in the front of your journal that it is to be destroyed upon your death. Also, include a sentence on the front page that your journal contains important information and if found, "please return immediately" and give pertinent information about how it can be returned to you.

The reason we often procrastinate journaling really is a fear of our own thoughts. When you become aware of your own thoughts through journaling, much spiritual growth may occur. Just as in the case of King David, you also can express all of your emotions to God. When you commit your thoughts to paper, you can sometimes more easily "leave them with the Lord," rather than carrying your worries around with you through the day or into the night.

Journaling is an excellent way of getting your thoughts into the open before God, where He can shine His light on them and give light to your paths.—*James Stillwell*

Family Forum writers are David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; Susan Howell, assistant professor of psychology at Campbellsville University; Jon Rainbow, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Wade Rowatt, director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville. Send questions for *Family Forum* to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@ntr.net.



Personal action promotes pro-life position

Southern Baptists' strong opposition to abortion is well-documented. Editorializing on the issue in the state Baptist paper is not so much a courageous act as it is preaching to the proverbial choir.

Yet it is important to occasionally reiterate Baptists' commitment to timely moral and social concerns. The anniversary of the Supreme Court's controversial *Roe v. Wade* decision seems a fitting time to address our nation's ongoing abortion debate.

Even more important than recounting devastating abortion statistics from the past 27 years, however, is grappling with today's rapid technological developments that will make abortions quicker, easier and less emotionally overwhelming for many young women.

The latest culprit is the French abortion pill, RU-486, also known as mifepristone, which is expected to be made available to American women later this year. Actually, the real culprits are the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Population Council, which are in the final stages of discussing how the drug will be prescribed and distributed. The Population Council, a New-York based research group, owns the rights to the drug.

According to advocates and opponents of RU-486, widespread availability of the drug will significantly impact the nation's abortion debate.

"Mifepristone will absolutely make our battle harder to fight and harder to win," American Life League President Judith Brown acknowledged in a Religion News Service article published last week in the Western Recorder.

In addition to women being able to abort an unborn child earlier in the pregnancy without the need for surgery, studies indicate an increased number of doctors may be willing to offer non-surgical abortions. Such developments will complicate the efforts of pro-life advocates seeking to highlight the emotional and moral costs of abortion.

During a recent conversation with a campus ministry leader here in Kentucky, he voiced concern that

many college-age women who become pregnant out of wedlock will take mifepristone to abort their babies without ever really wrestling with the reality of pregnancy, the moral issues involved or the potential grief and depression such actions often trigger.

Despite such stark projections, there also are a few rays of hope on the pro-life front. According to a recent study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, legal abortions declined 3 percent from 1976 to 1977, the latest year for which statistics are available. Tragically, there still were 1.2 million abortions reported for the year, but that is the lowest total since 1975.

Government officials have cited a decline in unplanned pregnancies, attitude changes about abortion and a reduced number of abortion clinics as possible factors.

Of course, Baptists and other faith groups can point to more specific influences. Southern Baptists' True Love Waits sexual abstinence emphasis among youth has gained international attention as it helps promote positive peer pressure in the area of sexual purity.

Yet adults must be willing to do more than

just stand on the sidelines and applaud young people's positive choices. We must take an active role in addressing our nation's abortion crisis.

How? Many Kentucky Baptists will take part in this week's 2000 Rally for Life at noon, Jan. 27, on the steps of the state capitol in Frankfort. Once the rally ends, however, the key to effecting change is personal action. That might range from actively supporting the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's pregnancy counseling and adoption services to contacting government leaders and voicing concern about RU-486 or abortion-related legislation. It might even include personally ministering to a young woman experiencing the trauma of an unplanned pregnancy.

The most effective way to affirm pro-life values is to move from words to actions. Rather than complaining about the problem, we must be willing to become part of the solution.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Keys to reaching single adults

By Todd Cravens

And the King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these my brothers of mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40).

Reaching single adults for Christ is among the greatest challenges for the contemporary church. Some churches have ignored single adults altogether.

In recent years, however, more and more Kentucky Baptist churches are realizing the need to minister to single adults. Many large churches are hiring single adult ministers.

One of the difficulties in single adult ministry is the diversity of people who come under the heading of "single adult." The age range in a typical single adult ministry could be from age 18 all the way up to Methuselah.

There also is a wide range of life experiences. There are college students; young adults who have never been married, both with children and without; young adults who have gotten married too hastily and then divorced; divorced median adults who have children in

their late teens and early 20s; median adults never married (who want to be married); and widowed adults. Each of these groups have diverse ministry needs.

Another problem in ministering to this growing segment of our population

has been a lack of awareness. Those who have never experienced the devastating pain of divorce, don't have college-age children or are married often are not aware of the daily struggles, doubts, stresses and fears single people face.

You may be thinking, "So how can my church have an effective ministry to single adults?"

First, be aware of the single adults in your congregation and find out what their needs are. Host an event specifically for single adults. Have them fill out a questionnaire to define the demographics of your single population. Resources by Jim Smoke and Harold Ivan Smith are available to assist in creating such a questionnaire. If you truly want to reach as many single adults as possible, provide child care for the event.

Next, divide your ministry into some workable organization. For example, most churches divide singles ministry

into three age categories: collegiate ministry (ages 18-25), young adults (ages 26-35) and median adults (36 & up). In order to minister effectively to each age group, divide your singles ministry into similar life experiences. College students rarely want to hang out with other single adults who are the ages of their parents. Similarly, median single adults are not usually interested in going to an event full of singles the same age as their children.

Third, enlist leaders and workers who have had some similar life experience with the age group with which they will be working. For example, when starting a divorce recovery ministry, someone who has experienced divorce will be invaluable to the success of the ministry.

Finally, the most effective way to minister to single adults is through relationships. Jesus is our best example. He had 12 disciples who were closest to Him, with three being His intimate friends.

Even if you have not been through a divorce or it has been 30 years since you were in college, a genuine concern and a Christlike love will go a long way. We must always remember the admonition in Matthew 25:40 that if we neglect to minister to any group of people, we are neglecting Christ.

Todd Cravens is single adult leader at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville.

Kentucky native spends half her year in Nigerian hospitals

“Many times in the New Testament, Jesus used healing as the door to share the gospel. That’s how I see what I do.”

Tina Slusher

By Norman Miller
Baptist Press

CHICAGO (BP)—Few Christian doctors make a personal sacrifice to serve Jesus the way Tina Slusher does.

Every year the Kentucky native leaves her job at Rush Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago—where she is assistant professor of pediatrics and attending physician in the pediatric intensive care unit—and spends four to six months meeting spiritual and medical needs in Nigeria.

Slusher said that as a sophomore in medical school she struggled when God posed a question to her: “Are you willing to give up medicine for Me?” Her response was to give up her life.

“I go to Africa to introduce people to the gospel,” she said. “I see medical ministry as very consistent with the gospel. Many times in the New Testament, Jesus used healing as the door to share the gospel. That’s how I see what I do.”

A self-described “country bumpkin,” Slusher prefers the farm life she knew as a child in Pineville. That’s where her interest in medicine began. “I’d always pull for the runts of the litters born on our farm. I did all I could to see that they’d live.”

While growing up, Slusher volunteered at Red Bird Hospital in Eastern Kentucky. That led to an opportunity to work in Methodist medical missions in Nigeria when she was a pediatrics doctor in Pikeville.

While in Nigeria in 1989, she looked into Southern Baptist medical missions. “I have continued to go back every year since that point,” she said.

Years later, when officials of Rush Hospital approached Slusher with a job offer, she basically designed her own job description, including working in Africa up to six months a year. In return, Slusher agreed to sacrifice six months’ pay and to take medical students with her to Africa.

“The trips provide a wonderful chance for the students I teach to be exposed to the gospel,” Slusher said. “Even though they are from the States—and you think they’ve heard the gospel—many never really have.”

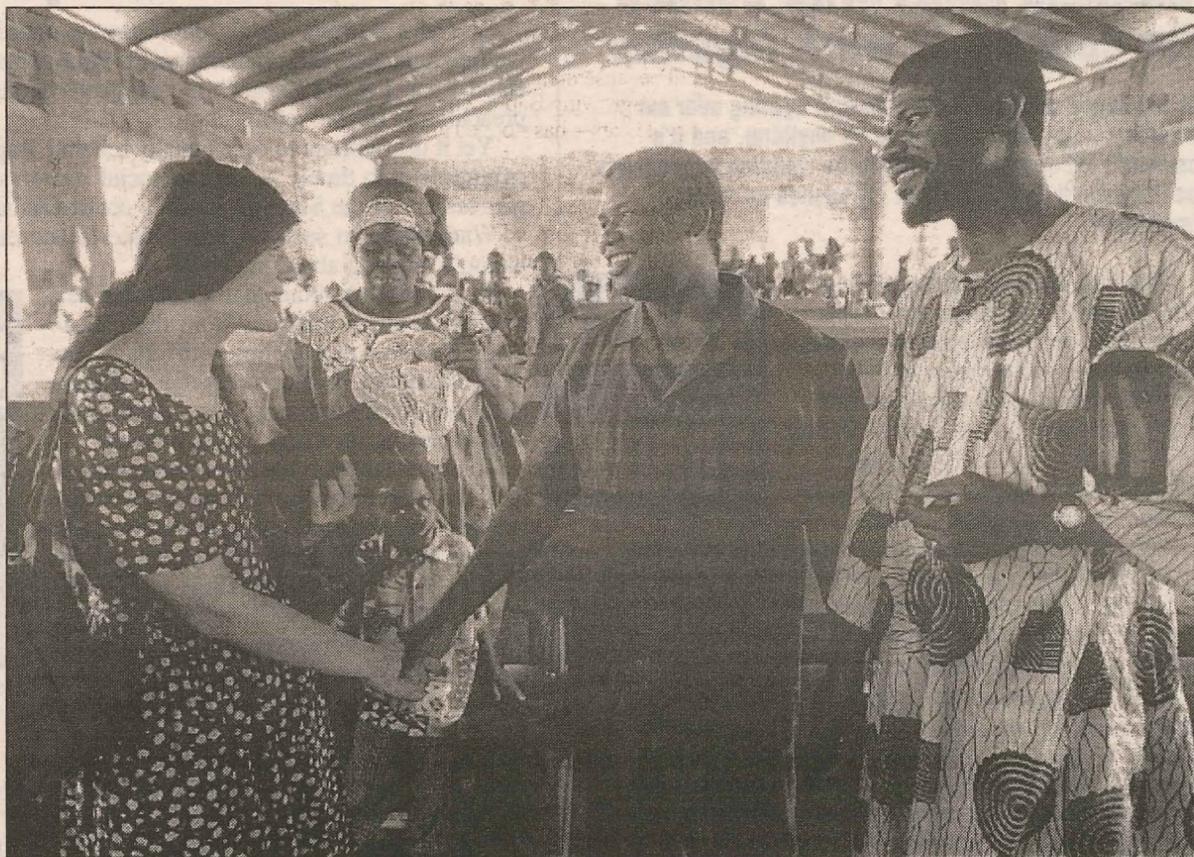
When she is in Nigeria, Slusher spends most of her time—about 18 hours a day—teaching and practicing medicine at Eku Baptist Hospital. She also travels to the Baptist hospital in Ogbomosho. And she treks into the bush to give medical care in rural villages.

But with Slusher’s ministry, there’s more going on than meets the eye. She gets even more mileage out of her strategy of using medicine as a vehicle for the gospel.

“One very important thing I do on the mission field is teach local medical doctors at our Baptist hospitals. If they become better doctors, they’ll have a broader witness to Muslims who would otherwise choose a less-qualified or less-trained doctor,” she explained.

“If Muslims come to the doctors I train, then they’ll hear the gospel,” she added.

In her daily prayer time, Slusher is



MEDICAL MISSIONARY Kentucky native Tina Slusher takes four to six months’ unpaid leave from her position at a Chicago hospital’s pediatric intensive care unit to help meet spiritual and medical needs in Nigeria. ■ Above: Slusher greets members of First Baptist Church of Abraka, Nigeria. ■ Right: Slusher examines a baby with tetanus at Rush Presbyterian Hospital in Chicago. (BP photos by Warren Johnson)



on the lookout for God’s will for her life. Living just one day at a time, she said she tries to stay attuned to where God is working in her life—always seeking a better way to serve Him.

“I spend a lot of time wondering where God will take me next,” she said. “I wonder if the Lord will change my Africa assignment someday.”

Amid the questions, Slusher says God has never let her down—like the time she entered customs at an airport in Nigeria with 22 pieces of checked luggage. Agents inspected only one bag and let her pass.

As for the questions about future ministry, God provided an answer. Slusher left work in Chicago one evening last August, hailed a taxi and told the driver where she was headed. The driver replied in a booming British-inflected African accent. A couple of questions later, the two were exchanging greetings in the cabbie’s Nigerian dialect.

After a lively conversation in which she described her ministry, the driver noted: “Isn’t it ironic? I left my family and a struggling Nigerian economy to come to America for a job.” His voice softened. “And you leave your country and a doctor’s salary to go to my home and help my people.”

In the waning afternoon sunlight, as the shadows of Chicago skyscrapers flashed across her face, a Kentucky farm girl leaned back in the seat and smiled a silent answer at the cabbie’s rearview mirror. “It’s not irony,” she thought. “It’s providence.”

MISSIONS

1,300 volunteers sought for revivals in Japan and Korea

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—At least 1,300 Southern Baptist volunteers are needed to help with two nationwide evangelistic campaigns planned in Japan and South Korea later this year.

"We need some people who believe in miracles to go with us," said W.H. "Dub" Jackson, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's partnership evangelism coordinator for Asia.

Baptist leaders in Japan are seeking 300 volunteers to help with crusades in at least 30 key churches in that country June 21-July 3.

Baptists in South Korea are calling for 1,000 volunteers to join them in leading revivals in about 100 churches Nov. 1-14.

"If God is leading—and He is—one will ever get to Korea or Japan without Satan coming up with a thousand reasons we should not, or seemingly cannot go," said Jackson, a former IMB missionary in Japan. "Satan is especially strong in opposition when so much depends upon our going."

Baptists in both countries are praying God will use the campaigns to bring revival, Jackson said.

Baptist officials in South Korea are

concerned because their convention—Asia's fastest-growing Baptist convention in recent years—has stopped growing, he added.

"Since World War II and the Korean War, we have prayed and asked God for open doors in Japan and Korea," he said. "God has heard, and the door is open."

For both projects, teams of six to 10 volunteers—including a preacher and a musician—are needed. "It is always best if the teams can come from the same church with their pastor, but the need is so urgent that we will take volunteers from across the convention and put them together to work as teams," Jackson said.

The only qualification for participating is being a Christian with a desire to tell someone about his or her faith, he added. "You don't need experience—just a compassionate, loving heart and a determination to share Christ."

Trip costs are \$2,875 for Japan and \$2,850 for South Korea. Pastors and laypeople of all ages are needed for both projects. For more information, contact the Jacksons by phone at (915) 698-8480; fax, (915) 698-4000; or e-mail, whdubjackson@compuserve.com.

Baptists to share super message during Super Bowl

By Joe Westbury
Georgia Christian Index

ATLANTA (BP)—When thousands of sports fans descend on Atlanta for Super Bowl XXXIV, Atlanta Baptists plan to be part of the crowd.

Volunteers from nine metro Atlanta associations will be sharing the gospel in a variety of ways, from staffing hotel information booths to helping fans play games at the "NFL Experience" to distributing evangelistic sports magazines.

Baptist ministry started Jan. 22, eight days before the world-famous mega-event.

To kick off the outreach, Atlanta Baptists turned the parking lot at the Atlanta Braves' Turner Field into a block party with volunteers distributing 15,000 bags of groceries to the needy. About 700 volunteers are staffing the event, "Operation Blessing-Supper Bowl," which is being sponsored by Christian Broadcasting Network. The NFL-sanctioned street festival is held annually in the host city to benefit economically challenged families.

But that's not all. Joel Harrison, director of missions for Atlanta Baptist Association, said metro-Atlanta Baptists will host 183 viewing sites for the game in area churches and homes. Christians can invite unchurched friends to enjoy the game in a relaxed atmosphere. The gatherings

will include the showing of a halftime video in which Christian athletes share their faith.

Harrison said 168,000 copies of Sports Spectrum, an evangelistic sports magazine, have been distributed to churches for use during the week-long emphasis, as part of a partnership with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. Many of the magazines are being distributed in door-to-door campaigns and as part of church visitation programs.

Mike Murphy, pastor of Clairmont Baptist Church, said members of that church also have distributed the magazine in doctors' offices and in the office of an Atlanta corporation.

Mike Sigmon, bivocational pastor of Northwest Baptist Church and a sports referee, said the publication has been well received. He has distributed them to coaches, players and other referees; some coaches have asked for additional copies to distribute to their teams.

"I like the Christian testimonies that are included by well-known athletes. This gives many athletes a chance to say that regardless of how important and exciting the Super Bowl is, it's not as big of a thrill as accepting Christ as your Savior," Sigmon said.

"It's a great way to accomplish a witness with sports-minded individuals who may not otherwise be open to the gospel," he added.

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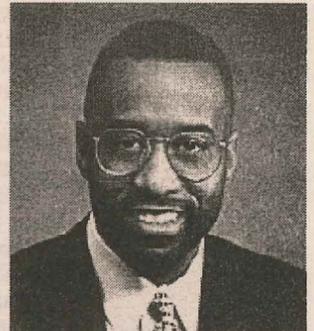
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Youth are communicating if you're listening, author says

Gage lists 3 strikes for parents

Author and youth ministry specialist Rodney Gage has much to say about ineffective parenting. In his book "Why Your Kids Do What They Do," he highlights three roles parents usually play that can sabotage the relationship with their teenager:

■ **Nagging.** Some parents substitute nagging for communication. "Nagging can be habit-forming."

■ **Escaping responsibility.** "This type of parent usually casts blame on others, even the teenager, for irresponsibility."

■ **The "Spy."** "This parent is always snooping into the teen's business as if trying to catch the teen doing something wrong. Parents must remember to look for a pattern of behavior with supporting signs before spying on their kids."

NASHVILLE (BP)—Kids will communicate if someone is listening. That's the biggest lesson author Rodney Gage said he's learned during 10 years of speaking to more than 3 million teenagers.

"Young people can communicate their unspoken needs without necessarily verbalizing anything," Gage said. "Kids communicate with their eyes, facial expressions, body language, attitude and appearance."

Understanding teen needs is a key to understanding their behavior, Gage writes in his new book, "Why Your Kids Do What They Do: Responding to the Driving Forces Behind Your Teen's Behavior."

Gage identifies five basic emotional needs that must be met in order for teens to develop into healthy, mature adults.

"Every teenager has a need to be noticed, to receive encouragement, to receive empathy, to receive direction and to receive security," he writes.

Parents can use needs displayed by their teens as a guide to determine what they require. For example, the need to be noticed tells parents their teen should receive focused attention, respect, appreciation and value as an individual.

Likewise, questions such as "Who am I? Who am I physically, sexually, emotionally, in my relationships, in my faith, in my values?" indicate teens need to feel a sense of significance and purpose in life, he said.

"Even if teenagers don't articulate those basic questions about their lives, they do want assurance their presence on earth is important and valuable to someone," Gage writes.

When teen needs aren't met, serious problems can develop, he said.

"We spent a year researching behavioral problems among today's youth," said Gage who heads the ministry organization, Rodney Gage International, an interdenominational ministry aimed at helping parents and

teenagers. "We discovered that almost all major behavioral problems were linked to unmet emotional needs."

Armed with information about their teens' needs, parents' next step is this, he said.

This step, Gage says, is a challenging one: "Actions speak louder than words. You can fool a fool, you can con a con, but you can't kid a kid."

"Teens know whether their parents are for real. I believe the greatest thing parents can do is model Christ-likeness to their kids. Kids may not believe what you say, but they will believe what you do."

Gage said the assumption a teenager who acts out is just going through a phase is wrong. Such faulty thinking, he said, ignores the fact youth are being raised in a whole new world.

Kids are exposed to more destructive ideas than any other generation, he said. "It has been said that today's youth could be labeled the 'Polaroid Generation': They are overexposed and underdeveloped."

Gage says parents might need to invest more time in raising their teens.

"They need to stay in touch with their kids as much as they can so they can discern when a particular need may be going unmet," Gage said. "Behind every deed, there is a need."



Specialist: Learn about teen culture in order to minister in it

Continued from page 1

the movies that your youth are watching."

Such media reflect the issues kids are facing, Mueller explained, giving intimate peeks into their minds and hearts. Instead of ranting and raving about students' interests, Mueller advised ministers to immerse themselves in the youths' cultures to get to the heart of where they are, listen to what they have to say and what the songs and movies say for them.

"As a result of listening and observing, we can target our evangelistic efforts at the relevant 'touch-points' in the lives of young people," he said. "By quoting their music, art and literature, we are able to meet them on common ground, thereby opening lines of communication."

Such a mission strategy isn't original, he added. Consider the amount of time and energy foreign missions candidates spend in preparing to immerse themselves in a new culture, Mueller said.

"And yet," he added, "we set constraints on our youthworkers and accuse them of compromising their faith if they attempt to understand the culture of their youths."

Even the apostle Paul examined the culture before evangelizing it, Mueller recounted. In Acts 17, before addressing the men of Athens in his sermon at Mars Hill, Paul painstakingly examined all the objects of their worship, even reading their inscriptions and poetry. By taking the time to observe their culture, Mueller said, Paul could speak directly to their point of need and appeal to the "hole in their soul," by revealing the unknown God whom they wanted to know.

Understanding the world's practices doesn't mean embracing them, Mueller said, adding that believers must each decide what lines to draw in their personal observation of the worldly culture.

"It is one thing to be entertained," he said. "It's another thing to critique something and view it in light of the opportunity to communicate the gospel."

Far too often, however, Christians communicate the gospel in ways that direct animosity toward it, he said. "Though the gospel is offensive, the messenger need not be."

Like Paul's example, explore ways to reach people at their level and then explain the gospel, Mueller counseled. "To do this, you must know the unchanging Word and share it with changing kids in a changing world."

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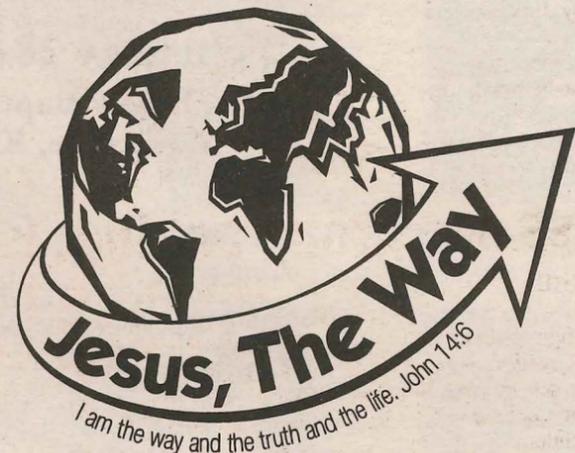
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Report: Parents ill-informed about teen alcohol abuse

By Sarah Griffith
Baptist Center for Ethics

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Alcohol-related deaths outnumber deaths from drug use 4-to-1, but parents are less concerned about their teenagers using alcohol than drugs, according to a new study.

A report from the non-profit organization Drug Strategies found that 21 percent of parents fear their teenagers using drugs, while only 5 percent fear teenage abuse of alcohol.

That is due to effective public-awareness campaigns about the dangers of drugs, according to the report, "Millennium Hangover: Keeping Score on Alcohol."

Drug Strategies, a Washington-based research group, said the media should give equal attention to alcohol abuse, which the report called "America's most pervasive drug problem."

Though its ill consequences are less recognized, alcohol abuse is more

widespread than abuse of illicit drugs, Drug Strategies said.

Of the nation's 113 million drinkers, 10 million are underage and 33 million "binge drink," or have more than five drinks at one time. An estimated 14 million Americans need treatment for alcohol problems, the report said.

Alcohol's consequences also cost society more money than drugs, the report continued. Estimated costs for alcohol abuse in America due to health problems, accidents, crime and "lost productivity" total \$167 billion annually.

"Even though the costs of alcohol abuse to society are 50 percent greater than all illicit drug abuse costs combined, voters are not telling elected officials that alcohol abuse presents a pressing problem," the report stated.

More federal money is allocated for research on illicit drugs than for research on alcohol. The U.S. government has an Office of National Drug

Control Policy, but there is no similar federal program for alcohol abuse.

The report called alcohol the "drug of choice" among teens, used more than all illicit drugs combined. While less than half (42 percent) of parents said they thought their children had consumed alcohol, a majority of teenagers (79 percent) said they had, according to a Hart Research poll cited in the report.

Alcohol abuse contributes to 7 out of 10 child-abuse cases, the report continued. And despite health risks to unborn children, drinking among pregnant women is increasing. Four in 10 violent offenders said they were under the influence of alcohol when they committed their crimes.

"These problems will persist well into the next century unless greater leadership emerges to address alcohol abuse and its consequences," the report maintained.

A Baptist ethicist said church members should take advantage of the elec-

What to do?

Drug Strategies lists several ways to fight alcohol abuse:

- Increase alcohol excise taxes.
- Urge doctors to communicate alcohol's health risks to patients.
- Establish more youth treatment programs.
- Start more employer-intervention programs.
- Raise the price of alcohol for the military.

tion cycle to make their voices heard on alcohol policy.

"Southern Baptists have historically spoken forcefully about the dangers of alcohol and other drugs," said Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville.

"During this presidential-election cycle, one of the best ways to exert our influence is to speak loudly for an increase in the federal excise tax on alcohol, a proven strategy to fight alcohol abuse," he said.

Supreme Court review welcomed on abortion, Boy Scouts

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Organizations concerned about two of the nation's most controversial moral topics—abortion and homosexuality—have welcomed a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to take on cases dealing with a controversial late-term abortion procedure and gay leadership in the Boy Scouts of America.

The high court said Jan. 14 it will hear oral arguments in the two cases. The cases will likely be heard in April and decisions are expected to be rendered by July, Associated Press reported.

In the abortion case, justices will review a Nebraska law making it a crime for doctors to perform a surgical procedure known as dilation and extraction—what opponents call a

"partial birth" abortion. In that procedure, a fetus is partially extracted, feet first, through the birth canal, and its skull is cut and drained.

The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously struck down the Nebraska law, saying its wording also would ban a more common procedure called dilation and evacuation.

But other, almost identical, state laws were upheld by another federal appeals court.

The Family Research Council, a Washington-based group opposing abortion, was among those cheering the Supreme Court's consideration.

"We hope the judges uphold the ruling of the lower court and end this very gruesome, very specific measure of infanticide," said Janet Parshall, the

group's chief spokesperson.

Janet Benshoof, president of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, a group that supports abortion, also welcomed the court's upcoming ruling.

"Whatever decision the court eventually makes, this case will be our road map for women's reproductive choice in the 21st century," she said in a statement.

In the Boy Scout case, the high court will decide whether the scouting organization can bar gays as troop leaders or members. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled last summer that the Boy Scouts' denying of membership to gays violated state anti-discrimination laws.

Liberty Counsel, an Orlando, Fla.-

based group that supports the Boy Scouts in this matter, welcomed the high court's review.

"Requiring the Boy Scouts to employ or admit an active homosexual is like requiring a church to hire a Satanist as its pastor, or like requiring a Miss America Pageant to admit drag queens," the organization said in a statement.

But James Dale, the gay man whose assistant scoutmaster position was revoked, said in a statement the Boy Scouts should not be able to discriminate.

"The court now has a chance to hear that scouting is about honesty, community service, self-reliance and respect for others—not discrimination," he said.

"Requiring the Boy Scouts to employ or admit an active homosexual is like requiring a church to hire a Satanist as its pastor."

Liberty Counsel, an Orlando, Fla.-based group that supports the Boy Scouts

Class has group asking: Is this public school or Sunday school?

WASHINGTON (ABP)—"Why is it hard for a non-Christian to understand things about God?"

That question doesn't come from a Sunday school class but from a Bible history course taught in Florida public schools.

And it is among the reasons a civil-liberties group has asked a state education department to remove the classes from a list of state-approved courses.

"There is a right way—a constitutional way—to teach about the Bible in the public schools, and there is a wrong way," said Ralph Nees, president of the Washington-based People For the American Way.

In a report released last week, the national group claimed that 14 public school districts in Florida that have taught Bible history courses in high schools since 1997 were violating a 1963 Supreme Court ruling allowing public schools to teach the Bible "objectively as part of a secular program of education."

The classes are anything but objective, the report claims. According to one district's lesson plan, Satan is the father of Jews, said Elliot Minberg, legal director of the 300,000-member Wash-

ington-based group dedicated to defending constitutional and civil rights. Another course teaches biblical events—such as the creation of humanity and the resurrection of Jesus—as historical fact, he said.

"They teach the Bible as if it were history," said Minberg. "Those things described in the Bible are events that are accepted by millions of people on faith, and appropriately so, but they're not historical fact. To treat the Bible as a history book is wrong."

PFAW charges that groups such as the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools have been urging local school boards around the country to adopt curricula that teach the Bible from a Christian perspective and its content as historical fact.

Elizabeth Ridenour, president of the National Council on Bible Curriculum, said her organization agrees with PFAW in some areas. "We agree that the Supreme Court says it is legal to teach the Bible as history and literature as an elective and not for indoctrination."

Where they part, however, she continued: "We do not agree with them on some of the other ways they want the Bible taught. They would have some

events censored out—the Creation, Resurrection and the Virgin Birth. The Supreme Court does not say you have to censor the Bible."

Ridenour said the council's curriculum has been used in school districts in 29 states without legal problems. "We teach only the Bible and what it says," she said. "We do not teach whether it's true or false. The students draw their own conclusions."

After investigating publicly available records, PFAW issued the report criticizing the curriculum being used in Florida schools. Nees said the Bible history approach is "hopelessly flawed and should be abandoned."

PFAW provided the state education department with a new publication offering guidelines on how to use the Bible in public schools in ways allowed by the Constitution.

"The Bible and Public Schools: A First Amendment Guide" has been endorsed by a wide range of groups, including the National Association of Evangelicals and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"We simply cannot afford to raise a generation of biblical 'know-nothings.' But, the Bible can't be taught as if it were a Sunday school instead of a pub-

What's being taught?

People for the American Way's report says the 14 Florida counties teaching Bible history courses are teaching from a Christian (usually Protestant) perspective and that students are assumed to be Christians. Some of the specific complaints in the report include:

- Students are most often taught that the Bible has 66 books, even though the Bible accepted by Catholics has 73.
- An exam question asks students at a high school in Columbia County, "If you had a Jewish friend who wanted to know if Jesus might be the expectant Messiah, which book of the Gospel would you give him?"
- In Okaloosa County, a workbook question asks: "What is Jesus Christ's relationship to God, to creation, and to you?"
- An exam on Genesis asks Columbia County students, "What stages in the Temptation and Fall of Man do we still find ourselves (in) today?"
- Most courses include study, and sometimes memorization, of the Ten Commandments. The students generally are not made aware that the commandments are arranged differently by Christians and Jews.

lic school," said Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington.

With additional reporting by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

MINISTRY

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Court lets Good Friday holiday stand.** The U.S. Supreme Court has left standing a Maryland law requiring public schools to close on Good Friday. The justices refused Jan. 18 to hear claims by a former teacher that the mandated holiday violates the separation of church and state. The decision lets stand an appeals court verdict which said the Maryland law does not endorse or advance Christianity and serves a "secular purpose" of closing schools on days when a large number of students probably would not attend.

■ **Congressman taps biblical principles for GOP platform.** The Republican Party's prosperity principles should be based on a biblical worldview, according to Rep. Zach Wamp, a Tennessee congressman who is helping develop a draft for the GOP's national prosperity platform. Wamp told Baptist Press the formula for developing the platform should be based on Scripture. "That formula should be based on a biblical worldview," he said. "If we make our plans based on God's Word and His principles, then I think we will be blessed."

■ **Report: No ranking of final chaplain candidates.** The co-chairmen of the selection committee for the next chaplain of the House of Representatives issued a report saying the committee did not rank the finalists for the position. The report, sent to House members, comes after criticism from some Catholics and some Democrats who said the House leadership's selection of Presbyterian Charles Wright rather than Tim O'Brien, a Catholic priest, raised questions of anti-Catholic bias. The report shows the committee did take a "final tally" of six semi-finalists to determine the three candidates to be considered by House leaders, and O'Brien received the highest score. But the report also states that the three finalists were forwarded to House leaders without any ranking or scores from earlier selection criteria.

U.S. panel cites religious oppression abroad

WASHINGTON (ABP)—In its first months of work, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has issued a series of statements detailing threats to religious liberty in China, Russia and the Sudan.

The commission recently criticized China's move to consecrate five Catholic bishops, an effort to disavow Chinese Catholics' allegiance to the Vatican.

Rabbi David Saperstein, chairman of the commission, said the move revealed "an escalating pattern of religious repression in China."

In previous weeks, the commission also criticized China's repression of followers of Falun Gong—a mixture of Buddhism, Taoism and traditional Chinese exercise. The Chinese government has labeled it a "dangerous cult" and has issued a warrant for the arrest of the sect's teacher, Li Hongzhi, who now lives in the United States.

The panel also has followed religious freedom issues in Russia and Sudan.

Charging that the war in Chechnya is being fed by religious bigotry against Muslims, Saperstein in December urged the Clinton administration "to press Russia to stop playing upon popular prejudice and fear of Muslims to justify its military excesses."

In the Sudan, the commission said, attempts by the government to impose Islamic law have restricted

the delivery of food aid to those in need.

"The Sudanese government is deliberately starving people for religious, as well as, political, military and ethnic reasons," the panel said.

The panel urged the U.S. government to pressure Sudanese officials to stop banning food flights. It also urged U.S. officials to ship food directly into southern Sudan in addition to its participation in the United Nations' food aid program.

The 10-member commission, created under the International Religious Freedom Act, provides independent recommendations about curbing religious persecution to the

administration.

McFarland said the commission either meets or holds a teleconference every two weeks. "What will make or break the commission," McFarland said, "is the response of the American people to our findings and recommendations."

He said it might be too early to know whether the committee's work already has helped faith groups facing persecution by their government. "But some of the effects will be invisible," he noted. "If you're looking over people's shoulder and keeping them honest, how do you know what you may have prevented?"

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Are you ready for summer?

Today I'm in Louisville, it's 30 degrees and the forecast is for 1-3 inches of snow by tomorrow morning. Our winter has been reasonably mild thus far, but will it continue? I don't know. Only God knows.

But one thing I do know is that it is that time of the year when churches across Kentucky finalize decisions on children and student summer camps. That's right. Summer camps!

I want to remind you that there are outstanding summer camp opportunities in Kentucky for boys and girls as well as youth and older youth.

At Cedarmore, the Brotherhood department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention runs the boys' camp at Rabro. Dwayne Doyle has brought a strong passion for boys' camping and already is making a difference. Call him and talk with him about where he's headed with this camping program for young boys.

For the girls, Cedar Crest at Cedarmore is the site for the GA camps. Each year hundreds of girls attend the GA camps and experience Jesus and His call to missions. Kentucky WMU leads and staffs these camps, which run throughout the summer. For more information, call WMU.

For older youth, both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek offer great week-

long youth camping programs. Tom Smoot and the KBC student ministries department recently mailed out brochures on the summer Discovery Weeks. Last year the Discovery Camps were virtually sold out, and this summer will be the same. Tom and his staff deliver an exciting week in which God works to change lives. And for value, you can't beat it anywhere in America!

At Jonathan Creek, as I have written before, we are launching our new youth camp, Crossings at the Creek. And as I write, the weeks are filling up quickly, with one or two already sold out. So don't wait to make your decision. We're excited about this new camp, and we are very thankful for the early response. By the time you read this, we will be at

about 60 percent capacity for the summer with reservations coming in each day, so call now if you're planning to come to Crossings.

Consider attending a Kentucky children's or student camp this year. Your children, students and adults will receive a blessing and grow in their relationship with Christ.

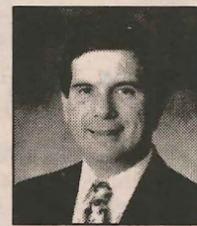
Rusty Ellison is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Box 37, Bagdad, KY 40003. Call (502) 747-8911

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

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TheCyberChurch takes the church to the Internet

By Dan Nicholas
New England Baptist

LITCHFIELD, Conn.—TheCyberChurch, a Bible-preaching congregation planted last year by Pastor Darril Deaton and other leaders of Friendship Baptist Church in Litchfield, Conn., is among the latest of groups to take the church to its newest frontier—the Internet.

A reliable computer, access to the World Wide Web and the Web address theycyberchurch.org are all that is needed to find an innovative church on the Internet.

No longer a dream, TheCyberChurch is an active body of believers from around the world. It provides two worship services a week, discipleship classes and a fellowship gathering.

Friendship Church members designed TheCyberChurch to reach into the homes of those who, for whatever reason, cannot access a local church. TheCyberChurch also carries the gospel around the world through its activities and members.

Roslyn McKearney, a TheCyberChurch member in Australia who has cerebral palsy, praised the site for uniting Christians who otherwise can't attend a local congregation. "It is not God's will that people are isolated and lonely and starved of fellowship," she said. "His will is the opposite. Praise Him for people like Darril and the team at TCC for answering the call."

The Internet congregation start-



NET CHURCH Krystal Qualls of Azle, Texas, types by using a pencil in her mouth during a meeting of TheCyberChurch.

ed with a visit by Deaton and others to a Christian chat room on the World Wide Web.

There they met Theresa Frost, a disabled Christian from Oregon, who suggested the idea of starting a "real church" on the Internet. Frost, who is unable to attend a traditional church every Sunday, asked if anyone would be interested in starting such a church.

That's all Deaton needed to hear, considering that request to be God's invitation to get involved. He made a commitment to follow through.

Leaders of Friendship Church adopted the vision as an opportunity to reach the world. Soon, they said, God began confirming the vision by providing resources.

Months later, Albert and Michele Petrunti made an appointment with Deaton to discuss getting married.

Petrunti, was an Internet technician and his fiancée, Michele, was a graphics designer. It was not long before key pieces fell into place.

After the Petruntis offered to provide the technical expertise, the Baptist Convention of New England offered its support. The convention provides the same financial support it gives for any new mission congregation.

"Our state convention is on the cutting edge of missions and evangelism and is probably the first to ever fund a position like this one," Deaton said. The funding helps support Mrs. Petrunti, TheCyberChurch's full-time site manager.

TheCyberChurch went online in June 1999. Frost was the first member to join.

"Jesus always went where the people were," Deaton said. "He didn't wait for them to come to a certain spot, at exactly the right time. Millions of people in cyberspace will never come to our churches. I am convinced that Jesus would have us take the church, and all that it implies, to them."

At first, TheCyberChurch sought members only from the United States. The membership application did not ask for the person's country, only their state. That soon changed as people from around the world joined.

In January, the church started a second worship service for Australia and the Pacific Rim countries. When TheCyberChurch meets at its

initial time, 3:30 p.m. EST on Sundays, it is 7 a.m. Monday in South Australia. The new service meets Saturday at 10 p.m. EST, or 1:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Many churches post information on a Web site, so what makes TheCyberChurch different?

"TheCyberChurch is not designed to give people a relationship to a Web site, but a relationship to other Christians. Just as in a traditional local church, worship takes place with a group of people together praising, singing, praying and hearing the Word proclaimed," said Deaton, who types his sermon live each week.

TheCyberChurch is seeking local churches to partner with them and baptize new believers. TheCyberChurch tries to integrate believers into local churches when that is possible, even locating and recommending churches for people.

Friendship Church also has been designated a Key Church by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. Currently sponsoring eight missions and ministries, this church of 400 resident members plans to start 10 new Lighthouse Ministries throughout northwestern Connecticut in 2000.

"Friendship doesn't have to look for ways to get involved with missions; God makes it obvious where and when the church should take the gospel," Deaton said. "The church only needs to respond in obedience."

Is TheCyberChurch really a church?

LITCHFIELD, Conn.—What does a group of believers have to do to be a church? Is it prayer, worship, fellowship, Bible study and evangelism?

"If it looks like a church, and acts like a church, then it's a church," said Darril Deaton, founding pastor of TheCyberChurch.

Many people, however, offer opinions about what constitutes a real church from their own experience and tradition. Deaton admits TheCyberChurch doesn't always fit those definitions.

In addition to weekly worship, TheCyberChurch offers a library, bookstore, daily devotions and links to other Web sites such as the prayer request site of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

It has an active prayer ministry with team leaders who distribute prayer requests to the prayer team.

Members help process membership applications. Questions on the application form are designed to clearly reveal if a person has a relationship with Christ. If not, counselors share their faith with the applicant.

Several people have said they've come to know Jesus as their personal Savior as a result of the application process.

Andrew ministers in Cincinnati

By Robert Dunston

When Brooke Andrew, a senior in social work at Cumberland College and daughter of Ron and Della Andrew, returned from Taiwan last summer, she went right to work in her hometown of Cincinnati as a summer missionary.

Her primary assignment was working at Lydia's House, a new ministry in Cincinnati. Lydia's House ministers to children infected with HIV. During the previous year Andrew and her mother both had worked with some of the older children on a volunteer basis, so they were aware of the needs and ministry opportunities.

Andrew and her teammate worked with all 13 children, ages 6-12, in the center. The two summer missionaries encountered a variety of emotional, mental and spiritual problems caused by the children's medical condition. Andrew said her social work courses at Cumberland College helped her minister more effectively.

Andrew and her teammate bathed their ministry in prayer. When a child became out of control, they would calm the child down and then pray with him or her. If a child fell asleep in one of their

laps, they would pray for the child.

One day, the older children were especially wild, and Andrew said she was going to pray for them. She prayed, "Thank you, God, for how much you love these children and how much I love them. In Jesus' name, Amen." When she opened her eyes, she encountered the stares of the children. One asked, "How much do you love us?" God provided a wonderful opportunity for Andrew to talk about Christ's love for the children and His presence with them.

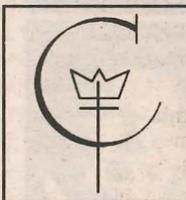
As a secondary assignment, Andrew worked on Sundays with the children's program of Sunrise Community Church, a new Baptist church in Cincinnati. Shortly before she arrived, the pastor had resigned but church members were moving ahead in their ministry for God. By the end of the summer they had called a new pastor.

Andrew devoted her summer to ministering for God in Taiwan and Cincinnati. "I was so blessed," she said. "God took care of me this summer."

Her example blesses us as well.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Saying vs. doing

The Child Welfare League of America, the oldest child welfare organization in America, completed a survey in 1999. The survey, "Assessing Public Opinion and Perception Regarding Child Abuse in America," had both encouraging and disconcerting highlights.

For instance, more than 80 percent of those surveyed believe everyone should involve themselves in stopping child abuse. And 62 percent are willing to financially support nonprofit organizations working to prevent child abuse.

On the other hand, 53 percent confessed they had done nothing after witnessing child abuse. Why? Most said they did not know what to do, or what the consequences might be for them or the family. The gap between wanting to help and not helping is based on several wrong assumptions.

For example: 65 percent of respondents said they believe that when child abuse complaints are filed, children must be removed from their home. Not true. Removing a child from a home is the least-likely solution.

Twenty-seven percent believe they cannot make reports anonymously. False! Call the child abuse

hotline at (800) 752-6200 to report suspected abuse or neglect.

Seventeen percent believe the person accused of abuse has a right to know who filed the complaint. Again, that assumption is false.

"Protecting America's children: It's everybody's business" is the driving principle behind CWLA's campaign to eradicate child abuse. This is a worthy goal we applaud.

However, you and I know that families ultimately need the light of God's grace and mercy to make them whole. This is the mission of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

We bring the answer to families. Yes, parenting skills, anger management, discipline, therapy and many other behavioral aids are important to

this process. But unlike other family services agencies, we go the next step. We share the good news of Jesus Christ who forgives sins, heals broken hearts and gives everyone hope for the future.

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

FCC chairman clarifies recent ruling on religious broadcasting

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Federal Communications Commission Chairman William Kennard has written a letter to concerned members of Congress stating that a recent FCC decision concerning religious programming on noncommercial television does not apply to most religious broadcasters.

Rep. Michael Oxley, R-Ohio, however, has announced plans to introduce legislation to reverse the ruling.

The FCC issued expanded guidelines in December that state, "Not all programming, including programming about religious matters, qualifies as 'general educational' programming."

The National Religious Broadcasters and several members of Congress have voiced alarm that the new guidelines could limit religious programming.

In response, Kennard wrote: "The standards used by the commission to determine whether a broadcaster qualifies for a reserved noncommercial educational television channel do not apply to the large majority of television broadcasters offering religious programming because they use channels that are not reserved for NCE stations, i.e., commercial channels."

Kennard said in the Jan. 12 letter that there are a "small number of cases" where religious broadcasters would be subject to the standards of noncommercial educational stations.

"These standards, however, never operate to prohibit the airing of any particular noncommercial programming, religious or otherwise," he wrote.

Karl Stoll, communications director for the National Religious Broadcasters, told Religion News Service that he rejected Kennard's characterization of the guidelines.

"So what?" said Stoll. "Does that mean that it's OK to restrict religious speech if it only affects a small number of stations or people?"

Anti-porn campaign gets Amazon.com to pull book

By Todd Starnes
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—The world's self-proclaimed largest bookstore has one less book on its shelf after a nationwide protest.

Amazon.com will no longer sell or stock a book on pedophilia called, "Varieties of Man/Boy Love: Modern Western Contexts." Amazon.com's spokesman told Baptist Press the company originally was not aware of the book's content. "When we physically examined the book, we were offended by the pictures on the cover," said spokesman Bill Curry. "It was so close to kiddie porn that we removed the book from our catalog."

Charles Colson, a noted evangelical author and founder of Prison Fellowship, spearheaded the protest against Amazon.com for carrying the book.

Last October, Colson told listeners to his "BreakPoint" radio commentary that he was discontinuing his partnership with the on-line business.

The partnership had allowed visitors to BreakPoint's Internet site to purchase books that were recommended in Colson's broadcasts. Colson said the partnership was broken because Amazon.com refused to stop selling books on the subject of pedophilia.

Colson told Baptist Press he was pleased with the response. "I'm glad we blew the whistle on that," he said. "It's a good example of how Christians can

make their case. We didn't make the case that what they were doing was a sin. We made the case that it was illegal, and that's what did it."

While Amazon.com pulled that book from its catalog, a women's group claims the company continues to sell other books that are pornographic, including pedophilia fiction.

Concerned Women for America launched a nationwide petition drive accusing Amazon.com founder and chairman Jeff Bezos of encouraging the sexual molestation of children.

Curry said CWA's charges aren't true. "Just because we offer the products doesn't mean we endorse the products," he said. "These books aren't out there for everyone to see. You have to know what you are looking for to want these books."

A search by Baptist Press also found that Amazon.com sells the same books that brought misdemeanor charges against a national book chain in Tennessee and Alabama.

In 1998, Barnes and Noble was charged with breaking state obscenity laws in two Tennessee cities, and two Alabama grand juries indicted the chain for breaking child pornography laws. Settlements were later reached in all four cases.

A CWA spokesperson said the group's campaign against Amazon.com will continue until the company agrees to remove all child pornography from its site.

Stewart biography due out in spring

NASHVILLE (BP)—Broadman & Holman announced it will publish the authorized biography of pro golfer Payne Stewart, who died in an October plane crash.

The book, targeted for release this spring, is expected to coincide with the anniversary of Stewart's 1999 U.S. Open victory, said Ken Stephens, president of Broadman & Holman.

Stewart's widow, Tracey Stewart, is writing the biography with the help of author Ken Abraham, a writer who has collaborated on several projects with celebrities and public figures.

"Mrs. Stewart's account of her late husband's life on and off the course will be the most compelling, powerful tribute to one of the PGA's best and most recognizable golfers," Stephens said.

"His life was a shining testimony of how powerful an impression one man's devotion to faith and family can make in the world around him," he added.

Tracey Stewart called the book an "opportunity to share qualities that really defined who Payne was. I think he would want people to know that it was the conviction and commitment to his faith and to our family that made him a joyful and energetic competitor on the course—and in life."

An exciting time at Oneida, part 3

Another student honored at Oneida's recent Harvest Banquet was John. He is a senior from Kentucky and first came to Oneida Baptist Institute in the spring of 1995. We were told John had a temper, that he was not doing very well at home and his grades were not good. John did well here, and his grades came up.

He tried his old school in the fall of 1997, but returned to OBI in January 1998 because his grades were falling again and he still struggled with his temper. John has made a lot of progress and is one of our hardest workers on the farm. He is learning to control his temper and his grades have improved dramatically. He received the "Most Dependable Award."

Megan came to Oneida this fall as a freshman from Kentucky. Megan is a Christian and wanted to come to Oneida because of the Christian influences we provide. Her grades had been good, and she currently is on the B honor roll. When Megan enrolled, she told us she wanted to learn to have patience and she wanted to grow as a Christian. She has found the work on the farm very enjoyable, and it has been a real learning environment for her. She certainly is not afraid of work and can hang in there with the toughest boys. We were honored to give her the "Hardest Worker Award."

Adam is a junior and came to us three years ago from Kentucky. He had been diagnosed with ADHD and was struggling in school. Adam also was having difficulty dealing with many of his peers. At the time Adam enrolled, we were not sure we could meet his needs. When he signed up to work on the farm I was concerned about his ability to do the work and whether he could get along with his peers.

The farm has turned out to be his salvation. Adam takes a lot longer to complete most tasks than others do, but when he says the job is finished, you can be sure it has been done as well as it can be done. We didn't know how the students would respond when Adam was put in charge of other workers. They soon learned he would not tolerate any foolishness and he demanded that the chores be done to near perfection. Adam still struggles with peer relations, but he has learned a lot about how to deal with his emotions. His grades have improved, and he is passing every subject. Adam received the "President's Award" and the "Safety Award." He has learned the importance of making the safety of his crew a priority.

Rachel came to Oneida last fall as a junior from Illinois. Her parents told us she had been spending time with the "wrong crowd," that her grades were going down and she had been dealing with some other problems. Rachel told us she wanted to learn to have more respect for family members, to mature and to make better grades. When Rachel enrolled she had been making all D's and F's. We have just completed the second quarter of our school year, and Rachel is now on the B honor roll.

She has done well on the farm and has been pleasant to work with. One of her shining traits has been her smile. She always seems to be happy with herself and her peers. We gave Rachel the "Happy Face Award."

We are grateful to all our friends who have helped make these students a success!

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

Welcome to January students

We admitted 25 new students for the January term, a higher number than we usually enroll.

Thirteen of the new students came from Kentucky, seven from Ohio, two from Tennessee and one each from the states of Virginia, Texas and Georgia.

Twenty-two of these matriculated for classes. The oldest student is 52. The average age of the group is 26.9, dropping the overall average for the campus family to 30.8.

Eleven of the couples are married. They have a total of 21 children.

Two of the group hold GEDs, 12 are high school graduates and 11 have previous college work. Only four are commuters. We are thankful for adequate housing to accommodate the rest.

Previous occupations for the new students include hospital staff, telemarketer, carpenter, truck driver, salesperson, printer, postal worker and care provider.

The college Web site, www.cbbcc.edu, is a success for the admissions office. During the fall semester, more than 50 percent of admissions inquiries came from the site. The college received 156 inquiries, with 87 coming by

e-mail. Total inquiries last year were 56 for the same time.

Saturday classes also are off to a good start with 15 students. Some are first-time enrollees. Full-time employment prevents them from attending weekday classes. One student goes to his factory job at 4:30 a.m., then attends an 8:30 a.m. class.

Employment always is a major need, especially in this area of high unemployment. One student who had been granted a waiver of financial requirements because of a special need, came by the following week with a big smile: "I got a job. Thanks for your encouragement."

One spouse secured work in the child development center; another student filled an opening as a custodian in the Aldridge Building. These minimum-wage positions are an answer to prayer and enable students to continue in school.

Pray for these new students and the adjustments they face. Your support through prayer and financial giving is an eternal investment in each life.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

BOOKS

Studying the Parables of Jesus. Peter Rhea Jones. Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 1999. 378 pages. \$27. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

In 1982 Peter Rhea Jones published "The Teaching of the Parables." In the 17 years since, there has been much development in parable study. In "Studying the Parables of Jesus," Jones revises his earlier work by adding more than 100 pages and including a helpful new chapter on teaching and preaching the parables.

Jones' earlier work struck a balance between being an academic work and a pastoral work. Jones continues this rewarding mix. Few can surpass Jones when he turns his attention to contemporary application. At the end of each chapter, Jones offers questions for reflection and discussion. The thrust of these questions is to draw the reader further into the world of the parable to allow the reader to experience the full impact of the parable today.

This book also is an offering for academia. Thoroughly conversant with parable research, both current and historical, Jones provides an excellent primer in the critical issues of parable research. The opening chapters on recent study of parables and the interpretation of parables are among the most succinct and informative presentations available. Jones' scholarly dialogue, as in his earlier work, occurs both in the text and in the endnotes, with much of the technical details reserved for the later. By this method, Jones allows the reader to determine how far down the scholarly road to travel.

Therefore, the book finds an audience with the college/seminary student, the parish preacher/teacher and the serious lay reader. I commend this book highly to any person serious about Bible study. *Wayne Hager*

Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples. Oscar Thompson Jr, with Carolyn Thompson Ritzman. Revised and updated by Claude King. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999. 207 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

Oscar Thompson, who died of cancer in 1980, taught evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, after 27 years in the pastorate. By his own admission,

most of the evangelistic techniques he practiced as a pastor and taught his seminary students focused on "training Christians to tell strangers about the Lord."

One night, while teaching a class at a Bible college, Thompson realized he had been doing it all wrong. He went back to his seminary class, already halfway

through the semester, and told students to discard all their notes. He was going to start over.

Drawing a series of concentric circles on the board, he said, "The gospel did not go from house to house to house ... down the street like a nice, neat census. It went from house to house" along the lines of relationships.

"God holds you responsible for every person who comes into your spheres of influence," he told the students. Evangelism is all about relationships, not those we have to manufacture, but those we build every day.

Originally published posthumously, "Concentric Circles of Concern" outlined an evangelistic method that taught Christians how to recognize the web of everyday relationships and how to share the gospel across that web. Deceptively simple in its approach, Thompson's method often was overshadowed by more conventional patterns.

Claude King has done us all a favor by rescuing this gem from obscurity. To

Thompson's original work he has added personal and group learning activities. In addition, he updated some of the language and the look of survey forms. I hope this reissue will get the attention it deserves. *Jim Holladay*

Paul and His Letters. John Polhill. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999. 485 pages. \$29.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

In "Paul and His Letters," John Polhill seeks to survey all available information on the life and thought of the Apostle Paul. His sources include Acts, the Epistles and traditions about Paul from "reliable," non-canonical sources.

The book is intended as a textbook for a college course on Paul or a seminary New Testament introduction class. Still, pastors and church Bible teachers will find this book an excellent reference tool for preparing sermons or lessons.

Polhill introduces Paul in the opening chapters by sifting through both primary and secondary sources to give a clear picture of Paul's life before and after his conversion experience. Along the way, Polhill interacts with all the major perspectives on Paul's life, presenting both those with whom he agrees and those who take alternate positions. Polhill, usually, if not always, decides for the traditional evangelical understanding of Paul regarding date and authorship questions. He does so, though, with clear explanation of his logic.

Following those chapters, Polhill turns to chapters on each of the traditionally accepted Pauline epistles. It is here that the book really shines. Each chapter is clearly presented. The structure of each epistle is outlined, and the message is unmistakable. Polhill's years as a professor at Southern Seminary presenting lectures on Acts and Paul and his letters are evident in this interesting

and entirely readable volume. When Polhill speaks from his abundance of knowledge, the student is clearly the winner. *Wayne Hager*

AquaChurch: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture. Leonard Sweet. Group Publishing, 1999. 269 pages. \$19.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

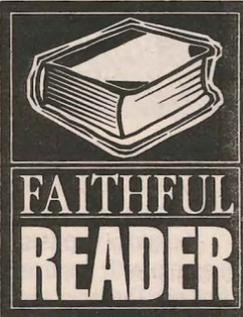
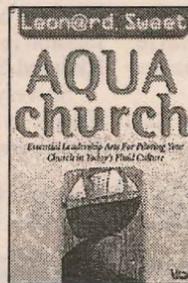
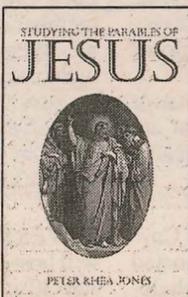
Mention Leonard Sweet's name and you are likely to get one of two responses. One group will sing his praises as the prophet who will lead the church into its future. The other group will roll their eyes and think, "Oh not, not again."

To some folks, Sweet not only accurately diagnoses the condition of the church in America, he also has the correct prescription for revitalizing it. His approach energizes these people. To others, Sweet's often frenetic style of writing simply wears them out.

That said, though sometimes Sweet's style irritates me (he often is too cute for his own good), I generally find he is worth reading. While I cannot join those who would be his disciples, neither can I dismiss his insights into the cultural waters in which the church must sink or swim.

"AquaChurch" takes up where "SoulTsunami" left off. In it, Sweet outlines 11 1/3 leadership arts (he does not like the word "skills"—too linear) necessary to lead the church in a culture where change is not only constant, but rapid.

Those who believe Sweet is overly enamored with contemporary culture will be surprised at his ability to ground each leadership art solidly within the biblical faith of the church. One of his strengths is his ability to provoke readers to reconsider their assumptions about "doing church." *Jim Holladay*



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

Lawyer asks: How would Matthew, Mark, Luke & John hold up in a court of law?

By Cecile Holmes
Houston Chronicle

HOUSTON (RNS)—Pamela Binnings Ewen was a true child of the '60s.

She remembers the famous Time magazine cover early in that decade which asked: "Is God dead?" She read Ayn Rand, the ultra-libertarian author of "The Fountainhead." She hung out with people who argued philosophies with names like objectivism and existentialism.

Try as she might, she couldn't hold onto her childhood faith. Only now, in her 50s and after years of painstaking research, has she returned to church. Only now is she comfortable calling herself a Christian.

"Faith is a wonderful gift, but it was not given to me," she said. "At the point when one begins to wonder what life is really all about and when the music will stop, this becomes an unacceptable state of affairs."

An attorney with a major law firm, a happy marriage and a successful grown son, Ewen is the last woman you would expect to be so spiritually restless. She is a partner in Houston with an international law firm where she practices corporate law, brokering the legal side of financial deals

between large companies.

In a new book, however, she shows how the legal expert and the determined spiritual seeker have come together. The reader can feel the energy of her 10 years of research and religious questing in the book, "Faith On Trial."

She set out to find everything she could offer as evidence of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Her book treats the four Gospels of the New Testament as eyewitness testimony of His life, ministry, crucifixion and resurrection.

Would those accounts "stand up in court?" she asked.

The book is aptly subtitled: "An Attorney Analyzes the Evidence for the Death and Resurrection of Jesus." Drawing on her expertise in legal procedure, she covers archaeological, scientific and scholarly material.

For the purposes of her case, Ewen speculates on whether standard legal criteria can be applied to the Gospels. Her question is: If the testimony of the Gospels were held to the same standards as any other testimony within an American court

of law, could a jury accept the death and resurrection of Jesus as fact?

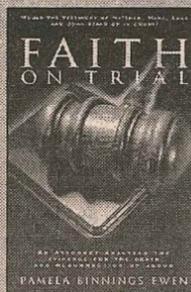
She places the reader in the jury box.

Then as though a standard civil case were unfolding, she examines the four Gospels' eyewitness accounts. The

reliability of the testimony is explored in light of the Federal Rules of Evidence (legal standards applied by attorneys) and common law principles. Ewen assumes the burden of proof.

To examine the credibility of the four evangelists known as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Ewen uses the standards first outlined by Simon Greenleaf, famous in the 19th century as a professor of evidence at Harvard University. She concludes the four evangelists—whom she treats as witnesses—were honest men with honest motives who offered reliable testimonies to evidence they witnessed.

Her approach, Ewen said, comes naturally to a trained attorney, even one whose professional life today involves more behind-the-scenes negotiating than courtroom work.



"The process is something you learn in law school and you keep it with you. You change your way of thinking when you go through law school," she said. "The process is sort of like if you're going to build a house and you have somebody dump a lot of bricks and mortar and a whole lot of wood and cement on your property. You look at it, it's just a pile of bricks and mortar and cement.

"But if you have an architect and a plan and you build a foundation and then you build a frame and then you pile one brick on top of the other, pretty soon you step back and you see a house.

"This is like that. It's the cumulative effect of the information. It's not any one thing here or one thing there. Which is probably why I couldn't get an answer when I (first) asked the question."

That question dates to her youth: Why should I believe Jesus lived, died and rose from the dead?

Today her faith is something she cherishes. But she respects other peoples' religion, and the constant questioning of so many would-be Christians in her own age group. Let them search, she said.

And let the evidence speak for itself.

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ **Urgent request:** Greater Boston Baptist Association needs a semester missionary, a Mission Service Corps volunteer or an intern to serve as a church planting associate through May. This person would help with preparation of new church-planting sites to be developed this summer. E-mail David Jackson at revnjoy@juno.com, or call Calvin Wilkins at (888) 254-5724 for information.

■ An elder in the village of Yombo, Tanzania, who became a Christian in November.

Missionaries Kevin and Sonya Barnes ask prayer that the village will be used as a starting point for an indigenous church-planting movement among the Wazaramo people group.

■ Missionary Pauline Eardensohn and a Tanzanian named Gibson Mwanenja as they begin a children's ministry in Mbeya, Tanzania.

■ The Tanzanian Prayer Conference at Brackenhurst, Tanzania, which begins Jan. 29.

■ Baptist representative Steven Reece as he ministers in Gilwice, Poland.

■ TheCyberChurch, a congregation begun last year on the Internet at theycyberchurch.org by Friendship Baptist Church in Litchfield, Conn.

■ The year-round ministry of Farmington, Maine, Conference Center and managers Earl and Carole Edgerly.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **CAMPBELLSBURG**—Carlton Whirley, 85, former pastor of Port Royal Church and emeritus Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, died Jan. 8. Whirley and his wife, Enid, served as missionaries from 1947 to 1980.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—J. V. Mullen, retired pastor, is available for pulpit supply and other ministries. Call (270) 465-2495.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will host Dwight Ashley in concert Jan. 30 at 6:30 p.m. Billy Compton is pastor.

■ **EUBANK**—Bethel Church called Patrick Butcher as youth minister. Butcher is a student at Clear Creek Bible College. Curtis Brock is pastor.

■ **HARDYVILLE**—Hardyville Church called Ricky Martin as pastor beginning Jan. 9.

■ **HENDERSON**—Green Valley Association called Phillip Basinger as ex-

ecutive director. Basinger previously served in Florida.

■ **LEXINGTON** Immanuel Church will host a single adults seminar Feb. 11-12. Registration before Feb. 4 is \$25; after Feb. 4 \$30. Also, Immanuel will add a second worship service and Bible study hour beginning Jan. 30.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Bethany Church will host Sierra in concert on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. Advance tickets available at church and Wellspring Christian Book Center. For information, call (502) 452-2681. Todd Robertson is pastor.

Foster Avenue Church will host David Livingston in concert Jan. 30 at 6 p.m. Frank Kuriger is pastor.

Ormsby Heights Church will host Plush in concert Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. Admission is a non-perishable food item. Richard Bowden is pastor.

Shively Church called Kenneth Cutrer as associate pastor of administration and education. Cutrer comes

Former pastor Maurice Barnes dies

LOUISVILLE—Former Kentucky pastor and regional Baptist leader Maurice Barnes, 83, died Jan. 11.

A native of Louisville, Barnes has served as pastor of nine churches, seven of them in Kentucky.

He also served as moderator of three Baptist associations, clerk of Long Run Baptist Association, on the Kentucky Baptist Convention executive board and as a KBC regional director of missions.

Barnes also served as chairman of the Long Run committee that acquired Cedarmore before it became a state convention facility.

Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church—where Barnes was a member the past 21 years—recalled how Barnes devoted many hours to Cedarmore. That stemmed from a commitment to camping as a method of evangelism and discipleship, he noted.

Holladay noted that Barnes baptized the first African-American member of First Baptist Church of Key West, Fla., at the time an act not widely accepted in the South.

Survivors include his wife, Tillie Barnes; three sons: Charles, Maurice and David Barnes; a sister, Tillie Brown; and three grandchildren.

from First Church of the Grande Caymans. Also, Shively Church hosted 12,327 people at its "Walk Through Bethlehem" in December. Chris Butler is pastor.

■ **MURRAY**—Terry Ellis resigned as pastor of First Church to accept a pastorate in Mobile, Ala.

■ **WESTPORT**—Westport Church will host David Livingston in concert Jan. 30 at 10:45 a.m. Lynn Traylor is pastor.

■ **WICKLIFFE**—First Church called Donald Roberts as pastor. He is a recent graduate of Southeastern Seminary.

Couples with ties to Kentucky appointed to serve abroad

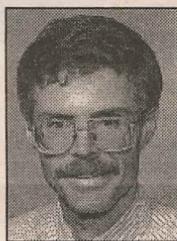
AUBURN, Ala.—Three couples with ties to Kentucky were appointed recently to be Southern Baptist international missionaries.

Bob and YoungOak Farmer will work in Dipolog, Philippines, to help begin a church-planting movement. They recently returned from a two-year assignment in the Philippines through International Service Corps, a short-term missions program through the International Mission Board.

The Farmers are members of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. The couple also lists Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville as being influential. Farmer has a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

He said his professors' teaching and the story of William Carey's call to serve as a missionary to India helped him understand his own call to serve.

"William Carey's statement that one should expect great things from God while attempting great things for God has given me a clearer picture of what



The Farmers



it means to have a walk of faith," he said.

Mrs. Farmer, a native of South Korea, has a degree in law from Sungkyun-Kwan University in Seoul. She also has studied at Southern Seminary.

While working with international students at Michigan State University in East Lansing, she became exposed to other cultures. "I believe that God granted me the desire to share the gospel with people who have not yet heard."

Darren and Ruth Smith will work in Panama City, Panama. Smith will serve as a strategy coordinator, devising a



The Smiths



plan to start churches among the people of Panama. Most of the population live in multi-family housing and they are ready to hear the gospel.

Since 1998, the Smiths have served at a church in Panama through International Service Corps. They are members of Deer Park Baptist in Louisville.

Smith, a native of Oklahoma, has a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary.

Through the ISC program, the Smiths served at Beautiful Zion Baptist Church in Bocas del Toro, Panama. He was the pastor, and she ministered to the women of the church. She started a



The Rankins



Woman's Missionary Union group, and she helped revive the Sunday school program.

Wes and Paula Rankin will live in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where he will serve as an urban evangelist in a city of more than 20 million people.

Rankin is former pastor of Locust Grove Baptist Church in Kings Mountain. A graduate of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., he has been serving a church in Maryville, Tenn., since 1997.

The three couples were among 38 people appointed by the IMB Jan. 10 during a service in Auburn, Ala.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Campbellsville University, a private, comprehensive institution affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is seeking applicants for the position of director of alumni and parent relations. Under the supervision of the vice president for advancement, the director will develop and manage programs designed to increase alumni and parental support of the university. A bachelor's degree is required with a background in sales, marketing or public relations preferred. Previous experience in Christian higher education and an alumnus of the university a plus. For more information, contact Betty Kidwell, director of personnel, Campbellsville University, 1 University Drive, Campbellsville, KY 42718-2799.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Southern Baptist church in Northern Kentucky. Send resumé to: Mr. Carl Smith, Music Minister Search Committee, Hebron Baptist Church, PO Box 92, Hebron, KY 41048.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, Ky., is prayerfully seeking applicants for pastor. Please send resumé to: FBC Pastor Search Committee, 1400 South Main St., Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: New Bethel Baptist Church, PO Box 100, Verona, KY 41092, Attn: Music Search Committee.

SEEKING: Anchor Church in Erlanger is currently searching for the right person to become our youth minister. This is a part-time staff position requiring approximately 20 hours per week. We have a good core group of youth and much potential. Send resumé to: Anchor Church, PO Box 18195, Erlanger, KY 41018, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister needed immediately. Approximately 10 hours weekly, primarily weekends. Call pastor: (606) 299-5649.

SEEKING: Office assistant for Christian social service agency. Have a real heart for ministry? Part-time Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Skills needed: typing, data entry, some knowledge of Windows 95, Microsoft Office, great phone skills and ability to deal with clients and the public. Interested? Call Infant Resource Project at (502) 584-0774 and ask for Cathy Neel.

SEEKING: Southside Baptist Church in Fulton, Mo., is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumé and references to: Search Committee, Southside Baptist Church, 501 Business Highway 54 S, Fulton, MO 65251.

SEEKING: Farmdale Baptist Church at 5610 US Highway 127 South, Frankfort, Ky., is seeking a part-time children's minister. If you feel God calling you to work with children, send resumé to: Ms. Bryan, 530 Alfa Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Caneyville Baptist Church seeks a full-time, experienced, energetic pastor. Prefer college and/or seminary training. Send resumé to: Eddie A. Majors, 164 Clay Way, Leitchfield, KY 42754.

SEEKING: Part-time, bivocational pastor needed for small, rural church near Whitesville, Ky. Three services per week. Call Ed Hemmersbach for details: (270) 264-1478.

SEEKING: Part-time interim music director for First Baptist Church, Russellville, Ky. Call (270) 726-2468.

SEEKING: Teacher's assistant, mother's day out, 2-year-olds. No lesson planning, must love children. Shively area. Tuesday/Thursday, 8:30-2:15. (502) 447-2591 or 353-1646 (pager).

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister. Send resumé to: Beechmont Baptist Church, 4574 South Third St., Louisville, KY 40214, or fax: (502) 368-5807.

PEOPLE

Christians commemorate Jesus' baptism at Jordan River

By Elaine Fletcher
Religion News Service

JORDAN RIVER, Israeli-Occupied West Bank (RNS)—Garbed in a loose white robe, 38-year-old Anne Maniuk waded into the grimy brown river full of reeds, dunked her head under and emerged with a smile on her face and hands lifted heavenward.

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," said the teacher in her native Russian language, her short blond hair tied into a white kerchief, now dripping wet.

At the same time, a nun splashed in the murky water, trailing a heavy long black habit and headdress. Nearby, men sporting long hair and beards, swam a few strokes into the center of the river, before returning to shore.

The more timid, or well dressed, meanwhile, crowded the water's edge to receive a blessing and a splash of droplets of water from an Orthodox priest, or scoop up a sample of the "holy water" in a plastic bottle to carry back home.

Every year, Orthodox Christians around the world celebrate the baptism of Jesus on Jan. 18. In some parts of Russia, Christians cut through frozen streams and rivers to make a ritual dip in commemoration of the date, said Slava Molitvin, a Russian-Israeli tour guide accompanying the group of 18 pilgrims. "For us, this water is not so cold."

Still, a dip in the Jordan River site, revered by many as the actual place of Jesus' baptism 2,000 years ago, has a special meaning for pilgrims. And on Jan. 18, several thousand Orthodox Christians—from as far away as Greece, Russia and the Ukraine—came to view the river of the Bible and sample its waters first hand.

"I had imagined a big river. I was surprised to see how small and dirty it was," confessed Maniuk as she stood on the river bank nearly two hours in prayerful anticipation, singing hymns and uttering prayers with a group of women friends.

Finally, the signal came. An Orthodox priest descended to the river's edge, threw a flower-decorated cross into the water while simultaneously releasing a dove into the air. Maniuk and her friends took the plunge. They held hands and sang in the water. They embraced each other.



BAPTISM CEREMONY A Russian Orthodox woman comes up crossing herself after a baptism Jan. 18 in the chilly waters of the Jordan River. Another woman has gathered water from the river in plastic bottles which she will take back home. Scores of believers celebrated the Orthodox Christian feast of the Epiphany and took the plunge in the chilly waters of the Jordan River among tall river reeds at the site where tradition holds that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. (RNS/Reuters Photo)

"It was wonderful," Maniuk said after emerging barefoot and dripping wet a few minutes later.

As far as appearances go, this baptismal site, on the Israeli-occupied West Bank side of the Jordan River, has probably known better days.

Approaching the river from ancient Jericho, the remains of an enormous monastery courtyard lies in ruins. Soldiers from a nearby army post scan the area that lies along the border with Jordan. Signs warning of minefields are posted along the monastery walls.

At this southernmost point of the Jordan near its outlet to the Dead Sea, the river water now is largely a cesspool of modern agricultural sewage.

Just one set of narrow concrete steps leads down to the water, creating human traffic jams on holidays like this one, when Palestinian Christians, Orthodox clergy and foreign tourists converge at once.

One such visitor is a Russian Orthodox priest, Father Germanos, from

the Russian city of Tula, about 200 miles south of Moscow. This is his seventh visit to the site, he said, adding that on his last trip in the fall his finger was healed of rheumatism when dipped in the water.

"I take the water in bottles back to Russia," he said, "People use the water to clean their apartments of evil spirits, and they even drink it if they are sick."

As far as Father Germanos is concerned, there is no doubt in his mind that the place where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist is right here at this very site.

Many European and American pilgrims, however, prefer to take the dip at the Israeli-developed "Yardenit" pilgrim site about 100 miles further north. There, where the Sea of Galilee flows into the Jordan, the water is considerably cleaner and access is not through a militarized border zone.

Near here, meanwhile, the government of Jordan recently developed its own baptismal site on its side of the

Jordan River. That site lies alongside a small fresh-water spring and an ancient monastery.

Not to be outdone, however, Israel is planning to upgrade this facility on the West Bank side of the Jordan River. The multimillion dollar improvements will include a better access road to the river, as well as modern amenities such as toilets, say Israeli military officials who control the area.

Still, given the proximity to the border, it's unlikely the minefields surrounding the old monastery will be removed or the military jeeps that circulate will give way to easy tourism access. Nor is it likely the water quality of the river itself will be improved.

For the moment, however, pilgrims like Father Germanos remain undisturbed by the water's brown tinge.

"I myself have drunk the water on three different occasions," he said. "In the Bible it says that even if you drink poison and you believe, nothing will happen."

At this southernmost point of the Jordan near its outlet to the Dead Sea, the river water now is largely a cesspool of modern agricultural sewage.

Media specialist says Jane Fonda & Ted Turner deserve prayer instead of gossip

By Todd Starnes
Baptist Press

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (BP)—Amid reports that Jane Fonda has become a Christian causing her marriage with Ted Turner to cool, a leading Christian media consultant is urging prayer rather than gossip.

"We need to pray for Ted and Jane and their marriage," said Ted Baehr, chairman of the Christian Film and Television Commission.

Media outlets across the country have reported Fonda's conversion, including the Washington Post, Associated Press and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Baehr, quoted in a column by evangelical writer Dan Wooding, said, "Actress Jane Fonda and her husband, medial mogul Ted Turner, need prayer, not gossip."

Baehr noted that a year ago Ted Turner told his marriage counselor that Jane Fonda was "trying to make him a saint."

"This comment was reported but not followed up by the major media," Baehr added. "What he (Turner) was referring to is the fact that, according to reliable sources including correspondence with Jane herself, Jane has accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior."

"In fact, Ted Turner has complained

that several of his closest friends and associates have accepted Christ over the years: key people in Turner Broadcasting, his best fishing buddy and his former paramour," Baehr said.

Fonda previously attended Peachtree Presbyterian Church, according to a report in the Washington Times.

The Times also reported that several prominent Atlantans were involved in Fonda's path to Christ, including Ginny Millner, wife of Georgia Republican leader Guy Millner, and Nancy McGuirk, whose husband is an executive in Turner Broadcasting Co.

A spokesman for Fonda's Atlanta office

told Baptist Press they would not comment on Fonda's personal life.

Regardless of her salvation experience, Baehr said believers should continue to pray for both Fonda and her husband during this time.

"We have all made mistakes. We've all said and done things we learn to regret. And that's a feeding ground for a malicious media, which seeks to create scandal and foment sensationalism," Baehr said. "Ted and Jane are two very bright and energetic people caught in the glare of the media's celebrity spotlight. They may be doing the right thing by taking time to re-evaluate and re-appreciate one another."

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