



# WESTERN RECORDER

February 1, 2000  
Vol. 174, No. 5

## FOR THE RECORD

**International Mission Board**  
Missionaries report 1,000 baptisms a day among affiliated work worldwide. *Page 2.*



### Missions

Partnership needs are still strong in New England, Poland and Tanzania, where Ross Bauscher of Owensboro (above) served last year. *Page 3.*

### Financial Forum

Don't let debt take control of your life. *Page 4.*

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Baptist World Alliance is a global family of faith. *Page 5.*

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Do you know where your next pastor will be trained? *Page 9.*

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dc Talk's Toby McKeehan leads Dove nominees with 10. *Page 11.*

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, Feb. 2

## Promise Keepers to make summer stop in Kentucky

DENVER—Kentucky Baptist men won't have to drive out of state this year to attend a Promise Keepers rally.

The group whose stadium events stress Jesus and family commitment will visit Louisville's Freedom Hall July 28-29.

The theme for the event will be "Choose This Day," said spokesman Roger Chapman.

"Basically it's the concept of being in this relationship for the long haul," he said. That relationship includes "God, wives, children, the same themes we've always been about."

A special emphasis this year is the relationship between fathers and sons, Chapman added. Organizers are recruiting nationally known youth ministers to talk with fathers about that subject, he said.

Organizers are working to give the rallies a more regional flavor, he added, featuring local sports figures and celebrities to share their testimonies.

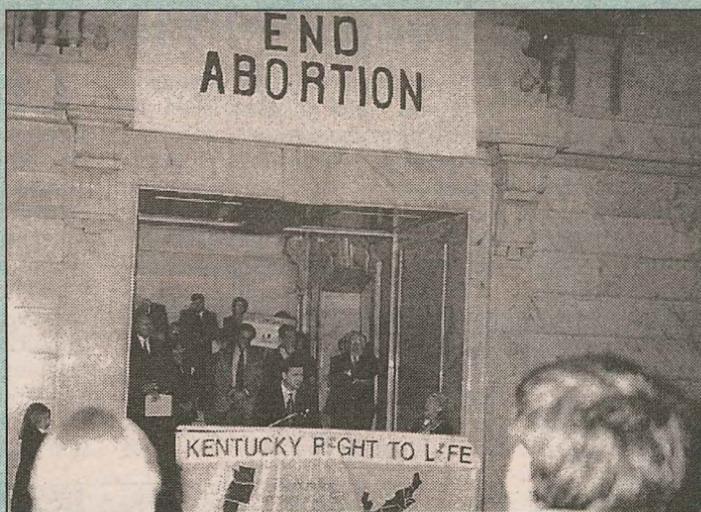
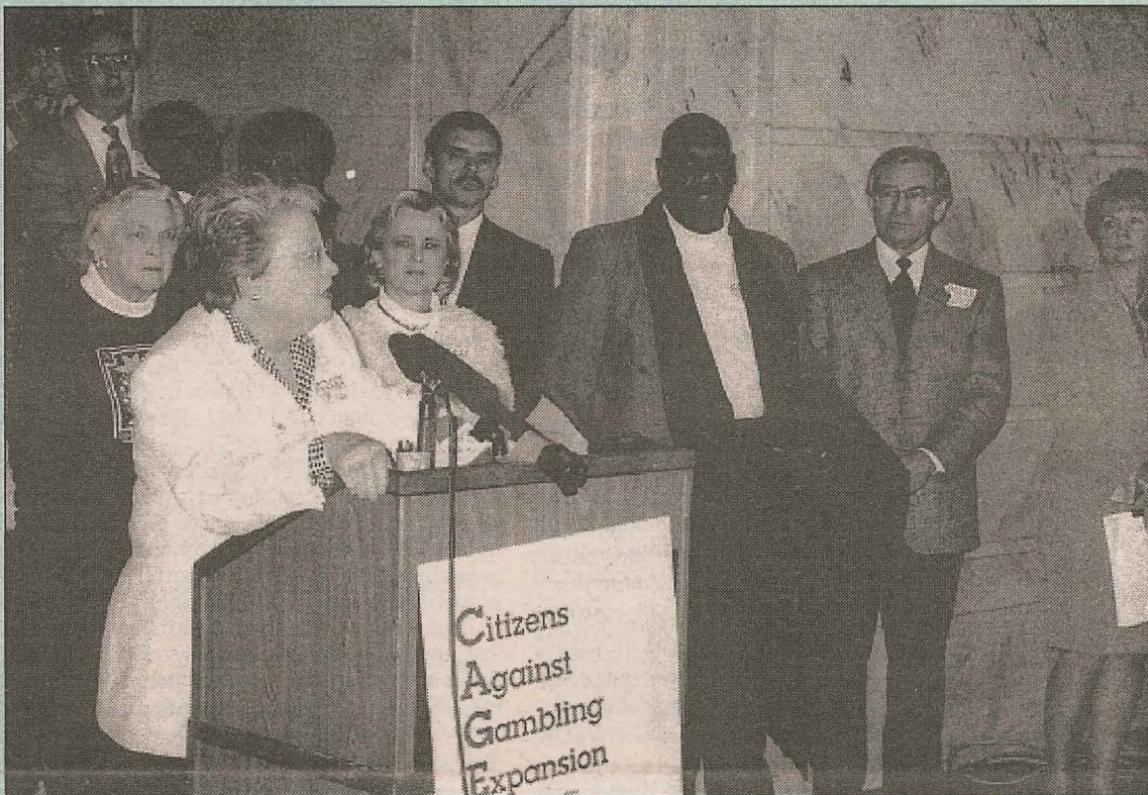
The announcement of the Louisville rally comes amid reports that the Denver-based men's ministry has closed its eight regional offices.

A Promise Keepers official said the move was designed to make Promise Keepers more effective in working with existing ministries in conference locations.

More than 3.5 million men have participated in stadium and arena events around the country since former college football coach Bill McCartney founded Promise Keepers in 1990.

The organization downsized in 1998, due to a loss in income after it stopped charging registration fees for its conferences, and has continued to suffer financially.

## Capital concerns



Kentucky citizens opposing abortion and expanded gambling expressed their views during two separate events held last week in the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort.

■ Above: Nancy Jo Kemper, moderator of Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, emphasized during a Jan. 25 press conference that although gambling expansion proposals appear dead for this session of the legislature, gambling opponents "will not relax nor reduce our crusade." See story on page 3. ■ Left: During a Jan. 27 Kentucky Rally for Life, Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, urged anti-abortion advocates to do everything possible to "keep this issue before the nation's conscience." See story on page 8.

## 'Shepherding' conference stresses personal & church health



**COMIC RELIEF** Charles Lowery, pastor of Hoffmantown Church in Albuquerque, N.M., jokes with the audience in a session of the Shepherding the Shepherd conference. About 150 people attended the second annual event, Jan. 27-29 in Lexington.

By David Winfrey  
News Director

LEXINGTON—Healthy churches start with healthy pastors, a Christian psychologist told those attending the second annual Shepherding the Shepherd conference.

"By and large, the evangelical church is not a healthy place today," said Archibald Hart, professor of psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "We must be about building a healthier church, but it starts with the pastor."

Pastoral health was the focus of the conference, Jan. 27-29. The event was launched in Kentucky last year as a way to give ministers an opportunity to re-energize.

Conference organizers and speakers often noted the pitfalls related to the preaching profession, including burnout, firings and increasing congregational expectations.

Hart noted that business management guru Peter Drucker calls being pastor of a local church one of the three toughest jobs in America. Hart said he doesn't know what the other two toughest jobs are. "But I figure being the spouse of a minister is one of the other two."

Many churches are not healthy today, Hart said, due to an overemphasis on church growth or a deviation from God's formula for ministry.

Drawing from 2 Corinthians 1, Hart said God intends for pastors and all □ See Conference speakers ..., page 7

Shepherding the Shepherd

# BAPTISTS

## Overseas missions witness 1,000 baptisms a day in '99

**"We must be driven by nothing less than a passion for the lostness of a world without Christ."**

*SBC International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin*

By Erich Bridges  
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist international missionaries and their overseas partners baptized a record 363,703 new Christian believers last year—despite mounting persecution abroad.

The total equals almost 1,000 baptisms per day—or "one Pentecost every three days," noted the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's annual statistical report for 1999.

The baptism total topped 1998's record mark by 4.3 percent. The other key categories of total churches, new churches, mission "preaching points" and church membership also reached record highs. Total Baptist churches affiliated with IMB work climbed to 52,186, a 10.5 percent increase. Total church membership jumped 9.5 percent to more than 4.9 million.

Missionaries and their partners started 4,748 churches, an 11.7 percent increase over 1998's record. And total "preaching points"—potential future churches and a key indicator of strategic growth—soared 21.5 percent to 38,363.

Many of those new churches and mission congregations are being born in tough places—like a communist country where hundreds of Baptist lay missionaries have sparked a wildfire house church movement.

"Paul," a young engineering student

there, gave up his professional aspirations to study for ministry. On weekends, he began traveling from the nation's capital to a remote town, where he slept on a park bench and shared the gospel with town residents.

Paul later got married. He and his bride used their honeymoon gift money to move to the town, where for two years they lived out of a borrowed suitcase in a small room. They've started three mission churches since, and they're studying Arabic to share Christ with 600 Muslim students from abroad who attend a school in the area.

"That couple's story can be multiplied hundreds of times over" in the country, said an IMB missionary.

Another lay couple there moved to one of the birthplaces of the country's communist revolution. No known believers lived there when they arrived, but they have baptized 68 people and started two churches. Nearly all such churches meet in homes.

"It's a house, but it's a church," said the missionary. "They can't buy, build or rent facilities, so they use their homes. We Americans tend to compartmentalize our lives. But for them the gospel is not a part of life; it is their life."

The worldwide growth continues "an upward trend that characterized much of this decade," the IMB report for 1999 said. "Seven of the last 10 years have set records for growth across most of the IMB's key result areas."

The year also saw more than 1,000

### Worldwide witness

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Southern Baptist International Mission Board's 1999 annual report cites significant ministry growth in key areas around the world. Examples include:

■ More than 4,000 soldiers were baptized in a single day at a military base in South Korea. They marched in columns into large swimming pools during a worship service led by new Baptist World Alliance President Billy Kim.

■ In Uganda, seven Baptist young people and two adult leaders led 650 students to Christ in one week.

■ Church groups sprouted in a North African country as tribesmen responded to the gospel despite years

of civil war and wanton murder. A worker described the joy he felt when he baptized 10 new believers in a bathtub. "To have worked for years to get the gospel for this country and now to be baptizing people ..." he said, his voice breaking with emotion. "And the larger churches are having baptisms almost every week."

■ In Kenya, more than 22,000 people received Christ as Savior during a month-long evangelistic campaign. The outreach involved 332 U.S. volunteers who saw 132 congregations started.

■ In Brazil, more than 4,500 people made decisions for Christ on the streets of Salvador during the raucous Carnival celebrations.

new missionaries appointed, and the IMB world mission force increased to more than 4,800 missionaries, on track to surpass Southern Baptists' 25-year Bold Mission Thrust goal of 5,000 sometime this year. Southern Baptist volunteers heading abroad soared 25 percent to more than 25,000 (the Bold Mission Thrust goal of 10,000 volunteers per year by 2000 was long ago surpassed).

If the trend of the last decade holds, IMB President Jerry Rankin said, the mission force will exceed 8,000 within five years. It could go far higher if the

recent rapid expansion continues.

2000 is the target year for Bold Mission Thrust numerical goals set a quarter-century ago, and not all of them will be met. But Rankin said God has set the stage for meeting Bold Mission Thrust's great overarching objective: to give every person on earth a chance to hear and respond to the gospel of Christ.

The only obstacles effectively preventing the completion of the task, Rankin added, loom in the minds and hearts of Christians: regressive thinking, timid spirits, lack of faith, neglect of prayer.

## 1999 Annie Armstrong offering sets giving record, misses goal

TALLEDEGA, Ala. (BP)—Southern Baptists gave a record \$43.5 million to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions in 1999, reported Bob Reccord, president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Despite a record offering for seven years in a row, however, the 1999 offering fell short of its \$45 million goal.

The offering supplies 38 percent of NAMB's budget with another 34 percent from the SBC Cooperative Program, and the remainder from individual gifts, investments and other income.

The agency uses the funds to support more than 5,000 missionaries in the United States and Canada.

Speaking to the national Woman's Missionary Union executive board meeting, Reccord expressed appreciation to WMU, which initiated the missions offering more than 100 years ago.

"Thank you and your thousands of WMU members across the country for helping Southern Baptists give \$43,550,000 to the Annie Armstrong Offering last year," Reccord said. "We are so wonderfully thankful for what God is doing through this offering to

reach people for Himself."

Every dollar of the offering directly supports the work of Southern Baptist missionaries, most of whom are jointly appointed and supported by NAMB and partner state Baptist conventions.

Acknowledging that the offering fell short of its 1999 goal, Reccord said, "While all of us wish there were more, we realize there will never be enough to meet the overwhelming challenges of reaching North America for Christ. Therefore, every one of us must redouble our efforts at personalizing the mission and ministry of the 5,000 mission-

aries supported by this offering." The national goal for the 2000 offering is \$47 million.

Reccord also reported that the mission offering was not the only record set by the agency last year. For the first time in history, the number of NAMB missionaries exceeded 5,000 in 1999—a key goal of the SBC's 25-year Bold Mission Thrust emphasis.

The number of missionary appointments for the year also was up, Reccord said, as were the number of missionary candidate interviews, mission volunteers and endorsed chaplains.



### BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Need free lodging for SBC?** First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., will provide free housing for pastors, ministerial staff and missionaries attending this June's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. The "Good Samaritan Inn" will rely on members of the congregation willing to open their homes to qualifying messengers and their families between June 10-15. Applicants must be current or retired ministerial staff or missionaries. Participants can sign up for lodging by e-mailing a message to GoodSamaritanInn@fbcorlando.org or by leaving a voice mail message at (407) 514-4411. The deadline to apply is April 15.

■ **Two students killed in crash.** Two students at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., were among 10 people killed Jan. 23 in a

fiery chain-reaction crash on Interstate 29 north of Kansas City, Mo. Sara Nicole McGaha, an 18-year-old sophomore from Papillion, Neb., and her boyfriend, Jay Wetzel, a 19-year-old freshman from New Salem, N.D., were returning to college for the start of a new semester when their car was involved in a 24-vehicle pileup that killed 10 and injured 42. A memorial service was held on campus Jan. 26. Counselors on staff were available to work with grieving students.

■ **Plan aids chaplains, evangelists.** A new plan aimed at providing a retirement savings option for ministers has been announced by the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. The product, geared toward ministerial income from self-employment, will provide a savings option for self-employed chaplains, evangelists and

others, said project manager Barbara Medlin. The plan also is available for ministers who are employed by for-profit and some not-for-profit organizations that do not sponsor retirement plans for their employees. Interested ministers may contact Annuity Board customer relations specialists at (800) 262-0511 for more information.

■ **Religious educators tap leader.** Lawrence Klempnauer, a longtime member of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association, will be nominated as the organization's next executive director during the annual SBREA meeting March 30-April 1 in Nashville. Klempnauer also will continue as vice president for student services at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where he has served since 1980.

## Anti-gambling group stays vigilant despite victories

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

FRANKFORT—Efforts to expand legalized gambling in Kentucky are dead for this year—or are they? Gambling opponents are taking no chances.

Citizens Against Gambling Expansion gathered Jan. 25 at the state Capitol in Frankfort to make certain that Gov. Paul Patton and legislators know of their determination to battle any future gambling expansion plans in the state.

CAGE, an interdenominational anti-gambling coalition, was organized last summer after Patton suggested the option of legalizing casinos and video lottery terminals as a state revenue source.

Although gambling proposals have failed to gain legislative sponsorship so far this year, opponents warn that concerned citizens must remain vigilant.

Although “all political observers have said the issue is dead, that CAGE had won the day,” CAGE moderator Nancy Jo Kemper declared that as long as there are lobbyists “working for the cause of expanded gambling, we, the advocates for the well-being of our people, will continue to be vigilant, vocal and ready to act. We will not relax nor reduce our crusade until this session has concluded.”

CAGE has gained the support of more than a dozen denominations including the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Other groups involved in the anti-gambling effort include Catholics, Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Methodists and Presbyterians as well as the Family Foundation and the Temperance League of Kentucky.

Last week’s briefing session held in the Capitol Annex attracted legislative leaders from both parties, in-



**ANTI-GAMBLING** KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey speaks in Frankfort. “Every person is created in the image of God and has a right to live in a just society ...”

cluding Speaker of the House Jody Richards (D-Dist. 20).

“I think it’s very important that you have joined together in unity to oppose expanded gambling in our state,” Richards told dozens of CAGE supporters from across the commonwealth.

Sen. Dick Roeding (R-Dist. 11), spoke on behalf of Senate President David Williams (R-Dist. 16). “This is so important that people get involved in this process,” Roeding said.

Declaring that Patton’s “trial balloon on land-based casinos ... has been popped,” Roeding added, “I find no support for increased gambling in Kentucky. You guys are winning. Keep us informed.”

Other legislators who spoke during

### On the horizon

Just because legislators say expanded gambling measures are dead this session, that doesn’t mean Citizens Against Gambling Expansion’s work is done.

“Make no mistake,” said CAGE leader Nancy Jo Kemper, “this coalition is not a fly-by-night operation that will disappear.”

CAGE’s efforts are “part of a national trend to limit and restrict the exponential increase in gambling activity across our nation,” she added.

Future goals include:

- Opposing efforts by the lottery to expand into electronic forms of gambling.

- Opposing attempts to loosen regulations on charitable gambling.

- Urging legislators to encourage public schools to educate children about the illusions of gambling.

the briefing included Rep. Sheldon Baugh (R-Dist. 16) and Rep. Tom Burch (D-Dist. 30).

“I’d like to congratulate you on a job well done,” Baugh told CAGE participants. “You make it look easy, but I know it’s not.”

“The people of Kentucky simply do not want any form of expanded gambling in the state,” he said. “You must remain ever vigilant.”

Burch emphasized his position on gambling is that “we have too much of it in Kentucky.”

Urging gambling opponents to “stay in contact with your legislators,” he added, “Thank you for encouraging us to be for the right thing.”

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey reminded briefing partici-

pants that “expanded gambling works against the well being of the citizens of the commonwealth.”

“Every person is created in the image of God and has a right to live in a just society that works for good and doesn’t work against them,” he insisted. “When we base the funding of education and other worthy causes on the willingness of the citizenry to gamble their hard-earned wages, we’re working against the citizens of the commonwealth.”

Mackey encouraged gambling opponents to “continue to be watchful in the days ahead to make sure that we enhance the well being of every citizen in Kentucky.”

Kemper said one of the primary goals of last week’s meeting was to “thank our legislators for their support in opposing expanded gambling.”

Following the briefing, Kemper led a press conference in the Capitol Rotunda.

Backed by fellow CAGE supporters, Kemper told media representatives, “We are here to make sure that the issue remains dead, and that our elected leaders know we have not let up nor backed down nor lessened our intentions to stay on guard until this session of the legislature is complete—and for years to come.”

Criticizing Gov. Patton’s consideration of expanded gambling to finance state programs, Kemper emphasized that “worthy ends can never justify duplicitous and destructive means.” She described gambling as “a vacuum cleaner to empty the pockets of those who are so far down that they think luck is their only option.”

Noting that CAGE represents “something close to 1.5 million adult church-goers” in Kentucky, she said, “We will do what we must do to stop the slots and prevent any expansion of gambling in our beloved commonwealth.”

**“Thank you for encouraging us to be for the right thing.”**

Kentucky Rep. Tom Burch (D-Dist. 30)

## Needs still strong for all three Baptist partnerships, Wilkins says

The recent cold weather might have you huddled inside, but now is the time that many Kentucky Baptists are making plans for partnership missions trips.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention’s three partnership relationships are progressing at a healthy pace, according to director Calvin Wilkins.

This is the last year for the partnership with New England, but that convention’s Executive Director Ken Lyle “has asked us to consider going beyond” 2000, Wilkins said.

Keeping track of the number of volunteers in New England has become impossible because many churches have established relationships with churches in New England and plan their own trips without the partnership office, he added.

“The important thing is getting people up there,” Wilkins said. “We have touched every state, every association with volunteers, as well as their convention building in Northboro,” Mass.

Kentucky Baptists are entering the second year of partnership with Baptists in both Poland and Tanzania.

“We’ve gotten off to a rather good start with Poland,” Wilkins said.



**TANZANIA PARTNERSHIP** Kentucky Baptists are working with Baptists in Tanzania to evangelize 120 unreached people groups, said Calvin Wilkins, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s partnership missions department. (Photo by Calvin Wilkins)

“We’ve had about 100 volunteers to go, which has not been an incredible number of people, but we’ve had some good things happen.”

The first year introduced Kentucky Baptists to several Polish churches and leaders, especially the Baptist seminary in Warsaw, he said.

“A considerable amount of money has been given to the seminary for various needs such as the completion of their chapel and books for their library,” he said. English books for the

library continues to be a need, he added.

In Tanzania, the most significant project of the first year was the pastors’ training event led by KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey and former KBC partnership missions associate Ken Murphy.

“Tanzania has been slow taking off, but we’ve had some very significant projects there,” Wilkins said.

“We’re working along with the missionaries there to try to reach the

### When can you leave?

■ **New England.** About 40 projects are scheduled for the spring and summer, with a major focus on Boston in preparation for its becoming a “strategic focus city” in 2001. Most projects involve prayer walks and neighborhood surveys, although other needs include vacation Bible school and Christian day camps and other projects.

■ **Poland.** At least 43 projects are scheduled from March to September. Primary jobs include construction and evangelism, although other jobs include music, sports evangelism, vacation Bible school and prayer walking. Cost: \$1,495 for 14 days.

■ **Tanzania.** Sixteen projects are scheduled from February through October. Work includes evangelism, a missions seminar for pastors, health training, prayer walks and a children’s camp. Cost: \$2,495 for 14-16 days.

120 unreached people groups,” he said. “We work alongside them in starting new churches, developing new churches and strengthening existing churches, training people to disciple new converts.”

For information about partnership missions opportunities, call the KBC partnership missions office at (502) 244-6462 or (888) 254-5724.

# OPINION

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Discovering the root of the blue battle

By Tom Ehrich

A local high school is embroiled in controversy over its school colors.

Over the years, what started as Navy blue has evolved into royal blue. One alumna has made it her personal crusade to reverse the blue tide and restore the school to its original shade.

She has no support in the athletic department, whose players are the most visible wearers of the blue, or in the administration.

But she is undaunted in her telephone calls, e-mails and solicitations of support from other alumni.

Having myself been the target of such campaigns, I don't dismiss the crusade lightly. One determined person can wreak havoc on any institution, especially one so vulnerable to public image as a school or a church.

In a national study of church conflict, the stark conclusion was that "all it takes is one"—one antagonist who will say and do anything to win.

Their venom and determination frighten others to the sidelines and become a magnet for all manner of unresolved issues, most having nothing to do with the presenting problem.

One pastor tells of a lay leader who came to him on his first day in office and announced his intention to force the

pastor out. It took two years, but the antagonist won. At another church, an antagonist threatened to ruin not only the pastor but his wife. He and his handful of allies also won.

The blue battle, therefore, might not fade into oblivion just because it is intrinsically absurd. Look at the division of Christendom over the one word "filioque" ("and the Son") in the Nicene Creed. Look at blood shed over the Greek word meaning "baptism." Look at how the

Church of England tore itself apart in the 19th century over clergy vestments, or more recent warfare over wording of the Lord's Prayer.

But, you say, Christendom didn't split over the filioque clause. It split over political power and ethnic hatred. The Reformation didn't fragment over baptismal water. Its origins lay in more momentous issues like nationalism and intellectual freedom. The vestment controversy was a cover for class warfare. Fighting over the Lord's Prayer was a cover for deeper angst over modernity and new roles for women in the church.

That's all true. Same with the lynch mobs who routinely accost vulnerable targets like pastors and school principals: They tend to be compensating for frustration in the rest of their lives. A noted consultant concluded after three

## COMMENTARY

## Heresy of inerrancy

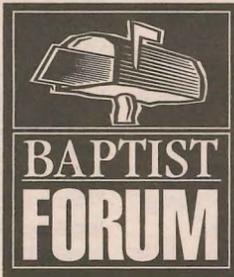
Baptists are free of human creeds and turn only to the Bible as a sufficient guide for faith and practice. But the heresy of inerrancy has caused great harm. The deification of Scripture is blasphemy. Surely God the Father of Jesus Christ is offended by the use of our Bible to hurt and exclude others of the faith.

Some popular preachers declare they could not preach without an inerrant Bible. They thus would

consign to hell the first two centuries of Christians who had no Bible. The earliest Gentile believers heard only the story of Jesus but were saved by faith in our living Lord.

Those who choose to honor some verses while ignoring others make themselves inerrant and seem blind to biblical ambiguities. So none of us are without sin. As we repent, may we all confess that Jesus alone is the living Word of God.

Russell Bennett  
Louisville



decades of toiling with church conflict: When people fight at church, it's because something is wrong at home.

In all likelihood, the local issue isn't Navy blue vs. royal blue. I have no idea what it is. I doubt the alumna herself could say. At some point, chasing victory obscures all origins.

That's what makes tightly focused antagonists so dangerous: They tend to use a small issue to deal indirectly with a large issue, and they can't afford to let it go, because then they would have to deal with the larger issue.

The fact is some things matter more than others. When the Apostle Paul faced tension between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians—tension that eventually would erupt in warfare and lay the ground for centuries of vicious anti-Semitism—he begged for a little common sense.

Does the Christian enterprise turn on circumcision? he asked. That is absurd. Circumcision is nothing, he said, and uncircumcision is nothing. All that matters is obeying God.

No one stopped fighting just because Paul named the absurdity. But history bore him out. Fighting over small stakes as a substitute for larger stakes might bring down the mighty, but underlying issues remain.

Kicking the dog never saves a marriage or brings a promotion at work.

Tom Ehrich is a free-lance writer and computer consultant in Durham, N.C.

## Effective worship

Many thanks to the Western Recorder for publishing Marv Knox's Jan. 11 article presenting Bruce Greer's thoughts about today's "music wars" in worship.

Greer's remarks are timely and right on, and his appeal for greater consideration and accommodation of musical tastes as key to successful corporate worship suggests recommitment to Philippians 4:5, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand!"

Richard Bower  
Campbellsville

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

## The miracle at Steubenville

Attendance at Steubenville Baptist Church had gone up and down like a yo-yo. The facilities on one acre had been limiting growth for 20 years. The new pastor, Mike Wells, had a great vision, but the resources for growth just did not seem to be available. The church had purchased 15 acres of land for a future relocation, but with an annual budget of about \$95,000 and attendance around 150 people, building on the land seemed like a pipe dream. The stage was set for a miracle.

After a study of "Experiencing God," the members were willing to follow God's vision. The people prayed and decided to venture in faith.

The pastor mailed a multi-page brochure with a detailed proposal to more than 300 ministry groups and suppliers. Soon more than 17 different building groups had responded and 600 people participated in the building project during the next five months. Groups from

Virginia built and installed beautiful cherry cabinets in the library and pastor's study. A glass company in the Midwest donated and installed six stained glass windows. Another company donated a commercial dishwasher. Church members spent many weeks at the church assisting volunteers and providing food. Carpenters for Christ, based in Centre, Ala., coordinated volunteers.

On Sunday, Dec. 5, the new dream facilities were dedicated. I could not believe my eyes when I approached

the new building. The parking lot was paved and the grounds landscaped. The basic metal and brick exterior was intercepted by a covered drive entrance and foyer that would rival that of any modern building. The sanctuary has an elevated floor, circular seating for 500, beautiful chandeliers and a screen with overhead camera projection. A hallway surrounds two classrooms and enough folding dividers to form a spacious



Bill Mackey

fellowship hall for a total of 17,100 square feet.

Many of the volunteers who had worked on the building returned to fill the sanctuary for the dedication service. Evangelist Dale Rose, who served as chairman of the building committee, recognized all the committees. The choir, a soloist and a quartet of high school girls provided special music and the pastor delivered a powerful message.

A young African-American woman made the first public profession of faith in the new facilities. Later, I learned that the pastor and an African-American deacon from the church had led the young woman to Christ the previous week.

However, this is just an interim report on the miracle. The ground west of the facility has been graded for construction of a family life center, and the area in front of the facility has been graded for the future construction of a new sanctuary. Additional miracles are anticipated!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## DEBT

## Don't allow debt to take control of daily life

By Don Spencer

Debt is one of the major financial problems for many people today. You can never have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt.

Accumulating debt is so easy—you can get a five-

year car loan and have a period of time where you owe more than the car is worth. Home equity loans make for easy debt. Pre-approved credit cards are much too easy to obtain. I've recently read true accounts that document this. One involved a young lady who signed up for a special offer in her cat's name. In a short time the cat had been "pre-approved" for a credit card that was issued. Recently a mother received a pre-approved notice for her daughter, age 3. For fun the mother completed the application, being honest about all answers—age: "3"; occupation: "preschool"; purpose: "to buy toys"; etc. The child's credit card was approved.

In today's world, people can easily get over their heads in uncontrolled debt. The idea of buying now and paying later is appealing, and it allows us to enjoy things we cannot buy with cash today. But if you cannot control debt, it will control you.

Remember that borrowing money carries with it many potential financial dangers, including:

■ Borrowing increases the cost of the items we purchase.

■ Borrowing assumes one's future ability to repay the debt.

■ Borrowing often creates a bonded relationship to the lender—a relationship is never to the advantage of the person borrowing.

■ Repaying debt can seriously lower your future lifestyle.

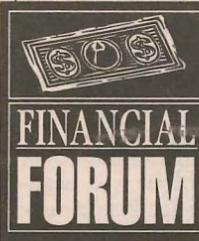
■ As debt takes increasing control, it creates more stress. This stress can cause health problems and sometimes can affect your ability to earn. This, in turn, decreases your ability to repay debt, which then adds more stress. Get the idea? It's an endless cycle.

■ Excessive debt can damage your credit rating. This can restrict your ability to borrow in the future.

■ Loans with a variable rate can create substantially higher future payments.

Use extreme caution in taking on debt. Be aware of the added costs of repaying the debt. Avoid the debt trap and avoid being another statistic. Remember, you can never have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt.

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



## Ex-spouses can help children treat both parents with honor

**Q: My teens badmouth me around their father and stepmother. My ex-husband does nothing to correct their behavior. I told him to stop them from running me down. He said I should talk to them; it was none of his concern. What do you think?**

For the sake of all concerned, you and your ex-husband should address this issue with your children. Everyone should honor his or her father and mother. Ephesians 6:1 includes this as a basis for a solid, faithful family.

You are still their mother and should be treated with respect. If they feel anger or hatred toward you, encourage them to discuss it with you privately. If you cannot address these issues, talk with your pastor or a Christian family counselor.

When they belittle you, they cause others to think less of them. Other adults will not think highly of them if they mock and jeer their own mother. Encourage them to be respectful of their father when they speak to you. Ask them to do the same for you.

Request again that their father speak to them about this matter. If he will not, you still should confront the issue.

If they do talk with you about the comments they have been making, be patient, open and willing to discuss their concerns. The best way to put a stop to this is to get to the bottom of their upset feelings.—*Wade Rowatt*

**Q: Each time I visit with my mother, she repeats the same stories over and over again until it reaches the point I want to stop talking with her. Is her behavior typical? How do I handle my negative feelings about listening to her?**

Your mother is doing something called reminisce. This activity is typical of many older persons and often is misunderstood by those around them. Pastoral counselors consider these reminiscing episodes important attempts by older people to reconcile or resolve some aspect of their past.

Most older people are not aware of the repetitive nature of what they are saying. To them, they simply are retelling a story. The story is important to their spiritual and emotional makeup. It often is their quest for meaning in this stage of their life.

Here are some steps you can use to help your mother with this life review process:

- Listen for more than the words; try to understand the feeling and meaning behind the story.

- Give positive feedback and try to decipher what the message is in the story.

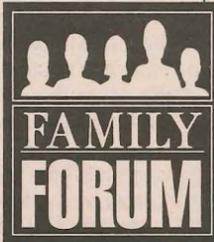
- Clarify the story as you hear it. Ask questions that begin with what, how or when; stay away from "why" questions. Be gentle with your questions.

- Help by summarizing what you hear. For example, use such statements as, "I can see how that would make you feel."

- Encourage the reminiscing. This often helps curb the repetitive nature of a story. It also shows your awareness of the importance of the life review process for your mother. Taking these events seriously will be significant for your mother and make it much easier to handle the situation.

We all need to listen to the older people in our lives and to appreciate the rich treasure of memories they possess. In their memories rest our own spiritual and emotional roots.—*Jon Rainbow*

*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.



## Baptist World Alliance—a global family of faith

It's not as well known in Southern Baptist circles as Cooperative Program Day or World Hunger Sunday. It doesn't have immediate name recognition like the annual Lottie Moon international missions emphasis. But Feb. 6 is a significant day in the lives of millions of Baptists around the globe. It is Baptist World Alliance Sunday.

The Baptist World Alliance is the international organization of 196 Baptist conventions and unions representing more than 43 million baptized believers. Established in 1905, the alliance's newest member bodies are from such diverse settings as Africa, India and Vietnam.

Why is BWA important in Southern Baptist life? Just as members of local congregations benefit from involvement in Baptist efforts on the associational, state and national levels, Southern Baptists benefit from cooperating with the international family of Baptists.

Few Baptists around the world have access to the resources that Southern Baptists typically take for granted. Yet some of the most significant spiritual growth in Baptist circles today is taking place in Africa, Eastern Europe, Korea and South America.

In addition to supporting Southern Baptists' global missions efforts, we must be willing to accept our international brothers and sisters as peers and mentors. The fellowship of the Baptist World Alliance is an excellent place to start.

BWA seeks to embody the biblical theme of "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." American Christians occasionally need to be reminded of the importance of Christian unity.

The color of the church carpet, the menu for the Wednesday night meal or the setting for the next youth social are not the most pressing issues facing the 21st century church. Baptists who walk miles to meet under a tree for worship or who endure physical persecution for their faith can teach us valuable lessons about the true priorities of sacrificial service.

BWA hosts an international congress once every five years. During the past 15 years, it has been held in Los Angeles; Seoul, Korea; and Buenos Aires, Argentina. The most recent congress took place last month in Melbourne, Australia.

Celebrating the theme, "Jesus Christ Forever. Yes!", the 18th Baptist World Congress attracted an international crowd of 7,000 participants. South Korean pastor Billy Kim was elected BWA president for the next five years, succeeding Brazilian pastor Nilson Fanini.

Jim Hawkins, retired executive associate of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, was among the thousands of Baptists who traveled to Australia for the congress. He said the event "is especially important to the Baptist work in countries where it is still very limited and the churches are small. They look forward to it for a sense of renewal and encouragement."

Hawkins emphasized that BWA leaders "are able to facilitate some incredible ministries,"

addressing such vital issues as human rights, racism, economic concerns and international reconciliation. During the recent congress, participants declared a "decade of racial justice" and embraced a new emphasis on evangelism.

Affirming the value of Kentucky Baptist churches actively supporting BWA's international ministry efforts, Hawkins said, "It has to enlarge our perception of the body of Christ. We get so wrapped up in our own stuff, we sometimes forget there is a larger body of Christ."

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz describes the alliance as "a home for every Baptist." Although Baptists worldwide "are a very diverse group of people," he added, "We all belong together."

Plans already are under way for BWA's centennial congress in England in 2005. Whether it's a matter of celebrating BWA Sunday on Feb. 6, adding BWA concerns to your church's prayer list or making plans to attend the 2005 congress, BWA offers Kentucky Baptists an opportunity to be part of a global family of faith.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## Helping blended families blend

By Karl Babb

*By wisdom is a house built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures (Proverbs 24:3-4).*

In his recent book, "Preparing to Marry Again," Dick Dunn notes that "remarriage is not a new phenomenon. One hundred years ago, step-families were being created at about the same rate they are today, but for different reasons. Today, the number of remarriages can be largely attributed to the high rate of divorce. In the past, remarriage usually followed the death of a mate, with many women dying during childbirth and many men dying in work-related accidents and war." Since the mid-1980s, a majority of weddings have included at least one partner who has divorced, according to researcher George Bar-na.

Research also indicates the divorce rate for second marriages is up to 10 percent higher than for first marriages. Healthy blended families don't just happen; they take time and effort on

the part of everyone involved. What can churches do to help strengthen blended families?

In ministering to a blended family, think holistically. Issues to consider include grief, relationship building, changes in family structure and complex legal and financial matters.

The blended family has emerged as a result of at least one lost relationship. Other losses blended family members face include loss of a parent, loss of dreams, loss of privacy and loss of role in the family. Family members need help to recognize and work through the grief process associated with these losses.

Remember the primary relationship is the married couple. Healthy blended families will grow as the husband and wife nurture their loving relationship.

Each of the new relationships created by a blending family requires adjustments. Recognize that the blended family is trying to mesh at least two distinct family histories, traditions, norms and beliefs. It takes time and energy to sort through all this "stuff." Encourage patience and appreciation of the differences.

The opportunity to share with oth-

ers and hear their stories provides help and encouragement for blended families. Active participation in a blended family support group enhances the couple's growth as a family. "Without help, only 40 percent of all people who marry with children from a previous marriage stay together," Dunn writes. "With the help of a support group... 80 percent of families in a stepfamily support group succeed."

Dunn's "New Faces in the Frame: A Guide to Marriage and Parenting in the Blended Family" explores the stages of blended family development and helps participants recognize the signs of moving from one stage to another. Among marriage and parenting goals are giving the marriage priority, building communication skills, learning to live together, minimizing interference and relying on God.

Some people have suggested that instead of calling this particular family structure the "blended family," we should use the term "blender family," since this is a more realistic portrait of life inside the home. A church's intentional ministry with blended families can make a positive difference.



Karl Babb is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's family ministries department

## Consultant urges pastors to hone personal integrity

**"Ministry is a high and holy calling, but it's also a hard calling."**

Dan Webster, founder of Authentic Leadership Inc.

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LEXINGTON—Pastors should spend more time developing personal integrity than worrying about ministry programs, leadership consultant Dan Webster told those attending the "Shepherding The Shepherd" conference.

Webster, a former director of student ministries at Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago, is founder of Authentic Leadership Inc. He recounted how he experienced a major crisis just as it appeared everything in life was going well.

"Life is not as great as it appears on the surface," he said. "While working at one of the largest churches in America, my heart had shrunk to the size of a pea. I was starting to implode (and) hate life."

The author of five books on leadership, Webster said a series of setbacks touched off the crisis. Among them were his father's death, feelings of ministerial burnout and molestation charges brought against a young man he had disciplined.

This spiritual and emotional valley lasted more than three years, forcing him to rethink his life in ministry. At

one point, he said God told him, "Dan, now is the time to think less about numbers and more about your own soul."

A personal crisis always sharpens the attentiveness of one's heart, Webster said, adding that he discovered how personal development is always tougher than building programs and ministries.

Despite the setback, he also reflected on the affirming aspects of life in ministry, such as the letters he received from people describing the positive impact he had made on their lives.

"Ministry is a high and holy calling, but it's also a hard calling," Webster said. "It's hard to live day in and day out. It's very challenging and difficult."

He guaranteed pastors they would face certain issues while seeking to faithfully follow God during the coming year, including:

■ *Experiencing unexpected circumstances.* Ministry rarely takes one where a pastor thinks it will lead, he said. He mentioned a fire chief in suburban Chicago who can double his pen-

sion benefits if he stays on the job seven more years. But the man feels God's calling to enter ministry now.

"I said, 'Tim, God's ruining your life, isn't he?'" the speaker said.

He also shared about a couple in Seattle who were battling with the twin crises of losing their daughter in a car accident and a challenge to his leadership ability as a youth pastor.

"We never thought following Christ would lead to these moments," the woman told him. "We're so disillusioned we can barely get out of bed in the morning."

Webster advised pastors to be honest about their feelings during a crisis, noting how Jeremiah often complained to God that his prophetic call had ruined his life.

■ *Reaching points of surrender they didn't anticipate.* Circumstances will push ministers to the level of either trusting God or bailing out of the pulpit and becoming bitter, Webster said.

John the Baptist hit the top of his career introducing Christ, and wound up with his head on a platter, he noted. Yet through periods of adversity the prophet surrendered to God's sov-

ereignty, he added.

If pastors develop a spirit of surrender, he said, they will lose the "comparative mentality" and will no longer be concerned with what others have or how successful someone else may be.

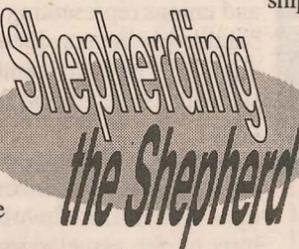
While at Willow Creek, he finally had to acknowledge Bill Hybels had superior leadership abilities, which freed him to appreciate the senior pastor.

"As we mature, God weans us of self-importance," Webster said. "We become very dangerous when we reach the point of saying, 'I don't need to survive.' Wouldn't you rather release it?"

■ *Closer intimacy with Christ.* "In the valley, God reminded me I don't do ministry; I am the ministry," Webster said. "He wants to move me to greater intimacy with Him. You know how God ... develops a leader? He often takes the long way around."

Instead of worrying about meeting the budget or starting a certain program, accept that God's timing may be different and He wants to do other things in the meantime, Webster said.

"This is the call," he concluded. "Wherever we are, there's joy in serving God. (But) there is fatigue and depression when it's all about us."



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## Conference speakers urge personal & church health

Continued from page 1

Christian ministers to experience God's comfort and healing and then impart it to others. Violate that rule, Hart said, and a church or Christian is not operating according to God's plan. "Maybe you're having fun. Maybe you're not, but you're not in God's ministry."

God specifically trusted His gospel to humans rather than angels, Hart added, because humans are best able to demonstrate its effectiveness in their own broken lives.

Hart suggested that sometimes it's God's plan for a Christian minister to experience burnout.

"God has got to bring you to the end of yourself so God can say, 'Step aside,'" Hart said. "A theology of failure recognizes that in God's kingdom there is no such thing as failure, only forced growth."

Hart said a focus on church growth

has led evangelical churches to focus on salvation to the exclusion of sanctification. Evangelical churches are good at bringing in new recruits, "but not very effective in discipling them along the kingdom highway," he said.

The result Hart said, is summed up in the illustration of the little girl who prayed to God,

"Make all the bad people good and all the good people nice."

"The church is full of good people. I don't doubt that for a moment," Hart said. "I just don't want them as neighbors, that's all."

Hart again encouraged pastors to minister out of their state of "brokenness" so that the work of God can demonstrate its power to bring healing and changed lives.

"Your very woundedness is your qualification to serve, provided God is providing the healing," Hart said. "God knows the work He is producing in you, but do you know what God is doing in you?"

*Shepherding the Shepherd*

## Kentucky pastor offers insight from 33 years

LEXINGTON—Expecting criticism, setting priorities and relying on other resources were among the suggestions a Kentucky pastor offered from his 33 years of experience in pastoral ministry.

"Ministry is a fishbowl," said Billy Compton, pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. Successes and failures are made public.

Compton combined both technical and spiritual responses to the variety of pressures pastors often feel, including:

■ **Preaching.** An increasingly media-savvy audience has higher expectations, Compton said. "The challenge to do better each week, month, year puts pressure to produce on the pastor."

Compton said he relies on preaching magazines and tapes of respected preachers to give him ideas for his sermons. "If I get one creative idea or process I can use, then I think it's worth having (the resource) on my shelf."

Spending one day every three months to schedule and plan sermons in advance can help pastors from feeling pressured, he said. Compton said he spends three hours each week planning for the worship experience, giving him time to add more creative elements to the event.

■ **Criticism.** Pastors will be criticized for a variety of reasons, some justified and some not, Compton said.

"It hurts to admit you are not universally accepted and loved because you don't get called into ministry to create conflict," he said.

Even in the best of circumstances, he said, criticism will come. "When you make the tough call, that happens sometimes."

Compton said that in addition to prayer and thanking God for opportunities to practice what he preaches, he keeps a feel-good file of positive letters he can read at needed times.

"That squeaking wheel sounds louder than all the other working three," he said.

He said he's also developed some "safe friendships" he can turn to as well as prayer partners who pray for his needs. Another healthy discovery was the realization that he could never have 100 percent of church members like him.

Compton said Philippians 4:4-8 offers a four-step plan for guarding one's heart in the face of criticism: keep perspective, decide to be gentle, trust God totally and live positively.

■ **Time expectations.** "Ministry is a 24-hour-a-day, eight-day-a-week job," he said. "There is always more to do than you can do." Pastors often face multiple expectations regarding worship, Sunday school, the budget, staff and ministry.

"Balance is key," he said. Ministers should schedule and guard time with God, their spouse, children and others. "Set some boundaries."

## I'm a partner.

I'm a deacon and Sunday school teacher. I've seen Christian education first hand, both as a student, then as a college trustee.

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## Lowery: Enjoying the ministry requires 'THANKS'

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LEXINGTON—Charles Lowery never met a joke he didn't like. During his presentation on the ABCs of enjoying ministry during last week's "Shepherding the Shepherd" conference, he reeled off such laugh-provoking lines as:

"Here's how you tell the difference between a good hotel and a bad one. In a good hotel the soap bounces and the glass breaks. In a bad hotel the glass bounces and the soap breaks."

"I'm in the empty nest stage; it took about 10 minutes to get used to that. I had three daughters. It was nice to get in the bathroom again."

One thing the humor columnist doesn't joke about is the pressures ministers face. Lowery, pastor of Hoffmantown Church in Albuquerque, N.M., thinks such pressures are increasing in today's fast-paced society.

Yet, he believes a solution can be found in Psalm 100, which talks about knowing God's goodness. Too many people get confused and try to control things only God is supposed to control, Lowery said.

Referring to Psalm 100:4 about entering God's courts with praise, he said that presents an image of someone who is joyful and in a good mood. Using the word "thanks" to illustrate the attitude pastors should have, he shared a word for each letter.

**T** is for changing the way one thinks. Proverbs says as a man thinks so is he, while Romans 12 says one should be transformed by the renewing of your mind, he noted.

He told the story of a farmer in Kansas who couldn't understand why his two sons had gone off and joined the Navy. But a psychologist pointed out a picture of a sailboat hanging in their bedroom. The boys had grown up thinking constantly about sailing.

"Think on things that are praiseworthy and of

good report," Lowery said.

**H** is for habits. It is amazing how many pastors get burdened down by their habits, he said. Noting the damage from fatty foods and cigarettes can be seen only over time, he said at first a person has habits but in the end the habits take control.

"Boundaries are good for you. A fireplace is good, but outside the boundaries it can destroy. There are certain things you better learn to control."

**A** is for appreciating what one has. In this world, bad qualities or circumstances exist in every situation, he said.

If someone went to a fine restaurant with good food, yet found a bug in his dessert he would never forget it. Every time he thought about the restaurant he would think about that bug, even though it was probably an isolated circumstance, Lowery said.

"If you're not careful, you will focus on the bugs in life," he said. "It's natural to focus on bugs. It's supernatural to focus on good things. Appreciation is a choice."

**N** is for enjoying life now. When people believe in God, they find power to carry out the difficult tasks of ministry, he said, but too many pastors get weighted down by the past.

In addition, ministers often let trivial things steal their joy, he said.

**K** is for knowing God is good. Too many Christians harbor an image of God wanting to strike them down for their mistakes, he said. But if the Lord wanted to "get you," He would have done it already, Lowery noted.

"Most Baptists feel saved but they don't feel loved," he said. "They're still trying to win (God's) acceptance. It's not your sweat; it's His blood."

**S** stands for space. Have enough space in your life so there is some time left for self and family, he advised. Otherwise the race of life will squeeze the love, thanks and joy out of a pastor.

## Stop 'all or nothing' strategies

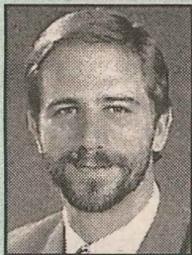
Last week marked the 27th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that established abortion on demand as a new right in American life.

Sometimes it seems there is little more to be said about abortion. We have been stuck at an uneasy cultural impasse for a quarter of a century now.

The impasse looks something like this: The basic right to abortion is now enshrined in difficult-to-overturn law; it is more readily available and more widely used than most Americans are comfortable with; but there is not broad support for the ban or near-ban on abortion sought by many activists. So the situation changes little from year to year, despite a constant tug of war between the staunch supporters and adamant opponents of legal abortion.

In a democracy, it ought to be possible to argue our way to a middle-ground position in which abortion would be restricted more than it is today but not eliminated.

### OPINION



David Gushee

A variety of options exist for reaching such a middle ground.

One could, for example, forbid abortions after the first trimester, or restrict permissible abortions to a limited number of cases (such as rape, incest and threat to the physical health of the mother), or ban certain procedures.

Along with these steps, gatekeeping measures that would have the impact of reducing the number of abortions could

be used, such as imposing a 24-hour waiting period, requiring that information about fetal development and requiring alternatives be provided, and developing parental notification and/or consent for minors. Many of these and other steps already are in place in various states, and their legitimacy was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1992.

Some opponents of legal abortion, Christian and non-Christian alike, are appalled at any approach to the abortion problem that falls short of an absolute or near-absolute ban. I share the moral passion driving this perspective. But we live in a democracy in which decisions are made by those in various branches of government who represent our entire, quite diverse population.

Groups and individuals very rarely get everything they want when they engage in the political process. We should aim high and fight doggedly for our convictions, but then be willing to take the best outcome available until the next round, when we come back to the struggle once again.

Ultimately we are dealing with a moral and spiritual problem. When the Supreme Court abolished nearly all state abortion restrictions, it went much further than most Americans desired at the time. But a powerful advocacy apparatus fought hard to consolidate the gains won with Roe v. Wade. By the time the opponents of legal abortion really got organized, the abortion license, as it is sometimes called, was deeply entrenched.

The fine Christian thinker Frederica Mathewes-Green once offered a statement about the abortion debate that has not been improved upon. She said supporters of legal abortion argued the fetus is not a baby, that abortion is good for women and that our society cannot do without it. Now, she said, advances in prenatal technology make it almost impossible to deny the full humanity of the developing child, and the testimonies of a generation of women reveal that abortion has actually led to less freedom and more heartbreak. Two of the three pillars of the case for legal abortion have fallen.

But those who oppose abortion have not yet convinced society as a whole that we can do without it. That is the next step. I continue to believe that one day we will see a sharp rollback of legal abortion in America, because it violates our most cherished constitutional and moral principles and in our national soul we know it.

David Gushee is director of the Center for Christian Leadership and associate professor of Christian studies at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

## Frankfort rally decries 'abortion assault'

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

FRANKFORT—Icy temperatures forced last week's Kentucky Rally for Life indoors, but failed to chill the resolve of hundreds of pro-life supporters from across the state.

The Jan. 27 rally, sponsored by the Kentucky Right to Life Association, marked the 27th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision that legalized most abortions in the nation. Anti-abortion advocates estimate up to 38 million infants have been aborted since the 1973 ruling.

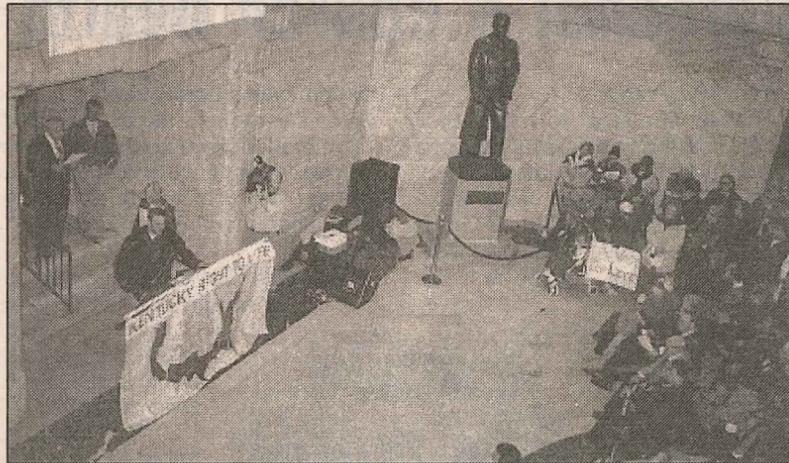
The statewide rally, originally scheduled to be held on the steps of the State Capitol in Frankfort, was moved inside where participants crowded into the Capitol Rotunda.

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was the rally's featured speaker. More than a dozen state legislators, including Speaker of the House Jody Richards (D-Dist. 20) and Senate President Pro Tem Dick Roeding (R-Dist. 11), also addressed the crowd.

Ten-year-old Emily Hurt was the rally's youngest speaker. Reading a letter she had written to President Clinton and members of Congress, she told how her mother's doctor has recommended aborting her. Citing her parents' pro-life stance, Hurt said, "I was delivered one week later at 27 weeks of age" and had heart surgery two days later.

"Would you have killed me since it took close to \$1 million to bring me home from the hospital?" her letter asked. Declaring that "abortion is murder of God's innocent children," she urged Clinton to be "courageous enough to sign a bill against abortion and to veto a bill for abortion."

Mohler described the 20th century as "one of the most murderous, barbaric and genocidal epochs in human history," including a lost generation of unborn children "slaughtered on the altar



LOVE OF LIFE Cameron Mills, former Kentucky basketball star, was among the featured speakers at last week's Kentucky Right to Life rally. He said legalized abortion "will not change unless we first love because love is what will change hearts."

of convenience."

Despite significant technological advances, he noted, "For many, the century has ended neither with a bang nor with a whimper, but with a silent scream."

Mohler spoke beneath a banner that read "End Abortion," as other rally participants waved homemade posters with such messages as "Jesus loves the little unborn children" and "When did we become God?"

Affirming activists' commitment to reverse "nearly three decades of abortion's assault upon the sanctity of human life," Mohler added, "May God be with us in this great task."

"We have elevated convenience over conviction and comfort over compassion," he said. "A nation cannot long prosper ... when it has sold its soul for personal choice."

Calling opposition to abortion "the most significant and urgent issue before our nation," Mohler urged participants to "educate, legislate, organize and agitate" in an effort to "keep this issue before the nation's conscience."

Addressing political involvement, Mohler said, "We must elect those who

are advocates for life. We must remove those who defend abortion. ... By God's grace, may we choose life."

Other rally speakers affirmed specific legislation that has been introduced this session in the Kentucky House of Representatives, including House bills 378 and 379 that address fetal personhood and fetal homicide and HB 489 that permits pharmacists to refuse to dispense abortion-inducing drugs.

Sen. Boeding described abortion as "the No. 1 evil in the land."

"If we are to save the lives of the unborn, we must overturn Roe v. Wade and reclaim the dignity and sanctity of life," he added.

Rep. Richards urged pro-life supporters to "keep involved, keep the pressure on," noting that "we will continue to do legislatively what we can to protect the rights of the unborn."

Former Kentucky basketball star Cameron Mills, director of By His Power and For His Glory ministries in Lexington, challenged listeners to reflect the love of God in their pro-life efforts.

"These laws will not change unless we first love," he said, "because love is what will change hearts."

## Thousands rally in Washington against abortion

By Shelvia Dancy  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Marking the 27th anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling that legalized most abortions, thousands of anti-abortion protesters poured into the nation's capital Jan. 24 to call for the landmark decision's reversal.

"Roe v. Wade was an unforgivable decision made a long time ago," said John Sandhaas of Long Island, N.Y., who said he has attended nearly every March for Life since the protests began in 1974. "Abortion has to be overturned—it's just too horrendous a thing. A whole generation of children has been lost."

As marchers threaded their way from the Ellipse to the Capitol and Supreme Court, they held aloft posters of aborted fetuses as well as banners asking "What if Jesus' mother had an abortion?" Some cradled babies and toddlers in their arms.

"Society needs to recognize everyone has the right to live," said Matt Matthews of Delaware, who was ac-

companied by his wife and 10 children. "Our children need our protection." He said he and his wife had been advised to consider aborting their youngest child, 2-year-old Miriam, after in utero tests revealed she had Down syndrome.

Event organizers called on protesters to champion the movement to end legal abortion as "a human rights issue, not a political issue."

"The purpose of our coming into Washington every year is to get action on Capitol Hill to overturn Roe v. Wade," said Nellie Gray, who heads the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. "This is not a political rally. We are here today to think of babies and how we can get legislation passed to save them."

The anti-abortion protest comes as the Supreme Court prepares to consider two key court cases involving abortion. In April, the court will review the rights of anti-abortion protesters outside clinics and review Nebraska's ban on a controversial late-term abortion procedure known as "partial-birth" abortion.

"This year we have an opportunity for the Supreme Court to take a step in

the right direction," said Rep. Todd Tiahrt, R-Kansas. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if instead of a step away from human life, the court took a step toward protecting human life?"

House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, pledged to reintroduce legislation to make it a federal crime to use the controversial abortion procedure.

"I marvel at the people who fight for prenatal care from the moment of conception and then believe it's not a child until the third trimester," he said. "Ladies and gentlemen, that is a baby, one of God's creatures. I am committed to passing legislation this year to stop partial-birth abortion procedures. I am committed to protecting the unborn child from violence. This fight will never end until we end this awful practice of killing God's children."

Other speakers criticized presidential candidates for not tackling the issue.

"The candidates are afraid to speak out about it," said Bonnie Carroll of Charles Town, W.Va. "Abortion is a very divisive issue, and politicians are trying to play it safe."

# TRENDS

## Do you know where your next pastor will be trained?

By Pat Cole  
Associated Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—Theological education in America, once largely the purview of classical seminaries, is taking on new forms and new life.

Propelled by the shifting winds of culture and congregational life, a quiet revolution is taking place in ministerial training. At issue: who is learning, what is taught and how and where that education is delivered.

For the churches that will employ these ministers in coming decades, the changes will affect not only the quality of leadership they receive but what those congregations believe and how they relate to the world.

In a nutshell, here's what's happening:

- Students now face a proliferation of options. New schools are opening. Specialized degrees are cropping up, including many for laypeople.

- Training is taking place in non-traditional venues, such as megachurches, making training more accessible.

- User-friendly techniques, such as online classes and satellite seminars, are creeping into curricula.

- The profile of the typical seminary student is changing—in part the cause and in part the effect of these new options. Students are older, as more pursue the ministry as a second career, and more laypeople are studying theology.

- There is a new emphasis on leadership skills to go along with the classical theological disciplines.

- Partnerships between seminaries and churches are springing up, making theological training more practical and accessible.

Despite these changes—and in some cases because of them—seminaries have continued to grow in recent years.

Seminary enrollment grew by nearly 6 percent in the last five years and stood at 68,875 in the fall of 1998, says Nancy Merrill, a spokesman for the

Association of Theological Schools.

One major factor in the increase is the jump in laypeople seeking theological training. Degree programs for laypeople are being added by all sorts of schools, Merrill says. "Laypeople are taking (the new degrees) for personal development or because of an academic interest in theology."

This trend produces an unusual turning of the tables: At a time when some ministers are choosing local churches over seminaries for training, some laypeople are going to seminary for the in-depth education not available at most churches.

Critics say seminaries suffer from two common shortcomings:

First, pragmatic church-growth advocates, after witnessing the remarkable growth of megachurches, say seminaries fail to teach ministers how to lead congregations and interpret culture.

Second, many Christians say classical seminary training is too beholden to systematic and rationalistic thinking, both products of the Enlightenment. Such dependence, they argue, leaves little room for the awe and mystery that ancient Christians valued and for which postmodern people yearn.

For both reasons, some aspiring ministers now skip seminary and seek training through churches, professional groups and even secular universities.

Dave Travis, a Leadership Network consultant, said the formal educational background of pastors is not a concern for many congregations. "There is a growing number of churches that see a seminary education as irrelevant to whether they call somebody as pastor or a staff member," he says.

Traditional theological education has been in transition since the 1960s, observes Bill Leonard, dean of Wake Forest University's divinity school. Part of the transition has been driven by the inclusion of pastoral care and other practical disciplines into curricula, he says. "You have to ask, how large is this transition?"

Meanwhile, studies have shown pastors feel inadequately trained for today's ministry realities, says Carol Childress, a researcher for Leadership Network.

"At the five-year point, seminary grads understand that the subjects they were taught in seminary, while valuable for creating sermons, exegeting Scripture and so forth, have not equipped them to deal with leadership and the other issues facing pastors," she notes.

A focus on practical teaching attracted 65,000 ministers and laypeople to training events offered in 1999 by Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif., says Andrew Accardy, Saddleback's director of church leader training.

Accardy says the church has never considered its events to be in competition with seminaries. "We support seminaries, but there is some information you get directly from a church, a church that God appears to be blessing, that tends to create some energy," says Accardy. "It tends to be viewed more as something that can be used."

Yet ministry cannot be reduced to a set of skills such as preaching, leadership and conflict management, says Wayne Stacy, dean of Gardner-Webb University's divinity school in North Carolina.

"While all of those things are important, ministry is fundamentally about calling, and without a solid theological substructure, then all of our skills simply become a bag of tricks," Stacy says.

Stacy speculates that theological education may become church-based in the same sense that medical education is hospital-based.

"Schools like ours could partner with congregations and supply faculty and students," he explains. "What will happen is that a divinity school will be a home base. It will coordinate activities and do quality control."

*This article and sidebar previously appeared in the January-February issue of FaithWorks, a Christian lifestyle magazine published by Associated Baptist Press*

### The digital classroom

By Marshall Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (ABP)—As the tides of culture and communication turn to the Internet, many seminaries are exploring online education.

Using Internet technology, students from all across the country can learn in a virtual classroom, reducing the need for a centralized training location. Few seminaries are using cyberspace to teach their students, yet. But a handful are cutting a trail that others likely will follow.

The "distributive learning" program at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., is in its fifth year and has 170 students enrolled. Bethel offers a master of divinity degree—and is introducing two new master's degrees—in which students can go to seminary without having to leave their current vocations. Students complete their degree through intensive courses on campus, interactive distance courses and participation in ministry.

Other schools—like Asbury Theological Seminary in Lexington and Fuller and Golden Gate seminaries, both in California—are dabbling in online learning.

Fuller Seminary recently finished its first quarter of online courses. The program is mostly text based at this point, but it is in its infancy, explained Dave McMartin, Fuller's director of distance learning. "It's experimental to us, but I think that the trends will be that we'll see more seminaries and colleges who will offer degrees (online) because that's what students are asking for."

As technology expands, so will online education. The educational architects at Bethel look forward to using streamed video, where they can actually communicate face-to-face, even across thousands of miles. But for now, the technology used in these classes requires nothing more than a Pentium-based computer and a 28.8 modem.

Neither Fuller nor Bethel proponents of online education contend that the Internet will ever totally replace traditional classroom instruction. But it provides an option for many students who are in need of quality training, they said.

"We are presenting timeless truth in a timely methodology," said Greg Bourgon, Bethel's dean of instructional technology. "Seminaries need to find out where the culture is moving, and design programs to produce leaders who can minister effectively to the culture."

## Rick Warren uses 'Purpose-Driven' book royalties to establish pastors' Web site

By Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

FOOTHILL RANCH, Calif. (ABP)—The local ministerial association is going global via a new high-tech ministry tool being promoted by California Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren.

There is nothing new about pastors and other ministers gathering in various settings to swap ideas, interact and learn from and help each other. Warren and his wife, Kay, hope to replicate that kind of community in cyberspace with a new Internet site named [www.pastors.com](http://www.pastors.com).

Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif., said he and his wife have been praying about how to use royalties from his book "The Purpose-Driven Church," which has sold a million copies in 14 languages.

They decided to use the money to build a site on the World Wide Web to provide free electronic mail and other Internet services to pastors and church leaders

everywhere, he said.

"God blessed us through the publication of 'The Purpose-Driven Church' book," Warren said, "and we felt compelled to give back to the pastors I dedicated the book to."

Among features is free e-mail for church leaders. Ministers can receive e-mail by their name "@pastors.com," instead of a cryptic user name assigned by an Internet service provider or a domain name such as "Yahoo." The address doesn't change when a pastor moves to another state and can be used from anywhere. E-mail can also be encrypted for use by missionaries serving in areas where security is a concern.

Pastors.com also offers clergy chat rooms and bulletin boards, placement notices and a daily devotional. Soon it will offer a church-to-church auction like the popular E-Bay, news and information and on-line stewardship consulting, Warren said.

The Warrens said Pastors.com will

especially help pastors of small churches, who otherwise might be left behind by the Internet revolution.

"Rick and I both grew up in pastor's homes so we really care about pastors and their families, especially those in smaller churches," said Mrs. Warren. "We want to encourage them and help them any way we can. Now God has made it possible for us to do this."

The Internet site is the latest evolution of Warren's 20-year-old tape ministry, The Encouraging Word. Sermons at Saddleback are made available to American pastors at a modest cost, Warren said, and proceeds are used to send them to pastors overseas for free. Millions of tapes have been distributed, he said.

In the last decade, as more churches began adopting Warren's "purpose-driven" church model, the ministry expanded to selling curriculum and other resources. Last year, the ministry branched into offering Internet services, and the name

was changed to Pastors.com.

So far, it has spread by word of mouth and is attracting an average of 50,000 to 70,000 visitors a day, Warren said, and hit a record high of 143,000 on Dec. 8. The site has not been advertised, but Warren recently sent an e-mail announcing the service to contacts around the country.

"I feel God has put two callings on my life," Warren said. "First is to pastor Saddleback, where we are continually experimenting with better ways to reach and minister to people. Second is to serve pastors and church planters and do everything I can to support them."

The Warrens started Saddleback Valley Community Church in their home with one family in January 1980. Today, it is reportedly the second-largest attended church in the United States, with 14,000 people each weekend, and has been the fastest-growing church in America the last three years. It has been recognized as the fastest-growing Baptist congregation in American history.

## Supreme Court hears abortion clinic 'sidewalk counseling' case

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments last month over what limits might be placed on the free-speech rights of demonstrators who offer "sidewalk counseling" outside abortion clinics.

The case centers around a Colorado law requiring protesters to keep at least 8 feet away from people entering health-care clinics unless someone agrees to closer contact to take a leaflet or talk.

Justice Antonin Scalia challenged Colorado Solicitor General Michael McLachlan when he argued the law was written in a neutral way.

"I think we know what it's aimed at, which is abortion protesters," said Scalia, who added that counseling someone to consider the results of abortion is "a totally different entity when you do it from eight feet away."

Attorney Jay Sekulow, representing three protesters, asked the justices to reverse a Colorado Supreme Court ruling upholding the law.

"You certainly can convey anything you want to convey orally from a distance of eight feet," Justice Sandra Day O'Connor told Sekulow. If someone wants to take a leaflet, "they can and will, and it would be the same if it were one foot or eight feet," she added.

Sekulow argued that the law "makes the peaceful distribution of a leaflet, the display of a sign ... a crime if prior consent is not obtained." Associated Press reported.

Eighteen states are supporting Colorado. The demonstrators are backed by such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union and the AFL-CIO.

The ACLU's brief said protecting women's right to seek medical treatment is a significant goal, but group members believe the law goes too far by preventing speech—such as passing out a leaflet—that would not prevent someone from entering or leaving a clinic.

## Do Christian campuses affect adult students?

By Shelvia Dancy  
Religion News Service

AKRON, Ohio (RNS)—Could Christian colleges be selling out when it comes to recruiting adult students?

A recent study of 16 schools found that faith-based colleges are increasingly successful in attracting adult students, but less successful at influencing their religious behavior.

"The good news is that the non-traditional students we talked to were very happy with their programs—some said it helped them with their spiritual development and ethics and values," said John Green, who designed and conducted the survey. Green is director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron (Ohio). "But most said the schools were not particularly effective at influencing their behavior—few reported any change at all in their religious behavior."

The report, conducted jointly by the University of Akron Survey Research Center and the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University, surveyed 1,600 college graduates, between fall 1998 and winter 1999. The students were graduates of adult bachelor's degree programs at 16 colleges and universities—four Roman Catholic, four Protestant and eight secular.

Many respondents who attended Christian schools reported they were unaware they had attended a reli-

gious institution. They also said religious ideas were not emphasized in their school's curriculum.

"These students come to school at night and mostly associate with other nontraditional students, and the programs don't communicate very effectively the distinctive religious mission of these schools to them," Green said. "Go on campus during the day and there's a lot of effort to communicate the religious message of the school to the younger kids."

He said many nontraditional students already have formed religious and spiritual views by the time they enroll in a bachelor's degree program, and that could partly explain the survey's findings. "While they enjoy the religious elements of the program, there may not be much room for the program in their lives."

And in some cases, Green said, the schools themselves may downplay their religious mission.

"In many schools the programs for nontraditional students are money-makers," Green said. "They generate additional revenue which the schools need, so it may well be the schools are not stressing a distinctive religious mission because they're interested in having a larger number of people sign up for their programs."

Diane Winston, who commissioned the study, said faith-based schools should make a priority of extending their religious mission into adult degree programs.

"If schools don't find a better way to integrate their core commitments into their adult programs, they will find that these valuable money-makers are contributing to secularization on campus," said Winston, a fellow at the Princeton Center for the Study of Religion. "Most adult students do not want to be hit over the head with religion, but they are willing to consider a religious perspective on issues and events."

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dence in the charitable organizations and causes we are asked to support, the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel has declared the rights of all donors. Here is the list:

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- To have access to the most re-

cent financial statements.

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

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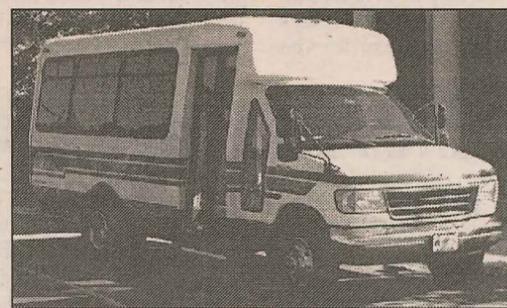
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## Southern Gospel's Rex Nelon dead at 68

LONDON (BP)—Rex Nelon, 68, one of the most respected men in Southern Gospel music, died suddenly Jan. 23 after suffering a heart attack.

Nelon was in London to record music for the Gaither Homecoming Tour.

Nelon, a member of First Baptist Church of Vinings, in Smyrna, Ga., began his professional music career in the 1950s with the Homeland Harmony Quartet.

He later joined The LeFevres, serving as the group's bass singer for 20 years. Nelon eventually bought The LeFevres and changed the name of the group to The Rex Nelon Singers.

Even after he retired from the group, Nelon continued to travel as a regular member of the Gaither Homecoming Friends tours. He also was involved in publishing music. He owned LeFevre-Sing Music, Rex Nelon Music, Goss Brothers Music and Stoker Music.

He was a board member for the National Quartet Convention and was active in the gospel music industry.

Nelon is survived by his wife, Judy, who lives in Nashville; son, Todd; daughter, Kelly; and several grandchildren.

## McKeehan of dc Talk leads Dove nominees

NASHVILLE (RNS)—For the second year in a row, dc Talk's Toby McKeehan has received the most nominations for the Gospel Music Association's annual Dove Awards.

McKeehan was nominated for 10 awards, GMA officials announced Jan. 26 at a news conference in Nashville.

The 31st annual awards presentation will be held April 20 at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville. It will be broadcast in syndication, with many major network affiliates and independent stations planning to air it during the weekend of Easter, April 23.

Several of McKeehan's nominations were related to his membership in the Christian rock trio. The group's hit song "Consume Me" was among those nominated for Song of the Year and "Supernatural" was nominated for Rock Recorded Song of the Year.

Also at the announcements, "I Will Follow Christ," was listed among the nominees for Song of the Year.

The nomination is of note to Southern Baptists because the song is the

theme for the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program's "Partners in the Harvest" campaign.

Christian artist Clay Crosse, a Southern Baptist, co-wrote the song with Steve Siler. The video used to promote Partners in the Harvest featured a performance of "I Will Follow Christ" with Crosse, Bob Carlisle and BeBe Winans.

Not far behind McKeehan for most nominations was singer/songwriter Steven Curtis Chapman, who collected nine nominations, including Artist of the Year and Male Vocalist of the Year.

Michael W. Smith, who won Artist of the Year in 1999, received eight nominations. Fred Hammond, a pioneer of urban praise and worship, earned seven nominations in contemporary and traditional gospel categories. Gospel music star Kirk Franklin garnered six nominations.

Nominations include:  
**Artist of the Year:** Avalon, Steven Curtis Chapman, Point of Grace, Sixpence None the Richer, Michael W. Smith.

**Female Vocalist of the Year:** Jennifer Knapp, Leigh Nash, Nichole Nordeman, Kathy Troccoli, Jaci Velasquez.

**Group of the Year:** Audio Adrenaline, Avalon, the Cathedrals, Point of Grace, Sixpence None the Richer, Third Day.

**Male Vocalist of the Year:** Steven Curtis Chapman, Fred Hammond, Fernando Ortega, Chris Rice, Michael W. Smith.

**New Artist of the Year:** FFH, Ginny Owens, Raze, SonicFlood, Watermark.

**Song of the Year:** "Basic Instructions," "Can't Live a Day," "Choose Life," "Consume Me," "Dive," "I Will Follow Christ," "I've Always Loved You," "Jesus King of Angels," "The Only Thing I Need," "This Is Your Time."

**Songwriter of the Year:** Brent Bourgeois, Cindy Morgan, Fernando Ortega, Michael W. Smith, Darlene Zschech.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

"I Will Follow Christ," the theme song for the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program's "Partners in the Harvest" campaign, was nominated for Song of the Year.

## CenturyMen garner group's first Grammy nomination

NEW YORK (BP)—For the first time in its 30-year history, The CenturyMen, a 100-member men's chorus of Southern Baptist musicians, has been nominated for a Grammy Award by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

The group's most recent recording, "Beautiful Star—A Celebration of Christmas," is one of six nominees in the category of best classical crossover

album. The winner will be announced Feb. 23 at the 42nd annual Grammy Awards, to be broadcast on CBS.

"This is a real honor," said Buryl Red, The CenturyMen's musical director. "I was real pleased when our recording was placed in the category of classical crossover. I was happy that people perceived it that way."

"We see our work as a way to communicate the message of Christ with the

secular world," he explained. "I feel like our music can communicate beyond the musical language of the church."

Founded in 1969, The CenturyMen is comprised of more than 100 men, each a director of music from a Baptist church, representing 22 states and two foreign countries. The group has performed across the world, including the People's Republic of China, Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic.

## Founder's Day

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College celebrated its Founder's Day Jan. 17. The event inaugurated our 111th year of providing quality education immersed in Christian values to the people of our area and far beyond.

Our guest speaker for the special event was William Augustus

Jones Jr., pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y. Jones is a native of Lexington and the son and grandson of Baptist ministers. He is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and Crozer Theological Seminary and earned his doctorate from Colgate Rochester Divinity School. He has studied

further at the University of Lagos in Nigeria and the University of Ghana of Legon.

Jones' first pastorate was First Baptist Church of Paschal in metropolitan Philadelphia, where he served from 1959-1962. Since 1962, he has served as pastor of Bethany Baptist, leading his congregation in constructing a beautiful Neo-Gothic building which was completed in 1967. Currently he leads a multi-faceted program and supervises a full-time staff of 27 people.

Cumberland College honored

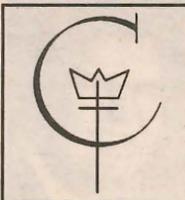
Jones with the doctor of laws degree in recognition of his leadership and service in the causes of human rights and economic justice. After receiving his honorary degree, Jones reminded us of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and challenged us to put our Christian faith into action.

Benny Williams provided special music for the program. Williams has served as pastor of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church in Louisville for the past 20 years while also working at LifeWay Christian Store in Louisville. His vocal and keyboard skills blessed and inspired all in attendance.

We at Cumberland College enjoy the opportunity to celebrate our heritage. Many dedicated people have worked through the years to make Cumberland College the excellent college it is. We appreciate their work and pledge to make Cumberland College an even greater Christian institution.

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

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## Developments may affect ministers' retirement plans

DALLAS (BP)—Two important developments concerning Social Security will affect how ministers plan for retirement, according to a spokesman for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board.

First, Congress enacted legislation in 1999 that would permit ministers who chose to exempt themselves from Social Security to opt back into the program as of Jan. 1, 2000, through April 15, 2002.

"Many ministers who revoked their exemption from the Social Security program would like to rejoin the program because of the disability and survivor benefits and Medicare coverage provided through Social Security," said Jim Morrison, Annuity Board managing director for retirement services.

"In the past, they were unable to rejoin the program since a decision to opt out of Social Security was irrevocable. We encourage all ministers who opted out to seriously consider this window of opportunity to participate in the Social Security program. The opportunity may not be available again," Morrison said.

The new law states that ministers can revoke an exemption from Social Security as of Jan. 1, 2000, and they may do so up to the April 15, 2002, deadline. "However, when revoking an exemption, a minister must choose to begin paying self-employment taxes as of Jan. 1, 2000 or Jan. 1, 2001," said ministerial tax expert Richard Hammar.

Hammar recommends that ministers who decide to revoke their exemption should minimize the financial impact of the decision by "opting in" during the first quarter of either 2000 or 2001.

Revoking the exemption means ministers must pay all self-employment taxes back to the beginning of the year.

"Many ministers who opted out of Social Security may have failed to understand some of the benefits available through the program, such as disability and survivor benefits, as well as Medicare coverage. Medicare medical insurance is optional under the program, but the cost is generally far less than coverage available from other providers," Hammar states in the "Ministers Tax Guide for 1999 Returns" published by the Annuity Board. The new annual tax guide is available on the Annuity Board's Internet site, [www.absbc.org](http://www.absbc.org).

The second Social Security development comes in the form of a direct mail effort. Beginning last October, the Social Security Administration began mailing out annual benefit updates to about 125 million U.S. workers.

"These statements are a valuable piece of information that the Annuity Board can use to assist our participants in planning for retirement," Morrison said.

The benefit statements also include another critical piece of information: how old an individual needs to be to collect full retirement benefits from Social Security.

Most workers assume that full Social Security benefits are available at 65; but this age is moving up gradually.

"While you can sign up to receive benefits early, you may need to reconsider," Morrison said. "Retiring before you qualify for the full amount means an individual's benefits could be reduced by up to 30 percent."

## F's, D's, C's, B's, A's

Funny title, isn't it? I have been pondering how to present this and the next two columns. I am so excited about the contents and implications of these articles, I must be careful not to boast or exaggerate. Lord, I need a little humility just now.

Regular readers of this column know that we strive to honor students who have excelled academically and in other areas. With nearly 50 percent of our students making failing or very low grades when they enroll, we understandably get excited when those students make academic improvement.

We saw a lot of progress the first quarter of this school year when 42 percent of our students were on the A or B honor roll. Since nearly half of our students enroll with failing grades, earning honor roll status requires dedication from our faculty and students.

People sometimes ask how our grading scale compares to other schools, both private and public. I am not sure there is any way of making an absolute comparison. The purpose of this and the following two articles is not to say we have a higher grading scale than other schools, or to say our students are smarter. But I do want to add some credibility to our students who have earned honor roll status, especially those who are on the honor roll for the first time at Oneida.

There was an article in the Lexington Herald Leader in 1999 titled, "Doling out A's." The article included a report given by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority. In that report, it was stated, "One in six Kentucky high school seniors has a 4.0 grade-point average. Straight A's..." I do not question the validity of that report, nor am I in any way challenging those grades. But I

don't believe we are guilty of "doling out A's" since our valedictorian, a student who has gone to school here all of her middle school and high school years, has only a 3.9 GPA. The salutatorian, who has been here all of his high school years, has only a 3.8 GPA.

It would seem to me that if we were just "doling out" grades, the two brightest students in our school surely would have 4.0's, but they don't. So, as I share some stories this week and the next

two weeks of students who are on the honor roll for the very first time, I am simply saying that a large percentage of our students were doing very poorly academically when they enrolled at Oneida. With a lot of hard work, tutoring, patience and extra help from their teachers, many of our students have earned honor roll status.

I hope you get as excited reading about these first-time honor roll successes as we did. The first young woman I want to tell about is Abby, who enrolled for summer school in 1999 as a sophomore. Abby had struggled academically her freshman and sophomore years. Her report card before coming to Oneida had mostly D's and C's. Abby had been losing interest in school, and her low grades were a partial reflection of that situation. Abby, now a junior, told us when she enrolled that one of her priorities was to make better grades. With the extra effort she put forth and the extra help we were able to give her, Abby made the B honor roll for the first time during the second quarter.

Look for part 2 next week.

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

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

'Come, let us worship...'

— Psalm 95:6



## 4th Annual Community Hymn Sing

Tuesday, February 8 • 7:30 p.m. • Alumni Chapel



The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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## Student team prepares for Tanzania mission

"I am so excited about going to Tanzania and what the Lord will do with our team." This comment expressed the feelings of the group that recently met to pray for the June 14-28 mission trip to Morogoro, Tanzania.

The invitation is part of the KBC/Tanzania Partnership in cooperation with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. I will accompany eight students to work with Clear Creek alumni, missionaries Charles and Carolyn Dixon.

The mission emphasis of our curriculum enables students to secure two hours of academic credit for this mission practicum. Only one of the students has previous international missions involvement.

I am still influenced by my experience as a student missionary to the Philippines, and realize this can be a life-changing encounter for team members.

The team expects to show the "Jesus" video in three or four locations, do door-to-door visitation in town and nearby villages, teach leadership and discipleship seminars, pour cement and finish the floor for the first building of the new Baptist Christian elementary school. Team members will divide up and lead worship services in three churches on

the two Sundays we are in the country.

The first KBC/Tanzania partnership volunteers went last October and included 1999 alumnus Steve Mayle, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jenkins. In the Ifakara area, highly influenced by Islam, the volunteers saw approximately 1,000 people make first-time decisions for Christ and three new preaching points/churches established. One volunteer said, "We've experienced the book of Acts here."

During the remainder of this semester, our team will meet for prayer each Tuesday at 4 p.m. At that time or whenever you pray, remember the team in prayer: Melanie Burdette, Randy Burns, Delia Burns, Mike Hamby, Todd Hatfield, Forrest Hearn, Terry King, Brad

Watson and myself. Our prayers are focused on these needs: personal holiness, salvation for people in Morogoro, useful service in support of the mission goals, KBC partnership staff and the Dixons, health and safety for the team and watchcare over family members while we are away, and adequate funds for expenses.

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

# PEOPLE

## Hoops star, now coach, keeps focus on more than wins

By John Pierce  
*Georgia Christian Index*

ATLANTA (BP)—Former basketball star Mark Price has picked up a lot of titles since leaving Enid, Okla., in 1982 for Georgia Tech and then the NBA—three-time all-ACC, four-time NBA all-star and Olympic Dream Team II gold medalist.

But he recently added another—"Coach Price."

"I've always enjoyed Tech and Coach (Bobby) Cremins," said Price of his return to the program he helped raise to its first ACC championship in 1985 against some of the finest basketball teams in the nation.

But the Ramblin' Wreck team was not where the talented point guard expected to play in college.

"I was not really planning to go that far from home," Price recalled. But he felt an obligation to at least make a casual visit since Cremins and his then-assistant coach, George Felton, "had come all the way to Enid, Okla.,

17 times."

"It was amazing," Price said of the way the team went from "last place my freshman year to ACC champions two years later." And anyone familiar with that 1985 championship team knows the vital role Price played in its success.

Price, in his usual humble manner, said he was a "latecomer" not heavily recruited by the top programs in the nation. And, to be sure, the basketball team at Tech seemed like a long way from the top when Price came on campus.

"I believed in Coach Cremins and his desire to build this program," said Price who served as team captain from 1984-86 and had his jersey retired in 1986.

In the same way Price's talents were underestimated by college recruiters, so were the expectations for him as a professional. But after 12 years in the NBA, nine with the Cleveland Cavaliers, Price can look back with gratitude on his success.

"The Lord blessed me beyond what I could have ever imagined," he said, reflecting on his years in the NBA. "Obviously, I'd like to take away the injuries," he said. "But I try to remember the good things."

And there is much good to remember for the talented ball handler and three-point shooter, who was selected among the best players in the world for Dream Team II.

Throughout both his collegiate and professional careers Price was known for his strong Christian values and integrity. And even in an environment like the NBA, he was not distracted from his deep commitment.

"You really have to make an effort to spend time with the Lord," he said of the demanding travel during basketball season that makes church involvement and personal devotion more difficult. And Christian players "need accountability" to make the right decisions when faced with the temptations so available to pro athletes.

"I could probably still be playing

now," said Price, who ended his career after injury. "But I've got four kids now and (the NBA) is not real family-oriented. The travel is hard."

Back in Atlanta, Price and his wife, Laura, are enjoying a more normal lifestyle for themselves and their four children. They are members of Victory in Jesus Baptist Church in Duluth, Ga., where Price volunteers as music director.

But back over in Tech's Alexander Coliseum, the player who helped raise a team to national prominence will be trying to do so once again, but in a new role—one he has learned to appreciate even more recently.

"There's a lot more to (coaching) than rolling the ball out there and putting guys in the right places," Price said. The pressure to win at a major college basketball program is not unlike that in the NBA, he said.

But winning is not all Price wants the players to know. "I hope I can encourage these kids so they will know that I value them as God values them."

**"I hope I can encourage these kids so they will know that I value them as God values them."**

*Former Cleveland Cavalier Mark Price*

## Falwell suing FBI and White House

WASHINGTON (RNS)—In a lawsuit filed against the White House and the FBI, Jerry Falwell claims he was denied access to information about him contained in a "secret" Justice Department database about religious and anti-abortion leaders.

In the lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Falwell claims the information about him is used for smear tactics.

He said he tried to use the Freedom of Information Act to gain access to the database last summer after learning of its existence from the conservative Washington group Judicial Watch.

Falwell contends that restricting his access to the information about him violates the Privacy Act, which declares the government cannot keep a file on an individual without a lawful reason.

But that's not necessarily the case, according to Meredith Cabe, an associate counsel to President Clinton, Associated Press reported last week.

"FOIA does not establish a statutory right to the records Dr. Falwell has requested from the White House, if such records exist," she wrote in a letter responding to Falwell's request.

According to the FBI, no information relating to Falwell's request was found in a search of the agency's automated records—which date back to 1958.

Falwell's lawsuit also was filed on behalf of several organizations he established or is connected with, including Liberty University, the Moral Majority and the Old-Time Gospel Hour.

## Memorials are spawning a new kind of road rage

SALEM, Ore. (RNS)—An ideological battle is heating up in Oregon between supporters and critics of roadside memorials for victims of automobile accidents.

While Christians have placed religious memorials at the side of public roads to honor those who have died, some activists have begun posting signs with black crosses and a red slash through them.

There have been disputes across the country about whether crosses and other memorials are appropriate at accident sites. Some states have passed laws either allowing them or prohibiting them.

In Oregon, transportation workers recently started removing religious memorials after people complained that they did not belong on public property.

Oregon Republican state Sen. Marilyn Shannon has kicked off a campaign to declare the legality of religious me-

morials, and the transportation committee of the legislature is considering developing a bill to make them legal.

Opponents of religious memorials left one of the placards bearing a black cross on Shannon's lawn. It includes the anti-Christ "666" mark painted in red.

"You know what I think? I think they are in the minority, and this is a temper tantrum," responded Shannon. "I knew all along that this was about the atheists not wanting to see crosses on a public right of way."

State workers also are removing the anonymous placards that oppose the religious memorials.

The identity of those posting the black cross placards remains a mystery.

In an unsigned letter to the Statesman-Journal newspaper of Salem, someone wrote that dozens of the signs were mounted to protest the religious memorials. "In order to sleep at night,

we had to do our part in the battle," the note stated. "We truly hope wisdom will prevail."

Supporters of religious memorials said they are offended by the placards placed by opponents.

"It's pretty sick that it could turn into something like this," said Jeremy Haddock, the survivor of a traffic accident in which his two best friends were killed about two years ago.

"I put up a cross not just because I'm Christian, but because it is a universal symbol for what I feel," he said.

Dave Fidanque of the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon said the state will have to permit placards posted by atheists on the state's roadsides if it opts to permit religious memorials.

"Once you open the door, you open the door to all kinds of memorials," he said. "You might not be very happy with what happens down the road."

## National Baptist president pushing convention toward reforms

By Adelle Banks  
*Religion News Service*

NASHVILLE (RNS)—Four months after assuming leadership of the scandal-plagued National Baptist Convention, USA, William Shaw says he is pushing the denomination toward the reforms and accountability he pledged in his presidential campaign.

Shaw, 66, presided at the denomination's midwinter meeting Jan. 18-20 in Nashville, a session where about 3,500 NBCUSA members met and enacted new restructuring and accounting procedures.

He was officially installed as president during the meeting, but his position became effective in September when he was elected to a five-year term.

Shaw succeeded Henry J. Lyons, who was sent to prison last year after being found guilty of swindling millions of dollars from corporations wanting to market products to members of the denomination.

Lyons, who also was found guilty of

stealing money intended for burned black churches, is serving concurrent state and federal sentences in Florida.

"The possibilities for the convention to move ... to another level in its own life are present psychologically and spiritually," Shaw said in an interview. "I think there's a real good spirit within the convention."

Asked whether he feels the weight of responsibility to rebuild the NBCUSA's credibility, he said, "I recognize the weight but, at this point, I don't feel it."

Shaw ran on a campaign with the acronym VISA, which stands for vision, integrity, structure and accountability. At the midwinter meeting, decisions were made to hire accounting and consulting firms to restructure fiscal operations and other procedures within the denomination.

Shaw decided to make his goal for accountability personal by forgoing the president's annual salary of \$100,000 and instead using it throughout his term to endow a scholarship fund.

"I wanted to set another tone for why people become involved and to remove myself from any question of involvement for money's sake," Shaw said.

Although major decisions were enacted at the recent meeting, Shaw said he began his work toward restructuring as soon as he was elected president.

He initiated a 30-day freeze on spending to determine financial priorities and called for a 40-day period of prayer and fasting.

"It was to really signal and call for a time of personal purging and openness to the Spirit of God," said Shaw, who said he abstained from food during the day and ate evening meals during the period.

In September, he also appointed a statistician to determine the total membership of the denomination, which has been in question since the time of Lyons' state trial. Prosecutors charged the actual membership was far smaller than the 8.5-million-member figure denominational officials have claimed.

# 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:

■ Shep and Amanda Bevis, who serve as church planter interns at Garrison Baptist Church in Dover, N.H. He is a student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

■ Semester missionary Jason Ward of Texas, who is working on the staff of the Baptist Convention of New England in Northborough, Mass., in computer services.

■ As Baptist representatives Doug and Marcy Shaw prepare to leave Poland on stateside assignment, they ask for prayer for replacement workers with children, youth and music.

■ Missionary journeymen Amy Alexander and Jonna VanDieren as they work on publications for the Makhuwa people group of Tanzania and Mozambique.

■ Give thanks for a new preaching point in Kiberege, Tanzania, that is a result of the "Jesus" film in the nearby town of Sabasaba.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **ASHLAND**—Bill Messer, pastor of First Church, resigned to accept the pastorate of First Church of Irmo, S.C.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—First Church held a note-burning ceremony to commemorate paying off a \$2 million debt to rebuild its building after a 1991 fire. Mark Hopper is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Green River Memorial Church called Brent Gupton as pastor.

Meadowview Church celebrated pastor Gene Hall's 40th year in ministry. The church also held a note-burning to commemorate paying for its new building and payment toward a new bus.

■ **CROMWELL**—Green River Church called Kelly Harris as pastor.

■ **CURDSVILLE**—Curdsville Church called Randall Hurt as pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—A scholarship fund has been established in memory of Matthew White, son of Brenda and Henry White, pastor of Younger's Creek Church. He died Dec. 17 in an automobile accident. The

scholarship will support Hardin County student-athletes attending Georgetown College. Contributions may be mailed to Matthew White Scholarship Fund, c/o Republic Bank & Trust Co., Box 769, Elizabethtown, KY 42702.

■ **ELK HORN**—Raikes Hill Church called Robert Stotts as pastor.

■ **GILBERTSVILLE**—Gilbertsville Church called Deward Hurst as interim pastor.

■ **GREENSBURG**—New Hope Church called Terry Edwards as pastor.

Scott Carpenter resigned as pastor of Pleasant Valley Church.

■ **HAZARD**—First Church called Alan Dodson as pastor. Dodson was previously pastor of Bethany Church, Somerset.

■ **LEITCHFIELD**—First Church will host Charita Gresham in concert Feb. 6 at 6 p.m. George Smith is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Immanuel Church will host a seminar for single adults Feb. 11-12. For information, call (606)



**NEW SANCTUARY** East Barbourville Baptist Church recently dedicated its new sanctuary. The 398-seat auditorium has more than 6,000 square feet. It was built in six months with the help of volunteers from Sulphur Fork Baptist Association in LaGrange, said Pastor James Vandy. "During that six months period, there were 15 new additions to the church, thanks to the godly influence the builders had on our people," he said. East Barbourville Baptist's former auditorium was converted into a fellowship hall.

266-3174.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Carlisle Avenue Church called Shawn Merithew as its 14th pastor. Merithew previously served as youth minister.

Lyndon Church will host Centerfield Church's praise group featuring Melanie Devore Feb. 6 at 6 p.m.

■ **MANCHESTER**—Pleasant Run called Louie Graves as pastor.

■ **SCIENCE HILL**—Northside

Church called Mark Perko from Columbia, Tenn., as pastor. He began Jan. 16.

■ **SOMERSET**—Doug Williams resigned as pastor of Camp Ground Church to accept an associate pastor position in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

■ **UTICA**—Utica Church called Everett Berry as pastor.

Red Hill Church called Tory Hunter as pastor.

## Magazine: Graham 'most influential' Christian of century

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Evangelist Billy Graham tops a list of the 10 most influential Christians of the 20th century, according to a series of essays published in the most recent issue of Christian History magazine.

"I find this most-influential list most inspiring," said Mark Galli, the magazine's editor. "Such an exercise is a way to look back on the century and, as the psalmist said, 'remember the wonderful works (God) has done, his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered.'"

Also on the list, in order, are:  
■ Scholar C.S. Lewis.  
■ African-American Pentecostal minister William Seymour.

■ Mother Teresa.  
■ Christian thinker Karl Barth.  
■ Pope John XXIII.

■ Soviet novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

■ Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

■ Evangelist John R. Mott.  
■ Pope John Paul II.

## Rock fans send Christian magazine hate mail

By Todd Starnes  
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Fans of the alternative rock band "Nine Inch Nails" have made the Southern Baptist family magazine HomeLife a cyberspace target in response to a critical review of the band's most recent musical recording.

The e-mails include a profane response from "Trent," sent from Nothing Records, the recording studio owned by Trent Reznor, the group's lead singer and primary lyricist.

The e-mail messages started two weeks ago when the band's official Internet site at Nothing Records published HomeLife magazine's e-mail address. More than 100 e-mail letters, many laced with profanities, have been received at HomeLife's offices since.

HomeLife, which carries features, news and information for Christian families, is published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Complaints stemmed from a review of the new Nine Inch Nails album, "Fragile," that appeared in a "Media Play" column by Bob DeMoss. DeMoss, a regular contributor to the publication, is a freelance writer who

focuses on youth issues.

In his review of "Fragile," DeMoss wrote that Reznor "uncorks chaos and despair for another generation."

HomeLife editor Jon Kent Walker, in a prepared statement, said the reactions from Nine Inch Nails fans "show how influential music is in our culture, which is why we comment on it every month through Bob DeMoss' Media Play column.

"It's obvious Reznor has touched the depths of their souls," Walker said of the rock group's fans.

This was not Reznor's first appearance in HomeLife. In 1997, Reznor was the focus of a HomeLife prayer artist profile.

"There's no question God gave Trent Reznor tremendous musical talent," Walker said. "There is a question whether Trent Reznor believes in the God who gave him the talent. He often admits he's on a search for meaning, and that's why in September 1997 we asked HomeLife readers to pray for him."

Reznor was on tour with Nine Inch Nails in Asia and unavailable for comment.

Susan Swann, a spokesperson for Nothing Records, told Baptist Press she could neither confirm nor deny wheth-

er Reznor had sent an obscene e-mail to HomeLife.

E-mail messages to HomeLife accused the magazine of being everything from judgmental to hypocritical.

Walker said the review was not meant to be a personal attack on Reznor. "Rather this is a simple clash of world views. Some of Reznor's fans, in writing us, assumed we hated him and them. That simply is not the case," Walker said.

"Many of their letters expressed, in one way or another, that the church is no longer a safe place for them to bring their pain and heartache," Walker added. "As Christians, we should hear that message, even if it's wrapped in profanity. Reznor and his fans are not the enemy, and we should be less interested in winning debate points than in winning souls."

DeMoss, meanwhile, said the vulgarities used in the letters from Nine Inch Nails fans affirm his position that Christian teenagers should not listen to the group. "I stand by what I wrote," DeMoss said. "I actually thought I was gracious compared to what I could have said."

Both Walker and DeMoss said they would attempt to respond to as many of the letters as possible in a spirit of love.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Full-time secretary for Baptist church in Franklin County. Must have secretarial experience and be competent in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Access and Excel. Qualified candidate also should possess effective oral and written communication skills, organizational skills and the ability to work with minimum supervision. Please respond by Feb. 10, 2000, by sending resumé with references to: Personnel Committee, PO Box 4208, Frankfort, KY 40601.

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

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

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

**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:** 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:** Full-time minister of education. Please send resumé to: Crestwood Baptist Church, 1006 East Main St., Frankfort, KY 40601, Attn: Minister of Education Search Committee. For information regarding our church, please visit our Web site: www.crestwoodbaptist.com.

**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).

**FOR RENT:** 2-room apartment (sleeps 6), 2 baths, kitchenette. Cocoa Beach, Fla. Available April 2-9 or April 9-16, 2000. Call: (812) 944-3866.

# PEOPLE

## Clothing ministry helps women get dressed for work

By Janet Little Cooper  
Florida Baptist Witness

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP)—For Debbe Jefcoat, coordinating the Suit Your Self ministry at Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., is not just about providing women with clothing. It is an opportunity to help them find a life of hope and a future.

The project at Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola resulted from an area Methodist church asking the congregation to help expand its similar ministry.

Jane Holston, the coordinator there, contacted Olive Baptist Church with the prospect of beginning a similar ministry due to the community's need and Olive's convenient location.

Suit Your Self North became a reality in April 1999. Since then, more than 100 women have participated with a total of 375 outfits being distributed.

Suit Your Self is a program designed to outfit women with clothing appropriate for job interviews, and for working thereafter, free of charge. The program now serves approximately six women a week.

Word of mouth has been the best form of advertising for the ministry, Jefcoat noted. Most of the women who are served are sent to Olive on a referral basis.

"We work with about 15 different agencies," Jefcoat said. Some women recently have been released from jail. Others are leaving an abuse shelter or a college program for women in transition.

Applications give Olive Baptist information about the women's needs—both general and spiritual. The church keeps a record of each client to better minister in the future.

Women who show proof of employment can receive at least five complete outfits suitable for their new job.

"One lady we had helped came back for her outfits after being hired, during her lunch break. I fitted her with numerous outfits. She was so excited that she wore the clothes we gave her back to work instead of her own," Jefcoat recalled.

Suit Your Self has about 10 volunteers who work with Jefcoat, secretary of Olive Baptist's social services department. Members of the church or people from the community have donated all of the clothing distributed.

On some occasions, Suit Your Self will have a group fitting for as many as 10 women at one time. At those times, all the volunteers are on hand to help, and they give the women a booklet on job etiquette.

"We are fortunate to have a lady who has retired with a degree in business education in our church, who has a heart for this service and comes to speak to them about the business world," Jefcoat noted.

Also, a cosmetics consultant in the church comes to the group fittings and does facials for the women. Three hairdressers have volunteered their time to style the women's hair on the church premises.

Several church members who work in department stores have donated



**READY FOR WORK** Debbe Jefcoat (right), program coordinator for Suit Your Self, helps Shirley Pugh with a fitting. The program provides appropriate clothing for women who are entering the workplace. The ministry works with women from 15 different agencies. Some have been recently released from jail, while others are leaving an abuse shelter or job training program. (BP photo by Janet Little Cooper)

ed money through their stores for clothing purchases, Jefcoat said.

"I have a heart for helping women to feel good," she said. "When you feel good about your appearance, it boosts your self-esteem and confidence."

Olive Baptist currently does not have a Suit Your Self program for men, but Jefcoat said she isn't ruling out that possibility.

Jefcoat related how a 21-year-old woman with a year-old child had been left by her husband, forcing her back into the workplace. After being fitted

by Jefcoat, she was hired by a dentist's office.

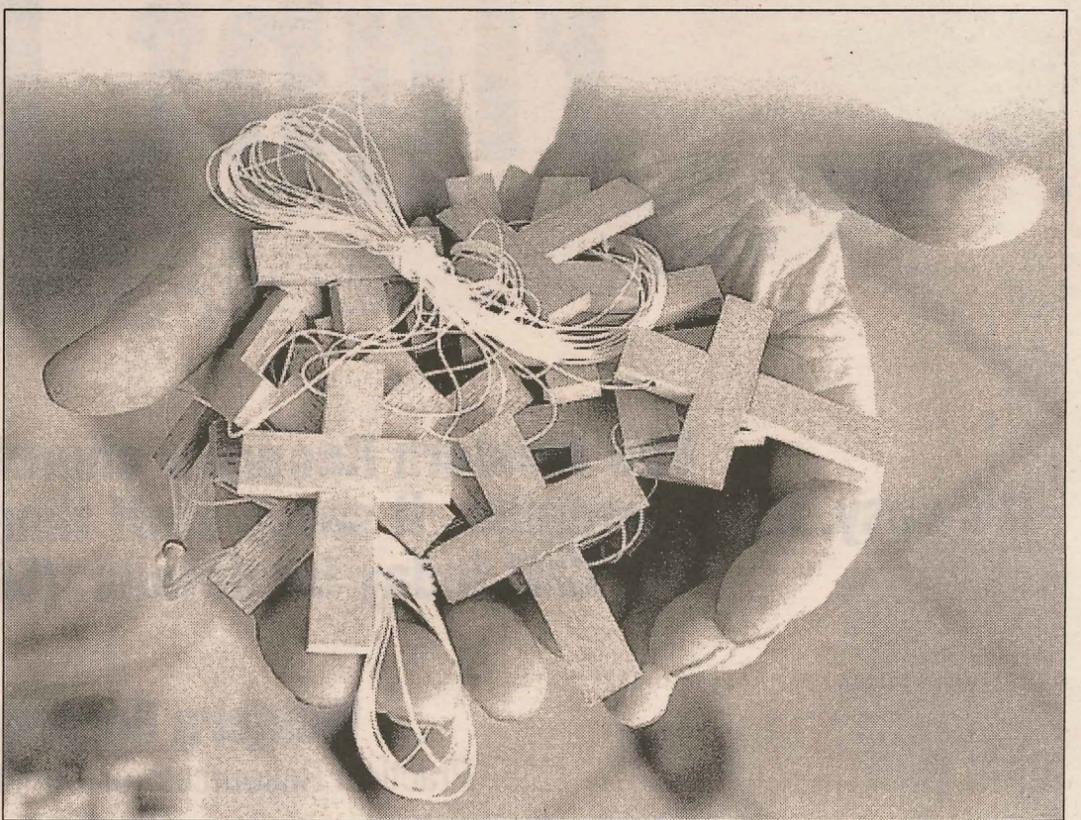
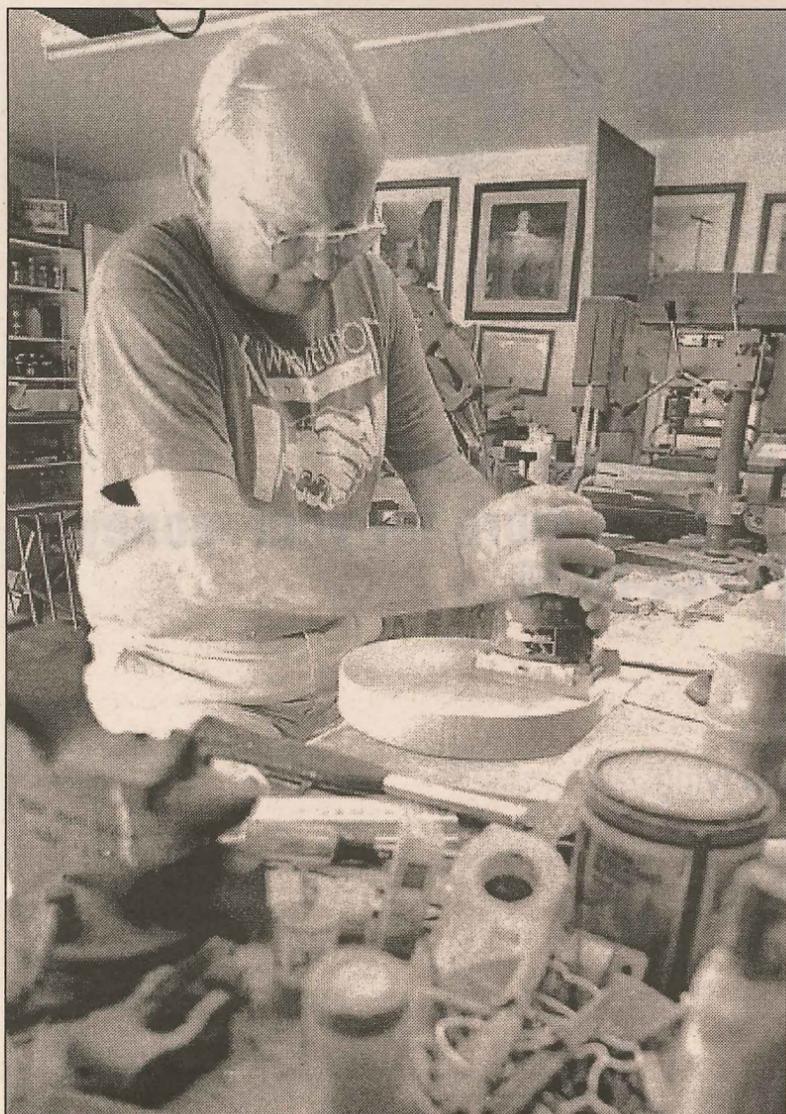
She related to Jefcoat that the employer had told her how nice she looked, and asked her where she had bought her outfit. The young lady responded, "I got it from a friend."

The tears that well in Jefcoat's eyes as she speaks of such victories show her compassion for the women she has encountered.

"God has blessed us in a tremendous way," she said. "We started in a very small room and now have expanded to a much larger one."

"She was so excited that she wore the clothes we gave her back to work instead of her own."

Debbe Jefcoat,  
coordinator for Suit Your  
Self clothing ministry



**CROSS CRAFTSMAN** It's said every person has a cross to bear, but for Greg Mroczek of Palm City, Fla., there have been about 9,200 of them. Almost 20 years ago, Mroczek and his wife attended a Christian retreat in Rhode Island where he was handed a small wooden cross hung on a string to wear around the neck. Looking at the crosses, Mroczek thought, "I could make these." So when Mroczek, now 80, retired about 15 years ago, he decided he needed a hobby to help "keep me busy." He remembered those wooden crosses and turned to woodworking, something he had never really tried before. He started carving the crosses, which measure about 2 1/2 inches high, out of cedar, then turned to black walnut, but has finally settled on scraps of mahogany. His goal is to reach 10,000 and then keep going. "If the Lord wants me to make some more crosses, then I'll make more crosses," he said. But for Mroczek, the crosses are more than just a hobby. He says that when he sees a cross, he sees Jesus. And when he gives away a cross, he's giving away a piece of Jesus, too. The crosses have been sent all around the world, from Jamaica to Australia to South America and Europe. "It is my pleasure to give them away," he said. "It is a labor of love." (RNS photos)

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