

FOR THE RECORD

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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, March 8

Study: Church member giving declines slightly

CHAMPLAIN, III. (RNS)—Per-member giving to churches declined slightly according to the most recent study of 15 evangelical and mainline Protestant denominations by empty tomb inc., an Illinois-based Christian research organization.

In 1997, congregants donated just 2.56 percent of their income to the church, compared with 2.58 percent the previous year, said the report, "The State of Church Giving through 1997." In 1968, congregants contributed about 3 percent of their income to the church.

"We see a similar trend in both groups that on a per-member basis their members are devoting a smaller portion of their total resources to their churches," said Sylvia Ronsvalle, co-author of the study, which analyzed eight National Association of Evangelicals denominations and seven National Council of Churches member churches. "The portion of income they're spending on the church is shrinking. It appears the church is becoming less important in their lives."

Still, total contributions to the church increased between 1968 and 1997 for both evangelical and mainline Protestant denominations—about 79 percent for the former, and about 15 percent for the latter, the study reported.

That's partly because even though congregants are donating a smaller percentage of their income than in the past, that income is larger than it has been in previous years, she said.

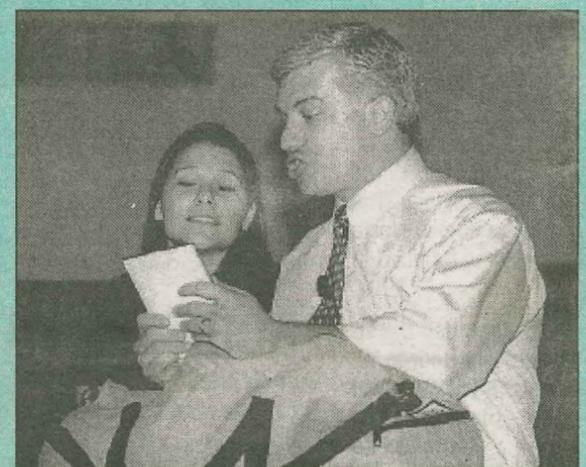
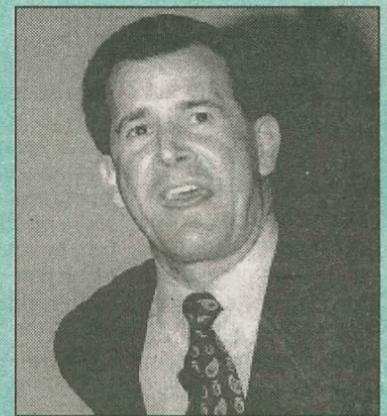
"Evangelical denominations are also growing in membership, and that may account for an increase in total contributions," she said. "In contrast, the mainline Protestant denominations have lost members, so members have not had to increase giving so much to maintain operations."

The study also revealed that contributions to church outreach activity—such as hunger relief efforts—showed a measurable increase for the first time in 12 years, inching from .406 percent of income to .407 percent among 29 denominations in 1996 and 1997.

The study proposes that U.S. churches shift their focus in raising funds from congregants.

"We're suggesting that the church in the U.S. is putting too much emphasis on institutional maintenance for the future and not enough emphasis on loving a hurting world today," Ronsvalle said. "Early Christians met in caves, living rooms, but they got the job done. Today, we're more interested in where we're meeting than what we're doing."

31 flavors



CELEBRATE JESUS A variety of worship styles were showcased during the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism conference. ■ Top left: The choir of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville sings. ■ Top right: Herb Reavis, pastor of North Jacksonville, Fla., Baptist Church, preaches. ■ Bottom left: Michael Higdon, minister of praise and worship at Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg, leads music for the youth-emphasis session. ■ Bottom right: Jeff Coursey, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Glasgow, and Amy Fralix perform a skit.

Evangelism conference offers variety of styles

By Trennis Henderson & David Winfrey
Editor & News Director

LOUISVILLE—One participant described last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference as a "Baskin-Robbins" event, offering something for everyone in the tradition of the ice cream shops famous for serving 31 flavors.

The two-day gathering, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism growth team, featured a variety of speakers, music, testimonies and resource conferences. Highlighting the theme, "Celebrate Jesus 2000," the five sessions focused on celebrating Christ's uniqueness, His teachings, His cross, His resurrection and His mission.

Featured speakers ranged from traditional evangelist Junior Hill and Paul Powell, retired president of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, to the leader of a Gen X Bible study in Dayton, Ohio, and youth evangelist Cameron Mills, a former Kentucky Wildcats basketball star.

The conference, Feb. 28-29 at Highview Baptist Church in Louis-

ville, also incorporated drama and an interview with a convert from Mormonism.

Music ranged from traditional hymns and Southern Gospel to a worship band and an African-American choir whose soloist kicked her shoes into the audience while singing.

"We really went after young pastors and youth ministers and they came en masse," said Dan Garland, who as leader of the KBC evangelism growth team is responsible for organizing the conference. "I'll take some hits over some of it but that's OK."

Speakers addressed a variety of topics related to evangelism designed to both educate and encourage:

■ Florida pastor Herb Reavis said many Christians today have separated the terms "Savior" and "Lord" in their relationship to Christ.

Preaching on the lordship of Jesus, Reavis said, "Jesus Christ is not simply Savior; Jesus Christ is Lord. ... He didn't simply save you to get you out of hell; He also saved you to get hell out of you."

Reavis, pastor of North Jacksonville Baptist Church in Jacksonville,

Inside



Youth night features music and a plea for passion to reach young adults. *Page 9.*

"Jonah attitude" stops many Christians from witnessing, Kevin Cosby says. *Page 10.*

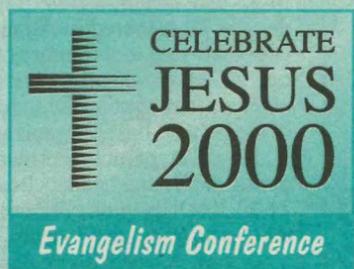
Five "musts" for effective evangelism. *Page 11.*

Internet strategies for sharing the gospel. *Page 11.*

Fla., said Christ's lordship is deserved, demanded and must be displayed.

"Let's stop playing church," he urged. "Let's get down to the real thing. Let's talk about the lordship of Christ. If Jesus is the absolute Lord of your life, you don't whine, you don't gripe. ... All that matters is Jesus."

□ See *Evangelism ...*, page 10



Conservative Texas pastors meet to evaluate options

Three Baptist schools earn ATS approval

Three Baptist schools have gained approval by the Association of Theological Schools in ranging from new degree programs to full accreditation status.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville has gained ATS approval for two new degree programs. The seminary will offer the doctor of educational ministry and the master of arts in Christian school administration degrees beginning this summer.

ATS also recently accredited Gardner-Webb University's M. Christopher White School of Divinity. The divinity school in North Carolina was founded in 1992.

ATS upgraded Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary from "associate" to "candidate" status. As a candidate school, the seminary in Waco, Texas, will enter a two-year self-study process leading to a vote for full accreditation in 2002.

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

PLANO, Texas (ABP)—More than two dozen conservative Texas Baptist pastors met Feb. 28 in suburban Dallas to discuss their future relationship with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Despite extensive media coverage beforehand, no formal action resulted from the meeting.

Secular media outlets across North Texas speculated that the gathering at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano would draw up to 300 pastors or that it was a meeting for Prestonwood members to vote to leave the BGCT. Neither report was true.

In reality, fewer than 30 pastors attended the by-invitation-only meeting convened by Prestonwood Pastor Jack Graham; Claude Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless and chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee; and Ed Young, former Southern Baptist Convention president and pastor of Second Baptist Church of Houston.

"We have no statement, no proposal or pronouncement," Graham said at the conclusion of the three-and-a-half hour meeting. Rather, he described the meeting as a time of prayer and discussion about the options available to Tex-

as Baptist churches that want to fully support the SBC and believe the BGCT is distancing itself from the national convention.

The small group of pastors included Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church in Amarillo and president of the new Southern Baptists of Texas Convention formed in opposition to the BGCT. No representative of the BGCT was invited to attend, even though James Semple, director of the BGCT's state missions commission, called the church the morning of the meeting and volunteered to come hear the concerns of the pastors.

"We talked about what we believe matters most—world evangelization and missions in Texas," Graham said after the meeting. "The common thread was support of the Southern Baptist Convention. As Southern Baptists living and ministering in Texas, how do we go about reaching our state?"

Asked if the group thought the BGCT was an ineffective means of reaching Texas with the gospel, Graham said he believes there are "some philosophical differences about how we do church and missions."

But the primary concern, he reiterated, is that the BGCT is not supportive enough of the SBC and its current conservative leadership, put in place after

a 20-year battle for control of the denomination.

Graham is scheduled to nominate Georgia pastor James Merritt for the SBC presidency during the annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., in June. Graham also has been rumored as a future presidential candidate himself.

Graham expressed displeasure with an earlier statement by BGCT President Clyde Glazener that the BGCT "won't be controlled by the SBC."

"I ask, what convention in all the world is controlled by the SBC?" Graham responded. "There's no other state convention saying this."

The pastors represented at the meeting—most of whom were unidentified and unavailable for comment—also shared concerns about the BGCT becoming a refuge for churches from outside Texas, Graham said.

"The BGCT wants to be a shadow denomination," he charged.

BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade said since neither he nor any other BGCT leader was invited to the Prestonwood meeting, he could not comment on the issues raised there.

"We are open to discuss any matter of concern with any church affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and to address those concerns as openly and honestly as possible," Wade

said. "I am sure that before any church would decide to move away from the BGCT, they would want to have representatives from the convention visit with them and their churches."

Young admitted he and his church have not been involved much in the BGCT or its statewide ministries. Last year, Second Baptist Church gave no money to the Cooperative Program through the BGCT, according to the BGCT's published annual report. The mega-church did give \$7,400 in designated funds.

Young came to the Prestonwood meeting, though, because he is interested in knowing more about reaching Texas with the gospel, he said.

However, Young would not commit himself to the new Southern Baptists of Texas Convention any more than he committed to supporting the BGCT. "I'm just going to do my work and designate straight to the SBC," he said.

But he did complain that he and other conservative pastors feel "disenfranchised from the General Baptist Convention of Texas."

Graham said Prestonwood has not made any final decisions about its state convention affiliations. A study committee is working on the matter and should report to the church's deacons this spring, he said.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leaders endorse strategic plan

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—A proposed strategic plan for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will seek to cast the Southern Baptist Convention splinter group "as a movement and not just as an organization," according to its chief executive.

"We think this represents a significant and perhaps even revolutionary direction for the future," said Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the Atlanta-based Fellowship. "That is we exist for the benefit of the local church."

Founded by moderates in response to the conservative shift of the South-

ern Baptist Convention in the 1980s, the 9-year-old Fellowship initiated its second generation with a strategic-planning process begun last summer.

Approved by the Fellowship's Coordinating Council Feb. 24, the plan awaits adoption by the CBF General Assembly June 29-July 1 in Orlando, Fla.

The plan calls for renaming the Fellowship's Atlanta offices as the "CBF Resource Center" and for hiring a new "Resource Center coordinator" to serve as chief operating officer. The new officer would lead and coordinate the work of the CBF's leadership team, freeing Vestal to "cast the Fellowship's vision" in Baptist churches around the

nation, he said.

Phase one of the plan clarifies the Fellowship's identity and mission, strategic initiatives and key priorities. A Phase two next year would examine issues related to the structure and role of the Coordinating Council and the relationship of state and regional CBF groups.

"This provides the foundation for us in dealing with some structural issues in the future," Vestal said.

The plan includes a new mission statement: "Serving Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission."

"Core values" include Baptist principles, biblically based global missions,

a resource model for serving churches, an emphasis on justice and mercy, lifelong learning for ministers, trustworthiness and organizational effectiveness.

The plan contains four "strategic initiatives"—faith formation, building community, leadership development and global missions and ministry—and 14 "priority areas," such as church planting, evangelism and outreach, and reconciliation and justice.

Members of the Coordinating Council endorsed the plan, proposed by staff and officers. The Fellowship staff will draft a budget for next year based on the proposed structure. The Coordinating Council will consider it at a called meeting in March.

CBF 'young leaders' organize national coalition

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (ABP)—More than 100 moderate Baptists under age 40 gathered in Atlanta to discuss their role in the future of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and organize a permanent coalition for support of the Atlanta-based organization.

However, participants made it clear during the Young Leaders Retreat, Feb. 21-23, that they think CBF needs to better live up to its stated ideals.

A session where participants voiced concerns about CBF emphasized two issues in particular: a lack of diversity among CBF leadership and the fear that CBF might become a re-tooled version of the old Southern Baptist Convention.

Retreat convener Jim Baucom, pastor of Rivermont Avenue Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., admitted that even he had reservations about the CBF's future. "I am worried about investing in something that might be unrealistic—namely, asking moderate Baptists to coalesce around anything of substance," said Baucom, who will be

nominated in June as the CBF's moderator-elect.

During a dialogue session between retreat participants and CBF's senior-level coordinators, Baucom made note of the group's general concerns.

"We believe that CBF as an organization, many of the churches related to CBF and many of the people related to CBF are afraid," he said. "We're afraid that the commitment level is low in CBF all over, as a group. We're afraid that we could make the same mistakes the SBC has made if we aren't careful. We're afraid that we're reactionary. We're afraid that we've just put a new face on an old system. And we're afraid of the lack of diversity that is displayed in many areas of the organization."

Participants did point out that one area where they are proud of CBF's commitment to younger leaders is on its Global Missions team. Noting the high numbers of missionaries under age 40, Global Missions Co-Coordinator Gary Baldrige noted his appreciation for the

under-40 generation's activism.

Participants came to a consensus on five initiatives their group wants to implement in the life of CBF with the national leadership's help. They are:

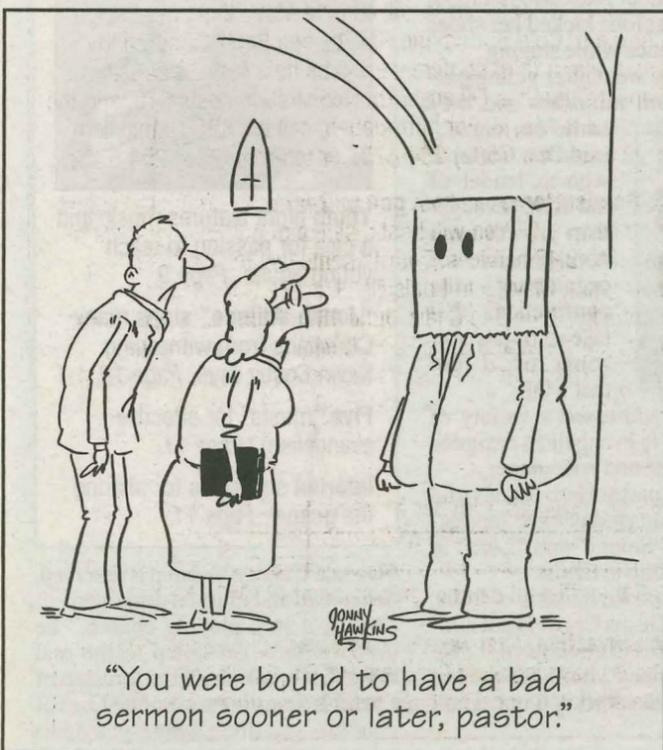
- To push CBF as an organization to be more inclusive on all levels—including doing more than paying lip-service to women in ministry and ethnic diversity.

- To encourage greater involvement of the laity at all levels of CBF leadership and in all age groups.

- To ask the Coordinating Council and state CBF organizations to improve the under-40 representation on the council to at least 25 percent within the next few years.

- To hire a national staff member at the coordinator level who is under 40, and who preferably would work with emerging generations in CBF.

- To create an ongoing CBF Young Leaders' Network for encouragement, fellowship and coalition-building among under-40 CBF supporters.



Tony Evans to headline Louisville evangelistic crusade

By Robert Reeves
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—Christians from throughout Kentucky and southern Indiana are working on a crusade this June featuring Tony Evans to share the gospel of Christ and promote racial reconciliation.

The Greater Louisville Tony Evans Crusade will be June 19-21 at Freedom Hall in Louisville. Tony Evans is an author, preacher and national speaker on the issue of racial reconciliation. Special guests will be contemporary Christian musical artists Kirk Franklin and Truth.

Evans is scheduled to speak at a pre-crusade rally March 9, 7 p.m. at Canaan Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville. Also scheduled for that event is former University of Louisville basketball player Brian Kaiser and youth evangelist Andre Barnes. A combined choir from Walnut Street

Baptist Church and Canaan Missionary Baptist Church also will perform at the rally.

Evans also will speak March 10 at 8:30 a.m. at a prayer breakfast for area pastors.

Organizers predict more than 500 area churches will participate in the June crusade.

"This Crusade promises to bring the evangelical Christian community together," said Lincoln Bingham, pastor of St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church. He and Ed Moore, pastor of Genesis United Methodist Church, are co-chairmen of the crusade.

"In working together, the body of Christ will be reflected probably in an unprecedented, positive way," Bingham said. "I believe it will have a positive effect on the community in which we have worked and prayed."

Evans will be the speaker at all services. He is co-founder and serves as senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fel-

lowship in Dallas, Texas. He also is founder and president of The Urban Alternative, a national organization that seeks to bring about spiritual renewal in urban America through the church.

The Urban Alternative radio broadcast, "The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans," can be heard over 250 stations daily throughout the U.S. and in more than 40 countries worldwide. He is a speaker on the Promise Keepers platform and speaks regularly in crusades and Bible conferences in the United States and abroad.

"Tony is a prolific writer and speaker with a global vision and exclusive strategy for mobilizing the body of Christ to carry out the Great Commission," Bingham said.

Other high profile musicians and special guests are expected to be announced. The evening services will be Monday through Wednesday from 7-9 p.m. Admission will be free.

The event is modeled after Billy Graham crusades, and Jim Coldiron, a staff member of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, is serving as crusade director

Organizers are seeking to make the event broad-based. Crusade leadership is made up of Christians from various Apostolic, Assembly of God, Baptist, Catholic, Christian, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Nazarene and United Methodist churches and denominational organizations in Kentucky and southern Indiana.

"There are 15 subcommittees branching from the steering committee," said Bingham. "We are targeting 500-600 participating churches which will represent all different denominations of the Greater Louisville area."

For more information on the Crusade, volunteer efforts or pre-crusade events call (502) 635-1004. The crusade Web site is www.tecrusade.org.

Tony Evans is scheduled to speak at a pre-crusade rally March 9, 7 p.m. at Canaan Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville.

Conference teaches how to use variety of media in worship

LOUISVILLE —When they do their jobs well, they're hardly noticed.

But the people who work the sound systems, cameras, screens and other technical gadgetry have become increasingly vital in many churches.

For that reason, the Kentucky Baptist Convention is offering training for technical ministry volunteers in a conference May 6 in Bowling Green.

"Worship 2000: Catching Their Attention and Touching Their Hearts" will be the theme of the event, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist convention's communications/media departments.

"The technical ministry workers, who are almost always volunteers, are some of the unsung heroes of the church, quietly going about their busi-

ness behind the scenes," said KBC Communications Director Robert Reeves.

"This is an opportunity to provide these volunteers with the training they need to help them in their ministry of enhancing the worship experience," Reeves said. "We're sensing a pent-up demand for this kind of conference which has never been offered before here in Kentucky."

During the day-long event, experts will teach participants how to get the most out of the equipment the church has available, how to plan for and anticipate technical needs and how technology can be used to enhance worship.

The conference also will give instruction for training volunteers, and

conference leaders will answer questions about specific church needs.

Reeves said the conference is not only for volunteers from big churches or from churches that use a contemporary worship style.

"Even volunteers working the most basic sound system can benefit from the conference and the principles of good technical management apply whether your church uses a more traditional worship style, a blended style or a contemporary style," he said.

Worship 2000 will be led by the production personnel from Living Hope Baptist Church, a leading innovator among Kentucky Baptist churches in using technology to enhance worship.

In addition to Living Hope's staff,

Brad Johnson, who served as senior pastor of the church before taking a position with Saddleback Community Church in California, also will speak on the role of technical ministry in worship.

Registration costs \$20 per person for those who pre-register by April 28. The fee will be \$25 per person after April 28. A lunch will be provided at the church.

Much of the program costs are being offset by both the Cooperative Program and the generosity of Living Hope Baptist Church, Reeves said.

For more information, call the KBC communications/media department at (888) 254-5713 or (502) 254-4731. Registration is also available online at www.kybaptist.org/worship2000.

April youth evangelism event to feature music and testimonies

LOUISVILLE—Youth speaker Saleim Kahleh, Heath High School shooting survivor Missy Jenkins and contemporary Christian musical artists Jami Smith and the Katinas will headline the upcoming Kentucky Youth Evangelism Conference set for April 14-15 at the Frankfort Civic Center.

Kahleh, born in a Muslim family, speaks at conferences about his personal quest to find the truth about God and religion.

Other speakers include Jenkins, who will share about her experiences before, during and after the shooting at Heath High School in Paducah, and Ricky Cowles, a youth from Hillview

Heights Baptist Church in Bowling Green who suffers from muscular dystrophy.

"The conference is designed to reach young people with the gospel. Many different styles of presentation will be used to share Christ," said Tom Smoot, Kentucky Baptist Convention youth department director.

Jami Smith has recently released a new recording and was featured on the WOW Worship 2000 CD.

"The Katinas," who will perform in concert April 14, blend R&B funk with urban-flavored pop.

In addition, former "Son Bound" team members will present drama. Son Bound is one of the KBC's trav-

eling summer missions teams. Several presentations will be given about overseas mission trips and mission opportunities within the United States.

"We are headed toward a conference where youth share with youth," said Smoot. "We are hoping for over 4,000 youth to take part in the conference this year."

Registration costs \$15 per person and can be made in advance. Registrants can add a ticket for a day at Kentucky Kingdom in Louisville for \$28.50. For more information, contact the KBC Youth Department at (502) 244-6465 or toll free at (888) 254-5714. Information is also available online at www.kybaptist.org.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ Women's evangelism conference planned for May 22-23.

Author and speaker Becky Freeman will be the keynote speaker for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's women's lifestyle evangelism conference set for three locations May 22-23. Two conferences will be held May 22 at First Baptist Church of Cold Spring and St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville. A third conference will be held May 23 at Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro. Registration costs \$10, and the deadline is May 8. For information, call the KBC evangelism growth team at (502) 254-4737 or toll-free (888) 254-5722.

■ Baptist Homes to host golf tournament.

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children will host a series of golf tournaments to benefit KBHC services. Tournaments will be May 13 in Lexington, May 15 in Louisville, May 24 in Northern Kentucky, June 3 in Cadiz, June 16 in Richmond, June 19 in Bowling Green and June 22 in Owensboro. The top two teams will advance to the championship July 24 in Louisville. The entry fee is \$125 per individual or \$500 for a four-person team. For more information, call (502) 245-2101 or toll-free (800) 456-1386.

■ **Campbellsville invites students to revival.** High school youth groups are invited to Campbellsville University's spring revival and mission work project April 3-5. For information, call the office of campus ministries at (270) 789-5227.

■ **Correction:** Last week's story about refugee resettlement should have included Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville among those who have resettled refugees since 1997.

Now showing: Tanzania & Poland partnership videos outline needs

LOUISVILLE—Two new videos describing Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Baptists in Poland and Tanzania are now available from the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The videos, produced by the KBC Communications and Media Department, are designed to educate Kentucky Baptists about the Kentucky partnerships and offer an overview of Baptist work in the countries. They also describe the range

of ministries needed in the countries.

The most basic ministry needs in both countries are in the areas of evangelism, construction, church planting and leadership training. Tanzania also has a need for medical assistance and education. Encouragement for the small number of Baptists is a vital need in Poland.

Baptist leaders in both Poland and Tanzania have called upon Kentucky Baptists help them with three-

year partnerships. Tanzania has a population of 30 million and approximately 120 peoples groups. Poland is nearly three times the size of Kentucky and has a population of 40 million.

The videos are available for loan from the KBC video lending library. Call (502) 254-4731 or (888) 254-5713 to receive the videos. Most association offices also have the videotapes available.

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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The name of Jesus still stands

By Tim Mills

On Dec. 11, 1999, State Rep. Jim Stewart invited me to the Kentucky General Assembly by opening a session of the House with the daily invocation.

I felt it was a high honor to be asked to offer the invocation. As a minister of the gospel I have a responsibility to pray for the leaders of our government. I would have a chance to serve the General Assembly and an opportunity to honor God.

As a pastor I knew what an invocation was—the inviting of God to come, the invoking of His presence where we are. I understood prayer is the communication of the created talking to the Creator and I wanted to accomplish two things in my prayer. I wanted to honor God by sharing His scriptures in my prayer and I wanted to pray for the members elected to serve in the House of Representatives.

On Feb. 18, 2000, I offered the following prayer:

"This morning, Father, we greet you and we praise you for your love and for the abundant plan you offer us. Your Word reminds us of our sins and the consequences of our actions. So we look to you as the way, the truth and the life. God, I ask for these legislators your

mercy and grace. Give them direction, health, vision, purpose and understanding wisdom, as they legislate the business of this Commonwealth. This I pray in the only name given among men, whereby we must be saved—in the name of Jesus. Amen."

Who would have imagined this prayer would have created such a stir as it did. I never would have imagined my words would have been so controversial and considered intolerant and divisive.

My prayer that day was based entirely on the Bible; I know of no other way to pray. I did pray the proper way, claiming the Word of God as just that—the Word of God, including: God's love (John 3:16), God's plan (John 10:10), our sin (Romans 3:23), our consequences (Romans 6:23) and looking to Him (John 14:6). I ended my prayer with the one line that was published statewide, Acts 4:12.

Rep. Kathy Stein, a member of the Jewish faith, said she was reluctant to publicly complain, but that she had to speak out. She pointed out that my statement was that "one could only be saved if one believed in Jesus Christ." Her understanding of my position is correct. I do believe you can only be saved through Jesus Christ but that is not true because I say it; it is true because that is

what God has said.

Rep. Stein said she takes her faith very seriously and I respect her for that position. She has the right to believe what she wants to believe, but just because one is serious doesn't make one correct. When it comes to godly truths, there is only one standard—the Bible.

We can legislate Jesus out of the classrooms. We can throw Him out of our courts. We can decide to no longer pay attention to the principles He has instructed us to live by. We can declare our freedom to believe what we want to, but that still will not change the infallible truth of God's Word. We can even choose not to hear His name mentioned in prayer, but the name of Jesus will still stand no matter what we choose or want to believe.

This nation was founded on the principles of the Bible. We have structured our laws, relationships and standards based upon the Bible. The founders of this nation were Christians. That's not a political position; that's the truth. People can choose to re-write history if it makes them feel better. We are free to think, act and speak out, thanks to God. But we should remember that Jesus came the first time to be the sacrifice for our sins, He came to abolish that old Jewish law of sacrifice and by dying on the cross He has set those free who choose to believe.

Tim Mills is pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church of Dorton Branch

COMMENTARY

Pray for revival

In the Feb. 15 issue of the Western Recorder, Trennis Henderson's editorial on spiritual awakening was right on target. He quoted Larry Martin saying, "There is a growing number of people who have such a hunger to see God do something different than they're seeing in routine, everyday life."

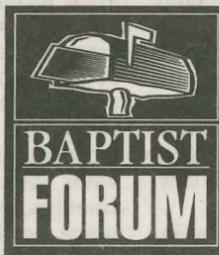
I am seeing God stir the hearts of the people of First Baptist Church of Russell Springs and the community of Russell County. The last two evangelist teams to come to our church comment-

ed on the hunger in our people for God to move in an unusual way. It seems this hunger is growing. Each revival apparently grows in power, offering, attendance and results.

On Feb. 16 we concluded a revival led by evangelist Henry Linginfelter and music evangelist Carolyn Reed. In moving services God gave us 22 salvation decisions, 20 for baptism, 12 for church membership and about 80 other decisions. Praise the Lord!

Increasingly God is calling us to seek His face during our revival services and throughout the year. Our hunger and belief is greater than ever for genuine revival to begin right in the heart of Kentucky. The number of people in central Kentucky who believe God is preparing to do something special is growing. Pray for us in our pursuit of Him.

*Bill Ramage
Russell Springs*



PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Spreading the gospel by all means

The situation always dictated the approach for Paul. Whether it was Mars Hill, the Philippian jail, just after a shipwreck, or in his trials before Festus or Agrippa, Paul related the gospel in the way that spoke best to the particular audience. He was a master at flexibility in approach, "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

As Northern Christians face the third millennium, we have exciting new opportunities to spread the gospel and we must do so by all means available. In addition to traditional methods—preaching, teaching and sharing the gospel one-on-one—modern technologies are offering new opportunities for telling the gospel story. Today, satellite communications, movies (the "Jesus" film), fax, radio, television, the Internet and other electronic media are methods for reaching people with the message of Christ's love.

Here in Kentucky, churches in

Christian County Association are running media spots developed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. The "Who Split Time" tract is being distributed in metro Louisville, supported by media developed by NAMB. In addition, 32 associational outreach efforts are scheduled in Kentucky this year, with support from NAMB.



Bill Mackey

Reaching the lost takes a lot more than just using the latest technological innovations, however. It is crucial that the message is tailored to the audience.

For instance, NAMB supports an effort to encourage high school students to share the gospel with fellow students. It is student-led and student-initiated. Randy Record is in a Kentucky Baptist Convention staff position funded by NAMB to coordinate this interdenominational effort in Kentucky.

There also are 47 Hispanic ministries in Kentucky jointly funded by NAMB, KBC and local associations and churches. Alan Witham began work

Jan. 16 with the KBC staff to serve as a new work starter strategist. He will be funded for three years by NAMB. Recently, the KBC elected Mike Watts to serve as the first part-time resort minister in Kentucky.

Other NAMB missionaries share the gospel message by ministering to people's needs in church and community settings. They work with such demographic groups as non-readers, substance abusers, families, people in the criminal justice system, homeless people, disabled people, migrant workers and even vacationers.

Kentucky Baptists, jointly with NAMB, sponsor ministry centers at Marrowbone and Wheelwright. KBC, along with Long Run Baptist Association and Central District Baptists, also helps NAMB sponsor the Baptist Fellowship Center in Louisville.

"By all means" demands that we develop creative strategies, pray fervently, go frequently and give sacrificially. Consider one sacrifice in order to increase your gift to the Annie Armstrong Offering for North American Missions.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

'Tithing Counts' emphasis helps affirm priorities

By Doug Strader

What are the things that really count in life? The things that we spend our time and money on are the obvious things that each of us regard as counting in our life.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." That is a strong but true statement, one that would be very difficult for anyone to refute.

Our relationship to money and possessions is a good indicator of our spiritual priorities. Our practices related to tithing and giving to the Lord's work through the church reveal much about what we think counts.

The Kentucky Baptist stewardship department has a new promotion called "Tithing Counts." Churches could use this material to develop stewards by emphasizing biblical teachings about tithing. Some of the benefits include:

■ Tithing counts as a proof that our acknowledgment of God is honest and measurable. Abraham first instituted the tithe as a reminder that without God's help, we could not survive or succeed (Genesis 14:18-20).

■ Tithing counts as a standard that has been established to keep our priorities straight. God claims first place in our lives and the tithe is holy to Him (Leviticus 27:30);

■ Tithing counts as an assurance that our relationship with God is fresh and growing. Malachi's complaint was not a financial indictment, but it was a plea for personal repentance (Malachi 3:7).

■ Tithing counts as a witness to those who know us best. The way we apportion our money readily identifies our values. Jesus reminds us that tithing is to be connected to things like justice and mercy (Matthew 23:23).

■ Tithing counts as an investment in eternity. When we tithe through our church, we identify with Christ, our Great High Priest, as we express our desire to participate in His eternal kingdom.

By conducting the three-Sunday "Tithing Counts" emphasis in your church, you can help members discover these assurances and experience spiritual growth. The emphasis requires little advanced preparation and can be conducted at any time during the year.

For more information, contact us at (888) 254-5708 or (502) 254-4716 or by e-mail at douglas_strader@kybaptist.org

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



Be sensitive in facing teen's fear of separation from parents

Q: My 15-year-old daughter is afraid to go on the church youth retreat planned for spring break. They will be gone only five nights, but she has never been away from us that long. She enjoys the youth group and leaders. She is just fearful of being separated from us for that long. My husband thinks we should make her go. What do you think?

Encourage her to go, but do not force her this year. It could be something simple. She is probably a freshman and could be shy about being with all of the older youth. She could be overly attached to you and reluctant to grow up. Perhaps it is a money issue and she does not want to burden you or put forth the effort herself. She might even be afraid something would happen to you while she is gone. Take time to examine her thoughts and feelings in more depth. Get the specifics about her anxiety.

Address her concerns. Offer options to get around her apprehensions. Let her take a school friend on the trip. Offer to let her call each day. Work to make the trip as stress-free as possible. If she still refuses to go, she might have a complex issue that needs further attention.

You might take her to the youth minister or your pastor for counseling. If they don't do much counseling, ask them for a referral to a pastoral counselor or a family therapist. Go with her, but be prepared to let her talk privately if she wishes.

This could be something insignificant or it could be an indication of something deep-seated. She will need to leave home some day for college, military, marriage or a job. Trips like this can prepare her and you for her growing up to be on her own.—Wade Rowatt

Q: My husband has Alzheimer's disease and he is getting worse, which has caused us to need more intense care. This is creating a severe financial burden and worry about providing for his care. Is there anything we can do?

After saving and sacrificing all your life, it is hard to believe you can run out of money to care for your husband, but many people face the same situation. If possible, try to find an Alzheimer's support group and see if you can find an attorney who specializes in this type of case.

There are five options to check out, if you have not yet done so. The options are Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance supplements, Veterans Administration system and Social Security disability.

Medicare is a federal program intended as a government health insurance plan for older Americans. For the most part, Medicare is of little benefit for long-term care services for Alzheimer's patient. However, it is worth checking out.

Medicaid is another federal program administered by each state. When those needing financial assistance exhaust all their resources, Medicaid is available. Contact your area state department of social services for information.

Private insurance has not been much help in the past. Fortunately, this is changing and some coverage is available from some companies. The supplemental policies have restrictions, but are worth learning about.

Veterans Administration has facilities for Alzheimer's patients and regulates the availability of services. For those who qualify and can get into the system, there is treatment and financial resources. The quality of care sometimes has been questioned.

Social Security disability has two programs, which historically have been of some assistance. Obtaining eligibility can be frustrating, but those who gain eligibility find modest financial relief.—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.



After the huddle, the real game begins

Fill your cup. Recharge your battery. Stoke your fire. Prime your pump. Pick your favorite metaphor for spiritual renewal and that would describe the atmosphere during last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Promoted as an event to help participants "prepare for evangelism in the 21st century," this year's conference offered a rich diversity of sights, sounds, sermons and seminars.

From the energetic, expressive African-American worship style of the St. Stephen Baptist Church choir to the cutting-edge, in-your-face messages of Gen X speakers and the old-time fire-and-brimstone preaching of Southern Baptist evangelists, the two-day event had something for virtually everyone—as well as plenty that could make some folks downright uneasy.

And that, apparently, was one of the goals—not intentionally to make anyone uncomfortable, but to expose Kentucky Baptists to a variety of resources and worship styles that can help move us beyond our comfort zones in an effort to reach more people with the gospel.

In the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:22, it's a conscious commitment to "become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."

Dan Garland, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism growth team, said part of his motivation for this year's program was realizing that "the hair was getting thinner and grayer" among the conference crowd each year.

While still providing ample traditional programming, Garland expanded the options to attract a wider range of participants. The program also offered hands-on ways to reach people beyond traditional church settings.

"Part of my dream was to have a session to model what it takes to reach this generation," Garland said. Acknowledging that "I'll take some hits over some it," he added, "That's OK."

And it is OK. If Kentucky Baptists are unwilling to take risks to reach people with the gospel in innovative

ways, it's going to be a long, gloomy, unproductive 21st century. If, however, we maintain the message and adjust the methods, we have the potential to make a growing impact for the sake of the gospel.

One conference speaker said Christians tend to spend too much time in the huddle and not enough time in the game of changing lives through Christ. He's right.

But it's also important to remember that the huddle is a key part of the game. Taking time to plan and prepare together is essential before lining up to tackle the challenges of the world.

The state evangelism conference is a significant huddle in Kentucky Baptist life. With resource conferences ranging from "Internet Evangelism" to "Becoming a Contagious Christian" and plenary sessions featuring drama, videos and testimonies as well as music and messages, this year's event offered timely resources for people serious about sharing their faith.

Now that the huddle has broken, the real game begins. What will Kentucky Baptists do on the local, associational and state levels to

reach unsaved people with the life-changing message of Christ? We must be more concerned with reaching our communities than preserving our personal comfort.

On a personal note, one of last week's most meaningful moments for me came during an impromptu meal with a Kentucky Baptist pastor. We crossed paths at a fast-food restaurant and he invited me to join him. As we munched on burgers and fries, he asked about my transition and ministry here in Kentucky. Then he said: "Trennis, tell me how I can pray for you."

Wow. I shared a couple of concerns and he promised to pray daily for me throughout the next month. His spiritual sensitivity reminded me anew of the importance of talking about more than basketball, politics and the weather. Thanks, Bill.

If we are to make a spiritual impact on the world around us, we must be sensitive to the needs of those we meet.

Give it a try. It will fill your cup.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Christian counseling offers hope, freedom

By Mitch Holbrook

"Jesus told them, Unwrap (Lazarus) and let him go!" (John 11:44b)

This passage is from the familiar story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. It is a story that often is witnessed, after a fashion, in the counseling office.

There are more people entering counseling today than ever before. As more and more people accept that they need not suffer aimlessly, many are seeking help.

People enter into counseling for a variety of reasons: depression, marriage difficulty, grief, confusion and other concerns. The common reason people begin a journey with a counselor is to be, like Lazarus, freed from the things that seem to tie us and keep us from walking in freedom and wholeness.

Churches can enhance this process by offering support groups, listing available counseling resources in their area, leading Bible studies on various emotional and mental health topics or supporting a counseling center in their area.

The greatest help churches can offer is to accept those who are struggling and help them find the help they need in a timely manner.

When people come to me for counseling, I often ask why they chose a pastoral counselor. People often elect to come to someone identified with a "Christian outlook" because the things with which they are dealing are so painful or scary that they want some assurance that "God is on their side."

The decision to begin counseling usually is reached after most other alternatives have been decided against. Questions people need to address include: How do I decide which counselor to call? What do I look for? What questions do I need to ask to see if this person is the best person to help me?

Before a therapist can answer these questions, you must decide for what you are looking.

Do you want a male or a female therapist? There often are issues we feel more comfortable discussing with someone of our own gender. When you call to set up an appointment, ask if there

are male and female counselors available, if this is important.

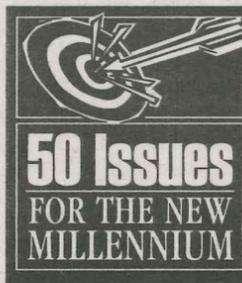
What credentials does the therapist have? I often remind my clients that we don't take our cars to have the oil changed to people who have not been trained to change oil, so feel free to ask if the person with whom you will be talking has been trained. What degrees do they hold? Are they certified? What credentials do they hold that indicate they know how to help you?

What is the cost? Find out the cost for each session in the initial call. Most counseling offices have some leeway in their cost. If the amount given is more than you can pay, ask if there is a sliding fee scale available or ask about a payment schedule.

In the initial session, ask the questions only the therapist can answer about the way he or she does therapy. Is there a spiritual aspect to the therapy? Is the therapist a Christian? How long has the person been in practice?

This is a partnership between you and the therapist with you being the expert on yourself; the therapist can only help you help yourself. The first step, like that of Lazarus, is to seek to find freedom from those things that bind us.

Mitch Holbrook is lead counselor for Cornerstone Counseling, affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children



BAPTISTS

Patterson urges students to avoid 'Samson syndrome'

By Tim Ellsworth
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

WORDS OF WARNING
SBC President Paige Patterson urged seminary students to avoid putting personal interests before God.

LOUISVILLE (BP)—The "Samson syndrome" ensnares many ministers, warned Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson. He said it can be avoided by giving God

priority in one's life. "What your life is all about is whether or not you will choose to please yourself or whether you will choose God," he said. "How your ministry goes will select bound up in whether you will be choosing God as an option, or whether you will instead decide to choose yourself."

Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., spoke Feb. 29 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Samson's life started well, Patterson said, but his chosen life of promise became a cratered life of pleasure and led to a cratered life of pain—mainly because he put his own desires above obedience to God.

Samson was a man who had it all—strength, the blessings of God, godliness. "But unfortunately Samson was determined to please himself above God," Patterson said. "As a result, he prostitutes his entire life and

ministry and loses the reward God had for him as a result of his determination to please himself."

Samson had a weakness for women, but that wasn't his biggest problem, Patterson said. "The real enemy Samson slept with every night of his life, because the real enemy is his own heart."

After revealing the secret of his strength to Delilah, Samson awoke with the intentions of freeing himself from the Philistines. But according to Judges 16:20, "He did not know that the Lord had departed from him." Patterson said that's one of the saddest statements in the Bible.

"You can never fail when the Spirit of God comes upon you, but when He leaves you, He leaves so quietly that men often miss it," Patterson said.

The SBC president warned seminary students not to put their own interests before God.

"The moment you decide that your

career and your pleasure and the fulfillment of the desires of your flesh are more important than pleasing God, then the hand of God comes off of you, and He will never use you in a way that could have been the case, and He will not bless you with heaven's richest blessing," Patterson said. "Make the decision. It is absolutely up to you."

One of his biggest fears, Patterson said, is that ministers of the gospel will compromise themselves doctrinally, morally and spiritually.

"I fear that our young ministers all across the Southern Baptist Convention may be so caught up in the times in which they live, in the rush for success and the desire for the larger church and the larger opportunity, that we may miss God in the whole situation," Patterson said. "And that in our efforts to please ourselves, we will forget that what it's all about is to please God. When we please God, then we have His blessing."



Baptist laymen defends methods labeled by critics as propaganda

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

DALLAS (ABP)—Should Baptist leaders be judged by the company they keep or by what they say they believe?

From Roger Moran's perspective, Baptists who serve on the boards of interfaith agencies alongside others who advocate more liberal positions on issues such as homosexuality and abortion are guilty themselves of advancing those positions.

But a number of Baptist leaders who have been targeted by Moran's Missouri-based advocacy group say he unfairly paints them as liberals simply because they have some professional affiliation with others who are more liberal than the typical Southern Baptist.

Is it guilt by association, as they contend? Or is it just the facts, as Moran contends?

A growing number of Baptist churches are being forced to make a judgment for themselves, as literature and videos produced by Moran's Missouri Baptist Laymen's Association circulate across the nation. The literature—which is especially critical of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs—is being distributed by individuals who want state Baptist conventions and churches to remain closely aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Here's an example of how Moran's approach works:

Moran believes Texas Baptists ought to be alarmed because David Currie, executive director of the moderate group Texas Baptists Committed, sits on the board of the Interfaith Alliance, a non-partisan organization committed to fostering dialogue between religious perspectives.

"If you know much about the Interfaith Alliance, you know it is one of the leading pro-homosexual-left groups around," Moran charged in a recent interview. "Meg Riley serves on there with him, and she's a lesbian, openly a lesbian. She's co-chair of a group called

Equal Homosexuals in Faith (which advocates homosexual rights). ... The Interfaith Alliance is one of the members of it. Are you saying none of that stuff was ever mentioned in an Interfaith Alliance board meeting?"

Currie says this criticism of him is unfounded and is representative of the kind of "guilt by association" he believes Moran publishes. Currie firmly denies any personal support for homosexual activity or homosexual marriage. "It's taking a little-bitty coincidence and saying this is all of reality," Currie charged.

Despite Moran's impressions, Currie said, "I've been to Interfaith Alliance board meetings for four years, and homosexuality and abortion have never been mentioned."

As for Moran's charge that the Interfaith Alliance is a member of Equal Partners in Faith, that organization's leader laughed when asked if this were true.

"We have no organizational members," said Steven Baines, executive coordinator of Equal Partners in Faith. Further, there is no formal link between the two organizations, he added.

And Currie argued that if he is guilty of supporting homosexuality just by participating with the Interfaith Alliance, then Moran ought also to indict Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

"Last year, Richard Land appeared at an Interfaith Alliance board meeting, because we worked together on a particular issue," Currie said. "Does that mean he supports all these things?"

"That's the way these people operate, to try to find one little piece of reality and say it describes all of reality."

Yet Moran defends his research methods and publications as accurate.

"It's not guilt by association," he said. "These are the organizations that these guys relate to. If you consistently align yourself with organizations that advocate for the acceptance of homosexual rights, ... it tells you something."

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This year's technical ministry conference presenters are made up of production personnel from host Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, one of the leading innovators in using technology to enhance worship among Kentucky Baptist Churches. They include:

JOHN BEVILLE, Lighting Designer

John is a lighting designer and has worked on technical crews for off-Broadway productions. He has worked with such stage productions as "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown" and others.

DAVID BENZ, Front of the House Sound Engineer

David is general manager of TV 48 Proclaim Broadcasting in Bowling Green and has many years of experience in both radio and television broadcasting. He also has experience in the design and installation of sound systems.

BRYAN JACKSON, Computer Graphics Tech.

Bryan is a computer graphics technician and lighting designer who has worked on the Living Hope Baptist Church technical crew in a variety of capacities. He has also been acting technical director and a sound engineer.

BRAD JOHNSON

Prior to his recent move to California to join the staff of Saddleback Community Church, Brad Johnson was senior pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church. Previously he was pastor of Springfield Baptist Church in Springfield, Ky. where he was ordained in 1981. He received a master of divinity degree in 1987 and a doctor of ministry degree in 1990 with a focus of study on church growth.

DAVE LOVE, Minister of Music

Dave became the minister of music at Living Hope Baptist Church in January 1991. He previously served as minister of music and youth at Meridian Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn. and at First Baptist Church, Union Springs, Ala. Dave's responsibilities at Living Hope include leading in worship; overseeing the worship planning team, tech crew, drama team, vocal teams, accompanists, instrumentalists, and rhythm section; and directing the worship choir, youth choir, and seasonal productions.

BETH STRAYER, Vocal Team Director

Beth is the vocal team director at Living Hope Baptist Church. She has more than 10 years of professional vocal training and received music scholarships for her work at Albion College. Beth has performed professionally and been an opening act for such groups as The Cathedrals.

STEVEN STRAYER, Technical Director

Steve has been involved in technical presentation and church ministry since 1989 and has headed the technical crew at Living Hope for the past six years. He previously served as technical director at Faith Church in Detroit.



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EVANGELISM

Conference's youth emphasis breaks traditional mold

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

LOUISVILLE—It wasn't a typical Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference session. But, then, it wasn't supposed to be.

A praise band complete with drums, keyboard and guitars led the crowd in a series of upbeat, hand-clapping praise choruses. That was followed by two Generation X preachers sporting close-cropped hair, baggy pants and powerful messages.

Conference coordinator Dan Garland said his goal for the evening's events was "to have a session to model what it takes to reach this generation."

Noting that "music is the language of this generation," he said the program was designed to give Kentucky Baptists "a glimpse of what can happen when your church gets a vision of reaching teenagers and young adults."

Garland, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's evangelism growth team, said to reach today's young people with the gospel, "you've got to want to do it, you've got to be willing to do it and you've got to ask God what He wants you to do."

Wasting no time grabbing the crowd's attention, self-described Gen X minister Rob Turner announced his sermon topic was, "What makes a whore dance in the street?"

Recounting Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, he said Jesus' response to the woman is the key to reaching today's generation of teens and young adults.

Noting that Jews typically would walk around Samaria to avoid it, Turner added, "Would you please quit walking around my generation? We are real people. We have a passion. God can use us."

Turner, a 28-year-old student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, leads a weekly Bible study for Gen Xers in Dayton, Ohio. The group recently began meeting in a comedy club in an effort to attract more unchurched people.



CELEBRATE
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Evangelism Conference

"If you want to minister to Gen Xers, get ready because it is messy,"

Turner warned. Challenging Christians to "go to your Samaria" to reach people in need, he added, "Jesus is right in the middle of Samaria and He has a purpose."

Turner said the key is to get outside the walls of the church and take the church to people in need.

"We want to tell the sheep to come to our pen," he said. "Here's the problem—lost sheep are lost. If you are a shepherd, you go to the sheep because you care for the sheep."

"Get out of your geographical, sociological and religious comfort zone," he urged. "You can have fun playing church, but if you do, our world is going to go to hell."

Turner said after the woman at the well received Christ's forgiveness, she

dropped her bucket and ran into town without any sense of shame.

"When God forgives you, He takes away the shame," he affirmed. "What God did in her life with shame, Gen Xers need to see that."

Turner said it's crucial for Christians to "get your religious rumps back on the street" to meet people's needs. "I'm not going to waste my oxygen playing church and you can't either if you're a child of God. So quit."

"Are you going to come to a place of religious significance and leave with absolutely nothing?" he asked. "Some of you are pretty thirsty tonight. Be obedient to God in this holy moment because that's what God wants."

Cameron Mills, the session's closing speaker, is best known for helping the Kentucky Wildcats win the 1998 NCAA basketball championship. Since graduating from college, he has become a popular youth evangelist.

Confessing that he quickly became burned out with his busy speaking schedule, Mills said he also lost his passion for seeing people accept Christ.

"When you see people at your church coming down the aisles, does it move you to tears?" he asked. "Are you overwhelmed not only with the love of God, but with the power of God? We have a world out there searching for miracles and the supernatural takes place in our churches every single Sunday. Does that move you to tears?"

Citing the biblical account of Mary and Martha's interaction with Jesus, Mills said, "I myself had become a Martha."

Reading Luke 10:38-42, Mills explained, "Mary and Martha both loved Jesus. Martha, like me, went about working for Jesus. ... Mary was doing nothing but sitting and listening to His words."

Although "I believe Jesus loves everybody equally," Mills added, "I believe Jesus has His favorites. Mary, because she sits at the feet of Jesus, becomes one of His favorites."

As a result, "Mary had the ability to move the heart of the King of Kings and Lord and Lords. Martha didn't."

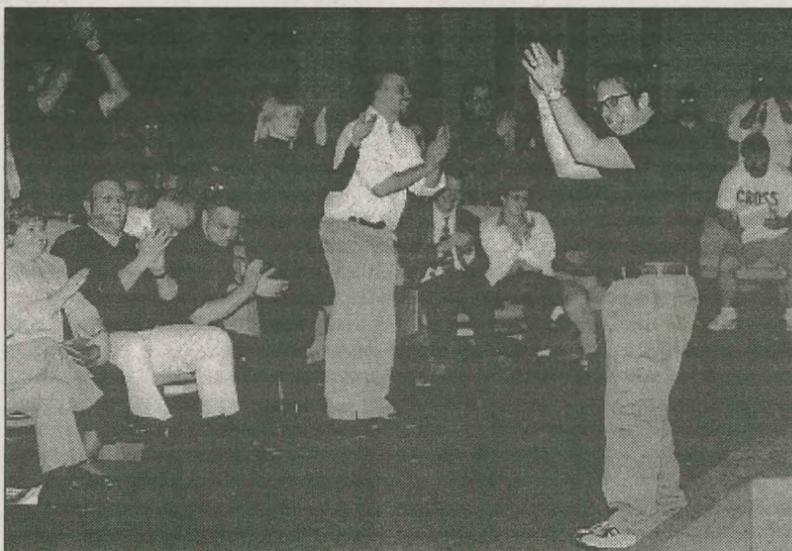
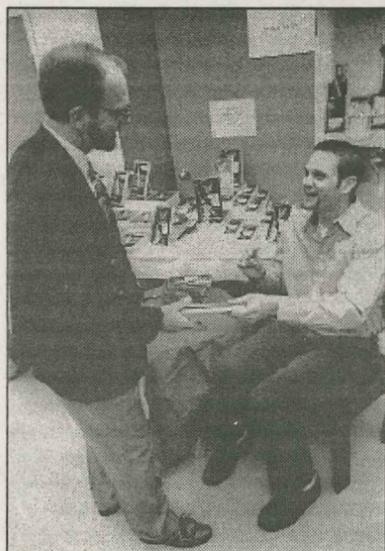
"If you want to have the ministry that I know you want to have," he told the crowd, "you have got to be a pastor, a pastor's wife, a layperson who does nothing except sit at His feet. That's the answer, folks."

Describing the cross as "God's altar built by God," Mills said, "Altars are things that bring you to God."

"If you want your ministry altered, you have got to altar your life," he declared. "If you will alter your life by altar your life, God will alter your life."

Calling the need of today's young people for the gospel "a matter of life and death," he added, "If you're not willing to do it for you, do it for them."

PRAISE BAND Musicians from Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg lead worship during a session on taking the Christian message to youth and young adults.



SPEAKERS Former University of Kentucky basketball player Cameron Mills (left) autographs copies of his book, "A Dream Come True." He and Rob Turner (right) spoke about the need to take the gospel message to youth and young adults. "If you want to minister to Gen Xers, get ready because it is messy," said Turner, leader of a Gen X Bible study in Dayton, Ohio.

Evangelism conference offers 31 flavors of witnessing ideas

Continued from page 1

■ Toby Frost, an evangelism specialist for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, said Christians are spending too much time in the huddle and not enough time in the game of changing lives through Christ.

Frost said one of the saddest developments in America has been the Christian subculture dedicated to personal growth and entertainment.

Frost said Christians should be more like Jesus' disciples, who had a sense of mission, mirrored Jesus and saw miraculous changes in the lives of people who experienced Jesus.

"Jesus said go into the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. But instead of going into the world, we've stayed at home and the world has gotten into the church," he said. "The problem is not that lost people are unwilling to hear. It's that so often saved people are unwilling to tell."

■ Preaching about the cross of Christ, Alabama evangelist Junior Hill recounted the story of a religious group that baptistered a Baptist sanctuary for worship and covered the baptistry cross with a cloth each week.

He warned that in the religious world today, "imperceptibly, insidiously and subtly, the cross is being covered."

"Under the disguise of cultural cleverness, social graces and religious pluralism, we have very subtly taken the cross and we have obscured it just a bit," he said. "We're not ashamed of it. We just don't want to be bothered by it very much because it's an offense to those we are trying to reach."

He said any minister who fails to proclaim the death and resurrection of Christ as the only way to God is "a traitor to the cause of Christ."

■ Powell and Tennessee pastor Bob Pitman preached about Christ's resurrection.

Declaring "it's not over 'til it's over," Powell said that is the message of Easter. "It is never over until God gets through with it. God can bring life out of death."

Christ's disciples greeted initial news of His resurrection with skepticism, Powell noted. Eventually, "they learned firsthand the message of Easter," he added. "God specializes in turning tragedy into triumph and turning crucifixion into Easter." As a result of Christ's victory over death, Powell said Christians should:

- Never give up on any person.
- Never write off any experience as a total waste.
- Never despair in the face of death.

"Death did something terrible to Jesus Christ, but Jesus did something wonderful to death—He conquered death," Powell said. "He can bring good out of the worst thing that may have happened to you."

Pitman, pastor of Kirbywoods Baptist Church in Memphis, described the resurrection of Jesus as "the most important event in all history." Preaching from 1 Corinthians 15, he said that without Christ's resurrection, "all else that the Bible says about Him is absolutely meaningless."

Because of His resurrection, however, "our preaching has value," Pitman affirmed.

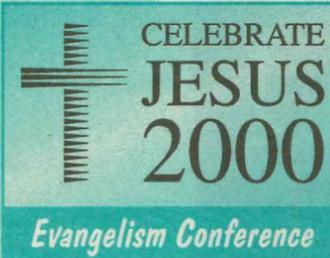
Christ's resurrection was not a trick, hoax, joke or parable, he added. "I thank God for the hope we have in Christ now and the hope we have in Him tomorrow. My hope is sure. We have an anchor. He's alive."

Citing his vision for the annual event, Dan Garland told participants, "I wanted us to be humbled so God could exalt us. I wanted us to be broken so He could make us whole."

He described a defining moment three years ago while still a pastor. Attending that year's evangelism conference, "I just looked out over the congregation, and it was getting older. There weren't hardly any younger pastors there."

Garland said that as he moved from the pastorate to the KBC staff position he felt a mandate to plan programming that would attract pastors of all ages.

"I think last year set the stage," he added. "This year we took it a step further of telling Kentucky Baptists it's a new day" in offering a diverse, upbeat conference program.



Cosby: 'Jonah attitude' hinders witnessing

David Winfrey
News Director

LOUISVILLE—Christians must forsake their "Jonah" attitudes and take the message of Christ to the rest of the world, Louisville pastor Kevin Cosby told those attending the Kentucky Baptist Conventions' evangelism conference.

Cosby, pastor of the 7,000-member St. Stephen Baptist Church, compared modern Christians to the Old Testament prophet Jonah who refused to take God's message demanding repentance to Nineveh.

"Jonah did not want to preach, not because he thought he would fail," said Cosby. "He didn't want to preach because he thought he might succeed. And that would mean his enemies might be saved."

Cosby delivered the closing message for the first day of the two-day conference. Punctuated with lively music before and after by St. Stephen's choir, the bi-racial audience responded enthusiastically to the music and message.

Cosby told the packed sanctuary at Highview Baptist Church that Jonah's attitude still prevails in many churches, and Jonah's reaction to Nineveh's repentance is the antithesis of most pastors. "I've known preachers who wanted to quit because they don't get any converts. He's the only preacher that wants to quit because he's getting converts."

Paul, meanwhile, is the opposite of Jonah, taking the Christian message to Jews and Greeks, Cosby added.

While Jesus and the first Christians were Jews, the expansion of the church upset the "Jonahs" who wanted to limit



WORSHIP Kevin Cosby (left), pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville, and Kevin Ezell, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, listen to the St. Stephen choir during the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism conference, held at Highview.

fellowship to other Jews, Cosby said.

Reluctantly, the church decided it would open the doors and let anyone in regardless of race or culture, Cosby said. "Some didn't like it. They were called Judaizers, but really they were nothing more than the sons and daughters of Jonah."

Paul reminded them in Galatians that "in the body of Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, bond nor free," Cosby said.

"This Jonah spirit has not died. The Jonah spirit is still with us," he added.

Cosby outlined three reasons to overcome the Jonah spirit:

■ *If the church does not go to Nineveh, Nineveh is coming to the church.* Because many churches have abdicated their responsibility to evangelize the world, the world is doing its own evangelizing with media and other ways that promote non-Christian values, Cosby said. "You cannot keep Nineveh within the bounds of Nineveh."

Cosby noted that when he started his ministry 20 years ago at St. Stephen, the community had night clubs and liquor stores on every corner. As the church grew, however, the night clubs and liquor stores shut down. The church purchased those properties, new houses have been built and crime has gone down, Cosby said. "God gave us the land of the Hittites, the Jebusites and the Bud lights."

■ *Everyone has lived in Nineveh.* "You can act like you're saved," Cosby said. "but there was a time when every last one of us was in Nineveh."

■ *God loves Nineveh.* "God loves the city, and we who are called by God must love who God loves," Cosby said. "We've got to reach out to Nineveh."

Cosby noted that God's love reaches to everyone regardless of race or nationality. He said the washing of God's love is like Clorox 2, "It's color safe."

"Get back, Jonah," he said. "There's room in God's church for me."

Fay: Sin of silence is costing America's souls

By David Winfrey
News Director

LOUISVILLE—The sin of silence is preventing the vast majority of Christians from sharing their faith, an author and evangelist told those attending the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism conference.

Bill Fay, author of "Share Jesus Without Fear," said a recent seminary study reported that 92 percent of Southern Baptists never share their Christian faith with anyone.

Fay said he regularly asks people to stand if they have shared their faith in the past year. "I have never been in a church where it's over 10 percent."

Contrasting with Cassie Bernall, the Columbine High School student who reportedly expressed faith in God before she was shot, Fay said most Christians are denying their faith by how they speak and behave.

Fay, self-proclaimed former crime boss and owner of a house of prostitution, said he initially scoffed at Christianity but was attracted to people who had the peace they found in Christ.

Those who tried to witness to him

were often mocked and antagonized," he said. "But if you went away believing you were a failure, you believed a lie."

Only 15 percent of all conversions come as a result of preaching or evangelistic crusade events, Fay said.

"But 85 percent of every conversion in your church comes when they hear the gospel an average of 7.6 times," he added. "And with a majority of our people choosing the sin of silence, can you understand why hundreds of thousands of churches in this country are shutting their doors? Because they're dead."

Fay stressed that the responsibility of Christians is to be obedient and tell others about their faith. It is up to the Holy Spirit to convict and convert, he added.

"As an evangelist, I have never led one person to Jesus Christ," he said. "Now I've been around a bunch of times when the Holy Spirit's done it."

The silence of Christians in America requires some tough questions, he added.

First: How many Christians are actually witnessing about their faith?

Second: Do Christians in America really believe that unless a person accepts Jesus as personal Savior he or she is damned to hell?

"Because if you really believe it, I wouldn't ask the first one: Where in the world is our urgency?"

Too many Christians think they are witnessing only by offering small comments about the gospel, such as "I go to a good church," Fay added.

"If you offer only tidbits of gospel, it never fills," he said. "Until they hear and understand the truth of the whole gospel, they do not become born anew, born again."

Fay said he fears God will remove his blessings from Southern Baptists if they continue in the sin of silence.

"If you become keepers of an aquarium instead of fishers of men, you are one step from a dead church," he said. "If we and our churches do not evangelize individually and collectively, our churches will fossilize."



Bill Fay

EVANGELISM

Internet technology just one more tool for sharing Christianity, speaker says

LOUISVILLE—Detailing the urgency of Internet evangelism, a research assistant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention said the ministry principle involved can be traced to the Apostle Paul.

Citing 1 Corinthians 9:22, Tom Johnston affirmed Paul's declaration that "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Johnston, a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, also is president of Evangelism Unlimited. He shared his vision of techno-evangelism during a small-group conference at last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference.

The Internet session was one of 15 resource conferences offered during the Feb. 28-29 event. Other conference topics ranged from "Witnessing to Jehovah's Witnesses at the Door" to "God's Special Plan for Children."

Johnston said the Internet is one means to spread the message of Jesus Christ. "Does the Internet shape value?" he asked. "Absolutely. We need to be there with the gospel."

Noting that some Christians are hesitant to use Internet technology because of pervasive pornographic sites and other negative influences on the Web, he said the Internet can be used in "a spiritual battle against a spiritual foe for spiritual results."

"The gospel never changes but the methods do," he said. He cited radio, television, telephones, Christian bulletin boards and the Internet as electronic means to proclaim the gospel.

"We need to keep on the cutting edge," he insisted, noting that Internet access allows "instant communication with one or millions of people."

Johnston said there are a variety of ways churches can use Web technology, ranging from static Web pages that list basic information about church programs and resources to interactive gospel presentations using high-tech graphics and sound.

He said other options include chat room evangelism, developing evangelistic video games, providing e-mail services to church members and uploading sermons and evangelistic tracts.

"If pastors could get a vision for putting their words on the Internet, that's fantastic," Johnston said. "I'm not saying Internet evangelism is going to win the world but it is a tool."

"Those who seize technology will flourish in the future," he added. "We need to seize technology for the sake of the gospel."

Evangelism a great way to celebrate Jesus, Johnson says

LOUISVILLE—The best way to celebrate Jesus is to focus on what Jesus celebrates, said Brad Johnson, a teaching pastor at Saddleback Community Church in southern California.

Celebrate Jesus 2000 was the theme for this year's evangelism conference and for an evangelism emphasis by Southern Baptists this year.

Johnson, former senior pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, noted that Jesus constantly was among sinners and that the Bible notes heaven rejoices when a non-Christian accepts Jesus as personal Savior.

Johnson said one of his favorite definitions of evangelism is: "Using every available means at every available time to reach every available person."

But, he said, many churches have bought into the myths that churches are preparing their people for evangelism and that most people become Christians through evangelistic preaching.

"We need our pews filled with evangelists. Then our churches will be evangelistic," Johnson said. He outlined four steps to make that happen:

■ Churches must be driven by the

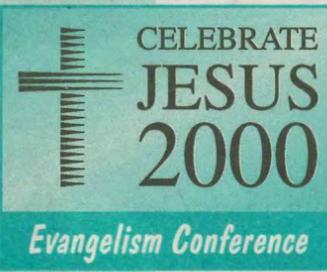
purpose of evangelism. All churches are driven by something, be it evangelism, tradition or money. All churches should ask themselves two questions, he said: "What's our business?" and "How's business?"

■ Understand and use one's own evangelistic style. "Not all of us are going to be a proclaimer," he said. "But I've found almost all of us can be an inviter." Johnson noted that a poll of non-Christians by researcher George Barna found that 25 percent of unchurched adults would go to church if a friend invited them. "Fifteen to 18 million adults are just waiting to be invited to our churches."

■ Christians must be willing to take strategic relational risks. Christians need to be able to make Jesus a part of their conversations with non-Christians, Johnson said. "Pastors, it starts at the top," he said, adding that pastors can't challenge their congregations to be evangelistic with integrity if they aren't willing to model evangelism.

■ Churches must partner with their members in evangelism. A church that wants to reach non-Christians must be willing to structure its meetings to be welcoming to them, Johnson said. He noted that connecting with non-Christians won't be the most comfortable actions for church members. "If you're mature in the Lord, please be mature enough to realize it's not all about you."

All churches should ask themselves two questions, Johnson said: "What's our business?" and "How's business?"



Hutchcraft: Think like missionaries to communicate with post-Christian America

By David Winfrey
News Director

LOUISVILLE—American Christianity has traveled as far as it can go safely and stands at a crossroads that requires both risk and offers unparalleled rewards, according to evangelism specialist Ron Hutchcraft.

"I am sensing what all of you are sensing: That there's a powerful wave coming and you better ride it or get buried by it because it's coming," Hutchcraft told those attending the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism conference, Feb. 28-29 at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville.

Hutchcraft, author, Christian radio host and regular speaker at Billy Graham training schools, noted that Asbury, Ky., was the site for one of the most recent spiritual awakenings. "God knows His way here and He may be fixing to do it again, and you're here for it."

But America today is a post-Christian culture, requiring new methods and risks to reach people who perceive they have no need of Jesus, Hutchcraft said.

"We no longer go to the mission field. We live in the mission field," he said. "We live in a culture where they say 'We used to believe that.'"

"The day of the local church is over, the day of the mission outpost is come," he added. "The challenge is to think missionary."

Hutchcraft outlined five imperatives for effective evangelism at the dawn of the 21st century:

■ **Communicate in non-religious language.** Hutchcraft noted that every missionary starts by going to language school. "It's understood that you don't just transmit the gospel. You translate the gospel into another language," he said. "Every missionary does this."

Phrases such as "praying to receive Jesus" are lost on non-Christians because the language doesn't make sense, he said. "We don't receive people. We receive gifts and UPS packages," he said. "Think lost."

Hutchcraft noted that in Jesus' parable of the sower and the seeds, the seed that grew represents those people who hear the word and understand it. "Could it be they're not rejecting our Savior, they're rejecting our vocabulary?"

■ **Connect with non-Christians where they are.** "Drowning people never go to the lifeguard station to be rescued," Hutchcraft said.

The difficulty is that non-Christians in America don't know the Bible, don't know there's a right or wrong and have no interest in religious activities, he added. "That means it's not going to be comfortable for us."

But Jesus modeled three ways to reach out to non-Christians, Hutchcraft said.

First, reach non-Christians on their turf. Examples of getting outside the walls of the church include Christmas programs at

the local theater instead of the sanctuary. "If you want to really rescue the dying, you connect where they are."

Second, reach non-Christians in their tribe, he said. There already are groups of people who work and meet together that Christians and the church can work with, Hutchcraft said. Examples include the parents tribe, the business and professional tribe and the youth tribe.

Third, reach non-Christians through their needs. "Sin is a non-issue to lost people today, but the results of sin are a huge issue to them," Hutchcraft said.

Hutchcraft often leads seminars for business professionals. Although these seminars are centered on the message of Christianity, they are promoted on addressing the issues important to non-Christians: peaceful living in a stressful world. "Start with the symptom, get to the disease and present the cure," he said. "To really reach the really lost, reach them with people they know, in a place where they feel comfortable, through an issue they care about, in a program they can relate to."

■ **Concentrate on Jesus.** When Jesus talked to the woman at the well, she started talking about religion but Jesus wasn't distracted, Hutchcraft noted.

"Do not get off on religious detours," he said. "Keep bringing it back to Jesus."

Today many people object to Christianity because of the hypocrisy of some Christians. But Jesus "didn't say

follow My followers. He said follow Me," Hutchcraft said. Concentrate on Jesus, and don't let them change the subject."

■ **Work together with other Christians.** Unity between and within churches is vital to rescuing non-Christians, Hutchcraft said. "Turf doesn't matter when people are dying," he said.

"You know why churches turn on their pastor and turn on their members? Because they've forgotten their mission," he added. "Someone said Christians are the only ones who form their firing squad in the circle. Some way to win a war."

Southern Baptists need other Christians and vice-versa, Hutchcraft said. "I don't know how many churches are in your community, but the correct answer is one," he said. "You're on the same rescue team."

■ **Create ambassadors for Christ.** Churches must equip members to share their faith in Jesus with their neighbors, co-workers and fellows students, Hutchcraft said.

"If the way to rescue the dying is to go where the dying are, guess who's already there?" he asked. Another mom.

Churches will know they are headed in this direction when they have more prayer requests for non-Christians than for health concerns, Hutchcraft added. "Here's my battle cry: Every believer a rescuer. Every unbeliever a chance," he said. "The secret is going to be if every believer represented by every church here will say 'I'm going to be a rescuer on my beach.'"

Play by play

"They come, often, because they've heard we have a cool band, or because of the light show or the smoke machine. But what they get is an encounter with God."

Victory Fellowship Music Minister Ty Tyler



BEYOND THE GRAVE Members of Victory Fellowship Church, near New Orleans, act out a school shooting for a play that has been presented every Friday since Oct. 29. Typically, 75 to 100 young people walk the aisle to the stage each week to become Christians, said Pastor Frank Bailey. (RNS photo)

Columbine-based Halloween drama still running 4 months later

By Bruce Nolan
Religion News Service

METAIRIE, La. (RNS)—Months after they seared the American consciousness as the embodiment of pure evil, the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., have been recast as a Christian morality tale.

Told in rock music and intense, chaotic video, the play has drawn thousands of young people to a church sanctuary in Metairie, La., for months of Friday nights.

Conceived originally as a one-weekend alternative to Halloween, "Beyond the Grave: The Class of 2000" is still running with the approach of spring. To the surprise of its creators, it still attracts 1,000 to 1,500 mostly young spectators to its weekly showings at Victory Fellowship Church in the New Orleans suburb.

What they get, many young people say, is church that does not feel like church, although "Beyond the Grave's" evangelical call to personal conversion is explicit.

Its use of video and music, thudding through a theater-quality sound system, speaks their language; its angst-ridden high school setting, where preps, geeks, Goths and Christians jostle for handholds on the social ladder, resonates with their world.

It has blood—blood pooling under sprawled bodies, blood spattering into shooters' faces, so much blood that parents with small children are warned before the lights go down.

And although it's from an original script fashioned by Victory Fellowship Music Minister Ty Tyler, it includes the

now-mythic martyrdom of Cassie Bernal, the Columbine High School student who some say declared her belief in Jesus Christ just before her killing in the school's library.

But with all its multimedia sophistication, "Beyond the Grave" has a traditional heart: It ends with a familiar altar call, in which audience members are asked at the play's end whether, as Bernal reportedly did before her death, they're prepared to give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Typically, 75 to 100 young people walk the aisle to the stage each Friday, said Frank Bailey, Victory Fellowship's pastor.

And every Friday dozens accept the church's invitation to don some church-provided jeans and T-shirts and accept baptism on the spot in a pool manned by Victory Fellowship staff ready to reap the harvest.

"Beyond the Grave" is both old and new—old in its traditional message, but also new in its attempt to appropriate Columbine as a teaching moment.

Although the Columbine shootings were a horror everywhere, they quickly acquired a special resonance among evangelical Christians. Four of the shooting victims were evangelical Christians, and Littleton's Trinity Christian Center, a nondenominational church, was host to four funerals broadcast live on CNN.

There, and at civic memorials after the tragedy that attracted tens of thousands, evangelical pastors forsook the politely ecumenical language of public grief and drove home the meaning of the event in their own terms: the overarching evil of popular culture, the necessity of personal salvation, the hero-

ism of Christian witness and the certainty of glory for those who hold firm to Jesus Christ.

In particular, Bernal's death has become celebrated as a touchstone of faith to be modeled by young Christians.

"I've been to lots of national youth conventions over the last year where Columbine is always brought up, usually in the context of some kind of role-playing," said Mike Yaconelli, founder of Youth Specialties, a for-profit ministry in El Cajon, Calif., that assists church youth ministers with seminars and resources. "And whenever that happens, kids immediately calm down and get serious. They connect to that."

A few years ago, similar morality plays might have used sudden death through a post-prom traffic accident as the lens through which to examine characters' life decisions.

One such staple is "Judgment House," a warhorse of the genre produced for years by and for teens at many churches, said Allen Jackson, associate professor of youth ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

But at Victory Fellowship, the crucible is Columbine.

The play premiered Oct. 29, and the church hasn't been able to close the production since, Tyler said. It's supported by audience donations.

The play will run through March 10, and perhaps longer, depending on demand, Bailey said. On that date in March, South African evangelist Rodney Howard Brown, who has expressed an interest in taking the play on tour with him nationally, will be in the audience.

Each Friday, shortly after 7:30 p.m.,

from the first moment Tyler on piano, a drummer and bassist begin banging out "They That Wait," audience members hit their feet in the church sanctuary, hands waving overhead or clapping to the beat.

With the lights down, the play begins with the hard fact, projected overhead, that since 1996 more than 100 students have been shot in their schools.

During the next 90 minutes, 25 to 30 members of Victory Fellowship's youth group act out quick scenes that introduce six diverse characters and sketch the tensions among cliques at the school.

Music from groups like Jars of Clay and The Crystal Method pounds away in the dark between set changes.

The shootings come in an explosion of on-stage gunfire, augmented by video clips shot next door at Victory Fellowship's school: quick cuts of screaming, panicked teenagers stalked by a handful of pitiless shooters.

Near the end, Bailey appears on stage in a series of short sermons, each setting the stage for the coming judgment about to unfold for each of six victims who have either reached, or fallen short of, heaven.

Audience members come for a variety of reasons, Tyler said. "They come, often, because they've heard we have a cool band, or because of the light show or the smoke machine," he said. "But what they get is an encounter with God."

"I thought it'd be boring," said Julian Sams, 14, who traveled from Slidell, La., to see the play. "Sometimes I'd go to sleep in church, but this was entertaining. Well, it was entertaining and serious, both."

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Blood linked to missing O'Hairs.** Texas investigators have linked bloodstains found in an Austin storage unit to the DNA of missing atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair's two children. O'Hair disappeared from her Austin home in September 1995, along with a son and adopted daughter. The latest evidence was revealed in a prosecutor's response to a motion by a suspect to get back property seized by the government last spring as part of its investigation.

■ **Methodists prepare for thorny issues.** As the nation's second largest Protestant denomination prepares to tackle thorny questions of gays and lesbians within church life, leaders of the United Methodist Church are urging church members to pray and fast for 40 days leading up to May's General Conference in Cleveland. The church, with 8.4 million members, has been wracked by internal division over the issue of gay marriage and whether or not the denomination should delete the church's position that homosexual acts are "incompatible with Christian teaching."

■ **Christian Coalition sues IRS.** The Christian Coalition has sued the Internal Revenue Service, claiming the federal

agency discriminated against the political organization by denying it tax-exempt status. The complaint charges the IRS gave "disparate treatment" to the coalition's application for tax-exempt status compared to "liberal" groups engaged in similar activities. The coalition also charges that IRS rules regarding exemptions are vague and unclear.

■ **Supremacist groups on rise in Northwest.** White supremacist groups are on the rise in Washington state and Oregon, culling new members from young people from the suburbs, according to a new report by a hate monitoring agency. In its annual "Hate by State" report, the coalition identified 52 white supremacist groups in the country's northwest region, Associated Press reported.

■ **eBay halts online auctioning of souls.** A New Mexico teen-ager sold his soul on the Internet recently and expects to get \$5 for it—if the bidder comes through with the money. According to press reports, the online auction giant eBay has put a stop to people trying to sell their eternal souls for a little extra cash because the existence of a soul is not something that can be

documented, and therefore sold. An eBay spokesman cautioned, however, that the company was not taking a position on whether or not souls exist. "You have to be in a position where you can deliver what you sell," said Kevin Pursglove. "We will leave the debate over the existence of the soul to the theologians."

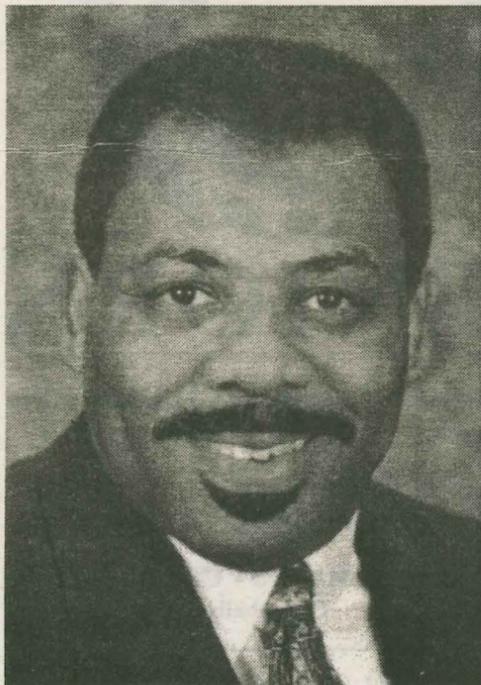
■ **Black churches to focus on AIDS.** Thousands of churches are expected to be holding services, workshops, concerts and other events this week to highlight the Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. Former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders is serving as the national spokesperson for the week-long effort organized by The Balm in Gilead, a New York-based group that works to encourage African-American churches to participate in AIDS-related programs. More than 7,500 churches are expected to take part in activities.

■ **Man sues library to distribute Bibles.** A Georgia man has sued a regional library system, claiming its refusal to allow him to distribute Bibles in its free literature area is unconstitutional. James Flournoy of Luthersville, Ga., has sought to display and

distribute small paperback New Testaments at the Manchester Public Library in Manchester, Ga. Flournoy is suing the Pine Mountain Regional Library System, along with its director and board of trustees. Flournoy's complaint alleges library officials have allowed a wide range of materials in the free literature area, including some newspapers and religious publications. The lawsuit argues that the library system's policy includes "vague and standardless guidelines" for library officials to follow when deciding whether material is "nonsectarian."

■ **Baptists ministering after shooting.** Pastors from two Southern Baptist churches are among those ministering to those affected by the fatal shooting of 6-year-old Kayla Rolland in Flint, Mich. Denzil Green, pastor of Galilean Baptist Church, is also chaplain of the Flint Police Department. Randy Wheeler, pastor of West Side Baptist Church in Flushing, said a number of the children at the elementary school where Rolland attended are participants in the church's AWANA program. "During our Wednesday night services, we plan on talking to the children and trying to dispel any fears they may have," Wheeler said.

*What does it take to break down barriers between people?
Come hear Christ's message of hope and reconciliation...*



Dr. Tony Evans

Thursday, March 9, 2000

**Canaan Baptist Church
2840 Hikes Lane, Louisville
7 p.m.**

With these special guests:

- Former U of L Basketball Standout Bryan Kaiser
- Dynamic Youth Speaker Andre Barnes
- Special Mass Choir

Dr. Tony Evans is senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas and one of the nation's leading speakers on the topic of racial reconciliation. His radio broadcast, "The Urban Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans" can be heard over 250 stations daily throughout the U.S. and in more than 40 countries worldwide.

This event sponsored by the Greater Louisville Tony Evans Crusade. Find out more about this upcoming event by dialing 502-635-1004 or check out the Crusade website at:

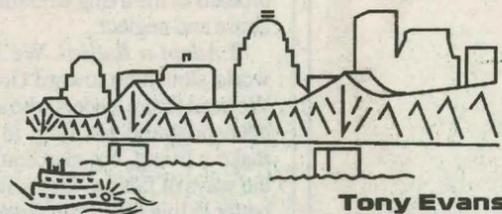
www.tecrusade.org

"I encourage you to be a part of the upcoming Greater Louisville Tony Evans Crusade and to attend this special pre-



crusade rally! I believe this a unique opportunity to come together as Christians across denominational and racial lines to share Christ's love with a community that desperately needs Him!"

*Dr. Bill Mackey
Executive Director
Kentucky Baptist Convention*



**Greater Louisville
Crusade**

Baptists mobilize to help flood-ravaged Mozambique

"Pray that Baptists will respond to their cry for help through prayers, offerings and willingness to serve them."

Missionary Dianne Randolph

By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

MAPUTO, Mozambique (BP)—One million people are homeless in flood-ravaged southern Mozambique, and Southern Baptists are mobilizing to help.

Southern Baptists in North Carolina and Texas dispatched a volunteer team Feb. 28 to set up water purification units and an emergency feeding kitchen for people forced from their homes by three weeks of heavy rains.

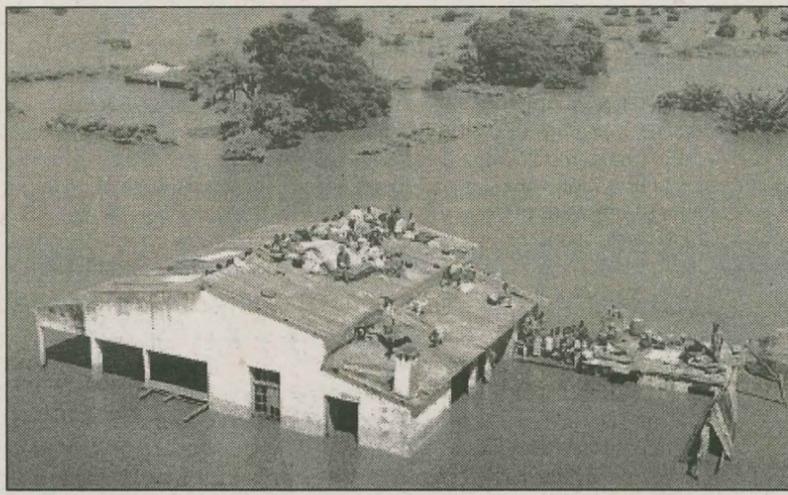
Those volunteers partnered with Southern Baptist missionaries and Baptists from Mozambique and South Africa to organize an immediate response to some of the most desperate needs.

A Southern Baptist International Mission Board assessment team planned to enter the area to identify ways Southern Baptists might help with long-term ministry evangelism projects, said Jim Brown, the board's human needs specialist.

The United States and the European Union mobilized military forces March 1 to help evacuate and feed 1 million people displaced by the disaster. Concern was heightened by a violent new storm that was about to dump even more wind and water on the region.

The current disaster was created by a cyclone that hit hard on the heels of two weeks of torrential rainfall. A second cyclone would destroy crumbling homes and throw people stranded on rooftops into the raging water, observers predicted.

The volunteer team planned to take



MOZAMBIQUE Victims of devastating floods wait to be airlifted from the roof tops of their homes west of Chokwe, Mozambique, near the mouth of the Limpopo river. Baptists are among the many agencies providing relief to the impoverished southern African nation hit by its worst floods in living memory. (Reuters/RNS photo)

three water purification units and an emergency feeding kitchen into Maputo, Mozambique, along with two teams of South African Baptist volunteers, said Clyde Berkley, an associate director of IMB work in southern Africa. Their work was to be facilitated by First Baptist Church in Maputo.

Missionaries Nancy Carley and Kris Tolar helped pack bread rolls and canned sardines into small food packets that were being sacked up in large trash bags and air-dropped to people stranded by the floods. One group was planning to make up family food packs that would take care of a small family for a week at a cost of about \$10.

Missionary Scott Flowers was working with a team from Baptist Youth of Southern Africa that was taking \$5,000 in Southern Baptist relief funds to purchase blankets and tarpaulins for people stranded in open country.

North Carolina volunteers Bob and Martha Mizelle and Roy and Shirley Smith were planning to deliver food supplies to a church in northern South

How to help:

■ Current prayer needs for Mozambique can be found on the International Mission Board's prayer line, (800) 395-PRAY.

■ Contributions for the relief effort in Mozambique can be sent to International Mission Board, Hunger and Relief Fund—Mozambique Flood Relief, Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Africa that was serving as a disaster shelter for flood victims there. That congregation's pastor and several church members would then take the food on foot across a river and over a mountain to reach people otherwise cut off from assistance.

The massive disaster has rocked a country only just beginning to recover from a ruinous civil war that ended in 1992, and the people need prayer, said missionary Dianne Randolph.

"The people of Mozambique have lost their homes, crops and members of their families," she said. "Pray that Baptists will respond to their cry for help through prayers, offerings and willingness to serve them."

Adoptions

Of what do you think when you hear the word, "adoption?" You probably think of the process of a couple adopting a child. As wonderful as that is, we Kentucky Baptists are fortunate to have multiple opportunities to become involved in another kind of special adoption through the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. By establishing a permanent endowment/trust fund, or contributing to an existing fund, you can adopt one or more of your favorite Baptist ministries. Let me suggest these financial adoption opportunities:

■ **Adopt a child/family.** Through Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children you can touch the lives of thousands of children from birth through college. These are not traditional orphans; they are orphans of the living who suffer from abuse and neglect.

■ **Adopt a student.** We live in a world slouching toward Gomorrah. We need future leaders who will have been prepared not only in how to make a living, but also equipped in the ways of faith so they will be able better to live their faith through their vocations. Providing scholarships for an education in a Christian values environment is a way to make a lasting difference in this world. The foundation administers funds for stu-

dents attending Campbellsville, Clear Creek, Cumberland, Georgetown, Mid Continent, Oneida and Southern Seminary/Boyce.

■ **Adopt a missionary/mission project.** Help ensure the future of state, national and international missions through the KBC Executive Board, SBC International Mission Board and North American Mission Board and/or Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

■ **Adopt a camper.** Many young people accept or rededicate their lives to Jesus at Cedar more or Jonathan Creek.

■ **Adopt a patient.** Assist the Christ-centered healing ministry of the five hospitals of Baptist Healthcare System.

■ **Adopt a news journal.** Help communicate information and activities of Baptists in Kentucky and around the world through the Western Recorder.

■ **Adopt an annuitant.** Demonstrate benevolence toward needy retired ministers and spouses through the SBC Annuity Board ministry.

Please give Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, and me the privilege to assist you in a financial adoption plan.

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

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

2000 SENIOR ADULT CELEBRATIONS SENIORS

April 25 - Owensboro
Bellevue Baptist Church

April 27 - Hopkinsville
First Baptist Church

May 11 - Lexington
Immanuel Baptist Church

May 16 - Whitesburg
First Baptist Church

May 18 - Campbellsville
Campbellsville University

FEATURING



Bill F. Mackey is Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



David Garrard, Minister to Children at St. Matthews Baptist Church, entertains with a mix of illusions.

\$7.00 for reservations made 2 weeks prior to event; \$10.00 at door and for reservations made less than 2 weeks prior • Cost includes lunch

For more information, contact:

The Family Ministry Department • Kentucky Baptist Convention
Toll Free 1-888-254-5704 or 502-254-4719
E-mail: patricia_clifford@kybaptist.org • Website: kybaptist.org

Nicaraguan relief work paying off, observer reports

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)—More than 235 houses have been built and more than 600 professions of faith have been recorded as a result of Baptist disaster relief work in Nicaragua.

Baptist conventions representing five states responded to needs in Nicaragua after Hurricane Mitch, said Tim Bearden, leader of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's missions awareness and involvement group.

"All of these statistics are important because people are out of the rain, people have come to know Jesus Christ and houses of worship have been left behind for people to be disciplined," he said.

Bearden traveled to Nicaragua to evaluate the work of representatives of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, Missouri Baptist Convention and the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Bearden said he found more than 180 volunteers have responded to the needs. Besides numerous construction teams, one Tennessee medical team treated 770 patients. Other results of the partnership effort include the distribution of 1,000 Bibles and more than 20 showings of the "Jesus" film.

Will pope's Jerusalem visit mar historic Beatitudes site?

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Israeli environmentalists are charging that construction work on the historic Mount of Beatitudes in preparation for the upcoming papal visit threatens to destroy the sacred area overlooking the Sea of Galilee.

The controversy centers on a site that has been preserved virtually untouched for the 2,000 years since Jesus gave His famous Sermon on the Mount.

Government contractors are working around the clock to level a portion of the rocky mountainside above the historic Church of the Beatitudes to build a huge amphitheater for the tens of thousands of pilgrims expected to attend a Mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II this month at the site.

Huge parking lots also are being built on dozens of acres of nearby land to accommodate the thousands of vehicles bringing pilgrims to the area. To clear the land, tons of huge basalt rocks have been removed from the mountain and dumped nearby.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, which raised the alarm over the work, said it wants the government to commit itself to repairing the damage to the mountain after the pope departs, adding it will file suit to ensure the scars aren't permanent.

But Prime Minister Ehud Barak's office, which is coordinating the work, has so far refused to issue any such commitment.

"We don't want to stop the Mass.

We want it to happen. But we want to repair the damage after it is created," said Yohanan Darom, director of the society's northern office.

"The Mount of Beatitudes is in an area that we call 'holy geography'—it's the area where Jesus walked, and there are layers of 2,000 years of history at least," Darom added. "It's ironic that for this holy Mass, we have to do so much damage. I'm sure that if the pope understood what was happening here, he wouldn't agree to it."

Darom said his biggest fear is the infrastructure work that has been undertaken for the papal visit will pave the way for real estate developers to build shopping centers, restaurants and hotels on the site.

A government spokesman dismissed the society's claims, saying the land would "repair itself" within a matter of months and there is no need to rehabilitate the site after the pope leaves.

The spokesman did say, however, a plan for a "day hotel" on one of the new parking lot sites apparently was winding its way through local planning committees.

The scenic mountain areas around the Sea of Galilee have been the subject of a fierce tug-of-war between developers who want to build on the area's prime real estate and environmentalists who want to preserve the landscape, covered with farm fields, flowers and natural bush as it was in biblical times.

Nigerians hope Christian-Muslim compromise will end bloodshed

KADUNA, Nigeria (RNS)—A week of bloodshed between Nigerian Muslims and Christians has led to a compromise between the central government and Muslim-dominated states in the north to withdraw a proposal to implement Islamic law in the northern state of Kaduna.

The traditional laws, collectively known as sharia, would—among other things—prohibit alcohol and force men and women to ride in separate public transportation. They also would have created criminal courts specifically for Muslims. Supporters said the courts would apply only to Muslims, but the country's Christians were fearful of the proposed laws.

A meeting Feb. 29 between the nation's predominantly Muslim northern provinces and largely Christian southern region came after 30 people were killed in the eastern city of Aba on Feb. 28, Associated Press reported.

Since ending 15 years of military rule last year, the central-western African country has been wracked by internal ethnic disputes. The agreement reached this week calls for areas with sharia laws to stop enforcing them and for states seeking to implement them to suspend those plans.

"To restore normalcy and create confidence in the troubled polity, it was agreed that, as far as the sharia issue is concerned, everyone will revert" to the legal system before sharia was implemented, said Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

The governor of the only state to have sharia laws, Ahmed Sani, said he would return to his northern province of Zamfara and abide by the agreement.

"As soon as I go back, I'm going to have a meeting of Muslim and Christian leaders ... to make them understand we need peace," Sani said.

Benning wins national scholarship

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College junior Jami Craiger Benning is co-recipient this year of the Shackleford/Martin Undergraduate Scholarship.

The scholarship, sponsored by Baptist Communicators Association, is presented annually to a college student pursuing a career in Baptist communications. Benning shared this year's scholarship with a student from Oklahoma State University.

Benning, the daughter of Jimmy and Linda Craiger of Partridge and the wife of Brent Benning of Moores Hill, Ind., is working on a major in communication arts and a minor in religion. Her dream is to work in gospel radio as an on-air personality, but she also would enjoy working as religion editor for a newspaper. Primarily, she wants God to use her and her talents in His service.

Benning already has experience in speaking to large groups. She was valedictorian of her graduating class at Whitesburg High School and spoke at graduation. She and her husband served as summer missionaries with Mountain Outreach in the summer of 1999. At the end of the summer they were asked to assemble a PowerPoint presentation describing

the summer's work. They presented their report to Cumberland's communication council and trustees and to the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention as part of Cumberland College's report.

During the academic year, Benning also works at the Cumberland College office of public information through our work-study program.

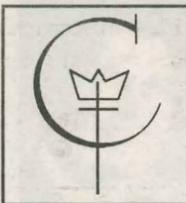
Her responsibilities include writing and editing press releases, some photography and preparing a weekly report of press clippings featuring Cumberland students, faculty and staff.

Benning always has been active in church and has served as a Sunday school teacher, children's church leader and vacation Bible school teacher since age 16. She also sings in the choir. As a high school student, she formed the Christian Crusaders Club that performed plays and ministered to fellow students.

We congratulate Benning on winning such a prestigious scholarship. We know God will continue to use her in a great way to communicate the gospel.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Such a big family

Having recently attended the wedding of an alumna of Glen Dale Children's Home and the Center for Independence, I think about all the services provided to this young lady over the years.

She lived at Glen Dale for more than 10 years. While there, she experienced stability and care and was able to come to terms with her troubled past.

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children continued to offer assistance through the Center for Independence, one of several non-residential intervention and support programs we call community services. We helped her learn how to budget, balance a checkbook, write a resume, handle a job interview and pursue college. We worked with her until she was 22 years old.

Today, at 27, she is a college graduate, manager of her own business, homeowner and newlywed! No one would ever believe that she, with her disturbed background, would be where she is today. As I sat at the wedding, I saw her former Glen Dale house parents and other KBHC staff who touched her life through the years. She was thrilled when she saw us.

The amazing part of the day for

me was the presence of her biological family. Her own father gave her away and her mother was there, too. That is a blessing in itself. The fact that she stayed at Glen Dale for 10 years tells us that reconciliation has not come easy for this family. But these broken relationships had mended enough for mom and dad to be part of their daughter's very special day. They were there, along with the family you and other KBHC supporters helped provide when times were tough and a bright future seemed out of the question for this bright young woman.

None of this was lost on our former KBHC kid. When I received a thank-you card from her for my wedding gift she wrote in closing: "How lucky I am to have such a

big family!" I hope you celebrate with us this changed life! Through your many gifts you gave her a chance for a better future and she grabbed onto it with both hands. Thank you!

Jeannette Stratton is community services administrator for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Road, Middletown, KY 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. KBHC's Internet address is: <http://www.iglou.com/kbhc/>

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Jeannette Stratton

Christian groups among those feeling forced out of Sudan

"We felt there is a risk here that humanitarian aid could not be objectively administered by southern Sudan."

Bruce Wilkinson, senior vice president for international programs at World Vision

By Shelvia Dancy
Religion News Service

KHARTOUM, Sudan (RNS)—Nearly a dozen international relief agencies have been expelled from southern Sudan after they refused to sign an agreement giving rebel groups in the area greater control of the agencies' operations.

World Vision, Oxfam, Care International and Doctors Without Borders are among the 11 groups who rejected the memorandum of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, a rebel group that controls much of the southern part of Sudan.

Sudan is torn by fighting between the Islamic government in the north and rebels in the predominantly animist and Christian south who want autonomy. In January the SPLA demanded all nongovernment agencies in the area sign a "memo of understanding" by March 1 or withdraw from the region.

Appeals from Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., and U.S. Special Envoy for Sudan Harry Johnston all failed to persuade rebels to reconsider the deadline and resume negotiations with the aid groups.

"It is regrettable that this difficult course of action became necessary," said Bruce Wilkinson, senior vice president for international programs at World Vision, which has been involved in Sudan for nearly two de-

acades and provided more than \$60 million in humanitarian aid. "But we felt there is a risk here that humanitarian aid could not be objectively administered by southern Sudan."

World Vision's parent organization, World Vision International, was one of several expelled aid agencies which issued a joint statement March 1 asking rebel officials to resume negotiations.

"We are deeply concerned about the effect that this crisis will have on the people of southern Sudan, now and in the future," read the statement, also signed by Save the Children UK, CARE, the Belgian arm of Oxfam, Vets Without Borders, the Carter Center and the Dutch branch of Doctors Without Borders. "We are determined to see negotiations re-started so that we can return to our humanitarian work in southern Sudan. It would be a positive thing to have an agreement that clarifies everybody's responsibilities when it comes to supplying aid."

On Feb. 29, World Vision finished evacuating its non-Sudanese staff in southern Sudan, about 50 people. The agency—which already has similar agreements of understanding in countries such as Mozambique and the Philippines—took issue with several terms of the rebel army's agreement, said Wilkinson, such as the imposition of new airport and road taxes as well as restrictions on whom the group

could hire and when relief workers could meet with Sudanese locals.

"We feel these issues need to be negotiated further," said Wilkinson. "We cannot accept the army's terms."

He said despite the withdrawal, World Vision intends to continue its humanitarian efforts through work with the United Nations, which is not required to sign the agreement, and with the aid of about 500 Sudanese nationals who remain in the area.

About 26 relief agencies have signed the rebel army's memorandum, including Catholic Relief Services, which spends about \$25 million each year for humanitarian aid in Sudan.

"The memo of understanding simply specifies all the terms that govern how a foreign nongovernment organization operates inside an area," said Michael Wiest, deputy executive director of Catholic Relief Services. "Our signing a document with these people doesn't have any political significance—it simply means we agree to these terms."

He said Catholic Relief Services has entered into about 80 similar agreements in countries such as Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda and Peru.

"It's quite routine," he said. "In many parts of the world there are de facto authorities, whether politically recognized or not, and if you're going to do business in those areas you have to at some level recognize

their jurisdiction. It's not always ideal, but it's the kind of situation you confront in the kind of work we do."

But Catholic Relief Services did have reservations, Wiest said.

"What's been most troublesome to us is that we need to get the approval of authorities to meet with local communities," he said. "For us, that borders on a civil liberty issue for the Sudanese people, their right of free association."

And Wiest said he sees potential problems in a requirement the rebel army approve any Sudanese national hired by the aid agency.

"It could be very problematic or not at all, it depends on how it's administered," said Wiest. "If they say we can't hire a person because he's not from the ethnic group they like or they don't like his religious or political views, then it would become a problem."

The expulsion of the aid groups comes as the White House considers using recently passed legislation, sponsored by Brownback, allowing it to provide food aid directly to rebels in southern Sudan. The rebels' decision to expel the aid groups will not advance that cause, said State Department spokesman James Rubin.

"At this point we have made no decision as to whether to use the authority provided by Congress," said Rubin. "I am not going to predict for the end of time what we will do with that authority, but I can state rather comfortably that this can't help their case."

A kind letter

From time to time I share some of the letters I receive from various friends of this ministry. The following is a portion of a much-appreciated letter that came last week:

"On Saturday, Jan. 29, 2000, we visited a friend at Oneida. We came with a lot of concerns, but left with a good feeling. We came to visit Jesse.

"Jesse was a student at the school where I work. He was a neighbor, only living a few miles up the road from us. I had wanted Jesse to be a student at Oneida, and I have kept up with him through a friend.

"She had told me of the trouble Jesse was in. So, my family and I came to see Jesse. It was a cold and rainy Saturday. We stopped a lady on campus and asked how we may locate Jesse. Immediately, she knew Jesse and his whereabouts. That impressed my daughter. She was amazed that the staff would know every student and exactly where to locate them!

"We had a good visit with Jesse. My husband is impressed with the farming program and how the students are required to work. That is so needed today! A man who works with Jesse in the pig barn talked with us about how Jesse is a good worker.

"I am impressed with how everyone cares for Jesse. I knew that Oneida was a caring Christian atmosphere. That is why I wanted Jesse to be there. But to actually see and experience that atmosphere is so encouraging. I do know that Jesse has been a challenge for each of you at Oneida, but I continually pray that each of you will not give up. Please, keep working with Jesse. He must grow up in loving Christian surroundings to learn to cope with our world.

"Jesse is proud and happy at Oneida. He talked

with us about his responsibilities. He shared with me where his special 'spot' was on Cemetery Hill where he likes to go to think. Jesse wants to be at Oneida.

"Our church visited Oneida many years ago, and we have been supporters of Oneida. But it was certainly a joy to visit and see the wonderful work that is being done with all of the students. Our prayers are with you, your work and Jesse daily."

Needless to say, a letter like this one sure can lift our spirits. The primary reason I shared this letter with you is because it addressed an area that is very important to us.

For years we have emphasized that one of our strengths is our size. We are big enough to have a full program in academics and co-curricular activities, but at the same time we are small enough to know most of our students. I wish I could tell you that I and my staff know all of our students by name, but I can't. I can tell you, however, that many of us know our students by name, and we call them by name many times each day.

If you have read this column very often, you have noticed the number of times we give special recognition, which sometimes may seem to be a little unimportant. For example, a few weeks ago I wrote about students who were given various farm awards.

Every quarter, we recognize our honor roll students in a chapel service. We try hard to think of our students, not as a group of 400 or so students, but as boys and girls with individual names, personalities and needs.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Kelly Hall to be renovated

For 60 years stately Kelly Hall has been the visual symbol of Clear Creek.

Constructed from 1938-42, the building represents the heritage of a generation that pioneered in efforts for a trained ministry, in an area where an educated ministry was frowned upon. The structure marked the climax of the life work of L.C. Kelly, who founded Clear Creek Mountain Preacher's School in 1926.

In 1936 the Board of Control for Clear Creek Springs determined the work of the Preacher's School and the summer camps could go no further without an adequate dormitory. The overseers approved a plan to build a "fire-proof building faced with native stone" containing 94 rooms.

In February 1938, Kelly and three students from the preacher's school traveled 2,100 miles and spoke 96 times seeking support from Kentucky Baptists to start construction.

At the conclusion of the trip Kelly wrote, "We thank God and take courage. A spirit of revival broke out in many places where our mountain men spoke. There must have been more than a doz-

en professions of faith resulting from the trip."

In 1942 R.P. Mahon, the preacher's school superintendent, wrote, "With our new equipment we can house the men and carry on all the work of the school without going outdoors for a single thing. Every Baptist in Kentucky can help by praying and paying and sending good men to the school. The Lord is on the giving hand. He moves men and women to offer to Him what they are and have."

After 60 years of use, Kelly Hall requires a complete renovation. The \$1,750,000 project gets underway on May 8. The result will provide adequate facilities for at least two more generations trained for ministry.

The plea of 1942 still is true, "Every Baptist in Kentucky can help by praying and paying."

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

BOOKS

Fresh Faith: What Happens When Real Faith Ignites God's People. Jim Cymbala. Zondervan Publishing, 1999. 218 pages. \$17.99 ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

In his sequel to "Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire," Jim Cymbala continues the story of the renewal at Brooklyn Tabernacle and the impact of that church on people in its community.

But Cymbala's purpose is not to sing the praises of his congregation, nor to present a model that other churches can follow. Rather, he writes to encourage church leaders.

Cymbala expresses a concern that too many pastors and church leaders have lost their first love. Indeed, they have allowed their first love to be stolen from them, he states. Cymbala observes that concerns for attendance, budgets, buildings and programs has diverted attention from the authentic mission of the church and their role in it. This leads to burnout, which not only robs pastors of their calling, but churches of their vitality.

Quoting Galatians 3:3, "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" Cymbala contends that many church leaders have "walked away from something vital." He encourages those leaders to remember that "true Christianity is ... to know Jesus and trust Him, to rely on Him."

Like his book, "Fresh Faith" is not so much an outline of a program that can be replicated. It is stories, mixed with biblical exegesis, which seek to encourage the church and its leaders to live authentic, spirit-directed lives. Like his first, it is simple, direct and challenging. *Jim Holladay*

A Baptist's Theology. Edited by Wayne Stacy. Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 1999. 212 pages. \$20. ♦♦♦♦

In days gone by, Baptist theology was championed by scholars teaching in seminaries, colleges and universities. The great names of Baptist theology were almost always attached to academic institutions.

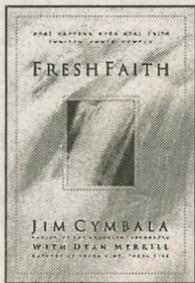
In recent decades, the tide shifted to mega-church pastors and tele-pastors who are seen by the masses of Baptists as the holders and guardians of Baptist thought.

With this book, Wayne Stacy provides a good effort at helping Baptist scholars recapture their rightful place in the church as the shapers of Baptist theology.

Each contributor to this volume is either a dean of a Baptist theological school or relates directly to such schools. Even though Stacy does not like the label, these Baptist theologues are decidedly moderate. But as Stacy points out in his introduction, moderate does not mean a lack of passion. Each article is well-written and organized and addresses a different aspect of Baptist theology.

Beginning with revelation and ending with eschatology, contributors Bill Leonard, Molly Marshall, William Hendricks, Alan Culpepper, Furman Hewitt, Wayne Stacy and others provide thoughtful articles that challenge and encourage church staff people and laity alike.

The articles are presented with the perspective that no one Baptist can speak for all Baptists on any subject. Yet, each voice anticipates stimulating a dialogue among other Baptists. *Wayne Hager*



More Than Houses: How Habitat for Humanity is Transforming Lives and Neighborhoods. Millard Fuller. Word Publishing, 2000. 303 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦

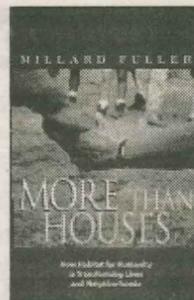
Since 1976, Habitat for Humanity has been building houses for needy families. Started in Americus, Ga., Habitat is now an international organization, and one Habitat house is completed in the world every 30 minutes.

Almost from the beginning, Habitat founder Millard Fuller has been writing about the incredible ministry. In this, his seventh book, he does more than share the basic facts, figures and basis for the Habitat ministry. This book shows how Habitat is doing more than just building houses but also is changing communities and individual lives.

Volunteers around the world submitted stories to Fuller for consideration. The stories you would expect are about the people who received Habitat houses.

The unexpected stories are the ways the lives of volunteers have been changed. People have discovered whole new ways of looking at life and their neighbors as they swing a hammer for Habitat. Fuller's book is really an appeal for people to allow the transforming power of Christ to work as they give of themselves to others.

This is an excellent book to put in the hands of potential volunteers and church leaders to help them see that they are not beginning an effort of charity, but one of life-transforming possibilities. People who have volunteered with Habitat will see themselves and others they have worked with in many of the stories. *Wayne Hager*



Escape from Church, Inc.: The Return of the Pastor-Shepherd. E. Glenn Wagner. Zondervan Publishing, 1999. 254 pages. \$16.99. ♦♦♦

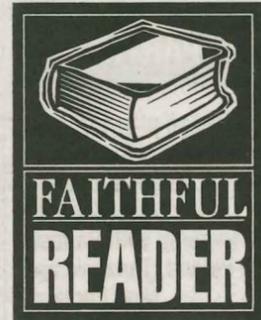
In the introduction to his book, Glenn Wagner states that "North America is the only continent where the church is not growing; it is not even keeping pace with population growth." Why? "It's because we have bought into gimmicks and programs. ... But we have forgotten the basics of what it means to be the church and do ministry."

Wagner's thesis is that the church is all about relationships—relationship with God, one another and a lost world. Within that web of relationships, the pastor's primary role is that of shepherd—one who looks after the sheep, seeks their welfare, protects them from harm and equips them for ministry. He argues that the Bible's guiding image for the pastor is that of a shepherd, therefore, pastors should build their core identity around the shepherd motif.

The strength of his work is his biblical examination of pastoral leadership and its application to the modern church. At times he is repetitive. Yet, when proposing a paradigm shift, perhaps repetition is necessary.

I also found his chapter on "The Call of God" to be an excellent description of what it means to be called, as well as an able defense of the necessity of "the call" for both the pastor and the church.

Wagner is to be commended for challenging the flood of contemporary advocates for the pastor as leader, prophet or visionary. While acknowledging these are part of the role, he contends the shepherd should be the guiding image. *Jim Holladay*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C., and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville. Holladay and Hager welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: docholladay01@aol.com or jwhager@surry.net

Faith impacts writing and writing challenges faith, John Grisham says

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

WACO, Texas (ABP)—Research for his best-selling book "The Chamber" changed John Grisham's opinion on the death penalty, he told a Baylor University audience the morning after Texas executed its ninth inmate this year.

Grisham made a rare public speech to a capacity crowd at Baylor Feb. 25 as part of an international conference on writing and spirituality. He spoke just hours after the execution of Betty Beets.

In preparation for writing "The Chamber," Grisham made frequent visits to death row at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. He got to know the guards, the inmates and the stories of some of the convicted killers' victims, he said.

During one of those death-chamber visits—a night visit not normally allowed—just he and a lone guard stood inside the tiny, antiseptic room.

"I read somewhere that you're a Christian," the guard said.

"Yes, I am," replied Grisham, a lifelong Southern Baptist and active layman.

"Do you think Jesus would approve of what we do here?" the guard asked.

The answer Grisham gave, he said, was different than what he would have said

before he started visiting death row. And it was different from what he had learned growing up in the Baptist church.

"No," Grisham said. "I don't think that's what Jesus taught."

Then the guard had another question, one Grisham said he never was asked before and never has been asked since.

"Well, then," the guard said, "who do you believe in—Jesus or the state of Mississippi?"

Grisham told the Baylor audience he now struggles with conflicted emotions on the death penalty. On one hand, he doesn't believe killing other humans is what Jesus taught, he said. "But at the same time, with every execution there's a sense that justice has been done, and I can't escape it."

The death-row experience is just one of many ways faith influences his writing of novels and writing novels challenges his faith, Grisham said.

He probably wouldn't even be a novelist if it weren't for a concern for social justice, he explained.

Early in his career as an attorney in Mississippi, he spent many hours hanging around the local courthouse and listening to trials, he said. One day he heard the testimony of a woman who had been raped, and the tragic story of what had happened as a result of that rape was so

compelling he felt he must write it down.

"I sat down late one night and wrote the first page of what would become 'A Time to Kill,'" he recalled. He never had written a book before and had no intentions of becoming a novelist.

"I wanted so desperately to capture this story," he recalled. "But I didn't know if I'd finish it."

After three years of late-night writing, he had a novel but couldn't find a publisher. He was rejected by about 15 publishers and the same number of literary agents, he said.

When he finally found an agent willing to shop the book around, it took the agent a full year to secure a publisher.

While waiting for "A Time to Kill" to get published, Grisham wrote his second book, "The Firm." After first reading the manuscript, his agent urged him to spice it up with more sex and profanity.

"I'm not going to do that," Grisham responded.

"Fine," the agent finally submitted. And then nothing happened for months. The agent, Grisham said, would not aggressively promote the book without the saucier content he thought was necessary.

Then, unknown to Grisham, someone stole a copy of the manuscript and took it to Hollywood. That changed everything.

Grisham recounted how he was called away from his duties as a Sunday school teacher to 3-year-olds one morning. He had just returned from a store where he had gone to pick up juice and crackers for the preschool department, when his wife told him to call his agent immediately.

A bidding war had begun over the movie rights to "The Firm," even though Grisham never had submitted it to a studio and the book had not been published. Grisham authorized his agent to take the highest bid, and then he went back to church.

The worship service that day lasted forever, Grisham recalled. After a long sermon, observance of the Lord's Supper and three baby dedications, he arrived home at 12:30 p.m. and found the telephone ringing. It was his agent. The movie rights had been sold for \$600,000.

Though life forever changed since that moment, Grisham has maintained a somewhat normal lifestyle, volunteering as commissioner of his community's Little League and participating in mission trips to Central America.

He is careful to distinguish himself as a Christian who happens to be a writer rather than a writer of Christian literature. Still, faith does influence his writing, although "you can't preach too much" in popular fiction, he admitted.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ A new church in Framingham, Mass., that is moving to a new location this week. The church plans its first worship service for Easter, according to church planters Richard Henry and Vinnie Cappetta.

■ Four students needed to work in Boston this summer planting churches.

■ Missionary Pauline Eardensohn and a Tanzanian Baptist who feel an increasing burden to develop stronger ministries to children in Mbeya, Tanzania. A recent children's rally drew 200 children.

■ Students in Tanzania involved in theological education by extension as they prepare to be leaders in local churches.

■ Leaders who are preparing to lead a True Love Waits seminar, March 17-19 in Tanzania.

■ Baptist students in Warsaw, Poland, who are concentrating evangelistic efforts on one college dorm in the city. "Pray for openness of the dorm directors for the work being done in the dorm, for the use of the large room and for permission to have activities there," a missionary writes.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Burton Memorial Church will host an Experiencing God weekend March 10-12 for all ages. The first session will begin March 10 at 6:45 p.m. To pre-register, call (270) 842-1931. **Tom Cummings** is pastor.

Living Hope Church will host its Easter pageant April 12 and 14-16. For information and tickets, call (270) 843-9462. **Dave Love** is minister of music.

■ **BURLINGTON**—**James Godsey**, 71, former pastor of Burlington Baptist Church for 25 years, died Feb. 23. Godsey also was pastor of

Dover Church in Shelby County, Pleasant Hill Church in Somerset and Loyall Church in Harlan County.

■ **EAST BERNSTADT**—East Bernstadt Church will host the Laurel River Baptist Association evangelism rally March 20 at 7 p.m. **Bill Mackey**, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will be the guest preacher. For more information, call (606) 864-9441. **Roy Faulkner** is director of missions.

■ **HARRODSBURG**—**Lewis Walter**, pastor of Pioneer Church, will retire March 12. A retirement

luncheon for Walters and his wife, **Pat**, will follow morning services. For information, call (606) 734-2821. Walter will be available for supply, interims and revivals. To reach him, call (606) 734-5787.

■ **LEXINGTON**—South Elkhorn Church called **Phil Schultz** as pastor. Schultz previously served as a chaplain at a rescue mission in Pennsylvania. **Greg Waltermire** served as interim pastor.

■ **LONDON**—East Pittsburg Church called **James Reese** as pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Beechwood Church will host revival services March 15-19. **Kirk Rowe** will be the evangelist. For information, call (501) 895-3439. **Robert Blackburn** is pastor.

John White, minister of music and worship arts at St. Matthews Church, has resigned to accept a similar position with a church in Richmond. **Les Hollon** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—First Church will host a conference for parents, children and youth workers and youth March 25, 8 a.m.-4:15 p.m. Conference sessions are for parents, Sunday school, discipleship leaders, adult volunteers, ministers to students and pre-teens and teenagers. For reservation information, call (270)442-2728. **Kevin McCallon** is pastor.

■ **WHITLEY CITY**—First Church will host revival services March 12-15. **Bill Jagers** will be the evangelist. For information, call (606) 376-2418.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and youth. Please send resumé to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 506, Hindman, KY 41822, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Growing church 12 miles north of Bowling Green. Send resumé to: Dr. Tom Stokes, Oakland Baptist Church, PO Box 154, Oakland, KY 42159. Or call (270) 563-4011.

SEEKING: Youth minister for a vibrant, growing suburban church. Youth group of 80+ has significant opportunity for growth. Seminary degree required. Send resumé and cover letter indicating general philosophy of youth ministry to: First Baptist Church of Newport News, 12716 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, VA 23606. Or submit documents via e-mail by sending them to staff@fbcnn.org.

SEEKING: Pastor of lay ministries and pastoral care to coordinate, supervise and provide leadership and encouragement to all lay ministries of the church. Also, to provide training and serve as a resource for ministries whose responsibilities are to provide care for those with various spiritual, emotional and physical needs. Send resumé with references to: Personnel Committee, Living Hope Baptist Church, 1805 Western Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42104. For church profile: www.lhbg.org.

SEEKING: FBC, Bronston, Ky., is prayerfully seeking applications for pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, FBC, 401 Highway 790, Bronston, KY 42518.

SEEKING: Full-time youth pastor for Lake View Baptist Church, 320 Drake Road, Fairview Heights, IL 62208 (St. Louis area). Contact person: Nancy Hodge, (618) 235-4000. Fax resumé to (618) 235-9828.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and education. Comprehensive benefits package. Experience preferred but not mandatory. Send resumé to: Pleasant View Baptist Church, 1834 U.S. 70E, Morganton, NC 28655, or fax to (828) 437-2103.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Piney Grove Baptist Church, PO Box 1563, Corbin, KY 40701, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, West Covington Baptist Church, 1003 Highway Ave., Covington, KY 41011.

SEEKING: New Hope Baptist Church, a small, rural, conservative (KJV) Eastern Kentucky church, is searching for a bivocational pastor. Contact: Pulpit Committee, PO Box 62, West Liberty, KY 41472. Stephen Howard, (606) 743-7437.

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister. Send resumé to Jeff Anders, Eastern Gate Baptist Church, PO Box 6686, Shepherdsville, KY 40165.

SEEKING: First Baptist, Taylorsville, seeks energetic, self-motivated minister of youth and young adults (full-time). Prefer college and/or seminary training. Send resumé with references to: Youth Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 446, Taylorsville, KY 40071.

SEEKING: Full-time secretary/office assistant. Self-starter to assist with desktop publishing (newsletters, flyers, brochures, programs, etc.) and other clerical work. Responsible for bulk mailings several times a year. Salary plus benefits (health and life insurance, retirement). Knowledge of Southern Baptist churches helpful. Send resumé and samples of publishing work to: Brenda Price, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, PO Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253-6569.

SEEKING: Allen/Monroe Association has an opening for director of missions. Resumés will be accepted until April 1. Please send resumé to: Doug Cain, 3541 Finney Road, Glasgow, KY 42141.

SEEKING: First Baptist, Shepherdsville, is looking for a half-time minister of youth—great bivocational or seminary student position. Contact: Personnel Committee, FBCS, 238 Frank E. Simon Ave., Shepherdsville, KY 40165. (502) 955-7372.

SEEKING: Edgewood Baptist Church of Nicholasville, Ky., is receiving resumés for the ministry position of minister of youth and education. Please forward resumés to: Kevin Lee, 717 South Main St., Nicholasville, KY 40356.

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.

FOR SALE: Used diesel school-buses, automatic transmission, air brakes, 65-passenger. Call Fisher Buses at (502) 267-5191 or e-mail Fisher Buses@aol.com.

Kentucky magician warns against world's sinful illusions

ST. LOUIS—As a performance magician, Louisville minister David Garrard knows first-hand not to take everything at face value.

Last month he took that message to Missouri Baptist College as guest speaker for the school's Christian scholar lecture program.

Many speakers open with clever anecdotes or vivid illustration, but Garrard grabbed students' attention by shredding a newspaper.

Every eye watched carefully as he folded the pieces and then opened a whole newspaper. After using illusions to build rapport with the students, he hit them with his message, "Dancing with Deception."

Garrard encouraged discernment and skepticism against the sinful "illusions" of the world. He exposed myths about phony psychics, horoscopes and other false supernatural claims. The speaker/performer warned Christians to guard against subtle deceptions that can manipulate someone before he or she realizes it.

"A simple interest often leads to involvement, first hand-in-hand," said Garrard, a minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. "Then suddenly, almost before we know it, we find ourselves in a

close embrace, and the next thing we know, we are dancing cheek to cheek."

Student Sarah Hayes said, "It was eye opening to see how easily we are deceived. I found it interesting that a master of illusion was the one to expose the father of all lies."

Garrard has used the entertainment of magic to delivering a gospel message for more than 30 years.

Garrard's father was a Baptist minister who enticed his son to magic with his own pastime of illusions. The younger Garrard developed this hobby at an early age, but he dreamed of following his father's footsteps into the ministry.

Subjects like magic once were taboo in Christian circles. But Garrard's presentations show how illusion and ministry can go hand in hand as he speaks in churches, conventions and business settings across the nation.

He also uses his talent as a subtle evangelistic tool when he entertains at corporate functions and seminars.

"As Christians, we need to realize if we allow anything or anyone to become a substitute for God and our dependence upon Him, we are dancing with deception," he said. "And that kind of dance is always deadly."

City reverses limit on church's work with poor

PORTLAND, Ore. (RNS)—The Portland, Ore., City Council voted unanimously last week to overturn an attendance limit put on a United Methodist church whose feeding program for the poor has sparked controversy.

The attendance limit had drawn attention from many people concerned about constitutional issues involving government entanglement with religion.

"It was a dumb mistake," City Commissioner Charlie Hales said about the January decision by city hearings officer Elizabeth Normand. "It's not a legal issue. It's a common-sense issue."

Normand's ruling had placed a limit of 70 people on those who could attend worship services. It also placed conditions on the operation of the church's nighttime shel-

ter, day-care center and Indo-Chinese Socialization Center.

"We are not saying this population should not be served," said neighbor Lisa Long. "We are saying this population should not be served access from our public park and our elementary school."

The church presented a plan to address concerns of the neighbors and the council used it as the basis for negotiations between church members and residents, Associated Press reported.

The plan calls for the church to provide access to its key church contacts and decision-makers, enforce zero tolerance of disruptive behavior, increase volunteer foot patrols around the neighborhood during the meal program and develop guidelines for providing services to poor and transient people.

PEOPLE

Oklahoma City chaplain 'retires' to train others

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—A lead chaplain during the Oklahoma City bombing has taken early retirement to train others for such disaster counseling.

At the time of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City April 19, 1995, Joe Williams was director of chaplaincy for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and heavily involved in chaplaincy work himself.

After the bombing, in addition to his work at the Baptist building, Williams became chaplain for people in crisis across Oklahoma and the nation. That's one of the reasons he's retiring a few years earlier than planned.

"The bombing changed my life," Williams said. He added that because he has become so involved with people who have been through crisis, he is comfortable relating with them.

Williams, 64, who retired March 1, has established the Crisis Intervention Institute, which will conduct seminars and training in traumatology, compassion fatigue, disaster preparedness and response to violence.

Before the bombing, Williams was busy with chaplaincy programs in the military, health care, institutions, business and industry and law enforcement. His workload has increased to include organizing and helping victims, families and rescue and recovery personnel cope with disasters.

He has organized workshops and seminars on crisis intervention. In the past two years, as violence erupted on school campuses, he has spoken around the country on preparation for disaster.

Williams recalled that after the federal building bombing, he checked in at the site with the FBI command center, met with Oklahoma City police chaplain Jack Poe, organized the work briefly and then went into the "pit" where rescue workers were carrying out bodies and body parts.

"We assigned at least two chaplains to the pit for a 'ministry of presence' as long as they were bringing out victims," Williams recalled.

He worked at the bombsite 12 to 14 hours a day for 19 days.

Besides coordinating 225 chaplains, Williams made regular calls at the command center that housed all federal agencies. He also was involved in debriefing sessions for recovery personnel and FBI agents.

"I never experienced the result of people praying for me like I did at that time," Williams noted. "I went to bed late, and woke up refreshed at 6 a.m. Only prayer could have done that."

For information about the Crisis Intervention Institute, call (405) 848-3139, or e-mail jwilliams6319@cs.com.

Seminary, penitentiary team up for ministry

By Shannon Baker
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

ANGOLA, La. (BP)—As the Louisiana State Penitentiary inmates sang, their faces shined.

With hands raised toward heaven, the men clad in black gowns and caps celebrated the first four-year graduation service ever to be held at the Angola prison.

"I'm trading my sorrows," they sang. "I'm trading my shame. I'm laying them down for the joy of the Lord."

Trading as many as two to four years of intensive biblical studies in exchange for diplomas adorned with their names, these 21 inmates received undergraduate degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Angola extension center, set amid 18,000 acres of farmland enclosed by barbed wire and steel bars, is one of 16 centers the seminary operates.

The center was started in 1995 after hundreds of prisoners completed the "Experiencing God" Bible study and wanted more education to prepare themselves for ministering within prison congregations.

"The extension center at Angola was birthed out of a dream to reach our entire state of Louisiana for Christ," said Thomas Strong, dean of the seminary's college of undergraduate studies.

"The students who graduated are men whose faith in Christ is genuine and who are determined to reach the world in which they now find themselves for Christ," Strong noted.

"In here, you cannot fake Christianity," said inmate graduate John Sheehan. "People are watching 24 hours a day."

Now with more than 100 students, the seminary program benefits not just graduates, but the rest of the prison population, Sheehan said. "Angola is probably one of the best-evangelized prisons, but it needs people to be shepherds."

"Welcome to the place where men are not ashamed of the gospel, to be judged, to agree, to repent and see God's grace," said John Robson, director of the Angola extension center, at the ceremony's beginning. "Welcome to a place where men pray by giving up their struggle and center down and rest in Him."

Seminary president Chuck Kelly

told graduates and family members, "I have told your story everywhere I have been."

Kelley reminded the prisoners that most of the second half of Paul's ministry was in a prison cell. "His most significant work, including his letters written to the outside that became a large portion of the New Testament, occurred when he was in prison."

Often known as one of the nation's bloodiest prisons, this maximum-security facility has more than 5,000 prisoners who face the daily grind of living out their sentences, 85 percent of whom will never walk out of Angola alive.

Joseph Stevenson, a seminary graduate and an inmate for 22 years who himself is serving a life sentence, said he has seen the prison go from a "bloody prison to what we see today," pointing to the culmination of the hard work and God's direction in the lives of seminary graduates.

Michael Canady, strategy coordination director for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, summarized the Angola graduation in these words: "On this momentous occasion, we are seeing lives changing, all because of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"In here, you cannot fake Christianity. People are watching 24 hours a day."

Inmate John Sheehan, a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's extension center at the Louisiana State Penitentiary

Volunteer helps repair parsonage, then God calls

By Todd Deaton
South Carolina Baptist Courier

CHESTER, S.C. (BP)—After a mission trip to renovate a parsonage, a layman later discovered he had been working on his future home.

Curtis Marshall, a veteran schoolteacher of 31 years, went with a construction team from First Baptist Church of Duncan, S.C., to renovate a rural church's parsonage near Chester, S.C., a church facing difficult times.

Marshall recalled joking with the mission project's leader, Monty Sanders, "Who in the world would live in this mess?"

When the work was completed, God had a surprise: Marshall would.

"There was an attraction," Marshall recalled. Orrs Baptist Church reminded him of one in Tennessee he had attended while in college. "As I met more people from Orrs Church, the Lord seemed to be saying, 'Say something to somebody.'"

One night during a prayer service back at First Baptist, he did. Marshall approached Linda Clark, wife of the pastor. She had grown up in the Orrs church, where her grandmother is a member. "Do you think the folks at Orrs would consider an old, worn-out schoolteacher?" Marshall asked.

"I can't think of anyone who I'd want more to be my grandmother's pastor," she replied.

After speaking with Orrs' deacon chairman, Larry Wilson, Marshall was called in June 1998.

"I don't know what type of pastor's wife I'll make," Marshall's wife, Joan, told him, "but if you feel God is calling you, I'll go."

Mrs. Marshall has adjusted well, her husband said, citing an experience from her visit to a hospitalized church member who voiced concern that his crop of corn might ruin in the field. The next day, the member's wife was surprised when Mrs. Marshall came to their home to "pull and put up" the corn.

Early on, the Marshalls were interested in being missionaries and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. But they settled in Duncan and took teaching positions.

Marshall has begun completing his seminary education. "I felt the Lord was saying, 'You need to finish something you started a long time ago.'"

Since his arrival at Orrs Baptist, worship attendance has grown to 75, with 15 additions, ranging in age from 5 to 70. Marshall has restored the Sunday night discipleship program, offering two "Experiencing God" classes and TeamKid.

"I really enjoy seeing the excitement of the people," Marshall said. "I see them doing things that indicate they believe that God has them here for a reason—to reach the people of Chester for Christ."

"The people at Orrs are a good and caring congregation," he added. "They just needed someone to go and love them."

'Stealth' mission effort recruits women to reach unreached

By Eric Gorski
Religion News Service

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (RNS)—They are stealth missionaries, often cloaking their work in secular names, sometimes not telling the whole truth to slip out of their countries and meet with allies in the cause.

Their devout belief in spreading the Christian gospel unites them, but so does something else: their gender.

A movement to evangelize some of the least Christian countries on Earth is relying heavily on women as foot soldiers. About 30 women from far-flung corners of the globe met recently in Colorado Springs, invited by a local church to speak to Western women about evangelism efforts in their countries.

Sponsored by New Life Church, the second annual Women's Summit on the Window drew 300 U.S. women seeking to network with their contemporaries from a region called the "10/40 window." The area extends across northern Africa and Asia roughly 10 to 40 degrees above the equator. The region spans 61 nations and is mostly populated by Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and animistic tribalists.

The focus on women is a calculated strategy. The rationale is that it's hard to reach men in these countries because their livelihoods often hinge on loyalty to established religions, said Tricia Langley, outreach director at New Life Church. If women and children are won to faith in Christ, the thinking goes, ultimately they can

influence the men.

But there's an irony to the effort: Women are regarded as second-class citizens in some of these nations. The evangelism, then, is often subtle: sharing with a husband over dinner or leading by example.

"Our culture suppresses women, though we have so much potential and talent," said one woman from India who ministers to prostitutes. She asked not to be named for fear of reprisal back home.

"I feel if the women are reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, we will be a mighty instrument."

The conference aimed "to marry the passion of the East with the financial resources of the West to create a synergy to propel the gospel," Langley said.

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