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FOR THE RECORD

Baptists

Many people are looking to see whether Texas Baptists will alter their relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention. *Page 2.*

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College students from Kentucky recently returned from teaching True Love Waits material to Ghana youth. *Page 3.*

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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, July 19

ACLU sues state over monument display for Ten Commandments

By Art Toalston
Baptist Press

FRANKFORT (BP)—A lawsuit to block a 7-foot-tall Ten Commandments monument from the Kentucky capitol grounds has been filed by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The July 10 ACLU filing takes aim at a resolution passed by the Kentucky legislature to permanently display the monument just behind the capitol building in Frankfort.

An ordained Southern Baptist minister, Democratic Rep. Tom Riner of Louisville, authored the amended version of the legislation that eventually was passed in April by state lawmakers.

A minister identified by the ACLU as James Jerrell Greenlee, with credentials in both the Southern Baptist and American Baptist conventions, was one of three Protestant ministers (the others being a United Methodist and a Presbyterian) and a rabbi who are plaintiffs for the lawsuit, which was filed in U.S. District Court in Frankfort.

In comments to the Louisville Courier-Journal, Riner described the ACLU lawsuit as "part of their systematic campaign over the course of 30 years to denigrate God in the classroom and public life."

"They (the ACLU) are going to continue in the courtroom, basically, until they succeed in the emasculation of any heritage that has spiritual roots," Riner said.

Courts in four states have upheld Ten Commandments postings in public places, Riner told the Lexington Herald-Leader, predicting that Kentucky's law also can withstand a court challenge.

Kentucky has been a Ten Commandments battleground since 1980, when the U.S. Supreme Court's *Stone v. Graham* decision invalidated state legislation requiring Ten Commandments postings in public schools.

"This (legislation) is not an attempt to promote religion. It's an attempt to educate people as to the origins of our laws," Riner told the Lexington newspaper. "We want our children and our children's children to know that these laws didn't just come from thin air."

Kentucky Senate Joint Resolution 57 calls for the Ten Commandment monument's placement at the capitol "in order to remind Kentuckians of the biblical foundations of the laws of the Commonwealth."

Greenlee, the Baptist plaintiff, was not quoted by the newspapers. *See ACLU sues state ..., page 3*

Should your child be reading Harry Potter?

NEW YORK—As Harry Potter books continue to fly off the presses and store shelves, evangelical Christians continue to debate whether their children should be a part of the hot-trend since Pokémon.

Para-church groups Focus on the Family and American Family Association have led the call for caution on the books by English author J.K. Rowling.

Meanwhile, Christianity Today magazine and Christian author and Prison Fellowship Director Charles Colson have praised the mystical series.

Regardless of where one stands, the phenomenon has been hard to miss and will only get harder.

On July 8, Scholastic Publishers released "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," the fourth of a planned seven-book series.

The first printing of the latest in-

stallment totaled 5.3 million, with nearly 400,000 copies sold worldwide by Amazon.com before publication, making it the biggest-selling book in e-retail history, a spokesman for the Internet bookseller told the Washington Post. The Barnes & Noble chain had 360,000 orders and expected to break records for first-day and first-week sales for any book, *The Post* continued.

Worldwide, 30 million copies of the three earlier books are in print in 33 languages.

It's not just the book's release that is forcing Christians to deal with the overarching occult themes in the series about a fictional teenager who attends a school for witchcraft and wizardry.

A movie from Warner Bros. will begin production next year in England and, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, big profits are envisioned from se-

quels, TV broadcast rights, cartoon spin-offs, home video sales, theme park rides and interactive games. Nearly 50 deals with toy makers, worth \$1 billion, already have been cut, according to the *Washington Post*.

But it is the wizard part that is the problem for the evangelical Christian community, which holds that sorcery and witchcraft are real, malignant and not to be trifled with.

The American Family Association, in a news release, described the "Harry Potter" series as "books that promote witchcraft and wizardry."

But, the Donald Wildmon-led AFA likewise noted, "within the conservative community, there are varying opinions on whether Christians should be concerned about the content. ... Since the books first came on the market, many Christians have voiced strong objection to their use of magic and the occult and its frightening passages. But others disagree."

See Potter series concerns ..., page 12



Friend or foe?



SEWING SEEDS Southern Baptist missionary Kim Davis shows women how to operate the hand-cranked sewing machines used in an outreach ministry in Epworth, Zimbabwe. In addition to learning skills that help them provide for their families, the women hear Bible stories that tell about God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ. About 70 women have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior, and the local church has grown in size and spun off a new preaching point. *Story on page 11. (BP photo by Ray Davis)*

IRS issues election-year warning to churches

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Churches and other tax-exempt organizations should keep voter-education efforts within Internal Revenue Service guidelines and must refrain from participating on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

That was the message delivered earlier this month in an IRS advisory to charities.

The IRS stated that 501(c)(3) organizations, including churches, cannot endorse or oppose any candidates for public office. They also may not "en-

gage in fund raising, distribute statements, or become involved in any other activities that may be beneficial or detrimental to any candidate."

But, the IRS noted that the impropriety of such activity depends on the facts and circumstances in each case. "For example, organizations may sponsor debates or forums to educate voters. If the debate or forum shows a preference for or against a certain candidate, however, it becomes a prohibited activity," the IRS advisory stated. Similar election-year advisories were issued in 1992 and 1996.

If found in violation of improper political activity, a church or other charitable organization could lose its tax-exempt status or it could be subjected to an excise tax on the amount of money spent on the activity.

In cases of flagrant violation of the law, the IRS warned that it has authority to make an "immediate determination and assessment of tax."

In addition, contributions to organizations that lose their tax-exempt status because of political activities are not deductible by donors for federal income tax purposes.

"The BGCT will work with those who share our vision, our values and our commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible."

Charles Wade, executive director, Baptist General Convention of Texas

Texas Baptist leaders evaluate ties to SBC

DALLAS (ABP)—The Baptist General Convention of Texas will not "split" from the Southern Baptist Convention, because the two autonomous Baptist conventions never have been joined, according to Marv Knox, editor of the Texas Baptist Standard.

However, a significant change in relationships between the BGCT and SBC seems likely, Knox wrote in a July 10 editorial titled "Will the BGCT Split from the SBC?"

Meanwhile, one of Texas Baptists' largest congregations is scheduled to vote July 23 whether to align with the conservative Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. The 17,500-member Prestonwood Baptist Church of Dallas is expected to wait until after the BGCT's annual meeting in October to determine whether to continue the church's relationship with the state convention, according to Pastor Jack Graham.

The future relationship between the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the SBC has been the topic of nationwide speculation since messengers to the SBC annual meeting adopted a revised faith statement June 14. Several Texas Baptists, including BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade, were unsuccessful in attempts to amend the faith statement to make it more closely resemble the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message.

Texas Baptists last November explicitly rejected a new article on the family added by the SBC in 1998.

Talk of a schism between Texas

Baptists and the SBC reached a high point in the weeks immediately after the SBC annual meeting. The issue was given further steam by a front-page article in the Dallas Morning News June 24 carrying the headline "Southern Baptist May Face Schism: Texas Moderates May Leave National Group."

That article, which noted Texas Baptists gave more than \$45 million to SBC causes in 1999, was picked up by national news services and reprinted in papers from coast to coast.

Writing partly in response to questions raised by the Dallas Morning News article, Knox asserted, "An absolute and cataclysmic split is not imminent."

"Texans who want to continue to support the SBC will have an opportunity to do so," predicted Knox, a former editor of the Western Recorder. "And, given the recent initiatives taken by the SBC, a sobering and significant change in the relationship between the conventions seems ultimately probable."

But even in the most dramatic scenario, the result could not properly be called a "split," Knox said. "According to Baptist polity—the way we conduct our business and relate to each other—neither group owns or controls the other. Baptist conventions voluntarily affiliate with one another to accomplish agreed-upon purposes. But neither is over or under the other in denominational hierarchy."

Knox acknowledged several BGCT study committees currently are examining certain aspects of how Texas Baptists relate to other Baptist mission

boards and theological schools. While these committees could produce recommendations about changes in funding for SBC causes, he said, such recommendations are not likely to be ready in time to present to the BGCT annual session in Corpus Christi, Texas, Oct. 30-31.

In an earlier statement, Wade made similar points to Knox's, asserting that what is likely to happen will be a complete cut in relationships,

"The BGCT will work with those who share our vision, our values and our commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible," Wade said. "We will cooperate with Southern Baptists where we can, and we will do missions and theological education together where we can. We will also cooperate with other Baptist bodies and other Christian bodies where we can to get the gospel to everyone we can."

SBC leaders, meanwhile, have downplayed the threat of any reduced funding from Texas Baptists.

Richard Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, predicted that Texas Baptists won't abandon the SBC. Land is a native Texan and a former professor at Criswell College in Dallas.

While BGCT leaders "believe that most rank-and-file Texas Baptists think of themselves as Texans first, they don't," Land insisted in the Dallas Morning News article. "They just don't."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

Baptists express diverse views on death penalty

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

HAVANA—As debate over capital punishment escalates in the United States and elsewhere, how do Baptists view the death penalty? As with most moral and social issues, it depends on who you ask.

Messengers to last month's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting adopted a pro-capital punishment resolution for the first time in denominational history. A few weeks later, Baptist World Alliance participants from the U.S. and Sweden presented a pair of papers opposing the death penalty.

The SBC article describes the practice as "a legitimate form of punishment for those guilty of murder or treasonous acts that result in death." The resolution declares that God "established

capital punishment as a just and appropriate means by which the civil magistrate may punish those guilty of capital crimes."

"God's Word has spoken clearly on the issue of capital punishment," Resolutions Committee chairman Hayes Wicker told SBC messengers. "We believe it is time to speak since the world is saying so much about it."

Meanwhile, members of BWA's Christian Ethics Study Commission have been studying the issue for several months. Sven Lindstrom, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Sweden, and Charles Johnson, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, presented papers affirming the principle of restorative justice, even in capital murder cases.

"The question is not if they have done something they should die for," Lindstrom said. "The question is: Do we have the right to kill them? That is the ethical question."

Affirming the need to "work from a Christian perspective toward confession and reconciliation," Lindstrom said, "We as Christians need to emphasize the possibility of rehabilitation, recovery and restoration."

"God Himself is the only One who has the right to give life and take life," he insisted. "We can go back to the creation and the dignity that is God-given regardless of the acts we commit."

Johnson presented a detailed 13-page paper contrasting Old Testament and New Testament views of capital punishment.

"The biblical material concerning

capital punishment is varied and colorful," Johnson noted. "As with most profound moral issues, the Bible contains a diversity of viewpoints with regard to death as a criminal and moral punishment."

Johnson cited 21 specific crimes in the Old Testament Torah for which the death penalty can be administered. The offenses range from murder, kidnapping and adultery to witchcraft, homosexuality and parental disobedience.

By contrast, Johnson said, Jesus "instituted the wonderful ethic of agape" love.

"Historically, the way of Christ has informed the teachings of the church," Johnson emphasized. "Jesus locates the essence of the transgression not in the act itself but in the attitude behind the act."

Noting that Jesus moved beyond legalism "to promote His higher goal of reconciliation," he added, "The power of love and forgiveness must match and exceed the volume of violence."

Commission chairman Nigel Wright of Great Britain said refraining from exercising the death penalty "is not to say people do not deserve it."

"In strict retributive terms, the death penalty is deserved," he said. "The measure of our humanness and our Christianization in refraining from capital punishment says something good about our society."

Capital punishment was among a number of issues discussed during commission and committee meetings held in conjunction with the BWA General Council meeting July 3-8 in Havana.

Press reports offer conflicting views of CBF altercation

ORLANDO, Fla. (RNS)—The cold war between Baptist conservatives and moderates heated up after two incidents involving a free-lance reporter for Baptist Press who was covering the recent Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Baptist Press correspondent Russell Moore, a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, alleges he was accosted by someone claiming to be a former foreign missionary with the SBC.

Moore also said he was rebuked by a CBF leader during a small-group meeting of about 100 people, many of whom allegedly hissed and booed the reporter when he was identified. CBF leaders dispute Moore's claims.

In a July 5 BP article, Moore recounted the shoving incident at the convention center. An article by Associated Baptist Press the following day refuted Moore's account.

Moore claimed the unidentified former missionary "started screaming and yelling at me in the middle of the convention center. He called me a (expletive deleted) liar and said I had no integrity." Moore said he isn't aware of any witnesses to the incident.

Moore said he asked the man to let him pass by and as he did, he said the man "pushed me against a wall, berated me, jabbing me in the chest with his finger as he spoke. I asked him to discontinue the conversation again, but he continued to pursue me, yelling a curse."

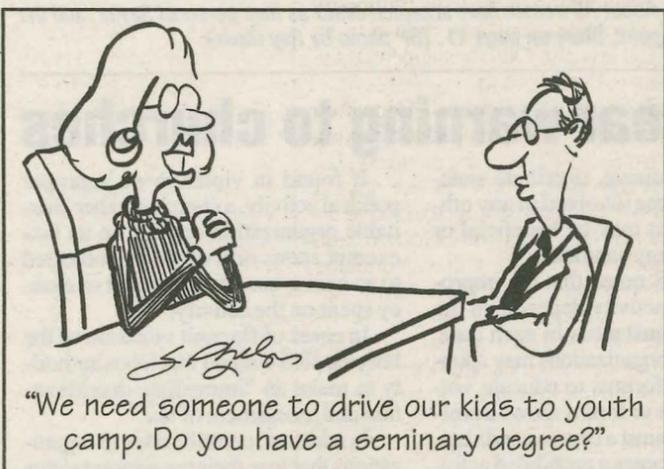
CBF Communications Coordinator David Wilkinson spoke with the individual, whom BP officials identified in a complaint to CBF officials.

Wilkinson said the individual admitted that he said Moore's coverage of the CBF meeting lacked integrity and was unethical. However, he flatly denied that he pushed Moore, put his finger on his chest or swore at him.

Moore also said David Currie, coordinator of Texas Baptists Committed and CBF financial chairman, publicly rebuked him in a meeting, a charge Currie denies.

"For the last two or three months, there has been a coordinated effort of unethical and unprofessional journalism by Baptist Press to slander Texas Baptists, Texas Baptists Committed, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and any mainstream Baptist group who stands up to them," Currie said in a phone interview. "When the reporter from Baptist Press came into the room, I mentioned that he was present, and we did have some people who booed him. I told them to 'be nice. He has a right to be here. He just needs to do a better job of reporting.'"

Will Hall, the SBC's new vice president for convention news, called the incidents "unfortunate."



"We need someone to drive our kids to youth camp. Do you have a seminary degree?"

KBC baptism totals just don't add up

Something about the baptism figures in the 1999 Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual just doesn't add up.

The annual, which was mailed to churches, associations and Baptist institutions and agencies recently, incorrectly lists the baptism totals for the top five churches in the state. Baptism reports for all five churches were in the triple digits but only the first two digits printed in the annual.

KBC Communications Director Robert Reeves said the mistake was the result of an error made when outputting the figures from the database containing Annual Church Profile information. Too little space was allowed in the field designated for baptisms, which in turn caused any baptism total in triple digits to be truncated to two digits.

Proofreaders did not catch the error because baptism totals for each association printed correctly. The correct totals are:

■ Hillvue Heights in Bowling Green, 322.

■ Little Flock in Louisville, 166.

■ Highview in Louisville, 137.

■ Springdale in Lexington, 132.

■ Valley View in Louisville, 111.

"We want to commend these top churches and certainly not shortchange them," Reeves said. "Each of these churches has done an outstanding job in the last year in reaching lost people for Christ. We celebrate along with the angels these totals and the changed lives they represent."

Reeves said a letter with a correction sticker is being sent to all who received the annual. The corrected totals also are posted on the KBC Web site at www.kybaptist.org.

Students teach about abstinence in Ghana

A dozen Kentucky Baptists got a first hand view of the AIDS crisis facing Africa during their two week mission trip to teach "True Love Waits" lessons in Ghana this summer.

The team of mostly college students returned home recently with stories of the incredible needs and openness of the people they met.

Team members performed skits, shared their testimonies and taught lessons from True Love Waits, a sexual abstinence program from LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Kevin Floyd, 20, of Waynesburg, said the friendships and smiles of the local residents are what he'll remember most. "You could just see their eyes light up," he said of the students he taught. "They hung onto every word you said."

The group stayed at a local Baptist medical compound. Team members said as many as 60 Ghana youth would come visit on the facility's front porch. "We had so many opportunities to make relationships with them," Floyd said. "That allowed us to adapt our programs to meet their needs."

Many of the Ghana students had misconceptions about the AIDS virus.

"I was really surprised at how uneducated they were about AIDS," said Cindy Howard, a recent University of Kentucky graduate who leaves in October for a two-year mission trip to Africa. "They're still not getting the message."

Team members said they also heard several stories from students at



GHANA TEAM Volunteers helped teach True Love Waits material to Ghana youth.

boarding schools who were being pressured for sex in order to get better grades.

An estimated 5,500 people in Africa die of AIDS every day. The most recent figures released by the United Nations states that of the 35 million people worldwide infected with the HIV virus, an estimated 60 percent—24.5 million—live in Africa.

Questions often centered on the disease's origins, but team members tried to focus on the threat AIDS personally posed to the youth, Floyd said. "We really made it into a reality for them," he said. "After we left, they understood how bad it really was. It wasn't an African disease. It wasn't an American disease. It's a worldwide disease."

Team members also saw firsthand the impact of the country's large Mus-

lim population. "I woke up one morning at 5 o'clock and could hear the prayers going on," said Jennifer Mount, a student at the University of Kentucky.

Team member Bonnie Brown, a Kentucky State graduate and teacher at Lafayette High School in Lexington, said she also saw the reach of Christianity around the world. "Regardless of where you travel throughout the world Christians are still Christians because the Holy Spirit reigns."

Mikel Robinson, campus minister at Kentucky State University in Frankfort and leader of the team, said this was one of the first bi-racial Christian mission teams many Ghana citizens had seen. "It kind of says to them, 'Hey, this is for everybody.'"

See story "Church ministries respond to AIDS crisis in Africa" on page 11

Clay Crosse to perform at KBC annual meeting

Christian recording artist Clay Crosse, who wrote the Dove Award-winning Cooperative Program 75th anniversary celebration theme song "I Will Follow Christ," will perform at this year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting.



The meeting, Nov. 14-15 at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, will have a theme of

"Partners in the Harvest." Crosse will be featured in the convention's celebration of the Cooperative Program 75th anniversary. The Cooperative Program is the unified giving program Southern Baptists use to support mission work around the world.

Crosse teamed with artists Bob Carlisle and BeBe Winans for

"I Will Follow Christ." The accompanying video also was honored with a Telly Award.

Crosse won a Dove Award for 1995 New Artist of the Year, and he has been nominated twice for Male Vocalist of the Year.

For more information on the Cooperative Program or the annual meeting, contact the KBC communications/media department at (502) 254-4731 or toll-free in Kentucky at (888) 254-5713.

ACLU sues state over monument display of 10 Commandments

Continued from page 1
or in an ACLU news release about the lawsuit.

The ACLU called the legislative action a violation of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which forbids government from endorsing or favoring religion. The suit seeks an order to prevent the monument's placement at the statehouse.

"The placement of the Ten Commandments monument at a central location on the capitol grounds is no accident," said Kathleen Flynn, one of the volunteer ACLU lawyers handling the case. "The legislature chose to place religious text next to the Floral Clock as a way of endorsing that text."

"This legislation must be viewed in context," said David Friedman, the ACLU of Kentucky's general counsel. "It was enacted after the ACLU of Kentucky sued local governments to prevent them from placing the Ten Commandments on courthouse and school walls.

The legislature clearly was taking sides in that debate, choosing the endorsement of religious texts over American principles forbidding government from doing so."

In a May 5 ruling on an ACLU lawsuit, U.S. District Judge Jennifer Coffman ordered Ten Commandments displays removed from public sites in three southeastern Kentucky counties. The counties didn't take the documents down until May 17. The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati refused to grant a stay of Coffman's ruling on May 18.

Empty frames were put up in Harlan County schools in response to Coffman's ruling, which also affected Ten Commandments displays in the courthouses of McCreary and Pulaski counties.

The Lexington paper quoted Hershael York, a professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, as saying that the clergy-

men and rabbi in the ACLU lawsuit don't represent typical Kentucky churchgoers.

"There's no question that the average grassroots Southern Baptist would be in favor of posting the Ten Commandments," York said.

The rabbi involved in the lawsuit, Jonathan Adland, of Temple Adath Israel in Louisville, meanwhile told the newspaper, "Religion is a matter of the heart and soul and it should be celebrated and observed in religious institutions and in the home. The state has no business being involved in this."

Adland also stated, "The Ten Commandments are not universal," saying they are not revered by Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims.

The monument was a gift from the Fraternal Order of Eagles in 1971 and has been in storage since the late 1980s.

The Kentucky case is one of several controversies involving church-state issues around the country. Others are:

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

■ **Campbellsville University** will host a day-long study of the Book of James, the focus for next winter's Bible study for many Baptist churches. John Polhill, professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, will teach the lesson Aug. 3, beginning at 1:15 p.m. The event is open to the public. For information, contact Walter Jackson, dean of Campbellsville's school of theology at walterjackson3@juno.com or John Chowning, the school's business manager, at (270) 789-5520.

■ **The daughter** of longtime Kentucky Baptist leader Eugene Enlow died June 27 in an automobile accident in Texarkana, Ark. Elizabeth Shaw, 46, was a professor at Texarkana University. She is survived by her husband, Nelson, and three children.

Patience, self-control among keys to effective discipline

Q: What is appropriate discipline for a teenager? I have heard that to spare the rod is to spoil the child, but I think spanking a teen is inappropriate. What do you think?

First, I agree that to spank a youth is uncalled for and ineffective. Rather than use punishment, I like to think about discipline. Bring up children in the way of righteousness and they will follow as they get older.

The goal is to teach them to recognize what is unacceptable and to build self-control to the point that they do not make bad choices. You can do this by three methods other than punishment.

Give praise and rewards for correct behavior. Tell them when they are good. Catch them being good and provide some type of positive reinforcement.

React to positive behavior by relieving them of unpleasant duties. For example, you might say, "You have been so good at helping with the children at church that I will do your chores this weekend." Vary the approach and surprise them with unrequested help.

Take away privileges and opportunities when they are disobedient. Relate this to the infraction or misdeed. For instance, if they misuse the phone, then they lose phone privileges for a period of time.

Of course there is a time to punish them, but not with whipping. Have them do extra work or write an essay on their mistake.

Whatever you do, do it with patience and calm self-control. Remember Ephesians 6:4. We are to discipline our children without provoking them to anger. That requires special composure.—Wade Rowatt

Q: It seems that more and more people are living together prior to marriage. Where can I find a thoughtful response to this issue? I'm trying to avoid a "knee-jerk reaction" without just "sticking my head in the sand."

Barbara Markey, developer of the FOCCUS premarital inventory, gave an important keynote address to the Smart Marriages 2000 Conference held recently in Denver. She made the following points:

Marriage mentors should be intentional and proactive, making the most of "teachable moments" such as when couples come for advice or counsel. Help them identify risk factors so they can attain confidence necessary for success.

Research indicates that one common risk factor is an attitude of extreme individualism. Cohabitators tend to "drift" across the line of commitment. Guide them to be more intentional.

Bring to light any negative views of the self or partner that are keeping them out of marriage. If they are avoiding marriage because they view themselves or the partner as not good marriage material, those risk factors will not simply go away at the time of the wedding.

Spiritual practices of the couple likely will be low. Your relationship with the couple as a Christian mentor is an opportunity to bring them into the realm of a shared relationship with Christ, moving toward shared spiritual disciplines.

There is no substitute for commitment. Living together does not in any way practice permanency. Be a model and an encourager to these couples to bring the light of God's wisdom within reach. It ultimately can lead them from being at high risk for conflict, adultery, abuse and divorce to achieving the goal of a successful marriage.

For more information on Markey's address, see www.smartmarriages.com.—James Stillwell

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



Reflections from the 'not quite' new editor

There certainly are more monumental milestones in life, such as a couple's 50th wedding anniversary or a local congregation's centennial celebration. However, the first anniversary of any major transition in life remains a significant moment in time.

I marked such an occasion last week in my ministry as editor of the Western Recorder. It seems like such a brief time since my family and I made the transition from Arkansas Baptist life to Kentucky Baptist service, yet the calendar confirms a full 12 months of life has hurtled by.

It has been a positive, productive 12 months for me—and I hope for Western Recorder readers. I still recall the challenge of leaving behind the many relationships developed with Arkansas Baptists during almost seven years of ministry there—and the task of seeking to build similar relationships in Kentucky. But a clear sense of God's timing and direction helped simplify the commitment to serve among Kentucky Baptists.

As you would expect, Kentucky Baptists have been extremely gracious during this year of transition. I have had the privilege of speaking in dozens of churches, associations and convention meetings throughout the state and have enjoyed the opportunity to become acquainted with many Kentucky Baptists on a personal basis.

Along with building relationships, one of my primary emphases has been seeking to consistently produce a quality state Baptist paper that makes a positive difference in the lives of our readers.

As I emphasized in my inaugural editorial, my guiding philosophy as a Christian journalist is: For the Western Recorder to effectively serve any Kentucky Baptist, it must fairly serve all Kentucky Baptists. I hope you have found that to be true each week in the pages of the Western Recorder as our staff publishes accurate, balanced, comprehensive news and feature articles of significance to our readers.

During the past year, we have covered such diverse topics as developments in the Kentucky Baptist Homes

for Children's state contract negotiations and pending lawsuit; Ten Commandments legislation and lawsuits; partnership missions projects in New England, Poland and Tanzania; and revisions to the Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Faith and Message statement. Such reporting is essential to help Kentucky Baptists stay informed and involved in issues that impact our churches and denomination.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed by our peers.

The Western Recorder staff earned several national awards this year from Baptist Communicators Association, including first place among state Baptist papers. That commitment to quality is reflected in the personal and professional skills of each staff member.

Also this year, I have been able to share my heart and vision with Kentucky Baptists each week through this editorial page. Topics have ranged from denominational politics and anti-gambling efforts to spiritual awakening and racial reconciliation.

Other editorials have been more personal, focusing on lessons learned from my dad, a tribute to the life and ministry of long-time editor C.R. Daley and reflections on my fam-

ily's first excursion to the Kentucky State Fair as volunteers in the state convention booth. Perhaps the most eloquent editorial of the year was a Father's Day column written by my 13-year-old daughter, Emily.

Each editorial is written with a specific purpose, whether to inform Kentucky Baptists about current issues, challenge readers to greater involvement in God's work or simply to help us know one another better.

Even more important than looking back, however, is looking ahead to what God has in store. I look forward to the opportunity to continue serving Kentucky Baptists as the Western Recorder staff responds to denominational issues, societal shifts, technological advances and other challenges we can't yet envision.

Whatever the future holds, God's Word assures us He is available to supply every need "according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." What more do we need?

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Interim offers opportunity for growth

By Norman Lytle

"Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it?" (Isaiah 43:19)

At any given time, one of every five churches in Kentucky is without a pastor. Your church may be one of them. Studies indicate the average time between pastors is 15 to 18 months. These figures point out that the periods of time when churches are without pastoral leadership are significant.

The departure of the pastor produces a sense of loss, with accompanying anxieties for the ongoing ministries of the church. Strong emotions of anger, guilt, blame or relief and joy may surface, depending upon the circumstances of the departure. As a result of such anxieties, the interim period between pastors often is viewed as an awkward, unproductive time during which attendance, membership and offerings decrease. Consequently, there often is the desire to return as quickly as possible to "normal" by rushing to call a new pastor.

A more positive approach to the interim period has emerged in recent decades, growing out of studies and re-

search by church consultants at the Alban Institute. In the mid-1970s, Loren Mead and others began researching the possibilities of the interim time between pastors. Largely as a result of their work, the interim time has come to be viewed by many congregations as an opportunity for congregational renewal. It can be an opportunity for clarification and growth in the life of a congregation. Mead writes, "No moment... is as pregnant with possibilities for a congregation as the moment of change."

Fortunately, there are increasing options for churches to take full advantage of the interim period. The use of supply ministers or interim pastors are time-honored methods which have blessed and strengthened many churches during their transition between pastors. In recent years additional options have become available: the intentional interim minister; and the interim consultant.

The intentional interim ministry is a six- to 18-month process a church can use to improve the church's health in the interim between pastors. The heart of the process is five developmental tasks through which the congregation is guided: coming to terms with history

and allowing healing to take place; examining leadership and organizational needs; clarifying mainstream doctrinal and theological beliefs; developing a new sense of identity and vision and redefining the sense of purpose; and commitment to new leadership.

Among Southern Baptists, intentional interim ministries have been pioneered by the Center for Congregational Health in Winston-Salem, N.C. A ministry of the School of Pastoral Care at North Carolina Baptist Hospital, and the Baptist General Convention of North Carolina, the center provides advanced training in interim ministry and intentional interim ministry. The center also provides resources and services to help congregations in transition become healthier communities of faith.

The words of Isaiah are relevant to congregations in transition between pastors, which also can experience God's renewal springing forth in their midst—if they will be aware. The intentional interim ministry provides skilled leadership to heighten that awareness.

Churches or pastors interested in interim or intentional interim ministries may obtain further information from David Odom, director of the Center for Congregational Health, Medical Center Blvd., Winston-Salem, NC 27157-1098; phone: (336) 716-9722; e-mail: dmhall@bgsm.edu.

Norman Lytle is a retired Southern Baptist missionary to Israel and Russia

BAPTISTS

Kim encourages Baptist unity; Chapman affirms BWA's role

HAVANA—Baptist World Alliance President Billy Kim of Korea called for Baptists around the world to strengthen their commitment to unity.

"I'd love to see unity," he declared, citing urgent needs in the areas of evangelism, church planting and battling persecution, racism and ethnic conflicts.

"We must be unified if we're going to do a great work for God," Kim emphasized. "The only way we can unify is through faith."

Outgoing BWA President Nilson Fanini of Brazil echoed Kim's call for unity. He said missions and evangelism are keys to global Baptist cooperation.

"Theology sometimes divides us," he acknowledged, "but evangelism and missions bring us all together."

Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, agreed that missions and evangelism are essential priorities in international Baptist life—even among Baptist groups that differ on such issues as female pastors.

Although "there always will be some differences of opinion when you have as many Baptists bodies in the world as we do," Chapman said, "Some theological differences should not prevent us from ministering to a lost world."

While Southern Baptist leaders "want to be fairly represented in theological discussions at BWA meetings," Chapman said, "I think Southern Baptists will benefit by remaining very active participants in the Baptist World Alliance."

Cuban Baptists hold first public rallies in 40 years

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

HAVANA—Celebrating their first public evangelistic rallies in more than 40 years, Cuban Baptists packed into two evening services held in conjunction with the July 3-8 Baptist World Alliance General Council meeting in Havana.

"This is an historic event for the Cuban people," declared Victor Gonzales, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba. "This is the first time that all the Cuban pastors, seminarians and missionaries are together in one meeting. It is the first time we have celebrated open meetings since revolution times in the past 41 years."

Baptists in Cuba are organized into four conventions with a total of 418 churches and 901 mission sites. With approximately 38,000 baptized believers, Baptists are the largest evangelical group in Cuba.

The rallies, held at "Kid Chocolate" Sports Arena in Havana, attracted up to 3,000 people each evening. The events featured a variety of Cuban musical groups, pagentry and sermons by BWA President Billy Kim of Korea and immediate past BWA President Nilson

Fanini of Brazil. General Council members also spoke in 40 evangelistic services held in area churches.

"It's an impact in all of Cuba, especially the people of Havana, to know that all Cuban Baptists are working to win Cuba for Christ," Gonzales noted. "I praise the Lord that this has been a great, great dream come true."

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz said the organization's meeting in Cuba has helped strengthen "bonds of friendship, partnership and fellowship."

"We have come to listen to our brothers and sisters in Cuba," he added. "We've come to give solidarity to our brothers and sisters here and we have come to worship with them."

Kim said the gathering of 400 international participants from 60 countries will "help Cuban Baptists strengthen their profile among their people because they have been under less freedom for the past 40 years."

Theo Angelov, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation in Sofia, Bulgaria, compared Cuba's political and economic conditions to life in Bulgaria before the fall of communism a decade ago.

"Coming from such a country

which was 50 years under communism, I am aware of the significance of such a gathering for the people of Cuba," Angelov noted. He said the recent meeting was "a symbol of change, unity and of hope for the future."

Citing gradual changes in Cuba since the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991, Angelov added, "Cuba cannot survive alone so changes are inevitable. The problem will be what will happen."

"From our experience in Europe, freedom does not always bring better times but changes for which we are not prepared. I'm concerned for the future in Cuba as well as countries in Eastern Europe and many others."

Alexander Kozyenko, president of Moscow Theological Seminary, said the BWA events provided "another step in recognition for Cuban Baptists."

"It is a good witness for society here that Baptists around the world are behind Cuban Baptists and are supporting them," Kozyenko said. "We are one family."

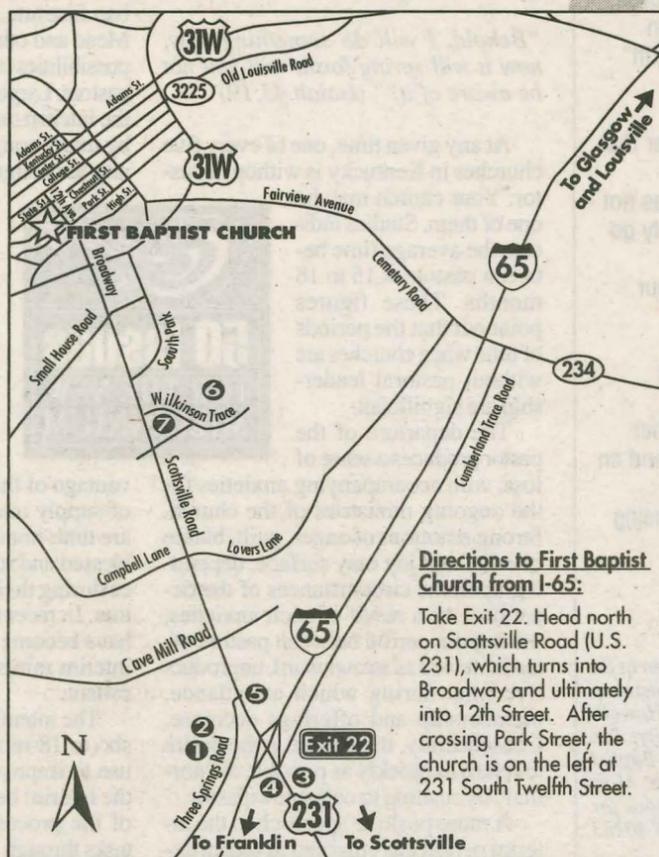
"For Cuban Baptists, this meeting has been a tremendous blessing, Gonzales remarked. "It is the Lord opening the doors in Cuba. The only answer for Cuba is Jesus Christ."

PARTNERS IN THE HARVEST

**2000 KBC
Annual Meeting
November 14-15, 2000
First Baptist Church
621 East 12th Street
Bowling Green, Kentucky**

Messengers are responsible for making their own reservations. Kentucky Baptist Convention must be mentioned and reservation deadlines met to receive blocked room rates. Non-smoking rooms were blocked whenever possible.

KBC
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION
For more information, contact
Denise Withers by phone at
502.245.4101 X212 or e-mail at Denise-Withers@kybaptist.org



Accommodations

The following Bowling Green facilities are on Scottsville Road (or near Scottsville Road on intersecting streets), accessible from Exit 22 off I-65. All rates listed are subject to 10.24% hotel tax.

- Baymont Inn & Suites**
165 Three Springs Road • 270.843.3200
Reservation Deadline: November 1
Rate: \$48 (double or king/1-4 persons)
Complimentary continental breakfast
- Hampton Inn**
233 Three Springs Road • 270.842.4100
Reservation Deadline: November 1
Rate: \$59 (double or king/1-4 persons)
Complimentary continental breakfast
- Comfort Inn**
4646 Scottsville Road • 270.843.1163
Reservation Deadline: October 15
Rate: \$69.88 (double/1-4 persons)
\$59.88 (king/1-2 persons)
Complimentary continental breakfast
- Ramada Inn**
4767 Scottsville Road • 270.781.3000
Reservation Deadline: October 13
Rate: \$55 (single or double/1-4 persons)
Breakfast buffet - \$3 per person
- Holiday Inn**
3240 Scottsville Road • 270.781.1500
Reservation Deadline: October 15*
Rate: \$59 (double/1-4 persons)
On-site restaurant
*Cancellations after November 5 are subject to one night's room rate.
- University Plaza Hotel**
1021 Wilkinson Trace • 270.745.0088
Reservation Deadline: October 13
Rate: \$85 (single or double/1-4 persons)
On-site restaurant
- Courtyard by Marriott**
1010 Wilkinson Trace • 270.783.8569
Reservation Deadline: October 13
Rate: \$65 (double or king/1-4 persons)
Breakfast available at cost

BAPTISTS

SearchLight leads hundreds in Chicago to Christ

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

CHICAGO (BP)—A group of young men near Chicago's Grace Place told lay evangelist Travis Johnson of San Antonio, Texas, they were afraid to come to a block party at the ministry center July 8.

"They said the guys on Rockwell (Street) are shooting people," Johnson said, referring to the penalty for intrusion onto another gang's turf in an area that has become known throughout the city for its street violence.

But for several hours on July 8, Grace Place's small fenced parking lot in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood became an oasis of hope for about 400 children and adults. There was food, Christian entertainment and a constant witness to the life-changing power of Christ. By the end of the day, more than 140 people had responded with a prayer of commitment to accept Christ as Lord of their lives.

That, in microcosm, was the spirit of SearchLight—a one-day effort that was one of the centerpieces of Southern Baptists' Strategic Focus Cities evangelism and church planting emphasis in Chicago.

There were more than just block parties, of course. Volunteers assisted local churches with door-to-door visitation, shared their faith on beaches, parks and city streets, distributed copies of the evangelistic booklet "The Book of Hope," and joined in a joint "Festival of Hope" on the lakefront at the end of the day.

Ultimately, more than 1,150 people made personal professions of faith—including about 250 who accepted Christ at a July 11 evangelistic concert hosted by 26 Korean churches. More than 1,800 people attended the concert, featuring Korean recording artist Seung Jun Yoo.

Thousands more across the city were introduced to more than 110 churches that participated in SearchLight. More than 103,000 copies of evangelistic materials were distributed, and more than 31,000 face-to-face evangelistic conversations took place.

"I'm gloriously exhausted," said SearchLight Coordinator Phil Miglioratti, taking a break during a contemporary Christian concert on the shore of Lake Michigan that closed out the day's activities.

The approximately 2,934 volunteers from outside the area was significantly

lower than earlier goals of up to 100,000, but involvement of local Southern Baptist and evangelical churches boosted the number of volunteers to an estimated 5,271.

Strategic Focus Cities—which continues through the end of the year in both Chicago and Phoenix—is an evangelistic and church starting effort of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in cooperation with local churches and associations in two major cities each year.

The day of SearchLight began at Chicago's Montrose Beach, where several local churches hosted a joint baptism service in Lake Michigan. After a worship service on the beach, Brian Bakke of Uptown Baptist Church in Chicago led the group of new Christians into the lake for the baptism as the crowd watched several hundred feet away on the shore. Afterward, volunteers distributed Frisbee-style flying discs imprinted with the gospel.

Geno Miller, a member of Uptown Baptist Church, was quick to slip into Spanish when speaking about Christ with the largely Hispanic families on the beach. He said he is trying to learn the language to be more effective in reaching his community. "It's amazing to see the expression on the people's face when you speak their language," he said.

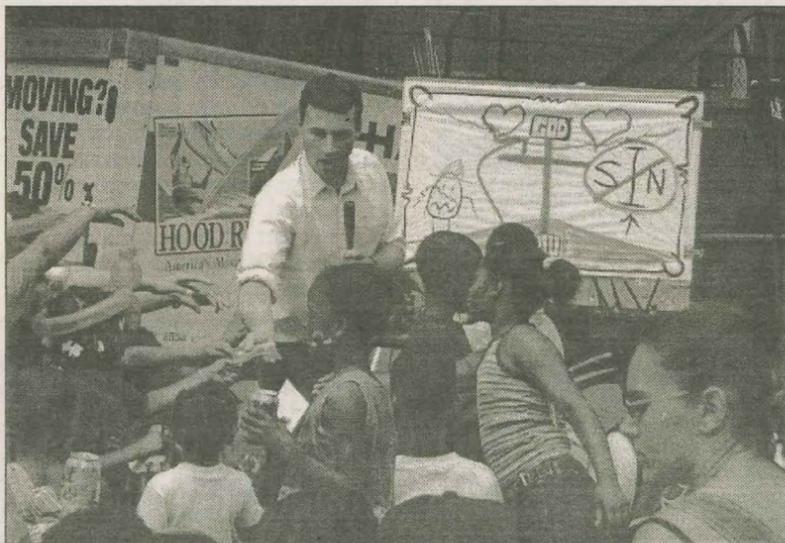
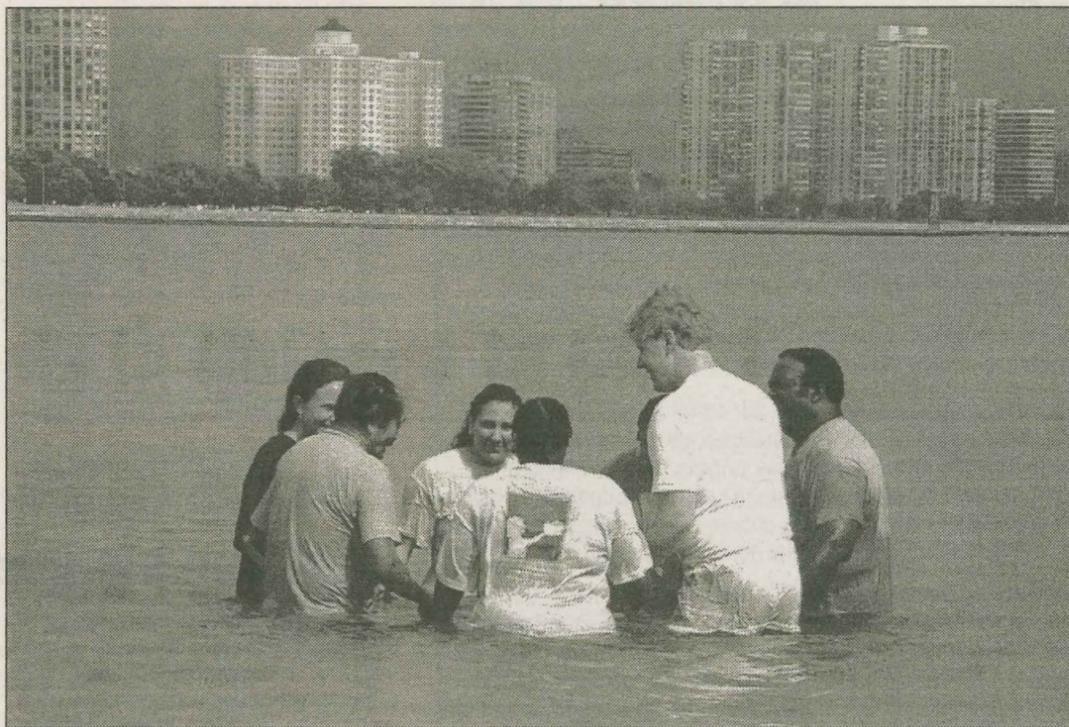
At the Grace Place block party, one of those accepting Christ was James Wilson, a man who had come by about a week earlier looking for work and had spent the week working alongside volunteers. Saturday afternoon, he said he wanted what they had.

"Since I've been working and meeting all these Christians, I just felt that this is where I needed to be. And I'm not ashamed of it," said Wilson, who later brought his sister and a friend to the block party.

Grace Place itself is a product of the Strategic Focus Cities effort, which provided stipend funding for center director Tammy Addington to move into the association-owned building this past April to start developing the ministry center.

"The reason we're here is to win people to Jesus," Addington said. "We want people to have personal relationships with God and to be able to grow in that relationship by being part of the church."

About 100 volunteers who met at the Household of Faith Christian Assembly in the southern suburb of Markham



SPREADING LIGHT More than 5,000 Southern Baptist volunteers gathered in Chicago July 8 for SearchLight ministry efforts. ■ Above: Brian Bakke of Chicago's Uptown Baptist Church prays with a group of new Christians who were baptized in Lake Michigan as part of the evangelistic emphasis. ■ Left: John Rath, a member of Armitage Baptist Church in Chicago, hands out gospel tracts to children after illustrating the gospel with paint and paper during a block party. (BP photos by James Dotson)

were greeted with a "Welcome to Macedonia" by pastor Lawrence Haskin.

Members of Household of Faith and neighboring Bel-Aire Baptist Church joined about 35 volunteers from Chicago's New Morning Star Baptist Church and 40 volunteers from Michigan in going door-to-door distributing "The Book of Hope," a gospel presentation including passages of Scripture from throughout the Bible.

"This is the greatest time in the history of the church since the Book of

Acts," Haskin said. In 22 years of ministry, Haskin said this is the first time he's witnessed blacks, whites and Hispanics "going out hand in hand sharing the gospel."

"Just seeing the body of Christ coming together like this is fantastic," he said.

In late afternoon, participants celebrated with a "Festival of Hope" service of praise and prayer—including a "Concert of Prayer" lifting up the city of Chicago and its people. Throughout the event, volunteers talked with passersby about Christ and why they were there.

The relatively low number of volunteers dissipated a concern by Chicago religious leaders about the Southern Baptist effort having the potential to spawn "hate crimes" against other religious groups.

"They felt like what we were doing was not threatening to their communities, and they've stated that publicly, so we really haven't heard much about it," said Jim Queen, director of missions for Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association.

Queen said one of the key rabbis opposing SearchLight—who lives in a high-rise apartment building overlooking the Festival of Hope site—came by the event and personally wished the group well.

Coppenger becomes church planter in suburban Chicago

ELGIN, Ill. (BP)—For years, former seminary president Mark Coppenger proclaimed the need for more church planters to spread the gospel throughout the Midwest. He now has taken his own advice to heart by moving to the northern Chicago suburbs to start Evanston Baptist Church—the only Southern Baptist congregation in the affluent North Shore area.

"I've been lifting up the cause of church planting and encouraging people to do it for years, and have the strong sense the Lord is saying, 'OK, it's your time,'" said Coppenger, who led several teams of volunteers in

door-to-door surveys as part of the SearchLight evangelism emphasis.

Coppenger was fired last year as president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. Trustees cited outbursts of anger by Coppenger that "irreparably damaged his ability to lead this seminary." He previously was vice president for convention relations with the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and executive director for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

"God is in control," Coppenger said after his dismissal, "and I am

looking forward to the next thing."

Coppenger taught at Chicago's Wheaton College for six years before attending seminary. He was invited to return to the area as a church planter as part of the Strategic Focus Cities effort by Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association director of missions Jim Queen. The Evanston area was one of two fields he was asked to consider.

"We're the first work up there," he said, noting that it is an affluent area with very little Christian witness. "We hope to spawn missions all up the North Shore" of Lake Michigan.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Clayton Bell dies.** Clayton Bell, 67, the brother-in-law of Evangelist Billy Graham and son of Presbyterian medical missionary Nelson Bell, died July 4 at Montreat Conference Center in Asheville, N.C., of a massive heart attack. Bell retired last year after serving for more than two decades as pastor of Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas.

■ **Rastafarian policeman suspended for hairstyle.** A Baltimore police officer removed from active duty in late June for refusing to cut off his dreadlocks, claims his department's hair policy is unconstitutional because the dreadlocks are a form of religious expression. Rastafarians wear dreadlocks in imitation of one of the religion's dominant figures, former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie, also known as Ras Tafari.

■ **ABA president supports death penalty moratorium.** July 10 at the American Bar Association's annual convention in New York, Martha Barnett, ABA president-elect, encouraged U.S. lawyers to support a moratorium on the death penalty. She said there is widespread unfairness and "gross injustice" in the manner in which capital punishment is applied.

■ **Jackson encourages ministers to take HIV tests.** Jesse Jackson is urging ministers to take HIV tests in an effort to curb the spread of AIDS among African-Americans. "The minister tends to have the moral authority," Jackson said at an Indianapolis church. "You have to have the courage to take the test."

■ **Episcopalians move toward endorsing gay unions.** The Episcopal Church took a first major step toward the "support" of same-sex relationships, but narrowly defeated a call to create special ceremonies to recognize gay unions. Officials meeting for the group's general assembly passed a resolution July 11 affirming relationships "characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication and holy love" between, whether gay or straight.

Church lay leaders committed, unorthodox

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)—A study of church lay leaders finds they are more committed to religious activities than other churchgoers but are often at odds with orthodox biblical understandings.

The Barna Research Group study found that church leaders were more than twice as likely as others to attend church services and more than four times as likely as others to volunteer, attend Sunday school and take part in a faith-related small group during a typical week. These leaders also were more likely than other churchgoers to pray or have a personal devotional time during the week.

Researchers found that 96 percent of lay leaders donated money to their church in the past year, compared to 48

percent of other adults. Leaders also were much more likely than others to have shared their Christian faith with others in the past year.

But the survey also found 58 percent of church leaders thought the Bible teaches "God helps those who help themselves," a saying often attributed to Benjamin Franklin but dating to Aeschylus, a Greek writer of tragedies who lived more than 2,400 years ago.

It also found that 43 percent of lay leaders do not believe in the existence of the Holy Spirit and 39 percent claimed not to believe Satan exists. Thirty-three percent of lay leaders surveyed said Jesus Christ never had a physical resurrection.

Nine out of 10 church leaders surveyed described themselves as "absolutely committed" to the Christian faith, more than double the percentage that affirmed such a commitment among those who weren't leaders.

Fifty-three percent of church leaders believe there are absolute moral truths, compared to 36 percent of non-leaders.

"When only half of the leaders believe that moral truth is absolute, then that creates challenges within the body of believers," said George Barna, president of the marketing research company. "When leaders are indistinguishable from others in their beliefs about the resurrection, with one-third of the leaders denying Jesus' physical resurrection, confusion and doubt will prevail."

The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Coalition pledges to help rebuild marriage culture

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Pledging to "rebuild the shattered dream of lasting love," more than 100 scholars and religious and civic leaders released a report June 29 calling on the nation to rebuild a "marriage culture."

"Make supporting marriage—not just neutrality—the goal," the Coalition for Marriage, Family and Couples Education urged in its 35-page report. "Healthy marriages benefit the whole community. Conversely, when marriages fail, huge personal and public costs are generated."

The report advocated making divorces more difficult to obtain, and urged courts to "find innovative ways

to give legal weight to the marriage vow" such as revising no-fault divorce laws and adopting longer divorce waiting periods.

Counselors, lawyers, friends, relatives and the faith community share a responsibility to "respect the special status of marriage," the report said, advising policymakers "not to extend the benefits of marriage to couples who could marry but choose not to."

The report also asked that policymakers "not discourage marital interdependence by penalizing unpaid work in homes and communities."

Such a report could never have been released a few years ago, said Diane

Sollee, director of the group that released the report. "It was still politically incorrect to say you were for marriage, because it was thought that meant you were against some other family form," she told USA Today.

Among those unconvinced the report is on the right track is Mike Bowers, executive director of the American Association for Marriage and Family. He said he found it "hard to argue with the basic premise of the marriage movement" but "the devil is in the details."

A scalpel is needed for the delicate work of fine-tuning marriages, he said. "When you change laws (such as no-fault divorce) you use a club," he said.

Study finds rural churches are a lot heartier than some people expected

By Hillary Wicai
Religion News Service

COLUMBIA, Mo. (RNS)—Sociologist Lynne Isaacson studies churches. She notes that at most scientific conferences about organized religion there is not much said about rural churches. She guesses most people feel there's not much to talk about.

For years many people have predicted small country churches would disappear. Much of rural America has. In the past 50 years country schools have consolidated, corporate agriculture has taken the place of family farms and Wal-Marts have replaced most mom-and-pop shops.

But according to a new sociological study coordinated by Isaacson, the rural church not only remains stable but also, in some cases, is growing.

"The church is often the only institution that hasn't been taken over by outside forces," Isaacson said.

Isaacson and researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia teamed up with the Missouri School of Religion-Center for Rural Ministry to survey 420 rural churches in Missouri. The university first conducted a similar survey of about 500 churches in 99 Missouri townships in 1952. It's been conducted nearly every 15 years since.

In the 1950s researchers wanted to identify ways to modernize rural churches. Today the survey seeks to help rural

churches survive.

"We wanted to look at how rural congregations have responded to change in rural areas, to identify marks of church viability and to identify special concerns or challenges that face rural churches and rural ministers," Isaacson explained. The goal is to share the conclusions with denominational leaders through workshops.

The study was funded by a \$347,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., a private philanthropic foundation that encourages the study of religion. The grant includes the cost of four workshops. Isaacson said ultimately the study hopes to bridge the gap some rural congregations and ministers feel exists between their small churches and the large denominations to which they may belong.

Parker Rossman retired from campus ministry and was called to Dixie Church in Callaway County, Mo. He shares the post with another retired pastor. He believes that as the only institution left in the area, the church's role is much different than it used to be. For example, his church hosts more community functions, like elections, than it used to.

"More people go in and out of our church than ever actually attend services," Rossman said. Dixie members now believe one of their chief missions is to foster "that old kind of neighborliness," Rossman said.

Isaacson said even in rural areas with declining populations, the majority of

congregations either have a stable membership or have grown since they were last measured in 1982. The study concludes that the average congregation size is 145 members on the rolls with about 73 active members, nearly the same numbers as 1982.

There is no one model of success, but in general most rural churches, even the smallest, have increased their social services in their communities. "In some poorer townships, the church is called upon to provide a number of services because there are no other community institutions," Isaacson said.

Isaacson fondly recalled one group she interviewed. The congregation has dwindled to only half-a-dozen devoted senior women. They told Isaacson that their denomination suggested they close their church, but the women refused. They continue to meet weekly. When a visiting minister can't preach, the women gather at church to watch inspirational videos and pray. They regularly collect money and contribute it to local families in need.

"How do you measure spiritual viability?" Isaacson wondered. "That church is viable for them, and for the families they help."

Nearly every church in the sample has some sort of food pantry and is known throughout its community as a place to go for help. Many of the pantries are run by alliances set up by several rural churches.

Many of the churches have a

transportation ministry or a van they use to shuttle people to and from church. Some minister to a growing Hispanic community of farm workers.

"In rural areas it's OK to be small," said Jere Gilles, the project's coordinator and an associate professor of rural sociology at the University of Missouri. "Being small is not an indicator of being in trouble. Small churches may be more fragile, but they are not any less successful."

Rossman said the study will demonstrate the vitality of small congregations in American culture.

"The value of small, family-style churches has been overlooked," he said.

This doesn't mean rural churches don't struggle with myriad problems. Rural congregations are aging and they worry about keeping their young people in the area. It's often difficult for them to afford a full-time minister, and the turnover rate for ministers is high. Not only do nearly half of the ministers in the survey hold another job, but so do their spouses. That leads to a huge time crunch.

"Some ministers are working 80-hour weeks," Isaacson said. "That makes it difficult to attend any seminar or workshop on, say, 'How to Improve Your Rural Church.'"

The study will be finished by September and final results will be available by the end of the year. Two books are planned: one for ministers and their faith communities and one for an academic audience.

Some groups take issue with SBC over women pastors

LONG BEACH, Calif. (RNS)—Less than a month after Southern Baptist messengers voted that the pastorate should be limited to men, Presbyterian, Pentecostal and Episcopal leaders have voiced support for women pastors.

During its annual meeting in California last month, the Presbyterian Church (USA) passed a resolution that expressed "respectfully and publicly its Christian concern for and solidarity with women who are being denied the exercise of their pastoral gifts."

The resolution, however, made no direct reference to the Southern Baptist Convention; all direct references in the original resolution were deleted by a church committee.

The resolution had specifically named the 15.8 million-member Southern Baptist Convention, which earlier in June revised its statement of faith, the "Baptist Faith and Message," to state the role of pastor should be limited to men.

Presbyterian committee members also deleted a section of the resolution inviting women in the Southern Baptist Convention to become Presbyterian ministers, and encouraging local presbyteries to "consider such candidates for ordination in light of our oneness in Christ, despite the significant differenc-

es in our traditions of biblical interpretation and freedom of theological expression."

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has ordained women as ministers since the mid-1950s. The resolution expressed the church's desire that other Christian denominations would open their pulpits to women.

"We are saddened by the continuing reality that other faith traditions do not hold the same beliefs about God's call to women and men for ministry and leadership," the resolution stated. "Even though our noble words do not always meet the realities that exist for women and men in ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA), we continue to struggle to live out our own commitment to equality."

In New Orleans last week, Pentecostal Bishop Paul Morton called on fellow Pentecostals to ensure their churches' leadership roles remain open to women. He suggested that Southern Baptists might one day have to apologize for their defense of an all-male clergy, as they did five years ago for the historic racial segregation of their congregations.

Morton is leader of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, a predominantly African-American fellowship

consisting largely of former traditional Baptist churches that adopted Pentecostal-style worship and theology without formally severing their Baptist ties.

The fellowship claims churches in 45 states, an estimated 1 million members and a hierarchy of hundreds of bishops and fellowship pastors.

The crowd included a dozen or more women pastors and assistant pastors who work in Full Gospel Fellowship churches.

Women frequently preach in Pentecostal pulpits, and Morton's wife, Debra, is co-pastor with him of the 20,000-member church they serve in New Orleans.

Morton urged fellow pastors to keep their churches open to the preaching and leadership skills of women.

Noting the recent SBC statement, Morton criticized churches "run as social clubs" by men. He quoted Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

"We have made ourselves into little gods and placed (women) where we want them to be," said Morton.

Noting that in 1995 the predominantly white Southern Baptist Convention formally apologized to African-Americans for its support of slavery and

opposition to civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s, "sooner or later that denomination is going to have to apologize to women," Morton said.

In Denver last week, the Episcopal Church took the first step to reprimand three conservative dioceses that refuse to allow women as pastors, 24 years after the church approved women's ordination.

The dioceses of Fort Worth, Texas, Quincy, Ill., and San Joaquin, Calif., have refused to obey church law allowing women to be ordained. While San Joaquin has moved toward the ordination of women, leaders in Fort Worth and Quincy say their theology compels them to restrict the priesthood to men.

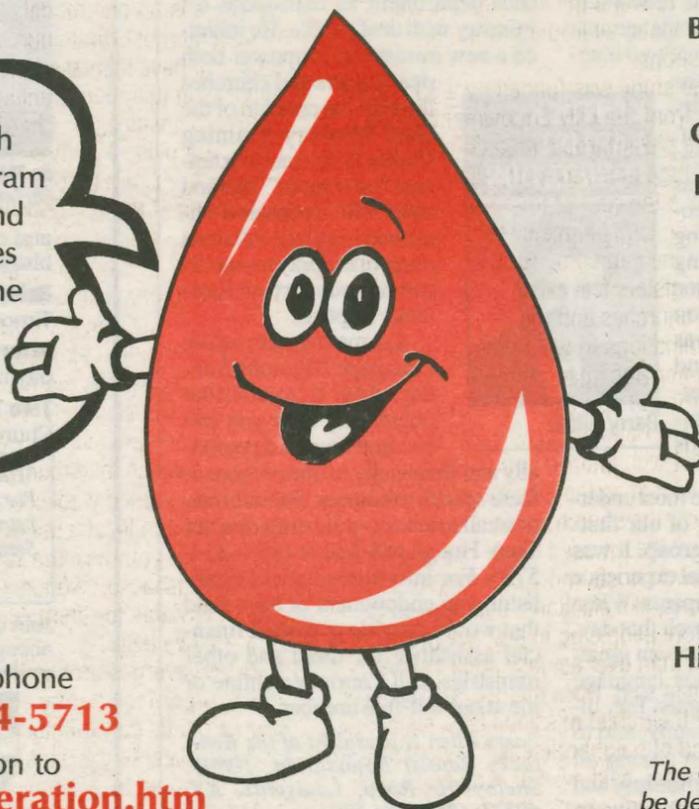
A resolution overwhelmingly passed in the church's House of Deputies—comprised of 832 clergy and lay members—criticizes the resistance in Quincy and Fort Worth and sets up a task force to push the two dioceses into compliance.

For many in the Episcopal Church, women's ordination is a non-issue after the church approved women clergy in 1976 and ordained its first woman bishop in 1988. But for the most conservative pockets of the liberal-leaning church, women's ordination boils down to a power struggle.

Presbyterian committee members deleted a section of the resolution inviting women in the Southern Baptist Convention to become Presbyterian ministers.

OPERATION: COOPERATION

Operation Cooperation is an exciting way for Kentucky Baptists to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Cooperative Program through simultaneous blood drives and promotional fun runs in over thirty cities statewide. The Cooperative Program is the lifeblood of Kentucky Baptist missions and ministry, so giving blood is a concrete, hands-on way to be involved in missions and send a positive message that Baptists care.



For more information phone
502/254-4731 or toll free 888/254-5713

To volunteer or register over the internet, log on to
www.kybaptist.org/operationcooperation.htm

Operation Cooperation will take place during a two-week period between September 10-23, 2000.

Cities that have already committed to host Operation Cooperation events are:

Alexandria	Lexington
Ashland	London
Bardstown	Louisa
Bowling Green	Louisville
Burlington	Madisonville
Campbellsville	Mayfield
Elizabethtown	Middlesboro
Erlanger	Morehead
Fountain Run	Morganfield
Frankfort	Murray
Glasgow	Owensboro
Grayson	Paducah
Hazard	Paintsville
Hardinsburg	Pikeville
Henderson	Prestonsburg
Highland Heights	Richmond
Hopkinsville	Somerset
	Williamsburg

The exact date and site of related activities will be determined by coordinators in each host city.

WORLD VIEW

■ **Summer missionary killed in South African van crash.** Michael Kristopher Tuck, 24, was killed July 1 when the van in which he was riding veered off a road in Johannesburg, South Africa, to avoid hitting two donkeys. Tuck, a student at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, was in South Africa helping to build a church. Several other students were injured in the crash.

■ **10,000 evangelicals expected for Amsterdam 2000.** More than 10,000 evangelicals from around the world are expected to attend "Amsterdam 2000," July 29-Aug. 6 in The Netherlands. Interpreted into at least 25 languages, conference events will be led by 300 of the world's most prominent Christian leaders. Planners said this could be the last such conference led by the 81-year-old Evangelist Billy Graham who recently was released from the hospital after treatment to relieve fluid on the brain.

■ **Evangelists among hostages held by Muslim rebels.** Thirteen evangelists have been missing for more than two weeks since visiting 20 hostages kidnapped from a Malaysian diving resort April 23 by Muslim separatists in the Philippines. The group, affiliated with Jesus Miracle Crusade, went to pray with the hostages in early July and are now suspected to also be captives, a Philippine official said.

■ **Italian town attacked for crucifying live dove.** The Umbrian hill town of Orvieto is being attacked for its tradition of crucifying a live dove to symbolize the Holy Spirit in Pentecost celebrations. The Italian agriculture minister called using the live bird "unjustified cruelty" and warned that it is an "open violation" of Italian law. The town traditionally celebrates Pentecost by lowering a dove on a giant wooden cross attached to a wire into the square as townspeople set off firecrackers.

Sewing class sows gospel in Zimbabwe

By Sue Sprenkle
SBC International Mission Board

EPWORTH, Zimbabwe (BP)—Behind the stalks of corn, laughter erupts, followed by chatter.

In a small clearing in front of a plaster-covered mud-brick home sit 90 women. Some sit on the ground piecing together a skirt, while others work diligently on a hand-cranked sewing machine.

Epworth, Zimbabwe, might not have electricity, but the sparks ignited by a monthly sewing class have been enough to set a local church on fire for God.

The class started 15 months ago as a way to bring people to the local church. The pastor's wife, Auxillia Ncube, envisioned something that could be done outside of the church that wasn't a traditional church meeting.

Southern Baptist missionary Kim Davis suggested a crafts class with an emphasis on "storying" the Bible, telling stories from the Bible in chronological order. Davis and fellow missionary Amy Fike joined Ncube in teaching Bible stories and sewing techniques.

The class started off small, with only six women. Now, it has grown to 90 women, most of whom have made a profession of faith and been baptized.

"About 70 of these women have come to Christ, some actually at the sewing class but most through attending the Baptist church they started going to as a result of the sewing ministry," Davis said. "We never advertised the class. The women were invited by other women who attended the class."

Several Woman's Missionary Union groups in the United States learned about the sewing classes and donated 200 sewing kits. Before receiving a kit, a woman must attend the sewing class, make a sewing bag and attend the Baptist church for six consecutive weeks. More than 100 women have met the requirements to earn a kit.

Eight hundred yards of fabric was donated by Springs Industry in South Carolina. And donations from Baptists in the United States and from the Diplomatic Wives Association in Harare, Zimbabwe, helped buy 13 hand-crank sewing machines, 12 stools and several portable tables. The women are contributing to the resources by selling enough items to make the class self-supporting.

Davis points out that while the women are learning skills that will help provide for their families, the most important thing is for them to hear about Christ and become a Christian disciple.

"As a result of the sewing ministry and the pastor's hard work of following up, the church has grown from a handful to more than 200 people," Davis said. "It has also spun off to another preaching point where about 90 people attend."

The urgency about spreading the good news of salvation in Jesus is heightened by the AIDS crisis in the country, Davis said.

"Reaching the women in the class is critical since so many of them are HIV positive," she said. Eight women in the class have died from AIDS this year. Each week, 1,700 people die from AIDS in the country.

Political turmoil in the country as recent elections approached also hampered the outreach, Davis said. Classes had to be canceled, and people in the community were intimidated politically. She asked Southern Baptists to pray for Christians and other people in Zimbabwe.

As word of the sewing class spread throughout the community, so did the Bible stories. One woman summoned Davis and Ncube to her home, saying she wanted them to tell her the truth.

Another woman walked past the sewing group one day and stopped. She had just lost her baby due to advice from the local witchdoctor.

Her baby had been born on the one-year anniversary of her great grandmother's death, when her people believe the ancestor's spirit comes back to inhabit someone or something. The witchdoctor counseled the young mother to not feed her new baby for two weeks so the grandmother's spirit could decide whether the baby should live.

"This woman came to our class in great heaviness and grief," Davis said. "The new Christians ministered to her, and through the Baptist church she became a believer. She was released from the oppression of the ancestral spirits she had been taught to worship."

Davis said this woman represented the bondage Satan has over many of the people in Epworth and how Christ can dispel the darkness that binds them.

"Death is a major issue these people face daily," Davis said. "This woman found that the truth indeed sets one free."

Deaf ministry

Recently Laurie Valentine, our trust attorney, and I led a Christian estate planning seminar for members of Louisville Baptist Deaf Church. It was a first-of-its-kind experience for Laurie and me. And what an inspiring and enriching experience it was!

Following a time of fellowship and lunch, we conducted the seminar with the able assistance of two interpreters, who alternated the interpreting responsibility throughout the seminar. The unusual communication challenge for me was to speak to a group of people who were not looking at me. They were looking at the interpreter. The even greater communication challenge for Laurie was to substitute words and expressions the interpreters could use in sign language for the legal words she normally uses.

The participants were most understanding and affirming of our first-ever seminar to a deaf group. It was truly a mutually beneficial experience for us and for the participants. When Laurie and I left the church that day, we agreed to prepare for even greater service to the various language groups in Kentucky Baptist life, including the deaf community, and to help increase awareness among all Kentucky Baptists of the ministry and financial support opportunities to

change peoples' lives for Jesus' sake through language missions.

We appreciated pastor Tim Bender giving us this opportunity. We want other language groups to call upon us as well. Tim also serves through the KBC extension-ministries department as consultant for ministry with deaf people. He initiated a new ministry to empower both deaf leaders and churches through the creation of the Deaf Ministry Training Center, a seminary extension "on wheels." This and other KBC-sponsored ethnic and language missions deserve the prayers and financial support of Kentucky Baptists.

Let me suggest you use Language Missions Sunday, Aug. 6, to consider prayerfully how you can become involved personally and financially in one or more of these special ministries. For information call extension-ministries director Tony Hough toll-free at (888) 254-5725. For information about establishing an endowment or trust fund that would provide perpetual financial assistance for these and other ministries, call Laurie Valentine or me at our toll-free number.

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

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Barry Allen

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Church ministries respond to AIDS crisis in Africa

By Shelia Dancy
Religion News Service

NEW YORK (RNS)—In the decade or so since AIDS emerged as an epidemic in Africa, the deadly disease has devoured approximately 19 million lives worldwide and is expected to slice life expectancy to as low as 30 years in some African nations.

As skyrocketing infection rates promise more to come, faith-based relief agencies have enlisted a new ally in their own battle with the viral monster: African churches.

Any real dent in the AIDS epidemic cannot be made without the help of African churches, said Debbie Dortzbach, director of an HIV/AIDS prevention program in Africa run by World Relief, the international aid arm of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"The church is already established in the community. It is usually well-respected, and it has a ready audience," said Dortzbach. She is one of several World Relief staffers who attended the recent 13th International AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa.

"When churches use their position in the community to distribute accurate information, they can sometimes be more effective than clinics and other health institutions, which are so busy with so many numbers of patients that they don't really have the time to sit down and counsel very often," she said.

Ann Doherty, director of programming for Catholic Medical Mission Board, said the not-for-profit charity is gearing up to launch its own AIDS/HIV counseling program on the continent this fall.

"In my experience I've found that really it is the church that has been taking care of the dying and even making some attempt at HIV/AIDS prevention," she said.

"And it is the churches who come forward to take care of orphans of AIDS victims," Doherty said. "The churches have been there all along, so it only makes sense to work together."

Churches also play a large role in encouraging responsible personal behavior, said Dortzbach, and can offer a spiritual context for prevention messages in secular campaigns.

"Messages about abstinence and faithfulness are out there, but it is the church that can really illustrate and address those issues most effectively," Dortzbach said. "The church gives the necessary context about faithfulness and abstinence until marriage."

In Rwanda, World Relief has teamed up with churches to distribute about 2,000 manuals for people who provide home care to people infected with the virus. The manual will be adapted for use in other countries including Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa.

In countries where African churches have collaborated with local governments and non-governmental organizations to stop the spread of AIDS, infec-

tion rates have decreased, said Dortzbach, citing Uganda as an example.

"In Uganda, the church has been involved from the very beginning and it has paid off," said Dortzbach. "The church has partnered with all sectors of society, and together they have lowered the prevalence of AIDS in that country. Now I think there's a real commitment on the part of governments to see the church involved more. Uganda is considered a success story."

On a continent where an estimated 5,500 people die of AIDS every day, the African church's role in HIV/AIDS prevention cannot be ignored, said Clive Calver, president of World Relief.

"This is the biggest epidemic to hit this world since the black plague during the Middle Ages," said Calver, who has personally visited Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan to work on HIV/AIDS prevention programs in those countries. "We've got to do something, and we've got to do it now."

The most recent figures released by the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS sketches a dismal portrait of the continent's future. Of the 35 million people worldwide infected with the HIV virus, an estimated 60 percent—24.5 million—live in Africa.

For years the majority of churches in Africa remained on the sidelines as the AIDS epidemic mushroomed, hesitant to tackle a subject that required frank talk about human sexuality and other subjects long considered taboo in the religious community, Dortzbach said.



"I also think churches sometimes have chosen not to be aware of AIDS—there's been sort of a self-righteous attitude that this can't be in our church, and that's true in the United States as well," she added. "But now the epidemic has grown so much the church is finally realizing it's something we can't ignore."

Calver agreed.

"Church leaders in Africa have been coming to a growing recognition of the AIDS dilemma, and now they're waking up to the problem," he said. "Now they desperately need the resources to fight it."

That's where faith-based relief organizations step in to help, said Dortzbach. "Our work is set out for us, but the church is the institution that will be there for the long haul. The church is God's instrument in a crisis like this. We have no choice but to help."

AIDS MINISTRY The AIDS support group Bethsaida Ministry in Kigali, Rwanda, is one of several African church ministries supported by World Relief. The ministry has been meeting since 1988 to pray and receive encouragement from the Bible. (RNS/World Relief photo by Jon Warren)

A busy summer

By Robert Dunston

Most of Cumberland College's students either have gone home for the summer or are serving as summer missionaries, but the Cumberland campus remains busy throughout the summer.

Mountain Outreach is hosting groups from nine churches to build houses for families.

Church groups have come and will be coming from Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas to minister in our area. An Elderhostel group also came at the end of June to help with construction.

Church groups also are helping Appalachian Ministries provide vacation Bible schools to area children and youth this summer. Church groups from Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and South Carolina have come or will be coming to help children learn more about Jesus.

Cumberland College is offering a variety of athletic camps this year. We already have offered a team camp and a big man guard camp for basketball as well as a track and field camp and women's soccer camp. A men's soccer camp is taking place this week, and in the next few weeks we will provide a wom-

en's basketball camp and a football camp.

Champions for Christ used our Cumberland facilities in June, and Crosspoint II will be held at Cumberland at the end of July and the first of August. The Kentucky Baptist Convention secretaries' conference meets here at the end of this week.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Our pastor/staff/family conference were held earlier this week. This time of Bible study, worship and preaching is always a highlight of our summer.

Two orientation weekends for students who will enter Cumberland College in the fall will assist them in preparing for the Cumberland experience. When they return in August to begin college, they will be familiar with the college and already have begun to make friends.

As you can see, we stay busy. We have beautiful facilities and wonderful opportunities for learning and serving at Cumberland College, and we encourage churches and other groups to join with us in ministry. We hope you can be involved with us next summer.

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

It's all about the kids

The older I get, the better I understand the truth, "You can't please everybody."

Since Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children passed an employment policy prohibiting people who engage in homosexual behavior from working for us, we've heard from a lot of people who weren't pleased. There also are some individuals and churches who aren't pleased with us for pursuing contracts with the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Recently, I've heard people say, "The churches need to be supporting Baptist Homes. You shouldn't have to contract with the state."

Make no mistake, if KBHC could serve 4,000 children and families annually without contracting with the commonwealth, we would do it. I hope and pray that individual and church giving increases so we can implement programs that intervene in troubled lives before state authorities have to step in and remove a child from his or her home.

But it is because there are so many children who are removed from their homes and placed in the commonwealth's guardianship that KBHC is needed. Those are the lives we are impacting. As long as those children are referred to us, I

believe we have an obligation to care for them. If those referrals dry up because of the stand we have taken against homosexuality, so be it. I know God is involved in every aspect of this agency and that includes transforming it into whatever He knows we need to be.

As you support KBHC, you are in a position to make an eternal dif-

ference in the lives of our community's most troubled and hurting kids. Your funds, prayers and donations keep us Christ-centered and provide spiritual opportunities that no other Kentucky child care agencies have, even those with Christian denominational ties.

If we turn our back on these kids because we dislike dealing with the state, then we withhold from those children countless opportunities to experience the love of Christ. We might even postpone their decision to accept Him as Lord of their lives. Is that what we truly want?

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Potter series concerns some Christians, delights others

Who is (and isn't) wild about Harry?

"If you're the parent of a Harry Potter fan, you may be concerned about the elements of witchcraft in these books. It may relieve you to know that the magic in these books is purely mechanical, as opposed to occultic. That is, Harry and his friends cast spells, read crystal balls and turn themselves into animals—but they don't make contact with a supernatural world." **Charles Colson**, director of Prison Fellowship Ministries and author of "How Now Shall We Live?"

"I wouldn't carry Harry Potter for anything. I don't think people fully realize what they're dealing with, and I think anyone who knows anything about spiritual warfare knows those books can open the door to spiritual bondage." **Clara Sessoms**, manager of Living Water Christian Books in Marion, Ind.

"Amid the laugh-out-loud scenes are wonderful examples of compassion, loyalty, courage, friendship and even self-sacrifice. No wonder young readers want to be like these believable characters." **Christianity Today** magazine editorial

"With the growing popularity of youth-oriented TV shows on witchcraft—Sabrina, the Teenage Witch; Charmed; Buffy the Vampire Slayer—a generation of children is becoming desensitized to the occult. But with Hollywood's help, Harry Potter will likely surpass all these influences, potentially reaping some grave spiritual consequences." **John Andrew Murray**, writer of video, "Think About It: Understanding the Impact of TV-Movie Violence"



Continued from page 1

Focus on the Family recently published an essay by John Andrew Murray, headmaster at St. Timothy's-Hale, an Episcopal school in Raleigh, N.C., and writer/director of the video "Think About It: Understanding the Impact of TV-Movie Violence."

Murray noted that some Christian parents have complained that the tales of young witches and wizards are terrifying to young children and inappropriate for classroom use. "They've been rewarded for their concern with ridicule in newspapers and editorial cartoons," he said.

Murray noted that the Harry Potter books, evidencing "no higher authority," push young readers into a morally confused world.

And it can be a gory world, Murray added, "including a professor whose leg is mangled by a three-headed dog; a mysterious figure who is caught drinking blood from a unicorn carcass; ... and Nearly Headless Nick—a ghost whose head is barely attached."

"Harry frequently—and unapologetically—lies, breaks rules and disobeys authority figures," Murray also said.

Others, however, contend that the world of Harry Potter simply needs to be countered with Christian reasoning.

Last Christmas, Christianity Today magazine lauded the books in an editorial that called the series "a 'Book of Virtues' with a preadolescent fun-

ny bone."

While noting that parents should scrutinize what influences their kids, the editorial writers stated, "The literary witchcraft of the Harry Potter series has almost no resemblance to the I-am-God mumbo jumbo of Wiccan circles."

Colson said in a BreakPoint radio commentary that the millions of Harry Potter books floating around American homes make it "almost inevitable that your own children or grandchildren will be exposed to them."

Colson advised helping children understand deeper messages. "Contrast the mechanical magic in the Potter books to the kind of real-life witchcraft the Bible condemns—the kind that encour-

ages involvement with supernatural evil."

Children who develop a taste for the Potter series also might go for other fantasy books with a Christian worldview, he added.

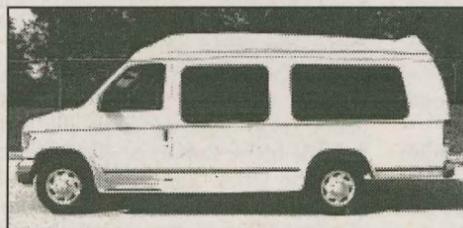
"When your kids finish reading Harry Potter, give them C.S. Lewis' 'Narnia' books and J.R.R. Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy," he said. "These books also feature wizards and witches and magical potions—but in addition, they inspire the imagination within a Christian framework—and prepare the hearts of readers for the real-life story of Christ."

Compiled from reports by Baptist Press and Religion News Service

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Not quite like last year

Homecoming 2000 was not quite like Homecoming '99. Last year, our campus was a beehive of activity as we celebrated our centennial. Several hundred alumni and friends visited. We had a good crowd this year, but it was considerably smaller.

This year we had four large tents under which to serve the meals set up on the athletic field. A heavy rain the day before made for a difficult time placing the tents. While we did contend with a little mud, no one complained. We were all so happy to have the rain, I think anyone would have been ashamed to complain.

For the past several years we have served barbecued pork from hogs raised on our farm. In a recent survey, some folks asked for an additional meat. So this year we added barbecued chicken. We ordered more than we thought we would need, but misjudged a bit and ran out of chicken near the end of the serving line.

In addition to the picnic-style noon meal, everyone always enjoys the fellowship. Most of the fellowship began at Oneida Baptist Church, just across the street from our campus. Oneida Baptist Church, originally Riverside Baptist Church, has been an integral part of this ministry since our founding in 1899. There was an extended time for sharing special memories of days gone by, as well as words of praise for how the school has helped many students get an education. Some expressed gratitude not only for gaining an education for time, but for being prepared for eternity as well.

The fellowship continued under the tents as everyone filled their plates to capacity. Most people were not at all embarrassed to make more than one trip to the food line. Expressing to everyone how

delicious the food is makes the return trip seem like the logical thing to do. It also opens the door of opportunity for others to make the same decision. Few things make a meal more enjoyable than a lot of laughter, and there was plenty of that.

While many people ate under the tents, others chose to eat in the dining room. Because of health concerns for some, the air-conditioned dining room made the noon meal more enjoyable. Some of the stories told had been told dozens of time before. No matter how many times the tale has been told, or how many times one has heard the same story, the memories of those school days always bring smiles and laughter.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

It is always exciting to have the anniversary classes back. Those celebrating special-year anniversaries such as 5, 10 or 15 years always put forth extra effort to attend. It always brings a smile to my face when class members share with me, in confidence, how much older the other classmates look, how many have less hair and how much weight others have gained.

The afternoon always ends with a gathering in the chapel. We honor all the anniversary classes, with a special emphasis on those alumni celebrating their 50th reunion. This year we inducted two alumni into the Athletic Hall of Fame. We also placed a picture of Melvin Davidson, after whom our chapel is named, in the chapel.

The day came to its conclusion with a final meal under the tents. After the last hamburgers had been eaten and the laughter ended, everyone headed for home ... until next year.

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

Finding encouragement

Third-year student Jimmy Garland did not attend church regularly as a child. His older brother became involved in a new church plant and took Jimmy to a revival. "In that revival at age 12, I gave my life to the Lord," Jimmy said. "At age 19 in another revival I became aware of God's call to ministry."

Why did another 10 years pass before Jimmy answered that call?

"Our church was high on an educated ministry and I was a poor country boy without much chance of going to college," Jimmy says. "My pastor didn't think I would ever make it as a minister because of my limited educational background."

"After I gave my heart to the ministry, the Lord took me to Haiti with (Clear Creek alumnus) Evangelist Joe Mobley. I became familiar with Clear Creek and found spirituality among the graduates I had not found anywhere else. I was encouraged by their humble servant attitude," he said.

At age 31, Jimmy, Vanessa and Billy (now age 12) moved to campus and Jimmy soon found other people with similar backgrounds.

"I believe God still calls folks like me. I've seen a number of men

and women with backgrounds like mine from high schools that didn't encourage them to attend college," Jimmy said. Vanessa is working toward an associate of arts in ministry degree while Jimmy is completing a bachelor of arts degree.

As campus workshop employees, Jimmy works in the library and Vanessa is secretary to the director of financial aid. The jobs are a blessing God has used to provide for their needs.

"At Clear Creek everyone supports each other. Studying and praying with other students are some of my most wonderful times. Prayer is an important part of our preparation," Jimmy said.

He also is getting experience in preparation to live out his call to be a church planter as he serves as pastor of Fonde Baptist Church, 12 miles from campus.

"I'm sure the Lord wants me to continue study at the seminary and I'm open to either starting new work or helping re-plant a work that has closed," he said.

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

Survey finds Bible shoppers too overwhelmed to buy

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (RNS)—More than one-third of Bible shoppers enter stores intent on buying the holy book and leave confused and empty-handed, according to a new survey.

Almost 40 percent of shoppers for Bibles walk away from stores without one, recent research by Zondervan Publishing House has found. Most buyers either cannot make up their minds or do not find what they are looking for. And 46 percent of Bible shoppers leave without ever speaking to a salesperson.

In response, the Michigan-based publishing company is developing a "store within a store" to meet the needs of customers searching for the right Bible among the plethora of choices.

Zondervan alone publishes at least 300 different types of Bibles, including those for youth and leaders, in study and devotional volumes and in paperback and leather, said Tom Mockabee, executive vice president and publisher of Zondervan's Bible Group.

Learning about the percentage of Bible shoppers leaving empty-handed and the more than 50 percent of Bible shoppers who say they visit stores' Bible departments at least once a month, Mockabee said his company's leaders realized Zondervan was not properly meeting consumer needs.

At the CBA International Convention, a gathering of Christian retailers July 8-13 in New Orleans, Zondervan unveiled what it said is the answer: an in-store "Bible Shop." Customers visiting the area within some stores' Bible departments will be invited to tear off the shrink-wrap around the Bibles and sit on chairs or at tables to flip through prospective purchases.

"We're saying it's OK to touch it, pick it up," said Mockabee.

Mark Rice, marketing director of Zondervan's Bible Group, said he hopes the new Bible departments will create the same kind of ambiance for which some secular bookstores have become known. The new areas will include counters with open Bibles.

"We're trying with Bible Shop to take away not only the confusion, but we're really trying to get them to interact ... with the product," he said of customers.

In the past, many Bibles were sold behind the counter and on shelves in shrink-wrapped packages when retailing had less of a self-service emphasis.

The "Bible Shop" will cover about 340 square feet and is designed for a store of 10,000 to 15,000 square feet. The project is being tested in four stores and is expected to be placed in 20 more stores in the next year.

In addition to aiding customers, Zondervan also is offering a new free CD-ROM to train employees at Christian and secular bookstores.

"Selling Bibles can be intimidating," said Mockabee. "There's many translations and many features to the Bible."

The CD-ROMs, offered at three different levels, range from basic information about Bibles to advanced terminology about translations to details about the various kinds of bindings used for the Bibles.

Mockabee said the CD-ROMs, developed in conjunction with Family Christian Stores, include information about Zondervan Bibles as well as those of the publisher's competitors.

Rice said the survey involved interviews with 800 shoppers at Christian bookstore Bible departments and 1,500 phone interviews of Bible shoppers at secular stores like Barnes and Noble, warehouse clubs like Sam's Club and mass merchandisers like Wal-Mart.

The study revealed other aspects of shopping habits of those in search of

'Fresh Wind' wins Book of the Year Award

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—A book by the pastor of a prominent Brooklyn church has been named the 2000 Charles "Kip" Jordan Christian Book of the Year by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

"Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire" was written by Jim Cymbala with Dean Merrill. Cymbala is pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle Church, home of the Grammy Award-winning Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

The book details how Cymbala's church grew from 20 people to 6,000 in his 25 years as its pastor and how other churches can experience spiritual renewal.

The award, named for a former publisher of Word Publishing who died in 1997, was announced during a banquet July 8 in New Orleans. Winners of Gold Medallion Awards were honored in 20 categories:

Bibles "The Knowing Jesus Study Bible, NIV" edited by Ed Hindson and Ed Dobson.

Bible Study "Moses" by Charles Swindoll.

Biography/Autobiography "Fingernail Moon" by Janie Webster.

Christian Education "Boundaries GroupWare," a combination kit of resources from the Boundaries series on healthy relationships, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend.

Christian Living "Fresh Faith" by Jim Cymbala with Dean Merrill.

Christian Ministry "The Upside Down Church" by Greg Laurie.

Christianity and Society "How Now Shall We Live?" by Charles Colson with Nancy Pearcey.

Devotional "Wow—The Big Picture: The Bible in 7 Minutes a Day" by Carl Laney, Jeff Schulte and Lloyd Shadrach.

Elementary Children "Because I Love You" by Max Lucado.

Family and Parenting "Just in Case I Can't Be There" by Ron Mehl.

Fiction "A New Song" by Jan Karon.

Gift Book/Poetry "The Art of God" by Ric Ergenbright.

Inspirational "The Bible Jesus Read" by Philip Yancey.

Marriage "Boundaries in Marriage" by Henry Cloud and John Townsend.

Missions/Evangelism "Finding Common Ground" by Tim Downs.

Preschool Children "The Rhyme Bible Storybook for Toddlers" by Linda Sattgast.

Reference Works/Commentaries "Holman Bible Atlas" by Thomas Brisco.

Spanish "Nuevo Diccionario De La Biblia" by Alfonso Lockward.

Theology/Doctrine "The Story of Christian Theology" by Roger Olson.

Youth "What's the Big Deal? About Sex" by Jim Burgen.

Bibles. For example:

■ 77 percent of Bible shoppers intend to make a purchase when they arrive at the store.

■ 53 percent of those planning to purchase a Bible know which one they want.

■ 80 percent of Bible shoppers at stores like Kmart and Target are female.

■ When asked what one thing they would change about Bible departments,

Rice said 17 percent said "open Bible samples."

Zondervan officials said while the survey showed "road blocks" for customers, they learned people are still interested in buying Bibles.

"They aren't telling us they don't want more Bibles," Rice said. "In fact, they're telling us just the opposite. The research is showing they want more Bibles."

More American worship services diversifying with world music

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (RNS)—At their weekly choir rehearsal, the Messengers of Peace practice what they call "fun" music along with the Lutheran standards of "Lift High the Cross" and "Amazing Grace."

Working through the syncopations, rhythms and languages of African and Spanish hymns, they bring a new tradition to the worship at Peace Lutheran Church every third Sunday: music from around the world.

In fact, "Siyahamba," a South African piece known as "We Are Marching in the Light of God," has become such a favorite that it is no longer sung solely by the choir. Sometimes the congregation sings along, and a bell choir plays it, too.

"This is one you can really just open out," Christine Howlett said. "You don't have to have any reserve. You can sing your heart out."

Global church music—particularly from Africa, Asia and Latin America—has trickled down from occasional international Christian gatherings to local worship services throughout the country.



WORLD MUSIC Joy Namulondo of Uganda, left, helps Christine Howlett and other members of the Messengers of Peace choir with the pronunciation of a Bantu word. The choir at Peace Lutheran Church in Alexandria, Va., has added global music to expand its worship. (RNS photo)

And, in the last decade, publishing houses have issued new hymnals and hymnal supplements for denominations that feature more music from foreign lands. Others have published smaller volumes that highlight global music.

Michael Hawn, a church music professor at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, is editor of "Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round."

Hawn said some churches have embraced global music in an effort to be

more hospitable to the wide range of people they hope to attract to their weekly worship. Other congregations find they learn about their own faith by worshipping as others do.

"No one culture has the corner on God's revelation," he said. "It's that sense of moving beyond our little view of the world."

Part of the attraction of the music is movement itself—the irresistible need to mark its rhythms with swaying or toe-tapping.

The dozen or so Messengers of Peace, most sitting on high wooden stools and sharing music stands covered with song sheets and hymnals, grin from ear to ear as they sing and tap to the music's rhythm.

"The simplicity of this kind of music is enchanting," Howlett said.

Three months out of the year, Hawn leads "global immersion" weekends with congregations, preparing the choirs on Saturday and guiding a special Sunday service using what they've learned. Some older members say the international music reminds them of earlier foreign missions work and young people, who often are learning other languages in school, enjoy applying a global experience to the church setting.

Hawn encourages congregations to let global music be a part of regular services, rather than solely at an annual celebration of Pentecost or World Communion Sunday.

"What I think is the norm is when this kind of music is not segmented as a special event but it becomes part of the reservoir from which we draw for all of our liturgical experience," he said.

Clergy and church musicians throughout the country say the music is welcomed by some members and guests from a variety of cultures, though some oppose the introduction of nontraditional music or find singing a verse or two in a foreign language difficult.

In predominantly white congregations, pastors find the music is a favorable factor for racial and ethnic minorities considering joining their churches.

John Wimberly, pastor of Western Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., said his predominantly white congregation has seen an increase in the church's diversity since the choir began performing more works by African and Latin composers as well as Asian hymns. "Those things ... just attract a different kind of person than if you're doing the white European dead male thing."

Some older members say the international music reminds them of earlier foreign missions work.

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ **Urgent need:** Four people for a construction/evangelism team to Marlboro, Poland, Sept. 12-25.

■ Alex Mwasile, pastor of Morogoro Church in Tanzania, and his wife, Hilda.

■ The many Muslims who live in Mbuyuni, a densely populated area in Morogoro, Tanzania.

■ Children who attend kindergarten at Morogoro Town Church and Mikesi Church in Tanzania. Many of them are from Muslim families.

■ The leaders of a house church in Poland led by missionaries Doug and Marcy Shaw as the Shaws prepare for stateside assignment.

■ Missionaries and volunteers working in Czestochowa, Poland, this summer as they reach out to the hundreds of thousands of Polish Catholics who will come to the city to worship the Black Madonna.

■ Praise God for a young Polish college student who recently became a Christian through a Bible study led by missionaries Jim and Patti Barrett.

■ Joshua Park, the new pastor of Rice Korean Baptist Church in Northborough, Mass.

■ The summer outreach ministry of Burlington Street Ministries in Burlington, Vt., and pastor/director Dave Russell.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BANDANA**—Bill Miller resigned as pastor of Bandana Church to become pastor of Bicknell Church, Bicknell, Ind.

■ **BENTON**—Zions Cause Church called Deward Hurst as interim pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Beech Grove church called Jammie Vance as pastor.

■ **CORINTH**—New Columbus Church will host David Livingston in concert July 23 at 11 a.m. David

What's going on?

Send your happenings to Shirley Wooton for Mountains to the Mississippi. Mail: Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6474. E-mail: shirley_wooton@kybaptist.org.

Foley is pastor.

■ **FALMOUTH**—Turner Ridge Church will host its 125th anniversary celebration July 30 at 11 a.m. service. A potluck lunch and a 2 p.m. service will follow. For information, call (606) 654-8707. Norman Workman is pastor.

■ **GILBERTSVILLE**—First Church called Terry Sills as interim pastor.

■ **GREENSBURG**—Mt. Gilead called Scott Carpenter as pastor. Carpenter was pastor of Pleasant Valley Church.

Pleasant Valley Church called Marshall Eastham as pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Watson Lane Church called Tim Enwright as associate minister.

■ **IRVINE**—Beech Grove Church recently ordained Lewis Babb Jr. as a deacon. Stephen Creech is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Calvary Church ordained Linc Taylor to the gospel min-

istry. Taylor resigned as minister to youth to become minister to students at North Metro Church, Lawrenceville, Ga. Robert Baker is pastor.

Grace Church will host revival services July 23-26 at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday morning and at 7 p.m. nightly. Tom Huls will be the evangelist. Donna Bonner will lead the music. Terrance Freeman is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Mark McClintock resigned as minister to children at Crescent Hill Church to become minister of congregational life at Seventh and James Church, Waco, Texas. Ron Sisk is pastor of Crescent Hill Church.

■ **OWENTON**—Pleasant Ridge Church will host David Livingston in concert July 23 at 7 p.m. David Wotier is pastor.

■ **PLEASUREVILLE**—Pleasureville Church will host revival services July 23-26 at 7 p.m. Mike Caudill will be the evangelist and David Stahl will lead music. For information, call (502) 878-4755. Dale Niswonger is interim pastor.

■ **SMITHLAND**—Ohio River Asso-

ciation will host a Celebrate Jesus 2000 Crusade July 30-Aug. 4 at 7 p.m. nightly at Livingston Central High School. Jamey Ragle will be the evangelist and the group First Love will lead music. For information, call (270) 988-2204.

■ **SPOTTSVILLE**—Spottsville Church called Don Duncan as pastor. He began July 1.

■ **SUMMERSVILLE**—Aetna Grove Church will celebrate its 200th anniversary July 30 at 10:30 a.m. A potluck lunch and a 1 p.m. service will follow. For information, call (502) 366-7540. Ferrill Gardner is interim pastor.

■ **UTICA**—Ray Cummins, pastor of Glenville Church for nine years, will retire Aug. 1. Also, his wife, Terry, will retire after 6 years as minister of music. Cummins has served as pastor for 44 years. After Aug. 1, their address will be: 2018 Hearthside Circle, Shelbyville, KY 40065.

■ **WHITLEY CITY**—Larry Frisby resigned as associate pastor of First Church to become pastor of Palestine Church, Campbellsville.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo available for vacation rental, Sanibel Island, Fla. Large pool, tennis courts, bikes, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely secluded beach. Weekly rates May through mid-December: \$650. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752.

FOR SALE: St. Matthews Condo: 2Br/2Bth with pool, party room, sauna, exercise, security, elevator for only \$83,900. Immediate possession, great area; call Hornbuckles, Century 21 Joe Guy Hagan, (502) 326-7822.

FOR SALE: 100-percent renovated house (Highlands). New plumbing, electrical, furnace/AC, windows, roof, tile floor, 3BR/2Bath. (502) 899-5353.

FOR SALE: Padded church choir seats. Please call (606) 266-2601 (Chevy Chase Baptist Church) for more information.

FOR SALE: 1991 Dodge 15-passenger van. 105k miles. Asking \$4,500. Please contact Jerry Gifford at (270) 842-5554.

SEEKING: Progressive Virginia Baptist congregation seeks full-time minister of education and administration to lead in continuing a transition to purpose-driven discipleship. Send resumé and cover letter to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 12716 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, VA 23606.

SEEKING: Two spiritual gospel songwriters and vocalists are seeking a spiritual pianist who is serious, dedicated and committed to working God's will through music. Call James at (502) 772-4028, or Jackie at (502) 774-3706.

SEEKING: Minister of education/youth for First Baptist Church, Barlow, Ky. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 160, Barlow, KY 42024.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for a growing Western Kentucky church. Send resumé to: Zion's Cause Baptist Church, Box 1532 Highway 68 W, Benton, KY 42025, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to children. Rich Pond Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, 200 Brad Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42104.

SEEKING: Senior pastor. Effort Baptist Church: Dynamic, fast-growing, moderate (SBC) New Testament church with a diverse membership and average worship attendance of more than 300. Two Sunday worship services: 9:30 a.m.—traditional; 11 a.m.—contemporary. Staff of four full-time and four part-time. Dynamic location near planned community of Lake Monticello in Fluvanna County (second fastest-growing county in Virginia). Located near university town of Charlottesville. Gifts needed: respect for diversity, strong leadership, administrative skills, preaching, teaching, evangelism and must share our vision for the future growth of the church. Requires a master of divinity degree or better; and at least five years of successful experience as a senior pastor. Please submit your resumé following the format of the "Church First, Virginia Baptist Mission Board—BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION" to: Pastor Search Committee, Rt. 7, Box 7353, Palmyra, VA 22963. E-mail: kab@cstone.net.

SEEKING: Part-time custodian; 20 hours per week. Competitive wage. Call (502) 452-2681 for an application.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director (24 hours per week) for Buena Vista Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, Buena Vista Baptist Church, 119 West 24th St., Owensboro, KY 42303.

SEEKING: Calvary Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., is accepting recommendations and resúmes for the full-time staff position of minister to youth. Calvary is a 125-year-old multi-staff congregation in the center of our city with 1,700 resident members. This minister will lead an active, growing youth ministry (grades 7-12) that reaches out to youth throughout our community. Appropriate seminary and ministry experience is desired. Calvary has a very strong commitment to CBF-related ministries while continuing to participate in Cooperative Program giving. Send recommendations or resúmes by Sept. 1 to: Youth Search Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 150 E High St., Lexington, KY 40507. E-mail address: calvary@compuserve.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music to direct and lead dynamic music ministry. Candidate must be theologically conservative and outreach-minded. Must be experienced in leading and directing large productions as well as ongoing choirs and programs. Worship style is blended. Send resumé to: Paul Blizard, senior pastor, Memorial Baptist Church, PO Box 777, Beckley, WV 25801.

SEEKING: Growing church is in search of a full-time staff member to work with music/youth/children. Dry Ridge Baptist is in a growing area and has great potential in all three of these areas. A church parsonage is available if desired, and salary will be determined by experience, qualifications and need. If you are interested, please inquire by phone: (606) 824-5501 or 824-9229, or send your resumé to: Dry Ridge Baptist Church, 19 Broadway, PO Box 14, Dry Ridge, KY 41035.

SEEKING: Ashworth Road Baptist Church, "Iowa's Fastest Growing Community," located in actively-growing West Des Moines, Iowa, is now accepting resúmes for the position of pastor. ARBC is a 175-member congregation which affirms women in ministry and supports missions through SBC, CBF and local ministries. Applicants should be seminary graduates with at least 3+ years of pastoral experience. A strong emphasis in ministry strengths of preaching and teaching is important. For more information, visit us at http://members.aol.com/ABaptist/ashworth. Send resúmes to: Search Committee, ARBC, 5300 Ashworth Road, WDM, IA 50266.

SEEKING: FBC Prestonsburg is seeking a highly motivated and Spirit-filled individual to lead and direct its youth toward a more fulfilling and enriched Christian experience. The full-time position has primary emphasis on youth and their salvation and daily walk with our Lord. Send resumé to Cara Hall, FBC, PO Box 756, Prestonsburg, KY 41653.

SEEKING: Secretarial position available. Telephone and computer skills required. Health insurance provided. Call: (502) 426-6577.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for a contemporary church. Please send resumé to: Elk Horn Baptist Church, 3145 East Elkhorn Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to children for First Baptist Church, Shepherdsville, Ky. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 238 Frank E Simon Ave., Shepherdsville, KY 40165, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Second Baptist Church of Greenville, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Please send resumé to: Mr. John Mark Pendley, Search Committee, PO Box 253, Greenville, KY 42345.

SEEKING: South Elkhorn Baptist Church, Lexington, is prayerfully seeking a full-time associate pastor of music and youth. Send resumé to SEBC, 4867 Versailles Road, Lexington, KY 40510, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: East Cadiz Baptist Church of Cadiz is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumé to: M/Y Search Committee, East Cadiz Baptist Church, 407 Third St., Cadiz, KY 42211.

SEEKING: Senior pastor for a loving church in Bowling Green. Must be experienced and ambitious. Send resumé to: Forest Park Baptist Church, 520 Old Morgantown Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister for Farmdale Baptist Church, 5610 U.S. Highway 127 South, Frankfort, Ky. If you feel God is calling you to this area to work with children, send resumé to: Ms. Bryan, 530 Alfa Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601.

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

SERVICES: Home care for the elderly. Meal preparation, housekeeping, personal hygiene. Bonded, insured, eight years experience. Kinnett Care, (502) 499-7777.

Teens keep YouthLink promise to spend summer on mission

By Erin Curry
Baptist Press

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—To keep a promise to God, 18-year-old Lydia Edrington is going to Africa to work for two weeks with Southern Baptist missionaries in Burkina Faso.

"God has given me a burden for the 1.86 billion people in the world who have never heard the name of Jesus and why He came," said Edrington, of Bradenton, Fla. "I pray God can use me in some small way as He did the little boy with the two fishes and five loaves."

That's just one example of Southern Baptist teens fulfilling the commitments they made to God six months ago at YouthLink 2000.

More than 46,000 young people gathered for YouthLink 2000 in seven cities across the country Dec. 31 to celebrate the arrival of the year 2000. Students met in arenas and conference centers to worship and to listen to speakers and musical groups emphasizing the need to reach the world with the gospel. The Southern Baptist event was sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources, the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union.

As they welcomed the new millennium, thousands of students publicly told God they were available for future career missionary service.

In addition, more than 4,000 promised they would spend a summer, semester or year doing God's work full time before they graduate from college.

Now it's time to start fulfilling those promises, and many students are keeping their word.

"We've had an increase of over 5,000 participants in World Changers compared to last year," said Lynn Taylor, director of student evangelism at the North American Mission Board. "Part of the credit may go to the exposure students and youth ministers had to the mission opportunities presented at YouthLink."

International World Changers has seen an increase as well, but more results from YouthLink are expected next summer after churches have had more time to plan international trips.

But there's no shortage of mission action this summer:

■ Will Aleshire, minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church of Hinesville, Ga., is leading a group of high school students as they minister July 15-22 to the people of Culiacan, Mexico, through International World Changers.

■ Matt Mantooth, 17, of Greenville, S.C., joined International World Changers in Australia to help build facilities for Southern Baptists to use as they minister during the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney. He also led sports camps and gave his testimony in Australian schools.

■ The youth at Padre Island Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas, are leading backyard Bible clubs in low-income housing areas of San Antonio.

"Our youth caught a vision and passion for what God can do through them,

and our youth ministry has exploded since YouthLink," said Darren Sutton, minister of youth and discipleship at Padre Island. "Before YouthLink, we averaged eight youth, but now we average 40."

■ Youth from Tabernacle Baptist Church in New Bern, N.C., are partnering with the inner-city mission in Atlanta they worked with during YouthLink. They are raising funds to provide a new roof for the people they worked with, and have named the campaign "Raisin' the Roof."

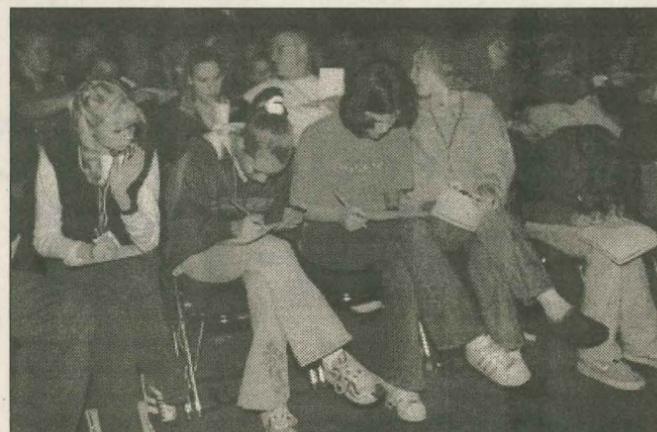
"YouthLink was the greatest event in our youth's history," said Sharon Bender, youth worker at Tabernacle.

■ The youth group from Second Baptist Church in King's Mountain, N.C., is traveling to Cleveland, Ohio, July 21-29 to conduct vacation Bible school in the inner city and work with a homeless ministry sponsored by a church in the area.

■ A group of 77 youth from Forest Hills Baptist Church in Nashville led kids' clubs and did construction in Reynosa, Mexico. Eighteen were YouthLink participants.

■ First Baptist Church of Nashville committed to three mission trips this summer. The middle school youth ministered to the homeless and children in inner-city Atlanta. The high schoolers headed for New York City. Senior high students from First Baptist are traveling to Sydney, Australia, to work with three churches in leading sports camps and worship services.

■ Youth from Oak Hill Baptist



Church in St. Louis are traveling to Johnstown, Pa., July 28-Aug. 5 to reach out with puppets, clowns, backyard Bible clubs and various street ministries.

"These kids are looking for ways to give their lives away to others," said Sherry Woods, a missionary in residence who helped coordinate YouthLink activities. "This generation is out there, looking for God, and we're offering them ways to serve Him."

Richard Ross, LifeWay youth ministry consultant and one of the co-chairmen of YouthLink, said the conference's impact will be felt for generations to come.

"YouthLink 2000 has made an indelible mark on the Southern Baptist missions enterprise. The students who attended saw a vision for the world they will never forget," Ross said. "The 'rest of the story' will not be told for decades."

KEEPING PROMISES
Students at YouthLink 2000 in Denver fill out commitment cards, which pledge prayer, participation or support of missions. More than 4,000 students promised God they would spend a summer, semester or year doing God's work full time before they graduate from college. This summer, students are fulfilling those commitments by participating in projects such as World Changers and serving as summer missionaries in the U.S. and overseas. (BP photo by Russell Rankin)

American Indian blends heritage, Christian faith to reach others

By Laura Johnston
Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (ABP)—For many years Robert Francis couldn't accept his Cherokee Indian heritage because he didn't think God would accept him as a non-white person.

For centuries American Indians have been treated unfairly and unjustly by white Europeans, he said. They've been told that God's chosen people were Jews and then white Europeans and Africans, but never American Indians.

Because of those stereotypes, "I couldn't accept myself as an Indian because I didn't see God accepting me as an Indian," he said. "I thought I had to be a white person for God to love me."

He tried hiding his features by keeping his hair cut short and hoped to blend in with the mainstream. Yet he found assimilation to be "just a road to frustration."

Now, as a consultant for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Missouri, he embraces his braided hair, drums and shaker as part of his ancestry. He works with Missouri's more than 20,000 American Indians to start home-fellowship and worship groups.

Francis and his family live in Butler, in western Missouri. He was the pastor of Perkins Baptist Church near Advance, Mo., before attending sem-

inary in Kansas City.

Francis returned to southeast Missouri this spring to speak at First Baptist Church in Cape Girardeau during an emphasis on home missions.

Francis doesn't consider himself a missionary. Using words like "missionary" and "Christian" has negative connotations among American Indians, he said.

His official title is catalytic consultant with the CBF of Missouri. It reminds him of a person who teaches others how to start fires.

And maybe that's what he's doing with the fellowship groups.

Three groups have started since January 1999 in Joplin, Butler and Callaway counties. Another group is likely to begin in Cass County.

Francis hasn't ruled out starting a fellowship in the southeast. He's just waiting; it's sort of like spontaneous combustion, he said.

Francis hasn't actively worked to get any of the groups started. Instead, he waits to be approached. "When I hear that, I know that it's the Creator leading these people," he said.

The fellowships meet in homes much as the early Jewish believers did. On occasion the groups get together for a powwow.

"We love to fellowship," Francis said. "We like to have fun and laugh."

Most of the meetings begin by cooking a meal, often just fry-bread,

juice and coffee. After the meal there is a ceremonial fire or smudge. His eldest son, Peter, is the fire-keeper.

The white smoke from burning cedar leaves soaked in spring water is a way "to visualize our prayers going up to heaven," Francis said.

The service includes singing, drums, Bible reading, preaching and sharing stories. As many as 12 tribes are part of the fellowships, which link them spiritually and socially, he said.

"All Indian people have to live in two worlds and find a way to relate to both," Francis said.

When Francis talks about Jesus and the Creator, he doesn't bring Jesus to the American Indian culture. Instead, he looks for Jesus in the culture. When American Indians talk about the cedar and its red bark, they remember the blood of Jesus. The smoke from the fire is also a symbol of healing and purity that comes from the Holy Spirit, he added.

Francis said people often are surprised at the number of American Indians in the state. Census figures from 1998 put the population at 20,644.

When people ask where American Indians live, he tells them they may be next door or just down the street.

Francis has met at least two American Indians while working as a substitute teacher in Butler. Students often ask him to sing or "do a rain dance."

One time he took out a cassette tape of stomp music, which is a traditional Cherokee dance, and showed a photo of the dance to the students as he explained the event. He told them about shell shakers—women who wore bracelets made of terrapin on their ankles. Today the bracelets are made from Pet milk cans, he told them.

One young girl said that was what hers were made from, much to the surprise of Francis and the students.

"Most didn't even know this about her. Some will make fun of her for it, and some will respect her for that," Francis said.

Another time he was teaching students some songs when the school's drug education officer told the students what a valuable lesson they were learning.

It turned out that the blond-headed officer, who was nicknamed the Great White Dope Hunter by his colleagues at the sheriff's office, was of American Indian ancestry. Not many people knew this because "he was just trying to fit in," Francis said.

The deputy's mother was American Indian, and he wore his hair braided as a teen. But years later he cut his blond hair short and had nearly forgotten all the songs until he heard the drums and joined Francis' class.

The deputy is likely to come to fellowship, Francis added.

Francis said his work "is not something I'm doing but the Creator using me to help in it."

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Our best-kept secret

Hawaii Pacific BAPTIST



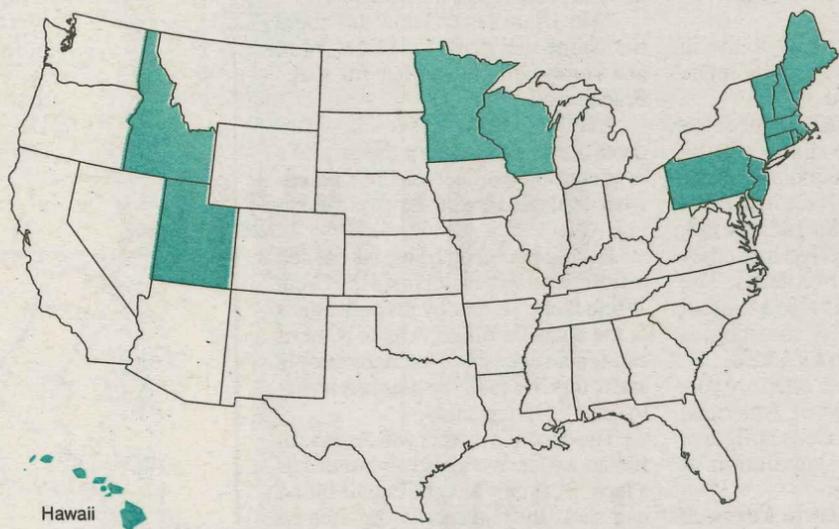
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NEW ENGLAND BAPTIST

THE UTAH-IDAHO SOUTHERN BAPTIST WITNESS



*The Western Recorder works in cooperation with
5 Baptist conventions representing 13 states*

A while back at the Western Recorder we got a call asking if we knew another state Baptist newspaper was copying our design format.

It struck us anew that one of the Western Recorder's best kept secrets has been its publishing relationship with newspapers in five state conventions where Southern Baptist work is in its infancy.

For seven years now, the Western Recorder has worked with these conventions to help them publish their monthly newspapers.

In most of these conventions the responsibility for producing the state paper previously fell on the executive director or a staff person whose primary focus was another ministry field. Now, with the help of the Western Recorder, they no longer have to handle the production of their paper.

The process works like this:

Editors or their assistants in the Baptist state conventions of New England, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, Minnesota-Wisconsin, Utah-Idaho and Hawaii Pacific assemble their local news stories, photos, advertisements and editorials and transmit them electronically to our office.

Here, Partnership Editions Editor Joyce Martin edits and prepares layouts, adding national and international news, missions and feature stories from the Western Recorder.

And, yes, she uses the same design format as the Western Recorder.

The result is a win-win situation. Staff in these partnership conventions are freed up to focus on their primary responsibilities and readers get a paper chock full of local, national and international news.

And it looks good, too.