

WESTERN RECORDER

July 25, 2000
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FOR THE RECORD

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Kentucky Baptists recently met with European Baptist Convention leaders to establish the third international partnership for Baptists in the Bluegrass State. *Page 3.*

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State churches report increase in '99 baptisms

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—Even with fewer churches reporting, the number of baptisms reported by Kentucky Baptist churches in 1999 topped the previous year's totals by more than 600.

Churches reported 17,928 baptisms in 1999, up from 17,251 in 1998, for an increase of nearly 4 percent, according to Dan Garland, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's evangelism growth team.

Garland said the total number of baptisms increased despite the fact that 221 fewer churches turned in their statistics last year. In 1998, 2,339 Kentucky Baptist churches reported but that number dropped to 2,118 in 1999.

The number of baptisms reported has increased 19 percent since 1993, Garland said, adding that with 32 associations conducting revival crusades in 1999-2000, he expects the trend to continue.

Garland attributed the increase in baptisms to the Celebrate Jesus 2000 emphasis. The four-year evangelism emphasis, which kicked off in 1997 and concludes in 2000, centered on teaching Christians to share their faith.

"By stressing and teaching personal evangelism, you would have to say that when people are trained to share their faith, they do and people respond to that," said Garland. "Kentucky has a good climate for evangelism."

Personal evangelism is exactly what Pastor Jeff Eaton and members of Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg are using to spread the gospel. Hope Community's new member class addresses fundamentals of the faith and prepares new believers to share their faith. *See Kentucky baptisms ..., page 7*

'Paradise lost'



SEARCH Filipino rescuers search for more bodies under ruined shanties from a collapsed garbage dumpsite in Manila July 11. Southern Baptist missionaries and local Baptists are helping relief workers feed, clothe and comfort survivors of the collapse of the massive Lupang Pangako ("Promised Land") trash dump on the edge of Manila, the Philippines. (Reuters/RNS photo)

Baptist missionaries minister to disaster victims

By Eric Bridges
SBC International Mission Board

QUEZON CITY, Philippines (BP)—Their "promised land" was a fetid dump, but thousands of Filipinos lost even that when the huge mountain of trash came crashing down.

Southern Baptist missionaries and local Baptists are helping relief workers feed, clothe and comfort survivors of the July 10 collapse of the massive

Lupang Pangako, or "Promised Land," trash dump on the edge of Manila, the Philippines.

Typhoon rains and wind toppled part of the 50-foot-high, 25-acre-wide mound, which buried several hundred shanties in an avalanche of garbage. By July 18 more than 200 bodies had been recovered, with more still missing. Many of the victims were children. Up to 80,000 people make a living scavenging through the garbage

for scraps to sell. Residents there continued searching for items to sell even as workers and bulldozers unearthed corpses.

A missionary team drove two vans loaded with food and relief supplies to Payatas-Hope Baptist Church near the dump site July 18. There they joined church members to pack 300 relief bags for shantytown families being housed at an evacuation center *See Baptists respond to ..., page 12*

Church starter describes 11 characteristics for healthy churches

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

GLORIETA, N.M.—Healthy churches are characterized by progressive intimacy with God, genuine relationships among members and compassionate mission and ministry, according to a church-starting leader.

E.B. Brooks, director of the Texas Baptist Church Starting Center, led a recent conference session on church health.

He drew his definition of a healthy church from recent work completed by a task force to pave the way for a stronger emphasis on church health in Texas.

Church health is not a new idea, but it is gaining renewed attention as a follow-up to the church growth movement of recent years, Brooks said.

While church growth focuses on numbers, church health does not, he explained. "Churches that are numerically growing oftentimes are healthy, but not always. They may be growing not because they're healthy but because

there are a lot of people around looking for a church."

Likewise, churches that aren't experiencing pace-setting growth might be healthy, he added.

"Church health isn't measured by numbers," he said, drawing on physical health as an illustration. "If health were measured by numbers, we'd keep getting taller and broader until we died."

Brooks outlined the various approaches to church health advocated by some of the nation's best-known authors, noting that the differences between the approaches result mainly from geographical and social contexts.

Among the characteristics of a healthy church are:

■ **God-centered worship.** Healthy churches provide worship experiences that are biblically based, inspiring, dynamic, participatory and transforming, Brooks said. "Healthy churches help people have an encounter with God."

■ **Loving relationships.** These relationships are based on trust, acceptance, openness, honesty and respect, he said. "Relationships are not built in worship

services" but in small groups such as Sunday school classes, Bible study groups and ministry groups.

■ **Enabling servant leadership.** Effective church leaders will focus on equipping the laity for mission and ministry, Brooks said. "The product of a good leader is another leader, not a bunch of followers."

■ **Bible-based discipleship.** "The focus of discipleship is not knowing more and more," he explained. "It is knowing and applying ... what God is doing."

■ **God-focused vision.** This vision must not be the pastor's alone, but must be shared by pastor and congregation, he advised.

■ **Focused prayer.** Healthy churches focus on prayer in a way that facilitates a dynamic relationship with God, Brooks said. This requires more than hearing prayer requests for physical ailments during a Wednesday night prayer meeting, he added. Instead, it requires a church and its members to become dependent upon God in prayer.

■ **Intentional evangelism.** The

church has done a disservice by separating evangelism from the rest of church life, he asserted. Evangelism should permeate every ministry of the church and is "what we all do all the time."

■ **Kingdom-based missions.** The end-result of a healthy church's missions emphasis is reaching the community and the world for Christ, Brooks said.

■ **Needs-based ministries.** Healthy churches transform their communities by meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs, he reported.

■ **Joyous stewardship.**
■ **Participatory decision-making.** Healthy churches focus on consensus building and are able to solve problems and deal with conflict, he said.

Brooks acknowledged this is a daunting list. "No church is going to be strong in all 11 things. We have strengths and weaknesses."

Sometimes, a church's strengths offset its weaknesses, while other times, weaknesses must be addressed to bring health, he advised.

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, July 26

IMB trustees reaffirm 'New Directions' mission strategy

"Our mission is to start New Testament churches consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message."

International Mission Board trustee statement affirming IMB's "New Directions" strategy

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (BP)—Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees reaffirmed the agency's current overseas policies, known as "New Directions," during their recent meeting in Asheville, N.C.

New Directions began in 1997 as a massive overhaul and restructuring of the board's overseas operations. Key ingredients in the missions strategy include its focus on the world's people groups instead of geopolitical countries and on igniting church-planting movements instead of starting one church at a time.

Trustee-approved recommendations regarding New Directions included an affirmation that "our mission is to start New Testament churches consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message. Where government policy allows and where security concerns are not prohibitive there, churches will be publicly identified as Baptist churches."

Other points in the New Directions review affirmed:

- "IMB leadership (will) continue to emphasize church planting while exploring ways to promote discipleship and leadership training for churches that is contextually appropriate and adequate



NEW MISSIONARIES International Mission Board trustee vice chairman Bob Claytor presents 57 new Southern Baptist missionaries during an appointment service July 13 at Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. (BP photo by Jessica Webb)

to facilitate church planting movements."

- "Our primary commitment (is) to people group focus without neglecting megacities and mega-population segments."

- "The senior vice president (is) to continue to evaluate the world's needs and personnel growth and recommend changes to the organization's structure to meet those needs."

Trustees also requested that a committee be named to study missionary support. They also approved a restructuring of the staff salary policies for IMB workers in Richmond, Va.

Avery Willis, the board's senior vice president for overseas operations, said he has heard concerns about whether some churches started by the IMB can correctly be called "Baptist."

Don Dent, regional leader of South-

east Asia and Oceania, explained, "In most of my region we use the name Baptist and work with Baptist partners, but we have some places where this is not possible." He described three situations that are exceptions to the rule.

- In one country where being identified as a Baptist would bring swift governmental reprisal.

- In another country where Baptist work is overly identified with one ethnic group, and using the name Baptist would cause other groups to react negatively.

- In yet another country where national Baptists are considered quite liberal in their theology and do not believe faith in Jesus is the only way to salvation.

In his report, IMB President Jerry Rankin noted he has agreed to sign "The Chicago Declaration on Religious Freedom," drafted recently by a group of Christian scholars, theologians and church leaders.

The document affirms, "Only a society that documents free discourse within the robust marketplace of ideas envisioned by America's founders can safeguard the true liberty, freedom and human dignity we all pursue."

Texas pastor clarifies controversial statement about the Bible

FLOYDADA, Texas (ABP)—The Texas pastor who at the recent Southern Baptist Convention described the Bible as "just a book" claims his words have been widely misunderstood.

"Seven words taken out of context have caused quite a stir," Anthony Sisemore noted, understating the maelstrom that has circulated around a speech he made at the June 13-14 SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Sisemore, pastor of First Baptist Church in Floydada, Texas, has been quoted widely for saying, "... the Bible is still just a book," during discussion of the Baptist Faith and Message article on Scripture. He made the statement during debate on his motion to restore portions of the Scripture article from the

1963 version of the statement.

Conservative SBC leaders seized upon Sisemore's quote as Exhibit A for their long-running allegation that moderates have a low view of Scripture. Baptist Press wrote an article quoting pastors and theologians lambasting Sisemore's statement. Some critics have suggested Sisemore's words represent views of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, though Sisemore is not a member of that group.

"It's been completely misinterpreted and taken out of context," Sisemore said in an interview with the Texas Baptist Standard, discussing his speech.

"My statement, '... the Bible is still just a book,' was preceded by a statement about my beliefs about the Bible,"

he said. "I did not expect to create a stir. I believe the Bible is God's Word."

In his address to the convention, Sisemore stressed his faith in the Bible.

"Without any hesitation, I believe the Bible is God's Word, and I strive to obey the standards it prescribes," he said at the annual meeting. "The Bible is a book that we can trust. The Bible is a book that points toward the Truth."

"With that being said, the Bible is still just a book. Christians are supposed to have a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Living Word, not a book. Jesus Christ redeems us, not a book."

Jesus Christ "is the standard by which Christians must measure everything," Sisemore said in Orlando. "Brothers and sisters, today we must be

careful not to elevate the written record above the one to whom it points.

"The Bible is a record that focuses on the Word, Jesus Christ, who is God's revelation to humanity."

Later, in an interview, Sisemore said he did not mean to imply the Bible is just an ordinary book.

"It's not to be equated with 'Tom Sawyer,' say, or 'For Whom the Bell Tolls' which were 'just' books," he explained. "I said it's 'just a book' in that it's not to be worshipped. What I mean is, yes, it's God's word to us. It is God's truth. It is God's guide for us."

"But we do not have a relationship with it. The book—the Bible—is not what redeems us. Only Christ redeems us."

BAPTIST DIGEST

- **Membership criteria proposed.** Cooperative Program support and the Bible will be the criteria used to determine New Mexico Baptist churches' eligibility for seating messengers at state Baptist convention meetings if messengers approve a recommendation of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico Executive Board. The proposal replaces an earlier recommendation to consider allowing only churches that affirm the Baptist Faith and Message statement to seat messengers. The new proposal, to be considered in October by convention messengers, defines eligible churches as those that give at least \$250 through the Cooperative Program and whose faith and practice do not "conflict with Scripture."

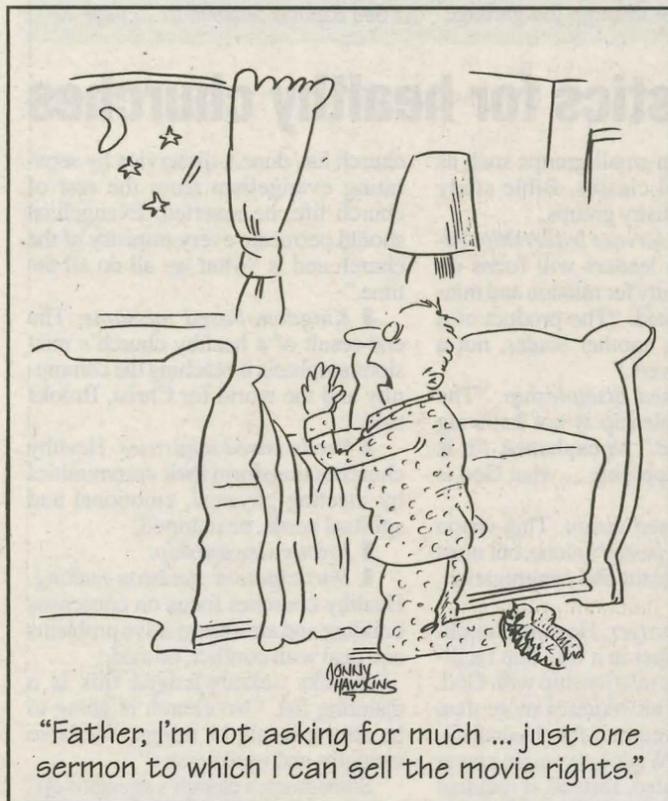
- **New BF&M tract available.** The 2000 edition of the Baptist Faith and Message tract is now available from LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. The new tract is the edition adopted by

messengers June 14 at the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Copies are available for 20 cents each by calling LifeWay's Customer Service Center toll-free at (800) 458-2772.

- **Pastor questions revision.** The newly revised Baptist Faith and Message is not a Baptist statement of faith, and those who affirm it "cannot be understood to be historic Baptists," the pastor of Texas Baptists' top missions-giving church declared July 15. Jim Denison, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, made the comments during a keynote speech at a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship breakfast during the July 14-15 convocation of Texas Baptists Committed in Corpus Christi. The SBC "has adopted a statement of faith which departs from historic Baptist views of authority, hermeneutics and ecclesiology," Denison charged. "In short, the Southern Baptist Convention is no longer Baptist as Baptists have traditionally defined themselves."

- **Shackleford dies in car crash.** Longtime Southern Baptist journalist Al Shackleford died July 23 from injuries sustained in a three-vehicle accident near Nashville. Shackleford, 68, was editor-in-chief of Mature Living magazine at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. He previously was vice president for public relations of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. He was dismissed from that position in 1990 by conservative trustees. He also served as editor of state Baptist papers in Tennessee and Indiana.

- **Estep dies at age 80.** William Estep Jr., 80, distinguished professor of church history emeritus at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died July 14 at his Fort Worth, Texas, home. Estep, a prominent church historian, taught at Southwestern from 1954 until 1994. A native of Williamsburg, he was pastor of Cold Springs Baptist Church in the 1940s.



"Father, I'm not asking for much ... just one sermon to which I can sell the movie rights."

Kentucky Baptists sign pact with European convention

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

INTERLAKEN, Switzerland—It's official. Leaders of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and European Baptist Convention recently signed an agreement finalizing plans for a three-year missions partnership.

The partnership plan, approved in May by the KBC Executive Board, gained final approval during an EBC gathering July 8-13 in Interlaken, Switzerland.

The partnership will begin Jan. 1, 2001, and continue through the end of 2003. Kentucky Baptists also currently are involved in international partnerships in Poland and Tanzania.

The European Baptist Convention is an international English-language convention with 67 congregations in 22 nations. The convention began in the 1950s with English-language churches near American military bases. Following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe a decade ago, the EBC shifted its primary focus toward international ministry in major European cities.

EBC General Secretary James Heflin said the convention's 67 churches include members from more than 120 countries. He said key needs among

churches include discipleship and leadership training for church members as well as "training and resources for our pastors who have little or no access to the basic tools they need for becoming better ministers."

Heflin said he also hopes partnership volunteers can help European Baptists "reach more European nationals with the gospel and get them involved in local EBC congregations."

"One of our great concerns is the growing number of refugees in Europe who need Jesus and the fellowship of a local church," he explained. "We have several churches whose membership is mostly refugees. The pastors tell us that their people have great needs which are overlooked or ignored."

Heflin said other concerns are that many EBC churches have few members and that the new Christians "have little or no knowledge about the basics of doing church. When other Christians come to help them with a Bible conference or a special event, they are encouraged to know that someone really cares enough to help them."

Larry Martin, leader of the KBC missions growth team, and Calvin Wilkins, KBC partnership missions director, represented Kentucky Baptists at the recent EBC meeting.

Martin said Kentucky Baptists' previous partnership experience in other parts of the world "has helped prepare us for this opportunity."

Citing the EBC's diverse international membership, Martin said, "They see their mission field as the world. They really have that vision."

"The European leaders are very excited about what God is doing in Europe," he added. "There will be opportunities for Kentucky Baptists to see the work grow and experience the joy with European Baptists."

Heflin said EBC leaders initiated discussions with Kentucky Baptists about a possible partnership "because we know the reputation of the Kentucky Baptist Convention for serving well in missions."

"I hope we can learn more about each other during these years we serve as partners in ministry," Heflin said. "We can do much for the Lord by cooperating with each other. That is the heart of the matter for us."

Wilkins said partnership ministry opportunities will range from construction projects to prayer walks to discipleship and leadership training. He said he expects initial projects to begin next spring.

"We're already getting some re-

quests for construction renovation projects," he said. "It comes down to volunteers willing to go and serve."

With the large number of countries and cultures involved in the EBC, as well as the English-language context, Kentucky Baptists' newest partnership "is going to be different from the other partnerships we have done," Wilkins said. "It will take a different flavor of how we will fit into their needs. We will try most anything if it will help them and advance their ministry."

Wilkins said he expects involvement in the EBC partnership to benefit Kentucky Baptist churches as well.

"I think it's going to strengthen our churches here in Kentucky," he noted. "I believe God will touch some hearts and lives of people here in Kentucky as they go over and help meet needs" during the partnership.

Urging Kentucky Baptists to begin praying for the partnership, Heflin said European Baptists "are praying for revival to come and for the light of the gospel to burn more brightly as a result of our cooperation."

For more information about partnership missions opportunities, contact Wilkins at (502) 244-6462, toll-free at (888) 254-5724 or by e-mail at calvin_wilkins@kybaptist.org.

"It comes down to volunteers willing to go and serve."

Calvin Wilkins, Kentucky Baptist Convention partnership missions director

Ashland churches partner with Ohio neighbors

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

JACKSON, Ohio—A partnership between two Baptist associations bordering the Ohio River led to several southeastern Ohio congregations welcoming new members at recent Celebrate Jesus 2000 revival services.

The mid-May event was sponsored by 15 churches in Scioto Valley Baptist Association, with headquarters in Jackson, Ohio. The evangelists were pastors from 15 churches in Greenup Baptist Association, based in Ashland.

The results included 544 average attendance, six conversions, nine rededications to Christ, four people who transferred memberships to Baptist churches, and five seeking baptism.

Dan Russell, director of missions for the Eastern Kentucky association, said the event grew out of a "Bridging the River" agreement the two associations signed in March of 1999. Russell expects the three-year partnership to be extended.

"We're excited about this," he said. "Christians who can't go a long way to do missions opportunities can do missions closer to home now. One of the pastors came back from the revival excited about helping (an Ohio church) do vacation Bible school. The relationships between churches is where this will develop."

The partnership got off to a rousing start earlier this year with a youth rally at Sharon Baptist Church in Ironton, Ohio. More than 390 young people attended, 90 of them from Kentucky.

Bill Wellman, director of missions for Scioto Valley, said 44 participants accepted Christ as their personal Savior and 24 youth rededicated their lives. "This was a very powerful event," he said. "We've never had anything like that in our associations."

A friendship between Wellman and Russell led to the agreement. Wellman was Russell's pastor at Rose Hill Baptist Church in Ashland before he moved to Ohio in the mid-1970s.

In the past, there had been some informal cooperation between churches on both sides of the river. Finally, they decided to take steps to formalize the relationship.

The officials stress it is a two-way street, with 15 Ohio pastors scheduled to preach revivals in Greenup Association churches next year.

The latter is a major step for Scioto Valley, which has 7,100 members in 31 churches. While that is close to half of Greenup's 15,000 members in 51 churches, the Ohio association encompasses twice as many counties.

Stretching from Athens in the east to just west of Chillicothe and as far north as the Columbus area, all 10 counties are part of Appalachia. But the group isn't seeking spiritual handouts.

"We don't want welfare," said Wellman. "We can give as well as receive. We want to expand missions endeavors and get our people to see you can do missions beyond where you're at."

However, there are needs. With a population of 500,000, the region needs more churches, he said. No county has more than four Southern Baptist congregations.

Many of the existing works are small, struggling churches that need additional leadership, Wellman said. He is planning a leadership training institute for bivocational pastors that begins next fall.

While no building projects are scheduled for this summer, one Ohio church has acquired property and will need laborers when it starts its new building. Two churches in the association recently received new roofs, thanks to help from Kentucky Baptists.

And in Paducah ...

PADUCAH—Ashland churches aren't the only ones partnering with an association in another state.

Paducah-area churches have been linked with Maine Baptist Association in the New England Baptist Convention for about three years.

Volunteers from several churches in West Union Baptist Association have traveled to Maine for mission projects, according to Rodney Cude, a member of the Paducah group's missions committee. That link was strengthened recently when the Paducah churches committed to send \$10,000 to Maine Association during the next year.

"The support will free up monies in Maine Association's budget for further missions activities," said Cude, pastor of Newton Creek Baptist Church in Kevil.

There are needs south of the Ohio River, too, Russell said. He hopes to see new churches started in Blaine, Carter City and Newfoundland, where a state prison is to be built soon. Many small churches need assistance with renovations, he added.

The two associations keep each other informed by exchanging newsletters and are discussing sponsoring a mass evangelistic rally.

Russell calls the partnership an effort to spread missions awareness and said it is already having an impact.

"We realize some people are intimidated by the idea of a missions project a long way from home," he said. "This will at least get their feet wet and let 'em loose from there."

Children's Homes files motion to dismiss suit filed by ACLU

LOUISVILLE—Responding to a lawsuit filed in April by the American Civil Liberties Union, attorneys for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children have filed a motion calling for the suit to be dismissed.

ACLU officials filed the suit in federal court on behalf of Alicia Pedreira, a former KBHC employee fired in 1998 because of her homosexual lifestyle. The suit, which includes several secondary plaintiffs, named the KBHC and two state agencies as defendants.

The KBHC's motion to dismiss challenges the ACLU's claim that the child care agency's hiring practices against homosexuals constitute religious discrimination. Such a ruling by the court would force "religious organizations to hire homosexuals while employers without a religious affiliation remain free not to do so," the response notes.

The ACLU claims that state funds channeled to the KBHC for child care services is a violation of the First Amendment's establishment of religion clause. Calling that argument "fundamentally flawed," attorneys for the KBHC countered, "The establishment clause does not bar the funding of religious organizations merely because the organization has a religious inspiration and affiliation."

While Children's Homes officials would prefer for the case to be dismissed, KBHC President Bill Smithwick said it is more realistic to expect "a long year of discovery and depositions and the time-consuming work that goes with preparing to go to court."

Noting that the lawsuit probably is "far from over," Smithwick said the case creates "that extra burden of work we'd rather not be doing. We'd rather be continually focusing on children and families than defending ourselves in litigation."

Regardless of the suit's outcome, Smithwick said, "We're going to continue doing what we've been doing. We'll operate on whatever resources we have. If those resources go away, we just won't be as large as we are now."

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

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'Walls of partition'

The influence of Calvinism and Old Testament theology is growing within Southern Baptist ranks. Al Mohler, a leading Calvinist, recently was compared to Thomas Jefferson, apparently for his writing skills. Practically speaking, it may also mean that the Deist Jefferson and the Calvinist Mohler share more than a pen.

Discussion about the revisions in the Baptist Faith and Message reveal that Jesus is less significant to some modernist Baptists. As one said, "All we know about Jesus is in the Bible." Whatever relationship with Jesus? Jesus as the criterion for interpreting Scripture also was eliminated; thus we are bound to a "flat Bible view" that demands both Sabbath worship and killing those who desecrate the Sabbath—and whatever Jesus said about Sabbath and life is not superior to Old Testament law but only equal to it.

Not only is this particularly surprising. Calvinism logically leads to Jesus and the Holy Spirit being unnecessary. If all we know about God is limited to the Bible, then a personal experience with Jesus and guidance by the Spirit is not possible. Obviously, I do not agree with these interpretations, nor do most Baptists I know.

Sadly, the new Baptist leaders have a fascination for Old Testament law and getting people in line. When these people align themselves with Calvinists, we have a group who are convinced that they alone have the truth. New "walls of partition" are being erected, further weakening the influence of the gospel in the world.

That may not trouble some, especially those who feel like all this is pre-ordained. Some of us, however, believe they are using their free will to advance their own personal ambitions and secular political aims. None of that brings

honor to God, exalts Jesus or responds to the Holy Spirit—nor does it "rightly divide the word of truth."

Robert DeFoor
Harrodsburg

Fabricated attack

The June 13 issue of the Western Recorder reported on the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's "A Closer Look at Freemasonry." The pamphlet, which claims to have all the knowledge about Masons, concludes that Freemasonry is not compatible with Christianity. This comes up every couple of years, using the same old erroneous message.

While Masons are forbidden to engage in public debate about the fraternity, it can be stated that this latest attempt to condemn and demonize Freemasonry is, like the others, completely wrong. The eight concerns listed in the article are taken out of truthful meaning, twisted to be some of perversity, used to validate some pre-conceived conclusions and are damaging in character and reputation.

How many times must it be said that Masonry is not a religion, does not try to replace any religious theology and does nothing to interfere with one's duty to God and country? Once again, Southern Baptists have fallen victim to an erroneous and wrongful report brought on by someone with some "ax to grind" and a hidden agenda.

If Masonry is so bad, why were so many founders of our nation Masons, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin?

Certainly this latest attack on Masonry is fabricated. We ask why the Southern Baptists don't go after the real social ills we have: drugs, abortion, homosexuality, immorality, violence and crime everywhere. Is it because the "powers that be" don't want to be attacked in return? Is missions money

being properly spent?

We hope that the misguided and confused Southern Baptist will see that Masonry is not their enemy and go after the real offenders of Christianity.

Theodore Gaedert Jr.
Fort Thomas

Is SBC 'golden calf'?

In the late 1960s and early '70s I asked different churches, "What difference would it make if we got up tomorrow and there was no Southern Baptist Convention?" The question, of course, was to try to make people think about where their God was ranked with SBC.

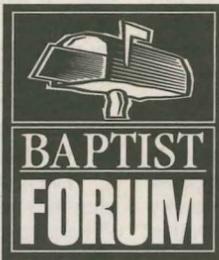
Suddenly, I realized that many of us treated the SBC like a "sacred cow." We had believed for a long time that God was the creator and the sustainer of the SBC. Didn't some of us believe He "blessed" us more than any other denomination in the world? Because of these feelings I ask: Has the "holy cow" become the "golden calf"?

You remember, Moses was on assignment in the presence of the Holy God, and the people made for themselves a golden calf to worship. Therefore, brethren, I have decided that now, and in the future, there will be no group of any kind, no matter how holy a group may appear, and that will be able to come between me and my God. Jesus is Lord and has fulfilled His promise of the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

One of my blessings in life was to have had William Hull as a New Testament teacher. I remember that he said something like this: The Bible is perfect in telling the story of God's redemption of mankind. I assume he would say with me, the redemption of womankind also.

I am a Baptist. I have been a Baptist for more than 60 years. But I am only a Baptist and that is all I will call myself no matter where I worship, regardless of their affiliation to any group. "Here I stand." Jesus is Lord! Praise God!

Ernest Cruse
Lexington



INVESTING

Confused about financial jargon? Here's some help

By Don Spencer

Many people are confused by some of the basic financial terms used in investing. Here is a "basics" explanation of several:

Q: What's a stock?

A stock represents ownership in a

company. If you buy a share of the ABC Company, you now own a small part of the ABC Company and you have become a stockholder of that company. If ABC does well, you might earn dividends. Dividends are payments a company makes to stockholders based on its profits. If the company earnings grow, your stock will grow in value. You can then sell your stock for more than you paid for it. That is a capital gain. But if the company loses money, you will too. There are no guarantees.

Q: What's a bond?

When you invest in a bond, you are lending money to a company, a city, a school district, a church, the government, etc. Bonds are formal IOUs that represent a contractual obligation to repay the amount borrowed by a certain time (the maturity date). In addition, you will receive interest payments. High quality bonds are considered a safe investment, but, like stocks, there are no guarantees.

Q: What's a money market fund?

The money market is not one market, but several individual markets that hold the country's cash reserves in various forms. Banks, businesses and government agencies use the money market for short-term borrowing. When you invest in a money market fund, you'll be paid interest on your money. In addition, your principal is relatively safe.

Q: What's a mutual fund?

A mutual fund is an investment company that uses a pool of money from many investors to purchase dozens or even hundreds of different stocks, bonds and money market instruments. When you buy a share of a mutual fund, you buy a share of the fund's total investment. Like individual stocks and bonds, mutual funds do not guarantee you'll make money.

However, the risk of losing money is reduced for two reasons. First, mutual funds invest in many different companies, so chances are at least some of them will do well over time. That's called diversification. Second, every mutual fund is managed by experienced professionals.

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

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Super Saturday: 'Engaging Generations'

"Engaging Generations ... to work with God and each other" is the theme of Super Saturday 2000. Six locations will host the annual church leader training conferences on four Saturdays in August and September.

A new and exciting feature for this year will be the focus on reaching young adults. Each Super Saturday will open with worship that speaks to the needs of young adults and special workshops designed especially for young people are planned.

"So You Want to Go Deeper with God," "Relationships Are Thicker than Water," "How to Get Out of Debt" and "Five Love Languages of Children" are special segments geared specifically for young adults. Childcare will be provided with advance registration.

The leadership conference subject is "Moving Worship from Tension to Mission." There will be much discussion about generational issues and dialogue with the worship team.

Most of the 71 Super Saturday conferences will provide assistance for the

local church in understanding and reaching young adults. All of the emphasis and conferences will be related to what works in Kentucky.

Last year, more than 2,800 people from 492 churches (21 percent of Kentucky Baptist churches) attended one of the conferences. Every age group church worker should make plans to attend the conference nearest you:

■ Aug. 12: Burlington Baptist Church; First Baptist Church of Madisonville.

■ Aug. 19: Severns Valley Baptist Church of Elizabethtown.

■ Aug. 26: Immanuel Baptist Church of Lexington.

■ Sept. 9: Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah; First Baptist Church of Somerset.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. and worship at 9 a.m. each day. Leadership conferences are at 1:15 p.m. and 2:20 p.m. Adjournment is at 3:15 p.m. There is a registration fee of \$10 per person if received at least two days prior to the

event. (It will cost \$14 to register at the site.)

Conference participants will:

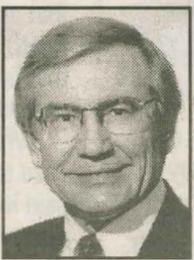
- Learn new teaching skills.
- Observe how others are reaching young adults.
- Gain confidence in their gifts and abilities.
- Build enthusiasm and focus for the new year.

Church leaders and teachers have discovered that Super Saturday consistently offers excellence in presentation and content. Vernon Cole and the Kentucky Baptist church growth team have become known for quality in ministry.

"Transformational Discipleship" is the new theme for Discipleship Training but transformation is not limited to a program or process. If you consistently expose your people to God's work and the best in training and learning experiences in sufficient numbers, God can transform your church from tension to praise and worship.

This could be the most important day your church leaders have ever experienced in learning. Find out more about Super Saturday on the KBC website at www.kybaptist.org.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



Bill Mackey

In the wake of divorce, who gets the friends?

Q: My wife and I have some close friends who recently divorced. We have all been friends for years and now it is really awkward. We don't want to get pulled in, but it's hard not to take sides. Can we remain friends with both?

This issue is difficult because you probably care a great deal about each person and yet, as you stated, it is sometimes very difficult not to take sides. While divorcing couples make decisions on who gets the house, the kids and the car, we often forget that another relevant issue is: "Who gets the friends?"

I don't have a quick and easy answer, but you might want to consider the following issues as you decide what your response will be.

■ Do you feel more loyalty to one friend than the other? For instance, knowing one of the individuals long before the other might influence your sense of loyalty to him or her. Realizing this early on might help you determine the extent to which you can befriend each one.

■ Will your divorcing friends each feel comfortable continuing the friendship knowing you are still close to the other? Knowing that the ex-spouse is talking to you about the divorce could make each of your friends feel uncomfortable and might put you in the middle of a difficult situation.

■ Will either or both pull you into the conflict? While this may sound petty on their part, remember that these people have just gone through a war of sorts and it is very natural for them to look to people they trust for support and a safe place to process the experience. There are pros and cons for either providing a listening ear or asking that they not talk to you about each other. Choose wisely.

■ Most importantly, don't let this become an issue between you and your spouse. Your taking sides against each other will not remedy your friends' marriage and will only stress your own.—*Susan Howell*

Q: How can I help my child learn good table manners?

Teaching children good table manners can be lots of fun! Children may want to make a paper placemat with drawings to help them remember what goes where on the table. Remind them that napkins go in the lap. Insist that children always come to the table with clean hands and remind them to wait until everyone has been seated and grace has been said to begin eating.

Play-acting with friends during an afternoon snack can be a fun way to learn and practice good manners. Pop a large bowl of popcorn and call everybody to the table. Let children use a large spoon to serve the snack onto a paper plate or into a smaller bowl. Don't forget the dialogue: "May I have some popcorn, please? Thank you!" Soft foods (like bananas) can be used with plastic utensils to teach even young children how to hold and handle a knife and fork.

Use regular mealtimes to discuss manners. Talk about table noises such as slurping and smacking, and how distasteful they can be. Remind children to chew with their mouths closed. Teach them not to talk with their mouths full; help them know what topics are appropriate and inappropriate for table conversation. Help them learn to say "Excuse me" if they spill something at the table. Insist that they ask to be excused before leaving the table.

Remind children to say "Thank you" when they finish their meals. Don't forget to set a good example. Children will learn much about manners from watching you.

(Churches may want to consider offering a class in basic manners for children. For curriculum ideas, contact me via e-mail at dgarrard@juno.com.)—*David Garrard*

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



KBHC leaders still facing tough decisions

Actions during the past several months have produced a roller coaster of emotions for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children—and the ride is far from over.

From the time the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the Baptist child care institution in April, long-term ministry options have been filled with uncertainty. That concern was complicated further when state officials indicated they might decline to renew a biennial contract set to expire the end of last month.

The source of the current legal wrangling dates back to early 1998 when KBHC officials inexplicably hired Alicia Pedreira, an acknowledged lesbian, as an art therapist and supervisor for the agency's Spring Meadows Children's Home in Middletown. Pedreira was fired five months later after a photograph of her and her homosexual partner taken during an AIDS walk was publicized.

Negotiating under the shadow of the pending lawsuit, Children's Homes officials and state leaders explored several options before KBHC leaders agreed June 23 to accept a new two-year contract with the state. The new agreement stipulated that the KBHC was responsible for any legal expenses the state incurred in suits related to the agency's hiring practices. It also specified that state social workers could decline to refer children to KBHC for any reason.

Despite the restrictions, KBHC leaders agreed to sign the new contract in good faith. They reversed that decision five days later after Viola Miller, secretary of Kentucky's Cabinet for Families and Children, indicated that even with a new contract, state workers might stop sending children to the KBHC specifically because of the agency's policy against hiring homosexuals.

That's when Gov. Paul Patton stepped in. To his credit, Patton took the initiative to salvage the proposed contract. The governor wrote an open letter emphasizing that "we certainly are not going to interfere with the personnel policies of the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children." He added that he would reiterate to state

administrators that "our only criteria for serving our children is the best interests of the child and that we cannot and will not let personal beliefs cause us to lose sight of this fundamental responsibility."

With the governor's assurance of cooperation, KBHC leaders finalized a new state contract July 5.

Amid the ups and downs of the contract negotiations, KBHC officials began to formulate a contingency plan in case the agency lost the \$12 million it receives annually in child care reimbursements from the state. Those state funds have grown in recent years to approximately 70 percent of the Children's Homes annual income.

While KBHC workers, Kentucky Baptists and needy families can breathe a little easier after the latest contract settlement, the Baptist agency still faces significant threats to its statewide ministry.

For starters, the ACLU lawsuit remains unresolved. While the KBHC has a strong case, if the court sides with the ACLU and the state contract is voided, the KBHC would face an immediate financial crunch.

Additionally, while Gov. Patton was influential in helping finalize the latest contract,

there are no guarantees two years, four years or six years down the road—especially when future negotiations involve a new state administration.

That means it remains imperative for KBHC officials to continue fine-tuning ministry contingency plans. Whether that means dramatically increasing other revenue sources, reducing statewide programming or eliminating certain areas of ministry, KBHC President Bill Smithwick and trustees must be prepared to make tough choices. That's far better than waiting for the agency's future to be determined by judges or politicians.

In the meantime, Kentucky Baptists must evaluate their role in supporting the institution's ongoing ministry efforts. It's one thing to applaud KBHC leaders for their stand; it's quite another to provide support through prayer, financial gifts and personal involvement. In the words of Smithwick, "It's all about the children."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Honoring the past helps impact the future

By Duane Bolin

"In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." (Joshua 4:6-7)

The account in Joshua of the 12-stone memorial is not the only instance where Scripture encourages us to remember. In fact, my personal Bible study has revealed 286 specific admonitions in the Old and New Testaments to remember the past. Each of the four Gospel writers records numerous statements by Jesus Himself about the importance of remembering: "Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?" (Matthew 16:9). "Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?" (Mark 8:18). "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). "I have told you this, so that you will remember that I warned you." (John 16:4).

Christ's admonitions to remember

were not included in Scripture to promote some antiquarian penchant for dates and facts. Rather, the act of remembering, we are told, is important as a corrective in present circumstances and as an inspiration for future endeavors. And if we are to honor the past we must refuse to consider only a saccharine past devoid of failure and folly.

Historian Kenneth Startup, vice president of Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark., has written that for Baptists a very real danger is that history survives "only as a misty, sentimentalized, mythical past

which is inhabited by plaster saints whose experiences have little meaning for us because they seem so alien to the real life we experience."

"The real past, peopled by real men and women, has much to teach us," Startup concluded, but "the mythical past has little to offer beyond nostalgia."

To honor our past as Kentucky Baptists we must learn from our mistakes—indeed our sins—as well as from our victories. In Kentucky, we Baptists have been blessed beyond measure with a rich, tumultuous, often heroic past. From the times of Eliza Broadus, E.Y.

Mullins, H. Boyce Taylor, George E. Hays Sr., and Asbel Petrey at the beginning of the past century, we have benefited from exceptional leaders whose visions and ministries still linger to inspire and instruct us today.

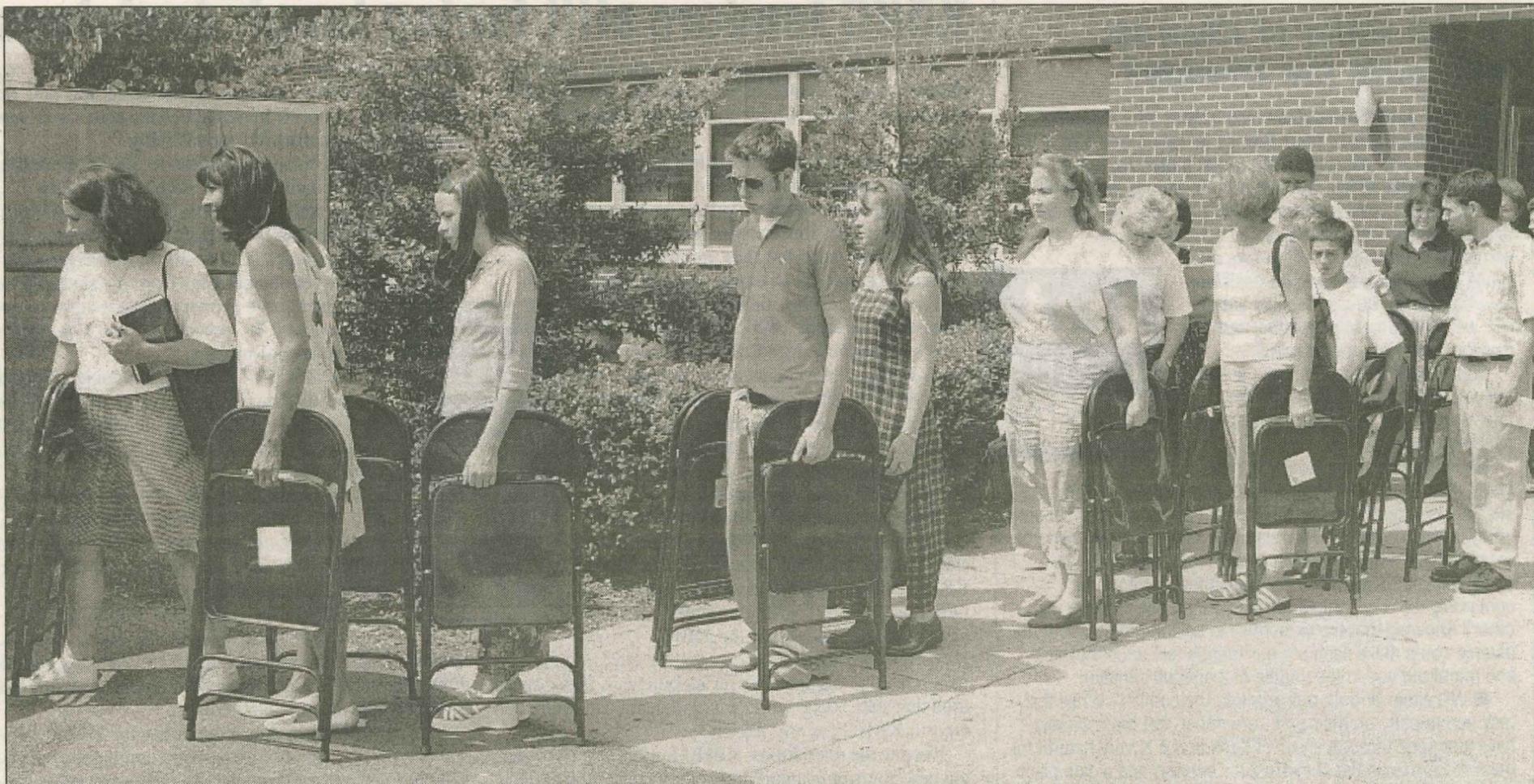
The stories of other, lesser known Baptist ministers and laymen and laywomen need to be recorded and remembered as well. Every Kentucky Baptist congregation has such stories to tell. But for future generations to hear, Kentucky Baptist churches have a responsibility to make the stories available for all the generations following by:

- Establishing historical committees.
- Providing for "heritage rooms" within church facilities.
- Microfilming church records.
- Recording oral interviews with church members.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention provides valuable assistance through the Kentucky Baptist Archives and the work of archivist Cheryl Doty. Don't delay! The story must continue to be told and considered from the new perspective of each generation.

Duane Bolin, associate professor of history at Murray State University, is a deacon at First Baptist Church of Murray. He is the author of the forthcoming history of the KBC, "Kentucky Baptists, 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation."





TAKE DOWN ■ Above: Members of River of Life Community Church carry chairs after a Sunday morning service at the gymnasium of St. Catharine College in Springfield. ■ Far Right: Trevor Shumate, 21 months old, of Springfield, peers over the chair during a recent service. (Lexington Herald-Leader photos by Janet Worne)

Church start's message to visitors: 'Come as you are'

By Todd Van Campen
Lexington Herald-Leader

SPRINGFIELD—Rock 'n' roll pounds through the speakers, drowning out the sound of big fans that push air through the gymnasium. Twenty-five teenagers lead the congregation in singing. Later, one of them will be baptized in a metal trough.

Sunday morning services of River of Life Community Church in Springfield feature contemporary music, a casual dress code and an emphasis on small-group fellowship.

These characteristics used to be confined to city churches. Many rural churches, especially Southern Baptist congregations such as River of Life, have tended to hold to traditional practices such as singing hymns and dressing up.

But River of Life shows that change is flowing into all corners of Kentucky Baptist life.

Troy Shelton, pastor of River of Life, said he sought advice from Hillvue Heights-Logan County and Hope Community in Lawrenceburg, two other smaller-market Baptist churches that have gone contemporary.

Others are starting or exist in Paducah, Brandenburg and Bardstown.

"I just felt God was calling us to do a different type ministry and really to reach a different group," Shelton said. "People feel like they can come and not dress up. They're accepted if they have wild-looking hair or earrings."

The work started at a prayer meeting at Springfield Baptist Church in

October 1998. Shelton, then youth pastor at the church, was praying with 12 other people on a Friday night when the group felt led to start a new church.

Shelton turned in his resignation that Sunday. River of Life's first service, held at a senior citizens center, drew about 200 people, many of whom were just curious and did not return.

The next week, the new congregation met at St. Catharine College, a Roman Catholic school. They've been there ever since, moving from the cafeteria to the gymnasium as attendance grew to its present average of about 200.

On a recent Sunday, member Leon Smith greeted people in the parking lot while wearing shorts, tennis shoes and a polo shirt.

"We haven't changed the message, we've just changed the approach," said Smith, 47, a supervisor for Washington County Schools who attended Springfield Baptist for eight years.

But for Smith, the approach isn't River of Life's biggest drawing card. It's the people.

"This is a real close group of people," he said.

"The best thing is that one person doesn't feel superior over another," said Maxine Elliott, 77. "The color of the skin makes no difference to us, nor does the denomination. Our salvation's from the heart, not from a name."

River of Life's departure from tradition has led it to try some interesting new things, not the least of which is the baptism trough. Members took



a tank that would normally be used for horses or cows and fitted it with wheels.

On Sunday, four children dribbled a basketball in the corner before services started.

Although it is a Southern Baptist church, River of Life has chosen not to include "Baptist" in its name to draw more people, Smith said.

Worship has been held outdoors, and revival services scheduled for September will be held in a town park.

Members show up every Sunday at 7:30 a.m. to lay down tarps, put up chairs and assemble sound equipment. They take it all down again afterward.

A volleyball league attracts folks who normally wouldn't darken a church door, and nine small groups meet during the week in members' homes for fellowship and Bible study.

River of Life retains youthful enthusiasm, and members revel in their unconventional surroundings on Sunday morning.

"When you don't have a building, you realize that church is the people, and being with them is really the church," member Christy Carpenter said. "It's a great feeling."

It remains to be seen whether the attitude of the congregation will change when the church moves to more traditional surroundings.

River of Life is buying 38.9 acres on the outskirts of town, and a committee is planning a new building. It likely will be a gymnasium that can be adapted for services on Sundays and used by the community during the rest of the week.

Meanwhile, the church's leaders are trying to lay a solid foundation that will carry through in the years ahead.

"Our real goals right now are trying to teach people that they're ministers and that that's where life change takes place," Shelton said. "We're seeing results of people doing that, just going and sharing their faith."

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Shelton

Evangelist: Mayfield crusade still going; no end in sight

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

MAYFIELD (BP)—A revival that started in May continues on a week-by-week basis, and the evangelist said he sees no end in sight.

"I'm committed to do it until God releases me," Brady Weldon said. "But I don't see that happening any time soon. I sense it continuing on. It grows every weekend."

More than 650 people have reported decisions to accept Jesus as their personal Savior during the meetings at Trace Creek Baptist Church near Mayfield. Weldon said an exact count is unknown.

"Sometimes we give three or four invitations and people get saved afterward," said Weldon, who lives in West Tennessee. "When people are getting saved in the parking lot, we can't keep up with that."

Nor has anyone tracked the number of states represented, although visitors have come from as far west as Arizona and as far south as Florida.

Many visitors leave excited, Weldon said. After accepting Christ, a family from Texas went home and dipped into their savings to send relatives by bus to West Kentucky, he said.

A man from Champaign, Ill., became a Christian after feeling prompted to drive to Kentucky when he heard about the revival on the radio, Weldon said.

"God told him to get in his car and go," Weldon said. "He had been involved in church for a long time, but the closer he got to Mayfield the more he realized he didn't know the Lord. He felt convicted of his sin."

Kentucky Baptist churches are growing amid the excitement, he added. Trace Creek, which is hosting the weekend meetings, has baptized more than 30 people since early May.

Among others in the area: Sedalia Baptist Church has baptized nearly 20 converts; Enon Baptist Church has baptized 23; and New Hope Baptist Church, about a dozen.

The revival grew out of services Sunday, May 7. Gerald and Cindy Simmons, music evangelists who are members of Pass Road Baptist Church in Gulfport, Miss., sang at Sedalia Baptist Church that morning. That night, the couple led a joint worship service at Enon Baptist Church that included members from Sedalia.

Near the end of the three-and-a-half-hour service, Sedalia pastor Tim Allred suggested meeting again the next night. On May 8, there were three conversions

and 20 people who recommitted their lives to God, he said.

Those services—and the ensuing revival—reflected a spirit of praise and repentance that began at Sedalia that Sunday morning, Allred said.

"God broke loose," he said. "You could tell it was a visitation from the Lord. People were just getting right with the Lord ... confessing sin and drawing closer to God. It was a hunger, people saying, 'God, I want to sense you in my life.'"

This activity spurred an impromptu meeting of several pastors who wanted to keep the meetings going.

After learning the Simmonses had a cancellation for May 14, they asked the couple to return. And, despite Weldon's Internet site saying he was booked, they called to ask if he would preach. Weldon said that 20 minutes before their call, he learned a tent crusade set for that week had been postponed because the tent burned.

Although originally meeting four nights a week, in mid-June the services shifted to a Friday-through-Sunday schedule. The meetings likely will continue at least through the weekend of Aug. 18, when a mass youth rally is scheduled.

While members from various denominations have attended, the leadership primarily is Baptist, with eight Kentucky Baptist churches helping sponsor the outreach.

The crusade's influence also has been felt primarily in these churches, Weldon said.

"People from the Assembly of God and others are coming for the praise and worship and the excitement, but the reports I've gotten are mostly Southern Baptist," the evangelist said. "We've been talking about how God is working in the Southern Baptist area."

That includes the conversion of a number of church members. Of nearly 20 people baptized at Sedalia Baptist since the revival began, 11 already were church members.

"There's been people finding out they had religion and not a relationship with the Lord," Allred said. "It's breaking down the walls of religiosity."

Revival updates are being posted on the Internet at www.bradyweldon.com and www.geraldandcindy.com

A controversial book's influence

By Ken Walker
State correspondent

MAYFIELD (BP)—The evangelist whose preaching helped spark an impromptu revival in West Kentucky credits the impact to a book written by controversial Chattanooga, Tenn., pastor Ron Phillips.

Brady Weldon said "Awakened by the Spirit" had a profound effect on his spiritual life.

Weldon said that as soon as he read how Phillips, the pastor of Central Baptist Church, felt spiritually dry before encountering the Holy Spirit, he recognized that described his own life.

He said he read the entire book in one afternoon. When he finished, he added, he fell on his face, weeping.

"I had a deep hunger for God which couldn't be quenched by going to church and preaching revivals," said Weldon, who lives in Martin, Tenn. "God was speaking to me through this book. He broke me. I began to confess my sin and weep."

"God walked in and said, 'You've been sinful. You've preached for 10 years under your own strength. It's time to let go.'"

In addition to "Awakened by the Spirit," the evangelist said he had read many other books on revival movements. He said he hadn't seen the kind of power they described in his evangelistic campaigns. In fact, preparing his messages had become drudgery, he added.

The afternoon Weldon read Phillip's book, he said, God gave him more than a dozen sermons. He has preached them all at Trace Creek Baptist Church near Mayfield, which is hosting the crusade on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

More than 650 salvation decisions have been recorded during the 10-week-long event, although one pastor said he thinks the total number in the area is closer to 1,000.

A former president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and chairman of the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Phillips has upset some Southern Baptists with his advocacy of spiritual gifts, including speaking in tongues.

Published last November, his book emphasizes Southern Baptists' history as radical reformers and avid worshipers who participated in demonstrative revival movements. It also argues that spiritual gifts are still active in Christians' lives.

While Weldon said he hasn't experienced tongues or other signs associated with charismatics, he added that he can't ignore the key role Phillips played in his life.

"I am very much a conservative Baptist, but God used that book," he said. "Truth is truth and it will stand. As soon as I read it, I was aware of every sin in my life. It has changed me to this day."

Campbellsville University

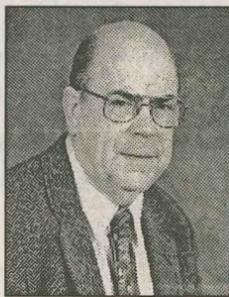
presents

Winter Bible Study 2001 Preview:

Letter of James

August 3

1:15 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



With Dr. John B. Polhill as
Featured Bible Teacher

Campbellsville University's School of Theology is proud to present the *Winter Bible Study 2001 Preview:*

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For more information, contact the Office of Church and External Relations at Campbellsville University at 1-800-264-6014 or (270) 789-5520.



Kentucky baptisms rose in 1999

Continued from page 1

faith in the first two weeks of class. Eaton also encourages members to "be engaged with lost people in a lost world" by scaling back church activities during summer months and supporting the development of member-initiated home Bible studies and prayer meetings.

The emphasis on personal evangelism coupled with outreach-driven events like vacation Bible school has paid off. Hope Community saw one person baptized for every two members in 1999, for a total of 50 reported baptisms in the 119-member church.

Pastor Ronald Shaver attributed Little Flock Baptist Church's 166 baptisms to the Shepherdsville church's emphasis on intentionally training members to be disciples. The training approach is different than simply teaching, Shaver said, because members learn through

instruction, example and personal experience.

Little Flock's baptism total was second only to the 322 baptisms registered by Hillvue Heights Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

In addition to intentional discipleship training experiences such as mission trips, Shaver said Little Flock's commitment to the FAITH Sunday school outreach strategy also played a role in the church's significant number of baptisms.

The numbers were taken from the Annual Church Profile, a tool used to track baptism, discipleship and other indicators of church growth and health. Since 1993, the number of churches reporting through the ACP has dropped nearly 10 percent.

For more information, contact the evangelism growth team at (888) 254-5722.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Attempt to block RU 486 approval fails.** The latest congressional attempt to block the abortion drug RU 486 from approval by the federal government did not get out of the House of Representatives. The House—which twice before had passed legislation blocking the Food and Drug Administration from using federal funds for the testing, development or approval of RU 486—voted 187-182 against such a measure recently. The vote was taken on the first day after Congress' Fourth of July recess, and 66 members were absent.

■ **Bill passed to eliminate marriage tax penalty.** The U.S. Senate gave final approval July 21 to legislation alleviating the penalty for married couples under the federal tax code. The Senate voted 60-34 for the bill one day after the House of Representatives passed the compromise version 271-156. The bill is designed to address portions of the current tax code, under which more than 20 million married couples pay a yearly average of \$1,400 more in taxes than they would if they lived together without being married. Some Christian organizations have lobbied for Congress to repeal the extra tax, which they say punishes families.

■ **House forgives debt in foreign aid package.** In a 239-185 vote, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a \$13.8 billion foreign aid bill July 13 that sets aside \$225 million to alleviate or forgive the debts of 40 heavily indebted poor countries. "This is a real shot in the arm for the debt relief campaign," said Dan Driscoll-Shaw, national coordinator for Jubilee 2000 USA. Jubilee 2000 is an international coalition of religious groups and activists campaigning for global forgiveness of debt owed by the world's poorest countries. The Senate version, already passed, allots just \$75 million for debt repeal.

■ **'Charitable choice' amendment fails in Senate.** A rider to a Senate tax bill that would have made it easier for religious organizations to receive federal money for providing social services fell three votes short of passage. The failed amendment to a bill aimed at phasing out estate and gift taxes is the latest of several recent attempts by lawmakers to tack on so-called "charitable choice" measures to legislative initiatives. A charity of choice approved the amendment, but it failed to gain a required three-fifths majority by three votes, 57-40.

■ **Homosexuality education at issue in Oregon.** Concerned parents and homosexual activists are squaring off in Oregon in what appears to be the next major battle over the teaching of homosexuality in public schools. Pro-family advocates in the state have collected 83,281 signatures on a petition in an effort to get a citizens' referendum on the November ballot that could prevent homosexuality from being taught in schools.

■ **Farrakhan Announces Million Family March.** Five years after the Million Man March brought thousands of African-American men to the nation's capital in a demonstration of racial unity and pride, Nation of Islam Minister Louis Farrakhan appeared July 14 in Washington calling for a multiracial, interfaith Million Family March scheduled for October. About 10,000 new couples will be married and 1 million couples will renew their vows during the Oct. 16 event, said Farrakhan, adding that the march will stress the Nation of Islam's beliefs about poverty, education, drugs, crime, and African and Caribbean relations.

■ **Fairfield Four's James Hill dead at 83.** James Hill, the leader and baritone for the gospel group the Fairfield Four, died July 6 in a Nashville hospital. He was 83. The group formed in 1921 and gained popularity after Hill joined in the mid-1940s, Associated Press reported. After two decades in semi-retirement, the Fairfield Four re-emerged in the 1980s and recorded three albums in the 1990s. The singers were awarded a Grammy in the best traditional soul gospel album category in 1998 for "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray." They worked with such celebrities as John Fogerty, Elvis Costello and Johnny Cash.

Churches face battle for low-power radio

By Tom Strode
SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty
WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON (BP)—Hundreds of churches and Christian ministries are seeking permission for radio broadcasts in their local communities, but those efforts face opposition from Congress and broadcast organizations.

More than 750 applicants from 10 states and the District of Columbia sought low-power FM radio licenses in the new program's first round of filing completed in June, according to the Federal Communications Commission.

Of those, nearly half were churches or religious organizations.

It was the first of five filing periods set by the FCC with a goal of licensing 1,000 new low-power FM stations. Each station, which would not exceed 100 watts, would be able to broadcast to an area no larger than a radius of about three and a half miles.

While many churches and Christian ministries see the FCC's plan as a low-cost opportunity for them, others—including the National Religious Broadcasters—see a danger. NRB, as well as the National Association of Broadcasters, opposes the program because of its potential for interfering with the signals of established stations.

NRB spokesman Karl Stoll praised the idea of more stations

sharing the gospel, "but not at the expense of those that are already heavily invested in."

"Our position is, 'Here are hundreds of radio stations that are members with NRB, Christian stations that have invested millions of dollars, many of those dollars from donors, and we feel it is important to protect those donors'" until it is clear whether low-power stations will interfere with the transmissions of established stations, Stoll said.

Different studies conflict on the potential for interference. With interference raised as a concern, members of Congress have acted to eliminate or limit the FCC's plan. The House of Representatives adopted in April a bill that would sharply reduce the number of licensees and would require the FCC to establish a pilot program to test whether low-power stations will interfere with existing FM stations.

Meanwhile, the FCC plans to accept applications in late August from the next group of stations.

AmGrace, a North Carolina-based nonprofit organization seeking to spread God's Word through its reading on the air, is helping churches with the application process and volunteering its assistance in setting up stations. On its Internet site, AmGrace says a low-power station would expand a church's outreach and provide young people with ministry projects.

AmGrace provides aid without

charge for the opportunity to fill in a station's programming with Scripture reading it has produced on compact disc.

The start-up cost for a low-power station ranges from \$10,000 to \$25,000, said Danny Miller, an AmGrace director in Asheboro, N.C.

AmGrace is concerned Congress will limit or end the program, "but we've made it a matter of prayer and have encouraged some of the churches we've talked to to pray," he said.

William Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church, Mansfield, La., said his congregation would be disappointed if it did not receive a license. Louisiana was one of the 10 states in the first filing period, and First Baptist Church was one of 66 applicants from the state.

Mansfield, a town of about 5,000 in the northwest part of the state, has no local radio station, Crosby said. "We wanted basically to share sacred music, sermons, devotions with people in the area" and promote the events of First Baptist and other churches, Crosby said.

The first group of applicants included a diverse list of applicants, including: Louisiana College, a Baptist school in Pineville, La.; the Georgia Department of Transportation; the Rock 'n' Roll Preservation Society in Newport Beach, Calif.; the Southern Utah Air Museum in Washington, Utah; and Crisis Pregnancy Help Center in Slidell, La.

Veggie Jesus campaign looking for new image

NORFOLK, Va. (RNS)—Jesus might have been a vegetarian, but the Priests of the Sacred Heart have told an animal rights group to find another picture of Him for their campaign to promote the ethical benefits of vegetarianism.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has pulled its popular "Jesus Was a Vegetarian" ad campaign after the 122-year-old religious order claimed ownership of the image of Jesus the animal rights group was using in its materials.

PETA, known for its outlandish efforts to promote animal rights, agreed to pull the campaign and is now looking for a "new Jesus to star in its ads."

The campaign, which featured a devotional image of Jesus, regularly pops up during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. In June, three demonstrators, including a person dressed as Jesus and another dressed as a chicken, were arrested when they did not leave a plaza where homosexual demonstrators were being arrested for unlawful assembly.

The priests, who number about 130 in the United States, said they own the copyright to the image and want to keep it for devotional use.

"The image of the Sacred Heart has been tied to the Priests of the Sacred Heart for many years, and for those who have a devotion to the Sacred Heart, we would like to have it kept for use of the priests," said Mary Gorski, a spokeswoman for

the order.

Gorski said the issue went beyond the "nitty gritty" aspects of copyright law, but declined to say whether PETA had cheapened the image by using Jesus to promote vegetarianism. "That's not our issue," she said.

PETA, in a statement, said some scholars believe Jesus was a member of a religious sect of vegetarians who rejected animal sacrifice. PETA said

9 billion animals are killed each year, "most eaten by Christians."

Bruce Friedrich, PETA's Vegetarian Campaign coordinator, said his organization will be back with new ads soon.

"This campaign has been perhaps our most successful ever," Friedrich said. "We're simply asking that people extend compassion to all God's creatures by becoming vegetarians."

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(Philippians 4:4)

Billy Graham might be too ill to travel

ROCHESTER, Minn. (RNS)—Poor health might thwart Billy Graham's plans to speak at an international conference of evangelicals in Amsterdam this week.

"What's uncertain today is what his schedule will be relative to Amsterdam," spokesman Mark DeMoss told Associated Press. "If he doesn't travel for the beginning or any of the conference, provisions have been made for him to address the conference by satellite."

Graham, 81, was scheduled to deliver the opening and closing speeches at a nine-day conference expected to draw more than 10,000 evangelists from 190 countries.

Graham, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, has been undergoing physical therapy in Rochester, Minn., since being released earlier this month from the Mayo Clinic. He was admitted to the clinic in June for surgery to relieve a buildup of fluid on the brain.

The treatment has left Graham weakened, his son Franklin told AP, making it uncertain whether the evangelist will have regained sufficient strength before the conference begins July 29.

"He realizes this conference doesn't hinge on him," said Franklin Graham. "He doesn't want this to be Billy Graham. He wants the focus to be on the evangelists."

AT&T's porn connection draws concern

DENVER (RNS)—Religious and other institutional investors have written a letter to the chairman of AT&T expressing concern about the decision of a division of his company to offer some cable customers access to an adult pay-per-view network.

The coalition of 27 investors contacted Michael Armstrong, chairman and CEO of AT&T, after the AT&T Broadband division's decision to offer the Hot Network to cable customers.

"While we represent organizations whose investments are guided by their faith or social convictions, we believe that most people of goodwill are concerned about corporate practices that detract from the character and quality of our society," they wrote. "And few

would argue that pornography represents the best our culture has to offer."

The coalition, which includes Mennonite, Presbyterian and Catholic groups, asked Armstrong to reconsider AT&T's relationship with the Hot Network.

"While individuals may have a legal right to view what they want and companies a right to show what they want, the concept of 'free speech' does not remove the onus of responsible behavior," they wrote.

Rob Stoddard, a spokesman for the Denver-based AT&T Broadband, said his division does not plan to reconsider its decision to offer the adult service.

"At this point in time, we intend to proceed with our plans," he said.

"We do want to offer a broad choice, but that is always coupled with the ability for the consumer to block or directly affect the kind of programming that is actually viewed on their television sets."

He said the Hot Network will be offered only in places where technology includes "very effective parental lock mechanisms."

Signatories of the letter included representatives of Mennonite Mutual Aid/Praxis Mutual Funds, United Methodist Board of Pension and Health Benefits, Catholic Healthcare West, American Friends Service Committee, Presbyterian Church (USA), Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ.

Religious liberty bill would restore some protections

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A new religious liberty bill has been introduced in Congress that would offer some of the same protections included in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was struck down by the Supreme Court.

The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 was introduced by Rep. Charles Canady, R-Fla., on July 13. It would prevent zoning laws from discriminating against religious assemblies or religious exercise unless there was a compelling government reason for a restriction. It also would allow individuals in mental hospitals or prisons to exercise their faith if it did not undermine the security and order of their institutions.

"Since the founding of our republic, religious liberty has been at the heart of the American experience," Canady said in a statement. "RLUIPA provides important protection for people of faith from the overreaching power of government."

Canady's office said groups supporting the legislation include the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the Christian Legal Society and the National Council of Churches.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs welcomed the proposed legislation.

"This bipartisan legislation will protect a right that is foundational in our country—the right to worship free from

unnecessary governmental interference," said Melissa Rogers, general counsel of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee.

The Supreme Court struck down the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1997, saying Congress overstepped its authority and infringed on states' rights when it passed the legislation.

Some groups withdrew their support for a proposed Religious Liberty Protection Act last year. Nevertheless, the House passed the Religious Liberty Act last year, but no action has been taken on the measure in the Senate.

The latest proposal is viewed as a compromise addressing areas where groups believe there has been substantial religious discrimination.



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Supreme Court decisions make three states re-evaluate laws

WASHINGTON (RNS)—In the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent rulings striking down a state ban on a late-term abortion procedure and declaring student-led prayer before football games unconstitutional, two states have taken a second look at their own abortion laws while a third state has axed a student-led prayer policy.

On July 6, Florida state officials decided a state law banning a late-term abortion procedure should not be enforced. The law prohibited the intentional killing of a "partially born living fetus" and penalized doctors who performed the procedure known as dilation and extraction in the medical community, with a possible \$10,000 fine and a maximum prison term of 15 years.

In Idaho, a federal judge has postponed enactment of a new state law mandating females under the age of 18 receive consent from their parents before undergoing an abortion.

The law is a violation of the U.S. Constitution's equal protection clause, contend the American Civil Liberties Union and Planned Parenthood of Idaho. The law was scheduled to be implemented July 1 but has been delayed by appeals.

U.S. Magistrate Mikel Williams said he ordered the injunction to give the court time to examine potential legal repercussions for doctors who perform abortions for minors, and assess issues concerning minors who need the procedure during a medical emergency.

The court also needs time to look into whether women seeking an abortion should be required to show government identification, Williams said, and whether minors can have access to abortion services outside the judicial district of their home.

Also July 6, school trustees in Santa Fe, Texas, voted to end a policy that gave students permission to deliver "a brief invocation and/or message" over a loudspeaker before football games.

Groups split over whether voter guides are a problem

Neutral guides are not a problem, according to the American Center for Law and Justice. Churches should beware, warned Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

By Tom Strode
SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty
Commission

WASHINGTON (BP)—Do churches have reason to fear the Internal Revenue Service in this year's election season if they distribute voter guides? That answer depends on which organization at opposite poles of the church-state spectrum is asked.

Neutral guides are not a problem, according to the American Center for Law and Justice. Churches should beware, warned Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

A recent IRS memorandum to tax-exempt organizations warned churches and other charities to be careful about their education efforts during this fall's campaigns.

Organizations that are tax-exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the tax code "are prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office," the memo said. "These organizations cannot endorse any candidates, make donations to their campaigns, engage in fund raising, distribute statements or become involved in any other activities that may be beneficial or detrimental to any candidate."

Forums or debates sponsored by tax-exempt organizations are permitted if they do not demonstrate a preference for or against a candidate, according to the memo.

In its memo, the IRS cited a 1988 incident in which the Association of the Bar of the City of New York was barred

from 501 (c) (3) status even though its published ratings of candidates were nonpartisan. "Thus, activities that encourage people to vote for or against a particular candidate on the basis of nonpartisan criteria nevertheless violate" the tax-code regulations, the memo said.

In response, Americans United Executive Director Barry Lynn, whose organization often criticizes the Christian Coalition, said the July 5 memo was a reminder churches should avoid that organization's voter guides.

"Pastors should see this statement as one more reason not to distribute Christian Coalition voter guides," Lynn said in a written release. "As the IRS made clear today, handing out materials that steer voters toward certain candidates can jeopardize your tax exemption."

But Mark Troobnick, senior litigation counsel with the American Center for Law and Justice, said Lynn's assertion is off-base.

A church may distribute a voter guide as "long as it presents the response of ... candidates fairly and accurately" and does not endorse a candidate, Troobnick said.

Troobnick acknowledged the IRS "has disputed with a wide variety of groups concerning their voter guides" but said he is unaware of any specific case based solely on voter guides in which the IRS has threatened to revoke the tax-exempt status of a church.

On its Internet site, the ACLJ provides the following guidelines for voter guides:

■ All viable candidates must be included.

■ Statements on candidates must be unbiased.

■ The candidates' positions should be on a broad range of issues.

■ Candidates cannot be endorsed nor individuals instructed whom to vote for or against.

■ Editorial comments grading a candidate's positions may not be included.

The Christian Coalition—which, like ACLJ, was founded by Pat Robert-

son—plans to distribute 70 million voter guides this fall, a spokesman for the organization said.

During the last two decades, the coalition and other organizations, including both liberal and conservative groups at the national and state levels, have published and distributed voter guides. They typically consist of the candidates' positions on several issues of interest to each organization's constituency.

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God is working in awesome ways

It's hard to believe, but we are in the last two weeks of summer camp at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore.

I'm a little beat up and weary from the wear and tear on my body from the summer work, but it has been a great time of ministry. God has worked in awesome ways.

By the time next week is over, we will have had what likely will be record numbers of students at both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore. We don't have a tally on the numbers of decisions yet, but it no doubt will be in the hundreds. And many youth have felt a clear call into vocational ministry as well.

So we come near to the end of our third summer and third year operating as Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. I am reminded that there were lots of question marks (and questioning people) as we took responsibility for Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore 34 months ago. And I understand and respect those who doubted what would happen in the coming years.

The fact, however, is that it was God's plan that both of these ministry venues succeed. And while we have miles to go (and years to go) before we reach a point where we

can begin to relax, we have made a lot of progress. We knew when we started that it would take us 10 to 12 years to bring the physical plants up to date, and it still seems as though that will be the case.

I am thankful for all the support of those people who have encouraged us in our ministry, and there are too many of you to even begin to count. I have felt your prayers, heard many kind words and received many notes.

I also am grateful for all of you who have brought groups—students and adults—to both places. Without your participation in this ministry, we wouldn't have made it. When nobody comes, we don't have much hope. But many of you have come, more than in 20 years, and to each of you I am and will be appreciative of your presence at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore as we look to an exciting future at both places.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

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

RESOURCES

Author: Lack of forgiveness hampering many Christians

By Linda Lawson
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—“Failing to grant forgiveness to other people results in a living hell,” according to pastor and Bible study author Robert Jeffress.

“We cannot control the offenses that come into our lives. What we can control is how we handle them,” said Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, and author of “Free to Forgive,” an interactive Bible Study course published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Jeffress called forgiveness “the bot-

tom line issue in life. In more than 20 years of ministry, I’ve seen bitterness destroy individuals, couples, entire congregations.”

He cited a national survey by the Barna Research Group in which four out of 10 Americans said they currently were having difficulty forgiving someone who had wronged them.

“As many of those people were Christians as non-Christians,” he said. “Forgiveness is not the preferred choice of most Christians.”

“If becoming a Christian were the only requirement for being a forgiver, then our churches would be filled with loving and forgiving people,” Jeffress said.

Despite worldly standards of justice, he said Christians must “forgive on the basis of grace, not justice. Forgiveness is not earned; it is granted.”

Noting tragedies such as deaths or violent crime can make a person a “pris-

oner of bitterness,” Jeffress said “forgiveness is sometimes the only way to break free of that vicious cycle of hurt and get on with our lives.”

“When you demand that your offender do something before you forgive him or her, you are binding yourself to that person,” he said.

Perceptions to the contrary, Jeffress said, “refusing to forgive hurts us more than it does our offender.”

In another area, he said, for Christians, there is an “inseparable link between receiving God’s forgiveness and granting that forgiveness to others.”

Jeffress cited four reasons some people choose not to forgive others:

- They believe forgiveness denies the seriousness of the sin.
- They believe forgiveness places too much responsibility on the victim.
- They believe it is unfair.
- They believe forgiveness lets people off the hook too easily.

Also, he said at least four myths about forgiveness exist:

■ Confusing forgiveness with repentance. “This is the myth that my forgiveness has to be conditional on their repentance,” Jeffress said.

■ Confusing forgiveness with consequences. “When I forgive you, I give up my right to hurt you for hurting me, but that doesn’t release you from the consequences of your actions.”

■ Confusing forgiveness with reconciliation. “Forgiveness has no strings attached. Reconciliation has many strings attached.”

■ Confusing forgiveness with forgetting. “Forgetting is neither possible nor profitable.”

Jeffress urged church leaders to involve members in a study of forgiveness. “If you will teach your people to be better forgivers, you will destroy the greatest barrier to spiritual and numerical growth in your church.”

“When you refuse to forgive, you enter into your own private torture chamber.”

Robert Jeffress, author of “Free to Forgive”

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How good is your church at saying ‘thank you?’

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—When was the last time you thanked a volunteer at your church?

John Garner recommends that church leaders say thank you in a variety of ways.

“When we ask for volunteers, we ask for their time. People’s time is worth more to them than money, so we have to be sure they are appreciated in their work,” said Garner, director of recreation and sports ministry at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern

Baptist Convention.

Garner offered more than 50 ideas for saying “thanks” during a recent conference for church leadership at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center.

Ideas ranged from recognition days and special parking spaces to appreciation bulletin boards and gift certificates.

“People need to feel like they are doing something useful and something that makes a difference in the lives of others,” Garner said, “but we must also recognize our volunteers and thank

them for the time they give.”

Garner also recommends for churches to find ways to thank a community’s civil servants.

“We need to go above and beyond the typical methods of saying thank you,” Garner said.

He noted that a lack of thanks leads to the “same old stuff” and produces the “same old results.”

“We must appreciate people because they are the seed planters to the rest of the community,” he said.

An enriching conference

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College’s Pastor/Staff and Family Conference last week was an enriching experience for all who attended. The conference began on Monday evening, July 17, and concluded at noon on Wednesday, July 19.

Gayle Toole served as conference pastor. His many years of experience in the pastorate and his continuing involvement in ministry showed in everything he said and did. Using humor and honesty, he comforted and challenged all of us.

Kenny Faught, associate professor of religion at Cumberland, made the Book of James come alive for us. Many churches will be studying this biblical book in January 2001. Faught provided insights and applications for individuals and churches.

Don Spencer, director of the annuity department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, led several seminars on financial planning. His clear presentations, individual attention and willingness to answer any and all questions provided tremendous help to us.

David Scott, minister of music and senior adults at Ormsby Heights Baptist Church in Louisville, led us

in music. He provided a varied music program that inspired everyone present. His sweet spirit and musical talents helped us worship in spirit and truth.

Those who attended enjoyed ample time for fellowship and relaxation as well. Cumberland College students provided activities for children and teenagers during each session. Tuesday afternoon was free time for all participants. Some enjoyed an afternoon of golf while others swam in the indoor college pool, walked in the beautiful mountains or around our lovely, growing campus, read in their rooms or found other ways to enjoy being a family.

Plans already are being made for next year’s conference which will begin on Monday, July 16, with an evening meal, and conclude on Wednesday, July 18, with lunch.

We hope you can join us next year for a time of worship, Bible study and learning designed to refresh and inspire us as we serve God.

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

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Baptists respond to Philippines tragedy with food and clothing

Continued from page 1

set up in a local school. The supplies included rice, canned food, soap, clothing and 300 copies of the Gospel of John.

The team delivered the supplies to the evacuation center and met with community workers and government officials coordinating relief efforts.

"There are 475 homeless families—2,000-plus people—living in the 12-room elementary school within sight of the mountain of trash [that] collapsed on their houses and families," reported missionary Mark Harvey, who coordinates ministry to Manila's urban poor. "The only word that came to mind was 'overwhelming.' Overwhelming tragedy, overwhelming need, overwhelming opportunity to make a difference for the glory of God."

Despite the massive needs, Harvey said he was impressed by the cooperation of government and private agencies to provide medicine and supplies at the school and three other evacuation centers.

"There was plenty of fresh water and rice, and an excellent, well-organized supply room where our bags will be added to the community's response," Harvey said. "We were greeted by the victims with friendly Filipino smiles and high-fives."

Southern Baptist disaster relief funds helped pay for the supplies delivered by the missionaries.

The missionaries plan to continue relief efforts at the center for about a month until the families have been resettled in government housing. After the move, they want to start an evangelistic Bible study among the families, which could lead to a new church.

"Please pray for these individuals who God loves so much," Harvey said. "Pray that out of this disaster and loss of life they will each find Jesus: the way, the truth and the life."

India Christians facing constant violence

NEW DELHI, India (BP)—Another day, another bombing.

That's the impression being created, at least, by a mounting wave of attacks on Christians and churches in India.

Blasts from time bombs planted in churches have injured Christians in at least three states. Several Catholic priests have been murdered. Another priest was defended from a mob by his landlord, a Hindu woman who fended off the attackers with boiling oil.

Indian church leaders charge that many of the attacks are a part of a campaign by Hindu extremists bent on intimidating Indian Christians and driving missionaries out of India.

Some government officials and Hindu groups counter that most cases are local quarrels exaggerated by Christians to foment hysteria—or

are plots instigated by Pakistani Muslim agents to hurt India's international image.

But few deny the increasing frequency of anti-Christian incidents.

The trend commanded renewed world attention early last year when Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons were burned to death in their vehicle by militant Hindus in Orissa state.

Reported anti-Christian attacks have numbered in the dozens since the beginning of 2000, continuing a frightening growth pattern of recent years.

Police in Andhra Pradesh arrested four more members of several shadowy Muslim groups July 17. The suspects reportedly confessed to being involved in church bombings.

Regardless of who's responsible for the church bombings, Christian

leaders insist radical Hindu groups are behind many of the 100-plus attacks on Christians reported since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in India in 1998.

The BJP government's consistent downplaying or denial of organized Hindu involvement, they charge, only encourages more attacks. International human rights groups express similar concerns, noting the government's ties to radical Hindu groups.

Yet another church bombing in early July in Karnataka drew 100,000 Christians to a July 9 rally to pray and call for action. "We appeal to the government to bring under control the organizations that openly challenge our constitutional rights, spread half-truths and untruths—and encourage criminals," said church leader Marampudi Joji.

Christians seek role in Jerusalem negotiations

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Jerusalem's Christian leaders July 19 jumped belatedly into Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, expressing opposition to any settlement that would divide Jerusalem's Old City.

The leaders are particularly opposed to dividing the Old City's historic Christian and Armenian quarters into separate spheres of Israeli and Palestinian administration.

The patriarchs also issued an unusual appeal asking for Christian

representation at the Camp David summit, should it continue, as well as in any future peace talk forums.

The letter apparently was triggered by news reports that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority had softened demands for total sovereignty over the historic Old City, and were now considering some division of powers.

According to one plan for divided jurisdictions reportedly being considered by the Palestinians, Isra-

el would continue to control the Jewish quarter and the adjacent Armenian quarter while the Palestinian Authority would take control of the Muslim quarter and the adjacent Christian quarter.

In their letter, the Christian leaders suggested that as an alternative to the physical division of the Old City, they would prefer to see international guarantees ensuring free access by Jews, Muslims and Christians to their Jerusalem holy places.

From North Pole to Oneida

In the fall of 1999 I received a call from a family in North Pole, Alaska, asking about a ministry position here at Oneida. I must confess, I had to get a map to see just exactly where North Pole, Alaska, is. Sure enough, there it was, just outside Fairbanks.

Usually when I get a call like that, I have no idea how the people have heard about Oneida. In this case, however, I had been told by a friend that I might be getting a call from a family in Alaska about a position at Oneida.

I asked the usual questions about their interest in full-time ministry at OBI. Normally I have a positive attitude about ministry positions here. After all, it's not every day you find people who are willing to work for our modest salaries, work much longer than normal hours, live in school housing and eat most meals in a school cafeteria.

As I listened to their story, I was thinking about how unviewed it would be to grant an interview. I did not even know if I had an opening for them, and I knew it was going to cost them about \$2,000 for airfare to interview for a ministry position I did not have. After trying unsuccessfully to get them to understand how unrealistic the whole idea was, I told them to give it more thought, consider the things that I had told them and pray about it. When I hung up the phone, I just knew they would not be calling me back.

About a week later I received another call from my friends in North Pole. Like my children who often seemingly ignore my advice, this family had decided to come for an interview. Reluctantly I agreed, and we set a date.

They arrived on our campus a few weeks later. We spent the usual amount of time discussing the Oneida ministry and what, if any, positions might

be available. I had to be creative and finally decided, based on the husband's background, that I would find a position for him in our auto mechanic shop, though I already had a full-time mechanic. We had never employed a full-time mechanic until 10 or 12 years ago, and now we were about to have two. I was beginning to think I had lost my mind. We agreed that the wife would begin a new program for our high school students in computer graphics.

When I shared with other staff about the family who was coming from Alaska, the first question was, "What are they going to do?" When I said he was going to do mechanical work and she was going to teach computer graphics, you could read everyone's mind: "A second mechanic?" Then I found myself defending my decision.

One of Dr. Moore's unfinished tasks was to write two or three books. He even had a title for one: "In God's Time." Dr. Moore had counted on God's blessing providing for us long before we even knew we had a need. This is one of those stories.

I lost only one family this summer, and the husband was our mechanic. Due to family illness and other complications, they had to move back to Ohio. So as we have seen so many other times, God made the provision for us long before we knew we would have the need.

The family from Alaska pulled in last night. They had sold nearly every earthly possession to keep moving expenses to a minimum. After five weeks on the road and more than 5,000 miles, they are here. In God's time.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Student mission trip to Oklahoma

Clear Creek students have the opportunity for practical ministry experiences that complement classroom study.

In May, Associate Professor of Bible Roy Lucas directed a team of eight students, Academic Dean Malcolm Hester, and his son James to the Norman, Okla., area. Five of the credits received academic credit for the mission practicum.

During the 10-day endeavor, the team worked with seven churches in Union Baptist Association and one church in Capital Baptist Association in Oklahoma City. One pastor had graduated from Clear Creek and another grew up in the Pikeville area. The other pastors were not aware of Clear Creek before the connection with the student team.

Most of the students attended at least one service at Falls Creek Baptist Encampment in Davis, Okla. Moses Mivedor played his drums in a service attended by 4,785 fourth, fifth and sixth grade children. During the children's camp, 468 made professions of faith.

"I went to minister, and was ministered to by new friends, the church and most of all by the kids," Mivedor said.

Geoff Estep helped Union Hill Church in youth camp at Siloam Springs, Ark., attended by 988 youth. Three of the Union Hill group trusted Christ and four young men indicated God's leadership to ministry leadership.

Timothy Smithheart experienced his first association board meeting. "It was refreshing to see cooperation between churches and not total autonomy," Tim said.

Another student observed, "I learned to stop talking about evangelism and begin obeying God by doing it."

In preparation for the trip, students researched Oklahoma Baptists' current mission work through the state convention Internet sites and scanned several past issues of the state paper.

Smithheart summarized the mission experience, "This is a 'safe' way that students can learn while doing, yet also be kept from making detrimental mistakes that could lead to disaster in the mission field."

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

MISSIONS

Phoenix's city-wide strategy depends on each church

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

PHOENIX (BP)—How do you touch a booming metropolis of nearly 3 million people with the gospel—and do it in a way that will last?

The Phoenix metropolitan area runs the gamut from extreme poverty to extravagant wealth, with strong contingents of Hispanics, American Indians and an ever-increasing flood of newcomers of every culture.

Organizers of Southern Baptists' Strategic Focus Cities effort in Phoenix determined that the solution was not in grand region-wide strategies, but in the individual neighborhoods where 170 Baptist churches were full of people who shared their vision.

"We felt that everything we do here had to be church-based, because we're not into looking for a short-term event or activity," said Bill Agee, coordinator for Strategic Focus Cities in Phoenix, which operates locally under the banner of Celebrate Jesus 2000: Caring for the Valley of the Sun. "We're looking for those things that lead people to long-term involvement."

Phoenix and Chicago are the first two cities being impacted by Strategic Focus Cities, an evangelism and church-planting initiative of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and local partners focusing resources and volunteers on two major cities each year.

Phoenix is characterized by its explosive growth, Agee said—with a pop-

ulation expected to double by 2030. It is also a city where neighborhoods and community ties are much stronger than regional identity. Churches in the Valley tend to grow to 600-1000 people—rather than growing into mega-churches—because identity with the neighborhood culture is strong, he said. Growth, he said, typically results in the birth of new churches.

The neighborhood focus also has helped in planning events that effectively reach those neighborhoods—whether with block parties, vacation Bible schools or sports clinics.

"What we have to do is find the common denominator of a neighborhood, and who better to do that than the local church," he said. If churches "identify with a particular neighborhood, they know better than anyone else what it will take to reach those people."

An example of how that works well was at Coronado Baptist Church in Scottsdale, situated about a mile from the Salt River Pima Indian Reservation. The church had been slowly building relationships on the reservation and among its leadership for the past five or six years. So when the opportunity came to host a block party last September, the American Indian community was receptive.

Nearly 3,000 people attended, and thus far 167 baptisms have resulted. Another block party and other events are planned for the summer.

"What's happening now is (the Indians on the reservation) are actually doing the work themselves," said pas-

Lighthouses in the 'Valley of the Sun'

TEMPE, Ariz. (BP)—Each Thursday evening, Kent and Janice Joan go on a short walk, up one side of the street, down the other, and back again. It only takes about 10 minutes, but the potential benefits are eternal.

The Doans are one of thousands of couples participating in Lighthouses of Prayer, an evangelical movement that is promoted by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. It is also a key element in the city-wide effort of Baptists to reach metropolitan Phoenix area, an area often referred to as the Valley of the Sun.

As they walk their street, they pray aloud—heard only by each other—for each of the families who are their neighbors. And as they pray, they are considering how they might serve their neighbors and eventually find opportunities for sharing the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

"We just walk along the sidewalk, and if we know the people by name we pray for them by name. And if we don't, we just pray in general terms," said Kent Doan.

Across Phoenix, others have been catching the vision to make their homes "Lighthouses of Prayer," said Sheila Jones, prayer coordinator for Strategic Focus Cities/Celebrate Jesus 2000 in Phoenix.

Like the Doans, she said she has found the simplicity of the "Lighthouses" movement is what appeals to people.

"You don't have to attend seminars, take a bunch of classes and memorize all this stuff," she said. "You just pray and ask God to help you do the next step."

For more information about Lighthouses of Prayer, visit NAMB's Web site at www.namb.net/prayer.

tor Mark Hickman. "Our members now are starting to win their neighbors."

Many of the new church starts will have evangelistic events and volunteers associated with them this summer, while other events are being conducted by existing churches.

There are a few large-scale efforts—such as a rodeo Nov. 10-12 being sponsored by 20 area churches and an outreach at the Arizona State Fair in the fall. But most of the 117 evangelistic events during the year are being sponsored by a single church or small group of churches.

NAMB is providing up to \$1,000 per church for promotion and related evangelistic initiatives, and Lifeway Christian Resources has donated almost \$50,000 worth of literature. Ritche Carney, a strategic cities planning coordinator for NAMB, said the effort is "one of the strongest examples I know of getting NAMB, Lifeway and the local churches standing shoulder-to-shoulder."

For more information about Strategic Focus Cities/Celebrate Jesus 2000, visit www.phoenix2000.net on the Internet, or call (602) 957-9160

Missionaries find 'person of peace' an important part of evangelism strategy

By Erich Bridges
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Missionaries have unearthed a scriptural approach to evangelism that's often been ignored: find a "person of peace."

When Jesus sent out 70 followers to preach His message, the Bible states that He commanded, "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him. ... Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you. ... Do not move around from house to house. ... Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you'" (Luke 10:5-9).

A Southern Baptist missionary in Asia discovered the power of that advice when he and a co-worker entered a potentially hostile unreached village:

"We prayed, 'God, we know you're at work here or we wouldn't be here. We need a man of peace who will take care of us until we can feel our way around this village and know if it's safe or unsafe.'

"I started my stopwatch. We walked into the center of the village where the well was. A person approached me out of nowhere and said, 'Have you eaten?' We said, 'Not yet.' He said, 'Well, come to my home.' His name was Li, and he was the person of peace we wanted. I stopped my watch: three minutes, 21 seconds."

Li fed them, then properly introduced

them to the village's hard-faced leader—who might otherwise have ordered the strangers killed with long knives. Li told the village head, who was ill, that the newcomers' God "is a great God, and they will pray for you." They prayed; the leader got better. He soon became a man of peace in his own right, opening his heart—and the whole village—to the gospel.

Analysis

Who is a person of peace?

You can identify him or her

by three R's, according to Thom Wolf who teaches at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, a leading proponent of the concept:

■ The person of peace is *receptive* to the gospel,

■ The person of peace possesses a *reputation* to gain attention for the message among family and community.

■ The person of peace effectively *refers* the bearers of the Christian message to that larger group.

The Roman centurion Cornelius was such a person, "a righteous and God-fearing man ... respected by all the Jewish people," according to Acts 10:22.

Encouraged by a divine vision, he invited Peter into his home, warmly welcomed him and called together his family and friends to hear the apostle's words. The result: Cornelius, his family and many others believed and were baptized.

Wolf contends Cornelius' "sphere of



PERSON OF PEACE Like the Roman centurion in the Bible named Cornelius, who invited Peter into his household to share the gospel, the "person of peace" is receptive to the gospel, possesses a reputation to gain attention for the message in his community, and effectively refers the bearers of good news to that larger group. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)

influence" was the normal focus for the first evangelists.

Michael Green, author of "Evangelism in the Early Church," agrees that the sphere of influence, "consisting of blood relations, slaves, clients and friends, was one of the bastions of Graeco-Roman society. Christian missionaries made a deliberate point of gaining whatever households they could as lighthouses ... from which the gospel could illuminate the surrounding darkness."

Today, such lighthouses shine in many places.

One people group's region in India was long known as a "graveyard for missions"—and the literal grave of at least six Christian martyrs in recent years.

Instead of giving up, a mission team trained workers to quietly enter villages, pray and seek men of peace. If they didn't find one, they were to leave the village. If they did, they were to build relationships and share Christ with that person's natural network of family and friends. Hundreds of churches have been planted in the years since.

Not every "friend of the gospel" becomes a believer, however. Wolf also identifies "men of goodwill." A man of peace is prepared to receive the gospel and follow Christ as Lord. In contrast, a man of goodwill "does not now and may not ever receive Christ," Wolf explains. But he usually is an influential person who recognizes the great value of what believers bring and becomes their "protector, promoter and pathway finder" in his "area of jurisdiction."

For example, Chief Some Emmanuel, an important leader of the Dagaari people in Africa, invited Southern Baptist missionary Lynn Kennedy into the 20 villages under his influence to share the gospel. He hasn't made a personal commitment to Christ yet, but he gathers his people to listen to one who "speaks the truth."

The man of goodwill is "a protector who allows things to happen," said International Mission Board strategy leader David Garrison. The person of peace is "sometimes actually the first convert who becomes a leader of the church."

Either way, the good news spreads through the community.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Pray that Tanzanian Christians and missionaries will find ways to share the gospel with the many Asians who live in Morogoro, Tanzania. Many Asians are shop owners and traditionally have been ignored, missionaries say.

■ Pastors' wives in Morogoro, Tanzania: Hilda, Sophia, Julieth, Suzanna and Upendo.

■ Missionaries in Warsaw, Poland, ask prayer that "we all will be sensitive to God's leadership and always be willing to do whatever it takes and not get stuck in a rut."

■ A new women's group in Poland begun by missionary Patti Barrett.

■ Travis and Mari Glatter, new church planter interns in Greater Boston. Glatter is a student at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Mass.

■ Church planters needed in Plymouth and Bridgewater, Mass.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BARDSTOWN**—Bardstown Church will host the Nelson Association senior adult revival Aug. 7-8, 7 p.m. **Bill Marshall** will be the speaker and **Gene Sutherland** will lead the music. For meal and fellowship information, call (888) 585-8467. **Fred Halbrooks** is director of missions for Nelson Association.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Meadow Land Church recently held groundbreaking ceremonies for its 450-seat worship center. **Gary Beatty** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Six members of Victory Church participated in a World Changers construction project in Nashville, June 10-17. Participants included **Don Moore, Jacob Rudd, Alysha Graves, Brandon Francis, Hannah Dienes and Mark Burroughs**.

■ **MAGNOLIA**—Pikeview Church will host **David Livingston** in revival,

July 30-Aug. 2. Sunday morning service will be at 11 a.m. and nightly services at 7 p.m. **David Walters** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—South Hampton Church will host **Cheri Taylor** in concert July 30 at 1 p.m. For information, call (270) 281-9677. **Tim Roberts** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—First Church will host a women's conference Sept. 22-23 with Bible teacher **Jill Briscoe**, and singers **Cheri Keagy** and **Beverly Terry**. Registration costs \$25. For information, call (270) 442-2728. **Erin McCallon** is director of First Church's women's ministry.

■ **RICHMOND**—**Dick Ham**, minister of music of First Church, has retired after 45 years in music ministry. Ham was music minister at several other churches including Walnut Street Church, Owensboro, and Immanuel Church, Lexington.

LaVerne Butler facing radiation treatment for throat cancer

LEXINGTON—LaVerne Butler, former pastor of Ninth & O church in Louisville, has been diagnosed with throat cancer.

Butler, 74, currently is special assistant to the pastor at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington. He was pastor at Ninth and O from 1969 to 1988.

Butler said doctors have scheduled him for eight weeks of radiation treatment and are optimistic about his recovery.

"They talk about cure rather than treatment," he said. "I'm very much at peace about it."

Butler said he preached at 37 revivals last year, but doctors did not link his speaking schedule to the cancer. "Most everybody who's been around me knows I've been having voice problems for over a year," he said.

Kentucky native serving in Illinois

ALPHARETTA, Ga.—Louisville native **Christy Garber** and her husband, **Kevin**, have been appointed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to serve as church planting missionaries in Lake County, Ill.



Garbers

Kevin Garber will serve as pastor of LakePointe Church. The mission is a "flagship" church start being sponsored jointly by **Thomas**

Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., and the **North American Mission Board**.

Garber, who grew up in Lynchburg, is a graduate of **Liberty University** and **Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary**.

Mrs. Garber has served as a children's choir director, itinerant evangelist with her husband, assistant youth worker, and Sunday school teacher.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CELEBRATION: Welfare Baptist Church, Jamestown, will be celebrating homecoming Oct. 8 and is pleased to invite all former pastors and wives and members to help us celebrate. Please call (270) 358-4054 or (270) 866-6615 if you have any questions.

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 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.

SEEKING: Christian couple to provide quality childcare to children and adolescents. Call **Tim Tharp** at (618) 382-4165, ext. 14, or send resumé to: Baptist Children's Home & Family Services, PO Box 579, Carmi, IL 62821. Opening in January 2001.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister to work with approximately 40 youth. Must be saved, Bible believer, called, impeccable morals, growing. Send resumé and request for job description to: **Greenwood Baptist Church**, 5165 Scottsville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42104.

SEEKING: Senior pastor for First Baptist Church, Femendina Beach (on Amelia Island), Fla. Located in a growing community with a deep history steeped in tradition, we are seeking a pastor with a vision for the future and an appreciation of our past. Seminary masters minimum requirement. Resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 416 Alachua St., Femendina Beach, FL 32034.

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 organist for First Baptist Church, Somerset, Ky., to play a 34-rank Holtzkamp organ built in 1990. Salary is negotiable. Please send a letter of application and resumé to: Music Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 797, Somerset, KY 42502, Attn: **Ken Yeager**, chairman.

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: 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: 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 large programs. Worship style is blended. Send resumé to: **Paul Blizard**, senior pastor, Memorial Baptist Church, PO Box 777, Beckley, WV 25801.

SEEKING: Christian administrative assistant for Frankfort church. MSWord and Quicken experience preferred; Database and PowerPoint experience a plus. Full-time position with salary and benefits commensurate with experience. Active member of a local church required. Please send resumé and salary history to **MBC**, 130 Holmes St., Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Calvary Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., is accepting recommendations and resumés 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 resumés 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 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 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: Part-time minister to children. Rich Pond Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, 200 Brad Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42104.

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

SEEKING: Ashworth Road Baptist Church, "Iowa's Fastest Growing Community," located in actively-growing West Des Moines, Iowa, is now accepting resumés 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 resumés to: Search Committee, ARBC, 5300 Ashworth Road, WDM, IA 50266.

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.

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

Musician's show biz career leads to ministry with addicts

By Ben Johnson
Religion News Service

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (RNS)—To most people, celebrities like Muhammad Ali, Stevie Wonder, Donnie and Marie Osmond, B.B. King, or Archie Bell and the Drells are sports and entertainment icons they can only dream about seeing live, let alone know personally.

But to Pastor Al Lewis, they were fellow performers and even personal friends.

Beginning nearly four decades ago, Lewis and his band, Allison's South Funk Boulevard, played with these and other notables or appeared on stage with them. Perhaps his greatest claim to fame was co-writing and playing saxophone on the No. 1 1960s hit "Tighten Up" with Archie Bell and the Drells. The single sold more than 3.5 million copies and was No. 1 on Billboard's charts for six weeks.

But in 1978 Lewis' life changed dramatically. He's now the pastor of the House of Salvation Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Birmingham, Ala. The congregation's major outreach effort is its drug recovery program—the Imani (Swahili for faith) New Life Drug Recovery Program.

"We believe in a holistic approach to a ministry," Lewis explained, noting that more than 1,300 men have completed the program which helps introduce or reintroduce religion in the lives of many who complete it. In fact, most of the nearly 300 members of Lewis' church either went through the program

or have some association with a former drug addict.

Lewis' church has earned a wide reputation for the work it has done in salvaging the lives of many people—both physically and spiritually.

Even the church's building has undergone a metamorphosis. It once housed the Walker Memorial Church where the infamous Sheriff Bull Connor, who made his place in Southern history by his harsh treatment of civil rights workers, taught Sunday school.

Lewis' commitment to help addicts is understandable because of his past.

"I was brought up in a Christian home. I was out there (as a secular entertainer) for 17 years," Lewis said. "It was 12 years before I ever messed with drugs or alcohol. They used to accuse me of trying to run a Christian band in the nightlife. But being in that environment, I ended up on drugs and alcohol.

"If I had never had that experience with drugs and alcohol, I would not have understood what it means, what it's like to be addicted and to come back, to back away from that life. I understand addiction. That gave me compassion to understand what it means when people are on drugs."

The most recent addict in Lewis' recovery program is his 21-year-old son, Robert, who was on drugs before coming back to the fold.

"It was general backsliding," Lewis said of his son. "I had empathy and understanding for him."

Lewis said it helped confirm he is "doing the right thing" in his work.

Lewis said he's not a traditional min-

ister like his father, R.A. Lewis, who retired as a presiding elder in the C.M.E. church. "He would have nothing to do (with addicts). He doesn't understand drug addiction. He would say they're just stupid, they're crazy to mess with the stuff. That includes me. He always called me stupid but he's proud of me now.

"It was because of my experience that I started this ministry," he added.

"Sometimes as Christians we forget that when God called Moses out of Egypt, He sent him right back into Egypt. So our gifts and graces for ministry will be in the area that we have experience with, in the area that we were most sinful or where we experienced the most pain. That's where we're going to be most effective in ministry because we have compassion and we're most experienced."

Lewis' entertainment career ended in 1978 when his band left him to join legendary singer Joe Tex.

He and his wife, a former nightclub singer who joined Lewis' band in 1977, moved to Birmingham. "I was going to show the rest of the group that I didn't need them; I was going to be a big star. ... (But) I was devastated because the group was just my world. Music was my life and my god.

"I thought it was the end of the world. And really it was. In the process I couldn't get back in a recording studio. I couldn't put a band together. Nothing would happen for me with the exception that someone sent me a Bible and introduced me to the Word of God and to Jesus Christ."

That friend, Jim Merritt, reintroduced him to religion, something Lewis had shunned throughout his music career.

"My father was a minister," he said. "I grew up in the church. I sang in the choir. I was active in the church. But I had drifted so far away from it. I was open. I was down and I was out. I was hooked on dope and even contemplating suicide." He said Merritt "led me and my wife both to the Lord. We haven't looked back."

He resumed his education, graduating from Birmingham Southern College in 1985 and earning a master's degree in theology from Emory University in 1989. A three-week stay in Ghana that year added another direction to the ministry he would launch.

"It literally changed my life in terms of understanding African culture, African history, African worship," he said. It was in Ghana that Lewis sensed a call to start a new ministry, incorporating African worship themes in his church. He also began to reach out to "the broken, the hurting and the lost."

This ministry is what he was meant to do, Lewis said.

It took some time for him to understand it, he said, but he received a message from God the last night he performed on stage as a secular entertainer. It happened in Huntsville.

"When I came to the Lord, my last night on the bandstand was right here in Huntsville. That night, the ... stage caught on fire and I was out of there. And I've been serving the Lord ever since."

"Our gifts and graces for ministry will be in the area ... that we were most sinful or where we experienced the most pain."

Former drug addict
Al Lewis

'Just' fishing: What would Jesus—or Buddha—do?

By Douglas Todd
Religion News Service

VICTORIA, British Columbia (RNS)—What would Plato, Buddha and Jesus do about the world's dwindling fish stocks?

No joke.

A Canadian government research body, with the support of religious groups, has just spent more than \$150,000 finding an answer to this unusual question.

Their surprising conclusions may provide a model for resolving the world crisis in fishing, particularly in North America, where stocks of salmon, cod, lobster, shrimp and herring are threatened by a devastatingly effective high-technology fishing industry.

The eclectic team studying the dilemma includes environmentalists, economists, biologists, artists, philosophers and religious thinkers.

Together they recently published a book linking the multibillion-dollar business of fishing with ethics and spirituality.

The cross-Canada research project is the brainchild of professor Harold Coward, who heads the Center for Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. The team has produced a book titled "Just Fish: Ethics and Canadian Marine Fisheries" edited by Coward, social scientist Rosemary Ommer and University of British Columbia fish biologist Tony Pitcher.

The title "Just Fish" is an intentional double entendre, referring to the

prevailing attitude that salmon, cod and others are "just fish"—dumb things to be exploited. The title also suggests the need to be more ethical about how to treat once-bountiful oceans, which Ommer says are in danger of being strip-mined of fish and turned into "plankton soup." The message is that humanity needs to be more "just" about fish.

Believe it or not, Canadian government officials have been converted to the approach.

"It took some time for some of the government scientists to understand what ethics had to do with fish," Coward said. But now, he says, they're hooked, so to speak.

But why would Atlantic Episcopal Assembly, Catholic archdioceses of Vancouver and Victoria, the United Church of Canada and the Unitarian Church help research the ethics of fishing?

Religious people are disturbed, like many, about the future of once-proud families in dying coastal communities. They've heard the stories about how a father and his child could easily catch a coho only a decade ago off Vancouver while now it takes a minor miracle. The churches also fear humans are wreaking incurable damage on God's creation.

Coward and others discovered the world's ancient religions offer ethical guidance for our peculiarly modern ecological emergency.

They found Buddhism saying that, because everything exists in interdependence, we should give up our self-

ishness and protect the earth, since we can't live without it. Similarly, Taoism sees nature as part of humans' existence "and thus humans must learn to respect the rhythms and life cycle of the migrating salmon." Islam, meanwhile, portrays nature as good, not corrupted and fish as part of Allah's creation, which is marked by beauty.

Since Canada officially is a multicultural society, Coward believes society needs to know what different faiths might have to say about how nature should be treated. It's easier to get Hindus, for example, concerned about the well-being of fish if you can show them their scriptures would want them to be, he said.

Religion remains a powerful influence for Canadians, particularly the majority steeped in Judeo-Christian beliefs. That's why "Just Fish" stresses relevant biblical lessons.

Coward and his team are especially drawn to the biblical ideal of the Sabbath, the day of rest and reflection, which suggests regularly giving fish a reprieve from human predators. They also favor the notion of jubilee, a Hebrew ideal focusing on restoring relationships with people and the earth, and by extension, the seas. They envision more marine protected areas.

Underpinned by such values, the "Just Fish" team explains in detail how the ethic of justice can be brought to the ecosystem, to the fair distribution of fish, to the sustainable production of sea creatures and to the restoration of the once-teeming oceans.

Theologian examines negative impact of modern technology

HOUSTON (RNS)—Theologian Rick Gaillardetz worries that the genie of technology has escaped its bottle and threatens to enslave Christians as consumers.

Gaillardetz warns that techno-wizardry—from the Internet to the microwave—can undermine family relationships and personal spirituality, and speed the vanishing sense of community once common in American life.

As Gaillardetz, who teaches at the University of St. Thomas School of Theology in Houston, tells it, he came home from work one day and realized his life could become an electronic odyssey of cell phones, portable computers and Nintendo games.

He decided to explore how technology was reshaping life and how Christians might know God and love each other amid all the distraction. His exploration eventually led to a new book. "Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community and Liturgy in a Technological Culture" is really a lay theological manual for Christians with questions about technology and faith. He doesn't recommend discarding technology, but using it judiciously.

Virtually all technology promises consumers a commodity with little effort, Gaillardetz said. In his book, he offers three main insights to avoiding such pitfalls:

■ Consumers must avoid "technologizing basic human engagements out of our lives."

■ God is a God encountered in ordinary life.

■ Christians learn the scriptural truth that God is love in familiar activities, even ones as simple as bagels over breakfast with a spouse or swapping greetings with a convenience store clerk. Living those insights, he said, means cultivating daily "attentiveness to God's grace."



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