

August 8, 2000
Vol. 174, No. 31

FOR THE RECORD

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Study: Some pastors' pay falling short

By **Trennis Henderson**
Editor

Salaries for full-time Kentucky Baptist pastors are slightly below average, according to a recent study that includes 18 state Baptist conventions.

Kentucky Baptist pastors' salary and housing compensation ranks 10th among the 18 participating conventions. The total average compensation is \$39,187 compared to \$37,623 for Kentucky Baptist pastors. The average total pay package, including retirement and insurance benefits, is \$47,260 nationally, compared to \$46,561 in Kentucky. Average pay packages range from \$52,947 in Georgia to \$35,678 in Iowa.

Among bivocational pastors, compensation and total pay packages in Kentucky rank slightly above the study's average. Bivocational Kentucky

Baptist pastors receive an average of \$12,990 in salary and housing benefits compared to \$12,046 nationally. The average total pay package in that category is \$14,109 in Kentucky and \$13,128 nationally.

Average pay packages for bivocational pastors in the study range from \$23,713 in New England to \$8,390 in West Virginia.

The biennial study is coordinated by Don Spencer, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department. It includes compensation statistics for pastors, staff ministers and support staff from Hawaii to Virginia and New England to Florida.

The combined study began in 1996

with 12 state conventions participating. That grew to 13 conventions two years ago and 18 conventions this year.

"Each state is responsible for inputting their data. We combined them all together," Spencer explained. He said the study is designed to "get the best information we can get to provide the best information we can to our churches."

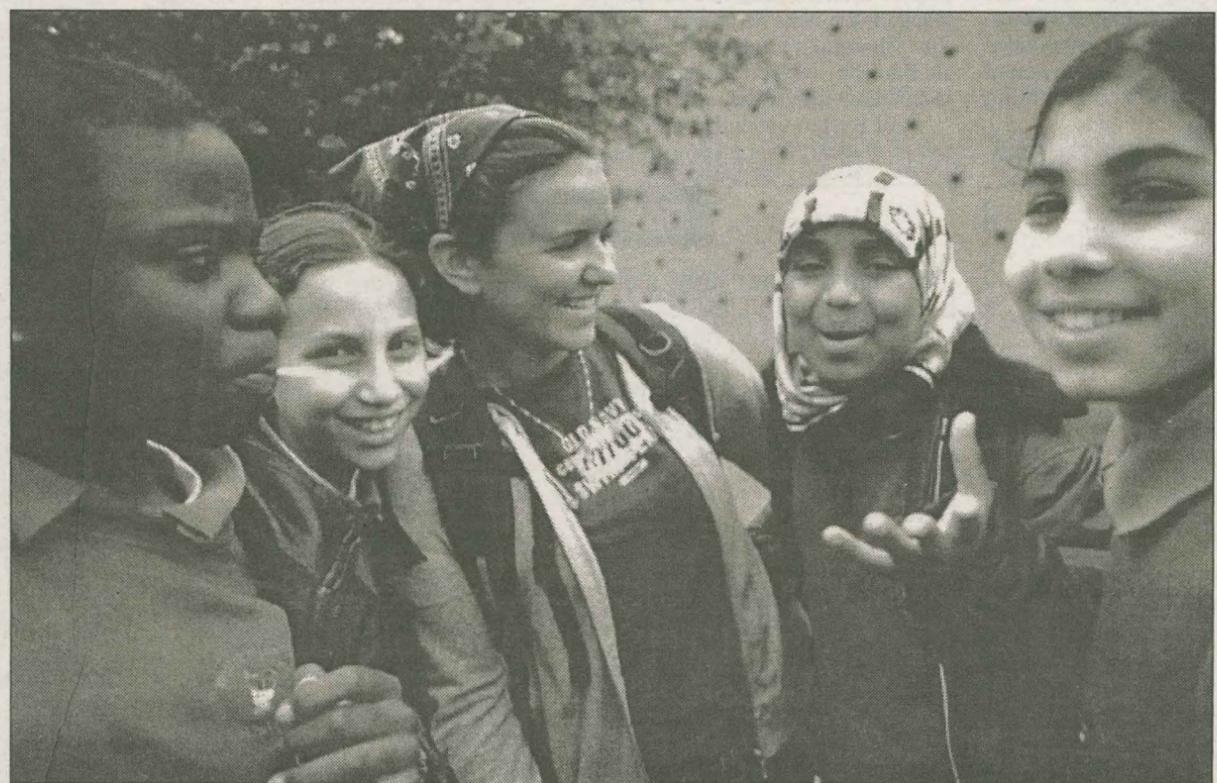
Spencer also wrote a computer program to allow each state convention to provide customized studies for individual churches. The customized studies compare a church's ministerial compensation to congregations with similar membership, attendance and annual budget.

See Study author: *Better ...*, page 9



Does your pastor need a raise?

FULL-TIME PASTORS	Average range	Kentucky average	Study average
Average Compensation	\$29,814 (Iowa) to \$43,560 (Ga.)	\$37,623	\$39,187
Average Pay Package	\$35,678 (Iowa) to \$52,947 (Ga.)	\$46,561	\$47,260
BIVOCATIONAL PASTORS			
Average Compensation	\$7,556 (W.Va.) to \$22,087 (New England)	\$12,990	\$12,046
Average Pay Package	\$8,390 (W.Va.) to \$23,713 (New England)	\$14,109	\$13,128
FULL-TIME STAFF MINISTERS			
Average Compensation	\$32,251 (Mo.) to \$43,578 (Fla.)	\$36,837	\$38,879
Average Pay Package	\$38,346 (Mo.) to \$53,176 (Fla.)	\$44,943	\$46,776
BIVOCATIONAL STAFF MINISTERS			
Average Compensation	\$7,642 (Ohio) to \$18,048 (Hawaii)	\$9,448	\$9,712
Average Pay Package	\$8,062 (Ohio) to \$21,832 (Hawaii)	\$10,252	\$10,593



KENTUCKIANS IN ENGLAND Emily Amerine (middle), 17, from Highland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Thomas, chats with students at a public school in London. Amerine was one of 20 students from churches in M-Fuge in Fort Thomas, a program offering a week of Bible study, worship and hands-on missions experiences. About 90 students took part in mid-July, and some 340 students are expected to take part throughout the summer. The program is jointly sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention and the SBC International Mission Board. **Story on page 6.** (IMB photo by Grace Robinette)

Could automatic withdrawal be offering plate of the near future?

By **Ken Walker**
State Correspondent

MOUNT WASHINGTON—When members of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington were contemplating electronic funds transfers for donations, pastor Travis Collins asked his mother what she thought of the idea.

"Sign me up," replied the 81-year-old church member. Accustomed to direct deposit of her Social Security check and automatic withdrawals for utilities and other bills, she liked the convenience.

Starting Aug. 1, Mrs. Collins and the rest of the congregation could donate money to the general or building funds through their checking or savings accounts. Withdrawals can be done weekly, semi-monthly or monthly.

At the June business meeting, members approved setting up the system by a near-unanimous vote.

"What we're trying to do is facilitate the giving of offerings," the pastor said. "I compare this to the introduction of the envelope system a few decades ago. Whenever Baptists first placed their money in an envelope, my suspicion is that people said that it was too mechanical."

The director of the stewardship department for the Kentucky Baptist Convention agrees that automated giving represents a prudent method of managing funds.

Doug Strader said he doesn't know many churches that have done so yet, but "it makes sense to go with a more modern, electronic way of doing things instead of all this paper."

Collins sees another benefit: giving members a chance to commit to continual giving, even if they're on vacation, sick or kept home by bad weather.

He also calls it a step beyond pledge cards, which the church doesn't use. Instead of promising to give a certain amount, a person who signs up for the program is taking action to give regularly, he said.

"I think that's a wonderful justification for people to decide to do this," he said. "They're saying, 'I'm taking a step of faith. I'm going to give my tithe before I wonder if I have enough to pay my water bill, electric and cable.'"

First Baptist's Finance chairman Greg Dorris suggested the option at a committee meeting last January. A finance officer at a Louisville hospital, he had noticed an increase in electronic transfers there and thought technology could benefit the church.

In addition, two members had

See Is electronic ..., page 9

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, August 9

SBC, state Baptist leaders study cooperation

By Art Toalston
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—A Task Force on Cooperation was approved unanimously by the presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention's entities and executive directors of state Baptist conventions during a July 26 meeting in Nashville.

The meeting was moderated by Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, and Wynnell Jones, president of the Association of State Baptist Executive Directors. The group decided that only Chapman and Jones, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa, would issue statements to the news media.

A motion to establish the eight-member task force specified that it will "be initiated for ongoing dialogue between the presidents of SBC entities and executive directors of the state Baptist conventions," according to a statement released by Chapman and Jones.

The motion, made by John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, added, "This dialogue will include, but not be limited to: the future of cooperation; the Cooperative Program; strategies that will cultivate and strengthen cooperative relations and assist in engaging a new generation of Southern Baptists in cooperation."

Four representatives of the SBC entities on the Task Force on Cooper-

ation will be the president of the International Mission Board; the president of the North American Mission Board; the chairmen of the Council of Seminary Presidents; and the president of the Executive Committee.

Representing the Association of State Baptist Executive Directors will be its president and three executive directors to be appointed by the association's president.

Jones said July 31 he is appointing to the task force Carlisle Driggers of the South Carolina Baptist Convention; Robert White of the Georgia Baptist Convention; and Anthony Jordan of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

The motion named Chapman as chairman of the task force.

"It was decided the task force would report to a combined meeting of the state Baptist executive directors and SBC entity presidents in February 2001," the statement by Chapman and Jones noted.

The reason for the meeting, Chapman said, was "to provide both groups an open forum to discuss present and future needs in Southern Baptist life." The meeting was held at the invitation of Chapman and Jones.

The statement noted that "each state convention and the SBC are autonomous bodies that historically have worked together through partnerships to assist Southern Baptist churches throughout the United States in evangelism, missions and ministries."

According to Jones, "It is the sin-

cere desire on the part of the executive directors to build trust and to work together in promoting the Cooperative Program through the convention.

"The state conventions wish to work in partnership to build the kingdom of God," he added, "and be the missionary force God wants us to be."

Chapman said, "Because Southern Baptist polity is not hierarchical, but autonomous, keeping lines of communication open between the SBC and the state conventions is vital to our work."

"If we hope for Southern Baptists to remain faithful in fulfilling the Great Commission, we must talk and work together as genuine partners. At least, this is what our forefathers envisioned years ago, and, in my opinion, should continue today," he said. "For the partnership to hold fast and remain effective, Southern Baptist leaders must doggedly determine to do so purposefully, and not leave it to happenstance."

Chapman also noted after the meeting, "Among other topics discussed, it was strongly agreed that leaders throughout the SBC need to do a better job educating a new generation of Southern Baptists about the Cooperative Program."

Noting that "the group that met in Nashville is not an official body in Southern Baptist life," he added that "any recommendations coming from the task force will be informally considered as an agreement among the bodies represented."

Chapman charges Texas leaders with 'anti-SBC spirit'

NASHVILLE (BP)—Claiming there is an "anti-SBC spirit" among some Texas Baptist leaders, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Morris Chapman issued a statement Aug. 3 calling for "Southern Baptists in Texas to turn away from those who would diminish the spirit of cooperation."

Chapman's statement came one week after he and other SBC leaders met with state convention executive directors who agreed to form a Task Force on Cooperation to explore ways to strengthen cooperative efforts.

In his Aug. 3 statement, Chapman referred without names "some anti-SBC voices in Texas" seeking "to discourage support for the SBC."

Such an effort "is unwarranted and threatens the long-standing partnership between the SBC and the BGCT (Baptist General Convention of Texas)," Chapman said.

"No one can tell individual Southern Baptist churches how to give their money. That is the reason we have always made provision for designated gifts," he noted. "But we can encourage the churches in a particular direction."

"The Executive Committee's position is that all churches are encouraged to give receipts undesignated to the Cooperative Program through the state convention," he added. "We have resisted creating any other track for giving because we believe it harms the idea of the Cooperative Program and breaks faith with our state convention partners. We believe it is also breaking faith for state conventions to encourage or permit churches to identify contributions as Cooperative Program when those contributions are not to be distributed exclusively to the SBC and state convention budgets."

"It would be sad indeed if Southern Baptist churches in Texas were dissuaded from supporting the SBC portion of the Cooperative Program or denied a vehicle through the state convention for forwarding their gifts to Southern Baptist Convention mission causes," Chapman said. "I hope neither of these practices becomes a reality. However, the Southern Baptist Convention is committed to relating to Southern Baptist congregations in Texas and will be forced to find ways to partner together in the event the traditional methods are unavailable."

Ken Hall, president of Buckner Baptist Benevolences in Texas, said the call for budget changes among Texas Baptists is not an anti-missions or Texas-only perspective.

"The issue for me is not taking it away from Southern Baptists to give it to Texas Baptists," he said. "The issue for me is prioritizing our missions giving."

"Because Southern Baptist polity is not hierarchical, but autonomous, keeping lines of communication open between the SBC and the state conventions is vital to our work."

SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman

NAMB refuses to sell site for gambling complex

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (BP)—"Under no circumstances will the North American Mission Board allow property it now owns to be sold and used, directly or indirectly, to further gambling interests," said Randy Singer, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention agency.

The property in question is a 25-acre tract north of Miami which the Seminole Tribe of Florida has announced intention to acquire for construction of a \$300-million hotel and gambling complex.

Singer, an attorney, said he is confi-

dent NAMB has had clear title to the property for more than 50 years even though tribal officials contend the tract is reservation land.

Singer also affirmed NAMB's commitment to maintain the viability of two Baptist churches that could be displaced by the announced plans. First Seminole Baptist Church meets in a building located on the NAMB property while a Spanish-speaking Baptist church, Iglesia Bautista, owns and meets on an adjacent three-acre tract.

Paul Buster, a member and former pastor of the 100-member First Semi-

nole Baptist Church, told the Miami Herald the church has been the heart of Christianity on the Hollywood reservation since it was started in 1936. "Hopefully, they can be mindful of leaving the church to its work," Buster said. "That's what we're praying for."

Baptist opposition is not the only hurdle for the Seminoles. A 65-acre mobile home park with more than 90 homes would also need to be acquired. And Florida officials, including Gov. Jeb Bush and Attorney General Robert Butterworth, oppose allowing Las Vegas-style gambling in Florida.

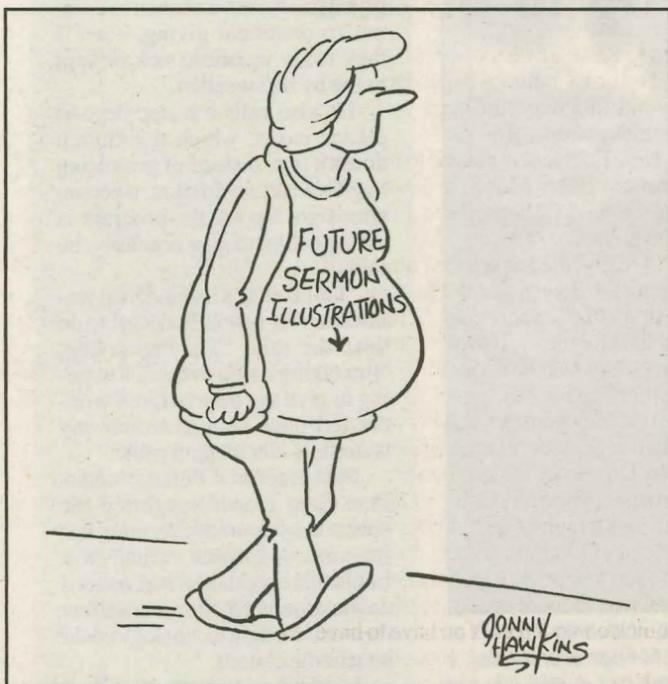
BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Baptist copter crew dies.** A Baptist Life Flight helicopter crashed July 24 in rural Georgia, killing the three-member crew on board. The accident occurred in a swampy area about 15 miles from Tifton as the helicopter was returning to its base at the Georgia Baptist Healthcare System's hospital in Sylvester.

■ **Walker receives award.** The first African-American appointed to a full professorship at a Southern Baptist seminary was honored Aug. 2 with the fourth annual Black SBC Heritage Award. T. Vaughn Walker, chairman of the black church studies department in the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, received the award during Black

Church Leadership Week, July 31-Aug. 4 at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center. Walker also directs the doctor of ministry and Ph.D. programs in black church studies at the seminary and is pastor of First Gethsemane Baptist Church in Louisville. He joined the faculty of Southern Seminary in 1985.

■ **BJCPA names scholar.** Brad Creed, a church history professor and former dean at Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas, will serve this fall as a scholar-in-residence at the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Creed will spearhead educational activities at the religious-liberty agency in Washington, D.C., and engage in speaking and writing projects on Baptist principles and religious liberty.



Local Tanzania official blocks Kentucky volunteers

By David Winfrey
News Director

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania—A team of 36 volunteers were prevented from working on construction and evangelism projects during a recent trip to Tanzania with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership with Baptists in that East African country.

A local immigration official questioned the Kentuckians' visas and required them to return to the country's capital ahead of schedule, according to Larry Martin, leader of the KBC's missions growth team.

To protect the work of missionaries in that area, Martin and Southern Baptist International Mission Board officials asked that neither the city of the projects nor missionaries there be named. This city previously had Kentucky Baptist volunteer teams without incident, Martin added.

The volunteers traveled to Tanzania Tuesday, July 25, for work that includ-

ed evangelism, speaking in churches and helping build a primary school and church building.

During their first day on the job, the team built part of a wall and performed evangelism work that led to 87 professions of faith, Martin said.

"On Friday, a local immigrations official came to the site and halted the work of the volunteers," Martin said. "He raised an issue related to their visas." Volunteers had the same type of visas as previous volunteers in the country, Martin said. Partnership coordinators in Kentucky have requested those specific visas on the recommendation of Tanzania government officials, Martin added.

The immigration official restricted the volunteers' actions while in that region. Volunteers were unable to continue construction work or show the "Jesus" film in the evenings. The Kentuckians were allowed to visit churches, but were told they could not preach or speak to the congregations, Martin

said.

The group also was allowed to visit a game preserve before being bused back to the city's capital ahead of schedule, Martin said.

In Dar es Salaam, the team participated in more missions projects. Half the team worked in the IMB missionaries' offices, and the other half conducted prayer walks throughout the city, Martin said.

One volunteer said she learned how to pray more specifically for missionaries, and several team members said they were ready to go back, Martin said.

The leaders of the team were Bob Morrison, director of missions for Little Bethel Baptist Association in Madisonville, and Larry Baker, director of missions for Christian County Association in Hopkinsville. Both have been on numerous mission trips, and Baker is a former missionary to Latin America, Martin said.

This year Kentucky Baptists have sent two previous teams, without inci-

dent, to the same area where this team was. This is the second year of a three-year partnership with Tanzania Baptists. Kentucky volunteers will have filled 18 projects for the year, with five more scheduled through October. None of this year's remaining trips will be in the city where these volunteers were prevented from their work.

Martin said it is too early to tell whether projects will be scheduled for that city next year, but he requested prayer that the remaining volunteers will not be prevented from their work.

He added, however, that Frank Pevey of the IMB offered one encouraging insight. Looking back at Kentuckians' partnership with Kenya Baptists, volunteers encountered major obstacles then also, Martin said.

"They usually preceded a major spiritual breakthrough," he said. "He (Pevey) sees this as spiritual warfare and asks Kentucky Baptists to pray that we will see God break through in major ways in the coming months."

This year Kentucky Baptists have sent two previous teams, without incident, to the same area where this team was prevented from working.

Mountain meeting offers fellowship, worship & inspiration

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

ONEIDA—Lots of things have changed since Kentucky Baptists' Mountain Missions Conference was launched in the late 1940s. Modern transportation, education and communications have helped reduce the isolation that engulfed Eastern Kentucky culture for generations.

But much like the conferences of decades past, mountain pastors and missionaries still gather each summer at Oneida Baptist Institute for a few days of fellowship, inspiration and worship.

One other factor remains unchanged: When the Mountain Missions Conference convenes, A.B. Colvin will be there.

Colvin, retired associate to the executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, has attended 50 of the 52 conferences held at Oneida. And last week was no exception.

Recalling the early days of the con-

ference, Colvin said, "In those days there was no such thing as air conditioning. Everybody suffered."

He said the annual conference continues to address many of the same needs for Eastern Kentucky ministers. "Dealing with principles and methods and the preview of the next January Bible Study always has been helpful," he noted.

Colvin, who also served the KBC for several years in the areas of missions and evangelism, said one of the things that keeps him coming back each year is "the sense of fellowship and camaraderie among people who don't get to see each other very often—sharing good things and lamenting bad things."

Even amid changing times, the conference "can continue to be a real force in the lives of the churches," he said. "It's a matter of getting something you can take home and use."

This year's conference, highlighting the theme, "New Millennium, New Models," maintained the tradi-

tional focus on Bible study, practical ministry ideas, worship and fellowship.

David Aker, the KBC's director of mountain missions, said the conference is designed to "refresh the weary missionaries and pastors of the mountains and to synthesize people's minds for missions."

Aker said the region targeted by the Mountain Missions Conference encompasses 23 associations in Eastern Kentucky, including four counties that have only one Southern Baptist church each. He said studies indicate 68 percent of people in the region remain unchurched.

In addition to decades of social and geographical isolation, "there's a spirit of distrust where the area has been misused politically and economically with nothing given in return," Aker said.

While there are growing pockets of prosperity throughout the region, he said there are still many rural areas with tremendous economic, social and

spiritual needs.

Aker said the Mountain Missions Conference challenges participants to "dare to do something different in your communications with people."

"It's not the method that's sacred," he emphasized. "It's the message."

Randy Jones, director of the KBC state missions department, said conference leaders plan to evaluate the annual event to determine the most effective ways to meet the needs of pastors and directors of missions serving in a changing society.

Jones said one of his primary goals is for participants to leave the conference "with hope and encouragement that they're not alone in the Lord's work."

Ray Cooper, director of missions for Three Forks Baptist Association, also is a longtime conference participant. "This is always a very powerful spiritual experience for me," he said. "It has been a fertile seedbed for the development of missions in the mountains."

A primary goal for the meeting is for participants to leave the conference "with hope and encouragement that they're not alone in the Lord's work."

Son Teams teach sports with a mission during trip to Boston

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

BOSTON—A group of Kentucky college students recently spent a week in New England planting gospel seeds on some unusual ground: a basketball court, a soccer field and a makeshift driving range.

The SonTeams, five groups of college students coordinated through the Kentucky Baptist Convention youth department, led a sports camp offered as part of the Super Summer activities planned by New Colony Baptist Church in Billerica, Mass. SonTeams spend the summer leading camps, backyard Bible clubs, worship and more at summer camps and churches.

New Colony began offering Super Summer eight years ago as a way to raise its visibility in the community, according to Vicky Parrott, minister to children. New Colony now offers four back-to-back weeks of camp for chil-

dren, featuring music, drama, sports and the traditional vacation Bible school.

During sports camp week, the SonTeams taught golf, volleyball, soccer, basketball and fitness skills to more than 90 children. In addition, SonTeams taught puppetry and Bible stories.

The SonTeams worked hard to create a fun, safe Christian atmosphere, according to Tom Smoot, youth department director and SonTeams organizer. "We wanted to offer an atmosphere in day camp where parents would say 'I want to go back there.'"

The SonTeams efforts dovetailed nicely with the mission and purpose of Super Summer, according to Parrott.

"In the Northeast, a lot of what you want to do is to help people understand who you are and feel good about it," said Parrott. Since only about 6 percent of Northeasterners attend church, many of them are unfamiliar with the mission, purpose and message of evangelical churches. The camps serve as an intro-

duction for families and New Colony.

Sports week is one of the most popular weeks, she added. "Everyone is into sports for their kids."

Media coverage of the recent U.S. women's soccer team's world championship, Tiger Woods' dominance in recent major golf events and the upcoming Olympics all fuel family interest in sports, Smoot added. In fact, the media frenzy over Woods prompted the addition of a golf class to the sports camp this year for the first time.

"It opens the door for us to be able to share," he explained. "Sports is a common denominator, a common language."

The SonTeams found themselves in need of a common language throughout the week, Smoot said with a laugh. Many of the campers from the church's surrounding middle-class neighborhood spoke English as a second language, while the heavy Boston accents of American-born kids were equally for-

eign to Kentucky ears.

The cross-cultural experience went beyond language differences for the Kentucky team.

New Englanders proved to be direct, observed Betsy Moore, a 19-year-old Cumberland College student from Indianapolis.

"I really liked to see the cultural differences between Kentucky kids and Boston kids," Moore said. "That was a highlight for me. . . . If they wanted something, they asked. Kids (in Kentucky) are more laid back."

Teaching younger children was also a challenge, according to Eastern Kentucky University student Ben Stewart of Somerset. The SonTeams usually work with junior high or high school students at Kentucky camps and churches.

"God taught me a lot of patience and creativity," Moore added. "You have to be quick on your feet. You have to have a lot of things planned, a lot of things in mind."



SPORTS CAMP About 30 Kentucky Baptist college missions volunteers taught a variety of sports during their work with New Colony Baptist Church in Boston. (Photo by Tom Smoot)

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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Incompatible views

Theodore Gaeddert Jr.'s defense of Freemasonry against the North American Mission Board's recently published pamphlet, "A Closer Look at Freemasonry," which states that Freemasonry is incompatible with biblical Christianity, appeals to the fact that if our founding fathers participated in Masonry it must be OK. We must, however, be careful to critique all teachings about God using the Bible as our guide and not rely on whether prominent historical figures were involved.

I applaud the fine work done by our own Southern Baptist mission board which simply compared the official teachings of Freemasonry with Scripture. That's how everyone should approach the subject.

Gaeddert also states that Baptists should go after real problems such as drugs and abortion. I agree, but I would also include Freemasonry in that list. According to the Baptist pamphlet, Freemasonry promotes salvation by works, universalism and occultic readings. We need to recognize that as a very serious problem.

All teachings about God, secret or not, need to be critiqued by the local church in an objective, biblical, dispassionate manner. Sadly, many well-meaning Christian men join Freemasonry before they even study the official teachings of Masonry. Once they are in, like Gaeddert said, it's a "fraternity." Then it's hard to be objective.

Thanks to our Southern Baptist leadership for these pamphlets that will help local churches make informed decisions concerning Freemasonry. Other fine resources can be found in our local LifeWay Christian bookstores under "Apologetics."

Jake Huffman
McQuady

Calvinism affirmed

I am a steady reader of the Western Recorder and a Calvinist.

I was strongly in the camp of the conservatives when Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was taken back by the conservatives. I was overjoyed. I am not fond of liberals whether they be political or religious ones.

The Western Recorder might need to let Calvinism be explained by someone who does not distort this classical biblical position. The Calvinistic position has been mainstream Christian thought since St. Augustine in the fifth century. The modern-day Armenian Southern Baptist position is an amalgamation of the position of Erasmus of Rotterdam in the 1500s and the views of John Wesley in the 1700s.

I do not know a soul at Southern Seminary nor have I ever been there. Dr. Al Mohler is only a name to me but I am tired of Calvinists being castigated as some sort of evil monsters.

I can only speak for myself and on the positions that I hold but I stand strongly for an inerrant Bible, salvation by grace through faith, a literal heaven and hell, Christ's substitutionary atonement for our sins and most any other doctrine that most people would call conservative.

The Calvinistic doctrines I hold to would have been mainstream Southern Baptist doctrine in the mid-1840s when the Southern Baptist Convention was established. What we see today is a mixture of old-line Wesleyan Methodism and Baptist doctrine.

The New Hampshire confession of faith was the cornerstone document of Southern Baptists when the denomination was founded. It holds strongly to what is called today

moderate Calvinism.

The brand of Calvinism portrayed by Robert DeFoor in the July 25 issue of the Western Recorder is not even remotely close to any positions that I hold or that of any Calvinist I know of.

Roger McKenney
Morgantown

Promote reading

As a retired career teacher, I am favorably impressed with your succinct report concerning the book by J.K. Rowling in the Harry Potter series. The question introducing this best seller is, "Should your child be reading Harry Potter?" Within my 30-year experience of the guidance of learning activities, my answer is a definite affirmative.

One reason is that in my childhood I sought out "The Wizard of Oz" by Frank Baum and "Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll, which led me into the land of make-believe. There were others, such as the Nancy Drew Mystery series. I also, along with millions of children and adults, regularly read the comic strips in the funny page of our newspaper such as Buck Rogers in the 21st Century, Batman, Superman and Dick Tracy with his magic two-way radio wristwatch. Today there are strips even more bizarre in the comics, plus videos of aliens and space wars, which tease the imagination of both older and young readers. Personally, it only whetted my desire to read the printed word.

Besides, as a teacher I was always thrilled when my young pupils found a book or story that caused them to actually want to read.

There are reasons even more for children to devote themselves to read, such as the Bible. I began with my Bible when I was six years old; I kept up the practice to this day. "Get on board, little children." Read on!

Edith Oldham
Louisville

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Unrestricted prayer requires action

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled recently that public school students cannot lead public prayer before football games even if the students select the student who prays. The court feels the selection process favors the dominant faith in the school and is therefore unfair to those who have different beliefs.

Several years ago prayers initiated by teachers were eliminated from the classroom. Christian symbols and Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter also have been restricted or eliminated from public schools depending on local interpretations of court rulings.

Protests of these rulings have come from varied Christian expressions across the United States. Christians have a right to complain about restrictions on prayer in the classroom and at school sports events based on their individual convictions about the issue.

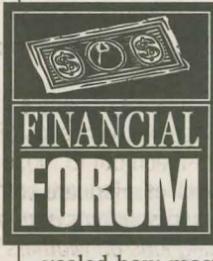
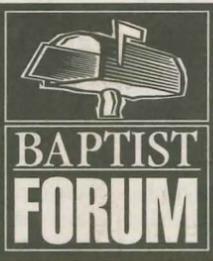
However, there is no restriction on personal prayer or prayer in the home,

church or other community events. What are we doing with the unrestricted opportunities we have to pray?

As Christians we confess that there is power in prayer and that God uses our prayers in the spiritual process. The Bible places a major emphasis on prayer and Jesus taught His disciples the model prayer. The power of prayer is demonstrated in the lives of biblical personalities and people of faith in Christian history.

Most of us also have experienced prayer personally and have heard testimonies from others. Prayer is a vital part of our relationship to God, a dynamic resource for ministry and a powerful way to intercede for others. Remarkable miracles have been wrought by prayer.

Yet, of all Christian gatherings, prayer meetings are the poorest in attendance. Calls to prayer go unheeded. I have heard church leaders confess that personal prayer is their greatest need but



FAMILY

Words of wisdom reveal timeless financial truth

By Jeremy White

Summer is known as the season of television reruns. In a sense,

I consider most new financial "how-to" books reruns as well.

The recent best-seller "The Millionaire Next Door" re-

vealed how most American millionaires made their net worth. The authors' findings indicate a typical millionaire is a high saver, frugal spender, usually self-employed and a hard worker.

Two economists recently published "Getting Rich in America." Their education and experience resulted in writing eight rules for getting rich. These included resisting the temptation to spend, using the power of compounding and sharpening one's own skills.

A much older work, "The Richest Man in Babylon," is considered one of the classics of personal finance. It popularized the phrase "Pay yourself first." The rich man in this tale teaches others his secrets, namely spending less than one earns and then using the surplus savings to work for its owner.

All of the recent and older 20th century works echo the financial wisdom and practical advice in the Bible. Throughout the Bible, particularly in Proverbs, we find the basics of successful finance:

- Limit and ultimately eliminate the use of debt.
- Build a surplus by spending less than you earn.
- Work hard and develop your skills.
- Give generously.
- Let your savings work hard for you through wise investment.

A recent survey indicates that most Americans still don't grasp these basic truths. Twenty-eight percent of Americans believe winning a lottery or sweepstakes is their best chance to save \$500,000.

In the same survey, the percentage of respondents holding this belief jumps to 40 percent of households with incomes of \$35,000.

Many Americans don't realize that saving \$25 a week for 40 years invested at 9 percent interest would yield more than \$500,000. Or saving \$100 a week for 25 years invested at 9 percent would result in about a half-million dollars.

Perhaps we should appreciate the wisdom recently published in the reruns of financial truths. Better yet, we should focus on the source of wisdom—God's Word.

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant in Paducah. See his weekly financial tip on his Internet Web site at www.consultcpa.com.



Bill Mackey

the one Christian discipline most neglected. Surveys indicate that the average Christian prays less than five minutes per day.

There is no prohibition against Christians praying for their pastor to be anointed for ministry, church leaders to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the congregation to grow in love and ministry, for youth to be protected from evil and for people to come to know and follow Jesus Christ. We need to be taking these and all other concerns to the Lord in prayer.

Some church members gather with their pastor on Saturday night or early Sunday morning to pray for worshipers to experience the manifest presence of God. Others conduct prayer walks through the buildings. Others pray during worship services. I spend time every Saturday and Sunday praying for worship services.

God cannot answer prayers that we do not pray. Will you join me in permeating Kentucky Baptist churches and ministries and world missions with prayer?

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

How can churches help meet stepfamilies' unique needs?

Q: How can I help my church minister to stepfamilies? This family structure seems to be the norm rather than the exception. I want to help prevent the cycle of divorce in these situations.

Most Americans in our generation will be part of or related to a stepfamily at some point in their lives. Our challenge as churches is not to "sweep it under the rug" and pretend that everyone is from biological, intact families. We communicate acceptance of people by the language we use. As witnesses of Christ, we want to reach out to those who are in stepfamilies. Here are some suggestions:

■ *Honor stepmoms, adoptive moms, foster moms and grandmoms raising kids on Mothers' Day. Honor stepdads, adoptive dads, foster dads and granddads raising kids on Fathers' Day.* Otherwise, we are using language that alienates people doing the work of parenting within our congregations.

■ *Offer parenting courses for parents of pre-teens, early teens and middle teens.* Stepfamilies with children this age are coming into predictable cycles of stress and disillusionment as adolescents seek independence.

■ *Be positive and take the long view.* Our culture wants to "microwave" stepfamilies, while the better model may be the crockpot. It takes an average of seven years for a stepfamily to achieve a sense of normalcy. By responding to the needs of stepfamilies, we can promote marital and family satisfaction while helping stem the tide of divorce. This can include weekly or monthly education and recreation. Recommended resources include: Dick and Betty Dunn's "Developing a Successful Stepfamily Support Group" and "New Faces in the Frame," as well as Emily and John Visher's "How to Win as a Stepfamily." Recent tapes available on the subject include "Stepfamilies: What They Need and What Works" by George Doub and Flo Creighton and "Building a Successful Stepfamily: How Churches Can Help" by Ron Deal. Both tapes are available from www.smartmarriages.com.—*James Stillwell*

Q: My child has questions about other faiths. How should I respond?

Always be respectful as you talk with your children about other faiths. Center your conversations on what people believe about Jesus. Help children understand that people who share the same belief that Jesus is God's Son are called Christians, regardless of where they go to church. They simply worship and serve Jesus in different ways. Children may begin to understand the concept of denominations through the illustration of baseball teams who play the same game in the same league, but who wear different uniforms and play in different stadiums.

Talk about sources of authority. Help children know that while other faiths have special books, writings and teachers they look to, we depend on the Bible and on Jesus for our understanding of God.

Children are especially aware of the order of worship, sanctuary furnishings, the way the ministers dress, the method of baptism, the service of communion and other concrete expressions of faith. Explain the uniqueness of our Baptist tradition and why we do what we do.

Ultimately, children may press to know who is right and who is wrong. Don't dodge the question. It is important to help children begin to understand that all forms and expressions of faith are not equal. Because we embrace the Bible, we must disagree with people and faith traditions that do not recognize Jesus as God's Son. However, we can still treat them with respect.—*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; 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.



Don't settle for being 'slightly below average'

Kentucky Baptist pastors are slightly below average, according to a recent study.

Don't get too alarmed, however. The study didn't indicate they are below average in preaching skill or ministry commitment or leadership. The study of 18 state Baptist conventions found that full-time Kentucky Baptist pastors are slightly below average in salary, housing and benefits such as retirement and insurance.

The good news is that the Kentucky pastors' average total pay package is only \$700 below the average pay package in the study. Additionally, increases in compensation have outpaced inflation the past few years.

The bad news, of course, is that being a little below average isn't much of a goal to pursue. Just as churches strive to excel in worship, ministry and growth, we also should seek to compensate our ministers at a level worthy of the commitment and sacrifice they bring to their ministry efforts.

"The laborer is worthy of his wages," 1 Timothy 5:18 declares. While some church leaders act as if discussing financial issues is

unspiritual, the fact is that congregations have a responsibility to provide appropriate financial support for their ministers.

"Our history has been that this is a taboo subject," noted Guy Futral, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's leadership development team. He said the compensation study "helps open it up and say it's not only OK to talk about it, it's necessary to talk about it."

In addition to full-time pastors, the study examined compensation for bivocational pastors, staff ministers and support staff. Bivocational pastors in Kentucky fared slightly better on a comparative basis, receiving almost \$1,000 more in annual compensation than the study's average compensation in that category. That total places Kentucky eighth among the 18 state conventions in compensation for bivocational pastors.

Among full-time and bivocational staff ministers and most of the support staff positions, Kentucky Baptist churches remain below average in total compensation.

The biennial study is coordinated by Don Spencer, director of the KBC annuity department. He said the study is designed as a tool to help church leaders evaluate and adjust ministers' compensation as needed. Personnel committees, finance committees and even search committees can use the study to make informed decisions about financial issues.

Spencer and Futral note that the study can benefit both ministers and churches. When a church takes the initiative to provide appropriate compensation for its minister, it allows the minister to focus more time and attention on ministry needs of the congregation.

It also promotes longevity in ministry positions when ministers sense tangible support and encouragement from church members. That paves the way for more effective ministry and long-term growth opportunities.

"In a real sense, a church robs itself when the pay is too low," Spencer said. By contrast, when ministers are freed from undue financial concerns, they have greater opportunities to "become the best ministers they can be."

Details of the 2000 church compensation study will be published as a four-page supplement in next week's Western Recorder. Individual congregations also can receive customized compensation reports from the KBC annuity department that highlight average compensation packages among churches with similar membership, attendance and annual budget. The result is a detailed report that gives church leaders statistics tailored for their ministry setting.

Few, if any, Kentucky Baptist churches would be satisfied with being perceived as an "average" congregation. Most church members desire for their church to be above average in its spirit, vision and impact.

The same should be true of the financial support we provide our ministers. If we truly believe the laborer is worthy of his wages, we must refuse to settle for those wages being below average. Carefully studying the 2000 compensation study or ordering a customized study for your church is a great place to start.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Minister to the mobile multitudes

By Mike Watts

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep with a shepherd (Mark 6:34).

When I retired a few months ago from the full-time pastorate and became a resort/leisure ministries consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, I did not realize I would have the pleasure of conducting my first-ever "houseboat wedding." It was a great experience, as I was able to share the love and blessings of Christ at the beginning of a couple's life together as a family.

This is what this job is all about—taking Jesus' love to where the people are. If we want to be like Jesus, we need to look at how He reached out to people. He did not go to church and wait for the people to come to Him. He went to the seashores, to the

mountains, to a wedding feast, to their homes, to the sick, to the sinners. Jesus was a people person.

It is very important for the church to be in touch with humanity. We are to reach out to the lost and to care for people to the point that we interact with them where they are in their lives.

America is a land of plenty and of great financial resources. That allows us the ability to take time to enjoy life and to have fun. We have an abundance of leisure activities, and many people have the occasion to participate in them. Where does the church fit in that activity?

I think first of all that the church needs to recognize that leisure is a reality. People will get away from it all. Second, the church needs to love those who are a part of the resort-leisure community. Then the church needs to reach out in Christ's name to the multitudes and the places where the people gather. There already are some

exciting Christian ministries at campgrounds, horse parks, lakes, race-tracks, gated communities, sports events and other settings. God is leading in so many challenging arenas.

What a great opportunity for churches and Christians to be people who are loving others in the name of Jesus. It will call for churches to focus on the need to reach the leisure community around them.

Churches need to locate the facilities and activities that are within their area of ministry. They need to pray about God's leadership in meeting the spiritual needs of the leisure population in their reach and allow God to call out the called. He loves people and will lead others to love enough to go forward in His name.

Give church members the opportunity to serve where God has called. Train them in the ways of ministry and outreach. Love them as a church as they enter the leisure world. Be open, alert, innovative and watchful as God opens the doors of service.

Mike Watts, a member of First Baptist Church of Albany, is resort ministries consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



Fort Thomas teens take gospel to London's streets, students

Missionaries in England call M-Fuge International a key element in their work to get a church-planting movement started in London and other European capitals.

By Mike Creswell
SBC International Mission Board

LONDON—On a warm day in July as gray clouds threatened rain, Rob Roy stood in Leicester Square, the famed cinema and theater heart of England's capital city, and was beaming with pride.

That's because his students from Highland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Thomas, were singing praise songs for scores of passers-by in the busy plaza.

They kept singing even when a drunken man cursed them. And when the songs ended, the students moved among the crowd and shared their Christian faith with people from around the world.

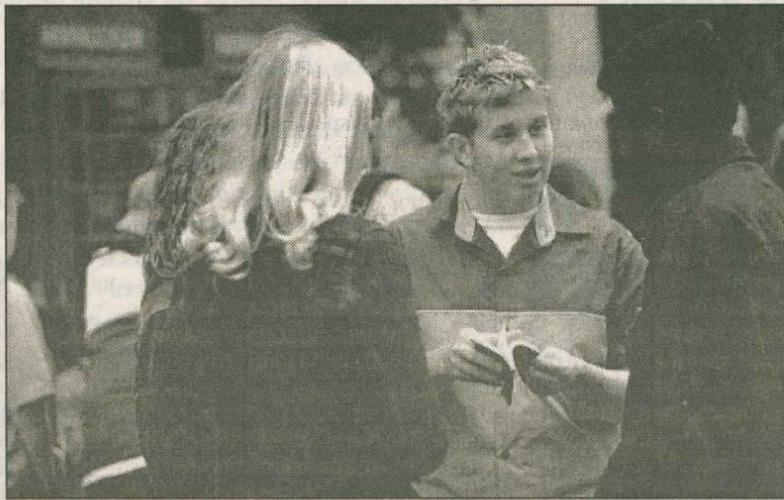
"Immediately where we live, there's not much diversity of cultures or people. I believe this week coming here has truly been eye-opening. We have seen so many people groups we've never seen in day-to-day living. So it has been a good experience," Roy said.

Highland Hills Baptist sent 20 students and seven adults to take part in M-Fuge International, a missions-oriented offshoot of Centrifuge, the camping program for young people which will draw approximately 70,000 participants this year.

M-Fuge International adds missions projects in an overseas setting to the usual Bible study and worship. Southern Baptists' International Mission Board co-sponsored the London program with LifeWay Christian Resources.

Missionaries in England call M-Fuge International a key element in their work to get a church-planting movement started in London and other European capitals.

About 90 students took part in the first London session during July; more than 300 students are expected to participate during the summer.



LONDON WITNESS A youth team from Highland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Thomas participated in M-Fuge International in London, England. The event offered Bible study, worship and hands-on missions projects. ■ **Left:** Nathan Engels shares the plan of salvation with a passer-by in central London's Leicester Square. ■ **Top right:** Alissa McLane (third from left) talks with British students at a public school. Many students in the school are Muslim, and some are from countries closed to the gospel. ■ **Bottom Right:** Stephanie Class (left) and Tiffany Engles sing praise songs with other M-Fuge participants in Leicester Square. (IMB photos by Grace Robinette)

Talking to people in public—especially the many people from different cultures—was educational for his Kentucky youth, Roy noted. "To go up and introduce yourself and start talking to someone and finding people are actually willing to talk—even in Kentucky we often don't take the time to do that."

One of the young men from Fort Thomas was sensing God's call to missions service during the week, and two others sensed confirmation of an earlier sense of calling, Roy said. "One boy began thinking of a friend who has strayed from the faith, and he has committed to talk to that friend about God's will."

Kyle Jones, 16, of Highland Hills served on the sports evangelism team. He and other students played football and other sports in a North London park as a way to get to share their faith.

"It has been such a laid-back environment, but God is so much here right

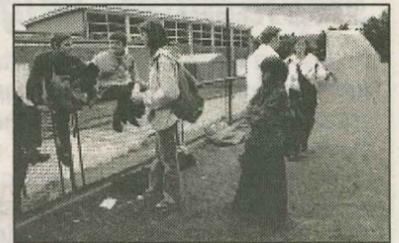
now," Jones said during a break in the play. "We come out here and play sports each day, yet God is with us all day, every day," he said.

He and the others were able to talk with people from many parts of the world. Asked where they were from, Jones reels off: Kosovo, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Somalia, Jamaica, Turkey, India and Nigeria, in addition to England.

"There's nothing more exhilarating than to talk with someone who's either a Muslim or someone with no beliefs at all. It's definitely fun to talk to them," he said.

Jones will be a junior at Highlands High School in Fort Thomas this fall. At Highland Hills Baptist he's a member of the servant and leadership team.

"I just think it has been awesome," added Brian Morris, 15, also a Highlands member, as he laid down his football during a break. "We get to go out and meet people from so many differ-



ent cultures," he said, adding that he talked with people from Kosovo, Somalia and Cambodia.

Morris admitted that the prospect of witnessing to strangers initially made him a little nervous. But in London, he said, he realized for the first time how easy it is to share his Christian faith with others. "A lot of people would think it is so hard, but it's not, long as you keep a good attitude. I mean, the kids will even come up to you and ask questions and you don't even have to start the conversation. You get to explain your faith and they're really interested. They want to find out more about us," he said.

Morris said he's learned that sharing his faith is nothing to be afraid of. "Even the Muslims and the people who don't believe in anything... they won't reject you," he said. "They want to know and they want to learn. It's just they need somebody there to teach them."

Cecilia crusade draws thousands, showcases evidence for Christ

By Suzanne Darland
State Correspondent

CECILIA—More than 10,000 people filled the floor and bleachers of the Central Hardin High School gym for an evangelistic crusade July 20-23.

"This is the largest gathering for a religious event in this part of the state ever," Jim Shaw, crusade chairman and pastor of Mill Creek Baptist Church, told the crowd the last night.

Sixty-four churches in Hardin and Larue counties—most Southern Baptist but a significant number Assembly of God, United Methodist, Church of Christ and independent churches—sponsored the crusade.

"So many things fragment us," said John Walker, director of missions for Severns Valley Baptist Association. "This increases the unity of the Christian community and lets the non-believing community see we can cooperate on the important things."

Frank Harber, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke each evening. An apologist, one who defends the Christian faith with evidence, he said he became a believer after setting out to debunk the claims of Christianity. As an atheist preparing to go to law school, he



TESTIMONY Clebe McClary, a decorated Vietnam veteran who suffered numerous wounds, gives his testimony July 23 at the youth night of a regional revival in Cecilia. Attendance totaled more than 10,000 for the four nights.

studied nine world religions on a challenge from the pastor of a colleague.

Much to his surprise, Harber said, he found "there is powerful, convincing evidence from history, archaeology and science that demonstrates without a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is God."

He said secular historians from the time of Jesus note His life and ministry, and accounts from that time corroborate the resurrection. Harber pointed out that even Jesus' detractors didn't deny that He performed miracles; they instead tried to find explanations for them oth-

er than that God did them.

"Jesus fulfilled 456 Messianic prophecies," Harber said. He couldn't have planned all that Himself unless He was divine, especially those that deal with His birth, he said.

"It takes more faith not to believe in God than to believe in God," Harber told the crowd.

The first night of the crusade, when the Christian musical group 4 Him sang, Harber spoke about scientific evidences for God. He said 90 percent of astronomers believe in God, citing the complexity of the universe as why. "An explosion (like that of evolution's Big Bang theory) produces chaos," he said. "Yet the universe is consistent and orderly."

He also spoke of major gaps in the fossil record, wondering aloud how some could believe that "life came from non-life" and "intelligence came from non-intelligence."

"You'd have to believe that the dumb stuff designed the smart stuff," he said.

More than 130 decisions were recorded at the revival meeting, including 67 people who said they received Jesus as their personal Savior. One woman, intrigued about Christianity after reading a book in the "Left Be-

hind" series, came with a co-worker the first night and made a profession of faith. Another man who had donated \$250 toward crusade expenses several weeks ago accepted Christ at a men's prayer breakfast where Harber spoke. A women's luncheon and children's event were also held in conjunction with the crusade.

Three hundred members of the churches, from high school students to senior adults, trained to be counselors in the months prior to the crusade. Also, the sponsoring churches raised the money for the crusade to meet its expenses—about \$50,000—before the first night, "so we didn't have to plead," Walker said. An offering taken during the crusade raised about \$15,000 and will fund Harber evangelism crusades in other countries.

July 22 was youth night, with Christian artist Al Denson performing. Clebe McClary, a decorated Vietnam veteran who suffered numerous wounds while serving as a Marine, spoke July 23. He said God brought him and his wife from despair to hope in Christ in the agonizing time after his return home.

They had been active in church all their lives and taught Sunday school, yet never had personal relationships with Christ.

"It takes more faith not to believe in God than to believe in God."

Frank Harber, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Anne Graham Lotz seeks to be heard in a man's world

By Yonat Shimron
Religion News Service

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands (RNS)—Before launching into her lecture at the world evangelists' conference earlier this week, Anne Graham Lotz paused to pray that God would break down barriers of race, language and gender as she spoke.

Though race and language were important concerns, especially at a conference of evangelists from 209 countries, it was the gender barrier that troubled her more.

As a woman, and as a powerful preacher, Lotz still struggles to be heard. And in the circles where she travels, it's a man's world. Among the 10,000 conference participants gathered here, at what is considered the world's largest school for evangelists,

only 7 percent are women. And among the 300 speakers asked to lecture, Lotz, the daughter of Billy Graham, is the only woman to address the entire assembly on her own.



Lotz

Evangelical Christians are divided on whether women should serve in positions of authority over men. For that reason, Lotz is something of a lightning rod. Her own denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, recently passed official statements declaring that the office of pastor is limited to men and that wives must submit graciously to their husbands. But other evangelicals say women are equally gifted in preaching.

Lotz is one of them—and because of her lineage she may be in a position to do for women what her father did for ecumenical relations. A decade ago, as she was approaching the microphone to

speak to a gathering of U.S. pastors from all denominations, a group of men turned their backs on her.

More recently, she was invited to speak at another conference only to have the invitation rescinded when it became apparent that some men would not hear it. These experiences have sent her back to the Bible and made her convictions on this matter even stronger.

"I believe God has confirmed to me His call that I'm to go wherever He sends me and to give out the message He's put in my heart," said Lotz, 52, who lives in Raleigh, N.C. "He's responsible for the people in the audience. I'm responsible to give out His word."

Though she says she does not believe God called her to be ordained or serve as a pastor of a church, Lotz doesn't rule it out for other women. The key, she says, is to listen to God, to study the Scriptures and find a way to make peace with them.

But there is one biblical figure she encourages both men and women to examine. That woman is the New Testament figure of Mary Magdalene, an early follower of Jesus.

"Jesus commissioned Mary to share His word and her personal testimony," said Lotz. "If the church has gotten more strict than that, we need to examine what we base that on."

At this week's lecture, Lotz urged young pastors to be mindful that they are sinners just like the members of their churches, and that their ministry will falter unless they too repent and ask God to forgive them. Her 35-minute message, delivered without notes or an outline, hit all the bases, with time left over to round them out in a powerful summation. With the hand gestures and jabbing fingers so characteristic of her father, Lotz showed she was in a league with him—speaking eloquently and offering plenty of examples in rapid-fire succession.

By all accounts, people liked what she had to say.

"She had really good charisma," said Elias Burgos, a participant from Denver. "You could see her emotions when she preaches and that's touching."

Fellow lecturers thought highly of her too. "I find myself envious of her gift," said John Stott, a renowned British pastor and Bible scholar who has served as chaplain to the Queen of England.

Indeed, despite criticism from some circles, Lotz is something of an international evangelical celebrity. From the minute she arrived in Amsterdam, Lotz patiently surrendered to countless interviews with the BBC World Service, ABC's Good Morning America and the New York Times.

With her perfectly blow-dried gray hair and fashionable suits, she could easily slip into a world of gloss and glamour, but never strays far from her message. In the black tote bag she carries are an extra pair of shoes, a makeup bag and a well-thumbed Bible. As she walks from one interview to the next, clusters of conference participants follow her, waiting for the opportunity to get an autograph or pose for a picture.

In part, that's because she is the second of Billy Graham's five children and shares a marked resemblance to his tall frame and chiseled good looks. In part,

Carey: Beware of false gods

AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands (RNS)—Preaching at the Amsterdam 2000 conference, England's Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey warned against finding the answer to the West's malaise in anything or anyone other than Christ.

The conference, which brought 10,000 preachers and evangelists from 185 countries, had been intended to be the occasion for the veteran evangelist Billy Graham to pass the torch to the next generation. But he was too ill to attend.

Citing G.K. Chesterton's observation that original sin was "the only directly observable Christian doctrine," Carey said that "while the predicament of human nature was so clearly shown in our powerlessness over wrongdoing and our consequent need for radical transformation in Christ," solutions often are sought in things which, though good in themselves, are "no substitute for Christ and are indeed false gods."

"Western culture today is obsessed with three alternative 'Saviors'—therapy, education and wealth, among many others—none of which can provide lasting healing for our broken world," Carey said.

it's because she's built up a loyal following, especially among women, as a Bible teacher and author.

Married to Dan Lotz, a Raleigh dentist, she was cast into a traditional role of wife and mother when she got engaged at the tender age of 17. Lotz never went to college and never took a class in seminary.

But soon after her son and two daughters were born, Lotz felt trapped.

"I felt frustrated in the home with young children," she said. "I was losing my temper. I was impatient. I knew my mother had drawn her strength by reading God's Word and spending time in prayer. I just didn't have the discipline to do that."

Lotz finally found a way to rekindle her faith—by teaching it. A Bible study she started once a week at her church grew from 150 people in its sixth week, to 500 the following year. She ended up teaching that class for 12 years.

Along the way, she developed a faithful following, especially among women who found in the Bible ways to cope with life's frustrations and small tragedies. Lotz's method of Bible teaching does not rely on scholarship or a historical or literary appreciation. It is mostly a devotional exercise intended to draw out personal lessons for the reader's life.

At a workshop here, Lotz said she asks three questions when she approaches a passage from the Bible: "What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me?"

"We want to read so we can have God talk to us," she said. "This is the best way to transform the relationship of your heart."

In 1988, Lotz founded AnGeL Ministries, an organization that handles her speaking engagements. (Its first, middle and last letters form her initials.) These days, she rejects 20 engagements for every one she accepts. She recently spoke in Australia at the Baptist World Congress and at an annual Bible conference in England.

Lotz does not take money for these engagements. Nor does she draw a salary from the ministry. She says she is supported by her husband and the ministry grows through gifts. This fall, she will complete a five-city revival tour called "Just Give Me Jesus."

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RESOURCES

Baptist churches among Kentucky's lost bank accounts

The best way for a church to avoid seeing its name on the list is good record keeping, especially during times of congregational transitions.

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

FRANKFORT—In Luke 15:8-9, Jesus describes a woman filled with joy after a diligent search led her to a lost coin. At the state treasurer's office, Kentucky Baptist churches might be able to find thousands of them.

A list supplied by the treasurer's unclaimed property division recently showed it is holding money and other property owned by more than 60 Baptist churches from a variety of affiliations. Not all can be found easily; more than a dozen accounts contain no address or city.

The printout includes several related organizations, such as an unnamed Baptist Student Union, Baptist Hospital East in Louisville and Baptist Memorial Hospital in Union City. Among Baptists and others, the state holds more than \$40 million in uncashed checks, abandoned savings accounts, inheritances and items left behind in safety deposit boxes, such as rare coins, jewelry or stocks.

By law, after seven years banks must turn over idle accounts and other holdings to the state.

"The most typical thing is money or property left in a safety deposit box that has been forgotten about, or a savings account at a bank," said Treasurer Jonathan Miller, who took office last January.

New items are reported every day, added Tim Lester, unclaimed property branch manager. He noted there are hundreds of thousands of names in the office's database.

The question is: How do churches lose money?

"They can forget about an account, or a new treasurer doesn't know about an account and it falls through the cracks," he said. "The same way it does with an individual. Or, somebody leaves money to a church in their will and they don't know about it."

In addition, small accounts sometimes get forgotten or the files are lost, Miller said. Or, churches move to a new location and mail doesn't get forwarded. In other cases, the congregation disbands, leaving a complex trail for the state to uncov-

er as it attempts to find the rightful owner.

In some cases, unclaimed property amounts to a small fortune. Several months ago, the treasurer presented a \$170,000 check to the estate of a Lexington woman who had left behind a municipal bond her heirs knew nothing about.

In another case, he said \$500 in stock purchased in the 1970s had grown to \$135,800 by the time it was returned to the person's estate in March.

Churches are more likely to find sums closer to \$246, the size of the average valuation held in Frankfort. But Miller said nobody has grumbled about coming up with less than the mother lode.

"Lots of people are excited to find anything," he said. "We really haven't had anybody complain about the size."

Churches or individuals who want to know if their name appears on the list can check the department's Web site at www.kytreasury.com

or call (800) 465-4722. Information about filing a claim is available through either source.

The treasurer said the best way for a church to avoid seeing its name on the list is good record keeping, especially during times of congregational transitions.

"The good thing is we've got this backup just in case it does happen," he said. "Every church in the state can check our Web site, find out whether they have property and we'll return it."

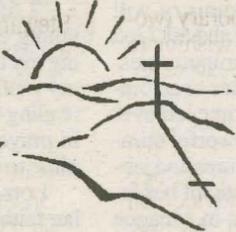
Since Kentucky started its unclaimed property program in 1942, the state has collected more than \$97 million.

More than \$15 million has been returned to owners, with an average of \$2 million per year returned in recent years.

However, the treasurer's office holds only about \$40 million of the money not returned. The remainder was turned over to the general treasury when control shifted from the revenue cabinet to the treasurer's office a decade ago.

Still, there's no statute of limitations on filing a claim. Theoretically, Miller said, a church today could file for money lost in the 1950s.



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2000

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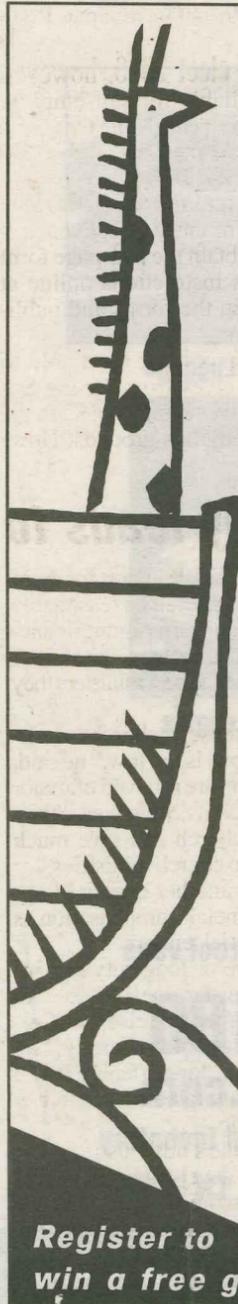
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Where: First Baptist Church Pikeville, KY
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RESOURCES

Is electronic withdrawal the offering plate of the future?

Continued from page 1

mentioned they would like a way of donating when they were out of town.

But he emphasized that participation is voluntary.

"If there's someone who felt strongly about giving an envelope when the plate is passed on Sunday morning, we didn't want to take that away," Dorris said. "We want to operate like a church, but people have to understand there are bills to pay and salaries to meet."

While the savings will depend on how many people sign up, financial secretary Pat Bowen said the church also expects to cut costs by also going to an electronic payroll system this week.

With most staff members expected to sign up, First Baptist hopes to have at least 15 people participating this month. That will put it ahead of another Kentucky Baptist church that implemented electronic donations in June.

Highland Baptist Church in Louisville started its program two months after distributing applications with its annual stewardship letter.

Thus far, only eight individuals or families participate. Because of the low numbers, financial secretary Betsy Neill said the impact has been negligible.

"Most have served on the finance committee or are more aware of finances," she said of those participating. "By and large, our congregation has not responded either way."

The idea came from the previous chairperson of the stewardship committee, who thought it represented a good option for giving. After researching companies on the Internet, he chose an electronic-processing firm in suburban Minneapolis.

Their proposal was reviewed by the trustees and their attorney, but wasn't brought before members for a vote.

Highland hasn't seen any cost savings yet, although if everyone signed up they could save \$1,000 a year on envelopes, Neill said.

"It's just a convenience to those who use it," the financial secretary said. "We did it strictly in hopes those people who forget to write their checks in the summer would do this. Churches suffer in the summer months when people go on vacation."

While no opposition surfaced at

either church, Collins acknowledged there are disadvantages, such as the possible loss of the connection between giving as part of worship. However, he said, those who give during Sunday school also fail to make that connection.



Also, some parents may like envelopes to teach their children about giving. To address that issue, the Mount Washington church is

working on a coding system. Either numbers or colors will be used to identify electronic donors who still want to place an envelope in the offering.

While no one voiced concern about the philosophy of computerized giving, Collins said it likely would have raised objections in Eastern Kentucky, where he was a pastor previously. For years, conservative evangelicals have warned of a cashless, checkless society as paving the way for the "mark of the beast" described in Revelation.

"That was never raised here," he said. "I wouldn't even try to debate that issue."

Forms allow pastors to return to Social Security

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The Internal Revenue Service has made available the form allowing pastors and other religious ministers to re-enter the Social Security program that, among other benefits, provides seniors with Medicare health coverage.

Ministers who previously opted out of Social Security because of religious objections but now want to re-enter must file Form 2031 by April 15, 2002. They can elect to make their re-entry effective in tax year 2000 or 2001 by filing the form titled "Revocation of Exemption From Self-Employment Tax for Use by Ministers, Members of Religious

Orders and Christian Science Practitioners."

If pastors elect 2000, however, they will be liable for self-employment taxes this year. Ministers, who had previously opted out of the program, should file Form 2031 before filing their tax returns for the year they wish to make re-entry effective.

They can obtain the two-page form along with its instructions online at www.irs.gov in the forms and publications section.

Ministers have long been able to exempt themselves from paying Social Security taxes if they object to the program on religious grounds. How-

ever, once a minister decides to opt out, it is irrevocable.

Congress opened a temporary two-year window for ministers wishing to re-enter the program in a measure approved in November 1999.

Deirdre Halloran, associate general counsel at the U.S. Catholic Conference, said that several years ago some ministers "got bad advice" on opting out of the program. As they near retirement, those ministers "wake up and smell the coffee," she said, and realize that as a consequence of opting out, they will not receive Social Security benefits, including Medicare coverage.

Study leaders: Better pay leads to pastor retention

Continued from page 1

Spencer said his office typically provides customized reports to 150 to 200 churches each year.

This year's study reveals that ministers' compensation increases have outpaced inflation over the past four years. Full-time pastors' salary and housing compensation, for example, has increased 15.5 percent since 1996 compared to a total inflation increase of 9.6 percent.

"While we're glad it exceeds the cost of living, we're still behind compared to the workforce," noted Guy Futral, leader of the KBC leadership development team. "Not many churches take a look at the median income of the congregation and say, 'Our pastor must make at least this or more.'"

"Compared to people whose jobs require similar training and experience, ministers still are very much underpaid," Spencer agreed. "That tradition takes a long time to fix."

Spencer said the compensation study can help church leaders provide

"improved financial support for those in ministry so they can be reasonably free of undue concerns about finances." That, in turn, means ministers are "free to become the best ministers they can be."

"In a real sense, a church robs itself when the pay is too low," he said. When ministers are relieved of major financial concerns, however, "they can lead the church and give much more energy to church ministries."

Futral said another benefit of appropriate financial compensation is longer ministerial tenures.

"The tenure or longevity can increase if a minister doesn't feel like he has to go someplace else that pays more to take care of his family," he said, noting that "longer tenure is one of the significant factors in churches that are growing."

Futral said the study "also enables us to see trends developing." As an example, he said more churches now use accountable reimbursement plans for ministry-related expenses.

That benefits ministers by separat-

ing their reimbursable ministry expenses from taxable income. It also provides churches a more accurate picture of ministers' salaries and compensation packages.

Spencer said churches separating expenses from compensation "is something we've been pushing for 10 years but it has really become visible this year."

Assessing this year's overall study, Spencer said, "I'm grateful to see the improvements in compensation but there's always room for more. When I see the improvements happen in churches, I feel like all the hours are worth it."

A detailed summary of the 2000 church compensation study will be published as a supplement in next week's Western Recorder. Kentucky Baptist churches also can contact Spencer's office to receive customized compensation reports.

For more information about the compensation study, contact Spencer at (502) 254-4732 or toll-free at (888) 254-5703.

Companies say idea growing

By Ken Walker

State Correspondent

MOUNT WASHINGTON—First Baptist Church of Mount Washington and Highland Baptist Church in Louisville have joined a growing national trend toward electronic church donations.

"We're absolutely seeing an increase," said Ann-Marie Bartels, president of Mid-America Payment Exchange in Kansas City, Mo.

Southern Baptists aren't in the forefront of this trend; LifeWay Christian Resources' stewardship division doesn't offer materials on automated donations. But a Lutheran-related insurance and investment organization that encourages it has more than quadrupled the number of participants in a year.

Based in Minneapolis, the Lutheran Brotherhood promotes "Simply Giving" among churches in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Missouri Synod. More than 2,700 churches have signed up in 2000, compared to about 600 last year.

Ray Johnston, an agent with offices in Owensboro and Evansville, Ind., said the reception hasn't been overwhelming in his area. But it makes sense, he said, because most people know their monthly income and can budget giving. That helps maintain church budgets during the summer, he said.

"We're not involved in it other than encouraging it as part of Lutheranism, to help the life of the church," he said.

Based in St. Louis, the Missouri Synod is about to kick off its own electronic giving option. It will be done through StewardAccount, a program that includes debit cards and investment options for its 6,300 churches.

Project manager Dick Schulte predicted electronic giving will pick up. Younger people who grew up with computerization often pay up to 20 bills a month electronically, including church donations, he said.

A veteran of 30 years in financial services and banking, he said it will take a long time for automated transfers to become the standard. "There will be quite a bit of time before electronic giving is common. The younger people will have to carry it forward."

A suburban Minneapolis firm that processes automated transfers for churches also is seeing a steady increase in its clientele. Vanco Services, which also works with businesses and other organizations, deals with more than 2,900 churches, according to senior account manager Len Thiede.

"A lot of churches go to their bank and do this," he said. "But a lot don't want to do it because then they have to have a computer program that gives them access to (the Federal Reserve). We make it easy for them."

Its most active customers are Lutherans and Catholics. But Baptist churches of various backgrounds rank third, with 75 currently using its services.

Since first working with churches three years ago, the firm is seeing interest growing rapidly.

"We're signing up 30 to 50 a month," Thiede said. "It's changed a lot in the last two years because more people are paying bills electronically."

Most resistance originates from people who still wish to put an envelope in the offering plate as an act of participating in worship, he said.

Only four of Vanco's accounts are in Kentucky, but he noted that the company hasn't marketed actively in the state. Thus far, there doesn't appear to be widespread interest in the commonwealth.

A check with officers at Peoples Bank of Mount Washington and several banks in Louisville found isolated examples of churches using automated transfers.

"It's not very pervasive," said Kim Stargel, corporate treasury officer for Fifth Third Bank's Kentucky affiliate. "It's very new. I commend (First Baptist) for doing it because it's a very forward-looking way of doing business."

Bill would give government funds to church drug rehab programs

WASHINGTON (ABP)—In a rare show of bipartisanship in an election year, House lawmakers passed a bill that would boost business efforts in impoverished communities and allow houses of worship to receive tax funds to provide social services.

The Community Renewal and New Markets Act won approval July 25 by a 394-27 vote. It would establish new tax breaks, loan programs, housing credits and business incentives in economically impoverished areas. President Clinton already has agreed to sign it if the Senate approves the measure.

It is unclear, however, if the measure is constitutional. It includes a controversial program known as "charitable choice" that would allow houses of worship to receive tax dollars to provide drug rehabilitation and other services.

While making houses of worship eligible for funds, the bill also could open churches to new regulations. It states that government can "apply to religious organizations the same eligibility conditions in designating programs as are applied to other nonprofit private organizations."

It also would require a faith-based group receiving money to bear the burden of locating and referring a secular alternative treatment program to individuals who object to the religious character of the program.

The bill would bar federal and state governments from requiring faith-based groups to remove religious art, icons, scripture and other symbols. It also would allow religious groups to receive tax funds while continuing their long-held exemption from the Civil Rights Act of 1964. That exemption—intended to permit religious organizations to hire only those that share their faith—allows discrimination in hiring.

GOP gives Religious Right quiet treatment

By Kevin Eckstrom
Religion News Service

PHILADELPHIA (RNS)—In 1992, conservative firebrand Pat Buchanan used the Houston Republican Convention to dispatch an army of evangelical Christians in his take-no-prisoners "culture war."

In 1996, fresh from the Newt Gingrich-led sweep of Congress, evangelicals again flexed their muscles and refused to surrender the party's anti-abortion platform plank. Bob Dole grudgingly conceded.

This year in Philadelphia, Buchanan was gone, Gingrich was gone and the other icons of the formidable religious right—Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Gary Bauer and Alan Keyes—were hardly seen.

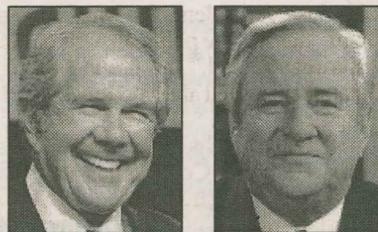
It's not that they weren't invited—they were just told not to speak.

Worried that the hard-line religious right could hamper Texas Gov. George W. Bush's appeal to the middle, Republican leaders carefully kept Robertson and Falwell behind the scenes and out of the spotlight.

"They have been given the word, 'Don't get anywhere near us. You're radioactive,'" said conservative columnist Cal Thomas.

Surprisingly, Robertson and Co. quietly acquiesced.

Fueling the strategy on both sides is a relentless hunger to take back the White House. Conservatives feel it is better to sit quietly for now, rather than make a fuss and alienate enough voters to usher in a Gore administration.



RELIGIOUS RIGHT Pat Robertson (left), president and founder of the Christian Coalition, and pastor Jerry Falwell were quiet during last week's Republican convention in Philadelphia. (RNS photo)

The dirty-laundry primary battles of the past have largely been avoided this year. The party left Philadelphia with a gentler platform while conservatives could claim victory for retaining strong language against abortion.

Bush, a political pragmatist, wants to win. The conservatives also want to win, mostly to have an ally in the Oval Office. In short, Bush needs them as much as they need him.

While Bush has talked openly about his Christian faith, he largely has kept the Christian right at arm's length—working with them, but not necessarily embracing them. And while Bush might not be their dream candidate, the religious right has realized such a candidate probably could not get elected.

Surveys show at least one-third of the Philadelphia delegates identify themselves as Christian evangelicals, and Green's surveys indicate evangelical voters are supporting Bush three to one over Al Gore.

The main objective for Bush now is to be supported by, but not be beholden to, the Religious Right.

It appears to be working. Green draws a distinction between "traditional" evangelicals of the Jerry Falwell variety and "non-traditional" evangelicals who might share the views but maybe not the zealous fervor.

In 1996, Dole carried 74 percent of traditional evangelicals, but actually lost the more moderate evangelicals to Bill Clinton. So far, Bush already is pulling 63 percent of moderate Christians.

Falwell, a political kingmaker of the 1980s, said the younger Bush is the first Republican that conservatives have been "energized" about since Ronald Reagan.

"George W. Bush is going to activate a lot of apathetic religious conservatives," Falwell said. "Our people sort of went 'ho-hum' with Bob Dole. They liked him, but they couldn't get excited about him."

Evangelical delegates say Robertson's and Falwell's low profiles in Philadelphia do not reflect badly on the movement. Dee Benedict, a former Christian Coalition leader in South Carolina, said evangelicals have become so mature, so sophisticated, that the delegates no longer need a cheerleader.

"It's not a place at the table (we're looking for)," Benedict said. "George W. Bush is the table, he's one of us. We've got the table. We just don't need to slam people over the head with it."

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **BYU suspends student after MTV appearance.** A Brigham Young University student who appeared on the MTV reality program "The Real World" has been suspended for allegedly violating the university's honor code during taping of the show. Julie Stoffer, of Delafield, Wis., has been suspended for the fall semester, Associated Press reported. The school said the 21-year-old business major violated its honor code by living with four men and two women in New Orleans during five months of filming. The honor code prohibits coed cohabitation by single students.

■ **Pro-creationism candidates lose.** Kansas voters rejected three Board of Education candidates Aug. 1 who support removing evolution from the state's science curriculum and replacing it with an emphasis on creationism. In the GOP primary elections, two incumbent board members and one other candidate lost their races to opponents who favor removing the voluntary evolution standards passed by the board last year. The standards, which won praise from religious conservatives and scorn from church-state watchdog groups, omit the big-bang theory of the creation of the universe and downplay the role of evolution.

■ **Faith leaders denounce gun ads.** An interfaith group of religious leaders took part in a New York City news conference last week to condemn gun manufacturers' television ads that attack legislators who support lawsuits against gunmakers. Participants included Robert Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Sister Mary Rose McGeady, president

of Covenant House; Herbert Daughtry, pastor of the House of the Lord Pentecostal Church; and Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

■ **Indiana appeals Commandments ruling.** Indiana has appealed a federal judge's order halting the installation of a Ten Commandments monument on the Statehouse lawn in Indianapolis. The state filed its appeal Aug. 1 on orders from Gov. Frank O'Bannon to seek a lifting of the preliminary injunction that was issued July 28. On July 1, a state law permitting schools and other government entities to post the Ten Commandments with other historical documents went into effect. The ruling mirrors that of a federal judge, who issued a ruling July 25 that barred Kentucky from placing a monument of the Ten Commandments on the capital grounds in Frankfort.

■ **Arkansas may vote on casinos, lottery.** Baptists and gambling opponents in Arkansas are organizing to oppose a proposed amendment to the state constitution to establish a state lottery and allow casinos in six Arkansas counties. A petition backed by the Arkansas Casino Corp. was filed with the secretary of state July 7 with more than 80,000 signatures. If placed on the Nov. 7 ballot and approved by voters, the amendment would give the corporation the right to build casinos in six counties. The proposed constitutional amendment also would establish a state lottery, authorize charitable gambling and create a state gambling commission to oversee operations at the casinos.

Summer camp's over

I must be getting old. For years, I always heard that time goes by even faster the older you get. It must be true because it's hard for me to believe that our official "camp summer" is over. As part of my ministry with Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, each summer my wife and I spend the camp season at either Cedarmore or Jonathan Creek. This summer, with our new Crossings camp, we have been at Jonathan Creek. It seems like only yesterday we were prayer walking this beautiful place, praying that God would do a great work in the lives of the students who would be our guests. Actually, that day was 10 weeks ago! And there have been lots of long days and nights since then, but it definitely has been worth it.

It's too early for us to have any final tabulations on numbers, but it looks like we had record youth camp attendance at both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. This vital ministry is alive and well in Kentucky. Night after night at these two camps, young adults made life-changing decisions for Jesus. Night after night wonderful worship and praise filled the air and brought glory to God. Night after night churches met with their campers and got up close and personal as the students discussed what God

is doing in their lives as He becomes more real to them. Day after day students studied God's Word in their small group Bible studies.

Oh, and by the way, day after day the students had a big time. They had fun! Some critics of our changes at Jonathan Creek have said we started a "sports camp" or water park. That's bunk. Talk to the churches that have been here. Nearly half of them already have signed up for next year, and I will assure you they are not coming back because we have a water park.

So we close the "camp summer" at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek, grateful for what God has done and the support of the churches that have attended. I know I can speak for Tom Smoot and express our appreciation to the churches that brought the thousands of youth. It's a great ministry, and I am continually thankful to be a part of it.

So that's all. By next year I'll be older yet, and I guess time will be moving even more quickly. Guess I better get ready. In nine months "camp summer" will be here again. To God be the glory.

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

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

Christians lobbied on Jerusalem control issue

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher
Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Palestinian officials have sponsored a first-ever gathering of Christian and Muslim religious leaders to discuss the future status of Jerusalem and its holy sites.

But many of the city's leading Christian figures stayed away from the politically charged meeting, which concluded with a declaration supporting Palestinian control of the Old City's holy sites.

"Any peace agreement that doesn't guarantee full Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem with all of its Islamic and Christian sites is doomed to failure

because Jerusalem, for Muslims and Christians, is the political, national and spiritual capital," the group said in a statement issued after the July 29 meeting.

The patriarchs of the Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Coptic and Armenian churches, which represent the main Christian communities in the Holy Land, all stayed away from the meeting. But a prominent Greek Orthodox archbishop, Attalah Hannah, was present along with lower-level leaders from other Christian denominations.

The meeting was held at Jerusalem's Orient House, the Palestinian Authority's de facto headquarters in Jerusalem, under the auspices of Faisal Hussein,

Palestinian Authority Minister in charge of Jerusalem Affairs, and Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, the supreme Islamic religious leader in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

The meeting was the first of what is likely to be an intensive public relations campaign among both Israelis and Palestinians, here and abroad, to call attention to their competing claims on the city revered by Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Both Israeli and Palestinian political leaders are jockeying for international support for their respective claims to Jerusalem following the failure of the recent summit meeting between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Sudan bombings close to Christian relief agency

KHARTOUM, Sudan (RNS)—A staff member with World Relief, the international assistance arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, was injured during a bomb attack July 20 in Liethnom.

Government military planes dropped 12 bombs in the area, where World Relief operates one of its two relief operation centers in southern Sudan.

"It is an appalling travesty that the military forces of northern Sudan should target humanitarian endeavors aimed at improving the condition of the civilian population in Liethnom," said Clive Calver, president of World Relief.

"At a time when the church there is exploding with life, I call upon churches in the U.S. to demonstrate solidarity

with the church in Liethnom through their prayers and much-needed humanitarian assistance at this time," he said. "We do not intend to leave our brothers and sisters to stand alone."

The bombing marked the third attack on Liethnom since June 14, according to World Relief, which reports that each bomb attack gets closer and closer to World Relief's operations.

Also, the government has announced that humanitarian relief planes that depart from outside Sudan will not be allowed to enter the war-torn southern part of the country.

President Omar el-Bashir said he believed that Operation Lifeline Sudan, a joint effort of U.N. and other relief agencies, used planes to deliver aid to separatists in southern Sudan.

Religious freedom panel notes four new countries for violations

WASHINGTON (RNS)—One month ahead of the State Department's release of a list of countries suspected of religious freedom violations, a federal commission on religious freedom abroad has recommended the list be expanded to include Laos, North Korea, Saudi Arabia and Turkmenistan.

Muslims, Protestants, Baha'is, Catholics and Hare Krishnas are among faiths whose members face detention, prison terms, deportation and other forms of persecution in those countries, the 10-member International Commission on Religious Freedom said in a July 28 statement.

The commission based its report on information culled from the State Department's 1999 country reports on human rights and its 1999 report on international religious freedom.

Turkmenistan's government is "reminiscent of Stalin's," the commission concluded, and it found the Saudi Arabian government "brazenly denies religious freedom and vigorously enforces its prohibition against all forms of public religious expression other than that of Wahabi Muslims."

In the past, the State Department has been cautious of making any critical remarks about Saudi Arabia, the United States' closest Arab ally.

In North Korea religious freedom "is nonexistent," the commission said, and its government "has imprisoned religious believers and suppresses all organized religious activity except that which serves the interests of the state."

The commission recommended the seven governments designated as countries of particular concern last year—Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, Serbia, Sudan and Afghanistan's Taliban regime—remain on the list because they "continue to engage in particularly severe violations of religious freedom."

Under terms of the 1998 religious freedom law, the U.S. government can choose to limit diplomatic relations with nations designated countries of particular concern.

CONTEMPLATIVE LIFESTYLE RETREAT

Speaker: Dr. Glenn Hinson
September 8-10, 2000
cleftrock Christian Retreat
Mt. Vernon, Ky.

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Concludes Sunday at 11 a.m.
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Retreat limited to 25 people
For questions or to register, call Kathy Corry at (800) 719-0600, or e-mail: cleftrock@aol.com

Special Cumberland juniors

By Robert Dunston

During our Honors Day program at the end of the spring 2000 semester, we honored two outstanding Cumberland College juniors for demonstrating exceptional service at Cumberland and the promise of greater service in the future.

Anita Earle Childers, the daughter of Stephen and Sherrell Earle of Clinton, Tenn., and the wife of John Childers, received the A.T. Siler Service Award. Childers is majoring in middle school education with emphases in both English and math. Her academic excellence has been recognized through her induction into the freshman, mathematics, English and education honor societies.

On the Cumberland campus, Childers has served in our INSIGHTS orientation program helping new students succeed at Cumberland. She also has worked as a mentor through our Knight program and provided tours and information to prospective students and their parents. Childers has been actively involved with children in church as a Sunday school teacher. After graduation she plans to teach, work toward a graduate degree and

write for children.

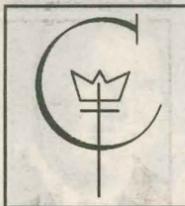
David Blakeman from Harrodsburg, son of Glenda Blakeman and Robert Blakeman and husband of Bridgett Hamilton Blakeman, received the T.E. Mahan Service Award. Blakeman is pursuing a secondary education major in both mathematics and physics. He has excelled academically and been inducted into the freshman, physics and math honor societies as well as receiving an endowed scholarship.

At Cumberland he has served in the freshman orientation program, as a dormitory resident assistant, as a preacher on many Baptist Student Union revival teams and as president of several organizations. Off campus, Blakeman has volunteered as a track coach at Williamsburg City School and with the youth at First Baptist Church of Williamsburg.

We congratulate both of these students and know they will continue to serve Christ during their senior year and throughout their lives.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Labels of Love

The Women's Auxiliary of Spring Meadows Children's Home in Louisville and the KBHC Women's Advisory Board are continuing to collect labels from Campbell's products to be redeemed for much-needed educational equipment and materials!

Campbell's is not just soup anymore. Other products appropriate for this project are:

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Pepperidge Farm
Prego
Swanson
Vlasic



Call KBHC at 1-800-456-1386 to find out more about how you can get involved!

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children
Find us on the Web at <http://www.kbhc.org>



IMB cautiously happy with growth of overseas volunteers

Last year, 26,741 volunteers participated in projects facilitated by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, and the agency is on a course for 30,000 volunteers this year.

By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists are poised to set another record for short-term volunteer projects overseas—with impacts both abroad and at home.

But while missions leaders continue to call for even more volunteers, they are reminding Southern Baptists to be sure overseas ministries encourage—and not hinder—the development of evangelistic, multiplying churches that know how to trust God for their needs.

Southern Baptists continue to step up in record numbers to serve in short-term volunteer projects overseas, said Bill Cashion, director of the SBC International Mission Board's volunteers program.

Last year, 26,741 volunteers participated in projects facilitated by the agency, and the board is on a course for 30,000 volunteers this year, Cashion said. That compares to 12,756 volunteers in 1994 and 6,066 in 1984.

"Today, short-term volunteers play a very, very significant role in IMB overseas strategies," Cashion said. "Twenty years ago, many people wondered whether God could actually use volunteers to win people, disciple them and see churches started and churches strengthened.

But through the years, attitudes have shifted toward volunteers, he added. "Now, missionaries around the world more and more are includ-



READY TO SERVE? David and Jill Reynolds of Columbus, Ga., talk about overseas missions opportunities with Don Dent, who leads Southern Baptist International Mission Board work in the Southeast Asia and Oceania region. The couple was among 1,400 people who participated in International Missions Week last month at Ridgecrest, N.C. (BP photo by Jessica Webb)

ing volunteers, not as an add-on to their strategic plans, but in some cases it's the hub of the wheel."

The impact of volunteers has been enormous, both at home and abroad, added IMB President Jerry Rankin.

"Most pastors would testify that getting their people personally involved in international missions has resulted in greater commitment to local witness and outreach as well."

Veteran missionaries realize, however, that missions efforts sometimes can harm as well as help, no

matter how good the intentions. Sometimes projects create a welfare mentality that hinders church growth.

"Over many years, missionaries have recognized it is a mistake to try to accelerate growth by an infusion of financial aid to build churches and support pastors," Rankin said. "Well-intended financial assistance too often creates dependence and handicaps the initiative and faith essential for spontaneous growth."

Cashion said he wonders whether Southern Baptists themselves

would be as strong as they are if others had "helped" them like many Americans are tempted to assist Christians overseas.

"When Southern Baptists were a pioneer people, who came and bought our land, built our buildings and paid our pastors?" he asked. "Nobody did. So our forefathers had to do more faith building than they did building building."

There always will be a tension between facilitating what volunteers want to do and what is most effective in the long-range strategy of missionaries on the field, Rankin said.

"Our field leadership in responsive places, such as Middle America, struggles with the tension between utilizing a massive number of volunteers and channeling their efforts into beneficial strategies," he said. "Our desire is to unleash an indigenous church planting movement in which churches exist, grow and multiply within their own culture and economy without any dependence on foreign resources, but that often is deterred by excessive help from abroad."

The challenge is for Southern Baptists to really hear where God is calling them to serve—and then be obedient, Cashion said. "God is doing a great work in the far corners of the earth, and He is inviting us to be part of what only He can do."

For information about short-term volunteer missions opportunities with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, call (800) 888-8657.

Gone today, but they'll be back in two weeks

Our summer school session was over yesterday, but in two very short weeks the students will be back. Cars, vans and trucks were parked all over our campus yesterday as parents and grandparents waited for the final bell to ring. Within minutes after the bell, footlockers, clothes, stereos, fans and boxes of other items were being loaded.

I always have enjoyed watching the adults pack everything in the car. Each trip their child makes with a load of personal belongings, you can tell the parents are sure this has to be all. With a little pushing, shoving and rearranging, the final item is loaded. Then the student brings another armload. I am always amused to see what started out to be a happy day turn into a day of frustration. Most of our students did little in the way of packing until the evening before. During the time they were given to clean their rooms and pack, they were more interested in visiting their friends and saying their good-byes.

Within two hours, the campus looked like a ghost town. The cars, trucks, vans, family members and students were nearly all gone. For the most part, the only students still remaining are those who will be working the next two weeks. Right after lunch, those students began their chores. Some went to the farm, some started mowing the grass and others began to clean our many buildings. While we have two weeks to get ready for school to start, we had only a weekend to prepare for the Mountain Missions Conference, which began July 31.

This was the 52nd year Oneida has hosted the Mountain Missions Conference. As I write this article, the girls are busy cleaning Burns Hall, our girls' dormitory, so our many guests will have a place to

sleep. In addition to moving everything out that the students left behind, the floors must be mopped and waxed, windows cleaned, rest rooms cleaned and much more. Several boys are cleaning Baker Hall so single men can sleep there. One wonderful addition during the past two years has been the installation of central air conditioning in all the dorms. This not only has made living conditions for our students much more comfortable, it also has made the accommodations for our conference guests much more enjoyable. Many readers of this article can remember hot, humid summer nights spent here when we did not have air conditioning.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

The conference will last until Wednesday noon. Several people have been coming for years, while others will be here for the first time. Bible study, sermons, crafts and many others activities will provide a special time of spiritual growth and renewal for our guests.

As soon as these guests leave on Wednesday, a group of men will arrive to do some volunteer work. We have had 20 volunteer groups so far this summer, and we have additional groups scheduled every week until Nov. 3. Next week a group from Ohio will help put the finishing touches on everything before our students return Sunday.

The scene I witnessed yesterday will be repeated in reverse in just two weeks as our students return for the fall session. In the meantime, there is much to be done before they return. We call this the summer break, but for the life of me I don't know why.

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

The man at the front door the last nine years

Conversations at a 1981 Wednesday night church supper helped change Jayson Barnett's life.

At the table Jay talked with a 1947 Clear Creek alumnus who recommended he consider Clear Creek for ministry training. With his mother, Clara, he visited the campus "and fell in love with the place."

Jay had been called to the ministry before serving in the Coast Guard. After active duty he worked three years for the Corps of Engineers and at age 25 he surrendered to God's call and began his preparation.

Clear Creek exceeded his expectations. "The ministry here then was very much like it is now. We stress practical ministry preparation. I learned to baptize, perform weddings and conduct funerals; the things that equip one for the local church ministry," Jay said.

At Clear Creek he also met Vicky, a single student whose parents had graduated from Clear Creek in 1976. "I knew the first time I saw her we would marry; it was just an issue of convincing her!"

With a Clear Creek group they toured Israel as single students.

Vicky graduated in 1983 and she and Jay were married the same year. They went back to Israel again in 1985 with another campus group.

Jay was Kelly Hall director his last two years in school and trained his mother to take his job, a position she held for five years.

In 1991 Jay returned to campus as director of admissions, with responsibility for alumni relations and institutional research some of those years.

Our fall class is the largest in Jay's nine years and enrollment has climbed each year the past five years. Jay has broadened campus involvement in the admissions process and seen a dramatic increase of Internet inquiries. We are grateful for his good work.

This month Jay, Vicky and Justy, 15, and Caleb, 5, move to Campbellsville University where he will be associate director of admissions, with primary responsibilities in graduate admissions. Dr. Kelly came to us from Campbellsville, so I guess it is time we helped them out.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Evangelist uses stage to tell modern-day Genesis story

By Ted Parks
Religion News Service

ATLANTA (RNS)—“Wrapping a sermon around a drama,” evangelist and best-selling author T.D. Jakes has taken on the issues of breast cancer and marital infidelity in a musical drama that premiered last month in Atlanta.

“Behind Closed Doors,” co-authored by Jakes and writer Tyler Perry, opened to a crowd just 300 shy of the center’s 4,600-seat capacity, according to Shawn Wood, public relations coordinator for The Potter’s House, Jakes’ 26,000-member Dallas church.

Jakes’ new production weaves the soulful improvisation of black gospel with other musical styles in a dramatic retelling of the Genesis story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. Thrusting the old into a thoroughly new setting, the play explores the conflict resulting when a woman recuperating from a mastectomy pays her female domestic to meet the unfulfilled sexual needs of her husband.

The 21st century version echoes the sexual tensions of the biblical original, where Sarah, unable to bear Abraham his divinely promised child, offers him her slave Hagar. Jakes’ play makes the debilitating effects of breast cancer the motive for seeking a surrogate lover.

Interviewed before the Atlanta opening, Jakes underscored the devastating effects of breast cancer, especially among African-American women. Echoing data gathered by his organization, Jakes said a new case is diagnosed in the United States every three minutes and breast cancer claims another woman’s life every 12 minutes.

The American Cancer Society cites the disease as the No. 2 killing cancer among African-American women, following lung cancer.

Jakes’ decision to square off against breast cancer in the play reflects a ministry focus that goes beyond spiritual matters.

“As we endeavor to bring ... ministry in all of its facets,” he said, “it includes to me dealing with the body, the soul ... and the spirit.”

The play’s premiere was prelude to Jakes’ third straight “Woman, Thou Art Loosed” conference in Atlanta, which broke attendance records last year at Atlanta’s Georgia Dome. An event that attracts principally women, especially minorities, the conference features an economic empowerment seminar and a business exposition.

While co-author Perry said he targeted an African-American audience, he believes the musical drama has broader appeal. “There are lots of people ... who will come to see a play but won’t go to church,” said Perry.

The use of a racially diverse cast in “Behind Closed Doors” replicates the social barriers between the characters in the biblical story. The play’s modern “Sarah”—with the same name as her Genesis counterpart—and husband Howard, analog to Abraham—are an affluent white



rah and Hagar. When Jakes told writer Perry his thoughts, “immediately I could hear the dialogue,” Perry said.

As the two collaborated, Perry added, Jakes “would write scenes and send them back to me.”

Asked why he turned to the stage to communicate the Christian message, Jakes responded, “I’m a very dramatic person by nature.”

The evangelist, whose books have been both New York Times and Christian Booksellers Association best sellers, said he rejoices in his opportunities for self-expression.

“One of the things that I have most enjoyed about my life was the freedom to be diverse ... not to be confined to being one-dimensional because I’m a Christian, because I’m a pastor,” he said. “My idea of success is to be able to bring to fruition every creative thought that God put in you before your life is over.”

With his writing often dealing with women’s issues, the evangelist credits his insight into women’s problems to a capacity to understand others’ struggles. “I’m a real good listener,” he said, adding, “I’m a connoisseur of the different ages and stages of life.”

Jakes said that running through most of what he does is a “message ... that says you can make it.” Taking to the stage after the play, he echoed his characteristic theme in an evangelistic epilogue, telling the audience that whatever the struggle, “you can still be a survivor.”

Audience member Renfroe thought the play offered hope. “No matter what you’ve done,” she said, “God will never turn His back on you.”

family.

Diana, the domestic worker whom Sarah offers \$15,000 to be Howard’s stand-in lover, is a young African-American whose husband, Vernon, has just lost his job. Vernon, like the remainder of the characters, is also African-American. Other characters include Vernon’s deeply spiritual mother Minnie and Diana’s fellow domestic Wilma.

At the story’s end, Diana’s willingness and Howard’s eager acceptance almost destroy Howard’s marriage with Sarah. But he eventually opts for wife over lover. Similarly turning to God, Wilma winds up with Vernon, who divorces the adulterous Diana.

Jakes’ play pulled few punches in its frank portrayal of the story’s sexual dynamics. Upon Sarah’s urgings, Diana slinks down the staircase of the two-story set in a provocative red dress Howard intended for his ailing wife.

When Diana tells her suspicious husband to back off with his questions, Vernon retorts, “I’m not the

one that’s on your back. Somebody else is.”

“I’m just about speechless,” said Jacqueline Hairston of New York after the play. Herself victim of a debilitating illness affecting her skin and muscles, Hairston revealed that less than six months ago, she was being bathed by a nurse. “God is real,” Hairston added. “No matter what happened yesterday, you can come out of it.”

Other viewers connected with different themes. Atlanta resident Gwendolyn Jordan identified with Vernon’s righteous mother in the play. “I believe in people ... living on their mother’s prayer, especially when they don’t have God in their life,” she said.

Nikki Renfroe of Milledgeville, Ga., said the evening “brought about awareness ... about breast cancer for women.” She said, “It spoke to me about adultery ... fornication, all the sins.”

Jakes linked the idea for the play to “creative brainstorming” about the biblical story of Abraham, Sa-

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
T.D. Jakes’ new play retells in a contemporary setting the biblical story of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar. The play, which opened in Atlanta on July 24, also deals with the issue of breast cancer. ■ Far left: A scene from the play involving a wealthy housewife and the domestic worker she hires. ■ Above: Evangelist T.D. Jakes takes to the stage to issue an evangelistic call. (RNS photos by Ted Parks)

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Missionaries in Tanzania who have been trying more than five months to obtain the New Testament and Psalms in Swahili and have been told by printers in Tanzania that they are not available.

■ A team of Bible translators in Kenya and Tanzania working to translate the Bible and other Christian literature into the Digo language.

Missionaries report much progress has been made, but the translators are discouraged because one team member had to quit in late June. "Pray that this team will see how important their job is and be encouraged to keep translating," request missionaries John and Sherri Herod.

■ The small Baptist fellowship in Rzeszow, Poland. Recently an entire family became Christians and were baptized there.

■ The search committee for an executive director for the Baptist Convention of New England to replace Ken Lyle who retired in June.

■ Mission groups from Kentucky who will be working in New England this month.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ BENTON—The churches of Marshall County will host a youth crusade Aug. 10-12 at 6:30 p.m. at Marshall County High School. **Ken Freeman** of Texas will be the speaker. **Jonathan and Lisa Moore** from Georgia will lead the music.

■ CORBIN—Horse Creek Church will host revival services Aug. 21-23 at 7 p.m., sponsored by Booneville and Irvine churches. The speakers will be **Richard Gaines**, pastor, Consolidated Church, Lexington, (Monday); **Lonnie Riley**, evangelist, Lynch (Tuesday); **Dan Garland**, Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism growth team leader, (Wednesday). For information, call (606) 536-1550.

■ LOUISVILLE—Auburndale Church will host **David Livingston** in concert Aug. 13 at 10:45 a.m. **Harry Mills** is pastor.

Beechwood Church will host a community picnic Aug. 26 at 5 p.m. **Marshall Kellam** will provide the entertainment. For information, call (502) 895-3439. **Robert Blackburn**

is pastor.

Buechel Park Church called **Don Rogers** as pastor. Rogers was pastor of First Church of Blowing Rock, N.C. The church also called **Becky Speight** as interim minister of youth. **John Willingham** recently resigned as minister of youth. **Mike Yelton** is interim pastor.

Thixton Lane Church will host **David Livingston** in concert Aug. 13 at 7 p.m. **Preston Siler** is pastor.

■ MADISONVILLE—First Church will host a revival service Aug. 11 at 7 p.m. The evangelist will be **Herb Reavis**. **Ross and Jennifer Rainwater** will be the musicians. The revival is sponsored by Little Bethel Association.

■ OWENSBORO—Lewis Lane Church honored **Kathy Baird** on her 25th anniversary as secretary. **Chip Pendleton** is pastor.

■ SOMERSET—**Mark Hazle**, minister of youth at First Church, resigned to become minister of youth at First Church, Gaffney, S.C.

Younger Graham leads GOP prayer, asks forgiveness for America's moral erosion

PHILADELPHIA (ABP)—Baptist evangelist Franklin Graham concluded the first night of ceremonies at the Republican National Convention with prayer, lamenting the erosion of morals and a faith in wealth, technology and prosperity over a faith in God.

The son of famous evangelist Billy Graham also asked God to "watch over and protect George W. Bush and his wife Laura and their wonderful family, as they seek the highest office in this land and to serve their country at their own personal sacrifice."

Graham also prayed for the family of GOP vice presidential nominee Dick Cheney and "for all who seek public office this year."

"We ask that Your will be done, that You give us leaders who acknowledge You—not just with their lips but with their lives," he added.

Graham said, "We confess to You tonight that as a nation we have tak-

en our eyes off you. We have put our faith and trust not in you but in our wealth, technology and prosperity."

He added: "We have allowed our morals to erode to such depths as to accept violence as entertainment and immorality as an accepted way of life. The Bible says, 'Righteous exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.'"

Graham prayed, "We recognize our failures and the injustice that still plagues our society and acknowledge that there is still much work that needs to be done."

Graham sat next to former President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush.

GOP delegates heard prayers from a variety of faith leaders at the convention, including a Jewish Rabbi and a Muslim, who was the first Muslim to lead a benediction at one of the major political party conventions, according to the American Muslim Council.

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.

NEEDED: Faith Baptist Church of Myra needs to buy pews for addition to church. Call Pastor Dave Hammond at (606) 855-4645 or Tom at (606) 639-9296.

FOR SALE: Seven days vacation yearly, Fort Myers Beach, Fla. \$7,500. Call owner: (270) 657-8392.

FOR SALE: Contributions Count Software. Tracks your envelope offerings, produces IRS statements and more. Send name and address to: At Home with Business, 250 Pine Point Road, Brandenburg, KY 40108. For further information, call (270) 422-3820 after 5.

FOR SALE: 100-percent renovated house (Highlands). New plumbing, electrical, furnace/AC, windows, roof, tile floor, 3BR/2Bath. Open house Sunday. (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: Full-time financial secretary. Knowledge of Automated Church Systems software preferred. Salary commensurate with experience. Send or fax resumé to: Bethlehem Baptist Church, 5700 Preston Highway, Louisville, KY 40219, Attn: Personnel Committee. Fax: (502) 964-9678.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children. Calhoun Baptist Church needs an individual with a passion for young people to provide leadership for a cutting-edge ministry to the heart of McLean County, Ky. Send resumé to: Calhoun Baptist Church, PO Box 283, Calhoun, KY 42327.

SEEKING: Full-time minister for rural church in the heart of the Bluegrass. Seventy-five active members. parsonage available. Contact: Terry Newton, 2367 Munday's Landing Road, Versailles, KY 40383. (859) 873-9160 after 6 p.m.

SEEKING: Central Baptist, Miami, a center-city, multi-cultural church desires a pastor who celebrates diversity while possessing primary gifts as leader, proclaimer, teacher and counselor. Minimum of 3 years experience in urban setting and MDiv. degree. Moderate church that supports SBC and CBF. Send resumé to: Central Baptist Church, 500 NE First Ave., Miami, FL 33132, or e-mail: JenisuA@aol.com.

SEEKING: Pianist for Rosemont Baptist Church, 556 Rosemont Garden, Lexington, KY 40503. Applicants are asked to apply in person at the church. For directions, call the church office at (859) 277-6147.

SEEKING: Oak Forest Baptist Church, a moderate SBC church near Richmond, Va., is seeking a full-time minister of youth. Send replies to: Search Committee, 2934 Quisenberry Drive, Midlothian, VA 23112, or call (804) 276-6547.

SEEKING: Associate pastor for youth and outreach. Will direct strong youth ministry and assist in developing outreach ministries using newly constructed family life center. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 19479 N IL Highway 37, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Shepherdsville, Ky., is accepting recommendations and resúmes for the full-time position of pastor. Affiliated with the CBF and SBC, FBC has a strong commitment to CBF-related ministries while continuing to participate in Cooperative Program giving. Send recommendations or resúmes to: First Baptist Church of Shepherdsville, 238 Frank E. Simon Ave., Shepherdsville, KY 40165, Attn: Chairperson, Pastor Search Committee.

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

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of North Kansas City, Mo., is accepting resúmes and recommendations for a full-time associate pastor for youth. This minister will work with middle and high school youth. We emphasize an Ephesians 4:11, 12 ministry; the minister will work with parents and volunteer youth workers. Please contact the Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 2205 Iron St., North Kansas City, MO 64116.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Hazard is currently accepting resúmes for the full-time position of minister of music. The congregation and leadership are moving toward a blended style of worship. Interested candidates should possess at least an undergraduate degree in music or sufficient experience to lead the program capably. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 560 Main St., Hazard, KY 41701.

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

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music 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 leading choirs and programs. Worship style is blended. Send resumé to: Paul Blizard, senior pastor, Memorial Baptist Church, PO Box 777, Beckley, WV 25801.

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: Full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Tunnel Hill Baptist Church, 734 Tunnel Hill Church Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

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

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

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

Jim Bakker returns to church where ministry began

By Susan Harrison
Religion News Service

MUSKEGON, Mich. (RNS)—He stood in the church of his childhood for the first time in 30 years, Bible in one hand, microphone in the other.

Then a contrite Jim Bakker, once at the pinnacle of a televangelism ministry and the fame that accompanies it, did what he'd come to do in his Sunday morning sermon July 30 at Central Assembly of God in Muskegon, Mich.

"If I've ever hurt you," he said, "I say please forgive me."

With that, Bakker began a homecoming message of reconciliation, healing and life after serving five years in federal prison on a fraud and conspiracy charge.

"My life was smashed," Bakker told several hundred people who gathered to hear his message, "but Jesus Christ has put me back together again."

For the past two years, he has sounded that same message in pulpits and at conferences throughout the country.

But this time, the 60-year-old Bakker came to the church where he first heard the call to preach, a church his grandfather helped start during the Depression, a church his cousins and their families still attend.

The people of the church started coming down the aisles early to get a place to sit for the 10:45 a.m. service, clutching their Bibles, carrying babies or leaning on walkers.

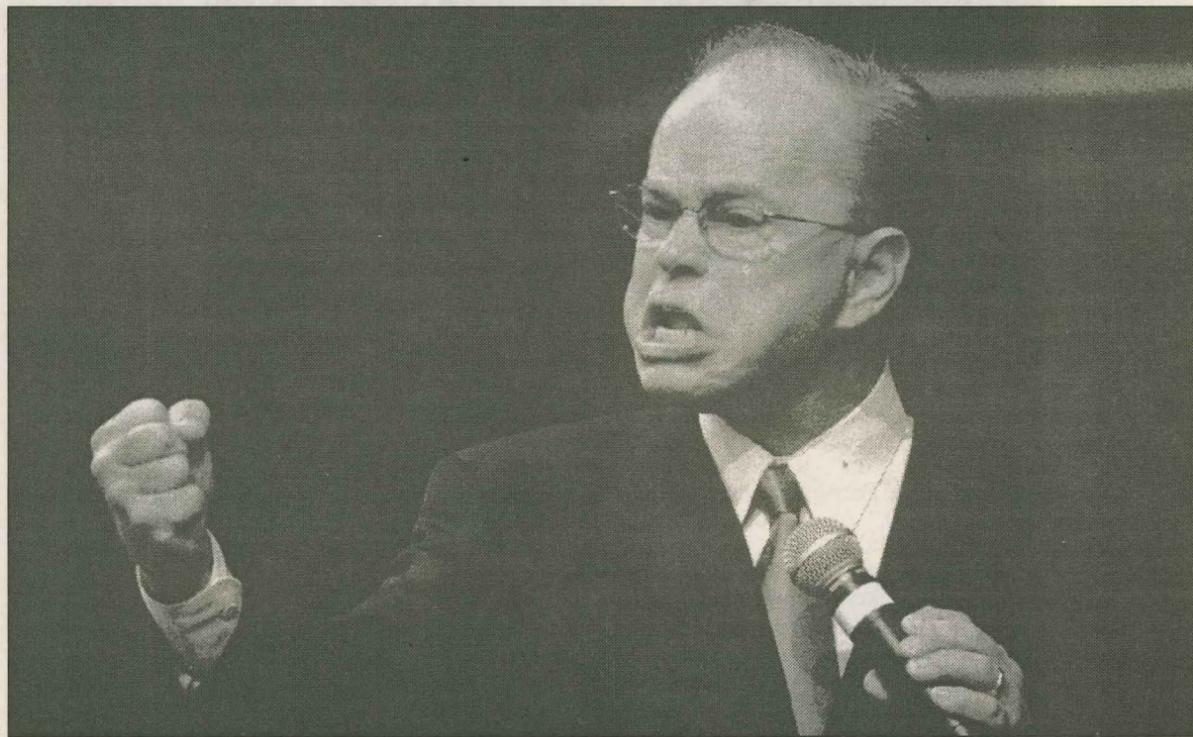
Gordon Aiken, Central Assembly's senior pastor, relinquished the pulpit to the church's most famous son early in the service that lasted more than two hours.

"I can feel the sweet presence of God here today in this sanctuary," Aiken told the congregation, who answered him with a chorus of "amens" and "hallelujahs."

"You've all read what they've printed, true or false, about this man, but I don't think we need to introduce him in any of those ways. Let's just say: 'Welcome home, Jim Bakker.'"

And the people rose to their feet in greeting.

Bakker, who graduated from Muskegon High School in 1959, left the area soon after to attend Bible college



A VISIT HOME Jim Bakker, 60, preaches at the Central Assembly of God in Muskegon, Mich., where he said he first heard the call to preach. It was Bakker's first time back to preach there in 30 years. (RNS photo)

and start a ministry that revolutionized religion on television. He has been back in the pulpit at Central Assembly of God only once since then, and that was in the 1960s when he and his former wife, Tammy Faye Bakker, were just starting out.

Once, Bakker was at the "mountain top" with PTL Ministries and the Heritage USA campus.

But scandal and allegations of financial mishandling toppled his ministry in 1987. Bakker was sentenced to 45 years in prison, a term that later was reduced in years but not in its impact on the man behind bars.

"I lost everything—friends, my reputation, my ministry," Bakker said.

He also lost the famous Tammy Faye, who divorced him while he was in prison and married his best friend, Roe Messner.

He is now married to Lori Bakker, and they will celebrate their second anniversary Sept. 4. She has joined him in his ministry, helping women who have had abortions and drug addictions.

"We are an example of people who

have blown it," Bakker said, "and by the grace of God, we've been put back together."

His words were often emotional, prompting people to tears and self-reflection.

But he also had them laughing. Bakker poked good-natured fun at himself from the pulpit, now that he's 60 and a grandfather with thinning hair.

He laced his sermon with the nostalgia of those coming back to a hometown that has changed. He complained that he couldn't find the "old church." The building where he worshipped as a boy has been torn down.

"What's happened to Muskegon?" he teased the congregation. "I want to come home and have things the way they were."

But more than the town has changed. So has Bakker.

"When I was facing 45 years in prison, I felt like God had left me," Bakker said.

He leaned forward, as if he were in a one-on-one conversation, not in front of a congregation of several hundred.

"That's the real problem with prosperity teaching," he said, making sure people remembered that once it had been a cornerstone in his televangelism days.

"If God comes to you when you prosper, do you think He will walk away when you are poor? ... There's a lot of false doctrine going around, and I was preaching a lot of it," Bakker said.

After 30 years away from the pulpit of his childhood, Bakker had a lot to say, often apologizing for taking more than his allotted time.

He said he takes the church in Muskegon—where it all started with him—into every pulpit, every conversation, every memory of where he's been and where he's going.

He is starting a new ministry in Florida, a church camp for children from the inner cities where, Bakker said, he is reminded "that God brings you through the valley to train you."

"He gave us a ministry of reconciliation and said, 'C'mon, now,'" Bakker said. "God is going to use you in the very place you hurt."

"There's a lot of false doctrine going around, and I was preaching a lot of it."

Jim Bakker

TOGETHER AGAIN
Joe DiPaolo portrays Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury during a service of reconciliation aimed at apologizing for the segregation that divided Methodists 200 years. Thaddeus Govan Sr., playing Richard Allen, the founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, assists. Allen founded the church after being denied a place at the altar of St. George's United Methodist Church in Philadelphia. (RNS photo)

Methodist racial reconciliation sought after 200-year-old snub

PHILADELPHIA (RNS)—More than 200 years after racism compelled Richard Allen to leave St. George's Church, the freed slave "returned" to the red brick colonial church and received communion from his good friend, Bishop Francis Asbury.

Allen left the church in 1787 when white parishioners excluded him and other blacks from praying at the church. Taking about 50 people with him, Allen went on to found the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was Methodism's first racial schism, and unfortunately not its last. Racism would split the church three more times, and as late as the 1960s, Methodists drew distinctions between black and white members.

That bleak history was the backdrop for Allen's return to St. George's on Sunday, July 30, for an emotional ser-

vice of reconciliation. A member from Allen's AME church played Allen, while a Pennsylvania pastor portrayed Asbury, the first Methodist bishop in America.

At the service's dramatic climax, Joe DiPaolo, playing Asbury, served communion to Thaddeus Govan Sr.—the man playing Allen—from a 215-year-old chalice given to Asbury by Methodism's founder, John Wesley.

"Back around 1790, there were some unholy distinctions drawn around this altar rail," DiPaolo said, "but today, this is the Lord's table, and it is open to all."

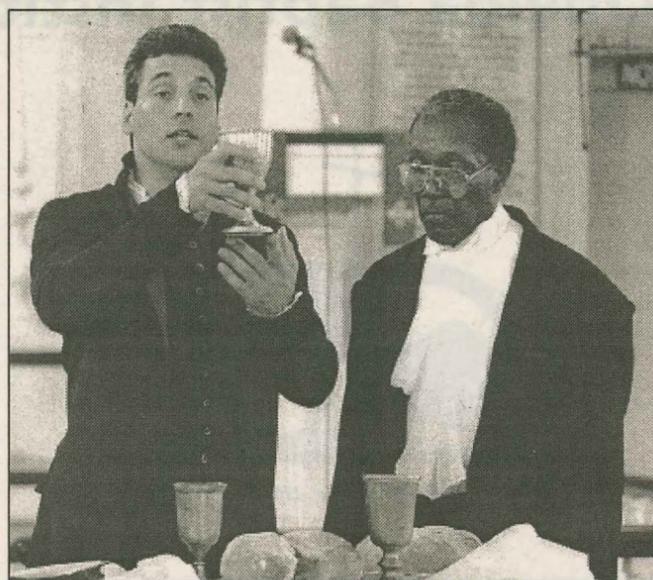
The setting for the service was layered with symbolism. It was from St. George's that American Methodism flourished. Asbury essentially birthed the U.S. church from the St. George's pulpit, and the building, dating back to

1763, is the oldest continually used Methodist building in the nation.

But two centuries later, Allen's walkout continues to haunt the United Methodist Church. At its General Conference meeting in May, the 8.4 million-member church donned sackcloth and ashes and begged for forgiveness.

Sunday's service recounted the exodus, with white United Methodists and black AME members pledging to break down the walls that still exist. Evidence of true reconciliation, they say, will come not in a church but on the streets of Philadelphia and beyond.

"Our forgiveness comes from God, ultimately, but we need to be doing things with each other that show we are interested in practical signs of reconciliation," said Bishop Peter Weaver, the United Methodist bishop of Eastern Pennsylvania.



“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you...”

— I Peter 3:15



Jennifer,
class of 2000

Josh,
class of 2000

Oneida Baptist Institute offers a well-rounded education, including study of the scriptures.

Middle school students have Bible class each year as part of their regular curriculum.

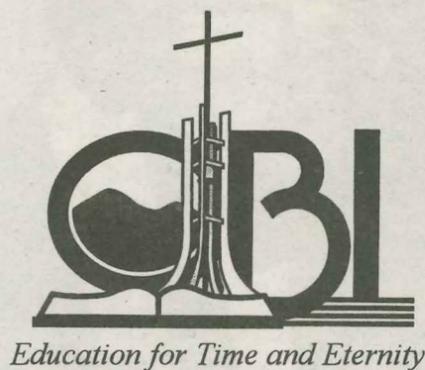
Students in high school must have a year of Bible in order to graduate. They may choose between Bible Survey or Advanced Bible.

For some, Bible class is their first in-depth exposure to God's word. For others, a Bible course is a way to dig deeper into the scriptures they have loved since childhood.

“The single most important thing I have gained from OBI is that I have learned more about the Bible in the Bible class, chapel services, and church. Now I can confidently say that I know more about the Bible and will be able to give reasons for my beliefs to anybody who asks me...”

— Belay, class of 2000

Oneida Baptist Institute: Giving answers. Giving hope.



Would you like to contact us?

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