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FOR THE RECORD

Kentucky students take gospel to North African Muslims

Baptists
Texas Baptists will consider a plan to cut drastically their funding for Southern Baptist seminaries. *Page 2.*

Editorial
Kentucky Baptists' Tanzania partnership sparks spiritual warfare. *Page 5.*

Kentucky CP
Kentucky Baptists gave a record \$21.8 million through the Cooperative Program during the 1999-2000 fiscal year. *Page 6.*



Calling all youth
A recent Washington D.C. rally focused on reconciling generations. *Page 10.*

Say what?
A statement by the Vatican is causing a stir in theological circles. *Page 11.*

Editor's note: Due to the sensitivity of Southern Baptist work in North Africa, neither the International Mission Board writer of this story nor the story's precise location is identified.

NORTH AFRICA—The sun in the Western Sahara is the same one that shines down on Kentucky's bluegrass. But for some reason, the penetrating heat seemed a little more merciless to the five college students from Kentucky studying in North Africa during their summer break.

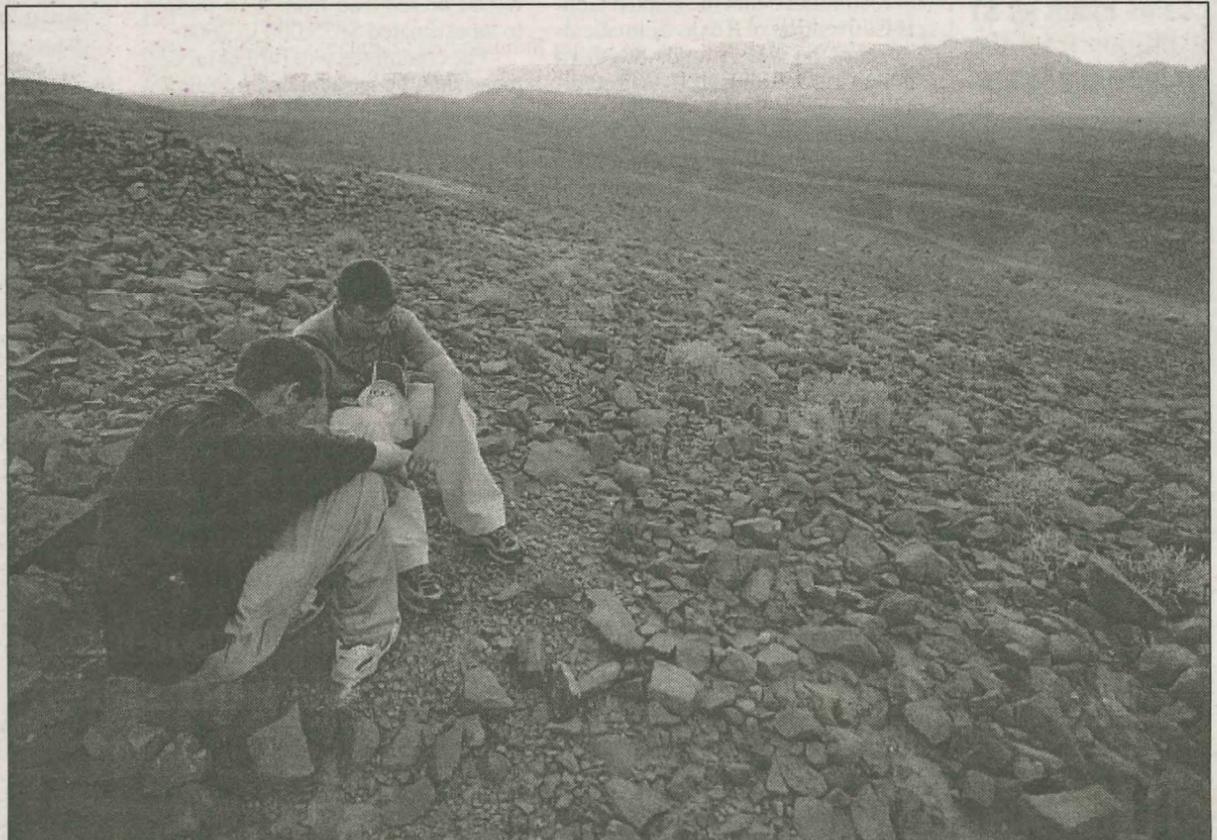
The group of Kentuckians, part of a larger group of 12 students from six other states, volunteered their summer vacation to travel across the world to study at an Arabic university. Their more important goal, however, was to share their Christian faith as opportunities arose.

They approached their task with missionary fervor, said Travis Kaiser, 20, a member of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. But once they arrived in the North African country where they would spend most of their summer, they began to understand the complications of witnessing in a land closed to the gospel.

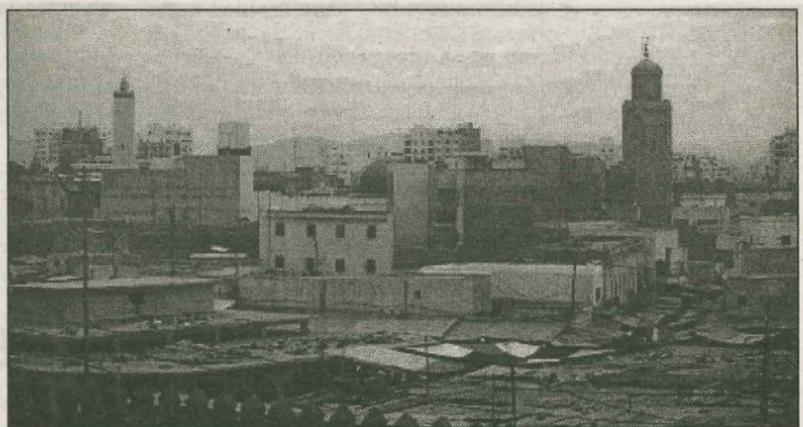
"Wanting to share with people who don't know the truth can be frustrating, especially in a country like this one," said Kaiser, a student at Bellarmine College in Louisville. "We've had chances to share the gospel, but we also had to come to grips with the fact that we may have to reach them just by loving on them."

As part of their study requirements, Kaiser and his fellow students spent several hours a day in class, learning basic Arabic and studying the culture and society of their host country. Everything they heard was based on the premise of Islam, they said.

After classes, the group spent time
□ See Kentucky students ..., page 3



PRAYING FOR RAIN ■ Above: Kentuckians Travis Kaiser and Brandon Shields pause in the arid Sahara desert to ask God to pour out "living water" for the Berbers of North Africa. Kaiser and Shields were part of a group of 12 students who spent their summer vacations studying at an Arabic university in North Africa. The students learned basic Arabic and studied the culture and society of their host country. Along the way, they were able to share their Christian faith with people who rarely hear such a message. ■ Right: Minarets dominate the skyline of cities and towns in North Africa, a sign of the influence of Islam (IMB photo)



Does 'Jesus junk' cheapen Christians' witness to the world?

By Craig Bird
FaithWorks magazine

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—*Scene 1: Ancient Rome.* Two strangers meet on a dusty road. Miles pass in polite conversation. Slowly and cautiously, oblique references to religious ideas slip in.

Both sense a spiritual kinship but are wary of mentioning it. After all, Christianity is a crime punishable by death.

The sun is high and hot, so they stop to rest. As the discussion continues, the younger man pushes his walking stick through the dust as he talks, tracing a gently curved line.

The older man glances at the mark, then into the eyes of his new acquaintance and quickly around to see if anyone else is watching. With his own staff he draws a mirror image of the first mark, connecting the lines at one end but intersecting at the other. The two lines together form a crude drawing of a fish, a word used as an acronym in the underground sect's ancient Greek lan-

guage for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

"He is risen!" exclaims the older man. "He is risen indeed!" comes the reply.

In excited whispers they arrange to meet the next evening. One will show the other the secret passages to the Christians' hiding place in the catacombs.

Scene 2: Modern Rome. Two American tourists meet while waiting to clear customs. One wears a \$50 golf shirt with a fish logo. The other sports a baseball cap emblazoned on the crown with the acronym, WWJD?

"Cool shirt," says one. "Great hat," says the other. They shake hands, exchange names and agree to meet the next day for cappuccino, after touring the catacombs.

What a difference two millennia make.

The cost attached to that original Christian icon was certain and severe. Display the secret fish symbol in the wrong place or at the wrong time and it could cost you your life.

In the 21st century, the cost for the

individual Christian is much cheaper, and can be paid with a credit card.

Multiplied by millions of consumers who now openly adorn themselves with the symbols of their faith, however, today's price tag for Christian imagery has reached proportions unimaginable to early disciples. Clothing, jewelry, bumper stickers and related merchandise bearing religious messages generate an estimated \$3 billion a year.

But the spiritual value of those purchases is debatable, even among fellow believers.

Many say "Christian wear" is an effective witnessing tool. Others use derisive terms like "Jesus junk" and say it does more harm than good, especially if the actions of Christians don't match the message on their shirts.

Some things haven't changed over the centuries. Now, as then, Christian symbols remain a means of identifying "friendlies" in a dominant culture that is hostile to religious "fanatics."

But what was once a furtive code for a persecuted religious minority is

now a mainstream fashion statement.

The companies that sell items adorned with Christian messages uniformly say they create witnessing opportunities.

"The average shirt is read 10,000 times!" touts Spiritual Wear on its Web site. "You're just a click away from ordering some of the best Christian apparel available."

"With the right message and emphasis, a T-shirt can definitely help bring someone to Christ," adds Kerusso Activewear.

Living Epistles Apparel, whose Christian gear includes everything from clothes to mouse pads, describes itself as "a witnessing company dedicated to helping Christians creatively share the truth of the gospel and to create witnessing opportunities for Christians."

Do these products deliver what they promise? Are they effective for evangelism?

Opinions cover the spectrum. But most people interviewed said such items probably do a better job of

□ See Does 'Jesus junk' ..., page 9

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, September 13

Texas Baptists might slash funding for SBC seminaries

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville could lose as much as \$1 million from the proposed change.

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

DALLAS—A Texas Baptist committee studying theological education will recommend that the Baptist General Convention of Texas dramatically change the way it funds Southern Baptist Convention and BGCT seminaries.

The funding changes are based on research by the 16-member committee since March, including recent visits to the six SBC seminaries and extensive dialogues with each school's president and leaders.

Due to the load of information, the administrative committee postponed final decisions about a 2001 budget until Sept. 13. The committee's final report won't be made public until presented to the BGCT Executive Board Sept. 26.

But study committee chairman Bob Campbell reported that the committee will recommend that of the \$5.3 million currently sent to the SBC seminaries, a maximum of \$1 million be set aside to fund those seminaries next year. This funding would be granted based on the number of Texas Baptist students at each seminary.

Moderates within the BGCT have been calling for the state convention to stop sending millions of dollars in undesignated gifts to the SBC every year. These calls are based in theological and political differences that have divided moderate and conservative Southern Baptists since 1979.

If approved, the decrease in funding would virtually defund five of the six SBC schools. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, for example, could lose as much as \$1 million from the proposed change. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, based in Fort Worth, would

get the largest share of the \$1 million pool because it currently enrolls about 1,400 of the estimated 1,600 Texas students attending SBC seminaries.

Even so, Southwestern's funding would be reduced from \$1.5 million to an estimated \$875,000 in 2001.

The committee will further recommend that the remaining \$4.3 million be distributed to three Texas schools: Truett Seminary at Baylor University in Waco, Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene and Hispanic Baptist Theological School in San Antonio.

Campbell said the theological education committee's report will highlight such issues at Southern Baptist seminaries as:

- Requiring faculty members to sign the revised Baptist Faith & Message statement.

- A high rate of turnover in faculty in several of the seminaries.

- A high percentage of faculty from non-Southern Baptist backgrounds in some seminaries.

- The use of Cooperative Program funds to create undergraduate colleges at the seminaries.

- A lack of diversity on the seminary trustee boards.

- A pattern of trustees interfering with the routine work of faculty and staff.

- Trustees creating political litmus tests for faculty hiring.

- A lack of diversity in chapel speakers.

Despite this, the in-person conversations between the BGCT representatives and SBC seminary officials were cordial and Christian, Campbell said.

After doing its work, the committee struggled with a desire to treat some of the SBC seminaries differently than others—Southwestern, for example, because of its location and

Southern Seminary responds

LOUISVILLE—The following is a statement released by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler in response to the Baptist General Convention of Texas' proposed changes in theological funding:

"We are deeply saddened by the BGCT proposal. It is nothing less than a rejection of the Cooperative Program. Driven by anger at the SBC, the leaders of the BGCT now show their true agenda. This is a cold and calculated move designed to sever the historic ties between the Baptists of Texas and the Southern Baptist Convention. They are trying to roll back over a century and a half of cooperation.

"In the long run, this will not work. Sadly, it indicates that the BGCT is interested only in Texas and Texans. This is a sad commentary on the missions vision and national commitment of the BGCT. The churches of Texas are loyal to the Southern Baptist Convention. Trying to hurt the SBC, the BGCT leaders will instead do irreparable harm to their own convention.

"The defunding of the seminaries is a radical proposal with a transparent political agenda. The BGCT study committee declined the opportunity to conduct a genuine study of our institutions. Had they done so, they would have been forced to affirm the integrity and quality of our work and programs.

"We are honored to serve the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. The BGCT leaders reveal their antagonism to the Baptist Faith & Message, but Southern Baptists expect our faculty members to teach in accordance with our Baptist beliefs. The requirement that all faculty sign and affirm the Baptist Faith & Message is nothing new—as a matter of fact, it has been in place for many years at all six of the seminaries. It is the BGCT leaders who are out of step with Southern Baptists.

"Southern Seminary will keep doing what Southern Baptists assigned us to do—educating ministers of the gospel. I have no doubt that Southern Baptists will ensure that we have the funds necessary to accomplish our mission."

Texas heritage—but finally realized it could not do so. The six SBC seminary presidents specifically asked the committee to treat all the schools the same, Campbell said.

Campbell noted that Southwestern's faculty members "can't criticize the Baptist Faith & Message. If I can't criticize this man-made document, I've made this document inerrant. That's creedal. And that's a big thing for us."

He noted that Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Com-

mittee, had appealed to Texas Baptists to keep supporting SBC causes because Texans have been given so much. "To whom much is given, much is required," Chapman quoted from the Bible.

"That's right," Campbell said. "Texas Baptists have been given very much. And we've been willing to share it. The SBC should also realize the six seminaries have been given much by Texas Baptists and under God we believe much was required in return."

Vestal: CBF must better communicate differences from SBC

By Brenda Sanders
Central Baptist Theological Seminary

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (ABP)—Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leader Daniel Vestal has resisted calling the movement a "denomination," but the moderate group must build an identity that more clearly distinguishes it from the Southern

Baptist Convention, he said Aug. 29.

From its beginning, people have asked if CBF is a denomination, Vestal said at a "Baptist dialogue" panel discussion during a daylong centennial celebration at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kan.

"I have resisted that title," Vestal said. "I have said we are 'denomination-like' in that we provide services that an organized structure, which we have traditionally called a convention or a denomination, have provided."

Now, however, Vestal said he senses "a great yearning" among Fellowship supporters "for us to define ourselves and to separate more clearly from the Southern Baptist Convention."

"I'm not afraid of using the 'D-word,' but I guess I'm more comfortable in saying we are a fellowship that functions like a denomination," Vestal said. "I guess I have bought into the reality that we are living in a post-denominational world."

"Yet, in the life of CBF, there is this great yearning out there for a more clearly defined organizational structure that differentiates us from SBC—

even from (American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.) or other Baptist organizations," he said. "And I think CBF is going to have to deal with that this year. I don't think it's something that we can avoid."

Vestal shared the panel discussion with Trinetta McCray, president of American Baptist Churches, U.S.A. Both discussed the two groups' openness to working together.

One tangible way that CBF and ABC are working together, he pointed out, is through the CBF's recent endorsement of retirement-benefit plans for ministers and employees of churches with the American Baptist Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. Other areas of cooperation have included partnering for some church starts, joint support for some conferences and mutual support for Central Seminary.

"There are some very practical, structural, tangible ways that partnering has started. My hope is that we deepen that and find ways to explore that."

Also during the discussion, Vestal offered a frank assessment of weaknesses among CBF and moderate Baptists.

"For CBF, I think we try to do too many things. Our expectations exceed our resources and ability to perform," he said. "When moderate Southern Baptists get together, we will address every human problem in the world, all the theological issues, all the human concerns—then we leave convinced that we're going to meet them all tomorrow, and we can't do that."

"We don't think strategically. We don't budget strategically. We don't plan strategically. We think we can do everything," he continued.

Asked about a common challenge for CBF and American Baptists, Vestal cited evangelism. "To be honest, as I look at ABC, I guess I don't see ABC churches and folks being really aggressively evangelistic. They don't win a lot of people to Jesus."

"However, having said that, I don't see most moderate Southern Baptist churches being aggressively evangelistic," he continued. "We're not really passionate about the gospel changing people's lives. We're ... more oriented to political correctness and relevancy."

"To be candid, I see that as a problem that both ABC and moderate Southern Baptists share."



Louisville trekkers find North African Berbers receptive

Editor's note: Due to the sensitivity of Southern Baptist work in North Africa, neither the International Mission Board writer of this story nor the story's precise location is identified.

NORTH AFRICA—The heat ceased being an issue earlier in the day for the trekkers from Kentucky. Traversing the mountainous desert ground in North Africa would be hot, regardless of the time of day. The real issue for them, nearing sundown, was finding a village.

As always, the group began to pray. The group of 10 Kentuckians, all members of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, traveled to North Africa to help Southern Baptist personnel in the region gain insights into the lives of the tribal Berbers.

By committing to backpack through the area during the summer to study and minister to tribal groups strewn throughout North Africa, the men knew they would be stretched in new ways.

Most said they came away from the weeklong trek with a newfound perspective on missions, but they also discovered the power of prayer.

As one of the least evangelized people groups in the world, the Berbers have lived in the harsh environment of North Africa for 4,000 years. Tied by strong family traditions, the Berbers, living in the mountainous regions, eke out a meager existence within small village communities strewn across the rocky terrain.

With no agenda other than to engage the local people and share the love of Christ, the trekkers hiked through the heat of the day, praying for divine appointments.

Unanimously, the group said God provided for all their needs.

"About sundown every day, the whole group would start praying for a village. The folks in the country would tell us that we wouldn't want to sleep in the desert," said Jeff Smith, 23.

"We would pray for shelter, and usually about sundown we would come across a village," said Smith, an elemen-

tary physical education teacher. "Praying really opened a lot of doors for us."

Although the group never knew how they would be received, they always were struck by the receptiveness of the Berbers.

"In every village, there was always a man of peace or a village elder who would take us in, or at least help us find a family who could take us," Smith said.

"God truly went before us and prepared hearts," said Tim Nobles, 32, the group's leader, a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and singles minister at Highview Baptist.

"The families who hosted us acted as if they had won an honor," Nobles said. "They were extremely proud and would parade us in front of the village. In spite of their meagerness and poverty, their kindness was astounding."

Using broken conversation and a lot of charades, the group of Kentuckians did their best to communicate why they were there. To most people they encountered, the message of Christ was the most foreign concept they could have ever heard.

"In one village, we were the first Americans that had ever been to this area," said Fred McConnell, 26. "It became so clear to me that it is going to take a lot of time to reach these people with the gospel."

"They are some of the finest people I've ever met, but they are lost," he added. "It was heartbreaking to realize that they had no concept of the Savior."

Islam is the official religion of the area, but most Berbers practice forms of folk Islam, which combines mysticism and superstition. Opportunities for the group to share their faith were plentiful, as they met people who seemingly were hungry for the Christian message, the trekkers said.

Villagers would comment on the peaceful demeanor of the group and "that would lead into conversations about our faith in God," said Steve Harrison, principal of Waterson Elementary School in Louisville.

"We had to be obedient in every



opportunity," Nobles said. "There are no excuses or distractions with these people. They've invited us into their homes and we sit for three or four hours, face to face. There is no television or golf. You get close really fast."

In one particular village, Nobles said, their Muslim host family asked the group of trekkers to sing them an American song. Nobles eyes lit up at the memory. "There we were, a group of men from Kentucky sitting in the middle of this North African country, magnifying the Lord, singing 'Lord, I Lift Your Name on High.' It was beautiful."

Sharing the gospel among the Berbers "is a God-sized task," said Daniel Tai, a student at Southern Seminary. "God saw that the harvest is ready, and He knew we should be the laborers at this time and in this place. But it is hard. We had no idea about some of the hardships we would be facing—the heat, the isolation, the food—but He is an awesome God."

"The needs are there and they are so evident," Tai said. "We have to be will-

ing to change ourselves and join Him in the work."

Nobles agreed, noting that the group's reliance on prayer is something that should not be left on the mission fields of North Africa.

"We were going as God led; sharing as God directed," he said. "But the uniqueness of living in that way. I wish we lived in the United States like we did here, moment by moment in prayer."

Enduring the daily pounding of a searing sun and temperatures well above 100 degrees is worth sharing the gospel with people who never have heard, McConnell added.

"The work is daunting, but if we didn't come here, would someone else have come?" he asked. "We can't sit back and say that someone else will surely get burdened to go minister to the Berbers."

Other team members from Highview were Gilbert Barrett, Kenneth Shake, John Dick, Brian Perkins and John Jordan.

OASIS To Kentucky summer workers in North Africa, an oasis in the Sahara desert symbolized the good news of God's love for people thirsty for the "water of life." (IMB photo)

Kentucky students spend summer learning Arabic, sharing gospel

Continued from page 1

in the open-air markets, among women—veiled from head to foot in black robes with only small slits showing dark eyes—and men, weather-beaten and rough, who cast curious looks at the American young people.

The strict separation of the sexes and "the segregation of everyday life keeps them further from God," noted Kristi Gerlach, 20, a student from Northern Kentucky University and member of Main Street Baptist Church in Alexandria.

The group drew attention simply by the color of their skin and the smiles on their faces. Everywhere they went, they said, they saw how God was overcoming the barriers of these unreached people, most of whom are tribal Berbers.

The Berbers of North Africa call themselves "Amazighen," which means "the free people." A proud, independent people, they have lived in the mountainous desert region of North Africa for thousands of years, according to Southern Baptists working with them.

Steeped in tradition and bound by

tight family structures, the Berbers of North Africa practice Islam interwoven with traditional animistic religions. A hard life greets the people of this region. Acrid land and dry conditions yield nominal crops. In the desert, ancient dirt and rock forts still stand guarding water sources, the most precious commodity in the desert regions.

While the Berbers have seen their freedom encroached by tightening borders and government control, it is their spiritual freedom that concerned the group of students from America.

Despite the harsh conditions, the young people said they found themselves among some of the most hospitable people they had ever encountered.

A stern lesson, for some.

"I feel broken when I look at these people," said Mike Cummings, 19, a member of Highview Baptist and student at the University of Kentucky. "I have Christ in my life and I want to share Him, but these people here are so giving. It has shown me how selfish I am with what I have. Why did God choose me, a filthy rag, and not them?"

It is so humbling."

The need is great for people to share the gospel among the peoples of North Africa, the students agreed. Desiring to share their faith takes sacrifice, they admitted, especially on foreign soil.

"It's tough not seeing fruit like in the past," said Jon Nelson, 20, a student at Boyce Baptist College at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and a member of Highview Baptist. "But God brought people to us who were hungry to hear the truth."

In the markets, curbside coffee shops and even in the dark of night, the student volunteers said, person after person approached them, eagerly asking, "Who is Jesus?"

"Colossians 1:6 is so true," said Brandon Shields, 20, a student at the University of Kentucky and member of Highview Baptist. "All over the world, the gospel is bearing fruit, whether we know it or not. God's victory, His promise, is happening. It is not going to be stopped by any man or spiritual opposition."

Standing in the heat of the desert,

watching the dust stir as a shepherd led his flock to water, Shields said he was struck by the realization of how sheep scatter without a shepherd.

"I had never seen a herd of sheep before I came to North Africa," he said. "Without a shepherd, there is no way these people will get anywhere. After spending these weeks here, I know that God is going to call the scattered sheep of the world to Himself."

Shields said the biggest obstacle young people face today is a small one. Students must get over the insignificant barriers of pride and selfishness, he said.

"God has commanded us—as young people and as the future of the church—to go, even though we don't deserve to be used. What a privilege to be used for something so great," Shields said.

"We have to be faithful to the call," he added. "Sure, we run the risk of losing a part of ourselves, and we've got to sacrifice our money and our time. We've been called to be His mouthpieces and spread His truth through the giving of ourselves. That is the only way so many of these people will ever hear."

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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Popular music fallacy

I am a 25-year-old and am writing in response to an article in the Aug. 15 Western Recorder. This particular article represents a disturbing trend that seems to be pervading the Baptist denomination as well as the church as a whole. It is felt that, in order to reach the younger generation, the church must change its music and other means of worship to conform to the ideals of popular culture.

This is a fallacy. The gospel of Christ carries its own weight and does not need to be helped by the trends of popular culture. The music of worship should not be used to move man, but instead to praise God. If this is true, then our value system must be re-examined. The Bible does not give principles on art, but instead gives life principles to which every aspect of life must answer. The Bible is fairly explicit that what we offer to God should be excellent, not necessarily popular. Thus, the problem occurs when poor music is offered because of its popularity and not because of its quality.

The second problem of this notion, if it continues, is clear. The church, which proclaims to the people of the world that they can become new creations in Christ, will be carrying the gospel through borrowed mediums; mediums which first developed in the world. The substance and mode of our worship should not be determined by Neilson ratings or Billboard's Top 20. Let us not use a style of music to worship the eternal God because it is held in high regards by the temporal opinions of popular culture or because it is what people are used to hearing in shopping malls and elevators. Let us use music to worship God that is excellent, whether it be popular or not.

Bo Warren
Versailles

Whosoever will

On the thought of predestination I have heard that, to some, it means since God knows everything He knows who will be saved and who will not; therefore, we have no choice in the matter. But I choose to believe that God can and does, as He chooses, limit Himself in knowing in advance who will accept and who will reject His love. A notable exception to this is the case of Jeremiah; perhaps there are others.

This helps me around the thought of being doomed for no good reason. God is no respecter of persons and whosoever will, may come. Certainly none are righteous enough to merit His favor. That distinction belongs only to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Quentin Gaskin
Harrodsburg

A statement by Faith

The following statement was adopted by Faith Baptist Church in Georgetown during its August business session:

Faith Baptist Church was organized in 1962 as a congregation in which all people could be accepted and loved. Our heritage is one of inclusiveness, openness and ministry. There is room at the table for all God's children. As Baptist Christians, we join hands in ministry to our community and beyond.

Among other beliefs, we affirm the following:

■ We believe in a living faith rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday and today and forever." Jesus Christ is our sole authority for faith and practice. His will is revealed in Holy Scripture.

■ We believe that Holy Scripture is the inspired record of God's revelation



to humankind. Jesus Christ is the complete and final revelation of God to humanity. Scripture records and reflects that revelation through the words and deeds of Jesus on earth and the teachings of His disciples.

■ We believe in each person's freedom, led by the Holy Spirit, to interpret Scripture in the light of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the criterion by which all Scripture is to be understood.

■ We believe in soul competency and the priesthood of all believers. All Christians have direct access to God through Jesus Christ and are responsible to be priests on behalf of others.

■ We believe in servant leadership in which laity and clergy work side by side.

■ We believe in shared leadership. God calls men and women to all ministry roles, including the role of pastor.

■ We believe in spending our energies and resources to support rather than to oppose. We invite all people into relationship with God through Christ, a relationship from which no one is excluded.

Greg C. Earwood
Georgetown

Opposes term 'gay'

I am an avid reader of the Western Recorder and enjoy it very much. It gives a broad perspective of different interests in our Baptist churches and also the people of our state. I especially like the Mountains to Mississippi and the opinion page. I was reading this page when I saw the letter dated Aug. 15, "Avoid 'gay' label." To me it stated the very subject I have been concerned about for some time. Why is the label of a homosexual called "gay?" I get the idea no one will stand up to this label and tell it like it is. I agree with the writer of this letter. We should not use the word "gay" in our literature and Christian publications.

Leota Ray
Owensboro

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Record gifts support missions

Praise the Lord for His goodness in blessing Kentucky Baptists and for their willingness to share in reaching the world for Christ! It's a true joy to inform you that a new record has been set for Cooperative Program giving in Kentucky.

During this year-ended 1999-2000 fiscal year, Kentucky Baptists gave a record \$21,863,083 through the Cooperative Program. This well exceeds the budget of \$20,192,239 and represents an increase of 7.5 percent over last year.

This does not mean that the Kentucky Baptist Convention has a surplus, however. The funds are put to work immediately, and the needs continue to be great. It certainly is gratifying to be able to send additional funds to support Baptist missions endeavors through the Cooperative Program.

Kentucky Baptists' faithfulness means greater support for more than 10,000 North American and international missionaries and for more than 10,000 seminary students. Missions causes here in Kentucky also receive a

boost. The increased giving helps summer camps at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek, where a record number of youth were reached for Christ this year. It helps efforts to support student-initiated outreach on high school and middle school campuses. It helps Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children provide loving care for abused children and assists Oneida Baptist Institute's incredible ministry to youth.

The good stewardship also impacts great evangelistic efforts, like the many association and area crusades that have been held this year and the evangelistic witness on 45 college campuses through Baptist Student Unions. Did you realize more than 6,000 international students are enrolled in Kentucky colleges and universities this year?

Kentucky Baptist giving also helps thousands of young adults receive an excellent education in a Christian environment at Campbellsville University, Georgetown College and Cumberland College. It helps support Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and its



Bill Mackey

wonderful emphasis on missions education. It enables the Western Recorder to provide information about missions work across Kentucky and around the world. It strengthens the work of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, which has become the envy of other state conventions because of its growth and service to Kentucky Baptists.

Cooperative Program gifts also make possible numerous training opportunities for Kentucky Baptists, such as the just-completed Super Saturday conferences attended by more than 3,000 church program leaders from more than 500 churches. Shepherding the Shepherd, Joshua Project and Marriage Fest are leadership and enrichment experiences provided by the Cooperative Program. Life insurance and disability coverage for more than 2,000 pastors and church staff also is made possible, as are new work opportunities, 20 state missionaries, language work and church building loans and grants.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your missions gifts through the Cooperative Program, your prayers and your personal involvement in reaching people for Christ. God is good!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Senior adults face changing priorities in financial plans

By Don Spencer

Financial planning involves different steps in each stage of life.



Below are four basic elements of the financial planning process that apply to every stage of life. However, the priorities for each element changes as one ages.

■ **Setting goals and objectives.** Earlier in life the goals may have been saving to educate children, saving for adequate retirement income or paying off a home mortgage. Now, goals may be saving to cover costs of long-term care, setting up a financial plan to preserve as much of one's estate as possible for heirs or funding charitable gifts.

■ **Keeping records.** Over the years individuals develop a particular style of financial record keeping. This need to be continued. Attention needs to be given to making the records understandable and clear to those who may need to help in the event of one's incapacity.

■ **Assessing your current status.** A net worth statement should be prepared each year showing assets and liabilities. This helps measure one's financial progress. As you reach your 70s and beyond, net worth may gradually decrease, but you need to assess the rate of decrease so resources are not depleted too early to meet your goals.

■ **Using a spending plan or budget.** This is critical to every stage of life and does not change in the senior years. In fact, for most retirees, it becomes even more critical.

For most seniors, the heaviest expense years are behind. Preserving capital becomes more important. Investments gradually will lean more toward income and less toward growth. However, individuals easily could live another 20 or 30 years after retirement, so some long-term growth in investments still is needed. Seniors probably should assume they will live into their 90s and invest accordingly.

Seniors should re-evaluate life insurance needs and adjust coverages accordingly. Often, life insurance policies were purchased in earlier years to meet specific goals or needs. If those goals and needs change, the life insurance coverage also should change.

Finally, get competent help to make sure that you have a complete, up-to-date estate plan. This estate plan should reflect your goals and objectives as well as your Christian values.

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

Clear communication may help ease transition to nursing home

Q: My husband recently was placed in a nursing home. The relationship between my family and the nursing home staff seems sometimes to be tense and strained. We are concerned with the care quality and well being of my husband. The staff can seem offended by our questions, leaving us frustrated and uncomfortable in what we thought was going to be a good facility with a strong reputation for quality care. What should we do?

The adjustment of your family to having someone else caring for your loved one can be difficult and problematic. Both nursing home staff and family members of residents benefit from good relationships and sharing the caring, but they can begin with adversarial positions. Although it is desirable to forge a partnership between staff and family, working together to plan care often is lacking or underdeveloped as a formal part of placing a resident in a nursing home.

Nursing homes that try to work closely with the family typically follow these guidelines:

- An introduction at admission to the partners in the caring process.
- Promoting successful family-staff communication techniques.
- Scheduling joint planning sessions.
- Developing active listening skill training.
- Understanding and respecting cultural and ethnic differences.

These activities are extremely important to the success of any nursing home experience. However, the cost and time involved doing these things can be difficult to make happen for all parties connected with the adjustment. The goal is for programs like ones with these guidelines ultimately to improve the coordination of care between staff and family members. Ask the administration at the nursing home if they provide these types of services for their residents' families. Hopefully, they will respond with the assistance that can smooth out the issues with which you are concerned. It is in their best interest for your family to be satisfied with their care for your husband. They want to serve you.—*Jon Rainbow*

Q: Our 13-year-old son tells us that we do not love him. He says that if we did, we would give him more stuff and that we would praise him more often. We tell him that we love him every day and when we try to hug him, he stiffens up or pulls away. How can we assure him of our love?

Teenagers are sensitive about being touched by their parents because of their own new sexual development. It is common for 13-year-olds to resist being hugged by a parent. Back off and wait for him to offer a hug. It may be a couple of years, but hug at his initiative.

On the matter of giving him more stuff, it could be that he needs gifts to feel loved. However, more than likely it is just his attempt to use guilt to get things he wants.

Offer to spend more time with him and give him more praise. He should read both of those as expressions of your deeper warmth for him. Respect him and meet his needs.—*Wade Rowatt*

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.



Tanzania partnership sparks spiritual warfare

What does treating malaria, malnutrition and gunshot wounds have to do with spreading the gospel? Everything, according to Susan Smith, a Southern Baptist missionary physician serving in Tanzania.

Smith is a surgeon at the 35-bed Kigoma Baptist Hospital in a strongly Muslim area of western Tanzania. The medical missionaries and other hospital staff consistently mix medical care with prayers, personal witnessing, chapel services and frequent showings of the "Jesus" video in Swahili.

"Jesus was healing and teaching when He was here so I know medical evangelism has a special role in the spread of the gospel," Smith explained. "It's a way to get the gospel into these closed communities."

Medical missions is one of many ways Kentucky Baptist volunteers personally can be involved in the state convention's current missions partnership with Tanzanian Baptists. Other volunteer ministry opportunities include church construction, prayer walks, evangelism and leadership training.

Tanzania, which gained independence in the early 1960s, remains one of Africa's poorest nations. Such "luxuries" as ample food and water, dependable electrical service and quality educational opportunities are scarce in many areas of the Third World country.

Southern Baptists' missionary presence in Tanzania is comparatively new, beginning in the 1950s. While up to a third of the African nation's population is considered Christian, Baptists make up only a small percentage of that total. In a nation where legendary Scottish missionary David Livingstone helped spread the gospel more than 130 years ago, much Christian evangelistic and discipleship work remains to do done.

Kentucky Baptists entered a partnership with Tanzanian Baptists in 1999 to help strengthen churches and other ministry efforts there. The state convention also is involved in partnerships in Poland and New England and will begin a partnership next year with the European Baptist Convention, an organization of more than 60 English-language congregations in 22 nations.

What difference can partnership mission volunteers make amid overwhelming global needs? According to Ed Giddens, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's mission administrator in Tanzania, "Prayer support is what we need the most because we're facing spiritual warfare out here."

Noting that Tanzania has entered the 21st century with "whole tribal groups with no exposure to Christianity," Giddens said, "Most of our missionaries emphasize the spiritual side, but there is also the physical side." He said critical priorities include seeking to reach unsaved people with the gospel, discipling Christian leaders and helping construct church facilities.

Baptist ministry efforts in Tanzania also include support for the International Baptist Theological Seminary of Eastern Africa. The seminary, established in 1963, has approximately 100 resident students from several African nations as well as four branch programs throughout the nation.

Seminary President Harrison Olang said the Baptist institution seeks to make theological education available to people with all levels of education throughout Eastern Africa.

Emphasizing that seminary-trained Christian leaders are "the backbone of our convention," he added that "these are the people who influence our society."

Olang said Kentucky Baptists' partnership efforts will play a key role in Tanzanian Baptists' ministry strategies in the coming years. "Partnership is sharing what we have in common," he noted. Affirming that partnership missions "is one way to work together for God's glory," he added, "For me, partnership is really going back to the roots of Christianity. It's a very Christian thing of sharing."

"Volunteers are very important to what we are doing," Smith agreed. "The Tanzanian Baptist churches are encouraged so much by the partnership."

For more information about partnership mission opportunities in Tanzania and elsewhere, contact Kentucky Baptist partnership missions director Calvin Wilkins at phone (502) 244-6462 or toll-free at (888) 254-5724.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Obedience offers key to true success

By Eric Allen

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

How do you measure success? The world looks at bank accounts, houses, prestige, degrees earned or one's position in the company. The athletic world looks at scores, games won and championships attained. The church may look at membership rolls, Sunday school enrollment, the number of programs or the size of buildings. All of these things are indicators or "marks on the measuring rod." But true success is obedience to God. How can anyone be more successful than obeying God who created and sustains us?

There are more than 2,000 successful missionaries serving in North America through Southern Baptists' Mission Service Corps. These mission volunteers are having an impact in all areas of Southern Baptist life through local churches, institutions, associations, state conventions and special ministries.

Mission Service Corps volunteers

are committed to long-term mission service (four months or longer for at least 20 hours per week) and provide their own financial support or are supported by sponsors while on the mission field. Successful Mission Service Corps applicants are carefully screened to serve in specific ministries and must attend one of numerous orientations held regionally each year across North America.

If you want to be obedient to God, and therefore successful, prayerfully consider if God wants you to be a Mission Service Corps volunteer by examining these questions:

- Have you felt an unusual moving or stirring of God in your heart?
- Has God alerted you to see or hear of missions or ministries that you could perform?
- Has God placed in your heart a strong desire to help others?
- Are you available to serve, either by going someplace else or by remaining at home?
- Did the Lord call you previously to missions or a special service and you were not able to or did not respond?
- Has God assured you that He will

provide enabling for all He may call you to do?

If you answered "yes" to several of these questions, you are aware of God working in your world and He may be calling you to be a Mission Service Corps volunteer.

Let me encourage you to:

- Seek guidance from God's Word.
- Talk to and pray with your pastor or director of missions.
- Discuss your feelings with family members.

Most importantly, pray, asking God to show you what He is doing and how you can be a part of it.

The genius of the Mission Service Corps structure is that every Baptist can be directly involved in missions. For some, involvement means volunteering to go. For others, it is sponsoring someone else to go. For still others, volunteering means praying for those who go and those who sponsor.

Mission Service Corps volunteers won't climb the corporate ladder, be featured on ESPN, or make more money than Bill Gates, but they will be successful if they serve the Lord with gladness by answering His call to go.

Eric Allen is the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Mission Service Corps director



KENTUCKY

Kentucky Baptists set new CP record with \$21.8 million

By David Winfrey
News Director

Kentucky Baptists gave a record-breaking \$21.8 million to the Cooperative Program during the recently ended 1999-2000 fiscal year.

Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Bill Mackey praised the year-end report as representative

of Kentucky Baptists' commitment to worldwide and statewide missions and ministries.

"There's a wonderful spirit among Kentucky Baptists and a deep commitment to missions and this is just one representation of what they're doing," he said.

The receipts for the first and last months of the year were larger than

normal, but Mackey noted that the monthly average contributions were larger than ever even if adjustments are made for those months and the inflation rate.

The Cooperative Program is the unified plan for contributions to both KBC and Southern Baptist Convention ministries, institutions and agencies. Kentucky Baptists send 64.642 percent of CP funds (or \$14.1 million this past year) to KBC ministries, agencies and institutions, and 35.358 percent (\$7.7 million) to SBC causes.

Not only was the \$21,863,083 given through the Cooperative Program a one-year record, but the increase of \$1,526,173 compared to last year's contributions also was a record, according to Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC business services team.

CP donations were approximately \$1.6 million more than the \$20.2 million KBC budget, and for the first time Kentucky Baptists exceeded the CP budget's challenge goal of \$1.3 million, Ashby added.

"It appears that people are still valuing the Cooperative Program as the way to participate in Kentucky and worldwide ministries and missions," Ashby said.

In addition to the CP increase, nearly every other category of giving

through the KBC saw more dollars compared to the previous fiscal year, including:

■ The Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering, up \$28,446.

■ The Thanksgiving Offering for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, up \$24,718.

■ The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, up \$173,039.

■ The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions, up \$127,990.

■ The Barkley Moore Father's Day Offering for Oneida Baptist Institute, up \$1,151.

■ The Mother's Day charity for Kentucky Baptist Health System, up \$509.

Only funds designated for the KBC ministry budget, a means sometimes used to avoid contributions to the SBC, was down. "Restricted Kentucky Only" funds decreased 2.1 percent, or \$8,900.

Ashby said there still might be room for growth in Cooperative Program giving. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Cooperative Program. The KBC annual meeting in November will promote CP involvement, and Operation Cooperation, a series of blood drives this fall, also will promote CP giving.

Overview of KBC giving

	1999-2000	1998-1999	Change
Cooperative Program gifts received by KBC:	\$21,863,083	\$20,336,910	7.5%
Amount forwarded to SBC	\$7,730,349	\$7,167,541	7.9%
Amount kept by KBC	\$14,132,734	\$13,169,369	7.3%
Undesignated income to KBC ministry budget:	\$14,541,863	\$13,587,398	7.0%
Amount from Cooperative Program	\$14,132,734	\$13,169,369	7.3%
Amount from "Restricted Kentucky Only"	\$409,129	\$418,029	-2.1%
Designated gifts channeled through KBC:*			
Thanksgiving Offering (Children's Homes)	\$974,561	\$949,843	2.6%
Mother's Day Hospital Charity	\$10,507	\$9,998	5.1%
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering	\$3,265,731	\$3,092,692	5.6%
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering	\$1,552,315	\$1,424,325	9.0%
Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering	\$774,080	\$745,634	3.8%
Barkley Moore Father's Day Offering	\$19,178	\$17,627	8.8%

*Not all gifts from Kentucky Baptist churches to designated offerings are channeled through the KBC, thus the actual amounts given by Kentucky Baptist churches to those causes will be higher than the amount shown.

New group offers support to missionaries' parents

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—What if you prayed faithfully your whole life for God to send missionaries into the field, and He chose to send your child and only grandchildren?

That's the bittersweet situation in which many of the parents of 79 missionaries from Kentucky serving around the world find themselves.

While blessed, honored and humbled that God would choose their children for such a special vocation, many parents find themselves grieving over the extended separation from their children and grandchildren.

Gerald and June McNealy, emeritus missionaries and the parents of a missionary, are working with the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union to organize the Parents of Missionaries Fellowship.

The Kentucky group will hold an organizational meeting Sept. 23 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. The meeting will include a brief devotion time, discussion, prayer time and lunch.

Organizers said they hope the fellowship will provide an opportunity for parents of missionaries to find support, pray with other parents who understand their feelings and learn to undergird the call of their missionary children. Several other states already have similar fellowships, and the Southern Baptist International Mission Board provides materials for such groups.

While Kentucky WMU has sponsored a luncheon for parents of missionaries at their annual meeting for several years, WMU leaders felt the need to organize a more formal group, according to Tonya Williams, adult consultant for the Kentucky WMU.

Because of their own experiences, the McNealys are well-equipped and eager to help organize the group.

"We remember what we wish our parents

had," said McNealy, who left with his wife and children for Spain when their daughters were 2 and 5. They returned home on furlough once every four to five years, he added. "We went far away and took our parents' only grandkids away."

When the McNealy's daughter Marsha left for the mission field in Israel with her husband and two young sons, the McNealys said they realized even more fully the complex feelings experienced by parents of missionaries.

"Wanting your children to be in God's will above all doesn't completely remove the emptiness when they return to a distant mission field," McNealy said.

Though e-mail has helped, communication between stateside parents and far-off missionaries traditionally has been difficult and expensive.

Because missionaries return on furlough only every four or five years, grandparents might see their grandchildren a scant handful of times as they are growing up, they added.

The McNealys said they hope the group will offer parents of missionaries a place for fellowship, prayer and support.

Parental support is a make-or-break proposition for many missionaries, Mrs. McNealy said. Missionaries in difficult situations can withstand many hardships, but resisting a parent's pleas to return home can prove to be too much, she said. Lack of parental support can seriously hamper a missionary's efforts and even cause them to leave the mission field, she added.

Parents of missionaries must understand their own call as well.

"When God called your children to be missionaries, He called you to be parents of missionaries," Mrs. McNealy said.

The organizational luncheon costs \$6.50 per person. For information or reservations, call Tonya Williams at Kentucky WMU, (502) 244-6485 or toll-free in Kentucky (888) 254-5726.

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KENTUCKY



You Are Invited to **Celebrate the Mission!**

October 6 - 7, 2000

Immanuel Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, KY

Celebrate the Mission is the 2000 Brotherhood Convention. The Brotherhood Department at KBC seeks to involve **families on mission**. It works to provide you, your family and church with many **hands on mission opportunities** as well as important **mission education training**. This year, you will find times of worship, mission praise reports, hands on mission projects and mission education training for the whole family.

Friday:

9:00 a.m. Annual Golf Scramble
7 - 9:00 p.m. Brotherhood Convention
Mission Action Praise Reports
9:30 - 11:00 p.m. Mission Celebration

Saturday:

8:00 a.m. - Noon Mission Projects and
Education Training for Mission Friends,
Girls in Action, Challengers,
Acteens, Baptist Men on Mission
and Women on Mission



For Registration information, contact:
KBC
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION
Brotherhood Department
10701 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40243
1-888-254-5720 or 502-244-6489
www.kybaptist.org/brotherhood.htm

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Statewide collegiate conference planned.** Kentucky college students are invited to a weekend of fun, worship and learning at Focus 2000, a statewide collegiate ministry conference. Sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's collegiate ministry department, Focus 2000 will be held Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville. Registration costs \$10 per person, \$5 for conference attendees who stay at the Galt House Hotel. Participants will learn more about Son Teams and other mission opportunities offered for college students. For information, visit the KBC Web site at www.kybaptist.org, or call (502) 244-6463 in Louisville or toll-free (888) 254-5723.

■ **Murray blood drive site changed.** The Operation Cooperation blood drive in Murray has been relocated to Westside Baptist Church from the National Guard armory. The Sept. 24 event is one of 71 blood drives being held throughout the state to raise awareness of the Cooperative Program, which supports ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention and Kentucky Baptist Convention.

■ **Campbellsville Cornerstone fundraiser to be held.** Campbellsville University's Baptist Student Union will organize a walk Sept. 16 to raise funds for the local Cornerstone Counseling program. The Taylor County Cornerstone office is a cooperative ministry of the university, Taylor Baptist Association and Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. For more information, call Tim Coghill at (270) 789-5227.

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John Kruschwitz, Special Representative to KBHC President, past president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, professor at Boyce Bible College



Curtis Warf, Special Representative, past chairman of KBHC's Board of Directors, past president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



T.A. Prickett, Special Representative to KBHC President, pastor for 34 years, past vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



C. Wyman Copass, Special Representative to the President, pastor for 41 years, trustee of Campbellsville University, has led 150 revivals in 16 states

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Former Kentuckian at historic church.** Georgetown College graduate James Somerville has been named pastor of the historic First Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. Somerville previously was at Wingate Baptist Church in Wingate, N.C. He will serve at the church—located a few blocks from the White House—where Presidents Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter both were active members of the congregation. Somerville holds degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

■ **Sect member ordered into state custody.** A Massachusetts judge said an unborn child told him, "I don't want to die like my brother," so he has ordered the baby's mother to remain in state custody until she gives birth. Judge Kenneth Nasif ordered Rebecca Corneau, a 32-year-old member of a conservative religious sect, to remain in state custody for another 30 days until she gives birth. Corneau is suspected of allowing her first child, Jeremiah, to die because her fundamentalist sect will not seek medical care. The sect of about two dozen adults says wives must put their husbands second only to God, and members shun government, organized religion, banking and medicine as blasphemy.

■ **Religious bias in the media?** Amid growing discussion of the role of faith in presidential politics, conservative radio figure Cal Thomas charged that the media is biased toward religious talk coming from the left. Thomas, a syndicated columnist, said the media is more accepting of religious talk coming from Democrats than from Republicans. Thomas said the media "approve" of the policies of Gore and Lieberman. "And for all they care the two can worship trees," Thomas said. "If it takes a favorable mention of God to advance the Democratic agenda, that's fine with them. But when a Republican speaks well of the King who said His kingdom is not of this world, that's another story, because liberal Democrats oppose most of the Republican agenda."

■ **Justice Department intervenes for Jewish teacher.** The Clinton administration is coming to the aid of a Jewish teacher who is suing his Michigan school district after he claimed he was the victim of anti-Semitic harassment and threats of violence in his classroom. The Justice Department, which will file a complaint with the U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids, Mich., said the school did not "reasonably" or "appropriately" address the teacher's concerns and did not take proper measures to keep Louis Owen free from religious harassment.

■ **Conservative Episcopalians launch movement.** A coalition of conservative Episcopalians has launched an informal network of pastors and parishes "parallel" to the national church structure because of a "pastoral emergency" in the liberal-leaning church. Conservatives say the church has betrayed biblical teaching on issues such as homosexuality and argue there is no longer room for them within the existing church structure.

■ **Woman claims stolen idea on Christian movie.** A West Virginia woman has sued the Christian cable channel Trinity Broadcasting Network, claiming its hit action movie "The Omega Code" stole her idea about a Christian apocalypse. The lawsuit, filed last month in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, is alleging unfair competition, copyright infringement and breach of implied contract and seeks damages of \$40 million. Sylvia Fleener, 53, is a longtime supporter of TBN in Monroe County, W. Va. She claims there are numerous similarities between last year's film and her self-published book "The Omega Syndrome."

■ **First African-American named lead Navy chaplain.** Rear Adm. Barry Black has been installed as the first Seventh-day Adventist and the first African-American to serve as Chief of Navy Chaplains. He will manage a corps of more than 1,000 chaplains in the Navy. Black said his denomination's emphasis on religious liberty and keeping of the Sabbath has sensitized him to the need to accommodate the religions of all naval personnel. "The moment equal accommodation is permitted to be jeopardized, it becomes an ethical slippery slope," he said.

Study: Hazing common among church groups

ALFRED, N.Y. (RNS)—Hazing is prevalent among high school students, whether they are joining a church group or a sports team, a new survey finds.

The Alfred University study found that 48 percent of students who join any high school group are subjected to hazing.

"We found that every high school student who joins any group—from gangs to church groups, from the football team to the band—is at risk of being hazed," said Nadine Hoover, the principal investigator of the survey by the private, nonsectarian university in Alfred, N.Y.

Hazing was defined as "any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of you to join a group, regardless of your willingness to participate."

Examples included being yelled, cursed or sworn at; being forced to eat disgusting things; and being told to skip school or not associate with others.

While high school fraternities and sororities haze about 76 of their members, Hoover said few high school students are involved in such groups. But she said far more students are active in church groups.

"We know that church groups haze about 24 percent of their new members," she said. "Based on that, we project approximately 237,000 high school students are being hazed to join a church group each year."

The direct-mail study results were based on 1,541 surveys returned from a random national sample of high school students. About 90 percent of the students responding attended public schools and the rest attended church schools, other private schools or home schools.



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All events 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. local time

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To help us plan, please call one week prior to the event you want to attend and tell us the number of people in your group.



Does 'Jesus junk' cheapen Christianity's message?

Continued from page 1

identifying and encouraging Christians than attracting non-believers to the claims of Christ.

"I have a couple (Christian T-shirts) that were gifts that I wear, but I don't think of them as anything but shirts," said Andrea Valenzuela, a 22-year-old Ecuadorian who works for Nyack College in New York. "I hope someone will read the Bible verse and ask about it. But I would rather have my walk and my life—my works, my everyday living—speak louder than some easy-to-pull-on T-shirt."

Even the minister who instigated the "What Would Jesus Do?" explosion looks forward to the time when the profitable sheen wears off her concept.

Slightly over a decade ago, Reformed Church minister Janie Tinkleberg came up with the WWJD bracelets for her youth group. She didn't copyright the idea, so anyone is free to produce WWJD items. As a result, the emblem has become almost as pervasive in pop culture as the Nike logo. But she doubts the fad is advancing the gospel.

"I think it has diluted the message," she told the Knight-Ridder News Service. "I want the fad to fade so (the concept) will wind up where it belongs—back with people wearing them who know what these little bracelets really mean."

William Benoit, who teaches rhetoric, persuasive speaking, argument and advocacy at the University of

Missouri-Columbia, said he suspects the bumper stickers and bracelets have the greatest effect on two groups: "The people who wear or display them, as a manner of self-expression, and those for whom it is a 'hot button' topic, either agreeing or disagreeing fervently."

"I doubt that the people in the middle are much influenced," he added.

Betty Talbert, meanwhile, who teaches spiritual formation at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, is overwhelmingly supportive. "Since the time of (Roman Emperor) Constantine, it has been difficult for Christians to maintain their religious identity while being accepted as a part of the culture," she said.

"Wearing a religious symbol—a cross, a fish or a WWJD bracelet—is a way some of us testify to ourselves and to others that our commitment to Christ is about everyday living and not just Sunday worship," she continued.

"Personally I like religious bumper stickers," Talbert said. "The first time I put one on my car I did so with fear and trembling. I was a university professor who had just encountered Christ in a deep conversion experience. I knew that people might laugh at me, but I felt it was important to place a symbol of my new allegiance on my car."

Guy Mattox, a retired pastor from King George, Va., said Christian T-shirts gain the most value when they are baptized with the sweat of hard work. "If someone is wearing a shirt

that says he is a follower of Jesus while he is replacing gutters or re-shingling a roof or rebuilding a porch, then they are worthy of the name they are claiming," he said.

Nearly 40 years ago, Mattox presented his gas credit card for payment to a service station attendant who was in the process of exhibiting an impressive display of profanity. When the man saw "the Reverend" in front of the name on Mattox's card, he apologized profusely.

Mattox went home, cut up all his credit cards and had them reissued without his clerical title. His reasoning? Christianity isn't viable if it can be detected only by a title on a card. "If there is not something about my life and my attitude that says I belong to Christ, then I don't deserve the honor (just) because I graduated from a theological seminary," he said.

Les Switzer, a seminary graduate and professor of journalism at the University of Houston, meanwhile, suspects there may be more behind the Christian gear craze than meets the eye.

The Protestant Reformation ended for many Christians the use of icons in worship and the sale of "indulgences," a method of paying cash as penance for sins. Switzer said he finds a parallel in today's Christian paraphernalia.

"Could I suggest that, in some convoluted way, this is an Americanized, sanitized form of indulgence?" he asked.

Spending money to "obtain an icon" in the form of a shirt or bumper sticker, he said, might help some Christians "deal with their sins, absolve them of guilt or at least to make them feel more comfortable."

"It's kind of like a talisman," he said. "And of course most of us can't get along without one, whether it's in the form of a trinket, a cross or even a Bible."

A fish wars field report

JACKSONVILLE (ABP)—Read any good fish lately?

The fish symbol was pretty much the exclusive property of Christendom for almost 2,000 years, until it began showing up recently on car bumpers, lapel pins, coffee cups and T-shirts.

Soon, a challenger appeared. The familiar fish outline, in a tribute to evolution, had now grown feet, and the word "DARWIN" appeared inside.

The fish wars were on.

Antagonism between atheistic evolutionists and fundamentalist Christians has fueled a fish war raging on America's bumpers, complete with escalating counter-attacks.

Creationists countered with a larger fish, labeled "TRUTH," gobbling up the smaller Darwin fish. The evolutionists' response, a crude depiction of fish procreation, is too tasteless to describe in print.

Communications expert Tom Lessl has been studying the fish wars. "In several respects, displaying the Darwin fish is the symbolic equivalent of capturing and desecrating an enemy's flag, an act of ritual aggression," said Lessl, an associate professor at the University of Georgia.

Emulating a religious symbol gives the Darwin fish "unique power to express ridicule in a vivid and symbolically pointed fashion," he said.

Lessl walked parking lots to find cars displaying Darwin fish and stuck survey forms under their windshield wipers asking three questions: Why did you put this emblem on your car? What audience did you hope to reach? What does the Darwin fish mean to you?

Out of nearly 140 surveys distributed, 51 completed questionnaires were mailed back.

"The fact that 66 percent of the respondents identified Christians as their target audience is the key to interpreting these themes," Lessl reported. "The apparent desire to deride this audience seems to be just as important as any serious message they want to communicate."

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FAMILIES

Rally urges family reconciliation & youth evangelism

By Adelle Banks
Religious News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—When her husband knelt down and kissed the feet of her son, Paula Lubrano enthusiastically waved her hands in praise to God.

The scene on the National Mall on Sept. 2 was replayed across the famous stretch of grass in an emotional act of reconciliation during TheCallDC, a multicultural, interdenominational event that drew Christian teens and adults from across the country for a day to dedicate themselves to spiritual renewal.

"As my husband prayed for my son, it's like all the angry words and all the distance became a thing of the past," said Lubrano, 40, who attends a nondenominational charismatic church in Farmington, Conn.

Tens of thousands of Christians—mostly young, white and charismatic—filled the sections of the Mall nearest the U.S. Capitol for a 12-hour period of prayer, preaching and songs.

Like other events that have brought Christian groups to the Mall in recent years, the focus was on repentance for past sins and hopes for future evangelism. But this gathering moved beyond issues of racial and denominational reconciliation to emphasize speakers' belief in the need for healing between the generations.

"Til we turn to one another, the world will not know Jesus," said Rich Manley, executive director of CampusWave, a nondenominational ministry in Chico, Calif., that encourages youth to be Christian examples on their junior high and high school campuses.

Promise Keepers President Bill McCartney, who spearheaded the "Stand in the Gap" event that filled the Mall with evangelical Christians in 1997, got down on his knees onstage and washed and kissed the feet of his 27-year-old son, Marc, as an example for others to follow.

"It's time for the men to humble themselves, to take a posture as Jesus taught us," he said.

Beyond reconciling the generations, Che Ahn, master of ceremonies and organizer of TheCall, emphasized the inclusion of teens in future ministry efforts.

"The boomer generation, we're saying now it's your turn to transform cities and states, nations for Jesus Christ," the Pasadena, Calif., pastor, said near the conclusion of the all-day event. "Right now, we pass the baton to you, the baton of the mantle of leadership."

As the mostly youthful audience was urged by young and old speakers from the stage to evangelize their schools and the world, some said they felt emboldened to be more outspoken about their faith.

Joy Martinez, a 24-year-old graduate student from Baltimore, said it was "awesome" to have well-known speakers like charismatic evangelist Benny Hinn of California say they believe "our generation is going to make a difference."

Campus Crusade for Christ President Bill Bright voiced his support for plans announced at the gathering for young people to fast and pray from Sept. 20—the day students pray for their schools and their country at "See You at the Pole" events—through Oct. 29.

Walt Mueller, president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding in Elizabethtown, Pa., welcomed the efforts to bridge the generational gap.

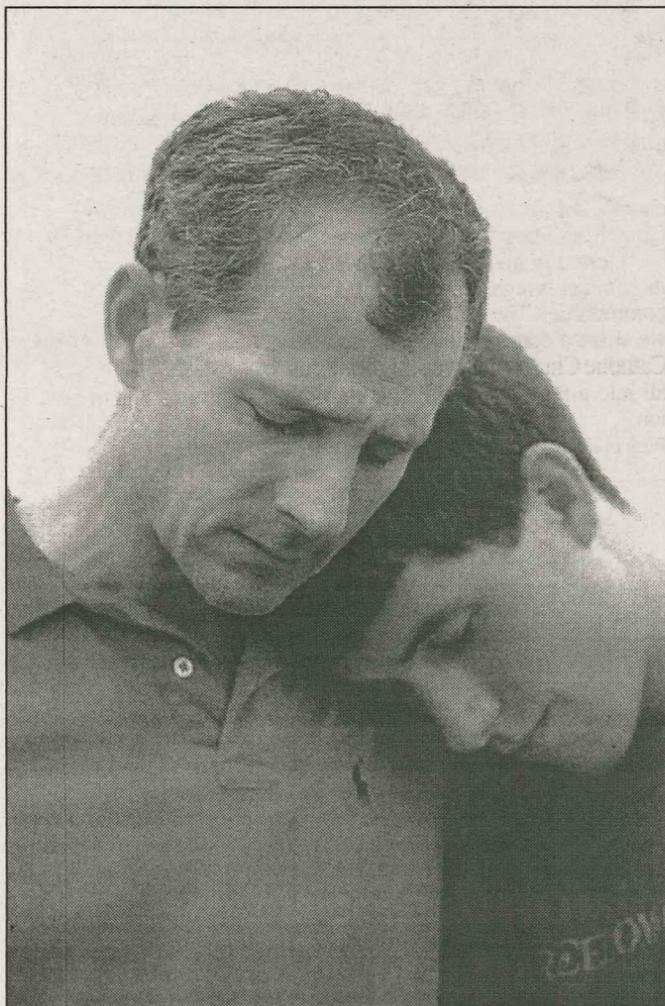
"This is the first organized movement of that type that I'm aware of," he said in an interview just before the event. "I think it should happen on a large-scale level all across the country at the community level and on a smaller level in individual homes."

Event organizers said they already have made plans to foster the generational ties that were renewed through the event. They have created a Web site (www.livethecall.com) and are planning a multiple-city tour this fall that will continue to spread the message of the day across the country.

"If two generations can't reconcile, everything that we're talking about becomes irrelevant," Manley said in an interview. "The youth have the zeal, the vision and the passion, but the fathers have the wisdom, the authority, the resources."

Charles Riley, a chaperone for a youth group from an Assemblies of God church in Brenham, Texas, said that during the course of the day he saw youth have an increasing resolve to be more involved in praying for others and telling friends on campus about Jesus. "They're actually saying, 'Look, it's my turn.' It's not just for adults. It's not for this generation. It's for all generations."

PRAYING TOGETHER
Scott Simmons of Manassas, Va., hugs and prays with his 17-year-old son, John, during TheCallDC, a Christian gathering on the National Mall Sept. 2 that included prayers and preaching focused on spiritual renewal and reconciliation between generations. (RNS photo)

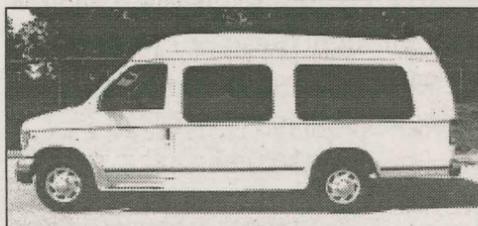


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Call for Resolutions

The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Committee on Resolutions will meet Nov. 14 during the 2000 Kentucky Baptist Convention meeting in Bowling Green. Individuals wishing to submit a resolution in advance for the committee's review can do so by mailing the resolution to:

Committee on Resolutions
Kentucky Baptist Convention
P.O. Box 43433
Louisville, KY 40253-0433



How are we doing?

Just last week we concluded our third year operating both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore under the umbrella of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. During the three years, I have heard countless encouraging words from many of you. Often when we faced huge challenges, I would hear from someone who so fully believed in our ministry and the role that camps and conference centers would play in kingdom expansion.

So how are we doing after three years? Well I want to tell you, as I always do, that we have a long way to go toward rebuilding both places. But, oh, have we been blessed by God during these first three years:

■ In the year we just completed, we set records at both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore for both "camper days" and meals served. These are the two clearest indicators of activity at a camp and conference center. Understand that we had record years both places. Between the two we had 36,213 camper days and served 100,115 meals! Our revenue at Jonathan Creek was up 58 percent over last year, thanks to Crossings, our new camp.

■ In our first three years of operating as KBA, our income from operations is up more than 100 percent.

■ We are projecting another substantial increase this year. We already have more than 900 reservations for our Crossings camp for next summer.

■ As you read this, we are starting nearly \$600,000 in improvements on Boone Lodge and Byrdwell Conference Center at Cedarmore, thanks to KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey's commitment to help this project with year-end funds.

Some might say that we aren't about money, we aren't about numbers, and that is true. We are first about kingdom impact. As a matter of fact, when we look at projects and improvements and new programs, we first ask ourselves the question, "What will the kingdom return be on this investment?" Secondly, we consider the financial impact:

How will we pay for it, and what will be the financial return as well? And I would say that our kingdom impact both places was huge this year. God moved in extraordinary ways. Hundreds of decisions were made by people of all ages.

So thank you once again. On behalf of our KBA board, I thank you for your confidence.

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

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

Vatican: Salvation comes solely from Catholic Church

VATICAN CITY (RNS)—In a declaration that could affect its relationship with other Christian and non-Christian bodies, the Vatican said last week that the Roman Catholic Church is the only "instrument for the salvation of all humanity."

The statement doesn't deny the salvation experience of Christians from other denominations, but it does call non-Catholic Christian bodies "defective." The document expresses respect for other religions while attacking "religious relativism which leads to the belief that one religion is as good as another."

"If it is true that the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the church, have the fullness of the means of salvation," the Vatican said of non-Christian religions.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued the document at a news conference as part of what appeared to be an ongoing effort by the Vatican to reassert traditional Catholic doctrine.

Jerry Rankin, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, responded to the statement by saying most Southern Baptists would agree that the trend toward religious relativism should be rejected.

"We emphatically disagree with the Vatican, however, on the direction that path takes," he said. "Salvation comes by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and Christ alone—not through

any institutional church body, be it Baptist, Catholic or otherwise. ... That's why we have always sent missionaries even to 'Catholic' countries, because people come to salvation only through personal faith in Jesus Christ."

Another prominent Baptist, however, who has been criticized for taking part in ecumenical efforts with Roman Catholics, said he welcomes the Vatican document as demonstrating that groups can work together without compromising core convictions.

"We certainly do not agree on the role of the papacy, and this remains a barrier to full Christian unity," said Timothy George, dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. "But evangelicals believe that God is able to work in, with and under faulty structures to bring lost men and women into a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ."

"While only God can read anyone's heart, I dare to say that there are countless Roman Catholics who know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, just as there are no doubt many Southern Baptists who have been duly dunked but are still spiritually dead," he said.

In London, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, leader of the worldwide Anglican Communion, called Ratzinger's statements "unjustified" and said they did "not reflect the deep comprehension that has been reached through ecumenical dialogue and cooperation during the past 30 years."

In Geneva, the World Council of Churches warned that the growth of ecumenical dialogue could be "hin-

Jewish group finds common ground with Christians

BALTIMORE (RNS)—A group of Jewish scholars released a landmark statement Sept. 7 calling on Jews to affirm their shared roots with Christians while acknowledging a "humanly irreconcilable difference" between the two religions.

More than 160 Jewish leaders and theologians signed the eight-point statement, which was drafted by the Baltimore-based Institute for Jewish and Christian Studies.

While the timing of the Jewish and Vatican statements was largely coincidental, the language and tone of the two documents could not have been more different.

Where the Vatican statement attempted to draw differences between church teaching and other religions, the Jewish statement moved to affirm the shared roots and traditions between Judaism and Christianity.

"We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it," reads the statement, "Dabru Emet," which is Hebrew for "Speak the Truth." "We do not see it as an extension of

Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity."

The statement goes on to say that Jews and Christians worship the same God, seek authority and moral guidance from the same Scripture (the Bible) and both respect the Jewish claim on Israel. It adds that relations with Christians do not compromise Jewish faith.

In perhaps the most important section, Jewish leaders say Christians should not be held responsible for the Nazi Holocaust, even though some Christian leaders could have tried to stop it.

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, signed the statement and said Jews are long overdue for a reassessment of Christianity.

"Christians have come extremely far, especially when you juxtapose the past 30 years against the past 2,000 years of fratricide and enmity," Eckstein said. "Now it behooves us to take another look, to look at the commonalities, and not to have this siege mentality based on the Christians of the past, not the Christians of today."

dered—or even damaged" by what it called "language which precludes further discussion of the issues."

In England, in an exercise in damage limitation, Archbishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster, chairman of the department of mission and unity of the Catholic bishops' conference of England and Wales, said the new document "does not attempt to

change the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding ecumenism."

"Certainly no slight is intended by its comments regarding other Christian communities," he said. "As Christians we share a common baptism, and the Catholic Church believes this brings us all into a real, if imperfect, communion."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

Starting with worship

By Robert Dunston

Each year Cumberland College's opening chapel service provides exactly the right beginning to our academic year. This year's service, held Sept. 4, continued our tradition of focusing our work and ourselves on God.

Sacred Vision, a student men's quartet who minister through our Baptist Student Union, began our worship by singing a beautiful arrangement of "Shine on Us."

Stephanie Mahler, a junior majoring in communication arts and the daughter of John and Cheryl Mahler of Mt. Sterling, prayed a heartfelt invocation.

Cumberland College President James Taylor, welcomed the students, faculty and staff to a new year of preparation and service. Like Baptists do, we engaged in a warm handshaking, introducing ourselves to those we had not met and greeting one another. Dr. Taylor then recognized the faculty and staff members who recently had become part of the Cumberland College family.

Wes Roy, assistant to the president for church relations and director of convocation, introduced our speaker, Terry Wilder. Wilder is in

his ninth year as pastor of Burlington Baptist Church and currently serves as president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He has provided service and leadership in Kentucky for 22 years.

Before Wilder spoke, Wendy Miller, the wife of our men's soccer coach, Rob Miller, sang "Jesus Doesn't Care." The song emphasized Jesus doesn't care about our past but provides us with a new present and future in Him.

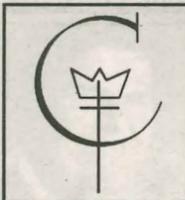
Using the story of Abraham, Wilder provided insight for surviving in today's world. The lessons he drew from Abraham's life challenged and inspired us.

Matt Howe, a junior majoring in religion and the son of Tony and Teresa Howe of Crittenden, closed our service with a benediction.

Our opening chapel service always reminds us to Whom we belong and to what purpose and whose glory we are working. We look forward with excitement to the new year.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



A free lunch and a hug

For a long time now, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has hosted annual Child Care Day events on our Spring Meadows and Glen Dale campuses.

In the last few years, we discovered that some of our supporters were confused by the term "Child Care Day." Some people thought it was a workshop on parenting or day care. Those are good ideas, but not the focus of these events. I think the name is actually a reference to KBHC's previous monitor, the Baptist Board of Child Care. Without that name, "Child Care Day" kind of loses its context. Now we are using the old-fashioned term "open house." You can't miss with a classic, and it is perfect for this ministry.

We are excited about another change in our annual open houses. We are hosting them at some of our other campuses. To be sure, Spring Meadows and Glen Dale are the foundation of KBHC, but we want you to visit our other programs, too.

On Sept. 23 an open house will take place at the Southern Region Campus in Bronston, located in Pulaski County. On Oct. 7, KBHC Dixon Center in Webster County is opening its doors to the public, and on Oct. 14, we return to familiar ground

at Glen Dale. Each event begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m., local time.

I hope you, your family, Sunday school class, missions group or entire congregation will come. This year's open houses hold a special meaning. It is because of your letters and phone calls to the governor and state legislators that we still have eight campuses available to serve children in crisis.

Sure, a free lunch and a hug aren't much to offer in return, but we want to do that and to give you a chance to meet some of the children you are supporting. These are kids you sent to summer camp, purchased Bibles for, sponsored at Christmas, lifted to the Lord in prayer and have helped in many other ways.

Please mark your calendars now. Call us at (800) 456-1386 a week before the event you plan to attend to let us know how many will be in your group. That will be a big help as we prepare to open to you these houses blessed by God.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

China blasts United States' report on religious persecution

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A new U.S. State Department report critical of religious freedom violations in China is a "fabrication" say Beijing officials, who have demanded that Washington correct the "mistaken" findings.

The second annual report on religious freedom concluded that during the last six months of 1999 respect for religious freedom in China "deteriorated markedly," and noted that religious oppression continued during the first half of this year. It criticized China's treatment of members of minority faiths as well as Tibetan Buddhists and followers of the Falun Gong spiritual movement.

The report—released Sept. 6, two days before President Clinton was scheduled to meet Chinese President Jiang Zemin as part of the United Nations summit of world leaders—"blatantly interferes in China's internal affairs," Sun Yuxi charged, insisting religious freedom was under no threat in China.

Religious freedom violation in several other countries, including France, Germany, India, Cuba, Russia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Israel, also were criticized in the report.

But in certain countries the report showed an "evident attempt to 'balance' negative reporting with positive developments," said Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom. The Washington-based organization is a nonpartisan group that monitors religious and other freedom of conscience issues abroad.

"This is most evident in countries where the U.S. has strong economic or strategic interests," the center said in a statement.

The center's director, Nina Shea, noted that "though the report this year is unflinching in finding religious freedom has 'deteriorated markedly' in China, it soft peddles religious genocide in Sudan and religious violence in Egypt, most likely in deference to the Middle East peace process."

Conjoined sisters spark national ethical debate

LONDON (RNS)—Conjoined 1-month-old twins are at the center of an ethical and moral debate in Britain after a judge ordered the twins to be separated so that one might live, even though the parents object to the procedure.

The two girls, born Aug. 8, are joined at the rump, and doctors say both will die within a year if they are not separated, according to the Washington Post.

Doctors told the parents that if separated, one of the twins, "Mary," will die, but the other, "Jodie," could expect to live a healthy life.

The girls' parents, who are Roman Catholic, do not want to separate the twins for religious reasons and said they would rather have both girls die than sacrifice one for the life of the other.

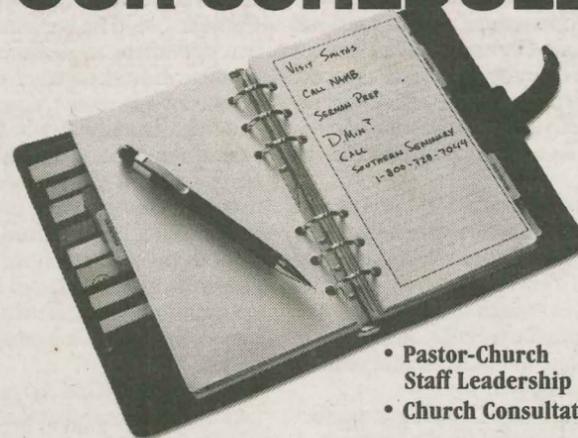
A British judge ruled last week the two daughters should be separated, but the parents have appealed the case to a higher court. At a hearing Sept. 6, the parents' lawyer said her clients have an uphill struggle because British law weighs the child's interest above that of the parents.

The case has touched off a swirl of medical and ethical hand-wringing as the courts, the church and the country's small pro-life movement weigh in on the case.

Archbishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the leader of Britain's Catholic bishops, sided with the parents.

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

They come in all shapes and sizes, part 2

Another new student this fall is "Art," a middle school student. Art is 4 feet 6 inches tall—like "Chuck," whom I mentioned last week—but weighs a whopping 75 pounds. Like many of our students, Art's grandfather has been a large part of his life. Art said he was more concerned about missing "Grandpa" than Mom. This young man is from a broken home and does see his father a lot, though he lives with his mother.

Art had mixed emotions about coming to Oneida Baptist Institute. He knew he had a bad attitude and didn't follow rules well at home. Art did not like to help with household chores and was becoming more defiant toward his mother. At school, Art's grades were average and he got along well with teachers and peers, but he was completely "lost in math."

When I asked Art what he most wanted to accomplish at Oneida, he replied, "make good grades" and "be a better boy." During the first two weeks of school it appears Art is making a good adjustment to being away from home and Grandpa. Hopefully, we will be able to help Art achieve his goals.

Another young man who enrolled this fall is "David," a ninth-grader. David is a little taller than Chuck and Art at 5 feet 4 inches, but the big difference is his weight: 220 pounds. One of the reasons David came to Oneida was because many students at his old school made fun of his size. Normally, because we become family at Oneida, this is less of a problem. If there is teasing, it usually comes from our newer students who do not realize that it is not the "cool" thing to do here. If David can make it the first month or so, I feel safe in saying he will have very little trouble with his peers making fun of him.

David is a Christian, so he was excited about coming to a Christian school where he could share his beliefs without being ridiculed. David admits to being "lazy" and unmotivated. His mother said he would rather use his brain to figure out how not to do something than just do it.

At school, David's grades were a little above average, and he got along well with his teachers. His only real problem at school was the teasing because of his size. David said his two main goals in coming to Oneida are to "get a very good education and to meet very good Christian friends." David will do well here academically, and he will have many opportunities to meet and interact with other Christian young people.

"Andy" enrolled this fall and is actually a returning student. He first enrolled in August 1999. Unfortunately, Andy made a serious poor decision and was asked to leave our school in October. In his favor was the fact that when confronted about the situation he told the truth. Though he had to leave, we encouraged Andy to consider re-enrolling for the 2000-2001 school year.

Ten months and several letters from Andy later, he returned to OBI for his senior year. Andy really needs to be here, but will continue to be a challenge for us. He has a history of poor choices, drug abuse and terrible grades. Though he generally was liked by teachers at his old school, Andy admitted to being "lazy" about schoolwork and not liking school in general. Hopefully Andy will make better choices this year.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Largest entering class in a decade

We are three weeks into the new academic year and rejoice in the largest entering class in a decade.

Fifty-one students matriculated; 48 of those taking classes for the first time. The class marked the last group that worked with former director of admissions Jayson Barnett.

God sent 28 students from Kentucky, nine from Tennessee, three from Indiana and two each from Ohio, Virginia and South Carolina. One student each came from Alabama, Georgia, Nebraska and New York. Do Khan Khup holds the distinction of the farthest move, coming from Burma. Only seven of the class will commute to campus. We have one three-story wing of Kelly Hall undergoing renovation, yet adequate housing was found for the remainder of the class.

Twenty-six students are single, and 25 of the students are married with 39 children. The children's ages vary from four months to age 22. Twenty-seven of the class have previous college experience. The entering class has 43 men and 8 women. The average age is 27.4 years. The oldest student is 68 and

the youngest is 18.

The Lord calls His workers from every field of employment: cashier, medical center, clerical, personnel, media, fast-food restaurant, construction, retirement, warehouse employee, tool maker, service man, electrical company, newspaper office, garage, mining, daycare, sales, church school teacher, energy manager, deliveryman, general laborer, respiratory therapist, meat cutter, grocery store, nurses aid, truck driver and infantry.

Sam Dickenson and Ed Glover met this summer on a mission trip to Nicaragua and discovered they would be classmates.

Paul Harris first came to Clear Creek in 1996 with a Georgia volunteer construction team. Volunteers from his home church helped prepare the cottage that has become his family's new home.

Pray that this new class will do their best to become approved workers who can rightly divide the Word of Truth.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

BOOKS & TV

'Christy' returning to TV with 3 new movies, PAX says

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—PAX TV plans to present three new "Christy" movies in the coming season, building on the popularity of the novel by Catherine Marshall.

The broadcast television network, owned by Paxson Communications Corp., announced last month that Lauren Lee Smith has been cast as lead character Christy Huddleston in the upcoming movies. She has appeared in the Fox series "Dark Angel" and MTV's boy band parody "2Gether."

One movie will air this fall, probably in November, and two other movies are scheduled to air as a miniseries early next year.

"Christy" premiered as a TV movie in 1994 and aired for two seasons on CBS before it was canceled. It was lauded by Christian critics of television for its positive values and family entertainment and has continued to be popular in videos and reruns.

"We've had a tremendous amount of interest," said Tracy Speed, senior publicity manager for PAX TV. "People really love the show. ... It's an authentic product that's faithful to the book and it's all being done with the support of Catherine Marshall's estate."

Tom Blomquist, who served as writer and supervising producer of the original "Christy" series, is an executive producer for the movies. Actors returning from the original series include Stewart Finlay-McLennan as Dr. MacNeil and Bruce McKinnon as Jeb Spencer.

Paul: A Novel. Walter Wangerin Jr. Zondervan Publishing, 2000. 504 pages. \$22.99. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

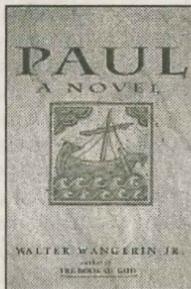
With the deftness of an expert storyteller, the insight of a serious Bible scholar and the heart of a pastor, Walter Wangerin Jr. transports us back into the world, heart and passion of the Apostle Paul.

In so doing, Wangerin brings to life the letters of Paul. Though the book, in many ways, is a fictional account of Paul's encounters with his world and its people, Wangerin does not simply make up the story out of thin air. Rather, he seeks to read between the lines of Paul's correspondence and to look behind the historical record of Luke.

Many readers might be shocked at Wangerin's presentation of the early Paul as a banty rooster, whose nearly manic zeal for being the apostle to the Gentiles often causes him to offend the original apostles. But Wangerin takes pains to portray Paul as one who grew wiser and astute as a result of his confrontations and afflictions.

Picking a highlight of the book is difficult. Wangerin's portrayal of the confrontation between Paul and Stephen in the temple reveals in stark contrast the reason for the eventual split between synagogue and church. It also illustrates the radical nature of Paul's conversion and his conviction to know "only Christ and Christ crucified." The ongoing struggle between James the Just and Paul over the role of the Torah sheds light on the Jerusalem Council and the ongoing conflict between Paul and the Judaizers.

I had a hard time putting this book down. And I will hear Paul in a different way, as a flesh-and-blood missionary seeking to make Christ known to the Gentiles, the Jews and even the church. *Jim Holladay*



Ecclesiastes Interpretation Series: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. William P. Brown. Westminster/John Knox Press, 2000. 143 pages. \$21.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

In his introduction, William P. Brown acknowledges that many people have deemed Ecclesiastes "the strangest book of the Bible." In this strangeness, many in all practicality have omitted it from the canon.

Despite the difficulty of placing Ecclesiastes in the flow of Christian theology, he endeavors to do just that.

Following an introduction that first traces the Gilgamesh epic as a way of setting Ecclesiastes among the shared values and perspectives of this Mesopotamian tale, Brown addresses the dual difficulties of Ecclesiastes' literary structure and pattern and understanding the message of Ecclesiastes.

Understanding comes to Brown when "the teacher" is seen as being on a journey in which wisdom builds upon wisdom. At various points of the journey, the wisdom might be at odds with previous wisdom. Brown is convinced that Ecclesiastes presents in its contradictions and cynicism the ancient sage's understanding of life as both full of painful wrenchings and surprising gifts.

Brown's epilogue to the commentary sets Ecclesiastes in its place in Christian faith and life. Even though his conclusions are scattered throughout the commentary, I appreciated his clear and incisive summary in one place. Brown's commentary helps to clearly affirm Ecclesiastes' place in Scripture and brings insightful connections between the ancient searcher and the searchers of the 21st century. *Wayne Hager*

Soul Salsa: 17 Surprising Steps for Godly Living in the 21st Century. Leonard Sweet. Zondervan Publishing, 2000. 224 pages. \$19.88. ♦♦♦♦♦

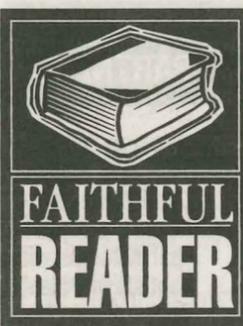
Soul Salsa is the conclusion of Sweet's trilogy on postmodern spirituality. The first volume, "SoulTsunami" sought to develop a framework for understanding the postmodern milieu. The second, "AquaChurch" focused on helping the church navigate the uncharted waters of the postmodern world. This volume centers on the individual's effort to live faithfully in the midst of a radically changed situation.

Of the three, I enjoyed this one the most. It is more down to earth, and less given to the cutesiness that afflicts the others. In this book, Sweet writes more out of the rich tradition of Christian spirituality, though he gives it his own unique twist. For example, he describes those who are serious about developing a healthy, postmodern spirituality as "soul artists."

I found his discussion of trusteeship—also known as stewardship—intriguing and challenging. Sweet argues that we must move away from a theology of giving to a theology of receiving. He contends a "theology of giving seduces us into believing that our 'gifts' to God are ours to begin with. The truth is just the opposite. Everything we have is a trust from God."

His chapter on dirt challenges us to stop "asking God to take out our garbage."

I do wish that writers on spirituality would stop talking about "steps to Godly living" or "steps to peace with God." That makes it sound like spiritual growth is a steady, upwardly linear process, when in reality it is more like a spiraling double helix. Perhaps a better subtitle for this book might be "17 Surprising Features of Godly Living in the 21st Century." *Jim Holladay*



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

Christian authors focus novel on Israel's roots

By Cecile Holmes
Religion News Service

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (RNS)—In their newest book, Christian authors Bodie and Brock Thoene build upon research for two earlier book series linked to World War II and the roots of Israeli statehood.

"Jerusalem Vigil" is the first book in what the Thoenes envision as a six-book series, to be called Zion Legacy.

"Vigil" opens as the British withdraw from Jerusalem after Israel is declared a state on May 14, 1948, a tense and difficult period for people of all religions in the famous city.

After the British ceremonially hand over the key to Zion Gate and depart, remaining are Jews and Muslims who battle for control of the city.

This novel captures five days of what became a struggle for control in the Mideast. It explores the difficult period through the eyes of the different ethnic groups involved.

"This is the one we've been aiming at all along," Mrs. Thoene said. "We just started back there with the earlier series. ... Once we got started in research, it was so interesting that we decided, 'Why don't we start here?'"

Zion Chronicles, a series of five books published between 1986 and

1988, traced the birth of Israel as a nation from November 1947 to May 1948. Zion Covenant, six books published between 1988 and 1991, detailed the German Nazi takeover of Europe from 1936 to 1939.

In Christian markets and now in more secular circles, the Thoenes have been successful, with 32 titles to their credit and 6.5 million books in print. The first books, marketed as inspirational fiction, were published only under Mrs. Thoene's name. Her husband began being listed in the early 1990s when they published a series on Western tales.

With a background in journalism, she serves as plot creator and storyteller. His degrees in education and history make him the natural researcher for the team.

"Vigil," released to bookstores this spring, also establishes the couple as trend-setters among Christian writers. With this book, they cross over from Christian to mainstream publishers, signing a multibook deal with Viking Publishers for The Zion Legacy.

Earlier this year, Publishers Weekly noted that the world of Christian and mainstream fiction "seldom meet," interpreting the Thoenes' deal with Viking as part of a potential erosion of the borders between the two genres.

The Thoenes stress that their goal is

giving readers a compelling, readable and meaningful story.

"We had taken a break from the other series," said Brock Thoene. "We found that the books were so full of heavy circumstances and really terrifying times. To have to live through those with your characters and live with your characters was tough."

In "Jerusalem Vigil," they chose a very brief slice of history because we "wanted readers to know what happened on an hour-by-hour basis," Mrs. Thoene said. They created some characters, but the events in the book come from history, she said.

As always, the Thoenes said they hope their books both entertain and teach. Mrs. Thoene said the couple are pro-Israel and they see faith as a cornerstone of all their work.

Their writing odyssey began in Bakersfield, Calif., where they grew up. They married as sophomores in college, graduated and eventually went to work for the production company of actor John Wayne. When Wayne once asked Bodie what she really wanted to do, she told him her yen to tell Israel's story.

"This ('Vigil') is actually the book John Wayne told me to write," she said. "He asked me, 'What do you want to do?' And I said, 'This.' He said, 'That's the Jewish Alamo.'"

'Will & Grace,' Focus on the Family fight over ex-gay show

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—The NBC comedy series "Will & Grace" offended Focus on the Family this summer with an episode poking fun at "ex-gay" ministries.

But the flap extended beyond the show's May episode mocking an ex-gay ministry and involves the show's response to the conservative Christian group's request for a meeting.

The episode about ex-gay ministry used references to homosexuals who use controversial Christian-based therapy to become heterosexuals as "self-loathing closet cases," "morally wrong" and "freaks."

Mike Haley, a public policy/youth and gender specialist at the Colorado Springs, Colo.-based group, wrote "Will and Grace" executive story editor Jon Kinnally in June.

He wrote that as a former gay man he felt the show "grossly misrepresented thousands of individuals struggling to come out of homosexuality. ... You may vehemently disagree with this position, but I'd at least like the opportunity to sit down with you and talk about it."

Kinnally's July 14 response, which Focus on the Family issued with a press release, said the episode was produced, "solely in the interest of creating the most comedic episode possible. And it was certainly not our intention to offend you in any way."

But Kinnally's letter then jokingly noted that since Haley requested a meeting, the "Will & Grace" executive cited his personal statistics as if the request was for a date.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Boston church planter intern Travis Glatter.

■ Partnership churches to link with two new churches in Newton and Allston-Brighton, Mass.

■ The Dar Leadership Development Center in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and the pastors who will live there while completing seminary training.

■ Two young pastors from the Kikunde area of Tanzania who hope to begin a Bible study that will become a church.

■ Follow-up to 20 days of prayer-walking in Poland completed by volunteers from Tennessee in August.

■ A new believer named Goska who will lead a ladies' Bible study in Poland while missionaries are on furlough.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **CADIZ**—East Cadiz Church will host revival services Sept. 17-21 at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday; 7 p.m. Monday - Thursday. **Paul Northcutt** will be the evangelist. **Kevin Cravens** will be the worship leader. **Robert Burnett** is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church will host revival services Sept. 24-27. **Wyman Compass** will be the evangelist. For information, call (606) 465-8115. **James E. Jones** is pastor.

■ **DENVER**—Liberty Church ordained **Dean Murray**, **James Tackett** and **Jimmie Walker** as deacons Aug. 17. **Merle Little** is pastor.

■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church will host a deaf mission revival Sept. 15-17 at 7 p.m. nightly and at 9 a.m. Saturday. **Henry Deller**, of Garden City, N.Y., will be preaching. For information, call (606) 727-2588. **William Crosby** is pastor.

■ **HICKMAN**—West Hickman Church will celebrate its 90th anniversary with homecoming services Sept. 24 at 10:45 a.m. and lunch at noon. It will host revival services Sept. 24-27 beginning at 6 p.m. on Sunday and 7 p.m. nightly. Speakers will include former pastors **Hal Shipley**, **Ralph Thomas**, **David**

Smith and **Ronnie Wilburn**. **Chant Thomas** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Farmdale Church will host its 75th anniversary celebration Sept. 24 with fellowship, worship and lunch. For information, call (502) 366-1434. **David McCollum** is pastor.

Gethsemane Church will host **The Redemptions** in concert Sept. 17 at 10:55 a.m. For information, call (502) 969-3191. **Robert Wright** is pastor.

Rockford Lane Church called **Randal Pollock** as pastor.

Valley Station Church will host homecoming Sept. 24 at 10:30 a.m. Speakers will be **D.E. Jones**, **William Kaufman** and **Dan Hatfield**. For information, call (502) 937-1730. Also, Pastor **Don Zuberer** announced his retirement effective Oct. 8. to become part-time minister to senior adults at First Church, Clarksville, Tenn.

Valley View Church will host a Smart Discipline workshop Sept. 15 at 7 p.m. For information, call (502) 935-5142. **Kevin Hamm** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—First Church will host revival services Sept. 17-20. **Robert Jolly** of Cummings, Ga. will be the evangelist. For information, call (606) 678-5106. **Paul Chitwood** is pastor.

KBHC launches fundraising drive for new facility in Owensboro

OWENSBORO—Supporters of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children have begun a fundraising campaign to provide a central location in Owensboro for family support services to area individuals, couples and families.

"For a long time Owensboro has been an area of unquestionable support for the children and families in crisis all over Kentucky served through KBHC," said Tom Townsend, vice president for development and communications for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. "Now this agency has the privilege of offering more services to people living right here in the Daviess County area to help them deal with the obstacles life throws at us all."

The KBHC Cornerstone Family Services Center will provide a permanent home for KBHC's Cornerstone Counseling ministry, which has been in the Owensboro area since 1995. The new location, at 2720 Frederica Street, also would be the location of Family Foster Care and KBHC Pregnancy and Adoption Services.

"There was a real need for more space and the bigger picture is to have a strong, physical presence for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in Owensboro," said Mike Melloan a member of the team that investigated several loca-

tions for the center.

"The Owensboro Cornerstone program is KBHC's largest in the state," noted Melloan, a member of Yellow Creek Baptist Church. "We wanted to have a place where if someone had a need for counseling, needed help during a pregnancy, wanted to find out about foster care or just wanted to drop off a donation for KBHC, they could do it."

Joe Bob Pierce, lead counselor at Owensboro Cornerstone Counseling, said that office serves about 100 people per month. "So many couples and families are struggling with depression, conflict and a lack of understanding," he said. "The new office would permit us to help even more people."

Women facing unplanned pregnancies also would be assisted at the new center, said Barbara Lee, director of KBHC pregnancy and adoption services. "In the past, prospective adoptive parents have had to travel to Louisville to attend orientation and training," she said.

The goal of the "Touching Lives-Touching Futures" campaign for the Owensboro KBHC Cornerstone Family Services Center is \$400,000. For more information, call Townsend at (800) 456-1386.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 1990 Ford 20-passenger bus, \$4,000. Call (606) 474-6325, 474-5896 or 474-0037.

FOR SALE: New visual/digital nursery paging system: \$300 (sells for \$460). Simple operation, easy to install. Used baptism immersion water heater: \$150. Call (502) 454-4681.

SEEKING: Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville is currently looking for a pastor. For those interested, send resumé to: Edgewood Baptist Church, 212 Sanderson Drive, Hopkinsville, KY 42240, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Stanford Baptist Church invites applications for the position of senior pastor. Applicants must have seminary degree. We're a rural-town church in a fast-growing area of beautiful central Kentucky. We have an outstanding music ministry, youth ministry and Christian life center program. Please send inquiries or resúmes to: Stanford Baptist Church, 204 Church St., Stanford, KY 40484, Attn: Pulpit Committee, or call (606) 365-2178.

SEEKING: Minister of music/youth. Send resumé to Bethlehem Baptist Church, 19360 Alberta St., Oneida, TN 37841, Attn: Tony Duncan. (423) 569-4518. E-mail: duncan_t@scottcounty.net.

SEEKING: VP Finance & Administration, California Baptist University. Fast-growing and exciting evangelical Christian university with 4,000 students and \$25-million budget seeks a new CFO. Full information is available on this ministry position at www.dingman.com under "Searches." E-mail: fleming@dingman.com.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Send resumé to Personnel Committee, Yorktown Baptist Church, 7300 National Turnpike, Louisville, KY 40214.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Coordination of all music activities. Specific responsibilities: adult choir and handbell choir. Master's degree in music preferred. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship affiliated. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 201 Saint Clair St., Frankfort, KY 40601, Attn: Gayle Sutherland.

SEEKING: Director for Rainbow Nursery School at West Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville. Must meet state requirements for position. Send resumé with two references by Sept. 25 to: RNS Committee, 8420 Six Mile Lane, Louisville, KY 40220.

SEEKING: Human resources assistant for Kentucky Baptist Convention. Attractive compensation package. Contact KBC Administrative Services Department, Louisville, Ky. Phone: (502) 244-6468.

SEEKING: Parkway Baptist Church of Bardstown is seeking a full-time minister of youth and education. This person will help develop and grow an already strong youth and education ministry. Parkway Baptist is a dynamic, cutting-edge church, seeking to reach our community and world for Christ. Send resumé to: Parkway Baptist Church, c/o Eddie Benton, 2580 Springfield Road, Bardstown, KY 40004.

SEEKING: Middleton Baptist Church is a rural church located half way between Franklin and Russellville, Ky., just off highway 100. We are searching for a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: Middleton Baptist Church, 9193 Middleton Circle, Franklin, KY 42134.

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

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and education. Must be saved, Bible-believer, called, have impeccable morals. Send resumé and request for job description to: Greenwood Baptist Church, 5165 Scottsville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42104.

SEEKING: Children's pastor/director. Bellevue Baptist Church is a fast-growing, contemporary congregation averaging 1,000 in attendance in three Sunday morning services. We seek a full-time, experienced, energetic and visionary person with strong leadership, creativity, innovation and the ability to recruit and motivate a growing volunteer team. Contact: Dr. Greg Faulls, Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 West Byers, Owensboro, KY 42303. Fax: (270) 685-5134. Web page: www.bellnet.org.

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: First Baptist Church of Taylorsville is prayerfully seeking a part-time minister of music. Those interested please send resumé to: Monica Cox, First Baptist Church, PO Box 446, Taylorsville, KY 40071.

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: 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: Hargrave Military Academy, located in Chatham, Va., is seeking an energetic individual to fill the position of chaplain. Hargrave is a private boarding school, grades 7 through 12 and one post-graduate year, affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. This position will report directly to the president of the academy. It will be the responsibility of the chaplain to minister to 400+ students and 100+ faculty and staff. The chaplain must be able to relate to people from diverse economic, racial, social and cultural backgrounds. This position requires a seminary degree from a Southern Baptist seminary, five years experience in ministry and ordination (or eligibility for ordination). Musical and/or drama talent will be a plus. The major responsibilities include three chapel services weekly, managing small-group Bible studies, providing ministry opportunities for students, facilitating faculty and staff prayer groups, counseling students and faculty/staff as needed and teaching in an expanded Bible program. The chaplain should be a team player who is highly motivated to reach young people for Christ and disciple them in their Christian walk. Benefits include housing and utilities. Salary is negotiable depending on qualifications. Please send a resumé that includes the following: a brief statement of faith, a brief ministry philosophy statement, picture, one audio/video tape of a sermon, one video tape of a youth activity, five references (two personal and three professional). Oct. 1 will be the closing date for resúmes. Please send to: Joe Merricks, Chaplain Search Committee, Hargrave Military Academy, 200 Military Drive, Chatham, VA 24531. To learn more about Hargrave, please check our Web site at www.hargrave.edu.

Bowden wants champions in life as well as football

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (BP)—Whether it's leading his team to a national championship on the gridiron or carefully tending his flock of football players, Florida State University's Bobby Bowden is on mission for God 24 hours a day.

During 46 years of coaching, Bowden has focused on the spiritual health of nearly 5,000 young men who have found themselves at his office door.

In fact, when a student athlete signs to play football at Florida State University, one of the first things the coach does is send a letter to the parents asking for permission to take the student to church.

Bowden said he is just as concerned about his players "getting saved" as he is about them learning their on-the-field assignments.

Bowden takes the players, as a team, to church twice each season. Typically, one church each year is predominantly Anglo and the other predominantly African-American.

"I make all my boys, black or white, go because I want them to see that they are welcomed here in this church no matter what the color of their skin. I want them to understand that," he said.

He also tells the parents, "I want them to carry on the way that you have trained them in your home because I know how it is when kids get away to college—the first thing they do is quit going to church."

And while Bowden may be a man of character and integrity, don't underestimate him as an opponent. Firm coaching principles are as important to him as winning the game.

Tangible evidence of his success is on display at Florida State's Coyle Moore Athletic Center. The football wing is a museum that houses two Waterford crystal national championship trophies (1993 and 1999) along with hundreds of other awards, rings, trophies, outstanding player portraits and memorabilia from 24 years of winning football games.

Sure, Bowden is proud of winning but it's mainly others—boosters, the media and fans—who bring up the impressive statistics. Bowden unequivocally gives God the glory for his success.

Most Sundays find Bowden speaking as a guest in a church's pulpit, even in towns where the Seminoles have a game.

"God hasn't blessed many coaches more than He has me," Bowden said. "I've always felt like He put me in coaching to try to reach young men through coaching, through playing ball, you know? It opens a lot of doors for them."

Church building bridges through sports

By Shawn Hendricks
Missouri Word & Way

LEBANON, Mo. (ABP)—A portion of the bus barn behind Hillcrest Baptist Church in Lebanon, Mo., is set aside for sports equipment—baseball gloves, bats, balls, helmets.

This equipment isn't for any local church league team. It's set aside for a higher cause.

For the past few years, members of the church have participated in a variety of sports-related ministries, such as sending sports equipment to missionaries in other nations and distributing Bibles to high school athletes.

Recently, church members took part in distributing 1,000 water bottles at the Babe Ruth World Series in Lebanon, Mo. Each bottle had the plan of salvation printed on it.

These sports ministries "have gotten the church excited about witnessing," said Joe Jones, minister of youth for the church.

Church members Paul Dudley and Teresa Moots are two of the congregation's all-stars in ministry.

Dudley coaches high school baseball. He started collecting sports equipment for missions about two years ago when he wanted to get rid of some older baseball gear that had been piling up at the school.

"Within the first week of posting it on the Internet, I had more requests than I had equipment," he said.

Before long, the ministry expanded into a much larger operation, providing all types of sports equipment worldwide.

With the help of family, friends and fellow church members, Dudley has sent equipment to the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Mexico, Uruguay and Brazil.

"We've sent equipment to about every continent," he said.

A lot of the donations come from area high school coaches and church



members. "Instead of throwing it away, they send it to me," Dudley said. "One guy sent in a complete set of basketball uniforms."

Dudley hopes to keep the project going. "I've always felt like this is something I can do," he said. "God has worked it out."

Moots, who is now a freshman at Southwest Missouri State University, is another church member who helped start a sports-related ministry. Its focus is to distribute Bibles to varsity athletes at her high school and to opposing teams.

"God really spoke to me about this area," she said. "I thought about how much of an emphasis there is on high school sports, and maybe if people could see good sportsmanship in these athletes then maybe (the spectators) would wonder why and want to find out."

Moots said she knows that

change doesn't happen overnight. "Maybe they won't read it at first, but maybe in the future they will, and maybe it will touch their lives."

The church youth group helped distribute sports Bibles during cook-outs and other events held at the church for various athletic teams and their opponents.

Car washes and other fund-raising events helped raise money for the 250 Bibles that were distributed last school year. Athletes on the volleyball, football, track, softball, golf, tennis, cross-country, basketball and baseball teams were given the opportunity to pick up a Bible.

Moots said seeing fellow student athletes accept the Bibles was a blessing. "When I would go to another church and see different youth and people with these Bibles and actually using that tool, it was really neat."

WATER MINISTRY
Members of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Lebanon, Mo., give away water to fans attending the Babe Ruth World Series this summer. The church has found sports can be an avenue for sharing their faith at home and around the world.

National Baptists trying to work past scandals

By John Dart
Religion News Service

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—National Baptists must not be too quick to forget their recent trials, the group's president told participants at their national convention last week.

In his first annual presidential address since succeeding a minister convicted of money swindles, William Shaw told more than 15,000 National Baptists last week that too many among them "want to forget what we've seen" and "turn away because the price of change is too high."

Shaw, 66, urged delegates to brave "the discomfort of unknown territory" by reforming the National Baptist Convention, USA, a historically African-American denomination, with accountable systems of finances and organization.

The previous president, Henry Lyons, was sentenced last year to

five years in prison after conviction by a Florida court of racketeering and grand theft.

Although Shaw did not mention Lyons by name or recap details of the money scandals that wracked the denomination in recent years, he said the church cannot move forward honestly without examining itself in the mirror.

"The public defined us by the secular scandal rather than by the spiritual scandal," said Shaw, who remains pastor of White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia where he has served since 1956. "How others see us is not nearly as significant as how we see ourselves."

"We had an organization without checks and balances," Shaw told delegates to the 120th annual meeting in Los Angeles. "What we see is not pleasant."

More than five lawsuits are in litigation involving the church, he said in his address. Shaw also alluded to

the debt still outstanding on the denomination's Baptist World Center, which overlooks the Cumberland River in Nashville.

After he was elected to a five-year term as National Baptist president one year ago, Shaw designated his \$100,000 annual salary for that post to various scholarships. Shaw, emphasizing an overhaul of education in church structures, holds graduate degrees from Union Theological Seminary in New York and Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, N.Y.

Shaw also urged federal, state and local governments to look themselves in the mirror.

"Justice must be even-handed," he said.

He also called on governments to use economic and human resources wisely: "Stop demonizing our people as an excuse for underfunding our schools. ... Stop making health care a partisan issue."

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