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FOR THE RECORD

Church hoppers give varied reasons for not staying put

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By Amanda Phifer
FaithWorks magazine

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—If "bloomed where you are planted" epitomized church life in the 1970s, today's slogan is "you better shop around."

Each year one out of every seven church-going adults changes churches, according to the Barna Research Group. And one of six attends two or more churches on a rotating basis.

Americans are a religious people, and church remains an important aspect of life for tens of millions of Americans. However, there is less concern about "brand loyalty" to churches than there used to be, says George Barna.

"Although Americans do not change churches as regularly as they change the brand of gasoline they

use, church loyalty is a modern casualty," says the head of the research company based in Oxnard, Calif.

Though pervasive, "church hopping" is a trend that in some ways defies explanation. Few churches and denominations keep track of how long members stay or why they leave. Little research has been done into what motivates church loyalty.

One common explanation is consumer mentality. If one church lacks a desirable trait or service, today's churchgoer will look elsewhere.

"Religion and spirituality have become just another product in the broader marketplace of goods and services," American Demographics magazine observed in April 1999.

Adults will flit from one church to another the way they hunt for Christmas bargains: Which church has the best childcare? Which church has my favorite style of mu-

sic? Which church has the strongest recreation program? Which church is the friendliest?

In a society where there is always another option, even religion is for sale.

Perhaps that explains the "Church Shopping Guide" offered online by Atonement Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wisconsin. The "guide" suggests a series of questions the church shopper should ask: Is this church a theater or a temple? A gymnasium or a hospital?

Translation: Do you want a church where worship is about God and not entertainment? Where wounded people come for healing or the healthy come for exercise?

But church hoppers aren't always searching for the best show.

"Sometimes people are just looking for a good fit, and they can't find it," said San Francisco-area resident

Brad Sargent. "You find that this church helps you grow spiritually but doesn't have an outlet for you to serve in. So you keep looking."

Sargent describes himself as "bi-churchal."

"I go to one church where I can grow spiritually, participate in a Gen-Xer worship service and serve to make a global impact. I go to another, new church on Sunday evening to contribute to my local community through service there. Why should my attendance be an either/or? Why can't it be both/and? This fulfills me. I don't think church hopping has to be a negative."

The choice of a church used to be a simpler matter. Most people stuck to one denomination, often predetermined by family background, ethnicity or geography. Now blurred doctrinal lines and an

□ See *Church hoppers ...*, page 8

Light in Laos

Drive to stamp out Christianity in Laos having opposite effect

VIENTIANE, Laos (BP)—Those who become evangelical Christians in Laos, the communist neighbor of Vietnam and Cambodia, likely will be "asked" to sign a fill-in-the-blank form.

It's not the new-member card you would find at your neighborhood church.

The form reads in part: "I, (name), who live ... in (location), believe in a foreign religion, which the imperialists have used for their own benefit to divide the united front and to build power for themselves against the local authorities.

"Now, I and my family clearly see the intentions of the enemy, and regret the deeds which we have committed. We have clearly seen the goodness of the Party and the Government," the card continues. "Therefore, I and my family ... voluntarily and unequivocally resign from believing in this foreign religion."

Those who sign also promise not to participate in this "foreign religion"—Christianity in every reported case—or any of its meetings and ceremonies. They also agree that if the authorities should catch them continuing to practice their faith, the Christians must "accept that the government shall do to me whatever is required by its laws."

Those who don't sign can expect humiliation, harassment and persecution—including probable imprisonment. Some Christians who refuse

□ See *Observer: ...*, page 7



SEEKING LIGHT Early-morning worshippers in Laos bring prayers and offerings to a Buddhist temple. They seek union with the divine in traditional Buddhist fashion, but more Laotians are turning to faith in Jesus Christ as the gospel spreads across the small Asian nation's countryside. Laotian sources have reported that the growth continues despite a new government drive aiming to eliminate Christianity in Laos by the end of this year. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

Kentuckian's King James 2000 Bible ready for mass distribution

Victoria Moon
State Correspondent

MAYFIELD—Since he was a teenager, Robert Couric longed for a translation of the Bible that would update some archaic terminology of the King James Version without changing its beauty or tradition.

After a decade of intense work, Couric, 71, is about to make his dream come true with the release of the King James 2000 Bible.

The new, minimum-change version of the King James Version will be available from the Bible League Nov. 1.

The Bible League, an international Bible-distribution ministry, plans to use the new translation mainly for English-speaking African Christians and North American prison ministries, both of which have long expressed a need for just such a Bible translation.

"I am absolutely thrilled about this," Couric said, "not just because I'm seeing my translation published, but because I know it will be used and read by people. I'm so amazed that God is using me to reach thousands of people in Africa and North America I've never met."

Couric, an adjunct professor and former dean of biblical studies at Mid-Continent College in Mayfield, said he sees God's hand in every aspect of how the translation was completed and published. "I definitely see God's intervention through this whole process," he said. He noted that

□ See *Kentuckian's King ...*, page 3

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, October 25

Jimmy Carter renounces ties to Southern Baptist Convention

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Former President Jimmy Carter, Southern Baptists' most famous layman, says he feels "excluded" by the Southern Baptist Convention and "can no longer be associated" with the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

As a candidate in 1976 who introduced the term "born again" into the political lexicon, as a president who was criticized for witnessing to world leaders, as a goodwill ambassador through his work with Habitat for Humanity, and as a Sunday school teacher at his small church in Plains, Ga., Carter has been one of the most visible and respected Southern Baptists for 25 years.

But in a letter and press release Oct. 19, Carter lamented the new "creedal" direction taken by the SBC. He said recent changes in the Baptist Faith and Message doctrinal statement are "profound and revolutionary" and reflect "an increasingly rigid SBC creed."



Carter

In the letter mailed to 75,000 Baptists nationwide by the moderate group Texas Baptists Committed, Carter wrote he was disappointed that his effort two years ago to promote dialogue between SBC factions failed.

"Since that brief interlude of apparent harmony, I have been disappointed and feel excluded by the adoption of policies and an increasingly rigid SBC creed, including some provisions that violate the basic premises of my Christian faith. I have finally decided that, after 65 years, I can no longer be associated with the Southern Baptist Convention," said Carter, 76.

"This is strictly personal for me," he added. "I am not trying to speak for my church." He said he will remain a deacon and Sunday school teacher at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains and support the church's recent decision to send half of its missions contributions to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Carter said he and his wife, Rosalynn, want to associate with "other traditional Baptists who continue to share such beliefs as separation of church and state, servanthood and not domination of pastors, local church autonomy, a free religious press and equality of women."

He lamented the SBC's departure from those beliefs and the exclusion of those who disagree from service in the convention. "Over the years leaders of the convention have adopted an increasingly rigid creed, called a 'Baptist Faith and Message,' including some provisions that violate the basic tenets of my Christian faith. These premises have become mandatory criteria that must be accepted by employees, by members of committees who control the convention's affairs, and by professors who teach in the SBC-owned seminaries."

Carter compared division in the SBC to the inflexibility seen in the Arab-Israeli disagreement over control of East Jerusalem. He said that strictures adopted by Southern Baptists mean "if you don't accept these premises, then you cannot be a part of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Carter called the decision "torturous." "I do it with anguish and not with any pleasure," he said. Carter later added that he hopes someday Baptists of different stripes can work together in cooperation, humility and service.

SBC President James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga., called Carter's decision to withdraw "an unfortunate turn of events."

Merritt told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that he believes the former president is "a man of sincere faith." But, "he evidently has a set of personal convictions that are at odds with what we believe as Southern Baptists."

Southern Baptists "cannot maintain a relationship with anyone that would come at the expense of what we believe to be biblical truth," Merritt told the newspaper.

Groups trade in financial show and tell

SBC surplus 3 times Texas' proposed cut

NASHVILLE—As Texas Baptists head toward a key vote on the future of the Cooperative Program in that state, groups are noting the assets of the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist General Convention of Texas in a round of financial fingerpointing.

An analysis by the moderate Baptist Center for Ethics noted that the SBC currently has more than \$1 billion in assets.

In its e-mail newsletter "BCE Bytes," the Nashville-based ethics agency reported assets in investments, cash, property and equipment at the SBC's two mission boards and six seminaries totaling more than \$1,016,000,000.

Using what agency head Robert Parham called a "conservative" calculation of figures printed in the SBC's 2000 Book of Reports, the BCE reported the following:

■ The International Mission Board, which supports 4,800 missionaries and has an annual budget of \$250 million, held investments of more than \$387 million at the end of 1999. Property and equipment assets totaled just over \$17 million.

■ The North American Mission Board, with a \$126 million budget, held \$87.3 million in investments and \$23.8 million in property and equipment. The agency reported cash and interest deposits of \$6.5 million, third-party investments of \$30.7 million and mission properties of \$5.8 million.

■ Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, with 4,100 students, was the richest of the six SBC seminaries, with \$193 million in cash, investments, property and equipment. Assets at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville totaled \$141 million, at New Orleans' \$65 million and at Southeastern \$47 million.

The BCE newsletter also cited a report of a Texas theological-education study committee that SBC seminaries have a total of roughly \$186 million in endowment funds.

Parham suggested the SBC's vast assets might help explain the aggressive political tactics used by conserva-

DALLAS (ABP)—The Southern Baptist Convention took in a surplus for the fiscal year just ended that is three times more than the amount Texas Baptists might withhold from the national convention next year.

When the books closed on the SBC's fiscal year Sept. 30, total gifts to the national Cooperative Program unified budget were \$178.3 million, which is \$18.72 million over budget.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas has proposed cutting \$5.2 million from next year's funds going to six SBC seminaries and two agencies.

According to SBC policy, the \$18.72 million surplus will be distributed to all SBC agencies on the same percentage basis as regular Cooperative Program funding. That means the SBC seminaries as a group will receive a windfall of \$4.01 million, almost the same amount threatened to be lost from Texas next year.

Despite this unanticipated funding boost, leaders of several SBC seminaries have said the proposed reductions from Texas will cause severe financial strains at the semi-

naries. Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California, for example, has begun a budget-cutting process that President Bill Crews said could involve staff layoffs.

Members of the BGCT Seminary Study Committee that recommended the reallocation of Texas money have called Golden Gate's action and others like it political grandstanding intended to sway votes of messengers at the BGCT annual session in Corpus Christi next week.

The SBC Executive Committee, which would lose \$696,291 in funding from Texas next year, gained nearly that same amount in the year-end windfall, \$621,342.

The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, which would lose \$364,582 from Texas, gained \$278,855 from the year-end overage.

SBC agencies have received bonuses from Cooperative Program overages for the last several years. The SBC has experienced seven consecutive years of CP increases, a fact Executive Committee President Morris Chapman has said indicates rank-and-file Southern Baptists approve of the convention's current leadership and direction.

tives to gain control of the denomination during the 1980s.

He also suggested that rank-and-file Southern Baptists are largely unaware of the convention's wealth and that denominational officials for years have downplayed the amounts for fear that Baptists would not give sacrificially to programs that appear flush with funds.

But SBC leaders defended the reserves. IMB President Jerry Rankin said his agency's reserves date back two presidents ago, before conservatives gained control of the SBC.

Rankin said interest from its reserves fund 11 percent of the IMB's annual budget. It also allows the IMB to respond to emergency needs.

NAMB spokesman Marty King said, "To imply that the North Ameri-

can Mission Board has some secret wealth is simply misrepresenting the truth."

Meanwhile, Baptist Press noted that the Baptist General Convention of Texas and its umbrella organizations have net assets of more than \$3.2 billion, based on reports in the BGCT Annual.

Messengers to the Baptist General Convention of Texas will vote next week on a proposal to pull more than \$5 million in Cooperative Program funds from SBC entities, including \$4.3 million in CP funds from the six SBC seminaries and a combined \$1 million from the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and the SBC Executive Committee.

Based on reports by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press

CBF adopts statement about homosexuality

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has adopted a stance against homosexuality described by leaders as "welcoming but not affirming" of gays.

The Atlanta-based Fellowship's governing board, the Coordinating Council, voted Oct. 13 to adopt a "statement of organizational value" about groups or causes it will fund.

The statement describes faithfulness in marriage and celibacy by singles as "the foundation of a Christian sexual ethic."

"Because of this organizational value, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship does not allow for the expenditure of funds for organizations that condone, advocate or affirm homosexual practice," it says.

The statement further prohibits the "purposeful" hiring of gays as CBF staff or missionaries.

The Coordinating Council approved the recommendation by a 35-

23 margin, but council leaders added quickly that they doubt the vote was a referendum on homosexuality.

CBF moderator-elect Jim Baucom said the approved statement "probably represents the vast majority of people in this room." While a few members obviously voted against the statement out of conviction, he said, several others told him they agreed with its sentiment personally but "cannot make a statement that would exclude people from the pews of my church."

The Fellowship, a moderate group spun off from a long controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention, is often targeted by SBC critics for associating with individuals and groups on record as affirming gays. While CBF leaders have said publicly they believe homosexuality is immoral, the organization itself has never before made a statement on the issue.

CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal said he has "given an inordinate

amount of time" to the issue of homosexuality in his three years on the job. Fellowship leaders have received more than 200 e-mails, letters and phone calls on the subject since last summer's General Assembly alone, he said.

While the Fellowship has purposefully avoided taking positions on controversial issues through a policy of not allowing resolutions at the General Assembly, Vestal and other leaders said the organization can no longer dodge a controversy that is dividing many denominations.

While rejecting homosexual practice, the new CBF statement acknowledges "the love and grace of God for all people, both those who live by this understanding of the biblical standard and those who do not."

Vestal described the Fellowship's position on homosexuality as "welcoming but not affirming," borrowing a phrase from the title of a book by theologian Stanley Grenz.

Owensboro churches unite for Celebrate Jesus crusade

By Karen Owen
Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer

OWENSBORO—The music was upbeat and mostly modern, but the message at Celebrate Jesus 2000 was as traditional and hard-hitting as any of Sam Jones' sermons.

Jones, a Methodist evangelist who preached a record-setting revival in Owensboro more than 100 years ago, "happens to be my hero," Harold Hunter told a crowd that nearly filled the Owensboro Sportscenter on Sunday night. "I'm praying for the same move of God this week."

Hunter preached Oct. 15-18 at an evangelistic crusade organized by Daviess-McLean Baptist Association. In his first sermon Hunter had as much to say about those who already attend church as those who don't.

But first came lots of music, including an interchurch choir and an ensemble from Bellevue Baptist Church, a small orchestra, drums, guitars, electric keyboards and even bongo drums.

Many people in the crowd clapped along. Even the more traditional numbers had many worshipers tapping toes or patting a leg in time with the music.

First Baptist Church of Owensboro member Karen London was there with her 11-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son. Her husband was singing in the choir.

She remembered attending a crusade at the Sportscenter when she was about her daughter's age, London said before the service began.

Her family came to this crusade because "we always spend our Sundays in worship, Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings," she said.

"I think any way you can fellowship and worship is a good thing," London said. "Whenever you see the community come together with one focus on Christ Jesus, it's uplifting."

"This is not a Baptist thing," Ross Bauscher, chairman of the crusade committee, told the crowd at the beginning of the program. John McRaith, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Owensboro, was at the service, Bauscher noted.

"This is the family of God come together to lift up Jesus' name," he said.

That family needs to get right with God, Hunter, the former pastor of North Jacksonville Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., told the audience.

He's not surprised that Satan has deceived "the Hollywood crowd" and others outside the church, Hunter said. "The thing that really troubles me is Satan has deceived many people in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Satan has deceived us in the matter of holiness," he said. "Boy, there's a word you don't hear preached.

"Would you like to know why there are plenty of seats in the average church in Owensboro?" he asked.

Outsiders look at the "shameful" way Christians live and see no difference from the ways of the world, Hunter said.

He blasted men for thinking they can watch sex on television—HBO stands for "Hell's Body Odor," Hunter said—without being guilty of adultery. He also blasted women for gossip.

"If you can tear down somebody's reputation and not feel any remorse, honey, you need to get saved," he said.

And he warned teens not to think they can pet in parked cars every Friday night and congratulate themselves for not committing fornication because they didn't go "all the way."

Racism, he said, "is not a skin problem. It's a sin problem."

"I have no right to change the truthfulness of the Word of God, and God calls homosexuality a sin," he said.

And finally, Hunter told churchgoers, "if you don't tithe, you are a thief."

Someone who is truly a Christian, Hunter said, can't continue sinning. A saved person will either repent or be chastised by God, he said.

During the altar call, hundreds of people flowed to the front of the arena, some of them wearing red cards hanging from strings around their necks, designating them as counselors. A fourth to a third of the respondents raised their hands when Hunter asked who was making a first-time commitment to Christ.

Charles Jarvis of Livermore was one of the counselors. "I had the opportunity to share with a woman who was 43 years old," Jarvis said later. She wanted to become a Christian. "It was a joyous time."

"It was good," London said, summing up the service afterward as she shepherded her children toward the exit. God's presence was at the service "in a mighty way tonight."

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BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children** has named Barbara Ruschival of Crestwood as director of development for the South Central and metro-Louisville regions.

■ **Georgetown College** has joined a national pilot program to promote tolerance and appreciation of diversity in schools. Next spring, undergraduates will help implement the "Communicating Common Ground" program in Georgetown high school and elementary classes.

■ **Kentucky Baptist Fellowship** will host workshops on technology in the church Oct. 28 at Third Baptist Church in Owensboro and Nov. 4 at Melbourne Heights Baptist Church in Louisville. The free meetings are designed to teach how to use technology as a ministry tool. No pre-registration is required. For more information, call (502) 721-6060 or send e-mail to kbf@core.com.

■ **Correction:** Last week's story about the Franklin Graham crusade in Louisville contained an error concerning the mass choir. The choir consisted of approximately 1,600 people from 440 area churches.

Kentuckian's King James translation to be used in Africa, prisons

Continued from page 1

he had finished editing the New Testament of the KJV2000 in 1994, and started at that time to seek a publisher for the new Bible version.

"There was a lot of interest in the work, but no one willing to put any money behind its publication," Couric recalled. He continued working on the Old Testament while teaching classes at Mid-Continent, but ill health forced him to retire from full-time teaching in 1997.

"But I knew it was God's direction," Couric said of the forced retirement, "because doing this translation required a great deal of research and time, and once I retired I finally had the time to really focus on completing it."

After Couric completed the translation this summer, he realized why God had allowed him the time to work full-time on the KJV2000. He received a phone call from Glen Alan Sherwood, a translator for the 21st Century King James Version, who suggested Couric get in touch with the Bible League, an interdenominational ministry that provides Bibles around the world. "He mentioned they were looking for a minimum-change translation," Couric said, "so I sent them some information and samples in December 1999."

A month later, Couric received a call from Joseph Owens, director of African Missions for the Bible League. Owens saw Couric's translation as the perfect tool for use in English-speaking African churches. "These are people who have come from countries originally colonized by England," explained Couric, "and they prefer the slightly more formal language of the King James Version. But they also want some of the archaic

What's the difference?

Reference	King James	New King James	King James 2000
Genesis 24:45	and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee	And I said to her, "Please let me drink"	and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray you
Matthew 5:13	if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?	if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?	if the salt has lost its savor, how shall it be salted?
John 17:5	glorify thou me with thine own self	glorify Me together with yourself	glorify me with your own self
Romans 4:3	For what saith the scripture?	For what does the Scripture say?	For what says the scripture?
Romans 4:5	But to him that worketh not	But to him who does not work	But to him that works not

ic language—the 'thee's' and 'thou's', for example—updated so its easier to understand."

Owens informed Couric that the Bible League planned to publish approximately 100,000 copies of the complete KJV2000 and more than 100,000 KJV2000 New Testaments for use in African churches. An additional 10,000 copies also would be printed for use in American and Canadian prison ministries, where the traditional KJV is also the

most widely used and accepted version.

"It's just incredible," Couric said, "there are a million African Christians with no Bible, and God is using me here in Kentucky to get the Bible out to these people."

Couric's translation differs from other similar translations, such as the New King James Version, in several ways. "The intent of the King James 2000 is to look, sound and feel like

the KJV," said Couric.

First, the KJV2000 keeps the King James vocabulary as it is except in places where the vocabulary might cause a mistake in meaning (for example, changing the word "suffer" to "allow," or the word "bowels" to "heart").

Second, the KJV2000 keeps almost all of the original sentence order and structure of the KJV rather than changing it to more modern structure and order. Most of all, Couric sought to make the KJV2000 the least altered update of the KJV translation available, keeping every word the same except in cases where there is a misunderstanding or in cases where the word order would result in a gross misreading for modern readers.

The KJV2000 will be available as full text in hardback and paperback editions, one with a cover specifically targeting the African market and the other targeting the North American market. The Bible League also will publish two paperback editions.

"Currently, there's no leather ver-

sion available, but we hope eventually we'll be able to offer that," said Couric. He said he also hopes a red-letter edition will be offered later.

Couric's red letter edition keeps the standard format of recording all Jesus' words in red print, but also records the words of God the Father and the Holy Spirit in red as well in both the Old and New Testaments. The red-letter edition is not currently available because it was not needed for the African ministry of the Bible League and would have added to the cost of printing.

Regardless of what future editions are offered, Couric said he's glad to see God bear fruit through his work and see his dream fulfilled.

"A large percentage of English-speaking people still prefer the KJV, whether because of their trust in its truthfulness or their enjoyment of its beauty of language," he said. "To these saints the King James 2000 is presented, that they may hold to the old with confidence, yet move into the future without fear."



Couric

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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Don't underestimate the power of stories

By Erich Bridges
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Find the common thread in the following items:

■ The numerous "newsmagazines" on American television carry little actual news, but attract legions of viewers with their dramatic stories of real people in crisis.

■ "Uncle Tom's Cabin" helped start a war—and end American slavery.

■ The "Left Behind" end-times novels by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins are huge bestsellers, drawing millions of readers to consider biblical themes.

■ When a teenage gunman walked into the Columbine High School library last year and asked if anyone believed in God, 17-year-old Christian student Cassie Bernal reportedly replied, "Yes, I believe in God" before she was shot dead. The story of her brave response has sparked a national revival among her generation.

■ Kids everywhere still plead nightly: "Mommy, tell me a story."

What unites these fragments? Stories. Be they simple or profound, fictional or factual, stories retain their age-old power to enthrall. Great stories do much more: They enlighten—and motivate. Children need stories to develop young minds and moral senses. Adults need them to make sense of a seemingly random world.

God's Word contains the greatest (and truest) story ever told: His saving love for the nations, culminating in the coming of His Son. It continues to transform lives the world over.

It's no surprise that chronological Bible "storying"—the teaching of God's message of salvation through simple Bible stories from Genesis to Jesus—has become one of the most effective modern mission methods in oral cultures that revere storytelling.

Americans respond to stories, too, however sophisticated we think we have become. And when it comes to communicating a message people will embrace in confused postmodern culture, "He who tells the best story wins," Al Janssen of Focus on the Family told a Christian writers conference last spring. "We have the best story, but we're not telling it very well. Tell it compellingly and the world will come hear it. ... That is our challenge today, to master story."

Award-winning Christian TV/film producer Phil Cooke had similar advice for listeners at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "The filmmaker Ingmar Bergman said, 'Facts go straight to your head. Stories go straight to your heart,'" Cooke recounted.

Yet most Christian television still consists of static, headshot preaching loaded with lingo that only long-time Christians can understand. Likewise, Cooke added, every Sun-

day "thousands of pastors will step into the pulpit without telling a single story."

Cooke issued a challenge: "Learn to tell stories that will change people's lives."

That's good advice for any gospel communicator. It's also wise counsel for mission mobilizers. Gen X missions leader Michael Schwartz explains why today's young adults respond so positively to missionaries and other Christian servants of their grandparents' generation:

"Those folks have been trained in telling stories, and we love storytelling. We love them to sit down and tell us their lives and give us great stories of faith, things that are real that happened with them."

That's nothing new. Missionary stories of generations or centuries past have long inspired the young to follow their elders' footsteps into the world. But we need to realize it anew, and tell those stories again.

Reporting about the lost millions is essential, says Florida Baptist Witness editor Michael Chute, formerly the International Mission Board's missionary correspondent in Asia. But talking about the masses only, he cautions, "tends to dehumanize. It allows audiences and readers to become detached, to look at the 'forest' without seeing the 'trees.'"

He emphasized that "the story of missions is not a story of 'forests,' but one of 'trees,'" of people transformed by God.

COMMENTARY

What are you thinking?

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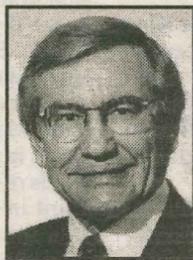
'Partners in the Harvest'

The 2000 Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting Nov. 14-15 at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green looks to be a wonderful time of worship, business and fellowship.

This year's sessions will feature inspirational music, creative reports and challenging messages. Convention business will include recommendations from committees, the election of officers, the appointment of committee members, consideration of the 2001-2002 KBC budget and other business.

One of the biggest highlights will be the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Cooperative Program during the Tuesday evening session. The celebration will feature a dramatic portrayal of Boyce Taylor, the pastor of First Baptist Church of Murray in the early 1900s who prepared the way for a unified budget to support missions. Also planned are a wonderful music video that will enable us to visualize the multitude of ministries supported by the cooperative gifts of Kentucky Bapt-

tists and a mini-concert by Dove Award winner Clay Crosse. It should be a very moving time as representatives of Kentucky Baptist ministries join Crosse on the platform as he concludes the concert.



Bill Mackey

It is my prayer that churches in driving distance will organize van and bus trips to encourage members to be a part of this historic celebration on Tuesday night. It will be a wonderful time of celebration.

We have a lot to celebrate. According to a report by Lowell Ashby, our business services team leader, Kentucky Baptists led the way among old-line state conventions in percentage increase in gifts to the Cooperative Program during 1999-2000 with a 7.5 percent increase over the previous year.

Other inspirational music at the annual meeting will be provided by Doug Crawley, Alma Randolph, Phoebe Parks, the Tapestry Ensemble, Georgetown College Chorale, Kentucky Baptist Chorale and Wind Orchestra, and combined choirs

from the Bowling Green area.

Dramatist Chuck Neighbors will interpret the theme, "Partners in the Harvest," creatively in each session. These creative interpretations have become a highlight of the convention.

Terry Wilder will bring the president's address and preside during most sessions. Harold Greenfield, who served as director of missions for Caldwell-Lyon Association until his retirement last year, will bring the convention sermon.

Charles Lowery will speak during the Pastors' Conference set for the same location on Monday as well as on Wednesday morning to conclude the annual meeting. Lowery is pastor of the rapidly growing Hoffmantown Baptist Church in Albuquerque, N.M. He is known for his humor and principles of leadership and church growth. You will be glad you stayed to hear him.

I want to encourage you to pray that God will be glorified through this convention. Do your best to attend the entire convention, especially the celebration Tuesday night.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

Checklist offers keys to healthy stewardship

By Doug Strader

In the book, "Vital Signs of a Healthy Church," Clarence Hackett describes 10 signs of a healthy



stewardship church, but he also notes there are unhealthy signs in individuals and churches.

He lists these unhealthy signs

and then offers a practical "how to" list that can help improve the situation.

Individual unhealthy signs:

■ Fifty to 55 percent of church members give no money to the Lord's work.

■ There are too few members active in leadership positions.

■ Many members consider themselves too busy to attend or serve at church.

■ Leaders and members have little sense of the church's vision.

■ Members see stewardship as giving money only.

■ Members lack maturity as faithful stewards.

■ Fraud or embezzlement may occur.

Church leaders don't tithe.

Unhealthy Church Signs:

■ There is little or no stewardship promotion.

■ There are few appeals for members to serve or give.

■ The church lacks leaders with time for service, stewardship or leadership.

■ The church has lost its vision.

■ There is a limited concept of total stewardship.

■ There are limited stewardship development opportunities.

■ A church has no checks or balances in its accounting procedures.

■ A church does not expect its leaders to tithe.

How to's:

■ Provide quarterly statements of contributions with thank you notes and ministry reports.

■ Offer Christian money management seminars.

■ Emphasize spiritual gifts.

■ Provide leadership training.

■ Prominently display the church's mission statement on budget and financial reports.

■ Conduct stewardship Bible studies.

■ Provide year-round stewardship education.

■ Adopt church procedures for internal financial control.

■ Promote tithing and giving.

Our office has a supply of this 48-page booklet available to Kentucky Baptist churches. To order a copy, call (888) 254-5708.

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

Single parents can gain relief by lowering expectation level

Q: How can one parent handle three teenagers? I'm a single mom with a son, 17, and daughters, 15 and 14. By the time I get home from work and cook dinner, they are complaining. Weekends are spent shopping, cleaning, doing laundry and then church on Sunday. They are all good kids with high marks in school. They stay busy with their homework and friends. They do keep the house mowed and take out the trash. I hate to make them do more just because their father and I divorced. What can I do?

Stop doing so much yourself and either share the load with them, get outside help, lessen the quality or let something go undone. You seem to be feeling guilty about the divorce and working hard to keep them from chores. Make this an issue for the family to discuss. Tell them that you are burned out.

I think chores are good for teenagers. They learn responsibility and how to manage their time carefully. Also, they discover the satisfaction that comes from being productive in everyday living. Honest toil builds character, self-discipline and the ability to sacrifice for others. Spirituality builds upon these personal traits. Make a list of eight to 10 chores and ask them to select two each for a month. Rotate the tasks the next month if they need a change. Use praise and quality time together as a reward.

If you can afford to hire out some work, it might be a good tradeoff—money for time and peace. Eating out, taking clothes to the laundry or buying prepared foods are ways of engaging outside help. Is the family willing to make the sacrifice in money? Perhaps a family member or good friend at church could volunteer to help once a month and give you some time off.

Lessen the quality of the work and let that level be good enough. Clean the house every two weeks. Tell them to do their own laundry for special care items. Get them to clip coupons and then buy all groceries at one place. You cannot be a single mom, work full-time, and run a Better Homes and Gardens, "picture-perfect" home.

Just do not do some things at all. If they want something ironed, let them do it or leave it undone. Stop planting flowers that need tending. Move to a condo where there is no yard to mow. Simplify life if you can't get relief any other way.—
Wade Rowatt

Q: What can be done to help homebound senior adults use modern technology to keep in touch with other people and the world around them?

In Michigan a joint program between Michigan State University and the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging is putting television and video equipment into the homes of senior adults who are confined to their homes. Carrie Hetter, director of the program, states that in addition to watching television, program participants can have interactive television installed in a room of their choice. This connects them via the Internet to such resources as the local senior center.

This equipment uses audio, video and network technology to open a window to a distant location. They have the option of engaging in conversations or they can just watch. This provides a new kind of social relationship: an ambient presence, a shared window between one individual's life and the lives of a chosen social group, friends or family.

Anyone interested in learning more about this project can contact Hetter at (415) 681-6473. I do not know of anyone in this area who is doing anything like this. If you know of someone, let me know at JonR885624@aol.com.—
Jon Rainbow

Family Forum writers are David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; 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.



Commitment, compassion & consistency

My mom, Juanita Henderson, is being honored this week as she retires from her responsibilities as associational Woman's Missionary Union director for Southeast Missouri Baptist Association. While that is not major front-page news in the grand scheme of denominational life, her years of faithful service are representative of a generation of grassroots Baptists who have dedicated their lives to missions and ministry on the local church level and beyond.

My parents, like other families in rural farming communities in the 1930s, spent most of their childhood years in the throes of the Great Depression. Following their wedding and Dad's overseas service in World War II, they joined millions of other Americans as part of the Builder generation—a segment of society Tom Brokaw has described as America's "greatest generation."

During the 20-plus years since Dad's death, Mom has remained active in ministry projects ranging from WMU leadership to backyard Bible clubs for neighborhood kids to out-of-state mission trips. She also found time to serve as a houseparent for unwed, pregnant teens at Missouri Baptist Children's Home and to provide care for my grandfather during his final years of life.

Now age 76, Mom is taking a well-deserved break from her associational WMU role as she encourages women from younger generations to step into leadership.

Some of my earliest memories during my preschool years are of Mom taking me with her to associational WMU meetings while my older sisters and brother were at school. While those meetings weren't always the most exciting way for an energetic 5-year-old to spend his day, in later years I grew to appreciate the tremendous contributions of those WMU members as they studied, prayed and gave to support mission efforts around the globe.

Much of my appreciation for missions can be

traced to Mom's lifelong enthusiasm for personalizing Christ's Great Commission. She and countless other women have set unwavering examples of what it means to undergird the spread of the gospel on a daily basis. Among the traits they exemplify are:

■ **Commitment.** Mom and other Christian women of her generation have been willing to stand for their beliefs regardless of the cost. In a world filled with compromise, corruption and chaos, it is refreshing to witness the faithfulness of believers who gather to affirm the urgency of sharing God's love with a needy world.

■ **Compassion.** WMU's role as an active, vital part of Baptist life for more than a century has not grown out of mere tradition or a sense of obligation. Mom and her fellow WMU members are driven by heartfelt compassion for neighbors down the street and strangers in distant lands. I've often seen Mom take time to deliver a meal to a hungry family, tutor an academically struggling child or visit an ill friend in the hospital as practical expressions of her sincere love both

for God and others.

■ **Consistency.** Come rain or shine, affirmation or adversity, missions has remained a constant focus in WMU settings throughout the years. And missions commitment isn't the only area of consistency for Mom and her peers. I never recall hearing Mom tell one person one thing and then changing her story when she was around someone else. Her consistent honesty and integrity are daily testimonies to anyone she encounters.

"Who can find a virtuous woman?" asks Proverbs 31. "For her price is far above rubies. . . Her children rise up and call her blessed." Like most of you, I can sincerely bestow the title of "virtuous woman" on my mother.

Thanks, Mom, for living a life of commitment, compassion and consistency. Congratulations on a job well done. I love you.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Authentic worship is delicate balancing act

By Carl Stam

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." (Colossians 3:16-17)

That passage seems pretty clear—or does it? The apostle Paul instructs the early church that its corporate, Christ-filled life should be characterized by wise teaching and songs of heartfelt gratitude to God. Very clear!

But there are so many things that are not clear. How do we find the most effective musical language to lead God's diverse "one body" in meaningful song and prayer? Is there a proper balance between the historic worship models of the early church and those of the Protestant Reformation? Can we find an appropriate middle ground between our revivalist, free-church fore-

bears and the evangelical worship thinkers of our day? Is authentic corporate worship of God a natural byproduct of holy thinking and living, or does a meaningful encounter with our Creator and Redeemer yield lives of faithful discipleship?

The tough service-planning questions are not over yet. Do we design a worship experience that is aimed at the head or the heart? Or does "wise teaching and gratitude in your hearts" imply that both cognitive and experiential responses are needed as the Word of Christ indwells His church, His bride? Is our

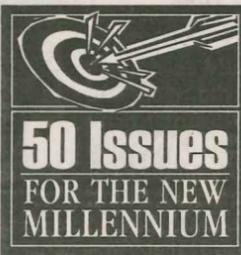
Sunday morning gathering intended primarily to reach the lost with the bold gospel of the cross, or are we seeking to lead born-again women, men and children in adoration of our gracious heavenly Life Giver?

Evangelistic outreach or doxological outreach? Organs or pianos? Electric or acoustic? Wood or carpet? Monthly, quarterly or weekly? Hymns or worship songs? Loud or soft? Fast or slow? Bach or Bliss? Fanny Crosby or Twila Paris?

I propose that these and many other important choices for church musicians and worship leaders are best answered by balance, combination and a spirit of Christian deference. We can find musical and poetic languages that allow the local church to adequately express its sincere praises to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We can encourage God's people to invest more spiritual energy in Christian expressions of artistic deference, rather than in various modes of self-serving stylistic elitism. We can model to our congregations a relentless affirmation of doctrinal essentials as we hold more loosely to matters of personal taste or even regional distinctives. We can honor the riches of our Christ-centered faith heritage while doing everything in our power to give the congregation an authentic voice to express its full-hearted gratitude to God.

May the Holy Spirit be our teacher in these important matters, and may the glory of God be our main concern. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

Carl Stam is associate professor of church music and worship and director of the Institute for Christian Worship at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He posts weekly quotes about worship and prayer at www.wqotw.org.



BAPTISTS

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Begg to deliver Southern lectures.** Pastor and author Alistair Begg will be the featured speaker for the Mullins Lectures at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Oct. 31-Nov. 2. Begg will speak at Alumni Memorial Chapel Oct. 31 and Nov. 2 and at Heritage Hall Nov. 1. All three lectures will begin at 10 a.m. For more information, contact the seminary's public relations office at (502) 897-4141.

■ **Baylor interested in Bush library.** Baylor University is interested in securing a library that would be dedicated to Texas governor and presidential candidate George W. Bush. Baylor's administration shared the idea with the school's Board of Regents, but no action was taken. "It is premature for them to think about, but planning is not premature," Baylor President Robert Sloan said.

■ **New Orleans trustees back BF&M.** Trustees for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary showed support for the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message statement by signing the new statement. Trustees also affirmed seminary President Chuck Kelley's work in developing the document.

■ **Fisher inaugurated Belmont president.** Robert Fisher was inaugurated Sept. 29 as president of Belmont University, a Baptist-affiliated school in Nashville. Fisher, former vice president for academic affairs at Arkansas State University, was appointed to the post in April.

■ **Missouri governor was active Baptist.** Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan, who died Oct. 16 in a plane crash near St. Louis, was a lifelong Southern Baptist active in his church and denomination. Carnahan, 66, who was running for the U.S. Senate, died in a plane crash en route to a campaign stop. Carnahan was an active member of First Baptist Church in Rolla, Mo. He also was a former member of the Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Board and a former trustee of Southwest Baptist University and the Southern Baptist Foundation.

■ **"Mainstream" group in Alabama.** A group in Alabama has formed a new chapter of "mainstream" Baptists. Mainstream Alabama Baptists, one of several state organizations modeled loosely after Texas Baptists Committed, intends to support the Alabama Baptist

State Convention and defend it against "fundamentalism" that the group says in a press release "has ravaged the Southern Baptist Convention." The group said it plans to emphasize lay involvement in state-convention life.

■ **Merritt asks for prayer for election.** Southern Baptist Convention president James Merritt said Southern Baptists should pray and fast that God's will be done in the Nov. 7 presidential elections. The pastor of First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga., asked that Southern Baptists specifically pray for the election of godly men and women to serve in public offices, from the White House to Congress.

■ **Baptist head hails Disney closings.** A Southern Baptist official has greeted reports of plans for the closure of more than 100 Walt Disney Co. stores as a sign that a boycott against the entertainment conglomerate has been successful. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that Disney plans to redesign about 600 of its stores and close the remaining 140 stores over the next several years as their leases expire. "I read this news as a sign that the boycott Southern Baptists called in 1997

against the Disney Company is working," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

■ **Texas conservatives add staff.** The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention has tapped a global prayer strategist from the International Mission Board and a former Indiana Baptist editor as the newest members of the two-year-old convention's staff. Carra Kumpe began her assignment of directing women's ministries and prayer support for Southern Baptists of Texas Convention on Oct. 16, while Gary Ledbetter has been named communications director beginning Jan. 1.

■ **SBC of Virginia adds 41 churches.** The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia added 41 churches to its ranks and adopted an \$8.2 million budget in its annual Bible conference and convention. Fifty-six of the SBCV's 292 churches are dually aligned with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia left the BGAV in 1992 due to theological differences. The SBCV shares undesignated receipts on a 50-50 basis with the Southern Baptist Convention.



2000 Kentucky Baptist Convention November 13-15

Limited Care for Preschoolers and Children

During convention sessions
and Pastors' Conference
First Baptist Church
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Extended teaching care for a limited number of preschoolers and children (ages 6 weeks-5th grade) will be provided by **ADVANCE RESERVATION ONLY**—call (888) 254-5709 for reservation via Wendy Dever in Sunday School Department. Care will be provided at the church. Children must be picked up at meal times.

Due to staff and space limits, all reservations for children must be made in advance. There is no charge for this care, thanks to gifts through the Cooperative Program and the Pre-school Children's Office, Sunday School Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Wendy Dever, Associate for Pre-school/Children.

Observer: Christianity growing in Laos despite persecution

Continued from page 1

to sign have been placed in wooden stocks.

The document's widespread, ongoing use by provincial and local Laotian officials has been documented by the World Evangelical Fellowship's Religious Liberty Commission and other sources. Reports claim that hundreds of rural Christians have been forced to sign the form in public, then compelled to participate in animistic sacrifices.

The constitution of Laos, ratified in 1991, guarantees "the right and freedom to believe or not believe in religions." But that right apparently does not apply to evangelical Christians, who have been persecuted with increasing intensity as they have grown in number. And though the right to believe might exist on paper, the state continues to outlaw evangelism, religious training and church-planting.

Despite the persecution—and in

some cases because of it—Christians in Laos have more than doubled, from about 32,000 in 1997 to 80,000 or more today, according to a well-informed observer. Some estimates put the total much higher.

The government reportedly identifies Christianity as the No. 1 enemy of the state. It accuses Christians of undermining Laotian culture, national unity and the traditional dominance of Buddhism, which reinforces existing social power structures.

Laotian sources have reported a new government drive, called "The Program," that aims to eliminate Christianity in Laos by the end of this year and close all Christian places of worship in the countryside.

Some believers renounce their faith under pressure, but the crackdown often backfires.

"The local people say, 'There must be something to this if the government is taking such a strong stand against it.

It must be right,'" a Christian observer told Baptist Press. As for Christians themselves, the observer said, "We've seen people grow stronger in the midst of persecution. Once they've been refined by it, their faith is just so strong."

Some jailed believers were released in June, but up to 100 Christians remain in custody, according to reports.

That might be just the tip of the iceberg, the source said. In rural areas, "there could be a couple of hundred or even more."

Home to about 5 million people, Laos has been ruled by the socialist Lao People's Revolutionary Party since 1975. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an annual per capita income of \$350. It has experienced marked economic growth in recent years, but more than 80 percent of the population still depends on subsistence farming.

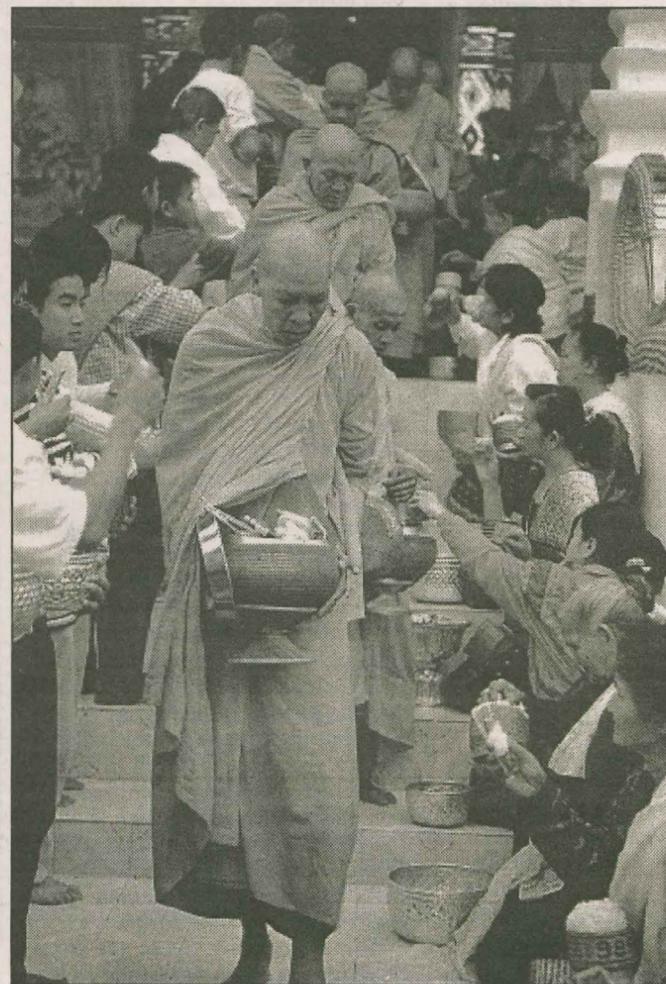
Most Laotians practice Buddhism or animism. Christians remain a fraction of the population, but an expanding one. About 15,000 Christians lived in the country when the communists gained power in 1975, and many fled the country or went into hiding. The church began to expand again in 1990 as revival reportedly swept the countryside.

Another revival began in mid-1997 in an unexpected place: among the oppressed Khmu people of Laos.

"The Khmu are the second-largest people group in Laos (at about 20 percent of the population), but historically they have been slaves to the more powerful peoples of the region," the observer said. History, he added, also predicted the Khmu would fall away from their new faith when challenged.

"But this time they were very responsive and filled with boldness once they got the gospel. In one area, they took (the message) to the governor of their province. They just began to share the gospel with everyone, especially with other Khmu."

Christian literature, gospel cassettes and gospel radio listening groups have rapidly increased the spread of the gospel despite numerous arrests of people



BUDDHIST INFLUENCE
Buddhist monks receive alms from worshippers on Buddha's birthday at a temple in Laos. Ancient Buddhism and a 25-year-old communist regime are the two power structures of the Southeast Asia nation, and both oppose Christianity, which has been spreading in the countryside. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

brought listening to Christian radio broadcasts. Hundreds of house-church leaders have been trained and now are taking the initiative to train others. In each of several areas more than 3,000 people, including entire villages, decided to follow Christ within a single year.

What can outside Christians do to help? Appeals to the government to respect believers' right to worship might help, the observer said. "If the Lord leads people to do that, they need to be obedient and do it," he said. But he stressed that the opposition is refining and purifying the church.

"We see this persecution as natural," he said. "We're not praying that the government will change. We're just praying that they (Christians) will have moments during this persecution when they can have fellowship with other believers, maybe in jail. Pray for God to give them an extra measure of His grace during this time."

You are invited to our 100th Anniversary Celebration!

Latonia Baptist Church in Covington, Ky., will celebrate its 100th anniversary Nov. 11-12. A special banquet will be held on the 11th at the Commonwealth Hilton in Florence beginning at 6 p.m., featuring Christian entertainer Joe Mason. Reservations are required.

Dr. Bill Turner, pastor of the South Main Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, will speak in the morning worship service on the 12th at 10:45 a.m.

Friends and former members of Latonia Baptist Church are cordially invited to join us for this centennial celebration. Please call the church office at (859) 431-8004 for reservations and further details.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION 2000 MESSENGER CARDS

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Messenger cards for voting privileges at the KBC are available **upon request** from the KBC Executive Office. Avoid long lines at the convention—request your messenger cards now.

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RESOURCES

Church hoppers give varied reasons for not staying put

Resources:

"High Expectation Churches" by Thom Rainer

"Building High Commitment in a Low Commitment World" by Bill Hull

Continued from page 1

option-driven consumer culture have changed the equation. Church hopping has become a way of life for many.

Most churches are unprepared for the new ground rules. They watch in bewilderment as their membership rolls turn over or even decline.

Co-pastor Grant Teagarden and the other folks just starting Living Hope Church in Santa Clara, Calif., said they hope they have the solution—a little something for everyone.

"For those from a liturgical background, we'd like to set up a room where you can come before the service and have communion and liturgy. For those who just need quiet and prayer, we'd have a room where the prayer team can pray for you and you can meditate. We'd like to have a service where all the members of the family can worship together, without having to be separated."

Lifestyle changes also complicate the picture. The average working couple logs 717 more office hours a year than they did in 1969.

For a person who hasn't settled into one church, it's easier to take that day off without feeling guilty. Likewise, attending church sporadically keeps many people from getting deeply involved anywhere.

Some church hoppers say their membership shifts with their spiritual development.

"Your needs change," says Reggie McNeal, a leadership-development specialist from South Carolina. "You attend this church partly because the children's ministry is very good. But children grow up into teenagers, and maybe this church doesn't have a strong youth ministry, and so you look for a church that does."

It happened to Jo from Columbia, S.C. After several years at a downtown Presbyterian church with a "warm and wonderful pastor" and a "fantastic children's ministry," she took her two children across town to a different Presbyterian church. They were teenagers now, and there was little for them at the downtown church.

About four years later they transferred again, this time to the Baptist church across the street from the Presbyterian one. Her children had graduated from high school and there was a new pastor at the Baptist church. Her needs had changed.

So who exactly is church hopping? Is it just the Gen-Xers who flit from church to church? Is it just the



market-shaping Boomers?

Lyle Schaller writes about those generational differences: "The loyal member born before 1940 is upset and baffled when a longtime member becomes dissatisfied and quietly departs to worship with a different congregation in that same community. The younger member, who was reared in a culture overflowing with choices, shrugs off that departure as normal and completely acceptable."

While each generation has a different take on loyalty, church hopping is about more than generational differences.

"It's a values issue more than a generational one," says Brad Sargent, who studies and teaches on ministry in the postmodern era. While some church hopping is a result of consumerism, particularly among Boomers, Sargent says, "Postmoderns, whatever their age, do it more for spiritual reasons."

Futurist Cassidy Dale agrees. "I think often when people church hop, they're looking for spiritual hooks. They want to be drawn in deeper. They're looking for spiritual depth. "The postmodern church-hopper

is looking for spiritual meat," explains Dale, a research consultant in Washington, D.C. "They want a church with a unique calling and identity, one that will go with them on an adventurous spiritual journey."

He pauses before adding, "Many churches don't offer this."

While many church leaders lament the cultural changes that have made us a nation of church hoppers, others are more accepting.

"I cannot in good faith judge the church hopper," admits consultant Jim Simpson of Columbia, S.C. "God may be working in their lives. He may be using their church hopping. If they're honestly looking for the beef, why berate them? I wish we had enough substance that we were worthy of being hopped to!"

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How to respond

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—Here's how churches respond to hopping, according to congregational leaders and consultants polled by FaithWorks magazine:

■ **Deny it.** "Churches for the most part are in denial that people church hop, especially if they can't tell by looking at the numbers," says Jim Simpson, discipleship director at the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

In fact, experts say, few churches and denominations keep track of how long members stay or why they leave.

■ **Do nothing.** "The majority of churches respond with hand-wringing and think it must be the preacher's fault," says Roy Oswald, senior consultant with the Alban Institute research organization. "(They) know they need to do something different, but don't know what. And so (they) don't do anything."

■ **Don't worry about it.** "Most of the thriving churches I know focus on empowering those who find what they need at their church," says author and consultant Bill Easum. "They don't feel it makes much difference what church people go to as long as they are growing in Christ."

Adds Easum's colleague, Tom Bandy, "Most thriving churches recognize that church hopping is just part of the reality of the pre-Christian world."

■ **Hook the committed ones.** Some churches are bucking the church-hopping trend by requiring members to sign covenants or agreements that detail the conditions of membership. "Membership here means 'I'm joining this family and committing myself in the responsibilities of this church,'" says James Atherton, pastor of The Bridge Church in San Francisco.

FBC Leitchfield Seeks Pastor

First Baptist Church of Leitchfield, Ky., seeks as its pastor a visionary who is called by God to minister to people of all ages. This position requires strong communication and leadership skills, including the willingness to empower others to lead and work with other ministers on staff. This energetic and dynamic man will have a passion for community evangelism and soul-winning as well as a loving, caring heart for guiding the spiritual development of others. Because he has a strong, disciplined prayer life, he will know when God calls him to this purpose-driven ministry. If you feel led to join God working through this church and ministries such as a new family life center, a mission church, a new Christian academy, a preschool program and children, youth, senior and music ministries, please submit a resumé to Larry Perkins, Search Chairman, 105 Moon Ave., Leitchfield, KY 42754.

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Colson: Stats show trend toward cultural decay reversing

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—The trend of cultural decay of the past 30 years has begun to reverse itself to the point at which statistics indicate the first signs of improvement in the nation's moral climate, according to Charles Colson.

Colson, President Nixon's self-proclaimed "hatchet-man"-turned-evangelical commentator and author, was one of the featured speakers during Legacy 2000, a conference sponsored jointly by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis.

Colson noted that while Christians often appear to be losing ground in society at large, the worst thing they can do is retreat into the churches and stop engaging the culture.

In fact, statistics indicate that the tide is turning. Teenage pregnancies are at the lowest level since statistics began being recorded 40 years ago, he said. Crime is at the lowest level since 1973; welfare rolls have been cut in half; divorce is down 19 percent over the past 20 years; and the number of abortions has declined by 15 percent during the past 20 years.

Why the reversal? Colson pointed

to the "modernist impasse," a realization that the ideals of the 1960s ultimately result in societal decay.

"The '60s culture became mainstream, and we see the quintessential expressions of the '60s today: 'Do your own thing,' 'Live for the moment,' 'Overcome the nothingness of life,' 'God is dead,'" he said. "It leads to moral chaos, and people can't live with that. And they're suddenly waking up to the fact that you simply can't survive in the moral jungle and can't live without rules."

That shift in thinking reached a critical point in April of 1999 with the massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., Colson said.

"I think Columbine was the Pearl Harbor of the culture war in this country," he said. "I think people were forced to look at two diametrically opposed world views."

On one side was the nihilism of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, who Colson said were bathed in popular culture and "disciples of Nietzsche, the one who said 'God is dead.'" On the other side of the same event were "those incredible worship services" in the aftermath of the shootings that "celebrated Christ" and highlighted the faith of those killed.

"People watching those two world

views at Columbine had to make that choice, and all of a sudden since Columbine we've been seeing some things change," Colson said.

A recent Wall Street Journal poll, he said, indicated that "84 percent of conservatives and 33 percent of liberals said the No. 1 priority was to restore respect for traditional values. A short while ago that was a pejorative term used against the religious."

In another recent poll, he said, a majority of Americans said the country is on the wrong track. When asked why, 75 percent said because of the moral failures in American life.

Additionally, Colson said, 58 percent said they wanted more religion in American life, and 68 percent wanted creation taught alongside evolution in schools. "That's after 75 years of being told that you are a know-nothing ... if you thought that anything other than evolution is the true scientific answer," he noted.

The task for Christians, he said, is not just to plant more churches, but to "plant more churches that are truly the church."

Too often, he said, evangelical Christians "are simply as confused as the world around us" when it comes to understanding and holding basic biblical doctrines. "Folks, we've got to get

it right inside our churches before we can give it away outside our churches," he said. "If we're going to go to war for God in this culture, we've got to understand what we believe."

In order to effectively confront the culture, he said, Christians also must understand the full biblical revelation—not just the basics of the gospel.

Without that understanding, he said, "You'll never make a case for Christianity among people who are doubters and skeptics. Yes, the Word of God will convict, but you are going to be able to understand its fullness and how it applies in all of life."

Finally, he said, Christians must be willing to live out and defend their faith in every area of life. He noted one family that protested the teaching of evolution as the only theory of origins in schools. They not only were successful in seeing change, but the student's mother was even offered a seat on a curriculum review board.

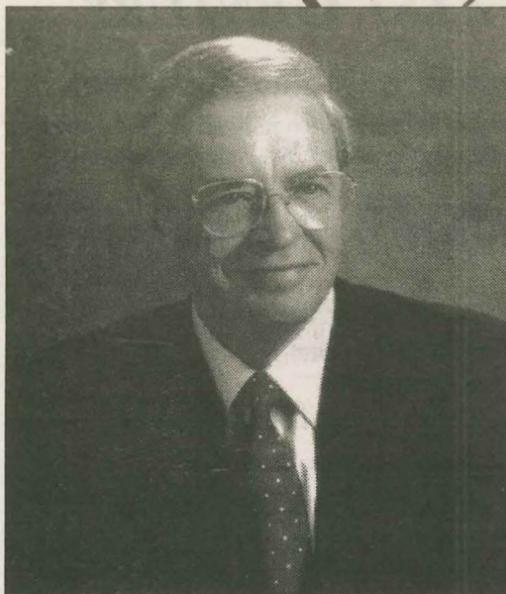
"Let me tell you folks, we Christians have been intimidated," he said. "We think we can't win those battles, but yes you can, because truth is on your side."

Approximately 2,500 people attended the conference designed to encourage and equip church leaders in evangelism and church planting.

"Columbine was the Pearl Harbor of the culture war."

Evangelical author
Charles Colson

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Gang member taught pastor a lesson about ministry

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

Speaker: Get personally involved with the poor

HOUSTON (ABP)—“The Good Samaritan didn’t just toss a bunch of canned goods and religious tracts at the wounded person on the side of the road.”

Yet that’s all many Christians today want to do to help the poor, wounded and needy, said Amy Sherman, urban-ministries adviser at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Charlottesville, Va.

“We’re busy doing many good things, but we may not be changing many things,” said Sherman, who has led her congregation to create a whole-family ministry in a neighborhood of low-income, single-parent families.

She was a keynote speaker at the Faith in Action conference in Houston Oct. 2-3.

The church must “go further” in its efforts to minister to the community and meet social needs, she charged. “We are guilty of a rocking-chair kind of kindness, ... never getting up out of the rocking chair to do something about it.”

Yet the church has an important message for people who think they have no value, she said. That message is that all people are made in the image of God and therefore have great value, she said.

Bringing spiritual transformation to needy people will require investing in places as well as in people, she declared, quoting the example of the prophet Jeremiah, who was told by God to buy property in Anathoth, an area under siege by Babylon at the time.

“Who buys property behind enemy lines?” she asked. “God does.”

HOUSTON (ABP)—Eugene Rivers learned an unforgettable lesson about Christian ministry from a gang member in Boston.

The gang member came to see Rivers, pastor of Azusa Christian Community in an inner-city neighborhood, with some questions and some unsolicited advice.

There’s not that much difference between a gang and a church, the visitor said. “You guys are just as divided as we are, but you claim to have the love of God.”

That got Rivers’ attention. As a result, he pulled together a coalition of clergy who met with gang members for dialogue during a four-year period.

At one of those meetings, held in a crack house, the gang member offered to explain to the pastors why gangs were more successful than churches in reaching children.

“When Miss Beulah sends Johnny to school in the morning, I’m there; you’re not,” the gang member said. “When Johnny comes home from school, I’m there; you’re not.”

In fact, he concluded, virtually any place Johnny goes, “I’m there and you’re not.”

Through messages such as these, “God really convicted some preachers,” Rivers said during the Faith in Action conference Oct. 2 in Houston. Rivers was a keynote speaker for the event, designed to encourage churches and faith-based organizations to do

more in social ministry.

During the succeeding years, Rivers became co-founder of the Boston Ten Point Coalition and a national authority on reducing crime through church involvement in community life. He is the author of two books and has been featured in national newsmagazines and newspapers.

“The church wants to build malls and confuses quantity with quality,” he said. Instead, “God is calling us to make our faith effective and wise.” That means getting out “in the streets, among the poor, where Jesus traveled.”

Rivers said the church must recover Jesus’ agenda and be inspired by a “logic of love.”

“If we will move out into the community to help those in need, ... God will pour out a new vision,” Rivers said. “God is calling on His people to labor in a vision that combines clarity, justice and mercy.”

Effective community ministry must move beyond giving charity to working for justice, he asserted. “We think charity is a substitute for justice.”

In short, he said, a Christian’s “hips ought to follow his lips.”

The event was cosponsored by Leadership Network and the Texas governor’s office. The stated mission of the conference was to “marry the passion and vision of the faith-based groups working among Texans in need with the practical tools they need to flourish and be proficient.”

On one hand, the conference encouraged faith-based organizations to use charitable-choice dollars made

available through welfare reform. Texas is considered a trendsetter in implementing charitable-choice funding in areas such as childcare, substance-abuse treatment, food distribution and welfare-to-work training.

On the other hand, the conference offered examples of faith-based organizations providing the same services without any government funding. One of the programs highlighted was Christian Women’s Job Corps, a welfare-to-work training program created by Woman’s Missionary Union.

Diane Garcia, executive director of Christian Women’s Job Corps in San Antonio, told the conference how Baptists have created three training centers in San Antonio. She was joined by Ann Cook of Houston, who told about the Christian Women’s Job Corps of First Baptist Church there.

“The key to this program is mentoring,” Cook said. “They need someone who is a friend. That is a problem for many of these women. They have never had someone who likes them for no reason.”

Through Christian Women’s Job Corps, women on welfare learn skills necessary to get jobs, how to handle family finances and to attend to their basic spiritual needs, Garcia added. “The success of Christian Women’s

Job Corps is God changes the lives of these women.”

John Dilluio, professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania, told conference participants that people of faith are more likely to serve as volunteers.

“If you are a self-identified member of a church or synagogue, you are 20 percent more likely to give food or clothing or money to a charity ... and 50 percent more likely to volunteer,” he said. “The extent to which communities of faith are out there helping the poor ... is much greater than even the most faith-friendly researcher would say.”

Dilluio cited new research finding that 90 percent of U.S. congregations offer at least one social-service program, most commonly benefiting neighborhood children.

If the volunteer hours contributed by church members were paid at minimum wage, that would account for \$200 million worth of labor, Dilluio said.

When people ask “Why are things so bad in society?” they are asking the wrong question, he suggested. Instead, he said, the proper question should be, “How much worse would things be if churches weren’t involved in community service?”

Summer of significance

As I was preparing recently for my report at our annual convention in Bowling Green next month, I was working with hundreds of photographs from last summer’s youth camp at Jonathan Creek. As I looked closely at the faces of the students and staffers, I vividly recalled some of the more significant moments at Jonathan Creek last summer.

God worked in great ways in the hearts and lives of many of those who spent the week with us. And even though I spent the summer at Jonathan Creek, I know the pattern was similar at Cedar Crest for the GA camp, at the Discovery Youth Weeks at Cedarmore, and at the RA camp at RABRO.

I have written about the significance of children’s and youth camping before, but in this recently concluded summer my passions for camping were stirred more than ever before. I feel such a burden for the younger generation. I saw firsthand how hungry they are for the Word and the power of Christ in their lives.

As I have mentioned, the camp environment is one in which a student goes away for the week and

finds himself or herself more deeply immersed in spiritual matters than is usually the case. The distractions that we live with at work, home and school are many. When a student comes to camp, to be sure, recreation is a part of it. But more importantly, every student—whether at Camp RABRO, Cedar Crest, Cedarmore or Jonathan Creek—gets a major dose of Christ over the course of the week.

And during that week, God frequently chooses to move in the lives of those students, calling them to Him, calling them to vocational ministry, calling them to missions.

I am so thankful that only three short years ago Kentucky Baptists elected to chart a new course for our camp and conference centers. I know that not all have agreed with this new course, but my prayer is that across this state we would come to the realization of just how blessed we are to have Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore, and that the support for both places will increase in the years to come.

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

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Gore asked black churches for help

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A phone call by Vice President Al Gore to black ministers from Air Force Two was inappropriate and could get churches in trouble for improper politicking, according to a leading church-state watchdog group.

According to the New York Times, Gore called a group of black ministers Oct. 14 during a flight from Detroit to Washington and urged them to ask their congregations to vote on Election Day.

"I'm asking you in your sermons to do the work of the Lord here on Earth," Gore said. "I ask for your help in getting that message out urgently tomorrow."

Several of the pastors said they would help.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, asked Gore in a letter to clarify just what he wanted the pastors to do on his behalf.

"You appear to be asking religious leaders to endorse your candidacy from the pulpit," Lynn wrote, emphasizing that churches, as tax-exempt organizations, are prohibited from partisan politics or endorsing candidates. "This is highly inappropriate, since it could put the tax-exempt status of those churches at risk."

■ Pastors wouldn't vote for Mormons.

A national survey of Protestant ministers shows most pastors would vote for a Catholic or Orthodox Jew before voting for a Mormon or homosexual. The survey conducted by Phoenix-based Ellison Research found 63 percent of pastors said a candidate's Jewish faith would not matter, and 64 percent said they would not care if a candidate were Catholic. But when it comes to members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 76 percent said they would be less inclined to vote for a Mormon candidate, and 86 percent said they would not vote for an openly gay candidate.

■ Suit filed against Weigh Down founder.

A former employee of Weigh Down, the Christian weight-loss workshop, has filed a religious discrimination lawsuit against Gwen Shamblin, the company's founder, claiming she was fired because she would not attend a church founded by Shamblin and her husband, David. Attorney Gary Blackburn filed the suit in Nashville on behalf of Tonya Cardente, who worked as a staff counselor until her June 13th firing. Blackburn said he might also represent two other former employees who allege they lost their jobs because of similar claims.

■ Agreement reached on debt relief.

Congressional Republicans have signaled their agreement to fund all of President Clinton's \$435 million request for debt relief for poor nations, marking a major victory for

NATIONAL NOTES

the politicians, religious leaders and rock stars who have lobbied for debt relief. The United States agreed last year to contribute to a \$90 billion fund to eliminate the foreign debts of about 40 poor countries in Africa and Latin America. The U.S. share is only about \$900 million, with one-third of the money forgiving debts owed directly to the United States, and two-thirds helping to eliminate debts owed to the World Bank and other international institutions.

■ Baptist school directory has nudity.

Samford University's student directory has generated national attention after sharp-eyed students discovered the front cover was a mosaic of hundreds of tiny images featuring nude women and sex acts. The student who designed the directory will face disciplinary charges, but Richard Franklin, vice president and dean of students at the Alabama Baptist school, told Associated Press the book would not be recalled. Noted freshman Natalie Gavin, "They won't let us have MTV, but we've got pornography on the directory."

■ **Colson's civil rights reinstated.** Former Watergate figure-turned-evangelical activist Charles Colson was given his civil rights back 25 years after he was sent to jail for his role in the Watergate coverup. Colson, 68, was the special counsel to former President Richard Nixon and spent seven months in federal prison for his role in the Watergate scandal. After his release in 1975, Colson founded Prison Fellowship, an evangelical

prison ministry based in Virginia. Florida Gov. Jeb Bush restored Colson's civil rights—including the right to vote, practice law and serve on a jury—after his name and 21 others were sent to him by the state's Parole Commission. Colson has a home in Naples.

■ **Mormons dedicate 100th temple.** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reached a historic milestone this month as their 100th temple worldwide opened its doors near Boston. With the launch of its newest temple, the 11 million-member church can boast of 50 U.S. temples and 50 overseas. The new temple's neighbors, however, feel besieged by the 69,000-square-foot hilltop structure and its plans for a 139-foot steeple. They've filed a lawsuit to stop the steeple's construction, claiming the church received an unlawful zoning waiver that would harm the town's character if the steeple goes up.

■ Sex trafficking bill gets approval.

Congress has adopted legislation to combat sexual trafficking globally of women and children. The Senate approved the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, five days after the measure passed the House of Representatives. After the Senate's action, President Clinton said he would sign the legislation into law. A diverse coalition of religious organizations, including the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, worked on behalf of the legislation.

Ministry in Taiwan

By Robert Dunston

Paige Kolok, daughter of William and Joan Kolok of Owensboro, and Amy Larkin, daughter of Thomas and Martha Larkin of Baton Rouge, La., spent eight weeks this summer in Taiwan. They were two of 20 summer missionaries Kentucky Baptists sent to Taiwan.

Kolok and Larkin had a busy schedule. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays they spent the morning in a local kindergarten/preschool teaching basic English words, songs and games. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings they worked in a vacation Bible school. On the first day the 20 workers welcomed three children. They prayed asking for more children to come, and soon 30 children were attending.

Most afternoons Kolok and Larkin went to "cram school," an after-school program in which children studied for exams. They helped the young people improve their English skills.

In the evenings Kolok and Larkin went to parks and performed drama and songs. Following their presentation they would talk with those who had stopped to watch and listen.

Both Kolok and Larkin devel-

oped strong relationships with young people in Taiwan. Kolok developed a relationship with a 15-year-old girl whose parents were separated and who felt her world coming apart. The young girl became a Christian, and Kolok had the opportunity to disciple her during the summer.

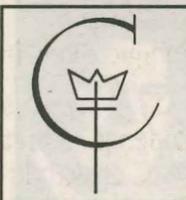
When they told her they had to leave, the young girl, not wanting to lose their presence and strength, threatened to abandon her faith. Kolok and Larkin have remained in contact with her through mail and e-mail, encouraging her and trying to answer her questions.

One of the most exciting events of the summer was helping start a church on Sunday nights at a local fast-food restaurant. More and more young people came each Sunday night. Since returning to Cumberland, Kolok and Larkin have learned that six people have made professions of faith.

Kolok and Larkin, both biology majors, invested their summer in service to Christ in an unfamiliar place. God used them to lead others to Him and gave them a new vision of missions.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



We'll be there

Driving our nation's interstates, I sometimes wonder if there's a truly isolated place left in this world. I'm talking about being totally alone with no sign of man visible. No houses, no power lines, no billboards, just God's creation. Depending on the kind of week you're having, that could sound pretty good. It also could sound scary.

I've been at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children since 1997 and have the routes to our residential facilities mapped out pretty well in my brain. Even on the most desolate stretches of road, I now know what to expect. I know how far away I am from a community or rest stop that offers shelter, food, gasoline, a telephone. It's a great comfort, knowing those places are there.

When I first came to Kentucky and started these journeys, I wasn't always so comfortable. I didn't know the roads then. Now I do.

The children who come to us know the fear of isolation. A teenager who has been battered or sexually abused doesn't know or care that there are others who have experienced the same trauma. Pain can be like a fingerprint, unique to each individual. Despite the activity around them, they are in a deso-

late place, cut off from what is good.

When children begin to learn that the smiles will be there every day, the meals will be there every day, the listening ear and strong shoulder will be there every day, they begin to come out of their pain. Where there was uncertainty and isolation, there is now a sense of stability and family. They got to know the roads and now they know that help and respite are near.

The beautiful hollows of Eastern Kentucky might seem an isolated place, especially when you are traveling at night. But even then, you can still see the lights winking in the hills, reminding you that you are not alone. That comfort, that rescue, that warmth is what Kentucky Baptists are offering children and families every day through KBHC.

With your help, we'll always be there, providing that special place, safe from the cold and dark of a hurtful past.

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

Pro-Israel evangelicals meet in Jerusalem despite unrest

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher
Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Garbed in Native American dresses of buckskin and beads, Jodi Scott and Tara Randolph arrived in Jerusalem last week to pray, drum and dance for peace.

Scott, of Atlanta, and Randolph of Ossian, Ind., were among the 4,500 evangelical Christians who defied media reports of Middle East violence and instability to attend the International Christian Embassy's annual Feast of the Tabernacles celebrations here in the Holy Land.

Amid reports of a 30 percent overall drop in tourism to Israel, most of the evangelical Christian delegations scheduled to arrive from about 120 countries worldwide did indeed make it to Jerusalem, said

Christian embassy director Johann Luckhoff.

"Many Christians came because of the situation, not in spite of it," Luckhoff said. "They felt this was the time to take a stand with Israel and to pray for the nation, and hope through prayers and goodwill to somehow help alleviate the situation."

"Less than 10 percent canceled," he added. "And in many cases, that was because their tour operators simply called off the trip."

A delegation of Native American drummers and dancers, a steel band from the Caribbean and puppeteers from Singapore were among the delegations attending the nine-day event, which includes performances, seminars and a parade through downtown Jerusalem.

At the Oct. 14 evening kickoff, Luckhoff presented Israeli government minister Rabbi Michael Melchior with a petition calling for a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty as part of any final Israeli-Arab peace settlement.

Luckhoff said that the petition had been drafted by the Christian Embassy several months ago, while the peace process was still in full swing, and has since been signed and endorsed by organizations representing about 15 million Christians worldwide.

The Christian Embassy has maintained its staunchly pro-Israel line in the recent period of violence, defending Israel against charges that police

and soldiers have shot indiscriminately at Palestinian demonstrators.

"Our observation is that Israel is showing much restraint and is not initiating problems, but is defending herself when there are attacks, and this is not well enough reported in the media," Luckhoff said.

But the participants attending the Feast reflected a wide rainbow of views. Some, like 64-year-old Betty Ward of Ocala, Fla., saw the recent instability as a harbinger of end days scenarios.

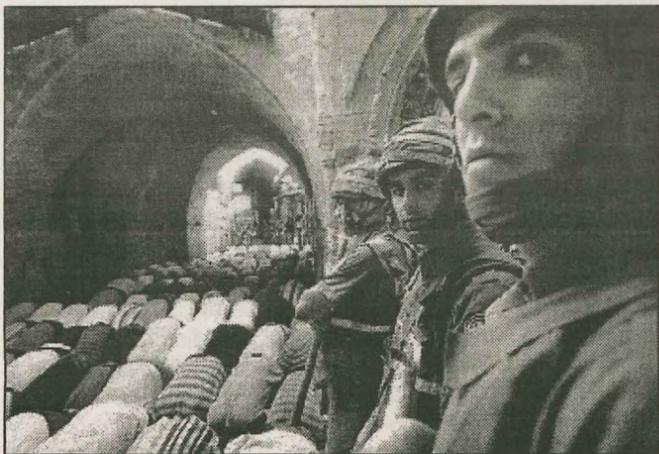
"You may not want to hear this," said the gray-haired grandmother, garbed in a long purple smock and a gold tiara that suggested a biblical

dress theme. "But things are going to get worse before they get better. It's the beginning of the end."

Others, like Scott and Randolph, are approaching the situation with greater equanimity.

"As Native Americans we can empathize with both sides," Scott said, as she awaited the arrival of fellow drummers and dancers in a flashy "modern" native dress of feathers, shells and shimmering red sequins. "We have been through our own holocaust and we also know what it is like to give up land for peace. We love the Palestinians and the Israelis and want to see the two brothers, Ishmael and Isaac, reconciled."

MIDEAST PRAYERS Israeli border police stand watch over hundreds of Palestinians kneeling in prayer in an Old City street in Jerusalem, Oct. 13. Recent unrest hasn't deterred a group of evangelicals meeting for the Feast of Tabernacles. (Reuters/RNS photo)



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Fall revival: "Fishers of men" part 2

"Amy" is a high school student who enrolled this fall from west central Kentucky. She had known about Oneida for years and wanted to enroll. Amy was not happy in the public school, though she did well academically and was a good student. She got along with her teachers and was respectful. Amy did have a tendency to talk a little too much, but she got along well with her peers.

When she enrolled, Amy told us she wanted to "be more social, be in drama and to develop my written and vocal skills." Everything we have seen indicates she will be able to accomplish her goals. Her decision to accept Christ will give her the spiritual support she needs to grow into a gifted and caring person.

Another young lady who gave her heart to Christ during the fall revival is "Kathy." Kathy came to us from way out west and is also in high school. She is from a broken home and was having angry outbursts that could be triggered by nearly anything. She would back talk and was beginning to withdraw from her family and friends.

Kathy had been doing OK in school until the last year or so. She had poor study habits and did not get along well with peers. Kathy was well liked by her teachers and was a good leader. She wanted to learn to have respect for others and to respect herself.

During the past three months we have seen most of the negative areas of Kathy's life. We also have seen some progress and hope she will continue to improve. Kathy is struggling academically, but that is not unusual. While some students progress more quickly than others, most take three to four months to show any substantial improvement in grades. We believe that by Christmas Kathy will be making

passing grades in all her classes.

"Hazel" came to us this fall as a middle school student from central Kentucky. Like many of our students, Hazel came from a single-parent family. She was excited to come to Oneida, but was also a little anxious about living in the dormitory and meeting so many new people. Hazel had developed an attitude with her mother, and did not follow the rules very well. She was a bit lazy about helping around the house and seldom took responsibility for her mistakes.

We were told that Hazel probably could do her schoolwork but did not apply herself and often complained that she wanted to go home because she did not feel well. She was known to start rumors about other students and therefore did not have many friends. Her teachers said she was respectful to them and she tried to act older than she really was. Her grades were fair to poor, so we are hoping Oneida's smaller classes and required study hall each night will benefit Hazel greatly.

In each personal interview with students, we always ask what they most want to accomplish at Oneida. While we might get a variety of replies, the two most common answers are to make better grades and to have a better attitude. It is always encouraging to know that the young person we are working with understands some of his or her needs. The two things Hazel said she most wanted were better grades and a better attitude. We believe the structure and discipline we offer will help her achieve her goals.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972. www.oneidaschool.org; e-mail: president@oneidaschool.org

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Brain surgery leaves a new perspective

Students at Clear Creek know they must use their brains to graduate.

Mark Wade can be more grateful than most of them that he can use his brain. The Athens, Tenn., native went to see an eye doctor in 1996. During the routine examination, the doctor asked Wade if he had experienced any problems. Wade indicated he had headaches sometimes. In a few days, physicians discovered a grapefruit-size brain tumor.

Wade went through surgery lasting nearly 12 hours. Doctors told his wife, Tara, they did not know how he would be afterward. The waiting room was filled with family and church friends praying for God's healing. In ICU, the family was told to speak loudly to Wade to be sure he heard them. "I told them to quit yelling, I could hear them fine," Wade remembered.

In 1993 Wade married a pastor's daughter. She had experienced a call to missions at the 1988 Southern Baptist Convention. "When we met I didn't have a call. I told Tara we were doing fine in our home church. But God did put a call on my life," Wade stated.

After recuperation from surgery, Wade returned to a good job at the paper mill but something was missing and he did not find peace and happiness until he surrendered to ministry.

The couple hold campus workshops. He is on the electrical crew; she is secretary to the dean of administrative affairs. "These jobs are

very important. It is so nice to attend class and then work on campus. We don't have to drive to another town, and the boss is understanding about study," Wade said.

Wade is youth minister at Southside Baptist Church in Middlesboro, and the youth group has grown from four members to 15. Mrs. Wade works with Acteens and is an accomplished singer and pianist. In their second year at Clear Creek, they are open to God's leadership for the future and willing to go wherever He leads.

Has Wade had any health problems since the surgery? He responded, "My health is perfect. Every day is different, and I try not to forget how blessed I am."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

BOOKS

He Chose the Nails: What God Did to Win Your Heart. Max Lucado. Word Publishing, 2000. 215 pages. \$21.99. ♦♦♦ (out of five)

With this book, Lucado adds to his string of popular treatments of foundational theological concepts. Lucado's subjects most often have revolved around an aspect of the life of Jesus, and here he considers the lessons of the death of Jesus.

Lucado picks up on the idea that we often consider the cross of Jesus as a gift from God. But Lucado also considers other gifts given in the passion of Jesus, such as the nails, the sponge, the sign and the other two crosses. With a chapter devoted to each, Lucado seeks to show the reader how the love and forgiveness of the cross was made even more apparent by the recognition of these other gifts.

As Lucado readers would expect, this book is filled with good illustrations and a straightforward conversational style. Lucado's words are inspiring and make the point well about God's love for us.

Lucado, however, fails at points to make a clear connection between his content and how his thoughts flow from the "gift" he highlights from the passion story. I think most lay readers will be inspired by this book; it is just that his hermeneutic, or way of interpreting Scripture, sometimes stretches to the point of breaking.

Basically, Lucado suggests that the whole passion story is filled with allegorical elements. I think this is questionable, but Lucado is probably no more guilty of this than most preachers. The last 60 pages of the book are a study guide that explores Lucado's themes through many interactive questions designed for individual and group study. *Wayne Hager*

Science and Faith: An Evangelical Dialogue. Harry Poe and Jimmy Davis. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000. 259 pages. \$19.99. ♦♦♦

Many Christians might be surprised to know that the rise of modern science was made possible by the predominantly Christian worldview of the late Middle Ages. At least that is what Harry Poe and Jimmy Davis contend as they make a case for the necessity of a serious, open and ongoing dialogue between science and faith.

Poe and Davis both teach at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. Poe is a professor of Christian studies, while Davis is a professor of chemistry. Together they have won a Templeton Award for their course on science and faith. They have collaborated on this book to help people "who struggle with how to believe the Bible and accept modern scientific discoveries at the same time."

The book begins with a review of the scientific and religious ways of knowing. One particularly fascinating arena of confluence between science and Christian faith is that "historically, the worldview that supported the development was Christianity with its concept of a Creator and a knowable, created universe." Scientific knowledge, they point out, depends on a "universe that is knowable, predictable and uniform."

Poe and Davis do more than call for a cease-fire in the current evangelical war with science, and they go far beyond calling for a simple accommodation between the two. They encourage an ongoing dialogue, in which both recognize the genuine contribution each can make to the other, and where we learn to discern the differ-

ence between information and our interpretation of that information. *Jim Holladay*

God for the 21st Century. Edited by Russell Stannard. Templeton Foundation Press, 2000. 194 pages. \$19.95. ♦♦♦

If "Science and Faith" is a call for dialogue between two distinct, yet potentially complementary ways of knowing, "God for the 21st Century" is a celebration of the ways God can be known and understood in and through science.

This collection of essays from 51 scientists with faith commitments examines some of the basic questions at the crux of the conflict and interplay between science and faith. Topics include origins, the universe as a home for life, evolutionary biology, life in the universe, genes and genetic engineering, personhood and the soul, and faith, medicine and well-being.

While the approach might seem unorthodox, the essays don't just challenge many of our traditional ways of seeing God, the created order and humanity. For those willing to engage them, the essays can provide grist for contemplating the wonderful mystery and majesty of God.

There is no doubt that the authors of these essays accept most of the categories and assumptions of modern science, i.e. evolutionary biology, the Big Bang and quantum physics. While some readers might find this an insurmountable obstacle, it is fascinating to see how those understandings drive these scientists to a deeper appreciation for God. Another limitation for some readers may be that not all the authors

write out of a Christian faith stance. All that said, I found reading the testimonies of these scientists of faith a mind- and soul-stretching exercise. *Jim Holladay*

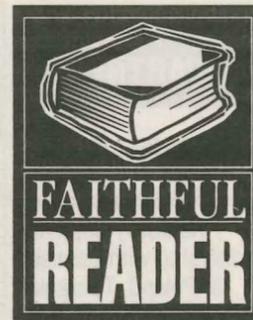
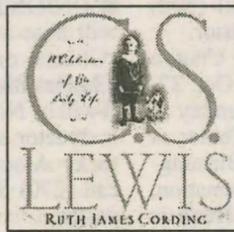
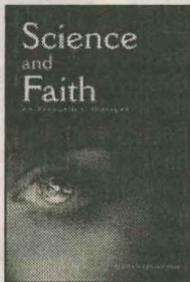
C.S. Lewis: A Celebration of His Early Life. Ruth James Cording. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000. 144 pages. \$14.99. ♦♦♦♦

Much has been written about the life and work of C.S. Lewis. So much so, in fact, that portions of his life have become the stuff of legend more than biography, fodder for romanticized versions of his life such as the one found in the movie "Shadowlands."

It is refreshing, then, to go into a biographical work on Lewis knowing that the biographer is fully acquainted with Lewis' life. Cording was the archivist at Wheaton College—the school that houses the world's most complete collection of Lewis' work. She has firsthand knowledge of Lewis' life from conversations with his brother, Warren, and the thousands of primary resources she has had access to at Wheaton.

This biography starts from the time Lewis was 4. It wanders in and out of his growing-up years to touch on the momentous occasions in Lewis' life, such as his conversion to Christianity and his marriage to and the death of Joy Gresham. It also includes remembrances from personal interviews with Douglas Gresham, Lewis' stepson.

The book is most notable for its photographs and illustrations by the author's son, Robert Cording. The heavy use of illustration throughout the book makes it seem almost a family photograph album. Lovers of Lewis' work will greatly enjoy the intimate reminiscences and beautiful layout of this very personal and well-researched work. *Victoria Moon*



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

Braille Baptist Hymnal is music to the ears of blind coordinator

By Charles Willis
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

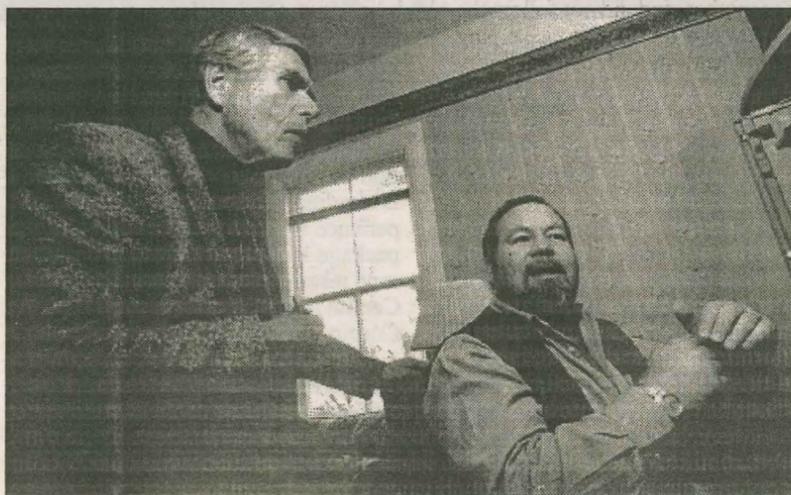
BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)—The sparkle in Leigh Scott's eyes belie the fact that he has been blind for the past 30 years.

Scott is helping produce the new Braille and large-print editions of the Baptist Hymnal, 1991, published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

A native of Pretoria, South Africa, Scott grew up healthy and sighted, the third of four boys in what he recalls as "a house of love." But at the age of 14, he had a mysterious high fever. While in the hospital, he was given an accidental overdose of a drug that left him clinically dead for three-and-a-half minutes and paralyzed and comatose for the following four months.

Scott said he believes it was through his mother's prayers and the prayers of others that he awoke from the coma.

When he could resume his schooling, Scott left his classmates behind to attend a school for blind children. His education continued well into adulthood, including studies in massage therapy, hydrotherapy and acupuncture.



BRaille Hymnal Leigh Scott (left) is helping produce the new Braille and large-print editions of the Baptist Hymnal, 1991, published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dan Johnson is Scott's LifeWay liaison on the project. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

A resident of Birmingham since 1994, Scott is a trained physical therapist and a doctor of acupuncture. He has taught massage therapy, reflexology and aromatherapy. He has been affiliated with the University of Alabama and is completing steps to attain United States citizenship next year.

Not one to be easily discouraged,

Scott had been searching for a Braille hymnal when he contacted LifeWay, inquiring about such a resource. When he learned none was available, he asked to speak with someone in music.

Dan Johnson, team leader for production and process in LifeWay Music Ministries, became Scott's contact. As conversations continued, Scott

agreed to partner with LifeWay to produce the hymnal's Braille edition.

The words-only Braille hymnal, released Oct. 1, includes a table of contents, hymns, responsive readings and information on how to become a Christian. The set consists of two 3-inch-thick, three-ring polyurethane binders.

Preparation for the new edition required transcription of all the words to computer disks, a task that took three transcribers approximately three months, Scott said. Disks were sent to a company in Boston for the initial production of Braille copies. Soon Scott expects to have an electronic Braille printer that will produce 400 pages an hour, and he will handle all the production in Birmingham.

Large-print editions in either words-only or exact replicas of the pew edition are also available for people with low vision.

Braille hymnals are available at \$195 per set, plus shipping charges. Large-print editions in spiral-bound, two-volume sets are \$145, plus shipping charges. For more information, contact Blind-Sight Ministries at 1919 Oxmoor Road, #306, Birmingham, AL 35209; by telephone or fax at (205) 324-4339; or by e-mail at ljgscott@bell-south.net.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ International Service Corps missionaries Travis and Charity Jones and local pastors who are trying to reach youth in Mwanza, Tanzania. Pray for the Joneses as they make the necessary cultural adjustments and learn a new language.

■ Offer praise that government officials have granted permission for repairs to begin on Immanuel Baptist Church in Madrid, Spain. The roof had collapsed several years ago and the building had been condemned and could not be used until repairs were completed.

■ Kentuckian Doyle Searcy, pastor of Bethel International Baptist Church in Frankfurt, Germany.

■ More than 150 Kentucky volunteers needed to complete 22 mission projects in Poland in 2001.

■ Missionaries Ed and Nancy Giddens as they lead discipleship seminars in Ifakara, Tanzania, this month.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host local gospel group **Vision** in concert Oct. 29, 7 p.m. A potluck meal will be held at 5:30 p.m. For information, call (270) 789-0082 or 789-2707. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **FRANKLIN**—New Hope Church will host revival services Nov. 5-8. The evangelist will be **Tony Bradley** and the music evangelist will be **Wade Baker**. For information, call (800) 848-1955. **Larry Baker** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Audubon Church will host a renewal weekend Oct. 27-29, nightly at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 11 a.m. **Robert Smith**, professor at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., will speak. For information, call (502) 635-6750. **Kevin Head** is

pastor.

Ormsby Heights Church will host its 40th anniversary celebration Nov. 5. For information, call (502) 447-6867. **Rick Bowden** is pastor.

Victory Memorial Church will host **New Spirit** featuring **David Wills**, **Barry Weeks** and **Ben Jacklin** Nov. 5, 6:30 p.m. For information, call (502) 368-2521. **James Veal** is pastor.

■ **UNIONTOWN**—Calvary Church will host a doctrinal book study of "Church on the Rock," written by **Charles Blair** who will lead the study. It will be Nov. 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. **Blair** is director of missions for West Kentucky Association. For information, call (270) 822-4722. **Jim Adams** is pastor.

Former comatose missionary takes steps

BARTLETT, Tenn. (BP)—Wade Watts might not be walking on water like Peter, but for Watts, walking in water is every bit as miraculous.

Watts was a Southern Baptist missionary to Peru in 1996 when he and his wife, Nancy, and their two sons, Marcus and Joshua, were involved in a car accident.

Watts and Marcus, then 9, fell into deep comas after the head-on collision. Doctors did not expect the father and son to survive.

To everyone's amazement, however, Marcus has made a 90 percent recovery.

His father recently was able to walk in a pool of water. His therapists say he is showing normal bilateral movement in his hips and gait.

"There is still a good possibility he'll be able to walk. The only question is when," Nancy Watts said. "It's not if, it's when."

She said her husband's recovery has been almost miraculous from the start.

Watts surprised everyone by waking from his coma four months after the accident.

Many doctors had diagnosed him as being in a "permanent vegetative state."

He then began rehabilitation, and a year after the accident was trying to talk. Today, Watts can communicate, but his speech is slurred.

The latest development came in August when Wade was able to walk with the help of his therapists and the water's buoyancy.

"The major goal right now is Wade walking," Mrs. Watts said. "It's what we're aiming for."

The Wattses have said previously that they want to return to the mission field.

"We would like to go back to Peru if that's where God wants us to go back," Mrs. Watts said. "If God chooses us to be somewhere else, we're going to try and follow His will whatever that might be."



IN CONCERT Christian vocalist Larnelle Harris sings Oct. 13 during a concert at Campbellsville University's Powell Athletic Center. Approximately 500 people attended the concert, cosponsored by Campbellsville and the Western Recorder, during Campbellsville's homecoming weekend. Proceeds from the concert will benefit Campbellsville's scholarship fund. (Central Kentucky News-Journal photo by Richard RoBards)

Chuck Swindoll recovering from mild heart attack

DALLAS (RNS)—Dallas Theological Seminary President Chuck Swindoll was released from the hospital Oct. 18 after suffering a mild heart attack.

"He's recuperating fine at home and expected back here at the seminary probably within a few weeks," Mike Fluent, a spokesman for the seminary, told Religion News Service.

Swindoll suffered the heart attack at his Dallas-area home Oct. 14.

"Of course, any problem with the heart is unsettling, but Dr. Swindoll not only is free of pain, he's already on the rebound," said Mark Bailey, the seminary's provost and vice president for academic affairs, in a statement.

Swindoll, who has been president of the seminary since 1994, is the author of 51 books, including "Laugh Again" and "Day By Day with Charles Swindoll," and is host of the international radio program "Insight for Living."

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Church pews in different lengths. Please inquire at Fee Fee Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo., with Rev. Ken Atherton, (314) 739-1525.

FOR SALE: New 1999 Dodge 15-passenger shuttle vans, center aisle, raised roof, easy-access lowered stepwell, rear heat and AC. \$590/month, 60-month lease with 15 percent residual subject to credit approval. Call American Bus & Accessories Inc., (800) 582-7118.

SEEKING: Christian couple to provide quality childcare to children and adolescents. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. Benefit package, competitive salary and housing provided. For inquiries contact Tim Tharp at (618) 382-4165, ext. 14, or send resumé to: Baptist Children's Home, PO Box 579, Carmi, IL 62821.

SEEKING: Clear Creek Baptist Bible College seeks an adjunct instructor in English for the Spring 2001 semester. This person would teach two courses in English grammar. Must be qualified to teach English at the college level. Housing and small (adjunct) salary provided. Excellent place of mission service for semi-retired English teacher. Please call (606) 337-3196 and ask for Dr. Malcolm Hester.

SEEKING: Organist for east-end (Louisville) church. Two Sunday morning services. Blended service. May also play keyboard for worship team occasionally. Contact: Gary Vido, West Broadway Baptist Church, (502) 499-1920.

SEEKING: Gethsemane Baptist Church in Danville, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of music/education. Please send resumé and references to 123 Quisenberry Ave., Danville, KY 40422, Attn: Pastor Mark Payton.

SEEKING: First Southern Baptist Church of Clarksville, Ind., is seeking a team player who has a heartbeat for evangelism and discipleship to serve as full-time minister to youth and families. Send resumé to the pastor, Russell Lievers, 215 E. Ettels Lane, Clarksville, IN 47129. (812) 288-8217. fsbc@protegra.net.

SEEKING: Anchor Church, located in Erlanger (Northern), Ky., is in need of a youth minister. This is currently a part-time position (20-25 hours/week) with considerable potential with the right leadership. Send resumé to: Anchor Church, PO Box 18195, Erlanger, KY 41018; e-mail to: Anchorchurch@anchorchurch.net; or fax to: (859) 727-4329.

SEEKING: Central Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of education. Candidates are expected to have an undergraduate or seminary degree in religious education or related field. Prior experience is required—full-time or part-time experience is acceptable. Compensation package includes full benefits. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Central Baptist Church, 201 W 4th St., Corbin, KY 40701.

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: Farmdale Baptist Church, 5610 U.S. Highway 127 South, Frankfort, Ky., is seeking three part-time positions: children's minister, youth minister and organist. Send resumé to church in care of Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Franklin, Ky., is seeking a full-time staff position for minister of education/administration. Interested candidates send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 303 East Cedar St., Franklin, KY 42134, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Hillsdale Baptist Church in Ohio seeks part-time youth pastor. Send resumé to: hbc@bright.net.

SEEKING: Main Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Ky., is currently accepting resúmes for a full-time senior pastor. Main Street Baptist is a progressive Southern Baptist church located in the Northern Kentucky area. The ideal candidate to fill our senior pastor position will be highly motivated, spiritually driven and have a master's degree from an accredited seminary. This candidate will be selected to lead this rapidly growing church which is involved in a very aggressive building program. All interested parties should send resúmes with cover letters by Nov. 15, 2000, to: Main Street Baptist Church, 306 West Main St., Alexandria, KY 41001, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SERVICES: Use the power of the Internet in your minister search. On ministrypositions.com churches can post job openings or search for candidates online. Ministerial candidates can post resúmes and search job openings. An easy-to-use, confidential service to help ministers and churches connect. Visit www.ministrypositions.com or call (800) 417-2123.

Focus on Family official resigns because of affair

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (RNS)—A top executive and well-known radio personality for Focus on the Family has resigned after admitting to an inappropriate relationship with a woman other than his wife.

Mike Trout, 53, the co-host on Focus on the Family President James Dobson's popular radio program, said in an interview his behavior violated the moral standards the ministry's employees agree to follow.

Trout, who has been married for 31 years and has three grown daughters, would not discuss details of the relationship. He called the relationship "not a long-term thing" and said it is now over.

"I'm greatly saddened," said Trout, who resigned Oct. 11. "I didn't work at Focus on the Family for 19 years because of the paycheck or the benefits or the positive environment. I worked at Focus on the Family because I believed in what we were doing. I know that might sound strange, because I violated it."

The revelation comes at a particularly bad time for Focus on the Family, a \$116 million-a-year nonprofit organization that has positioned itself in the last decade as a prominent national voice for conservative values through its many radio programs, publications and political lobbying efforts.

A month ago, another Focus on the Family official, John Paulk, was criticized by both his peers and critics for visiting a gay bar in Washington, D.C., and then lying about it. Paulk, a self-described former homosexual who advocates that gays can change, remains employed at Focus on the Family. Dobson said in a radio program a week ago that Paulk should be forgiven even though he "hurt the cause of Christ."

Trout said getting involved with another woman was hypocritical considering he worked for an organization that stresses the sanctity of marriage. But he said his actions should not reflect badly on Focus on the Family.

"As people think about this situation, reflect on me, don't reflect on Focus on the Family," Trout said. "This is exactly what I described it as—a personal problem, not a corporate problem. This is a cancer in my own life, not in the ministry of Focus on the Family."

Though best known as Dobson's on-air sidekick, Trout spent most of his time managing the Focus on the Family broadcast division as a senior vice president, the only person at the ministry to hold that title.



Jazz service mixes gospel with blue notes

By Chris Herlinger
Religion News Service

NEW YORK (RNS)—It is a "Homecoming on Earth," a way for jazz musicians and fans alike to congregate and enjoy what one singer calls the closest thing to prayer known in music.

"This is our little spiritual home for the jazz community," said singer Nancie Banks during the recent celebration marking the 30th anniversary of the annual "All Nite Soul Jazzfest" at Saint Peter's Lutheran Church on Manhattan's East Side.

The site of weekly "jazz vespers" since 1965 and renowned for its ministry to New York's large jazz community, Saint Peter's is something of a Manhattan institution—but an entirely informal and inviting one.

During the Oct. 8 anniversary celebration, which kicked off at 5 p.m. and finally wound down at 4 a.m. the next day, the mood was relaxed and quietly joyful, like a reunion of old friends.

The musicians held to a loose schedule but always left room for a guest or two. Jazz fans and longtime supporters of Saint Peter's came and went as they liked, enjoying barbecued chicken and cornbread dinners in a small dining area outside the brightly lit, modernistic sanctuary.

Proceeds from the \$20 admission—a bargain compared to some of Manhattan's renowned jazz clubs—went to support the jazz ministry and the church's weekly breakfast program for the homeless.

The acts were impressive. Younger artists, such as the Oak Park Middle School Knights of Jazz from Leesburg, Fla., enjoyed the spotlight, as did veteran artists like pianist Billy Taylor. There was also a nice blending of old



LISTENING Dale Lind of Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in New York listens to the music during a recent jazz marathon. The church's jazz ministry, according to Saint Peter's, "seeks to blend the riches" of jazz "with the gospel of Jesus Christ." (RNS Photo)

and new: the venerable Cab Calloway Orchestra was led by Calloway's grandson, Chris Calloway Brooks.

When not introducing the artists and serving as co-host of the event, pastor Dale Lind shared a word with old musicians, offering encouragement, pastoral support and, in some cases, a few dollars to tide them over for a few days.

Lind, an easygoing, bearded bear of a man, took it all in stride.

Lind has been at Saint Peter's "off and on" since 1964, initially as the church's young adult minister.

He took over the jazz ministry in 1994 upon the retirement of John Garcia Gensel, whose spirit still infuses the church's weekly jazz services, annual commemorations and frequent funerals and memorial services for jazz musicians. Gensel originated the weekly jazz vespers and the church's jazz ministry, which Saint Peter's proudly declares "seeks to blend the riches" of jazz "with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Gensel, who died in 1998, was something of a legend in musicians' circles.

Known as New York's "jazz pastor," he once told a reporter that a jazz musician "can be a lonely guy at four in the morning." In one of his more famous acts of pastoral care, Gensel took Thelonious Monk to the hospital when the famed pianist injured himself in a tumble from the stage.

With his clerical collar and quiet manner, Gensel was, said biographer Brian Kates, "one unlikely hipster." But Gensel followed his call: He was, Kates said, put on Earth "to minister to fallen musicians."

Pianist Frank Owens recalls feeling so happy after performing at Saint Peter's that he suggested to Gensel that he might even join the church. "He said, 'Well, why don't you?'" Owens said, laughing at the memory. "He called my bluff."

Banks, a Buddhist, had a similar experience with Gensel, who once kidded her that she appeared at Saint Peter's only when she had a gig.

Following on the path set by Gensel, Lind has provided a "safe space," a place where musicians can joyfully come together and commune with God through their music.

Does Lind think the musicians play in a special way at Saint Peter's, which, with its spacious and bright sanctuary, is in stark contrast to a dark and crowded Manhattan jazz club, like the famed Blue Note?

"You can't say," Lind said. "But they do feel they are offering their talent here. It's a worshipful setting, so their head is in a different space here than it is at the Blue Note."

"I can say that the music comes from their heart and soul."

Banks concurs. "Every time we sing, or pick up a horn or strike a drum," she said, "it is like we are saying a prayer."

JAZZ MARATHON Edward Swanson of the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band performs during the "All Nite Soul Jazzfest" at Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in New York. The church is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its ministry to the jazz community. (RNS photo)

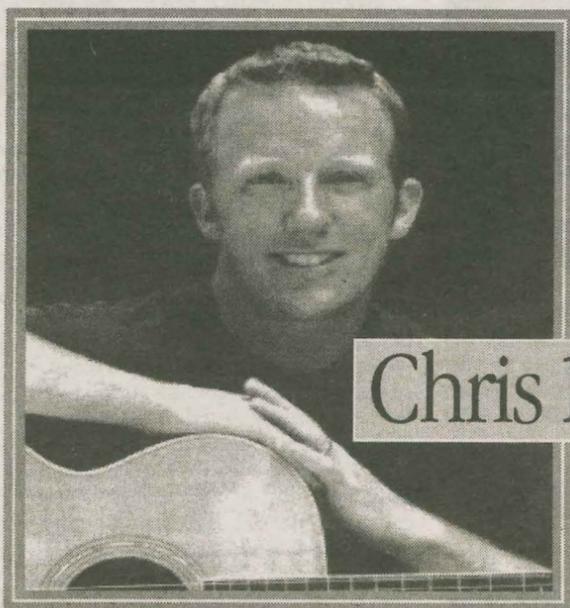
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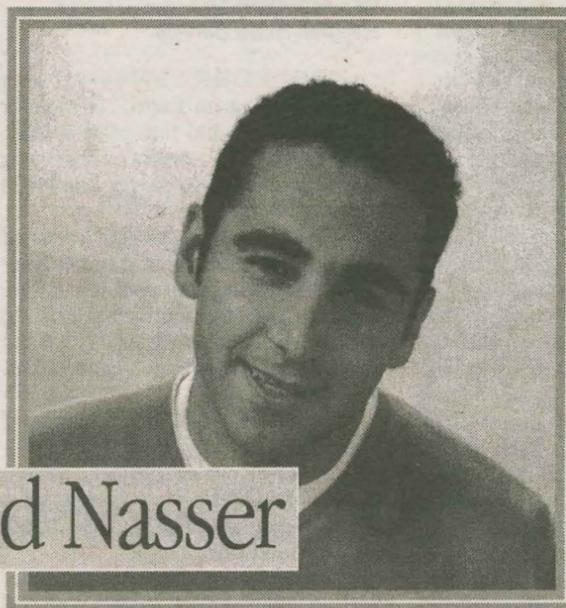
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