



WESTERN RECORDER

February 13, 2001
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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, February 14

Author: Church not affecting how members handle money

By Keith Todd
State Correspondent

PADUCAH—People who attend church show little difference from others when it comes to their financial problems, according to an author, radio host and financial counselor.

"There should be a difference, but there isn't," said Dave Ramsey, author of "The Money Game" radio show.

Ramsey, who spoke Feb. 8 in Paducah, said afterward that financial problems are cited as a major contributor to divorce for both Christians and non-Christians.

"The statistics are very, very similar. We see it every day in our counseling sessions," he said. "It's just like the marriage statistics; the divorce rate in the churches is the same as it is in the world. It shouldn't be that way and I wish we were doing better as Christians, but the reality is that there is very little difference."

Consumer debt is the greatest reason so many families struggle financially, he said. Popular culture constantly promotes the use of credit cards, he said, opposing the biblical approach of saving to buy an item.

"There is not one place in the Bible where it says it is OK to borrow money. There is not one place where God used debt as a tool to help or save His people," Ramsey said. "When the

□ See Ramsey: Biblical ..., page 9

Mid-Continent turning corner, leaders say

By David Winfrey
News Director

MAYFIELD—The year was 1997, and it was time for Mid-Continent College to put up or shut up.

Retiring President Laverne Butler had gotten the former Bible college on a firm financial footing, overseen building construction and led the trustees to expand the school's mission to be a full four-year college.

"It had to change to survive," Butler said. "That was my theme song."

But fundraising is a major challenge for any private college, especially one that was graduating an average of 14 students each spring.

Besides, Mid-Continent's students were pursuing careers as missionaries and bivocational pastors, not the paths by which graduates usually go on to make major donations to their alma mater.

"It was obvious that for us to be viable we were going to have to do some things different," says Tom Butler, chairman of the college's board of trustees and no relation to the former president.

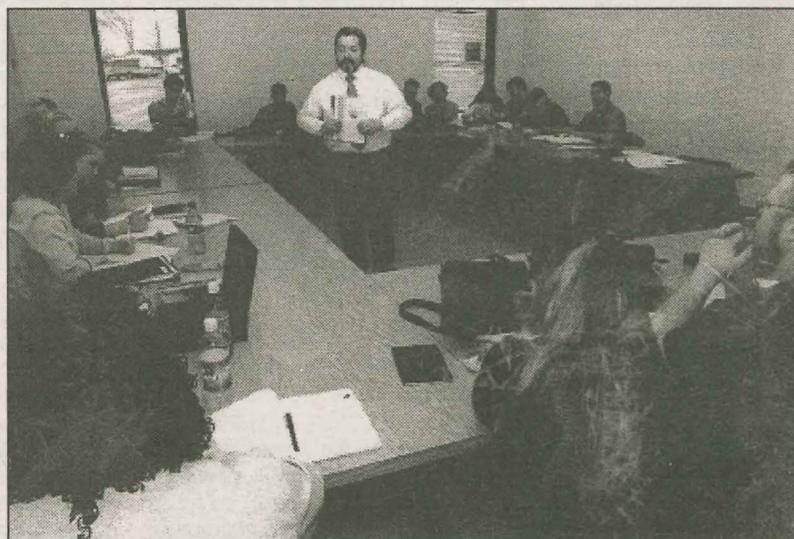
For four years now, the school has been doing "some things different" and leaders say they are paying off.

A president who knows school administration and a chancellor who knows Baptists are trying to merge marketing and mission. As a result, Mid-Continent has seen enrollment more than double, the budget nearly triple, the curriculums expand to nine majors and new campus housing built.

"The groundwork was laid and then it just exploded," Tom Butler says.

Still, officials admit the school has experienced some growing pains, and they say some supporters are watching closely, suspicious that the growth will move the school away from its original purpose.

The latest chapter in the school's 52-year history began as Laverne Butler was retiring and David Jester was



MID-CONTINENT Enrollment and money are up at Mid-Continent College in Mayfield. Leaders of the 52-year-old school attribute the growth to a mixing of marketing and mission by a president who knows college administration and a chancellor who knows Baptists.

hired as president in June 1997. Butler knew Jester, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, through Campbellsville University, where Jester had served a term as vice president for academic affairs.

Jester was approached at a school in Texas when administered by Mid-Continent and initially had no interest. But he says he couldn't shake the call to return to his home state. "It just seemed like the Lord was saying, 'If you're not willing to help your own people, just forget it. I don't need you.'"

During his 22 months as president, Jester led the school to expand its majors, especially in the arts and sciences.

But Jester says he soon realized he couldn't do it all alone.

"With the things that we wanted to

do, I knew it would take maybe five or more years," says Jester. "I didn't think that it was wise to jeopardize the college at my age with such a commitment."

Enter Bob Imhoff, a Baptist who was president of Bethel College, a Cumberland Presbyterian school where he says he was wearing out his welcome.

Imhoff says that when he arrived at Bethel College in northwest Tennessee he found a school in dire financial straits, unable to survive off the loan that the denomination had arranged.

"We had to have the first called meeting of the general assembly of the Cumberland Church in its history," he says. "Suffice it to say, that didn't go over well with a lot of the hierarchy in Memphis."

□ See Mid-Continent ..., page 7

Contemplative living: It's not just for Catholic monks anymore

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Programs focusing on personal retreats and meditative prayer have long been considered strongholds of Catholic spirituality, but it appears that more Baptists are focusing on the subject of contemplative living.

"Contemplative" spirituality refers to one's focus on his or her inward spiritual relationship with God and how that is affecting every aspect of life.

Personal spiritual retreats or extended meditation on Scripture are among the methods that contemplative Christians practice to accomplish that focus, also referred to as a time of "spiritual formation."

Renovare, an ecumenical clearing-house for contemplative spirituality founded by well-known author and pastor Richard Foster, recently reported that 25 percent of the churches par-

ticipating in its spiritual formation workshops are Baptist.

In Mars Hill, N.C., the Advent Spirituality Center has been founded at Mars Hill College to nurture a contemplative lifestyle in a Baptist setting.

The center offers events such as walking a labyrinth, an ancient form of Christian prayer. "Walking the labyrinth" involves following a circular path that winds to the center, resting and praying there, then following the path back to the starting point. The center also offers workshops on centering prayer (a form of prayer that focuses on praying a single word, image or phrase) and an annual conference titled "A Gathering of Baptists and Others Interested in Spirituality."

"Contemplative living has long been the realm of Catholicism, but Baptists have much to learn from it," said Glenn Hinson, a seminary professor and author of several books on spirituality including "Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership."

"Future churches need to think about having one of their basic ministries as retreats because we live in an age with a lot of stress and chaos, and we need that renewal," he said.

Retreating in Hinson's mind is not the typical retreat many Baptists go to. "The word 'retreat' is from the Latin root 'retrahere,' which means 'to draw back,'" he said.

"Southern Baptists in particular have developed an ethos of more programmed approaches and more noise, so this is sort of going against the more dominant stream in Baptist culture."

Despite this, Baptists like Skip Alexander, senior pastor of West Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville, are finding that quiet retreats are important to their daily ministry. Alexander recently retreated with his family to Gracemore, part of the facilities of Cedarmore Baptist Campground in Bagdad.

"My wife and I were suffering from ministry burnout, and we need-

ed to get away for a day or two," he said. "Gracemore was an affordable way for us to get a couple days away, and it was wonderful."

Gracemore is a four-bedroom, two-bath cabin renovated in 1999. It now serves as a retreat center for any Christian minister looking to find some solitude in the midst of their busy life, according to Rusty Ellison, president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies.

"Gracemore is small, personal and has a lot of warmth," Ellison said. "Our passion is that it would be widely used by anyone in ministry looking to take a break and spend some time alone with God."

Though the cabin has not been used by many ministers for retreat purposes, Alexander said more pastors should realize the importance of a personal retreat.

"There's a great quote that many of us are familiar with: 'Beware the

□ See Contemplative life ..., page 8

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **A conference on Southern Baptist identity** will be held Feb. 26-28 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. "Southern Baptists in the New Millennium: Identity, Orthodoxy and Cooperation" will address such topics as: Who are Southern Baptists? What do they stand for? What is the basis for continued cooperation? For information, call Sean Lucas at (502) 897-4573.

■ **LifeWayLINK**, a new service of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, offers free Web sites for Southern Baptist churches. Examples are available at www.lifewaylink.com. For information, call toll-free (888) 408-5580.

NAMB, state defund association over homosexuality

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Georgia Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist North American Mission Board have announced plans to withdraw funding from Atlanta Baptist Association over its refusal to expel two homosexual-affirming churches.

The Georgia convention's administration committee voted Feb. 6 to cut off special ministry funds immediately for Atlanta Baptist Association and to recommend that the state convention's executive committee end all pastoral support and other funding effective Dec. 31.

Meeting Feb. 7, NAMB trustees voted unanimously to affirm a statement of support for the state convention's action.

"The North American Mission Board will stand with the Georgia Baptist Convention, with whom it has an ongoing partnership, while attempting to minister to the association with grace," NAMB President Bob Reccord told trustees.

The related actions came in response to a Jan. 30 vote by Atlanta Baptist Association to continue to fellowship with Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., and Virginia-Highland Baptist Church in inner-city Atlanta. The Georgia Baptist Convention ousted both congregations in 1999 for their welcoming and affirming stance toward homosexuals.

The GBC administration committee said in a statement that the vote "places the Georgia Baptist Convention in the position of either affirming the decision of the Atlanta Baptist Association by its silence or taking action

against the association."

"We urge the Atlanta Baptist Association to revisit their decision immediately," the GBC statement said. "It is our prayer that the association will recognize the clear statements of the Bible regarding homosexuality as sin and vote to withdraw fellowship from Oakhurst and Virginia-Highland."

The pastor of one of the disputed churches lamented the actions.

"It seems like they are determined to have a doctrinal uniformity," said Oakhurst pastor Lanny Peters. "That seems to be part of a trend in the Southern Baptist Convention right now."

The secret-ballot vote by Atlanta association followed a nearly year-long process of dialogue prompted by a motion last spring to disfellowship the congregations, which include gays and lesbians in all areas of church life.

In the end, however, the association voted 253-164 in favor of a membership committee recommendation against expulsion. While the association doesn't "support or condone homosexual activity," the action stated, it "affirms the longstanding Baptist polity of local church autonomy."

Reccord, however, said there are boundaries to local church autonomy. "While local church autonomy is a cherished Baptist distinctive, there is a Baptist distinctive that supersedes it: the authority of Scripture and our accountability to it," he said.

The SBC constitution excludes from membership any churches that "affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior."

While Baptist associations technically are autonomous from their state convention and the SBC, they do receive funding from both through co-

operative, joint-funding agreements.

Reccord said NAMB provides \$150,000 annually for nine positions in Atlanta association, including directors of ministry centers, pastors and association staff.

Joel Harrison, Atlanta association director of missions, said the loss of funds would prevent the establishment of a proposed new staff position and the filling of an existing vacancy.

He said it also would disqualify the association from receiving hunger relief funds, which currently amount to about \$45,000 a year. The association also will not be able to request funds for new church starts.

In the long run, it would defund salaries for directors of two missions centers owned by the association.

Harrison said the state convention and NAMB provide about \$75,000 of an association budget totaling about \$800,000.

Asked if he thought the association might reconsider its decision about the two churches, Harrison said, "We're exploring avenues of seeing how we can work together in partnership."

Reccord indicated NAMB would consider requests to transfer affected individuals to other positions. "NAMB's actions have nothing to do with missionary personnel."

The Georgia Baptist administration committee statement pointed out that it would continue to relate to nine other associations in the metropolitan Atlanta area. "Further, we will continue to relate to and work with those churches which choose to cooperate with the Georgia Baptist Convention."

Some of Atlanta association's 153 churches are expected to defect over the controversial vote. If enough do,

there is even talk of starting an alternative association in the two-county area that makes up the current association.

Oakhurst's Peters said he was not surprised by the negative reaction.

"I know that our congregation was concerned about the negative impact," Peters said. "But I'm also aware that it possibly could have had an impact the other way."

"There are people who were present (at the association's Jan. 30 meeting) who saw this as an indication of whether the association was going to respect the autonomy of the local church," he said.

Peters noted that the association's membership committee was quick to distance itself from the churches' stance on homosexuality.

"They wanted to distance themselves from our theological position, but they wanted to respect the right of churches to interpret the Scripture for themselves and to minister according to God's calling."

But Georgia Baptist leaders said the association's vote amounted to a tacit endorsement of homosexuality.

Reccord concurred. "It is hard to understand how the association can say they 'do not support or condone homosexual activity' yet maintain affiliation with churches that openly accept homosexuals as deacons and Sunday school teachers and support same-sex weddings," he said.

"We do not believe that the church can condone ongoing behaviors which the Scripture clearly labels as sin," Reccord said. "One role of the church in today's society is to serve as a conscience for the community even when it is uncomfortable and unpopular to do so."

Southern Seminary names new deans in music & Christian ed

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has filled two vacant deanships, elevating Thomas Bolton to dean of the school of church music and worship and Brad Waggoner to dean of the school of Christian education and leadership.

Southern Seminary President Al Mohler made the announcements at a chapel service Jan. 30. Bolton had been serving as acting dean and will continue to serve as a professor of church music. Waggoner will continue to serve as associate professor of Christian education and leadership.

Mohler said the two new deans "will bring new energy, solid conviction and passion as these schools focus on the task of serving our churches and training a new generation."

Bolton succeeds Lloyd Mims, who resigned to become dean of the school of music and fine arts at Palm Beach Atlantic College in Florida. Waggoner succeeds Dennis Williams, who became dean of institutional assessment to oversee the seminary's accreditation review process.

Bolton has served at Southern Seminary since 1996. He previously was minister of music at First Baptist Church of Little Rock, Ark., and professor of music at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark.

Mohler said Bolton "is tremendously concerned that our churches honor God through authentic worship and that music be employed to glorify God in the context of worship."

Waggoner joined the Southern Seminary faculty in 1999. He previously was executive pastor of Far Hills Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio.

Waggoner "brings a combination of leadership vision, practical experience and outstanding academic preparation to this new responsibility," Mohler noted.

'Mainstream' Baptists work to expand influence

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

DALLAS (ABP)—After more than two decades of denominational infighting, the vast majority of Southern Baptists remain "largely uninformed" about causes of the conflict, said Houston layman John Baugh.

Of the 13 million "mainstream" Baptists he estimated are still on the sidelines of the Southern Baptist Convention controversy, Baugh said "it is unlikely that even 10 percent" are keenly aware of the dangers of "fundamentalism" facing their churches and the nation.

Mainstream Baptists, meanwhile, "are only four or five major decisions away from arresting the progress of and breaking the fundamentalist hold," Baugh said.

Baugh spoke at a national consultation of the Network of Mainstream Baptists Feb. 5-6 in Dallas. Baugh, founder of the Sysco food company and longtime critic of fundamentalism, co-convened the meeting with Baylor University Chancellor Herbert Reynolds.

The network has been holding annual consultations for "three or four" years, said Reynolds. "These consultations have proven to be helpful to us and I think have helped our efforts throughout the states to preserve soul freedom," he said.

New Mainstream organizations formed last year in Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, said David Currie, head of Texas Baptists Committed, the organization after which the Mainstream groups are modeled.

Those bring to 11 the number of Mainstream organizations working to mobilize Baptists in their states against what is termed alternately the "conservative resurgence" or "fundamentalist takeover" of the SBC.

Many Mainstream leaders also are active in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Mainstream founders, however, believe they can appeal to churches the Fellowship can't reach.

Representing Virginia's new Mainstream group, Bill Wilson described a number of churches in his state that "know they aren't fundamentalist, don't know what they think about the CBF, and we believe are the vast majority."

Baugh said "mainstream" Baptists "are the people who prayerfully determine and hold fast to our commitments. We adhere to the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message."

They are the people who believe the decision about whom to ordain as ministers is "solely vested in each autonomous body of believers," he continued, and not in Southern Baptists' recently revised faith statement that says the Bible prohibits women from serving as

senior pastors.

Baugh described as "startling" a change in the Baptist Faith and Message approved at last summer's SBC annual meeting that he said "significantly altered the role of Jesus in order to forward the new fundamentalist religion."

Those who gained control of the SBC are now working to "transform other areas of Christendom" with a view toward gaining control of governmental bodies, Baugh said. He urged mainstream Baptists to "stand in the halls of Congress" to dispute those who would erode the separation of church and state.

Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, emphasized that free Baptists have a moral responsibility to preserve historic Baptist principles.

"If we don't hold the Baptist vision up high, then Baptists in America and even worldwide will come under the domination of those who prefer control over freedom," cautioned Wade.

"Under the fear of liberalism, Baptists have sacrificed their old friend, religious liberty," he said. "No one should ever come between the soul of a man or a woman and God."

"Freedom is tough to proclaim and difficult to protect, but it is worthy of our efforts."

With additional reporting by Marv Knox of the Texas Baptist Standard

Senate bill would reverse precinct alcohol ballot law

FRANKFORT—A proposal introduced last week in the Kentucky Senate seeks to reverse a measure on alcohol wet-dry votes approved in the waning hours of last year's General Assembly.

Senate Bill 88, introduced by Sen. Vernie McGaha (R-Dist. 15), would delete a portion of SB 247 which permits local option elections on alcohol sales in restaurants that meet specific guidelines.

In addition to McGaha's bill, the Temperance League of Kentucky filed suit last summer in an effort to repeal SB 247. That suit is still pending.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Committee on Public Affairs also is on record opposing SB 247.

McGaha said he took the action to reverse the local option measure because he believes expanded access to alcohol "is something we need to fight every chance we get."

Citing his personal convictions against alcohol, McGaha added, "I find it somewhat hypocritical that the legislature in 2000 lowered the blood alcohol content from .10 to .08 and that we would authorize the lock system on cars for DUI offenders and yet turn around and pass legislation that would make alcohol more accessible.

"I don't think it had proper discussion and debate last year," he noted. "I hope to have a vehicle to do that this year."

Expressing optimism that SB 88 will pass the Senate, he acknowledged that "it will be a tougher sell in the House."

McGaha said he hopes "that we will have enough communication coming in from the public" to encourage lawmakers to reexamine the issue.

Claude Witt, executive director of the Temperance League, urged concerned citizens to oppose increased access to alcohol, noting that "people interested in this type of legislation are going to continue their efforts."

Conference spotlights church conflict

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

CAVE CITY — Church leaders can steer congregations in a healthy direction by honestly facing conflict instead of running from it or turning a dispute into a personal battle, according to a former pastor and noted conference leader.

Instead, too many church leaders treat the biblical mandate of reconciliation as an opportunity to argue their case, according to Ken Schmitt, keynote speaker at the deacon-pastor-spouse retreat sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Feb. 9-10 in Cave City.

"We see this as one-two-three strikes and you're out," Schmitt said, referring to Matthew 18:15-17. That portion of scripture tells a Christian in a conflict with another Christian to go to the person individually first, with a small group of people second, and ultimately to the whole church. "We are to work toward reconciliation for the common good."

The statewide retreat was titled "Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior." It was based on a book by Arthur Boers of the same name.

Schmitt said systems theory can reduce the likelihood of conflict getting out of hand.

He described this philosophy as thinking about the world and each person's part in it as a whole. When people appreciate how all members contribute to the congregation, they develop respect for others, even those that irritate them, he said.

"Systems thinking changes our focus from the speck in our brother's eye to the beam in our own," he said. "The most significant thing we can do to change our behavior is to deal with the beam in our eye."

Too often, members focus on the problems they think others pose, said Schmitt, an assistant director in charge of pastoral care for Wycliffe Bible Translators.

These differences have the potential for intense battles, he said. He recalled his pastorate in Knoxville, Tenn., where one woman sued the church for \$20,000 for injuries she received during a contentious business meeting, when she fell over a pew and banged her hand. While she accused

a specific person as her alleged attacker, she named the church as a defendant for allowing the incident to occur.

This kind of incident demonstrates a common ailment in churches, where people avoid confronting others until simmering problems explode, Schmitt said.

"Avoidance isn't love," he said. "We want to avoid discomfort. It isn't dealing out of love. We aren't really turning the other cheek."

"We need to learn a new vision of dealing with problems," he added. "The problem is change is challenging. It hurts."

One solution is to develop what he called Christian assertiveness. This calls for working on the system that leads to problems instead of fretting over them, he said.

Healing the system often eliminates the problem and helps members instead of dismissing difficult people. Then, churches can appreciate how they challenge us and contribute to spiritual growth, Schmitt said.

But too often, churches attack symptoms, he said. If a church has low enrollment in Sunday school, members often blame teacher quality, grumble about a lack of commitment or try to simply boost enrollment, he said. A systems approach asks what can be done to deal with the situation.

The same theory applies to churches that are upset with their pastor. Workshop leader David Stancil said congregations need to face what they are doing wrong instead of blaming everything on their leader.

An associate pastor at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, Stancil was a layman and deacon chairman about 10 years ago amid division.

"I got up and said, 'The last four pastors have left without our blessing and they were good people,'" he recalled. "'The problem is not the pastor, the problem is us.' It took us about a year and a half to work through that."

Noting that the virus of gossip won't spread without leaders' participation, he said if deacons and spouses behave in healthy ways it will dramatically improve congregational health.

If a member is upset about the pastor, deacons should ask if the individual has gone to the pastor, or offer to

Pastor can't do it all

CAVE CITY — Sometimes the most difficult person in a church can be the pastor, if that individual tries to run everything, Ken Schmitt said.

While leading the deacon-pastor-spouse retreat, Schmitt contrasted a minister-focused church and a ministry-focused church, using materials from the book, "Healthy Congregations" by Peter Steinke. Among the comparisons:

■ In a minister-focused church, the pastor is expected to motivate, uplift and rescue people. In a ministry-focused church the members are equipped and organized for ministry.

■ In minister-focused churches, dependency on the pastor is encouraged and no activity occurs without the minister's presence. With a ministry focus, stewardship is emphasized, responsibility distributed and interdependence practiced.

Formerly a pastor for 14 years, Schmitt admitted he at one time had a problem common to pastors: He worked too many hours, developing a self-righteous attitude about his efforts and resenting others for not working as hard.

Finally, he recognized that he worked long hours because of his need for value and recognition. He saw there was no reason to get mad at anyone else for that tendency.

Similarly, many pastors overwork themselves because of their insecurities or personal anxiety, he added. Schmitt suggested the most important thing deacons or church members can do is address this issue so their pastor feels secure and isn't afraid to let go of some responsibilities.

But this also requires more congregational involvement, he added. As a pastor quits trying to do everything, members must be willing to assume some responsibilities.

Schmitt said the primary way to accomplish that is for a church to develop a clear vision, which often will stimulate a positive response. He said his former church defined its purposes as worship, nurture and mission.

In addition to meeting for Sunday morning worship, members were expected to take part in small groups, where they developed closeness and accountability. Members also were encouraged to take part in ministry in the community.

"We had a significant level of involvement in ministry," Schmitt said. "But we limited our gathering to Sunday morning. If we had services four times a week, people wouldn't have time for small groups or anything else."

go with them, or ask if he or she can discuss the situation with the pastor, Schmitt said.

If the complainer refuses, the deacon should tell that person he or she is acting unscripturally and will be held accountable.

"If people know the rules, the system becomes healthy," he said. "The goal is not to win, it's reconciliation."

Campbellsville, Georgetown students spend break on mission trips

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer

GEORGETOWN—While many college students were enjoying Christmas break with their family and friends, some students from two Kentucky Baptist colleges spent their break making a difference through missions work across the country and across the globe.

Five Georgetown College students spent two weeks of their Christmas vacation on a mission to Kenya, and 37 students from Campbellsville University spent two weeks working in inner-city missions in Arlington, Texas, and Philadelphia.

The Georgetown students left the United States Dec. 30 and arrived in

Nairobi, Kenya, on Jan. 1. They spent the first week conducting a retreat for 30 children of missionaries stationed throughout eastern Africa while the children's parents repaired a school building in the city of Neryl, Kenya. Students spent the second week observing local customs and culture.

"While Kenya is terribly poor, I was surprised to see the number of people who wanted to hear about Christ," sophomore Kathleen Elizabeth McKown said. "They would just walk up to us and start asking questions."

Team members raised their own money to finance the trip and were hosted by Georgetown graduates Jodi Lynn Norman and Lindsey Mae Lee.

The Campbellsville group left Dec. 15 from the university campus and 22

of the students went to Arlington while 15 went to Philadelphia. Both groups assisted established ministries in the metropolitan area.

In Texas, the focus was Mission Arlington, an inner-city outreach.

"The students were involved in sorting clothes, helping to provide child care and assisting with the Christmas store offered by Mission Arlington," said Ed Pavy, director of campus ministries at Campbellsville. Pavy accompanied the students who went to Arlington. He said two of the students in particular were integral to the mission's Christmas store project's success.

"This is an annual event the mission does, making donated clothing, toys and gifts available to low-income families who qualify, so that they can

have a Christmas," Pavy said.

Approximately 15,000 people benefited from the Christmas store during the student's two-week missions trip.

Campbellsville also sent a student team to the Middle East. "These students were definitely out of their comfort zone, sharing Christ in often hostile territory," Pavy said.

He said he hoped students brought home a desire to continue the work they did while abroad.

"I hope these trips helped the students see beyond themselves and look for ways they can get involved in Campbellsville," he said. "Going on these short-term trips is great, but now I hope they look for applications of what they learned right here at home."

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

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Touching all the lonely people

By John Loudat

In their now-classic song of the '60s "Eleanor Rigby," John Lennon and Paul McCartney of the Beatles challenged their fans to "look at all the lonely people" and asked: "Where do they all come from?" Do you suppose that the lonely people might be created by a shortage of caring people?

Naah! That's rarely the conclusion we come to. We'd much rather place the blame right smack dab where we're sure it really belongs—on the lonely people themselves. After all, they're the ones who isolate themselves from others; they're the ones who take pains to avoid interaction with others; they're the ones who refuse to answer the phone (and thank God for caller ID); they're the ones who have grown to prefer being alone to being sociable.

But have you considered why that might be? I'm convinced many lonely people behave the way they do—and spend most of their time alone—because they sincerely believe it's the right thing to do, and the agonizing loneliness they suffer as a result is simply the price they believe they must pay.

Many lonely people believe it is rude to impose on others' space unless they know they are welcome. Thinking that there is a possibility—even if remote—that the presence of their company might not be appreciated is enough to keep them away. They require a clear indication that they won't be considered an imposition, so others must take the initiative and issue an explicit invitation.

Many lonely people stay away from others because others have been a source of pain in the past. The

experience of desiring love and support and encouragement from others but receiving rejection and indifference causes some people to avoid others at all costs—to protect themselves from emotional trauma, which can range from minor to devastating.

We've all had the less-than-delightful experience of inviting ourselves to "hang out" with others for a while only to get vibes—or find out in no uncertain terms—that the clique we've "invaded" would rather us be somewhere, anywhere else. That'll thrill your soul, and it will make you more reluctant to take the initiative in the future.

Then there are those times when lonely people could use a little love and support and encouragement. Unfortunately, some Christians think it's enough to say, "If we can ever help, let us know."

Many lonely people, though, suspect that if they never ask for help, it would be just fine, even preferable, with the person who offered it. They feel that if the person doesn't want to help unless he or she is asked, the individual really is not that interested in helping at all.

I know, some lonely people have a problem with getting carried away in their thinking, as illustrated above. But right or wrong, that's what they're thinking, and they're

suffering from loneliness, much of which they may have created for themselves. And mental health experts today recognize that their painful plight is only intensified—sometimes dramatically—during special times of the year such as a birthday, Valentine's Day or Christmas.

That's why Christians must take the initiative in reaching out to lonely people, like Jesus did to a man no one wanted anything to do with, the leper we read about in Matthew 8:1-4.

"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean," the leper told Jesus. Reaching out His hand and touching the man, Jesus responded, "I am willing. Be clean."

At that moment, Jesus did what no one else would dare do. He reached out rather than pulling away, and He actually touched the man, making him whole.

There are multitudes of hurting, lonely people all around us today who would feel a whole lot better if we would take the initiative and demonstrate to them that we really care.

It's not hard to understand how many lonely people are the first to realize that Jesus is really all they need—after all, in many circumstances, He's about all they've got. But it sure would be nice, don't you think, if they had some flesh and blood examples of that from those who call themselves followers of Christ?

John Loudat is editor of the Baptist New Mexican

COMMENTARY

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Baptist Forum is limited to Western Recorder subscribers, unless someone is responding to a story or editorial of which they are the subject. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@ntr.net.

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

January giving sets CP record

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Many thanks to Kentucky Baptists for their vision and faithful support of missions through the Cooperative Program. Mission giving by Kentucky Baptists set a new monthly record in January.

Cooperative Program receipts were \$2,456,988 in January, compared to the previous high of \$2,148,292. In addition, total mission giving for January was \$5,205,733, compared to the previous high of \$4,488,392.

January usually is a high month in KBC total receipts, due to December church receipts for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The January CP increase was especially needed this year in order for us to catch up with budget needs following a slow start.

I am especially grateful for the many churches that are moving forward with a percentage increase or

that are holding the percentage rate constant. There are pressures and voices calling for local church reduction in missions giving.

"We have local bills to pay and local needs that must be met," said one church member.

"But we have a mandate from our Lord to share the gospel with all nations," another member affirmed.

"We want to be involved in determining where our missions money goes," responds another member.

"Is there anything wrong with that?"

Of course not. It is good for members to be involved. However, it is very difficult for a local church to send staff to mission fields to evaluate priority needs and supervise the work.

One of the great values of the Cooperative Program is that missionaries on the field help make decisions about priority mission projects. None of the funds go to individuals but through the mission board to support carefully defined mission objectives and goals. With input from mission



Bill Mackey

leaders around the world, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board makes decisions about world missions priorities based on the best information and feedback available.

Consequently, the Cooperative Program looks great for priority missions support, accountability and continuity of mission work. I like the Cooperative Program because it allows me to support mission work around the world even when I am sleeping.

Also, the Cooperative Program provides funding for missions needs across Kentucky, including Hispanic work, partnership missions, education, new work, leadership development, strengthening churches, etc. Through the Cooperative Program you can participate in meeting hundreds of needs with weekly tithes and offerings.

The Cooperative Program remains the greatest mission support plan ever given to a group of people. May God be honored and glorified through the gracious giving of His people.

Remember this: *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously (2 Corinthians 9:6).*

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Ministers face several unique tax guidelines

By Don Spencer

A number of critical tax issues are unique to ministers and church employees. Four issues ministers and churches should be aware of are:



■ **Employment status.** Ministers have a dual

status. They are clearly self-employed for Social Security. A church may not pay Social Security for a minister. However, ministers (as they relate to a local church) are employees for income tax purposes. Therefore, ministers should receive a W-2 form and report their church income on the 1040 form. (Income from weddings, funerals, revivals, etc., still is reported on Schedule C as self-employment income.)

■ **Expenses.** Ministry-related expenses should be paid by a church using a valid accountable reimbursement plan. The IRS rate for mileage is recommended, currently 34.5 cents per mile. Expenses paid using an allowance become taxable income. To be a valid accountable reimbursement plan, the expenses must have a business/ministry connection, be substantiated within a reasonable time and have any amounts in excess of the substantiated expenses returned. Salary reduction arrangements to fund "reimbursing" expenses do not meet the requirements of an accountable plan and are therefore taxable. In the past, "salary restructuring" has been used to fund accountable reimbursement. Even this approach recently has been questioned by the IRS.

Therefore, it is more critical than ever that churches take the initiative to set up reimbursement of ministry-related expenses totally independent of any consideration of the minister's compensation. There is no valid reason for the church to handle expenses as part of the compensation.

■ **Special occasion gifts.** Cash gifts from a church to its minister generally are taxable income. This includes Christmas gifts, retirement gifts, etc. Gifts from individual members to the minister that do not go through the church generally are not taxable.

■ **Church contributions.** Contributions by a minister are not a business expense. A minister is expected to set a good Christian example through the giving of his tithe. But those gifts are a charitable contribution deduction for tax purposes, not a business expense.

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

Honest discussion can help clarify couple's sense of love, commitment

Q: My boyfriend and I have been dating for a year. We've even talked about marriage. He says he doesn't know if he loves me. What does that mean?

February certainly is the month of hearts, flowers, candy and romantic love. Our culture promotes the belief that true love is always a "sweep you off your feet" kind of love.

Our language conveys the notion that love is a rather unstable feeling. We "fall in love," "fall head over heels in love" and "lose our heads." Both men and women sometimes believe that unless they have those indescribable feelings for someone, they don't really "love" that person.

Perhaps your boyfriend is wondering if he needs to feel that kind of all-consuming love. If he doesn't feel that way, he may wonder if his feelings for you are the "real thing." It's also possible that your boyfriend may fear a commitment to one person.

The best answer to your question is to talk honestly with your boyfriend. Perhaps he's afraid of responsibility. Perhaps he feels like he's in a rut after a yearlong relationship. Or maybe he really does not have the deep feelings of love that are essential for a strong marriage. If you are unable to resolve this romantic stalemate, talk with your pastor or a credentialed pastoral counselor or Christian counselor.

Marital love does have a romantic, physical component. Christian marriage also demands emotional and spiritual compatibility. Sometimes romantic love gradually wanes a bit. During those times the spiritual connection a couple has can get you through the times of doubt.

Valentines are people who can share both good and scary feelings with each other. Hopefully an honest conversation with your boyfriend can make your Valentine's Day especially meaningful.—*Suzanne Coyle*

Q: I have serious medical problems. How much should I tell my children?

Occasionally, parents face medical problems that are beyond the realm of ordinary sickness. A simple physical can uncover serious concerns with major health implications. What do you tell children?

Give basic information. Answer questions simply and directly, but avoid unnecessary details that will confuse. Give special attention to things children notice, such as the ways illness or treatments affect how you look, think and act.

Children want to know what is going on, as evidenced by all the questions they ask. However, children need even more to be protected from the sometimes harsh realities and uncertainties of life until they are older and better able to handle them. If a medical condition worsens, you can let information unfold gradually on a need-to-know basis.

In the midst of the typical uncertainty that surrounds a serious illness, try to give reassurance that things are going to be OK. Resist the temptation to say too much. Talk to your minister or another adult friend about your own fears, uncertainties and questions.

Express gratitude for and confidence in doctors, and assure your children that the doctors are doing everything they can to help. Tell them you also are doing your part, following doctor's orders, taking medicines, etc.

Pray together for God's presence and help. Scriptures like Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 Peter 5:7 can be reminders that God wants us to trust Him with our worries and concerns. During your personal prayer time, ask God to be with your children in special ways, calming unspoken fears.—*David Garrard*

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



True Love Waits offers timely Valentine's emphasis

Amid cold winter days and barren landscapes, Valentine's Day offers a welcome focus on hearts, flowers and special relationships in our lives.

Valentine's Day is a time to proclaim our love for those we hold most dear, an opportunity to affirm our commitment and devotion to that special someone.

And this year, thanks to True Love Waits, Valentine's Day also is a time for young people to make a physical and spiritual commitment to keep themselves sexually pure for their future mate. Although not a traditional Valentine's sentiment, a pledge of sexual purity is among the most loving gifts a teenager can make to his or her future spouse.

True Love Waits, a sexual abstinence emphasis launched in 1993 by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, has grown into an international, interdenominational movement. True Love Waits and other sexual abstinence programs have resulted in hundreds of thousands of young people making personal commitments to sexual purity in recent years.

True Love Waits covenant cards have been signed by countless young people during events at local churches, statewide rallies, college campuses and other settings. The pledge states: "Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, my friends, my future mate and my future children to be sexually abstinent from this day until the day I enter a biblical marriage relationship."

The idea behind the emphasis is to encourage young people to make a conscious decision about their physical relationships and also to build positive peer pressure amid the barrage of sexual temptations thrown at young people in today's society.

Describing marriage in Matthew 19, Jesus reminded the Pharisees, "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ... Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate." Tragically, today's level of commitment both before and during marriage often is a far cry from that biblical ideal. Yet this generation of young people have the opportunity to reaffirm Christ's teachings during their dating years and beyond.

In addition to maintaining spiritual standards, statistics indicate that a growing number of teens view sexual abstinence as a viable option to avoid unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. That trend is accompanied by a recent decline of teen pregnancy across the nation.

According to Paul Turner, co-coordinator of True Love Waits, "Many students have shared how making a pledge to abstinence has kept them out of trouble even before it became an issue. It has given them a reason to fall back on when they are tempt-

ed to engage in premarital sexual activity."

As teens celebrate Valentine's Day 2001, True Love Waits leaders are coordinating a one-day "Seize the Net" emphasis. Young people around the world are being invited to e-mail their commitment to sexual purity on Feb. 14. Electronic commitment cards are available at the True Love Waits Internet home page: www.truelovewaits.com. Many churches and youth groups have scheduled Bible studies, retreats and other special emphases to promote "Seize the Net."

For more information about True Love Waits and "Seize the Net," call (800) LUV-WAIT or e-mail truelovewaits@lifeway.com.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Early Kentucky Baptist leaders divided over nation's looming Civil War

By Duane Bolin

America's antebellum years proved just as tense and divisive in Kentucky as in the rest of the nation. The issue of slavery split families, friendships, political parties and denominations.

When Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers met for their 1845 annual session in Georgetown, a chief topic of discussion was the recent formation of the Southern Baptist Convention. The result of a division about whether missionaries sent out by mission boards could own slaves, 310 Southern Baptist delegates met in Augusta, Ga., on May 8, 1845, and organized the SBC. Although Isaac McCoy probably was the only Kentuckian present in Augusta, most Kentuckians sympathized with the new convention. In Georgetown messengers dissolved an "auxiliary connection with the American Baptist Home Mission Society" to align with the new convention.

The new alignment did not mean all Kentucky Baptists condoned slavery. William Pratt, the prominent pastor of Lexington's First Baptist

Church, was an outspoken antislavery advocate. In Louisville, William Everts accepted a call to Walnut Street Baptist Church in 1852. A man "of excellent gifts and fine scholarly attainments," Everts, like Pratt, opposed slavery. It was Everts's opposition to slavery that led to the

creation of what one writer called "excited parties" for and against the slavery question.

Opposed to Everts and his adamant antislavery views was Samuel Howard Ford, editor of the *Western Recorder*. The "Everts party" seemed to be in the majority in the city, but in the surrounding countryside the "Ford party" garnered more support.

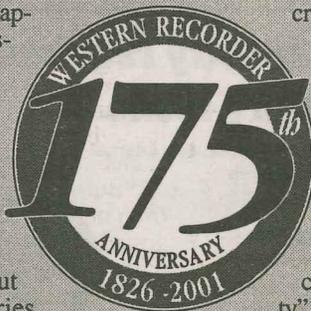
Everts and Ford both were remarkable, determined ministers. Ford remained a prominent leader in Long Run Baptist Association until the outbreak of the war in 1861. A native of Missouri, he moved to Kentucky in 1851 to teach in Paducah. When he moved to Louisville the following year he became co-editor with John L. Waller of the *Christian Repository*, a popular religious monthly magazine. Described as "a brilliant writer and an eloquent preacher," Ford was pastor of East

Baptist Church, Long Run Baptist Church and Floyds Fork (later Fisherville) Baptist Church in eastern Jefferson County. All the while Ford edited the *Western Recorder*, in addition to his pastoral duties and his work with the *Christian Repository*. Ford was an antebellum bivocational Baptist minister.

After serving the Confederacy during the Civil War, he started a new church in Memphis, Tenn., before returning to his home state of Missouri where he lived out his days in St. Louis. In 1905, at age 81, after a lifetime of service and only a month before his death, Ford returned to Kentucky to attend the annual meeting of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky held in Russellville. Through all the years, he had remained a life member of the General Association, keeping in close touch with his Kentucky friends.

The *Christian Repository* became known as Ford's *Christian Repository*, named after its editor of some 53 years. His editorship of the *Western Recorder* (1851-1861) was a much briefer duration, but his leadership in his Kentucky years in the decade before the Civil War was marked like everything else with the approaching fury of what one Civil War historian called "an American Iliad."

Duane Bolin is associate professor of history at Murray State University.



Louisville group aims to continue reconciliation efforts

By David Winfrey
News Director

"This event is a celebration for what God might do in the city of Louisville."

Les Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville

LOUISVILLE—Approximately 750 Christians from throughout Louisville gathered last Sunday evening to worship and promote racial and spiritual reconciliation in their community.

"This event is a celebration for what God might do in the city of Louisville," Les Hollon told worshippers at the beginning of the two-hour service. Hollon is pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church, which hosted the gathering.

The service, which featured representatives of 25 churches from various denominations, was organized by the same group that coordinated last summer's crusade featuring evangelist Tony Evans.

The worship service was designed to celebrate last summer's crusade and look toward future projects.

"It's sort of like the cementing of an approaching relationship of multiple churches who really do want to go on doing things for the kingdom," said Bingham, pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, the meeting's co-host.

The crusade team, which organized 160 Louisville churches for the event last June in Freedom Hall, has changed its name to "Greater Louisville Christian Reconciliation Ministries."

Organizers will meet soon to chart a course for their future projects together, Bingham said.

"We don't know what that's going to be right now, but it's going to be something that responds to an identified need that perhaps only the Christian community can meet," he said.

In addition to Hollon and Bingham, other Kentucky Baptists on the reconciliation ministry steering committee are Bill Mackey, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention; Charles Barnes, a member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church and past KBC president; and Doug Crawley, minister of music at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

Sunday's worship service blended



CELEBRATION Worshippers from a variety of Christian churches in Louisville met Feb. 11 at St. Matthews Baptist Church for a service to celebrate reconciliation. ■ Above: Choirs from St. Matthews Baptist and Lampton Baptist Church sing. ■ Right: Shelly Hill, women's evangelism director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and Les Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews, lead in a responsive reading. ■ Below: Women pray during a prayer meeting before the worship service.



African-American praise music and Anglo hymns. A Hispanic pastor read Scripture, and an Episcopalian rector delivered the closing prayer.

Various speakers repeated the theme of people being reconciled to God through Jesus and then being able to overcome barriers of race and status to be reconciled with each other.

"We've come under the banner of Jesus Christ to say we're one in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," Geoffrey Ellis, pastor of St. John AME Church said during a prayer.

Billy Ray Jennings, pastor of Christ Church United Methodist Church and a vice chairman for the upcoming Billy Graham crusade, told the story of Graham finding out about ropes to be used to divide black and whites who would be coming to a crusade meeting in Chattanooga, Tenn., in 1953. "He

tore the ropes away."

Reconciliation occurs in ways that are measurable, such as attendance at Sunday's service, and ways that can't be identified, Hollon noted. "The difficult part to measure is how many problems that are prevented, how many wounds aren't made," he said.

"Tonight was able to happen at this level because of the relationships that are already in place," he added. "Now we're ready to multiply it."

Dianne Lewis-Brown, director of Christian education at Canaan Missionary Baptist Church, said it is up to Christians if reconciliation is to take place. "I believe it starts with the Holy Spirit and the fact that we as one body are the salt and light of the world."

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MAKBWR

Mid-Continent mixing marketing with mission to grow

Continued from page 1

He says he helped the school reach financial security but realized he wouldn't be staying long-term. "You can come in and make some changes, but somebody else needs to lead them down the road."

But it was at Bethel that he learned about the high number of people in Western Kentucky who had two years of college education but no four-year degree.

Bethel has a fast-track bachelor's degree program by which older students with some college credit can complete their degree in 18 months. While at Bethel, Imhoff had investigated expanding the program into Mid-Continent's back yard, Paducah.

Jester was looking into a similar program at Mid-Continent, and a former classmate of Imhoff's recommended that Jester and Imhoff meet.

"Dr. Jester didn't know that I had been up here in Paducah and met with the mayor," he says. "I'd driven by this school probably 15 times and didn't even know it was here."

Imhoff says he was attracted by the school's potential, heritage and an ability to survive for the previous 50 years. "The fact that they had no debt, that's good news," he says. "It's also bad news when you're trying to build a university in that you have no debt service history."

Another concern, he adds, was the low student population and the high percentage of students who did not finish their degrees.

"It was difficult to see how they could sustain financial operations with such a small population, but the truth is they had done just that," he says. "I thought, with the demographics of the area, it would be an exciting challenge to continue what had been the Baptist College of the Bible while expanding its ministry."

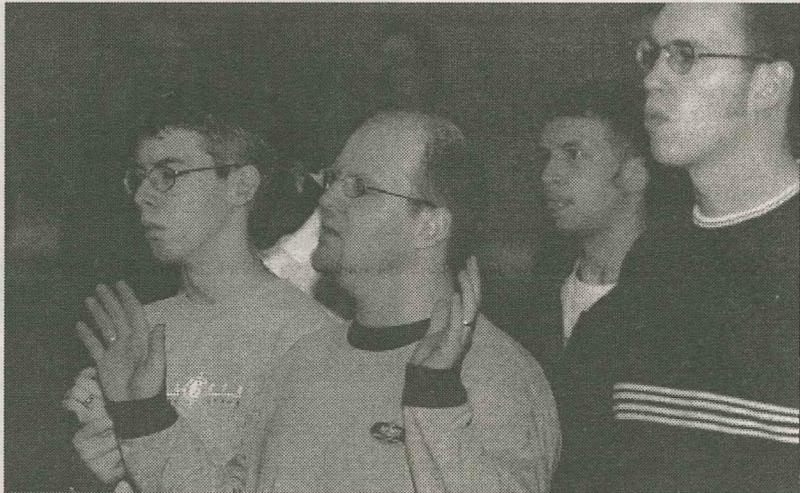
And as the trustees approached Imhoff about becoming president he says he found in Jester someone with whom he could forge a partnership.

"He has that long history and name recognition within the church," Imhoff says. "He's one of those guys who has paid his dues for a long time in the Kingdom, and I give him the utmost respect."

He also made Jester a deal: Imhoff



ON CAMPUS ■ Above: Mid-Continent's two top leaders agreed that Chancellor David Jester (left) would continue to develop the school's relationships with its Baptist supporters while President Bob Imhoff focused on running the school. ■ Right: Students sing during a recent chapel service.



would become president, focusing on the internal affairs of the school, including expanding the curriculum and long-range planning.

Jester, in turn, would become the school's chancellor, maintaining Mid-Continent's relationship with area churches, which provide financial support for the school. Imhoff saw that Jester had the credibility and trust among local congregations and likely could smooth the ruffled feathers that inevitably follow any change.

Both men say the changes, many designed to market the school to more students, are causing the growth as well as raising a few eyebrows. Among the changes:

■ **Accelerated education.** More than 5,700 people within a 25-mile radius of Mid-Continent have two years of college education but no four-year degree.

Like Bethel, many schools are offering accelerated degrees, but Mid-Continent leaders say their program is different because students don't attend classes on campus. Instead professors go to factory break rooms, office parks or churches, anywhere a minimum group of 15 students want to meet.

The groups of students begin the program together and finish in 18 months with a bachelor of science degree in organizational leadership.

In less than two years, the program already has 17 groups of students, effectively doubling Mid-Continent's enrollment and providing a year-round source of income.

Two groups are made up of bivo-

luntary pastors, who are taking two-thirds of their classes in organizational leadership and the other third in theology. "It's the only program like that in the country," says Don McCarty, dean of Mid-Continent's global outreach college.

■ **Intercollegiate sports.** "You'd be surprised at how many people will come out to watch us get our brains beat in at basketball," Imhoff says.

In two years, the school has fielded teams in men's basketball, soccer and baseball and women's softball. Plans are under way to add women's soccer and basketball.

Jester says the sports program was crucial to attracting more traditional-college-age students.

Additionally, the teams are boosting the school's image in the area by gaining free publicity in local sports reports.

"One of the things people don't realize is that the big universities are going after the big name players and all the other players are ignored," Jester said.

Recruit a local athlete, and his or her friends are likely to consider the school as well, he added. "If you recruit good ladies, good men, they attract others and bring them with them."

■ **From training field to mission field.** A year ago, most of Mid-Continent's students were people in their 30s and 40s, preparing for Christian ministry. "Now you don't know if the people sitting next to you are Christian or not," said Tammi Mallory, Baptist Stu-

dent Union director at Mid-Continent.

Mallory estimates that up to a third of on-campus students are non-Christians. While some people have questioned whether that signals a change in the school's direction, Tom Butler and Jester insist that students are surrounded by opportunities to discover the Christian message on campus.

And for those who worry that the school is forsaking its original calling as a missions training center, Imhoff notes that last fall 25 people graduated from the school's Baptist College of the Bible, the most ever.

Imhoff and Jester say the results of their changes already are evident.

When Imhoff arrived just 22 months ago, Mid-Continent had 190 students and a budget of \$1.9 million. Today there are 452 students and Imhoff is preparing a \$5.6 million budget for the next fiscal year. Professors have seen their first significant salary raise in five years.

"We're not out of the woods yet. This is still going to be a struggling college. But the future looks much, much brighter right now," Tom Butler says.

"We're not only going to turn out more students, we're going to graduate more preachers, more missionaries, more ministry people than we ever had before," he adds. "But we're also going to graduate more laymen and laywomen who are going to go out and be salt and light wherever they happen to go. And I see that as just as important as the number of preachers and missionaries that we turn out."

Mid-Continent offers study abroad program

MAYFIELD—Officials at Mid-Continent College say they hope a new foreign study program for incoming freshmen will both broaden students' horizons and instill in them a missions mindset.

Beginning next fall, every incoming student will be scheduled for an annual trip abroad.

The freshmen year, students will travel to England, a not-too-threatening country with a familiar language.

In subsequent years, students will travel to Spain, Costa Rica and Mexico.

President Bob Imhoff said Mid-Continent will be the only private four-year college in the country that includes the cost of an annual international trip in its tuition.

The program not only will attract students but also should help retain them, he said.

Imhoff noted that inquiries for applications have skyrocketed from 116 last year to more than 1,200 this year.

"The word is getting out that we are offering a broad curriculum, and this study travel initiative is generating some excitement."

'Baptist' and 'Bible' gone from school's name but not from campus, leaders say

By David Winfrey
News Director

MAYFIELD—What's in a name? Plenty if you upset alumni and supporters by changing it.

"Can you imagine the reaction of our constituents when we took the words 'Baptist' and 'Bible' out of our name?" asked Tom Butler, current chairman of Mid-Continent College's board of trustees.

"It was not pretty," added school President Bob Imhoff.

Mid-Continent started out as West Kentucky Baptist Bible Institute when West Kentucky Baptist Association established the school in 1949.

But the school's name was changed in

1965 and it was called Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College until 1997.

In 1993, then-President Laverne Butler proposed shortening the name to Mid-Continent College, according to Tom Butler. Trustees narrowly approved the change, but it generated so much debate that the school continued to go by the longer title even after it had changed its name on official documents.

Chancellor David Jester said that when he arrived as president in 1997 he found two reasons for changing the name completely to Mid-Continent College.

First, accrediting agencies take a dim view of an institution going by two different names, he said. The trustees wanted to expand the curriculum to attract

more students and the shorter name would represent that the school was no longer exclusively a "preacher's school."

Second, Jester said, the longer name could be an impediment to overseas students seeking permission to come to America. A Middle Eastern student from a predominantly Muslim country had been refused permission to leave the country to attend "Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College."

But that hasn't stopped some people from questioning whether the name change indicates the school is distancing itself from its roots, according to Charles Blair, director of missions for West Kentucky Baptist Association and a former Mid-Continent vice president.

Blair, who said he supports the school's current growth efforts, said everyone's attention is on the school's Baptist College of the Bible.

"As the college enlarges its field of service, it will more than ever be important for the Baptist College of the Bible to maintain the initial purpose of the school," Blair says. "I think it can be done and I believe it will be done."

Tom Butler said the trustees understand the questions and welcome them.

"We're not reluctant at all to defend what has gone on there," he said. "I'm not sure we've reassured all of them, but we're certainly willing to make that effort and walk them through the same thought processes that we went through as well."

Merton sparked professor's devotion to contemplative life

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer

ATLANTA—Glenn Hinson was first introduced to the concept of contemplative living in 1960 when he took a group of seminarians to the Abbey of Gethsemani in Bardstown for a retreat.

"I originally went there not with an interest in contemplative living, but in medieval studies," said Hinson, an author and professor who taught spirituality, worship and church history for 30 years at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

That interest changed, however, when he met the retreat leader, Thomas Merton. Merton, a Benedictine monk and author of several books including the best-seller "The Seven Storey Mountain," lived at Gethsemani and wrote extensively on the subject of contemplative living.

"He made me realize the value of the contemplative life more than anything else," Hinson said.

Hinson continued his friendship with Merton until the monk's death in 1968, and he considers Merton one of his biggest influences.

"Merton was the father of what we now consider contemplative living," he said.

Contemplative living involves focusing on one's spiritual relationship with God and how that is affecting every aspect of life.

Hinson took what he learned from his friendship with Merton and put it to work in his own life as well as his classroom.

"Since 1970, I have started my day with a three-mile prayerful walk as my daily retreat," said Hinson, who currently teaches at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. He also is known to start his



RETREAT LOCALE The Abbey of Gethsemani is located in Nelson County. Founded in 1848, it is the oldest Cistercian monastery in the United States and offers self-guided weekly and weekend retreats to people from all faiths 365 days a year. (Photo by Rob Carr)

classes with 10 minutes of silent contemplation.

"Many of the students are uncomfortable with it at first, but they grow to understand its importance and value it. Silent contemplation is something that must be learned."

Hinson, who has written several books on contemplative living and spirituality, is considered an expert in the field. In June 2002, the first E. Glenn Hinson Institute of Spiritual Formation will be held at the Advent Spirituality Center in Mars Hill, N.C. He also lectures on spiritual formation in churches throughout the Southeast.

"We live in an age of so much stress, and both Baby Boomers and Generation X'ers are recognizing a need for this kind of spirituality," he noted. "They may not have as much respect for organized religion, but they

have a tremendous interest in spiritual things."

He added that the contemplative lifestyle is not necessarily one readily embraced by many in traditional Baptist settings who are used to more scheduled retreats and prayer lives.

"This is going against a more dominant stream in Baptist culture, or perhaps more like two streams running side by side. Many in the Southern Baptist tradition may have trouble accepting some of the differences between the two approaches."

Still, Hinson sees a growing appreciation among Baptist churches for contemplative living.

"More and more Baptist churches are recognizing their need for this and more and more people are taking a contemplative approach to their spiritual lives," he said.

Time out

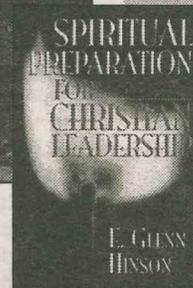
Author and professor Glenn Hinson notes that even Jesus needed to retreat during important times in His ministry. In his new book, "Spiritual Preparation for Christian Leadership," Hinson describes four types of retreats he says every Christian should take on a regular basis:

■ **Daily.** Hinson prefers a long, meditative walk every morning, but suggests other ways of taking a daily retreat as well. Ideas include finding a quiet place for 20 minutes a day and just showing up, or following the example of Quaker writer Douglas Steere by spending 30 minutes a day in silence and 30 minutes a day contemplating Scripture.

■ **Monthly.** Hinson recommends taking a day-long retreat once a month to the mountains or some other secluded place and spending that time in silence and prayer.

■ **Semi-annually.** Hinson advises a more in-depth retreat involving getting away for silent contemplation at least 36 to 48 hours two times a year.

■ **Sabbaticals.** Not just for professors and other academicians, Hinson suggests that everyone living in this stress-filled culture should leave the hectic lifestyle for an extended period of time and get back in touch with his or her center and with God.



Contemplative life attracting more Baptist followers

Continued from page 1

barrenness of a busy life," he said. "Pastors too often model an overly-busy life for their congregations. Getting away for a couple days—or at least overnight—can make a big difference in their lives."

Wade Rowatt, psychologist, author and director of the St. Matthews Pastor Counseling Center in Louisville, agrees that personal retreats are important not only for spiritual reasons, but physical and emotional as well.

"Retreats are a time to recharge your batteries not only by doing less, but by being in touch with your center and with the Center, which is God," he said.

"Baptists have tended to confuse doing with being, and doing is good, but it is not enough. There's a rhyme I sometimes quote to my clients: 'Mary had a little lamb./ It could have been a sheep, until it joined a Baptist church/and died from lack of sleep!'"

"We are killing our members, especially spiritually, by doing too much and not getting in touch with ourselves," Rowatt said, adding that personal retreats are essential to a healthy spiritual life.

"Only when we retreat and spend some time in silence are we ready to engage God on a deeper level," he said, "and when we don't take the time to do that, we are just running away from ourselves."

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Ramsey: Biblical money lessons will attract non-Christians

Continued from page 1

Amalakites surround God's people in the valley, God doesn't order a bond issue to get them out of trouble.

"Debt is always referred to as a curse," he added. "It's not a going to hell sin kind of thing. It's just stupid, and He says that over and over in the Bible. The borrower is slave to the lender. It's not the highest and best use of money for a Christian. Yet, Christians get into debt pretty much like everyone else."

Ramsey has firsthand experience with debt and its consequences.

As part of his testimony, he tells audiences that he built a successful real estate investing business during the 1980s. At age 26, his properties were worth \$4 million, but most of them were financed with short-term loans.

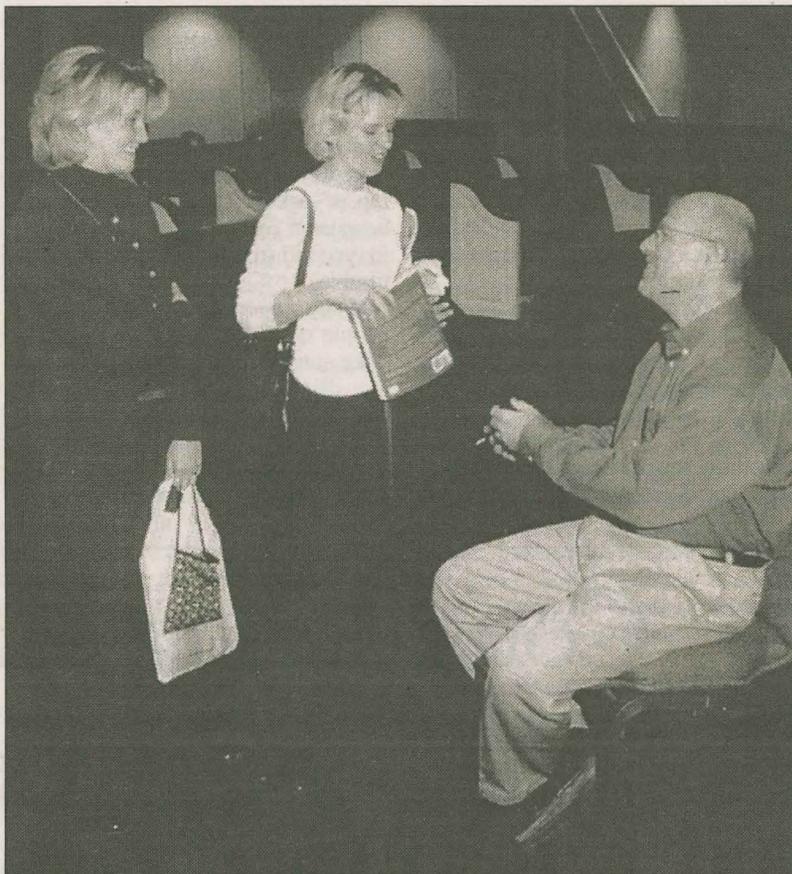
He says bank mergers and a downturn in the market caused several banks to call in the loans, leaving him bankrupt at age 30.

Ramsey credits his faith as the only stable force at that time.

"Honestly, if I hadn't been a Christian I probably would be in the grave; a suicide. The highest suicide rate for males is among entrepreneurs who lose everything," he said. "When Ramsey Investments was gone, I looked in the mirror and there wasn't anyone there, because that was my identity. Having an identity in Christ is probably what saved my life."

It also led him to consider the biblical statements regarding money.

"I've never actually sat down and counted the Scriptures, but Larry



FINANCIAL TALK Murray State University students Nicole Moore and Nicole Brandon who attend First Baptist Church of Murray talk with Dave Ramsey after his recent Financial Peace Seminar at Bible Baptist Heartland Worship Center in Paducah. (Photo by Keith Todd)

Burkett and several of the other scholars say money and possessions are discussed about 850 times in the Bible," he said. "Some of it is oblique, but there are references to our possessions and our heart. It says

'Where your possessions are; there your heart is also.' It's a money Scripture, but it is also an idol worship issue."

It was during the money crisis that he developed his "financial

peace" philosophy. He self-published "Financial Peace" and began counseling others. Later he developed a 13-session video series called "Financial Peace University."

Ramsey found a radio station that was struggling with a talk format and needed a program to fill broadcast time. Ramsey went on the air to share what he had learned and counsel listeners on the air.

His radio following grew as the talk show was picked up by other stations. He now has more than a million listeners each weekday, with stations in more than 40 cities including Houston and Salt Lake City. "Financial Peace" was picked up by a commercial publisher and it and Ramsey's second book, "More Than Enough," have both spent time on the New York Times bestsellers list.

If there is a secret to getting out of debt, Ramsey says it's having a plan. He pushes his snowball debt reduction plan, which involves making minimum payments on all debts except the smallest one and attacking it with every free dollar that can be found. Once that debt is eliminated, more money is freed up for the next smallest debt.

Ramsey also counsels people to pay cash for everything, establish an emergency fund, cut up credit cards and stay out of debt.

Repetition of those basic concepts on his talk show reinforces them for regular listeners while keeping things simple enough so new listeners can pick them up quickly.

"We have hundreds of thousands of people who buy our products, come through the 13-week Financial Peace University series and come to the one-day seminars," Ramsey said. "The radio show has a million listeners a day. What percentage of those listeners actually uses our whole Financial Peace program? I have no way of knowing. I do know people write and call us to let us know it works."

Whether with "Financial Peace" or another product, Ramsey said personal finance is one of four Christian living topics any church should consider teaching in its community.

"Teaching Christian living is a great way to minister to the body of Christ and attract the unchurched," he said. "George Barna's research, anyone who reads any of the mega-church or Willow Creek materials, knows you have to bring biblical principles down to where people can use them in real life."

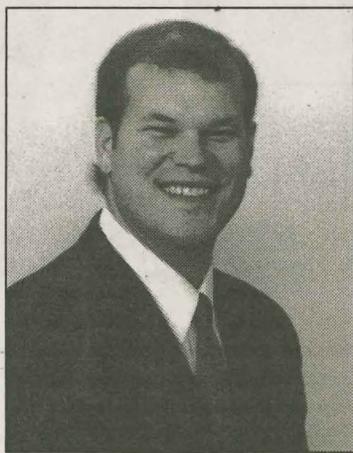
As an example, Ramsey cites his home church, Christ Church in Brentwood, Tenn., which he said grew from 400 to 7,000 members from 1984 to 1994. "One of the things we discovered during that process is that we had to teach marriage, parenting, careers and money from a biblical perspective," he said.

"The Bible has a lot to say about those four key life areas. We had to put clothes on Jesus and walk Him down the street," he added. "It draws the unsaved and unchurched and shows them we have something special. It's a beautiful outreach."

For more information about Dave Ramsey call (888) 227-3223 or visit his Web site, www.daveramsey.com

"Teaching Christian living is a great way to minister to the body of Christ and attract the unchurched."

Author and financial counselor Dave Ramsey



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Dr. Don Whitt, director of Evangelism, State Convention of Baptists in Ohio

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Dr. Bobby Mullins, Pastor of Cherokee Baptist Church, Memphis

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NATIONAL NOTES

■ **State assembly OKs abortion waiting period.** The Virginia General Assembly has approved a 24-hour mandatory waiting period for women seeking abortions. Under the bill, which now goes to the governor, physicians must provide counseling, including medical explanations of the procedure and alternatives, to women at least 24 hours before performing the procedure.

■ **Dobson appeal for donations bears fruit.** James Dobson spoke and the people listened. In November, the president of the conservative Christian group Focus on the Family made an unusual appeal for cash in his monthly letter to 2.4 million supporters. By the end of January, the Colorado Springs-based ministry had made up a \$500,000 deficit, eliminating the need for cutbacks, a ministry executive said. "Dr. Dobson is very subdued in fund raising," said Tom Minnery, vice president of public policy at Focus on the Family, which has a \$135 million budget. "When he does mention it, people do understand it's a genuine need. And they've always responded."

■ **Survey: Most pastors lukewarm on Bush plan.** A new survey of Protestant ministers shows most pastors are lukewarm to President Bush's proposal to fund faith-based organizations in exchange for providing social services. The study by Ellison Research found only 17 percent of pastors strongly supported the program, while 13 percent strongly opposed it. The rest of the pastors surveyed fell somewhere in the middle. Ellison Research President Ron Sellers said the pastors seem to reflect the opinions of most Americans on the proposal. "Pastors ... seem to be taking a wait-and-see attitude."

■ **Alabama Justice keeping Commandments in office.** Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who became famous when he placed his homemade plaque of the Ten Commandments in his federal courtroom, has chosen to hang the biblical laws in his office rather than the Supreme Court chamber. When the court heard a case Jan. 25—the first one since Moore joined the court—the plaque was not in sight. Moore's clerk said the justice placed the ornament on a wall in his outer office, the Associated Press reported. During his campaign, he called himself "Alabama's Ten Commandments judge" and vowed to take the biblical laws with him to the Supreme Court building in Montgomery.

■ **Sports fans irate over Methodist grant.** Fans and church members have been calling the United Methodist Church to protest a \$10,000 grant given to oppose the use of a Native American mascot at the University of Illinois-Champaign. The grant was given to the Illinois Chapter of the National Coalition on Racism in Sports and Media to oppose Chief Illiniwek. This is not the first time Methodists have weighed in on team mascots. When the church met in Cleveland last year, delegates passed a resolution calling Chief Wahoo of the Cleveland Indians baseball team "negative and denigrating."

Report: Churches 'condescending' to disabled

BOSTON (RNS)—Though many local churches have installed ramps, elevators and handicapped restrooms, too often worshippers with disabilities still feel "like inconvenient objects of pity."

That message reverberates through a joint appeal that the Massachusetts Council of Churches and the Rhode Island State Council of Churches issued last month.

"The Accessible Church: Toward Becoming the Whole Family of God" challenges congregations to question their enduring "condescending and paternalistic attitudes."

"What we're talking about here is something much deeper than ramps," said Diane Kessler, executive director

of the Massachusetts council. "It gets to the question of: What does it mean to be the church? We all gather at the table, so who's missing?"

A building might have a ramped entrance, for instance, but it's often covered with snow or the door at the top is locked. Or every bulletin and newsletter edition appears exclusively in type too small for those with vision trouble.

Such experiences make disabled people often feel either unwanted or "like somebody's project," according to disability advocate Carolyn Thompson, who helped draft the appeal.

"I don't think most of us want to be somebody else's project," Thompson

said. She encouraged congregations to acknowledge people's disabilities and offer courteous help without seeing them as "pitiful, suffering victims."

The appeal seeks to "raise awareness" about "ableism," defined as a "bias that assumes able-bodied people are the norm."

The statement continues, "A person learns to live with disability, not 'overcome' it." It adds, "Disability is about difference, and it is about letting each person be his/her unique God-given self."

The goals of the appeal, Kessler said, are first to stimulate discussion in congregations and second to help churchgoers take steps to think differently about disabilities.

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Muslim convert describes persecution in Bangladesh

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

DALLAS (ABP)—Abdul's family almost beat him to death when he turned his back on Allah. Only his mother's love—and God's grace—he says, spared his life.

Even 18 years later, Abdul says he risks his life every day in his homeland, Bangladesh, by urging other Muslims to accept Christ as Savior.

Abdul told his story during a recent trip to Texas, where he visited Baptist churches that are supporting Christian ministry among Bengali Muslims. "Abdul" is not his real name. He uses it, he said, to hide his real identity in order to protect his life and the lives of other Christians.

Located on the northeastern border of India, Bangladesh is about the size of Arkansas. But it is home to 150 million people—87 percent of them Muslim. Ten percent are Hindu, and fewer than 1 percent profess to be Christian.

"In Bangladesh, we have had the idea that no Muslim can become a Christian," Abdul said. "That idea already has been changed. People are coming to the faith."

But the journey is long, hard and often dangerous, he continued, recounting his own story of family, fear

and faith.

At age 17, he met a Baptist missionary.

"I asked him, 'Are you Muslim?'" Abdul said. "He said, 'No, I am a Christian.' So, I asked him, 'What do you believe?' He said: 'I believe in Isa (the Islamic name for Jesus). The New Testament is my holy book.'" Abdul asked for a New Testament, and the missionary gladly gave him a copy.

Abdul said he found two verses that changed his life, John 3:16-17.

"As a Muslim, I was treated as a sinner boy—no love," he said. "I thought I should commit suicide. But these verses promised eternal life. That night, I received eternal life."

"I started to join the church," Abdul recalled. "But my dad was very angry, upset with me." His father forbade him from attending the Christian church anymore, but Abdul instead obeyed his heavenly Father. "I tried hard not to go, but I had to go," he said.

So, Abdul's father called an emergency family meeting to discuss the boy's conversion.

"One of my uncles said they should beat me up, so that the 'evil spirits' would leave me," he reported. A cousin beat him. That night, the family tied him to a bamboo pole and ordered him to burn his Bible.

He refused. Bound outside in the night air, he was covered in mosquito bites.

Later, after his father, uncles and cousins went to bed, his mother sneaked out to him and set him free.

"She was very sad in her heart," Abdul said. "She untied me, put some money in my pocket and said, 'Run away, or they will kill you.' That was the last time I saw my mother." Abdul escaped to Dhaka, the capital city of 10 million people.

"It's a nice place to hide," he said. "I compared the Bible and the Koran, and I decided to take baptism. I wanted to break that idea—that a Muslim cannot become a Christian."

He said that his father went to court to disown him when the message of his baptism reached home. For the next three years, Abdul continually wrote letters to his family, declaring his love for them, even though he had embraced Christianity.

Then, he returned to his village, although he was not allowed to meet with his family.

He instead lived with his best friend, who became a Christian after six months. Three years later, Abdul baptized his father, his brother and his sister. He since has seen three other brothers, another sister and the cousin

who beat him embrace Christianity.

Abdul's family represents a trend in Bangladesh, he said, noting that in the past six years, 91,000 Muslims from across the country have become Christians. But that hasn't stemmed the tide of persecution, he said.

On the last day of 1998, Abdul visited a hospital to take food to an evangelist who had been beaten because of his faith in Jesus. The same group of people abducted him, beat him unconscious and bloody and left him in a drain for dead, he recounted. He said it took him 15 months to recover from the attack.

Abdul said he has been beaten four times, his financial accounts have been frozen three times and his house has been searched four times.

Others are less fortunate. Muslim militants reportedly killed four Christian evangelists in 1997 and 1998 and two more last year. At least 16 homes of Christians have been burned.

"In every day, in different ways, we are getting persecuted," Abdul said. Despite persecution, Bengali Christians see bright prospects, Abdul said.

"The people have been in prayer, and the Holy Spirit is working," he reported. "The people of Bangladesh have been coming to the faith. Pray for Bengali Muslims."

Abdul said he has been beaten four times, his financial accounts have been frozen three times and his house has been searched four times.

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Fred Luter, Jr. has been pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana since October of 1986. Under his leadership, the church grew from a 65-member mission to an autonomous church of more than 6,000 with 3 Sunday morning services. He speaks nationwide at various revivals, conferences and seminars.



Leonard Sweet is the past Dean of the Theological School of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. Author of 11 books, including *Soul Tsunami*, and more than 100 articles and 300 published sermons, he is a distinguished speaker and lecturer. Len is a futurist who can help the church navigate the seas of the 21st century world.



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Childcare is available for preschoolers during conference time only. For reservations, call Karen Hall at (859) 272-3441 by 4:00 p.m. (ET) Wednesday, February 21.

Political turmoil delays missionaries' plan to re-enter the Congo

By Sue Sprenkle
SBC International Mission Board

KINSHASHA, Congo (BP)—Despite recent unrest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Southern Baptist missionaries still hope to enter the country for the first time since 1992.

Congo's President Laurent Kabila was assassinated Jan. 16 by one of his own bodyguards. With all modes of transportation in and out of the country shut down and a government in turmoil, Southern Baptist missionaries Rusty and Debbie Pugh and Michael Hamline were not sure if they would be able to move from their home in Nairobi, Kenya, to Kinshasa, Congo.

"Things seem to be settling down now," Rusty Pugh said. "Kabila's son, Joseph, has been sworn in as the new president and the government has made a big effort to welcome foreigners. The foreign minister said he hoped many foreigners would continue to allow the Congo to be their second country."

The three missionaries originally



MISSIONARIES Southern Baptist missionaries have not been based in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1992. Rusty and Debbie Pugh are among those who were scheduled to enter the country, but the Jan. 16 assassination of the country's president has caused further turmoil in the African nation. (BP photos)

planned to enter Congo and start their ministry Jan. 25. Now plans are on hold in hopes that the country, formerly known as Zaire, settles down even more.

Even if the government stabilizes soon, there is still a possibility that fighting between government troops

and rebel soldiers will force missionaries to evacuate the country. Many missionaries living in the interior have moved to the capital city of Kinshasa or to bordering countries to escape the violence, which has dominated life in the country since 1996.

The IMB officially pulled out of the country in 1992.

Refugees from nearby Rwanda poured into Zaire in 1994, setting off a chain of events that eventually toppled the dictatorial regime of Mobutu Sese Seko and led to the ascension of rebel leader Laurent Kabila. The country has since become a battle zone for governments and rebels from across central and southern Africa.

Despite the unrest, Christian influence in the country is growing. Citizens enjoy freedom of religion. The Operation World prayer guide estimates the population as 42.1 percent Catholic, 36 percent Protestant (including 21 percent evangelical), 1.4 percent Muslim and 2.7 percent traditional religion.

Congo has a gross domestic product of just \$400 per person, and the continuing fighting has left the average Congolese malnourished, many able to afford only one meager meal a day.

On trips in and out of the country, the Pughs have reported a tremendous growth and commitment among the Congolese Christians. They work with a leader whose congregation has started 12 new churches. The Pughs plan to train local Christian leaders in evangelism and Bible schools.

"Everyone knows that in the fairly near future the missionaries will be forced out again," Pugh said. "That's why it is so important for the leaders to be trained in starting their own churches."

"Our future in the Congo is always going to be 'iffy' at best," he said. "We can always use prayers for our safety, but the Congolese need your prayers for daily sustenance. They need to feel God's comfort in the midst of this turmoil."

Excavations under Temple Mount spark tension

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher
Religion News Service

JERUSALEM (RNS)—For centuries, whatever buried treasures might lie underneath Jerusalem's ancient Temple Mount remained undisturbed, left to fuel the imagination and provide grist for fantasy adventures like those portrayed in the film "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

On the southern edge of the mount's enclosure, the main gates that led from a monumental stairway into the temple's "commons" area—probably where Jesus overturned the tables of the money-changers—were blocked centuries ago. Sealed, too, are the sacred gates below that opened into a labyrinth of underground passageways.

But behind the stone facades, the millennia-old cavities deep within the bowels of this ancient compound gradually are being penetrated and exposed by Muslim authorities bent on exerting their authority over every inch of the area, below the ground as well as above. The underground areas of the mount are becoming a major focus in the tug-of-war between Jews and Muslims, who both claim the enclosure as their holy turf.

"I have no doubt that underneath the present-day Temple Mount lie well-preserved finds from the First and Second Temple periods," said Hebrew University archaeologist Eilat Mazar, who has excavated areas near the main entrances to the ancient Temple Mount.

"The Islamic importance of the site is very well known and respected, and we have demonstrated that by publishing all of the Islamic remains that we have uncovered. But we claim the same treatment," she said. "Right now, the intention of the Islamic authorities is to transform the entire complex, underground as well as above ground, into an Islamic prayer shrine in which all Jewish connections to the site are erased."

"And by denying the Jewish connections, they are also denying the Christian connection because the Temple of the Jews of King Herod's time is also the temple where Jesus preached."

For most of the past 1,700 years, Islam has ruled over the sacred compound. The al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock have stood in the place where the Jewish temple presumably did

before its destruction in A.D. 70. For millions of devout Muslims, it marks the place where Mohammed ascended into heaven, the third holiest site in Islam.

Until just a few years ago, no one dared disturb the ruins that might lie underneath the mosques. Excavations, it was assumed, would be wisely left for that golden era when peace among Jews, Muslims and Christians might permit some sort of impartial, scientific investigation of the area.

That status quo began to crumble in 1996, however, after then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the opening of an ancient tunnel-style passageway running alongside the sacred Western Wall of the Temple Mount, just outside the Muslim-controlled enclosure. The tunnel excavation set off widespread Palestinian-Jewish clashes, resulting in dozens of casualties. On a deeper, psychological level, it triggered Muslim fears that Jewish excavators were attempting to tunnel under the mount itself and even undermine the foundations of the mosque.

It wasn't long before Muslims turned their attention underground. Over the past five years, young Muslim volunteers excavated two cavernous spaces believed to have been part of the foundations of the Herodian-era Temple Mount, emptying the cavities of years of accumulated dirt and turning them into giant underground mosques. In a matter of weeks, excavators dumped thousands of tons of dirt in a Jerusalem landfill, dirt littered with millennia-old bits of pottery and marble stone work that have yet to be fully cataloged and identified.

The Muslim construction triggered an outcry among a broad array of Israeli archaeologists and public personalities. The Israeli Antiquities Authority charged that the work had disturbed centuries-old layers of archaeological remains, seriously damaging or obliterating their value, while the Islamic authorities steadily denied the earthworks had turned up anything of value.

Proposals to share the mount have prompted a fiercely negative response from Islamic officials. Sheikh Ekrima Sabri of Jerusalem has demanded full Islamic sovereignty over all portions of the mount enclosure, including the Western Wall hallowed by Jews.

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Baptist churches 'adopt' Chinese cities for mission outreach

By Wendy Lee
Baptist Press

BEIJING (BP)—Imagine a city as large as Louisville with only a handful of Christians and very few churches—perhaps not any churches at all.

Although such a city does not exist in the United States, there are more than 200 such cities in China.

With the largest population of any nation in the world and a small percentage of Christians, China's spiritual needs are tremendous. Missions resources are urgently needed in the largest cities, including more than 100 Chinese cities with more than 1 million people each and five cities with more than 5 million people each.

So in China, a country of 1.3 billion people, there are entire cities as large as Birmingham and New Orleans that are "too small" to be placed on the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's priority city listings.

These growing cities currently

have only a handful of local Christians and no concerted Christian witness. Recognizing that an alternative strategy is needed, individual Southern Baptist churches are beginning to adopt these "medium size" cities.

But Southern Baptist volunteers are beginning to enter these cities to pray, learn, interact and share in an effort to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ.

In the past six months, three churches have adopted 10 of these cities and additional adoptions are under way.

Each adoption begins with a visioning tour involving two church leaders who travel to the prospective mission field and spend two days praying for the city and seeking a vision for the spiritual needs of the city. From there, each of the adoptions has proceeded to a "scouting tour" that typically involves about six church members.

These members travel as tourists

and learn as much as they can about the city while praying for discernment in how best to reach it for Christ.

Because most of the cities are off the beaten tourist path, the task is not easy. Yet the first few scouting groups that have traveled into these cities have found "people of peace" waiting for them.

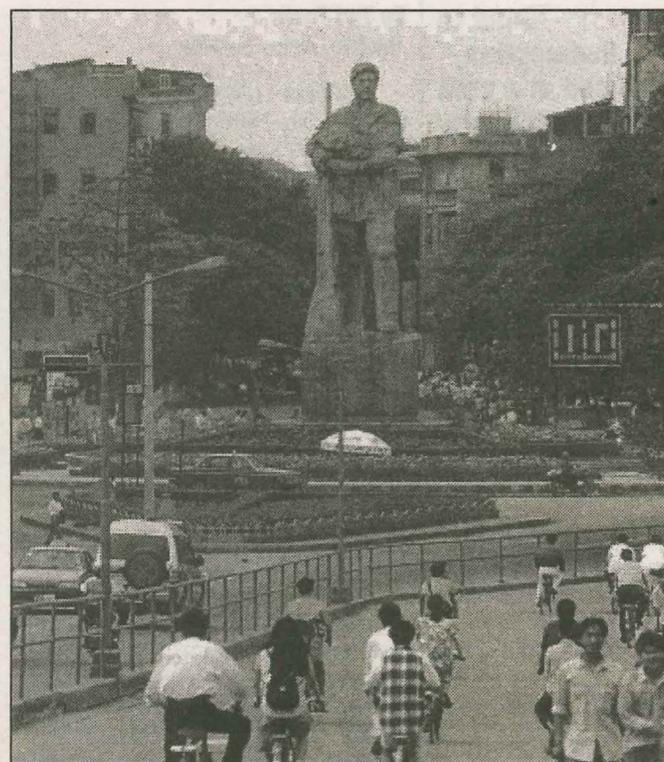
One group was approached by a 22-year-old young woman named Mei Ling, who was excited about the opportunity to talk with Westerners. The group was preparing to climb to a high pagoda to pray over the city. Although the woman was not aware of their purpose in ascending to the high place, she offered to accompany them.

At the bottom of the hill, however, Mei Ling hesitated, saying she was afraid to climb to the top. She explained that because a young couple had killed themselves there in a lover's suicide pact, she was fearful that she would encounter ghosts on the mountain.

The group took advantage of the opportunity to explain that they were not afraid because they had the Spirit of God in their hearts. She agreed to continue with the group. At the top, she offered to sing some Chinese songs for the group and requested that they also sing.

Overlooking this unreached city, the group sang, "I Love You Lord." Then they shared about their personal faith in Christ.

Mei Ling entertained the group in her home over the next four days, introducing them to her friends and showing them her city. Four days after



hearing of the Savior's love, she prayed to accept Christ as her Savior.

Committed to making future trips to the previously unreached city, the group's church plans to send teachers, business people and other professionals who can relate in various ways to the city over the next few years. They plan to continue their efforts until a full-time worker is available to take the reins of leadership in reaching the city.

For more information about mission opportunities in China, contact mobilize@pobox.com.

ADOPT-A-CITY In China, a country of 1.3 billion people, there are entire cities as large as Louisville and New Orleans with only a handful of local Christians and no concerted Christian witness. Individual Southern Baptist churches are beginning to adopt these "medium size" cities. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)

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New Billy Graham movie uses comedy to communicate message

"Road to Redemption," produced at a cost of \$2.2 million by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's World Wide Pictures, is the ministry's first Christian comedy film.

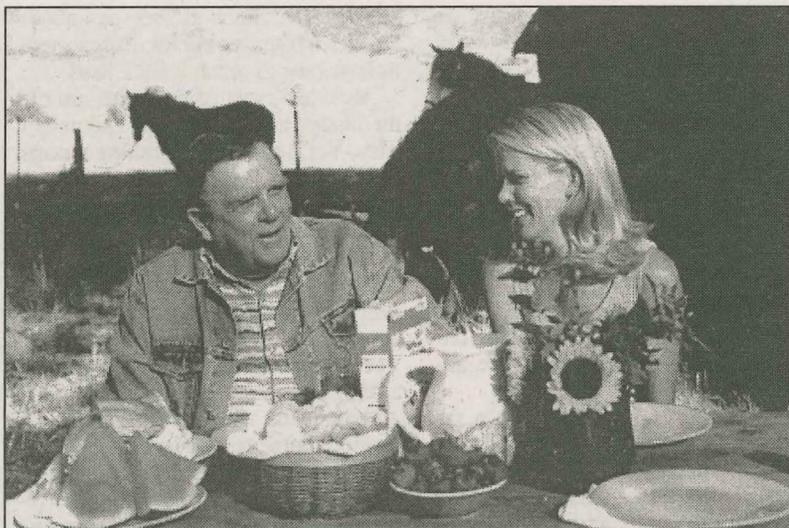
By Ted Parks
Religion News Service

NORTH HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (RNS)—The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association recently took the wraps off its new Christian comedy film, "Road to Redemption." The gala premiere at the elegant Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in North Hollywood, Calif., attracted 600 guests.

Featuring veteran actor Pat Hingle, best known for his role as Batman's Commissioner Gordon, the premiere precedes a limited theater release of the film planned for Feb. 16 and March 9. The two-phase release is part of a strategy by BGEA's movie arm, World Wide Pictures, to return its evangelical Christian productions to the big screen after more than a decade's absence.

The title of the latest project hints at its blend of the classic Hollywood road-trip film with overtly evangelical themes. The story centers on Amanda Tucker (Julie Condra), a Las Vegas secretary for mobster tough guy Sully Santoro. Finding herself and bumbling live-in boyfriend Alan Fischer (Jay Underwood) in big-time debt to Santoro, Tucker is desperate to get the bucks to save the pair's skin.

In her dilemma Tucker stumbles across an old photo showing her fishing with long-lost grandfather Nathan Tucker, played by Hingle. About all the granddaughter has heard recently about Granddad is that he's rich, ill and suddenly religious.



THE LONG ROAD BACK "Road to Redemption," a movie being released by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, marks the groups return to big screen movie-making after a decade's absence. (RNS photo)

Meeting up with him in the hospital where he is being treated for a perilous heart condition, Tucker confesses her desperate need to pay back her mobster boss. Grandpa agrees, but with one condition—that the two make one more trip together to a favorite fishing spot, the fictional Redemption, Mont.

"Road to Redemption" comes with a production price tag of \$2.2 million, according to Barry Werner, director of operations for the film. The latest feature, Werner explained, is part of the ministry's strategy to stage a comeback in the movie business after the organization's last major theatrical films between 1965 to 1987.

Werner said World Wide Pictures stopped mainstream theater distribution because it was no longer feasible in the changed market context of smaller theaters when multiplexes began taking the place of large-capacity houses.

With "Road to Redemption," the studio hopes to find its way back to the big screen from the made-for-television movies of recent years. Werner said the scheduled release on 150 screens in 14 major metropolitan areas in February and March reflect lessons learned from marketing experiments in 1997 and 1998 with "The Ride."

If the plan works, he said the next goal is to boost an upcoming "action-

adventure" movie to 500 screens. The eventual goal is to produce a film with big-screen appeal specifically for wide theatrical distribution.

The new movie follows another recent Christian film, "Left Behind," based on the popular book by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.

"Road to Redemption" is the Graham entity's first comedy, said Kristel Bosshardt, the association's director of media and public relations.

While acknowledging the laughs he elicits as he shows Santoro's cronies foiled in their attempts to find Tucker, writer-director Robert Vernon insists on his film's underlying seriousness. Meshing comedy and spiritual conversion is not easy, he said, but he believes laughter paves the way to the heart.

"For years, sit-coms and comedic programs have been the first area of walls being broken down and new ideas being presented to the culture," Vernon said. He said he hopes comedy will be the vehicle to break the barriers viewers might throw in the way of the film's Christian message.

Werner said the production tries to build into its on-screen characters the "lost condition of man, the sufficiency of God, man's response once they realize the lost condition and then an evidence of a changed life. We try to display all of those."

"If we can find a way to portray them in our film by doing it with story, not stopping and have someone preach at the camera," he added, "we have actually modeled the conversion experience."

Phase one renovation nearing completion

On the back page of this edition of the Western Recorder is a "Thank you" to Kentucky Baptists as we continue to celebrate the progress God has brought us at Cedarmore.

For the past 90 days, we have had a fairly good-sized construction project going on as we have renovated the exterior of Boone Lodge as well as the interior and exterior of Byrdwell Conference Center. As many have heard me say, both of these buildings were very much in need of repair, to the point that if we did not fix the exteriors, we literally were going to lose the buildings.

So now, as we approach completion of phase one of our project, there is a wonderful new look to both Boone and Byrdwell. This project assures all of us that these beautiful buildings will last well into this century. It was critical that we make these much-needed repairs, for without Boone and Byrdwell, the core buildings at Cedarmore, we would cease to operate and minister as we have done over the years.

On the back page, you will see a few pictures and you will note the changes. Boone Lodge has a completely different look. For some of

you who are traditionalists, you might prefer the old rustic look. However, we had to base our design decisions on a very tight budget and we had to make repairs that would last for decades, rather than just a few years. If we had tried to keep the old look at Boone, in a few short years we would be facing similar problems once again.

You also will note the new look at Byrdwell. The interior of this old building has a great new look; the exterior is a radical change as well. The improved entrances and doorways are an example of these changes.

So once again we rejoice at the blessings that God has brought to Cedarmore. We are thankful.

As an aside, registration opened last week for the Discovery Youth Camps for this summer. The first two days of registration brought nearly 1,700 reservations, about 75 percent capacity in two days. Praise the Lord and thank Him for the work He is doing.

Come see the changes at Cedarmore. We're going to be around for a long, long time.

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

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American evangelicalism needs reform, scholar says

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

WACO, Texas (ABP)—America's evangelicals need a "reformation" away from rigid boundaries to a more inclusive focus on the "strong center" of faith, argues a Baylor University theologian.

"Reformation is necessary for any movement's vitality and viability," Roger Olson said Jan. 11 in his faculty address at Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary. Olson, a professor of theology at the seminary, said he "enthusiastically and unapologetically" identifies with the evangelical movement. But "once it stops reforming itself," he said, "it dies."

Evangelicalism, a branch of Protestant Christianity that emphasizes personal conversion and the authority of Scripture, is the product of revivals that swept across America in the 17th and 18th centuries. The movement faced a crisis early in the 20th century, Olson said, as modernist theories questioning the miraculous and the Bible's historicity swept through mainline denominations. Out of that struggle came fundamentalism, with its emphasis on interpreting the Scripture as literally true.

However, with a penchant for "majoring in the minors of doctrine, extreme biblical literalism, maximal social and theological conservatism, and seemingly endless schisms and splits over issues such as the details of biblical prophecy," Olson said, fundamentalists became obsessed with theological boundaries to define their faith.

In the 1940s and 1950s, a group of more moderate fundamentalists countered the movement's rigid views. These ministers, Olson said, gave rise to what became known as evangelicalism in the last half of the 20th century.

Olson identified four "basic, unifying values and commitments" holding evangelicals together.

"First, the new evangelicalism wished to be centrist with regard to the modern spectrum of Protestant theology," he said. "It sought to identify and hold firmly to a core—a center—of classical, historic Christian belief, while allowing diversity of interpretation and adjustment to culture among those who stayed close to that center."

"Second, evangelicalism wished to focus its energies on mission and evangelism, rather than doctrinal precision and purity, polemical argumentation and accommodationist apologetics," he added.

"Third, evangelicalism desired to renew Christian higher education ... to avoid anti-intellectual obscurantism so common among fundamentalists and liberal accommodationism so common among mainstream Protestants."

Finally, "the 'glue' that held this evangelical coalition together for decades was the vast Billy Graham Evangelistic Association," he proposed. "All evangelicals revered Billy Graham as a living saint of evangelism and sound theology."

However, with the passage of decades, evangelicalism is being divided along "old tensions that existed like fault lines just beneath the surface,"

Olson asserted.

From one side have come accusations of accommodation to American culture, "especially consumerism, individualism, relativism and therapy," he said. Others have expressed concern about resurgent fundamentalism in the movement, particularly "the need to identify evangelicalism's doctrinal boundaries and ... social, political and theological traditionalism."

"There is a plain old power struggle going on within evangelicalism and evangelical theology," he reported. The struggle pits "conservatives," who primarily are Reformed, or Calvinist, inerrantists, against "progressives," who mostly are Arminian non-inerrantists.

"True reform in evangelical theology lies in striking the right balance ... between unity and diversity, doctrine and experience, and tradition and innovation," Olson said.

"The center of evangelicalism has always been relatively clear," he added. "It consists of conversion to Jesus Christ, commitment to His lordship and deity and development of a personal relationship with Him; belief in the triune God of Jesus Christ and the canonical Scriptures as a supernaturally inspired and authoritative witness to Him; embrace of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the way of salvation; and passionate dedication to disciplining all people into the way of Jesus Christ."

"The center is both an experience—called conversion to Jesus Christ—and a conviction—called faith in Jesus Christ."

Three steps to evangelical reform

WACO, Texas (ABP)—Building on his proposal to define evangelical Christianity by its "strong center" instead of its outer boundaries, theologian Roger Olson offered three steps to reform the movement:

■ "Evangelicalism must become comfortable with diversity while maintaining a rough unity," he began.

"Artificial, imposed uniformity is not the way to reform. It is the path toward the death of a movement," he insisted. "Drawing firm boundaries is one way we humans exclude those who for one reason or another make us uncomfortable by challenging our comfort zones."

Evangelicals must learn to include Christians of "like experience" despite differences of class, race, gender and "diverse viewpoints on secondary doctrinal matters," he said.

■ "Evangelicalism must identify itself as much by experience as by doctrine," Olson maintained.

"I am not in any way suggesting that evangelical theology elevate some universal form of God-consciousness or even some individual feeling of piety ... to the status of touchstone of truth for defining evangelical faith," he said.

"Rather, I am suggesting that we evangelicals ... recognize and acknowledge that the transforming work of God through faith in Jesus Christ and reception of the Holy Spirit is part of the core—the center—of what defines authentic evangelicalism and emphasize that as equally important with doctrinal affirmation."

■ "Evangelicalism must value innovation as much as tradition," he declared.

"Careful, patient, gentle dialogue about biblical materials and about tradition and its importance and defects might benefit all evangelicals," he suggested. "The innovators who remain close to the center ... should be given a fair hearing and not vilified and driven away."

David Blakeman honored

By Robert Dunston

Each year during Cumberland College's Founder's Day chapel, we present the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. The award honors a male member of the graduating class who has made significant contributions to college life and has demonstrated spiritual values.

David Bruce Blakeman, son of Robert and Glenda Blakeman of Burgin and husband of Bridgette Hamilton Blakeman of Williamsburg, received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. Blakeman has a double major in physics and mathematics.

Blakeman has distinguished himself academically while at Cumberland College. He is a member of the math, physics and education honor societies and has served as president of Cumberland's Society of Physics Students. Currently he is conducting Presidential Scholar research in physics.

On campus Blakeman has served in the freshman orientation program for three years and worked as a dormitory resident assistant. He has also been a member of Cumberland's track team. Cumberland College honored him last May with the T. E. Mahan Service Award and

he also has been listed in Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities.

Blakeman's service to Christ has also been exceptional. He served as president of the Baptist Student Union Freshman Council. Since coming to Cumberland College he has ministered as preacher on many revival teams. He has participated

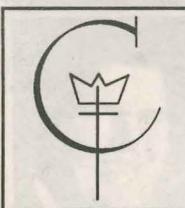
in several mission trips, including a trip to Haiti.

Blakeman has been active in the community of Williamsburg as well. At First Baptist Church in Williamsburg, he served as recreation director. He also helped out at Williamsburg High School as assistant track coach.

Following his graduation from Cumberland, Blakeman plans to pursue a master's degree and possibly a doctor's degree in physics. We appreciate his service to Christ, Cumberland College and the Williamsburg community. We know he will continue to bless those wherever he lives and works.

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

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Author takes humorous look at link between Protestants & food

"In the social hall, coffee becomes community. In the soup kitchen, rice and beans become hospitality."

Daniel Sack, author of "Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture"

By Cecile Holmes
Religion News Service

CHICAGO (RNS)—Daniel Sack's new book, "Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture," offers a funny and insightful pilgrimage into a diverse world of potlucks, communion services and coffee hours.

Sack, a historian of religion, is associate director of the Material History of the American Religion project in Chicago. When he signed on for that post, he was told he could write on a topic of his own choosing as long as it related to the "material" side of people's lives.

The idea was to highlight the tangible dimension of life among American Protestants, part of religious traditions grounded in theologies, spiritualities and liturgies rooted in concepts and words.

"My memory is the idea (for the book) occurred over dinner, but that may not be true," the 38-year-old Sack said in a recent phone interview.

"Throughout my life, my own life in the church, food often seemed to be a theme. I talk in my introduction about examples of that: snacks at vacation Bible school, coffee hour after worship and working the soup kitchen when I was in college.

"That's just out of my own experience. I thought, 'There is some-

thing going on there that needs to be looked at.' I found myself wondering what those many roles of food tell us about religion in America."

As churches blossomed in colonial America, their primary function was worship, but many also served as community centers, Sack learned. Following the Civil War, churches moved beyond picnics and parties to full-scale programs including gymnasiums, camps and military drill teams. In urbanized areas rife with "tempting entertainment," some congregations also sought to provide alternatives to saloons and pool halls.

In the book, Sack describes a typical Sunday in a "whitebread" Protestant church, a term he uses to distinguish middle-class white Americans from others included in the polyglot of studies focusing on the religious life of African-Americans, Asian Americans and other ethnic groups.

"By focusing on the particularities of these groups, they have robbed the mainline of its pretensions to universality," Sack writes. "The challenge gives us the opportunity to view mainline Protestantism as yet another religious tradition alongside the rest."

In keeping with the goals of the Material Christianity Project, Sack is examining the role material goods play in church life and faith.

"If you walk into a church or a syn-

agogue—for that matter, any religious building—there are things around in that building that clearly have very great importance to the people who worship there," Sack said.

"Whether that be a picture of a former pastor or a photograph of a confirmation class from 80 years ago or the communion table from the old building, all those things reflect that people's religious lives are not just about ideas."

Sack argues that food plays a role in almost every aspect of American religious life, exploring the growth of soup kitchens, hunger-fighting programs and other efforts undertaken by the nation's churches.

"Around the communion table, bread and wine become a connection to God," he writes. "In the social hall, coffee becomes community. In the soup kitchen, rice and beans become hospitality."

Food so defines the nation's religions that even school kids use it to explain their beliefs.

"A second-grade class was doing a project in comparative religions: each child was asked to say something about his or her faith and bring in a symbol of their belief," Sack writes. "On the day of the assignment, the first child stood up and said, 'My name is Joshua. I go to Beth Shalom. I am Jewish and this is a Star of David.' The second child stood up and said, 'My name is Marguerite. I go to St. Mary's. I am Catholic, and this is a crucifix.' The third child stood up and said, 'My

name is Fred. I go to Grace Church. I am Protestant and this is a casserole.'"

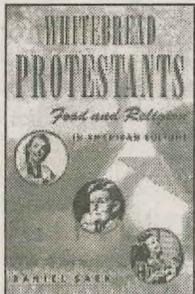
Sack laughs when quizzed about the story, an apocryphal tale taken off the Internet. "In virtually every religious tradition we can think of, food plays some role.

"An example: Several years ago, a group of scholars was touring religious buildings in suburban Nashville. We went into a Hindu temple on the edge of the city. The temple sells rice to its congregation who are immigrants from India and can't get the kind of rice they want at local grocery stores. Wherever you look around the world, that food and religion connection is everywhere."

For Sack, America's distinctive religious history has been the backdrop of his research. The American experience, especially on the frontier, was different from that in Europe, partly because distances on the frontier were so vast that church meetings and dinners may have been one of the few places where one saw a neighbor living 10 miles away.

"Partly, it's the distance issue, and partly it's marketing," he said. "In Europe, particularly in European Catholicism, you went to church because there was only one church in town and you went for the sake of your soul. But in American Protestantism, where you had lots of choices, they had to give you a reason to come.

"It's the old idea: If you feed them, they will come."



Only God could do it

I vividly remember hundreds of times when Dr. Barkley Moore took people on tours of our campus. If I overheard part of his conversation, I could nearly always tell whether the visitor was simply a guest or someone considering Oneida as an opportunity for ministry.

Some 16 years ago, Moore was giving an elderly man a tour. The tour ended at our home. Moore introduced the man as Dr. Schroder, a medical doctor. I hope my cynical smile did not reveal what I was thinking. A medical doctor coming to serve at Oneida for the salaries we pay? I could not imagine this doctor coming to Oneida, but I could tell that Moore fully expected him to come.

You will understand my surprise when a few months later the dear doctor joined our staff. Schroder moved into the school's modest clinic. A bathroom was remodeled a little to provide a shower. His living room was the clinic's waiting room, and his bedroom was a very modest area large enough for a bed, a dresser and not much more. As I said, that was 16 years ago and the good doctor faithfully served here until last fall.

While I knew his salary had to be modest like that of the rest of the Oneida faculty and staff, I did not know how modest it was until I became president and signed his check. While spending this past summer at his home in Cincinnati, he fell and injured his hip and leg. Now 90 years old (though you would never believe it by talking to him), it is doubtful that he will be able to return. We miss him every day as we continue to meet the medical needs of our students and staff.

Two weeks ago a family from Tennessee visited our school. They had heard about Oneida and were impressed with our ministry. I spent nearly

five hours with them as we talked and toured our campus. Both the husband and wife currently are making much more than we could ever pay, but they called last week to say they wanted to come.

Last week a couple from Oregon visited our campus. Like the first family, they had heard about Oneida and believed this might be the ministry they had been praying about. This mother and father of three flew, at their expense, to Knoxville where they spent a day with some friends. They borrowed a car from their friends and traveled to Oneida to spend three days with us. I gave them the tour and shared as much as possible about our ministry. They returned to Knoxville and then went back to Oregon.

Both of these husbands were interested in teaching positions. Each man knew before leaving home that the salary of an Oneida teacher is \$5,000 per year. Each family knew they would have to adjust their lifestyles to live within those financial boundaries. The Oregon family called yesterday, saying they would love to serve here if I felt led to give them the opportunity.

Now I am working with a woman from Texas. Like the others, she had heard about Oneida and was interested in visiting. She will spend the next four days with us and will return to Texas to pray about her decision.

Next week, a man from South Dakota will be visiting our campus as he seeks the Lord's will.

Only God could lead people to Oneida from all over the U.S. to serve for an average annual salary of just over \$6,000.

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

A winter harvest

When James Vandy graduated in 1968, he was pastor of East Barbourville Baptist Church in neighboring Knox County. After two years he moved to another ministry but in 1982 the church called him again.

"After these years many people ask me what is the secret of my longevity," Vandy said. "I know I am exactly where God desires. I also knew if I would be a long-term pastor I would need to treat every member the same. The deacon's child is no different than the child from the housing project.

"I also determined I would not become a socializer and form a clique within the church. Many churches in southeastern Kentucky have a dominant family and many pastors will get in with that clique," he said. "I've also had a very cooperative and supportive group of deacons. Galatians 6:9 has motivated me through the years. We will reap if we don't give up."

East Barbourville Church has reaped in the middle of winter. In December they dedicated a new building and then January brought a remarkable series of Sundays. Jan. 7 had an attendance of 192 and Vandy entered the sanctuary with the feeling that "something

would happen." The invitation saw the 58-foot altar filled with members kneeling in new commitments to Christ. When the invitation closed 10 people had transferred membership and five had made professions of faith. Two teenage daughters from two deacon families were converted.

The next Sunday morning the church had 234 in attendance, and a mother of three and a couple joined the church. On Jan. 21 ice and snow canceled many church services, but the congregation had 162 present. On Jan. 28 Vandy baptized six of the new members and attendance climbed to 310. A married woman made a profession of faith. In one month the church received 21 new members compared to only 17 during the previous year.

"To God be the glory," Vandy declared. "After nearly 19 years I feel I'm just now getting to know the people and reaping the harvest. I've been beside the mothers before the delivery of a baby and now see those children won to Christ. God is good! We need patience to wait upon Him."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

BOOKS

Beyond Rhetoric: Reconciliation as a Way of Life. Samuel George Hines and Curtis Paul Deyoung. Judson Press, 2000. 168 pages. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

For 23 years, Samuel George Hines was pastor of Third Street Church of God in Washington, D.C. During his tenure, he led the congregation into ministries on behalf of, and with, devalued and tossed-aside people. From his position as a pastor in our nation's capital, he exercised his freedom as a preacher of the gospel to speak of God's vision for humanity to the wider audience of politicians, ambassadors and world leaders. Curtis Paul Deyoung, Hines' son in the ministry, compiled "Beyond Rhetoric" as a testament to his mentor's ministry as well as a challenge to the church.

Toward the end of his life, Hines was asked what one theme characterized his ministry. Reconciliation was his response. He recounted being in South Africa in 1978, where he spoke of the "radical remedy of reconciliation." Challenged by a South African minister, who labeled reconciliation as a "namby-pamby" response to social evil and injustice, Hines replied, "The revolutionary says, 'The world is in trouble, in bad shape; it needs to be fixed, and I am going to work to fix it. If you get in my way, I will kill you, because I must do what I have to do.' The reconciler says, 'The world is in bad shape; it must be changed, and I am going to work to change it. If you confront me and try to block me, I am willing to lay down my life for this cause.'...Which of these positions is soft and namby-pamby?"

"Beyond Rhetoric" is a rich, powerful exposition of God's work of reconciliation in the life of the individual, the church and the world. *Jim Holladay*

Building a Contagious Church: Revolutionizing the Way We View and Do Evangelism. Mark Mittelberg. Zondervan, 2000. 404 pages. \$19.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

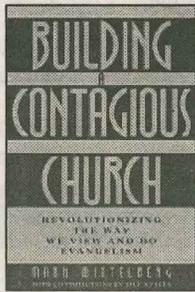
This book is another in a flood of books from Bill Hybels and his staff at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Ill. Mittelberg was director of evangelism for Willow Creek for seven years and the primary leader of the evangelism training course, "Becoming a Contagious Christian."

Mittelberg's main point is that churches must do all they can to encourage and equip members to do evangelistic outreach. For most churches this means significant change in the way the church views its ministry.

Mittelberg's dedication to and excitement about evangelism comes through on every page. First, Mittelberg outlines six stages for a church to become a contagious (for evangelism) church. While Mittelberg intends his message to be applicable to any size church, his stages and examples seldom venture far from his experience in the megachurch setting. I found myself constantly thinking, "That's fine at Willow Creek, but we're not Willow Creek."

He addresses this problem somewhat in the second major section: contagious diversity. As Mittelberg outlined six diverse approaches of ministry focus and how they relate to evangelism, it was easier to find examples that fit the average church.

Even though it would take some adjustments to implement Mittelberg's stages in my setting, I still like this book. His positive, "You can do it," approach is encouraging. He also challenges church leaders to evaluate honestly the degree to which the church seeks to bring new people into the kingdom, not just transfer people from another church. *Wayne Hager*



Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God. Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson. InterVarsity Press, 1996. 150 pages. \$9.90. ♦♦♦♦♦

Stanley Grenz and Roger Olson observe that theology often gets a bad rap from practically every sector of the church.

Some fear theology as a diversion from the real mission of the church, quoting the well-worn shibboleth, "Theology divides, Christ unites." Others simply see theology as an irrelevant discipline reserved for soul-dead academics. After all the real action is in the marketplace, stimulating worship or reaching the lost.

Yet, Grenz and Olson argue that we are all theologians. Everybody does theology. "No one who reflects on life's ultimate questions can escape theology. And anyone who reflects on life's ultimate questions—including questions about God and our relationship with God—is a theologian."

After making that case, Grenz and Olson seek to define theology from the Christian perspective: "Christian theology is reflecting on and articulating the God-centered life and beliefs that we share as followers of Jesus Christ, and it is done that God might be glorified in all we are and do."

Grenz and Olson have provided a helpful primer on the place and task of theology in the life of the individual and the church.

But after an excellent beginning, tying theology to the lived experience of God's people, their final definition and methodology backs away from that perspective, pointing out that theology seeks to clarify (i.e. make practical) the dogmas and doctrines of the church.

My own perspective is that theology is much more dynamic than that, and constantly precedes and shapes doctrine and dogma. Theology, to para-

phrase Wolfhart Pannenberg, is the conversation about God, by the people of God, which is enabled by God. *Jim Holladay*

The Wounded Spirit. Frank Peretti. Word Publishing, 2000. 197 pages. \$18.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

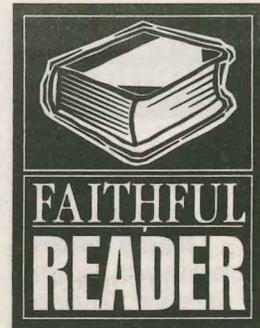
"The Wounded Spirit" is the best-selling novelist's first foray into non-fiction, and while it makes a compelling read, it also falls prey to some of the more frustrating aspects of works of art of literature deemed "Christian."

This book is, essentially, a memoir. Frank Peretti tells the story of his secret battle with a grotesque birth defect and the years of bullying he endured at the hands of school classmates because of his appearance. It gives fascinating insight into the sometimes-violent imagery of Peretti's novels. When he is writing in the style of a memoir the writing is searingly honest and thought provoking.

But Peretti is not content with simply telling his story and trusting readers to divine the anti-bullying message behind his tale. After touching the reader's heart with haunting images of his abuse, he switches gears and begins preaching, hitting readers over the head with the book's moral premise. It ceases to be a memoir and becomes a sermon and loses a great deal of its impact in doing so.

The occasionally faulty reasoning employed by Peretti in making his argument, such as when he suggests the foundational premise of every single evolutionist is rejection of God, also damages the book.

Peretti chooses an important issue to tackle, and has a good deal of good things to say about it. But he might have had a stronger book on his hands if he had chosen simply to show his wounded spirit rather than explain it away. *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 victoria_moon@kybaptist.org

Book exploring Christian anti-Semitism sparks support & opposition

By Jeffrey MacDonald
Religion News Service

WALTHAM, Mass. (RNS)—The release of "Constantine's Sword," Boston Globe columnist James Carroll's biting and radical history of Christian anti-Semitism, has sparked intense reaction—favorable and unfavorable—from Christians as well as Jews.

Some of those reactions were on view recently as nearly 500 people, mostly Jewish, packed an auditorium at Brandeis University near Boston to hear the Roman Catholic author discuss his views of what his church had done to their ancestors. Participants also heard Jewish, Catholic and Muslim scholars debate the merits of Carroll's case and what lessons might be learned from it.

At the end of the conference, "Catholics, Jews and the Prism of Conscience," some said they were feeling repentant for their own prejudicial sins while others insisted more contrition from the church would have to come first.

Meanwhile, the Catholic magazine

Commonweal published a scathing review of Carroll's book by historian Robert Louis Wilken, charging Carroll with bad history and bad theology.

Wilken accuses Carroll of supporting a kind of religious pluralism that would require Christians to disavow virtually everything the church has proclaimed about Jesus. "In Carroll's brave new world there will be neither Jews nor Christians," Wilken concludes.

In his 40-minute speech at Brandeis, Carroll defended the thrust of his book.

He said church teachings and authority structures have given rise to hatred and violence against Jews through the ages. Recent church apologies have inadequately dodged blame and avoided remedies by pinning anti-Semitism on select individuals, he added.

Panelists echoed one another's praise for Carroll's effort to weave his gut-wrenching personal narrative together with a woeful Catholic-Jewish history. Yet when they addressed the topical question—"What can be learned from James Carroll's method of critiquing one's own tradition

from within?"—listeners began to squirm.

Rabbi Arthur Green, a Brandeis professor, urged the assembled Jews to take an active role in overcoming "the deep psychopathology of Jewish-Christian relations."

"I believe that our repentance has to take place together," Green said, calling participants to account for "stereotyping" Christians and practicing "economic exploitation" of non-Jews.

Rabbi Irving Greenberg of the Jewish Life Network went further. "There needs to be an end to the negative stereotyping," he said. "At the establishment level (of Judaism), there is not yet the beginning of affirming Christianity."

Sole Muslim speaker, Brandeis professor Kanan Makiya, used his time at the podium to lament how 7th century Muslims disrespected the Jews' sacred Temple Mount by dumping their feces and menstrual cloths there.

In response to the presentations, historian Robert Wistrich of Hebrew University asked whether Jews really needed to respond with "symmetry" to

Carroll's repentant tome in light of the fact that Christians had persecuted Jews—not vice versa—through the ages.

Others in the audience also balked at the suggestion of Jewish repentance for sins against Christians. "I think it's a little early for that," said 70-year-old Max Perlotsch of Winchester, Mass. "I think it's necessary for James Carroll's message to get through to the Vatican and the pew first."

Carroll also dismissed any hint of dual or equal culpability for Jews and Christians.

"The idea of, 'I'll apologize if you apologize' is really ridiculous when you look at the history," he said. "The burden of this really belongs to Christians."

Carroll acknowledged his historical research breaks little new ground.

The novelty of his work emerges first in personal anecdotes aiming to show enduring Catholic biases against Jews, and second, in his proposed solution. He calls for a Vatican Three, a council of Catholic bishops to replace church hierarchy with democracy, to dispose of sacrificial atonement theology and to repent for centuries of sin against Jews.

PEOPLE

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:

■ Teams are needed to lead day camps in Worcester, Mass., this summer. Contact Rick Satkowski at (508) 799-9101 or e-mail luciese@juno.com.

■ Mark Eardensohn, son of missionaries Bill and Pauline Eardensohn, asks prayer as he returns from Tanzania to a boarding school in Kenya this week. Schoolwork and living in a boarding school are very difficult for him.

■ Giessen International Baptist Church in Giessen, Germany, as the congregation looks for a new meeting place that will be accessible to more people.

■ A smooth transition for the international church in Jurbise, Belgium, as it moves to being fully self-supporting.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BEDFORD**—Bedford Church called **Chad Cunningham** as youth pastor. **Jeffrey Combs** is pastor.

Union Grove Church called **Dennis Planck** as pastor. Planck retired as pastor of First Church, Franklin.

■ **BEREA**—Liberty Avenue Church called **Hoge Hockensmith** as interim pastor.

■ **FT. MITCHELL**—Ft. Mitchell Church will host **Squire Parsons** in concert Feb. 25 at 10:45 a.m. **French Harmon** is pastor.

■ **HAWESVILLE**—First Church

called **Willis Henson** as interim pastor. Henson recently retired from Lone Oak Church, Paducah.

■ **HENDERSON**—Hyland Church called **Jeff Coursey** as senior pastor. Coursey previously served as senior pastor of Calvary Church, Glasgow.

■ **HICKMAN**—West Hickman Church will host revival services Feb. 18-21 at 10:50 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday and nightly at 7 p.m. The evangelist will be **Don Mathis**. The music evangelist will be **Gene Hawks**. For information, call (270) 236-0046. **Champ**

Thomas is pastor.

■ **INDEPENDENCE**—**Charles Wilson** retired after serving 22 years as minister of music at Hickory Grove Church.

■ **LaGRANGE**—DeHaven Church called **Rick Davidson** as minister of senior adults. **Anthony Rose** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Calvary Church called **Brian Varble** as minister of youth. **Robert Baker** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Bethany Church will host **The Darins** in concert March 2 at 7 p.m. For information, call (502) 452-2681. **Todd Robertson** is pastor.

■ **MIDDLESBORO**—East Cumberland Avenue Church called **Randall Pressnell** as pastor. Pressnell previous-

ly served at Clear Creek Bible College as dean of administrative affairs and assistant professor.

■ **NICHOLASVILLE**—Nicholasville Church called **Ray Cotes** as pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—**Chris Kurtz** resigned as associate pastor/minister to students at Red House Church to become minister of discipleship at Beacon Hill Church, Somerset. **Larry Sizemore** is pastor.

■ **TAYLORSVILLE**—**Scott Savell** resigned as pastor of Little Mount Church.

■ **WHITLEY CITY**—Flat Rock Church called **Larry Burton** as pastor.

■ **WOODBINE**—Corn Creek Church called **Shawn Bruce** as pastor.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Due to the retirement of our former pastor, North Park Baptist Church of Evansville, In., is seeking an experienced spiritual leader for the full-time position of senior pastor. NPBC is a Southern Baptist congregation with an average worship attendance of 150. Seminary graduate preferred. Send resumé to: Search Committee Chairman Steve Humphrey, 4105 Quail Hollow St., Evansville, IN 47715-1536.

SEEKING: Someone who feels called to minister to the fast-growing international population of Bowling Green and Warren County. First Baptist Church Bowling Green has Sunday school and worship for Vietnamese, Cambodians and East Europeans each Sunday. We are seeking a part-time worker who would help these mission groups grow through home Bible study and outreach. This work would be done in English. For additional information, call Mark Hopper, pastor, at (270) 842-0331.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pioneer Baptist Church, 264 Sparrow Lane, Harrodsburg, KY 40330, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: We are prayerfully seeking the pastor God has chosen to lead us in winning lost souls and using our activities building to minister and witness to our community. Our community is very diverse with a growing population of young families. Maplewood is located in St. Louis County adjoining south St. Louis. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee Chairman John Titus, Maplewood Baptist Church, PO Box 3549, Maplewood, MO 63143.

SEEKING: We are seeking a full-time minister with the primary responsibility of leading our church in music and worship. If interested, please send resumé to: Music Committee, Hall Street Baptist Church, 1102 Hall St., Owensboro, KY 42303.

SEEKING: Lawrence County Baptist Association is accepting resúmes for director of missions. Send resúmes postmarked on or before Feb. 28 to Lawrence County Association of Baptists, 2427 Highway 43 South, Leoma, TN 38468.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church of Carlisle, Ky. A seminary degree is necessary. Previous experience as a church pastor would be beneficial. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Eugene R. Snapp, chairman, 645 Upper Jackstown Road, Carlisle, KY 40311.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music and worship. Our services are blended with traditional and praise and worship. (270) 563-4011. Send resumé to Oakland Baptist Church, PO Box 154, Oakland, KY 42159.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor of education and youth to assist new senior pastor. Williamstown Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church located in a small, northern Kentucky town near large metropolitan areas, is striving for a purpose-driven blended ministry with a weekly attendance of 250-plus and great potential for growth. Candidate should be energetic, self-motivated, well organized and a creative team player who has an ability to relate to youth and adults on a personal and spiritual level. A bachelor's degree is required and a master's with related experience is a plus. Send resumé to: Stephen C. Rice, 214 North Main St., Williamstown, KY 41097; e-mail to: srice@fuse.net. Phone: (859) 824-4102.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Richmond, Ky., with a resident membership of 1,336, is seeking a minister of music. The vision for this ministry within our congregation and community is for someone who will coordinate a comprehensive music ministry for people of all ages. Candidate must have a bachelor's degree in music and a music degree from an accredited seminary (or in process). Candidate should have a calling to this particular area of Christian ministry and a minimum of two years experience in coordinating a comprehensive ministry of music or other professional music experience. Superior skills in choral directing are a must. Resumé with references should be sent to: Minister of Music Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 697, Richmond, KY 40476-0697.

SEEKING: Immanuel Baptist, a multi-generational church in Lexington, Ky., is seeking an experienced seminary graduate to be on the cutting edge in preschool ministry with a strong leadership gift and a passion for reaching unchurched preschoolers and their families. Respond to IBC Personnel Committee, 3100 Tates Creek Road, 40502.

SEEKING: Valley Station Baptist Church, 5416 Valley Station Road, Louisville, KY 40272, is now accepting resúmes for full-time pastor position through March 16, 2001. Pastor profile and other information will be provided upon request. Please contact church office, (502) 937-1730, or Eddie Foley, (502) 447-0291.

SEEKING: Bethel Baptist Church in Franklin County, Ky., is seeking a part-time minister of music. Congregation and choir skills necessary. Send resumé to: M/M Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 8200 Owenton Road, Frankfort, KY 40601. Phone: (502) 227-7278.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Hurricane Baptist Church in rural Trigg County. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Hurricane Baptist Church, 4177 Hurricane Road, Cadiz, KY 42211.

SEEKING: Senior pastor. Main Street Baptist Church is a progressive Southern Baptist church located in the Northern Kentucky area. Ideal candidate to fill our 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 involved in a very aggressive building program. All interested individuals should send a resumé with cover letter to: Pastor Search Committee, 306 West Main St., Alexandria, KY 41001. For a more detailed job description, go to our Web page at www.mainstreetbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Minister of children/children's pastor. Zion Baptist Church is a purpose-driven Southern Baptist church in Northwestern Kentucky seeking a full-time leader for children's ministries, birth through grade 6. Candidates should possess vibrant people skills and strong administrative and leadership gifts; must also demonstrate a genuine call of God, a mature personal relationship with Jesus and a servant's heart. Send resumé to: ZBC Search Committee, Zion Baptist Church, 8158 Highway 351, Henderson, KY 42420. Telephone: (270) 826-4952; fax: (270) 830-8053; e-mail: edavis@henderson.net; Web site: www.zionbaptist.org.

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

SEEKING: Full-time minister for rural church. Good environment to live in; parsonage provided. Send resumé to: Betina Florence, PO Box 326, Brownsville, KY 42210.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for New Hope Baptist, a small, rural, conservative (KJV) Eastern Kentucky church. Contact: Pulpit Committee, PO Box 62, West Liberty, KY 41472. Stephen Howard, (606) 743-7437.

SEEKING: Rineyville Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of music and pastoral care. Church is located in a rapidly-growing rural community five miles west of Elizabethtown. Direct all correspondence and inquiries to RBC, PO Box 197, Rineyville, KY 40162, or Rineyville Baptist@msn.com.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Primary responsibilities include sharing in worship planning and leadership; conducting adult and children's choirs. Send resumé to Chevy Chase Baptist Church, PO Box 22113, Lexington, KY 40522-2113.

SEEKING: Full-time administrative assistant to add to our ministry and growing church. Experience preferred. Please inquire at (502) 491-1920 or send resumé to: West Broadway Baptist Church, 8420 Six Mile Lane, Louisville, KY 40220.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of education and administration to continue development of a comprehensive Christian education program in a growing church. Experience required, seminary degree in education preferred. Send resúmes and inquiries to: Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church, 3400 Summerfield Drive, Louisville KY 40220, Attn: Minister Search Committee. E-mail: Hunsinger.office@att.net.

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.

TOUR: Eleven-day best-of-Italy, July 8-18, See it all, just \$2,879. Lottie Moon's China plus four-night Yangtze River cruise, Oct. 31-Nov. 11, only \$2,375. Call Pastor Jack Studie for info: (270) 475-2197. Experience you can trust.

TRAVEL: Reach The World Travel. Established, experienced travel agency offers group mission travel special rates. (800) 277-2001. www.ReachTheWorldTravel.com.

TRAVEL: New Orleans convention packages. Great hotel choices, four-night packages as low as \$233 per person, double-occupancy with free parking and shuttle bus. Discount airfares. City tours. Christian Travelers, (800) 972-8952. www.christiantravelers.com.

WANTED: A 15-passenger van, late model, low mileage. Brushy Fork Baptist Church. Call Pastor Watts: (606) 349-6262.

Dale Evans leaves strong legacy of Christian faith

By Kevin Eckstrom
Religion News Service

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—When Dale Evans died last week at age 88, she not only left a legacy as America's favorite cowgirl. She also was remembered as a matriarch of evangelical Christianity.

Along with actor and husband Roy Rogers, Evans embodied the feel-good charm of the American West in countless movies and television specials. Rogers died in 1998 at the age of 86.

Despite their Hollywood successes, the couple also became well known for their public and unapologetic Christian faith, which they said sustained them through a string of personal tragedies. "I would love to be an evangelist," Evans once said, "but I think God has revealed to me that I can serve Him best by just remaining at my post."

Born Frances Octavia Smith in Uvalde, Texas, in 1912, Evans worked at several small jobs before landing work playing the piano and singing on a local radio show in Memphis, Tenn. She worked her way through Louisville and Chicago before moving on to the bright lights of Hollywood in the 1940s.

In her first year there she appeared in six movies, and went on to star in 26 movies for the Roy Rogers Western Musical Series. The couple married in 1947 and had nine children.

Despite their public image as a nearly perfect couple, Rogers and Evans were stung by a string of personal tragedies. The couple's first daughter, Robin, was born with Down syndrome in 1950 and died two years later. In 1964, their adopted daughter, Debbie, was killed in a church bus accident on her way to a summer mission trip. Just three years later, their adopted son, Sandy, died of alcohol poisoning while serving in the U.S. Army in Germany.

"I couldn't have done it without the Lord, and I've been very conscious of His presence," Evans said in a 1999 interview. "He promised He would never forget us nor forsake us, and He hasn't forsaken me."

Evans chronicled her struggles and successes in more than 20 books, but is perhaps best known for writing "Happy Trails," the couple's signature sign-off song. In her last book, "Rainbows on a Hard Trail," Evans wrote that God had been her comfort in the years since her husband's death.

"God is good in His benefits," she wrote. "I know, for He has cushioned the hardest moments of my life and given me strength to go on. However hard the way has been, I am at peace. ... I know I can trust Him."

Evangelism training influences inmates' lives

By Dana Williamson
Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

SAYRE, Okla. (BP)—Ralph Chapman didn't think he was cut out for prison ministry.

"When those doors slammed behind me, it just did something to me," Chapman recalled. Then God changed his heart.

Chapman, director of missions in Oklahoma's Beckham-Mills Baptist Association, is now in his second semester teaching "Evangelism Explosion" to inmates at North Fork Correctional Facility in Sayre, Okla. And he said he can't wait to get to the prison every Monday.

When the prison was built about five years ago, Chapman was among 60 to 70 volunteers who participated in training for prison ministry. But he quickly determined that "I didn't think I could be successful doing that."

After receiving evangelism training, however, Chapman discovered that "my heart had been changed to prison ministry." He approached the prison chaplain about leading evangelism training for some of the prisoners. The

chaplain chose 10 inmates to begin working with Chapman in October 1999.

All 10 inmates graduated from Chapman's first 13-week course. He noted that each of the men have phenomenal Christian testimonies.

Now Chapman has 12 new students and eight of the original 10 who have signed up for advanced training.

After the first course, one man told Chapman, "You said we should share with anyone, any time, any way we could, didn't you?"

The man went on to explain that his family wouldn't have anything to do with him after he was sentenced to prison—no letters, no phone calls, nothing. But after learning to share his faith, he wrote to his son and shared a gospel presentation in a letter. After two months of writing, his son wrote back and told his father he had trusted Jesus as His Savior.

"My son and I have discussed how we can work to get our family back together," the man added.

"To me, that one incident is worth it all," Chapman said.

But there are more.

One inmate said he didn't have to wait until he got to prison to share his faith. As a result of his witness, two inmates have become Christians.

Chapman said one inmate told him, "It wasn't until I got to this prison that I saw people who loved me. For the first time, I know what Christian love is."

Another inmate told Chapman he fought his transfer to Oklahoma in court, but now "I know why God sent me to Oklahoma—to meet Him."

Chapman said since North Fork is a minimum security facility, most of the men will be there from five to seven years, some as little as two.

"There are four levels in EE, and ironically, the last level is prison ministry," Chapman said. "It is conceivable that some of these men can become certified as prison ministry specialists. Then they would have come full circle."

Because of the success of the evangelism program in Sayre, there is a request to start the classes at another facility. Chapman said, "What we're doing here could have a real impact on society."

"What we're doing here could have a real impact on society."

Ralph Chapman,
ministry volunteer at
North Fork Correctional
Facility in Sayre, Okla.

Ministry consultants seek to impact 15 countries

NASHVILLE (BP)—Thirty-five English-speaking Christian leaders from 15 countries were challenged to make changing lives their top priority during a recent training conference at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The leaders, who are serving as contract consultants with LifeWay, will lead conferences for church leaders in equipping Christians to grow in their faith.

The workshop was the first training conference for English-speaking consultants conducted by LifeWay's international department. Similar training for Spanish-speaking consultants was held in 1999 and 2000 and

55 consultants are now serving in 13 countries.

English-speaking consultants represented Australia, England, Hong Kong, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Germany, Kenya, Lebanon, Philippines and Latvia.

"We are relying on people like you with a heart for the world who are willing to share part of your lives," noted Luis Aranguren, director of LifeWay's international department.

During the conference, participants gained training about the life development process as well as beginning, developing and multiplying progressive discipleship experiences.

"Discipleship for me is a passion," Aranguren said. "Discipleship is about relationships—a relationship with God and relationships with others."

Isaac Yim, a pastor from Malaysia, said he is "a product of the Lottie Moon missions offering" collected each Christmas season for Southern Baptists' international outreach. "We are linked to Southern Baptists by missionaries," Yim said. "We are able to continue what they left behind."

Discipleship "should not emphasize just teaching but should include bringing people to the likeness of Christ," he added. "I believe the primary task of the church is to transform lives."

Christian-themed toys gaining popularity among kids, parents

By Sue Ann Miller
Alabama Baptist

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP)—Hey parents, looking for birthday gift ideas for your kids? You may not have to look any further than your neighborhood Christian bookstore.

Christian-oriented toys are a new market niche in toyland that's catching on like wildfire—much to the delight of parents and grandparents in search of unique toy items.

Until recently Christian-oriented children's toys have played a minor role in the billion-dollar toy industry. That is until the introduction and phenomenal reception a few years ago of Veggie Tales—a video series featuring animated, vegetable-like characters that promote Christian beliefs through biblically oriented stories and songs.

Mark Miller, owner of the Carpenter Shop Christian Bookstore in Birmingham, Ala., said he has seen an increase in the number of Christian toys, games and videos during the past 18 years he has been in business.

"Fifteen years ago you didn't see the type of toys with a Christian theme or message

like you have available today," he said. "Back then—at best—we could offer puzzles and books."

Today the rise in popularity and availability of toys with a Christian emphasis has resulted in Miller offering an entire section in his store dedicated to children's toys. On his store shelves are toys and games geared to boys as well as girls.

Perched in a decorative box is a dark haired, Barbie doll-size figure that represents Ruth, Esther and Mary in the "Women of the Bible" series. The one figure comes with mix-and-match outfits that are interchangeable, and according to the doll's instructions, "girls can pretend the doll is any one of these courageous and faithful women of God."

For girls with an artistic flair there are Bible craft kits that feature tapestry, sand and bead art.

A myriad of toy choices is available for boys ranging in age from young toddlers to preteens.

A recent newcomer on the market is the "full armor of God play set." The seven-piece set includes a breastplate, helmet, shield,

belt, sword and shin guards and is made of play-safe plastic. The set is promoted as being a "great teaching tool for kids about spiritual warfare" and is based on Ephesians 6.

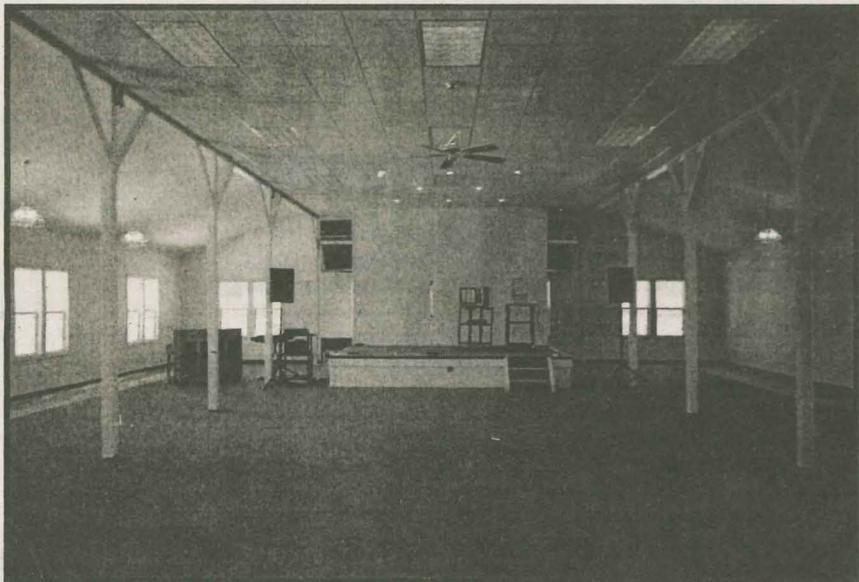
Other toys for boys include David and Goliath action figures that can complement a regiment of soldiers, horses and chariots as well as a Noah and the ark playset for younger children.

Young toddlers are not overlooked in this expanding market. A series of toys known as the "Baby Bible" collection features such items as Baby Bible pals, which are plush stuffed characters depicting biblical personalities and animals such as Mary and a donkey, Daniel and a lion and Jonah and a big fish.

A cuddle toy for youngsters ages 3-5 is Pauly Panda the Bible Bear. This toy is described as "a charming bear that depicts the character traits of the apostle Paul." A story on the package notes that Pauly Panda helps give an example of a Bible character who faced many difficult situations yet continued to persevere.

Please pardon our progress!

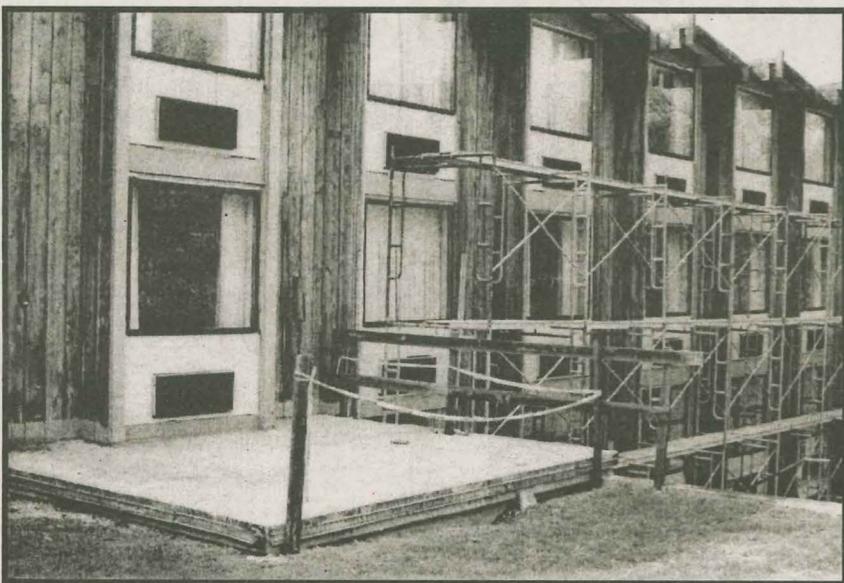
*The Phase One Renovation Project
On Cedarmore's Boone Lodge
& Byrdwell Conference Center
Is nearing completion.*



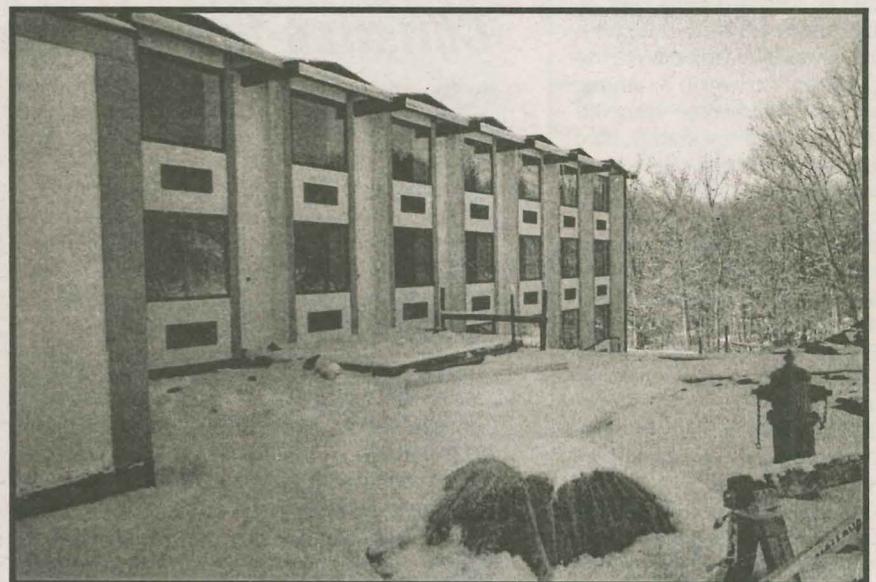
New Byrdwell Conference Center Interior



New Entrance to Byrdwell Conference Center



Front of Boone Lodge Before



Front of Boone Lodge After (not complete)

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your support!