

PRactical Resources for Christian Living

# WESTERN RECORDER

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**FOR THE RECORD**

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## Barna claims U.S. Christians 'stuck in rut'

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)—A new survey has found that Americans don't show signs of being more religious than in recent years, casting doubt on the notion—at least in some Christian circles—that a spiritual revival is under way across the nation.

In fact, the annual survey, released by pollster George Barna, shows a decline in some measures of religious devotion. Bible reading, church attendance and volunteering are all down from a decade ago.

"Americans seem to have become almost inoculated to spiritual events, outreach efforts and the quest for personal spiritual development," Barna said. "There are magnificent exceptions throughout the country, but overall, Christian ministry is stuck in a deep rut."

The survey of 1,005 adults showed 85 percent identified themselves as "Christian," with 41 percent classifying themselves as "born again" and 7 percent labeling themselves as "evangelical."

Barna's indicators of religious activity—church attendance, Bible study, prayer—all remained relatively the same as in last year's survey. Thirty-seven percent said they had read the Bible outside church in the last week, 42 percent had attended church and 16 percent had participated in a small-group Bible study.

Age was a dividing line for religious identity, with only 34 percent of Generation X saying they are "absolutely committed to the Christian faith," compared with 52 percent of baby boomers and 70 percent of seniors over the age of 74.

Barna said the data reveal a nation that is "spiritually complacent" and churches need to help spark greater devotion. "Too many Christians and churches in America have traded in spiritual passion for empty rituals, clever methods and mindless practices."

## Hoops fever

*Upward leagues hustling to keep up with growth*

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LEXINGTON—As Immanuel Baptist Church winds up its third season of Upward Basketball, David Howard's main challenge is preparing for next year's anticipated growth.

The league, which concluded play March 3, had 375 players on 38 teams, more than double two years ago. The Lexington church already plans to build new facilities, but they won't be ready until 2003.

"We need to find a second gym so we won't have to turn people away," said Howard, Immanuel's minister of recreation and outreach. "The other stuff we face—accommodating people, finding godly coaches—is minor."

Other Kentucky Baptist churches report similar growth patterns in hosting Upward Basketball, an elementary-school instructional league.

Four hundred children signed up at Burlington Baptist Church this season. That's larger than the church's average Sunday morning attendance. Organizers had to divide participants into fall and winter seasons.

"Our biggest challenge is space and time," said activities director Ken Clore. "We were bursting at the seams last year, and a church down the road did their own. They ended up with 80 kids in their league; about 40 would have been in ours. That eased the load."

Upward is the brainchild of Caz



**UPWARD BASKETBALL** ■ Above: Girls hustle down the court at Crestwood Baptist Church in Crestwood. ■ Left: Girls take part in a pilot Upward cheerleading program. During the 2000-2001 season, 5,275 Kentuckians played in Upward leagues and 277 children participated in Upward cheerleading. (Photos by Trennis Henderson)

McCaslin, a former pastor in Spartanburg, S.C. The program is concluding its fifth season, with leagues operating in 33 states.

In the commonwealth, Upward has become so popular that some churches have added seventh and eighth grade divisions; others include kindergartners. Since 1997-98, the number of leagues in Kentucky has mushroomed from 15 to 36, making it the nation's fifth-largest program.

There were 5,275 Kentuckians playing during the 2000-01 season, and 277 who participated in a pilot cheerleading program. Nation-

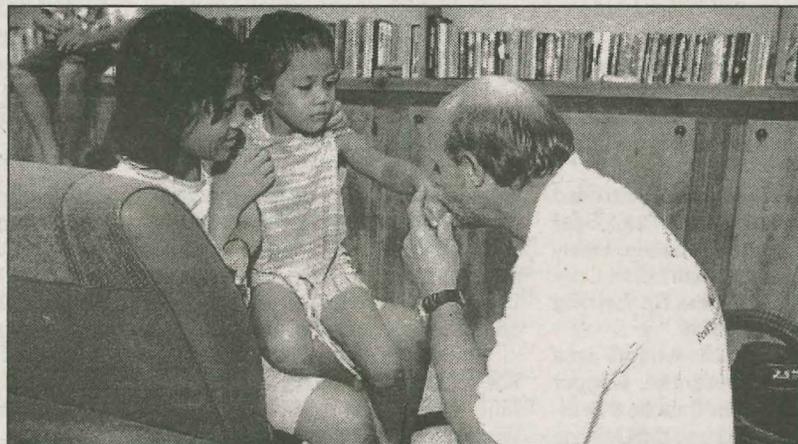
ally, 120,000 boys and girls at 585 churches learned about Jesus and jump shots.

Organizers say an average of 22 people per league accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior as a result of the weekly devotions and Bible instruction.

"It's an exciting program," said Ginger Yeaste, volunteer director at First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg. "How many programs can you get people coming to you instead of going to them? People are coming to you and hearing the gospel."

With six leagues apiece, □ See Upward Basketball ..., page 3

## Pago Pago Seafarer's Center sends gospel around the world



**MAKING IT BETTER** Rob Stip kisses a young girl's hand after tending to an infected cut on her leg. As director of the Pago Pago Seafarer's Center, Stip often ministers to minor medical needs of children who participate in the center's children's ministry. Stip and his wife, Sandra, are among Southern Baptist missionaries featured in the 2001 Week of Prayer for North American Missions. The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering helps fund the ministry operated by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention. (Photo by James Dotson)

By James Dotson  
SBC North American Mission Board

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—The incident was typical of many encountered by Rob and Sandra Stip at the Pago Pago Seafarer's Center. A ship's owners had a reputation for having "never paid a penny to anyone, and when the crew complained, they were thrown off the ship, arrested and deported," said Rob Stip.

But a group of seafarers from the ship found shelter at the Seafarer's Center and became involved in intense Bible study and prayer. After 10 days, a fishing agent brought \$35,000 to the center and paid the men, saying, "What is it with this God of yours? I can't eat.

I can't sleep. ... What is it going to take to make you guys happy?"

As directors of the center from 1998 until early this year, the Stips learned theirs would be much more than the ministry of "passing out Kool Aid and pool sticks" that they had envisioned. They soon saw how God had uniquely equipped them for ministry in ways they had never imagined.

Until early this year they served as Mission Service

Corps volunteers at the center, which has been operated by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and the Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention since October 1995. The American Samoan □ See Seafarers' ministry ..., page 6

ANNIE ARMSTRONG  
EASTER OFFERING  
FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, March 14

## BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Veteran Southern Baptist communicator** Pat Pattillo has been named to a senior staff position at the National Council of Churches in New York. Pattillo, former vice president of development and public relations at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, will serve as the NCC's associate general secretary for communications. In recent years he has served at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and as a North American representative for Hong Kong Baptist University.

■ **Howell Todd**, president of Mississippi College in Clinton, has announced he will retire after seven years at the Baptist-affiliated school. He is credited with restoring the college's image after its former president, Lewis Nobles, admitted to embezzling millions of dollars donated to the school.

## Seminary president, critics differ on faith statement

By Mark Wingfield  
*Texas Baptist Standard*

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP)—The revised Baptist Faith and Message is not being forced at anyone, and requiring faculty at Southern Baptist Convention seminaries to sign it should not alarm anyone, contends Ken Hemphill, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Meanwhile, a Georgia pastor whose writings Hemphill cites as an example of why changes were necessary in the SBC's official faith statement has charged the seminary president with misrepresenting his writings. And a former Southwestern professor cited in one of Hemphill's articles also has said his work has been misused.

Hemphill has written two articles about the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, both posted on the seminary's Web site and mailed by others in printed form to some Texas churches.

One article is titled "Is the Baptist Faith and Message Creedal?" and the other "Is the 2000 Confession Guilty of Bibliolatry?"

"Some among us love to use sound bites to create fear," Hemphill said in introducing the second of his articles.

He then accused critics of the Baptist Faith and Message revisions of instilling fear in Baptist members with misinformation, particularly their insistence that the revised faith statement is being used as a creed.

"No one can be coerced into believing this confession of faith, but it is appropriate for those who work for convention agencies and institutions to be held accountable to the statement of their convention," Hemphill said.

Critics of the SBC's changes to the Baptist Faith and Message have said seminary professors should not be required to sign the new statement, which they view as narrow and controversial.

Hemphill also addressed critics who have lamented the deletion of a line from the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message that "Jesus Christ is the criterion

## Will faculty members sign revised statement?

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP)—Two of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's 89 faculty members are resisting a requirement that they sign the revised Baptist Faith and Message statement.

The names of the two faculty members were not disclosed. But President Ken Hemphill said both teach in the school of theology.

"They are men of integrity," he said, who are struggling with whether they can sign the faith statement in good conscience.

Although overwhelmingly approved by messengers to the 2000 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, the revised faith statement has been criticized by some Baptists for removing language about Jesus being "the criterion by which Scripture is interpreted" and insisting that females cannot be pastors.

In Kentucky, for example, a Ken-

tucky Baptist Convention study committee currently is exploring how the KBC should relate to the revised statement.

Hemphill said he discussed the issue with seminary trustees during their March 5-7 meeting and now must go back to those faculty members for further conversation.

The bottom line, however, is "we will keep good faith with the Southern Baptist Convention" and "we will keep faith with our bylaws," Hemphill said.

Trustees previously amended the seminary's bylaws to require all faculty to sign the Baptist Faith and Message in whatever form it is adopted or changed by the SBC.

If the two Southwestern faculty members continue to resist signing the revised faith statement, that apparently would result in their termination.

Hemphill said all faculty are required to sign the faith statement and pledged to teach "in accordance with and not contrary to it." This requirement applies equally to new faculty, current faculty, adjunct faculty and retired faculty teaching adjunctively, he said.

"Nobody is grandfathered," Hemphill said. Trustees, however, "do have the ability to permit anyone to teach," Hemphill said in response to a question about whether some retired faculty have been exempted. He did not indicate that anyone has received an exemption from signing the revised faith statement.

David Crutchley, dean of the school of theology, said the deadline for faculty signatures is before the start of the next academic year in August. By that point, he said, anyone who will teach at Southwestern must have signed the faith statement.

by which the Bible is to be interpreted."

"The 'criterion' language was being used by some unprincipled Baptist scholars to ignore difficult texts, which they did not believe to reflect the character of Jesus," Hemphill asserted. This "loophole to avoid the plain teaching of certain biblical texts persists among moderates," he charges.

His only example is one sentence from a book by Jeff Pool, a former professor at Southwestern who now teaches at Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University. "Jeff Pool plainly stated that the criterion language was included in the 1963 confession largely in response to Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Ralph Elliott's claim that Melchizedek was a priest of Baal," Hemphill wrote.

Pool said he was unsure whether Hemphill intended to lump him in the category of the "unprincipled scholars" to whom he refers or if the reference was to Elliott. Either way, Pool said,

Hemphill is wrong and has confused the debate with ambiguous statements.

"If Hemphill intentionally injected this ambiguity into his allusion to my study, he has willfully distorted communication of the facts and truth, with the aim of deceiving some Baptists by defining Pool's," Pool responded. The line from Pool's book about Elliott was not Pool's own words but was a quote from Herschel Hobbs, chairman of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message study committee.

Apart from whatever he was attempting to say about Elliott, "Hemphill has failed to offer any example whatsoever of the so-called 'unprincipled Baptist scholars' or moderates whom he accuses of misusing Jesus Christ as the criterion by which to interpret the Christian Scriptures," Pool said.

Hemphill said the changes to the faith statement were necessary to eliminate the possibility that anyone might use the "experience of Jesus as the cri-

terion by which we judge the biblical text." He cited a Bible study lesson written by Bob Setzer, pastor of First Baptist Church of Macon, Ga., and published by the Baptist Center for Ethics.

"Setzer argues that Jesus issued a simple two-word creed, 'Follow me,'" Hemphill reported. "Do you see the danger in Setzer's argument? Which Christ are we to follow? Do we follow the Jesus of Mormonism or the Jesus of the New Age movement?"

Setzer wrote Hemphill a letter accusing him of misrepresenting his writings. "The thrust of the lesson argued that at its heart, the Christian faith is a dynamic, unfolding process of knowing, loving and following Jesus," Setzer stated. "Can this Jesus be divorced from Scripture? Absolutely not! Nothing I said suggested otherwise."

Setzer said his quarrel is not with the Bible but "with those who place creedal formulations between the believer and the Scripture."

## Controversy might split Atlanta association

By William Neal  
*Georgia Christian Index*

ATLANTA (BP)—An ad hoc group of Atlanta Baptists is taking initial steps to form a new Baptist association within the metro Atlanta area.

The move is in reaction to a controversial vote in January by Atlanta Baptist Association to retain two member churches that allow homosexuals to have leadership positions within their congregations.

Approximately 50 people attended the recent meeting at Pine Lake Baptist Church in Stone Mountain. Georgia Baptist parliamentarian Lester Cooper explained the process for forming a new Baptist association.

Approximately 18 Atlanta-area churches were represented. Cooper explained that in order for a new association to be accepted into the Georgia Baptist Convention it would need to have a minimum of 15 churches.

Following Atlanta Baptist Association's called meeting Jan. 30, a statement was issued from the association

that the vote was based on the issue of local church autonomy. At the latest meeting, speakers insisted that the issue was sodomy and whether Atlanta Baptist Association is going to condone sinful practices.

Some of the participants were hopeful that the position of the Atlanta association might be reversed. Sam Boyd, pastor of Mt. Vernon Church in Atlanta, has given notice that he will submit an amendment to the association's bylaws on membership at the annual associational meeting this week.

That amendment would state that "an affiliated church does not include a church which knowingly takes, or has taken, any action to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior."

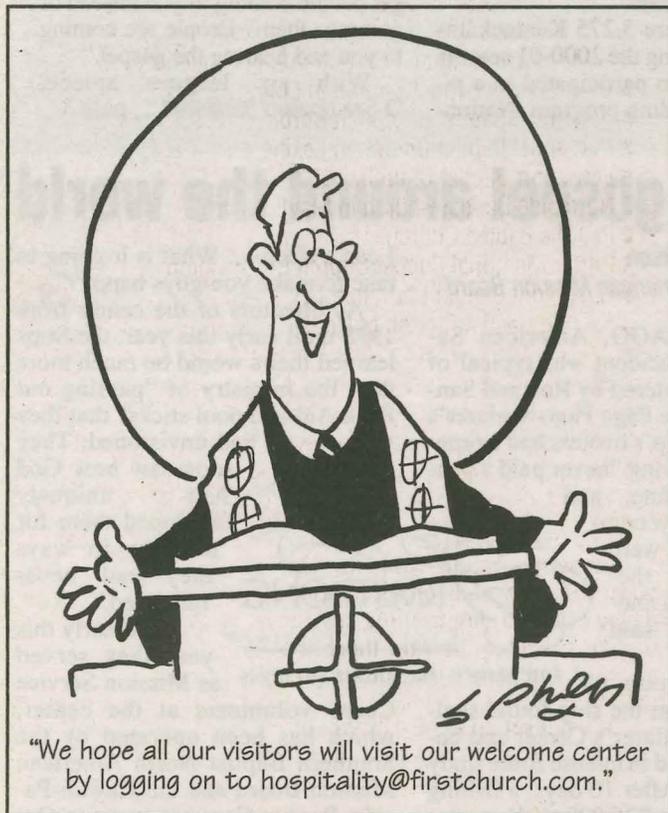
Some speakers indicated they were not optimistic about reversing the Atlanta association's position since it would require a two-thirds majority to change the bylaws. The vote on the bylaws change likely will be the determining factor in how many churches choose to join a new association.

Robert White, executive director of

the Georgia Baptist Convention, attended the meeting as an observer, along with other state convention leaders. After the recent decision of the association to retain the two churches in question, Oakhurst and Virginia-Highland, the Georgia Baptist Convention administration committee took action to recommend to the GBC executive committee that all funding to the Atlanta Baptist Association be cut.

White, who was asked to speak, said he is grieved by the issue. "The convention will relate to churches and associations that are biblically sound," White said. "If Atlanta Association says, 'We erred,' and they correct that decision, that will put us in a position of working with the association."

At the Pine Lake meeting a resolution was adopted unanimously by those present that sets in motion the process for a new association. Since most of the individuals present did not have authority to speak on behalf of their churches, a future meeting will be held after local congregations have voted whether to join the new association.



## Former Kentuckian helps direct Upward Basketball

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

SPARTANBURG, S.C.—Jeff Carmon believes so strongly in Upward Basketball that he changed careers and relocated his family from Western Kentucky to South Carolina to join the organization.

Carmon, who now is the program's director of training, previously was a volunteer at Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro. When founder Caz McCaslin approached then-director Jacqui Eckdahl about coming to work, she suggested he talk to Carmon.

The longer their discussion lasted, the more interested Carmon said he became in leaving the natural gas marketing business.

"It was funny. The second year we did it at our church, I told my wife, 'It would be awesome to work with Upward Basketball,'" he recalled. "Three years later, here I sit."

Although he no longer lives in Owensboro, Carmon is proud of the city's community-wide embrace of Upward Basketball. Carmon calls Owensboro one of the best examples of a multiple-church approach to host-

ing the outreach league.

Four Baptist churches—Bellevue, Third, First and Wing Avenue—cooperate with Settle Memorial United Methodist and Owensboro Christian. They follow the same practice and game schedules, print one brochure listing all six leagues and come together for an awards night at the end of the season.

As Upward concludes its fifth season nationally, it continues to experience steady growth. This year's number rose to 585, and few churches have dropped out along the way, Carmon said. He cited three primary reasons for the program's success:

■ *It gives a church a way to open the door for ministry participation.*

"I would see people start by refereeing a game and then get involved in another ministry, and another," he said. "It's one of the main ways to get people involved."

■ *It attracts people to church who otherwise wouldn't come.*

At Bellevue, people outside the church who wouldn't attend a worship service or Sunday school class would come to watch their children play basketball, he said. Once there, they

would hear the gospel during halftime devotions.

■ *Organizers continue to improve the program.*

As Upward as grown, the home office in South Carolina has continued searching for ways to improve its manuals, other support materials and packaging, Carmon said.

"We continue to look for ways to make the leagues easier for churches," he said. "That's one of our keys to success and a key to retaining churches."

While those are some practical factors, Vice President of Operations Shane McKenzie identifies its spiritual component as the primary focus.

He emphasizes that Upward is not a traditional basketball league, but one concerned with outreach.

"It's not about championships; it's not about trophies," he said. "What we're about is changed lives and creating opportunities to share the Lord."

Prayer is part of that picture, according to David Garrard, director of St. Matthews Baptist Church's league in Louisville.

Three years in the Upward Basketball program has created an awareness in the church of the importance of

prayer, said Garrard, who also is minister to children.

As part of the league, a prayer committee enlists 100 members to pray daily for the league, prior to and during the season. Each participant gets a prayer pin and a calendar listing specific requests.

"I'm convinced one of the reasons this thing has been so successful is it has concrete prayer support," he said. "As the director I've seen concrete answers to prayer, like when we needed a coach or an official. Last year, vacation Bible school people came to me and said, 'Can you enlist prayer support for us like Upward gets?'"

Churches interested in starting a league for next season must attend a two-day training conference. In Kentucky, one will be offered July 21-22 at St. Matthews Baptist Church.

The organization asks that at least four key leaders attend, including a staff member who will be responsible for oversight. The cost for newcomers is \$280 for up to four and \$52 for each additional person. For existing leagues, the charge is \$52 per person.

For more information, call (800) 585-4721.

## Upward Basketball leagues hustling to keep up with growth

Continued from page 1

Owensboro, Louisville and Lexington were this year's pacesetters. But regardless of location, pastors and league directors cite a litany of reasons for Upward's popularity:

■ **An emphasis on teaching instead of competition.** Using the theme, "every child is a winner," players get equal time. They also learn such fundamentals as man-to-man defense, which directors say brings noticeable improvements in skills.

The lack of a competitive atmosphere emerges in various ways. Scoreboards don't run during first and second graders' games, and some have abandoned them altogether. Leagues don't track standings either.

"We kept score the first couple weeks then turned (the scoreboard) off," noted Geoff Baggett, youth minister at Second Baptist Church in Hopkinsville. "We found it was doing more harm than good when kids were worrying about losing."

■ **A corresponding lack of emphasis on "stars."** There is no "Most Valuable Player" and everyone gets a season-ending award.

The only honor David Garrard has seen some leagues present is a white star denoting the most Christ-like player. Garrard, director of St. Matthews Baptist Church's league in Louisville, is the featured speaker at 21 Upward awards ceremonies across the nation this winter.

"Wherever you go, the jerseys are the same, the awards are the same," said Garrard, who also is St. Matthews' minister to children. "Everyone gets something."

The mother of three grade schoolers, Yeaste especially appreciates this boost to children's self-esteem.

"These kids are created in the im-



**UPLIFTING** Upward basketball organizers say an average of 22 people per league accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior as a result of the weekly devotions and Bible instruction.

age of Christ and we don't make them feel that way unless they're really good in some sport," she said. "This is a program that makes kids feel good about themselves."

■ **The ease of organizing a league.** Upward offers a franchise-style set-up. The home office provides jerseys, coaches' shirts, training videos, manuals and a computer program to organize schedules and other details.

For about \$45 (each league sets its own price), a player gets a jersey, gym bag, parents' guide, Upward Bible, gospel tool and awards.

■ **A spiritual component.** Devotions are delivered during each practice and at halftime of very game. A gospel presentation concludes the awards ceremony capping the season. Since up to 80 percent of participants come from outside the church, many aren't familiar with Scripture.

"Upward is intentionally evangelistic and our people have embraced that," Garrard said. "A lot of times people who want to do that don't have the tools. It's relational evangelism done over a 10-week period. It's very intentional, but not pushy."

Even when the numbers aren't

high, or decisions to accept Christ can't be directly traced to Upward, churches are pleased with the results.

Second Baptist in Hopkinsville had two professions of faith last year, but several families transferred memberships there. And it has boosted the church's community image, Baggett said.

"It has really increased the visibility and public attitude toward our church," he said. "We've gotten nothing but positive comments."

"There is a carryover in church attendance," added Clore. "It kind of puts us in the spotlight for the whole community. Burlington Baptist is seen as a church that cares."

■ **The enthusiasm it generates.** Organizers report they have been able to recruit dozens of volunteer coaches, referees, concession stand workers and other helpers.

Second Church's two-year-old league generated tremendous interest among members, including the youth group, Baggett said. Last summer the church sponsored four Upward basketball clinics, with teens providing 90 percent of the staff.

"Any time you develop and perform a new ministry the public responds to, you can't help but be excited about that," he said. "We have 500 people coming through the doors on a Saturday."

"I have people all the time who are too old to have kids in the program ask how it's going," said Dan Case, assistant director of St. Matthews' league. "I hear about it all year long. It's helped our church come together as a family."

That doesn't mean that sponsorship is simple, Howard warned. Some churches struggle for a year or two before participation builds, he said.

### Upward leagues

SPARTANBURG, S.C.—According to Upward Basketball, the following Kentucky Baptist churches hosted outreach leagues this season:

- Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset.
- Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro.
- Burlington Baptist Church.
- Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington.
- Community Baptist Church in Henderson.
- Corinth Baptist Church in McQuady.
- Crestwood Baptist Church in Crestwood.
- First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg.
- First Baptist Church of Mt Washington.
- First Baptist Church of Owensboro.
- First Baptist Church of Paducah.
- Florence Baptist Church.
- Freeda Harris Baptist Church in Lookout.
- Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Independence.
- Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville.
- Immanuel Baptist Church in Corbin.
- Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.
- Lewisport Baptist Church.
- Northside Baptist Church in Mayfield.
- Pellville Baptist Church.
- Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington.
- Rosemont Baptist Church in Lexington.
- Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville.
- Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.
- Shively Baptist Church in Louisville.
- St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.
- Third Baptist Church of Owensboro.
- Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville.
- Wing Avenue Baptist Church in Owensboro.

But with support from the Upward office, which requires attendance at a two-day training session to start a league, he said there is a "line of integrity" that helps programs.

"It's not set up to be overwhelming," Yeaste said. "It's a lot of people doing small things to make big things happen."

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Let culture determine your worship style

By Rick Warren

Have you thought much about the church of the 21st century? How we need to use new ways to accomplish old purposes?

Frankly, my concern is that far too many of us are trying to put new wine into old wineskins. We're still caught up in traditions that—at one time—were very effective for winning people to Christ, but now they actually hinder the lost from hearing the gospel message. Yet we cling to these traditions as if

they were carried down from Sinai right along with the Ten Commandments.

For the 21st century, I think the church needs to be consciously focused on bringing lost people into the body and then helping them mature in their faith. I know what you're thinking: Doesn't every church do that? Well, I think every church believes it's doing that, but many of them fail to understand how difficult they make it for lost people to feel comfortable. It's not just about being friendly to the unchurched; it's about loving them enough to limit some of your own preferences.

Let me illustrate how thinking should change if we're going to be focused on the lost:

■ **Who is the Sunday target?** Traditionally, Sunday activities at a church are aimed at the members. The worship service is geared toward the preferences of church members: the songs they like to sing, the terms they're used to hearing and so forth. Any visitors have to learn the church's "culture" in order to take part.

Now, imagine a missionary going overseas and saying, "I'm here to share the good news, but first you have to learn to speak my language, learn my customs and sing my style of music." You can immediately see why that strategy would fail; yet many church-

es in America do just that. Even as our culture has changed, we insist on using the same language, programs, customs and musical style we used in the 1950s! I think that's a major reason why two-thirds of all the churches in America are plateaued or declining.

So we have to start thinking differently. I think the target on Sunday morning should be the lost. The church should focus on making unbelievers feel comfortable by singing songs they can embrace, by voicing prayers that help them relate and by preaching messages

they can understand. We need to make Christianity available on an introductory level to any Sunday service visitors.

■ **What determines the worship model?** It's unfortunate in many of our churches, but we have let tradition determine the worship style. I think you'd agree there isn't any one right style. After all, Koreans worship differently than Americans; Southerners worship differently than Californians. We see and accept different styles of worship all the time. And as long as the worship is done in spirit and in truth, we don't have a problem with that. So why do we insist that some of our traditional methods—the ones we prefer—are the only way to do it?

I think we should let culture determine the worship style (and you know I'm not talking about compromising the truth here). Paul said, "I become all things to all men that I may, in some way, save some." So, if you're in California, you should have a California-culture church. If you're in Ohio, you have an Ohio-culture church. If you're in Mississippi, you should have a Mississippi-culture church.

■ **Why are you using the organ?** Let me give you one simple—yet controversial—example of what I'm talking about related to worship styles. Many traditional churches use organs

and hymns, but I'm just telling you that you're not going to attract many lost people with that kind of music. Do you listen to organ music on the radio? Do you think lost people listen to CDs of the organ's greatest hits? Do you listen to choir music in your leisure? What makes you think lost people will find choir music suddenly interesting on a Sunday morning?

At Saddleback, we use ensembles and microphones and we sing choruses. We do this because choruses are easier to learn quickly and sing along with—even on a lost person's very first visit. Keep in mind our target on Sunday is not the person who's been a Christian for 50 years.

Now let me ask you, who is your target? It's a little like fishing—if you use "organ bait," what kind of fish do you think you're going to catch? Probably people who like organ music or like more traditional worship, people who have been Christians for many years. There's nothing wrong with that, but there are plenty of good churches that were designed for those people. How are we going to attract the lost—the people who aren't coming to church now?

And let me add, don't just start singing choruses because they're popular. Some of them can be just as confusing as a traditional hymn. For instance, if you sing "Jehovah Jireh" to the average unbeliever—frankly—you might as well be singing Mumbo Jumbo. What's Jehovah Jireh?

You've got to make sure unbelievers can understand the words.

The bottom line is: Do we love lost people enough to change some of our preferences in order to help them understand the eternal truth of God's grace through Jesus Christ? We never—ever—change the message, but we change our methods to reach the generation of our time, very deliberately pouring new wine into new wineskins (Luke 5:38).

*Rick Warren is pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif.*

## COMMENTARY

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

### Garner Baptist Church's dedication

Garner Missionary Baptist Church in the Ashland area recently dedicated a new sanctuary that seats 380 people. It's beautiful but the thing that distinguishes this congregation is not its facilities but the dedication of its people.

You only have to hear Pastor Gary Arrington talk about the church's ministries to know that the emphasis on reaching out is a lot more than slogans. Weekly Bible studies are conducted at the Ramey Estep Homes for Children, the Woodland Oaks nursing facility and in the Boyd County Regional Jail.

Laypeople lead worship services at a local campground. Laypeople also are leading new member classes, parenting classes, FAITH outreach, AWANA, the bus ministry and graded choirs. Many are involved in the adult music ministry under the direction of volunteer Minister of Music Jeff Ferguson who has surrendered to vocational ministry.

Three other members also have sur-

rendered to the call to ministry and are serving churches. Two other men are praying about God's call to vocational ministry.

At the close of the building dedication service, the pastor called on the people to respond with a new commitment to God's future work among them. It was a powerful moment to see members on their knees at the altar.

The church's beginnings are quite interesting. It began as a mission following a survey conducted by Greenup Baptist Association that discovered there were 7,000 people living in the Garner area without a Southern Baptist church.

A layman heard Charles "Chuck" Stewart, then pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church, mention this need and a short time later learned that the Garner Elementary School building soon would be up for auction. Others withdrew their bids so the Rose Hill church could buy the property with substan-

tial funding from the layman.

Stewart then asked for volunteers to start the mission. Twenty of his fine people went to launch the new work. Arrington conducted the first service and was called as pastor a few weeks later.

To bring the story full circle, when the church got ready to build the new sanctuary, the layman who had been so instrumental in securing the school building had retired from the construction business and volunteered to serve as construction foreman. The sanctuary and seven classrooms were completed for \$540,000, at a savings of about \$250,000. Praise God for laypeople who respond to the challenge!

Thank God as well for pastors like Charles Stewart who understand that the best way to evangelize is through new work. Rose Hill Church has started a number of missions that have become churches. Rose Hill Church, now led by Pastor Mike Routt, currently sponsors Rush Chapel.

Pray that God will guide Kentucky Baptist churches and associations in the strategic launching of new work.

*Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*

## STEWARDSHIP

### Remember these basic truths about sound investing

By Don Spencer

What is an investment? In simple terms, it is when you put your money to work for you.

Savings accounts and certificates of deposit generally are safer; however their return usually is

less. An investment in stocks or mutual funds will have increased risk and volatility but generally will provide increased earnings potential. You need both—savings and investments.

Some of your retirement money may be invested in stocks or mutual funds. You might have other non-retirement money invested in mutual funds or individual stocks. If so, you likely have been concerned about losses you may have experienced in recent months.

Here are six basic truths about investing you should remember:

■ **Most investments fluctuate in value.** Fear and greed often determine short-term values of stocks. Don't get overly concerned about short-term "ups and downs." Invest for the long term and don't make short-term decisions on a long-term investment.

■ **Use time, not timing.** Even experts rarely time the market correctly. Just as they agree on the direction of the market, it often moves the opposite way. Those trying to time the market often do the wrong thing at the wrong time. However, those who keep time on their side by investing for the long term generally profit. Be patient.

■ **Bank CDs and savings accounts will not make you rich.** It happens too often. Individuals put their money in CDs or savings accounts to reduce risk. After taxes and inflation, they end up with a dollar amount that is lower in terms of real buying power. For the long term, it generally is better to invest for growth.

■ **Your portfolio is more important than any single investment.** No one can expect every investment to grow dramatically. But you expect reasonable growth from a total mix of investments.

■ **It pays to diversify.** "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" is wise advice. Use a mix of investments with differing levels of risk. This reduces the volatility of your total investment portfolio.

■ **Christian should invest their money.** Many of Jesus' parables deal with stewardship. Appropriate investing is part of a Christian's total stewardship (see Matthew 25:14-30).

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



## Teach by example to help children understand ways to control anger

**Q: How can I help my child learn to control anger?**

■ **Set a good example.** Learn to control your own anger when another driver cuts you off, when things don't go your way or when something happens in your home that makes you angry. Children are watching and learning.

■ **Explain the consequences of mishandled anger.** Children need to understand that when people with real reasons to be angry respond in ways that are unacceptable, they often bring trouble on themselves as well as others. See your daily newspaper for examples.

■ **Encourage and allow verbal expression of anger.** Parents must learn to hear angry words, and to hear them without becoming angry themselves. Children who are not allowed to verbally express anger are left with options that are even more problematic. Angry actions usually carry far greater consequences and cause far more trouble than angry words. Allow children to express their feelings, but require them to do so without being disrespectful or profane.

■ **Focus on feelings.** Most children do not like the tension, tears, frustration and other feelings that come with being angry. Contrast these feelings with the happier feelings that come when we learn to control anger. Read Ephesians 4:26 together. Ask, "Why do you think the Bible says it is a good idea not to stay angry?"

■ **Ask God for help.** Learning to control anger falls under the larger task of learning self-control at all levels. Only the Spirit of God can give true self-control (Galatians 5:23), so teach children to depend on God to keep them from doing or saying things they will regret.—David Garrard

**Q: My mother just returned from the hospital and she is not very steady on her feet. How can I help protect her from falling?**

Falls are not just the result of getting older. Many falls can be prevented. By reducing risks, individuals can lower their chances of falling.

One key is to begin a regular exercise program or physical therapy. Exercises that improve balance and coordination (like Tai Chi) are the most helpful. Ask a doctor or health care worker about the best type of exercise program for your mother.

It also is important to make one's home safer. About half of all falls happen at home. To make a home safer:

■ Remove things someone can trip over (such as papers, books, clothes and shoes) from stairs and other traffic areas.

■ Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.

■ Keep frequently used items in cabinets that can be reached easily without using a step stool.

■ Have grab bars installed next to the toilet and in the tub or shower.

■ Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.

■ Improve the lighting. As people get older, they need brighter lights to see well. Lamp shades or frosted bulbs can reduce glare.

■ Have handrails and lights installed on all staircases.

■ Wear shoes that give good support and have thin, non-slip soles.

It also is a good idea to have your mother's physician review her medicines. As people get older, the way some medicines work internally can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make a person drowsy or light-headed, which can lead to a fall.—Jon Rainbow

*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.*



## What's worth more than an NCAA title?

For college basketball fans, the 2001 version of March Madness begins this week with the "March to Minneapolis."

As usual, basketball is a hot topic in the Bluegrass State. The University of Kentucky Wildcats, who breezed through the SEC tournament and earned a No. 2 seed in the NCAA tourney, are being joined at the Big Dance by the Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers. Add to that Denny Crum's retirement at the University of Louisville and the prospects of former UK coach Rick Pitino succeeding him, hoops fans in Kentucky have lots to talk about.

As exciting as the annual NCAA tournament is, however, there's an even more significant basketball program taking place in Kentucky these days. More than 35 churches throughout the state, including 29 Kentucky Baptist congregations, are hosting Upward Basketball leagues. While the march to the national championship is riveting sports fare, it pales in comparison to the life-changing impact Upward Basketball provides young players and their families.

Upward Basketball was created 15 years ago in a South Carolina church. It has grown to include 120,000 boys and girls—many of them with no previous church connection—playing basketball at nearly 600 churches across the nation. The youngsters are taught fundamental basketball skills with an emphasis on learning rather than on competition. During games for younger players, for instance, officials don't even keep score.

Upward Basketball obviously isn't the typical community basketball league. On the spiritual front, coaches lead devotionals for their players at every practice and church members share testimonies with parents, grandparents and friends during halftime of each game.

The results? Based on national statistics, an average of more than 20 children and family members per league make professions of faith in Jesus Christ as a direct result of their involvement in Upward Basketball.

The league's primary focus is outreach, explains Shane McKenzie, vice president of operations for Upward Unlimited. "It's not about championships. It's not about trophies," he said. "What we're about is changed lives and creating opportunities to share the Lord."

During a recent Sunday morning service at Crestwood Baptist Church where my family and I are members, an Upward Basketball leader shared about a player who had become a Christian the day before. In our Sunday school class last week, a man whose children are playing basketball said their new church connection has helped prompt him to renew his own church involvement and spiritual commitment.

I had the opportunity to lead a couple of the halftime devotionals this season at Crestwood. It was a privilege to share a brief gospel presentation with family members, knowing that Upward Basketball had opened doors for ministry that might never have opened otherwise.

David Garrard, director of Upward Basketball at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, describes the program as "relational evangelism done over a 10-week period." He added that the evangelistic focus "is very intentional, but not pushy."

Whether or not Upward Basketball is a viable program for your congregation, it's important for every church to seek creative ways to minister in their communities and beyond. Whether it's sports evangelism, disaster relief, drama, literacy missions or church planting, the list of innovative ministry projects is unlimited.

The key is to produce a team effort that scores spiritual victories for the kingdom of God. As we "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," we have the opportunity to make an eternal impact on the lives of those we touch with the gospel.

And that's worth more than a national championship—even in Kentucky.

**STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR**



Trennis Henderson

## Kentucky Baptists' semi-centennial caps Caperton's editorship

By Jack Birdwhistell

As we reflected last week, Kentucky Baptists held a joyous celebration of the national centennial during the Western Recorder editorship of A.C. Caperton, who assumed leadership of the paper in 1871. An even more joyous celebration took place in 1887, as Caperton's tenure at the Recorder was coming to an end: the semi-centennial celebration of the General Association of Kentucky Baptists (now the Kentucky Baptist Convention).

The General Association held two meetings that year. The first was in June at First Baptist Church of Danville, where the organization's routine business was carried out. The grand 50th Anniversary Celebration was held in October at the historic Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville (the descendant of the First Baptist Church of Louisville, where the General Association had been formed in 1837). Seven men who had been present in 1837 were made "vice presidents" of the session, in-

cluding the influential J.M. Pendleton and J.L. Burrows.

A welcome to Louisville was brought by John A. Broadus, the distinguished president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The bulk of the program was given to historical addresses, including J.M.

Pendleton, "The Condition of the Baptists in 1837";

J.H. Spencer, "Fifty Years of Progress in Kentucky"; A.D. Sears of Clarksville, Tenn., "The Benevolence of Kentucky Baptists"; William Moody Pratt of Lexington, "The Earliest Baptist Churches in Kentucky"; and J.L. Burrows of Norfolk, Va., "Recollections of the First General Association in Kentucky."

One historic presentation made during the session honored J.A. Kirtley of North District Association for having been pastor of Bullittsburg Baptist Church for 31 years and of Big Bone Baptist Church for 35 years. T.T. Eaton, pastor of Walnut Street, presided, noting that "it was remarkable for a man to serve one church for 31 years and another for

35 years, and yet the churches did not kill the pastor, nor the pastor the churches." Handsome pulpit Bibles were presented to those two churches with words of affirmation by W.H. Whitsitt, a professor at Southern Seminary. (Remember those names, Eaton and Whitsitt; they will figure prominently in the next period of the Western Recorder's history.)

Almost simultaneously with this historic meeting, A.C. Caperton passed the ownership of the Western Recorder to Harvey, McFarran & Co., a group headed by W.P. Harvey as business manager. None other than T.T. Eaton was chosen as editor, while also remaining as pastor of Walnut Street. Eaton's editorship would not be nearly as tranquil as that of Caperton.

Having given, in his own words, "all the energies of our mind, soul and body" to the work of the Western Recorder, Caperton retired to a farm near Leitchfield, where he died in January 1901. He deserves the gratitude of Kentucky Baptists for having presided over the Western Recorder during a major period of growth and consolidation.

Ira "Jack" Birdwhistell is associate professor of religion at Georgetown College



# MISSIONS

## Seafarers' ministry fits water-loving volunteers

Continued from page 1

experience was just the latest ministry effort of a family that has reached out to those they know best, those who prefer life on the water—and others who often don't seem to fit in to conventional society.

Rob Stip, in particular, is no stranger to living on the fringes. He grew up in the hills of Tennessee, and as a car thief at 17 was offered a choice of either military service in Vietnam or jail. He chose the military, and his familiarity with guns, hunting and tracking handed down from his Cherokee Indian grandfather helped make him "very proficient in the art of

the music in the services and Stip served as harbor chaplain. It was there that they became NAMB Mission Service Corps volunteers. Later, when they were asked about taking on the leadership of the Seafarer's Center in Samoa, they were reluctant at first but finally consented.

"It just scared us to death; we didn't think we were ready for this,"

Stip said, adding that

God had worked it out. "I speak a little bit of seven different languages. My military background came into play in dealing with governments, and the lan-

guages and traveling experience helped in communicating with different cultures."

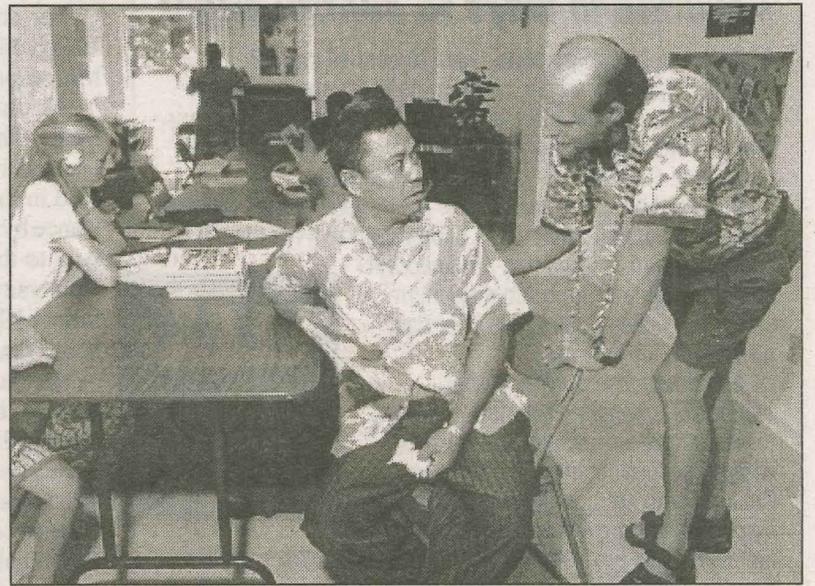
The routine at the center includes regular hours for recreation time for seafarers in port. The Stips also operate an international call center that allows seafarers to pay by the minute for calls to home at cheaper rates than are available elsewhere.

"It's a clean, safe environment for international seafarers to come to for recreation and help, whether it be medical, legal or spiritual," Mrs. Stip said. "And we must be here on call for their needs 24 hours a day regardless of what their needs may be."

Ministry often starts with just the simple things: assisting with international phone calls, listening to seafarers talk about the families. "First we have to develop trust," Stip said. "Once they develop this trust in you, then you can start ministering."

Last year more than a hundred seafarers made professions of faith through the ministry—many from countries where such decisions mean certain persecution even among their own shipmates. A Chinese mission that meets at the center includes many dedicated seafarers who have seen their faith forged by fire.

ANNIE ARMSTRONG  
EASTER OFFERING  
FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS



**SEAFARER'S CENTER** Missionaries Rob and Sandra Stip have directed this ministry in Pago Pago from 1998 until early this year. Faneo, a Samoan (left), talks with Stip after a worship service. Faneo became a Christian through the center's ministry.

"There have been reports that some of them have been beaten unmercifully on these ships because of it. But they will not turn around," Stip said.

While the Stips initially saw their role as primarily one of hospitality and evangelistic ministry, opportunities for being advocates for the seafarers and others quickly began to appear.

On one occasion, several young Vietnamese women appeared at the center with the story of how their families had paid thousands of dollars for the right to work in promised high-paying jobs in American Samoa. When they arrived, they found only meager wages and intolerable working conditions. Because they were indentured workers, their company felt justified in the abuse, the Stips said.

Police were called, investigations were conducted and eventually some relief was secured. During the turmoil, Mrs. Stip helped found a Christian grassroots advocacy group called Concerned Citizens for Asian Workers that became an ongoing watchdog for injustices at the plant.

"The Samoan people have gotten together and said, 'How is it that we can live in a country where God is supposed to be in command and yet we are allowing young girls like this to be mistreated?'" she said.

The youngest Stip, 12-year-old Scott, was the impetus for another ministry targeted more at the local Samoans than either seafarers or immigrant workers. One of the first things the family noticed about the Samoan culture was that children are treated differently, often neglected and abused by mainland standards.

"My son came here and said, 'Dad, how can only adults be missionaries? Why can't kids?'" Stip said. "And I looked around at the crime, the drugs, the abuse, ... and we started working with kids on our day off."

The ministry settled into a one-hour Bible study each Saturday, followed by a couple of hours of free time for the children in the Seafarer's Center.

The Stips became role models for

the children, not only sharing Christ with them and seeing many come to Christ, but also serving as surrogate teachers and parents.

They also encouraged them to stay in school and set their sights high. One young man who had quit school began coming to the Seafarer's Center, returned to school with tutoring help from the Stips and excelled. "He graduated with the highest SAT scores in the history of Samoa," Stip said.

A Sunday worship service also was started at the Seafarer's Center similar to the one the Stips conducted in North Carolina. It was intended primarily for pleasure boaters who visit the port, but it also has included some of the children and other local residents.

"We sure didn't come here with the expectation of becoming the pastor of a church or the head of a youth ministry," said Stip. "It wasn't my choice. It wasn't my wife's choice. The Lord led us here."

In the latter part of 2000, however, a series of events resulted in the Stips deciding that God was calling them back to the United States. The deciding factor was a doctor's medical advice that Stip's recurring health problems meant that he would be risking his life if he didn't choose to live near more advanced medical facilities than are available on American Samoa.

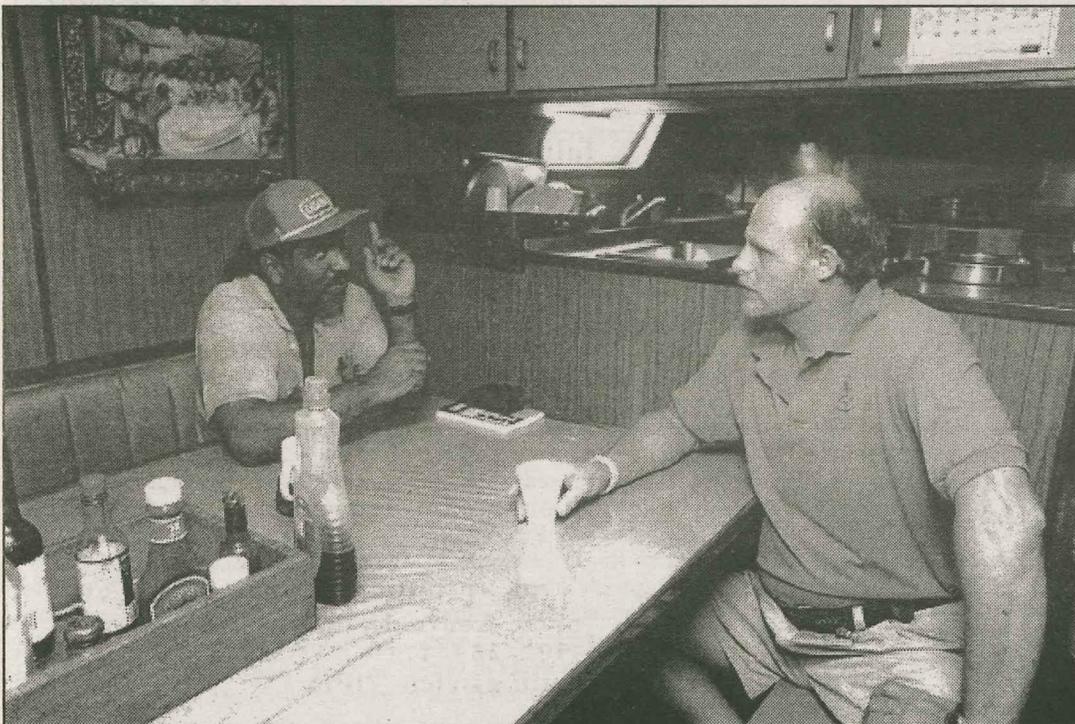
The Stips returned to Tampa in January, and tentative long-term plans are for them eventually to return to ministry to pleasure boaters in Chesapeake Bay, Va. They will remain Mission Service Corps volunteers.

"We hate to leave," Mrs. Stip said, "but I can see the good in it," noting that they plan to continue to build a network of ministries similar to theirs. Also, several key local leaders are emerging who will help continue some of the roles the Stips have filled and a search already is on for their replacement.

"God is still working here," Mrs. Stip said.

For more information on the Stips and other missionaries featured in the Week of Prayer for North American Missions, visit the [www.anniearmstrong.com](http://www.anniearmstrong.com) Web site.

**LISTENING EAR**  
A crewman (left) on a tuna fishing vessel talks with Rob Stip. (Photo by James Dotson)



## Kentucky Baptist workers sought for El Salvador relief

Inviting Kentucky Baptist volunteers to help "rebuild homes and rebuild lives," Larry Koch is seeking to recruit workers to participate in earthquake relief efforts in El Salvador.

A devastating Jan. 13 earthquake killed more than 700 people and damaged or destroyed an estimated 190,000 homes. Southern Baptist disaster relief teams from other states already are involved in initial relief efforts in the Central American nation.

Koch, Kentucky Baptist Convention disaster relief associate, is seeking to organize three trips to El Salvador in May. He hopes to enlist 10 to 12 volunteers for each of the eight-day trips scheduled to begin May 12, 19 and 26.

"These people are hurting. We want to get them back into homes and share Jesus with them," Koch said. "It's a ministry in the name of Jesus as well as a construction project."

Koch said the primary goal of the projects will be to construct homes for quake victims. He said carpentry experience is not necessary to be a team member.

Koch said another need is for a Spanish-speaking interpreter to accompany each team. He said team members also will work alongside Southern Baptist missionaries on the field.

Each trip will cost approximately \$850-900 per person. For more information, contact the KBC Brotherhood department at (502) 244-6489 or toll-free at (888) 254-5720.

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 CHRISTIAN STORES

## NAMB appoints missionaries with ties to Kentucky

ALPHARETTA, Ga.—The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board has appointed three missionary couples with ties to Kentucky.

**Micheal and Jennifer Osborne** serve as church planting missionaries in Cincinnati, where he is a church planter intern and pastor of Riverside Church.



Osborne, a Kentucky native, is a graduate of Centre College in Danville and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He previously was planter apprentice/senior pastor for eight years of The Church at Andover in Lexington and earlier was pastor or interim pastor of churches in Kentucky and Alabama while attending seminary. Before seminary he served three years as a vocational evangelist.

**Mrs. Osborne**, also a Kentucky native, holds bachelor's and master's degrees in special education and elementary education, respectively from Eastern Kentucky University. She has been a schoolteacher, interpreter for the hearing impaired, children's ministry coordinator, owner of a catering company and a teacher at a school for the deaf.

**Larry and Angela Sowders** serve as church planting missionaries in Cincinnati, where he is a church planter and pastor of Life-spring Baptist Church.



Sowders, a native of Pineville, is a graduate of Union College in Barbourville, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He most recently served as a Nehemiah Project intern for Bethany Baptist Church in Louisville, and previously served two summers on the staff of Concord Baptist Church in Flat Lick.

Mrs. Sowders is a graduate of College of Mount St. Joseph in Cincinnati and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Terry and Nina Woodbury** serve as church planting missionaries in Indianapolis, where he coordinates multihousing church planting ministries for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.



Woodbury, an Indiana native, is a graduate of Clear Creek Bible College in Pineville. Mrs. Woodbury, also an Indiana native, is a graduate of Indiana State University.



# SENIORS

## 2001 SENIOR ADULT CELEBRATIONS

**May 10**  
 Cold Spring  
 Cold Spring Baptist Church

**May 14**  
 Madisonville  
 First Baptist Church

**May 15**  
 Bowling Green  
 Eastwood Baptist Church

**May 17**  
 Mt. Washington  
 First Baptist Church

**May 24**  
 Pikeville  
 Grace Baptist Church

\$7.00 for reservations made 2 weeks prior to event

\$10.00 at door and for reservations made less than 2 weeks prior

Cost includes lunch

Featuring

### Trennis G. Henderson

is the editor of the Kentucky Baptist *Western Recorder*, the oldest weekly state Baptist paper in the SBC.



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# KENTUCKY

## Campaign to reverse alcohol law falls short

FRANKFORT—Efforts to overturn a law expanding local option alcohol elections fell short during the 2001 Kentucky General Assembly.

Senate Bill 247, approved last year by legislators, permits local option elections on alcohol sales in restaurants that meet specific guidelines.

The Temperance League of Kentucky, the Kentucky Baptist Public Affairs Committee and other groups opposed to expanded alcohol sales mounted an effort to reverse that law. Sen. Vernie McGaha (R-Dist. 15) introduced Senate Bill 88 this session, seeking to delete the new local option election language.

Despite phone calls and letters to senators by anti-alcohol forces, the Senate defeated SB 88 on a 22-13 vote. That means SB 247 remains in effect, allowing dry cities and counties to hold elections concerning the sale of alcohol in qualified restaurants.

Claude Witt, executive director of the

Temperance League, expressed concern that "the response we tried to generate through letter writing and telephone calls just didn't generate enough effort."

Despite the setback for anti-alcohol groups, Witt said a pending lawsuit on the issue has been accepted by the state Supreme Court. He said the court is expected to hear arguments in May or June on the suit filed by the Temperance League. The suit seeks to have SB 247 ruled unconstitutional.

Although the Senate action "puts all of the burden on our lawsuit," Witt added, "We're really excited about it because I think we probably will see an overturn of SB 247."

In other action, both the House and Senate passed resolutions last week honoring Witt for his work with the Temperance League. The House resolution affirmed Witt's leadership in "emphasizing Christian action on moral issues, particularly those pertaining to the harmful effects of using alcohol as a beverage."

## Kentucky WMU annual meeting to highlight state missions involvement

LOUISVILLE—Kentucky Baptists' 2001 Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting will focus on "the involvement of Kentucky Baptists to show Jesus to a lost world," according to Joy Bolton, state WMU executive director.

The annual meeting, March 30-31 at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, will highlight the theme, "Show Them Jesus: A Bluegrass Missions Celebration."

Bolton said Kentucky Baptists who attend will "discover how Kentucky WMU is challenging churches to be radically involved in the mission of God, equipping believers to respond to God's call, and partnering with others to fulfill God's mission."

National WMU president Janet Hoffman will be among the event's featured speakers. Other speakers will include Earl and Robin Pinkston, missionaries in residence at

Georgetown College; Lincoln Bingham, Kentucky Baptist Convention cooperative ministries consultant; and Mike Routt, pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church in Ashland.

Larry Martin, leader of the KBC missions growth team, will lead a panel of Kentucky missionaries and volunteers in sharing about mission ministries in Kentucky.

The program also will include a disaster relief lunch and an associational missions fair on Friday. There also will be a Saturday morning missions event for children in grades 1-6 and their leaders.

Preregistration is required for the disaster relief lunch, preschool child care, interpretation for the deaf and Friday evening dinners for the Baptist Nursing Fellowship and Acteens/Youth on Mission. For registration information, contact Kentucky WMU at (502) 244-6485 or toll-free at (888) 254-5725.

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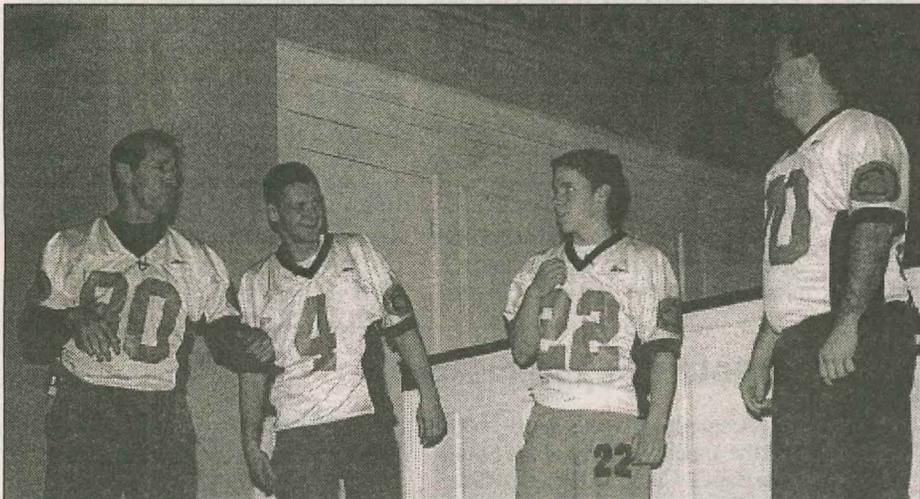
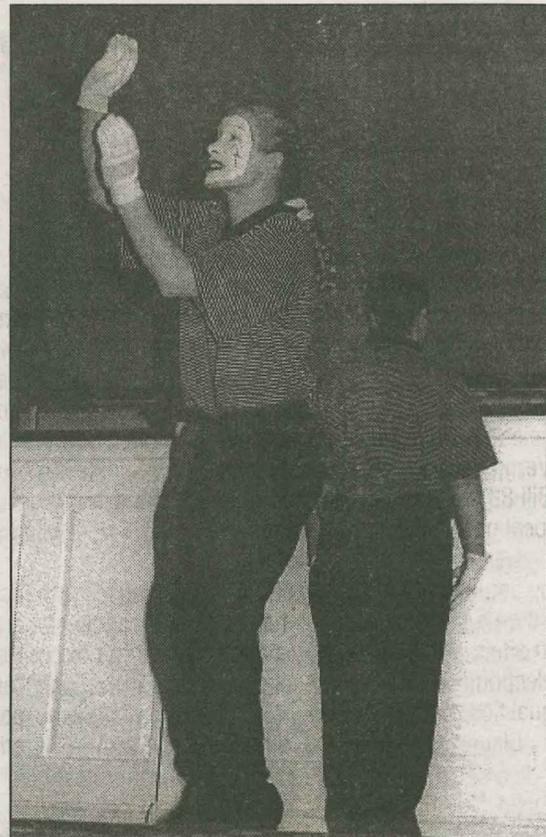
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# KENTUCKY



**1,200 Kentuckians get creative at KBC arts ministry conference**



*If an annual conference is any measure, church interest continues to grow for using creative arts to relate the gospel.*

*Approximately 1,200 people from 120 churches attended the Kentucky Baptist Convention's creative ministry festival, March 2-3 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.*

*Tom Smoot, director of the KBC's creative ministries division, said this year's event drew the largest attendance in the 12 years he has been organizing it.*

*The conference, co-sponsored by the KBC creative ministries and Brotherhood departments and Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, offered 80 workshops ranging from drama, clowning and magic to evangelism and how to organize a mission trip. (Photos by Tom Smoot)*



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## NAE reconsidering its inclusive stance toward more liberal NCC

DALLAS (RNS)—The National Association of Evangelicals has decided to reconsider its recent membership rule permitting church bodies of the more theologically liberal National Council of Churches to hold dual membership with the evangelical organization.

Bishop Kevin Mannoia, NAE president, said the board of the organization asked its bylaws committee March 5 to restudy the issue after a representative of the Presbyterian Church in America made a motion that the new rule be rescinded.

"The position of the NAE remains unchanged as it relates to membership," Mannoia told reporters at a news conference after the closed board meeting. "But we will probably be going back and making sure that that's the position that we mean to take."

Roy Taylor, clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, told Religion News Service his denomination views the NAE's move as "inconsistent with the unique nature" of the evangelical organization.

"The uniqueness of the NAE in its founding was to be an evangelical association in contrast to the more theologically diverse and pluralistic NCC mainline denominations," he said.

The bylaws change, approved at the 2000 meeting of the evangelical organization, allows for denominations that are members of other ecclesiastical bodies, including the National Council of Churches, to be able to hold membership with the NAE. Any denomination that joins would have to adhere to the NAE's statement of faith.

"Evangelicals know who they are," Mannoia said, defending the change in the bylaws. "We don't have to define ourselves based on who we're not. ... We are committed to the statement of faith that has been forged over 60 years. We are committed to the identity of the evangelical witness."

## Court considers school religious club case

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Does an after-school Christian club for elementary-age students have the same rights as any other club, or can a public school district prohibit it because it amounts to worship on school grounds?

Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court weighed the arguments on both sides of the question Feb. 28 in one of the few scheduled cases before them this term dealing with church-state separation. The case pits the Good News Club of Milford, N.Y., against the Milford Central School in upstate New York.

"This is a free-speech case," argued Thomas Marcelle, a lawyer on behalf of the club. "We're not asking for unique access, just equal access."

But attorney Frank Miller argued the school has a right to limit what groups it lets use its facility for after-school activities. Giving "special sensitivity" to the age of the students, he said it was appropriate for the school to make judgments to exclude such groups as religious ones, as well as those with commercial or partisan political purposes.

The club sued the school in 1997, but a district court found in the school's favor.

In February 2000, the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the lower court ruling, saying the club's "Christian viewpoint" elevated the organization from merely teaching moral values to giving religious instruction.

## Graduation prayer suit dismissed

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The U.S. Supreme Court on March 5 dismissed the case of a California high school valedictorian who was not allowed to encourage his classmates to "accept God's love" in his graduation speech.

Two federal courts previously had agreed with school officials that Chris Niemeier, a graduating senior at Oroville High School, could not deliver the speech. Niemeier had wanted to tell classmates that "God seeks a personal relationship with each one of us" and that "Jesus wants to be our

best friend," according to Associated Press.

Niemeier was not allowed to give the speech, and he appealed his case to the high court, saying school officials had restricted his right to free speech. The high court's action lets stand the ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In its decision, the lower court called Niemeier's speech a "religious sermon" and it "would amount to government sponsorship of, and coercion to participate in, particular religious practices."

Several of the Supreme Court justices questioned whether the age of the children—5 to 12—in the club and in the elementary school necessitated greater care on the part of the school.

Justice David Souter, who said the club "sounds like Sunday school," wondered if the children were so young they would not be able to distinguish that the after-school club was not endorsed by the school.

"The only children who attend the Good News Club attend with permission from their parents," responded Marcelle.

He argued that the school permits scouting activities, which include moral instruction, but not the club,

whose moral instruction is from a religious viewpoint.

The school's lawyer said the district barred the club not because of its viewpoint but because its activities amounted to worship, which would violate state and school laws.

The club of 28 people currently meets at Milford Center Community Bible Church, which is led by Pastor Stephen Fournier. His wife, Darleen, a club instructor, and his daughter, Andrea, are plaintiffs in the case along with the club.

The case has attracted widespread attention from groups with differing views on church-state separation, many of whom filed friend-of-the-court briefs supporting the club or the school.

## A note of appreciation

A couple of weeks ago I attended the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Camp Managers at Georgia Baptist Conference Center in Toccoa, Ga. This gathering brings together camp and conference center administrators from across the nation, from Washington to Florida and many states in between. This year's event was a special occasion and celebration of sorts as we paid tribute to the retirees of camp and conference ministry who have paved the way for those of us in this ministry today.

On a personal note, two of our Kentucky directors and their wives were present, Deward and June Hurst and Harold and Laverne Barnes. I feel that it was fitting that this be the "Year of the Retiree." All too often we can forget (myself included) those who have come before us and paved the way for our present ministries. Certainly Deward and Harold are two great examples of this.

Both of these men (and their wives) served selflessly for many years before they "retired" a couple of years ago. Had it not been for their dedication and their willingness to serve and minister under challenging circumstances at times, we would not be where we are today. During their years of service, seldom

was there adequate funding to do what needed to be done at either Jonathan Creek or Cedarmore (and we still deal with that issue today). Yet they pressed on and kept both places operating. Now, with greater support, we can make improvements to both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore as we continue to prepare for ministry in this new millennium.

I know both these men well. I love them both and consider them both friends, but I don't get the opportunity often enough to express my sincere thanks for their years of labor, long before I came on the scene as the leader of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. So I say to Harold, Laverne, Deward and June, I appreciate you all and will always be indebted to the work you did as you steered us through the late '80s and mid-to-late '90s.

Although both of these men have retired from their conference center responsibilities, God continues to use each of them as they serve in many different capacities at both ends of the state. I pray that each of them will continue to enjoy fruitful retirements for many years to come.

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

### KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



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## NATIONAL NOTES

### ■ Black Coalition staffers charge bias.

Ten African-American staffers at the Washington offices of the Christian Coalition have filed a \$621 million racial discrimination lawsuit claiming the organization subjected them to segregated entrances and eating arrangements. The employees, women who work in the data-entry and remittance departments, seek \$600 million in punitive damages and \$21 million in compensatory damages, the Washington Times reported. A coalition official denied the allegations.

### ■ Michigan town schools offer halal food.

Public school officials in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn are planning to introduce halal food to several schools. The plan would allow Islamic food distributors to provide meat that is halal—slaughtered and prepared under Islamic dietary rules—to the Dearborn school district's 28 public schools, where Muslims comprise about 35 percent of the district's 17,000 students. Halal laws prohibit pork products and prohibit the consumption of animals not slaughtered according to Islamic guidelines.

### ■ Muslims mad about Falwell comments.

A leading Muslim advocacy group is demanding an apology from Jerry Falwell for remarks he made on a religion Web site in which he said "the Muslim faith teaches hate" and Muslims should be ineligible to receive government funds for social programs. Falwell, in an interview on

Beliefnet.com, said Islam is intolerant of other religions and Muslims "should be out the door before they knock" and ask for federal funds.

### ■ Bright gets lifetime ministry award.

Campus Crusade for Christ President Bill Bright was honored March 7 with a first-ever Lifetime Ministry Award from the National Association of Evangelicals. The organization traditionally recognizes an evangelical leader for significant achievement with a "Layperson of the Year Award," but this year chose to recognize Bright for service over the course of his lifetime.

### ■ Lieberman backs program.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., the Orthodox Jew who called for a larger place for faith in public life, recently issued an enthusiastic endorsement of President Bush's plans to provide religious groups with federal funds to deliver social services. Lieberman, the first Jew to run on a major party presidential ticket, said supporters of faith-based programs must make the case to skeptics that there is a proper—and indeed needed—place for faith in public life.

### ■ Presbyterians won't sanction speaker.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) continues to wrestle with controversial remarks made last summer by a Chicago minister who questioned whether salvation is to be

found in Jesus Christ alone. The church's General Assembly Council issued a statement recently that affirmed the church's historic teaching but said it has no authority to make doctrinal statements. John Ficca, a Presbyterian minister and director of the Parliament of the World's Religions, spoke at a Presbyterian Peacemaking Conference last summer and suggested God might have other avenues of salvation for non-Christians.

### ■ Voucher backers turn to high court.

Objecting to an appellate court's decision to not consider their case, advocates of a school voucher program in Cleveland said they will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to consider whether the program is constitutional. The Institute for Justice's request stems from a decision Feb. 28 by the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to decline full-court consideration of the organization's challenge to the court's ruling last December. That 2-1 decision found Cleveland's voucher program improperly used public tax funds to educate children at religious schools.

### ■ Presbyterians offer pastors debt help.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) is hoping it can help both young seminary graduates and small congregations with a program to help pay seminary debt for pastors who agree to serve small churches. The church's Board of Pensions is offering to pay as much as \$10,000 of seminary debt

to recent graduates of Presbyterian-affiliated seminaries who agree to serve at least five years at a congregation of 150 or fewer members with an annual budget of \$100,000 or less. A study by Methodist-affiliated Candler School of Theology at Emory University found seminary graduates with student loans had an average debt of \$25,660 in 1997.

### ■ Dallas seminary names president.

Dallas Theological Seminary has named its provost, Mark Bailey, to become president in May. Chuck Swindoll, the seminary's current president, will become chancellor, the school announced. Prior to his work at the seminary, Bailey was a professor of Bible and academic dean at Southwestern College and pastor of biblical studies at Palmscroft Baptist Church in Phoenix.

### ■ ERLC urges halt in embryo research.

The Southern Baptist Convention's ethics agency has called on President Bush to clarify his position on stem-cell research by repealing the National Institutes of Health rules that permit the destruction of human embryos in such experimentation. The ERLC's March 2 letter came after a newspaper reported Tommy Thompson, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said researchers could continue to apply for NIH funds for such research while the Bush administration reviews the guidelines adopted under President Clinton.

## Summer conference

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College's annual Pastor/Staff and Family Conference will be July 16-18.

We invite all pastors, staff members and their families to join us for a time of relaxation, fellowship and spiritual renewal.

Rick Bowden, pastor of Ormsby Heights Baptist Church in Louisville, will serve as conference pastor. Bowden is a 1989 Cumberland graduate and will bless all in attendance with his comforting and challenging messages.

Vernon Cole, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church growth team, will conduct several seminars on church growth. As we strive to reach people for Christ, his words and guidance will provide encouragement and new ideas.

Emory Riley, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, will provide music. Riley will lead us in praising God with our voices and spirits and experiencing anew God's presence.

In addition, I will lead our Bible study focusing on the book of Genesis, the 2002 winter Bible study book. We will examine

these timeless accounts again and seek to find God's message for us.

During free time, indoor swimming, basketball and tennis will be available on the Cumberland College campus. For those who play golf, an outing is offered for an additional fee of \$25. Beautiful Cumberland Falls is only a half-hour away, and the new Hal

Rogers Water Park will be open in Williamsburg.

Conference housing will be in one of Cumberland College's air-conditioned residence halls. Conference participants need to bring their own linens and toiletries.

The cost is only \$30 for individual participants and only \$50 for families. The fee includes all meals, lodging and conference sessions.

We invite you to join us for a great time in the Lord. For more information or to register, contact Wes Roy at 7934 College Station Drive, Williamsburg, KY 40769, or at (606) 539-4154. Hope to see you here.

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

### CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



## Talking story

When I was growing up in Eastern Kentucky, sometimes we guys would sit around in the afternoon talking about things. We referred to it as "shooting the breeze" or "chewing the fat."

Later, when I was a missionary in Hawaii, I learned another phrase, "talking story." I think the Hawaiian phrase is more accurate, because that is what we were doing. Each of us was telling his story or another guy's story (especially if it was something funny about the other guy).

I recently had the privilege of participating in evangelism training sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism growth team. Dan Garland invited me to learn about The Net, which was developed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. According to NAMB, The Net "is designed to assist churches in training believers to effectively do evangelism in our changing culture." Basically we were encouraged to "tell our story" to unbelievers, that is, how the gospel story has impacted our lives.

As I sat there and listened to the trainers, I wondered how KBHC could use this approach. I soon came to see how the

"story" idea fits into our basic evangelism training. In that training, called Effective Evangelism: Seed Sowing 101, I show new staff how to give their "two-minute testimony," which tells about their life before Jesus, how they met Jesus and the impact that Jesus makes in their life today. The Net concept will help us take

their story a step further as staff see how they can incorporate key Bible verses into their own story of salvation.

Of course, my plan will differ from the overall plan of The Net due to our unique circumstances. Still, by developing an additional training, Effective Evangelism: Seed Sowing 202, we will ensure that our kids have a greater chance to develop their own salvation stories at a deeper level of understanding.

By the way, The Net training is just another example of how God uses the KBC to support the ministry of KBHC. Praise God that we continue to be co-workers together with Him!

Mike Dixon is vice president for religious life at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Contact KBHC at (800) 456-1386 or [www.kbhc.org](http://www.kbhc.org).

### HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Mike Dixon

## WORLD VIEW

### ■ Ecuador businessmen learn real success.

More than 600 businessmen in Guayaquil, Ecuador, made first-time decisions for Christ after a recent conference for professionals. Harold Finch, a former NASA scientist, community college president and training business owner, conducts conferences for professional people in Latin America. Following each seminar, Finch shares with interested participants that God is the essential element needed for success. "The excitement here continues long after the conferences," said Manuel Sosa, a Southern Baptist missionary in Ecuador. "The follow-up is going very well."

■ **100 English teachers sought for China.** One hundred Christian English teachers are needed to fill openings in the China Encounter 2001 summer teaching program, July 4 to Aug. 4. Teams of career teachers or volunteers with extensive teaching experience will be placed in 10 cities throughout China to work in cooperation with Chinese educators at institutions where friendly relationships have been established. The \$2,500 program cost includes international airfare, orientation, debriefing and all costs in China. For more information, call (800) 235-9384.

■ **Vietnam will recognize Protestant church.** The Vietnamese government has decided to recognize the southern branch of the country's largest Protestant church. The decision by the Government Board for Religious Affairs came last month as the southern members of the Protestant Evangelical Church of Vietnam ended a two-day

conference in Ho Chi Minh City. Some church members welcomed the government's decision as a sign that government repression of the church members will end, but others worry officials only want to keep an eye on them.

■ **Bible stories translated into Cockney.** A Church of England educator is translating Bible stories into Cockney, including the use of rhyming slang. Mike Coles, the head of religious education at a Church of England secondary school in East London, said he expects the translation to be published by the Bible Reading Fellowship in May. The book consists of the Gospel of Mark along with other Bible stories, including Noah's ark and David and Goliath. In a foreword, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, writes that, "The Bible in Cockney takes the Bible out of the formal church setting and puts it back into the marketplace, into the streets, where it originally took place."

■ **'Destroy churches, not homes.'** The spiritual leader of Roman Catholics in and around Jerusalem issued an emotional Lenten appeal to Jews, Muslims and Catholics, pleading for a cease-fire and offering churches to be destroyed instead of homes. "Destroy our churches but spare the homes of the faithful," Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah wrote. Sabbah also pleaded with his Catholic flock to remain in the Holy Land and not abandon it because of ongoing violence between Jews and Muslims. "Be patient," he told them. "It is here that God wants you, as believers in Him and witnesses of Jesus Christ in His land."

## Groups claim Baptist minister being abused in Turkmenistan

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Several human rights groups and a U.S. congressman are accusing the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan of torturing a Baptist minister.

In a statement delivered to Amnesty International, Turkmenistan officials denied that Shageldy Atakov, 38, had been tortured.

Despite the denial, human rights groups say Atakov has been forced to take psychotropic drugs used to treat mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, according to his family.

Atakov has endured severe beatings and torture at the labor camp in northeastern Turkmenistan since he was sentenced in March 1999 to two years in prison on fraud charges, according to Keston News Service, the England-based group that monitors religious freedom issues around the world. Two more years were added to the sentence later that year.

"Information that torture is being used against Atakov does not accord with reality," the statement given to Amnesty International said.

Atakov's family told the U.S.-based Russian Evangelistic Ministries that the minister has no history of psychological problems, but has been given aminazin and other powerful drugs that could harm him.

"After these injections all his internal organs ache," read the family's letter. "Our husband and brother is a psychologically normal person. Why is this being done to him?"

Atakov's case has drawn the support of Amnesty International and U.S. Rep. Christopher Smith, chairman of the International Operations and Human Rights Subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee. Baptists and other religious groups frequently face harassment and persecution in Turkmenistan, where the government favors Sunni Muslims and Russian Orthodox Christians, human rights groups have reported.

Atakov's congregation is affiliated with the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians/Baptists.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

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Organizations should make every effort to use their resources. It might appear that some groups receive more than their share of support. When we hear of an organization receiving a large gift, we often drool a little with envy. But we rejoice when an organization that uses good stewardship receives a blessing.

We sometimes are criticized because we are not more forward in asking for financial support for particular needs. Some people have said that because we have not asked for help, we have not received it. The temptation may be strong to share our needs more forcefully.

However, I believe strongly that if we use good stewardship and try to utilize every gift, the Lord will bless our efforts and meet our needs. Many of our friends help us financially and in other ways. We often receive used vehicles and farm machinery. We also are blessed with used clothing, furniture, appliances and much more.

Would we rather have new items than used ones? Who wouldn't? On the other hand, I believe we are blessed in part because we accept all gifts, new or used, with the attitude that God has placed them in our care. Will we snobbishly put them aside, disappointed because we could not receive newer items? I think not! I also believe that God often tests us to see if we have grateful hearts. I think our blessings are based on our attitudes about the resources God provides. I pray that I always will have a grateful heart for the gifts with which we are blessed, new and used.

I recently received a letter that was a special blessing. This friend noticed that we don't do some of the things that many charities and organizations

do. She wrote, in part:

"I am so thankful ... that you keep your focus on the young people under your care and provide the best Christian-oriented environment possible for them to receive their education. And that you (are) good stewards of the funds that the Lord has provided. I appreciate that you send information to me in black and white and use both sides of the paper—as opposed to the glossy, many-color brochures that I receive from others. While I eagerly look forward to receiving news ... from you, and knowing of new projects and activities, I also appreciate that I am not constantly deluged with information on some new and wonderful program ... while being asked for more money. You are certainly the exception! And I thank God for your focus on the children—and not just bigger and better buildings and programs."

This dear friend was right on target. We do not ask for any special financial support, except at Christmas and the Father's Day offering each year. We do not use expensive, glossy materials because we believe the Lord will bless our efforts to use a simpler and less costly approach.

This past week, our board of trustees met on our campus. They were told to look in their information folders for a tan sheet of paper. There was no tan sheet because I forgot and used white paper instead. I caught the mistake in time to correct it, but I didn't. I told the trustees I did not because I did not want to waste the 28 sheets of white paper I mistakenly had used. They were understanding, and I hope you are also.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972. [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org); e-mail: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Training church planters

How to reach a pagan generation is a primary concern for Ron Perry, associate professor of pastoral ministries.

"Culture Shift," the title of a textbook used in one of Perry's classes reflects the need to address the gospel to a changing world. "I want to help our students be faithful to Scripture and also do effective ministry to this generation," Perry said.

Now in his third year at Clear Creek, Perry came from a five-year pastorate at First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Fla. He also was adjunct professor at Florida Baptist College. "Many students and professors were members of our church. We employed some of the students on the church staff. I enjoyed talking with students about theology and pastoral ministry," Perry stated.

"God moved me to become involved as a teacher to help young men develop pastoral skills and lead growing churches. I knew very little about Clear Creek, but it is one of the most practical schools you can find, and I appreciate our conservative theological stand."

Has he missed the pastor's role? "I miss the good relationships I had with deacons and the opportunity to

help people in grief. Although I do interim preaching, I can't get as intense with the people," Perry noted.

He teaches evangelism, introduction to ministry, ethics, apologetics and church planting. As director of Clear Creek's Center for Church Planting he trains students for church starts in coordination

with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. The program involves required coursework, assessments and practical field experience. Through his leadership we have hosted church planters from West Virginia, Ohio and Tennessee.

Don't we have plenty of churches now? Perry responded, "Some people think we have a church on every corner

and there is little need for church planting. Many older churches will die, and we also need leaders willing to do church differently. We need pastors with a new view to take the same gospel to a younger generation. 2 Corinthians 4 motivates my calling to preach Christ as Lord and never lose heart."

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

# BOOKS

**Shattering the Myth of Race: Genetic Realities and Biblical Truths.** Dave Unander. Judson Press, 2000. 127 pages. \$14. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

When this book came in for review, I thought, "How is this relevant? No one really believes that one race is genetically inferior to another." Then two days later, a church member brought me a flier he had found in his paper box announcing the formation of a local chapter of the Royal Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. The bulletin encouraged people who were concerned about maintaining the superiority of the white race to respond to a local post office box. So much for dismissing the relevance of Dave Unander's book.

While some of Unander's book is what I expected, most of it was frightening. True, Unander discusses the genetic and biological underpinnings of the notion that humanity can be divided into six or seven races. He contends that no sound examination of human genetics supports the notion of distinct races of people. Yet he also demonstrates how science has been manipulated to justify slavery, discrimination and various types of oppression. As a scientific layman, I sometimes got lost in the detail, but I found his scientific argument compelling.

The frightening part of Unander's book was his survey of how religious, political, economic and scientific leaders used this warped reading of human genetics to create a social order based on the superiority of white people. Hate groups like the KKK were not the only advocates of that stance. Mainstream liberal and conservative voices combined to build a social order infused with racism.

After reading this book, I have come to see that racism needs redefin-

ing, and Unander points the way. It is more than "discrimination backed by power." It is a belief in the myth of race that determines the future of those deemed inferior. This book is a thought-provoking read for anyone interested in challenging racism. *Jim Holladay*

**Jesus: Everything You Need to Know to Figure Him Out.** Mark Littleton. Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 214 pages. \$16.95 ♦♦♦♦♦

The author states, "This book is not meant to be a scholarly history of Jesus, an exhaustive dictionary about everything connected to Jesus, or even a theological statement." And it is not. But it is a fun book which, in the midst of presenting its information, helps the reader draw a more complete picture of Jesus. It is particularly helpful in expanding one's awareness of the cultural impact of the life and the story of Jesus.

Arranged like a dictionary, with topical words, phrases and questions in case you want to look up a particular topic, the book can be read from beginning to end as any narrative work. Littleton includes the biblical witness to Jesus and facts from Christian history and contemporary popular culture.

Religious and non-religious people will find this book fascinating. Littleton does an effective job of presenting the biblical witness to Jesus in the course of serving up the cultural picture. In that way, the book might serve as a beginning point of discussion with a non-Christian. Littleton's biblical portrait of Jesus is from a conservative viewpoint, but it is neither preachy nor overpowering. As Littleton says, it is up to the reader whether or not to believe any or all of what he has written.



Without a doubt believers and non-believers will walk away from this book with a greater appreciation of the legacy of Jesus. For some that will confirm belief; for others it might be the starting point. *Wayne Hager*

**Go Down, Moses! Daily Devotions Inspired by Old Negro Spirituals.** Edited by Leonidas Johnson. Judson Press, 2000. 393 pages. \$13. ♦♦♦♦♦

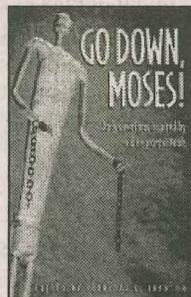
Here is an unusual devotional that is as much a lesson in our history as it is a collection of thoughts for the spirit.

Each day's reading features a traditional spiritual, a prayer focus and a Scripture reading designed to take readers through the Bible in one year.

The slave songs and spirituals are jarring reminders of a time when slavery was the norm and entire generations of African-Americans were forced to express their hope, pain and faith through song. These songs reflect a faith born in oppression, and as a result the depth of belief and pure trust in God expressed in many of these songs can take one's breath at times.

There is a darker element here, too, and it is surprising that editor Leonidas Johnson makes no comment on the double-entendres of many of these spirituals. "Die in de Fiel," for example, is taken as simply a song about spiritual warfare, but its chilling refrain of "and I will die in de fiel'/will die in de fiel'/will die in de fiel'/I'm on my journey home" shows a desperation that is starkly obvious.

"Go Down, Moses!" is a good devotional for all Christians to have, not only as a memorial to a faith that clung to God by the very tips of its fingers, but also as a demanding sermon recalling our duty to the poor and oppressed among us. *Victoria Moon*



**An Hour Before Daylight: Memories of a Rural Boyhood.** Jimmy Carter. Simon & Schuster, 2001. 286 pages. \$26. ♦♦♦♦♦

Rural Georgia in the first half of the 20th century is the setting. The 39th President of the United States is the primary character. His family and friends make up a fascinating, if at times eccentric, cast of supporting characters.

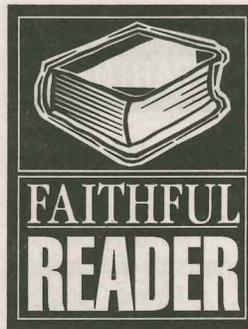
The plot? Let's just say it is the not-so-unusual story of a fairly normal child in rural Georgia and the influences that shaped his presidential and post-presidential life.

If you are looking for fast-paced action or juicy psychological tidbits you can pass this book up. Jimmy Carter writes in a fairly laid-back style that reminds us of the times we would sit around the picnic table in the back yard telling family stories. Except with "An Hour Before Daylight," I am a guest at the cookout who, while not getting all the inside jokes, nevertheless is fascinated and drawn into the family lore.

Carter's reminiscing about walking barefoot in the mud, picking blackberries, playing with the African-American kid up the street and being afraid of catching rabies from stray dogs brought me back to my own small town childhood.

And yet, this slow-paced, sometimes meandering story has a larger purpose. At the end of the book, Carter writes, "I am confident that the earth itself will remain basically the same, continuing to shape the lives of its owners, for good or ill, as it has for millennia. After all, the land belonged to the Indians before it was ours."

Where does the name of the book come from? You will have to read it to find out. *Jim Holladay*



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](mailto:jwhager@surry.net), [docholladay@juno.com](mailto:docholladay@juno.com) or [victoria.moon@kybaptist.org](mailto:victoria.moon@kybaptist.org)

## Preacher man's son: 'Sometimes God has to break your heart to open it'

By Karen Long  
Religion News Service

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (RNS)—Jay Bakker's body is a bulletin board of his battles, a testament to his loyalties.

His chest and arms scream with Christian crosses and a crown-of-thorns Jesus. A "Mom" tattoo darkens one arm. A "Dad" tattoo blazes on the other.

Dad and Mom are Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, the notorious televangelists brought low by scandal in 1989.

Jay Bakker was 11 then, a pudgy boy with warts on his hands. His family lost its empire, Praise the Lord ministries, and the legendary air-conditioned doghouse. Rev. Jim responded by curling into a fetal position, Tammy Faye began hallucinating from her pill addiction and Jay's 16-year-old sister, Tammy Sue, ran away permanently. The family, once an icon of Christian wholesomeness, became a national laughingstock.

Little Jamie Charles, as 13 million viewers of PTL ministries knew Jay, went through a long wilderness of alcoholism and drug abuse. He dropped out of 10th grade, barely able to read. He put all his

constructive energy into getting his defrocked father out of federal prison, only to discover he couldn't live by his dad's Assembly of God rules once they reunited. Tammy Faye had long since ditched them and married the minister her husband had entrusted to look after his family during the prison stretch.

Out of all this, Jay Bakker has emerged as a punk-loving preacher in Atlanta, with a new wife and a new book. "Son of a Preacher Man" is an unvarnished look at the Bakker catastrophe and how Jay groped for the saving grace of Christ.

"Human logic can't grasp the love of Christ," Jay said from his mother's home in Charlotte, N.C., where he had just made the front page of the local newspaper. "We've got to start restoring people and loving people instead of standing in judgment, saying 'That's what they deserve.'"

Bakker got a chance to practice some of his brand of radical forgiveness last week when reporters who had laid siege to his boyhood home showed up for the book signing.

"The Charlotte Observer had a party when we lost Heritage USA," Bakker said of the Christian theme park that once attracted 6 million visitors a year. "I don't know. That doesn't seem—what's the word?—objective to me. But this time the newspaper has been very nice to me, the reviews were really great. I kind of felt a reconciliation with the city, like they were saying, 'Maybe, we didn't tell the full story here.'"

Bakker provides an eyeful, 25, with dark hair and multiple piercings. When his picture ran in Charisma magazine, a publication of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, readers complained about his appearance for weeks. "It seems that Satan has infiltrated the church," one wrote.

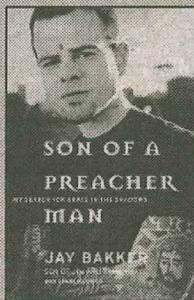
For his part, Bakker said he got the courage to pursue his rebel look in the same way his mother wore heavy makeup, incurring public mockery. He maintains that his dad was innocent, the victim of sloppy bookkeeping, shoddy defense lawyers and a vindictive judge. "It sounds ridiculous for me to say those 24 counts

were crap, I can hear it in your voice," he said on the phone. "But I'm not going to go through my life thinking my father is a thief and defrauder. That's fine because I'll always know what it's like to be persecuted. ... I'm a stronger person and a better person for what I've been through. I've learned rage and anger is just amplified fear," he added.

Bakker works on his temper in Alcoholics Anonymous and hosts punks and druggies and tattoo artists at Tuesday night Bible studies. Amanda Bakker, his wife, helps keep it real, squelching her husband's impulse to condemn with a patient, "Is that soooo, Mr. Grace?"

These days, Bakker dreams of finding a building for his Revolution ministry, one that could stay open 24 hours a day, with space for concerts. He is cheered that his book is already in its second printing.

"If anyone had an excuse to lose faith in God, it would've been me," he writes. "I'd been beaten up so often by traditional religion that running away from God, as so many others my age did, would have been the most natural reaction. ... Sometimes God has to break your heart to open it. That's what He did with me."



# 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:

■ John and Nancy Laramore, missionaries to the Kaguru people of Tanzania, praise God for answered prayers for a room to rent in Gairo in which Bible study and worship can be held.

■ Guidance for Baptist workers among Turkish Cypriots (from Cyprus) who live in Western Europe. Pray that a Scripture-distribution pilot project during March and April will help them identify Cypriots interested in the gospel.

■ Kentucky volunteers preparing to go to Tanzania during the April rainy season. Missionaries ask prayer that severe weather problems and roads that "turn to mud" will not hinder the volunteers' ministry.

■ New believers in Poland who are struggling with issues related to baptism.

■ David Bunch, interim executive director of the Baptist Convention of New England.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **ASHLAND**—The Georgetown College Chorale will sing at First Church March 20 at 7 p.m.

■ **CALHOUN**—Buck Creek Church will host a southern gospel concert March 25 at 6 p.m. **Jeffrey French** is pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Immanuel Church will host a sacred music series featuring tenor **Jason Woolsey** and pianist **Lynne Woolsey** March 18, guitarist **Renato Butturi** March 25, organist **Douglas Reed** April 1 and the University of Evansville concert choir April 8. All events are at 6:30 p.m. For information, call (270) 830-6976. **Joseph Tricquet** is pastor.

Zion Church honored **Wayne Eastham** and his wife, **Yvette**, on his fifth anniversary as worship/senior adult leader. **Eddie Davis** is pastor.

■ **LaCENTER**—**Kent Jackson**, interim minister of music at LaCenter First Church, resigned to become interim music director of the Georgia Baptist Convention. **Mark Bond** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Trinity Church called **Jack Copley** as associate pas-

tor for praise and family life. Copley previously was minister of worship at Northminster Church in Richmond, Va. **Jay Robison** is pastor at Trinity.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Beechmont Church youth and college/career choir will present the musical, "True Love Waits" March 18 at 6:30 p.m.

Bethany Church commissioned **Chad and Leslie White** for mission work in Southeast Asia. **Todd Robertson** is pastor.

Crescent Hill Church will host a spring concert series featuring **David and Colleen Burroughs** and **Mary Gutwein** March 25 and pianists **Louie Bailey** and **Don Scott Carpenter** April 1. For information, call (502) 896-4425. **Ron Sisk** is pastor.

■ **MADISONVILLE**—First Church called **Joe Leonard**, previously of Central Church, Corbin, as pastor.

■ **MAY'S LICK**—May's Lick Church will host the Bracken Association/Regional Hispanic Ministry Workshop March 17 at 10 a.m. Reservations requested. Call (606) 763-6260.

■ **MIDDLETOWN**—First Church

honored **Kitty Reynolds** on her 20th anniversary as church secretary. **James Cobban** is pastor.

■ **MURRAY**—Westside Church will host the Blood River Association evangelism conference March 22 at 7 p.m. **Jimmy Draper**, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, will speak.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Crabtree Avenue Church called **Michael Wimberly** as pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Paducah First Church will host a "Share Jesus Without Fear" workshop March 26 at 7 p.m. The leader will be author and evangelist **Bill Fay**. **Kevin McCallon** is pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—Southside Church will celebrate its 45th anniversary April 21 at 6 p.m. and homecoming April 22 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Revival services will be April 23-25. **Herb Reavis** will be the evangelist and **Phil Newsom** the minister of music. For information, call (270) 365-5510. **Ronald Sivells** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—First Church will host revival services March 18-21. **Troy Dobbs** of Crestwood Church, Crestwood, will be the evangelist and **Emory Riley** of First Church, Hopkinsville, will be the music leader. **Paul Chitwood** is pastor.

## Park service, monks resolve land dispute

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The National Park Service and a group of Franciscan friars in New York have reached an agreement in a dispute about property along the Appalachian Trail.

On March 8, the friars agreed to add seven acres to a 58-acre easement it sold the park service under a 1984 agreement. That agreement allowed the Appalachian Trail to cut across a portion of the friary's 400-acre property near Garrison, N.Y. In return, the park service agreed to return two acres of property received in the 1984 deal.

Last summer, the Interior Department had threatened to invoke eminent domain privileges to seize 18 more acres of the property without paying market value. The department claimed the friary violated the easement by installing a pump house and sewer lines.

Last week's agreement allows the friary to retain ownership of the easement. They cannot develop the land but can add sewer lines to the trail as long as the surface is restored. The friary will also receive \$25,680 from the park service, Associated Press reported.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** 12X60 trailer (four rooms). Formerly a real estate office; has been used for Sunday school. Accepting bids until April 1. Send to: New Salem Baptist Church, 632 New Salem Church Road, Vine Grove, KY 40175. Gary L. Kasey, pastor. (270) 877-2729.

**FOR SALE:** Two timeshare weeks 30 and 48, Lake Lure, N.C. 2-BR sleeps six; two baths. (606) 474-7235.

**FOR SALE:** Like-new church furniture: 36 oak pews, 21-and-1/2 feet long; pew benches; lectern; pulpit. Contact Tommy Hunt, (270) 782-2299.

**SEEKING:** Resumes are being accepted for the position of executive director/minister of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. All resumes must be received by April 30, 2001. Send to or direct inquiries to: Ken Stidham, Good Shepherd Baptist Church, 15 Scott Lane, Scott Depot, WV 25560. Phone: (304) 757-7621.

**SEEKING:** South County Baptist Church in suburban St. Louis, Mo., is seeking a full-time minister of worship. Prefer seminary degree and experience to bring enthusiastic musical and drama leadership to worship planning, directing choir rehearsals and leading dynamic worship services. Our church is 13 years old with a multi-staff ministry averaging 300 in Bible study, 400 in worship. If interested, please contact: Minister of Worship Search Committee, South County Baptist Church, 5115 Butler Spur Road, St. Louis, MO 63128. Fax: (314) 843-6122. E-mail: SOCOBAPTIST@aol.com. Web site: www.southcountyvision.com. All replies will be held in strictest confidence. Phone inquiries or leads may be directed to Rev. John L. Hessel, senior pastor, at (314) 843-5558, ext. 122.

**SEEKING:** Full-time education and youth staff person. Send resume to: Personnel Committee, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 1815 Clifty Road, Somerset, KY 42503.

**SEEKING:** Third Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of adults. Third Baptist is a downtown church with a broad base of ministries. Candidates should possess a combination of formal education and experience that prepares them to oversee educational and outreach ministries to adults in the church and community. Skills in pastoral ministries are important. Send resume to: Third Baptist Church Search Committee, PO Box 808, Owensboro, KY 42302-0808.

**SEEKING:** Piano and organ positions available. Contact: Tim Galyon, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville. For more information, call: (502) 896-8882.

**SEEKING:** Motivated individual to lead a blended style of worship at a dynamic, growing church (part-time). Send resume to: Music minister search, Victory Baptist, 2261 Armstrong Mill Road, Lexington, KY 40515.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of youth and children for First Baptist Church, Paris, Ky. We are located in the heart of the Bluegrass. Our resident membership is 521. Send resume to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 327, Paris, KY 40362-0327. Resumes will be accepted until April 1, 2001.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of youth for church committed to historic Baptist freedoms. Master's degree desired, preferably from a seminary. Highly competitive salary package. Send resume to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Broadway Baptist Church, 4000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister for growing church. Contact Jean Bezold, FBC, 600 N Fort Thomas Ave., Fort Thomas, KY 41075.

**SEEKING:** Married couple as house parents for mentally handicapped adults. Bright Life Farms, Princeton, Ky. (270) 365-7801.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to youth and young adults. Highland Baptist Church in Louisville seeks an individual with the relational and spiritual leadership skills to lead a dynamic program that helps our young people love and learn more about God. An MDiv and/or ordination are preferred. Highland Baptist Church is a moderate, "thinking, feeling, healing community of faith." We are affiliated with the CBF and have a vibrant congregation of 400 active members. We were founded in 1893 in Louisville's beautiful and historic Cherokee Triangle district. Visit our Web site at www.hbclouky.org. Send resume and references to: Minister to Youth Search Committee, Highland Baptist Church, 1101 Cherokee Road, Louisville, KY 40204.

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister. Send resume to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 113, Winchester, KY 40392-0113, or call (859) 744-2884.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. Direct resume to: Calvary Hill Baptist Church, 100 John St., PO Box 482, Stanford, KY 40484.

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

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

**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 resume to church in care of Personnel Committee.

**SEEKING:** We are earnestly seeking God's will in finding a new pastor. Lewisport Baptist Church, located in Hancock County on the Ohio River, is approximately 15 miles east of Owensboro, Ky. Lewisport is a small town about two hours from Louisville. The church has a total membership of 1,025 with a resident membership of 550. Average Sunday school attendance has been 241 for the past six months. Total receipts for the year 2000 were \$350,000. Cooperative Program giving for the year was \$46,800, and Blackford Baptist Association giving was \$13,900. If you have resumes for consideration, please send them to the following address and they will receive prayerful consideration: Pastor Search Committee, Lewisport Baptist Church, PO Box 384, Lewisport, KY 42351. www.lewisportbaptist.com.

**SEEKING:** Minister of youth for young, exciting, growing church. Send resume to: Emmanuel Baptist Church, PO Box 910, Stanton, KY 40380, Attn: Search Committee.

**SEEKING:** Due to the retirement of our former pastor, North Park Baptist Church of Evansville, Ind., 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 resume to: Search Committee Chairman Steve Humphrey, 4105 Quail Hollow St., Evansville, IN 47715-1536.

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

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

## Students begin emotional healing in wake of shooting

By Todd Starnes  
Baptist Press

SANTEE, Calif. (BP)—Hundreds of Santana High School students, many accompanied by their parents, returned to class two days after a 15-year-old boy opened fire, killing two students and injuring 13 others, including two adults.

Walking past a makeshift memorial adorned with flowers, posters and purple and gold balloons, students, some carrying Bibles, marched back to class through a sea of network media and curious onlookers.

Pastors, counselors and professional psychologists were present in every classroom to provide help as students and faculty began the process of emotional and spiritual healing from last week's attack.

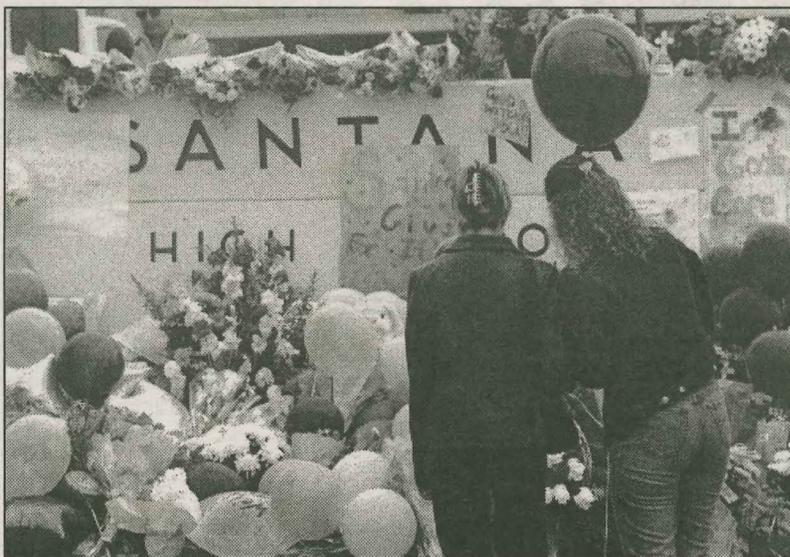
Phil Herrington, pastor of Pathways Community Church, has been busy providing assistance to students and their families since Andrew Williams shot and killed Randy Gordon and Bryan Zuckor March 5.

Herrington, who also serves as chaplain of the local sheriff's department, has been working around the clock, ministering to families throughout the community. He led a memorial service for Gordon, 17, on March 10.

"This has been a difficult day for us," Herrington said during a break in counseling sessions at Santana High School. "But this is the moment and time that we as Southern Baptists can be of tremendous help to our community. We are here to pray, console and listen to what our students have to say."

"This is our time, our chance to be a witness to Jesus Christ," Herrington added. "We are a close community here, and this has impacted all of us."

Pathways, a Southern Baptist congregation of about 600 members, meets in an elementary school not far from



**MEMORIAL** A school sign at Santana High School became a makeshift memorial for two students killed last week. (BP photo)

Santana High School. The church's offices, located in a storefront, are about a mile from the high school campus.

Santee is a quiet, bedroom community of about 36,000 residents, where people say they never would have imagined a school shooting.

For some in Santee's Christian community, the shooting was a sign of ongoing spiritual warfare within the public school system.

"To a degree, this is all about spiritual warfare," said Mark Jackson, a parent of a teenager who attends Santana. "We have taken every aspect of God out of our public education system and I believe that we are seeing the results."

"I'm not saying that God has to be taught in every class, but it's wrong to totally ignore the impact of Christianity on our culture," he noted.

"I do know this," Jackson added. "God will take this and turn it into

something good."

Becky Lang, the mother of a junior at Santana, agreed. Her daughter, Rusti, is a member of Fresh Jive, a Christian club that meets at the school.

"There are some people who want to take their kids out of public school because of this, but I think this is exactly where the Christian students need to be," Lang said. "I think our Christian students should stand tall and strong in the faith and be a beacon of light at Santana High School."

Rusti, 16, sang in the honors choir with James Jackson, a member of Pathways who was injured in the shooting. She said dealing with the incident has been difficult—even as a believer.

"We have our good moments and our bad moments," she said, just before attending classes on the morning of March 7. "There will be healing here, but it's going to take some time. I know that God is going to give us the strength to pull through this."

### Tragedy sparks ministry focus

SANTEE, Calif. (BP)—In the wake of last week's school shooting, some students at Santana High School see the tragedy as an opportunity for sharing with friends the hope found in Jesus Christ, according to a student evangelism specialist for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Scott Grissom, who facilitates campus evangelism efforts on secondary school campuses, said students in Santee, Calif., organized a worship service last Saturday evening to focus on seeking God's direction.

Grissom was in Santee last week meeting with Christian students and church youth leaders. "I think what will come out of this," he said, "is that among some students there is a remnant that is eager to strike while the iron is hot and say to their friends, 'We're not immortal. Life is short and our lives could end without warning, and when it does are we going to be ready to face our Creator?'"

Grissom said leaders of the same campus Christian club that organized the worship service also have expressed an interest in incorporating intentional evangelism more directly in their ministry at the school. NAMB's campus evangelism strategy is based largely on equipping clubs with the FISH! strategy—a four-week cycle of meetings designed to help members lead friends to faith in Christ.

"There are going to be all kinds of things going on at churches," he said. "But if we can help these students create an environment to share the gospel during the club meeting, I think that is going to reap the greatest harvest. Kids are more likely to attend something like that than they are a meeting at church."

Tiffani Thurman, 16, used an impromptu morning news conference to share her faith in Jesus Christ with the secular media. News cameras continued to roll as she quoted Scripture affirming the lordship of Christ.

Several Baptist churches, including Pathways, held special youth services last week. Herrington said the events provided an opportunity for students to share from their hearts about how they are dealing with the shooting.

## Ministry offers news media coffee, pastries & counsel amid crisis

SANTEE, Calif. (BP)—When a 15-year-old gunman opened fire on his classmates March 5 at Santana High School, the national news media descended on this small, bedroom community near San Diego.

Hundreds of journalists, photographers and news networks staked out territory in front of the high school, thrusting microphones and cameras into the faces of victims, parents and school officials.

Two days later, the relationship between the national media and the Santee community had rapidly deteriorated. While journalists argued they were just doing their job, school officials and families countered that the media was being intrusive.

In between those two sides is another group—one that fills a unique ministry niche—Media Fellowship International.

This nondenominational, evangelical ministry exists for the sole purpose of reaching secular media and entertainment professionals worldwide for Christ. And that means following the news crews to the "big stories."

At Santee, representatives of Media Fellowship International set up a hospitality

booth that provided free food, hot coffee and a place for working members of the press to fellowship.

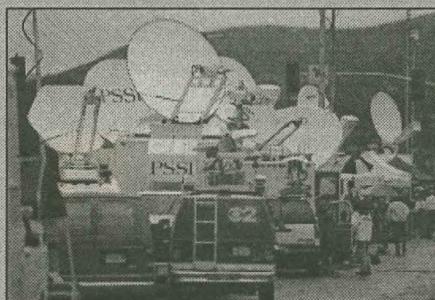
"A lot of people don't really think about the news media as needing help," said Bob Rieth, executive director of MFI. "But they do. We provide a non-threatening environment for the working press to be exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"After midnight, all the stores around here close down so we usually get a number of cameramen and photographers who stop by for some coffee and food," he said. "These folks are on duty around the clock and they can't leave the scene. So we welcome everyone in the name of the Lord."

MFI sets up shop around the nation wherever major breaking news occurs.

"We've been at all the major disasters that have happened," Rieth said. "We were there at Columbine and even Oklahoma City. And one thing we noticed was that everyone received counseling except the media."

"No matter how stoic reporters may look on camera, they go through the same emotions that the rest of us do," Rieth



**MEDIA MINISTRY** Journalists covering last week's school shooting in Santee, Calif., were greeted by Media Fellowship International, a ministry to news media. (BP photo)

said. "They are just human beings."

As a result, the working press at the Santana shootings can receive free counseling along with their coffee and pastries. "There was one reporter on the first day who used our facilities to quietly call home and talk to his teenage son who had just gotten off school," he said. "And there was another cameraman last night who walked into our hospitality suite looking dazed. He told us that this was his fourth school shooting. It was taking its toll on the man."

Reith and his team of volunteers work around the clock to offer prayers and a sense of community among the secular media. And it hasn't been easy.

"We've had to earn their trust," Reith said. "A guy from NBC came in a few days ago and mentioned that he appreciated our ministry in Oklahoma City. This is all about building relationships."

Reporters out in the field said the ministry is a big help. "I think it's great," said Colleen Rudy, a news reporter for KFMB in San Diego. "I am a born-again believer, and it is such a relief to know there is a group of people here who support the media and are basing their ministry on the solid rock of Christ."

School shootings are the most difficult assignments to cover for her station, Rudy said. "I try to look at this story as a matter of spiritual warfare. I see Satan at work here," she said. "So I just bathe every one of my live shots in prayer."

Michelle Locke, an Associated Press reporter from Berkeley, noted that "these guys are doing a work that we need among our journalism crowd. And it's nice to know they just care."

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