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FOR THE RECORD

Baptists
Southern Seminary leaders renew plans for \$6 million renovation project. *Page 2.*

Kentucky
Paducah recently hosted a five-state conference for bivocational ministers. *Page 3.*

Music
The Kentucky Baptist Convention's men's chorale is gearing up for its spring tour. *Page 3.*

Editorial
Easter 2001: Bunnies, home repair & an empty tomb. *Page 5.*



Easter
Some churches are distributing a booklet by Max Lucado to Easter visitors. *Page 7.*

Bible literacy
Are you brave enough to test your Bible IQ? *Page 8.*

Books
Reviews include "Your God Is Too Safe" and "The Prayer of Jabez." *Page 13.*

Reactions split on theology of 'Left Behind'

By Karen Long
Religion News Service

BRUNSWICK, Ohio (RNS)—David Buegler paused outside St. Mark Lutheran Church, shaking his head ruefully. He and three other ministers had just spent two intense hours warning believers about pitfalls in the "Left Behind" book series.

"My prediction?" Buegler said, glancing at 250 people filing out of the packed Brunswick, Ohio, church. "All these people will be in Christian bookstores Monday buying the books."

As Buegler made his ironic forecast, a young woman startled John Diener by announcing that he and the other Lutheran panelists were going to hell. When Diener tried to respond, the woman threw up her right hand. "Don't you follow me," she warned the pastor of St. Mark. He backed off.

Churches are split in their reactions to the Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins page-turners, which feature a rapture, in which millions of God-fearing people are zapped instantly into heaven; a Romanian Antichrist; and a computer chip implant as the mark of the Beast. The central characters, left behind after the rapture, get a second chance at salvation. The books move chronologically from the rapture through seven years of tribulation, interpreting accounts from the Book of Revelation.

"Certain Presbyterian churches have had seminars to debunk it," said Dan Balow, marketing director of Tyndale House Publishers in Wheaton, Ill. "Then some Baptists and conservative evangelicals go in the opposite direction. They embrace it and don't treat it like the fiction it is."

One death-row inmate in Texas begged for an advance copy so he could read it before his execution date. A Tennessee woman dying of Lou Gehrig's disease wanted an early manuscript of the eighth book, "The Mark," so she could be comforted in her last days by Christian martyrs refusing the mark of evil. In both cases, Balow said, his company complied.

"Left Behind" became a publishing juggernaut soon after its 1995 debut, selling more than 27 million copies in the series, with another 10 million items of related products such as wallpaper and postcards. Even the uneventful arrival of the millennium failed to dampen enthusiasm, with readers snapping up books at a current clip of 1.5 million per month. Tyndale has doubled both its staff and revenue, Balow said. Originally planned as seven books culminating in 2000, the series will roll out its ninth installment this summer.

Phyllis Tickle, religion editor of Publishers Weekly, has tracked the "Left Behind" phenomenon with interest.

□ See *Theology of 'Left ...'*, page 12

Spring training

Seder ritual teaches Jewish heritage of Christianity

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer

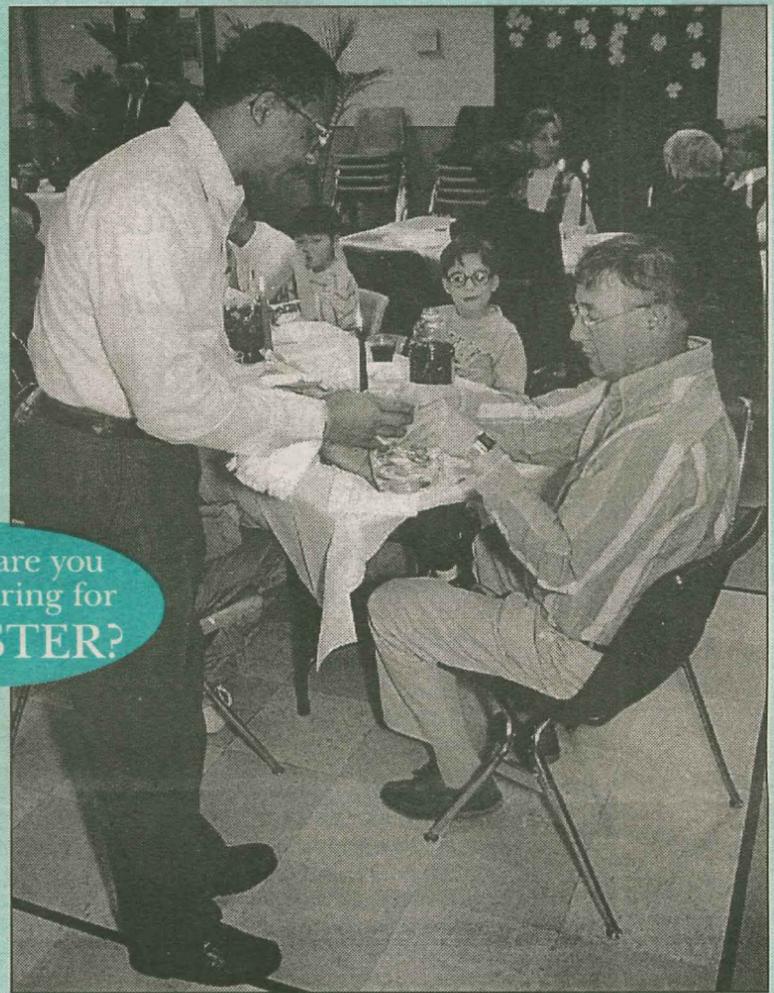
LOUISVILLE—As Easter approaches, some Kentucky Baptist churches are finding the symbolism of Jewish Passover meals, called "Seders," add a new depth of meaning to the story of Christ's resurrection.

"Participating in the Passover meal helps Baptist and all other Christian churches get in touch with their common heritage in Judaism, and appreciate the Jewishness of their New Testament faith," said Noel Rabinowitz, a messianic Jew with Chosen People.com and a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He also conducts model Seders and teaches churches about their Jewish heritage.

Rabinowitz said the most common elements of a Seder—which is the Hebrew term for "order"—are a lamb shank, parsley, onion, horseradish, unleavened bread, and a sweet mixture of apples, cinnamon and wine or grape juice. Other items commonly found at a Seder meal are salt water, a roasted egg and five cups of wine, or juice.

"Each element has meaning," he said, listing each element, its Hebrew term and its symbolism:

■ The parsley, or "karpas," represents life. It is dipped in the salt wa-



SEDER Members of a Louisville church participate in the ritual hand washing before a model seder meal. Many Kentucky Baptist churches combine communion with seders to help members understand the Passover meal's importance to the Easter story. (Photo courtesy of Community, the Louisville Jewish Federation's newsletter)

ter—a symbol of both the Red Sea and tears—as a reminder of the bitter tears the Israelites wept during slavery, their safe passage through the Red Sea and the bitterness of a life without redemption.

■ The "beitzah," or roasted egg, is a later addition to the Seder plate

and symbolizes the roasted temple sacrifice that can no longer be offered because of the destruction of the temple.

■ The horseradish, or "maror," represents the bitterness of life

■ The onion, or "chazoret," symbolizes the temple sacrifice that can no longer be offered because of the destruction of the temple.

□ See *Churches use Seders ...*, page 6

Singles ministries redefining roles for new century

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer



VOCÉ Author RoseAnne Coleman speaks during a recent Vocé conference for single women. The conference, which came to Lexington last month, is designed to encourage single women to dig deeper into their faith. (LifeWay Christian Resources photo by Sharon Harper)

LEXINGTON—Trying to move past the stereotypes of singles ministries as "meat markets" or social mixers, Christian singles ministry leaders are taking on the difficult task of meeting all the needs of their diverse group.

"This is a hard ministry to do, but it's desperately needed," said Eric Fruge, singles minister at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington.

Fruge said the perception of singles as troubled or issue-ridden people came about as an unwanted side effect of a positive trend in singles ministry.

"Back in the mid-1980s, there was a huge revolution in singles ministry with programs like divorce recovery, single parent ministries and support groups," he said. "They were great for the time and there was so much need for them, but as a result over the past 15 years a perception of dysfunction-

ality has become associated with single adult ministries."

Today, he said, many younger, Gen-X singles don't want to be associated with an established singles ministry for fear of being branded as dysfunctional or meeting only dysfunctional singles in those groups.

"We've had to build a new ministry beneath our established singles ministry to meet the needs of younger singles," Fruge said.

"This is a time of transition for singles ministry," he added. "There are two mindsets at work: the older singles who like their own established group and the support of that group, and the younger singles who are looking to be more a part of the mainstream church."

One of the ways Fruge said Calvary Baptist is trying to reach younger singles is through conferences like Vocé, an all-women weekend confer-

□ See *Singles ministries ...*, page 9

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, April 11

Southern Seminary renews major construction plans

By Michael Foust
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Six months after putting a major construction project on hold, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary officials announced plans to move forward with it.

President Al Mohler reported last fall that a \$6 million project to renovate Rice and Judson halls had been put on indefinite hold after the Baptist General Convention of Texas' proposal to slash funding of the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries. That proposal eventually passed at the BGCT's annual meeting, leading to a potential 6 percent shortfall in the seminary's projected income.

But Mohler announced during the trustees April 2-4 meeting that the Rice

and Judson project—which will provide on-campus guest housing and conference rooms—will go forward, and that construction will begin as soon as this month.

"Though the impact of the BGCT is still uncertain, we have decided that we should go ahead with the project, due to its urgent need and financial soundness," Mohler said.

In another move, trustees approved a major construction project that will add a total of 104 apartment units to the seminary property through a privatization arrangement with developers. The project will come in the form of two apartment complexes—a \$4.9 million, 70-unit complex and a \$2.7 million, 34-unit complex.

The seminary will retain ownership of the property, but the developers will own leasing rights. The 70-unit com-

plex will be reserved primarily for students, while the smaller complex will be open to the community. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall, with the apartments set to open in the fall of 2002.

"Many of the buildings on our campus are now over 70 years old," Mohler told trustees. He said seminary administrators face the dual challenge of building new facilities while investing funds in older buildings.

Trustees approved a budget of \$19,655,922 for the 2001-2002 fiscal year—an 8.1 percent increase over the current budget. Mohler said the Cooperative Program will comprise 35 percent of the seminary's 2001-2002 academic budget.

Mohler said one of the future priorities is construction of a building to house the Billy Graham School of Mis-

sions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

Mohler also announced the addition of Kathryn Webb to the faculty as associate professor of Christian education. Webb, who had been serving as an instructor, has 16 years of administrative experience in both public and Christian schools. She earned her master of arts degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary and her doctorate of philosophy from Southern Seminary.

In other action trustees granted tenure to three professors: Ted Cabal, James Parker and Sandra Turner. Cabal was elected professor of Christian philosophy, Parker professor of worldview and culture, and Turner associate professor of church music and worship. Cabal previously was dean of Boyce College, but resigned from that position because of illness.

Paige Patterson honored by Southern for 'legacy of leadership'

LOUISVILLE (BP)—"There is no genuinely good preaching except exposition," former Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson declared April 2.

Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was speaking at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's second annual "Power in the Pulpit" conference. Patterson, a key architect in the SBC's conservative resurgence of the past two decades, was the keynote preacher during the one-day preaching seminar.

President Al Mohler presented Patterson Southern Seminary's E.Y. Mullins Distinguished Denominational Service Award, citing his "remarkable legacy of leadership" during the SBC controversy. The Mullins Award, named in honor of the seminary's fourth president, is the school's highest award.

Mohler said Patterson's leadership was critical in helping the SBC recov-



MULLINS AWARD Former Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson (left) receives the E.Y. Mullins Award from Southern Seminary President Al Mohler. (BP photo)

er the "truths that are so precious to us" and the "platform of doctrine and eternal truth upon which we stand."

Speaking during the preaching conference, Patterson said groups such as the Mormons have taken advantage of church members who had a poor knowledge of the Bible.

"It is imperative today that our people be taught the Word of the Lord," he said. Otherwise, "they will not know what to do about the Mormons, who claim that they have more converts from Baptists than from anybody else."

While disputing the Mormons' claim, Patterson said it could be partially true because "we have not taught our people the truths of the Word of God. If we had, they wouldn't be sitting ducks out there on the pond for every 'ism' that comes along."

Ministers who strictly preach topical sermons instead of exegetical sermons do a disservice to the Bible, Patterson said.

"It is hutzpah when we think that what we think about things is more important than what God says about them," he said. "Whether he means to do it or not, that's what a topical preacher says."

Patterson added that if "God didn't say anything about it, you don't need to say anything about it, either."

Jesus preached expositionally in the Book of Luke, Patterson said. As an example, he pointed to the story of Jesus' conversation with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:27 which states, "Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Later in the chapter, Jesus' words began to convict the hearts of the disciples, Patterson noted, citing Luke 24:32 where the disciples ask themselves, "Weren't our hearts ablaze within us while He was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?"

"That's what you want to have happen" in your churches, Patterson said.

"Do you want your people to be soul-winners?" he asked. "Do you want them to be consistent witnesses for Christ? Do you want them to tell the story of Christ? Then you become a consistent expository preacher ... and you come in with your heart ablaze."

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Messianic Fellowship to reorganize.** The Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship will reorganize this summer in the wake of a disputed vote earlier this year to sever ties with the Southern Baptist Convention. Fellowship President James Austin reported earlier this year that the organization had terminated its association with the SBC because of a perceived "lack of ethnic and cultural sensitivities" by the SBC and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. Other fellowship leaders claim Austin's mail survey of 28 member congregations is invalid.

■ **Baptist named Air Force deputy chief.** A third-generation Baptist minister has been named deputy chief of the United States Air Force Chaplain Service. Charlie Baldwin will begin his three-year assignment May 1 as deputy chief over 600 chaplains and 450 chaplains' assistants. Pending Senate approval, he will be promoted from colonel to brigadier general. He will be responsible for advising the Air Force chief of staff on matters of religion and the spiritual welfare of the troops. Baldwin, a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, also is a graduate of Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He was commissioned in 1979 as a chaplain.

■ **Former SBC churches gather for dialogue.** Representatives of several former Southern Baptist Convention churches held a first-ever national meeting March 26-27 in Raleigh, N.C. The meeting, attended by representatives of 22 churches from six states, was organized by Bill Bruster, networking coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The gathering focused on fellowship and discussion of common concerns, according to Dan Day, pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh. Discussion topics included retirement plan options, literature resources and joint mission projects.

■ **LifeWay names conference center director.** Byron Hill has been named national director of LifeWay Conference Centers operated by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. Hill, 45, will direct LifeWay's national conference centers in Glorieta, N.M., and Ridgecrest, N.C. He currently is director of operations for a property management company in Orlando, Fla.



Bivocationalists celebrate their ministry at Paducah rally

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

PADUCAH—Ron Prater makes a living as a corporate officer for a grain company and as the president of his own real estate firm.

But he's also pastor of Ridgewood Baptist Church in Owensboro, and there is no question about where his priorities are.

"When I need to go somewhere, they understand," Prater said of his other jobs. "Ministry comes first."

A veteran of 42 years in the pulpit, Prater recently was recognized as the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Bivocational Pastor of the Year for the western half of the state at a conference March 30-31.

The Mid-Continent Bivocational Celebration drew 322 participants from five states, including 56 from Kentucky. Organizers called the turnout the largest gathering of bivocational pastors, spouses and directors of missions in Southern Baptist Convention history.

These dual-career pastors are a key to the future, according to Leon Wilson, a national Southern Baptist missionary for bivocational ministry.

The SBC has a goal of starting 2,100 churches annually, with bivocationalists launching 250 of those, said Wilson, who works through the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Bivocational pastors account for nearly 40 percent of ministers in Southern Baptist churches, but Wilson



Prater

said they often are overlooked.

"These guys feel so isolated, it's been great to encourage and affirm them," he said. "They're definitely becoming more important. If we're going to start enough churches, there have to be more bivocationalists involved."

State director of missions Randy Jones called the conference turnout a momentum starter for Western Kentucky.

"My prayer is that this isn't a one-time pep rally but the beginning of a focus on bivocationalists and their worthiness," he said. "We hope this meeting dispels the myth that they are second-class pastors."

The value of bivocationalists can be seen through Prater's example, said a veteran pastor who grew up attending Ridgewood Baptist.

Jerry Carter of Apollo Heights Baptist Church in Owensboro said his former pastor taught him how to lead others to accept Jesus as their personal Savior.

Prater's leadership was a key in helping Ridgewood grow in the 1970s, said Carter, who has served at two churches the past 26 years while running an auto parts business.

Prater remained at Ridgewood despite his wife's death in 1983 and the death of his youngest son a decade later, Carter noted.

"Ron has gone through many a valley, but he's always come out on top," he said. "He's never given up. He treats his church like family, too. Everyone is important to him. He means

a lot to a lot of people."

Besides Carter, six other current or former pastors in Daviess-McLean Baptist Association came from Prater's church, as well as a couple serving as missionaries to Haiti. While pleased with those who entered the ministry, Prater, a grandfather of six, calls his greatest accomplishment seeing multitudes accept Christ as Savior.

"We had a couple years in the mid-1970s where we baptized over 100 a year," he said. "It's been a good ride."

The bivocational role is nothing new for Prater. As a boy in Eastern Kentucky, he watched his father preach after working in a coal mine.

Holding a job in the marketplace creates opportunities to tell more people about Jesus and lightens the church's financial load, he said.

But it comes with a price. Prater routinely works 80 hours a week.

"I get up early and go late," he said. "I go to the office from 8 to 5:30 and do visiting and sermon preparation at night."

Other Kentucky Baptists at the conference have similar juggling acts.

Brett Myles, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Almo, is a radiation therapist at the regional cancer center in Murray. He also referees basketball games during the winter.

"It has cost me some precious time with my family," he said. "My wife says I hide my head in a book or sleep when I'm home. A pet peeve of mine is when people say, 'You're part-time in the ministry.' There are no part-time ministers."

Myles said he deals with time demands by getting to his office at 5

Pastor develops rules to minister by

PADUCAH—Bivocational pastor Mark Wilson was working at 5 a.m. one morning when he realized how constant the pressures were becoming.

In addition to being pastor of Kirbyton Baptist Church, Wilson works with an economic development agency.

In his spare time he is a freelance photographer and substitute teacher and runs a consulting firm.

Speaking at the recent Mid-Continent Bivocational Celebration, he said the pressures of the numerous hats he wears led him to develop three principles to remain faithful to his calling:

■ Don't confuse the press of time with priorities. No matter what the job, he said he must remember that "winning souls" is the only thing that lasts.

■ Don't let the world set the standard for success.

"Big-itis is rampant," said Wilson, who was a fully funded pastor before switching to a bivocational role. "The superstar, light-show mentality prevails. But when I read the apostle Paul, I don't read, 'So how big is your church?'"

■ Don't let busyness affect a personal relationship with Christ or one's role as pastor.

"We've been called to do something in ministry, so avail yourself of the task," he said. "Make your best effort to do your best."

a.m., an hour before a Tuesday morning prayer group.

Attitude is an important part of his outlook. He said that when unruly fans made him doubt the wisdom of refereeing, God showed him Christians are needed as basketball officials and in all walks of life.

He said he considers refereeing a hobby, not a sacrifice. "I've been able to use that as a witness. Schools invite me to speak to young athletes, and I can tell them Jesus is their only hope."

Music ministers across commonwealth prepare for chorale tour

By Tim Beauchamp
Kentucky Baptist Convention

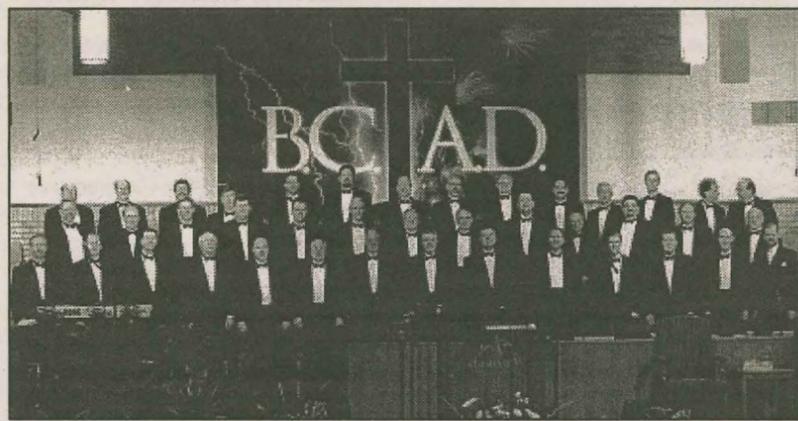
LOUISVILLE—Randy Holt says his time with the Kentucky Baptist men's chorale is an opportunity to share the gospel through meaningful worship.

Holt, minister of music at Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah, has been a member of the choir of professional music ministers since 1986 and considers the group's annual tour a part of his ministry.

"I believe that worship is a three-step process for believers. First we gather to worship, then our worship causes us to reflect on the glory of God, which then causes us to have a proper perspective on evangelism," Holt said. "We go away from a meaningful worship experience changed and prepared to share the gospel."

The chorale, which will tour Kentucky Baptist churches April 22-25, was organized in 1965 by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church music department. Members come from among 200 fulltime male music ministers who serve in churches affiliated with the KBC. (A similar women's group performs separately.)

The 2001 Kentucky Baptist men's chorale has 50 active members, with 35 members expected to tour this season. In addition to touring Kentucky Baptist churches, the chorale regularly performs at the KBC's annual meet-



MEN'S CHORAL The Kentucky Baptist men's chorale will tour April 22-25. Carl Stam, a music professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, will be the conductor. David Dale, minister of music at Gardenside Baptist Church in Lexington, will be the accompanist.

ings and conferences.

And the benefits the men receive are beyond their expectations, said Jim Cordell, director of the KBC church music department.

"It is a time of fellowship, continuing education and an opportunity to minister outside of their local churches that makes their time with the chorale so special and meaningful," said Cordell, a chorale member since 1970. "The relationships that are built with other fellow ministers mean a great deal to these men."

Kenny Sexton, minister of music and children at First Baptist Church of Leitchfield and a first-year chorale member, said he looks forward to

touring and sharing his passion for music with other churches and ministers of music.

"Being a part of the chorale is a way of showing your love for the One you serve, Jesus Christ," he said.

Sexton said he decided to join the group after attending a chorale retreat at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.

He said time with the chorale competes with an already full schedule as a minister and a family man, but he finds the experience worthwhile. He said both his family and church support his time with the group.

"They see my time with the chorale as a way of sharing what is going

on in our church with other Baptist churches throughout Kentucky," he said.

Sexton and others will spend a busy week on tour, rehearsing each day and performing at night while ministering to others whom they meet on their travels.

Holt said he decided to join the chorale as a result of encouragement from his pastor.

"Every time that we get together, it is a special time. It takes a lot of extra effort to be a part of the chorale group, a special commitment, but it is worth it," Holt said.

He also said the chorale is a good ambassador for Kentucky Baptist churches. "I would love to see more churches encourage their music ministers to be involved in chorale and to represent Kentucky Baptists."

The chorale currently is planning to tour Europe during the summer of 2002 as part of the KBC's partnership with the European Baptist Convention. The group previously has performed internationally in Scotland, Germany, France, Austria, Switzerland, England, Kenya, Brazil and Russia.

For more information about the chorale, contact the KBC church music department at (502) 245-4727 or toll-free in Kentucky at (888) 254-5707. Information also is available on the KBC Web site, www.kybaptist.org.

Schedule

The Kentucky Baptist men's chorale will perform at the following locations:

■ Ashland, April 22 at 10:45 a.m. at Unity Baptist Church.

■ London, April 22 at 6:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church of London.

■ Glasgow, April 23 at 7 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church.

■ Beaver Dam, April 24 at 12:10 p.m. at Beaver Dam Baptist Church.

■ Paducah, April 24 at 7 p.m. at Lone Oak First Baptist Church.

■ Hopkinsville, April 25 at 6:30 p.m. at Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville.

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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Where's the data?

The article, "Seminary president, critics differ on faith statement," in the March 13 issue of the Western Recorder created some questions for me.

How can Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Ken Hemphill reconcile the following: "The revised Baptist Faith and Message is not being forced on anyone, and requiring faculty at Southern Baptist Convention seminaries to sign it should not alarm anyone." Have the words "forced" and "requiring" undergone a change in definition? How is it possible for someone "to be held accountable to the statement of their convention" without some degree of coercion?

What has happened to the long-cherished Baptist principle of the priesthood of the believer if someone else must approve my faith convictions? I expect someone to answer, "You may believe as you feel led but you can't teach in a Southern Baptist Convention institution without believing the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message."

Hemphill wrote of "critics," "unprincipled Baptist scholars," "loopholes" and "sound bites to create fear" as apparent justification for his comments. The authors quoted in the article charged the president with "ambiguity," "willfully distorted communication" and failure "to offer any example" of his allegations.

President Hemphill apparently was writing to justify the creedalism being practiced at Southwestern Seminary. Even those who support his position, however, must wonder why he gave no data to support his contention.

Billy G. Hurt
Benton

Don't lose reverence

I am increasingly alarmed at the number of articles I see in the Western Recorder promoting or defending "contemporary worship." Most cite church growth and evangelism as reasons for doing contemporary worship.

According to the Great Commission we are challenged to "go," but we have stopped "going" and started trying to "attract." Consequently, we have stopped worshipping too.

David Roozen, the researcher who compiled the data for an article in the March 20 issue, gave additional reasons for churches using contemporary worship by saying, "The change in worship style follows a seismic shift in many Christian churches' approach to God. In the past, God has been viewed as an angry, judgmental deity. In recent decades, more emphasis has been put on the personhood of Jesus, resulting in a more personal view of God. Less structured, informal music better fits that changed view of God."

While I might agree that in the past the "angry and judgmental deity" has been overemphasized, the current view that portrays God almost as a playmate also is inaccurate. We should feel such indebtedness to God that neither words nor style are adequate to convey our gratitude. Awe and reverence are a part of worship, not because we fear God, but because we understand a kind of love that is so deep and personal that we cannot relegate God the Father, or the Son, to being merely a "chap."

If that is all God is then we should go to the local tavern and sing "ninety-nine bottles of beer on the wall" and chug one for the "big man upstairs" because it would honor God just as

much to do that as it would to sit on our haunches, sing trite little ditties, and expect everyone to come join us.

Phil Rector
Danville

Friend of sinners?

I have been a Roman Catholic for more than 29 years now, though I was raised as a Southern Baptist in Eastern Kentucky. For the last 20 years I have been a member of the Franciscans, the religious community founded by Francis of Assisi in the early 1200s. But I retain my interest in the faith of so many of my ancestors and family, so I have for several years now subscribed to the Western Recorder.

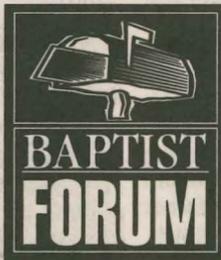
I find the Recorder consistently to be one of the best religious interest periodicals with which I come in contact. I want to congratulate you for the consistently high standards which you and your predecessors have maintained with the Recorder.

Among the things I find most commendable about the Recorder is the clear-headed tone which you maintain on any number of highly controversial subjects, from the most recent amendment of the Baptist Faith and Message statement to your March 20 editorial titled, "Is your congregation 'a friend of sinners'?"

I recently ran across a pamphlet called "What Would Jesus Do ... If He Met a Gay Man?" The author of the pamphlet, Mark K. Justice, asks whether Christians are "ready to beg Jesus for the ability to understand our gay brothers and sisters, for a healing of the hurts which society and Christians have so often inflicted upon them."

I think what Justice has to say provokes serious consideration from anyone who takes the Bible as God's Word and Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Jack Clark Robinson
Los Lunas, N.M.



STEWARDSHIP

Four basic steps can benefit family financial planning

By Don Spencer

Family financial management simply is the family participating in a process of financial planning. This process can be summarized in four stages:

■ **Set short-term and long-term goals.** Goals might include: Reduce or eliminate credit card debt, establish an emergency fund, save for college, save for a house down payment or save enough to have adequate retirement income. Since an entire family is affected by financial planning decisions, the family should be involved in setting the goals. Remember that the goals you set will reflect family values. As you carry this over to the financial planning process, your finances also will reflect your family's values.

■ **Assess your current financial status.** Add up total assets and liabilities (debts). Your assets minus your liability equals your net worth. This need not be a complicated process. The value of some items like a house or cars can be estimated. A family cannot plan appropriately for the future without a realistic assessment of the current situation. Re-calculate your net worth each year to see if progress is being made.

■ **Prepare a three-part family spending plan (budget).** The steps include: Itemize anticipated income from all sources; identify fixed expenses such as housing, utilities, insurance, taxes and debt payments; estimate flexible expenses such as food, clothing, entertainment and other things over which you can make choices regarding the level of expenses.

Keep the budget simple enough that it will be used. Remember, family members with no input in making a budget might tend to ignore it.

Also make sure the spending plan reflects a Christian perspective. Include your tithe as a fixed expense. Other charitable contributions might be listed as flexible expenses.

■ **Implement the process.** This approach to family finances will be only as effective as its implementation. Keep simple but adequate records in order to monitor progress and stay on track. Financial goals, net worth and the family spending plan should be re-evaluated each year and revised as needed.

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

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

New Salem celebrates growth

Members of New Salem Baptist Church in Vine Grove have good reason to celebrate when they dedicate their new building. It has been a long journey of personal involvement by members to reach this time of celebration.

The members have done most of the work over the past three years (except for the concrete and brickwork), and it has been a labor of love. One member said her husband worked on the building nearly every Saturday.

The church chimes can be heard throughout the beautiful valley below the church. It is a spacious facility for the rural congregation and has been built with a vision for the future. The sanctuary has been designed so that it can serve as a family life center in the future. The future sanctuary will replace the older building.

The new construction was needed because the congregation had outgrown its facilities. Pastor Gary Kasey, who became pastor in 1987,

said the older facilities could accommodate 75 people in Sunday school but the church was averaging more than 100. They had gone to two worship services, but that did not work well for the congregation.

On a recent visit, I was impressed with the programs and ministries of the church. It was obvious that the members had not neglected the ministry in order to construct a building.

New Salem members are very involved in missions organizations. According to the latest convention annual, New Salem had 38 people enrolled in Woman's Missionary Union ministries and 12 men in Brotherhood. Their music ministry enrollment was 61. Believers are being developed with 44 enrolled in Discipleship Training classes.

Although their needs have been significant, New Salem has not forgotten about missions. They give 16 percent of undesignated church gifts

to missions through the Cooperative Program and support all of the missions offerings.

It also was obvious to me in my visit that the congregation enjoys music and worship. Attendance has exceeded 137 and is expected to grow in the new facilities.

The congregation also has provided ministries for a growing number of children. In addition to extended session, a layperson led the children's sermon for about 15 children. The church enrolled 130 children in vacation Bible School last year.

Since entering the new facilities, five teenagers have professed their faith in Jesus Christ. All had been well counseled by the pastor. It is gratifying to see how the church has reached out to all people in the community.

I thank God for the way He has led the pastor and people to build a strong ministering congregation that has a vision for the future. My prayers go with New Salem as the church ministers in Vine Grove through these new facilities.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



Bill Mackey

Recounting life's memories can be productive project for senior adults

Q: A senior adult friend spends all the time going over the same past experiences and memories each time I visit. How should I respond?

It's normal and healthy for older people to reminisce about the past. Remembering times when they experienced successes, overcame problems, made difficult choices or dealt with losses might remind them how resourceful and capable they are. Research has shown that older people who reminisce are less withdrawn and apathetic than those who don't. Reminiscing promotes emotional well-being and reduces isolation, loneliness and depression.

Many families are working to create and preserve "oral histories"—written or videotaped recollections of the older generation. Looking up information about "the old days" can help trigger memories. It also can help the older generation convey a real sense of what the world was like when they were growing up.

The Web is a storehouse of first-person historical information, including some sites that invite you to add your own family's stories. There are several interesting and useful living history sites. They range from "The Rearview Mirror," a beautiful site with historical photos and news articles from the archives of the Detroit News, to "The Dirty '30s," a high school class project to collect photos and document first-person stories about living in South Dakota in the dustbowl days. Oral and living history sites have been created by the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, historical societies and genealogical organizations as well as colleges, elementary schools and churches. What a wonderful project for a family ministry emphasis.—*Jon Rainbow*

Q: What is hyper-parenting?

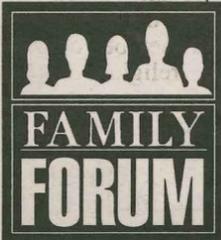
Webster defines "hyper" as "over; above; more than normal; excessive." Simply put, hyper-parenting is over-parenting. Hyper-parents become obsessed with and attempt to micromanage every aspect of a child's life—diet, school, sports, relationships. They are over-involved. Psychiatrist Alvin Rosenfeld and journalist Nicole Wise describe the phenomenon in their excellent book, "Hyper-Parenting: Are You Hurting Your Child by Trying Too Hard?"

Hyper-parents have good motives. However, in the desire to see their children succeed, they overstep boundaries. When milestones become steppingstones, life becomes a restless race—an endless "to-do" list that leaves little time to enjoy activities or each other. Children often interpret hyper-parenting as a push for perfection that leaves them feeling stressed and dissatisfied with themselves. Extreme cases produce resentment that affects the relationship between parent and child for years.

Hyper-parenting shows itself most clearly in two areas: education and sports. In school, many parents begin pushing early for the education edge in the race to get a scholarship or to land a spot in the best school. In sports, parents often take the fun right out of the game with an overemphasis on skills, execution and winning. Society and the media fuel hyper-parenting by proclaiming that participation in special programs is not only beneficial but necessary if your child is going to be successful.

Children should not be left alone to figure life out for themselves. However, many may need a little more room to be themselves. In a world of Tiger Woods, many parents forget that the average child is just that: average—good at some things; not so good at others; average at most.—*David Garrard*

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



On bunnies, home repair & an empty tomb

During a recent visit to one of my favorite everything-under-one-roof home improvement superstores, I noticed a large, colorful poster on the door that proclaimed, "We will be open Easter Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m."

"What a shame," I thought, "that buying plumbing supplies, lumber or a ceiling fan is so urgent that a major retailer would encourage the weekend handyman to skip Easter Sunday worship services and get a jump on that latest 'honey-do' list."

While we have grown conditioned over the years to the blatant commercialism of the Christmas season, it seems like the holy holiday of Easter should be reserved for reflecting on the sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ—and the spiritual impact available to anyone who accepts the risen Lord as personal Savior.

Yet the Easter bunny, spring fashions, chocolate candy and dyed eggs often take precedence as commercialism once again scores an economic victory.

Is it possible to recapture the wondrous joy of the first Easter celebration when the angel declared, "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." Perhaps, but it will require more than just going through the motions of one more Easter service—and then rushing to the home improvement store to pick out wallpaper or window blinds.

How can we help make Easter 2001 a fresh celebration of Jesus' eternal victory over death? Here are a few suggestions:

- *Invite a neighbor, co-worker or other acquaintance to attend your church's Easter services with you.* As much as Southern Baptists talk about outreach and friendship evangelism, many Sunday school classes and church pews feature the same familiar faces week after week. The Easter season offers an ideal opportunity to strike up a conversation with an unchurched friend and invite him or her to join you for worship.

- *Donate a nice set of clothing to a clothes closet*

in your church or community. While most church folks take the annual Easter fashion parade for granted, some people might feel uncomfortable visiting church on Easter simply because they don't have nice clothes to wear. Providing something as simple as an in-style dress or sports coat might make a difference in their Easter experience.

- *If you have young children or grandchildren, consider hosting a Scripture egg search.* Write down a few key Easter passages from the Gospels and place the verses inside plastic eggs. Once the eggs have been hidden and found, have the kids open the eggs, read the verses and discuss with them the significance of the Easter story.

- *Deliver an Easter basket to someone you know in a nursing home or hospital.* Take time to visit with the individual and pray for his or her specific needs before you leave.

- *Attend a community sunrise service or Easter pageant with your family or friends.* Listen carefully to the words of each hymn

and message, seeking to visualize the emotions associated with the first Easter morning and the discovery of the empty tomb.

- *Invite a single adult from church, a widowed friend or someone with no family nearby to join you for Easter dinner.* Spend some time around the table talking about what Christ's resurrection means in each of your lives today.

- *Take time during the early morning or late evening to spend a few moments alone reading the Easter story from Matthew 28 or one of the other Gospels.* Thank God for the miracle of Easter and the gift of salvation.

Enjoy your new spring outfit and milk chocolate bunny, but don't let the true meaning of Christ's glorious resurrection go unnoticed.

And remember: Surely that screen door repair can wait one more weekend.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Thompson serves Ky. Baptists as pastor, editor, executive director

By Jack Birdwhistell

During years of transition for the *Western Recorder* in the opening decade of the 20th century, Calvin Miles Thompson became the third editor of the new century in 1907. He succeeded J.M. Weaver who served briefly as acting editor.

Perhaps no editor of the *Recorder* had ever been so involved in Kentucky Baptist life as C.M. Thompson was. Ordained to the ministry in 1888 by Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, he graduated from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. After serving as pastor of Twenty-sixth and Market Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Thompson was called to a pastorate in Paducah. It was from there that he accepted the editorship of the *Western Recorder*. He served two years, continuing the transition between two long-term editors, T.T. Eaton and J.W. Porter.

In 1909 Thompson was called to the pastorate of First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, where he remained until 1918, when he became pastor

of First Baptist Church of Winchester. While at Winchester, probably because of his experience as editor, he was named to the Kentucky Baptist committee that brought the *Western Recorder* under the ministry of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky (a story to be told in full in a later column).

Then, in 1921, when Kentucky Baptists were looking for someone to become corresponding secretary (executive director) of the Executive Board of the General Association, they turned to Thompson as the successor to O.E. Bryan. Bryan had resigned to accept a position at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta. This was a time of tremendous denominational confidence and exuberance in planning for expansion of all Baptist ministries through a giving program called the Seventy-five Million Campaign.

Unfortunately, this grand program ran afoul of terrible financial conditions in the United States, which meant that many individuals and

churches were unable to pay their pledges. Kentucky Baptist ministries and institutions suffered under the shortfall. At the 1925 meeting of the General Association at Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville, Thompson recalled the year just past as "no doubt the most trying and spirit-wracking" in his ministry. After a good start in the Seventy-five Million Campaign, he said, "the financial storm broke in its fury and left wreck and ruin in its track."

Thompson served Kentucky Baptists faithfully through the years of the Great Depression until his retirement in 1938. The General Association passed a resolution expressing "hearty appreciation ... for the 16 years of meritorious work and faithful service which he has rendered to Kentucky Baptists." Following his death in 1944, he was remembered as "a good minister of Jesus Christ, an excellent preacher and pastor, and a man of great executive ability."

Kentucky Baptists were fortunate to have had a person who served them for nearly 50 years as pastor and denominational executive, including his ministry as editor of the *Western Recorder*.

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



EASTER

Churches use Seders to teach Christianity's Jewish roots

"It certainly added meaning to the Easter season for the people of our congregation."

Louie Bailey, worship minister at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville

Continued from page 1
bolizes the belief that the root of all life is bitter.

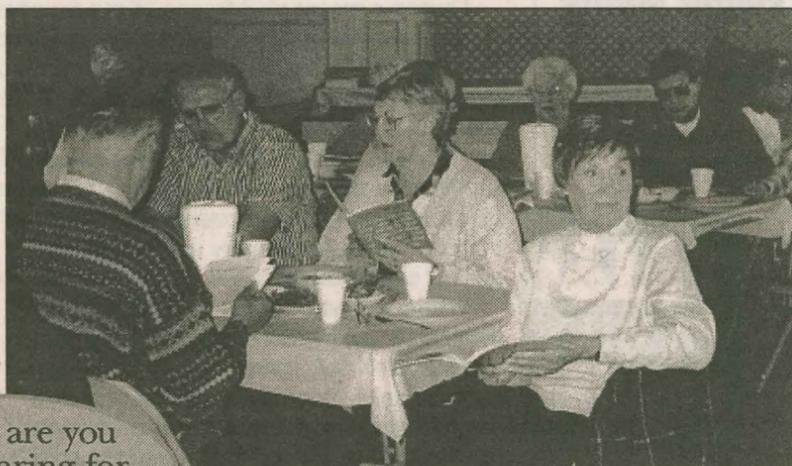
■ The "charoset" is a blend of chopped apples, nuts, honey and cinnamon mixed with a little wine. It represents the mortar the Israelites used to make bricks while they were slaves in Egypt. The sweetness of the mixture represents the promise of future redemption.

■ The lamb shank, or "zeroah," represents the original sacrifices made in the temple and the fact that sacrifices are no longer offered.

■ Four of the five cups of wine symbolize four blessings of God upon Israel: the cup of sanctification, the cup of the plagues (sent by God on the Egyptians in the Book of Exodus), the cup of redemption and the cup of praise.

■ The fifth cup is the cup of Elijah, representing the wish for his presence at the Passover meal, and that cup is not drunk by anyone at the table.

Rabinowitz also said the order of the Seder meal is dictated by the "haggadah," a book of Passover liturgy that contains the order in which the meal is eaten, the ritual hand washings associ-



HOLY RITUAL Church members follow the "haggadah," or book of Passover liturgy for a model Seder. Some Kentucky Baptists are using the Jewish service to study the roots of their faith. (Photo courtesy of the Louisville Jewish Federation)



How are you preparing for EASTER?

ated with the meal and Passover prayers and songs.

Louisville's Ridgewood Baptist Church interim pastor Norman Lytle, a former missionary to Israel for 30 years, said he hopes the Seder will add a new meaning to the communion table for his congregation.

"We are celebrating a model Seder on Maundy Thursday, and we are attempting to reconstruct the Last Sup-

per of Jesus, which was the Passover meal," he said. "We often lose a lot of the dynamics and power of communion in the formal way we normally celebrate the Lord's Supper, and hopefully this will bring that back."

Lytle said his interest in the Seder and Passover was sparked during his years as a missionary.

"While my wife and I were in Israel we rediscovered some of the spiritu-

al roots that the Christian faith has lost over the past 2,000 years," he said.

He said the reenactment of Jesus' last Passover meal will take one and a half hours and will include the singing of excerpts from traditional Passover songs like Psalms 115-118.

Worship minister Louie Bailey of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville said his congregation conducted a model Seder last year under the supervision of a volunteer from the Jewish Community Federation of Louisville.

"It certainly added meaning to the Easter season for the people of our congregation," he said.

Bailey said the church also combined communion with the Seder meal to emphasize the connection between the two events.

Rabinowitz said his hope for bringing the Seder to Christian churches is to offer a reminder of their shared Jewish heritage.

"I want them to see that when they celebrate the Lord's Supper, this Passover meal is exactly what Jesus was celebrating," he said. "It makes the Easter story come alive when you realize that when Jesus took the cup and said, 'This is My blood,' He was taking part in the Passover Seder and put Himself into it."

Easter egg dye company isn't all bunnies & chicks

By Hillary Wicai
Religion News Service

OCALA, Fla. (RNS)—Brightly colored eggs have been a staple for many families' Easter traditions and celebrations for decades.

In the PAAS line of egg dye alone, families can choose at least 10 different ways to design Easter eggs, including speckled, sparkling glitter or even tie-dyed eggs.

But this year, PAAS also is releasing a more religious kit.

According to the company, the PAAS Easter Celebration Kit "captures the true spirit of Easter through traditional images."

During March and April, grocery stores and supermarkets sell more than 600 million eggs nationwide. PAAS, which has been producing Easter egg dye for 120 years, estimates its kits help families decorate about 180 million eggs a year.

"The ingredients of the special Easter Celebration Kit came out of a brainstorming session as to what's the spirit of Easter and what does Easter mean to you?" said Pat Reddish, director of human resources at Signature Brands.

The kit includes angel cutouts, images to wrap around eggs like stained glass and a cross, and egg stickers depicting the Bible, praying hands, lilies and a dove.

"We certainly know that to some people Easter is the ultimate religious holiday of the year and to others it's about chocolate bunnies," Reddish said. "This was just an attempt to come out with a new kit that would address the family that's looking to have religious images for their children

at Easter time."

The company's Easter Angels egg decorating kit, released in 1997, was one of PAAS' best sellers.

For evangelist and author Steve Russo, the whole issue of eggs and Easter marketing is a problem on which he's trying to put a positive spin. Russo, host of the nationally syndicated radio program "Real Answers" and an associate evangelist with the Billy Graham organization, recently wrote the book "Why Celebrate Easter."

The book was partly a response to an increase in Easter marketing and sermons Russo had heard on past Easter Sundays that focused more on issues like the stock market than on the Easter message of the Resurrection.

"Unfortunately, even in the church today, Easter is not what it should be,"

Russo said. "In our desire to be seeker-sensitive we've become seeker-driven, so we've watered down the message of the cross and the Resurrection."

On one hand, he looks at religious-theme egg kits and cringes. "Their motivation is obviously marketing and money," he said, noting some Christians are adopting a purist attitude and rejecting eggs and bunnies altogether.

But his family chooses to decorate eggs and have fun doing it together. So he also believes a religious-oriented egg kit can offer a family an opportunity to talk about the Easter message while they decorate.

"It is contributing to the problem and it is a little bit hokey," he said. "But we can take this and make it a positive thing."



EGGSTRA COLORFUL PAAS, which has been producing Easter egg dye for 120 years, introduced a special Easter Celebration Kit this year that has more overtly religious decorations. (RNS/publicity photo)

Kentucky Baptist FELLOWSHIP Spring Gathering April 27-28 First Baptist Church Bowling Green

featuring

Dr. Sharyn Dowd
Baylor University

Tom Ogburn
CBF Global Missions

Friday

"Developing a Local Church Mission Strategy" 1 - 3 PM

Early Bird Workshops 4:45 PM - 5:30 PM

Dinner 5:30 PM Reservations required

Evening Session 7 PM Missions Emphasis
Commissioning of Summer Missionaries
Message by Dr. Sharyn Dowd

Saturday

Worship & Business 9 AM

10:45 AM & 11:45 AM Breakout Sessions:

Biblical Evangelism
Comparison of 1963 and 2000 Baptist Faith & Message
Oates Institute - Its Services & Resources
CBF Insurance & Retirement
Listening Session with Moderator & Coordinator
Smith & Helwys Resources
CBF Young Leaders Breakout

Reserve **FREE** childcare or make reservations for meal by calling the KBF office, 502-426-1931, by Wednesday, April 18.

EASTER

Booklet gives visitors something to read after Easter

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

NASHVILLE (RNS)—This Easter, many churchgoers at one of the year's most attended worship services will not go home empty-handed.

Across the country, churches are planning to distribute "He Did This Just For You," a 64-page booklet, to worshippers on Easter Sunday in hopes that they will keep them or share them with others.

The booklet is an extension of "He Chose the Nails," Lucado's book published last year by Word Publishing. Both are at the center of a massive campaign spearheaded by Christian book and music companies.

Since it came out last August, "He Chose the Nails" has morphed into a variety of products with an evangelistic edge—a recording, a teaching series, and a four-city tour that Lucado completed April 1.

During April 1, he read excerpts from the book in between selections by contemporary Christian artists and a choir including members of his San Antonio church.

An estimated 18,000 people attended the tour in Dallas, Oklahoma City, Cincinnati and Memphis, Tenn. A similar production will air as a tele-

vision special Easter weekend.

The author said the original book was designed to have readers look at the graphic elements leading up to Jesus' death. It dwells on the spit, the sponge and the spear, among other objects.

"I wanted this to be kind of an explanation of why Jesus died on the cross as seen through these different inanimate objects of the cross," Lucado said.

While some Christians focus on their belief in the resurrection of Jesus, Lucado thought it was important to remember the crucifixion.

"I have found that people have an easier time seeing a Jesus who rose from the dead than a Jesus who could forgive their mistakes," he said. "To see the empty tomb is to see the God of power. To see the crucifix on Friday is to see mercy and grace."

Lucado boiled down some of the concepts in the book for the smaller booklet, retaining stories such as that of a daughter who ran away from her father and how the dad always was ready for her to return home. It also includes advice on how someone who

decides to become a Christian can get involved in church life.

"I felt like if a person came to a point of belief in Christ through that booklet that they would be asking, 'Well, what do I do next?'" Lucado said.

The book and booklet have the same cover, a photograph of a gift from a visitor to Lucado's Oak Hills Church of Christ. It is a cross made of nails from a disassembled Russian church and overlaid with a ring of barbed wire resembling a crown of thorns.

Organizers of the evangelistic campaign hoped to sell 1 million of the booklets. By the end of March, at least 1.4 million had been distributed. When all the projects are totaled, more than 2 million items have been purchased including the book, booklet, video curriculum and church evangelism kits.

On top of that, more than 24,000 people have visited the campaign's Web site, www.hechosethenails.com.

Here to Music, also in Nashville, has shipped more than 90,000 related tapes and CDs from its warehouse.



How are you preparing for EASTER?

"I'm just real thankful," said Lucado, saying the campaign has exceeded expectations. "We sure didn't set out to do all this."

He did voice some qualms about the extent of the product line associated with the campaign.

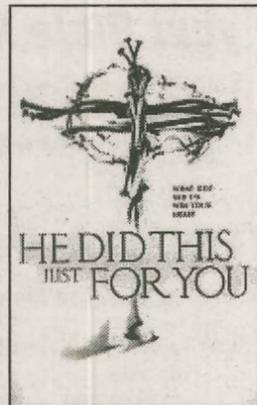
"I think we've done enough product out there," he said. "I think we've crossed a line."

Profits from the sales of T-shirts and caps are going to a ministry that aids Russian orphans, Lucado said. Thus far, 30,000 T-shirts, denim shirts and golf shirts and more than 5,000 caps have been purchased.

He said the booklets are being offered basically at cost, at \$1 or \$2 each with discounts for large orders. The concert tickets were kept to about \$10 each because of a deal with the Christian relief organization World Vision, which paid for half of the costs for renting facilities and paying the artists and technical crew.

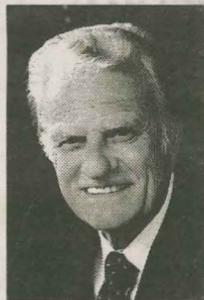
The booklet and some related products could turn out to be an Easter effort that outlasts the holiday.

Susan Ligon, former vice president of Word Publishing and a consultant heading up the campaign said, "It's likely that it will be licensed in several languages, both the book and the booklet, for campaigns abroad."



"To see the empty tomb is to see the God of power. To see the crucifix on Friday is to see mercy and grace."

Max Lucado



CHRISTIAN LIFE & WITNESS COURSE

Revitalize your faith and share it with others

"One of the greatest contributions we can make in any Crusade is through the Christian Life & Witness Course. No church member should miss the opportunity to take this." BILLY GRAHAM

The Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade invites you to attend the Christian Life & Witness Course. Plan now to participate in this dynamic five-part course designed to help you live a life that pleases God and to equip you to share your faith in Jesus Christ with others.

In the Christian Life & Witness Course you will learn how to:

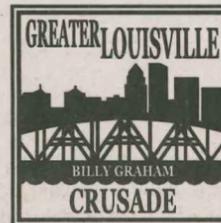
- Apply God's Word to your everyday life.
- Share Christ - what to say and how to say it.
- Answer the typical questions people ask about Christianity.
- Qualify to be a counselor at the Billy Graham Crusade.

This course is:

- Free!
- Conducted at locations throughout the city. Attend one class per week.
- Each session is ninety minutes in length.
- Taught by Billy Graham personnel.

Course Schedule & Locations • April 16 - May 19, 2001

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Saturdays
April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	April 17, 24, May 1, 8, 15 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	April 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	April 19, 26, May 3, 10, 17 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	April 21, 28, May 5, 12, 19 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
<p>Louisville St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church 728 East Lampton Street (I-65 to Jackson Street. Right on Lampton. Church is on right.)</p> <p>Louisville Highview Baptist Church 7711 Fegenbush Lane (I-265 to Beulah Church Road. Exit north. Left on Fegenbush Lane. Church is on right.)</p> <p>Louisville Northeast Christian Church 9900 Old Brownsboro Road (I-265 to Crestwood/Brownsboro Road exit. Turn toward Crestwood. Church is on right.)</p> <p>Sellersburg, IN Restoration Christian Church 11515 Highway 31 North (I-65 North to exit 9. Veer right off exit. Go straight on 31 North for 5 miles. Church is on left.)</p>	<p>Louisville* Southeast Christian Church 920 Blankenbaker Parkway (I-64 to Blankenbaker Parkway. Exit north. Church is on left.) (Begins at 7:00 p.m.)</p> <p>Louisville St. Stephen Baptist Church 1008 South 15th Street (I-64 to Ninth Street exit. Right on Kentucky Street. On corner of Kentucky and 15th.)</p> <p>LaGrange Covenant United Methodist Church 909 West Jefferson Street (I-71 North to Buckner - exit 17. Left onto Highway 146 for 4 miles. Church is on right.)</p> <p>Louisville Evangel World Prayer Center 5400 Minors Lane (I-65 to Okolona/Fairdale exit. Follow signs to Okolona. Left onto Minors Lane, then left on Dupin Drive.)</p>	<p>New Albany, IN* Graceland Baptist Church 3600 Kamer Miller Road (I-265 to Charlestown Road exit. Turn Right. Left at light, then right on Kamer Miller Road. Church is 1/2 mile on right.) (Begins at 6:30 p.m.)</p> <p>*Student Emphasis Class These classes begin earlier as noted to include a time of praise & worship.</p> <p>Deaf & Language Classes Available for more information call the Crusade Office at (512) 412-0977 Ext. 240</p>	<p>Louisville* Valley View Baptist Church 8911 Third Street Road (Valley Station) (I-265 to 3rd Street Road. Exit north. Turn left at Outer Loop, follow to end and turn left on 3rd Street Road.) (Begins at 7:00 p.m.)</p> <p>Louisville Canaan Missionary Baptist Church 2840 Hikes Lane (I-264 to Bardstown Road. Exit south. Left on Hikes Lane. Church is on right.)</p> <p>Shepherdsville Little Flock Baptist Church 5500 North Preston Highway (I-265 to Preston Highway South. Go 5 miles. Church is on left.)</p> <p>Elizabethtown Memorial United Methodist Church 631 North Miles Street (I-65 to Highway 62. Turn right. Right on French. Left on Miles Street.)</p>	<p>Louisville Calvin Presbyterian Church (co-hosted by St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church) 2501 Rudy Lane (I-264 to Brownsboro Road exit. Left on Rudy Lane.)</p> <p>Louisville Epworth United Methodist Church 919 Palatka Road (I-265 to New Cut Road exit. Go south, follow to Palatka and turn left.)</p>



June 21-24, 2001
Papa John's Cardinal Stadium

For more information, call the Louisville office at (502) 412-0977 • Web Site: www.LouisvilleCrusade.org • e-mail: info@LouisvilleCrusade.org

Are you brave enough to test your Bible IQ with this quiz?

- Name five of the Ten Commandments
- Who delivered the Sermon on the Mount?
 - Moses
 - John the Baptist
 - Jesus
 - Elijah
- Who was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb?
 - Nicodemus
 - Jesus
 - Joseph of Arimathea
 - Judas
- Who was the first king of Israel?
 - Saul
 - Samuel
 - Solomon
 - David
- Speaking from the burning bush, by what name did God identify Himself?
 - Jehovah
 - El Shaddai
 - I Am Who I Am
 - Christ
- Who walked on water?
 - Jesus and Peter
 - Jesus and John
 - Jesus and Paul
 - Jesus and Mary
- Who sentenced Jesus to death on the cross?
 - Herod
 - Pontius Pilate
 - Paul
 - The Pharisees
- The first four books of the New Testament are called
 - Epistles
 - Psalms
 - Prophecies
 - Gospels
- Who was the first murder victim?
 - Noah
 - Abel
 - Adam
 - Cain
- Whom did God command to sacrifice his only son?
 - Moses
 - Adam
 - Jacob
 - Abraham
- Whom did David memorialize with a love poem, reciting, "Greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful"?
 - Bathsheba
 - God
 - Absalom
 - Jonathan
- What was the first of the 10 plagues in Egypt?
 - Hail
 - Locusts
 - Famine
 - Water turned into blood
- What swallowed Jonah, keeping him alive in its belly for three days?
 - Satan
 - A whale
 - A fish
 - A dragon
- Why did Moses hesitate to appear before Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go?
 - Cowardice
 - Exhaustion
 - A speech impediment
 - Modesty
- Who walked with a limp after wrestling with God?
 - Jacob
 - Samson
 - Gideon
 - Isaiah
- God evicted Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden in order to protect something. What was it?
 - The Forbidden Fruit
 - The Tree of Knowledge
 - The Tree of Life
- What is the root of all evils?
 - Satan
 - Money
 - The love of money
 - Lust
- Whom did God command to marry a prostitute?
 - Hosea
 - Judah
 - Lot
 - Solomon
- Which two people did not die?
 - Adam and Jesus
 - Jesus and Elijah
 - Enoch and Elijah
 - Paul and Silas
- Who disowned Jesus three times?
 - Judas
 - Paul
 - Joseph
 - Peter

Why is America's Bible literacy declining?

By Clayton Hardiman
Muskegon Chronicle

MUSKEGON, Mich. (RNS)—For comedians, there are subjects that are almost too easy—sure things that guarantee a laugh. For Jay Leno one late night, it was the Bible.

Moving through the audience, Leno asked people what they knew about the Bible. "Name one of the Ten Commandments," he said.

"God helps those who help themselves?" someone ventured.

"Name one of the apostles," Leno told them. No one could.

Finally, he asked them to name the Beatles. The answer came ringing from throughout the crowd: George, Paul, John and Ringo.

Of course, it was not the Bible that Leno was spoofing. It was society, which claims a grounding in Judeo-Christian principles and yet increasingly is losing touch with the Scriptures of those faiths, according to a number of surveys and pastors.

In one recent Gallup survey, only two of 10 people could identify the person who delivered the famous Sermon on the Mount, said David Eikenberry, youth pastor at Orchard View Congregational Church in Muskegon, Mich.

"Typically, they could name only three or four of the Ten Commandments," Eikenberry said.

Willie Burrel, a teacher with Western Michigan Bible Institute, also noted a backslide in biblical literacy.

He attributed some of the trend to people's schedules. "The workload, the play load. People are spending less

time in the word of God."

Eikenberry said he recently gave what he considered a simple Bible quiz to members at Orchard View Congregational Church. The average score was just 40 percent.

The truth, Eikenberry said, is that many Christians are struggling. Eikenberry, who wrote a 100-page thesis on Bible literacy while working on a degree at Cornerstone College in Grand Rapids, Mich., said people generally have some of the pieces of the puzzle but lack the framework in which those pieces fit.

Eikenberry sent a simple survey of biblical literacy to a number of churches and youth pastors in West Michigan.

"The scores were just atrocious," he said. "I don't expect those outside Christianity to know the Christian book. But I do think the people of the Book should be familiar with it."

The Bible's impact on American culture is immense. It goes beyond values or faith. Without biblical references, the very language might be unrecognizable.

Every day people liberally season their conversations with such phrases as "eye for an eye" and Good Samaritans. They talk about the lure of forbidden fruit. They refer to burdensome circumstances as their cross to bear. They balance priorities by robbing Peter to pay Paul. And mismatched opponents are compared to David and Goliath.

But people often use such phrases without a clue as to their origin.

Educators even tell horror stories about intellectually advanced students

who do not recognize literary references to Jonah or the prodigal son.

Why?

In part, Eikenberry sees growing biblical illiteracy as a kind of reaction against educational methods of the past. There also has been a kind of educational inertia, with parents passing more and more responsibility for their children's education to professional educators.

Sunday school is not enough, Eikenberry said.

"Would you send your kid to learn math or science for just an hour a week with no homework?" he asked. "And yet we think that by osmosis kids are going to learn the Bible."

Biblical illiteracy also may be part of a general malaise in education.

"It's a dumbed-down society," Eikenberry said. "Literacy in general has suffered."

Whatever the reason, it seems clear that people are reading the Bible less. Occasional Bible readers declined from 79 percent in the 1980s to 59 percent, according to a Gallup Poll in October. Only 16 percent of Christians polled said they read the Bible daily. Biblical scholars are trying to fight back.

Eikenberry has established a couple of biblical literacy classes at Muskegon Community College.

Burrel, who says that Bible study is a priority in his own church, has challenged all members of his church to read 10 chapters daily to "get deeper in the Word."

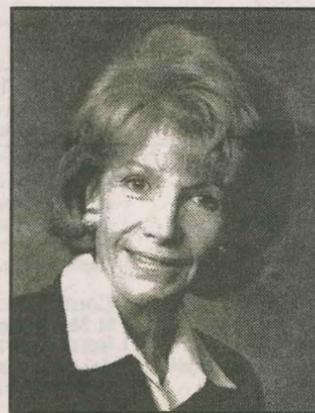
"Some of them were so happy I put that out there," Burrel said. "Some of our young people are doing it, some of our very young children."

Answers to Bible IQ test

- The Ten Commandments are:
I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before Me.
You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
Honor your father and mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.
2. c (Matthew 5:1)
3. b (Matthew 27:57-60)
4. a (1 Samuel 9-10)
5. c (Exodus 3:14)
6. a (Matthew 14:29)
7. b (Matthew 27:26)
8. d
9. b (Genesis 4:8)
10. d (Genesis 22:2)
11. d (2 Samuel 1:26)
12. d (Exodus 7)
13. c (Jonah 1:17)
14. c (Exodus 4:10-16)
15. a (Genesis 32:24-32)
16. c (Genesis 3:22-23)
17. c (1 Timothy 6:10)
18. a (Hosea 1:2)
19. c (Genesis 5:24)
20. d (Matthew 26:69-75)

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RESOURCES

Singles ministries redefining their roles for 21st century

Continued from page 1
ence the church hosted March 16-17.

Approximately 75 women seated at candlelit tables listened to Christian recording artist Margaret Becker, counselor Cindy Sneed and speaker/author RoseAnne Coleman discuss topics such as self-esteem, forgiveness and contemplative living.

"This is a new kind of singles event for Gen-X single women, and it is still finding its niche," said Vocé coordinator and LifeWay event specialist David Hassell, who added that some Vocé events have drawn as many as 400 women.

Becker, Sneed and Coleman, all of whom are single, devoted most of the conference to Vocé's mission statement: "seeking to minister to a new generation of women, today's single women who want more understanding and depth in their spiritual relationship with God."

Questions about dating and relationships were addressed only when audience members raised them during a panel discussion.

"Our culture tries to force us into a false and unattainable mold," Becker said when asked about single women's roles in the church. "Pray instead that the Lord will show you how He sees you."



SINGLES RoseAnne Coleman, Cindy Sneed and Margaret Becker sing during a Vocé conference. The conference is designed to focus on people's relationships with God, not their marital status. "This is a time of transition for singles ministry," said Eric Fruge, singles minister at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington. (LifeWay photo by Sharon Harper)

Alan Corry, single adult ministry specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, said the new attitudes among younger singles have led singles ministers to move toward ministry-oriented programs rather than event-oriented programs.

"I approach singles ministry this way: first and foremost, it is a ministry," Corry said. "Secondly, it is a ministry to adults. And finally, it is a ministry for adults who through life circumstances just happen to be single."

"I'd like to see a change in the image too often perpetuated by churches that a person is somehow inferior until he or she is married."

Corry said this image no longer holds water as more and more people in our society find themselves single.

"Singleness might be an atypical state in the church, but it is not an atypical state in our society," he said.

"The latest census data we have shows that 48 percent of all American adults are single, and in some major

metropolitan areas that number is estimated to be as high as 60 percent," he said. "And while some of that is because our divorce rate is high, the majority of those singles are people 35 and under who have never married."

Fruge said this is a major issue as singles in his church struggle to integrate themselves into mainstream church life.

"Essentially, the church is a married world," he said. "While out in society people aren't separated by their marital status, in the church they are."

He said older singles are more comfortable with the separation, but younger singles resent it.

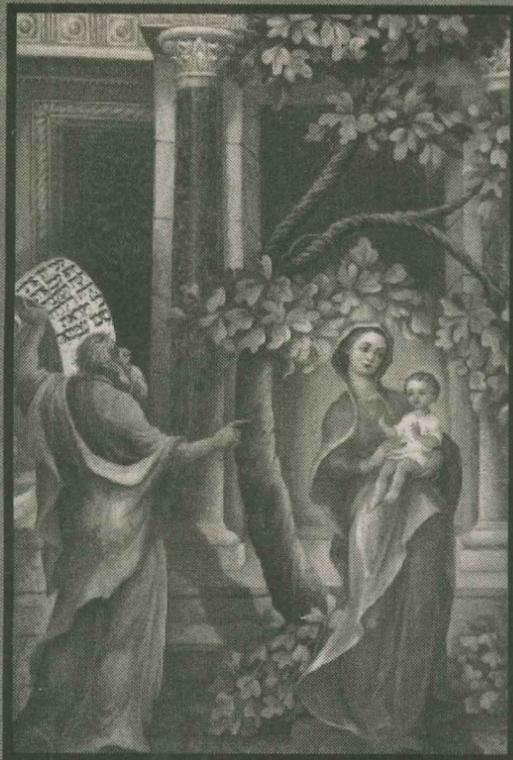
Calvary Baptist is seeking to minister to both groups without alienating either, Fruge said.

"The older single adult ministry is still viable, but we can't have one great big singles group like we had in the past," he said.

In order to reach all singles, Corry said, churches should involve them in leadership roles and spend more time building their faith than matchmaking. "If churches focus on getting singles involved in leadership, missions and giving of themselves, they will see singles getting involved rather than sitting on the sidelines in a holding pattern, waiting to get married."

"Singleness might be an atypical state in the church, but it is not an atypical state in our society."

Alan Corry, single adult ministry specialist for LifeWay Christian Resources



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Pastors report growing income amid stable church attendance

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)—The typical senior pastor receives compensation exceeding \$38,000, an increase over previous years, while Protestant church attendance continues to remain stable, Barna Research Group reports.

In its annual survey of senior pastors of Protestant congregations, the Ventura, Calif.-based firm found the median value of pastoral compensation is \$38,214, up almost 9 percent from 1999 levels. Compensation includes salary and benefits, such as housing allowance, insurance, car allowance and retirement payments.

The income of pastors varied widely depending on the size of their congregations. The annual median income for those with congregations of more than 250 adults attending is \$56,429, compared to \$29,808 for those with fewer than 100 adults attending.

Others with above-average income include mainline congregational leaders, seminary graduates and those with more than 10 years of full-time ministry experience.

Researchers found that the average adult attendance in a typical Protestant church's services each week remained at 90, the same total found in 1999. In 1997, the average attendance was 100 adults.

African-American congregations had the highest median attendance, 120, while churches associated with charismatic (or Pentecostal) denominations such as the Assemblies of God and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel had the lowest average turnout, 80.

Researchers found, though, that churches describing themselves as charismatic but with no ties to a denomination known for charismatic practices have an average adult attendance of 150 per week.

The demographic profile of Protestant pastors has not changed much in 10 years. Most are male (95 percent), married (94 percent) and seminary graduates (60 percent).

Study finds parenting is top family concern

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

WACO, Texas (ABP)—The presence of children in a home creates the most common challenge facing families of all types, according to the final summary of a national study of family life in religious congregations.

Blended families, single-parent families and traditional nuclear families all share a common challenge in dealing with issues of parenting, according to the Families in Congregations study by Diana Garland and Pam Yankeelov.

Garland, chairman of the School of Social Work at Baylor University, and Yankeelov, a professor of social work at the University of Louisville, completed the study with funding from the Lilly Endowment.

They interviewed 1,977 people in 32 U.S. congregations, including National Baptists, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians and United Methodists.

Meanwhile, the study also rebuts a common stereotype that single adults are mainly involved in congregations as a means of finding social interaction. "Single adults participate in a congregation not because they are just looking for a social gathering with other singles but because they want to grow and commit themselves to a life of faith," Garland said in an interview.

The national research project identified seven types of family structures commonly found in American congregations—nuclear families, blend-

ed families, single seniors, empty-nest couples, married seniors with grown children, single-parent families and married couples with no children.

Given this array of family situations in most churches, "ministry with families in congregations needs to be sensitive and responsive to the diversity of families in which persons live and define themselves as family members," Garland and Yankeelov assert.

Across this broad spectrum, however, the challenge of child rearing is the most common link between family types.

"The fact that the greatest stressor in the lives of families is the presence of children and not the 'kind' of parents—single or married or blending—is really something," Garland noted. "Raising children is stressful, and parents of all kinds need the support and involvement of a caring community."

The research report adds: "It appears that the most significant challenge to the cohesion, companionship, ability to avoid conflict dominating the family's communication and adaptability of families is the presence of dependent children, whether the adults in the family are in a first marriage, second or later marriage or single.

"Thus, attempts to strengthen con-

gregational families can emphasize that different kinds of families are indeed more alike than different. The challenges they face are more likely to be related to the developmental needs of child and adult members in interaction with one another and less to the varying structures of adult relationships."

The one significant exception to this finding is that blended families "tend to be less cohesive," Garland and Yankeelov note. "Trying to develop the same level of cohesion and commitment of family members in step-relationships with one another may be unrealistic and self-defeating."

The researchers also discovered that most church-going families believe they give greatest expression to their faith through family experiences rather than through private devotions.

This finding should have significant impact on how congregations attempt to minister to families, they add.

"Most ministry activities of congregations have involved persons as individuals, not as families," the report says. "These families seem to be saying that these activities are important to them as families, but perhaps they are missing from their lives. The answer may be to emphasize more the ways families together can serve."

Campers on Mission at Cedarmore

Spring is finally here at both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. To be sure, there have been signs of spring for a few weeks, but the real sign at Cedarmore is the sound of hammers and saws all over the campus—the sound of the hammers and saws of Campers on Mission.

Each year about this time, this wonderful group of Baptists from across the state gathers at our places to lend a helping hand as we work to get ready for the summer. Campers on Mission come in force and do everything from clean-up, paint-up and fix-up to building. I first met this group a few years back, and I fell in love with these very active, mostly senior adults.

These volunteers are strongly committed to serving in this role as they travel across Kentucky and beyond.

When I arrived at Cedarmore last week, I was excited to see friends. I was excited about the work they were doing. I took the opportunity after their lunch to speak to them for a few minutes. (It really was just a few minutes.) I was somewhat emotional as I listened to their devotionals before I got up to say my few words. I was

somewhat emotional as I thanked them as a group.

Just a little over three years ago, we assumed responsibility for both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek, and while we have a long way to go, we have come miles in these first three years. Without the help of this group of Campers on Mission, we wouldn't be where we are today. It's a fact! Their willingness and capacity to tackle many of the less-than-glamorous projects has helped us more than many people will ever realize.

This year, finally, the group parked their RVs at Cedarmore's new Guy King RV Park. This park sits on the bank of the creek or river or old lake. Regardless of what you call the water, it's a nice site, and it sure looked good to see the RVs lined up for the first time.

So thank you, Campers on Mission. Please don't park your RVs anywhere too long without coming to Cedarmore. We appreciate your ministry.

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

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Lawsuit: Navy discriminating against evangelical chaplains

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

WASHINGTON (BP)—A trio of lawsuits pending in federal court in Washington, D.C., plus a fourth in San Diego, allege that the U.S. Navy has engaged in systematic discrimination against evangelical chaplains, including Southern Baptists.

Five current or former chaplains endorsed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board are among 17 plaintiffs in one of the suits, a class action filed a year ago. In all, 27 chaplains are involved in the four suits filed during the past 14 months.

Attorney Art Schulcz, who represents parties in the three suits filed in Washington, said the Navy is failing to guarantee personnel free exercise of religion.

For example, while 12 percent of Navy personnel are members of denominations classified by the Navy as "Protestant Liturgical," encompassing Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, they hold 35 percent of chaplaincies, Schulcz said.

In supporting documents filed in U.S. District Court, Schulcz included statistics for last year showing one chaplain for every 140 members in the Navy's "Protestant Liturgical" classification.

But the report lists only one chaplain for every 494 members of the Navy's "Non-liturgical" classification, encompassing such groups as South-

ern Baptists, Pentecostals and Church of the Nazarene.

"You'll see twice as many Baptist Navy personnel as liturgical (personnel), yet they don't have twice as many chaplains," Schulcz said.

In a motion to dismiss the suits, the U.S. Justice Department replied the suits lack merit. The Justice Department's brief argued that meeting the faith needs of Navy personnel entails more than simply mirroring the breakdown of faiths within the Navy.

Responding to another complaint by evangelicals, the Justice Department said attempts to promote general Protestant services on some Navy bases is an effort to maximize limited resources—such as availability of chaplains and worship space—in order to provide for ministry needs.

The Southern Baptist chaplains and others in the class action suit, meanwhile, countered that they have been denied promotions, forced to retire early or subjected to retaliation for filing complaints.

The suit contends that in the late 1980s the Navy began allocating chaplains by thirds—a third Catholic, a third "Protestant Liturgical" and a third "Non-liturgical" Christians and non-Christians, such as Jews and Muslims.

The lawsuit asks the court to declare this and other policies unconstitutional; prohibit the Navy from further discrimination against non-liturgical chaplains; and eliminate religious quotas in promotions.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Federal officials limit use of RU 486.** The federal government will limit its funding of abortions for low-income women using the drug RU 486 to the same exceptions allowed for surgical abortion, according to a published report. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently informed state directors of Medicaid the government would pay for use of the controversial drug in cases of pregnancy from rape or incest or when the mother's life is endangered, the Washington Post reported.

■ **Christian Science facility gains federal funds.** A Christian Science nursing facility that relies on prayer instead of conventional medicine for treatment can receive federal payments through Medicare and Medicaid, according to a ruling left standing April 2 by the U.S. Supreme Court. Without comment, the high court turned away an appeal that claimed the payments violate the separation of church and state. The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals previously ruled that laws governing the federal payments are constitutional.

■ **Presbyterians issue gay union guidelines.** The top official of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has told churches they cannot use the traditional marriage liturgy for same-sex union ceremonies after an effort to ban same-sex unions failed in the church's regional governing bodies. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the church's stated clerk, said because the ban failed churches are free to conduct same-sex union services as long as they are not equated with traditional marriage in a spiritual or legal sense.

■ **Gift aids Methodist ministry to homosexuals.** A United Methodist church in Ohio has received a gift of \$600,000 to maintain its goal of being inclusive to homosexuals. Grayson Atha, pastor of King Avenue United Methodist Church in Columbus, announced the gift to the congregation March 18. Gay and lesbian members of the congregation began meeting six years ago for fellowship and Bible study. The anonymous donor said in a letter that the money should be used to establish a foundation for ministry to homosexuals and to reach out to other churches that are inclusive of gays and lesbians.

■ **Dove Awards to air on two networks.** The Dove Awards will air this year on two national networks, PAX TV and Superstation WGN-TV, according to Gospel Music Association officials. The 32nd annual awards show will be held April 26 in Nashville. It will air on PAX TV on April 28 at 9 p.m. Eastern Time and May 4 on WGN-TV at 8 p.m. Eastern Time.

■ **Odyssey Network to transform into Hallmark.** The Odyssey Network will become the Hallmark Channel Aug. 6 as the cable outlet known for religious and faith-based programming focuses even more on family-friendly Hallmark programming. Odyssey, owned by the Jim Henson Co., and Hallmark Entertainment, reaches about 29.5 million U.S. homes. Network executives said the name change from Odyssey to Hallmark is expected to boost subscribers to up to 35 million.

Spring break youth revival

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College sent eight ministry teams out during spring break. One team journeyed to Greenwood, S.C., to conduct a series of youth revival services.

Team members included team leader Kevin Floyd, Alanna Allen, Megan Ballard, Larissa Davis, Anthony Evans, Marsha Marcum, John May, Daniel McKee and Matt McQueen. Most of the team members did not know each other well, and all noted that one of the blessings of the mission trip was developing new friendships.

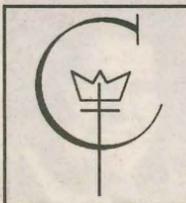
After traveling on Saturday to their destination, the team members worshipped Sunday morning at Callie Self Memorial Baptist Church, their host church. That night they led the youth worship service.

The youth revival did not begin until Wednesday evening, so the team spent Monday and Tuesday getting ready. Some of the preparation involved rehearsing skits and worship music. Team members also visited area churches and invited their youth to the services. Most of their preparation centered on prayer. Team members bathed every aspect of the

services and their lives in prayer, asking God to bless and use everything to His glory.

The revival services began Wednesday evening with activities followed by a spaghetti supper. Team members were overjoyed by the number of youth who attended.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



God blessed the three-day revival, and many young people came to know Christ as Savior and Lord. Team members experienced the joy of placing themselves at God's disposal to be used in accomplishing His work.

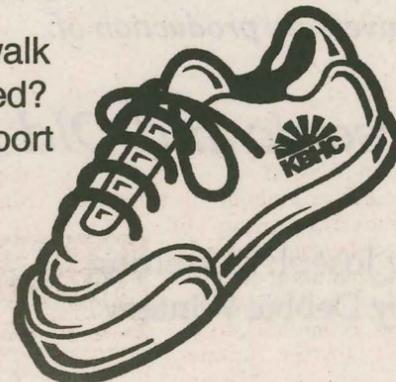
Every member of the team commented on the prayer times they experienced together. Never before had they experienced the presence of God in such a powerful way. Prayer enabled them to serve God. Evans said, "God used our gifts, our passions, each one of us to minister in His name."

For these Cumberland College students, the joy of ministry and the power of prayer became real. Even as God used them to help change lives, He also changed their lives.

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

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Theology of 'Left Behind' generating strong opinions

Verbal volley fired in video lawsuit

HOLLYWOOD (RNS)—Things are heating up in the ongoing battle over film rights for the popular "Left Behind" fiction series.

Peter LaLonde, CEO of Cloud Ten Pictures, issued a five-page press release saying the lawsuit filed against his company last July by book series co-author Tim LaHaye is "despite his protestations to the contrary ... about the money."

LaLonde spent the fall preparing for the October video debut of "Left Behind: The Movie," which was savaged by mainstream movie critics but has since sold nearly 3 million units. Next he focused on the February theatrical release of the film. With the help of Christian laypeople, who "sponsored" screenings in theaters, the movie opened on nearly 900 screens and has grossed more than \$4 million.

These are small potatoes compared to the "Left Behind" book series. The first eight novels in the series have sold more than 20 million copies, and various children's books and audio products have sold nearly 15 million units.

But back in 1997, there were two "Left Behind" novels which had sold around 500,000 copies. That year, LaHaye and co-author Jerry Jenkins, who is not a party to the lawsuit, granted film rights to Namesake Entertainment, a Louisville-based company which agreed to work with Cloud Ten.

LaHaye's lawsuit claims Namesake and Cloud Ten broke numerous promises by producing an inferior movie featuring no bankable stars and releasing the film to video before its theatrical release.

LaLonde's press release says he is speaking out now because the disagreement "is causing great harm to the inroads being made by Christian filmmakers in the high-stakes game of Hollywood filmmaking."

LaLonde plans to make a sequel based on the second novel, "Tribulation Force," unless the courts stop him.

Continued from page 1

"They are not badly written," she said. "They are fast-paced. Essentially, they are not much different from Steven King and other fast-paced, fast-selling fiction. Millennialism is fun."

"In our era, theology has been usurped by fantasy, by 'The Matrix' and 'Star Wars.' The interesting thing is Christianity is coming through in these books and retaking some of the turf."

The question is, whose version of Christianity?

Buegler, pastor of the 2,400-member St. Paul Lutheran Church in Westlake, Ohio, said one member donated the entire series to his church library. He read them all and decided against letting the books circulate.

"You can get hooked on these characters," Buegler said, using the language of addiction that is a hallmark of "Left Behind" readers. "Personally, I can't wait to see what will happen to Rayford Steele next. Maybe it's an indictment of us that we haven't preached enough about the end times in our own churches. We believe there is no second chance. When Christ comes, it will be once and for all."

In other words, Lutherans—as well as Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and United Methodists—think Jesus will return, judge everyone immediately and reign forever. Leaders in these denominations argue that the notion of disbelievers left behind for seven years is wrong, a misreading of

the Book of Revelation, a difficult, symbolic text.

The cultural significance of Revelation is hard to exaggerate, scholars say. Twenty-five percent of Americans tell pollsters the world will end within their lifetimes. Forty percent expect it to end with the battle of Armageddon, the epic last contest between good and evil that Revelation describes.

Phil Giessler, a panelist and Bible scholar, said juicy treatments of the end of the world are nothing new. Hal Lindsey's "The Late, Great Planet Earth" electrified readers in 1970. It shot to the top of the best-seller lists by interpreting the establishment of Israel, war

in the Middle East and an increase in natural disasters as biblical signs that Jesus' return was imminent.

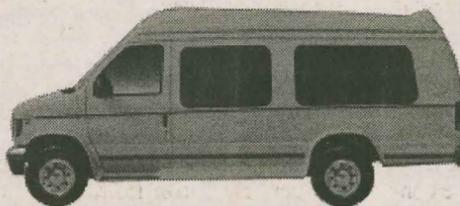
The difference, Tickle said, is Lindsey's book was nonfiction, while "Left Behind" fans are gobbling up a more visceral experience, a fictionalized Christian thriller.

Balow said about two-thirds of "Left Behind" readers are female, about the same proportion as customers at Christian bookstores. About 40 percent are Baptist; 5 percent are Catholic. Evangelicals are big fans. Age seems almost irrelevant, with 9- to 100-year-olds signing up for e-mail updates on the series' Web site. It receives about 60,000 visitors each day.

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Arsenic and Old Lace

Written by Joseph Kesselring
Directed by Debbie Winters



April 19, 20, 21 at 7:00 P.M.
Admission is FREE

On April 21 the cast and crew of our 1981 *Arsenic and Old Lace* production will be in attendance. OBI alumni and friends are invited to be our dinner guests at 5:45 P.M. on April 21.

Questions? Call 606-847-4111.

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

Clear Creek is the family place

Ask the Michael Medlock family if Clear Creek is a good place for a family. After courting for a year, Michael married Charity McFall in May 1983. They now have six children: Annah, 15, Seth, 13, Rachel, 10, Jessica, 8, Stephen, 7, and John, 5.

They wanted home birth experiences and found a good physician supportive of their desires.

Michael recounts some of the exciting adventure, "We testify that 'The Lord is our deliverer' because with the birth of Jessie and Stephen we were almost alone. Stephen arrived in the front seat of the car a short distance from the midwife's home."

What about life at Clear Creek? "The maintenance crew prepared the basement with two bedrooms. We are very content with a cozy five-bedroom cottage on Bear Trail. We never have a dull moment! The children love it here, with room to roam around and lots of friends. I came to more fully prepare myself to serve God, and I am blessed with godly professors and the Bible curriculum," Michael said.

"It is challenging," Charity commented. "I like the family life

center and the home school group. I enjoy the minister's wife classes with friendly and supportive teachers."

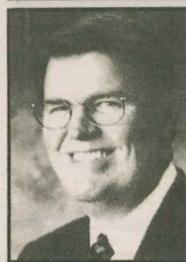
Michael was born in Cincinnati but lived in Barboursville after age 13. A friend at work led him to Christ. "I was working on an oil rig off the coast of Texas in 1981. I felt drawn to a man on the rig

because he seemed to have something I needed and wanted. He began to share the gospel with me, and as the week progressed he led me into a personal relationship with Christ."

Michael acknowledges that the encounter influences his ministry methodology. "I've realized considerable fruit in a ministry to people with a one-to-one approach. People are so busy that it is hard to connect with them, unless we have developed some personal rapport."

He ministers at Barboursville Advent Christian Church and also preaches once a month at Barboursville Community Church.

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

BOOKS

A Pastor in Every Pew: Equipping Laity for Pastoral Care. *Leroy Howe.* Judson Press, 2000. 179 pages. \$15. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

The earliest image of the Christian pastor is as shepherd: caring, loving, protective and dedicated to the flock. Most pastors still want to claim that image.

In reality, the role of shepherd must compete with many others, including the pastor as preacher, administrator, politician and counselor.

For the most part, the pastor is shepherd in times of crisis. After the crisis time with one person, such as a loved one's death, the pastor moves on to another crisis situation, leaving the earlier crisis family or individual without a sense of still being shepherded. It is this situation which Howe's book seeks to remedy.

Howe's basic approach is that each Christian is called to the work of pastoral care. In fact, he believes most Christians want to help others in Jesus' name. But while not every Christian will respond to the call, enough should respond in order for there to be a "pastor in every pew." This book first lays out the need for a pastor in every pew, then explores the basics of shepherding, all from the viewpoint of the laity. Howe also discusses two unique contributions of Christian shepherding: the use of prayer and Scripture. Included at the end of the book is a "training manual" for teaching and discussion of the book in a group setting.

Howe's book is a great resource for the church. He writes with clarity and confidence about the needed role of laity in pastoral care. The book should encourage pastors to include laity in the ministry of pastoral care while it also provides a needed tool to start the process. *Wayne Hager*

Your God is Too Safe: Rediscovering the Wonder of a God You Can't Control. *Mark Buchanan.* Multnomah Publishers, 2001. 258 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

Mark Buchanan states that between the borders of Uganda and Kenya is a strip of no-man's land, 100 yards wide by 300 yards long. Neither country claims it nor defends it.

It separates two countries that maintain a long-standing blood feud. The land is known as Borderland. It is teeming with a strange carnival of peddlers, hawkers, beggars, the wayward and the waylaid.

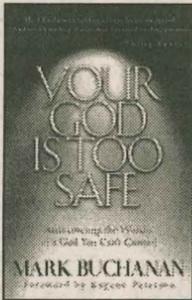
"Why would anyone choose to dwell there?" Buchanan asks. "Because, actually, it's safe. It's familiar. ... Life there requires no discipline, but falls into neat routine. ... It is chaotic, but

predictable. Borderland might be dangerous, but even more, it's safe."

Borderland is Buchanan's metaphor for the place where many of us who claim to be Christian have gotten stuck. Like willing refugees, we have fled the confines of slavery and oppression, but we have stopped short of entering the promised land, because we do not trust the God who calls us to this new place, with its risk and uncertainty.

Using familiar biblical stories and characters, Buchanan dedicates the first half of the book to explaining the concept of Borderland spirituality. He challenges us to get in touch with a God who is not safe and who will not be domesticated; a God who wants more than our obedience"; a God who can be known only by engaging the suffering in the world, not avoiding it.

The book's second half points beyond diagnosis, to developing holy habits that help us rise from Borderland and move to Promiseland. *Jim Holladay*



Celtic Benediction: Morning and Night Prayer. *Philip Newell.* Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000. 83 pages. \$16. ♦♦♦♦♦

This beautiful little book is slim in size, but it is stuffed to overflowing with thought-provoking content.

Philip Newell offers a week's worth of twice-daily devotions that contain every element of classic devotional practice: silent meditation, prayer and "lectio divina," or holy, contemplative reading.

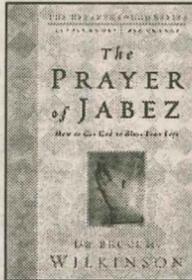
Throughout the pages, too, are reproductions of Celtic art from the Lindisfarne Gospels. This handwritten and hand-illustrated reproduction of the Gospels was produced in the 7th century on the island of Lindisfarne, off the Northumbrian Coast in northern England.

The images, like the words of the prayers, reflect the tenets of Celtic Christianity: That our deepest essence of being is that we carry within us the image of God, the mystery of God and the interconnectedness of all humans who bear within themselves God's image no matter how flawed that image may be.

Best of all, however, are Newell's prayers. Newell, who spent seven years as leader of the well-known Iona community in Ireland, sums up the whole of Celtic Christian doctrine into a few sentences of staggering beauty and depth.

The prayers stay with you throughout the day; gentle enough to bring a smile to your face, yet powerful in their challenges to fully live one's life as a child of God.

"Celtic Benediction" is something every Christian interested in deepening his or her own spiritual practice should experience in all its many-faceted layers. *Victoria Moon*



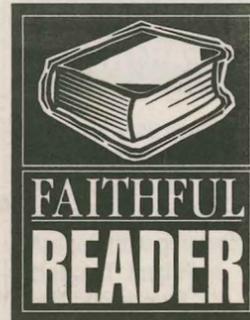
The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to the Blessed Life. *Bruce Wilkinson.* Multnomah Publishers, 2000. 93 pages. \$9.99 ♦

Bruce Wilkinson believes he has discovered the secret to the abundant Christian life: the prayer of Jabez. Tucked away in 1 Chronicle, chapter 4's meticulous accounting for the lineage of King David is a reference to Jabez.

Wilkinson notes that in this long genealogical survey, only Jabez is singled out for his prayer and God's affirmation. He reasons that there must be some significance to that. "What exactly did Jabez do to rise above the rest? Why did God answer his prayer? I wondered. For that matter, why did God even include Jabez's mini-profile in the Bible?"

From these questions Wilkinson began a lifetime of praying Jabez's prayer and discovered that this prayer, other than his prayer for salvation, has "revolutionized (his) life and ministry the most." The book serves as his testimony about the power of this prayer discipline in his life. He invites us to join him in this discipline and all but guarantees us that God so wants us to pray this prayer, that failure to do so will result in our missing out on all the blessings God has for us.

While I would not discount the power of this discipline in Wilkinson's life, I find his hyperbolic claims about this prayer a bit much. It seems that if the content of this prayer were so important to God, then when the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he would have referred them to Jabez. I would rather devote my life to incorporating the prayer of Jesus into the warp and woof of my life than an obscure prayer in a lengthy genealogy. *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, docholladay@juno.com or [victoria.moon@kybaptist.org](mailto: victoria.moon@kybaptist.org)

Authors use athletes' stories to show students the 'Heart of a Champion'

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

NASHVILLE (BP)—When Cleveland Browns lineman Tony Jones checked into a local hospital for routine elbow surgery, he never expected to face death.

But an allergic reaction to anesthesia triggered a massive heart attack. Suddenly his monitor flat-lined.

With an injection into his heart, doctors brought him back to life. When he had recovered enough to speak, Jones, now with the Denver Broncos, talked about his frightening brush with death.

When his heart stopped, he faced total blackness. He said he realized that if he died he was definitely headed for hell. The experience turned his life around.

"I sat there and thought, 'God ... I don't care if I ever play football again,'" Jones recalled. "I don't care what happens to me. I just want to be able to see my son being born."

God answered that prayer, Jones said, and restored his health and his football career.

Jones is just one of 100 athletes whose stories appear in "Heart of a Champion: Profiles in Character."

Authors Steve Riach and John Humphries say they hope the book is the first in a series aimed at promoting the teaching of positive values in America's public schools.

Their Dallas-based Heart of a Champion Foundation is preparing curriculum for students in grades three through 12 that will relate principles from the book. Among them are commitment, leadership, teamwork, discipline and overcoming adversity.

The foundation's character education materials will be introduced in Dallas-area schools this fall, then move to national distribution.

"We really take the call to be salt and light very seriously," said Riach, executive producer of Vision Quest Communications, a sports media firm. "We do that predominantly in mainstream areas, which is why our emphasis has been on the ESPNs of the world."

The book will benefit from the participation of network commentator Clark Kellogg, lead basketball analyst for CBS. The former Ohio State star wrote commentaries for each of the 12 chapters.

While 98 percent of the athletes profiled are Christians, the book differs from testimony-style collections that relate individuals' conversion experiences.

Much of what makes a person a champion is how he or she lives outside the spotlight, Humphries said.

So their goal was to share more behind-the-scenes stories that often escape notice amid the glamour of competition.

"Those are the stories that need to be told because those are the stories that I believe makes their faith real," Riach said.

"Many people can't relate to a guy who makes \$25 million a year or a guy who wins an Olympic medal," he said. "But they can relate to somebody who has to walk through adversity, failure and tragedy."

The authors, whose company has produced programming for the National Football League and ESPN, said they hope "Heart of a Champion" appeals to church members and unbelievers alike.

Christians can draw encouragement and hope from reading about high-profile people who have overcome various

obstacles, Riach said, while non-Christians can learn about the reality of Christ and God's work in the lives of ordinary people who have been given extraordinary platforms.

While centered on character-building principles, the book doesn't overlook faith. For example, among Humphries' favorite stories is one about James Naismith, the inventor of basketball.

"There's a whole spiritual element in how he was thinking of a new game, how he chose basketball and why he did it," Humphries said. "In the early years, the main training for basketball coaches was done by Naismith, in the context of the YMCA and the whole spiritual component. You never hear about that now."

The book also can be an evangelistic tool by opening people's eyes to the truth, Riach said.

Evangelism isn't limited to describing steps toward becoming a Christian, he added. "Obviously they have to trust Christ as their Savior. But there are many ways the Holy Spirit can illuminate that to people."

"By reading the stories of these (athletes) and seeing how faith has been an integral part of their lives, I think the Holy Spirit can use that to open people's eyes."



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:

■ Ministries of Greater Boston Baptist Association at this year's 105th running of the Boston Marathon on April 16.

■ David Jackson, church planter strategist for Greater Boston Baptist Association, as he begins a new ministry this month as church planting consultant for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. This is a position previously held by Jackson's father.

■ Rick Lally, a native Bostonian who is beginning a Bible study in Brighton, Mass. He and his wife, Vivianna, are committed to reaching their neighborhood with the gospel.

■ Thank God for the open door to teach literacy among the Digo people group in Tanzania.

■ The Zaramo people group in Tanzania, as missionaries work to help them experience God's power through Jesus, not in witch doctors.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ CADIZ—East Cadiz Church will host revival services April 22-25 at 6:30 p.m. **Bill Whittaker**, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, will be the evangelist. **Jeff Christmas** will be the music director. For information, call (270) 522-7522. **Robert Burnett** is pastor.

■ CALHOUN—Buck Creek Church will host **Cheri Taylor** in concert April 27 at 7 p.m. Taylor also will lead a women's conference April 28 at 10 a.m. For information, call (270) 733-4056. **Jeff French** is pastor.

■ CRESCENT SPRINGS—Crescent Springs Church honored **Wayne Dozier** for his 10 years as pastor.

■ ELIZABETHTOWN—Severns Valley Church will host revival services April 22-25. The evangelists will be **Rick Howerton**, LifeWay Christian Resources; **Kevin Cosby**, St. Stephens Church; **Travis Collins**, Mt. Washington Church; **Rob Turner**, APEX Min-

istries. For information, call (270) 765-7822. **Billy Compton** is pastor.

■ ERLANGER—Anchor Church will host **The Sound** in concert April 22 at 6:30 p.m. For information, call (859) 727-6400. **Darryl Crenshaw** is pastor.

■ GAMALIEL—Gamaliel and Tompkinsville church choirs will present "Cornerstone" April 15 at 7 p.m. at Gamaliel Church. For information, call (270) 487-6538.

■ GLASGOW—Immanuel Church called **Tony Cecil** as pastor. Cecil previously served as minister of youth at Central Church in Winchester.

Isaac McDonald has completed his interim pastorate of Immanuel Church and is available for pulpit supply, interims and revivals. For information, call (270) 737-7731.

■ GREENSBURG—Greensburg Church will host revival services April 21-25, beginning with a concert by **The**

Crossmen Quartet April 21 at 7 p.m. **Danny Pace** will be the evangelist. For information, call (270) 932-4495.

■ HOPKINSVILLE—New Work Fellowship's women's ministry will host a conference April 27 at 7 p.m. and April 28 at 9 a.m. **Susan Hunt** will speak on "Women Nurturing Women." For information, call (270) 889-0773.

■ JEFFERSONTOWN—**Harry Sherrer** resigned as pastor of Hopewell Church to accept a call to a church in Maryville, Tenn.

■ LOUISVILLE—Beechmont Church will host an Easter hunt April 14 at 1 p.m. for preschool-5th graders. **James Ward** is pastor.

Gethsemane Church will host revival services April 22-25. **Rolfe Dorsey** will be the evangelist. **Robert Wright** is pastor.

Long Run Association presented the Clarence Jordan Award to **Wayne Dehoney**, former pastor of Walnut Street Church, at a dinner at Audubon Church. Dehoney was recognized for his work for needy people.

New Beginning Church will celebrate its fifth anniversary and honor

Pastor **Michael Baker** for five years of service April 22. For information, call (502) 367-0680.

Ormsby Heights Church will host **Lois Jane** in concert April 22 at 6:30 p.m. **Rick Bowden** is pastor.

■ MORNING VIEW—Piner Church called **Dan Ison** as associate pastor. **Richard Collins** is pastor.

■ MT. VERNON—Roundstone Church will host revival services April 21-25 at 7 p.m. **Ronnie Pennington** will be the evangelist. **Arnold Pingleton** is pastor.

■ ONEIDA—Oneida Institute will present "Arsenic and Old Lace" April 19-21 at 7 p.m. Dinner will be served at 5:45 p.m. For information, call (606) 847-4111.

■ VERSAILLES—Versailles Church and Versailles Methodist Church choirs will present the musical "Experiencing God" April 22 at 7 p.m. at Versailles Church.

■ WHITLEY CITY—Flat Rock Church will host revival services April 22-27. **Bill Jividen**, a pastor from Cheyenne, Wyo., will be the evangelist. **Larry Burton** is pastor.

Southern Baptist archives opens historic collection to researchers

NASHVILLE (BP)—The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives has opened the Clifton J. Allen Papers to researchers. The materials offer a firsthand look at the former Baptist Sunday School Board and the Southern Baptist Convention during some of their most crucial years.

From 1945 to his retirement in 1968, Allen served as the editorial secretary of the Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources). After retiring, he served as general editor of the Broadman Bible Commentary. He also was SBC re-

cording secretary from 1965-76. He died in 1986.

"The Allen Papers document the life and work of Southern Baptists in the 20th century better than any other manuscript collection in the archives," said Bill Summers, director and archivist for the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives. "His files touch every major issue that faced Southern Baptists for over 40 years of the 20th century—including race relations, peace and war, temperance, social unrest, biblical authority, and work and ministry of the Sunday

School Board."

The collection contains information on board publications such as the "Message of Genesis" by Ralph Elliott and the Broadman Bible Commentary controversy. His papers not only document the work of the board, but record the organizational structure of the SBC through the 1950s and 1960s.

Allen also was actively involved in the work of the Baptist World Alliance, the Crusade for Christian Morality and the International Council of Religious Education. A gradu-

ate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he was pastor of churches in Kentucky and North Carolina before going to the Sunday School Board in 1937 as associate editorial secretary.

The Clifton J. Allen Papers are open and available to all researchers at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, located in the Southern Baptist Convention Building in Nashville. The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives is a research center open to anyone for the study of Baptist history and life.

CLASSIFIED ADS

AVAILABLE: Minister Larry Moore, 59, experienced, is available for supply work, interim pastor or possible pastor positions. Call (859) 278-3524, or write 226 Westwood Court, Lexington, KY 40603. Resumé on request.

FOR SALE: 1989 low-mileage, 15-passenger van. Send bid to Buena Vista Baptist Church, 119 W 24th St., Owensboro, KY 42303.

FOR RENT: 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo available for vacation rental, Sanibel Island, Fla. Large pool, tennis courts, bikes, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely secluded beach. Weekly rates May through mid-December: \$695. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music with emphasis on children and youth. Some experience in choir direction and worship planning a plus. Working knowledge of youth ministry very helpful. Hours and salary negotiable. Contact or send resumé to: Reid Village Baptist Church, PO Box 157, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353, Attn: Gary Conner. (859) 498-4550 or 585-1382.

SEEKING: Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a part-time minister of youth (paid position). If interested, please send a resumé to: Personnel Committee, Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, 12835 Copley Road, Ashland, KY 41102.

SEEKING: Kentucky Baptist Convention has an immediate opening for a senior accountant. This position has primary responsibility for payroll, general ledger, fixed assets and reconciliations. Should possess strong analytical and problem-solving skills, good communication, high energy, self-starter, the ability to work both independently and as a team player, prioritize multiple projects to meet deadlines. Strong computer skills, with knowledge of spreadsheets and word processing software. Degree in accounting and 3-5 years experience required. Great environment, attractive pay and benefits. Mail resumé to: Administrative Services Department, PO Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433 or e-mail to senioraccountant.job@kybaptist.org.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and education. Seminary preferred. Send resumé to: Elkton Baptist Church, PO Box 547, Elkton, KY 42220, Attn: Staff Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to children. Please send resumé to: Valley Station Baptist Church, 5415 Valley Station Road, Louisville, KY 40272.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for East Hickman Baptist Church, an historic, rural church located four miles from Lexington, Ky. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 2125 Azalea Dr., Lexington, KY 40504.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. We are looking for a blended approach of traditional and contemporary music. Please forward resumé to: Gano Avenue Baptist Church, 519 Gano Ave., Georgetown, KY 40324, Attn: Music Search Committee.

SEEKING: Naperville Baptist Church, a growing congregation in the western suburbs of Chicago, seeks a minister of education to provide leadership for the total discipleship ministry. Strong management skills, passion for training, willingness to work with a strong staff team are required. Send resumé to: Naperville Baptist Church, 29W771 79th St., Naperville, IL 60564; fax to (630) 420-7296; e-mail to Rick@napervillebaptistchurch.org.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for growing, Spirit-led congregation. Send resumé to: McHenry Baptist Church, PO Box 154, McHenry, KY 42354.

SEEKING: Receptionist/secretary to minister of music and worship arts and director of hospitality and special events at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. Computer and phone skills needed. For more information, please call Dr. David Stancil, (502) 896-8882.

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

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

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

SEEKING: Administrative assistant to perform full range of secretarial and administrative functions for the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship. Experience in Word and Excel needed. Contact John Lepper, (502) 426-1931; fax: (502) 426-1612. jlepper@kybf.org. E-mail, fax or mail resumé to: Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, 225 S Hurstbourne Parkway, Suite 205, Louisville, KY 40222-4929.

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

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

Missouri woman is 'mother hen' to Vietnamese kids

By Shawn Hendricks
Missouri Word & Way

FESTUS, Mo. (ABP)—When Betty Hayes walks into the foyer of Faith Baptist Church in Festus, Mo., one can't help but notice her.

With Vietnamese children flocking around her like chicks following their mother hen, the longtime church member makes her way through the building.

For the past 20 years, relationships between Hayes and a local Vietnamese community have matured slowly but steadily into a full-fledged ministry of the church. Within the last two years, the church has begun holding Vietnamese worship services in the fellowship hall.

Hayes, a single woman in her 60s, is quick to point out the support the ministry receives from fellow members of the congregation. But there is no doubt that she is the ringleader.

Whether giving rides to church for Vietnamese children or serving as a go-between for Vietnamese adults who speak little English and their doctors, Hayes keeps busy. And she does it all without speaking a word of Vietnamese.

"The children speak English, so that helps," she said.

It all began in 1981 when Hayes agreed to take in an 8-year-old Vietnamese girl named Mia, who needed a place to live. She lived with Hayes through college.

Hayes said it was an opportunity she couldn't pass up. "When the Lord puts something in front of us, we need to respond then, and He will multiply it."

Hayes, who also has two adult adopted children, has housed a half-dozen Vietnamese children through the years. She currently has legal custody of a 9-year-old Vietnamese girl, and she takes care of a 15-year-old boy.

Though Hayes believes the Lord's work is being done through the ministry, she said the cultural differences make it difficult for her and others to share their faith. Because most Vietnamese have been raised in the Buddhist culture, making a profession of faith in Christ is not easy for them.

Just within the last two years, however, the church has begun to see more cultural barriers broken down through the Vietnamese services Hayes and others helped start. Ban Le, pastor of Emmanuel Vietnamese Baptist Church in St. Louis, leads the service.

Through the years, 11 Vietnamese people have made professions of faith.

Mike Goodwin, who has been pastor of the church for 29 years, said Hayes is "one of the most marvelous ministers I've ever known. ... She's the picture of sacrificial ministry."

Artist depicts Jesus in Japanese context

By Chris Herlinger
Religion News Service

NEW YORK (RNS)—To Westerners, the scenes are well known. They are the subjects of paintings by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, the stuff of sermons and Sunday school lessons: Jesus and His disciples seated at the Last Supper; Peter denying Jesus; John baptizing Jesus in the Jordan.

But in the world depicted by the late Japanese printmaker Watanabe Sadao (1913-1996), the details are firmly rooted in Japanese culture: Jesus and His disciples are not seated at a table and eating bread and drinking wine but are sharing a meal of sushi, fish and rice. Peter is clad in the formal attire of a samurai; John baptizes Jesus while wearing a kimono.

For Watanabe, now the subject of a major exhibition at the gallery of the American Bible Society in New York City, the integration of Japanese art and Christian faith made for a seamless whole, not an easy thing to pull off since Christianity remains a small, minority religion in Japan.

But the result was both respected in Japan and cherished in the West. "Watanabe was very comfortable under his own skin, and it shows in the art," said Patricia Pongracz, curator of the gallery, which is exhibiting 59 of Watanabe's prints through May 19.

"God, his Christian faith, his ethnic identity—it all shows in art that is approachable, unforced and not derivative at all," Pongracz said in a recent interview while showing a visitor the exhibit. "Watanabe was a tremendous cultural bridge. He uses these 'codified' biblical images and tweaks them a bit.

"It's great folk art but it is also great

religious art. It's a seamless blend. They don't compete with each other."

Born in Tokyo, Watanabe was the son of a printer. He converted to Christianity as a youth after nearly dying of tuberculosis. A student of Keisuke Serizawa, a leading proponent of the mingei—folk art—movement, Watanabe became versed in what is called the "katazome" method of stencil dyeing. This technique requires stenciling paste onto fabric and hand coloring the open areas. The result is art of rich colors, subtlety and clean lines.

To Japanese eyes, Watanabe's work is instantly recognizable as rooted in a particular tradition. That was no accident: Watanabe was determined to express his Christianity within a Japanese context, and not just imitate the art of the West.

However, Watanabe's Christian faith was at the center of what he did. Pongracz noted that the art was produced in the wake of the end of World War II, when Japan was shattered as a nation.

"It was like a phoenix rising," she said of Watanabe's faith. "It was an expression of faith when there was little faith around."

For his part, Watanabe said he owed his "life to Christ and the gospel."

"My way of expressing my gratitude is to witness to my faith through the medium of biblical scenes," he said.

Historian Anne H.H. Pyle, a one-time student of the artist, noted in an essay that the "road to acceptance and recognition of his work in Japan was long and difficult," in part because of post-war debate in Japan over what constituted "fine art" and "applied art."

Watanabe began gaining international recognition in the late 1950s, but it was James Michener's 1962 book,



"The Modern Japanese Print," which solidified Watanabe's international reputation.

Watanabe's art has graced popular church calendars and posters, and his prints are now exhibited in many of the world's leading museums.

One of Watanabe's prints was even displayed in the White House during Lyndon Johnson's administration. But Watanabe was not easily impressed by where his art was exhibited. "I would most like to see them hanging where people ordinarily gather," he said, "because Jesus brought the gospel for the people."

Pongracz said Japanese visitors to the gallery often are more startled than Westerners when seeing the prints. Many have heard of Watanabe, she said, but never knew the vast range of his work.

"He was drawing from his passion for life, which was inseparable from his faith," Pongracz said. "And his faith was inseparable from who he was."

CULTURAL VIEW Japanese artist Watanabe Sadao sought to communicate the truths of the gospel in a Japanese context. His depiction of the Last Supper shows Jesus and His disciples sharing a meal of sushi. (RNS photo by Eduardo Colderon)

Russians fear tax IDs are sign of the Antichrist

By Frank Brown
Religion News Service

MOSCOW (RNS)—Ignoring a chilling rain, 500 Russian Orthodox believers gathered last month in a park near the Kremlin to hear several speakers sound a call to action against vague forces threatening Christians, Russia and, ultimately, the world.

The immediate cause of concern for these believers, and another 40,000 Russians who have signed petitions throughout the country, is a new government tax identification number designed to combat widespread tax dodging.

For a range of vocal opponents, the tax IDs and accompanying barcodes are to be avoided at all costs because they contain the number 666, the sign of the Antichrist.

Their anxiety and distrust—which has given rise to talk of schism—is at the root of one of the most severe crises to face the Russian Orthodox Church since it gained its freedom a decade ago with the fall of the Soviet Union.

These church members believe that the time, as foretold in the New Testament Book of Revelation, has arrived when "no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of his name."

Patriarch Alexii II and other top

prelates of the 80-million member Russian Orthodox Church are in an awkward position. In the year since the election of church-friendly Vladimir Putin as president, the patriarch has steered the church closer to the Russian government.

Now, tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of believers are convinced the patriarch must denounce the government's tax IDs and save Russian Orthodoxy. The patriarch has not done so.

Instead, in a series of letters and pronouncements, church leaders and theologians have done their best to dampen the anxiety about an apocalypse.

Despite the Russian Orthodox Church's effort to cool the debate, opponents appear to be gathering steam. Father Andrei Lebedev, an Orthodox priest from St. Petersburg who heads the Social Movement for the Right to Live Without Tax IDs, said his organization has branches in eight cities and has collected 40,000 signatures in Moscow and St. Petersburg alone.

Shortly before speaking to the rain-soaked crowd, Lebedev explained why especially those people living in rural and provincial Russia have had such a visceral reaction to the tax IDs.

"People think that the introduction of electronic IDs will allow total control over them through the use of the

'Global Positioning System,'" he said. "The result is an electronic concentration camp and the manipulation of the consciousness of a person. People know what a Stalinist concentration camp is."

After the Russian Orthodox Church was nearly destroyed by the totalitarian Soviet government, believers are sensitive to increased government control over their lives and attempts to deprive them of their ethnic or religious identity. Ignorance also plays a large role, according to a member of Russia's parliament working on the issue.

"A lot of this comes from lack of knowledge, from lack of understanding. We must take these people into account," said Alexander Chuev, a State Duma deputy who heads the Russian Christian Democratic Party and has worked closely with the Russian Orthodox Church to find a solution.

Chuev has proposed legislation designed to get around the tax ID issue and says he has the preliminary agreement of the Tax Ministry.

His idea is to issue each Russian citizen an ID number that would correspond to a document listing each taxpayer's details, rather than an ID number corresponding to an actual person.

Chuev, a member of the pro-Kremlin Unity faction, expects his bill to come up for a vote this month and does not anticipate much opposition.



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