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Research team lists 9 habits to draw & keep unchurched

By Michael Foust
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—What do Sunday school classes, church doctrine, clean restrooms and friendly greeters have in common?

They’re all factors that have helped churches attract unchurched people and keep them.

That’s the conclusion of a seven-year study by Thom Rainer and a research team at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

The study, “Nine Habits of Churches that Reach and Keep the Unchurched,” combines both old and new research, and includes surveys of more than 4,000 churches and interviews with more than 1,000 individuals.

A highlight of the study is new research into what Rainer calls the “formerly unchurched.” That is, people who became Christians within the previous 12 months and were active in church. This new research includes interviews with more than 350 formerly unchurched people and examines factors that attracted and kept them in the church.

Rainer, founding dean of the Billy Graham school, said past surveys that simply studied people outside of the church (the unchurched) had weaknesses.

“Something is obviously wrong because the unchurched are telling (researchers) what it would take to reach them, but they are not responding,” Rainer said.

Instead of hypothesizing unchurched people the hypothetical question “What would it take for a church to attract you?” Rainer’s team focused on people who recently had become Christians and what their churches did well to draw them.

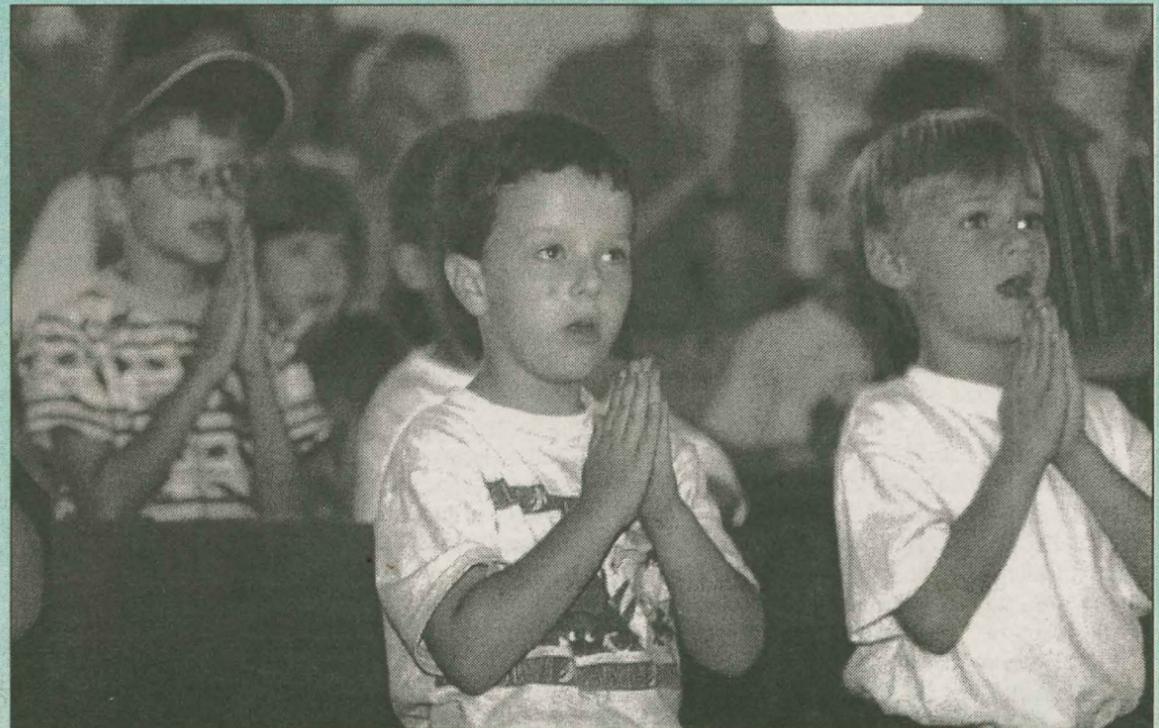
“Why don’t we ask them what God did in their lives and what the church did to bring them into the church?” Rainer recounted.

Nine denominations comprise the basis of the new study: Southern Baptist Convention, Evangelical Free, American Baptist, Presbyterian Church in America, Assemblies of God, Wesleyan Church, Church of the Nazarene, United Methodist and independent Baptists. The churches involved in the study ranged in attendance from 40 to 18,000.

Interviews with the formerly unchurched were limited to members of what Rainer calls “effective evangelistic churches.” Those are churches that met certain requirements regarding the number of annual conversions in relation to their membership. Only 4 percent of the churches in his research met such

□ See *Researchers list 9 ...*, page 10

Vacation Bible school



IS YOUR CHURCH READY? Jordan Duke, 6, center, and Grant Ellington, 6, right, sing songs of praise in the sanctuary at vacation Bible school at First Baptist Church of Henderson last June. Leaders say now is the time to prepare a church for the summer outreach to children. (Henderson Gleaner photo by Darrin Phegley. Used with permission)

Leaders say it will be time before you know it

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Vacation Bible school experts agree that now is the time for churches to start planning for VBS programs that meet the practical needs of the participants as well as the spiritual needs.

“Security is a big, big deal in this day and age,” said Wendy Dever, associate for preschool and children in the Sunday school department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. “And health issues are very important, too.”

Dever said safety measures like letting parents know what snack or craft is planned each day might seem unnecessary to some program lead-

ers, but could prevent a life-threatening emergency.

“I always post allergy alert cards in my classrooms,” she said, “that let parents know exactly what their children will be eating and drinking and handling.”

Janelle Frazee, associate vacation Bible school director for Louisville’s Long Run Baptist Association, has seen firsthand the importance of child safety measures.

“Over my years of teaching, I’ve had a child have a seizure, and another go into insulin shock,” she said. “Another of our children was so allergic to grain products that even touching (them) would cause a severe allergic reaction, so we had his moth-

er inspect the classroom with us to remove any potential hazards.”

Increasing pressure for better safety and security measures for children comes from shifts in our culture, said Frazee.

“I think it’s partly because churches used to know the people in their community in a way they don’t now, and partly because our culture and society have changed,” she said.

“People are not comfortable walking into a building and leaving their child with a complete stranger the way they might have been 20 years ago.”

As a result of these shifts, Frazee said churches should take their cue

□ See *Specialists: It’s time ...*, page 3

Churches asked to help mentally ill & families

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

HODGENVILLE—Several years ago bivocational pastor John Routh received information promoting a pastors’ seminar about caring for people with mental illness.

He discarded the material, but his outlook changed last May after his 22-year-old son was diagnosed with depression.

Today he is a trained teacher of a “Family to Family” class offered by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. The Elizabethtown affiliate began offering its latest 12-week session last month.

The primary course offered by the non-profit agency reviews the components of mental illness and how families can cope. It also serves as a support group.

“One thing NAMI is all about is removing the stigma,” said Routh, pastor of Welfare Baptist Church in Jamestown. “Mental illness is more widespread than heart disease or cancer.”

“That makes it imperative we educate people,” he added. “If it strikes one in five people, what would the chances be of someone being affected in a church of 300? Here’s a need that we could meet.”

But few Kentucky Baptist congregations are involved in such ministries—something the new executive director of the non-profit agency’s Kentucky office hopes to change.

Harry Mills, a pastor of Baptist churches in Ohio and Kentucky for 20 years, joined the NAMI’s Kentucky office last November. He got involved in NAMI four years ago after his son was diagnosed with schizophrenia.

“Seminaries do not train pastors with regard to mental illness,” said Mills, who most recently was pastor of Auburndale Baptist Church in Louisville. “Because of the stigma that comes with it, people are reluctant to talk about it, even with their pastor.”

“There is a tendency to believe it comes from bad behavior or is a demon possession,” he said. “It is neither. It is an illness.”

Based in Arlington, Va., the alliance is funded by a combination of government and foundation grants and private donations. In Kentucky, it has 14 affiliates.

Mills described its purpose as threefold: educating the public, serving as a legislative advocate and improving treatment options.

But the former pastor has another issue on his heart. He wants to see more

□ See *Churches asked ...*, page 3

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, April 18

'Tsilent Tsunami' seeks to impact major European cities

By Jenny Rogers
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Amsterdam. Berlin. Brussels. Frankfurt. Paris. Madrid. Rome.

Premier cities like these in Western Europe conjure up images of exotic vacation travel. But for millions of immigrants and refugees who call these cities home, there is no glamour.

Instead of financial success, they find language barriers. Instead of a new life, they find alcohol and nightclubs. And instead of hope, they find spiritu-

al darkness and despair.

Southern Baptist mission leaders would like to change that.

With a vision for reaching these seven strategic gateway cities in Western Europe, a ministry group called "Tsilent Tsunami" (pronounced: silent soo-NAH-mee) is seeking to make inroads with the gospel. Tsilent Tsunami's team members are reaching out to pockets of immigrants and political refugees, many of whom enjoy Europe's religious freedom in contrast to that of their birth countries in Asia, northern Africa and the Middle East.

The missions emphasis coincides with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's launch of a three-year missions partnership with the European Baptist Convention. The EBC, a convention of English-language churches, has congregations in more than 20 European countries.

The name "Tsilent Tsunami" came from the idea of a tsunami, or tidal wave, of prayer and outreach spilling across Western Europe. Using such avenues as praying, teaching English, crafts, dancing, singing and cutting hair, team members are ministering among people groups often closed to the gospel.

"Many refugees come from closed-access countries where it's illegal to witness or to convert to Christianity," said Chris Mills, associate director of IMB work in Western Europe. "They bring with them the religions they know, and often, hurting, empty hearts ravaged by wars and persecution."

Volunteers are needed for prayer-walking and distributing Christian materials in a variety of languages.

"The world is moving to Western Europe," Mills noted. "In London, for example, there are areas where English is by far a minority language. In fact, over 140 languages are spoken in London."

In Germany, he added, "I've been told that the largest Turkish population outside of Turkey resides in Germany."

The flood of immigrants to these gateway cities has done much to deconstruct the view of Western Europe

as a "Christian" area. In fact, Southern Baptist mission strategists have dubbed Western Europe "the new Last Frontier."

In most countries, evangelicals account for less than 1 percent of the population.

"Most Americans think of the great cathedrals in Western Europe and conclude, 'It must be a Christian place, just look at all the churches,'" Mills said. "The truth is, those church buildings are just monuments and mausoleums. They're filled with people, all right—tourists who take pictures and whisper aloud while a solitary priest pronounces Mass over a small group of aged congregants."

Mills believes now is a strategic time for reaching Western Europe with the gospel.

"Compared to (immigrants') home countries, Western Europe provides a very safe environment to witness," he explained. "While they are in transition, these people are especially open to receive Christ. But the window doesn't remain open indefinitely. We have to respond while they are ready."

With a goal of placing 1 million volunteers, plus long- and short-term missionary personnel, in the seven gateway cities, Tsilent Tsunami team leaders want to give Bibles to every member of identifiable unreached people groups.

For more information, call Tsilent Tsunami toll-free at (888) 836-5464 or visit the Web site at www.tsilenttsunami.com.

Prayers focus on Bhutan's Drukpa people group

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists are being invited to unite their prayers for the Drukpa, an unreached people group in the remote South Asian country of Bhutan, from 6 p.m. Friday, June 1, through 6 p.m. Saturday, June 2.

For centuries, the Drukpa have carried on their customs and religious practices with little variation. Because of their isolation in the treacherous terrain of the Himalaya Mountains—and their resistance to change—the Drukpa are virtually untouched by the gospel.

Bhutan, the only country officially recognized as a Tibetan Buddhist kingdom, incorporates Buddhism into every aspect of life. Prayer flags, prayer wheels and fortress monasteries called "dzongs" are as much a part of the Bhutanese landscape as the rugged Himalayas.

Mixed with ancient folk practices of

shamanism, magic, ancestor worship and divination, the religious landscape of Bhutan appears in fearsome symbols and faces of demons painted on houses.

Bhutanese leaders consider Christianity a threat to the preservation of their culture, and the few Christians in the country may be denied education and lose jobs and citizenship.

The Drukpa "are stuck in a cycle of deception," said a Christian familiar with the country. "The practices are very much akin to the occult, as there is so much superstition about everything—when you can marry, even the right time to pay bills."

A free video resource kit for the Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization is available from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board Call toll-free (800) 866-3621.

Baptist seminaries in Texas & Beirut agree to form fraternal relationship

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Leaders of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, have signed an "agreement of fraternal relationship" with a seminary in Beirut, Lebanon.

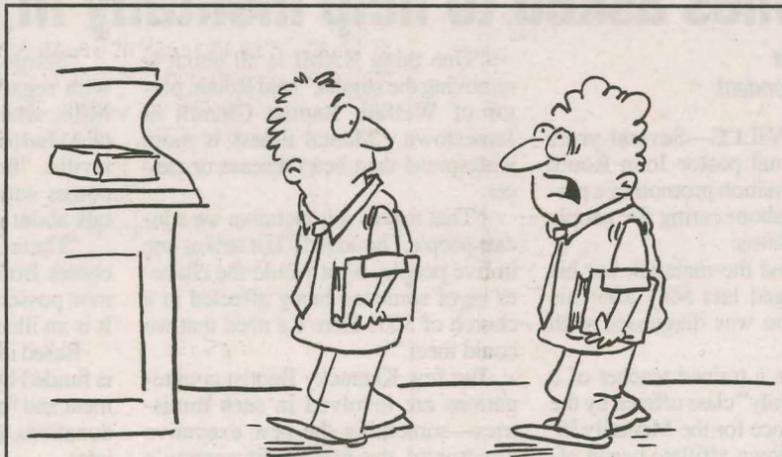
"This is a historic agreement," said Ghassan Khalaf, president of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut. ABTS is the only Baptist seminary in the Middle East-North Africa region and the only Christian seminary that can openly train converts.

The agreement signed by Khalaf and Southwestern Seminary President Ken Hemphill encourages "faculty enrichment through mutual use and co-

operation." Southwestern has similar agreements with educational institutions in Tokyo, Korea and India.

The document also calls for "student enrichment through mutual cooperation." Southwestern professors and students already have served at the Beirut seminary, and the first student from ABTS will enroll in Southwestern this fall.

The Arab seminary was established in 1960 by the former Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The board transferred ownership of the seminary to Baptists in Lebanon in 1993. Khalaf said the school currently has 10 professors and 50 to 60 students.



"I learned not to be haughty after I do a good deed, because a crown doesn't fit a swelled head."

BAPTIST DIGEST

Free counseling for ministers.

Individual, marital and family counseling will be offered free of charge to Southern Baptist ministers and their families during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 11-13 in New Orleans. The counseling sessions, as well as health screenings and a luncheon program, will be provided by LeaderCare and Wounded Ministers, ministries of the SBC's LifeWay Christian Resources. Licensed therapists and pastoral counselors will provide the confidential counseling sessions in private locations. A complimentary ministers' luncheon will be held June 11. For information, call Kay Russell at (615) 251-2173.

Student journalism event set.

Registration for the 2001 Baptist Press National Student Journalism Conference is under way, according to Will Hall, vice president for news services with the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. The conference is set for Sept. 27-29 in Nashville. For information, call (615) 782-8615 or e-mail tstarnes@sbc.net.

Virginia Baptist leader to retire.

Reginald McDonough, executive director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia for 15 years, has announced he will retire at the end of next February. Before serving in Virginia, Mc-

Donough was associate executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Duke names Baptist director.

Texas professor Curtis Freeman has been named director of Duke University Divinity School's Baptist House of Studies. Freeman, 45, is professor of Christianity and philosophy at Houston Baptist University, where he has taught since 1987. He will succeed Duke's first Baptist House director, Furman Hewitt, who will retire in July.

Cantata premieres at Southern.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Oratorio Chorus will present the premiere performance of "Emmanuel: Eternal Hope" April 20 at 8 p.m. in the Louisville seminary's Alumni Chapel. The cantata was composed by Wade Smith, a doctoral student at Southern.

Seminary names new director.

Attorney Joseph Breshears has been named executive director of development and general counsel for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Breshears, who previously held a similar position with the Baptist Foundation of Texas, is a graduate of Baylor University Law School.

Specialists: It's time to prepare for vacation Bible school

Continued from page 1

on health and safety measures from secular schools and day cares, and then go one step further.

"I don't think churches think about things like this when they start planning their VBS program, but it is my conviction that we should see what the school systems and day cares are doing, and then magnify that effort because we are doing this for God, and our purpose is higher," she said.

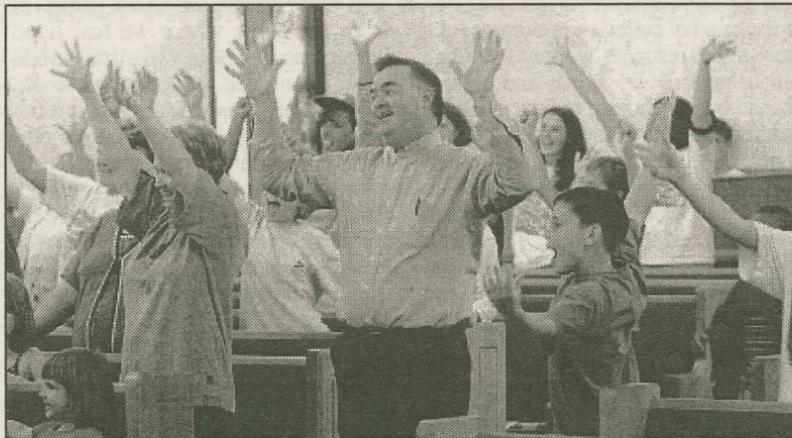
Practical steps she suggested include collecting detailed information about all children enrolled in vacation Bible school including emergency numbers and allergy information. Another step is ensuring enough staff is on hand to maintain classroom safety.

Dever and Frazee agreed that safety issues are especially critical in relation to preschool children.

"Parents of preschool children need to have some sort of identification when picking up a child," Frazee said. "And it is essential to know where they are at all times."

"Some churches use preschool security cards, which are handed to the parents when they drop their child off and which they must bring back in order to pick them up," Dever said.

The 2001 director's planning guide for "Truth Trackers and the Secret of the Stone Tablets," vacation Bible school curriculum from LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, suggests program leaders take safety walks through all the preschool and children's facilities to be used for their program and check for the following:



SONG TIME Nathan Whisnant, center, pastor of Eastview Baptist Church in Henderson, sings the *Ocean Odyssey* theme song along with students and teachers during vacation Bible school last June. (Henderson Gleaner photo by Darrin Phegley)

- Fully-stocked first-aid kits in each room in an easily accessible place.

- A published list of VBS teachers certified in first aid and CPR.

- Safety plugging in any exposed outlets.

- All furnishing and equipment are in working order.

- Screws and tight and nails are unexposed; chair and table legs are stable and playground equipment is safe.

- Wooden blocks have smooth edges.

- Carpet is free of holes and frayed edges.

- Disinfectant and cleaning supplies are stored out of reach of preschoolers.

- Toys are appropriate for each age group and free of loose parts or jagged edges.

- The rooms are free of any item within a child's reach that could be a choking hazard.

- Plants in the rooms are non-toxic.

- Ground coverings (mulch, gravel, sand) beneath playground equipment are of adequate depth.

LifeWay experts also encourage churches to reinforce existing security measures during vacation Bible school and have a volunteer security team monitor the church facilities during the program.

"We need to think of everything that could happen, and care for these kids just like we were their parents," Frazee said. "From security to health issues to advocacy, we need to take on that responsibility and care for these kids the way God cares for them."

Churches asked to help mentally ill & families

Continued from page 1

churches involved in ministering to the mentally ill and their families.

"I became a teacher for the (Family to Family) course and a member of the board of directors, but I wanted to be more involved," Mills said. "I saw the gap in terms of the faith community. The Lord was working in me and putting a burden on my heart for this."

He sees two primary steps churches can take:

- **Educating members.** He believes many have an image of those with mental illness as crazy and murderous. But with proper education, 70 percent of those with brain disorders can be productive members of society, he said.

- **Sponsoring support groups, offering prayers for the sick and their families and openly discussing the problem.**

Because someone is struggling with depression doesn't mean he or she is a bad person, Mills said. Reaching out to those who feel isolated or alienated can make a major impact.

A former Baptist pastor who left the ministry because of problems stemming from a family member's mental illness agrees. Dave Harris is part of an alliance taskforce formulating suggestions on how faith communities can reach out to sufferers.

"Most people won't talk about it for fear others will judge them," said Harris, board president for the Kentucky office of NAMI. "There's heartbreaking shame and guilt involved. If people could understand the biological

nature of the illness, it would be tremendous."

Neither the problem nor solution have simple explanations, Harris said. He said his relative endured five fruitless years of counseling before medication helped.

"Instead of shunning these people we need to embrace them and love them. It's a tumultuous time for everyone," Harris said.

Another step churches can take is opening day centers where sufferers can socialize and get involved in activities, said Gilbert Newman, the alliance's vice president for Kentucky.

That likely would require large churches with adequate resources, but Newman said more centers are needed desperately.

Newman said 83 such centers exist in the commonwealth, and they serve only 10 percent of the 74,000 Kentuckians with major mental illnesses.

"If we're going to fill the gap, the churches are going to have to do the job," said Newman, a deacon at Memorial Baptist Church in Frankfort. "Most of these people are isolated. They need to be with people during the day."

Such caring gestures are definitely needed, Routh said. He explained that while physical diseases often are cured, mental illness changes life permanently.

"There's no cure," he said. "The life they had before getting sick is gone and they have to make adjustments. It's a difficult illness for family members to deal with."

Ministry ideas

The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill suggests the following ideas for church ministries to mentally ill people:

- Invite an affiliate of NAMI to conduct a seminar or class. For information, call (800) 257-5081 or e-mail namiky@mindspring.com.

- Attend a NAMI course. The organization will host a free pastors' workshop on ministry and mental illness May 1 at Keeneland Health Education Center at St. Joseph Hospital. For information, call (859) 225-4039 or e-mail namilex@email.msn.com.

- Promote workshops and forums to teach people about mental illnesses.

- Use biblical stories and parables in classes to teach children acceptance of those who seem different.

- Provide space for support group meetings for family members and those who suffer from mental illness.

- Pray for those who are hospitalized with mental illness, as well as their family and friends.

- Discuss the problem with those who are affected by such illness: "You don't have to have all the answers," said Dave Harris, president of the board for NAMI's Kentucky office. "Just be there for love and support."

Why vacation Bible school?

NASHVILLE—According to vacation Bible school experts at LifeWay Christian Resources, VBS is no longer what it used to be: a daily, two-week regimen of activities held immediately after school lets out for the summer.

Now vacation Bible school planners report much more relaxed weekend and weeknight programs built around the busy schedules of both parents and children.

With the changes to accommodate today's chaotic lifestyles, is VBS still a relevant ministry?

LifeWay children's education experts believe it is, and back their assertions with the following statistics from the 1999 VBS national overview:

- More than 3 million people were enrolled in Southern Baptist vacation Bible schools in 1999.

- That same year, more than 100,000 decisions were made for Christ during vacation Bible school.

- More than 4,000 people committed their lives to church-related vocations during Southern Baptist vacation Bible schools.

- More than 76,000 people were enrolled in Sunday schools as a result of attending vacation Bible school.

- Vacation Bible school is the single largest outreach event of the majority of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

- About 25 percent of baptisms in Southern Baptist churches are the result of vacation Bible school.

- More people have come to know Jesus as Savior through vacation Bible school than through any other single church event.

Adapted from LifeWay's 2001 VBS director's planning guide

BLUEGRASS BURGEOON

- **Kentucky Baptist communicators awarded.** The Kentucky Baptist Convention's communications office recently received the Arthur S. Davenport Award in Public Relations for last year's Operation Cooperation campaign to promote the Cooperative Program in Kentucky. The effort encouraged Kentucky Baptists to donate blood as well as support Baptist ministries. The Davenport Award is the highest award for public relations from Baptist Communicators Association, which announced its awards earlier this month. During the awards presentation, Western Recorder News Director David Winfrey received first place for interperter reporting for a story package on church Web sites. Also, Editor Trennis Henderson and Winfrey received BCA's second place in the news series category. The two were recognized for their coverage of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's defense of its hiring practices.

- **Truett Cathy to speak at Georgetown.** Fast-food marketing pioneer and Christian businessman Truett Cathy will speak at Georgetown College April 19, at 11 a.m. in John L. Hill Chapel. Cathy, who founded Chick-fil-A restaurants 55 years ago, is known for his philanthropic work. He also has taught Sunday school for 40 years and doesn't allow his Chick-fil-A restaurants to open on Sunday. The lecture is free and open to the public. For information, call (502) 863-8755.

- **Taylor County Sunday school event offered.** Campbellsville University, Taylor County Baptist Association and the Kentucky Baptist Convention will sponsor a free regional Sunday school leadership conference, Monday, April 23, at Palestine Baptist Church in Campbellsville. Those needing child care are asked to call (270) 465-4169 by April 19. For more information, call Taylor County Baptist Association at (270) 465-7163.

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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Stop coercion

In the March 13 article, "Seminary president, critics differ on faith statement," Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Ken Hemphill said, "No one is being coerced into believing this confession of faith, but it is appropriate for those who work for convention agencies and institutions to be held accountable to the statement of their convention." A fair summary is: "No one" is being coerced except "the ones" we employ.

How and why is it "appropriate" to coerce those employed by the convention? Requiring denominational servants to bow to a doubtful statement is wrong regardless of the intention. Every Christian's accountability is to the body of Christ, the Church. Have we replaced the believer's service and responsibility to the body of Christ with service and responsibility to a merely human authority?

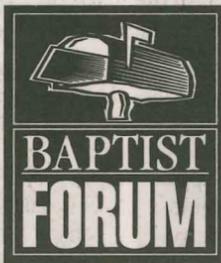
Creedal rules are no different than judicial laws. They simply can't do God's redemptive work. A people who live by such cannot be the redemptive

"body of Christ" to each other, or the world.

No matter the issue, our words of concern and commitment should bring to the mind of believers numerous faith stories that resonate with and validate our behavior. Our words and actions should be yet another telling of God's redemptive acts among us, and of the living Christ at work in us and through us. Only so can we see God's will and participate in it.

Is it in God's will that we judge one another, and use our rules of organization to have power over one another? No.

Can I get a witness?
D.E. Adams
Louisville



Walking by faith

Thanks for the April 3 article about Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. I would like to clear up one point. The fact that students are able to receive Pell grants in no way removes the fact that they walk by faith.

My wife and I sold the majority of our possessions in 1992, loaded the rest

into a U-Haul and moved to Clear Creek. We took our two children from the security of family and friends into unfamiliar territory. We took ourselves from the place where we had lived longer than any other to a place we had never been. Yes, we knew we would receive Pell grant money for tuition. However, we had the promise of nothing else. We had no promised jobs, income or financial security of any kind. But to say that we had no faith or that we needed no faith would be a gross misrepresentation of the facts.

The next three years, Pell grants and all, taught us fully what it means not only to walk by faith, but what it means to see that faith rewarded. We learned not to be surprised when the cabinets were bare to find groceries on the doorstep. We learned to expect financial as well as spiritual needs to be met in the most unlikely ways.

I would recommend Clear Creek to anyone seeking education for ministry. But do not go if you do not plan to walk by faith. Do not go if you are sent by anyone other than God. You see, all of us as Christians walk by faith and not by sight, or at least we should.

James Overbee
Beattyville

KBC audit work group issues report

The audit work group of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board's business and finance committee met February 2, 2001, to perform its annual review and evaluation of the financial condition and practices of the KBC's affiliated entities and its Executive Board as reflected in their 2000 audited financial statements.

This annual audit review process is one important way Kentucky Baptists receive an accountability report from the convention and its affiliated entities. Kentucky Baptists can be pleased that a procedure exists whereby the convention and its institutions and agencies can give an accounting of the stewardship of the resources entrusted to them.

These entities include Campbellsville University, Cumberland College, Georgetown College, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute, Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, Baptist Healthcare System, Woman's Missionary Union, Western Recorder and the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

Kentucky Baptists can be pleased and encouraged with the sound financial condition and stability of their institutions and agencies and the level of cooperation demonstrated by them. The work group was complimentary of the board and administrative leadership of the convention and each of its affiliated entities. Kentucky Baptists are

encouraged to increase their support of these institutions and agencies prayerfully and financially.

Members of the audit work group were: William Class, Covington; Don Phelps, Sturgis; Tom Prather, Louisville; Dan Russell, Paris; Irene Smith, Smithfield; William Steele, Bowling Green; John Mark Toby, Somerset; KBC Business Manager Lowell Ashby; Accounting Services Director Cathi Roy-Sanders, Executive Associate Steve Thompson; and Executive Director Bill Mackey. Certified public accountants also met with the group.

The work group's report was made to the full business and finance committee on March 30, 2001, and approved.

Bill Steele, chairman
KBC audit work group

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Kentucky Baptists' heart for missions

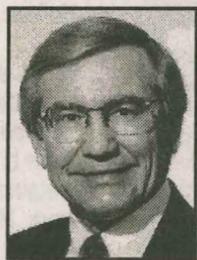
Operation Cooperation, the Kentucky Baptist Convention blood drive emphasis conducted last year as part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Cooperative Program, recently was recognized as Southern Baptists' best regional public relations campaign of the year.

The Baptist Communicators Association gave top honors to the KBC's communications/media department for their work in helping Kentucky Baptists use the CP anniversary as a springboard for reaching out to their communities. Operation Cooperation also was recognized with the Arthur S. Davenport Award for exceptional achievement in public relations.

This is a distinct honor for Robert Reeves, director of the communications/media department, the department staff and all Kentucky Baptists. It was the work of the Cooperative Program 75th Anniversary Celebration Committee, chaired by James Jones,

and the local committees across the commonwealth that enabled the celebration to be a success.

Operation Cooperation was a wonderful celebration of missions by Kentucky Baptists who have a heart for missions. Kentucky Baptists are expressing their heart for missions through partnership missions projects; mission projects in Kentucky and North America; Baptist Builders; Campers on Mission; Kentucky Changers; missions education and support; disaster relief; associational missions; Mission Service Corps; church partnerships; gifts through the Cooperative Program and special offerings; and other ways too many to mention.



Bill Mackey

It is a joy to report to you that Kentucky Baptists have continued their generous support of missions through the Cooperative Program and special offerings. With the close of business day, March 30, Kentucky Baptists had eclipsed last year's giving to date,

which was a record year in CP giving.

It is gratifying to observe the growth in missions giving by many congregations. Some congregations struggle to maintain their percentage level of giving but do so because of a heart for missions in Kentucky and around the world. When some lose ground in giving, it seems that God blesses another congregation to more than compensate.

I know KBC and SBC missions are worthy of my sacrificial giving and support. In the last few days I have heard reports from the work of the KBC staff; heard about 608 college students who paid their own way to use their spring breaks for missions; heard the testimonies of Doug and Marcie Shaw, our missionaries to Poland; met a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student who has become a Mission Service Corps missionary to minister to Muslims; and met a Chinese student involved in collegiate ministry who had just led two Chinese students to faith in Jesus Christ.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your heart for missions and personal participation!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

Financial inventory can aid churches' stewardship goals

By Doug Strader

Many businesses periodically take inventories of their operations to see how well they are doing in the pursuit of their vision. I suggest that you take a financial stewardship inventory to see

how well you are doing in the area of stewardship development. Here are possible actions you could take to see how well your church is doing:

■ Your church budget committee or finance committee can ask the church treasurer or financial secretary to calculate the total dollars given by the top 10 giving members or families. What percent of your total budget do these 10 give? (Smaller churches could use the top five giving members).

■ How many families or individuals does it take to give as much as the top 10 families give?

■ Ask the treasurer or financial secretary to determine the percent of the budget that is given by people who are age 55 or older.

■ Find out how many resident church members did not give any money to the church last year.

■ Look at the congregation's Annual Church Profile for the past five years and determine the rate of growth in annual giving to your church. Is it keeping up with inflation? Is it growing more than the inflation rate?

■ Last year in the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Kentucky Baptists gave an average of \$423.87 per resident member, and \$723.57 per Sunday school member. To determine how your church did, divide the resident members into the total undesignated giving for the church's last budget year. Then divide Sunday school enrollment into the undesignated giving for the last budget year. Were your church's averages higher or lower than the state?

■ What is your church doing to educate your members about financial stewardship? Are you developing good financial stewards, or are you hoping they will become good financial stewards on their own?

Most Christians need to be educated about their financial responsibilities to the Lord and His church. It is part of the discipleship process, and one that the church cannot ignore, if we want to be faithful to God's Word. In 1 Corinthians 4:2 Paul said, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."

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



Young daughter's interest in makeup is opportunity to affirm inner beauty

Q: Should I let my grade school daughter wear makeup?

Many of today's TV commercials are aimed at women. They tout hair care, skin care, diet, clothes, and of course, cosmetics. Famous faces appear on the screen, telling how you can be more beautiful and glamorous by using certain products or wearing certain clothes. The emphasis is on outer beauty, and the impact is significant, even on little girls.

Expect your young daughter to want to experiment with makeup, and provide opportunities for her to do so. Painting fingernails, piling on the rouge and lipstick, and putting on mom's high heels are a rite of passage for young girls. At the same time, don't let her be in too big of a hurry to make makeup a part of her everyday life.

Makeup belongs on older adolescents and teenagers. It looks out of place and unnatural on younger children. Makeup also can make young girls look older than they are, which may bring older boys into the picture in ways that are developmentally inappropriate.

Affirm your daughter at every opportunity, and look for ways to ease anxieties that naturally come when bodies begin to change and hormones begin to kick in. Teach her to keep her face clean. When the time comes, teach your daughter to use makeup sparingly—as an accent to her natural beauty that she should not want to cover up. Use interest in makeup to talk about the kind of beauty God values. Read 1 Peter 3:3-5 together and talk about the inner beauty that is of great worth in God's sight, as well as in the sight of others.—*David Garrard*

Q: Is it OK for single adults occasionally to sleep together in the same bed, but not to have sex? As an example, when attending conferences, is it acceptable for a male and a female to share a room or bed to save money?

Stop and ask yourself some tough, important questions. Are you looking for intimacy without sex? Ask yourself, "What would this act of intimacy mean?" What are you pretending to not know about this kind of intimacy? Does one person see this as a beachhead and have designs for what is next?

"Where will it lead?" is a question I would like printed in huge letters and placed on the mirrors and refrigerators of many single adults I know. All people need boundaries in relationships. Single adults sometimes seem to settle for discount relationships just so they can have any relationship.

When it comes to relationships, remember, "God never takes His kids to discount stores," notes Harold Ivan Smith in the book "Single and Feeling Good."

You may have been waiting a long time for a special relationship, and want it so badly that when someone comes along who is charming or even simply is interested in being with you, you become willing to compromise.

Remember Philippians 1:9-10, "This is my prayer ..., that you may be able to discern what is best." What may seem innocent to you at the time may seem like a lot more in the mind of the other person. It would be an appropriate application of the New Testament text to keep this verse written in your purse or billfold as well: "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

While a particular arrangement might seem totally innocent to the two of you, it may tarnish your reputations. A reputation is an easy thing to lose, and is nearly impossible to build back up again. Wisdom and discernment say you would be much better off to prepare ahead of time before such an arrangement is suggested, practice saying "no" and avoid any misunderstanding in the future.—*James Stillwell*

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.



U.S.-China crisis: Words make a difference

How important is the careful use of words in today's world? In the poetic language of Proverbs 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

The timeless truth of that biblical gem was reiterated the past two weeks as an international standoff unfolded between the United States and China. In the wake of a collision between a U.S. Navy spy plane and a Chinese fighter jet, government officials on both sides of the Pacific employed lots of words but they weren't exactly communicating with each other.

Blaming the U.S. for the crash that apparently claimed the life of the missing Chinese pilot, Chinese officials insisted on an apology from U.S. leaders. President Bush initially responded by demanding "the prompt and safe return" of the 24-member American crew detained in China.

As tensions escalated, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell insisted the U.S. had no reason to apologize. "We did not do anything wrong," he stated. "Our airplane was in international airspace." Powell said apologizing to China was tantamount to the U.S. admitting responsibility for the collision.

As Chinese leaders maintained their call for a formal apology, U.S. officials edged toward an expression of "regret" for the loss of the Chinese pilot. "Regret" was soon upgraded to "sorry" as the two sides negotiated over the subtle meaning of each word. The two countries' cultural and language barriers undoubtedly added to the confusion.

Bush wrote a letter of condolence to the Chinese pilot's wife but as the linguistic gymnastics continued, White House officials emphasized that he was "simply responding to the expression of grief, and nothing else."

After an 11-day standoff and six drafts of a letter from American officials to the Chinese government, the deadlock was resolved and the U.S. crew members were released from China. In the end, the official correspon-

dence stated that U.S. leaders were "very sorry" for the loss of the Chinese pilot and for the U.S. plane making an emergency landing in China without Chinese clearance.

News reports indicate Chinese leaders called the letter a moral victory and "a form of apology." U.S. leaders continue to insist their words were an expression of regret for the incident but not an apology.

"A word fitly spoken" sometimes is a challenging undertaking, whether it's an international impasse or a disagreement with a family member, co-worker or fellow church member.

What can we learn from the U.S.-China stalemate? It's a reminder that words really do matter and that the meaning of words easily can be manipulated for the benefit or detriment of opposing parties.

Unfortunately, some people seem to take pride in being combative and confrontational. While it's important to stand up for one's rights and beliefs, from a Christian perspective it also is important to exercise grace under pressure, imitating Christ's example displayed throughout Passion Week.

While Jesus certainly was forthright and plain-spoken throughout His earthly ministry, He primarily was known for His heartfelt compassion. His calls to turn the other cheek and go the second mile remain lofty goals in today's "what's in it for me?" world.

"Let your 'yes' be 'yes,' and your 'no,' 'no,'" Jesus counseled His followers in Matthew 5:37. That's a far cry from public posturing for personal, professional or political profit.

"Yes," "no," "I'm sorry," "You're right" and "Please forgive me" are words and phrases that often go unspoken these days.

Perhaps a case can be made that delicate international diplomacy requires different rules. But in the day-to-day discussions, debates and disagreements of life, "a word fitly spoken" remains a noble standard to pursue.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Recorder celebration seeks to 'dust off the pages of history'

By Trennis Henderson

From the debut of the Western Recorder's earliest predecessor in 1826 to today's state Baptist paper 175 years later, the Western Recorder has been intricately linked to the work of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The oldest weekly state Baptist paper in the Southern Baptist Convention, the Recorder consistently has reported and interpreted events and emphases that impact Baptist life in Kentucky and beyond.

Historian Duane Bolin notes in his book, "Kentucky Baptists, 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation," that the Western Recorder "still sets the standard for objective reporting of news relating to the religious life of the state and nation."

As the paper celebrates 175 years of ministry among Kentucky Baptists, this weekly series seeks to dust off the pages of history and recount memorable highlights and challenges recorded in the paper's pages. The series also is an effort to cite the personal and professional impact of such renowned editors as T.T. Eaton, V.I.

Masters and C.R. Daley. (Perhaps I should start referring to myself as T.G. Henderson.)

Previous articles in this series noted that the Recorder's early history dates back to the 1826 debut of the Baptist Register. The paper experienced several name changes and mergers before the publication name officially was changed in 1851 to the Western Recorder.

As a recorder of Kentucky Baptist history, the paper's first several editors grappled with such diverse issues as the Campbellism and Whitsett controversies, the Civil War and Reconstruction.

The publication also witnessed the birth of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, the forerunner of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Such editors as Spencer Clack, John Waller and A.C. Caperton became influential leaders in 19th century Kentucky Baptist life.

As Baptists today reflect on the history of denominational journalism over the past 175 years, it's intriguing to examine what has changed and what remains the same in the pages

of the state Baptist paper.

During the next few weeks, this series will move from 19th century Kentucky Baptist life to the more familiar history of Baptist ministry efforts in the 20th century. Jack Birdwhistell, associate professor of religion at Georgetown College; Duane Bolin, associate professor of history at Murray State University; and Joyce Martin, Western Recorder partnership editions editor, will explore the issues, editors and offbeat historical tidbits that have helped shape the Recorder into the award-winning publication it is today.

Topics will range from the spiritual and social impact of world wars, the Great Depression and Bold Mission Thrust to quaint turn-of-the-century ads hawking swamp root and cures for baldness. (I wish!)

As the Recorder expands its ministry efforts into the 21st century, we remain dedicated to the paper's guiding motto from Jude 3 that has graced our masthead each week for nearly a century: "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Stay tuned as we continue to celebrate 175 years of denominational journalism in the Bluegrass State.

Trennis Henderson is editor of the Western Recorder



Kentucky BSU members spend spring break in ministry

Where they went

■ **Berea College** had 9 students volunteering at the Christian Activities Center in East St. Louis, Ill.; three students working with the Christian Appalachian Project in Eastern Kentucky; and 25 students working with Habitat for Humanity in Charleston, S.C.

■ **Eastern Kentucky University** had 47 students involved in four trips from Salt Lake City to Birmingham, Ala. Projects ranged from clowning troops to inner-city missions.

■ **Georgetown College** had 13 students serving as designated drivers during spring break in Panama City, Fla.

■ **Hopkinsville Community College** had 15 students serving as volunteer staff for Creations, a creative ministries festival in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

■ **Kentucky Wesleyan College** had 15 students traveling to Nice, France, to work with Southern Baptist missionaries.

■ **Mid-Continent College** had seven students working on a missions project in New Orleans.

■ **Morehead State University** had 22 students working with an inner-city ministry in St. Louis and 17 students traveling to Philadelphia to work with three Southern Baptist church starts.

■ **Murray State University** had 77 students working on four missions teams in Texas, New York/Connecticut, Georgia and Montana.

■ **Northern Kentucky University** had 41 students working in Brunswick, Ga.

■ **Paducah Community College** had three students traveling to Paris, France.

■ **University of Kentucky** had 22 students at Camp Nathaniel in Hazard and 31 students serving as designated drivers in Panama City, Fla.

■ **University of Louisville** had 19 students serving as designated drivers and volunteers at Panama City, Fla.; 38 students serving as staff members at the Creations festival in Gatlinburg, Tenn.; and 15 students working with an outreach ministry in Charleston, S.C.

■ **Western Kentucky University** had 19 students volunteering in Boston and 12 students volunteering in Bowling Green.

By Victoria Moon
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Both home and abroad, a record number of Kentucky college students spent their spring break volunteering for a variety of missions projects sponsored by their school's Baptist Student Union.

BSU leaders in universities and colleges across the commonwealth report that 608 students from 17 schools volunteered for 28 missions projects in 17 states and seven countries.

"We've seen tremendous growth," said Ralph Hopkins, associate director of collegiate ministry for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He estimated the number of BSU mission participants during spring break has tripled in the last six years.

Dean Whitaker, campus minister at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, said the growth he's seen in spring break missions projects is a result of a revival that has been sweeping the campus.

"We've been experiencing a real spiritual awakening on this campus for the last two years," he said. "I think as a result of this revival the students have deepened in their discipleship with God and wanted to serve."

Whitaker said 67 Cumberland students joined four students from Pikeville and Prestonburg community colleges and one from Union College to volunteer for eight missions projects in seven states.

Pete Chapman, a Cumberland student and team leader for the group that helped with home repairs in College Park, N.C., said his biggest challenge was keeping a proper perspective on why they were there.

"Getting up in the morning at 6:30 and working hard all day long, sometimes it's easy to forget why you're



SPRING BREAK Students from Campbellsville University on a spring break mission trip to Poland talk with students. More than 600 Kentucky college students went on Baptist Student Union sponsored mission trips this spring. (Campbellsville photo by Katie Howd)

there and why you're spending your spring break there," he said. "It was a good reminder that what you do you do for God and others."

Cumberland students also volunteered for missions work in South Carolina, Ohio, New Orleans, Texas, Alabama and Illinois.

At Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, 109 students went to five states and four countries over their spring break.

"We had close to the same number of students participating this year as we did last year, but two years ago the numbers were around 75-85 and a year before that it was about 22," said Ed Pavy, campus minister at Campbellsville.

"I think that these missions trips feed on themselves, and generate their own excitement," he added. "The students come back excited about missions, and they share that with others on the campus and the program grows."

Pavy said many of the students who went this year returned with stories of how they saw God work.

"One of our groups went to Venezuela to do basketball and softball clinics and exhibition games, and then came back to the States to do the same thing with prisoners in Florida," Pavy said. "That group saw 200 professions of faith as a result of God using the work they did there."

Besides Venezuela, Campbellsville students did international missions work in Costa Rica, Poland and Jamaica. Students choosing to volunteer stateside went to Massachusetts, Ohio, Texas, Florida and Missouri.

Pavy said the trips' settings ranged from inner-city missions to suburban backyard Bible clubs.

"I wish every student could have some kind of missions experience," Pavy said. "Not only does it offer great opportunities for evangelism, but it offers tremendous chances for personal growth as well."

Police investigating bomb threat last week at Georgetown College

GEORGETOWN—Georgetown city police are investigating an April 11 bomb threat that Georgetown College officials received at the school's main switchboard.

A statement from the school said the campus was evacuated and classes cancelled for the rest of the day after the call was received at approximately 11:30 a.m.

School officials immediately contacted local law enforcement agencies and the decision was made to evacuate the campus.

Law enforcement officers searched the campus, assisted by college personnel. After consultation with local law enforcement authorities and risk assessment consultants, the decision was made to re-open campus at approximately 4:45 p.m.

"Georgetown College will do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of our students is not compromised," said Michael Dawahare, vice president for institutional advancement. "The administration acted quickly and effectively to ensure our students, faculty and staff were protected."

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KENTUCKY

College summer missions includes work at home and abroad

SHEPHERDSVILLE—Nearly 100 Kentucky Baptist Student Union members were appointed to serve in summer missions work during a service April 7 at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville.

The students, who came from BSU groups at 17 Kentucky colleges and universities, will serve in a variety of settings, from working as an intern with a Kentucky Baptist church to being part of a team that travels abroad.

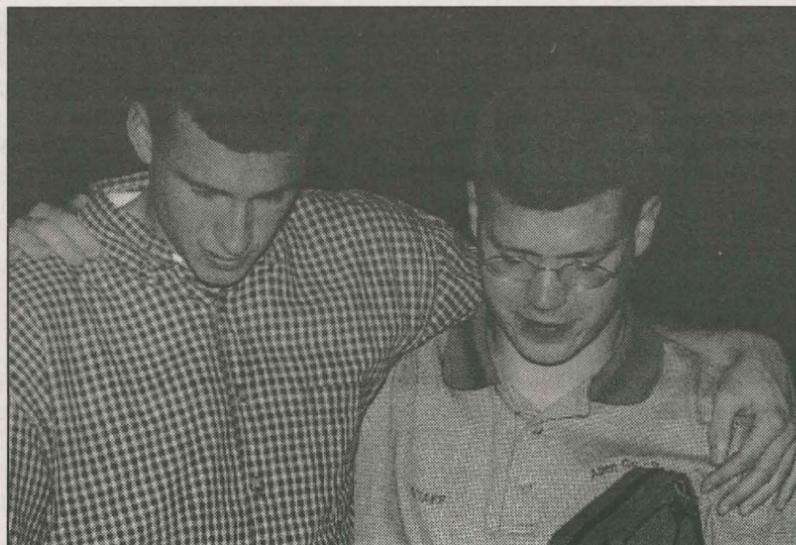
Workers will serve in seven countries, including Senegal and Poland, and at least 10 states.

Thirty students will serve on Son Teams, five creative ministry groups that tour the state each summer mixing missions with drama, music, sports and other activities.

In his appointment message, Mikel Robinson challenged the summer missionaries to serve in Christ's name.

"Never before have we seen so many people who need Christ," said Robinson, director of Eastern Kentucky University's BSU. "Seek to do God's will out of love."

For the first time in recent history, the number of students serving through a Baptist Student Union appointment was down compared to the previous year. Last summer 126 stu-



APPOINTMENT SERVICE Kentucky college Baptist Student Union members were appointed for summer missions during an April 7 service at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville. ■ **Left:** Aaron West (right), a student at Campbellsville University, prays with roommate Frank Wright during the closing prayer. West will travel with the Son Life creative ministry team to Salt Lake City this summer. ■ **Right:** Ashley Crouch, a student at Paducah Community College, tells the audience she will be serving this summer at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville.



"Seek to do God's will out of love."

Mikel Robinson, director of Eastern Kentucky University's Baptist Student Union

dents served through BSU appointments; this year, 97 students will.

Collegiate ministry leaders say the decline doesn't represent a decrease in interest in missions.

Rather, they say, it indicates that more students are being attracted by a

variety of missions opportunities, including some summer work coordinated directly with missions agencies such as the Southern Baptist International Mission Board or North American Mission Board.

Next year's appointment service

will feature IMB President Jerry Rankin. It will be held in conjunction with appointments of Acteen Activators, teenage girls serving in summer missions, and Kentucky Changers, teens who renovate houses for a week during the summer.

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NATIONAL NOTES

■ Conservatives blast AIDS czar.

Conservative groups said they feel betrayed by President Bush's decision to appoint an openly gay Wisconsin man as the new White House AIDS czar. Bush named Scott Evertz as director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, just a few weeks after White House officials signaled they might close the office. "This appointment sends a disturbing message that the problem of AIDS can be resolved without dealing with the promiscuity of many in the homosexual life," said James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family.

■ Religious 'progressives' organize.

Invoking the spirit and quoting the words of Martin Luther King Jr., religious and secular progressives have launched a new coalition aimed at offering an alternative voice to what they say is the Religious Right's dominance in the national political dialogue. Leaders of more than 200 groups ranging from the People for the American Way Foundation to the Children's Defense Fund to Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Unitarian Universalist congregations, met April 4-6 to initiate the Progressive Religious Partnership.

■ **Priests offer reward for shooters.** An anti-abortion group sponsored by Roman Catholic priests is offering a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of suspects wanted for shooting abortion doctors, just one week after a fugitive was arrested in France for the 1998 murder of a Buffalo, N.Y., doctor. Priests for Life said it will pay \$50,000 for information that leads to the capture of fugitives so that the anti-abortion cause is not associated with extremists who kill abortion providers.

■ Kirk Franklin produces soundtrack.

Gospel superstar Kirk Franklin has produced the soundtrack to the new movie "Kingdom Come," a new accomplishment for the gospel music industry. He is the first gospel artist to write and produce an entire score for a major motion picture, his publicist announced. All the songs on the soundtrack, unlike those for most motion pictures, will be featured in the film.

■ Zondervan marketing to Catholics.

Zondervan Publishing House, an evangelical Christian publisher, has entered the Catholic market through a new arrangement with the American Bible

Society. Zondervan has reached an agreement with the society to have the sole commercial publishing rights of the Good News Translation of the Bible. Forty percent of Good News Bibles have been purchased by Catholics, according to a Zondervan spokesman.

■ **Marriage law defeated.** Defenders of traditional marriage lost a bid to outlaw same-sex unions in New Hampshire recently. The New Hampshire House of Representatives voted 276-88 to reject a bill that would have blocked same-sex couples from claiming a right to domestic partner benefits.

■ Fat touted to oppose embryo research.

A Southern Baptist bioethicist said new research showing the potential for human fat to produce tissues of different kinds demonstrates why experimentation on human embryos is unnecessary. An April 10 report in the journal *Tissue Engineering* stated scientists have grown cartilage, muscle and bone cells in the laboratory from cells found in human fat. "This study demonstrates again that human embryos are not needed for

significant research," said Ben Mitchell, a consultant for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

■ **Panel slams loans to persecutors.** The United States should oppose international loans to Vietnam because its government violates religious freedom, says a federal commission. "Despite the increase in religious practice among the Vietnamese people in the last 10 years, the Vietnamese government suppresses organized religious activities forcefully and monitors and controls religious communities," wrote Elliott Abrams, chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

■ Guide issued for using tax funds.

Launching a major effort to educate churches about the perils of taking tax dollars for social-service ministries, the Baptist Joint Committee and the Interfaith Alliance are planning to distribute a guide to 20,000 houses of worship. While discussing concerns with President Bush's plan to fund faith-based services, it also details less-problematic ways of cooperating financially and non-financially with the government.

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Charles Carter
Pastor Emeritus of Shades
Mountain Baptist Church,
Birmingham, Alabama.

Kazakhstan law could restrict Christianity

ALTAMY, Kazakhstan (BP)—Ten years ago, when Southern Baptists began reaching out to the traditionally Muslim people of Kazakhstan, no one knew how long the hearts of the people or the doors of the country would remain open.

Few Kazakhs claimed faith in Jesus, but Southern Baptist workers found hundreds and thousands of people ready to listen and learn.

Today, while hearts remain open, some Kazakhstan lawmakers appear ready to shut as many doors as possible to limit the spread of evangelical Christianity.

Keston News Service reported that the latest proposed amendments to Kazakhstan's 1992 law on religion could "place the country among those former Soviet republics with the harshest climate for religious freedom."

The two biggest restrictions of the proposed law are an anti-proselytizing provision and a requirement that all religious meetings take place in facilities owned by the religious organization.

The latter restriction would bar religious meetings in both rented facilities and family homes.

A Southern Baptist worker speculated that government officials are pro-



KAZAKHSTAN MARKET Kazakhs still do the majority of their shopping at open-air markets, though new businesses are opening every day in the Central Asian country. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, unprecedented opportunities to share the gospel have unfolded in Kazakhstan, but proposed changes could severely limit that freedom. (BP photo)

posing the restrictions as a response against Islamic fundamentalism, seeing it as a destabilizing force in a country that has enjoyed a peaceful eight years of freedom after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Kazakhstan is about one-third the size of the United States and shares

borders with both Russia and China. A Southern Baptist worker said the turn of events isn't surprising. "With all of the things we have seen (God) do in our midst over the past few years, it should not surprise us that we are seeing forces rise up to oppose this significant work of God."

WORLD VIEW

■ **British archbishop nixes idea of gay marriages.** George Carey, the archbishop of Canterbury for the Church of England, recently ruled out the prospect that the denomination might affirm gay marriages. Interviewed on BBC television, Carey said the church could not accept gay marriages because marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman. He acknowledged the church is still grappling with issues like homosexuality. He said nonpracticing homosexuals are welcome in the priesthood, but the church draws a line at practicing homosexuals because it "has a clear ruling on what kind of lifestyle we require in the ordained ministry."

■ **Saudi Arabia bans Pokemon.** The highest religious authority in Saudi Arabia has banned the popular Pokemon cartoon characters from the country. The religious edict, or fatwa, claimed Pokemon trading cards and video games promoted Zionism because they include the Star of David. The edict also accused the game of featuring Christian crosses and symbols of the indigenous Japanese religion Shintoism. A Nintendo spokesperson denied that Pokemon features religious symbols.

■ **Good Friday is bad day for horror film.** Theaters in one Australian state couldn't screen the recut version of the classic horror film "The Exorcist" on Good Friday. A law in Victoria state forbids the screening of movies rated for adults on Good Friday. "It's a gesture of goodwill to the Christians who represent the vast majority of people here in the Melbourne area and the Catholic Church certainly supports it," said priest Christopher Prowse.

Women of Worth: Evangelism Conference

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Beacon Hill Baptist Church

May 22, 2001
Paducah, Kentucky
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Phone (502) 254-4737
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Per person ticket prices: \$10 if registered by May 7
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"Fitness" Speaker
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Carol Kent
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Yvette Eastham
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Linda Bourie
Women's Mentoring
Minister

Registration Information

To register, mail this completed form along with fees to the address below. Online registration is permissible at our website: <http://www.kybaptist.org/wlec.htm>, but payment *must* be received via mail by May 7 to be accepted. This form may be duplicated.

Registration deadline is May 7, 2001. Registrations will not be accepted by mail or online after this date.

Cost

The conference fee is \$10.00 per person for those registering/paying by May 7, and \$15.00 at the door. Light refreshments will be served.

Checks should be made payable to the Kentucky Baptist Convention and accompany this registration form in full. Fees are non-refundable, but substitutions are allowed.

Date/Site Selection

Check the event date/site you wish to attend.

- May 21 Somerset, Beacon Hill Baptist Church
 May 22 Paducah, Lone Oak First Baptist Church

I plan to attend the pre-session conference on Mentoring with Linda Bourie from 4:00-5:30 p.m. at the above location.

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RESOURCES

Researchers list 9 habits to attract, keep unchurched

Instead of asking unchurched people the hypothetical question, "What would it take for a church to attract you?" Rainer's team focused on people who recently had become Christians and what their churches did well to draw them.

Continued from page 1
requirements.

Based on their research, Rainer's team came up with the following nine habits:

■ **Intentionality.** Simply put, for a church to be successful it intentionally must be trying to reach the unchurched.

In his survey of more than 4,000 churches, Rainer said more than 83 percent of the churches did not have an intentional plan for reaching non-Christians. But that statistic flipped among effective evangelistic churches. Among the formerly unchurched, more than 75 percent said someone from the church had explained how to become a Christian, and in most cases it was not a staff member.

Rainer said one example of intentionality is use of LifeWay's FAITH evangelism program, which churches use to teach members how to share their faith.

The "habit of intentionality" also can include seemingly trivial matters. The research showed that people often picked a church for such reasons as restroom and nursery cleanliness.

Friendly greeters at a church's entrance also can have a positive effect, Rainer added.

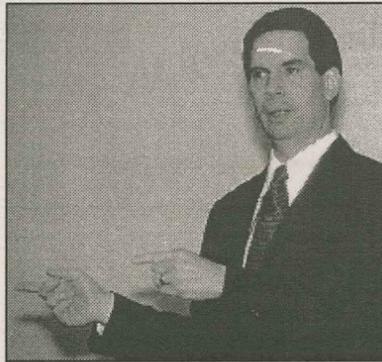
■ **Cultural awareness.** "The churches that reached the unchurched were highly intentional, but they (also) understood the culture," Rainer said.

Understanding the culture does not equate with compromising with it, he added. "There are some things we can do to be culturally aware."

Rainer said a large element of being culturally aware is understanding the generation born between 1977 and 1994—what Rainer called the "bridger generation." Telephone research done by Rainer's team indicated that only 4 percent of this group are Christians. By comparison, the research indicated that 65 percent of the generation born before 1946 are Christians.

"If there is one area where we are culturally unaware, it is in this generation," Rainer said. "This is the most unchurched generation in America."

■ **High expectations.** Rainer said his group found a direct correlation between how much is expected of new



THOM RAINER The dean of Southern Seminary's school of missions, evangelism and church growth led a team that developed a study called, "Nine Habits of Churches that Reach and Keep the Unchurched." The report combines old and new research, and includes surveys of more than 4,000 churches and interviews with more than 1,000 individuals. (BP photo)

members and how long they stay active in the churches.

"Churches that expect much receive much," he said. "Churches that expect little receive little."

New member classes, Rainer said, are vital to keeping people in the church. Among all churches in America, the average retention rate of new members is 35 percent. If new member classes are offered, that percentage shoots up to 72 percent. If the class is required of new members, the percentage increases even more.

"The most effective new members classes were those that said, 'We want to put you in a ministry as you leave this class,'" he added.

Personal evangelism classes for new members can be very fruitful, Rainer added. "One of the most effective ways to get these new Christians involved is to get them sharing their faith with those who are in the world of the unchurched."

■ **Clear doctrine.** Rainer said formerly unchurched people told researchers, "We want to hear about the doctrine on the front end. We're not going to make a commitment to a church where you will tell us about what you believe later."

Rainer said this information can be relayed in written documents, new members classes, Sunday school lessons or sermons.

■ **Risk taking.** Churches that are

reaching the unchurched do things and take what seem to be risks in the light of the world's eyes, or maybe in light of the church's eyes, Rainer said. "We see very few churches across America that truly act on faith—not foolishness, but faith."

Among the effective churches, 83 percent of senior pastors could tell of a major task their churches had undertaken.

"The risk-taking attitude of these churches is obvious by their willingness to lose members," Rainer said. "They do not make decisions based upon who might leave as a result of this. They make decisions more on, 'Who will we reach?'"

■ **Dynamic small groups.** Rainer said that prior to his team's research he had bought into the belief that Sunday school was in decline.

But 68 percent of the formerly unchurched people interviewed are in Sunday school, he said.

What is different between Sunday schools of effective churches and those of ineffective churches?

In effective churches, Rainer said, "There tends to be an expectation that you are involved in ministry through that Sunday school class."

"Unhealthy Sunday schools are inward focused—they only care about themselves," he added. "Healthy Sunday schools are constantly looking beyond themselves."

■ **Effective pastoral leadership.** When unchurched people visited churches, they said the pastor and the

preaching were the most important factors determining whether they would return, Rainer said.

Among effective churches, the pastor spent five hours a week involved in personal evangelism. Among ineffective churches, the pastor spent less than 10 minutes a week.

"As the leadership of the church goes, so the rest of the church tends to go," Rainer said. "If the pastor is not doing it, then it is highly unlikely that you'll see a congregation reaching the unchurched."

The senior pastors of the effective churches had an average tenure of 10.3 years. They also were good time managers, he said.

■ **Effective preaching.** Among effective churches, pastors spent an average of 20 hours a week on sermons—including the task itself. Among ineffective churches, pastors spent an average of four hours.

"That means that something has to give (in their schedule)," Rainer said. "What do they become? They become Acts 6 pastors. What do Acts 6 pastors do? They delegate and give away ministry" assignments.

■ **Prayer.** Churches that prayed together and prayed often kept their new members, Rainer said.

Often, he said, church members would call up the new members and say, "We are praying specifically for you."

Corporate prayer ministries were operational and emphasized in 83 percent of the effective churches.

The WMU embrace

Before I was born, I was actively involved in Woman's Missionary Union because my mother was a WMU leader. Of all the WMU responsibilities my mother had, my fondest memories as a boy are those times she had the YWAs at our house. Hers and my late father's love for missions were bequeathed to me through what they taught me by their lives and with their lips.

For most of my 30 years of serving Kentucky Baptists, I have been intimately involved in Kentucky WMU not only as one who has assisted in managing the business and financial affairs of the organization, but also as an advocate of its vital mission and its unique role in Kentucky Baptist life. I consider the Kentucky WMU leaders with whom I have had the privilege to serve across the years among my dearest Kentucky Baptist friends.

What I love most about Kentucky WMU is how its members and organizations embrace our entire mission family. To embrace is to clasp in one's arms, to hug, to cherish, to love, to take up readily and gladly, to adopt.

What would we do without Kentucky WMU? Perish the thought. After 123 years of serving Kentucky Baptists, Kentucky WMU is break-

ing new ground in missions and education.

If you participated in the recent WMU annual meeting, I am sure you are informed and inspired again about the larger world mission of God and your calling to that mission. How indebted we Kentucky Baptists are to Kentucky WMU, our "missions educator and activator" for the

past 123 years. May the Lord continue to bless Kentucky WMU as they lead us into the 21st century under the capable leadership of Joy Bolton. If you, men and women, are not already making a lasting difference in the larger world mission of God through Kentucky WMU, please give Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, or me a toll-free call.

There are a variety of ways already established, or perhaps you would prefer to establish your own Kentucky WMU endowment in honor of a special WMU person in your life. Give us the privilege of assisting you in perpetuating until the Lord returns the Kentucky WMU embrace.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION

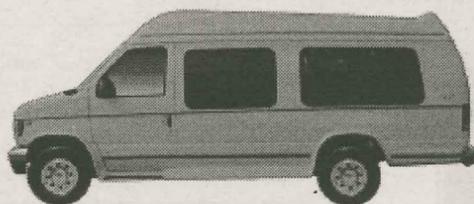


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MISSIONS

Baptists ministering to Sudan's ex-soldier children

By Brittany Jarvis
SBC International Mission Board

AKOT, Sudan (BP)—Boy soldiers, once forced to fight alongside rebels of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army, slowly are adjusting to civilian life after being released.

Southern Baptist workers have joined other Christians to meet the boys' physical and spiritual needs.

More than 1,600 of 2,500 boys released by the SPLA in March have made their way to a refugee camp in Akot, Sudan. The boys, some as young as 8 years old, live in dilapidated buildings and makeshift tents in the camp.

UNICEF has pitched in to supply food, sanitation, a T-shirt, hat and backpack for each boy.

Most of the boys express relief at being anywhere else after their traumatic military experiences, but missionaries fear the boys soon will grow restless as conditions in the camp deteriorate.

Thousands of boys have been recruited forcibly into military units on both sides of Sudan's 18-year-old civil war. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers cites Sudan as having one of the worst child soldier problems in the world.

The Sudan Peoples Liberation Army, which had held these boy soldiers, fights on behalf of largely Christian and animist southern Sudan against Muslim-backed government forces from the north. Generally, boy soldiers are kidnapped



BOY SOLDIERS Former child soldiers link hands as they make their way onto the World Food Programme plane in which they are being evacuated by UNICEF, from a combat zone in the province of Northern Bahr el Ghazal in southern Sudan. Southern Baptist workers are among the groups ministering to the children. (@UNICEF/HQ01-0088/Stevie Mann)

and forced to fight against their own people.

UNICEF hopes to reunite the boys with their families, who are in Sudan's northern Bahr el Ghazal region, within four months.

"UNICEF has provided some basic medicines for the boys, (which) seem to be adequate at this time," said John Witte, a worker through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

While a medical clinic is being planned specifically for the camp, a separate clinic run by Southern Baptist workers and the Samaritan's Purse

relief agency is filling in the gap to care for the boys' medical conditions.

The IMB is one of the first non-governmental agencies to offer help to the boys.

"We believe God is giving us an opportunity to work with these boys," Witte said. "We'd like to respond in three ways: medically, educationally and pastorally."

In March, Baptist missionaries Larry Pepper, a physician, and Ben Haley traveled from Uganda to conduct medical and pastoral work among the boys. Another missionary, Janet McDowell, will supply medical help in

For more information

■ Search prayer requests for southern Sudan at www.imb.org/CompassionNet/countries.asp.

■ View mission Web sites on Sudan people groups at www.peopleteams.org/NAME.htm.

■ Learn more information about Sudan from the CIA's World Factbook Web site: www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/su.html

April. Finally, a team of youth workers from the United States will do pastoral and evangelism work during May.

"We have been welcomed with open arms to share the message of Jesus Christ," Witte said.

During the initial survey trip, Witte and Larry Pumpelly, another Southern Baptist worker, were able to share Bible stories with the young boys. The missionaries told the boy soldiers about another great boy soldier who defeated a giant.

The boys "cheered the skill of David to kill the giant with only a sling-shot," Witte said. "I hope and pray they also heard the clear message that God can use even a boy to accomplish His greatest tasks."

Contributions toward the ministry to the boy soldiers in southern Sudan can be sent to: International Mission Board, Office of Finance, Southern Sudan Boy Soldiers, Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Relief started through UNICEF

AKOT, Sudan (BP)—Beginning Feb. 23 in southern Sudan, UNICEF, with the help of World Food Programme relief flights, airlifted more than 2,500 former child soldiers out of conflict zones in the provinces of Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal.

The boys were sent to reception centers in safe areas in the nearby province of Lakes, where rehabilitation and family tracing programs are now under way.

Ranging in age from 8 to 18 years, the children were demobilized from military camps run by the rebel Sudan Peoples Liberation Army, after a personal commitment by an SPLA commander to UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy when she visited southern Sudan in October 2000.

Including children who received military training but never saw combat and those who lived through combat and other traumatic experiences, the former child soldiers were greeted at the transit centers by UNICEF-assisted local and international non-government organizations.

The children, who are expected to remain at the centers for four to nine months, are receiving health care, education, psychosocial counseling and vocational training while family tracing is under way.

Children for whom no family member can be traced will remain under the long-term care of local authorities and non-government organizations, assisted by UNICEF. There are an estimated 9,000 child soldiers in various armed groups throughout Sudan.

Intergenerational ministry

By Robert Dunston

Eight Cumberland College students spent their spring break ministering to people of all ages in Calumet City, Ill.

Team members included team leader Karen Morgan, Jenny Carter, James Coffey, Megan Corbett, Joel Engel, Monica Garcia, Stacy Mahler and Danny Scalf.

Two students from Union College rounded out the team.

The team left Saturday morning and arrived in Calumet City late that afternoon. The next morning they worshiped in their host church, and that evening they began working with the youth of the church.

Their host church had an average attendance of about 60 people, so the youth group was small. Team members ministered to the youth group each evening during the week and attendance grew from nine youth on Sunday night to more than 30 for the Friday night lock-in.

During the weekdays, team members ministered to senior adults through a ministry called Senior Place. Some of the students helped in the computer lab. Some took care of paper work in the office, and others helped with art classes. Coffey

and Garcia spent one afternoon playing games with some of the senior adults.

Carter spent a day in the kitchen preparing meals and then helping deliver the meals to seniors who could not come to the center. Most of the team members' time was spent one-on-one with individuals.

The students stayed in the host church and used the shower facilities of the high school across the street at specific times during the day. The last morning, as they walked across the street to shower, snow fell on them; not quite what they were expecting for spring break.

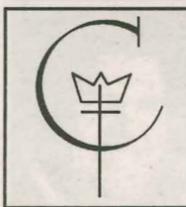
Team members put God in whatever they did, whether sorting clothes,

distributing food, playing games, helping with activities and classes, performing skits or helping people sort through the issues of life. They enjoyed ministering to people of various ages and feel blessed by their fellowship with people in Calumet City and on the team.

We at Cumberland College are proud of our students who minister in so many ways to so many people.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



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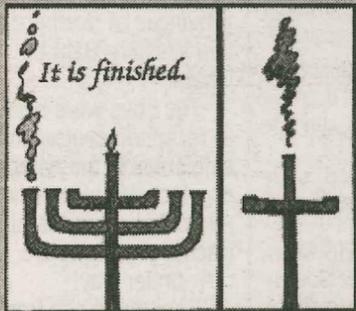


Jewish groups express outrage over B.C. Easter cartoon message

WASHINGTON (RNS)—An Easter-themed edition of the caveman comic strip "B.C." has sparked an outcry from some Jewish organizations, who say the cartoon is an example of "outright Jew-hatred."

The comic strip by Johnny Hart shows several panels in which the seven last words of Jesus Christ appear above a lit seven-branch menorah. By the last frame, all seven candles on the menorah have been extinguished, and the menorah has become a cross.

The groups say the cartoon advocates the idea that Christianity has supplanted Judaism. "This is insensitive and offensive because what it proclaims is that Judaism is finished and Christianity has taken over," Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, told Religion News Service.



Hart "has a right to claim what he believes, but not to offend other people's faiths," Foxman said.

The American Jewish Committee called the cartoon shameful. "Whatever the cartoonist's personal beliefs, the sudden insertion of religiously offensive cartoons into the comics section of Sunday newspapers is highly inappropriate and abuses readers, especially young children, who turn to 'B.C.' every week," the group said in a statement.

But Hart, an evangelical Christian, told the Washington Times he only intended to "pay tribute" to Jews and Christians. "I sincerely apologize if I have offended any readers, and I also sincerely hope that this cartoon will generate increased interest in religious awareness."

HBO documentary questions faith healers

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

LONDON (RNS)—Filmmaker Antony Thomas set out hoping to find a miracle when he produced a documentary on faith healing, but he doesn't think he found one.

"A Question of Miracles," which debuted Easter Sunday on HBO, prompted more questions than answers for Thomas and many interviewed in his 70-minute production.

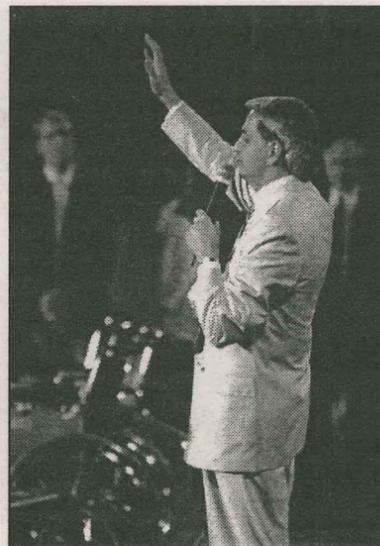
He focused on two charismatic preachers, Benny Hinn and Reinhard Bonnke, whose massive audiences vary widely but whose mission is basically the same—to evangelize and to demonstrate the possibility of healing based on a trust in God.

"I was quite willing to be persuaded that there really were miracles, and it was an important journey of discovery for me," Thomas said in a phone interview from his London home.

But, "in my experience, there was nothing that we saw that in any way could qualify as a miracle," he said.

The film touched on everything from the enraptured glow of the audiences as they praised God and believed they were healed to the heartbreak of those who are disappointed when their loved one doesn't recover after one of the emotional services led by Hinn or Bonnke.

It includes criticism from religious leaders who differ with those who support faith healers and theories of scientists who attribute belief in miracles to the mechanics of the brain rather than



FAITH HEALER Evangelist and faith healer Benny Hinn is among the subjects of the documentary "A Question of Miracles," currently airing on HBO. (RNS photo courtesy of HBO)

any nonhuman power.

Thomas, who also narrated the documentary, did some research of his own. Though Bonnke claimed 78 miracles during a crusade filmed in Benin City, Nigeria, the filmmaker said "reliable records" could not be obtained to verify medical evidence of recoveries.

In Hinn's case, after a Portland, Ore., crusade in which 76 miracles were claimed, Thomas sought to make an independent analysis. He followed five cases for a year and found that

those who were ill or their survivors maintained faith in God and support of Hinn, but did not have medical confirmation of a healing.

"I hope there is a special place in hell for people who try and enrich themselves on the suffering of others," rabbi and author Harold Kushner says in the film.

Neuroscientist Michael Persinger of Ontario, Canada, tells the camera that some people's feelings of healing come completely from the processes of the brain.

Asked on camera about the scientific theories about his work, Bonnke responded: "I'm not a psychologist. I just believe the Word of God and preach and pray and God honors His Word and that's it. The splitting of hairs, I leave to others."

Hinn acknowledged in an on-camera interview that he wonders why some people jump up from wheelchairs in his crusades but end up back in them hours later. He said he views himself not as a healer, but as a "vessel" used by God.

Thomas, an Anglican, said his two years of work on the documentary touched him personally. "My own faith took a temporary battering," he said.

He was affected by the words and actions of both the ministers and the scientists, but said he didn't agree with either.

"Science never disproves God," Thomas said. "Science can untangle details and give us a different concept of how ... the world was created but it doesn't eliminate the Creator."

Meet some of the class of 2001 (part 2)

One of the most outstanding students in the class of 2001 is "Sarah," who came to us in the ninth grade. Here is part of a letter her father sent with her enrollment application.

"After Sarah completed the eighth grade, I did not believe she was doing well in school, although she was receiving passing grades. ... Sarah was having difficulty ... because of her lack of ability to read. I was at Oneida on Family Day ... because my nephew ... is enrolled there.

"My wife and I spoke to (tutoring lab director) Ms. Nichols about my daughter's problem. Ms. Nichols ... told me without hesitation the program your school would use to try to help Sarah. I was greatly impressed by Ms. Nichols."

That letter was written four years ago. I want to share some of what Sarah wrote in her essay about Oneida.

"As a freshman, I had a horrible attitude. ... All I cared about was 'me, me, me.' I had a developmental English class with Mr. Stratton. We would get into an argument most every day. Most of the time I would curse ... and then express exactly how much I hated this place. Of course, it only made the situation worse because I would usually get sent to the office for being out of hand. At the end of the year I told Mr. Stratton that I would never see him or this school ever again. I have a feeling Mr. Stratton probably praised God over and over that day for getting me out of his hair.

"I have learned to set goals and to strive for those goals. ... I have caught ... up to a senior reading level, with the help of dedicated teachers, and I will now graduate and hopefully ... succeed in many more ways.

"My job at Oneida has taught me how to be a

leader and has also taught me that it can be a real pain sometimes to be in authority. It has caused me to stop and realize that the house parents have a hard job to deal with, and I respect them. ... The absolute best thing about Oneida is the education because without this place, who knows where I might be. The teachers push you to do your absolute best. They will help you set your goals, and they will help you work toward those goals.

"Mr. Stockton says something that I think speaks a lot of truth. He says, 'If you as my student fail, I too, as your teacher, have failed along with you.' I am glad the teachers want the students to know the material because it won't help me in college to have good grades but nothing in my head.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

"Before I came to Oneida I thought that church was a trendy Sunday thing that all the old women really got involved with. It wasn't until I became a Christian that I knew what it was all about. I believe that the reason I am different today is because I have the Lord as my Savior.

"I have been involved in ... the farm, band, choir ... FFA, student council, volleyball, basketball, softball, a hall monitor and I was in the yearbook pageant.

"The single most important thing I have gained at Oneida has got to be respect. Respect for myself and respect for others. ... I have met some really special people, and I will take a piece of them with me and hopefully I have left a piece of myself with them."

P.S. Sarah also is an honor roll student.

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

Equipping pastors to care for others

Assistant professor of pastoral care Steve Deaver recounts a familiar story.

"God called me when I was 30 years old. I was doing well in my management career with Borg-Warner Corp. Part of me said, 'You don't really want to be a preacher.'

"When I told my wife, Ellen, about God's call, she said, 'I didn't marry a preacher.'

"For 10 years I found many ways to avoid what God wanted. While we lived in Parkersburg, W.Va., two members of our small church left the factory where I was manager to enroll at Clear Creek. After lots of prayer we also came."

Has he been disappointed? "No, never disappointed," Steve replied. "I am so thankful God allowed me to come, I was saved at age 9, but I was very ignorant about the Bible. Clear Creek really helped me to grow."

After graduation in 1984 he became pastor of First Baptist Church in Racine, Ohio, an American Baptist congregation, and stayed eight years. They moved to Southern Seminary to enroll in the master's program, and he was called as pastor of Blue River Baptist Church in Salem, Ind.

For 90 years the church had used

student ministers and members expected Steve to stay only three years. He was with them seven years and completed campus requirements for a doctorate of ministry degree in pastoral care. He is at work on the written field project.

A seminary professor saw Clear Creek's announcement for a pastoral care teacher and told Steve, "You fit that description."

Steve describes his calling: "It is very fulfilling to teach and have an opportunity to affect students. As a pastor, I saw many families in need of forgiveness and reconciliation. I hope I can be used to help our students work through some of their problems and become better ministers to others."

He also is director of Christian service and works with churches and agencies as they consider our graduates for ministry positions. He and Ellen live on campus in Mahon Apartments and enjoy walking the creek-side trail that founding president L.C. Kelly walked in his days.

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

Kentucky Baptist youth compete in speeches, Bible drills

LOUISVILLE—More than 130 youth from throughout the commonwealth competed in the 2001 Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament, March 30-31 at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore Baptist Assemblies.

Meredith Tooley, 16, won the Jonathan Creek speakers' tournament. Tooley, a member of First Baptist Church of Owensboro, delivered the speech "God Is in Control."

Ashley Clark, 16, won the Cedarmore speakers' tournament. Clark, a member of First Baptist Church of Paris, delivered the speech "Winning by Losing."

Daniel Rogers, 18, was runner-up of the Jonathan Creek speakers' tournament with the speech "Just Trust." Rogers is a member of Cave Springs Baptist Church in Auburn.

Rebecca Overton, 17, was runner-up of the Cedarmore speakers' tournament with the speech "Games Christians Play." Overton is a member of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Alexandria.

Tooley and Ramey will represent Kentucky during Discipleship and Family Development Week at the LifeWay Conference Center at Glorieta, N.M., this summer. Clark and Jones will represent Kentucky at a similar event at the LifeWay Conference Center at Ridgecrest, N.C.

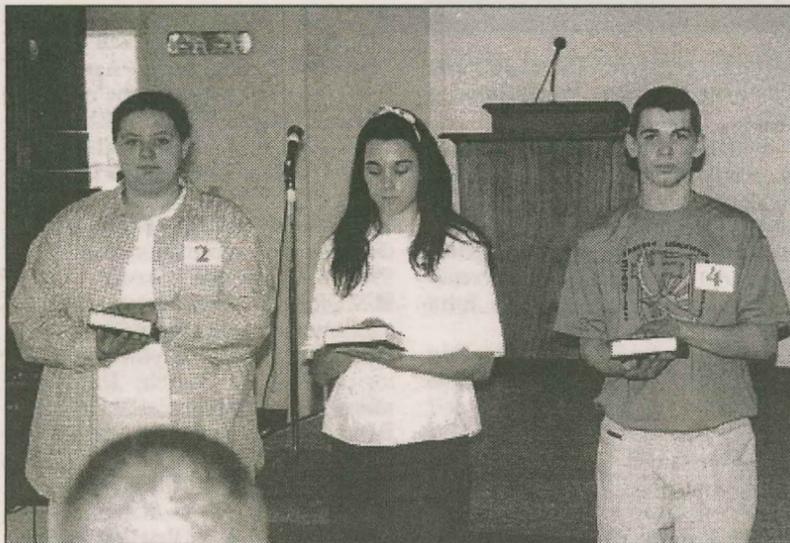
In addition, the four received scholarships totaling \$3,600 each for use at Campbellsville University, Georgetown College or Cumberland College.

The youth speakers' tournament allows 15- to 17-year-olds to express themselves in the areas of church, denomination, missions, home and other areas relating to Christian growth and maturity.

Participants could deliver a speech from a list of 20 topics.

Amanda Jones, 14, was the overall winner of the Cedarmore Bible drill. Jones is a member of Stony Point Baptist Church in Albany.

Ryan Kenimer, 14, was runner-up for the Cedarmore Bible drill.



PRESENT BIBLES Faith Sargent of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Williamstown, Christian Turner of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville and Kyle Winsett of Central Grove Baptist Church in Albany present their Bibles at the state Youth Bible Drill held March 30 at Cedarmore.

Kenimer is a member of Central Baptist Church in Paris.

Kandace Ramey, 12, was the overall winner of the Jonathan Creek Bible drill. Ramey is a member of Bethany Baptist Church in Eddyville.

Brooks Brown, 14, was runner-up of the Jonathan Creek Bible drill. Brown is a member of First Baptist Church of Arlington.

Students who score 21 or more points out of a possible 25 points are recognized as "state winners."

State winners at Cedarmore were:
 ■ Albany: Jennifer Brown, Jessica Cummings, MaKensie DeRossett, Amanda Jones, Sarah Jones and Kyle Winsett

■ Berry: Hannah Courtney and Jessica Jackson.

■ Clearfield: Mark Rhodes.

■ Cynthiana: Faith Sargent, Shannon Wade and Shelley Wade.

■ Elizabethtown: Kyle Franklin, Grant Mackey, Kyle Walters and Courtney Wright.

■ Frankfort: Hope Driskell.

■ Georgetown: Natalie House.

■ Glendale: Heather DeHaven and Lynne Fish.

■ Hi Hat: Tabatha Tackitt.

■ Lancaster: Jessica Gibson and Jana McMurtry.

■ London: Johanna Askew, Nicholas Beckner, Natasha Garrison, Kelly Grills, Trey Hallman, Amanda Hodge, Stephanie Hodge, Jonathan Hoskins, Jessica Houston, Brittany Hurley, Brett Martin and Michael Ridings.

■ Louisville: Anderson Bond, Razz Hughes and Christian Turner.

■ Morehead: Jessica Tackitt.

■ Mt. Washington: Kristen Yeager.

■ Owenton: Craig Egan and Brittany Mason.

■ Paris: Clayton Franklin, Sarah Franklin and Ryan Kenimer.

■ Pineville: Reagan Gilley, Tyler Hampton and James Hester.

■ Smithfield: Bryan Fox and Rebecca Tingle

■ Sonora: Kacie Bowles and Chelsey Crewz.

■ Sparta: Jessica Blackburn, Ashley Howard and Renee Osborne.

■ Teaberry: Tiffany Hamilton.

■ Upton: Morgan Strange.

■ Waynesburg: Ashley Alford.

■ Westport: Marie Tingle and Angela Traylor.

State winners at Jonathan Creek were:

■ Arlington: Brooks Brown, Ben Hocker and Travis Hoskins.

■ Auburn: Rachel Goff, Tyler Haley and Kyle Price.

■ Bowling Green: Joseph Bryant, Jonathan Randolph and Jordan Randolph.

■ Cadiz: Leah Drennan and Kandace Ramey.

■ Clinton: Jarrod Burgess, Kim Byassee, Greg Kelly and Casey Rogers.

■ Earlington: Crystal Costanzo.

■ Whitesville: Laurie Payne.

Eleven youth were recognized as state winners for the past three years: Brooks Brown and Ben Hocker of Arlington; MaKensie DeRossett, Sarah Jones and Kyle Winsett of Albany; Heather DeHaven of Glendale; Stephanie Hodge of London; Clayton Franklin of Paris; Bryan Fox of Smithfield; Ashley Alford of Waynesburg; and Faith Sargent of Williamstown.

Organizers said the state Bible drill competitions help 12- to 14-year-olds to learn the names and locations of the books of the Bible. Participants also learn to locate Bible passages and memorize certain verses, questions and references.

Overall winners represent Kentucky at national Bible drill exhibitions.

Alice Seymour, secretary for the discipleship training department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said this year's competition was a great success because it had more participants than last year's speakers' tournaments and 77 state Bible drill winners.

"We are so proud of all the accomplishments that these youth have made with their hard work and dedication," she said. "This is what Bible drill and speakers' tournament is all about."

Churches needing a fast facility consider Sprung structures

By Mark Wingfield
 Texas Baptist Standard

DALLAS (ABP)—Sprung is springing up all over.

A unique new structure called a Sprung building is gaining popularity among innovative and growing churches as an alternative for creating temporary space quickly.

Sprung comes from the name of the family-owned company that manufactures these high-tech tents, but they do virtually spring to life in a matter of days in all sorts of locations.

The structures are made of a strong synthetic membrane stretched over a skeleton of aluminum beams. Insulation is placed between an outer membrane and an inner membrane, creating an insulation factor of R-28.

The appearance of the completed building has been compared to a hard-shell circus tent, a giant marshmallow and a big bubble.

Lawton Searcy was pastor of the third church in the United States to use

a Sprung structure. In 1994, as pastor of a new congregation, he turned to Sprung to solve a crisis.

The young church had purchased property in Baton Rouge, La., but did not intend to build for up to 18 months. The landlord of the facility they were leasing at the time, however, gave members a 30-day notice to get out.

"We needed a worship space for 300 people immediately," Searcy recalled. "I thought about a tent, and the only person I knew who had a tent was Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in California."

Searcy called Warren, who told him about Sprung buildings as a better alternative to a tent. Saddleback was using a Sprung building to accommodate its rapid growth.

The church put up the Sprung building for 30 to 40 percent of the cost of a traditional building.

As soon as his church occupied its Sprung, leaders from other churches began trekking to Baton Rouge to in-

vestigate, Searcy said.

Some time this year, the number of churches using Sprung structures will surpass the 100 mark, said Searcy, who now is a consultant for Sprung Instant Structures, based in Canada.

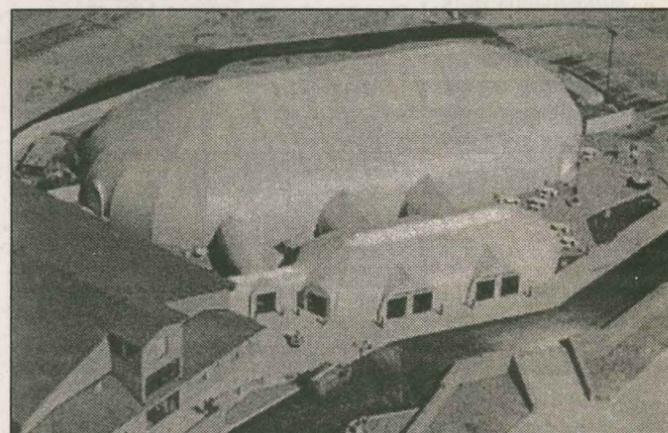
Cost and flexibility are major selling points of the Sprung buildings, Searcy said, noting the inside of the domes can be finished any way a church desires.

Because the structures have no corners, the acoustics are exceptional, he said. And the covering is fire-resistant and wind-resistant.

For an average church, the total cost per square foot averages between \$25 and \$55, he said.

That compares to between \$40 and \$60 per square foot for construction of a metal building or \$70 to \$130 per square foot for construction of a permanent traditional worship center, according to Keith Crouch, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas church-facilities office.

As with any church construction



project, however, he advises caution and careful deliberation about all options. Whether a Sprung building is appropriate for a church will depend upon factors such as a church's mission strategy, location, community expectations and long-term goals, he said.

"Some places it will work, and some places it won't," he said.

QUICK SOLUTION Sprung Instant Structures have been used by larger churches needing additional education, recreation or worship space or by smaller churches for worship or multi-use areas. (Sprung promotional photo)

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Give thanks with Hope Baptist Church in Dennis, Mass., as the 70-member congregation recently finalized an agreement to purchase property. Church planter Mike Beckner leads the church, which is located on Cape Cod.

■ Two new Bible studies begun in Methuen, Mass., by church planters Bill and Debbie Graham.

■ Missionary journeyman Katie Shults and the two weekly Bible studies she leads in Czestochowa, Poland. She asks for discernment about whether to combine the two groups into one.

■ Baptist representatives working among refugees in 32 refugee centers in an unnamed city in Germany. The Baptists are working with Turk, Vietnamese, Iranian, Thai and Afghan refugees.

■ Give thanks with missionaries Mark and M.J. Grossmann for a neighbor who has become a Christian. The Grossmanns work among the Digo people group of Tanzania. "Prayer warriors, we are seeing results from your prayers! Keep praying," they write.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **ALEXANDRIA**—Fairlane Church will host revival services April 29-May 2. **Jeff Maynard** will be the evangelist. **Phil Stanton** will lead the music. **Gary Wilson** is pastor.

■ **BAGDAD**—Christiansburg Church ordained **Danny Cabell** and **Mark Tackett** into the deacon ministry. **Douglas Sturgeon** is pastor.

■ **BEREA**—Berea Church and Bates Creek Association will sponsor a gospel singing to benefit Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children April 26 at 7 p.m. at Berea Church. Singers will include: **The Brotherhood Quartet**, **Calvary Heirs**, **Kevin Slemp**, **Allen Pike** and **Allen Livingood**. For information, call (859) 986-9391.

■ **BURKESVILLE**—Grace Union Church called **Todd Bryant** as pastor and licensed and ordained him into the gospel ministry.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church will host revival services April 29-May 2. **Bill Grisham**

will be the evangelist. **David Johnson** will be the musician. **James Jones** is pastor.

Saloma Church will present a showing of the Billy Graham film, "Something to Sing About," April 22 at 6 p.m. For information, call (270) 789-2707. Saloma Church also will host **Reflections**, from Campbellsville University, in concert April 29 at 7 p.m. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Valley Creek Church will present **Lois Jane Huddleston** in concert April 29 at 7 p.m. For information, call (270) 737-9282. **Steven Hill** is pastor.

■ **GRAEFENBURG**—Graefenburg Church will host revival services April 22-25. **Ed Erwin**, pastor of Shelbyville First Church, will be the evangelist. **Phil Landgrave** will lead the music. **Fred Moffatt** is pastor.

■ **HIGHLAND HEIGHTS**—First Church will host revival services April 29-May 2; 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. April

NY Times magazine examines Pedreira case

LOUISVILLE—Former Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children employee Alicia Pedreira and her lawsuit against the agency were the subject of a recent New York Times Magazine article.

The April 1 issue examined the case of the former art therapist who was fired after a photograph of her and her lesbian partner at an AIDS walk appeared at the Kentucky State Fair.

The story reviewed her lawsuit against KBHC in light of President Bush's "charitable choice" propos-

al to expand government support for religious groups performing social services.

Pedreira was fired by KBHC in October 1998. Last April, she filed a lawsuit charging KBHC with government-financed religious discrimination. The case is expected to go to court later this year.

Pedreira told the magazine she realized her job was at risk as soon as she heard about the photo and remembered she was wearing an "Isle of Lesbos" T-shirt. "I thought immediately, I've lost my job."

29 and 7 p.m. nightly. **David Livingston** will be the evangelist. **Bob Hanes** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Beechmont Church's music ministry will present "On a Hill Too Far Away" April 22 at 6:30 p.m. **Ken Bryan** is the minister of music. **James Ward** is pastor.

Crescent Hill Church will present "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" April 22-23 at 7 p.m. **Louie Bailey** and **Kris Brady** are the directors. For information, call (502) 896-4425. **Ron Sisk** is pastor.

■ **MURRAY**—First Church will host a community service April 29 at 6 p.m. Participants will be **Glynn Orr**, pastor of Westside Church; **Jim Simmons**, pastor of Memorial Church; and **Brett Miles**, pastor of Northside Church. For information, call (270) 753-1854. **Wendell Ray** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Seven Hills Church named **T.A. Prickett** as pastor emeritus in honor of his 34 years at the church. **Robert Coons** is pastor.

■ **PHILPOT**—Bethabara Church will host the Oneida Institute Choir April 22. **Bud Underwood** will speak. **Herschel Morgan** is pastor.

■ **SHELBYVILLE**—Highland Church will host revival services April 22-25. **Mike Hamrick**, pastor of Sand Springs Church in Lawrenceburg, will be the evangelist. **Marshall Phillips** is pastor.

■ **UTICA**—Brushy Fork Church called **Jason Nichols** of Owensboro, as minister of youth. **Larry Burris** is pastor.

What's going on?

Send your happenings to Shirley Wooton for Mountains to the Mississippi. Mail: Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6474. E-mail: shirley.wooton@kybaptist.org.

KBHC hosting seven regional fundraising golf tournaments

LOUISVILLE—Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children is offering seven regional golf tournaments as part of this year's "Play for the Children" event.

"I'm encouraged and excited about how this event is making more Kentuckians aware of the needs of children and families," said KBHC President Bill Smithwick. "Our goal is to put on a fun, top-class event that also educates participants on the great needs that exist for children, teens and families who are in trouble."

This year's tournaments are:

■ May 14 at Oxmoor Country Club in Louisville.

■ May 21 at Arrowhead Golf Club in Cadiz.

■ June 4 at Greenbrier Country Club in Lexington.

■ June 18 at Gibson Bay Country Club in Richmond.

■ June 25 at The Summit in Owensboro.

■ July 9 at Bowling Green Country Club.

■ July 11 at Highland Country Club in Northern Kentucky.

All events begin at 1 p.m., following lunch except the Northern Kentucky scramble which begins at 8 a.m.

This year pastors and ministers can play for free if they have three paying members on their team. The \$100 per player charge covers greens and cart fees, a KBHC-logo golf shirt, a sleeve of golf balls, lunch, beverages on the course and door prize drawings.

The top two teams from seven regional events will compete in a state championship Aug. 6 in Louisville.

For more information, call (800) 456-1386 or visit the KBHC's Web site, www.kbhc.org.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 56 computers. A ministry of Frenchburg Baptist Church rebuilds computers (486 and Pentium-class). High-tech cutting edge for Sunday school, church or home office. All are Internet-ready with new 56k modems and new CD-ROMs; all have MS Word, Bible and Excel accounting. \$150-350. Call for appointment: (606) 768-2416; or e-mail: hayworth@mrtc.com.

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: \$745. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752.

SEEKING: Immediate opening for part-time youth minister (15 hours per week). Send resumé to: Jim Holladay, Lyndon Baptist Church, 8025 New LaGrange Road, Louisville, KY 40222. (502) 425-7150.

SEEKING: Pollard Baptist Church of Ashland, Ky., is seeking a pastor. Interested applicants should send resumé to: PBC, 444 Blackburn Ave., Ashland, KY 41101. You also may contact us at (606) 324-3626 or 325-7445.

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: 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 senioraccountantjob@kybaptist.org.

SEEKING: Immediate opening for part-time children's minister (15 hours per week). Send resumé to: Jim Holladay, Lyndon Baptist Church, 8025 New LaGrange Road, Louisville, KY 40222. (502) 425-7150.

SEEKING: Immediate opening for part-time nursery coordinator (10-12 hours per week). Send resumé to: Jim Holladay, Lyndon Baptist Church, 8025 New LaGrange Road, Louisville, KY 40222. (502) 425-7150.

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

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

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

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

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

WANTED: Johnson Group of Ky., a Christian-owned and operated electrical contractor, has job openings for journeymen electricians and superintendents. JGI is a growing company. We offer excellent growth opportunity for people with integrity and high work ethics. Fax resumé: (502) 412-3523.

Couple works to save birthplace of 'Old Rugged Cross'

By Edward Hoogterp
Religion News Service

POKAGON, Mich. (RNS)—Any way you look at it, the weathered wooden building near the center of this southwestern Michigan hamlet is a piece of history.

You could look at the way it's built, with hewn timbers, wooden pegs and square-cut iron nails. You could talk of its original purpose, as part of a failed agricultural enterprise. Or you could simply consider its age: At 138 years old, it's among a small number of Civil War-era structures remaining in Michigan.

At times during its first five decades, the building served as a barn, a social hall and a Methodist church. And then it sat largely vacant for more than 80 years.

Bob and Molly Shaffer appreciate all that history. But to them, the building's true significance stems from a single day in 1913 when traveling evangelist George Bennard used it for the first public performance of his hymn, "The Old Rugged Cross."

Bennard, who conducted revival meetings around the Midwest, had worked on his hymn at several Michigan stops before performing it at Pokagon—both solo and with a choir—in 1913.

In the decades that followed, "The Old Rugged Cross" grew to become one of Christianity's most popular hymns, while the old barn-church was abandoned.

Two years ago the Shaffers bought the 90-foot-long building from a local family for \$10,000. They gave it to Pokagon United Methodist Church, which is the successor to the congre-

gation that first heard Bennard's hymn. With the help of other interested individuals, they formed the nonprofit Old Rugged Cross Foundation with hopes of restoring it to the way it looked in 1913.

"It's something that should have been done long ago," Bob Shaffer said. "There's an instant spiritual feeling in this building."

The group's architect has consulted with Michigan's Historic Preservation Office to ensure that the restoration follows guidelines for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Such a listing would increase the group's chances of receiving grants to complete the project.

The effort is expected to cost \$1.6 million and take at least three more years to complete. But the Shaffers seemed optimistic as contractors began replacing rotted beams last year, clearing out rubble and straightening walls that had been leaning as much as 15 degrees from vertical.

"Any other building that was vacant for 85 years would not be standing," said Shaffer, 62. "There's got to be a reason."

It was barely standing when the Shaffers bought it.

Eight-inch-square timbers that were supposed to support the south wall had turned to dust. The sanctuary floor had collapsed under the weight of time. Raccoon droppings sat a foot deep on the rotted boards.

The whole structure might have caved in except for three maple trees that took root decades ago along the north foundation and gave the tired walls a place to lean.

The group has raised \$83,000 so far. By next summer, they hope to bring in

another \$200,000 so contractors can lift the building off the site to put in a basement and new foundation walls.

Local records indicate the building went up in 1862 as a barn for drying and storing hops, a component in the brewing trade. But the hops business didn't take hold. The barn changed hands several times and was used briefly as a dance hall before a local Methodist congregation bought it in the late 1870s.

The church extended the building to add kitchen and storage space; cut holes in the walls for peaked, leaded-glass windows; and had interior walls plastered and wallpapered.

In 1915—two years after Bennard's visit—the congregation sold the building and moved to a former Baptist church across the street, where members still conduct worship services.

Contractor Dale Layman had to rush against the early onset of winter to get the old structure closed up and prevent further deterioration. A temporary steel roof was installed over a portion of the structure and lower walls were covered with building paper.

Inside, Layman put in temporary braces, jacked up the south wall and replaced some timbers, using the same wooden-peg joinery that was state-of-the-art in 1862.

He also recovered shards of painted glass and bits of red-patterned wallpaper that will be matched as part of the restoration.

"We are almost at the point where we can say we have saved the church," Mrs. Shaffer said. "Now we can work on raising the money to restore it."

In one popular fund raiser, Shaffer took broken pieces of lath—the rough-sawn wood strips that supported the



original coat of plaster—and fashioned them into tiny crosses available for a donation of \$20.

When the restoration is complete, the former sanctuary will be opened for community worship services, weddings and other events. The kitchen will become a museum, focusing both on "The Old Rugged Cross" hymn and the history of Pokagon.

RESTORATION Bob and Molly Shaffer purchased the 138-year-old Methodist church where "The Old Rugged Cross" was first performed in 1913. They have established the Old Rugged Cross Foundation to raise money for the structure's restoration. (RNS photo by Joanna Hecker)

Missouri man loses 174 pounds, gains new ministry opportunities

By Stacey Hamby
Missouri Word & Way

WARRENTON, Mo. (ABP)—A Warrenton, Mo., woman's dream of adopting a child from overseas is coming true—all because her brother decided to get in shape.

Randy Penberthy of Two Rivers Church in St. Charles, Mo., weighed 368 pounds in 1999. By following a strict diet and exercising six days a week, he dropped 174 pounds in 2000.

A program called "Body for Life" awarded him \$10,000 for his efforts. He, in turn, gave the money to his sister.

Bonnie Keen had long wanted to adopt a child from abroad. But she and her husband, Robert, pastor of Warrenton Christian Church, did not have the \$16,000 needed to adopt a Romanian child.

Penberthy said giving the money to his sister was the right thing to do.

"I spent time in prayer about what I should do with this money," he said. "I need a new roof, and I thought of all the things I could buy with it. But I balanced that up against being able to truly save a little girl's life and introducing her to Jesus Christ, and I knew what I needed to do."

Keen, who home schools her four

children, got a surprise call from her brother on his way to work one day.

"I just started crying," she recalled. "I always knew God would provide, but I had no idea it would be through my brother losing weight and giving me his cash prize."

Even with the gift, the Keens were \$6,000 short of the amount needed to begin the adoption process. Then Two Rivers Church got involved.

Penberthy recalled, "One Sunday, the pastor showed a local news video clip about my story and told the congregation about my sister's desire to adopt, and he said people could give to her by placing an offering in our box at the back of the church."

"The next Sunday, he presented me with a check for \$6,000."

The Keens have completed the necessary paperwork for the adoption, and they hope to travel this year to Romania to bring home their new daughter.

It all goes back to a weighty decision made by Penberthy more than a year ago.

On New Year's Eve 1999, Penberthy wasn't thinking about Y2K. His mind was on his struggling marriage. Despite praying that God would transform his marriage in 2000, he confessed, he really didn't

believe God would do so.

In February 2000, Randy and his wife, Vicki, attended a marriage retreat. That's when Penberthy made a commitment to lose weight.

"I got to thinking more and more about how God created me as a gift to my wife," Penberthy recalled. "I got to thinking about my weight, and I knew I had never taken care of that gift."

"I committed to get myself in the best physical and spiritual shape I could and present that as a gift to her."

From Jan. 30 to Nov. 26 last year, he lost 174 pounds using the Body for Life plan of nutritious eating and combining weightlifting with cardiovascular exercise. What made this effort different, Penberthy said, was the "six days on, one day off plan."

"On the seventh day, I could skip exercise and eat anything I want," he explained. "You can make it through those six days knowing Sunday is coming."

Mrs. Penberthy, who herself has lost 65 pounds, said her husband's commitment to lose weight and spend time with God daily has transformed their marriage and family life.

"We have date day once a month where we spend the whole day together, and we have date night once a week," she said. "I am proud of my

husband, and I hope his story might inspire other people. ... Once we put God first, everything else fell into place."

The Penberthys' day begins at 3:50 a.m. when they each rise to spend time alone with God. Then, they go to the gym to work out together before going to work. He is a technical manager and she teaches first grade at a Christian school.

He said eight or nine families and singles they met at the gym and shared Christ with now attend their church regularly. And about 15 people from church now work out regularly with the Penberthys at 5 a.m.

"God is allowing this transformation physically to enable me to share the gospel," he explained.

"Not only do I keep my body in good shape now, but I also have to watch myself spiritually as well, because people are watching me. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 really drives me so that I do not harm the platform God has given me."

Penberthy said the physical and spiritual renewal he has experienced during the past year has led to other changes, too.

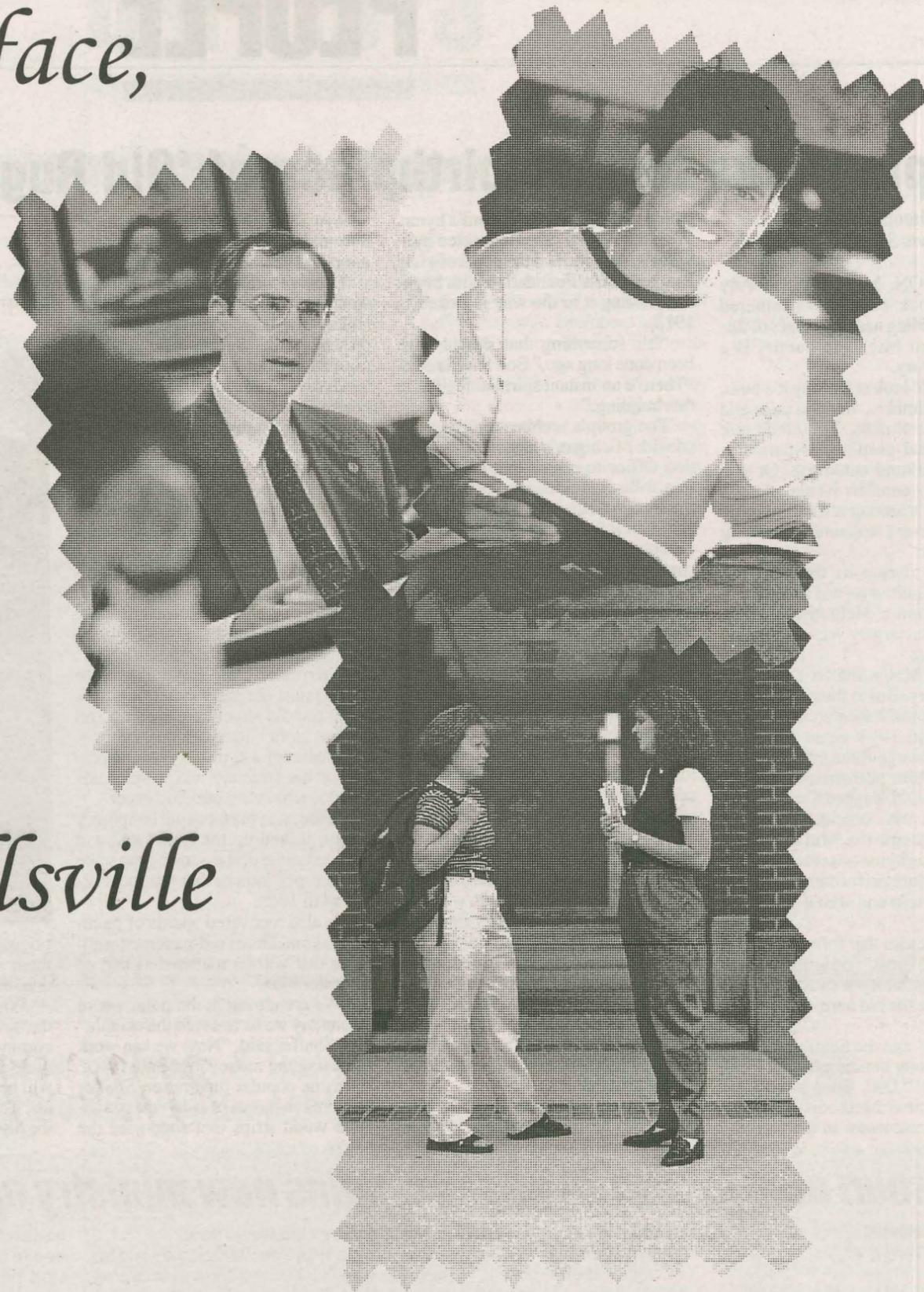
"My confidence level has gone through the roof," he said. "I see myself walking down the sidewalk and think, 'No way. That's not me.'"

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