



# WESTERN RECORDER

April 24, 2001  
Vol. 175, No. 16**FOR THE RECORD****Baptists**Texas' revised giving plan is falling short of expectations. *Page 2.***Georgetown**The Baptist school announced an agreement to allow public colleges access to its partnership with Oxford. *Page 2.***Editorial**Recapture the priority and power of prayer. *Page 5.***Pastors**The Georgetown pastors' conference explores the pastor's message and church excellence. *Page 6.***Nation**Baptist students invade Boston for ministry. *Page 9.***Books**Reviews include "The Evangelist," a book that explores the ministry of Billy Graham. *Page 13.*

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, April 25

## Author claims spread of urban legends damages witness

By Mark Wingfield  
*Texas Baptist Standard*

OKLAHOMA CITY (ABP)—Christians who pass along false stories and urban legends via e-mail compromise their witness for Christ, claims an Oklahoma minister who has written a book on the subject.

"If we're known for fabricating stories, for passing fearful stories around, we're going to lose our right to be heard in the public arena," said John Williams. "We're going to be looked upon as fools for Christ."

In fact, "Fools for Christ" was the working title of his book, recently published by Broadman &amp; Holman under the title "The Cost of Deception: The Seduction of Modern Myths

and Urban Legends."

The church, Williams says, is the representation of truth on earth. As witnesses to the truth of Jesus Christ, he says believers should not let themselves become known for spreading falsehood.

"Christians must guard themselves from the distrust and suspicion that can destroy community," he writes in the book's first chapter.

The danger, he writes, is illustrated by a famous Mark Twain quote: "A lie can travel halfway around the world before the facts have even put their boots on." The phenomenon of urban legends is nothing new, Williams acknowledges, although it has been given new impetus by the speed of the Internet.

"There is a lot of hooey that has been given validity by the replication and forwarding of urban legends and e-mail myths," he writes. "Perhaps you've recently signed a petition to stop an atheist's efforts to ban shows like 'Touched by an Angel.' Most of us have been told about the computer in Belgium called The Beast that has a record of every living human being.

"Even our pulpits are not immune from perpetuating urban legends. Have you ever heard during a wedding ceremony that as a result of the creation of the first woman, all men have one less rib than women? Ask any doctor; men have the same number of ribs as women. These myths still persist today, despite the fact they are not true."

All urban legends have several things in common, Williams explains.

"They are fun or shocking to tell, entertaining to hear and simply not true. Except in a few cases, it is usually impossible to determine the origin of Internet legends; they reappear every few months or years in slightly different versions, travel through cyberspace and then disappear."

Two things got Williams pondering why Christians are so gullible to spread urban legends.

First, he was amazed at the number of Christians who became prophets of doom as the year 2000 approached. He listened to those who were predicting the collapse of governments, the failure of banks, wars and all manner of

□ See Author: Myths ..., page 7

## More Kentucky disaster relief workers needed in New England

FRAMINGHAM, Mass.—Fifteen Kentucky Baptist Convention disaster relief volunteers traveled to Massachusetts last week to assist victims of recent severe flooding.

The Kentucky disaster relief crew arrived April 13 to help residents in Billerica, Reading and Winchester, Mass., in a three-county region declared a disaster area on April 10, said KBC disaster relief coordinator Larry Koch.

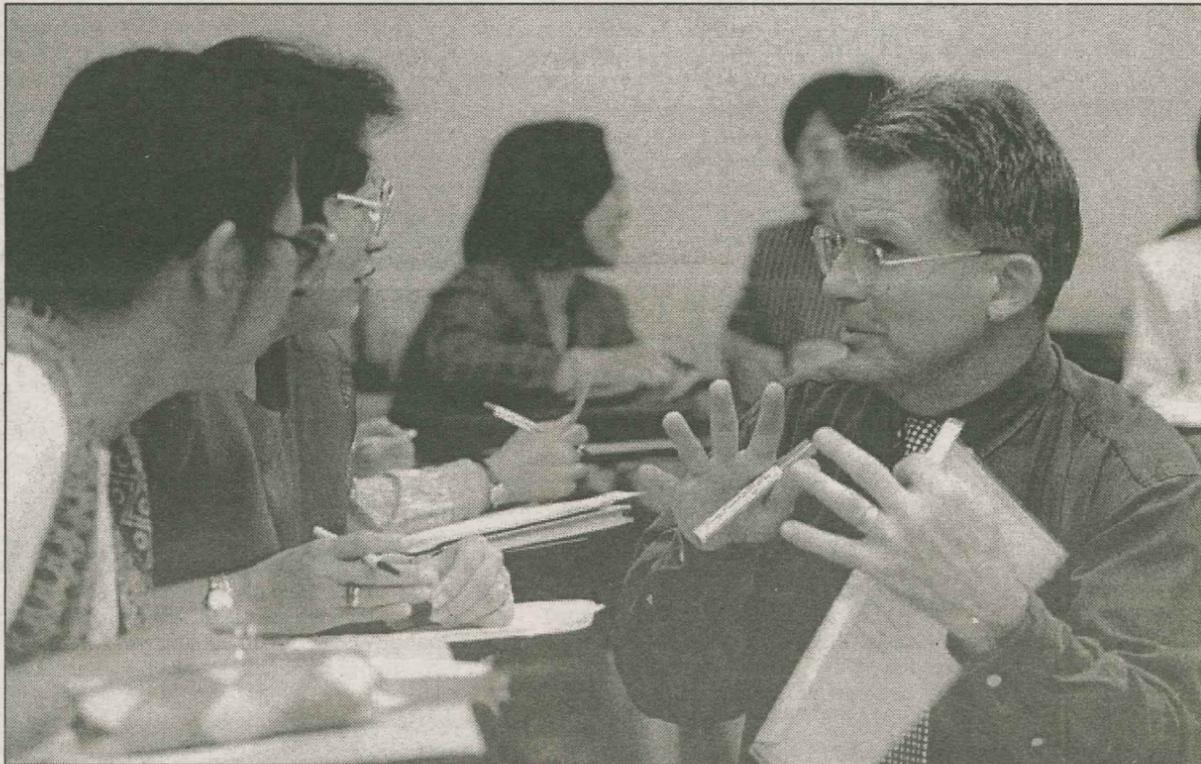
Koch and his crew primarily are working as a mud-out unit, cleaning out basements and washing walls with chlorine and water for sanitation purposes.

More volunteers will be needed for two to four weeks, he estimated. Approximately 200 homes need to be cleaned, he said.

"The amount of work to do is staggering. The floods affected so many homes and we are short on manpower. We need more volunteers," Koch said.

Disaster relief volunteers have the opportunity to share the gospel with others through humanitarian assistance, Koch noted. "People are really surprised that we don't charge for our clean-up. A lot of seeds are being planted through our efforts and that makes it all worth it," he said.

Trained Kentucky disaster relief volunteers who are interested in volunteering for the relief efforts in Massachusetts are asked to contact the KBC Brotherhood department at (502) 244-6489 or toll-free in Kentucky, (888) 254-5720.

Information about disaster relief also is available on the KBC Web site, [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org).

LANGUAGE MISSIONS Southern Baptist layman Bruce Robertson, 54, teaches English to high-level professionals in Bangkok, Thailand, and also ministers to prison inmates. Robertson and his wife, Bonnie, were both successful in business before they felt God calling them to Thailand as two-year International Service Corps workers through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in 1996. After finishing the two-year term they returned as four-year missionary associates. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)

## Specialists: Churches using poor business sense

By Jason White  
*Religion News Service*

CLAREMONT, Calif. (RNS)—Christianity and money never have been the most comfortable of bedfellows.

From the Apostle Paul's warning that "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" to churches' critical response to the spending excesses of American televangelists, Christians have tended to view money with a suspicious eye.

The challenge facing a growing group of would-be reformers is to turn that suspicious eye into a discerning one that is as comfortable reading budget sheets as it is the Bible.

"There's a general feeling among experienced church people that the way churches have handled money needs some work," said Scott Cor-

mode, a professor of church administration at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, Calif. "It is not simply a question of raising money. The way churches have thought about money needs to be theologized. And at the same time it needs to be subject to greater responsibility and general accounting practices."

Indianapolis Baptist Temple is a case in point. The church lost its building in February as payment for \$5.9 million in back taxes and penalties.

Such disputes could be avoided if only churches would embrace a more businesslike mindset and apply basic money management strategies to their operations, according to Valerie Brown, an accountant, church consultant and college professor.

"This is a call on my life," she said, "to take my secular training and incorporate it with spiritual support to help churches become better stewards."

Brown began her business career as an accountant at Arthur Andersen in Washington. She left in 1987 to found a private accounting practice in Chesapeake, Va., and married Kim Walter Brown, a minister.

Not long after setting up her new practice, Brown was surprised to find herself fielding calls from church leaders and pastors looking for financial advice. Most sought general information on taxes and government regulations. A few even wondered whether as pastors they were required to pay taxes.

Brown found the need among area churches to be so great that she devoted her entire practice to religious organizations—not the most profitable of fields for an accountant, she jokingly added. Brown now consults for churches and religious organizations all over the United States.

□ See Specialists say ..., page 7

# BAPTISTS

**More than 50 percent of Texas Baptist churches are giving funds through the convention's old budget plan while just 16 percent are contributing through the revised giving plan approved last fall.**

## Churches slow to embrace Texas giving plan

By Mark Wingfield and Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

DALLAS (ABP)—This year's Baptist General Convention of Texas budget was expected to redirect vast dollars away from Southern Baptist Convention seminaries and to Texas schools and ministries.

So far, however, churches in the state have been slow to embrace the new funding plan viewed by many on both sides as a milestone in Southern Baptists' power struggle between moderates and conservatives.

The budget, adopted overwhelmingly by Texas Baptists in their annual convention last fall, replaced the traditional 67 percent BGCT/33 percent SBC division of funds received from churches through the Cooperative Program. It called for reducing funding to the SBC's six seminaries by \$4.3 million and to the SBC Executive Committee and Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission by another \$1.1 million.

The BGCT, however, permits the state's nearly 6,000 Baptist churches to choose whether their gifts are disbursed through the approved 2001 budget or optional giving plans. Through the first quarter of the giving year, more than half of contributing churches (51 percent) designated their gifts for distribution under the old 67 percent/33 percent division of funds.

Just 16 percent of contributing churches, meanwhile, had given through the adopted budget, which keeps more money in the state (72 percent) and trims the amount for worldwide causes to 28 percent. Other churches have opted for an "other" category on a remittance form that excludes certain items or alters percentages in other ways.

As a result, despite total Cooperative Program giving nearly 3 percent above adopted goals, dollars earmarked for BGCT operations lagged almost 5 percent under budget. Convention offices have been operating at 90 percent of budgeted expenditures since January, said BGCT Treasurer Roger Hall.

Also feeling the pinch are Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University, George W. Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University and Hispanic Baptist Theological School in San Antonio.

The Hispanic school has so far received \$34,192 in new funds, far below the additional \$150,000 anticipated by now. Logsdon and Truett have split \$102,575 in new revenues so far this year, while SBC seminaries have received \$979,659 from the BGCT. Logsdon Dean Vernon Davis said new projects planned at the school are on hold because of insufficient funds.

Those numbers may improve soon. After funding of SBC seminaries

through the approved budget reaches a cap figure of \$1 million, only church-directed funds will go to SBC schools.

Texas Baptist leaders said they are not totally surprised by the figures. Hall said leaders expected sluggish giving during the first quarter because of a poor economy.

Other officials said it is too early to project giving patterns for the entire year. Baptist churches are infamous for resisting change, they said, and some pastors may be putting off discussions about budget options to avoid controversy within their congregation.

The percentage of money coming through the adopted Texas budget has increased steadily each month, from less than 10 percent in January to more than 22 percent in March. Some Texas churches will not adopt new budgets—and in the process consider the funding change—until fall.

While 93 churches so far have contacted the BGCT asking to be removed from its membership roll, additions of new churches and missions have offset those losses to yield a net gain of 20 affiliated churches, bringing the total to 5,995.

An alternative state convention, meanwhile, reports continued growth. Southern Baptists of Texas Convention now claims about 500 uniquely aligned churches and 200 more that are dually aligned.

## Seminary requires faculty to sign faith statement

By Melissa King  
Baptist Press

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's trustees affirmed a bylaw change requiring all faculty to publicly sign the Southern Baptist Convention's 2000 Baptist Faith and Message statement.

The action taken during the trustees' April 9-10 meeting on the Wake Forest, N.C., campus, adds that the revised statement will be added to the seminary's historic faith statement, the Abstract of Principles.

Russ Bush, vice president and dean of faculty, reported that all current faculty enthusiastically support the 2000 statement, citing their voluntary affirmation of the statement during a faculty meeting last fall.

Trustee Charlie Waller was the lone trustee voting against the bylaw amendment. He expressed concern that future trustees might pit the two statements against each other in an effort to

circumvent Scripture and ultimately teach contrary to the faith statement. Other trustees said the two statements are not at odds and, in fact, strengthen one another.

"This motion does not reject the Abstract of Principles. (It) keeps our roots that are in the past," Bush said. "But by approving this motion we can affirm where our convention is today."

"It is easier to hold up the BFM 2000 than any other document and say we (subscribe) to it," said trustee Hayes Wicker of Naples, Fla., affirming the decision to require faculty to sign two different documents. "I don't know anyone in my church that has read the Abstract of Principles in its entirety. The BFM 2000 is something that is more publicly known."

"This is an issue of showing support for our denomination," said trustee Tom Rush of Clovis, N.M. "We know what our faculty will teach, but others looking in do not. The perception outside is important."

Trustees also responded to a motion

presented during the 2000 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting requesting Southern Baptist institutions and seminaries not to require employees to sign the Baptist Faith and Message as a condition of employment.

Trustees said they would support the actions of the SBC by requiring all elected faculty to sign the statement, committing to teach within and not contrary to the parameters of the Baptist Faith and Message. Trustees previously affirmed the convention's changes to the statement last fall.

In other business, trustees increased the seminary's 2001-2002 budget by about \$2 million. They approved a \$16.8 million budget, up from \$14.8 million in the current budget.

Trustees also elected Ryan Hutchinson of Tampa, Fla., as vice president for administration after serving as interim vice president last year. Hutchinson will oversee the seminary physical plant, housing and financial and business affairs of the institution.

## Harvard, Baylor leaders discuss theology

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (RNS)—Officials from Harvard Divinity School and Baylor University held a recent series of discussions on "The Future of Public Theology."

The two meetings involving faculty, administrators and students is considered a first step in possible future involvement between the two schools.

"I was rather skeptical that much could be accomplished," said Baylor Provost Donald Schmeltekopf concerning the dialogue on the Harvard campus. "The 'R' world—religion—has been in the closet here for a long time."

Despite the philosophical differences between Harvard and Baptist-related Baylor, the discussions are expected to lead to a second meeting next year on Baylor's campus in Waco, Texas.

"We'd like to try to discover areas of common interest and consider opportunities for further dialogue and cooperation," Baylor President Robert Sloan told the Boston Globe.

Schmeltekopf said he hopes to create a channel to hire evangelically minded Harvard doctoral graduates for teaching positions at Baylor. Other options include exchanges of faculty and students.

## SBC membership in 2000 sets record, baptisms decline

NASHVILLE (BP)—Membership in Southern Baptist churches continued to climb toward the 16 million mark in 2000. With an increase of 108,552 members, the total number of Southern Baptist members reached an all-time high of 15,960,308.

While the increase of 0.68 percent was less than the 0.78 percent gain of 122,400 members in 1999, the 2000 total surpasses the previous all-time high of 15,891,514 members reported in 1997, according to figures from the Annual Church Profile. The previous record was followed by a 1.02 percent drop of 162,158 members in 1998, the SBC's only membership decline since 1926.

The ACP is compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention from church reports routed through local Baptist associations and state conventions.

Total baptisms surpassed 400,000 for the fourth consecutive year, although the 2000 total of 414,657 was a decline of 4,685, or 1.12 percent less than the growth in 1999.

Sunday school enrollment increased by 38,958 or 0.48 percent in 2000 to a total of 8,186,415, following a 0.01 percent decrease in 1999.

Increases in Discipleship Training and men/boys mission education enrollment were significant, due in part to an increased number of state conventions reporting in those categories. Discipleship gained 232,118 participants, an 11.75 percent increase, for a total of 2,208,427. Men/boys mission education gained 9.52 percent or 42,353 for a total of 487,410.

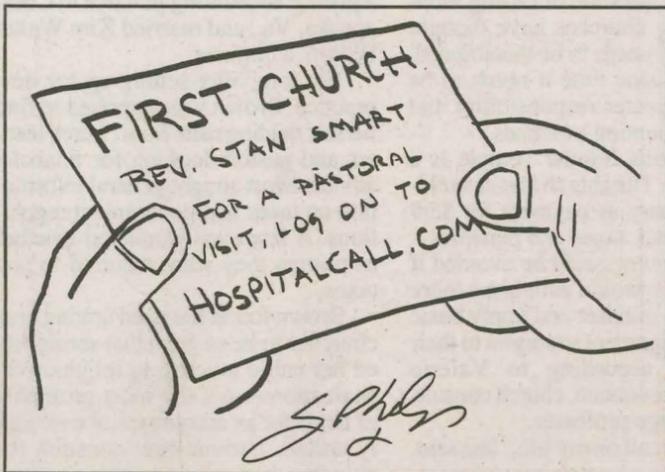
Other increases were reported in total tithes and offerings and special gifts. The giving total of \$7,793,931,050 was a 7.37 percent increase compared to the 1999 increase of 5.38 percent.

Sunday morning average worship attendance increased 2.33 percent from 5,418,348 in 1999 to 5,544,439 in 2000.

Music ministry enrollment/participation declined by 12,072 or 0.72 percent to a total of 1,654,877. That drop followed a 9.04 percent decrease the previous year.

Woman's Missionary Union enrollment declined by 17,370 or 1.91 percent to 892,157. That decrease was less than the 8.24 percent drop of the previous year.

Totals in two other categories—value of church property and church-type missions operated by churches—were affected by changes in the numbers of state conventions providing data. Reported church property value declined by 7.24 percent to \$25,201,554,006. Church-type missions increased by 39.55 percent to 5,243.



## Shelbyville radio ministry takes message around the world

SHELBYVILLE—When Ed Erwin delivers his sermons each Sunday morning at First Baptist Church of Shelbyville, the impact isn't limited to his congregation. His words travel literally around the world.

Erwin's congregation recently launched an international shortwave radio program called "The Light of the World." The program airs each Monday morning on WWCR, 15.685 megahertz on the shortwave dial.

WWCR is World Wide Christian Radio, a Nashville-based station that broadcasts spiritual and family-oriented programs overseas. Using high-powered transmitters for shortwave bands, WWCR is able to reach nationals and missionaries around the globe with Christian programming. The station reportedly has a potential listen-

ing audience of 500 million people.

How did First Baptist, Shelbyville, become involved in an international media ministry? Erwin said Harold Thom, the church's audio/video director, has extensive professional experience in the broadcast field and was familiar with WWCR's radio ministry.

"He's had all kinds of experience and has a lot of connections," Erwin explained. "He listens to this sort of thing a lot and knew about its potential. He had the dream and the vision."

Thom, who became involved in radio and television work in the 1950s, shifted to the music industry in 1966. He began producing a folk and bluegrass music show on WWCR last year and that relationship led to discussions about First, Shelbyville, hosting a program as well.

"The reason I did it is because of the tremendous amount of listeners shortwave broadcasts afford this type of ministry," Thom said. "The theme of this church is to spread the good news of Jesus Christ throughout the world and try to bring them to Christ. What better way to have an outreach than through a worldwide radio audience?"

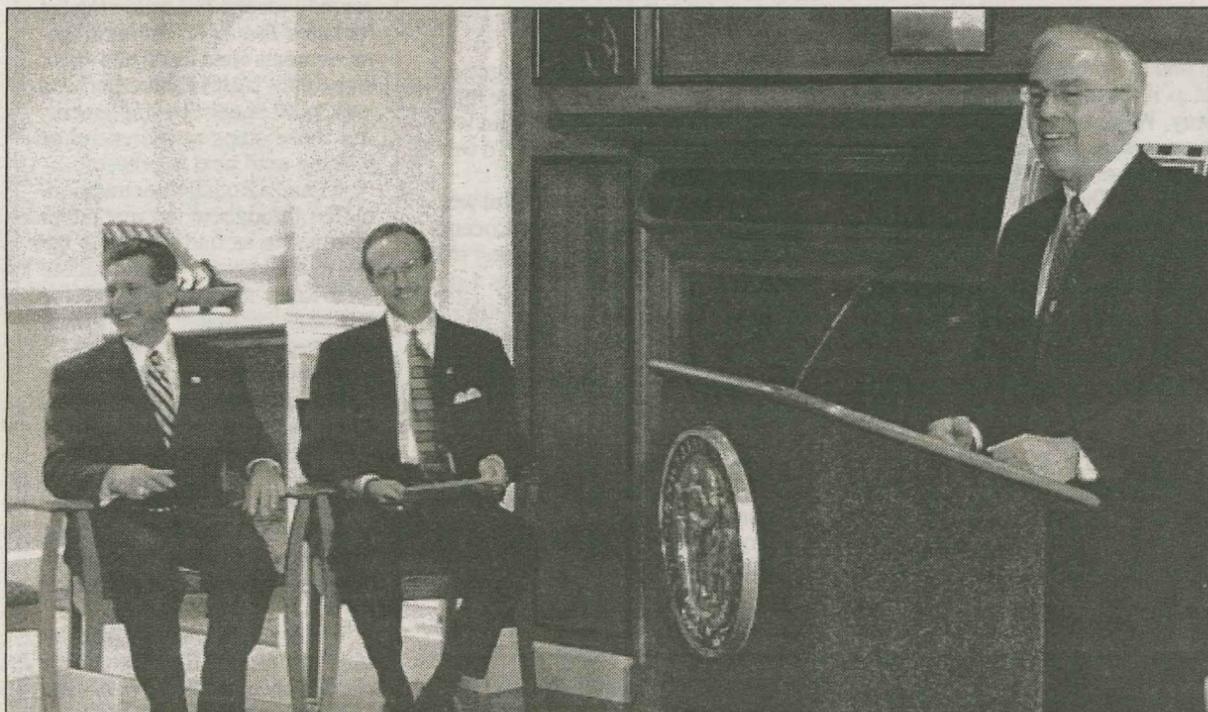
The next step was to secure funding. The congregation's Young at Heart senior adult ministry agreed to underwrite the cost of the weekly 30-minute broadcast and "The Light of the World" was under way.

"What an honor to be able to send the words of Jesus Christ to millions of people each week," noted Young at Heart leader Martha Beatty. "Our senior adults are thrilled to participate."

Media ministry is not a new venture for the Shelbyville church. Morning worship services air on a local radio station each Sunday morning and also are televised on a local cable channel each Sunday morning and Wednesday evening.

With the addition of the shortwave broadcast, Thom lifts the audio track from the television program each week, transfers it to audiotape and adds the program's introduction and conclusion.

"The idea of taking a small-town church and being able to produce a program of high quality that can be heard by a worldwide listening audience on a regular basis is quite an achievement," Thom said. "The primary reason is to bring people to Christ."



**GEORGETOWN ANNOUNCEMENT** Kentucky Gov. Paul Patton helps announce the British Experience in Learning and Living last week with KCTCS President Michael McCall (seated, left) and Georgetown College President Bill Crouch. (Georgetown photo by Jason Falls)

## Georgetown links public state colleges to Oxford

GEORGETOWN—Georgetown College announced a partnership last week to share its access to England's Oxford University with students and faculty of Kentucky's two-year, public community and technical colleges.

Under the new arrangement, students from schools in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System who transfer to Georgetown College and meet eligibility requirements can attend Regent's Park College of Oxford University.

Georgetown has been linked with Regent's for two years, sending students and faculty to the college.

Faculty and staff from the 28 colleges in KCTCS also will be able to travel to Regent's Park and other British educational institutions for professional development opportunities.

The program will benefit Georgetown by providing a pipeline of qualified students to transfer from two-year institutions throughout the state, according to spokesman Jason Falls. "We're going to get the best of those students"

Georgetown President Bill Crouch hailed the agreement as an example of cooperation between private and pub-

lic institutions. "As Gov. (Paul) Patton has indicated, this can only be achieved on behalf of all Kentuckians if public institutions like KCTCS and private colleges like Georgetown College work together for the common good."

Jamie Ratliff, 21, is among the Georgetown students who have studied at Regent's. The fine arts major said the one-to-one mentor-student arrangement, with weekly papers and intensive research, helped her realize she wants to attend graduate college to study art history and eventually become an art critic or writer.

The agreement, called the British Experience in Learning and Living, will encourage two-year public college students to continue their studies by offering study at one of the world's premier institutions.

"The British Experience opens new avenues to knowledge and broadens the ties of KCTCS to the global economy," said KCTCS President Michael McCall.

KCTCS also will reward all students who successfully transfer to Georgetown by offering them a two-week travel opportunity in England.



**MCCANDLESS LECTURE** Paul Fiddes, principal of Regent's Park College of Oxford in England, was at Georgetown last week to deliver the McCandless Lecture to students and faculty.

Crouch said Georgetown hopes to offer all students an option to travel abroad within two years.

Gov. Patton praised the partnership.

"Students from our colleges will get the chance to study at one of the most prestigious institutions in the world. Faculty and staff who qualify will be exposed to new ways to educate students," Patton said. "And this seamless partnership creates an excellent return on the investment that all Kentucky citizens make in higher education."

### BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Leadership training scheduled.** Bill Mackey, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will be the keynote speaker for three regional State Associational Leadership Training conferences this year. The west conference will be April 28 at First Baptist Church of Madisonville. The eastern conference will be June 2 at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington. The central conference will meet on Oct. 27 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. All conference times are 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Admission and lunch are free, but registration is required. Participants also can attend sessions addressing their leadership area. For more information, call the Kentucky Baptist Convention at (502) 254-4727 or toll free in Kentucky, (888) 254-5707. Information is also available on the KBC Web site, [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org).

■ **Equestrian ministry trail ride planned.** Kentucky Baptist horse enthusiasts are invited to help share the gospel during two equestrian ministry trail rides in May. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Brotherhood department will host trail rides May 5-6 at Double J Stables Campground in Mammoth Cave National Park and May 26-28 at Wrangler Campground in the Land Between the Lakes region. For information contact the Brotherhood department at (502) 244-6489 or toll-free in Kentucky, (888) 254-5720. Information also is available on the KBC Web site, [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org).

■ **New minister orientation scheduled.** The Kentucky Baptist Convention will welcome new ministers and their spouses with an orientation April 30-May 1. "Welcome to Kentucky," sponsored by the KBC leadership development team, is an opportunity for new pastors and other church staff members to meet the KBC staff and learn about available resources. Participants are the KBC's guests for seminars, dinner and a tour of the KBC building. Admission is free, but participants are asked to register. For information, contact the KBC leadership development team at (502) 254-4733 or toll-free in Kentucky, (888) 254-5702.

■ **Volunteerism video available.** A new video describing the work of Mission Service Corps missionaries in Kentucky now is available from the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Answer the Call...Make a Difference!" is a nine-minute video designed to help people learn more about the work of MSC missionaries and how to get involved. Produced by the KBC's communication/media department, it features Kentucky MSC missionaries involved in diverse ministries, including disaster relief, campus ministries and food distribution. For information about the video, call (502) 254-4731 or toll-free in Kentucky, (888) 254-5713. For information about Mission Service Corps, contact Eric Allen at (502) 245-4101, ext. 397 or toll-free in Kentucky, (800) 266-6477. Information also is available on the KBC Web site, [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org).

## 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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## Expand dialogue

I was heartbroken when I opened the April 3 issue of the Western Recorder and read the words, "Southern Baptist leaders halt dialogue with Catholics."

The Southern Baptist church I serve as pastor currently meets in the chapel of the diocesan Catholic children's home. We were welcomed there with open arms by a sweet Catholic believer named Sister Jean Marie. Since before we began meeting there we have been working with the children in the home through a program called "Kids For Christ." This class gives our church the opportunity to share the good news of God's love and of His Son Jesus Christ with these children.

Sister Jean Marie also has reached out to another Southern Baptist church, seeking their help with teaching the Bible to the children as well.

God has worked through this fine Catholic institution to meet many of the needs of our growing church. Our relationship mutually has been filled with blessings. Many have come to know Jesus Christ as Savior in this Catholic facility. Many Southern Baptists have discovered the fervor Catholics have for meeting the needs of hurting people, and it has motivated us to do the same.

Halt the dialogue? May it never be. If anything, expand the dialogue. I'm sure our church is one example of many who are tearing down denominational walls to spread the gospel of Jesus and meet the needs of people.

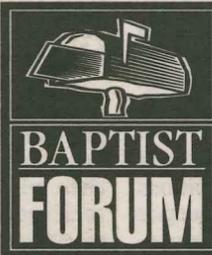
I'm thankful Jesus didn't "halt the dialogue" with us while we were yet sinners. Let us do the things that will build up the body and not tear down.

As long as we remain committed to the Word of God, we cannot go wrong by crossing denominational lines to reason with one another and allow God to open eyes on both sides of the line.

Kevin Murphy  
Covington

## Don't forget women

I am writing as an individual and a member of a Baptist church to voice my opinion regarding the work of the committee studying Kentucky Baptists' relationship to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.



I have observed for the last year our Baptist organizations address every conceivable subject—anything from the type of music we have in our churches to whether we should condone homosexuality. Yet in all this time, our churches seem to be petrified to address the issue of women and their role in the church. Some act as if the topic is ignored, it will go away. Well, guess what, it will not go away, not as long as there are free-thinking women in the church.

We as Christians spend so much time making sure we do not discriminate against this race or that society, ensuring that we make everyone welcome in our church, we have completely forgotten one portion of our church. We have forgotten the women, whom I might add carry out 80 percent of the work and are the most faithful in attendance.

I cannot in good conscious personally affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message when it specifically singles out one part of the church and deliberately discriminates against that one group.

I will not ever be able to understand

how a group of men dare to say or think they know whether God calls a woman to be a pastor of a church or a deacon. To prophesy what God plans for any individual would frighten me to my inner core.

I urge this committee to vote to turn away from the current Baptist Faith and Message. Please do not abandon the very part of our churches that hold those churches together.

Connie Pruitt  
Louisville

## Choose to worship

For some time I have read the merits of traditional vs. contemporary worship and vice versa. As a full-fledged senior citizen, may I add my personal views?

Until recent years I had attended only traditional services, but when an alternative style became available, I began attending that service.

No, I don't care for every song (neither do I like every hymn). I'm not wild about some of the background music (and I absolutely hate the thundering blare of a pipe organ). But why am I present in the first place? To worship. Simply to worship.

Some of the most meaningful worship I have ever experienced occurs during the contemporary service. I will not force anyone to worship as I do; rather I invite you to grant me the opportunity to worship in spirit and in truth, singing praise songs, listening to a variety of musical instruments, watching meaningful dramas, placing my offering in plates passed by young boys and girls and absorbing God's message brought by His casually dressed spokesman.

Worship as you choose. But by all means worship!

Sylvia Daugherty  
Elizabethtown

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

### VBS: An adventure in learning

The LifeWay Christian Resources materials for the 2001 vacation Bible school are designed to be an exciting adventure for boys and girls connected to Kentucky Baptist churches. But what about all the boys and girls in Kentucky communities who are not connected to a Bible-teaching church? As Baptists, we believe every boy and girl deserves the right to hear about Jesus from loving and caring teachers, to experience an exciting adventure in Bible learning, to know a pastor who cares and to know a church where they are welcomed.

The LifeWay catalog states the motto of VBS so well, "We want to help children (as well as youth and adults) 'Track down the Truth! Obey God's commands and follow Jesus.'" It is my prayer that every church will provide an exciting adventure in VBS for every boy and girl in their communities.

Some churches can accomplish this by a concerted effort to enlist every boy and girl in their church VBS. Church members can enlist children in their neighborhoods and provide transportation. Church buses and vans should not sit idle when boys and girls

could be transported to VBS. A little visitation will produce a great response and harvest. Church members should not wait for someone to ask them to enlist children. Jesus said, "Go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in" (Luke



Bill Mackey

14:23). Every boy and girl deserves to hear teachers who know God personally and who live what they teach. You can help children build a spiritual memory and heritage.

Recently at Horse Cave Baptist Church, a young woman told my wife, Kay, that she remembered Kay teaching her in VBS at First Baptist Church of Whitesburg. That was more than 25 years ago.

VBS is such a powerful learning experience due to the concentrated time of learning. I believe it is equivalent to six months in Sunday school. The anticipation of fun activities enhances the learning environment. VBS is a wonderful opportunity for children to get to know their pastor and church staff.

Some churches will need to plan a mission VBS or backyard Bible club for boys and girls not yet connected to their church. There are children in

multi-family housing, mobile home parks and isolated areas who deserve an adventure with loving teachers in discovering the truth of God's Word.

During college days, I was fortunate as a summer worker in Latta, S.C., a small farming town, to work with a pastor who led our youth and me to assist a small African-American church with VBS. When I served as a staff member of First Baptist Church of Middlesboro, the pastor, Truett Miller, led the youth and me to assist Pruden Baptist Church with VBS. It was natural for me as pastor of First Baptist, Whitesburg, to conduct mission vacation Bible schools.

Every church member can be involved in making VBS a great success in learning and outreach. Consider praying for workers and students, offer to assist as a worker, prepare and serve refreshments, serve as a safety/security patrol, assist parents with unloading and loading, enlist and bring neighborhood children, help workers with their family meals, pray for an abundant harvest and cultivate parents yet to be connected to your church.

With your willingness to venture beyond your comfort zone, boys and girls in your community can have an adventure in learning the truth of God's Word.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## FAMILY

### Implement steps now to prepare for next year's taxes

By Jeremy White

At the end of each tax season, our office staff holds a brainstorming session for improvements to make the following year. We have learned that now is the time to plan improvements while the tax process is fresh on our minds.

The same approach is useful for individuals. The following list includes the most common improvements cited by clients about steps they plan to take. Perhaps you could benefit by implementing these steps now instead of waiting until next tax season:

- Fund a Roth IRA or traditional IRA throughout the year rather than trying to find \$2,000 at the end of the year for a contribution.

- Keep track of mileage for business, charitable and medical purposes.

- Obtain receipts for non-cash contributions to charity (clothes, furniture, household items, etc.).

- Seek advice from a tax professional before, instead of after, a significant transaction.

- Adjust withholding of taxes from payroll now to increase or decrease the year-end refund or payment.

- Have taxes withheld from an early distribution from retirement plans to cover taxes and penalties.

- Save along the way to have enough for quarterly estimated payments.

- Keep track of child-care expenses for children in day care.

- Maintain accurate tax and investment records in a file throughout the year, especially mutual fund transactions where dividends are reinvested.

- Keep track of itemized deductions, such as health insurance, job hunting expenses, unreimbursed employee expenses, moving expenses, expenses incurred on behalf of charities, nursing home expenses and anything else that might be deductible.

An element of stewardship is paying the legal amount of your taxes. That involves honesty to pay as much as required and diligence to pay as little as required.

Although most of us dislike paying taxes, remember to count your blessings, as the hymn reminds us. I am reminded of Will Rogers' implied gratitude when he remarked, "There is no income tax in Russia. But there's no income."

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant in Paducah. He presents financial seminars and workshops at churches and conferences.

## How can parents develop unified approach to effective parenting?

**Q: My wife and I had many common interests before we married. Now, two children later, we can't agree on a common approach in raising our children. What can we do?**

It often seems like smooth sailing in the pre-marital period when two people seem to agree on everything. You like the same music. You both enjoy the outdoors. Then the children are born. It seems like some alien has taken over your spouse. That fun-loving person suddenly seems so unreasonable about parental guidelines.

Our parenting styles often are influenced by how we were raised by our parents and the makeup of our family of origin. Sometimes, we as parents either do the exact opposite of our own parents or act out the same parenting styles of our parents. It would be helpful for you and your wife to talk about what you learned about parenting from your parents.

Take a large sheet of newsprint and draw your family tree. Include ages of family members and important events. Where were you in the family order? What were the family rules? An excellent book is "Family Ties That Bind" by Ron Richardson to help you explore your families. Talk about what it was like growing up in your family. As a child, what did you think a parent should be like? Think about the happy and sad times in your family. Discuss these thoughts with your spouse.

After this step, consult with your pastor or a counselor about some good parenting books to read. Understanding your own family and reviewing some guidelines for parenting should get you talking more about a cooperative parenting partnership. As always, if you remain conflicted about the most effective ways to parent your children, consult with your pastor or pastoral counselor.—*Suzanne Coyle*

**Q: There is growing interest in Internet use by senior adults. This would seem to present some interesting ministry possibilities. Any suggestions?**

David Lansdale, a geriatrics expert from Stanford University, has started an innovative program in California. He has been organizing groups of older people and teaching them to use the Web. The LinkingAges program ([www.linkages.net](http://www.linkages.net)) is sponsored by the Alliance for Aging Independently, a nonprofit organization serving senior adults, their families and health care providers.

The goal is to build community and promote interdependence for older adults and their caregivers, teaching them to use e-mail and the Internet to communicate with family, friends and healthcare providers. LinkingAges offers hands-on training to institutionalized and community-dwelling elders, using a train-the-trainer, peer-based model.

The program's goal is to promote opportunities and skills for senior adults to access and use e-mail and the Internet in convenient and affordable communal locations, including senior centers, assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

"The Internet is a window to life," Lansdale said in a recent interview with Associated Press. "It's an elixir for these people."

He said mastery of e-mail and Internet techniques could help overcome what he called the four plagues of the institutionalized elderly: loneliness, boredom, helplessness and the decline of mental skills.

"We want to promote relationships," he explained. "Getting connected is bringing people back to life."—*Jon Rainbow*

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



## Recapture the priority & power of prayer

It was one of those significant spiritual moments in life. Of course, associational Woman's Missionary Union gatherings typically have a strong spiritual focus, but this one offered a special bonus in the meeting's closing moments.

I had the privilege of speaking last week at Enterprise Association's quarterly WMU meeting. Dozens of women and a few men from several area churches gathered at First Baptist Church of Paintsville for a hearty potluck dinner followed by a mission-focused program. Participants told about such ministry opportunities as an associational missions & ministry work day, a prayer walk, a women's conference and a mission trip to Boston. They also took time to pray for missionaries and to earmark several hundred dollars for specific ministry needs in the area.

At the close of the program, the order of service listed "Circle of Prayer." That's when the real spiritual zeal of the group came into focus. Clapping hands and forming a circle around the sanctuary, the 50 or so individuals attending the event spent several minutes sharing heartfelt prayer concerns. After some 20 prayer requests had been voiced, the meeting concluded with a time of ardent prayer for specific needs.

The WMU prayer circle offered a clear reminder of the true source of power for missions and ministry in Southern Baptist life. It's one thing to come together and talk about the importance of prayer; it's quite another thing to set aside specific time for sincere prayer in response to requests expressed by fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

It was Jesus Himself who quoted God's message recorded in Isaiah 56:7, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Among all the attributes Jesus could have used to describe the house of God—worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship—He chose to emphasize the role of prayer.

Faded bumper stickers proclaiming "Prayer is the

Answer" and "Prayer Changes Things" are fairly common sights in many church parking lots. In Baptist life, a brief time of prayer routinely is included in virtually any worship service, meeting or informal get-together. Yet the practice of prayer often seems to lapse into mere routine among those whose lives revolve around the local church.

Whether or not we take the power of prayer for granted, the fact remains that effective, fervent prayer to God truly does change things.

Jesus' personal priority on prayer is highlighted throughout the Gospels. Luke 6:12, as an example, notes that Jesus "went off to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in prayer to God." When was the last time most Christians gave that level of time commitment to their personal prayer lives?

Contrary to the straightforward directive of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray without ceasing," many churches seem to tack corporate prayer onto the beginning and end of each service without much thought or planning. Amid the so-called "worship wars" over musical styles and other elements of worship, the priority of focused prayer often is a forgotten ingredient.

As Kentucky Baptists emphasize diverse mission and ministry projects throughout the state and beyond, the most effective starting point is spiritual renewal fueled by faithful prayer.

Whether we are praying for mission endeavors, ministry opportunities or personal spiritual growth, the key is to sincerely seek God's perfect wisdom and will. Even for longtime Christians who have prayed faithfully for decades, there always is something new God can teach His children through the daily discipline of prayer.

"Lord, teach us to pray," one of Christ's disciples requested in Luke 11:1. As we strive to make prayer a true priority in Baptist life, seeking guidance from the Master Teacher is the best place to start.

**STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR**



Trennis Henderson

## On the lighter side of history: Products for body, mind & spirit

By Joyce Martin

Feeling puny? Worried about your thinning hair?

Need a sewing machine? Or a new-fangled "automatic" washer?

Want to know what Baptists believe? Looking for a new song for your church choir to sing?

If you had been a reader of the Western Recorder in 1900, you would have needed to look no further than the state Baptist paper's advertisements of that era.

It's all there: Something for the body, mind and spirit.

### ■ For the body:

■ **Swamproot.** "We recommend it to all humanity who are suffering from kidney and bladder disease," the ad boldly declared.

■ **Free Cure for Baldness.** Just the

thing for those who "have parted with their looks" either by baldness or premature greying.

A bonus: Western Recorder readers could order a free sample of these products.

### ■ For the mind:

"The Little Baptist."

A 200-page book that "has confirmed more Baptists in the faith and influenced more

to become Baptists than any book except the Bible." Price: 75 cents.

Sorry, no free copies, but the book was available at the Baptist Book Concern in Louisville.

### ■ For the spirit:

■ "In His Steps" or "What Would Jesus Do?" By Feb. 22, 1900, more

than 1 million copies of the popular book had been sold. Price: 15 cents.

■ "Out of the Shadow Land." A new song included in the "For Revival, Prayer and Evangelistic Meetings: Church Hymns and Gospel Songs." Written by Ira D. Sankey in memory of famed evangelist Dwight L. Moody.

### ■ Bradford's Automatic Washer:

"Rob's wash-day of its horrors. ... No broken backs, but a health-preserver." Plus, anyone who signed on to sell this "triumph of scientific construction" could make \$25 to \$50 dollars a week.

Talk about practical resources for everyday living!

Joyce Martin is Western Recorder partnership editions editor. She majored in history at Georgetown College.



Western Recorder Feb. 22, 1900



Western Recorder March 22, 1900

# KENTUCKY

## Pastors explore sermon, excellent churches at Georgetown

**"In so many of our churches, we're really running them as if we're atheists."**

Author Paul Wilkes

GEORGETOWN—Churches are challenged today to deal with a variety of cultures, but pastoral preaching still can minister to the needs of a variety of people, a former Kentucky pastor said recently.

"Preaching is pastoral care on a group scale," said Bill Turner, pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston for 16 years.

Turner, who was a Kentucky pastor for 25 years, told a conference audience last week at the Georgetown College pastors conference that he has his own view of the "worship wars" between contemporary and traditional styles.

"I call it the one-size-fits-all way of corporate worship versus creativity," he said.

"It probably never was true that one size fits all," he added. But the greater diversity of ethnic cultures and backgrounds in America is causing more tension in more churches, he said.

"Whereas we used to see diversity when it occurred in different congregations, now you're seeing diversity under one roof," he said.

Regardless of the culture, however, pastoral preaching can link the listener with the Christian message, Turner added. "Pastoral preaching



**GEORGETOWN PASTORS' CONFERENCE** Dwight Moody, dean of the chapel at Georgetown College, leads a conference workshop session on Baptist confessions during the college's annual pastors' conference, April 16-20. Approximately 85 people attended the meeting, which next year will be held April 8-10.

makes the connection between the story and their story."

Turner encouraged pastors to be careful about what they read, making sure it can help them relate better to their audiences and the issues with which church members are wrestling.

"Anything you can do to get inside their skin will make you a better preacher," he said.

Turner listed several sermon themes he said consistently have connected

with the needs of his members.

One is work. People want to understand the difference between a job and a calling, he said. Most people aren't interested in a protracted defense of baptism, he added. "But they'd like to know, 'How am I going to get through the next week?'"

Others themes, he said, are hope, dealing with change, forgiveness and time. Turner said a book by pastoral ministry pioneer Wayne Oates about

personality disorders led him to develop a sermon series applying the Christian message to such issues as dependence, suspiciousness, perfection and anger. "If the gospel works, it ought to address these issues."

The three-day conference also featured an author who has studied effective churches in America.

"In so many of our churches, we're really running them as if we're atheists," said Paul Wilkes, who recently completed two books on the subject. "We don't believe in God. We really believe in ourselves."

Wilkes, a writer and professor in Wilmington, N.C., said his research uncovered two characteristics common to the "excellent" Protestant and Catholic congregations he studied: Faith in God and each other, and imagination.

"They said, 'Don't tell me what isn't. Tell me what can be,'" he said. "With imagination and faith in God, it happened. It always happens."

The imagination exhibited at those churches includes a willingness to take risks, Wilkes added. "Churches are notoriously risk averse," he said. "But Jesus Christ was not risk averse."

Approximately 85 people attended this year's Georgetown College pastors' conference.

### MURRAY AREA ACCOMMODATIONS

Rates do not include tax (except Jonathan Creek). Taxes vary between 9-10%. Rates and other information not listed below was unavailable at time of printing. Messengers are responsible for making their own reservations. Kentucky Baptist Convention must be mentioned and reservation deadlines met to receive blocked room rates. Most blocked rooms are non-smoking.

#### Murray

**Amerihost Inn**  
1210 N. 12th St. (U.S. 641)  
1.270.759.5910  
\$69  
Free continental breakfast  
Reservation deadline: 11/1

**Calloway Inn**  
(formerly a Holiday Inn)  
U.S. Highway 641 South  
1.270.753.5986

**Days Inn**  
517 South 12th St.  
1.270.753.6706  
\$54 (1-4 persons/dbl or single)  
Free continental breakfast  
Reservation deadline: 10/12

**Holiday Inn Express**  
(Facility due to open in April.  
Look for contact information  
in an upcoming Western  
Recorder issue.)

**Shoney's Inn**  
1503 North 12th St.  
1.270.753.5353  
\$53 (1-4 persons/dbl or king)  
Free continental breakfast  
Reservation deadline: 9/11

**Draffenville** (I-24, Exit 25A)  
(23 miles from Murray)

**Holiday Inn Express**  
(Exit 25A off I-24)  
1.270.527.5300  
\$70 (1-3 persons/double or  
single; \$10 for 4th person)  
\$75-\$110 (suites)  
Free continental breakfast  
Reservation deadline: 10/10

#### Calvert City/Gilbertsville

(I-24, exit 27)  
(30-32 miles from Murray)

**Foxfire Motor Inn**  
3457 US. Highway 62  
1.270.395.7162  
\$35.88 (1 person)  
\$39.88 (2 persons)  
(Add \$6 for each add'l. person)  
Reservation deadline: 10/25

**Kentucky Dam Village  
State Resort Park**  
166 Upper Village Drive  
(near U.S. Highway 641)  
1.270.362.4271  
1.800.325.0146  
\$45 (1-4 persons)  
On-site restaurant  
Reservation deadline: 10/12

**Ramada Inn**  
2184 U. S. Highway 62  
1.270.362.4278  
\$50 (1-4 persons)  
On-site restaurant  
Reservation  
deadline: 11/1

**Super 8 Motel**  
3503 U.S. Highway 62  
1.270.395.5566  
\$52 (1-4 persons)  
Free continental breakfast  
Reservation deadline: 10/25

#### Hardin

(17-22 miles from Murray)  
**Kenlake State Resort Park**  
542 Kenlake Rd. (off Hwy 68)  
1.270.474.2211 or  
toll free 1.800.325.0143  
\$42 (single) / \$52 (double)  
On-site restaurant  
Reservation deadline: 9/12  
(Requests received after  
this date will be filled if  
space is available.)

**Jonathan Creek Camp and  
Conference Center** (motel)  
3043 Beal Road (off Hwy. 68)  
1.270.354.8355  
\$29/person (2 persons)  
\$27/person (3 persons)  
(Lone Oak Center is also  
available. Reservations  
are first come, first served.)



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## Author: Myths damaging Christian witness

Continued from page 1

dire consequences from the so-called "Y2K problem."

Williams, a former pastor and radio personality who now leads Oklahoma Concert of Prayer, went to the Bible to look for answers. "I just didn't see a scenario like Y2K coming," he said.

"In the aftermath of the Y2K wash-out, the most important question we must ask ourselves is this: How could so many people, who were so earnest in their convictions, be so wrong?" he writes in the book's introduction.

The second thing that prompted him to write the book was being inundated with one of the most unstoppable urban legends to afflict the modern church. On a single day in 1998, he received e-mails from five people urging him to sign a petition to keep Madalyn Murray O'Hair from putting an end to all religious broadcasting.

The appeal is bogus, but it has been circulating among Christians for nearly 30 years.

In his book, Williams devotes an entire chapter to debunking what he calls "the petition that won't go away." He also tackles stories about angel sightings, an alleged well drilled into hell from Russia, NASA's alleged proof of Joshua's missing day, alleged appearances by various corporate executives on television talk shows where they are purported to have made alarming comments about Satanism or racism, predictions of who is the Antichrist and other end-times prophecies.

All the urban legends he explains have been thoroughly researched, with information drawn from multiple sources. The response, he said, has been positive.

"The key to it is everyone can relate to one of these stories. Even if they don't get e-mail messages, they've heard these stories," he said.

### Common Christian myths

**Fiction: Act now, before it's too late.** An urgent e-mail claims Southern Baptist missionary Mike Hutchinson has been arrested in West Africa after an auto accident in which a 16-year-old boy was killed. "If convicted, he will be hanged immediately," the message states, urging both prayer and the forwarding of the e-mail.

**Fact:** According to the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, Hutchinson was involved in an accident April 30, 1999, which resulted in the death of a teenage boy, but the rest of the message is a myth. Local authorities treated Hutchinson's case routinely, and he never was in danger of being lynched. Hutchinson since has returned to the United States.

**Fiction: The petition that won't go away.** A message claims Madalyn Murray O'Hair has filed petition 2493 with the Federal Communications Commission, seeking to ban all religious TV programming. The message further encourages the recipient to write a letter to the FCC opposing the petition.

**Fact:** In December 1974, two men frustrated by their difficulties helping minority groups establish small commercial radio stations,

filed a petition with the FCC. One of their requests was for a "freeze" in all applications by religious schools and institutions for FM and TV channels that normally are reserved for educational organizations. O'Hair never was affiliated with the request. In August 1975, the FCC rejected the petition, R.M. 2493. In 1995, O'Hair disappeared and has since been presumed murdered by a former associate.

**Fiction: The well to hell.** In 1989, a Christian TV network newsletter carried a front-page article claiming a team of Russian geologists had drilled a hole 14.4 kilometers deep and heard human screams. The team also discovered a higher than anticipated temperature, according to the story, that attributed its story to an article in a Finnish newspaper.

**Fact:** The tale is traced to an article in Scientific American magazine. Scientists digging an experimental well in Russia's Kola Peninsula did discover rare rock formation and high temperatures, but the article mentions no screams. The story appears to have been spread by a Finnish prankster.

Source: *The Cost of Deception* by John A. Williams

And most people relate to the book because they have been guilty of passing on at least one of the urban legends, he said.

Pastors especially must be discerning about passing along bogus stories as sermon illustrations, Williams warned. "What would happen after a period of time if people find out these

are not true? It would cause people not to trust their pastors."

The best advice for all people hearing or reading sensational stories is to "trust but verify," Williams said. "Believe the best about everybody, but also verify."

"That really would help put to rest a lot of these stories a lot quicker."

## Specialists say churches need to manage their money better

Continued from page 1

"The No. 1 fallacy that I have found in churches," Brown said, "is that they trust one person to handle the financial affairs. Churches need checks and balances so there is not one person who is in the position of being able to take money with no one else knowing."

Brown advocates a division of financial responsibility among the minister, a treasurer and deacons or other elected church leaders. She also would like to see more seminaries offer church management courses similar to the one she teaches at Virginia Union University. The average church budget is \$500,000, and running an organization of that size, whether a church or a business, takes management skills, she said.

Loren Mead, author of "Financial Meltdown in the Mainline?," has long observed money management in the churches, and he doesn't care for much of what he sees.

"Sloppiness is not next to godliness in my book," Mead said. "And I think the problem generally is sloppiness, not anything worse. By and large, clergy and churches do not see money and budgets and auditing as having any religious or spiritual content." And that, he said, is bad theology.

Mead thinks something should be done but he's not sure that adding a course or two to the seminary curriculum is the answer. "Generally it's been found that seminary students don't want to take and generally do not profit by those courses. They don't think they are important."

Some of the blame for this would appear to lie with the various denominations and their clergy approval process. "When was somebody flunked from ordination because he couldn't read a budget or a balance sheet?" Mead asked.

Whatever problems do exist, it's likely that churches won't deal with them effectively until they can learn to talk about money. And right now, even that appears to be a significant hurdle.

Dan Hotchkiss, head of the faith and money project at the Alban Institute, a nondenominational religious think tank with a practical bent in Bethesda, Md., noted a widespread reluctance on the part of church leaders to talk about money. "Money," he said, "seems to be the last taboo."

## Church Weekday Education

S E M I N A R

June 2, 2001 8 - 3:20 p.m.

**Southern Baptist  
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2825 Lexington Road,  
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June 9, 2001 8 - 3:20 p.m.

**Calvary Baptist Church**  
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**LifeWay**  
CHRISTIAN STORES

## Gypsy town revived after drunk became a Christian

The former mayor says crime has fallen sharply in Berkovitsa in the past decade. Even smoking and drinking have decreased greatly.

By Mike Creswell  
SBC International Mission Board

BERKOVITSA, Bulgaria (BP)—People once feared the Gypsy Ivan Zahariev. He was a criminal and sometimes vicious when he was drunk.

Looking at the little Gypsy town of Berkovitsa, Bulgaria, where he lived, you'd have been hard-pressed to expect more from him.

It's a humble collection of homes strewn up and down a hillside; untreated sewage runs down the middle of dirt streets where in the summer naked children play.

Gypsies are second-class citizens at best in Bulgaria—poor, ill-treated and scorned, as they are across much of Europe. Berkovitsa, with few jobs and low incomes, reflects this status.

But when Ivan Zahariev accepted Christ as his Savior, his life changed.

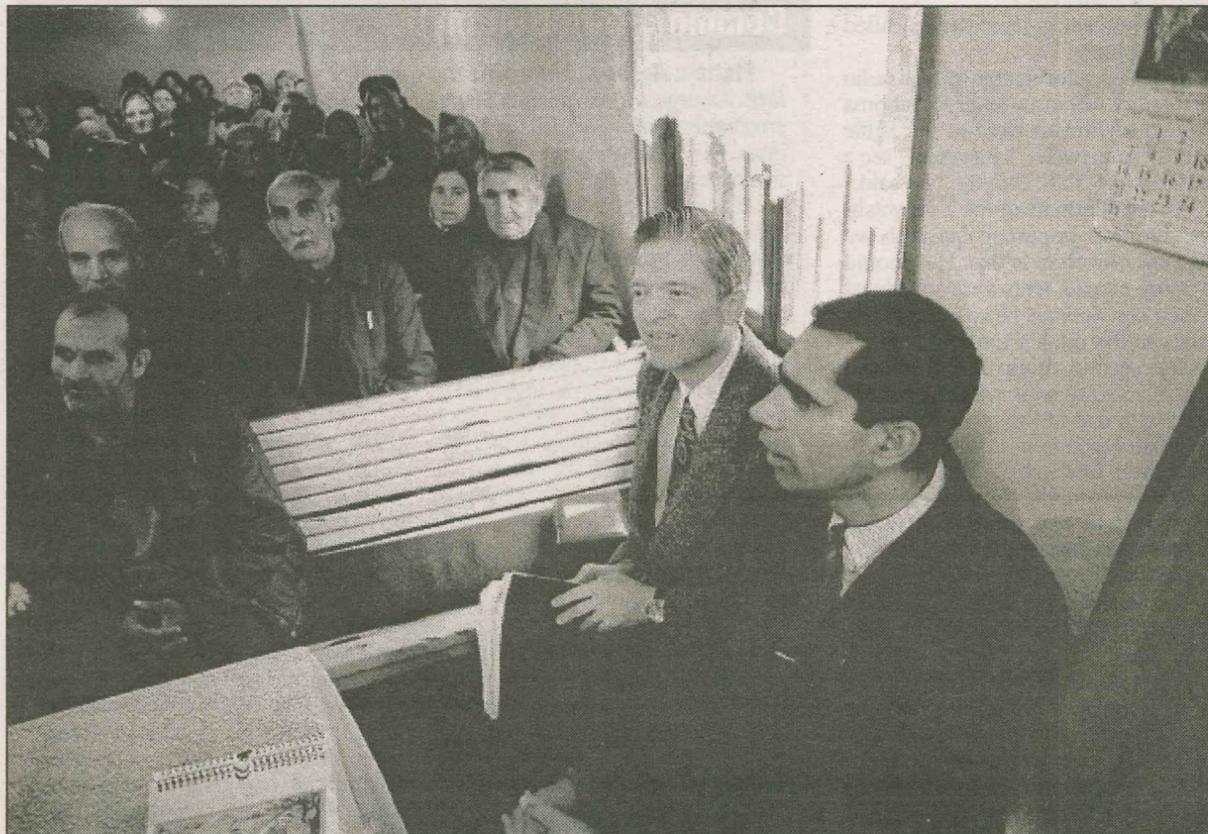
After Zahariev's conversion, Southern Baptist missionary Bill Wardlaw taught him the Bible and disciplined him. Ivan, the warehouse worker and drunk, became Ivan, a polished preacher well-versed in the Bible, a leader.

Ultimately, his entire village changed, too.

Today Zahariev is pastor of a growing Baptist church in Berkovitsa, population about 3,400. Especially popular are the weekly children's classes that teach music and Bible stories to about 100 children. Their principal teacher is the daughter of Victor Stefkov Georgiev, the town's former mayor.

Georgiev says crime has fallen sharply in Berkovitsa in the past decade. Even smoking and drinking have decreased greatly.

Other local improvements: Last fall ground was broken on three new buildings—a public bathhouse, needed because few houses in town have indoor plumbing; a health center to provide basic medical care; and a new Baptist church building



**CHANGED LIFE** Gypsy pastor Ivan Zahariev (right) sits in a church service next to former Southern Baptist missionary Paul Ridgway. Zahariev says God changed him from a warehouse worker and drunk into a polished preacher well-versed in the Bible. Ultimately, his entire village, the Gypsy town of Berkovitsa, Bulgaria, changed, too. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

to replace the tiny rooms the church has long since outgrown.

Not one, but three area mayors came to the church's groundbreaking—unheard of for a Gypsy village.

But Zahariev is looking far beyond a single church. He is looking toward churches for all his people.

Zahariev began preaching in a local prison. Response was so positive that the pro-communist government gave him a permit to preach in other prisons across the country.

And his preaching in the "Rom" Gypsy language on radio programs six times a week has brought responses from far and wide.

Recently when he preached in a town for the first time, a man came

up and hugged him, weeping. "I've listened to you preach on the radio for three years, and now I have an opportunity to see you," the man said.

In the town of Damyanovo, believer Natalie Kamenova recalls how excited she and her sister became two years ago when she heard a Gypsy-language broadcast. At the time, they missed getting the response address, but the next week they wrote it down and sent a letter. Two weeks later, Zahariev came to visit.

As a result, a Bible study started. Now there's a fledgling church, meeting upstairs in a house once owned by Joel Chiron, a French Baptist missionary who works with Zahariev in the area.

Similar churches have sprung up in towns between Sofia, the country's capital, and the Danube River, which stretches across Bulgaria's northern border.

In a Sunday afternoon service at the new church in Damyanovo, member Bobi Naidenov plays an electronic keyboard. Lay leader Ventsi Kirilov testifies how reading the Bible moved him from atheism to faith in God.

Zahariev smiles as he listens, nodding in agreement.

"We thank God that He is strong and true," he tells the congregation afterward. "When someone calls (on) Him, God is near, and He comes. He wants to live within us, not just near us!"

## Missionaries find medical, food ministries soften Rock People's hearts

By Ken Camp  
Baptist General Convention of Texas

DALLAS (ABP)—Medical missionary Ascanio Peguero found his work among the Rock People of northern Thailand difficult and discouraging, until he learned to draw a parable from the practices of local rice farmers.

Four years ago, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship assigned Peguero and his wife, Yanira, to Southeast Asia to do community-based health development.

The couple's work focuses on sharing their faith through a health-and-hygiene project among the Rock People, an unreached people group so named because they live in barely habitable rocky, mountainous region.

"At the beginning, it was very hard just to get the people to receive us," said Peguero, a graduate of Southwestern

Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Rock People's religious beliefs are a homegrown mixture of animism and Buddhism. Christianity's teachings are foreign to them in every sense.

"They were cautious and suspicious," Peguero said. "It took months and months of working with them."

Peguero found his work disheartening until he noticed how the rice farmers in northern Thailand did their work.

"They would break the ground, then water the land, then break the ground again, then water it again before they would ever plant the seeds," he recalled.

In images reminiscent of Jesus' parable of the sower, it dawned on Peguero that the gospel message he was eager to share was like the seed. The local culture, meanwhile, was like hard ground that would have to be softened and broken up

before he could even think about effective evangelism.

"I would have to break the ground and water the land," he said. "How? By loving the people and showing them God's love in every way possible."

The Pegueros set up mobile clinics in nine villages throughout Thailand's Chiang Mai province, where they provided health care and taught hygiene and nutrition.

"I sometimes see 100 (patients) a day in the clinics," Peguero said.

The Pegueros also have distributed food and vitamins to pregnant women and infants, and they have taught the people the importance of nutrition.

Black beans grow well in the region, and the Rock People commonly have picked the beans and sold them. Yanira Pegueros has taught them how to cook the highly nutritious beans with rice as a food source for their families.

As they have worked month after month with the Rock People and earned their trust, the Pegueros slowly have been able to see a few embrace the Christian faith. One example was Soy, a 16-year-old girl who came to live with the Pegueros to help them in the clinics.

"At first, her mother was doubtful," Ascanio Peguero said. "This is a culture where young girls are sold into prostitution. But the head man in the village went to her and said, 'You can trust these people. They are Christians.'"

Soy's mother grudgingly agreed. She not only allowed her daughter to work with the Baptist couple, but also began attending classes they offered in her village.

"Eventually, she came to the Lord," Peguero said. "In time her husband, who had a serious drinking problem, also came to know the Lord, and his drinking problem stopped."

## Baptist students invade Boston for ministry

By Kristen Treadwell  
Baptist Press

BOSTON (BP)—Katie Warnock went to Boston wanting to spend her spring break for a worthy cause, but she left the city a changed person.

The University of North Carolina freshman was one of about 650 students who participated in the Boston Plunge, a collegiate ministry initiative focused on sharing God's love with residents of Boston.

"The biggest thing that stood out in my mind was the perspective (the trip) gave me," said Warnock, who spent a night with others from her group at a Red Cross shelter during a severe snowstorm, yielding opportunities to talk to a variety of people and share their faith.

The three-week effort was the first major project of "Hearts for Boston," Southern Baptists' outreach emphasis in the city this year. The event—conducted in partnership with the Baptist Convention of New England and Greater Boston Baptist Association—involved students from schools in 13 states.

Volunteers spent their time prayer-



**BOSTON PLUNGE** Todd MacDonald, a Northeastern University collegiate minister, and several student volunteers are joined by a Boston woman in Boston's Park Street subway station. (BP photo)

walking college campuses and other areas of the city, handing out Pop-Tarts and hot chocolate, helping with construction at area churches and ministries, and serving as volunteers at Boston-area nonprofit organizations, including Greater Boston Food Bank and Red Cross.

Many of the groups also participated in vision tours, in which Hearts for Boston leaders pointed out historical and cultural sites and existing ministry efforts, and discussed the need for more outreach in the city.

"It was a very positive event for a number of ministries in the city," said

Curtis Cook, Boston-area collegiate coordinator for the New England convention.

Ignatius Meimaris, executive director of Greater Boston Baptist Association and co-city coordinator for Hearts for Boston, said the effort helped make a good first impression with the churches and other organizations that Baptists will be working with. "The students really set the pace in terms of their dedication, commitment and creativity."

The snowstorm meant a lot of changed plans during the week Warnock's group was there, but they adapted, she said. Her team improvised, passing out hot chocolate and playing with neighborhood children, engaging them in snowball fights.

"We don't do enough and as the church we could do so much more. ... Maybe that's why God took us there," she said.

Many of the students pledged continued support of the Boston effort. Hundreds committed to be prayer partners for the city, and dozens of students and leaders said they possibly felt led by God to return to Boston as transfer or graduate students.

## Scholars: Reclaim original meaning of 'tolerance'

By Mark Wingfield  
Texas Baptist Standard

WACO, Texas (ABP)—Tolerance has been given a bad name, according to a panel of scholars who are urging Christians to recover the word's original meaning, which the scholars argue was distorted in 18th century philosophy.

"Christianity and Toleration" was the topic of an April 9 symposium at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The event, sponsored by Baylor's Center for Christian Ethics, focused on the recent publication of "The Long Truce: How Toleration Made the World Safe for Power and Profit," written by Chip Conyers, a professor at Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

Conyers says toleration took on a different meaning after the Enlightenment, a philosophical movement that emphasized rationalism over traditional social, political and religious

ideas.

Under the influence of Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke, religion was assigned to the domain of "private" affairs and as a result lost much of its moral authority, Conyers said. "Public life belonged to the state." Somewhere along the line, as a way of keeping peace among competing ideas, society developed the notion that all views should be regarded as having equal value in the name of toleration.

But Conyers and two other primary speakers said toleration has a place for people with a Christian worldview.

Conyers said his purpose is "not to discredit tolerance but to bring credit to it once again."

For the Christian, Conyers said, toleration should mean believing firmly in the eternal truth of God but being willing to listen to other points of view. Christians can engage in conversations with people of other viewpoints, seeking to discover points of

truth that can be agreed upon, he said.

In contrast, the type of toleration advocated today is "logically impossible," said J. Budziszewski, a professor of political philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin.

"The modern version of toleration operates like a Trojan horse," he said. "It shuts out every view but one—while claiming to be neutral." Under the guise of toleration, one view gets smuggled in, Budziszewski said.

In too many cases, modern appeals for toleration are merely disguised attempts to keep competing ideas off the playing field, he said.

Christians must find a way to challenge the assumption that the modern view of all-views-are-equal toleration is necessary to prevent violence, added William Cavanaugh, assistant professor of theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

"Modern toleration assumes we can't disagree without doing violence to each other," he said.

## Poll: Americans fuzzy on denominations

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Most people have overwhelmingly positive views of American religious groups, but many people came up empty when asked to describe their opinions of specific Christian groups.

Nearly 30 percent of respondents had no opinion when asked about evangelical Christians, according to a recent survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Episcopalians drew the largest number of "no opinion" answers with 37 percent.

Among those who had an opinion, evangelical Christians were rated as "favorable" by 76 percent of those surveyed. While high, it is the lowest rating for a Christian group.

Methodists ranked highest with a 90 percent favorable ranking. Lutherans, Catholics and Episcopalians were

the next-lowest rated group, with an 85 percent favorable rating.

Religions outside the Judeo-Christian tradition did not fare as well. Only 65 percent had a favorable impression of Muslims; 60 percent had favorable opinions about Buddhists; one-third had favorable views of atheists.

Muslims scored similarly low when people were asked if Muslim groups should receive federal funds in exchange for social services as part of President Bush's faith-based initiatives program. Only 38 percent of people said Muslim groups should receive federal funds.

Demographically, young people and college graduates are more likely to have favorable views of Muslims and Buddhists, while conservative Republicans are most likely to have an unfavorable view of atheists.

## NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Children in married two-parent households up.** The number of children living with their married biological parents increased during the 1990s, according to a new study. About 56 percent of 71.5 million children fit that category in 1996, up 5 percent from 1991, according to the study "Living Arrangements of Children," USA Today reported. The study (based on a 1996 survey of 37,000 households rather than census figures) also showed that more children were being raised by two parents in 1996, 78 percent compared to 70 percent five years prior.

■ **Conservative Presbyterians launch movement.** Conservatives within the Presbyterian Church (USA), upset with their denomination's liberal drift on human sexuality and biblical authority, are circulating a three-point loyalty oath to member churches, and some are threatening to withhold money if the national church does not also sign on. A burgeoning "confessing church movement" is calling Presbyterians to affirm that "Jesus Christ alone is Lord of all and the way of salvation" and that the Bible is "the Church's only infallible rule of faith and life." The document also calls for sexual purity within the confines of marriage between one man and one woman.

■ **Black Methodists: Apology not far enough.** A group of black Methodists said the United Methodist Church's sweeping apology for racism last year did not go far enough, charging that church leaders have snubbed the concerns of black church members. At last year's General Conference meeting, church leaders apologized for the church's history of institutional racism. The apology was aimed at three predominantly black churches which left the Methodist church because of racism. At a meeting of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, leaders said the church has failed to adequately apologize to black members who did not leave to join one of the splinter churches.

■ **WGN to air Dove Awards; PAX-TV won't.** Superstation WGN Cable will air this year's Dove Awards, the annual honors presented by the Gospel Music Association, as planned but the awards will not be featured on PAX-TV as originally expected. WGN Cable will premiere the national airing of the two-hour awards show at 8 p.m. EST May 4. The awards ceremony will be taped April 26 at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tenn. Christian artist Michael W. Smith will host the show, which also will re-air on several regional cable networks.

■ **Church leaves body in dispute over woman speaker.** A Knoxville, Tenn., Presbyterian church that came under fire for allowing a woman to speak from its pulpit has voted to leave the conservative Presbyterian Church (PCA) and align with another Presbyterian body. Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church voted April 8 to leave the denomination after a three-year battle left the 3,400-member congregation uncomfortable in the body. The church and its pastor were criticized for allowing a woman to speak—but not preach—from its pulpit during two evening services in 1998. The PCA does not ordain women as pastors. Cedar Springs voted by 80 percent to leave the PCA and align with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a young denomination of about 60,000 members.

■ **Census tells Utah missionaries don't count.** Federal judges have dismissed claims that Utah lost a congressional seat because the 2000 census excluded thousands of state residents working as missionaries abroad. Utah had claimed that the Census Bureau did not acknowledge 11,176 state residents working overseas as missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The state needed 857 residents to gain its fourth congressional seat. That seat eventually went to North Carolina. The three-judge panel ruled unanimously that counting those missionaries would have placed other states at a disadvantage, and that those missionaries comprise a small percentage of the estimated 5 million Americans living abroad.

### Lyons seeks divorce

TAMPA, Fla. (RNS)—The former leader of one of the nation's largest predominantly black religious denominations is seeking to end his marriage of nearly three decades.

Lyons, 59, has been married for 28 years to Deborah Lyons, 53, who attracted scrutiny to the couple after setting fire in 1997 to a \$700,000 home her husband had purchased with a former Baptist convention employee.

Lyons has been incarcerated in a Florida minimum security work camp since a 1999 conviction on state and federal charges of racketeering, tax evasion, fraud and grand theft. An attorney representing Deborah Lyons said she did not want the divorce.

## Poll: Not all faith-based programs the same

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Americans overwhelmingly support the idea of allowing faith-based groups to receive government funds in exchange for social services, but only as long as those groups are part of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

A new study released April 10 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found significant numbers of

Americans oppose giving government money to groups such as Muslims, Buddhists, Scientologists and the Nation of Islam. Only 51 percent supported giving money to Mormons.

"While the public expresses strong support for the idea of faith-based groups receiving government funding to provide social services,

in practice, it has many reservations," the report said.

A strong 75 percent of Americans support the idea of faith-based initiatives, but also strongly oppose giving money to groups that would only hire people of the same faith.

Under President Bush's faith-based plan, faith-based groups would be allowed to discriminate in hiring.

The faith-based concept found strong support among African-Americans and Hispanics—81 percent support the idea—while a smaller percentage of whites, 68 percent, support the idea. Republicans also were much more likely to support the program than Democrats.

Surprisingly, older Americans are more cautious in their support of the program. While 80 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 29 support faith-based initiatives, only 55 percent of retirees do.

When asked which services faith-based groups can best provide, most Americans said they succeed in programs in which churches and synagogues traditionally have been involved. Faith-based groups scored higher on programs that help with feeding the homeless, prison counseling, mentoring and teen pregnancy, while the government was rated higher for literacy programs, health care and job training.

The telephone survey of 2,041 adults was conducted March 5-18 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

## Jehovah's Witness files suit on faith and parental rights

SOUTH ROYALTON, Vt. (RNS)—The Vermont Supreme Court will decide whether a divorced father may share his religion with his daughters during limited periods of visitation.

Last August, a lower court said Lee Meyer no longer could raise his two daughters as Jehovah's Witnesses or bring them to the group's meetings.

The restriction was part of a larger decision to give his ex-wife, Erica, sole parental rights in determining numerous factors from travel to education.

Earlier this month, Meyer called on the high court to restore his equal parental rights, including the right to shape religious formation. But his ex-wife warned against the harm that could ensue.

Erika Meyer stated the Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings have contributed to her daughters' anxiety and nightmares, according to her attorney, Amber Barber.

Lee Meyer's appeal of the county family court ruling rested on the grounds that the court had no basis for imposing its restrictions.

Barber said the case is not about anyone's right to practice a religion. The parents "became unable to communicate," she said. "One of the many things that these people couldn't agree on was religion."

## Panel appointment draws criticism

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A Cleveland minister who was fired in 1995 as a police chaplain for comments about Jews and Muslims is drawing fire again because Republican congressional leaders have named him to an advisory panel on faith-based issues.

The appointment of Bishop Delano Ellis is "shocking," complained Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Lynn cited a 1994 Cleveland radio sermon in which Ellis said Jews were "carnal, selfish ... dirty and lowdown and wicked."

In the broadcast, Ellis also said God allowed Hitler to hurt Jews because they had mistreated others, but that Hitler's actions were wrong.

Ellis, pastor of the Pentecostal Church of Christ in Cleveland, later said his remarks were taken out of context, and that he was not referring to Jews living today, but to biblical characters from the time of Jesus.

In the 1994 sermon, Ellis also criticized

blacks for becoming Muslims. He further angered Muslims in 1995 by writing a letter to his congregation calling Islam "at best false" and at worst "bloody and dangerous." The letter was designed to discourage people from attending the Million Man March.

Ellis, who oversees an international Pentecostal denomination that claims approximately 300 churches, said last week he was distressed by the renewed attention to a six-year-old controversy. He said his relationship with Jewish and Muslim leaders has improved considerably and noted he also has worked recently with Cleveland Roman Catholic Bishop Anthony Pilla and other Christian denominations.

Ellis said he did not know whether he will step down from the advisory committee, which was established to advise Republican lawmakers planning a summit this week on faith-based issues. Ellis said he would consult first with a pastor who helped organize the group.

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## Getting ready for summer camp

It's hard for me to come to terms with the reality that our camp season is just around the corner, but this is the time of the year when I really get excited about what God is going to do throughout the summer.

Youth camp is something I never experienced. I didn't have the opportunity to go to an exciting camp setting and experience God. That was a time in my life when I went to church, but that was about it. My involvement in youth activities was zero.

My first experience at a youth camp was at a Centrifuge camp in Panama City in the summer of 1993. I was serving as pastor of Benton First Church, and I felt that going to camp was a great way for a pastor to keep in touch (or get in touch) with the kids.

So my wife, Pam, and I loaded up two van loads of students and set out on a long haul south to Panama City. I won't go into the details of the trip, but I had agreed to let our youth minister (Jason Ellerbrook, who now is on our team at Jonathan Creek) work that summer for 'Fuge.

I tell stories about the travel arrangements Jason made for us. I

could have strangled him if he had been with us the first night we stopped at the hotel where he made reservations for us. We had been driving 8 or 9 hours (it seemed like 18 or 19) and pulled up to somewhat of a truck stop/motor inn with a pool that had green—dirty green—water and a restaurant that made Waffle

House look like a gourmet place.

But we survived the night. None of the kids got anything life-threatening from the pool water, and we made it to Panama City the next day.

It was worth it. We had 25 students with us that year, and seven of them received Christ on that trip. We baptized each of them when we got back to Benton.

That's what happens at summer youth camps. Pray for our youth camps and children's camps this summer. Pray that kids will come with hearts ready to hear and respond to Jesus.

I can't wait to see what He is going to do.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

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

## Faith groups mount 'Drop the Debt' effort

By William Bole  
Religion News Service

LONDON (RNS)—As anti-globalization protesters charged up for the 34-nation Summit of the Americas last weekend, many faith-based activists were looking further ahead—to Genoa, Italy, where leaders of the Group of Eight industrialized nations will assemble in July.

Several influential religious agencies have run with a campaign called Drop the Debt, which is pressing for what it terms a "New Deal on Debt" in Genoa.

Campaigners want the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to completely write off the debts of the most desperate countries.

G-8 leaders say they and their institutions have forgiven enough debt—up to half of that owed to them by 22 hard-pressed countries. Critics put the actual figure at slightly less than one-third.

"But it's just not enough, just not commensurate with the scale of human suffering in those countries," said Henry Northover of the Catholic relief agency CAFOD, based here.

He noted that even after those 22 countries get all of the debt relief coming to them under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative, they still will put out more, on average, in monthly debt payments than they spend on health care or education.

Behind much of the religious activism are dire reports from missionaries and church leaders in Africa and some other places. Pointing to crises such as the AIDS epidemic, Northover relayed an "increasing sense that there is this humanitarian catastrophe, this silent holocaust that is happening, particularly in Africa, and it's not on your TV sets. It's not coming to a cinema near you."

London organizers predict that 100,000 globalization activists will

surface for the G-8 gathering July 20-23, which would make it the largest such showing ever. That depends, however, on Italian police granting passage through Genoa, a small coastal city of narrow, winding streets with mountains on one side and the ocean on the other, said Jamie Drummond of Drop the Debt.

From that perspective, "Genoa was an unfortunate choice" of venue, Drummond said.

Other sources close to the campaign in London and Washington see the crowd estimates circulated by Drop the Debt as unrealistic. They said the Italian debt movement, responsible for turning out the largest numbers, is deeply disorganized.

In addition, one source, asking not to be identified, said some Italian church leaders are wary of opening their facilities to activists, fearing a repeat of past international meetings that have attracted violent protests.

## Christians travel to Jerusalem to apologize to Jews

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Approximately 900 Christian pilgrims from 22 nations traveled to Israel last week to make a public confession of sins against the Jewish people in a unique "Repentance Conference."

The April 18 event timed to coincide with memorial ceremonies marking Holocaust Remembrance Day.

At a prayer and atonement ceremony, conference leaders issued an official statement of "guilt and apology"

to Jewish and Israeli representatives. The message was endorsed by thousands of other Christians worldwide.

The conference was organized by the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary, a German-based Protestant order.

In the past, Christian groups have visited the Holy Land to ask for atonement for sins committed by earlier generations of believers against various people groups of this region. But this conference marked one of the first

times here that such a ceremony had specifically addressed Christian persecution of Jews.

The four-day conference also included visits to Israel's Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem. Representatives at the conference include members of the Bundestag, the German Parliament, and Prince Albrecht zu Castell-Castell of Germany, a direct descendant of Count Ludwig, a 13th century Crusader.

### WORLD VIEW

■ **Christians persecution up in Bhutan.** Christians in the country of Bhutan are facing increased persecution, according to a report from Kitbok Rynthiang, director of the Christian Academy in Shillong, in northeast India. Bhutan is a small country of more than 2 million people bordered by Tibet and India. According to the report, when Christians came to church April 8, they were met by authorities and police, who recorded their names. The police have interrogated a number of pastors and threatened them with imprisonment, demanding that the churches stop their witnessing.

■ **Netherlands legalizes euthanasia.** Lawmakers in the Netherlands voted April 10 to become the first country to legalize euthanasia. The strict conditions established under the measure require that each euthanasia case undergo review by a commission that includes a doctor, a medical ethics expert and a lawyer.

■ **England considers 'faith-based' program.** Both the people and politicians appear to be getting religion when it comes to tackling social miseries in their country and the impoverished world. The talk of London lately at least partly echoes Washington, where President Bush has proposed to fund faith-based organizations. Recent polling found about two-thirds of Britains support the idea of channeling public funds to religious groups to house the homeless and provide other services.

■ **Kazakhstan forum yields religious freedom progress.** Christian workers in Kazakhstan say a recent forum there might help stave off proposed restrictive laws governing religious freedom. The forum gave national believers an opportunity to present the distinctives of the emerging Protestant movement in Kazakhstan and its potential impact on Central Asian society. Believers from approximately 10 different churches and seminaries, spanning a broad range of Protestant traditions, participated.

## Hearing William Jones

By Robert Dunston

Each year the Thomas F. Staley Foundation sponsors the Staley Distinguished Christian Scholars Lecture Series. This year William Augustus Jones Jr., pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., served as our distinguished speaker.

Jones graduated from the University of Kentucky and then from Crozer Theological Seminary. He earned his doctorate from Colgate Rochester Divinity School. He has done additional study at the University of Lagos in Nigeria and the University of Ghana at Legon. Benedict College, Simmons University, Shaw University, Campbell University, Evangelical Reformed School of Theology, Cumberland College and University of Kentucky all have honored him with honorary doctorates.

Jones has published many books including "God in the Ghetto," "Responsible Preaching" and "When God Says, 'Let Me Alone.'" He also has served as a visiting professor at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Wesley Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary and Unit-

ed Theological Seminary.

Jones is best-known as a pastor and preacher. His first pastorate was First Baptist Church of Paschal, in Philadelphia, in 1959. In 1962, he became pastor of Bethany Baptist Church. In his years at Bethany the church has constructed a neo-gothic edifice and now has 27 full-time staff mem-

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



bers who lead a multifaceted program of ministry.

Jones spoke the morning of April 9 in convocation on "Instructions for the Journey" based on Luke 10:1-12. That afternoon he spoke from Luke 11:1-10 in a message titled "The Search for His Secrets."

His concluding message April 10 was drawn from Romans 8:35-39 and titled "The Word Confirmed." He spoke on the three central elements of Christian preaching: the incredulity of the incarnation, the centrality of Calvary and the reality of the resurrection.

We could not have heard a more inspiring and challenging sermon as we approached Easter. Jones helped us celebrate our faith and commit to greater discipleship.

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

## God-incidences

Hopefully all of us see evidence of God working in our lives on a daily basis. No doubt we all would if we took the time truly to look for it. But sometimes life distracts us from His presence and it takes something a little out of the ordinary, something close to a miracle, to wake us up to the fact that our Father is involved personally in every detail of our lives.

One such event occurred in the lives of an adoptive family on the momentous day that they met their newborn son. The couple already had adopted a daughter who was now 7. The little girl was accompanying them and was eager to meet her new baby brother. As they passed the large window of the hospital nursery, the little girl stopped and tugged on her mother's hand. The child carefully surveyed all the babies through the window, then scanned their faces again. "Mommy, I want that one," she said, pointing to one of the newborns. Her mother replied, "Honey, you can't pick the one you want. It doesn't work that way." The little girl was adamant as she once again pointed to the baby she had chosen. "No Mommy, I want that one!" Imagine the mother's surprise when the child brought to the room was

indeed the very baby her daughter had selected!

Another story of God's attention to detail came from an adoptive mother who was striving to find the right song to calm her fussy baby. The new mother tried several hymns with no success, then began singing "Victory in Jesus." As the tune progressed, the baby seemed comforted and finally fell asleep. As the weeks went by, the adoptive mother sang "Victory in Jesus" often, and it never failed to comfort and calm her daughter. One day the adoption worker was speaking with the little girl's birth mother. The worker shared the news about the baby's "favorite" song. The birth mother said, "Victory in Jesus' is my favorite song. I sang it throughout my pregnancy."

Neither of these incidents made the papers or changed the world. But they did confirm God's hand at work in the lives of these birth and adoptive families. What a privilege it is to work in such a ministry.

Bill Smithwick is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Road, Middletown, KY 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. KBHC's Internet address is: [www.kbhc.org](http://www.kbhc.org)

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

## Video features Muslims to teach Christians about Islam

By James Dotson  
SBC North American Mission Board

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—In a mosque in Southern California, a young man makes a vow that will profoundly change his life: "I declare that there is no God except Allah, and the prophet Muhammad is the messenger of God."

It is an authentic conversion to Islam, a ceremony similar in some respects to Christian baptism.

For the 6 million Muslims who now live in the United States and Canada, it is not a particularly unusual event. But for Christian audiences who witness the experience on a new video produced by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, it is a sobering reminder of the growing influence of Islam in a nation once considered a bastion of Christianity.

That personal perspective is a common theme of "The Cross or the Crescent: Understanding Islam," a video-based study of the world's second-largest religion.

By examining Islam and its current practice in North America through the eyes of its followers, the agency hopes to create understanding and address popular misconceptions about Islam among Christians. But NAMB officials said they also hope to equip Christians to relate more effectively with their Muslim neighbors when discussing their own deeply held beliefs.

"There is a realization that many Muslims have become our neighbors, and that only a few especially in our

Baptist churches really know about Muslims," said Wolf Schumacher, producer, director and writer of the video. "We don't really know what they believe. And that hinders us in communicating the gospel to them."

The video is accompanied by a 53-page leader's manual with further resources on understanding Islam.

Unlike many such efforts produced by Christians for Christians, "The Cross or the Crescent" hopes to ensure credibility by allowing the story of Islam to be told by those who know it best: prominent Islamic scholars and lay adherents to the faith. The video then allows Christian scholars to clearly illustrate the critical theological points of divergence.

"We felt like we had to look in-depth at Islam, and that led us to go to the eminent Islamic scholars in this country," said N.S.R.K. Ravi, an interfaith evangelism associate for NAMB and content director for the video.

One popular misconception addressed throughout the video is the notion that the fundamentalist extremes associated with terrorism are in any way characteristic of the majority of Muslims.

"There is a terrorist element in their history, but that is not the overriding characteristic of these people," Schumacher said. "In fact, all the Muslims I've talked with have strongly condemned that kind of behavior." To the contrary, Schumacher said he was struck by the "fantastic hospitality" and open doors wherever he went.

"I think they have a strong desire

to be, the Son of God. The video also examines a key aspect of both Islam and Christianity that has drawn fire particularly toward evangelical Christianity—the mandate to communicate beliefs to others in hopes that they will accept them as their own. In Christianity, it's known as evangelism. In Islam, the concept is known as Da'wah, and the video illustrates particularly how Islamic groups are actively gaining converts on college campuses and in prisons.

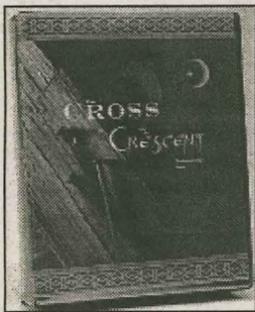
For information about the video, contact LifeWay Christian Resources at (800) 448-8032, or visit the Web site at [www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/video\\_islam.asp](http://www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/video_islam.asp).

that we understand them, that we don't see them as terrorists but as Americans and human beings who have very much in common with us," he said. But while the video illustrates the history, practice and basic theology of Islam in a manner that would not be disputed by most Muslims, the comparison of doctrines with Christianity does illustrate the sharp divisions. Muslims do accept and revere Jesus Christ as a key prophet along with other prophets of the Old Testament, believing only that the later revelation purportedly given to Muhammad was considered the final and only fully accurate revelation of God. But they do not believe Jesus was, or even claimed

to be, the Son of God.

For information about the video, contact LifeWay Christian Resources at (800) 448-8032, or visit the Web site at [www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/video\\_islam.asp](http://www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/video_islam.asp).

For information about the video, contact LifeWay Christian Resources at (800) 448-8032, or visit the Web site at [www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/video\\_islam.asp](http://www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/video_islam.asp).



By examining Islam through the eyes of its followers, NAMB hopes to create understanding and address popular misconceptions about Islam among Christians.

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### Meet some of the class of 2001 (part 3)

"Laura" came to Oneida her freshman year. She had not been doing well at home, living with her mother and older sister. Laura found herself in conflict with her family. She also was getting involved with the wrong crowd, which included drugs, running away, skipping school and bad grades. When I interviewed Laura and asked about her grades, she said, "I just don't care." At that time her grades were all D's and F's.

Laura did much better her first year at Oneida, but we saw a dramatic drop in grades her sophomore year. Her attitude followed, so we were not surprised when she decided to withdraw after Christmas. Like many other students, Laura soon realized she had made a big mistake and asked to re-enroll. With the promise of better grades and an improved attitude, I allowed her to return. Frankly, we did not see much of a change. At the end of that year she had five F's, four D's and a few higher grades.

At our spring revival her sophomore year, Laura gave her heart to Christ. None of us had any idea what a transformation would take place. When she returned for her junior year, we saw a different Laura. She had a perfect 4.0 grade point average that year. Her classes included chemistry, geometry, honors English, Spanish, 20th century U.S. history and biology. Those who attended the Kentucky Baptist Convention last November heard Laura speak about the change in her life. Here is part of what she said in her essay:

"Growing up, it never really bothered me that I didn't have a dad because I was always told that God would take care of me and be my father. ... When I hit the seventh grade, it became obvious to me why God designed a family with a mother and

a father. ... By my eighth grade year, my grades had gone from outstanding to barely passing. (My) private school refused to keep a student on scholarship with my GPA. I transferred to public school that year. The choices I made that year are what led me to Oneida.

"The initial shock of coming to Oneida was a sharp and painful one. I couldn't weasel my way out of trouble anymore. ... It took a lot of strength and humility for me to admit when I was wrong. ...

Oneida provided the structure and discipline I needed. ... I didn't have a dad here on earth, so (God) brought me to Oneida to give me a lot of the same structure a functional family would have.

"OBI gave me lots of time to think. I thought about how much my mom has done for me, and how much I put her through. ... I also realized that my new friends (at OBI) were the type of people who would build me up, and my old friends (at home) took me down. ... Oneida gave me the room I needed to grow in positive areas. ... I am almost certain that if God hadn't opened Oneida's door to me, I wouldn't be graduating this year with the grades I have today.

"Oneida changed my life, but more importantly, being here has changed my perspective on life. I am a different person today. I have taken off the mask of conformity. I have personal goals that I never would have dreamed of before. ... Before Oneida, I was just a regular kid who made mistakes and didn't care. ... Now, I have a new found appreciation for life, and I am sure I will make something out of mine."

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

#### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

### Indiana family at home in Kentucky

Like 75 percent of our students, a graduate introduced David Sizemore to Clear Creek. His Indiana youth minister, Stephen Hubbard, told him about the school's impact on his life and brought David to campus.

"I stayed the night in Kelly Hall. I opened the window in my room and heard the creek. The water was

up because of a heavy rain. God spoke to me that this was the place for me to prepare, I fell in love with it," David said.

At age 16 David had no desire for anything spiritual. "My mother took me to church screaming all the way," he said. The Lord used a Christian teenager in the church to draw David to Christ.

David and Lisa dated about five years and married in 1993. The family now includes Allison, 1; Timothy David, 2; and Amber, 4. Lisa is secretary for the Irene Peterson Child Development Center on campus and their children attend the center.

"I was a customer services secretary, and when we decided to come I wanted to work where my children were; the Lord met that need," Lisa said.

David observed the experience "helps the children to communicate

and open up more. Both Lisa and I are more introverted, and the children are being prepared to be more open with others. It is a blessing."

Lisa noted, "Clear Creek has a family-oriented closeness. We have made a lot of good friends." They both are grateful for the campus "workshop" position that helps meet financial needs.

This is David's third year, and he appreciates student mission experiences in Ohio and West Virginia. His home association in eastern Indiana recently sponsored a Clear Creek Day, and David was one of five students to preach in host churches.

"Clear Creek is preparing me with deeper Bible knowledge and how to develop sermons. I like the emphasis on the practical use of what we learn," David said. "The professors are great; they have an open-door policy, and all of them are very helpful."

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

#### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

# BOOKS/MUSIC



**BOY BAND** Plus One, called *Christian music's answer to the Backstreet Boys or N'Sync*, will tout the TruthQuest student Bible at the group's concerts. (BP photo)

## Boy band links with publisher to sell student Bible

NASHVILLE (BP)—It's doubtful you'll find many male vocal groups selling Bibles on merchandise tables at their concerts, but Plus One is not just any group.

Nominated for several gospel music Dove awards, Plus One has been called Christian music's answer to the Backstreet Boys or N'Sync.

The group recently joined with Broadman & Holman to offer the TruthQuest Inductive Student Bible at all of their concerts and special events through 2001. TruthQuest also will be offered on Plus One's Web site, [www.plusoneonline.com](http://www.plusoneonline.com).

"After meeting the guys and seeing them in concert, we know they are reaching out to the same audience that will enjoy this special Bible that encourages teens to go deeper in their relationship with Christ," said David Shepherd, vice president of B&H, the trade publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Released in 1999, the TruthQuest Bible is directed exclusively to the teenage market. The study Bible challenges young people to seriously weigh scriptural truths.

Conceptualized by veteran youth minister Steve Keels of Portland, Ore., the Bible is a result of working with students for 20 years and finding out what resources best facilitate their spiritual growth.

The study Bible, which uses the New Living Translation Bible, includes introductions and timelines for each book, one-page biographies of major biblical characters and sections that share biblical history and trivia.

B&H began its TruthQuest partnership with Plus One last fall with a series of co-advertisements in trade and teen consumer magazines.

For more information about the TruthQuest Bible, visit the website at [www.broadmanholman.com/truthquest](http://www.broadmanholman.com/truthquest).

**The Evangelist: The World-Wide Impact of Billy Graham.** Lewis Drummond. Word Publishing, 2001. 352 pages. \$22.99 ♦♦♦ (out of five) ♦♦♦

Perhaps no religious figure has captivated the imagination and affection of more people than Billy Graham. As Graham begins to wind down his preaching schedule and as his evangelistic association plans for its future leadership, Lewis Drummond believes it is time to assess Graham's legacy.

"The Evangelist" serves as Drummond's tribute to a man who has been his mentor, friend and teacher. Though he intends this book to be an objective assessment of Graham's place in history, it is hard for Drummond to fulfill the role of disinterested inquirer. He has worked with the Billy Graham Association.

For many years he held the Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and he counts Graham as one of his friends. By dropping the pretext of neutrality, Drummond could have achieved his desired end, without straining.

Drummond looks at Graham's life through "12 basic biblical, historical principles." He deems Graham's ministry to be guided by a balanced emphasis on the Holy Spirit, the call and the gospel, the sovereignty of God, the centrality of Christ, holistic ministry, the Christian approach to suffering, the Bible, boldness, godliness, revival and worldwide ministry.

The central strength of "The Evangelist" is the categorical examination of Graham's basic belief and value system. I have not seen them pulled together in quite this way any other place. In addition, Drummond pulls together some stories of Graham's ministry not highlighted in other places. *Jim Holladay*

**Praying with Katie: God, My Cat and Me.** Don Holt. Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2001. 130 pages. \$12.95. ♦♦♦

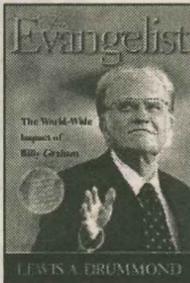
The artwork and initial descriptions of this book seem to signal a work that is sentimental, too sweet and better left for readers who call themselves "cat people." It is refreshing, then, to find that "Praying with Katie" is more than that and even at times is a theologically stimulating read.

Holt, a longtime Presbyterian minister who converted to Roman Catholicism late in life, adopts an orange-and-white tabby named Katie when he is unemployed, struggling with his conversion to Catholicism and struggling in his relationship with God. Instead of lectio divina, or holy reading, Holt attempts a sort of holy observation by watch-

ing Katie's daily interactions with him and relating them to his relationship with God.

The book is surprisingly deep and meditative, especially when he draws parallels between his contemplative life with God and Katie's unselfconscious demand for love and food from Holt. There is much in this small book to teach us about how God sees and loves us and how we should respond to Him.

Occasionally, though, the book does descend into preciousness, including the distracting use of free verse throughout the book and Holt's occasional tendency to beat his readers over the head with a metaphor. But on the whole, this is an open, honest and emotionally moving account of how God can speak to us, even through our pets, and how much there is to learn if we will just stop and listen. *Victoria Moon*



**Living Water for Thirsty Souls: Unleashing the Power of Exegetical Preaching.** Marvin McMickle. Judson Press, 2001. 218 pages. \$16. ♦♦♦

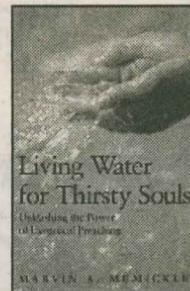
Marvin McMickle, a Baptist pastor and professor of homiletics at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ohio, believes "preaching becomes most authentic, and most useful, when we too can declare, 'Hear the word of the Lord.'"

Preaching is not about the preacher or the preacher's opinions, issues or passions, McMickle states. Preaching, rightly done, helps the congregation hear a word from the Lord addressed to their lives and the world in which they live.

McMickle unapologetically advocates an exegetical approach to sermon preparation. He states that only a thorough examination of the text can lead pastors to the word of the Lord for their audiences. Any other approach is open to eisegesis, the reading into the text of our personal opinions, prejudices and limitations.

Three objectives provide the foundation for the methodology he develops: to present an exegetical approach that is accessible to those with limited or no theological training, to offer an approach that will be nonthreatening and convincing to those who are suspicious of the exegetical study of Scripture and to portray an approach to biblical exegesis that can guide any preacher.

"Living Water for Thirsty Souls" provides a sound, convincing call to re-examine exegetical preaching. By recasting the traditional language of biblical exegesis into the eight L's—limits, literature, location, language, links, leads, lessons and life application—he does an excellent job of showing that this way of studying Scripture can help the preacher truly hear the word from God. *Jim Holladay*



## Exec: Contemporary Christian music's impact on church undeniable

By Cameron Crabtree  
Golden Gate Theological Seminary

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—Contemporary Christian music might not have started in the church, but its profound impact on the church is undeniable, said John Styll, president of CCM Communications and chairman-elect of the Gospel Music Association.

"In the annals of sacred music history, this type of expression is unprecedented in its growth and popularity," said Styll, guest speaker for the new Worship and Music Lectureship series at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary April 5.

Historians, Styll noted, generally view "three streams" of church music:

■ The monophonic music of the early church and then the more complex musical forms of the first 1,500 years of church history. "As composers began experimenting with complex musical forms, it began to leave the congregations as spectators rather than participants as trained choirs took over."

■ The simpler music after the Reformation, which allowed congregations

to sing again. "This returned to the notion of uncomplicated music that even non-musicians could participate in. This gave rise to many of the wonderful hymns and congregational singing."

■ The "gospel music" of the last two centuries. This third stream, which "began in camp meetings and revival services, has become a multi-million-dollar industry," developing into an entertainment medium with parallels to the secular music industry.

Total sales in the CCM industry have grown from \$83 million in the mid-1980s to nearly \$700 million last year, with 44 million units sold last year.

The church has become "hungry for contemporary praise choruses," Styll observed. "It has become known: Do contemporary worship and your church will grow; resist and die, or at least stagnate."

Styll said contemporary worship is the biggest issue facing the church today worldwide and he expects it to change again with the generations.

"What contemporary Christian music has done is make the worship experience more relevant and therefore more

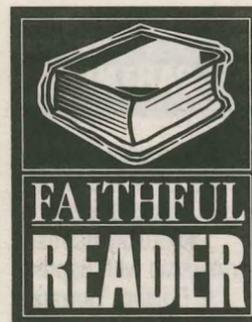
meaningful to a new generation," he said.

But there is a danger with contemporary Christian music because it is performance-oriented, he added. "The line between worship and entertainment can very easily get blurred. Music in worship should draw our attention toward God, but contemporary music often draws attention to itself."

Styll warned that churches can take on a consumer mentality, evaluating whether worship was "good" based on "how well the performances pleased us."

Things could change in the future, he added. Styll said young people already are rejecting some elements of contemporary worship that are shallow.

"The demand for depth and substance speaks to us of the need to find those biblical and transcultural principles of worship that have endured through 2,000 years of history and to incarnate deep principles into a new style demanded by the cultural patterns of a postmodern world," Styll said. "If we can achieve this, then the new generation will have taken us beyond the contemporary worship of yesterday into the contemporary worship of tomorrow."



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

# 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:

■ Urgent: Volunteers are needed for the following projects in Poland:

■ Debica: Eight volunteers for prayerwalking and conversational English classes, July 3-16.

■ Tarnobrzeg: Eight volunteers for prayerwalking and conversational English classes, July 17-30.

■ Stezyca: Four volunteers for a children's camp, July 17-30.

■ Urgent: Volunteers are needed for the following projects in Tanzania:

■ Mtwara: Six volunteers for prayerwalking and conversational English classes in early August.

■ Berega: Three volunteers for prayerwalking and evangelism, Aug. 22-Sept. 7.

■ Urgent: Eight volunteers are needed to lead backyard Bible clubs in Heidelberg, Germany, July 19-30 and July 26-Aug. 6.

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

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ ALBANY—Green Grove Church will host **Heart Faith** in concert April 29. **Ron Jones** is pastor.

■ ASHLAND—Liberty Missionary Church will host revival services May 7-9, 7 p.m. **John Burris** will be the evangelist. **Jeff Ferguson** of Ashland will lead the music.

■ BOWLING GREEN—**Doug Boyles** resigned as minister of music at Greenwood Church to become minister of music at a church in Lancaster, S.C.

■ DRY RIDGE—Dry Ridge Church will host revival services May 6-9. **Larry Davis** will be the evangelist. **Bill Clark** will lead the music.

■ GEORGETOWN—Dry Run Church will host revival services April 29-May 2. **Dwight Moody**, dean of the chapel at Georgetown College, will be the speaker. Music will be provided by the Georgetown College chorale.

■ HENDERSON—Dupey Church called **Randall Hurt** as pastor, beginning March 18.

Watson Lane Church called interim pastor **Jerry Pearcy** as pastor.

■ LOUISVILLE—Beechmont Church will present the musical "I Witness News: Live from Jericho," April 29, 6:30 p.m.

■ MONTICELLO—Roger's Grove Church ordained **Thurston Frye** and **Freddie Shelton** as deacons.

■ PRINCETON—First Church will host revival services April 29-May 2. **Willis Henson** will be the evangelist. **Tom Hughes** is pastor.

■ WILLIAMSBURG—A regional youth revival service will be held May 4, 7 p.m., at Briar Creek Park. **Aaron Hogue** of Fellowship of Christian Athletes will be the speaker. **Aaron Auston**, youth minister of First Williamsburg, will lead worship. For information, call (606) 549-0280.

■ WORTHVILLE—Worthville Church called **Dennis Hisle** as pastor.



**NO BULL** Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy told Georgetown College students during a speech last week to make responsible decisions in life. That was one of three suggestions Cathy, speaking April 19 in the school's John L. Hill Chapel, offered for a long and happy life. He also encouraged students to marry the right spouses and surround themselves with caring families. Finally, Cathy challenged students to concentrate on their relationship with God. "Instruction is what we say, influence is what we do and image is what we are," Cathy explained. "We are all created in the image of God. Why not be at our very best?" (Georgetown photo)

## Director of missions encourages peers to recognize bivocational pastors

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

PADUCAH—Directors of mission can play an important role in gaining acceptance for bivocational pastors, Bob Morrison told those gathered at the recent five-state bivocational ministry conference.

Morrison should know. He's director of missions for Little Bethel Baptist Association in Madisonville. Half the 50 churches in his West Kentucky association are led by bivocational pastors.

He said he tries to encourage these pastors by making sure they are in-

cluded in associational activities.

"You can't be energized if you're not included," he told the recent gathering of Mid-Continent Bivocational Celebration in Paducah. "One thing associations can do to let (a bivocational pastor) know he is included is by only having evening meetings."

Such considerations let bivocational pastors know a director of missions understands how important they are to the association, he said. Some other ways Morrison said associations can reach out:

■ Hold an annual banquet for bivocational pastors and spouses.

The one sponsored by Little Bethel Association includes a discussion of issues they face.

■ Recognize their contributions. While the Kentucky Baptist Convention has a pair of awards for bivocational pastor of the year, Morrison questioned why this isn't done more often on the associational level.

"Someone told me a long time ago any old dog likes a pat on the head," he said.

■ Hold quarterly pastors' prayer meetings.

These aren't for a meal or to conduct a program, but for a time when pastors can gather to share concerns

and pray, he said. "You get to know someone when you hear his prayers."

■ Visit their churches to hear them preach.

Morrison told of going to a church where the pastor was a bivocational coal miner. He said the pastor delivered a stirring message about how God doesn't deliver his children from problems, but from their dangers.

"The fire isn't that hot even though you've got to walk through it," he said. "The lions aren't that angry even though you have to face 'em. My bivocational pastor taught me that, and God bless him."

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**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.

**FOR SALE:** Beautiful console piano. Take on low monthly payments, no money down. (800) 371-1220.

**FOR SALE:** 1989 low-mileage, 15-passenger van. Send bid to Buena Vista Baptist Church, 119 W 24th St., Owensboro, KY 42303. Bid deadline: April 30.

**SEEKING:** Minister of music for Hyland Baptist Church in Henderson, Ky. If interested, please send resumé to: Hyland Baptist Church, 1400 Wright St., Henderson, KY 42420.

**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:** 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:** First Baptist Church of Ludlow is seeking a motivated worship and praise leader to help transition our traditional service into a blended service using the best of old and new. The individual will be responsible for incorporating instruments, praise teams and drama into services, as well as developing music programs for children through adults. Experience is required for this challenging and exciting full-time position. Please send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 400 Linden St., Ludlow, KY 41016.

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

**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 senior accountant job@kybaptist.org.

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

**WANTED:** Neat, clean, dependable people to work in a professional setting. Part-time (3-4 hours per evening) janitorial work. Local company; good management; nice starting pay. Call (502) 964-0618; leave message for interview.

# PEOPLE

## Blind Christian musician 'sees' in ways others don't

By Ted Parks  
Religion News Service

GARDEN GROVE, Calif. (RNS) —He couldn't make out the crowd sitting before him. But Ken Medema "saw" in ways the audience could not.

The sermon over, blind-from-birth Medema broke into song, spontaneously translating the words of the pastor into music and reinforcing with keyboard and voice the core motifs of the night's message.

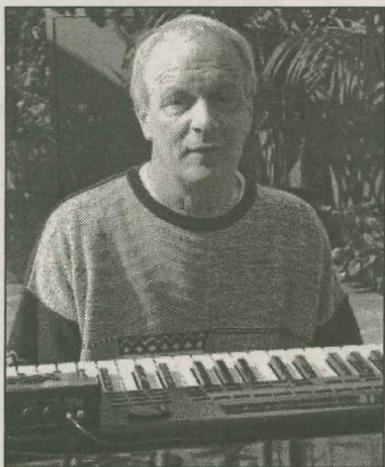
Medema's performance was one of approximately 220 concerts on his 2001 schedule as a Christian performer. He explains his ability to instantly turn speakers' words into inspirational lyrics as "a combination of natural gift and study, training."

Medema, who has released some 25 albums, began his concert career in 1973. Recording at first on such well-known Christian labels as Word Music, he later felt the music establishment was trying to dim the social vision he wanted his songs to convey.

"We wanted to sing about things that were uncomfortable to the church," he said. "I got told that if I sang in the churches about justice, about hunger, about poverty, about the biblical demand on the church to care for the homeless, to open its doors to people who have previously been unacceptable, that I would not have a recording career."

The message was, bluntly, "justice doesn't sell."

Looking for fewer creative restraints, he launched his own company, Brier Patch Music, in 1985. Medema's Web site ([www.kenmedema.com](http://www.kenmedema.com)) links the name of his recording company to Brer Rabbit in Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus stories.



**MINISTRY VISION** Ken Medema, a Christian musician who has been blind since birth, currently performs some 220 Christian concerts a year. (RNS photo)

"Brer Rabbit lived in a place not comfortable for anyone else," the Web site says, "and we have decided to follow him there."

Dave VanderMolen works for Brier Patch in Grandville, Mich., as booking agent, designer and office manager, with Medema living in San Francisco when not on the road. VanderMolen said Medema's music, though undeniably Christian, defies pigeonholing.

"He doesn't fit into the traditional mold," VanderMolen said. "It doesn't always have to have the Jesus words in it to make it a Christian piece of music."

Though Medema studied music at the university level, the talent to compose goes way back to his childhood in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"I've known ever since I was a little kid that I could create songs," he

said. "I did it when I was a little boy." In addition to assigning pieces to practice, his piano teacher would insist he mimic what he was learning by making up something similar. "I learned how to improvise with a lot of different styles," Medema remembered.

He recalled many hours spent "listening to wordsmithing," enriching his own inner repertoire of words and melodies by taking in poetry and music.

"When high school English teachers told us about alliteration and onomatopoeia, I took those things seriously," Medema said. "I used to practice speaking in iambic pentameter."

And in his dating days, Medema used his knack for singing just the right words in just the right way "to considerable advantage," he quipped. "Whenever I had a crush on a girl, I would make her up a song on the spot."

Despite the awareness of his gift, Medema said that for many years he saw little connection between his ability to spontaneously generate music and his own life of faith. That changed in 1971, when he blended performance skill with improv after an unexpected burst of inspiration during an evening church service in New Jersey.

Sitting at the keyboard of the New Jersey church, Medema said, it was his task to underscore the evening message with an appropriately selected song. "It wasn't a very good sermon, either," Medema said, the topic that evening being a comparison between Jesus and Judas Iscariot.

"This little inner voice said, 'Improvise something,'" Medema said. "Was it an epiphany, was it ... a prompting, was it a dumb idea, was it a deranged mind? I had no idea."

But he started singing: "Stop right here, there's a fork in the road, I don't

think you want to get lost. One way leads to a Potter's Field, and the other way leads to a cross." Pleased with the first line, the rest flooded into his mind. "I mean, it flew out of my brains."

Both Medema and the audience were stunned, he said. "This was not a church that was inclined toward ... charismatic rapture and prophecy. This was a ... rational, Baptist kind of church" in a prosperous suburb. Mouths agape, the crowd just sat there until dismissed.

Echoing Medema's social concern is his work with Christian activist Jim Wallis, editor of the Washington, D.C.-based *Sojourners Magazine*, and founder of the Christian social justice movement *Call to Renewal*.

Medema accompanied Wallis in a series of cross-country appearances throughout the 1990s called "Let Justice Roll," which Wallis described as "a concert, a revival and a rally, all together." The joint appearances were sponsored by faith-based ministries ranging from advocacy groups to soup kitchens.

Wallis said he and Medema would engage in a back-and-forth banter of preaching and song, Medema's improvisations keying off Wallis' stories and word pictures. "People would be ... dancing, they'd be singing, they'd be clapping, they'd be crying, they'd be laughing," Wallis said. "It's a whole range of emotions through the evening."

The artist put a different spin on the commonplace notion that losing one sense enhances another when he connected his lost physical sight to a deepened insight.

"The blindness has made me ... want to hear the voice of the not-included," Medema said.

**"The blindness has made me ... want to hear the voice of the not-included."**

Ken Medema

## Scientist-priest earns Templeton Prize for integrating science & religion

By Chris Herlinger  
Religion News Service

NEW YORK (RNS)—Arthur Peacocke, a physical biochemist whose early research of the DNA molecule led him to ask theological questions—and in the process become an Anglican priest—has been awarded the 2001 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion.

Peacocke, 76, founder of both the Society of Ordained Scientists and an Oxford University interdisciplinary center for religion and science, is the third scientist in as many years to win the prize. It is considered the most prestigious award in the field of religion, and is valued at about \$1 million.

Peacocke is the only one of the triumvirate of scientist prize winners in the last three years who also is an ordained clergyman. He was awarded the Templeton for his contributions in integrating the insights of religion and science.

"In the last five decades it has been the natural sciences that have unveiled new intellectually beautiful and dazzling vistas," Peacocke said after the announcement of the award. "We are the first generation of human beings to have solid evidence of the origins of our cosmos and of human life

and this has to affect the kind of meaning we can find in our existence in it. Progress in religion can come only when the religious quest engages creatively with such new scientific perspectives."

At the same time, he said, as science "now plunges ever more deeply into the physico-chemical basis of life, of reproduction and even of thinking, (it) increasingly needs a framework of reference that can take into account the integrity and meaning of personal life. The community of science needs the meanings that religion unveils."

Peacocke added that it is religion, perhaps more than science, that needs to open itself to the insight of the other discipline. He called science today's "universal language" and perhaps the most "formative influence" in the contemporary world.

Peacocke said that by now scientists generally are well-versed in ethics and ethical reflection on the scientific method, but ministers and theologians generally are not as acquainted with science.

At the heart of Peacocke's work as a "priest-scientist" is a belief that both religion and science ought to be subject to

critical scrutiny.

Peacocke began finding ways to integrate religion and science early in his educational career. During his days as a university student, Peacocke was particularly influenced by William Temple, the then-archbishop of Canterbury, whose theology was based on a "very comprehensive view of the world," and prompted Peacocke to begin thinking that Christianity was "intellectually defensible."



Peacocke

Peacocke studied theology as he continued his work as one of the early DNA researchers during the 1950s. Eventually, he earned a degree in theology and taught courses in both biochemistry and theology at Cambridge University.

Later Peacocke earned a doctorate of theology at Oxford University, where he now teaches. He is the only Oxford theology faculty member who holds doctorates in both science and theology.

Peacocke's 1971 ordination as a priest was, he said, prompted by the dual "strands" of his life. But he added that he also had felt frustrated in being only a lay reader within the Church of England.

One of the most frequently asked questions of Peacocke is why a prominent research scientist would not only take an active interest in theology but also become an Anglican priest.

His reply is that the "search for intelligibility" that characterizes science and the "search for meaning" that characterizes religion are "two intertwined strands of the human enterprise."

Peacocke founded the Society of Ordained Scientists in 1986, an organization of scientists-clergy who wish "to express their double vocation both to their faith and science." The group originally had 12 members; it now has 79, and draws its members from seven Christian denominations in five nations.

The Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion was established in 1972 by John Marks Templeton, a Tennessee-born investor who now lives in the Bahamas.

The prize is awarded to an individual whose work has deepened public understanding of religion and who also has shown a commitment to both public service and spiritual life. Among the most prominent winners have been the late Mother Teresa, evangelist Billy Graham, Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson and Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn.



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