

WESTERN RECORDER

May 15, 2001
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Poll: Americans interested in both religion and spirituality

NEW YORK (RNS)—American interest in spirituality is supplementing, not replacing, traditional religion, a new poll shows.

Fifty-nine percent of Americans polled said they are both religious and spiritual, according to Spirituality & Health magazine, which commissioned the poll.

One in five Americans view themselves as only spiritual and among that group, 47 percent view religion in a negative way.

Eight percent of those surveyed said they were solely religious.

The poll found that 13 percent of those surveyed thought spirituality and religion were completely different.

"Ideas about religion are changing," said Bob Scott, editor in chief of the magazine. "A generation ago most Americans viewed religion as a community and a set of beliefs. Now, the emphasis is more personal—a spiritual dimension that's always been present but largely ignored."

Seventy-one percent of respondents described God as "loving" when given a list of characteristics and asked to choose which one best described God.

Eighty-four percent of those surveyed said they viewed God as being "everywhere and in everything" rather than "someone somewhere."

The poll also investigated the percentage of people who considered certain activities to be spiritual: prayer, 91 percent; attending worship services, 81 percent; parenting, 80 percent; walking in the forest, 67 percent; and making love, 52 percent.

The magazine is underwritten by Trinity Church Wall Street, a 300-year-old Episcopal church in New York.

The poll by the New York-based Blum & Weprin Associates surveyed 502 adults across the country and had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

Hunger specialist: Gleaning provides modern-day role model

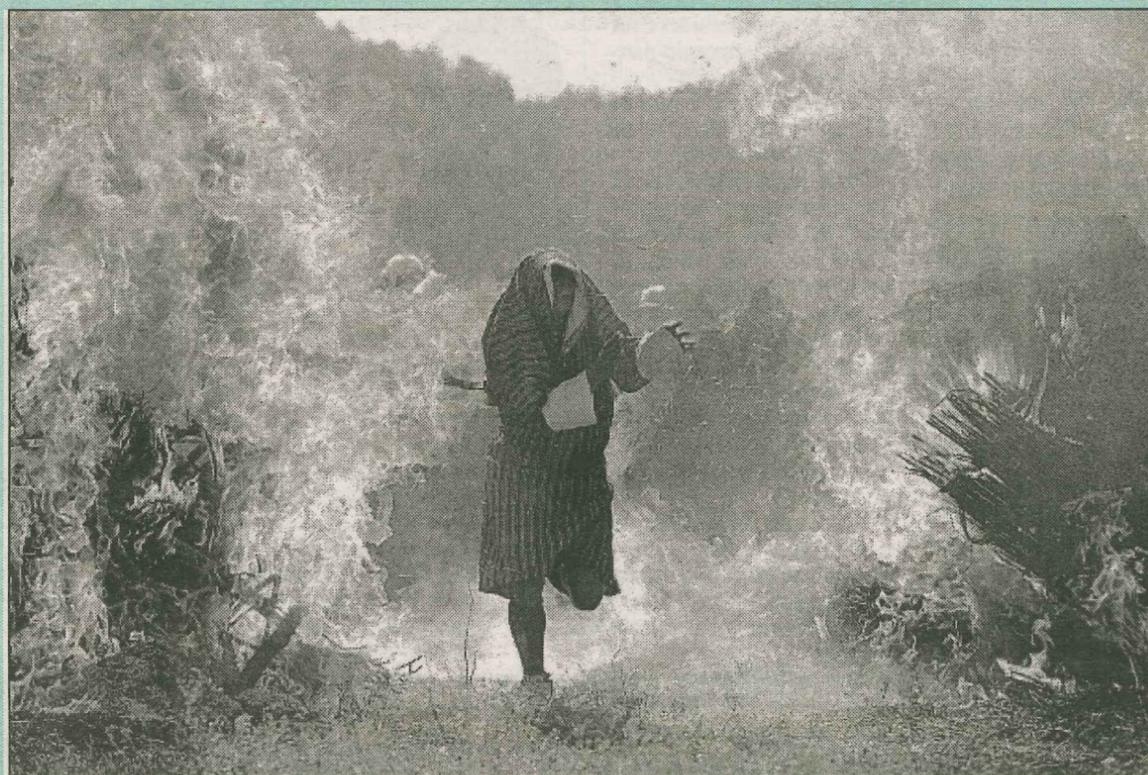
By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists can get closer to God by ministering to people in need in even the smallest ways, according to a Southern Baptist hunger expert.

"God cares about people in need. He calls His people to reach out to them. And when they do—even in the most modest way—He blesses the effort," said Steve Nelson, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

With more than 800 million chronically hungry people in the world, a Christian may wonder what one person can do, Nelson noted. But the Old Testament practice of gleaning shows how God can use a person's leftovers to provide for others in need.

Race for forgiveness



Bhutan Buddhists run through bales of burning straw as part of a local festival's cleansing ritual, believing their sins will be forgiven. The Drukpa people group of Bhutan will be the focus of this year's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization, June 1-2. (IMB photo)

'Land of Thunder Dragon' knows little of Christ

By Jenny Rogers
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Shangri-La: a hidden utopian paradise, tucked away in harsh Asian mountains.

Shangri-La, dreamed up by author James Hilton in his 1935 novel, "The Lost Horizon," has captured the imagination of readers and explorers for years.

And Bhutan, a peaceful country bejeweled with glacier-fed streams and the highest original forest cover of any country, fits the bill.

Known to its people as "Druk-yul," or "Land of the Thunder Dragon," this tiny dot on the map is only about half the size of Indiana. Bhutan has been isolated from the rest of Southeast Asia by the jagged peaks of snowcapped Himalayan Mountains to the north and India's arid plains to the south.

The Bhutanese also have existed in self-imposed isolation for centuries to preserve their culture and historical identity. Among its 600,000 people are the Drukpa, or "people of the dragon," Bhutan's majority group.

Television and radio are almost

non-existent, and outside influences (including Christianity) are considered disruptive and unwelcome. The Bhutanese continue life in the footsteps of generations before them, using the same ancient farming methods and techniques that were used hundreds of years ago. Electricity and running water are limited.

What could disrupt this image of Shangri-la paradise? For Christians, the greatest concern is the souls without Christ that dwell beneath the amiable Buddhist exterior.

In Bhutan, the world's only Tibet-
□ See 'Land of Thunder ...,' page 7



BREAD OF LIFE Southern Baptist hunger funds played an important role in sharing God's love with ethnic Albanian refugees who fled their homes in Kosovo in 1999. (BP photo by Grace Robinette)

"The practice of gleaning was God's way of telling His people to leave some portion of their abundance on a regular basis for people in need," Nelson told a chapel audience at the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in Richmond, Va. "In the same way, your little

bit of spare change can make a difference too."

Nelson recalled a project in Uganda in which Southern Baptist missionaries were able to feed thousands of refugees at a cost of 12 cents per meal.

"That's not a lot of money, but it is a lot of people," he said.

In fact, if 1 million Southern Baptists gave just \$20 a month through the ERLC's direct-debit giving program, gifts to the World Hunger Fund would be multiplied 25 times, Nelson said.

The ERLC promotes debit gifts from a person's checking account as a way to support the World Hunger Fund, Nelson added. "It is easy and quick. We call it 'high-tech gleaning.'"

Southern Baptists gave \$9.6 million to world hunger and relief in 2000, Nelson said. The Southern

Baptist World Hunger Fund uses 100 percent of every dollar donated to minister to hungry people.

In both the United States and overseas, Southern Baptist workers can minister to hungry people and share the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ because of the World Hunger Fund, Nelson said.

In southern Asia, 600 churches have grown out of an agricultural development program in just seven years, he noted. In Little Rock, Ark., a new church that used hunger funds for after-school snack and holiday food basket programs has grown to 300 people in attendance and baptized 220 people in three years.

"If our people will just give their small change and make it available to the poor through the World Hunger Fund, God will use it in their lives," he said.

BAPTISTS

Frost to lead NAMB's metropolitan focus

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

LAS VEGAS (BP)—Gary Frost, a former Southern Baptist Convention vice president, was elected May 9 by trustees of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to serve as vice president for the agency's strategic partnerships group.

He currently is pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church in Youngstown, Ohio.

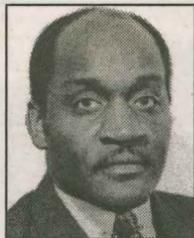
The position gives Frost administrative oversight of NAMB's Strategic Focus Cities initiative, which directs volunteers and other resources toward evangelism and church planting efforts in the nation's largest metropolitan areas.

Trustees also learned that 31 new missionaries recently were appointed or approved, joining more than 5,000 missionaries across the United States and Canada.

The meeting followed a three-day event in Las Vegas designed to allow trustees to participate in Southern Baptist mission efforts. Las Vegas and Boston are the focus this year of Stra-

tegic Focus Cities outreach efforts.

In addition to the emphasis on cities, Frost's group includes teams that coordinate associational strategy and work with state conventions in coordinating strategy and funding for cooperative missions efforts.



Frost

NAMB President Bob Reccord said Frost's 18 years of ministry and leadership in Youngstown made him an ideal candidate.

"Gary is a man who has not just talked about ministering in the city, with all of its challenges, but has done it—and done it with great success," he said. "He is a man of character, competency and compassion."

"In addition, I believe it is a real strength that Gary is African-American and helps NAMB reflect the growing diversity reflected in our society," Reccord said.

Frost noted that "this opportunity to have a role in reaching the cities for Christ is the opportunity of a lifetime. I can't imagine anything more challenging or yet more possibly fulfilling in terms of doing ministry for the Lord."

Frost is a graduate of Mount Union College, Central Bible College and Ashland Theological Seminary. He succeeds Phil Roberts, who was elected in January as president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

In other business, trustees approved rescinding an amendment to the "Endorsing Manual for Chaplains and Counselors in Ministry" added when the manual was adopted in February.

The rescinded policy had expanded the existing policy against chaplains participating in or promoting glossolalia (speaking in tongues) to include "other charismatic manifestations." John Yarbrough, NAMB's vice president for evangelization, said the phrase was removed because it was ambiguous and redundant. The manual already contained an article dealing with "practices outside biblical and Southern Baptist practices of worship," he said.

Reccord also announced that George Garner, of Flagler, Colo., has been appointed the agency's first national missionary to help coordinate "town and country" church planting. Reccord said about 35 to 40 percent of new church plants occur in smaller towns and rural areas.

LifeWay stores celebrate ministry milestone

By Polly House
LifeWay Christian Resources

NASHVILLE (BP)—LifeWay Christian Stores is celebrating 75 years of service and ministry.

LifeWay Christian Stores President Mark Scott listed various highlights of the stores' 75-year history during an April 27 chapel service at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville:

■ 1925—The then-named Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention purchased the Baptist Book Concern in Louisville.

■ 1930s—Difficult situations with the United States economy made some people question the wisdom of keeping the stores, but Baptist leaders prevailed and the bookstores survived.

■ 1940s—The stores continued to grow and added film rentals to their product mix in what would be a forerunner of the stores' video sales.

■ 1972—In a novel experiment,

the Sunday School Board opened two new concept stores called Lifeway Stores, at that time spelled with a small w. While the stores closed a few years later, the Sunday School Board later registered the LifeWay name.

"Even then, before anyone had thought about changing the name of the Sunday School Board, God was working through the event that, at the time, seemed to be a failure. But, through that apparent failure, we owned the Lifeway name," Scott recounted.

■ 1999—The stores changed names from Baptist Book Stores to LifeWay Christian Stores, conducting business through retail stores, online, catalog and direct sales.

■ 2001—LifeWay Christian Stores will open its 100th store this summer. Scott said that in looking toward the future of LifeWay Christian Stores, "our dreams must be greater than our memories."

"We want God to work through our LifeWay Christian Store employees,

allowing us to be a catalytic change agent in our country," he added. "We want to have an impact on people's lives."

Linda Jackson, a LifeWay Christian Store regional director, whose 35-year career began in the Birmingham, Ala., store, spoke about her experiences.

"My mother began working at the Birmingham Baptist Book Store in 1954," she noted. "I began working there when I was 22."

For every Christian, she observed, there are "defining moments when you see God working and you recognize His work with such clarity."

She said one of those moments occurred for her several years ago. "I was driving in to work and asked God, 'Is this what I'm supposed to be doing?'"

"God gave me calmness and a peace and I just knew this was where I belonged. This was my place of service. I realized this was God's calling for me just as much as He calls anyone else to his or her place of service."

Southern adds focus on apologetics

LOUISVILLE (BP)—An emphasis on apologetics has been added to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's doctor of philosophy program.

The new emphasis, which comes under the Louisville seminary's school of theology, officially is titled "apologetics and worldview studies." It is designed to equip students with the tools needed to defend their faith.

James Parker, Southern Seminary professor of worldview and culture, will oversee the new program.

"There's a constituency of people who want to learn more," Parker said. "It's just needed in our culture—people who are better prepared to be able to defend their faith and to respond to the objections to the faith in our culture at large."

Parker, who said he believes the doctoral emphasis is the first of its kind in the United States, said a knowledge of apologetics allows Christians "to be able to give intelligent, coherent, articulate responses to attacks, and to be able to present a coherent, intelligent, articulate case for Christianity in view of the multitudinous attacks that come from every side."

"As we looked around," he added, "we found that there seemed to be a very high level of interest in doing it."

Apologetics and worldview studies are the third emphasis within the doctoral program's worldview and culture division. The other two are Christian philosophy and Christian ethics.

Former leaders of Arizona Foundation facing 32 charges

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

PHOENIX (ABP)—Five former Baptist Foundation of Arizona officials could face prison if convicted of crimes alleged in a 32-count indictment unsealed May 4.

Three other former officials pleaded guilty to reduced charges in exchange for turning state's evidence at an initial criminal hearing in Phoenix.

Five defendants pleaded not guilty at the May 4 hearing in Maricopa County Superior Court. They are William Pierre Crotts, the Foundation's former chief executive officer; Thomas Dale Grabinski, ex-general counsel and vice president; Lawrence Dwain Hoover and Harold DeWayne Friend, former members of the Foundation's board of directors; and Richard Lee Rolfes, an accounting consultant.

Charges stemming from a two-year investigation by Arizona's attorney general include theft, fraud and racketeering. It is one of the largest fraud cases involving a religious denomination in U.S. history.

Sentences for the various crimes carry prison terms of eight to 12 years. If convicted, the former officials also could be forced to pay up to \$550 million in restitution to 13,000 defrauded investors.

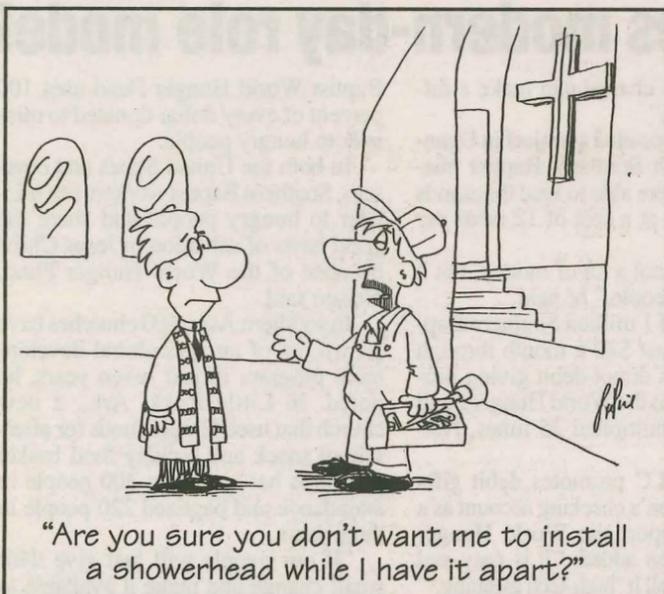
Three others targeted in the probe—former treasurer Donald Dale Deardoff; Edgar Allen Kuhn, an officer of Foundation subsidiaries; and former board member Jalma W. Hunsinger—accepted a plea bargain in exchange for cooperating with prosecutors.

Deardoff pleaded guilty to two counts of fraudulent schemes, which carries a penalty up to 12 and a half years plus fines and restitution. Kuhn confessed to three counts of facilitating fraudulent schemes and Hunsinger to three counts of illegally conducting an enterprise, less-serious felonies carrying sentences of six months to 18 months.

The indictments, handed down by a grand jury April 24, allege that the eight defendants worked together to defraud thousands of investors into putting money into bogus Foundation investments between 1994 and 1999.

They accuse the officials of hiding losses while promising investors a high rate of return. Officials allegedly used funds from new investors to pay dividends on old accounts, an illegal practice known as a Ponzi scheme.

Attorneys for two of the defendants, meanwhile, told the Arizona Republic newspaper in Phoenix that the charges are unwarranted and that their clients are innocent.



Campbellsville pioneers sports ministry emphasis

By Marc Whitt
Campbellsville University

CAMPBELLSVILLE—After completing its first year as an academic program at Campbellsville University, the school of theology's sports ministry program is off and running.

"We were the first Southern Baptist school to offer this program," said Ted Taylor, director of sports ministry and associate professor of theology at Campbellsville University. "This distinction gave us an automatic niche in the marketplace."

Taylor said since the introduction of the program last fall, at least eight other Christian colleges and universities have added sports ministry to their academic programs.

Campbellsville University had anticipated recruiting 20 majors in the sports ministry program within a three-year period. To Taylor's amazement, however, Campbellsville had met the three-year goal this past fall during the program's first semester.

"It has been estimated that more than 300,000 churches in North America will have a staff person who is responsible for sports ministry by the year 2005," Taylor said. "There are over 200 sports ministries which employ hundreds of staff members each year in the United States. Over 10,000 college students intern every summer through sports programs such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Crosspoint, Athletes in Action, SportsReach and Overseas Missions. It only makes sense that Campbellsville University be here as a resource to service that ministerial need."

The sports ministry major at Campbellsville includes 40 hours of biblical studies, leadership, evangelism, coaching theory, psychology and sociology of sport and internships. The sports ministry minor is 27 hours.

Among the required courses for the sports ministry program is an "introduction to sports ministry" in which students gain an overview of sports history and how it relates to the Scriptures.

"This includes sports heroes as well as many influential people who have helped shape 'muscular Christianity' into the sports ministry movement of today," said Taylor.

As a former college athlete, Taylor brings to the program experience as a player, coach and minister. He currently directs the NAIA's "Champions of Character" initiative along with the university's intercollegiate coaches and athletes.

For more information about Campbellsville's sports ministry program contact Taylor at (270) 789-5029 or by e-mail at ttaylor@campbellsvil.edu.

KBC board affirms Georgetown priorities

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

CEDARMORE—Trustees of Georgetown College voted recently to reaffirm their historic relationship to the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Responding to that decision, members of the KBC Executive Board voted last week to express appreciation for Georgetown's commitment.

Questions surfaced last year about the college's long-term ties to the state convention when Georgetown trustees endorsed a proposal to initiate a seven-year process to pursue Phi Beta Kappa standards.

Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest undergraduate honors society. Most colleges that gain Phi Beta Kappa status have self-perpetuating boards and few are strongly identified with a specific denomination.

"If we have to choose between being Phi Beta Kappa and Baptists, we're going to be Baptists," Georgetown President Bill Crouch said a year ago. "All we need to do is work with Kentucky Baptists to figure out a way to change the trustee selection process to satisfy the Phi Beta Kappa people."

After a yearlong study, however, trustees decided to seek Phi Beta Kappa status without altering the school's trustee selection process. KBC messengers currently elect Georgetown's trustees through a state convention nominating committee process.

Noting that Georgetown "is at a crossroads in our history," Crouch said the school's trustees "are absolutely committed to our partnership with the Kentucky Baptist Convention."

Although no Christian college has achieved Phi Beta Kappa status since 1984, he said the school will seek to accomplish that goal while maintaining its identity as a Kentucky Baptist institution.

Crouch said the society's membership requirements include 10 broad categories in such areas as academic programs, library holdings and faculty qualifications.

Seeking to raise \$96 million by 2004 to achieve those goals, Crouch said the college already has received \$66 million in gifts and pledges.

"If we're going to be a quality institution, we need to be doing this anyway," he noted. "Even at the end of the day if we don't get Phi Beta Kappa status, we've moved this institution light

years ahead as a quality educational institution."

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey said Georgetown's action "is going to help Kentucky Baptists as a whole feel really good about their relationship to Georgetown."

"There are many Kentucky Baptists who are graduates of Georgetown and have a connection to Georgetown who were concerned about Georgetown distancing itself from the convention and its Baptist heritage," Mackey noted. He said the college's decision to maintain strong ties to the KBC "is a very significant factor for the future."

In other action during the Executive Board's May 7-8 meeting at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, board members elected a new partnership missions department director, approved a 2001-2002 Cooperative Program budget of \$22,417,500 and heard an update from the KBC's Baptist Faith and Message study committee.

Ross Bauscher, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Owensboro, was elected director of the KBC's partnership missions department. He will succeed Calvin Wilkins who will retire in July. Wilkins will continue to serve as a part-time contract worker for partnership missions.

Bauscher has been involved in partnership missions, including the KBC's current missions partnership with Baptists in Tanzania. In addition to the Tanzania partnership which will conclude this year, Bauscher will be responsible for coordinating the KBC's partnerships with the European Baptist Convention, Baptist Union of Poland and Baptist Convention of New England as well as future partnership mission opportunities.

Mackey cited Bauscher's "passion and experience in partnership missions as well as his leadership and relational skills" as key factors in his new role. He said Bauscher's work will help ensure partnership missions "will continue to be a priority for Kentucky Baptists."

Bauscher said his transition from the pastorate to partnership missions director "is a long journey that God is bringing me to at this point in my life."

"My heart has always been missions and evangelism," he added. "That's what it's all about—being on mission with the Lord."

Bauscher has been pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church since 1989. He

previously was pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Frankfort and served on the staff of two other Frankfort churches—First Baptist and Buck Run Baptist. He is a graduate of Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and Lexington Theological Seminary.

Charles Barnes, chairman of the Baptist Faith and Message study committee, shared a brief update with Executive Board members. The committee is responsible for recommending how the KBC "can best relate to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message as Kentucky Baptists seek to fulfill their purpose and mission in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Barnes noted that how Kentucky Baptists "can best relate" to the revised faith statement is the essence of the study. While not revealing details of the committee's deliberations, he added, "We recognize the magnitude of the assignment given to us by the convention. We're still in process. Things are going well."

Barnes said the committee has met three times and is on schedule to release its report prior to the Oct. 1 deadline set by KBC messengers.

"We're trying to do what God would have us to do in Kentucky," he said. "Pray that we will know what God's will is through this process."

The board-approved Cooperative Program budget for 2001-2002 is a 6.75 percent increase over the current budget of \$21 million. Mackey noted, however, that the budget goal is only 2.5 percent above receipts for the KBC's 1999-2000 fiscal year.

Though the proposed budget "looks like a big increase," Mackey said, "We're trying to let the budget keep up with income."

Citing record CP giving in recent years, he added, "Kentucky Baptists are continuing to make a statement that they do support missions in Kentucky and around the world through the Cooperative Program."

The budget includes 35.8 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes, a 0.2 increase from the current year. The percentage gain is part of a three-year goal of increasing SBC gifts to 36 percent of the KBC's total CP budget.

Other allocations include 35.64 percent for KBC Executive Board ministries; 20.84 percent for the convention's educational institutions, homes for children and Baptist Healthcare System; and 7.72 percent for KBC-related agencies and Woman's Missionary Union.

Kentucky workers aid El Salvador, more help needed

Dozens of Kentucky Baptists have responded to a call for volunteers to help rebuild earthquake-damaged structures in El Salvador. If interest remains strong, more volunteers may be invited to go.

Slots on the original three mission trips—slated for May 12-19, May 19-26 and May 26-June 2—filled quickly, said Larry Koch, disaster relief associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention Brotherhood department. Three teams of 10 to 12 volunteers each have signed up to help rebuild homes in Chinameca, El Salvador.

"We want to build 30 homes, and we won't get that done in three weeks," said Koch.

Kentucky Baptists will be working in tandem with South Carolina Baptist disaster relief volunteers. Because of the positive response and significant needs, organizers are investigating extending the mission trips into June.

Each trip will cost approximately \$850 to \$900 per person, which will include airfare, insurance, food and lodging. Interested individuals may contact Koch at (502) 244-6489 or toll-free in Kentucky at (888) 254-5720.



Bauscher

Kentucky volunteers form medical mission fellowship

By Tim Beauchamp
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—Kentucky medical personnel with a heart for missions have organized the Kentucky Baptist Healthcare Fellowship.

The organization, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Brotherhood department in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship, is a state fellowship designed to mobilize medical personnel for mission efforts. The fellowship was organized April 21 during a meeting at Crestwood Baptist Church.

James Williams, president of the national Baptist Medical/Dental Fellowship, described the national ministry as a "dream that began 25 years ago to use the gifts of medical healing to share the gift of Jesus Christ."

Medical missions provides medical personnel a hands-on opportunity to share their faith in Jesus Christ, said Randy Foster, director of the KBC Brotherhood department. He noted that many countries that do not allow missionaries will allow medical personnel. Last year Southern Baptists sent out more than 1,000 medical missionaries to countries closed to evangelism.

Foster said the recent meeting was "a fulfillment of a dream for many people who have wanted something like this to happen for a long time."

Elaine Koch, a registered nurse from Taylorsville, noted that involvement in medical missions "teaches you a lot about love. You've got to forget all the universal precautions and just reach out and hug them."

Medical and dental personnel interested in learning more about medical missions can contact the KBC Brotherhood department at (502) 245-4101 or toll-free in Kentucky at (888) 254-5720.

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TRENNIS HENDERSON
Editor

DAVID WINFREY
News Director

MAURI SMITH
Marketing & Business
Manager

JOYCE MARTIN
Partnership Editions
Editor

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

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TV diary offers family values checkup

By Mark Wyatt
California Southern Baptist

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)—Not long ago, members of the Wyatt household became a "Nielsen family." For one week, we held in our hands the fate of television programming in the most technologically advanced nation on earth.

Okay, that's probably a bit overstated. More precisely, for that week we became part of a relatively small group of people helping the world's most influential entertainment and information medium discover what American TV viewers were watching.

It began with a phone call one evening. The caller said a computer had chosen our home at random—as if somehow that was supposed to make us feel special. She asked if we would be willing to record our television viewing choices for one week to help determine the ratings for local, national, broadcast and cable television programming.

Like many American families, ours often receives telephone solicitations. At times it feels as if the calls come in waves before a calm spell gives the phone ringer a welcome rest. They arrive in cycles, too, like the periodic calls from certain organizations invariably seeking a donation for this charity or that event.

Also, these calls typically occur at mealtime—undoubtedly by design. The callers know they have a better chance of someone being there to answer the phone. Dining out only means the calls are delayed.

I try to be courteous when these unwanted phone calls interrupt meals or other activities. But I am not in the habit of divulging personal information to strangers on the phone or in person. Besides, in the entire history of television ratings, never before had anyone in my family been asked to keep a Nielsen diary. I was skeptical.

Sensing my hesitation, the caller volunteered her ID number and a toll-free phone number I could call to verify the legitimacy of the call. I thanked her, hung up and—only slightly less skeptical than before—made the phone call.

As it turned out, the call was legitimate. I agreed to participate in the ratings process. Soon afterward, we received a Nielsen diary for each television in the house. The instructions asked us to record somewhat detailed information about what shows we watched when and on which TV set. Enclosed with the diaries was a single, crisp one-dollar bill, apparently payment for our trouble.

Looking back, it was probably the worst-paying job I ever accepted. The

amount of information we were asked to provide was not overwhelming but required constant diligence. Every time we changed the channel we were expected to record the time, the name of the program, the network, television station, cable channel, which family member(s) was/were watching and for how long.

Not long after my Nielsen experience, I visited a pastor friend in another city. He asked me to hold him accountable for what he watches on television. He had won a satellite TV system in a drawing and soon discovered some of the programs he now has access to contain things he doesn't need to view.

That kind of evaluation is worthwhile. That request and the week I spent intentionally monitoring my family's television viewing patterns both reminded me that what we watch on television, like other choices Christians make, reveals a lot about our values and interests. Through our Nielsen experience, I discovered we don't watch as much TV as the average American household, not even as much as I thought we did, although certainly more than necessary.

That kind of evaluation is worthwhile. I recommend it not only for entertainment practices, but also to check up periodically on spiritual matters as well. Without that kind of honest appraisal, it's almost impossible to avoid the idleness—and idols—God expects us to shun.

Mark Wyatt is editor of the California Southern Baptist

FAMILY

Celebrate worship by giving yourself as offering to God

By Doug Strader

Several years ago, I read a story, told by one of our missionaries, about a woman who had nothing to give when the offering was taken during the

worship time. She had the offering plate in her hands and she pondered for several seconds about what to do. Finally she set the plate on the floor and stepped in the plate to demonstrate that she was giving herself to God. She did this because she desperately wanted to be able to worship by giving herself to the Lord.

Is that not what worship and giving is all about? Should we not be offering ourselves to God each time we worship by giving?

That is the reason that some churches receive their offerings at the end of their worship time. It allows them the opportunity to make a worthy offering to God. After the sermon has been preached and the response has been given, people make a commitment to the call of God. The response comes after the challenge and call.

What would happen if we offered ourselves to God, in the manner of the woman reported by the missionary? What would it mean for you and me to literally offer ourselves to God to use as He chooses? I do not pretend to know the complete answer to this question, but some things are obvious to me as I ponder the subject:

■ I would have a Christlike spirit, and I would be submissive to God's will.

■ I would be about my Father's business as Jesus was when He conversed with the doctors and lawyers in the temple when He was about 12 years old.

■ I would be willing to serve my Master wherever He needed me to serve.

■ I would be an encourager to my family and fellow Christians.

■ I would be a peacemaker and I would be found trying to do good toward those who were not very kind to me.

■ I would be giving more than a tithe of my income to God to use as He chooses.

What would you add to this list? Why not covenant to try this for a week?

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

COMMENTARY

Be not conformed

There are those in high places who define issues and debate difficult theological questions while here where the rubber meets the road we are struggling with how to "do" church and what kind of music to have on Sunday.

There are those who say we must conform to the culture or we'll become like the Amish, frozen in time. Others fight with every fiber any proposed change.

If we have "rock" music on Sunday, what about those of us who

prefer other music forms? For instance, other than hymns, I rarely hear my favorite music forms—bluegrass and classical—at church.

The Scripture still says, "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

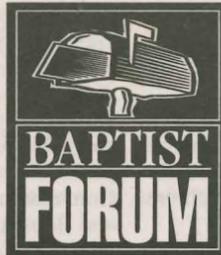
Harold Greenfield
Princeton

Offer a helping hand

During a recent "60 Minutes" broadcast, two of Darryl Strawberry's friends were asked why they, in view of seeming futility, continued to try to help him. One of them replied, "If someone had not helped me, I would not be here talking to you."

Indeed, where would I be if someone had not helped me?

Quentin Gaskin
Harrodsburg



PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

A ministry vision for the future

At the recent meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board, I shared some practical dimensions of my vision for the future. Kentucky Baptists have a significant history of cooperation in support of missions and evangelism across Kentucky and around the world. This has involved prayer and financial support, missions education and participation in partnership missions.

However, we are facing a tremendous challenge to strengthen the foundations in the local churches. According to the most recent Annual Church Profile, the Kentucky Baptist Convention is plateaued and declining. We are grateful that we continue to show increases in giving and the number of baptisms. But all of the church program organizations show decline in enrollment.

On the plus side, worship attendance averaged about 30 percent above the average attendance in Sunday school for the convention year 1999-2000. I am grateful for the growth in

worship attendance.

I am convinced that the foundation for growth is built on an authentic relationship to Jesus Christ anchored in the Word of God. Historically, God's people have been blessed when there was a desperate heart hunger for God to manifest His presence. It is in a close walk with the Lord that individuals are revived, the call of God is renewed, ministries are reinvented, churches celebrate in worship and lives are changed.

The second part of the vision involves the growth of every church. Every church can grow in one or more of the following ways: Bible knowledge, prayer, discipleship, worship, ministry, giving, stewardship, fellowship, missions education, leadership development, etc. Every church can find a way to start new units of Bible study that can meet needs and reach people. Discover the unreached people in your community and ask Jesus to love them through you. When we see people as Jesus sees them, love will find a way.



Bill Mackey

Bill Arnold, director of missions for Henry County Baptist Association, has challenged the churches there to prayer walk their church fields and to increase baptisms by 50 percent over last year. He and church leaders already have prayer walked roads connecting churches.

The third part of the vision is to expand ministries in churches and associations to meet needs and reach people. This already is happening in unusual places in Eastern Kentucky (more than 30 new ministry sites) and all across Kentucky.

I envision teams composed of KBC staff and church and associational leaders networking the best resources to enable Kentucky Baptists to fulfill their God-given mission. The vision also includes strengthening support of KBC institutions and agencies and world missions through the Cooperative Program and partnership missions.

Correction: The last sentence in my May 1 Western Recorder article should have read: "Please pray for the 180 KBC churches involved in FAITH Sunday School evangelism"—not 180 people.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

Spend both quality & quantity time with children for maximum benefit

Q: Is quantity time with my children as important as quality time?

The quality time vs. quantity time debate emerged during the '90s as one of the more interesting and energetic discussions in the field of parenting and family life. Some experts said that the quality of time parents and children spent together mattered most. Others argued that there simply was no substitute for quantity.

Newsweek's 1997 cover story, "The Myth of Quality Time" reported that "many of the most important elements in children's lives—regular routines, domestic rituals, consistency, the sense that their parents know and care about them—are exactly what's jettisoned when quality time substitutes for quantity time." More recent research on the relationship between hours spent in daycare and aggressive behavior seem to support the view that children need lots of individual attention.

Although calendaring time for family is important, quality time with children cannot be scheduled or guaranteed. We simply have no way of knowing when quality time is going to happen. The best plan seems to be to go for quantity. The math makes sense. The more you are available to your children emotionally as well as physically, the better chance you have of connecting in significant ways and sharing significant experiences. There simply are more opportunities.

Don't look at time spent with your children as something else on your "to do" list. Spend as much time with them as possible. You will never look back and wish it had been less. You almost certainly will look back and wish it could have been more.—*David Garrard*

Q: I am dealing with depression in my life. I'm having trouble keeping a job, and I don't know if it's worth looking anymore. As a single person, I don't want to have to depend on my parents. I feel pretty hopeless and helpless right now. What should I do?

In William Bridges' classic book, "Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes," he gives several points that can help in coping with the loss of a job:

- Take your time. Beware of artificial deadlines you might have imposed on yourself. Remember Jesus' words about worry (Matthew 6:34).

- Arrange temporary structures. What can you do in the meantime?

- Don't act for the sake of action.

- Recognize why you are uncomfortable. This transition can be a significant time of insight as you learn more about yourself and what you would really love to do.

- Take care of yourself in little ways. How can you nourish yourself today?

- Find someone you can tell about your thoughts and feelings. Half the healing is in being heard by someone else.

- Use this transition as the impetus for a new kind of learning. What have you always wanted to do?

- Recognize that transition has a characteristic shape. How has God worked in your life in the past?

Besides taking time to grieve your job loss, consider talking through other issues with a trusted counselor. As a single person, you don't have to go it alone. You have spiritual resources available to you in your church and community. Be willing to receive right now. And when your brothers and sisters in Christ have their own times of loss, be willing to give back and be there for them as well.—*James Stillwell*

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



Georgetown affirms its historic ties to KBC

It's official. Trustees of Georgetown College recently voted to maintain the school's historic ties to the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The KBC Executive Board responded last week by voting to "express appreciation and affirmation of Georgetown College's commitment to its relationship to the Kentucky Baptist Convention."

Questions about the future of Georgetown's relationship to the KBC surfaced last year when college officials announced plans to pursue elite Phi Beta Kappa status. Membership in PBK, the nation's oldest undergraduate honors society, is a sought-after standard of academic excellence.

Gaining Phi Beta Kappa recognition is a significant challenge for Christian colleges and universities, according to Georgetown President Bill Crouch. He said requiring an all-Christian faculty and having trustees elected by a denomination are major hurdles to achieving to PBK status.

As a result, when he announced Georgetown's PBK-related goals a year ago, Crouch said, "All we need to do is work with Kentucky Baptists to figure out a way to change the trustee selection process to satisfy the Phi Beta Kappa people." Some Kentucky Baptists interpreted his words as a code suggesting that Georgetown trustees were on the verge of amending the school's governing documents to create a self-perpetuating board.

During a yearlong study of the issue, Crouch candidly acknowledged that pursuing self-perpetuating status was among possible options. That is an option several Baptist-related institutions in other states have exercised in recent years.

Crouch voiced concern, however, that "an institution that does not have a denominational affiliation to serve as a spiritual conscience always leans toward secularism."

"I very much want denominational affiliation," he added. "We've got to have that to keep us anchored."

Once the study was completed, Georgetown trustees voted unanimously to maintain the school's current relationship to the state convention. That means KBC messengers will continue to elect the school's trustees and Georgetown will continue to receive Kentucky Baptist Cooperative Program funds.

Among the challenges Georgetown is facing, no Christian college has gained Phi Beta Kappa status in the past 17 years. Pledging to "try to do something no college has done since 1984," Crouch told Executive Board members, "I believe Georgetown College can achieve Phi Beta Kappa status while partnering with the KBC."

Another issue is the \$96 million price tag Georgetown leaders indicate will be needed to bring the college's facilities, programs and faculty salaries into line with PBK guidelines. While the college has received more than two-thirds of that total in gifts and pledges, some observers question whether the cost exceeds the benefit.

Crouch's response? "If we're going to be a quality institution, we need to be doing this anyway." Even if Georgetown falls short in its plan to achieve Phi Beta Kappa standing, he added, "We've moved this institution light years ahead as a quality educational institution."

Regardless of the outcome, Georgetown leaders are to be commended for their goal of enhancing the school's standing in the academic world while preserving ties to the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"We always have the option of redoing our by-laws and being self-perpetuating, but that certainly is not our intent," Crouch explained. "We want to be full partners with a trust relationship."

Despite those who predict gloom and doom in Kentucky Baptist life, Georgetown's actions offer a clear reminder that the vast majority of Kentucky Baptists are committed to moving forward together in peaceful cooperation for the cause of Christ.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Porter plays prominent role in birth of unified budget plan

By Duane Bolin

Influential Kentucky Baptist minister J.W. Porter wore three hats in 1913 when he set the stage for a major transformation in the operations of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky. He served simultaneously as pastor of Lexington's First Baptist Church, editor of the Western Recorder and moderator of the General Association.

As pastor of First Baptist, Lexington, the host church for the 1913 annual meeting of the General Association, Porter welcomed 288 messengers and 227 guests, the largest number ever gathered for an annual meeting. He was elected moderator and promptly appointed a "Committee of Five" to consider the question of unifying the work of the state body.

Because of the success of his church budget plan in Murray, Porter's friend, H. Boyce Taylor, was named to the committee along with J.A. Booth, W.W. Landrum, A.F. Gordon and O.O. Green. Taylor preached the 1913 annual sermon on "Kingdom Building." When he presented the report of

the "Committee of Five" the following year, he returned to that same theme: "Your committee is not unmindful of the splendid advance made by Kentucky Baptists in their missionary and benevolent contributions during the last few years. This advance, however, is not in keeping with their growth and financial strength and the growing needs of our denominational work," he explained.

In the past, funding for denominational initiatives had been haphazard at best. Weekly offerings were unusual in local churches in the 19th century. Support for denominational causes was solicited by agents sent out by the General Association or by Kentucky Baptist institutions. Entities depended on these "special collections" and agents sometimes competed with each other for funds.

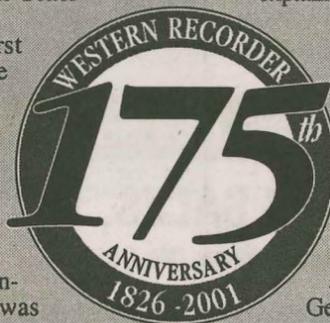
Porter and Taylor clearly felt that "the building of the Kingdom" in Kentucky could best proceed through a more innovative statewide financial plan. The committee recommended "the unification of all departments of our work, so as to give every object, fostered by Kentucky Baptists, the sup-

port to which it is justly entitled." In 1914, messengers voted to refer the committee's report to a new committee of nine. The new committee, chaired again by Taylor, was instructed "to consider the whole question, give publicity to their deliberations during the year, and report" back to the body in 1915.

Taylor and Porter took seriously the task of giving "publicity to their deliberations." Taylor toured the state promoting the unified budget plan. Porter furthered the idea in the pages of the Western Recorder.

The promotional work of the two friends paid off. At the 1915 annual meeting at the Baptist church in Jellico, Tenn.—at that time affiliated with the Kentucky convention—messengers accepted "by rising vote" the proposal for unification. The enthusiastic acceptance and implementation of the "cooperating" budget plan anticipated the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program, adopted a decade later. Porter's role in this cooperative venture—as pastor, moderator and editor—proved to be crucial for the advance of Kingdom work in Kentucky.

James Duane Bolin, associate professor of religion at Murray State University, is a member of First Baptist Church of Murray



MISSIONS

Persecution escalates as Christians pray for Bhutan

According to reports in early May, Bhutanese Christians are being told to pledge in writing that they will not gather to worship or evangelize.

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—News of a wave of repression against the churches of Bhutan recently reached the West—just as Christians are preparing to pray for the tiny Himalayan nation wedged between China, Tibet and India.

Bhutanese Christians, a relative handful in the overwhelmingly Buddhist land, are facing some of the strongest persecution they have seen, according to Indian Baptists who alerted the Baptist World Alliance in late April.

Christians attending churches in Bhutan in April reportedly were confronted by authorities who recorded their names. Some fled in fear of being identified and punished. Police also have closed churches, interrogated pastors and threatened them with imprisonment, demanding that Christians stop evangelistic activities.

Bhutanese Christians fear other actions, and the Indian Baptists asked for prayers.

According to reports in early May received directly from Bhutanese believers, Christians are being told to pledge in writing that they will not gather to worship or evangelize. Those who don't stop Christian activities face the loss of free education for their chil-



FALSE GOD A young artist in Bhutan is lost in thought over a Buddha statue he has just completed. Many Bhutan officials recently have cracked down on Christians. Bhutan's Drukpa people group will be the focus of this year's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization, June 1-2. (IMB photo)

dren, loss of access to free medical care and other penalties.

"Very harsh persecution has started in Bhutan," one Bhutanese Christian said. "Christians are asked either to leave their religion or their country. In some places they are beaten very badly. They are not allowed to gather anymore. Freedom of religion has been taken away. Christians now face termination of employment, expulsion from the country, cancellation of trade licenses and denial of all state benefits."

The persecution reportedly began to grow last year after Bhutan's king made a speech advising citizens they would be better off following one religion: Buddhism. Taking their cue from that speech, regional officials intensified repression of Christians.

These events are unfolding as Southern Baptists and other Christians plan a united prayer effort for the Drukpa people of Bhutan from 6 p.m. June 1 through 6 p.m. June 2 during the annual Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization.

Coincidence? One Christian observer familiar with Bhutan and the Himalayan region doesn't think so.

"This is the Drukpa's moment" to hear the gospel, he said. "It is the day of the Lord in the Himalayas. God promises in Psalm 2:8, 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations. ...'

"If I were to tell you there is a pos-

sibility that the Drukpa would pass from the darkness and hopeless self-effort of Buddhism to the light and liberty of the Savior, would you be willing to give yourself for that cause? The apostle James says we do not have because we do not ask."

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

Of more than 200,000 Drukpa, perhaps 20 are evangelical believers.

Bhutan, the only country officially recognized as a Tibetan Buddhist kingdom, incorporates Buddhism into every aspect of life. Mixed with ancient folk practices of shamanism, magic, ancestor worship and divination, the religious landscape appears in fearsome symbols and faces of demons painted on houses.

"The Drukpa 'are stuck in a cycle of deception,'" said another Christian acquainted with Bhutan. "The practices are very much akin to the occult, as there is so much superstition about everything."

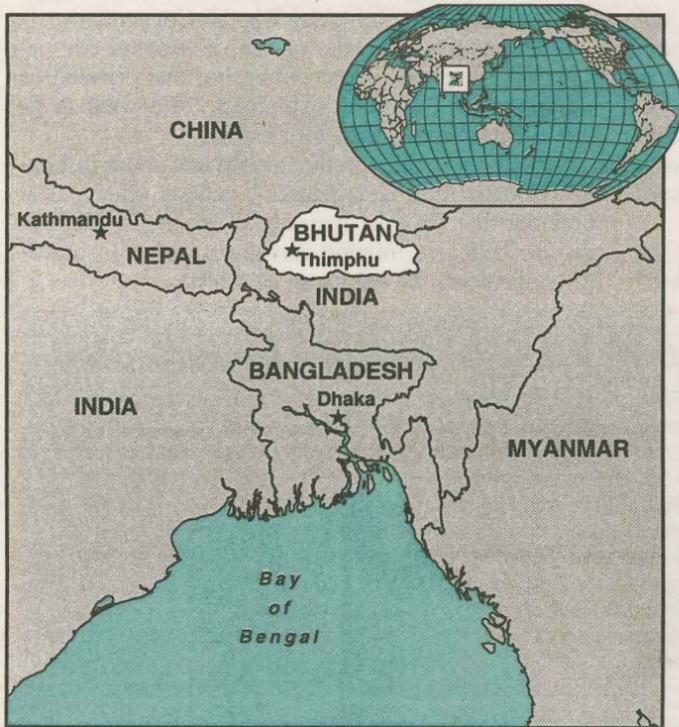
The need for prayer for open doors to witness recently was underscored by a Christian worker who reported an incident after preaching in a village.

After hearing about salvation and freedom from fear in Jesus Christ, the village chief asked the preacher, "Why did you not come here two weeks earlier?"

The worker said the chief told him he had consulted a sorcerer to gain goodwill for his family. After some rituals, the sorcerer told the chief that if he sacrificed three small children before the moon came up on a full-moon night, prosperity never would leave the home, the worker said.

The chief told the worker he kidnapped two boys from a neighboring village, and sacrificed them to the gods. Unable to kidnap a third child, the chief reported that he sacrificed his own 7-year-old son, the worker said.

"Why did you come so late?" the crying chief asked the Christian worker.



From Oxford to Oxford

It's a long way from Oxford, Miss., to Oxford, England, not only in distance, but also in time. Having been born and reared in Mississippi, I cannot remember a time when I did not know and expect to attend the University of Mississippi, located in Oxford, Miss. From the time I was in elementary school and through high school my parents took me to Ole Miss football games every Saturday during the season. We even traveled to Stoll Field to watch Ole Miss and Kentucky in the 1960s. Ole Miss is the affectionate name for the University of Mississippi where I graduated in 1970 and where my wife graduated in 1973.

She and I have just returned from a visit to Regent's Park College, one of 39 colleges and halls associated with Oxford University in Oxford, England. Founded in 1810, Regent's Park is a community of scholars in the Baptist tradition. Through a unique partnership with Georgetown College and its Marshall Center, Kentucky Baptist ministers have the unprecedented opportunity to study at Regent's Park. Short-term study leaves provide for growth in faith and scholarship. Participants have all of the riches of Oxford available to them, including extensive libraries, lectures, an intel-

lectually stimulating environment and centuries-old traditions that are part of Oxford's impressive history.

Bill and Alice Marshall, co-directors of the Marshall Center for Christian Ministry at Georgetown College, have done a magnificent job in facilitating the minister study leave program at Regent's Park, which includes a nice apartment on the

Oxford campus. In the spirit of Mark 1:35, "and Jesus withdrew to a solitary place," let me encourage church leaders to provide your ministers with such an opportunity. There are important benefits for your church and your minister in maintaining a mutually enriching relationship. Call the Marshall Center at (502) 863-8030 for details.

Also, let me encourage you to consider a gift to the Marshall Center Endowment Fund through the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. My wife and I are pleased not only to be regular contributors, but also the beneficiaries of this ministry. Yes, it's a long way from Oxford, Miss., to Oxford, England, but what a wonderful journey it has been!

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

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION

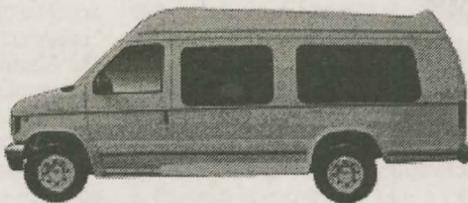


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MISSIONS

'Land of Thunder Dragon' has little knowledge of Christ

Continued from page 1

an Buddhist kingdom, an overwhelming 99 percent of its population have never had a chance to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. The Drukpa worship a pantheon of Buddhist gods and demons who are depicted graphically in every business, building and home.

They adhere to ancient folk practices of shamanism, magic, ancestor worship and divination. Altars and shrines dot the mountains, and in every village and on every hillside, prayer flags—tall poles with streamers of imprinted material—whip in the cold mountain air, delivering prayers to the gods at every moment.

While a handful of Drukpa Christians maintain their faith, the strict Buddhist climate does not allow for variation in religion. In larger cities, Christians might lose jobs, even their citizenship. In remote areas, Christians have been harmed physically. Children whose families follow Christianity are ridiculed and denied further education.

"Dorji," a Drukpa who embraced Christianity more than 20 years ago, said the Bhutanese hold to a fatalistic view of life.

"Everything is determined for you within the law of karma," said Dorji, who's real name was concealed to protect his family.

"Everyone is stuck in the wheel of life, and while you can't control your ultimate destiny, you can make the best of what you have."

The task is great for Dorji and Christians around the world who want to see the Bhutanese know Jesus



BHUTAN PRAYER EMPHASIS A Bhutanese man pays attention to his grandson during a festival. Because of their isolation in the Himalaya Mountains, the vast majority of Bhutan's Drukpa people have no knowledge of the love of God and salvation in Jesus Christ. The Drukpa will be the focus of this year's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization, June 1-2. (IMB photo)

Christ, who can deliver them from the meaningless "wheel of life."

Southern Baptists are being asked to unite in prayer for the Drukpa of Bhutan from 6 p.m. June 1 through 6 p.m. June 2, during the annual Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization.

"One of the reasons it's so important we pray for the Drukpa is we know the love of God and they don't—and when we pray for those who don't, we're expressing the very essence of love," said Randy Sprinkle, director of the prayer strategy office of the Southern Baptist Interna-

tional Mission Board.

"For most of us, the first verse of Scripture we learned was John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world ...' God's heart is for all the world. Jesus' sacrificial death was for all the world, and He has revealed to us that this is a divine moment in which He wants to reveal Himself to the Drukpa of Bhutan."

In an age of cell phones, workdays and maxed-out schedules, Southern Baptists might wonder how they can devote an hour to prayer, much less an entire day.

Sprinkle said self-sacrifice is the nature of a Great Commission Chris-

For more information

- Order a free video resource kit or request a copy of the April issue of "The Commission" magazine from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board at (800) 866-3621 or www.imb.org/resources.
- Watch the video: "Land Under the Thunder Dragon" at www.imb.org/tconline/Stories/April01_Bhutan_video.html.
- Read "Unmasking the Dragon: The Drukpa of Bhutan" at www.imb.org/tconline/Stories/April01_Bhutan.html.
- Read prayer profiles of Bhutan's unreached people groups at www.bethany.com/profiles/c_code/bhutan.html.
- Learn Bhutan information at www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bt.html.

tian whose own heart beats in sync with God's.

"When we deny ourselves and instead give that time to fervent prayer, we're not only agreeing with God, we're expressing the very heart of God," he said. "So why is praying for the Drukpa so important? So that they, too, will know how much He loves them and how much He's already done for them through Jesus, the Savior of the world."

Like Dorji, Christians who desire to see salvation among the Drukpa can plead for the people of Bhutan.

"Being a Christian hasn't lessened my patriotism and love for my country at all," he said. "But finding the personal God made the difference for me. There are no more 'pujas' to be done, pilgrimages to go on, amulets to wear, no more mantras to be chanted.

"Jesus Christ has done it all."

Recognizing special people

By Robert Dunston

On April 21, Cumberland College held its annual faculty/staff recognition dinner.

During the program Cumberland College honored two individuals for their outstanding contributions to the work and ministry of the college.

Bruce Hicks received the Excellence in Teaching Award for 2001. Hicks is associate professor of history and political science. He taught at Cumberland College from 1986-1992 and then returned in 1996. During his tenure at Cumberland, Hicks has taught most of the political science courses and supervised students pursuing political science majors and minors.

Students describe Hicks as a professor who makes them think. In class he presents material in an interesting format helping students understand the workings of government.

Out of class Hicks spends time with students supporting and encouraging them in all of their endeavors. He is active at First Baptist Church in Williamsburg and most recently has served as an integral part of the church's constitution and bylaws committee.

Lisa Cox received the 2001 Service Award. Cox began working at Cumberland College 20 years ago as a co-op student while still in high school. After graduation, she became a full-time employee in the development office. When James Taylor became president of Cumberland College, Cox transferred to the president's office.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Coworkers describe Cox as pleasant, polite, friendly, efficient, kind-hearted and considerate. She demonstrates constant initiative and professionalism in her work, continually seeking to help others, learn new skills and serve in any way she can.

An active member of Parkway Church of God, Cox works with children in Sunday school and Bible school, sings in the choir and ministers through the church's jail ministry.

Both Hicks and Cox represent the best of the Cumberland College family. We thank them for their dedicated work in Christ's service.

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



"I was a stranger and you took me in."

Matthew 25:35

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Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children
1-800-456-1386—www.kbhc.com



President Bush pledges to help end Sudan's religious civil war

WASHINGTON (RNS)—President Bush has announced that he plans to take steps to convince the government of Sudan to end the country's long-running civil war.

"We must turn the eyes of the world upon the atrocities in Sudan," Bush said May 3 during a speech to the American Jewish Committee, according to the Washington Post.

Bush told the group that Andrew Natsios, head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, has been selected to serve as a special humanitarian coordinator for Sudan to make sure that aid to the country "goes to the needy, without manipulation by those ravaging that troubled land," Bush said.

The announcement was applauded by religious rights and human rights advocates, including Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Bush's action "shows that this president is going to stand on the best of the American conscience," Land said.

More than 2 million people have been killed in fighting and war-related famine since 1983 when fighting erupted between the Arab Islamic government in the north and autonomy-seeking groups in the mainly animist and Christian south. Approximately 4 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's annual report, released last month, concluded that the situation in Sudan has reached "genocidal proportions."

"Clearly, more will be needed, because food aid is only one part of the Sudanese puzzle," said Elliott Abrams, chairman of the commission. "But this is a terrific first step."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

Competing studies debate gay conversions

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—The doctor who led the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973, now says a new study shows homosexuals can change their orientation.

But a competing study rejects those same conclusions.

Robert Spitzer studied 200 former homosexuals and said they had become straight through religious or psychiatric counseling.

Spitzer said the 153 men and 47 women have lived as heterosexuals for at least five years and were relatively happy with their change of lifestyles.

"The subjects' self-reports of change appear to be, by and large, valid, rather than gross exaggerations, brain-washing or wishful thinking," Spitzer said in the summary of his report, presented May 9 to the New Orleans meeting of the APA.

Spitzer told the New York Times his study was not necessarily representative of most gays in the United States. Seventy-nine percent of the people in his study said they wanted to leave homosexuality because of religious beliefs.

The study drew criticism from gay groups, who said 43 percent of the participants were referred to Spitzer from controversial ex-gay ministries. The

APA and other professional groups have been leery of conversion programs, and Spitzer himself said his study "should not be misused to justify coercive treatment."

A competing study of 202 gay men and lesbians, also presented at the APA conference, found that only six were still living as heterosexuals, while 178 failed in their attempts to become straight, and 18 described themselves as asexual.

The issue of conversion is a hot topic in churches grappling with gay issues, with conservatives saying that gays can change, and liberals arguing that they cannot and calling for greater inclusion of gays and lesbians in church life.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Beliefnet.com reduces staff.** Beliefnet.com, a major online site addressing religion, spirituality and morality, has reduced its staff and will scale back the e-commerce aspect of its business. Steven Waldman, co-chairman and editor in chief of the New York-based Web site, said his overall staff has decreased from 62 in mid-February to 52 in mid-April, due to layoffs and attrition. "Basically, the overall picture for us financially is good, but we had several different revenue streams," he said. "One of them was e-commerce and that basically didn't work out."

■ **Papers drop, pick up B.C.** About a half a dozen newspapers have canceled the "B.C." comic strip after an Easter cartoon sparked an outcry from some groups who called it insen-

sitive. The offending cartoon depicted a menorah transforming into a cross. Several groups, including the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, denounced the comic strip as an advocate of "Replacement Theology"—the idea that Christianity has supplanted Judaism. A spokesman for Creators Syndicate told Associated Press that about the same number of newspapers have since decided to publish the comic strip following the controversy.

■ **Judge rejects deity request.** A judge has rejected a lawsuit filed by a Michigan inmate who wanted to be treated like God, ruling that the man had no constitutional right to be treated as any "supernatural being of power." In his lawsuit against the Michigan pris-

on system, convicted armed robber Chad Gabriel DeKoven had sought a full pardon, public acknowledgment of his claim to be king of Jews, and an end to strife in the Middle East, Associated Press reported.

■ **Presbyterian (USA) membership falls.** The Presbyterian Church (USA) lost nearly 35,000 members last year, the largest drop in membership since 1994. At the end of last year, membership stood at 2,525,330, a decline of 34,871, or nearly 1 percent. The denomination also lost 38 churches. The new membership figures may play a role at next month's General Assembly meeting. Conservatives have long said that the church's liberal bent on human sexuality issues has caused the church to lose members over the years.

Meet some of the class of 2001 (part 6)

This senior essay was written by "Amber," who came to Oneida Baptist Institute the summer before her junior year. Amber's parents had been considering OBI for some time, but were having difficulty making the decision. They had volunteered at Oneida each summer since the mid-80s. Like many young people, Amber was struggling with authority and family rules. She had been in Christian schools almost all of her life.

Her grades were not the best, and just before coming to Oneida she had become disinterested in school. Amber told us her major goals were to make better grades and to gain more self-esteem. Amber has done well during her two years here. She is on the honor roll and is a teacher's aid with our elementary staff children.

In her essay Amber wrote, "I have been volunteering at Oneida a week each summer since I was six months old, when my family would bring me along with our church group. I never imagined myself coming to school here, let alone graduating from here. My parents always threatened to send my brother here but never actually did. So, when times were getting rough between my parents and me, they said, 'Well how about Oneida?' ... I never thought they would actually follow through with it, but ... they did this time. My mom got the forms in the mail the next day. ... And that's when it hit me, I was actually going away to school. Four hours away from everything I knew as home.

"In a way I was excited, but there was this fear. What if I didn't fit in? ... The only thing I remember from the day I came was sitting ... in our minivan just saying over in my head, 'Please let me like it here.' I didn't want my parents to know I was scared. When we got to Oneida my mom and

I went to the bathroom, and she just started bawling! I didn't know what to do. ... I was mad and lonely, ... then I just got over it."

Amber's junior year was a difficult one. There were some suspensions for doing things she should not have done. Amber had not yet decided to let Oneida help her overcome some of the major issues in her life. It is probably an understatement to say she had a chip on her shoulder. However, by the end of her junior year she met a very nice young man on our campus, and some very positive things began to happen.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

"One ... thing I like about Oneida is that you become so close to everyone. ... If I weren't going here, I probably wouldn't have talked to some of the people I call close friends now. One thing I don't like ... is that with everyone living so close, everyone is always in everyone's business. The dorm life is great and was ... good for me. I liked being able to live with my friends.

"As soon as I came to OBI, my grades started improving. I went from mostly D's to A's and B's. The single-most important thing I have gained by coming to Oneida is that it helped me to find my true innerself. I would like to thank Oneida for bringing a special person and me together, and helping to patch things up with my family. Thank you."

Amber added, "Mrs. Lawson always had these talks with me about where I stood with God. ... Mr. Stockton helped me realize that everything happens for a reason, and not to take anything for granted."

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

The blessings of encouragement

God works in many ways to encourage His people. For Barry Proctor it began with a sack of potatoes.

In 1981 Proctor helped his father and members of Fellowship Baptist Church in Harrodsburg raise a field of potatoes. "My dad and I drove our truck to campus. Each student received a gunnysack full of potatoes.

"My father met student Larry Hicks and formed a friendship that influenced my father toward a closer walk with Jesus. Now both of them are in heaven and I have graduated from Clear Creek," Barry said.

"My father was in and out of church for several years but after his visit to Clear Creek his faith grew stronger. He died in 1985."

Barry was one of 36 students to receive degrees at the May 11 commencement at Binghamtown Baptist Church. In October 2000, he became pastor of First Baptist, Hurley, Va.

"I first thought my calling was for international missions. The United States is a mission field and I look forward to doing missions as a pastor until God calls me home. At Clear Creek I have learned much about the Bible and ministry skills. I also gain valuable advice from

teachers who have served as pastor, but the best learning comes by doing it and I am learning so much as I serve as a pastor," Barry said.

Barry completes three years on the mowing crew with two of those years as supervisor. His wife, Leisa, was secretary to the academic dean.

"I have enjoyed working in the office and developing friendships with faculty, staff and students. I had never worked in an office and have enjoyed learning so much," Leisa said.

"These workshops have put food on our table," Barry observed.

Senior men have the opportunity to preach in chapel and Barry's sermon focused on friendship. He practices what he preaches and has assisted 51 student families when they moved on or off the campus.

"My family has backed me and encouraged me so much. I feel this is home and I want to encourage other students to complete the course God has given them," Barry said. His encouragement extends to Leisa; she will commute from Hurley to complete her degree.

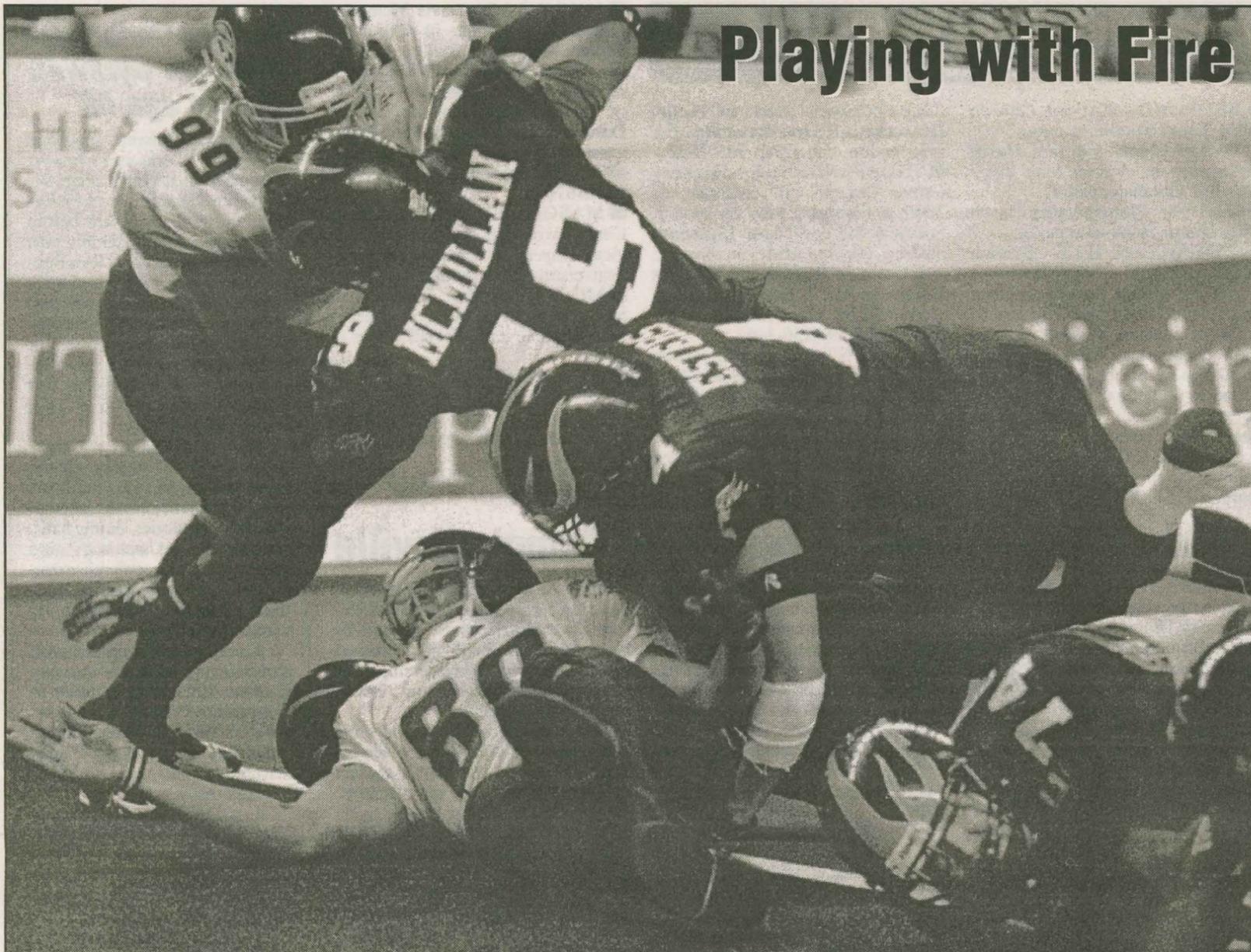
Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

SPORTS



Playing with Fire

"Think of it this way. You're playing football on Astroturf in a hockey rink."

*Elizabethtown native
Patrick Goodman*

CRUNCH TIME Elizabethtown native Patrick Goodman plays for the Louisville Fire, an Arena Football2 team, as he attends Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. ■ Above: Goodman (bottom right) just made a successful block leading to a touchdown in a recent game (Photo courtesy of the Louisville Fire). ■ Below: Goodman poses in Louisville's Freedom Hall, where the Fire plays home games. (Southern Seminary photo by Michael Foust)

Kentucky Arena player seeks to be witness while protecting QB

By Bryan Cribb
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Patrick Goodman's mission field is 50 yards long with padded walls and fake grass.

Goodman, a 6-foot-2, 285-pound Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student, plays football for the Louisville Fire in the professional Arena Football2 League—an indoor league known for its fast-paced, 8-on-8, offense-oriented pigskin pandemonium.

But for Goodman, tackling and blocking for the Fire is more than just a chance to compete in a game he loves. Goodman has returned to the gridiron after almost giving it up principally to glorify the God he loves.

"That's the real reason why I'm playing," said Goodman, a master of divinity student from Elizabethtown.

Referring to his "Astroturf mission field," Goodman maintains the football world of AF2 has fields ripe for gospel harvest. Though some of his teammates and opponents are Christians, most are not.

"I'm definitely not preaching to the choir," Goodman said of the evangelistic atmosphere of AF2.

The Fire debuted as an AF2 team in April. As Goodman has interacted with his fellow players, he has begun to see the many opportunities for Chris-



tian witness in the league.

"So when I'm on the road trip to Wichita, and I'm studying Greek at midnight, they'll ask, 'What do you do?'" Goodman explained. "There's my opportunity to share. ... I get about a five- to six-minute window where I'm able to share what's going on in my studies and also what's going on in my personal life."

In a world where locker room talk and temptations could corrupt, Goodman just tries to be a light for the Fire.

"I like to try and build trust with these guys and show that my faith and what I'm hoping to do is genuine," Goodman said.

A year ago, though, Goodman thought his football career had flamed out. After four years as the center for Western Kentucky University's team, Goodman had dreams of playing in the National Football League.

Then came NFL draft day. For Goodman, it was a day of disappointment. He had sent out tapes and letters

to every NFL team, all to no avail. He was not selected.

"Once the draft passed, I said, 'Football is done. That part of my life is done.' I had a wonderful time. I didn't have any huge regrets. ... I'd really almost given up on playing ever again."

But Goodman said he found that God had other plans. He said that since his senior year at Western Kentucky, God had begun placing a call in him for full-time ministry.

Last fall, he and his wife responded to that call by moving to Louisville. Last December, Goodman's sister informed him of the tryouts for the expansion Fire. Louisville had just formed one of 28 AF2 teams. The league itself only began in March 2000 as a minor-league affiliate of the Arena Football League.

Though Goodman was taking classes and working 35 hours a week, the opportunity to protect quarterbacks again was too good to pass up. "I thought football was done, and then this happens."

He impressed the coaches and made the team. Goodman starts on offense, defense and special teams. The league, which is set up for high scores and fan involvement, is a little alien to Goodman, who is familiar with the open-air stadiums and natural grass of the col-

lege gridiron. "This league is completely different," he said. "Think of it this way. You're playing football on Astroturf in a hockey rink."

Though the team has lost more games than it's won, Goodman knows there are other measures for success. And, while his return to the game has proved tiring, it also has been rewarding. "It is a huge test trying to juggle work and school and football at the same time," Goodman said.

Does he still dream of playing at a higher level? "It would be nice, but I would have to give up seminary," Goodman said. "I would have to give up what I'm getting now and the discipleship I'm getting now."

When asked which is tougher, seminary tests or the turf burns and tackling of AF2, Goodman deliberated. But, with the job uncertainty of Arena ball, the latter finally won his vote.

"I could play (Saturday) and lose my job Sunday," Goodman said.

Whether he is cut or plays several years, Goodman said he's thankful for the ministry opportunity. Plus, football yields many lessons for future ministry, he said. Goodman and his wife, Janet, are considering career missions in the Middle East.

"I think football really is a good preparation for being on a mission field where there aren't a lot of believers."

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Give thanks for the recent first baptismal service of a new international Baptist church in Milan, Italy, led by missionaries Don and Diana Barr. Two adult women and two children were baptized.

■ Theodore Oprenov, president of the Bulgarian Baptist Union, and the union's 67 churches.

■ Evangelistic outreach planned for "May Days" by both French and English-speaking churches in Nice, France.

■ Jason, a businessman from mainland China now living in Warsaw, Poland. His wife, Wendy, is a believer. Jason has begun reading her Chinese-language Bible and enjoys visiting in the missionaries' home.

■ A Baptist Student Union group from Mississippi working in Tanzania this week.

■ Give thanks for doors that have opened for literacy ministry among the Digo peoples of Tanzania.

■ David Platt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sudbury, Mass.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BEDFORD**—Antioch Church called **Evert Staible** as pastor.

Bedford Church will host **David Livingston** in concert May 20, 7 p.m. **Jeff Combs** is pastor.

■ **BENTON**—Pleasant Valley Church called **Duane Holland** as pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will hold a commemorative service for former pastors and deacons May 27 at 11 a.m. The service is part of a series of events to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary. At 6 p.m. the church will show "Road to Redemption." For information, call (502) 789-0082. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will host a woman's conference, DaySpring 2001, June

2 at 8 a.m. Special guests will be **Jan Dravecky** and **Alma Raudolph**. For information, call (270) 765-7822.

■ **INDEPENDENCE**—Hickory Grove Church will celebrate its 200th anniversary May 20-June 3. Speakers will be **Wayne Lipscomb** on May 20, **Jay Holt** on May 27, and **Colburn Hooten** and **Charles Wilson** on June 3. Homecoming services will be June 3. For information, call (859) 356-3162.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Cornerstone Church will host revival services May 20-23, 11 a.m. service Sunday and 7 p.m. nightly. **Don Mathis** will be the evangelist. **Foy Back** is pastor.

Victory Church called **Richard Christian** as minister of music. **Mike James** is pastor.

Medders named development vp at Campbellsville

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Alan Medders, president of the Woman's Missionary Union Foundation in Birmingham, Ala., has been named vice president for development at Campbellsville University. He will assume the university's chief development officer position July 1.

Campbellsville President Mike Carter noted that Medders "brings to this job a wealth of experience and know-how." Both Carter and Medders are former administrators at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.

Carter said hiring Medders "should clearly demonstrate this institution's commitment toward providing our students, faculty and coaches with the financial resources that are so desperately needed as Campbellsville University is soon to begin its second century of Christian educational service."

As president and CEO of the national WMU Foundation, Medders is responsible for fundraising, individual estate planning and asset management for non-profit Christian organizations.

Prior to his role at WMU, Medders

was director of church relations at Carson-Newman. He also served as executive director of the Norton Institute for Congregational Health which manages church services, programming and news and publications for east Tennessee Baptist churches.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Davis Memorial Church will celebrate its 40th anniversary May 20 at 10:30 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the morning service. Letters for a Book of Remembrance may be sent to Davis Memorial Church, 9550 Bluegrass Parkway, Louisville KY 40299. For information, call (502) 931-4670.

■ **MASONVILLE**—Sugar Grove Church will host homecoming services May 27 to celebrate its 140th anniversary. **Don James** is pastor.

■ **MILTON**—Milton Church will host **David Livingston** in concert June 3, 10:30 a.m. **Ferrill Davis** is pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—Freedom Church called **Bill Burrows** as pastor.

White Hall Church called **Michael Barnes** as associate pastor. **Tim Beard** is pastor.

■ **STANFORD**—Stanford Church called **Max Hester** as pastor.



Medders

Former Cedarmore manager Byrdwell dies at age 94

Marvin Byrdwell, longtime manager of Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, died May 9 at age 94.

Byrdwell began serving at Cedarmore in 1949, a year before ownership of the assembly was transferred from Long Run Baptist Association to the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He managed Cedarmore until 1971 when he became director of missions for Christian County Association. He previously served as a pastor and business manager of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

During his tenure at Cedarmore, Byrdwell supervised the construction of the facility's lodge, conference center, tabernacle, two dormitories, dining halls, several cottages and boys' and girls' camps. The conference center at Cedarmore, part of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, is named in his honor.

According to historian Duane Bolin in the book, "Kentucky Baptists, 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation," Byrdwell and his wife, Violet, "had been synonymous with the Kentucky Baptist Assembly" during 21 years of ministry there.

Byrdwell was a member of First Baptist Church of Shelbyville. The funeral service was held there May 14. Memorial gifts can be made in care of the church's Henderson House social ministry.

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: Hammond Organ, A100 internal speakers, full foot pedals, two manuals, excellent condition: (502) 456-0888.

FOR SALE: Beautiful solid cherry Baldwin console piano; excellent condition; \$2,500. (502) 223-0142.

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: First Baptist Church, Tullahoma, Tenn., seeks minister of education/administration and minister of students. Applicants must be committed Southern Baptists, call of God, firm in belief of Bible inerrancy, gifts compatible with respective positions. Dual Sunday school of 550. Capital improvement program underway. Student ministry includes grades six through college. Forward resumés to 108 E Grundy St., Tullahoma, TN 37388.

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, Shelby, N.C., is searching for a minister of education. Job focus: Responsible for leading the educational organizations of the church. Qualifications: Possess significant knowledge of Christian education and training systems; a degree in Christian education or Master of Divinity or equivalent experience is optimum. Candidates should submit resumés to: First Baptist, 120 N Lafayette St., Shelby, N.C. 28150, Attn: Pat Whatley.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor/minister of youth. Position includes youth ministries and administrative duties. Resumé must include experience and/or education in areas of youth ministry and church administration. Applicant must be active member of a Southern Baptist church for the past three years or more. Please submit resumés to: Search Committee, Oak Ridge Baptist Church, 6056 Taylor Mill Road, Covington, KY 41015.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and education for loving, growing church in Southwestern Kentucky. Seminary preferred. Please send resumé to: Elkton Baptist Church, PO Box 547, Elkton, KY 42220, Attn: Staff Search Committee.

SEEKING: Calhoun First Baptist Church is seeking a full-time, evangelistic, mission-minded pastor. Send resumé to PO Box 175, Calhoun, TN 37309.

SEEKING: Part-time bookkeeper (10 hours/week). Send resumé to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291.

SEEKING: Nursery worker for Wednesday and special services. Send resumé to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, or call (502) 239-0316.

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

SEEKING: The Kentuckiana Interfaith Community, Louisville and Southern Indiana's interfaith organization, seeks an executive director to continue a tradition of energetic, visionary leadership. The successful candidate will be a clergy or layperson who is an able administrator, sensitive to theological diversity, community-minded and capable in fund development. Ability to work with volunteers a must. Full job description available upon request. Total compensation range: \$50,000 to \$60,000 dependent upon qualifications. Send resumé and letter of interest by May 31, 2001, to Rev. Ron Sisk, Chair, KIC Search Committee, 1113 S 4th St., Louisville, KY 40203, or e-mail interfaith@bell.south.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth. Send resumé to Gene McIntosh, Concord Baptist Church, 1945 Concord Lane, Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

SEEKING: Springfield Southern Baptist Church, Springfield, Ill., is seeking a full-time associate pastor of family ministries. Appropriate education and experience preferred. Send resumé to: SSBC Staff Search Team, 225 N Grand Ave. East, Springfield, IL 62702. E-mail: ssbc@springnet1.com

SEEKING: Daycare director. Top pay; 40 hours per week; must meet state requirements. Mail resumé to 8415 Masnon Way, Louisville, KY 40258.

SEEKING: Senior pastor. Church is located in one of the fastest growing areas in Northern Kentucky. We have daycare, family life center and average 550 in worship. Send resumé to: Pulpit Search Committee, Hickory Grove Baptist Church, 11969 Taylor Mill Road, Independence, KY 41051.

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: 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 resumés to the church in care of Personnel Committee.

Barnes: Want to know Bush? Know his faith

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)—Many in the national media have a hard time understanding President George W. Bush because they don't understand the faith that guides his life, said Fox News political commentator Fred Barnes.

Barnes addressed business and civic leaders April 30 at Union University as part of the third annual Union Forum series. He is executive editor and cofounder of *The Weekly Standard*, a conservative political journal, and co-host of "The Beltway Boys," a weekly political discussion show on Fox News.

"I think he's already achieved the most popular promise he made in the campaign: to change the tone in Washington," Barnes said. "Most of the press in Washington ignores a particular factor in Bush's changing the tone in Washington, and that is his very serious Christian faith. There are two things he enjoys talking about the most: his faith and baseball."

The political writer and editor—and evangelical Christian—recalled the 1986 conversation Bush had with evangelist Billy Graham as the two walked on the beach at Kennebunkport, Maine. Graham asked him, "Are you right with God?"

"George W. decided he wasn't, and his life has changed remarkably since then," Barnes said.

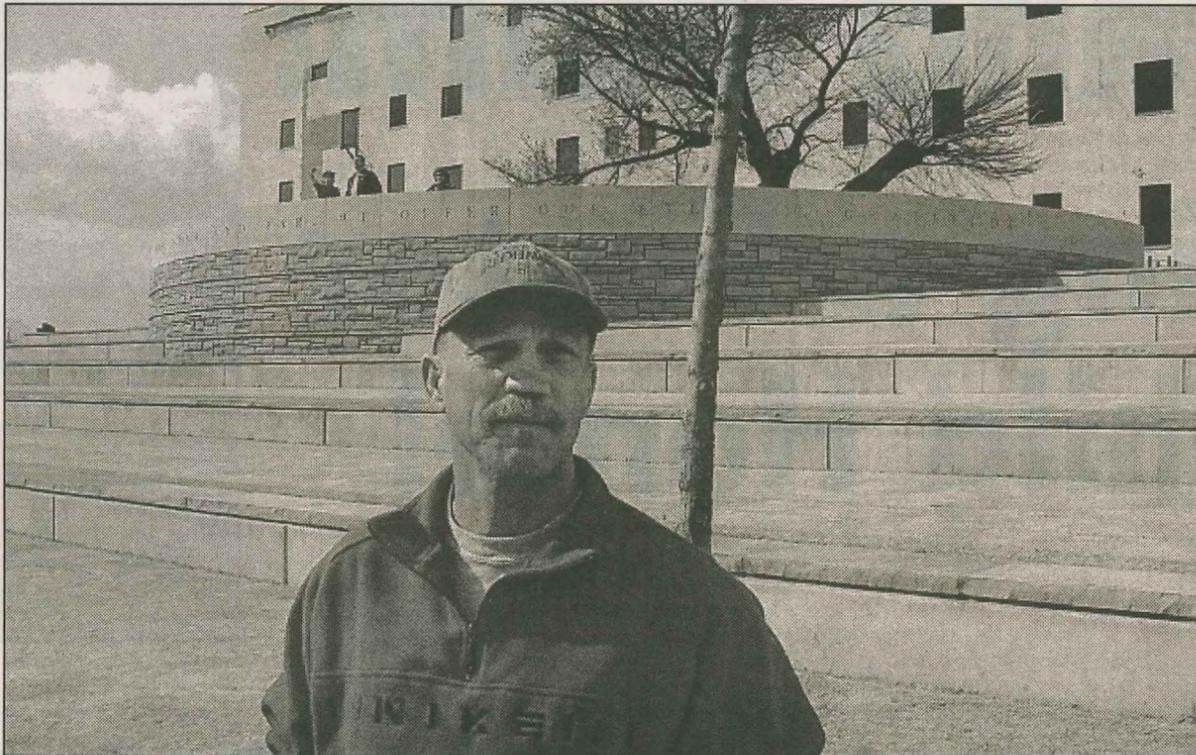
Barnes recounted that Bush, in an interview for Fox News in conjunction with the first 100 days of his presidency, was asked by Brit Hume about the role of his faith in his life and work. Bush responded: "I start with being on bended knee every morning. Seriously. I find great comfort in my faith. It helps me realize I am a person who has a lot of responsibility, but I am just a person. ... I pray every day, I read the Bible every morning."

"If you don't understand that—Bush and his faith—you don't understand Bush," Barnes said. "That's why I think so many people in Washington and the mainstream media simply don't understand Bush. This is paramount with him."

This faith perspective is part of why Bush believes so much in supporting faith-based initiatives, which Barnes called the president's "signature issue."

Bush's belief in faith-based initiatives, Barnes said, is "based on a very simple proposition: government-run social service programs aren't working. They don't produce results. Yet there is strong anecdotal evidence that faith-based groups working in drug rehabilitation and job skills, and so on, do work and work much better. Why not make them eligible to apply for those government grants?"

McVeigh's unseen victims



STRENGTHENED Oklahoma City fireman Wyatt Burks, standing at the Oklahoma City National Memorial Center, is among the more fortunate workers who responded to the 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. Burks said he emerged from the incident with a stronger faith and a marriage in which he talks "about things I never talked to her about before." But he and others say divorce, substance abuse and suicide are up among his peers. (BP photo by Jerry Pierce)

Site workers' problems evidence of holes in ministry

By Jerry Pierce
Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—The one good thing Wyatt Burks remembers about April 19, 1995, and the days following was aiding in the rescue of a U.S. Customs worker—the only person Burks brought out alive.

The rest he'd just as soon forget. Burks, like many emergency personnel and those closely affected by the Murrah Federal Building bombing six years ago, has struggled at times with "issues" related to the tragedy, he said.

But for him, unlike many others, the experience left him more able to talk intimately with his wife and—though his list of church activities has shortened—his faith is stronger than ever, said Burks, a member of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

"After 28 years of marriage, I talk to her about things I never talked to her about before. I guess it's just ignorance, but you wake up to certain things. As long as I'm with my wife and family, I'm happy."

Burks added, "I'm sorry to say in some cases it didn't work that way."

Among emergency personnel who worked the bombing, divorce statistics are up by most accounts, as are substance abuse cases, suicides and other problems.

Ted Wilson, Oklahoma City Fire Department chaplain and a member of Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond, said department statistics recorded since 1995 show about 30 divorces per year. No records were kept prior to that, but Wilson guesses the rate was probably around 10 annually.

"The last 12 months have seen about 16 divorces, so we're improving a little. Part of that might be the increasing distance of the event. People are accessing the systems that are there for

help and are building trust" with trained counselors, Wilson said.

Burks said he believes many pastors and church staff members unwittingly left some of his colleagues and others affected by the bombing without adequate follow-up care.

"A lot of guys would have stayed more involved in church had there been someone there to talk to when they were ready or needed to talk," Wilson said. Many ministers are trained in grief management, he said, but not the traumatic stress suffered in something of the bombing's magnitude.

"These (emergency personnel) are self-motivated, highly competent professionals. They are used to dealing with trauma. ... They try to apply the same coping techniques to their emotional injuries. They admit there's a problem only when their spouse walks out or their job performance deteriorates. Unfortunately, that's an inherent danger," Wilson said.

Joe Williams, head of the Crisis Intervention Institute in Oklahoma City and chaplain for the FBI at the time of the bombing, said churches historically have been poor at follow-up.

Years ago as a pastor, Williams said he preached the funeral of a young murder victim and recalled telling the family shortly after, "If you all need anything, you call me."

"Those calls never come," Williams said, "because often, they don't know what they need. I should have gone back and said to them, 'I'll go with you to the scene of the crime if you want,' walk with them through the valley, been there with them at the trial. ...

"Now that's follow-up." Unfortunately, Williams said, many pastors and Christian counselors are suffering from what he terms "compassion fatigue" from years of sharing grief with their church family during

the ordinary course of ministry. Williams said such fatigue, combined with a lack of awareness, might have contributed to some churches not following through in helping those hurt by the tragedy.

"Pastors have to be tough so they can help everybody else—that's part of the problem," he said.

Whatever coping mechanisms people use before a crisis tend to be used in greater amounts during and after a crisis, Williams said. For instance, if one drinks socially to ease pain, after a crisis that person might develop a more serious drinking problem, or someone who gambles to relax might develop a gambling addiction.

People can experience emotional setbacks on the anniversary of the traumatic event. The next few weeks are expected to be traumatic for many as bomber Timothy McVeigh's scheduled execution was postponed from May 16 to June 11.

One woman who lost a husband in the blast relapsed into depression after visiting the memorial museum, Williams recounted. She had been out of therapy for a year and was making progress.

"It set her back significantly to the point that she is back in therapy."

Job supervisors and even acquaintances of those affected by the bombing sometimes urge them to "just get over it," Williams remarked.

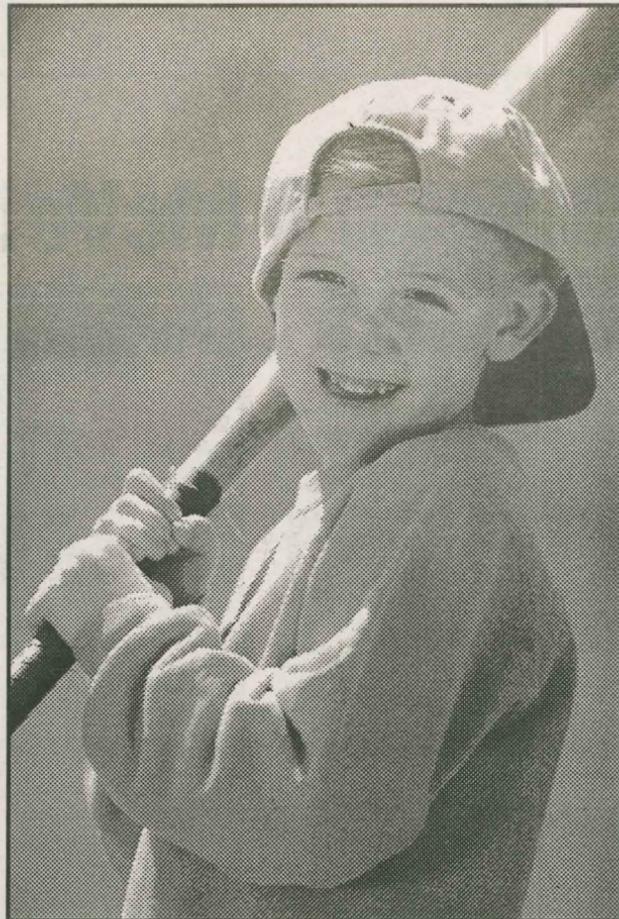
"When they say that to me, it just releases adrenaline in me. If they weren't here at the time it's hard to explain to them," he said.

"The devil makes sure that you get hammered," the fire department's Wilson added. "That's why it's important for pastors to be as prepared as they can to deal with this population of people in their churches. We need to be ready to take care of those people."

"A lot of guys would have stayed more involved in church had there been someone there to talk to when they were ready or needed to talk."

Ted Wilson, Oklahoma City Fire Department chaplain

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