



WESTERN RECORDER

July 10, 2001
Vol. 175, No. 26**FOR THE RECORD****Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**Participants in the group's 10th anniversary meeting vote to uphold a statement opposing homosexuality. *Page 2.***Financial Forum**When does it make sense to cancel life insurance? *Page 4.***Editorial**What's being said about the 2001 Southern Baptist Convention? *Page 5.***Resources**A church growth specialist outlines how many thriving churches are reaching 21st century Americans. *Page 7.***Books**Reviews include "Better Than Success: 8 Principles of Faithful Leadership." *Page 9.*

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, July 11

'Harry Potter' can be used as youth evangelism tool, author says

By Shelvia Dancy
Religion News Service

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (RNS)—When Connie Neal settled down with a copy of "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," the Christian author and lecturer steeled herself for the plunge into a world of mysticism and magic she was certain would clash with her beliefs.

Three "Harry Potter" books later, Neal adores the bespectacled kid wizard, and he is one of her greatest evangelism tools.

"I thought I was reading the book to explain to my kids why they shouldn't read it," said Neal, author of the new "What's a Christian to Do With Harry Potter?"

"What really turned me around was that once I had made that distinction for my kids about the fantasy world vs. our real world, I realized these books were so rich, and really had lessons that directly connected to the Bible."

Take the story of how Harry becomes an orphan, for instance.

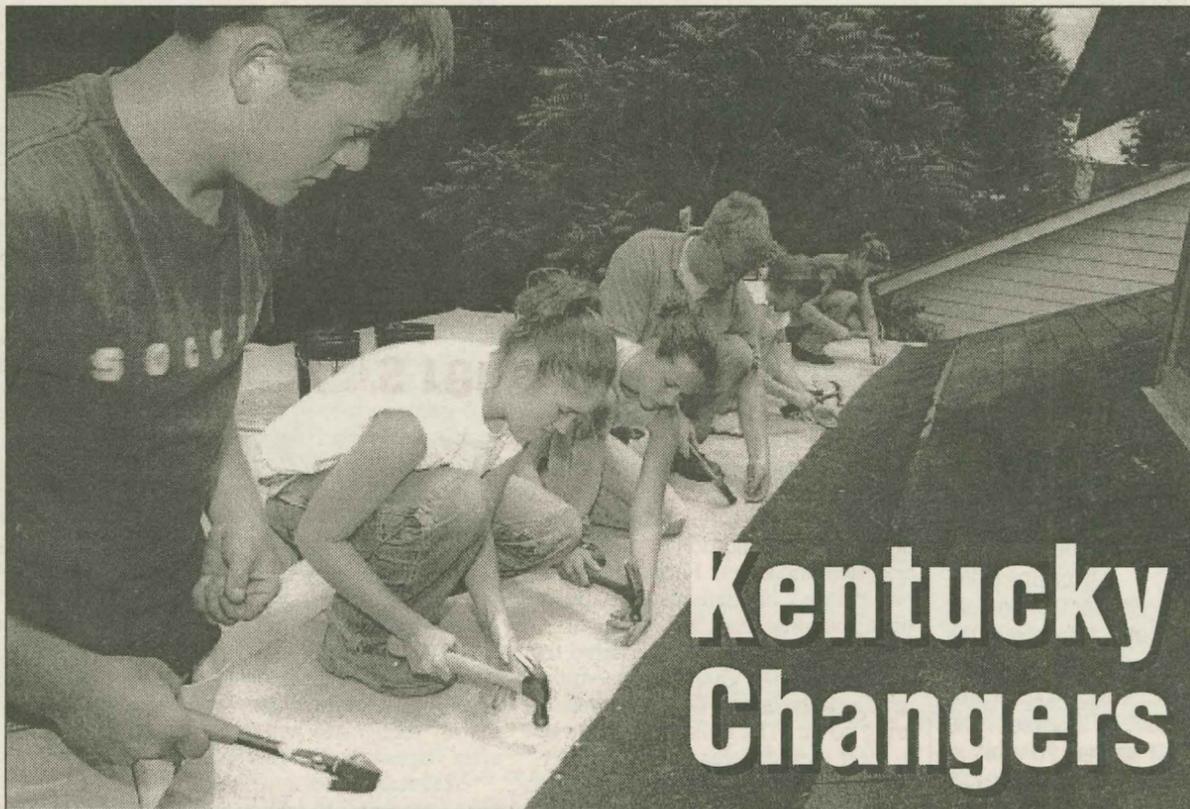
"In the first book, Harry's mother dies because she jumps in front of the curse of death that Lord Voldemort has thrown at Harry to kill him," Neal said. "Voldemort tries to kill Harry again, but the curse is broken and he doesn't die. It's a beautiful picture of the protection from evil that we have because of what Christ did for us on the cross when He broke the curse of death."

Or J.K. Rowling's portrayal of Dudley, Harry's jealous cousin.

"He's a good example of someone who was covetous, so I'd talk to my kids about his selfishness and gluttony and then we'd discuss how the Bible says we're not supposed to be a covetous person," Neal said. "And when you look at Professor Gilderoy Lockhart, you see that he was vain and selfish so that's another character you can use to learn what the Bible has to say about arrogance or selfishness or ambition."

Neal concedes that those lessons are easy enough to overlook. Critics have slammed the Potter stories as too cozy with the occult, anti-Christian even. The forthcoming release this fall of the Harry Potter movie is likely to stir the cauldron of controversy once more.

"To a large extent we let other people think for us on this issue," said Neal, a youth leader at her church and former youth pastor. □ *See Christian author ..., page 8*



Kentucky Changers

More than 100 high school youth from 13 churches converged on Hopkinsville June 23-30 for Kentucky Changers, a week of ministry sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Brotherhood department. The teens provided the labor for a variety of projects at houses of families who often cannot afford to pay for the work being done. ■ **Above:** Workers with the "Tar 'R Us" crew install a new roof on a house.

■ **Right:** Brandon Ford (right), 17, a member of First Baptist Church of Russell Springs, and Chris Neal, 16, a member of First Baptist Church of Barbourville, paint the support columns for an iron fence at a community center. Volunteers said the work at the center led to opportunities to tell children about Jesus. □ *Story and photos on page 3.*



Sabbaticals help ministers renew their energy

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

BALTIMORE (RNS)—It's offering time at Norman Handy's church and the energetic worshippers don't simply pass the plate through the pews.

With women on the left and men on the right, members of Unity United Methodist Church danced to the big straw basket in front of the altar to turn over their gifts to God.

"From Kenya to Ghana, the dance is an integral part of whatever people do, whether it's a funeral, a wedding, whether it's offering time or fellowship time at church," Handy told the 100 people attending the service.

"There is no form or fashion to what you do to express your love of God," he added. "Let the Lord know that during this offering you are grateful to have something to give and somebody to give it to. Amen? C'mon, let's dance."

Fresh from a trip to Africa, Handy, sporting a gray goatee and dreadlocks, danced along with

church members days after spending time learning about the African worship traditions he already had introduced and now planned to extend in his church.

Handy, 56, is one of a minority of ministers who have had the opportunity to take the rarest of retreats: a sabbatical.

Through a new National Clergy Renewal Program offered by the Lilly Endowment, Christian ministers are exploring their roots, discovering how other clergy run their services and taking time to visit Japanese gardens or prime kayaking spots in Puget Sound.

Before he left on his trip, Handy, who also is a Baltimore city councilman, compared his excitement to a child waiting for Christmas.

"It's like December 21 and you're 10 years old and you're expecting either your first bike or your first little red wagon," he said.

Squeezing the two-week trip between special Sundays at his church and the budget discussions of the Baltimore City Council, Handy relished the quality time by himself and with

his culture. Later this summer, he'll travel to New Orleans and the Gullah Islands off South Carolina, and use some of his \$26,468 grant to continue his study of African influences on African-American worship.

The foundation, which supports religious and educational causes, awarded the first grants to Handy and 117 other clergy last year. While 400 people applied for those grants, the foundation distributed 10 times as many applications this year as word spreads about the program.

"It's no secret that a renewed and refreshed person has a better outlook on his or her job," said Gretchen Wolfram, communications director of the Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment. "It gives the ministers a chance and time to often revisit those interests and feelings that led them to the ministry in the first place."

The idea that clergy want this kind of a break might come as a surprise to many lay consultants, said Roy Oswald, senior consultant at the Alban Institute, a Bethesda, Md.-based organization that supports □ *See Clergy sabbaticals: ..., page 6*

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ Gary Parker, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's coordinator of Baptist life and leadership, has resigned to return to the pastorate. Parker, who served five years with CBF, will become pastor of First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga. He previously was pastor of First Baptist Church of Jefferson City, Mo.

■ The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has hired its first executive staff member for fund raising. The CBF Coordinating Council unanimously elected Baylor University development officer Thomas Newsom to the newly created post of development coordinator June 27. Newsom has worked 20 years at Baylor, most recently as senior development officer for special projects.

■ Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leaders have launched a 20-year commitment called "Partners in Hope: CBF's Rural Poverty Initiative." The organization will partner with other groups to impact 20 of the poorest counties in the nation. The initiative will focus on counties in Appalachia, the Mississippi River delta, the Rio Grande River area of Texas and American Indian reservations in South Dakota.

CBF participants uphold ban on funding pro-gay groups

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship celebrated its 10th anniversary in Atlanta with a record attendance and a challenge from former President Jimmy Carter in a three-day meeting marred by a debate over homosexuality.

Carter, who last October renounced ties with the Southern Baptist Convention, urged a Georgia World Congress Center crowd to form partnerships with other moderate Baptists to advance what he called "traditional" Baptist views.

"I think the time has come for maybe CBF to take the leadership and for traditional Baptists to begin to reach out more aggressively to one another," he said.

"If there are other Baptists who don't respond and don't want to cooperate, who cares? Forget them and move on as Christians and as Baptists, just following Jesus."

About 5,100 people registered for the June 28-30 General Assembly, making it the largest CBF annual gathering so far. The Fellowship, formed in 1991 over differences with conservative leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, this year struggled with differences within the CBF over homosexuality.

After debate, delegates voted 701-502 to uphold a policy adopted earlier by the group's Coordinating Council against hiring openly gay persons as missionaries or employees or funding divinity schools that include sexual orientation in their open-admission policies.

Opponents of the policy, described by leaders as "welcoming but not affirming" of homosexuals, charged that the council overstepped its bounds because the Fellowship as a whole had never adopted a position on homosexuality.

Any published statement by CBF leaders is "presumed to represent all of us," said Larry Dipboye, supporting a motion urging the General Assembly to set the policy aside one year

Jimmy Carter urges moderates to pursue new partnerships

ATLANTA (ABP)—Former President Jimmy Carter urged estranged moderates to "forget" the conservative-led Southern Baptist Convention and form new partnerships to advance "traditional" Baptist views.

Addressing a crowd estimated at 8,100 at the 10th anniversary General Assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, America's most famous ex-Southern Baptist said June 29 in Atlanta it's time "for us to get together in a spirit of love" to maximize mission efforts.

"I think the time has come for maybe CBF to take the leadership and for traditional Baptists to begin to reach out more aggressively to one another," said Carter, a lifelong Southern Baptist who recently announced he no longer identifies with views espoused by the nation's largest Protestant group.

The 77-year-old former president, in his second address to a national CBF gathering, urged the Atlanta-

Lepper outlines Kentucky fellowship priorities

ATLANTA—Approximately 150 people attended the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship meeting held June 28 in conjunction with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's General Assembly.

The KBF meeting featured testimonies from missionaries and an overview of CBF by Reba Cobb, a former Kentuckian who now is coordinator of the CBF Resource Center in Atlanta.

John Lepper, coordinator of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, outlined four missions emphases the organization will highlight in the coming years:

■ *Partners in Hope.* This initiative is part of a broader CBF effort to fight hunger, Lepper said. KBF's involvement in Partners in Hope will fight hunger in Kentucky, particular-

ly in Owsley County, which Lepper said has the nation's seventh-highest ratio of citizens facing hunger.

■ *Gleanings.* Another hunger initiative, Gleanings will work with Kentucky farmers to revive the Old Testament practice of setting aside a portion of crops to fight hunger.

■ *New church starts.* Lepper said KBF has yet to start a church, as this initiative is in the beginning stages.

■ *Summer missions.* KBF sent four college students to South Florida this summer for summer missions experiences, Lepper said. The students are working with Touching Miami with Love in Miami for homeless and inner city work and Open House Ministries in Homestead for poor children, Lepper said.

Missing from the meeting was any conversation about the Ken-

tucky Baptist Convention or this fall's meeting and presidential election. Some conservative groups have said they are seeking to prevent the CBF or KBF from influencing the state convention.

Lepper said the KBC is not on his organization's radar screen.

"We're not about fighting with any organization. We're about finding out God's direction," he said, adding that KBF is focused on exploring missions opportunities for its 100 affiliated churches. "That's really at the heart of who we are, missions."

Lepper said the Atlanta meeting drew participants from some churches that aren't affiliated with the state organization. "We have some people who came to this meeting who have not totally understood what CBF and KBF are about."

for study of the issue.

But CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal, who said he drafted and takes responsibility for the policy, contended that it "recognizes where most moderate Baptists are on this issue."

In a breakout session for discussion of the proposal, Bill Sherman, retired pastor of Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville, said: "In my estimation, (homosexuality) is unscriptural. The Bible doesn't just tell Baptists how to believe, it tells them how to behave."

David Currie, director of Baptists Committed in San Angelo, Texas, said a study of homosexuality would confuse churches still on the fence about staying with the SBC or aligning with the CBF.

The SBC has taken a strong stand against homosexuality, banning from membership churches that bless same-sex unions or ordain gay ministers.

"We affirm everyone, but what I hear constantly about CBF is they don't believe anything; they don't stand for anything," said Currie.

Keith Parks, the Atlanta-based Fellowship's retired coordinator for global missions, argued that devoting a

Lepper outlines Kentucky fellowship priorities

year to the study of homosexuality would send the message that it is the most important issue facing CBF. "We ought to be focused on the broader issues of the kingdom of God," said Parks, also a past president of the former SBC Foreign Mission Board.

Chase Peoples, a member of Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta, however, said the policy ignores the fact that there "are a variety of views" on the controversial issue among CBF churches.

"We don't have an organizational value on any issue but this one," added Nick Foster of Montevallo, Ala., arguing that the vote could lead to future division over other controversies.

Participants in the General Assembly warmly welcomed moderator Donna Forrester, who presided despite recovering from surgery to remove a massive brain tumor five weeks ago.

"I'm glad to be here," Forrester said to a standing ovation in opening remarks to the CBF Coordinating Council meeting prior to the General Assembly.

Forrester, minister of pastoral care and counseling at First Baptist Church

in Greenville, S.C., hands over the moderator gavel but stays on as a CBF officer as the immediate-past moderator.

Succeeding her is Jim Baucom, pastor of Rivermont Avenue Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., who was elected last year as moderator-elect. This year's General Assembly elected a new moderator-elect to lead the organization in 2002-2003. He is Phill Martin, director of education for the National Association of Church Business Administrators in Richardson, Texas.

In a business session, the 1,800-church CBF adopted a budget of \$18 million, including a \$6 million goal for an annual Global Missions Offering. Sixty percent of the budget is earmarked for global missions, 12 percent for leadership development, 12 percent for administration, 5 percent for communications and marketing, 6 percent for "building community and networking," 3 percent for faith formation, 2 percent for expenses related to the General Assembly.

Next year's meeting will be June 27-29 in Fort Worth, Texas.

mindful CBF members that he told the group eight years earlier in Birmingham, Ala., that he and his wife, Rosalynn, "had finally found in CBF a home" after years of denominational infighting.

Prior to his remarks, Carter, who has received acclaim for work with Habitat for Humanity and in international affairs, accepted an award from the CBF-related William H. Whitsitt Baptist Heritage Society for faithfulness to Baptist identity and ideals.

The award was named for a seminary president forced in the early 20th century to resign because his scholarship conflicted with popular views. Society president Marv Knox told Carter that while Whitsitt is still honored long after his death, his detractors are by now largely forgotten.

"You're a William Whitsitt kind of Baptist, and on our best days we'd like to think we're a Jimmy Carter kind of Baptist," said Knox, editor of the Texas Baptist Standard.

Carter revealed that he had since convened two more meetings of "moderate, or I prefer to call tradition-

al," Baptists.

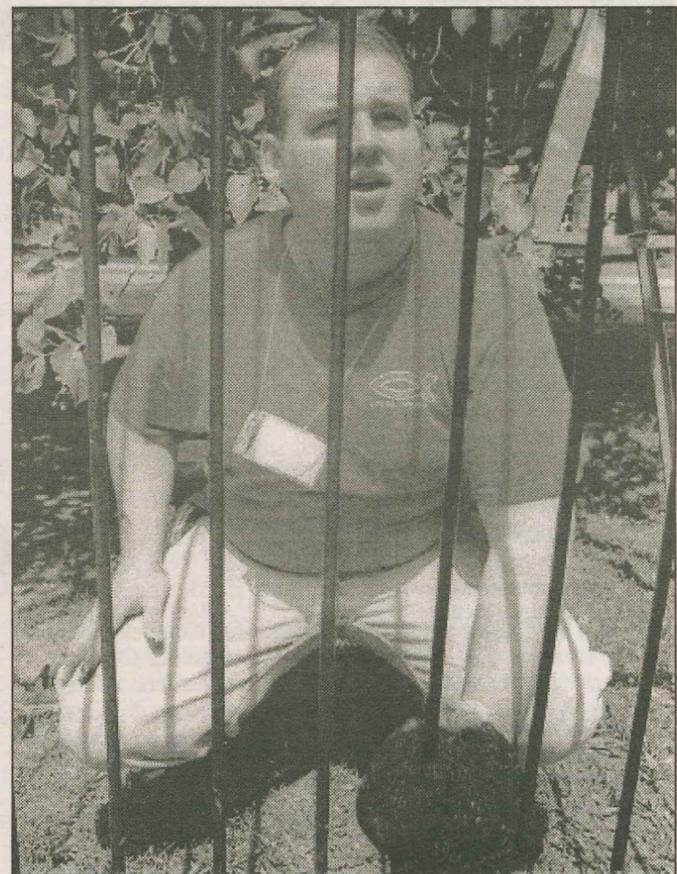
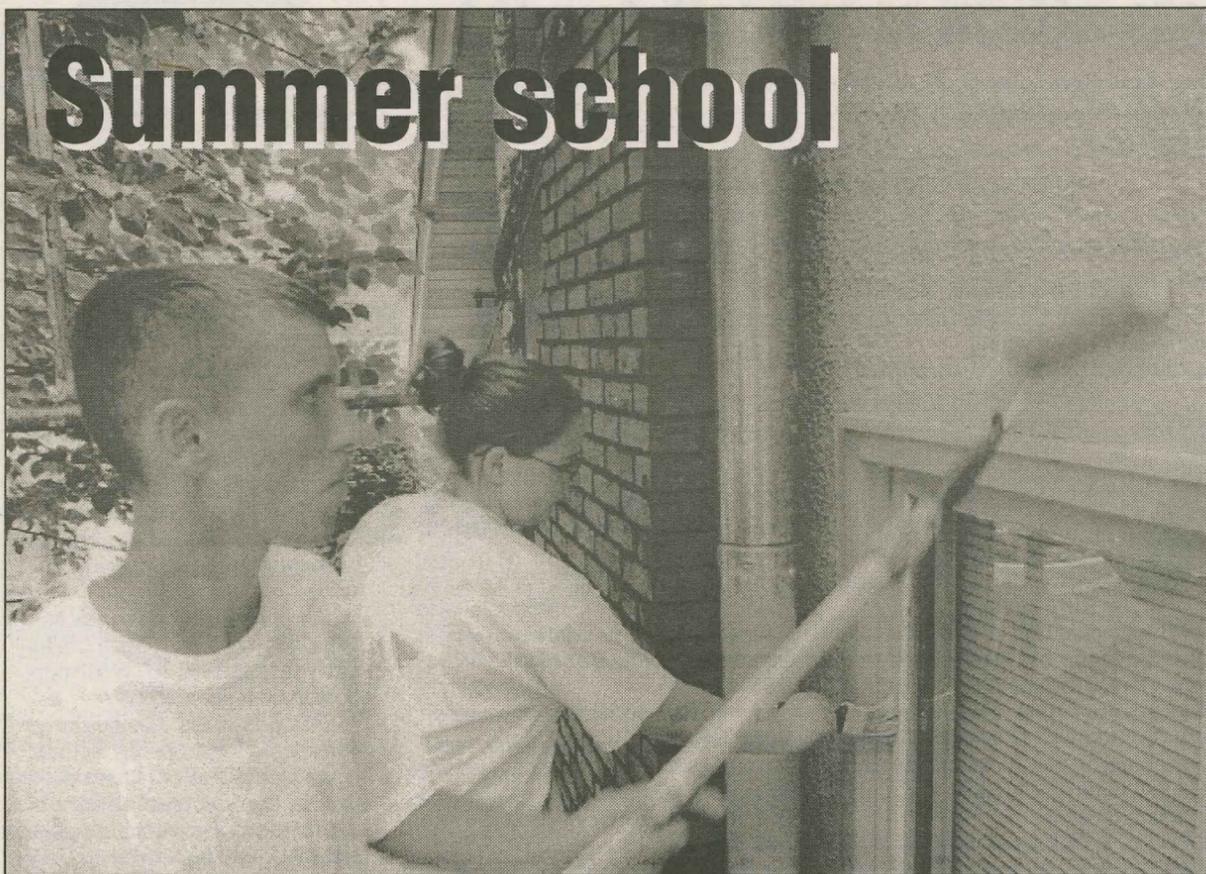
He said leaders from the CBF, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Baptist General Association of Virginia met recently to "discuss how we might find common ground on which we might form partnerships that would be more effective in carrying out the mandates of God."

Carter read a common statement he drafted at the group's request. It included belief in the authority and inspiration of Scripture as interpreted by the teachings and example of Jesus, that human statements of faith are fallible and shouldn't be used as creeds, the autonomy of the local church in matters such as selection of pastors and other leaders, the separation of church and state and respect for all persons.

Carter told reporters those views aren't shared by current leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Carter, who publicly renounced ties with the SBC last October, re-

KENTUCKY



Summer school

HOPKINSVILLE KENTUCKY CHANGERS The annual summer event, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Brotherhood department, combines ministry with devotions, worship and fellowship. ■ **Above left:** Brian Barth, 16, of Brownsville Baptist Church, and Megan Thweatt, 15, of Memorial Baptist Church in Murray, paint a house. ■ **Above right:** Eric Withers, 18, of First Baptist Church of Russell Springs, uses a paint glove to paint a fence. ■ **Below:** Lori Lanham, 16, of Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, leads a lunchtime devotional before the team gets back to work. (Photos by David Winfrey)

Weeklong Kentucky Changers teaching teens service in Christ's name

By David Winfrey
News Director

HOPKINSVILLE—Contemporary Christian music and praise hymns reverberate out of the open windows of a parked mini-van as teenagers apply black paint to an iron fence at a Hopkinsville community center.

The teens are participating in "Kentucky Changers," a weeklong camp for teenage volunteers to minister and learn about the power of missions.

Nearby, Larry Baker is beaming. "It's amazing the work these kids are doing," said Baker, director of missions for the local Christian County Baptist Association. This is the third time that Kentucky Changers have been in Hopkinsville.

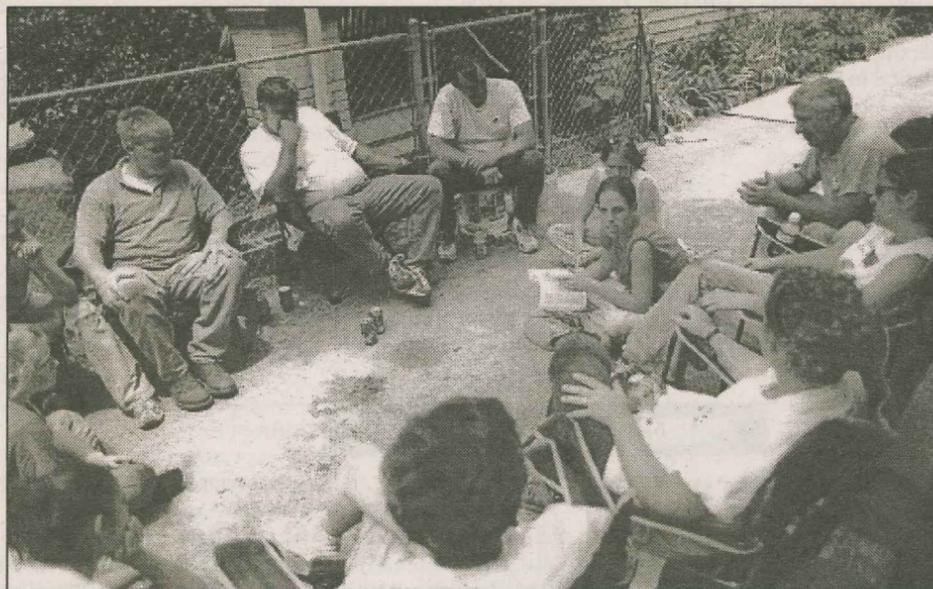
Sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Brotherhood department, organizers conduct two Kentucky

Changers weeks each summer. The Hopkinsville event, June 23-30, attracted 108 teens from 13 churches. The second week was July 7-12 in Frankfort.

Local governments supply the paint, nails, windows or other building materials and organize the work with low-income families who couldn't afford the labor costs.

Adult crew chiefs, who have construction experience, provide the supervision. Teens supply the labor.

"They come with anxiety and leave with confidence," said John McClure, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington and crew chief for nine teenagers, the self-proclaimed "Tars 'R Us" team, who put a new roof on a house.



Team supervisor Tom Ashburn, a member of First Baptist Church of Barbourville,

agreed. "You see the kids getting enabled to provide service," said Ashburn, a doctor who has traveled overseas for medical mission trips. "Things like this will spur kids to do overseas (missions) stuff."

Baker is a strong advocate for the program, which is in its 12th summer of operation. The week is structured to have an impact on the teens who work, the families receiving the assistance and the entire community, he said.

"Christ really has made a difference in these kids' lives, and it's making a difference in some of the people they're contacting," Baker said. "It's also to present Him (Jesus) to the community and say, 'This is what real Christianity is about.'"

The teens get up by 6 a.m. in order to eat breakfast and have a personal devotional time and still get to the work site by 7:30 a.m., before the summer sun gets too hot.

Lunches are supplied by local churches, which also host the teams for Sunday worship. Baker said the local church involvement helps motivate those youth groups to take an interest in Kentucky Changers and other missions opportunities.

In Hopkinsville, 16-year-old Grant Owen of Lexington enjoyed a lunch of fried chicken strips and vegetables.

"I never knew I liked peas," he said, sitting on the concrete floor of the front porch at the house he was painting. "If you swallow them whole, they're not that bad."

Teens lead in devotional time during lunch before getting back to work. Work ends at about 3:30 p.m. and the evening includes time for supper, worship and church group devotions before the lights go out at 10 p.m.

Chrissi Kidd, 16, of Lexington, said the week serves a dual purpose.

"I get to serve God and serve others, and I get to learn to do things that I wouldn't get to learn any other place," said Kidd, who was working for the third summer with Kentucky Changers.

Dwayne Doyle, Kentucky Changers coordinator for the KBC Brotherhood department, said Kentucky Changers seeks to demonstrate that missions is a way of life, not just something done occasionally.

"We want all of our young people to understand that every day provides a mission experience and an opportunity for them to make a difference," he said.

Until this summer, Kentucky Changers was limited to high school students. The Frankfort event will include middle school students for the first time.

"Participants must reach specific requirements before they are eligible to come," Doyle said. "Kids must complete a daily devotional guide, three sessions with their group and group leaders, and a hands-on project locally before they come."

Once on site, participants are grouped with other teens from across the state to work on different construction sites.

"Kentucky Changers impacts our family more and more each year," said Wendell Bowen, who has both a son and a daughter participating in Kentucky Changers. "Without Kentucky Changers I nor my family would have ever gone on a mission trip."

Registration will open in December for next summer's Kentucky Changers projects. For more information about Kentucky Changers, call (502) 244-6489 or (888) 254-5720. Information also is available on the Kentucky Baptist Convention Web site, www.kybaptist.org.

With additional information by Lance Ashby of the KBC communications office

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

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Kentucky Baptists affirm crusade's impact

God blessed crusade

As chairman of the Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade, I write to express deep appreciation for the support of Kentucky Baptists in this great endeavor.

Attendance at the crusade exceeded 191,500 and more than 10,000 people recorded decisions made in the course of the crusade. Many of these people came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ during the crusade and others were deepened in their commitment to Christ.

God greatly blessed us all through the Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade. I am especially thankful for the thousands of faithful Kentucky Baptists who gave of themselves so generously as volunteers, leaders, counselors and workers in the crusade. Kentucky Baptists provided much of the backbone of support that made this crusade possible. I am thankful that hundreds of Kentucky Baptist churches were directly involved in the crusade.

I write to express appreciation for the generous financial support extended by the Kentucky Baptist Convention to the crusade. This was an investment in eternity as the gospel was preached and Jesus Christ was proclaimed. Kentucky Baptists should be proud of the leadership of Dr. Bill Mackey, our executive director, and his staff whose leadership and hard work were so instrumental in the crusade.

Finally, let me express appreciation for the Western Recorder's coverage of the crusade. I am very thankful for the quality and accuracy of the Western Recorder's coverage of this great event.

God did indeed bless us abundantly and exceedingly beyond anything we knew to ask or to think. Now let us all be about the task of encourag-

ing these new believers to become fully faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Albert Mohler
Louisville

Answered prayers

What did the Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade mean to me personally? Everything.

The thrill of singing with the 4,000-voice choir; the hymn singing under the leadership of Cliff Barrows; the solos of George Beverly Shea, at age 92, realizing that God is not finished with him. And, of course, the messages by Billy Graham.

But beyond this, it was an answer to the prayers of many people who have prayed for this event for years. It was my prayer also that I would see my hometown flourish with the preaching of the Word and praising God's name once again through a Graham crusade.

I was so burdened in 1994 that I wrote to Sterling Huston, Graham's director of North American ministries, and Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, about the possibility of a Louisville crusade. They responded that they did not feel the time was right. But my heart was still concerned for the city.

So in 1999 I wrote to Billy Graham at his home office, expressing my concern and asking that he prayerfully consider Louisville. I never received a response but often wondered if he ever received my letter.

But what a shock in December 2000 when I read that Billy Graham was coming to Louisville and that God had placed Louisville on his heart. Now, apparently, the timing was right and the prayers of God's people were on target. I feel certain it was not my letter alone, but it was all in God's di-

vine plan for this mission to occur.

We witnessed history in the making at Papa John's Cardinal Stadium as people focused on God with souls saved and hearts rededicated. God was at work through Billy Graham and his team and Louisville will never be the same. And all because God's people came together and prayed and He heard our prayers.

Ron Wilburn
Lexington

Looking on the inside

Faculty and students visited as we walked into Alumni Memorial Chapel on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in April. We were attending a Christian Life and Witness course for individuals who planned to serve as counselors at the Greater Louisville Billy Graham Crusade.

Art Bailey, decision counseling director for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, looked at the throng. He declared that we "should look inside ourselves." That is difficult. I'd rather be tested on the Greek third declension or write a paper on Thomas Aquinas. Yes, anything but look inside myself.

Nevertheless, Bailey offered his counsel. "If we sin, we should want to be convicted. ... Trials can be stumbling blocks, or stepping stones to more maturity." The choice was ours. "We can be drawn away by small things," he continued. "Christ can be in our lives, but not the center. ... Prayer shouldn't be just an obligation to get out of the way."

The crusade arrived. I realized our counselor badges didn't indicate super saints, but simply Christians who had attempted to be clean vessels. Thank you, Billy Graham team, for reminding God's children to confess and forsake sin in our lives.

Roberta Lou Jones
Dexter

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Billy Graham is finishing well

Much has been written and history will record volumes about the incredible ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. I have selected four words to describe Billy Graham's ministry: integrity, relevance, excellence and impact.

The organization reflects the integrity of the leader. For a person who has international respect and whose introduction results in a standing ovation every night, it must be difficult to maintain humility and integrity. It is known that Graham and his wife, Ruth, have spent hours daily with the Word of God and in prayer. I have been a part of three crusades over 30 years and the absolute dependence on God and prayer has never changed.

As an evangelist, Graham always has had the gift of relating the gospel to unchurched people. But he has done so without a hint of compromising the truth of the gospel. He has become a

master of word pictures and phrases. What could take paragraphs for many speakers to describe, he does with word pictures and dramatic pauses.

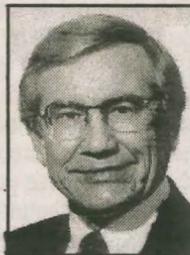
Rick Marshall, associate crusade director for North America, shared with the steering committee that the organization made a shift in musical guests about 10 years ago in order to reach certain groups of people. Fifty to 60 percent of the crowd on Friday night of the crusade indicated they were present for the first time. That was the night

when Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder were the special attraction. Maybe as much as 75 to 85 percent of the audience was new Saturday night when Kirk Franklin, dc Talk and Jennifer Knapp were the musical guests. Following a concert by these music groups, we witnessed a harvest of youth that exceeded all the other nights combined.

The Billy Graham Evangelistic



Billy Graham Crusade



Bill Mackey

STEWARDSHIP

When does it make sense to cancel life insurance?

By Don Spencer

Does everyone need to keep paying for old life insurance policies? The quick answer is no. But a decision to drop it often is complicated by tax consequences and the difficulty of analyzing a policy's real cost and value.

The first questions to ask are: Why do you have policy? Why did you purchase it? What purpose does it serve today?

Some policies that might be considered for dropping include:

- Policies that were not a good deal in the first place, like non-dividend paying whole-life policies that credit cash values at only 3 or 4 percent.

- Some universal life policies sold in the 1980s.

- Mortgage-life and credit-life policies sold by lenders.

- Term insurance purchases to cover debts that have been paid off.

Worksheets can help determine adequate life insurance needs. If the numbers tell you to drop or reduce coverage and you have a term policy, it's easy—just cancel the policy and stop paying the premiums. For whole life, and other cash-value policies, the decision is more complicated. These policies are part death protection, part investment and part tax shelter. Some things to consider:

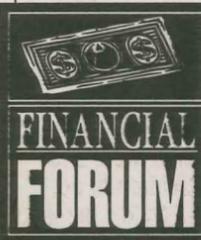
- *What are the tax consequences?* If you surrender a cash-value policy, you may have added taxable income. Sometimes, it's better to keep these policies until death and benefits may be income-tax free to heirs.

- *What is your policy earning?* Get assistance in analyzing the policy's earnings value compared to other potential investments.

- *Have you paid in more than you can take out?* If so, transferring the cash value into an annuity might be advantageous for tax and investment purposes.

Are there good reasons to keep a policy? After a policy has outlived its original purpose, one of the best reasons to keep the policy is to secure an estate. It also can be an effective means of funding a donation to charity. Some policies also can be a safety net against depletion of your assets by medical costs if the policy allows someone terminally ill to take a portion of death benefits tax-free while living.

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



Youngsters don't need constant entertainment to find fulfillment

Q: Help! My children are bored. Any suggestions?

Poet Joseph Brodsky says, "Boredom has blossomed because the notion that we ought to be entertained has become ingrained in us." Today's children constantly are barraged by sight and sound. Such sensory overload produces impatient children who demand constant entertainment and who must receive constant stimulation or they become bored.

Many parents either throw up their hands in resignation or shift into hyper drive in an attempt to find more and more things for their children to do. Instead of giving in to a child's demand to be entertained and rushing out to plan or purchase more excitement for their children's lives, parents might do better simply to recognize boredom as a search for meaning and significance, and let the search take its course.

Child psychoanalyst Adam Phillips says, "Caretakers err in rushing in to alleviate rather than simply acknowledging a child's boredom." Parents can help children learn that life does not have to be endlessly "interesting" in the sense of full of activity and entertainment. In the process, they will be protecting their children from the emptiness and shallowness an endless pursuit of pleasure brings.

Pace plays an important part. When a child can say "been there, done that" to everything suggested, nothing holds excitement anymore. Boredom sets in and the stage is set for involvement in things that are inappropriate and harmful. Wise parents will spread out some of life's activities and opportunities instead of trying to do everything at once. Wise age-group ministers will do the same as they plan programs and trips for children and youth.—David Garrard

Q: What is a mid-life crisis? My adult son believes he is having one, which is causing a great deal of tension in the family.

A central issue in the lives of young adults is the anxiety and anticipation of a "mid-life transition" as they enter middle adulthood.

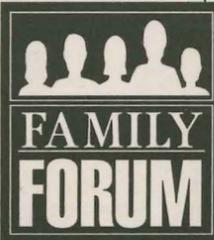
In his research of middle-aged men and women Daniel Levinson argued that this transition is for many a "crisis." He said this crisis is a time of struggle and a feeling of being struck down by life. Levinson's research has led to further research that has helped find answers to many questions: What is a mid-life crisis? Is it universal throughout cultures and gender? When does it occur? What causes it? Is it real?

The period of middle age typically is marked with physical changes (loss of reproductive capacity in women), as well as new responsibilities of caring for younger children and grandchildren, and also older parents. This period of time also is one in which adults take on new responsibilities at the workplace and often feel a need to reappraise their life and consider making revisions "while there is still time."

The term "mid-life crisis" originally was coined by Jaques in 1965. He claimed that people encounter a crisis as they realize their own mortality and a change in the time frame from "time since birth" to "time left to live." A mid-life crisis often includes worries about the future, inability to enjoy leisure time, a sense that health is deteriorating and a negative evaluation of one's marital relationship and work life.

The debate about whether or not there is a mid-life crisis is being explored through current research that attempts to clarify the issue. Each person needs to assess the meaning and circumstances in his or her own life. This often can produce a renewed spiritual clarification about the meaning of life.—Jon Rainbow

Family Forum writers are Suzanne Coyle, 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.



Baptist editors evaluate 2001 SBC actions

The recent Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting was low-key compared to previous gatherings that tackled such issues as the Disney boycott, homosexuality and women in ministry.

With a primary focus on family issues, Southern Baptists failed to attract much secular media attention this time around. What about coverage in state Baptist papers? Here is a sampling of editorial perspectives from Baptist editors:

■ **Bob Terry, Alabama Baptist:** "The overriding characteristic of this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention was zeal—zeal for Jesus and zeal for the lost. ... In recent years the SBC has been restructured. The Baptist Faith and Message has been rewritten. New leadership has carried the day in convention life. ... That is a lot of change, almost more than an organization can bear. ... A zeal for Jesus and a zeal for the lost are wonderful hallmarks for Southern Baptists. Hopefully, a zeal for ministry will be added. At whatever speed Southern Baptists continue to change, may the direction always be toward greater service to our risen Lord."

■ **Mike Clingenpeel, Virginia Religious Herald:** "For the first time in more than two decades Southern Baptists are in search of a cause. ... The SBC is now a thoroughly postmoderate denomination. Like a church at the end of a building program, a couple facing an empty nest or a worker at retirement, the SBC is entering a new chapter of its corporate life. What will become its focus? ... Family is a good place to start. Whether it can bolster the SBC's dwindling attendance at annual meetings remains to be seen. ... Is family enough to galvanize passionate support for the SBC in an era without a counterpoint, a postmoderate era?"

■ **John Yeats, Oklahoma Baptist Messenger:** "Great preaching, wonderful music and worship, and fantas-

tic testimonies of God at work through Southern Baptist missionaries and mission boards were the focus of this year's convention. So much convention time since 1979 has been related to turning the great Southern Baptist ship of state back toward her biblical and doctrinal foundations. ... The conservative renaissance appears complete, and it is time to move on and invest our energy and resources in reaching the lost of this world for Christ."

■ **Charlie Warren, Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine:** "One business session appeared to be somewhat orchestrated. ... When three attempted amendments to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message statement were considered, members of last year's BF&M task force were obviously primed to speak from the vantage point of the platform against each amendment attempt. ... The most distasteful comment was from Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and task force member. 'On these truths we take our stand and we will not give an inch,' Mohler said. We thought it was God's Word that is without error, not the Baptist Faith and Message statement. ... The most recent version may stand for many years, but eventually Baptists will revise it. Let's be open to considering giving an inch or two."

■ **Lynn Clayton, Louisiana Baptist Message:** "The 2001 edition of the SBC annual meeting was chapter one in the completely reformed national organization. ... This year's meeting was more an extended worship service than business meeting. ... This year's convention was a far cry from 1990 when 38,403 messengers gathered for the convention dubbed 'The Second Battle of New Orleans.' This year, 9,561 messengers gathered for revival services on the Mississippi riverbank. Battles seem always to draw more interest than revival services."

Depression-era Baptists witness financial loss, numerical gain

By Jack Birdwhistell

Struggle, loss and progress are among the hallmarks of Kentucky Baptist life chronicled in the pages of the Western Recorder during the 1930s.

For the nation as a whole, the period will always be known as "The Great Depression," beginning with the stock market crash of 1929. Yet, as historian Duane Bolin has noted, "By the time stock prices plummeted in October 1929, many Kentuckians already had experienced a decade, indeed a lifetime, of hard times." As we saw in last week's column, the annual convention reports of the 1920s reveal a constant struggle to "pay the bills."

These problems became even worse during the Depression. Mission gifts through the General Association of Kentucky Baptists dropped from more than \$534,000 in 1925 to only \$280,000 in 1933. By 1934 the total indebtedness of the various enterprises of Kentucky Baptists was \$668,270. One heroic method of erasing the debt came from a Southern Baptist Convention emphasis. It was the Baptist Hundred Thousand Club, a plan that en-

couraged 100,000 Southern Baptists to pledge one dollar per month over and above their regular church offerings. Many loyal Kentucky Baptists joined the effort.

Financial woes affected every level of Kentucky Baptist life, from individuals through local churches. The problems were most acute, however, in the Baptist educational institutions. At a meeting in Mayfield in 1930, Kentucky Baptists voted to allow the schools to appeal directly to the churches for funds. Georgetown College, Cumberland College, Campbellsville College and Bethel Woman's College in Hopkinsville survived the decade, as did Magoffin Institute and Oneida Institute.

Less fortunate, however, were the Hazard Baptist Institute, Barbourville Baptist Institute and Bethel Men's College in Russellville. The Depression was particularly hard on the children's homes in Louisville and Glendale. Out of the needs of the Depression the General Association established an annual Thanksgiving Offering for the children's homes, a practice that continues through the present.

Losses of Kentucky Baptist lead-

ership during the decade included A.T. Robertson, professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Eliza Broadus, a longtime leader among Baptist women; W.M. Stallings, superintendent of the children's home at Glendale; H. Boyce Taylor, veteran pastor at Murray; and J.W. Porter, former editor of the Western Recorder.

Yet the 1930s also witnessed some significant progress in Kentucky Baptist life. Clear Creek Mountain Springs Assembly near Pineville (now Clear Creek Bible College) served as a well-loved summer gathering spot for young Kentucky Baptists of the Depression era. The former Baptist Young People's Union became the Baptist Training Union, and actually expanded its work during the 1930s.

In 1928, Kentucky Baptists officially began Baptist Student Union ministry on the state's college campuses. Total membership in Kentucky Baptist churches actually grew during the decade. What explains this? Perhaps, as Julia Woodward of Lexington, a longtime leader in Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, told Bolin, "People probably were more regular at church. They turned to the Lord because there wasn't anyone else to turn to."

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



Clergy sabbaticals: A rest from the routine of ritual

"A renewed and refreshed person has a better outlook on his or her job."

Gretchen Wolfram, communications director of the Lilly Endowment

Continued from page 1

clergy and congregations. "They kind of joke, 'Well, you only work one day a week,' because that's the only time they see the pastor," said Oswald, who produced a video through Alban called "Why You Should Give Your Pastor a Sabbatical."

"They often think that pastors have it very easy and often do not know that clergy work generally between 50 and 60 hours a week."

He estimates that about 10 percent of clergy take sabbaticals.

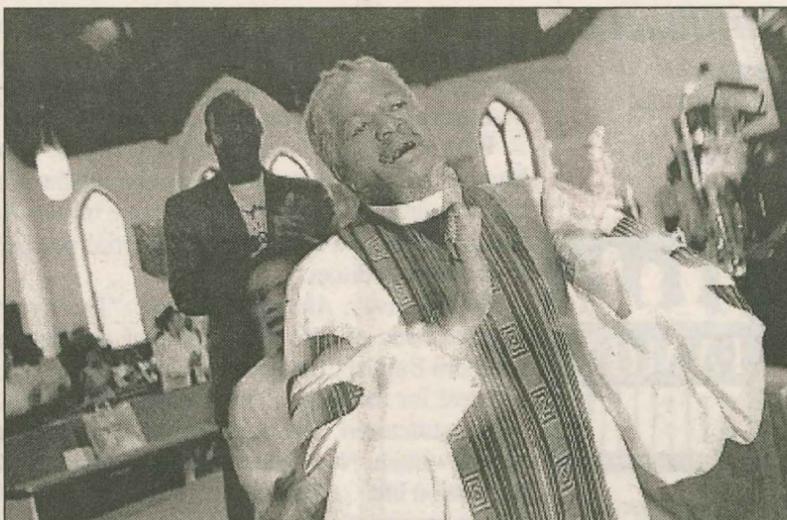
Among that small percentage this year is Patricia Jones, director of ministry of the Minneapolis Friends Meeting.

She used part of a \$30,000 grant to travel to Kyoto, Japan, in mid-April to explore gardens and Buddhist temples.

"I thought it would be rich, but I had no idea what there would be there for me," she said. "It was ... a wonderful opportunity for me to enlarge my soul."

It was an abrupt, but welcome, change from her days of facilitating worship and offering pastoral care to those facing surgery, about to marry or grieving for a recently deceased relative.

"One thing that's really huge is basically always being on call," said Jones. "Anytime day or night, even vacations, if I'm elsewhere, I could get a ministry-related call and I would sometimes. And while I've been on renewal leave, there are times I'd think



SABBATICALS Norman Handy, a United Methodist pastor from Baltimore who recently returned from a sabbatical in Africa, leads his congregation in a dance during the offering at a recent worship service. During his sabbatical he learned more about African worship traditions. (RNS photo by Carl Bower)

"I am not going to get any phone calls.' It's just a huge relief."

While she spends \$20,000 of the grant, the other \$10,000 will be used by her congregation as several people assist in continuing its management and ministry.

Oswald said sabbaticals can lead to longer pastorates by reducing "compassion fatigue" among clergy.

"There's no escape," he said. "It's like a parent with, let's say, four children under 6 and the parent doesn't get any relief. There's no baby sitter 'cause they can't afford it."

Recently Oswald, ordained in the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, attended his 40th reunion at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. He did an informal poll of those who were still in congregational ministry compared to those who had taken early retirement or some other work.

"Out of about 33 people, there were only three people that still were active as a parish pastor," he said.

Bob Hill, senior pastor of Community Christian Church in Kansas City, Mo., said the Lilly program will prove to be a time of renewal not only for him but for his congre-

gation as well.

"Our sabbatical together will investigate how we might grow in even more diverse ways," said Hill, who leaves his Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Aug. 1 for three months.

A native Texan who grew up as the "only Anglo family in our neighborhood," he's ready to spend some of the \$26,289 grant learning about successful multicultural congregations across the country while his church is treated to a diverse array of guest preachers and visiting choirs including an African-American boys choir, a Hispanic trio and a Jewish children's choir.

After visiting churches from one coast to the other and museums about Mexican, Japanese and Jewish cultures, Hill will spend time whale-watching and kayaking with his wife on an island off the coast of Seattle.

"It is a time to rest and breathe, but in the breathing and the resting you get to focus in a new way upon your work and upon what the work means and also how the work could get better or different," he said.

While some clergy prepare to head out on the sabbaticals, Handy is savoring the experience he's already had.

"I read three books—three books," he said, still marveling about the opportunity as he relaxed in a church pew after his first service since his African journey. "Just being able to do nothing or to sit and read for four hours, I don't have that kind of luxury here."

A burden for this generation

As we move beyond the midpoint of our camping season at both Jonathan Creek and Cedar-moore, I am again full of hope in Christ as this young generation comes and goes each week of camp.

This is my fourth summer of camp and conference ministry. Physically speaking, the demands are great as we go so hard almost every day and night of the week. Many nights we get home very late, only to return early the following morning. The fatigue factor is very real and our bodies grow weary.

However, the morning comes. Morning celebration begins. The kids come to life (as if they ever shut down!) and the campuses are filled with students everywhere. And I am awed by what God is doing in their lives as we go through the week. Night after night the students make life-changing decisions for Christ. Will all of the decisions prove to be real? Probably not. But most are, and it is from these decisions and God's moving that we find the strength to press on another week.

After four years of this (which is not a long time, ministerially

speaking) I have concluded that this ministry is both the most demanding and most rewarding that I have ever experienced. Most any ministry is demanding, but few are this rewarding. One pastor said last week, "You get to see God move more in one week than most of us do in one year." And that is true. This young generation

is responding in huge ways to His call on their lives.

So I continue to celebrate. This season of opportunity is so short. In eight weeks we host between 4,000 and 5,000 youth, not including the boys and girls for the GA and RA camps. Will we make an eternal difference in the lives of these students?

That's my prayer, our prayer. We're going to serve these students as if there is no tomorrow. We might not get another chance with some of them. Pray that God will give you a burden for this generation. They need Jesus. Somebody's got to tell them the good news. It's the only hope they have.

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

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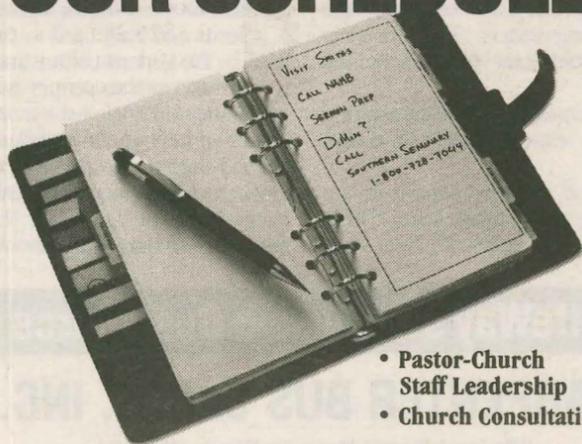
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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Bandy: Thriving churches focus on the heart

By David Winfrey
News Director

ATLANTA—In today's multiple option world, thriving churches are adapting to the culture around them to reach people's hearts, not their heads, according to a church growth specialist.

"In the 20th century, we grew Christians based on knowledge first and experience second," said Tom Bandy, a church growth consultant with Easum, Bandy and Associates Inc. in Port Aransas, Texas. "In the 21st century, it's just the opposite. You don't start with the head. You start with the heart."

Speaking in a workshop during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's annual general assembly, Bandy said reaching 21st-century people requires churches that are focused on helping people discover new meaning in their lives through Christ and equipping them for ministry and meaning. But too many congregations are based on a static model that doesn't attract today's non-Christians, he added.

"Nine times out of 10, churches are not growing because their structures are based on getting people enrolled, informed, supervised and kept," he said.

Not so, however, with today's thriving churches, he added. "It grows because every day, in every way, people are being changed, gifted, called and sent."

Bandy outlined a five-point path many thriving churches use to help transition visitors into active members who participate in ministry:

Mission. Mission-focused churches focus their programs and worship so that non-

Christians experience God, Bandy said. Often this won't occur first in a worship setting but in a ministry such as divorce recovery workshops or other programs to meet the needs of people who aren't attracted to the front doors of a church. As a result of that mission, visitors are attracted to Jesus, which is the motivating factor for the mission activity, he said.

Membership. After visitors have experienced God and become Christians, they move to membership in the church, Bandy said. But that doesn't involve the same commitments as were seen in the past, he added. "Membership is nothing more than a covenant to go deep."

He added that he has been encouraged to find that new Christians coming from unchurched backgrounds these days have an interest in deeper spiritual experiences often not found among Christians who grew up in the church.

Meaning. As members grow through discipleship, they discern that God has gifted them and called them to service, Bandy said. Members learn about their spiritual gifts and how they can use them to serve God, he noted.

Maturity. Members grow in spiritual maturity as they begin to develop their gifts and explore ways to apply them in service.

Ministry. Members serve others who have needs that Christians are especially gifted to meet, helping them to experience God.

Helping Christians grow will result in members taking their faith out in the community, he said. Whereas church leaders used to ask, "How can I get more people into the church?" church leaders at thriving churches are now asking, "How can I motivate more people to walk with Jesus?"

Honoring teachers

By Robert Dunston

Each year during commencement, Cumberland College presents the J.B. Fuqua Excellence in Teaching Award to three teachers. In establishing the awards, Fuqua, an Atlanta businessman and special friend of Cumberland College, asked that the members of the three most recent graduating classes select three faculty members whom they believe deserve special recognition for their commitment to teaching excellence.

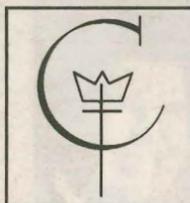
During our May 6 commencement service, we were honored to have Fuqua with us to present the awards to the three professors. This year's recipients were Jolly Faught, Bob Hancock and Rayford Watts.

Professor Faught serves as associate professor of English. She is a graduate of Cumberland College and received her master's degree from Wright State University. Faught joined the Cumberland faculty in 1991. She is a sought-after professor in English composition and has taught excellent classes on the works of John Milton and Eudora Welty.

Hancock serves as associate professor of biology. He received

his undergraduate degree from Hastings College and his master's and doctorate from Ohio State University. Hancock has been involved both behind and before the camera with several science documentaries on mosquitoes. An accomplished musician and artist, Hancock often can be found playing frisbee football with students in the late afternoons.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Professor Watts serves as chairman of the department of English and modern foreign languages and professor of English. He also is a Cumberland College graduate with a master's degree from Union College. Watts is an accomplished potter whose beautiful work

graces many homes in our area and beyond. His nurturing teaching style has blessed many students.

We congratulate our colleagues. Their creativity, concern and commitment to excellent teaching inspire all of us.

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

Thank you, Kentucky pastors

Every job has its ups and downs. Being a pastor is no exception. There are some weeks when you feel like you can't please anybody. There are other weeks when the pain and difficulties faced by families in your congregation threaten to overwhelm even the sturdiest, most steadfast minister. What's a stressed-out pastor to do?

Why not attempt to take your frustrations out on an innocent golf ball?

That was the theory behind this year's change in our "Play for the Children" golf tournament. We decided to give pastors a break. If they could get three people from their congregation to play on a team, then the pastor got to play for free. We found there were plenty of pastors ready to take us up on this offer.

I've described the four-person golf scramble as "golfing by grace" since you get to pick the best shot of four to play. Although not usually a team sport, golf is a companionable activity. Everyone always is ready to offer sympathy, congratulations or good-natured ribbing depending on the trajectory of a drive or the final destination of a putt.

It is such a blessing for me to get to meet new people during these tournaments. After 18 holes on a hot

summer day, you get to know more about someone than just their handicap. I hope the participants learn something too. I want them to know there is an agency in Kentucky that cares very much about what happens to children and teenagers in crisis. I want our golfers to realize there are children and families who need help and might not have anywhere else to turn were it not for KBHC.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

To the pastors who have played in our regional tournaments this year, thank you. Thank you for inviting members of your congregation to participate.

I so appreciate our pastors' dedication to KBHC. Thank you for making a place for the Thanksgiving Offering every year. Thank you for promoting the Food

Roundup, playing our foster care video, allowing a speaker to stand in your pulpit to give a report on the state of the mission of KBHC. Without you, our kids would have less. Without you, the opportunities for spiritual growth would be few.

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

Christian author using Harry Potter for youth evangelism

Using the Potter tales as a springboard to the gospel might seem strange at first, Connie Neal concedes, but, she points out, Jesus Himself adopted similar tactics.

Continued from page 1

tor. "We can't do this on this issue. It's too personal. You have to know your own child, whether this will scare them, whether they are sophisticated enough to understand the distinction between fantasy and reality. You cannot let anyone make this decision for your family."

Which is why one day Neal gathered her husband and three children (ages 8, 10 and 12 at the time) in the family reading room of their Sacramento, Calif., home for what developed into a weekly, and open-to-the-neighborhood, Harry Potter and the Bible study class.

"As a Christian parent, I need to be able to put these books in the right context for my kids, so I sat down with them and said 'Here's how we're gonna do it: We're going to pray before we read so we're not opening ourselves up to any deception,'" Neal said. "If there was anything in a chapter that corresponded to the real occult world I opened the Bible and made sure my kids understood why it was forbidden in our world."

"It's because I do understand the dangers of the occult that I want my own kids to be able to discern this stuff for themselves," she added.

Neal thinks Harry Potter is less a Satan-in-wizard's-clothing and more the literary cousin of fairytale favorites like Cinderella.

"Harry Potter follows the line of

the classic fairytale hero. He starts out in a terrible condition with his parents being dead, then he's transported into a magical world where there's a villain who has to be overcome," Neal pointed out.

"At the end of every story good triumphs over evil," she added. "And the wands, the spells and the astrology are all classic elements of children's literature. It's a medieval view of the universe, just like C.S. Lewis uses in his Narnia books."

But the distinction between occultism and fantasy children's literature is lost on many Christian readers, Neal said.

"Many of the things used as literary devices in the Harry Potter stories correspond to practices in our real world that are forbidden in the Bible, and that's a challenge to Christian parents," Neal said. "But I think what most Christians don't get is that Rowling shows you the dangers of believing in things like divination and omens. You see the way that getting sucked into trusting those things brings danger."

The name of Harry's school, Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry, "is what does it" for many Christians, Neal said.

"People think witchcraft equals Wicca, and Wicca equals religion," she said. "I think if Rowling had named Harry's school the Hogwart School of Magic and Mystery you wouldn't have had this kind

of hysteria in response.

"I approached it by teaching my kids to understand fantasy literature," she said. "We love 'The Wizard of Oz' but my kids know there is no Glenda the Good Witch and that the Bible makes it clear that witchcraft is idolatry."

Neal brushes aside the idea that Rowling's books dwell on topics too grim for young readers. "Using that criteria you wouldn't let your kids read the Bible!"

She dismisses the notion the aspiring sorcerer is a less-than-ideal role model for kids.

"You find me one person in the whole Bible apart from Jesus Christ Himself who did not sin!" Neal said.

"That's not how kids learn to be good anyway. In real life, kids do make mistakes. And if (Rowling) didn't treat evil as truly dangerous, she'd be doing her readers a disservice."

Using the Potter tales as a springboard to the gospel might seem strange at first, Neal concedes, but, she points out, Jesus Himself adopted similar tactics.

"Jesus and Paul used to find stories used by the general culture and tie them to spiritual truth so people could relate to it," she said. "We have a whole generation of kids who are biblically illiterate, so I share the gospel story with them through things they can relate to, like Harry Potter or the Power Rangers. It may seem strange, but it shouldn't."



Neal

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Summer school—give me a break!

I know some students really do not mind going to summer school, but if you were to ask them, the vast majority probably would rather be doing something else—swimming, camping, traveling or just sleeping all day.

It is difficult for most students to give up a summer of fun to spend all day in the classroom. So why do we have about 150 students here for summer school? By far, most of the students are making up classes they have failed. Most of the classes being taken in summer school are the results of failing grades prior to enrolling at Oneida, but not all.

Unfortunately, even at OBI, some students fail to put forth the effort it takes to make good grades, especially in the first month or two. I personally believe that very few students should fail any classes here at Oneida. When you consider our much smaller classes (often eight to 10 students), required study hall each evening and the extra tutoring given to students before and after school, few should fail. The old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink" also is true of students.

As I have watched our students during their morning and afternoon breaks the past three weeks, I have asked myself several times why certain students were here for summer school. Oh, I knew it was because they had failed a class; I was just confused about why a student who has been here for one or more years would fail any class. The most common reason students give for making failing grades prior to enrolling at Oneida is simply being lazy. I am sure most students would have to give the same reason today.

Many students enrolled for the first time when summer school began. They came from far and

near to hopefully get some things straightened out in their lives. The single biggest reason students enroll at Oneida is failing grades. Our new students rarely have been in a classroom with fewer than 20 students before. Most will quickly respond to the smaller classes and the added attention given to our students.

Summer school is the best time to enroll new students. Having fewer students on our campus with about the same number of faculty and staff gives us the opportunity to get to know the new students quicker. We will be able to assess their needs so we can help them reach their goals this fall. Most students agree that adjusting to dormitory life is much easier with fewer students.

Several students who enrolled this summer have needs that go far beyond poor grades. They often have had family and social conflicts. Even students who have grown up in good and loving homes can go through challenging times in their lives. Oneida can be a nearly perfect place to have some "space." It gives those students a "time out" to reflect on the issues that are causing conflicts and turmoil in the family, and everyone can better understand each other.

Summer school may not be the first choice for all of these students, but most would agree that it has been a good choice. Getting this attention and good start now will pay mightily this fall when about 150 additional new students will enroll. We will not be able to give those students the same time and attention our students are getting in summer school.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Student works as literacy tutor

Literacy work among Southern Baptists started at Clear Creek when Lillian Isaacs organized the first literacy conference. We continue to help meet the need through student tutors at the Sister Marjorie Learning Center in Pineville. Jeremy Green, a second-year student from Middleboro, tutors at the learning center as an assignment through the work-study program.

"We work with people from the area who haven't graduated from high school and need a G.E.D.," Jeremy said. "One couple is in their 60s. Most of them are young people including girls who dropped out of high school to get married. The court assigns a few clients, but most of them want to

continue their education. I am grateful to be a tutor; it gives me an opportunity to serve the community and to be a witness for Christ. I have also had several opportunities to talk about their personal relationship with Christ."

Jeremy and Shannon came to Clear Creek as newlyweds. "It has been a learning experience and both of us have grown in our relationship to Christ," Shannon said. They grew up in Bingham-

town Baptist Church and appreciate the church's encouragement. Jeremy was an Awana teacher until he started supply preaching on a regular basis. "Our pastors, Dr. W.B. and Preacher William Boyd Bingham, are good mentors and have helped us through difficult times," Jeremy said. "It is good to be close to home where

we know people. With our parents in Indiana and Florida, we are on our own but not alone." They also are learning skills as parents to 11-month-old Anna Alexis. "She is a precious gift from the Lord," Jeremy said.

"It is hard for a prophet in his own community, but at Clear Creek we can show how Christ has changed our life," he added. "We like the Christian atmosphere and the opportunity to take a stand for Christ. We also enjoy the fellowship with other parents."

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

Presbyterians criticize theology of 'Left Behind'

LOUISVILLE (RNS)—Presbyterians went on record last month as opposing the end-times theology in the wildly popular "Left Behind" book series, objecting to the idea that God would allow any of His followers to suffer.

Delegates to the church's annual General Assembly, who made bigger headlines on statements regarding salvation and homosexuality, overwhelmingly approved a resolution saying the books' theology "is not in accord with our Reformed understanding" of the book of Revelation.

The "Left Behind" series, co-authored by Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, uses an end-times theology in which millions of Christians are taken to heaven in an instant rapture and nonbelievers are given a second chance at salvation during seven years of tribulation.

Many Reformed churches, including the Presbyterian Church (USA), reject such a view, arguing that the end of the world will be marked by a return of Jesus, judgment for all mankind and an eternal reign.

Lewis Wilkins, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Lovington, N.M., argued for the resolution, saying some Presbyterians in his state—especially children—have been bullied by "Left Behind" fans.

The Presbyterians' resolution recommends a church document on the end of the world and urges pastors to lead their congregations through studies of the books if they are causing "confusion and dissension."

Communicating for Life: Christian Stewardship in Community and Media. *Quentin Schultz.* Baker Book House, 2000. 191 pages. \$14.99. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

This is not a book about stewardship that will help a church pledge its budget. Schultz uses the term stewardship in the sense of how we speak, listen and interact in word and gestures, both one-on-one and in community.

At each turn of the discussion, Schultz introduces God into the communication equation. Schultz contends that most communication theories ignore the role of God. Instead, communication theories should recognize that to study human communication is to consider questions of fundamental religious importance.

Communication, for Schultz, is more than the mechanical process of conveying knowledge. This book is his attempt to correct that oversight.

Schultz's work is an introduction to communication theory that interacts effectively with classic "secular" communication theories. But Schultz adds the concept of communication as an act of co-creation with God.

In this way, Schultz really offers a theology, rather than theory, of communication. Human communication should be used to serve others, rather than exploit them.

Schultz contends that God holds us responsible for our communication and its result. Ultimately, Schultz calls us to offer up all of our communication as our worship of God. *Wayne Hager*

Better Than Success: 8 Principles of Faithful Leadership. *Jeff Woods.* Judson Press, 2001. 134 pages. \$14. ♦♦♦♦

Jeff Woods opens his book with a statement toward which most of us

would gravitate: "Successful leaders mobilize people to make a difference in the world."

Yes. That's the kind of church leader I want to be: one who can motivate, challenge and inspire folks in the church to get busy making a difference in the lives of hurting people.

But wait, there is more to the sentence. After a well-place semi-colon, Woods goes on to declare, "faithful leaders mobilize people to make a difference in God's world. Successful leaders serve a bottom line; faithful leaders serve God."

And, as you would expect, he does affirm that faithful leadership and success do not always go hand in hand; although he does not engage in the simplistic assertion that faithfulness and success are in some way incompatible.

This tension between what defines a leadership style bent on success and one driven by a desire to be faithful becomes the grid for Woods' reflection on various aspects and tools of leadership, as well as the character of the leader.

Woods examines many familiar themes: vision, spiritual growth, crisis management, leadership development and re-energizing oneself and one's congregation. Sometimes his distinction between success and faithfulness is clear, while at other times he seems to want to have it both ways.

While Woods' has laid out an interesting and thought-provoking theme, his presentation suffers from less than satisfactory editing and an overabundance of what ought to be, without much practical guidance. That said, Woods offers a challenging perspective on how leadership is exercised within the faith community. *Jim Holladay*

Excellent Protestant Congregations. *Paul Wilkes.* Westminster/John Knox Press, 2001. 259 pages. \$18.95. ♦♦♦♦

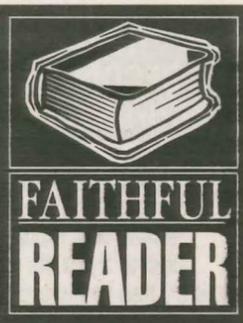
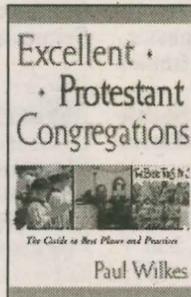
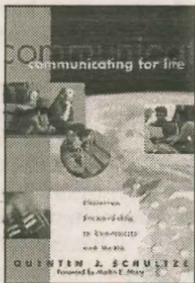
Paul Wilkes, whose background is in writing and television production, is the project director for the Parish/Congregation Study at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He came to this position after giving a "series of talks at the Church of the Presentation in Upper Saddle River."

When he returned home to his own parish, he was struck by the difference in vitality between two somewhat similar parishes. The quest to discover what makes a difference between stagnation and vibrancy led him to the Lilly Foundation, which funded what is now the "Parish/Congregation Study."

A key component that Wilkes discovered which separates excellent and mediocre/dying congregations, is something he terms "a habit of being" (a phrase borrowed from Flannery O'Connor). In other words, excellent congregations have "a soul."

"Excellent Protestant Congregations" is a sampling of churches who "impacted the lives of their people, ... were making a difference in the lives of their people, ... were beacons of hope and guidance and examples of what it really means to be a practicing Christian today." Wilkes believes that the nine congregations profiled in this book represent "reproducible excellence," rather than a mere collection of anecdotes.

Some have argued with the foundations of Wilkes' research methodology, suggesting that his findings are a type of self-fulfilling prophecy. I wish he had spent more time on the definition of excellence and how that ties into the basic nature and mission of the church. Yet, I came away from the book with a fresh sense of possibilities for ministry in our church's community. *Jim Holladay*



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

Draper: Central role of biblical authority is motivation for new book

By Linda Lawson
LifeWay Christian Resources

NASHVILLE (BP)—Biblical authority is "the key issue for Southern Baptists and every other group that is serious about the Bible," says Southern Baptist Convention leader Jimmy Draper.

That is why he and Kenneth Keathley have updated Draper's 1984 book, "Biblical Authority: The Critical Issue for Southern Baptists," in a new volume, "Biblical Authority: The Critical Issue for the Body of Christ." Draper is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention and Keathley is dean of students and assistant professor of theology and philosophy at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The book is published by Broadman & Holman, LifeWay's trade publishing division.

Draper wrote the first edition when he was president of the SBC and at the height of controversy in the denomination. He said he and Keathley updated the book out of the conviction the issue must be kept at the forefront for evangelical Christians.

In addition to broadening the focus of the earlier edition, the authors added two new chapters—one on the sufficiency of Scripture and a final chapter on biblical authority and the SBC today and into the future.

Draper believes the emphasis on "Scripture as sufficient for whatever we need" was "a dimension the first book missed."

In that chapter, Draper and Keathley acknowledge the Bible does not address every life issue. For example, the Bible doesn't specifically mention euthanasia, drug addiction or abortion.

"The Bible is not a rulebook that identifies everything we should and should not do," Draper said.

Instead of rules, the authors write, the Bible provides "a set of clear teachings, principles and commands that provide the Christian with the framework and tools to deal with all the issues of life. The Bible may not directly address such questions as whether abortion is ever permissible or whether it is proper to clone humans, but it does present a plain ethical system by which such difficult concerns can be answered."

Draper and Keathley warn about

subtle ways they believe the sufficiency of Scripture is being undermined in churches. They list three "dangerous errors"—adding to the Word of God, replacing the Word of God and displacing the Word of God.

They said some evangelical Christians add to the Bible when they claim to receive "special, private revelation."

"To contend that a Christian must receive a private word from God in order to completely know and do God's will is to implicitly deny the Word of God," Draper and Keathley wrote. However, they emphasized the importance of making "the distinction between private revelation and God's guidance."

As an example of replacing the Word of God, they said that could occur "whenever biblical truth is replaced or negated with modern psychological theory."

"Christian counseling must function on the premise that Scripture is the greatest psychology text that will ever be," Draper and Keathley wrote. "Consequently, every psychological perspective must be held up to Scripture."

Displacing the Word of God takes place when the preaching of the Bible is relegated to a minor part of the worship service, they said.

In the final chapter on the SBC, Draper and Keathley warned that conservatives must not fool themselves "into thinking that the issue of the authority of Scripture is the only challenge facing our convention."

They cited three possible pitfalls, beginning with what they termed "the danger of Christian cannibalism" or internal conflict.

"It is an unarguable fact that conservative and fundamentalist movements in the past have had a track record of splintering and infighting," they wrote. "The best way for conservatives to ensure that fratricide does not occur in our ranks is for us to protect our hearts."

The second pitfall Draper and Keathley listed is "Baptist exclusivism" or "how to maintain the balance between upholding Baptist distinctives while ... cooperating with the larger Christian community."

They cited a "passionless orthodoxy" as the third danger that could befall the SBC.

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

A number of years ago, a person whom I loved dearly was slowly passing from life to death. I had to have the assurance that this person knew Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

I told the individual how much I loved him. I told him that time on earth was too short a time to spend with him. I wanted to spend eternity with him. He thanked me and assured me all was well between him and the Lord. We would be together some day in heaven.

My prayer for each one of us, for you, is to spend eternity in heaven. How can we go to heaven?

■ **Repent.** Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. (2 Corinthians 7:10). Repent of your sins and ask for God's forgiveness.

■ **Believe.** When the jailer at Philippi asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved, they answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

■ **Receive.** Personally invite Jesus Christ into your life. This is illustrated by opening the door of your heart. "Behold, I (Jesus) stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

When? Now! Right now is the best time. "Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Charles Midkiff is pastor of First Baptist Church of Greenville

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **BEREA**—Fellowship Church called **John Dodson** as pastor.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Living Hope Church called **Jason Pettus** as pastor. He previously was associate pastor of Bellevue Community Church in Nashville.

■ **CORBIN**—West Corbin Church called **Randy McPheron** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Immanuel Church in Danville.

■ **FERGUSON**—Ferguson Church called **Patrick Butcher** as youth director. **Darrell Vance** is pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Eastview Church called **Darren Smelser** as youth minister. **Nathan Whisnant** is pastor.

Greater Norris Chapel Church called **Charles Johnson** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Bethel Church in Drakesboro.

Zion Church called **Chad Smith** as children's minister. **Eddie Davis** is pastor.

■ **LATONIA**—Ashland Avenue Church will host **Phil Cross** and **Poet Voices** in concert Aug. 2 at 7 p.m. For information, call (859)

431-1624. **Norm Blankenship** is minister of music.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Lynn Acres Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary July 15 with worship at 10:40 a.m., lunch at noon and special music at 2:30 p.m. **Donnie Gullion** is pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—First Church called **Mickey Ballard** as minister of music. He served for the past year as the church's interim minister of music.

Stoney Run Church called **Billy Long** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Fellowship Church in Berea.

■ **UNION**—Union Church called **Derek Cheatham** as minister of students. He is a recent graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

What's going on?

Send your happenings to Mountains to the Mississippi. Mail: Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6474. E-mail: wesrec@ntr.net.

Southwestern Seminary's Vinson named Seminary Extension leader

NASHVILLE (BP)—William Vinson, a veteran of distance education, has been named executive director of Southern Baptist Seminary Extension.

Vinson, an instructor of Seminary Extension classes since 1984 and a current faculty member at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, was named to his new position effective Aug. 1. He succeeds Ed Thiele, who retired in June.

Seminary Extension, a ministry of the Council of Seminary Presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention, seeks to provide ministers and laity with the opportunity to take seminary classes close to home. This is done through more than 500 extension centers. The hours can be transferred to universities or counted toward Seminary Extension diplomas and certificates. Seminary Extension's offices are located in Nashville.

Al Mohler, president of the Council of Seminary Presidents, said Vinson has the experience needed to lead Seminary Extension into a new millennium.

Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, described Vinson as "a pioneer in using technology to extend the reach of the classroom."

Vinson, a graduate of Southwestern Seminary, has taught at Southwestern since 1981. He currently is director of the seminary's department of undergraduate and lay theological studies.

While at Southwestern Vinson pioneered the effort to offer Seminary Extension courses on the Internet as well as on CD. He also has served since 1995 as pastor of Freedom Baptist Fellowship, a house church where students can train for the ministry.

"Picking up the baton from Dr. Ed Thiele, we will be building on the successes of the last 50 years of work done at Seminary Extension," Vinson said. "Dr. Thiele spoke much wisdom when he said, 'If you try to do the Lord's business without the Lord, you'll just be wasting time.' This is God's business, and when He builds, it will not only last, it will be supernaturally effective."

CLASSIFIED ADS

AVAILABLE: Experienced pastor seeking interim position. Excellent references. Available after July 15, 2001. (859) 283-9398; e-mail: mickey@eaglecarriers.com.

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: Conn organ; used in church; good condition. Make offer. Call (502) 477-2582 or 477-2047. Plum Creek Baptist Church, Taylorsville, KY 40071.

FOR SALE: 33 solid oak pews with white ends, assorted sizes. Excellent condition. Asking \$4,000. Falls of Rough, Ky. Contact Roger Allen, (270) 879-8233 or Bill Franks, (270) 879-3079.

FOR SALE: Allen organ, model T-622, with speakers, wiring harness and owners manual. Excellent condition. \$3,700. Call Tog at Valley View Church, (502) 935-5142.

NEEDED: High school history teacher. Certification required. Christian school. Call: (606) 272-1217 or (606) 273-8658 for interview.

SEEKING: Red House Baptist Church, Richmond, Ky., is seeking a full-time senior pastor to lead a growing congregation averaging 350. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Team, Red House Baptist Church, 2301 Red House Road, Richmond, KY 40475.

SEEKING: Mercer Association of Kentucky Baptists is prayerfully seeking a director of missions. The position will be part-time or a partnership with another association. Please send resumé to: Mercer Association DOM Search Committee, c/o Rev. Kirk Greenfield, 2471 New Dixville Road, Harrodsburg, KY 40330. For more information, contact Bro. Greenfield at (859) 734-5700.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Southern Baptist church, willing to work with preschool, children and adult choirs, lead congregation on Sunday mornings and evenings. Seasonal cantatas. Send resumé to: Greenwood Baptist Church, 5165 Scottsville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42104.

SEEKING: Silverdale Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tenn., is receiving resúmes for a full-time director of children's ministries. Must have full-time ministry experience to guide large children's program. Benefits. Send resumé to: Search Committee, 7236 Bonny Oaks Drive, Chattanooga, TN 37421.

SEEKING: Full-time director of community ministries. Experience in assessing ministry needs in a community. Must speak fluent Spanish. Position includes enlisting and training volunteers to organize and administer ministries to a local community. Male and female welcome to apply. Send resumé to: Bob Swift, First Baptist Church, 118 West South St., Mayfield, KY 42066.

SEEKING: Minister of music for 1,400-member Southern Baptist church to continue full and excellent program. Contact pastor, Mt. Hermon Baptist, 4385 Franklin Turnpike, Danville, VA 24540. mt.hermon.church@mthermonchurch.org.

SEEKING: Children's pastor/director (grades 1-5). Bellevue Baptist Church is a fast-growing contemporary congregation averaging 1,000 in attendance in three Sunday morning services. We seek a full-time, experienced, energetic and visionary person with strong leadership, creativity, innovation and the ability to recruit and motivate a growing volunteer team. Contact Dr. Greg Faulls, Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 West Byers, Owensboro, KY 42303. Fax: (270) 685-5134. Web page: www.bellnet.org.

SEEKING: Nicholasville Baptist Church is now actively seeking to fill the position of youth/children's minister. This is a part-time position (20 hours per week). Nicholasville Baptist Church, in downtown Nicholasville, is an SBC church with a heart for serving Jesus Christ. All interested applicants need to send a resumé with cover letter describing your call to ministry to Nicholasville Baptist Church, 131 S Main St., Nicholasville, KY 40356, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Bellfield Baptist Church, 9980 Highway 136 East, Henderson, Ky., is seeking two part-time positions: Associate pastor for worship, associate pastor for youth. Qualified candidates should send resúmes to the church in care of Staff Search Committee. Fax: (270) 826-1131; e-mail: bfieldch@henderson.net.

SEEKING: Minister of music. Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., is seeking an experienced person to coordinate our music ministry. We are a congregation of 1,500 members, affiliated with both the CBF and SBC. Send resúmes to: Minister of Music Search Committee, Shades Crest Baptist Church, 452 Park Ave., Birmingham, AL 35226, or e-mail our pastor, Dr. Dennis Foust, at dfoust@shadescrest.org. (205) 822-1360.

SEEKING: Full-time student minister to lead junior- and senior-high ministries in a mid-sized Southern Baptist church. Must display genuine love for Christ and teens. College education, seminary preferred. Please send resumé to: Lewisport Baptist Church, PO Box 384, Lewisport, KY 42351.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth/music for 500-member Southern Baptist church. Please submit resúmes to: South Elkhorn Baptist Church, c/o Laura Farrow, 4867 Versailles Road, Lexington, KY 40510.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Sand Springs Baptist Church. This position can become full-time. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Sand Springs Baptist Church, 1616 Harrodsburg Road, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342. Phone: (502) 893-3415.

SEEKING: Erlanger Baptist Church, located in Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati area, seeks an experienced full-time pastor. EBC averages 650-800 in worship, has three other full-time and two part-time ministerial staff members. Members give to both SBC and CBF causes. The candidate should possess strong interpersonal skills, dynamic preaching and leadership abilities. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 116 Commonwealth Ave., Erlanger, KY 41018. Accepting resúmes through the end of August.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of education with a strong emphasis on outreach. After prayerful consideration, please send resumé to: Minister of Education Search Committee, Second Baptist Church, 720 West Seventh Street, Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

SEEKING: Full-time minister for small, rural Southern Baptist church. We are looking to grow with you. Accepting resúmes through Aug. 1. Send to: New Banlick Baptist Church, 10719 Banlick Road, Walton, KY 41094.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children for First Baptist Church, Paris, Ky. We are located in the heart of the Bluegrass. Our resident membership is 548. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 327, Paris, KY 40362-0327.

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

Former child star says what was a curse is now a blessing

By David Briggs
Cleveland Plain Dealer

CLEVELAND (RNS)—At age 5, Keith Thibodeaux knew he was one fortunate kid. Having beaten out 200 other children, he was picked for the part of Little Ricky on the "I Love Lucy" television show.

"I remember asking my dad after one of the programs we shot, 'Dad, why did God choose me to be Little Ricky?'" Thibodeaux said in an interview. "He said, 'Keith, God has a purpose for your life.'"

Four years later, at age 9, he was collecting unemployment. Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball were splitting up, and the show could not go on.

Then he remembers thinking to himself, "I'm out of a job at 9 years old. At 9 years old, your life is behind you."

Thibodeaux would follow a now familiar route for many former child stars. A rejection of the character that would always define him in the public eye, bouts with drugs and depression, and finally, in 1994—surprise, surprise—an autobiographical book.

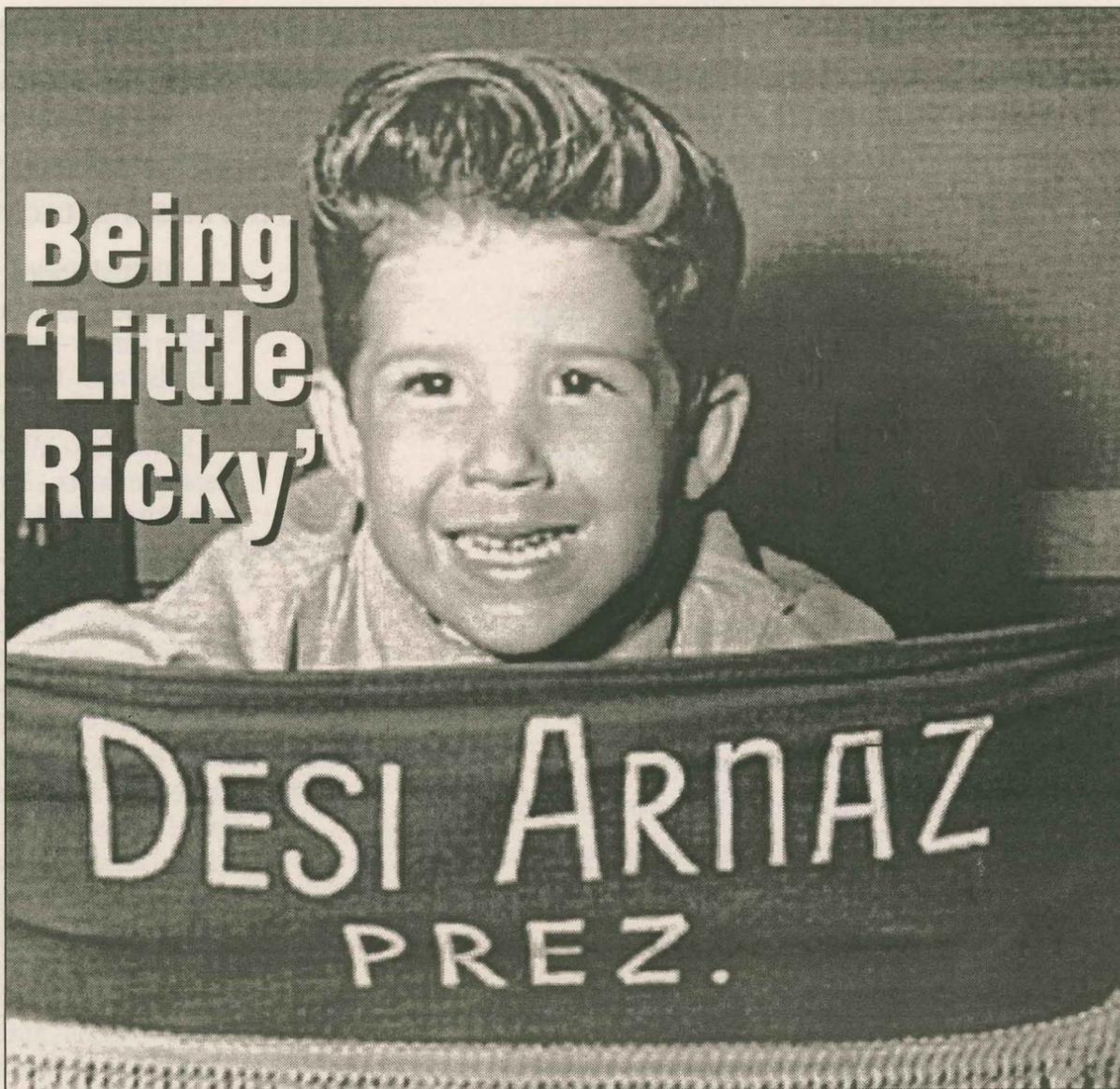
What makes Little Ricky's story different from that of, say, former "Partridge Family" star Danny Bonaduce or Gary Coleman of "Diff'rent Strokes" is that in turning his life around, Thibodeaux has become a part-time Christian evangelist.

Recently, for example, as a single spotlight shone on him in a party hall in a shopping center, Thibodeaux told a gathering of area evangelicals how God helped him get his act together for the rest of his life.

No longer riding in limos or dining with the stars of the day such as Jack Benny and Jimmy Durante, Thibodeaux, 50, said he has found happiness in Jackson, Miss., where he is executive director of a Christian dance company and parlayes his fame to share his



Being 'Little Ricky'



KEITH THIBODEAUX The former child actor who played Little Ricky on "I Love Lucy," went through struggles common to many child actors. He now uses his fame to tell others about Christianity. He recently told an evangelical audience in Ohio, "The one thing I knew was that God always had His hand on me." (RNS photo)

Christian testimony throughout the country.

So what was the divine purpose in his being Little Ricky? "It has given me a platform," Thibodeaux said. "I guess I get a soap box status of being famous, so to speak, in my early life."

Thibodeaux grew up in Louisiana, first demonstrating his musical ability with knives and forks on the kitchen table. When he started banging on the trash cans with sticks, a neighbor suggested to his parents that they get him a set of drums.

By age 4, the little drummer boy was playing one-night stands with a band across the United States and Canada.

While in California, he auditioned for the part of Little Ricky.

"I went to the studio, there was Lucy, and

she looked at me and my dad and said, 'He's cute, but what does he do?'"

When the young Thibodeaux started playing the drums, things got quiet on the set and the technicians came over to listen. Desi Arnaz walked over, started jamming with him, and declared, "I think we found Little Ricky."

He spent four years on "I Love Lucy" and its sequel, "The Lucy-Desi Comedy Hour."

A former altar boy, Thibodeaux would go to Mass with Desi Arnaz and his children.

Two experiences that would have a profound impact on his life were the breakup of Desi and Lucy and then the divorce of his own parents. In the middle of his high school years, he moved back to Louisiana.

Thibodeaux said he began to do drugs, drink and smoke, and tried to forget the role that made him America's darling in the mid-'50s.

"I didn't always want to be known as Little Ricky. I wanted to run away from Little Ricky. I wanted to be cool," he said.

After battles with drugs and depression, Thibodeaux said, he "ended up going under the wave, and barely coming out again."

One day, in his early 20s, Thibodeaux made a vow: "I said, 'God, if you're really there, save me out of this situation and I'll serve you.'"

In 1974, Thibodeaux said he started his long journey back by attending

a Catholic charismatic service. The former child star, who now attends a nondenominational church in Jackson, said he started to turn his life around.

A band he was playing in, David and the Giants, became pioneers in early Christian rock music. To be closer to his family, in 1993 he became executive director of Ballet Magnificat! a dance company he runs with his wife, Kathy.

Now, he juggles a busy schedule of personal appearances and his work with the ballet company. In September, he plans to go to Africa to play concerts with a mission band.

And he is at peace with his former life. So much so that he can sit down and watch old episodes of "I Love Lucy" and chuckle.

"It does add a little lightness and silliness to our world," he said.

Fame, however, is just not all it's cracked up to be, he told the area gathering.

"There's so many sad people in Hollywood. You just don't understand the sadness behind the mask," he said.

His favorite Bible verses now are Hebrews 12:1-2, an encouragement for believers to keep their eyes fixed on Jesus to "run with determination the race that lies before us."

In a life that could have peaked early, Thibodeaux said he is focusing on "staying in the race and not getting out of it. Because there's nothing else that matters but staying in the race."

"I said, 'God, if you're really there, save me out of this situation and I'll serve you.'"

Keith Thibodeaux

A Summer of Service

From Williamsburg, Kentucky to the Panama Canal to Mongolia, sixty-eight Cumberland College students will spend the summer serving locally and around the world. For many of these students, the commitment is for the entire summer, most of them as volunteers. They may not be spending their summer earning money, but these students will gain something far more valuable from their experience - a value for other people and the blessing received in service.

Kentucky

LaTisha Brown - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Michael Cabell - 180 Degrees Ministry
Eric Cecil - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Wayne Cecil - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Toney Cooksey - FBC, London
Melinda Clyde - Camp Burnamwood, Irvine
Tim Dowd - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Nikki Engle - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Elley Fisk - Lakeside Park Church
Scott Gilbert - FBC, Somerset
Lori Grigsby - 180 Degrees Ministry
Michelle Helton - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Michelle Henson - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Carrie Keener - 180 Degree Ministry
Lori Lunsford - Manchester Baptist Church
Crystal Matrau - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Daniel McKee - Son Burst Team
Jason Monhollen - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Heather Murphree - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Woods Nash - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Haley Owens - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Jeremy Prater - Camp Canaan, Burnside
Matt Rasure - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Ben Reser - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Matt Rosencrans - Appalachian Ministries (Cumberland College)
Danny Scalf - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Rachel Tharp - GA Camp
Mike Townsend - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)
Matt Walton - 180 Degrees Ministry
David Wilson - Mountain Outreach (Cumberland College)

United States

Joy Bailey - Crosspoint
Ellen Barnes - Arkansas
Leah Burnett - Crosspoint
Cara Beth Carroll - Crosspoint
Shawn Cato - Alaska
Stephanie Dobbs - Maryland
Kevin Floyd - King's Crusaders
Michael Hesson - Camp All-American (Georgia)
Clarrisa Hutcherson - Arkansas
Jamie Johnson - Crosspoint
Kari Leach - South Carolina
Karen Morgan - Crosspoint
Betsy Moore - Son Life, Utah
Christy Newby - Boone's Creek Christian Camp
Emily Peuse - Michigan Summer Camps
Daniel Plemons - Tennessee
David Reed - FCA Camp
David Riggs - Missions Adventure Camp
Nathan Riner - Crosspoint
Jamey Short - Camp All-American (Georgia)
Michael Taylor - Son Life, Utah
Mat Whitaker - Missions Adventure Camp
Casey Woods - Minnesota

International

Elizabeth Bailey - Wales
Abi Clifton, Mexico
Melinda Etter - Taiwan
Alice Freitas - Venezuela
Mike Adkins - Senegal
Kevin Goodman - Africa
Brad Hawkins - Poland
Matt Howe - Himalayas
Theresa Huson - Africa
Kristin Keenan - Africa
Elisha Morris - Mongolia
Amy Phillips - Panama Canal/Africa
David Reed - Peru
Julie Smith - Africa
David Unger - China

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