

January 15, 2002  
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**FOR THE RECORD**

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**Reprieve given to condemned Chinese house church leader**

LONDON (BP)—A Chinese underground Christian church leader who was condemned to death by the government appears to be safe for the time being.

Gong Shengliang, the 46-year-old founder of the "South China" house church movement, has been granted a reprieve from a death sentence scheduled to be carried out Jan. 5, Gong's relatives have reported, according to a Compass Direct news service dispatch Jan. 7.

Compass Direct is a Christian news service based in Santa Ana, Calif., dedicated to coverage of Christian persecution worldwide.

High-level pressure on the Chinese government was exerted after news broke in early January that Gong was sentenced to death in a Dec. 18 secret trial in Hubei province on charges of "complicity in rape" and "leading an evil cult," Compass Direct reported.

Sources in Beijing confirmed that Gong indeed was not put to death, the news service reported, but the official reason from the Chinese Foreign Ministry was that Gong had been granted a period of several months to appeal the death sentence.

High-level sources told Compass Direct that they are confident Gong will have his death sentence commuted to imprisonment, especially as evidence has come to light that two women whose testimony was used to convict him of rape were forced to provide false versions of events.

□ See *Condemned ...*, page 12

**King, the preacher**

*Civil-right's icon driven by 'God's law of love,' author insists*

HUNTSVILLE, Ala.—People who see Martin Luther King Jr. solely as a civil rights leader are missing the spiritual motivation for his work that came from being a pastor, according to an author who has studied King's sermons.

"The perception of King (today), in one sense, is certainly not that of a pastor but more of a social activist," said Mervyn Warren, a religion professor at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala., and author of "King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

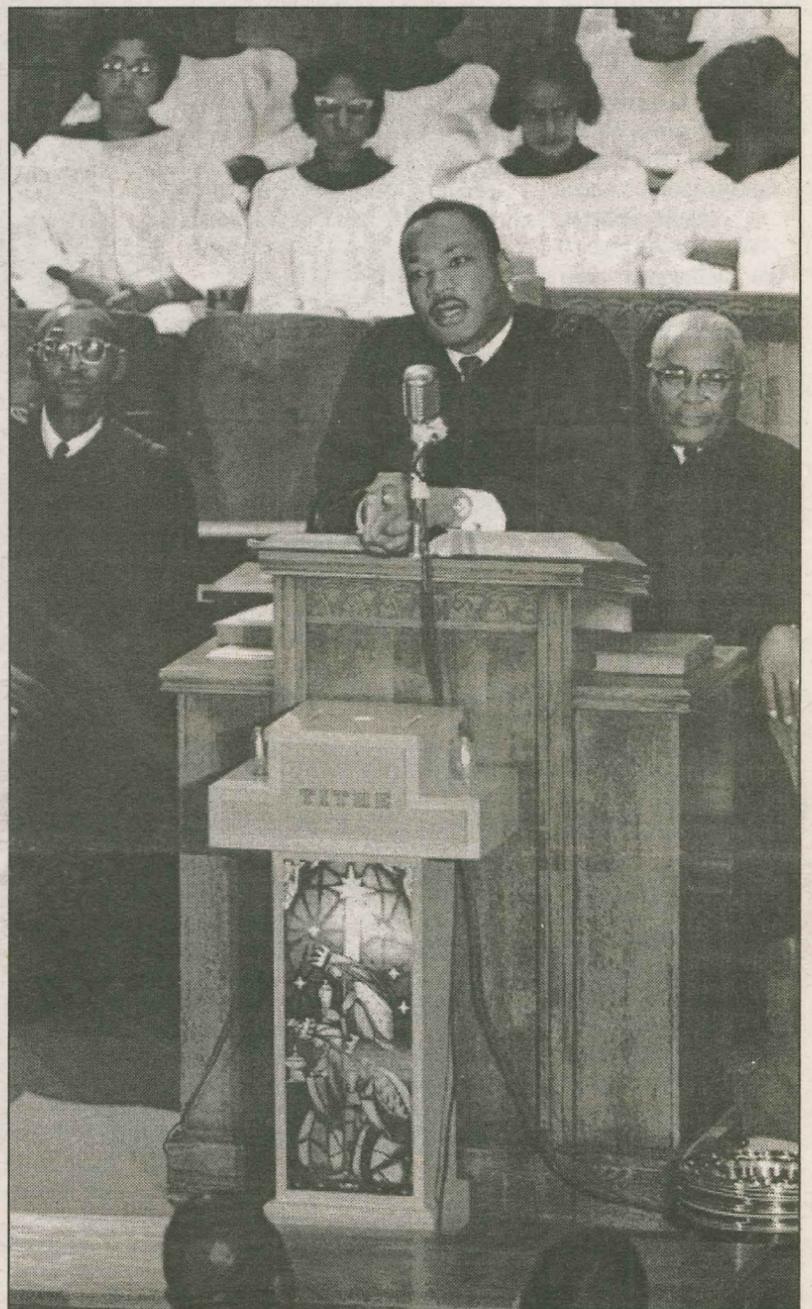
This incomplete view of King ignores the Christian influence that drove his work, Warren said. "We have lost the source of actually who he really was and the source that provided and generated the power for what he was able to accomplish."

King himself focused on his ministry as a pastor and not his influence in the civil rights movement, Warren noted.

"King never lived a day of his professional life without being a pastor. ... He never saw himself as anything else," he said. "I like his classic autobiographical statement that he often made about himself. He said, 'I am the son of a Baptist preacher, the grandson of a Baptist preacher and the great grandson of a Baptist preacher. The church is my life, and I have given my life to the church.'"

And the church shaped how King sought to lead African-Americans in

□ See *King, the preacher ...*, page 7



SUNDAY MORNING Martin Luther King Jr. preaches at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta as his father (right) looks on. A new book explores King's role as pastor. ©Flip Schulke

**Poll: Pastors praise their preaching, want help with fund raising**

**Pastors rate themselves**

Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Not Too Good	Poor
Preaching/Teaching	31%	59%	9%	8%	1%
Encouraging people	24	61	13	1	*
Pastoring/Shepherding	21	61	16	*	*
Leadership	16	57	25	1	*
Motivating people around a vision	15	53	28	3	7
Discipling/Mentoring	12	52	32	2	*
Evangelism	10	50	36	3	1
Counseling	9	45	38	4	2
Administration/Management	14	39	35	7	4
Developing ministry strategy	10	43	41	3	1
Fund raising	6	25	37	14	9

Source: Barna Research Group survey of 601 senior pastors. \* = less than 1 percent.

VENTURA, Calif.—Protestant pastors tend to rate themselves highly as preachers and teachers but don't consider themselves to be good fund-raisers, a new survey shows.

More than 80 percent of senior pastors surveyed by the Barna Research Group said they believed they were above average in preaching and teaching, encouraging people and being a pastor.

Ninety percent said they were "excellent" or "good" at preaching and teaching. Eighty-five percent said they were above average in encouraging people and 82 percent said they were above average in being a pastor, or shepherding people.

The only area in the survey of 11 aspects of pastoral work in which a majority did not claim to do an excellent or good job was in fund raising. Thirty-one percent of the senior pastors surveyed said they were above average in raising money while 37

percent said they were "average" in that area. Twenty-three percent said they were "not too good" or "poor" at fund raising.

George Barna, president of the research group, said the survey might show the need for a standard measuring tool by which pastors can better evaluate their skills.

"Pastors are indisputably a talented and well-educated group," he said. "However, it's unrealistic for most pastors to claim that they perform at an above-average level in such a large number of disparate ministry duties as those examined in the study."

Identifying a standard of excellence for these skill categories would help ministers and ministries better gauge their work, Barna said. It also might encourage them to seek out help from believers with strengths to help overcome their relative weakness, he added.

□ See *Pastors praise ...*, page 11

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, January 16

## Legendary Baptist pastor W.A. Criswell dies at age 92

**Criswell described 1985 SBC-related sermon as his 'most important'**

NASHVILLE (BP)—What was W.A. Criswell's most important sermon?

Criswell, in a personal letter to Jerry Sutton, author of "The Baptist Reformation," singled out his sermon, "Whether We Live or Die," at the June 1985 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in Dallas prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting there, attended by more than 45,000 Baptists.

Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, recounts that Criswell said he thought it was his most important sermon because, as Sutton puts it, the sermon "set forth the two directions and the implications of those directions in the Southern Baptist Convention."

"Whether We Live or Die" and other sermons by Criswell can be accessed on the Web at [www.wacriswell.com](http://www.wacriswell.com).

By Toby Druin and Mark Wingfield  
*Texas Baptist Standard*

DALLAS (ABP)—W.A. Criswell, the legendary pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas for more than 50 years, died Jan. 10 at the home of longtime friend Jack Pogue. He was 92.

Pogue was reading to Criswell from the 14th chapter of John when he took his last breath, reported Paige Patterson, former president of Criswell College in Dallas, who now serves as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Funeral services are scheduled for Jan. 16 at First Baptist, Dallas, where for decades Criswell's booming voice called sinners to salvation, defended the Bible as God's inerrant word, blasted "modernism" and challenged Christians to live more devoted lives.

Criswell had been in ill health since fighting off colon cancer in 1998.

The fiery preacher was among the best-known Baptist pastors in America in the latter half of the 20th century. Some compared his fame to that of evangelist Billy Graham, a friend whom Criswell enlisted years ago as a long-distance member of the Dallas church.

Criswell was the author of 54 books, including "Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True," a volume considered to have helped launch the conservative movement in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1980s and '90s.

In his trademark white suit, Criswell was seen in televised church services broadcast nationally. He was heard on numerous radio programs as well.

He was a little-known pastor from Oklahoma in 1944 when the church called him to succeed George W. Truett as pastor. In a 1985 interview with the Dallas Morning News, Criswell recalled how he had a vivid dream in which the deceased Truett urged him to "go down and preach to my people."

He initially declined an invitation to preach a sermon at the Dallas church, however, saying he was "nothing of the stature of Dr. Truett."



**W.A. CRISWELL** The longtime pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas was a major influence in the SBC's conservative shift.

His wife did not share his reservations, he said, explaining that she accepted the church's invitation for him.

"There wasn't anything for me to do but come down here and preach," he said. A few weeks later, the church called him as pastor.

During his tenure at First Baptist, the church grew in influence, membership and funding. In its heyday, First Baptist Church of Dallas was the largest congregation in the SBC, boasting nearly 30,000 members, five blocks of property in downtown Dallas and nearly 30 mission congregations.

Over the years, several U.S. presidents and would-be presidents made a point to visit the church when Criswell was preaching. When Gerald Ford visited the church in October 1976, he got a sermon on stewardship and an endorsement for his election, although Ford was running against Criswell's fellow Southern Baptist, Jimmy Carter. When the Republican Party re-nominated Ronald Reagan for president in Dallas in 1984, Criswell closed the convention in prayer.

In 1968, he was elected to the first of two one-year terms as president of the SBC, which he later described as a highlight of his ministry. He served on many boards of the SBC and Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Because of the influence of his church and his reputation as a preacher, Criswell was known around the world. A staunch defender of Israel, he was honored by Prime Minister Menachem Begin for his support of the Jewish state in 1988, and in 1971 his tour group was given an audience by Pope Paul VI.

But Criswell was best known in the pulpit of his own church and on the platform of the SBC, state conventions and evangelism conferences as simply a preacher of the gospel and defender of the Bible as God's inerrant Word.

In the pulpit, he wept, laughed, shouted and smiled. He waved his Bible in the air, sometimes ripping pages from it to make a point about those he said didn't believe all the Bible. He blasted "infidels" and "liberals" and warned sinners to turn from their path toward hell.

He was colorful and charismatic in the pulpit, and he was beloved by many as a pastor and as a mentor in the faith.

A native of Oklahoma, Criswell grew up on a farm near Texline. His father was a cowboy and then a barber. Criswell's mother moved to Amarillo during his last two years of high school so he could get a better education. He graduated from Amarillo High School in 1927 and then earned a bachelor's degree at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and master's and doctor of philosophy degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

His earliest recollection of being called to the ministry was when he was about 6 years old, he said. He made a public profession of faith in Christ when he was 10 and two years later committed his life to the gospel ministry. He began preaching at 17.

While attending Southern Semi-

nary, he was pastor of small Kentucky Baptist churches in Oakland, Mount Washington and Woodburn. He met his wife, Betty, in Mount Washington where she was church pianist.

Criswell's ministry took a turn in 1990, when First, Dallas, called Joel Gregory as pastor and heir apparent to Criswell. That rocky relationship lasted only 21 months, ending with Gregory abruptly resigning. In 1992, Criswell was named pastor emeritus as the church called O.S. Hawkins as pastor. Criswell had continued to maintain a presence in the church, to the extent his health permitted, alongside current pastor Mac Brunson.

Interviewed on his 50th anniversary at the church in 1994, Criswell laughed at the mention of retirement and said his role of raising money for Criswell College was his idea of retirement. He earlier had said he desired to be called to heaven while he was preaching in the pulpit at First Baptist.

"Wouldn't that be a glorious place from which to ascend into heaven?" he asked.

Patterson said Criswell deserved much of the credit for the conservative shift in the SBC.

"The old adage is Dr. Criswell preached the crusade and others carried it out," Patterson said. "That's pretty accurate. He was definitely my inspiration and that of many others."

"Probably, I could not have done what I did if I'd been at any other church," said Patterson, a former associate pastor of First Baptist Church for 17 years who helped launch the SBC's conservative shift beginning in 1979.

Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, described Criswell as "a larger-than-life figure who left his indelible brand on Texas and on three generations of Baptists."



**PARTNERS** W.A. and Betty Criswell in the early years of his prominent ministry that spanned half a century.

## Southern Baptist leaders remember Criswell as 'a giant in the land'

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptists from across the nation responded to the news of W.A. Criswell's death with memories of his life and ministry legacy.

■ **Evangelist Billy Graham.** "It is almost impossible to evaluate the life and ministry of W.A. Criswell. He had a multiplicity of gifts. He had one of the most loving hearts I have ever known. His devotion to Scripture inspired thousands of young clergy from many denominations. His preaching was electric in its power. He was anointed by the Holy Spirit in an unusual way. His counsel and love to me meant more than he ever knew."

■ **Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.** "W.A. Criswell was a giant in the land, and his passing is an event of

singular significance. In every way, Dr. Criswell was a one-of-a-kind man of God. He was an unexcelled preacher, an unequalled visionary, an unswerving champion of the truth and an unfailing leader of influence."

■ **Mac Brunson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas.** "The family of First Baptist Church of Dallas is deeply saddened by the home going of one of God's great saints. Dr. W.A. Criswell served our congregation for 50 years as pastor and was serving as pastor emeritus at his death. He will be greatly missed as a minister, preacher, but most especially as shepherd of the flock."

■ **Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.** "W.A. Criswell was a larger-than-life figure

who left his indelible brand on Texas and on three generations of Baptists. His extraordinary gifts in the pulpit, his steadfast pastoral commitment to a great downtown city church, his leadership by example in church growth, his fervent dedication to missions and evangelism and his unswerving commitment to proclaiming the truth of the Bible will long be remembered."

■ **Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.** "We rejoice today for Dr. Criswell even as the Church of our Lord Jesus contemplates the loss of the greatest preacher of our generation."

■ **Judge Paul Pressler.** "My friend, Dr. Criswell, gave leadership, voice and

inspiration to the restoration of the Southern Baptist Convention to its biblical roots. I am so glad he was able to see the victories for which he so earnestly prayed."

■ **Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.** "Dr. W.A. Criswell was a giant in the land, and it is now hard to imagine Baptist life without him. He towered over our denominational life for a half-century, casting a shadow that shaped at least three generations of pastors and Baptist leaders. His robust pulpit ministry led to a recovery of biblical exposition among Baptist preachers and those of other evangelical denominations. He was a bold champion for biblical truth, and this great lion gave courage to thousands of others."

## CAGE survey reveals most voters oppose more gambling

FRANKFORT—Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, a statewide anti-gambling coalition, believes most Kentucky voters oppose plans to expand legalized gambling in the state—and the group has the statistics to prove it.

During last week's CAGE press conference in the Capitol Rotunda, CAGE moderator Nancy Jo Kemper released results of a survey last month among registered voters in the state.

The survey, conducted by Ayres, McHenry & Associates of Atlanta, found that 64 percent of respondents "oppose allowing casinos to be built solely at the racetracks" in Kentucky.

Sixty-four percent also agreed "it is not right for the state government to be in the gambling business" and 67 percent said the state should not promote gambling.

Addressing such issues as corruption and education, 57 percent disagreed with the view that gambling operated by the state "is less likely to be corrupt." Half of respondents disagree with the statement that "gambling helps fund education without raising taxes."

Fifty percent of voters surveyed also said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate for governor or the state legislator if the individual favored expanded gambling. Only 26 percent said they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who favored expanded gambling.

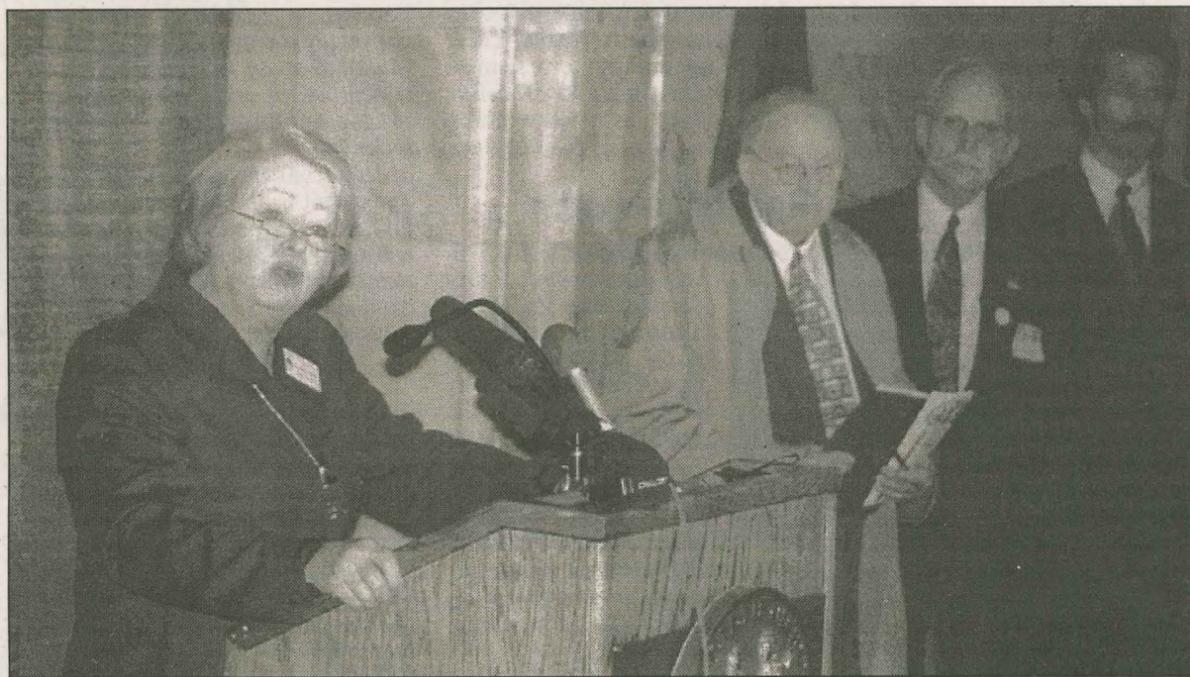
A total of 59 percent agreed with the statement that "gambling creates large social costs, including more bankruptcies, theft, domestic abuse and suicides."

"Clearly, Kentucky voters have significant reservations about expanding gambling in the state, whether it be through casinos or video slot machines," the polling firm concluded. "By more than two-to-one margins, they believe that the state government should not be involved in gambling, and they do not buy the argument that gambling helps fund education without raising taxes."

"Moreover, political candidates could suffer politically if they favor an expansion of gambling," the study added. "Expanding gambling is not a winning political issue in Kentucky."

The survey of 600 registered voters, conducted Dec. 9-10, has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent. Respondents were from every county in the state in proportion to voter registration figures.

## Risky business



"STOP THE SLOTS" Nancy Jo Kemper, moderator for Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, speaks during a press conference last week in Frankfort. CAGE held its event just before the beginning of the 2002 Kentucky legislative session. Also pictured (from left) are Claude Witt, director of the Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems, and Kentucky Baptist Convention President Harold Greenfield.

## Groups speak against expanded gambling

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

FRANKFORT—Urging Kentucky lawmakers to "Stop the Slots," gambling opponents gathered in the Capitol Rotunda Jan. 8 to highlight efforts to halt expanded gambling in the state.

The press conference was organized by Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, a statewide coalition of religious organizations, churches and public interest groups. It was held on the opening day of Kentucky's 2002 legislative session.

CAGE moderator Nancy Jo Kemper, executive director of the Kentucky Council of Churches, outlined plans to battle the legalization of video slot machines and casinos at racetracks and other sites.

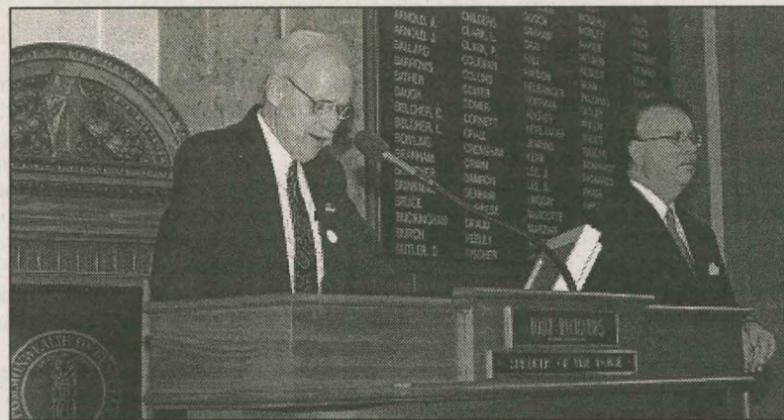
She shared findings from a recent survey indicating that 64 percent of registered voters "oppose allowing casinos to be built solely at the racetracks."

The study by Ayres, McHenry & Associates, a national public opinion firm based in Atlanta, also found that 68 percent of voters oppose video slot machines at any site that sells lottery tickets, 66 percent oppose the machines at locations that have a liquor license and 52 percent oppose casinos being built at other sites across the state.

"Kentucky needs a lot of things," Kemper said, "but we do not need slot machines."

Describing expanded gambling as "bad public policy," "bad government" and "bad economics," she added, "I suggest that it is pure greed that is driving this push for expanded gambling at the racetracks."

Kentucky Baptist Convention President Harold Greenfield emphasized that "Baptists oppose gambling on moral and religious grounds. ... We also oppose it because of what it does



OPENING PRAYER Kentucky Baptist Convention President Harold Greenfield leads the Kentucky House of Representatives' opening prayer last week. Greenfield delivered the prayer shortly after speaking out against expanded gambling, a topic expected to come up during the 2002 legislative session. House Speaker Jody Richardson, D-Bowling Green, is in the background. (KBC Photo by Robert Reeves)

to our society."

Calling legalized gambling "essentially racist," Greenfield said gambling "really is a redistribution of money from non-white, non-educated, lower-income people to white, educated, higher-income people."

Gambling "is bad for our whole state," he insisted. "We should be teaching the right kind of virtues and values."

Though no bills had been pre-filed prior to the start of the legislative session to legalize video slot machines or casinos, racetrack owners have voiced their support for such a proposal. Churchill Downs owners reportedly sent thousands of dollars in political contributions to legislators immediately prior to the session.

Kent Ostrander, executive director of the Family Foundation, noted that restricting political contributions from the gambling industry was among a series of recommendations offered two years ago by the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. He said the commission also called for a moratorium on the expansion of casin-

os and lotteries and increased help for those with gambling addictions.

Warning that such recommendations have not been heeded in Kentucky, he said, "Gambling proponents continue at their own pace to assure their vision of a state supported and controlled by gambling."

Howard Beaman, associate director of the Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems (formerly the Temperance League of Kentucky), said the interdenominational group opposes any gambling expansion in the state "because we feel it is not a good choice economically or sociologically for our citizens and all of the problems that are part of that."

Beaman said he hopes all Kentucky legislators will evaluate any gambling proposals introduced during the session "and will turn them down 100 percent."

For more information about anti-gambling efforts in the state, contact CAGE at [www.kycage.org](http://www.kycage.org) or call the Kentucky Baptist Public Affairs Committee at (502) 254-4731 or toll-free in Kentucky at (800) 254-5713.

## Owensboro forum touts casinos

OWENSBORO—Leaders from three cities with casino gambling praised the industry last week during a community forum on the issue.

Vincent Creel, public affairs manager for Biloxi, Miss.; Jeff Plyman, corporate counsel for Joliet, Ill.; and Bobby Williams, mayor of Tunica, Miss., spoke before a crowd of nearly 200 at a forum sponsored by Downtown Owensboro Inc. and the Messenger-Inquirer newspaper.

Dan Edelschick, president of Downtown Owensboro Inc., called the two-hour forum "a vehicle for the community to get input" on casinos, according to the Messenger-Inquirer.

He quoted state Rep. Greg Stumbo, Kentucky House majority leader, as saying there is growing sentiment in the legislature for some type of expanded gambling.

Other legislators, however, including Senate Majority Leader Dan Kelly, have gone on record saying it would be "a mistake to expand gambling" in an effort to increase revenue for the state.

In Owensboro, John Bays, owner of the Executive Inn Rivermont, has said he will spend up to \$100 million in downtown construction if he gets a casino license, the paper stated.

Applause was fairly evenly divided between pro- and anti-casino statements, the paper noted.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Conflicting views

People keep beating on me with a fundamentalist stick! That's OK though; I used one for the first 40 years of my Christian life. Then I learned that sometimes what the Bible says is not what it teaches.

A case in point is how we appear to the rest of the world. The Bible says one God and Jews and Muslims agree, but we quote Scriptures that make us sound like we have three Gods. This is the main dividing point between us and other religions. We say we have one God but we present ourselves as having three.

I learned on the mission field to present Jesus as God and let it go at that. No need to fight the battles of A.D. 400 again when Emperor Theodosius told his bishops to teach it his way or lose their jobs. His version of the Trinity sounded like Tritheism then and it still does today.

Realizing how the rest of the world sees Christianity is a big start toward winning it.

Another thing I learned is that the Muslim mindset is to give little respect to the son as long as the father is alive. This isn't a written law as such but you will find it does exist.

Therefore when we witness using our scripturally correct expression "Son of God" and think we are really impressing Muslims, we are not. They think, "Well I have the Father Allah ('The God' in Arabic). I don't

need an inferior member of the family." We think we have borne an effective witness by using Scripture when really we have given them a way out.

I learned this preaching on the streets of Mombasa, Kenya. These would be good things to remember next time you witness to a Muslim.

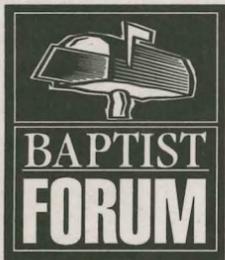
Gene Iglehart  
Bowling Green

## 'Damaging words'

I thought cooperation was a two-way street. Am I to understand that Mr. Henderson, by his Dec. 25 editorial, is now advocating that Kentucky Baptists stop cooperating with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board because of a disagreement between NAMB and the District

of Columbia Baptist Convention? Surely, Mr. Henderson doesn't believe that NAMB should be giving away Cooperative Program dollars to anyone who wants it with no oversight whatsoever.

Also, since when did NAMB become a "ministry middleman"? I was under the impression that NAMB coordinated the efforts of numerous state conventions, local associations and individual churches to achieve maximum impact on North America for the gospel. Am I to expect that we will be encouraged to distance ourselves from the International Mission Board because it



## What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Baptist Forum is limited to Western Recorder subscribers, unless someone is responding to a story or editorial of which they are the subject. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@ntr.net.

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

### A faithful servant minister

It was my privilege to serve on staff with Loraine Collins for 10 years when I was pastor of First Baptist Church in Whitesburg. Her position was church secretary, but her role was servant minister.

At the time of her death on Jan. 2 she had served the church for more than 41 years. She had served with six different pastors and numerous staff members.

The most frequently used words to describe Loraine were faithfulness and loyalty. She wasn't perfect but you don't have to be perfect in order to be faithful. All of us can be faithful, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

David Morrow, a former pastor, said Loraine was loyal to her Lord, her church and her pastor. Tom Stokes, a former pastor, said she never criticized her pastor. He shared that one time he heard someone start to criticize a former pastor and she stopped the person immediately.

Loraine had a positive attitude that enabled her to be an encourager and to have a perspective on situations. "She seemed to always know the right words," said Brenda Cook, a co-worker.

She was also a person of integrity. She served as financial secretary with the complete trust of the church family.

She had a sense of timeliness. She seemed to have an intuitive sense of who needed ministry and when. Her discernment was invaluable to me as a young pastor.

Loraine knew the value of time. Her surgery for breast cancer was in the mid-1970s. She was grateful that God gave her an additional 27 years and she served Him faithfully.

People who have walked through the valley of the shadow of death can teach us what is really worthwhile. Pettiness, greed and trivia can rob a person of his or her spiritual life.

Kay and I visited recently with a friend who is facing the last medi-

cal option in her battle with cancer.

She said that she had learned that the most important value in life is giving yourself and what you have to others.

The skeptic may ask, "Where is the evidence for Christianity?" Because of her faithfulness, Loraine witnessed God's transformation in hundreds of people, more than 1,600 baptisms, the launching of four mission churches and thousands of people receiving ministry of help, hope and healing. She could say, "There, Mr. Skeptic, is your evidence!"

Joe Brown, another former pastor, concluded, "She loved the Lord, God's church, God's Word. She was faithful and true. She lived a life beautiful to behold here on earth and in heaven."

Ray Cooper, director of missions in Three Forks Association, said he could wish that his life could have a portion of the influence that Loraine's had.

Faithfulness does make an eternal difference.

Editor's Note: I will be glad to clarify. My goal was to encourage state conventions to evaluate the most appropriate way to fund mission efforts without strings attached that violate Baptist autonomy. That is not a call for division, but for effective stewardship and historic Baptist principles.

John D. Newland  
Grayson

Susan Gabbard, direct care counselor  
KBHC Youth Support Center, Richmond

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## CHURCH

### Churches should study, implement current tax laws

By Jeremy White

Although churches do not have to pay income tax, they must report certain tax information for their ministers and employees. Unfortunately, many churches are not complying with the law.

As a tax preparer, I often work with ministers as clients. How perplexing for me that my clients' employing churches, particularly small ones, make little or no attempt to do things right. This often causes the ministers to pay more in tax and to increase their audit risk.

Through flawed reasoning, churches and committees have used the following rationales:

■ "We have always done it this way." Ahh, the oft-repeated logic that if done before, then it must be right. Unfortunately, tax rules change regularly and so must we.

■ "We don't want the government to get in our affairs." By not complying with current tax laws, churches and ministers are more likely to receive government audits and inquiries.

■ "Let the minister take care of his own 'package' and tell us what to do." Many church members already expect too much from ministers with all the roles they fill. Should they be tax experts too? Or should they spend more money on professional fees to do what the church should be doing?

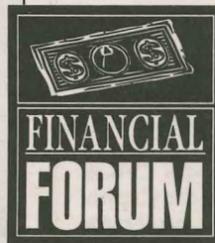
■ "We are volunteers (treasurer, finance and personnel committee, financial secretary) and can't be expected to keep up." My ears are thankful that volunteers such as the soloists and accompanists exert great effort to do their work the best they can.

The most common error is that some churches fail to report ministers' compensation on Form W-2. This is clearly wrong.

Other instances might not be wrong, but might not be in the minister's best interest. Examples include paying a car allowance instead of reimbursing for expenses through an accountable plan, considering books and convention expenses as part of the compensation package or ignoring the advantages of maximizing the housing allowance.

As church members, see to it that your church is complying with the tax laws and helping your ministers all you can.

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



## Parents can help their teens plan for life after high school

**Q: This is my son's senior year and he will graduate in May. What might I expect in these next few months and how can I help him as he finishes his high school career?**

The last months of one's senior year in high school can be an exciting and confusing time. While teens are excited about finishing and often ready to move on to the next stage of their lives, there also is accompanying grief related to the people and familiar things they will leave behind.

"Where am I going?" and "Who will go with me?" seem to be the two big questions at this point. It is important that teens are given the opportunity to talk about these questions without feeling interrogated or pressured. Being available to talk when they are ready seems to be the key. Frequently you will find that their readiness does not fit your convenience! Be willing to stay up late waiting for them to come home after an outing. "Hang out" and order pizza at midnight (I know this does not fit the mid-life diet or sleep schedule). Take advantage of informal opportunities to be together and listen more than you talk.

Giving teens more freedom as they approach graduation recognizes the fact that our society's laws make them legally autonomous at age 18 (regardless of functional maturity). Wise parents create an "experimental freedom zone" before their teens leave home and while there is still a parental safety net.

Encourage planning for the next stage. Allow them to take some initiative regarding making plans for college or career. Finally, realize it is up to you to find a way to "bless" their exit from home. Leaving with a blessing makes it more likely that communication lines will remain open and that they will continue to hear the message that they have a heavenly Father who loves them deeply.—*Scott Wigginton*

**Q: The past year has been a time of major anxiety for me. How can I regain a sense of hope?**

Study Jeremiah 29:11, "I alone know my purpose for you, says the Lord . . . prosperity and not misfortune" and John's prayer for his friend, Gaius: "I pray that you may enjoy good health, and that all may go well with you, as I know it goes well with your soul" (3 John 2). These verses teach that:

■ *Only God knows the future.* He stays up all night so that you don't have to. Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7).

■ *God has your best interests in mind.* It makes sense to trust and acknowledge His power to direct your path (Proverbs 3:5-6).

■ *Allow others to pray for you.* Whether your afflictions are physical or spiritual, the prayerful touch of God's people is powerful and effective (James 5:13-20).

■ *Make sure it is "well with your soul."* God's ultimate goal is to make you more like Christ (Romans 8:29).

When you are able to sense God's care in the inner sanctuary of your heart, you can find strength to face challenging circumstances of life. Bring to bear the spiritual resources of prayer, scripture and Christian community.

Try a 24-hour or even seven-day "news fast." When you begin to wonder about the latest news, just lift it up to God through prayer.

Finally, consider seeking out a competent, Christian clinician with access to the best medical, spiritual and psychological knowledge available. Such a consultation can give you more tools to overcome anxiety and to face the future knowing your life is firmly in the loving and all-wise grip of God (John 10:27-30).—*James Stillwell*

*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; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; and Scott Wigginton, director of LifeCare Counseling at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. Send questions for *Family Forum* to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail us at [wesrec@ntr.net](mailto:wesrec@ntr.net).



## Criswell's life, legacy shape SBC's future

The death last week of legendary pastor W.A. Criswell marks the end of an era in Southern Baptist life.

Criswell, who was flamboyant, outspoken and sometimes controversial, was pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas for more than 50 years. Taking leadership of the church at age 34 in the shadow of long-time pastor George W. Truett, Criswell led the congregation to become the largest church in the denomination, totaling nearly 30,000 members in its heyday.

Defending the inerrancy of Scripture while railing against "infidels" and "liberals," Criswell is credited as being the father of the SBC's "conservative resurgence" launched in 1979.

Presenting a theme interpretation at the 1995 SBC annual meeting, Criswell said the convention's future is secured because of Baptists' commitment to the Bible. Expressing "infinite thanksgiving to God from my deepest soul" for SBC leaders' focus on "the infallible and inspired and inerrant and authoritative Word of God," he said that commitment is "a promise of the direction of our convention and our churches in these years that are yet to come."

Paige Patterson, who served 17 years as an associate pastor at First, Dallas, was one of the architects of the SBC's conservative shift. "Probably, I could not have done what I did if I'd been at any other church," he noted.

Criswell "basically addressed the questions of denominational slippage and the need to return to the faith of the fathers as eloquently as anybody ever could have," added Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. "He began to ring those bells and there were many of us who listened quite attentively."

Criswell wrote more than 50 books, including "Why I Preach That the Bible is Literally True," a work that helped spark the convention's conservative movement.

Paul Pressler, Patterson's cohort in mapping out conservative strategy, said Criswell "gave leadership, voice and inspiration to the restoration of the Southern Baptist Convention to its biblical roots." He said he was glad Criswell "was able to see the victories for which he so earnestly prayed."

Even Criswell's detractors agree that he had tremendous influence in Southern Baptist life. They point out, however, that he supported racial segregation in the 1950s (a view he later renounced) and called moderate Baptists "skunks." He also sometimes shocked listeners by ripping pages from his Bible or throwing it to the floor to illustrate the need for an all-or-nothing commitment to Scripture.

Since his death at age 92, Criswell has been eulogized by state and national leaders, including President Bush.

"Dr. Criswell was an important spiritual leader for America," Bush said in a prepared statement. "He was a man of deep and abiding faith who brought comfort to the thousands who heard his message of hope, love and compassion."

Evangelist Billy Graham, a long-distance member of First, Dallas, said Criswell "had a multiplicity of gifts," noting that "he was anointed by the Holy Spirit in an unusual way."

Criswell will long be remembered as one of the leading pulpits of the 20th century. Perhaps even more significant, he will be remembered as a man of sincere faith and deep conviction.

For supporters and critics alike, those are attributes worth celebrating and imitating.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## Questions of the Day

Why does God allow tragedies like Sept. 11 to occur?

Should children and teens be allowed to use the Internet unsupervised?

How can churches settle the debate over traditional vs. contemporary worship?

As Kentucky Baptists seek to minister effectively in the challenging world of the 21st century, what questions do you have that you would like to see answered?

Beginning next month, the Western Recorder will launch a new question-and-answer column addressing the pressing issues of our day. Pastors, professors, counselors and others will be invited to explore topics that impact today's churches, communities and society.

What's your part? Submit thought-provoking questions. Simply jot down your questions and send them to the Western Recorder by mail, fax or e-mail. We look forward to hearing what you consider the vital issues of our day.

Send your questions to: Questions of the Day,  
Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253;  
fax: (502) 244-6474; e-mail: [wesrec@ntr.net](mailto:wesrec@ntr.net)

# BAPTISTS

## Baptist contributions aid Sept. 11 victims

### Adrian Rogers recovering from mild heart attack

MIAMI (BP)—Former Southern Baptist Convention president Adrian Rogers is recovering in a Miami hospital after suffering a mild heart attack Jan. 10.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., underwent surgery for a blocked artery Jan. 11 at South Miami Hospital. He is expected to make a full recovery, doctors said.

Rogers was in Cozumel, Mexico, preaching on a Bible study cruise when he suffered the attack. He was flown to Miami for treatment. He could be released from the hospital as early as next week.

By James Dotson  
SBC North American Mission Board

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—An allocation plan for more than \$3.4 million donated toward Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts in New York and Washington takes a comprehensive approach in dealing with a crisis expected to impact affected individuals and families for years to come.

In broad terms, the plan allocates 59 percent of the money to "victim benevolence and counseling ministry" and 41 percent to the longer-term "ongoing response ministry"—including provision for supporting future volunteer efforts and a church planted in the affected area.

The plan, titled "Enduring Hope: Disbursing Disaster Relief Donations with Integrity and Impact," was adopted by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, Metropolitan New York Baptist Association and Baptist Convention of New York at the recommendation of a task force that has addressed the issue since late September. The document also has been submitted to state conventions as a possible model for disbursement of their own relief funds set up in the wake of the

Sept. 11 attacks.

"Southern Baptists have responded to the tragic events of Sept. 11 with an outpouring of generous giving," said NAMB President Robert Record. "Enduring Hope will ensure these gifts are used in a way that promises accountability and cooperation with local churches to touch hurting people in Christ's name. Through doing so, we gladly acknowledge that it is the local church which serves on the front line in times of disaster."

The plan was developed in consultation with donors to ensure that the use of the funds would comply with their intent for how it should be used, said Claude Rhea, chief development officer for NAMB and a primary author of the allocation plan.

The document outlining the plan notes that "the sheer scale of this catastrophe mandates a response broader, deeper and longer than any we have mounted before. We must retool our strategies to counter the sobering realization that 3,000 people lost their lives, 8,000 children lost a parent and 100,000 people have lost their jobs."

Under the "victim benevolence and counseling ministry" category of the allocation plan, 40 percent of the fund will go to financial assistance through Southern Baptist churches

and associations in New York, Boston and Washington D.C., as well as to those in New York who lost their jobs because of the disaster.

Twelve percent will fund deployment of a "resident chaplain" to "oversee and augment our chaplaincy presence" in New York.

The chaplain will provide training for pastors in grief and trauma counseling, strengthen local church efforts to minister to victims and help pastors avoid damage to their own marriages, emotional health and ministry. Joe Williams of Oklahoma, an FBI chaplain who assisted in the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, will fill that role.

Rounding out the "victim benevolence and counseling" category, 7 percent will go to assist state and local partners in funding traditional Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts of feeding, childcare, cleanup of affected apartments and similar ministries.

The category of "ongoing response ministry" includes securing a center to house volunteers working in the area in coming years (26 percent) and funding for planting new churches to provide long-term care for affected residents, including one ministering in the immediate "ground zero" area of lower Manhattan (15 percent).

### Member of 1963 BF&M committee affirms 2000 view

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—One of the last living members of the committee that penned changes to the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message says the committee's foremost goal was to clarify Southern Baptists' belief in biblical authority.

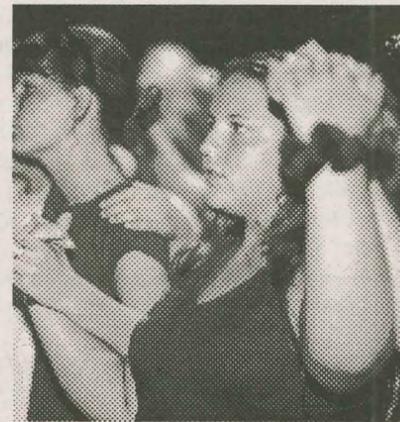
Garth Pybas, 86, a retired pastor, said language in the 1963 document concerning Christ as the "criterion" for interpreting Scripture was meant to convey biblical infallibility based on Christ's testimony of it in the gospels.

Pybas said Southern Baptist leaders in 2000 likewise aimed to clarify biblical truth for a changing culture. The 2000 statement removed the "criterion" language, prompting critics to voice concern that conservatives had placed Scripture above Christ.

"What did they worship before 1963?" Pybas asked. "Are they insinuating ... that all of those before we put that in there worshiped the Bible? That is ridiculous."

## Putting a face on Missions.

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To learn more about CP Missions and volunteer missions opportunities, check out [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org) / 502.254.4731 / 888.254.5713

## King, the preacher: Work driven by God's love, author says

Continued from page 1

their struggle for equal treatment. King viewed himself as both a shepherd of the flock "and yet an under-shepherd of Jesus Christ," Warren said.

"This dual perspective ... simply reinforced his determination to transfer biblical Christian principles of love and justice into the civil rights movement," he added.

"I would hate to think of what the civil rights movement would have been without Dr. King's influence," he said. "The National Guard, and the guns, and the dogs and the gas-ses, the fire hoses, they would have been around much longer. But it's very difficult to fight love indefinitely. Very difficult, if not impossible."

Ever since he was a doctoral student at Michigan State University in the 1960s, Warren has studied King's sermons and preaching style. His dissertation was a scholarly look at King the preacher.

Warren's new book is a complete rewriting and updating of that dissertation, scripted for lay rather than scholarly consumption. In it he dissects King's research, writing, speaking and delivery styles.

Warren was a student at Oakwood College when King spoke there on March 2, 1962. It inspired him to study King as part of his doctoral work in philosophy.

In a stroke of luck, one of Michigan State's few black professors then, Robert Green, had spent time with King during the Selma march. He was able to set up an interview for Warren. Prior to speaking at a Chicago church, King spent a couple hours with Warren.

"He exhausted every question I had to ask him," Warren recalled recently during an interview in his Huntsville home.

Warren writes: "Here was a man who spoke and served from principles hammered out primarily from family, the Bible and theological un-

derpinnings. All of his responses to my questions bore indelible marks of a conscious fulfillment of the understanding of God's law of love incumbent on his life—love of God and love of his fellow human beings—and he could do none other, come what might."

Warren interviewed numerous King associates and biographers and consulted some of the hundreds of books and thousands of newspaper and magazine articles about King.

The result is a painstakingly researched book that examines common notions about King's sermons. The book includes some little-known facts, including this one: By the time King turned 13, he had tried to commit suicide twice—both times in the wake of traumatic events involving his grandmother, first a serious accident and later her death.

Another observation deals with King's decision to enter the ministry after considering becoming a doctor and then a lawyer. He wrestled with his conscience and his soul.

When Time magazine selected him as the 1964 "Man of the Year" (the same year he won the Nobel Peace Prize), King told a reporter: "I had doubts that religion was intellectually respectable. I revolted against the emotionalism of Negro religion, the shouting and the stamping. I didn't understand it and it embarrassed me."

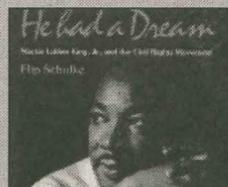
There are four ways to deliver sermons, according to scholars who study them: extemporaneous, reading a manuscript, memorization and impromptu (given off-the-cuff).

King preferred extemporaneous speeches, often using the same subject matter and many references, but always varying the content. Warren quotes King as saying he preferred to write out his sermons, making numerous revisions. But when he stepped to the pulpit, King generally used only notes or an outline, never a prepared

### Photographer recalls King's personal ministry

By Flip Schulke

*Editor's Note: Freelance photojournalist Flip Schulke had extensive access to Martin Luther*



*King Jr. during the last 10 years of King's life. Schulke's 11,000 images from the U.S. civil rights movement include private scenes of King resulting from exclusive invitations to photograph the King family at home. In "He Had a Dream," Schulke remembers King's personal ministry as well as his public protests.*

On Oct. 30, 1967, the United States Supreme Court upheld lower court convictions of Dr. King and other members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for trespass violations during the 1963 protest marches in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. King and his aides had to fly from Atlanta to Montgomery to serve the four-day jail sentence.

I met him walking through the Atlanta airport. He was casually dressed in a sweater with the Bible and two other books under his arm. We boarded the flight to Montgomery together and he motioned for me to sit with him.

At first he was deep in thought, but after a few

moments he turned to me and asked about my wife and children in Miami. We exchanged some small talk and I asked him why he was moving about in public, through airports, and at conferences, with so much advance notice. I told him that I was worried about all the loose talk I had heard through the South about the need to "get rid of Martin Luther King."

He picked up the Bible from his lap and said: "I will be here as long as God wants me here. I am not being careless with my life. I'm not going to walk in front of a car. But I also don't fear death. When the Lord wants to take me, he will."

I admitted to Dr. King that I did not have such faith. He spent quite a few minutes more counseling me about how I could develop and increase my faith. What had started out as my trying to tell him to be more careful, ended up with him worrying about my personal faith. He was going to jail and had been facing increasing problems with violent black protests, and he was more concerned about me than his own troubles.

I often find myself remembering that conversation, and it has been a great source of strength in my life. It was also the last personal conversation I had with Dr. King, and the last time I saw him alive.

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text from which he read. This approach made his sermons more spontaneous, Warren observes.

Warren asserts that King fits the role of a modern-day prophet whose strength and message had a divine source.

"I believe that God, in a real way, had marked him for his ministry and much of what he was able to accomplish through his spoken word, ... was beyond him," Warren said. "It was God performing a divine mission; God accomplishing something through an instrument."

King himself referred to a time during the Montgomery boycott when

he sat at his kitchen table and relinquished his own control over the situation to God, Warren added.

"He said, 'Lord, I don't know what to do. They (local African-Americans) expect something from me that's going to help them through this situation. I don't have it and I'm at my wit's end.'"

During that prayer he encountered a sense of peace that allowed him to proceed and lead, Warren said. "From then on, it was as if he and God were walking hand in hand."

Compiled from reporting by News Director David Winfrey and Ben Johnson for Religion News Service

## Warren says King's sermon topics still timely 34 years after his death

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (RNS)—Martin Luther King Jr. has been away from the pulpit for more than three decades, but his sermons are just as topical and timely today, according to Mervyn Warren, author of "King Came Preaching."

Here is how King addressed several themes, according to Warren's research:

■ **Brotherhood and sisterhood.** "The real tragedy—is that we see people as entities or merely as things. Too seldom do we see people in their true humanness. A spiritual myopia limits our vision to external accidents. We see men as Jews or Gentiles, Catholics or Protestants, Chinese or American, Negroes or whites. We fail to think of them as fellow human beings made from the same basic stuff as we, molded in the same divine image.

"The priest and the Levite saw only a bleeding body, not a human being like themselves. But the Good Samaritan will always remind us to remove the cataracts

of provincialism from our spiritual eyes and see men as men."

■ **God.** "We must be reminded anew that God is at work in His universe. He is not outside the world looking on with a sort of cold indifference. Here on all the roads of life, He is striving in our striving. Like an ever-loving Father, He is working through history for the salvation of His children. As we struggle to defeat the forces of evil, the God of the universe struggles with us."

■ **The church.** "The church must be reminded once again that it is not to be the master or the servant of the state, but the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state—never its tool. As long as the church is a tool of the state it will be unable to provide even a modicum of bread for men at midnight."

■ **The race problem.** "This text has a great deal of bearing on our struggle for racial justice. We as Negroes must

combine tough-mindedness and tender-heartedness if we are to move creatively toward the goal of freedom and justice. There are those soft-minded individuals among us who feel that the only way to deal with oppression is to adjust to it.

"But this is not the way out. This soft-minded acquiescence is the way of the coward. My friends, we cannot win the respect of the white people of the South or the peoples of the world if we are willing to sell the future of our children for our personal and immediate safety and comfort.

"Moreover, we must learn that the passive acceptance of an unjust system is to cooperate with that system, and thereby become a participant in its evil. Noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good."

■ **The role of whites.** "If your white brothers are to master fear, they must

depend not only on their commitment to Christian love but also on the Christ-like love which the Negro generates toward them. Only through our adherence to love and nonviolence will the fear in the white community be mitigated.

"A guilt-ridden white minority fears that if the Negro attains power, he will without restraint or pity act to revenge the accumulated injustices and brutality of the years. ... Many white men fear retaliation. The Negro must show them that they have nothing to fear, for the Negro forgives and is willing to forget the past."

■ **Overcoming a bad habit.** "What, then, is the way out? Not by our own efforts, and not by a purely external help from God. One cannot remove an evil habit by my resolution; nor can it be done by simply calling on God to do the job. It can be done only when a man lifts himself up until he can put his will into the hands of God's will as an instrument."

## Rock of ages

*Stadium event ministries look to reach next generation*

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

**Promise Keepers organizers say there might be as many as 10 "Passage" events for teens in 2003.**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (RNS)—They've brought thousands of adults to stadiums across the country for heart-tugging speeches, rousing music and a chance to think about God in the midst of busy lives.

Now, two evangelical ministries are turning their attention to the next generation.

On Dec. 15, Promise Keepers held "Passage," an event aimed at helping teen-age boys become "godly men," in Columbus, Ohio.

As boys watched "extreme" sports contests and heard a challenge to put Christian faith into practice, children of both sexes in Dallas watched a stage show called "The Gnoo Zoo Live Christmas Tour," created by Children of Faith, a new division of Women of Faith.

"It seems to be the next wave that people seem to feel

is an important thing to do," said Sheila Walsh, creator of the "Gnoo Zoo" concept and author of a related series of Christian children's books. "Parents want to be able to ... give their children something to hold on to that's not just fluff."

Brian Blomberg, vice president of development for Promise Keepers, said the Passage event is the result of older men seeking something for their children.

"It's been at the request of a lot of



**CELEBRATION** Approximately 14,000 teenage boys attended the "Passage" youth event last month in Columbus, Ohio. Sponsored by Promise Keepers, the daylong program represents a movement by several Christian arena-event groups to reach youth. (Promise Keepers photos by Wayne Armstrong)

our constituents that have said, 'You know, you do so much work with us as men. Is there some way you can reach out spiritually to our boys, to our sons?'" he said.

About three years ago after speaking at a Women of Faith event, Walsh said she was approached by an elderly woman who wished she had learned about God's "unshakable" love at a much earlier age. The mother of a 5-year-old boy, Walsh said she decided to create the "Gnoo Zoo" series in hopes of teaching young children about the grace of God.

The Christmastime tour is based on the first book in the "Gnoo Zoo" (pronounced "guh-noo zoo") series called

"In Search of The Great White Tiger: A Story About Following God." Walsh plays a tour guide who accompanies animal characters in a make-believe land to teach lessons to the children in the audience.

Children of Faith, based in Plano, Texas, features other children's books—including some for teenage girls—as well as products ranging from videos to CDs to stuffed animals. Another live nationwide tour is scheduled for the spring.

Promise Keepers, too, is hoping to reach out to young people through more than one event. The Columbus conference will be followed by a 12-week program the Denver-based men's ministry hopes will be used in local churches to address such issues as peer pressure, sexual abstinence and family relationships.

"We are going to use an event with high-octane speakers and popular bands and the extreme athletes to really give these guys a catalyst to say, 'I'm willing to make the commitment to go through this 12-session curriculum,'" Blomberg said. "That's where we really expect the longtime transformation."

He also expects the 12-hour conference for boys, dads and mentors will lead to more of the same. One already is planned for Anaheim, Calif., at an unspecified date in 2002. He hopes there might be as many as eight or 10 Passage events in 2003.

The Columbus event's 14,000 seats sold out early in the week it was scheduled, Blomberg said. Walsh said about 1,000 children and their parents have been attending the Children of Faith events.

The two stadium-oriented evangelical ministries are not the first to reach out to the younger set. Evangelist Billy Graham planned a one-time event at a 1994 crusade that has become a

tradition known as "A Concert for the NeXt Generation." The Cleveland event featured high-energy music from contemporary Christian artists coupled with a message from the famous evangelist.

"It really came out of his burden for his grandchildren and their peers, their generation, which is really a generation that is outside the grasp of the church," said Graham spokesman A. Larry Ross. "His wife, Ruth, said groups like dc Talk ... fill the pond and Billy gets to go fish."

Since 1992, the Graham ministry also has held events for children during its mission efforts, a Saturday morning staple that features a children's evangelist rather than Graham.

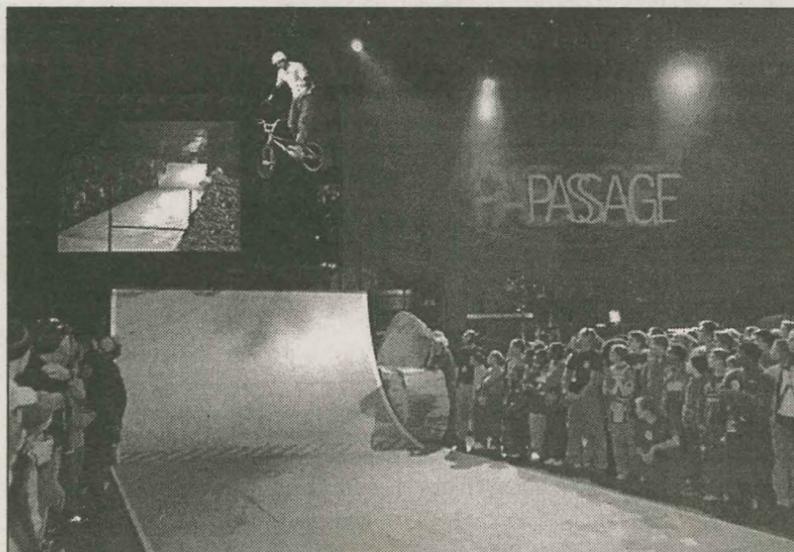
Although the efforts by Promise Keepers and Women of Faith are aimed at teens and younger children, officials at both ministries hope they will reach adults as well.

Promise Keepers, which has seen declining attendance since its historic 1997 gathering of tens of thousands of men on the National Mall in Washington, hopes this might cause men to return to its events aimed at adults—and refocus on their own spiritual lives.

"There will be an aspect of expectation that this could rejuvenate some of the guys to come back and look at a PK event," Blomberg said. "Maybe the dads will really feel an active involvement in their own spiritual path by working with their sons."

Likewise, Walsh said she hopes the Children of Faith initiative will reach more than the teens, pre-teens and children for whom they are primarily designed.

"I pray that some parents would buy a book about the love of God, sit down and read it to their children and that somehow through that their hearts (will) be touched," she said.



**IN THE AIR** A stunt cyclist performs for youth during "Passage" last month in Columbus, Ohio. Groups ranging from Promise Keepers to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association combine entertainment and music with a message encouraging youth to consider the gospel.

# NATION

## Preschool/Children's Ministers Meeting

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## Land blasts political strategy to link religious right with Taliban

NASHVILLE (BP)—A Southern Baptist religious liberties specialist says a reported Democratic Party plan to compare the "religious right" with the Taliban is "outrageous."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, responded to an article in Newsweek magazine that outlines a potential political battle plan this fall.

"The theory goes like this," wrote political analyst Howard Fineman. "Our enemy in Afghanistan is religious extremism and intolerance. It's therefore more important than ever to honor the ideals of tolerance—religious, sexual, racial, reproductive—at home."

Democrats will claim the GOP is out of the mainstream, Fineman wrote, "because it's too dependent on the intolerant 'religious right.'"

"This is outrageous," Land said. "I am appalled at this campaign by some in the Democrat Party to compare religious conservatives in America with the Taliban."

"The only way they can get away with it is if we take it lying down," Land said, promising to call his congressman, a Democrat. "I am going to tell him he ought to be ashamed of the leaders of his party who are proposing this and that he ought to do everything he can to stop it."

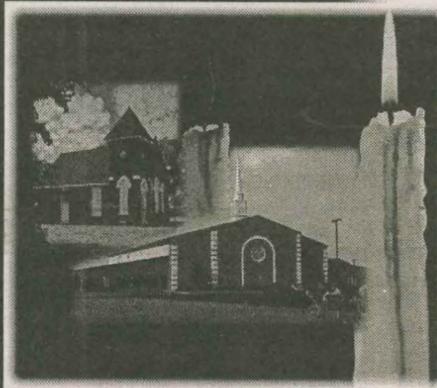
Fineman noted that the "incendiary battle plan" indeed is designed to outrage President Bush. "Then Democrats would have Bush just where they want him: in a fire fight at home."

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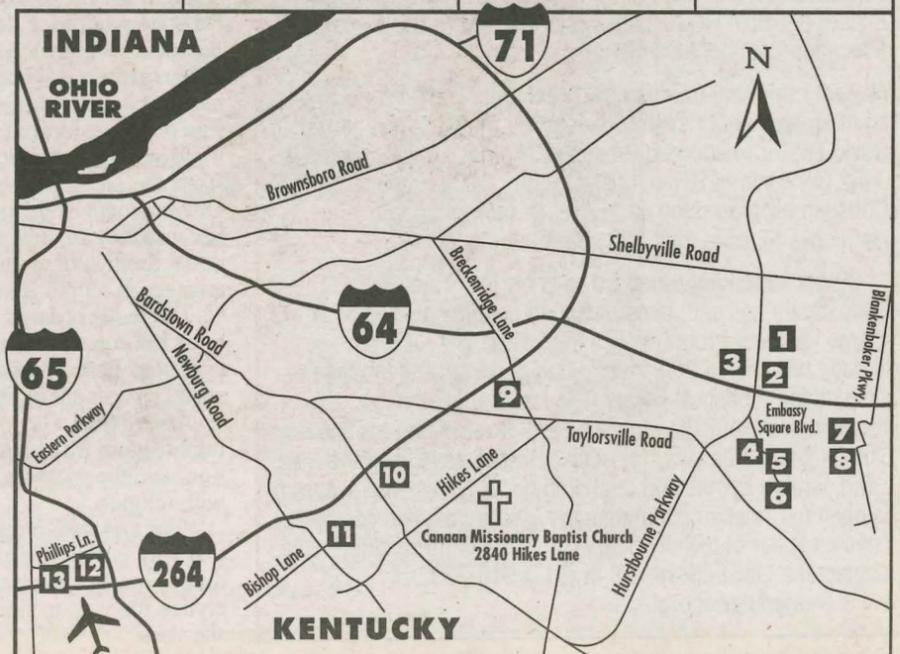
## Evangelism Conference Accommodations

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1 AmeriSuites Hotel / CB, K<br>701 S Hurstborne Pkwy.<br>502.426.0119<br>\$69   | 4 Hampton Inn East I-64 / CB<br>1902 Embassy Square Blvd.<br>502.491.2577<br>\$65 Single/Double<br>Cut-off date: 1/25/02 | 8 Best Western Signature Inn / CB<br>I-64, Exit 17<br>1301 Kentucky Mills Dr.<br>502.267.8100<br>\$71<br>Cut-off date: 2/10/02 | 11 Ramada Hotel Airport East<br>1921 Bishop Lane<br>800.228.2828<br>502.456.4411<br>\$59<br>Cut-off date: 1/18/02                                |
| 2 Holiday Inn Hurstbourne / R<br>1325 S. Hurstbourne Pkwy.<br>502.426.2600;<br>1.800.465.4329<br>\$79 Single/Double<br>Cut-off date: 2/4/02 | 5 Louisville Marriott East / R<br>1903 Embassy Square Blvd.<br>800.228.9290<br>\$99 (1-4 people)                         | 9 Breckinridge Inn / R<br>2800 Breckinridge Lane<br>502.456.5050<br>\$68 Single/Double<br>Cut-off date: 2/5/02                 | 12 Executive Inn / R<br>978 Phillips Lane<br>800.626.2706;<br>502.367.6161<br>\$55<br>Cut-off date: 1/25/02                                      |
| 3 Fairfield Inn by Marriott / CB<br>I-64, Exit 15<br>9400 Blairwood Road<br>502.339.1900<br>\$59<br>Cut-off date: 1/25/02                   | 6 Four Points Hotel & Suites by Sheraton<br>9802 Bunsen Way<br>502.499.0000<br>\$89 (1-4 people)                         | 10 Holiday Inn Southeast / R<br>3255 Bardstown Road<br>502.454.0451;<br>1.800.465.4329<br>\$79 Queen                           | 13 Best Western Ashton Inn Suites / CB, G<br>653 Phillips Lane<br>502.375.2233<br>\$89 Single/Double<br>\$99 4 per room<br>Cut-off date: 2/18/02 |
|   | 7 Microtel Inn / CB<br>1221 Kentucky Mills Dr.<br>502.266.6590; 502.499.6220<br>\$40.95 Single<br>\$45.99 Double         |  |  |

Special rates, if provided, are listed. When making lodging reservations, please mention Kentucky Baptist Convention and verify rates.

### Key to Amenities

CB continental breakfast  
G garage  
K kitchenette  
R restaurant



## NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Bush named "Layman of the Year."** President George W. Bush was named "Methodist Layman of the Year" by an evangelical United Methodist group. Good News, a 35-year-old evangelical caucus within the church, honored Bush for his "biblically informed worldview, character, patience, compassion and courage" in the war against terrorism. Bush was raised Episcopalian but moved to the United Methodist Church after marrying his wife, Laura. He regularly attended Methodist services in Texas but has decided not to join a Methodist church in Washington, reportedly opting instead to worship at the chapel at Camp David, where he spends most weekends.

■ **Conservatives criticize education bill.** Conservative Christians were critical of President Bush's education reform for lacking private school vouchers and other issues. The bipartisan bill calls for increased accountability among local schools and provides for yearly testing to measure progress. To gain Democratic support for the bill, Bush agreed to drop the vouchers proposal, which would have aided Christian and other private schools. Focus on the Family officials said Bush abandoned his core principle of giving more freedom to local school districts and instead invites a bureaucratic federal government into the classroom.

■ **Nine denominations take step toward unity.** Nine Protestant denominations will come together Jan. 18-21 in Memphis, Tenn., to highlight the start of a new relationship called Churches Uniting in Christ. Participating members include the African Methodist Episcopal Church; African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); Episcopal Church; Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; International Council of Community Churches; Presbyterian Church (USA); United Church of Christ; and United Methodist Church. Rather than a structural merger, the effort will bring them together occasionally for local worship services, anti-racism efforts and mission work.

■ **Presbyterian leader warns against withholding money.** The leader of the Presbyterian Church (USA) said pastors and churches who withhold money from the denomination in protest are violating their ordination vows and promoting schism. In a strongly worded letter to the church's 173 regional governing bodies, Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick criticized both liberal and conservative churches. At least one California church has ordained an openly gay woman. Conservative churches, concerned with the body's liberal drift, have threatened to withhold funds.

■ **School seeks exemption from Internet "filth."** Citing a concern about "unlimited filth" online, a small Christian school in Knoxville, Tenn., has requested that the state legislature permit exemptions from a law requiring computer education. The state requires a year of computer education, including "online communication," to obtain a high school diploma. "We don't have computers, radios or televisions in our homes or businesses, and we don't wish our children to be, you might say, infected with what's on them," Oakmont School principal Floyd Rochat told the joint House-Senate Education Oversight Committee.

■ **Radio ministry names new president.** Trans World Radio, an international Christian broadcasting ministry, has picked David Tucker to succeed President Thomas Lowell starting in July. Trans World Radio, based in Cary, N.C., broadcasts Christian programming each week in more than 180 languages to more than 160 countries.

■ **Clergy sabbatical program to continue.** The Lilly Endowment has announced plans to continue its National Clergy Renewal Program for a third year. The program already has helped 250 pastors and congregations to take or prepare for sabbatical leaves. The Indianapolis-based foundation recently announced the 129 recipients for 2001. They will use time away for such activities as touring the Holy Land, writing hymns and attending conferences. The program is open to Christian congregations whose ordained pastors have a master of divinity degree. For more information, contact the Lilly Endowment at (317) 916-7302; [www.clergyrenewal.org](http://www.clergyrenewal.org).

## High court declines teacher's evolution case

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The Supreme Court has declined to hear a case that could have decided if public school teachers have a First Amendment right to contradict their school district's policy on the teaching of evolution.

The court refused, without comment, to review a Minnesota court decision dismissing a lawsuit by a high school science teacher.

Rodney LeVake was removed from his position as a 10th-grade biology teacher in the southern Minnesota town of Faribault in 1998 after a colleague raised concerns about LeVake's thoroughness in teaching the theory of evolution. He was then reassigned to a lower-level science class that did not involve the teaching of evolution.

LeVake had told the colleague that he couldn't teach evolution in good conscience, and when the fellow teacher informed administrators, they initiated the process that led to LeVake's removal.

LeVake also presented a "position paper" in which he noted what he believed were faults with the theory of evolution and said he merely wanted the right to teach these. LeVake said he only wanted to take "an honest look at the difficulties and inconsistencies of the theory without turning my class into a religious one."

With the aid of the American Center for Law and Justice, LeVake sued the school district for discrimination, saying the district's actions violated his First Amendment rights to free

## Suit involves 2nd grader, religious materials

MASTIC BEACH, N.Y. (RNS)—A conservative law firm has filed suit on behalf of a second-grader whose public schoolteacher allegedly prevented him from handing out religious materials, including one responding to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The American Center for Law and Justice filed suit Jan. 8 on behalf of Michael and Lisa Leirer and their son, Joshua, charging the William Floyd Union Free School Dis-

trict in Mastic Beach, N.Y., with religious discrimination.

The suit charges that Joshua's teacher prevented him from distributing religious materials at the Long Island elementary school during non-instructional time.

He was prevented from handing out a booklet titled "God Is Our Shelter and Strength," a response to the terrorist attacks, because of concerns that it might offend some parents, the law firm said.

expression of religion and free speech.

A three-judge panel of the Minnesota Court of Appeals, however, ruled unanimously that a lower court was correct in dismissing LeVake's lawsuit against the district because, in the court's opinion, LeVake did not prove a legitimate claim to discrimination.

"It is unclear on what basis LeVake argues that his right to free exercise of religion was violated," the Minnesota judges wrote. "LeVake does not contend that (the school district) prohibited him from practicing the religion of his choice. He does not assert that (the school district) demanded that he refrain from practicing his religion outside of the scope of his duties as a public school teacher in order to retain his teaching position, and he does not assert that the curriculum requirements incidentally infringed on his religious practice."

In the past, the Supreme Court has

declared state laws requiring the teaching of creationism in public schools were unconstitutional. Since that time, many advocates of creation science have embraced a less religiously specific philosophy of creation called "intelligent design" theory. The theory doesn't deny that species have evolved or that the earth is older than a few thousand years, but suggests that an "intelligent force" guided the process. LeVake used ideas from intelligent design in his proposal to teach ideas contradicting evolution.

Wayne Holstad, LeVake's attorney, told the Supreme Court that the teacher "was silenced, not for anything he said in the classroom, but merely for holding a contrary viewpoint and expressing a desire to say certain things which the school district deemed out of step with its officially imposed orthodoxy."

## Judge puts brakes on state money for faith-based program

MADISON, Wis. (RNS)—A federal judge has ordered the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development to halt funding of a faith-based Milwaukee program that helps troubled fathers with job training and drug treatment.

U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb issued the order Jan. 8 after a lawsuit was filed by the Madison, Wis.-based Freedom From Religion Foundation opposing money going to the Faith Works program.

Faith Works receives grants from the state workforce development department and has a contract with the state corrections department to run a halfway house that provides 24-hour supervised residential care.

In her ruling, Crabb said the grants from the Department of Workforce Development were unconstitutional because they amount to "unrestricted, direct funding of an organization that engages in religious indoctrination."

The judge ordered a trial to determine the constitutionality of the contract that Faith Works has with the state Department of Corrections.

Anne Nicol Gaylor, president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, said the program was "drenched with religion."

"For a private program to operate that way is fine. Go right ahead, but don't expect public taxpayers to proselytize for you, to line up converts," she said.

## P.L.A.N. your estate

The Scriptures clearly teach us to honor the Lord with our substance, our estate. If we do, God promises "our barns will be filled to overflowing" (Proverbs 3:9-10).

The Scriptures also clearly teach us to provide for the future of our families. If we do not, God warns "we have denied the faith, and we are worse than an unbeliever"

(1 Timothy 5:8). In planning your estate, you have a responsibility to consider both your love for God and for family. Consider these four steps in planning your estate.

First, **prayerfully ponder** what are God's purposes for the estate He has entrusted to you, and what legacy does He desire for you to leave? What ministries would He have you benefit? In

what ways would He have you provide for your family, and who are those family members? Will the estate be subject to any death taxes? Are there gifts you should make during your lifetime for the benefit of ministries in which you believe and for family members? If so, do you need to retain an income interest in those gifts?

Second, **learn** more about the basics of Christian estate planning. Call toll-free Laurie Valentine, trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist

Foundation, for private consultation at no cost or obligation. In addition, suggest to your pastor the foundation be invited to conduct a Christian estate planning basics seminar in your church. There is no cost for the seminar, and the foundation has nothing to sell and does not twist anybody's arm to do anything. The seminar is exclusively for the stewardship education of the members and their guests.

Third, **act** upon your conclusions and convictions. Take immediate action to review and/or to execute the documents necessary to accomplish God's purposes for the estate He has entrusted to you.

Fourth, **'Njoy** knowing you have sought and followed God's will in providing for His ongoing work in the world and for your family. "In this way you will lay up treasure for yourselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so you may take hold of the life that is truly life" (1 Timothy 6:19).

### KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701; [www.ky.baptistfoundation.org](http://www.ky.baptistfoundation.org)

# RESOURCES

## Foundation spending \$25 million to fight pastor burnout

INDIANAPOLIS (RNS)—The Lilly Endowment is hoping to fight clergy burnout by spending \$25 million to help pastors to “sustain excellence” and “maintain energy and enthusiasm” throughout their careers.

The Indianapolis-based foundation, which funds religious causes with millions of dollars each year, said the physical, spiritual and emotional health of pastors is key to maintaining healthy, vibrant congregations.

Pastors are called to be preachers, teachers, administrators, fund-raisers and counselors, and “given the demands, it is easy for conscientious pastors to get so caught up with the press of daily work that they lose sight of what called them to the ministry in the first place,” according to a Lilly news release.

Officials are seeking proposals for grants, which will range from \$250,000 to \$2 million over three-

five-year periods. Nonprofit groups, ranging from seminaries and colleges to congregations and denominations, are invited to apply.

Programs funded by the grants could include sabbaticals, networking with other clergy or ongoing studies for Christian pastors. “Local congregations are crucial institutions, and the pastors who lead them need and deserve support for sustaining excellent work,” the foundation said.

## Pastors praise their preaching but want help with fund raising

*Continued from page 1*

Barna did note that the survey found a correlation between adult attendance at a church and the pastor's self-rating in the areas of vision casting, strategic development and possessing the gift of leadership.

“The pastors of larger churches were nearly three times as likely as the pastors of small congregations to rate themselves highly in motivating people on the basis of vision and developing ministry strategy,” he said.

While attendance isn't everything, he added, “the relationship between people's willingness to attend a church and the leadership qualities of the pastor is an important connection to highlight.”

Generally, pastors of charismatic churches rated themselves better in the nine categories than did pastors of fundamentalist churches. Pastors who described themselves as having a “liberal” theology—one-fifth of those surveyed—rated themselves more positively than those leading charismatic and fundamentalist congregations.

The survey also found that the spiritual gifts claimed by the senior pastors correspond with the areas in which they say they are doing their best work.

The primary gift that pastors listed most often were preaching/teaching (40 percent), pastoring/shepherding (12 percent) and encouraging (6 percent).

Years of service had some impact on pastors' replies. Pastors serving for more than a decade were more likely than less-experienced peers to rate themselves higher in pastoring, counseling and motivating people.

The survey, consisting of phone interviews of a random nationwide sample of 601 senior pastors of Protestant churches, was conducted in October and November 2001. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

*Compiled by reports from Religion News Service and the Barna Research Group's Web site, www.barna.org*

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## Missions in Mexico

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College sophomore Abi Clifton, daughter of Marc and Faith Clifton of Owenton, spent three weeks of her 2001 summer working through International World Changers in Los Mochis, Mexico.

During the previous summer she had journeyed to the same location to help build a church in the community.

The team Clifton served on planned to lead a vacation Bible school and teach English conversation classes at a local high school and university.

When they arrived, they learned they would only be able to work in the vacation Bible school, but they visited the university each day to meet and talk with students.

Thirty to 60 children between the ages of 2 and 16 came each day to the vacation Bible school. The team members taught the Bible school based on holidays. Each day featured a different holiday, and they sang songs and played games related to the holiday. Of the 60 youths who attended, only five knew the Christmas story about the birth of Jesus Christ.

Children in Mexico turned out to be just like children in America. Some were quiet and well behaved while others proved to be quite a handful. Frequently the team members would lead the children in playing games like Red Rover and Dizzy Bat to run off the children's excess energy.

Clifton enjoyed returning to Mexico. She was delighted to see the church building and how it is being used to minister to the people. Most of the time she conversed through translators and was frustrated by being unable to talk directly with a person. Seeing the children again and sharing God's love with them was a special high-

light. When Clifton returned home she served in her home church, First Baptist Church of Owenton, as a youth intern. She worked with both youth and college students and loved every moment.

Clifton actively involves herself in Cumberland College ministries. We thank her for her commitment to minister at home and overseas.

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

**CUMBERLAND  
COLLEGE**



## Working on the follow-through

Many people have given up on making New Year's resolutions. I'm sure there are some folks who really do lose those extra pounds, stop smoking or stick to a monthly budget as a result of a decision made Jan. 1. For many others, however, there is no resolve behind the resolution. The commitment, the passion for change, just isn't there.

There's a question I want to ask you: Is there something in your life that you are truly passionate about? I've asked myself this same question at various times in my life. Hopefully you can answer right away that you are passionate about being in God's will and then you will be able to identify, specifically, what His will is for you, this very day, this very moment.

For me and many others, I'm passionate about helping kids. There are so many children and teenagers who are in terrible situations and are facing trials most of us never could imagine. Through Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, those kids find a haven from abuse and neglect and a place to heal. Providing that place is the passion God gave me, and He's given it to many others in

Kentucky who have worked to create and sustain the ministry of KBHC.

KBHC came about because people put feet to their good intentions. Many intend to serve and give in the Lord's name, but sometimes the follow-through just isn't there. January would be a great time to work on that follow-through!

If you want to serve God by supporting this ministry, please call me at (800) 456-1386. The support you give can be for today's children and also for tomorrow's. I can tell you how you can support this ministry through your estate, charitable gift annuities and many other ways. I'm available to Sunday school classes, missions organizations and other groups to talk to you

about estate planning. There is no fee for these seminars, and you will not be pressured to give to KBHC or put the agency in your will.

Whatever direction the Lord is leading you, I challenge you to find your passion and then resolve to act upon it for His glory!

*Tom Townsend is vice president for development and communications at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Contact KBHC at (800) 456-1386 or at www.kbhc.org*

**HOMES FOR  
CHILDREN**



Tom Townsend

## WORLD VIEW

### ■ Number of Israeli Christians still small, but growing.

Recent figures compiled by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics found that 137,000 Christian citizens live in Israel, up from 120,000 in 1995. The overwhelming majority—about 115,000—of Christians are Arab. Most Christians are older than their Muslim neighbors and have fewer children. The data did not distinguish between Christians living in Israel and Christians living in the embattled Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The largest bloc of Israeli Christians—18 percent—live in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, where they constitute one-third of the city's population.

■ **Bin Laden in creche causes uproar.** Priest Giancarlo Sivieri said he had only the best intentions when he put the figure of Osama bin Laden behind the Holy Family in his Christmas creche, but he caused an uproar in the Tuscan city of Grosseto. Sivieri added a newspaper photograph of bin Laden mounted on cardboard to the traditional figures around Mary, Joseph and the Christ child in the miniature Nativity scene outside his church, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Protests poured in from local officials and parishioners. "I'm bitter," Sivieri said, "because there was no understanding of the message, which meant to say, 'Christ came to Earth to redeem every sinner, man or woman, and bin Laden is one of these.'"

### ■ Hindu accused of killing missionary might seek office.

A Hindu militant accused of killing an Australian missionary and his two young sons said he might be a candidate for the Indian parliament. Dara Singh is one of 17 men accused of setting fire to a jeep in which missionary Graham Staines was sleeping with his two sons, Philip, 10, and Timothy, 8. Staines, who ran a leper colony and lived in India for 30 years, died with his sons in the 1999 attack. Under Indian law, Singh could seek the office while on trial, but would have to resign if convicted.

## Condemned Chinese house church leader granted reprieve

*Continued from page 1*

The 50,000-member South China movement is one of many spinoffs from the larger Born Again house church movement, whose founder Xu Yongze recently served three years in jail.

The evidence against Gong has not been made public, and some evangelical sources are skeptical that his movement is a cult or that the rape charges are well-founded, Compass Direct reported.

The case highlights the question of defining a cult. The Chinese government has not given a formal definition, and its religious rules criminalize any Christian group that refuses to register with the government, making them vulnerable to the cult charge.

The South China group has received such a label, and in the December trial, four other leaders were given death sentences that were suspended for two years. A total of 63 members of the movement have been jailed.

"This group is in big trouble; the police are really gunning for them," a Beijing house church pastor told Compass Direct, "but I don't think they are particularly bad. They may be a bit eccentric in some doctrines, but there is nothing cultish about them."

Sources in Beijing said that Gong's reprieve was due "in a significant measure" to the pressure exerted by

U.S. government and congressional sources, as well as swift publicity by agencies such as Compass Direct and Freedom House.

The year 2002 is expected to be a difficult year for Chinese house churches that refuse to register with the government. According to Compass Direct, evidence suggests that the multi-million-member Born Again movement also has been singled out for harassment, show trials and multiple jailings of its leaders.

Another serious case emerged Jan. 5 when a Hong Kong citizen and trader, Li Guangqiang, also was accused of "using an evil cult to damage a law-based society," the same charge for which Gong's was sentenced to death, Direct Compass stated.

Li's offense: Smuggling 33,000 Bibles in April and May 2000 to the "Shouters"—a house church movement prominent in some rural parts of China, the news service reported.

Li was issued the indictment by a court in China's Fujian province, where he is being held.

The Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy warned that Li also might receive a death sentence. The center speculated that at least 16 Christian house church movements had been designated as "cults" by the government and could face the same kind of fierce crackdown that the folk-Buddhism movement Falun Gong has experienced during the past two years.

## Israel leaders halt construction of Nazareth mosque

NAZARETH (RNS)—Israel has decided to block further construction of a large mosque on land that sits adjacent to the main church in Nazareth.

The mosque project had angered Christians and led to tensions between the Palestinian Christian and Muslim communities.

The decision by the Israeli cabinet to stop the mosque's construction was likely to anger Muslims, and police in Nazareth, which has a population of 70,000, were braced for angry protests, Associated Press reported.

Muslim leaders called the government's act "irresponsible."

Earlier, Christians had strongly protested the government's decision to allow construction of the mosque which is on land adjacent to the Basilica of the Annunciation.

Muslim plans to construct the mosque at one point threatened to bring about the cancellation of Pope John Paul II's visit to the Holy Land in 2001 and in 1999 sparked street clashes between Muslims and Christians.

AP, citing government officials, said Cabinet ministers were asked to find an alternative site for the mosque within two weeks.

## Oh no! Not again!

It's a simple fact: Sometimes the weatherman does not cooperate. He could have had a snowstorm any time, but did he have to pick the weekend our students were returning from Christmas break?

A few days before the students were to return, I knew the forecast was not good. There was a front heading our way. In all likelihood it would come right across Kentucky, but maybe it would go more to the north or to the south.

On Saturday the phone began to ring. Parents from across Kentucky and the entire East Coast were asking what they should do. Some had to travel across the mountains of the Carolinas or Tennessee. They were worried that they would have a difficult time getting here. Additionally, about 25 new students were to enroll on Sunday morning. Fortunately, many of them arrived Saturday evening and stayed in some local motels.

By Saturday evening it appeared that the worst of our concerns was going to happen. The Weather Channel kept increasing the predicted amounts of snow.

First the prediction was 1 to 3 inches. Later they were saying 3 to 5 inches. Early on Sunday morning the predicted amount had grown to 4 to 8 inches, and by noon the possible amount of snow had reached 12 inches in some areas.

It appeared we were going to have a repeat of January 1996. On the very same weekend that year, a bad snowstorm hit early on Saturday morning. By Sunday morning traffic was at a near standstill and we had students stranded everywhere. Parents were calling, frantically trying to find out where their children were. Hundreds of phone calls were made trying to locate dozens of

students. We did not want to go through that again, but all indications were that it might recur.

Sixteen of the 25 new students did arrive to enroll for the second semester on Sunday morning. Little by little, dozens of returning students made their way back to campus. Then it happened. About 1 in the afternoon we were told that Greyhound was pulling their buses off the road. That meant we would have students stranded not only up and down I-75 but in many other areas. Again

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

the phone started ringing. Students wanted to know what they should do, and parents wanted to know where we thought their children were.

Fortunately some of the snow melted, and the snowfall amounts were less than predicted. By Sunday night two-thirds of our students were back on campus. More than 100 students were at home or were stuck on the way.

When the big snow hit in 1996 we cancelled school on Monday because we only had about 25 students on campus. It was the first day we had missed in 18 years.

After I arrived home late Sunday, students called to see if school would be canceled on Monday. Much to their disappointment, I told them that indeed we would have school. Missing another day would not have been the end of the world, but how many Kentucky schools can say that they have missed only one day in 23 years?

Classes on Monday were a little smaller than usual, but I think the students were glad to be back. By Monday evening only a handful of students were still absent.

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

## Lord, tell the Rippetoes we are grateful

Scripture declares of Abel: "though he is dead, he still speaks" (Hebrews 11:4). Stewardship decisions made while we live enable us to continue speaking after death. Emma W. and S.E. Rippetoe of Russell Springs continue to speak about their faith in Christ and commitment to the work of Kentucky Baptists. Mrs. Rippetoe died in 1989 and her husband died in 1992. Upon his death, the major portion of the estate went to the Kentucky Baptist Foundation to create the Emma W. and S.E. Rippetoe Endowment Fund. The \$1.3 million fund provides quarterly gifts to five KBC ministries.

Both the Rippetoes were born and reared in the Russell Springs area. He graduated from Bowling Green Business University. They lived a short while in Vanderburg, Ala., where he operated a company store. Her father owned a mercantile store in Russell Springs, and in 1934 they bought it out and operated the business until 1983.

Rippetoe was a director of the First National Bank; she was local postmaster for six years. Their home church, Liberty Baptist, was the central focus of their life. Edward Rippetoe, a nephew, said,

"The church was their pride and joy. They both taught a Bible class; he was a deacon and she was president of the Woman's Missionary Union for a long time. They always tithed their income to the Lord's work. From 1978 until his death, Mr. Rippetoe gave half of his income to charity. In December he added the figures and dispersed to various ministries until he gave away 50 percent."

Until Jesus comes, the faith of Emma and S.E. Rippetoe will speak. Each quarter, a gift comes in their name to Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Campbellsville University, Oneida Baptist Institute, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children and Liberty Baptist Church. This dedicated Christian couple, now in glory, helps us continue serving others in Jesus' name.

Contact personnel from the Kentucky Baptist Foundation and the other agencies to discuss your estate plans. Creative choices are available that will provide current income, simplify probate and lower tax liability. You can remember family and friends and also support the Lord's work. Lord, tell Mr. and Mrs. Rippetoe we are very grateful. Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

# BOOKS/MUSIC

**Reflections on the Water: Understanding God and the World through the Baptism of Believers.** Edited by Paul Fiddes. Smyth & Helwys/Regents, 1996. 143 pages. ◆◆◆◆ (out of five)

Baptists are who we are because of our understanding of baptism. Into and from our concept of the baptism of believers by immersion flow the identifying marks of Baptists: soul competence, the priesthood of believers, regenerate church members, separation of church and state and freedom of conscience. Yet, how often do we teach or reflect on this central act in the life of our branch of the Christian tradition?

English Baptists, under the guidance of Paul Fiddes, principal of Regent's Park College at the University of Oxford, have developed a series of study guides on Baptist life, practice and beliefs. Volume Four of that series deals with the unique way Baptists practice believer's baptism.

This book goes beyond a discussion of mode and fitness of the candidate, though it certainly touches those themes, to an examination of what believer's baptism testifies to about the nature of God, creation and the identity of Christian communities.

In so doing, English Baptists challenge us to go beyond viewing baptism as a "mere symbol." They encourage us to understand that, while Baptists may never be able to adopt the notion of sacrament prevalent in traditions that baptize infants, we still need to recognize that God is present and active in and through all who participate in the act of baptism.

"Reflections on the Water" is an excellent resource for teaching and preaching, as well as small group study. *Jim Holladay*

**"Velma Still Cooks in Leeway."** Vinita Hampton Wright. Broadman & Holman, 2000. 294 pages. \$12.99 ◆◆◆◆

"Velma Still Cooks in Leeway" shows that there are Christian novels being published that push some limits, touch on taboos and manage to have a little fun all at the same time.

Wright's novel is certainly not in contention for a Nobel Prize, but then again it isn't trying for that. It's simply a plain, quiet novel reflecting the Kansas prairie where it's set and the plain, quiet protagonist of the novel, Velma Brendle.



The book's title is also an explanation of the novel's heart. Velma, who runs the only diner in the town of Leeway, whips up meals

in her diner's kitchen while listening to and fretting over the lives of her friends and neighbors as they live, more often than not, in the limbo between pain and understanding.

The religious elements of the book are presented through Velma's own struggles with God and her inner dialogues with God.

Wright is successful in keeping the book's tone from becoming preachy by letting the religious ponderings in the novel come from Velma herself, a slightly cynical, pragmatic and compassionate woman who isn't afraid to ask tough questions or criticize perceived wrongs in the church.

"Velma Still Cooks in Leeway" also has a little fun with itself, including Velma's recipes throughout its pages as if sharing potluck secrets with a fellow friend at a church supper.

Wright knows the culture about which she writes and manages to write a novel full of faith with characters real enough to pull you into the tale. *Victoria Moon*

**Mad Mary: A Bad Girl from Magdala Transformed at His Appearing.** Liz Curtis Higgs. Waterbrook Press, 2001. 290 pages. \$19.95 ◆◆◆◆

In her two previous books on the "bad girls of the Bible" Higgs omitted Mary Magdalene from the study. This was for various reasons, but Higgs came to understand that Mary Magdalene deserved a book of her own.

Higgs continues in her formula of studying a biblical woman by first creating a fictional story in which the biblical character (in this case, Mary Magdalene) is a model for a modern character set in today's world.

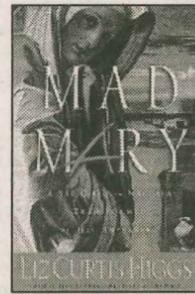
Mary Magdalene becomes Mary Margaret Delaney, "a woman adrift in contemporary Chicago, desperate for someone to save her from herself."

Higgs weaves an interesting story of Mary Margaret Delaney and her interaction with Jake Stauros from Calvary Fellowship. Higgs presents Mary as more mad than bad, and Mary becomes a character with whom the reader identifies.

After the fictional story, Higgs presents her well-researched and documented study of Mary Magdalene.

Each of the six study chapters ends with four lessons learned and a series of questions for further consideration. The questions are thought provoking and move beyond simple questions meant to review facts.

One other thing: This book is written for women. Men can hear the message as well, but Higgs writes with the same woman-to-woman language as she uses when speaking to women's groups, addressing her reader as "sister," "babe" and "girlfriend" and observations that assume a shared female experience. *Wayne Hager*



**Redefining Church Membership: From Myth to Ministry.** John Powers. LifeWay Press, 2001. 132 pages. ◆

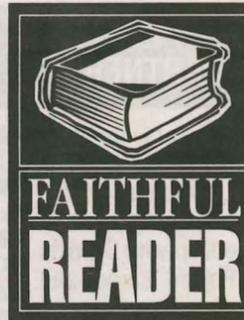
"Redefining Church Membership" is one of those books that should never have been published. That is not to imply that John Powers does not have something important to say; he does. He seeks to address the organizational myths of church life that hamper authentic ministry and discipleship.

Powers wants church leaders to take church membership more seriously and to put forth the effort necessary to motivate Christians to allow their Christian faith to shape not only their personal lives, but the way they work together to achieve God's mission in the world.

In the process, he tackles some pervasive myths: "The church is a volunteer organization"; "We cannot place expectations on church members"; "Eighty percent of the people doing 20 percent of the work is normal"; and "Belonging to a local church is not important."

One reason this book should not have been published is that it needed a more careful editing job. Powers wants to use the image of mountain climbing to illustrate the challenge of overcoming these myths. Each myth is a type of mountain that must be scaled. But every chapter begins with a recap of what this image means and why he is using it. The first two chapters dealing with this image easily could have been conflated into one.

Another reason for not publishing this book is that it offers very little in the way of practical handles. Powers does include lists of concepts related to each myth, but few ideas to flesh them out. A careful editor could have helped him overcome both these limits. *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](mailto:jwhager@surry.net), [docholladay01@aol.com](mailto:docholladay01@aol.com) or [victoria.moon@earthlink.net](mailto: victoria.moon@earthlink.net)

## Jaci Velasquez, P.O.D. among Grammy nominees

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—Christian artists Jaci Velasquez and P.O.D. earned nominations for the 44th Grammy Awards outside the traditional gospel categories.

The nominees were announced Jan. 4. The awards ceremony is scheduled for Feb. 27 in Los Angeles.

Velasquez's "Mi Corazon" (which means "My Heart" in English) was nominated for best Latin pop album, and P.O.D.'s "Alive" was among the nominees for best hard rock performance. Nominees in the gospel categories are:

**Best rock gospel album:** "Big Tent Revival Live" by Big Tent Revival; "Flap Your Wings" by the Choir; "Solo" by dc Talk; "Sonic-praise" by Sonicflood; "The Last Street Preacha" by T-Bone.

**Best pop/contemporary gospel album:** "Oxygen" by Avalon; "Declaration" by Steven Curtis Chapman; "Talk About It" by Nicole Mullen; "Worship" by Michael W. Smith; "CeCe Winans" by CeCe Winans.

**Best Southern, country or bluegrass gospel album:** "God Is Love: The Gospel Sessions" by Ann-Margret & the Jordanaires, The Light Crust Doughboys with James Blackwood; "Bill & Gloria Gaither Present a Billy Graham Music Homecoming"

## Christian music sales set record in 2001

NASHVILLE (RNS)—Contemporary Christian and gospel music reached a new U.S. sales record in 2001, selling almost 50 million units, according to an industry organization.

The total album sales of the Christian music were 13.5 percent higher than in 2000, while overall music industry album sales dropped about 3 percent, the Christian Music Trade Association announced.

by Bill & Gloria Gaither and the Homecoming Friends; "Two Old Friends" by Merle Haggard and Albert E. Brumley Jr.; "From the Heart" by the Oak Ridge Boys; "Inspirational Journey" by Randy Travis.

**Best traditional soul gospel album:** "Spirit of the Century" by the Blind Boys of Alabama; "Hymns" by Shirley Caesar; "Not Guilty ... The Experience" by John P. Kee and the New Life Community Choir; "Show Up & Show Out" by Dottie Peoples; "Persuaded—Live in DC" by Richard Smallwood with Vision.

**Best contemporary soul gospel**

The total sales of contemporary Christian and gospel albums stood at 49,965,000 units at the end of 2001, according to SoundScan, a computerized network that collects sales data from retailers and compiles the results for industry reports.

The total number of sales—marking an increase at mainstream retailers, Christian chains and independent vendors—exceeded 2000 sales of 44,031,000 as well as 1999 sales of 46,852,000.

**album:** "The Experience" by Yolanda Adams; "Live in Concert" by Kim Burrell; "In Case You Missed It ... And Then Some" by Fred Hammond; "Still Tramaine" by Tramaine Hawkins; "Melodies of My Heart" by Angie Winans.

**Best gospel choir or chorus album:** "All About Him (Jesus)" by O'Landa Draper's Associates; "Calling on You" by Chicago Mass Choir; "Light of the World" by Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir; "Love Is Live!" by LFT Church Choir; "The Storm Is Over" by the Potter's House Mass Choir.

## Church sponsors 'holy bonfire' to destroy Harry Potter books

ALAMOGORDO, N.M. (RNS)—Claiming that behind the bespectacled face of Harry Potter is "the power of satanic darkness," a New Mexico pastor led a public book burning recently.

Pastor Jack Brock of Christ Community Church in Alamogordo drew hundreds of supporters and protesters to the after-service burning.

Church members sang "Amazing Grace" as they tossed dozens of Harry Potter books and other works they consider spiritually harmful into the flames.

"These books teach children how they can get into witchcraft and become a witch, wizard or warlock," Brock said, according to Associated Press. "Harry Potter books are going to destroy the lives of many young people."

The books, written by British author J.K. Rowling about a kid wizard, have been popular with young people and the subject of a blockbuster movie.

The 74-year-old Brock said his Christmas Eve sermon was titled "The Baby Jesus or Harry Potter?" He considered the book-burning to be part of an effort to urge Christians to remove everything from their homes that prevents them from communicating with God.

While others also have criticized Rowling's books, saying they may foster devilish thoughts among young people, the author has said she considers such views to be absurd.

The "holy bonfire," which had been advertised in Alamogordo the previous week, also attracted hundreds of Potter-loving protesters who chanted "Stop burning books."

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ A Polish pastor for the new Baptist church in Czestochowa, Poland. To date, 12 new believers have been baptized into the new church and nine more await baptism. The church is praying to have 40 new baptized believers by May 2002.

■ That God would work in the hearts of Russians in Khabarovsk, Russia, to whom missionaries distributed Bibles in December and January. On Dec. 9 alone, about 400 Bibles were given out.

■ Openness among the members of International Baptist Church in Sofia, Bulgaria, to minister to refugees from Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan and a baptismal class for Iranian new believers taught by Pastor James Duke.

■ A pastor for International Baptist Church in Copenhagen, Denmark. Contact Daniel Grout; e-mail: daniel.grout@eu.rhodia.com.

■ God's blessings on the showings of the "Jesus" film in seven locations in Moscow this month.

■ Hellenic Gospel Church in Newton, Mass., as the church seeks to reach Greek-Americans in Boston.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **BELFRY**—First Church called **Mark Helton** as pastor.

■ **BENTON**—New Zion Church called **Brad Hall** as pastor.

■ **CENTERFIELD**—Centerfield Church will host a women's conference, "A New Year, A New You," Feb. 2. For information, call (502) 243-1982.

■ **FARMINGTON**—Coldwater Church called **Larry Salmon** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Poplar Grove Church in Hickman.

■ **FORT MITCHELL**—Fort Mitchell Church ordained **Darrell Andress, Lauri Hackman, Scott Long, Mark McFadden** and **Roger Slagle** as deacons. **French Harmon** is pastor.

■ **GRAVEL SWITCH**—Beech Fork Church licensed **George Hourigan** to the ministry and ordained **Ben Henson** as a deacon. **Lee Arnold** is pastor.

■ **HARRODSBURG**—Bethel Church called **David Culp** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Buffalo Lick Church in Cadiz.

■ **LAWRENCEBURG**—Alton Church will host "Days of Celebration" Feb. 17-20 with **Ricky Cunningham**, pastor of Hardin Church, as

guest speaker.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Hillsdale Church called **Timothy Harris** as pastor and **Dale Fields** as worship leader. The church will hold an installation service for the two ministers Feb. 3, 2 p.m.

Seaton Park Church called **Wayne Eads** as pastor. He previously was co-pastor of Morningside Church.

■ **REGINA**—**Rick Wright** resigned as pastor of Faith First Church to start a church.

■ **ROBARDS**—Robards Missionary Church called **Larry Birkhead** as pastor. He previously was pastor of New Barren Springs Church in Hopkinsville.

■ **SOMERSET**—First Church will host **Allison Durham Speer** in concert Jan. 27, 7 p.m. For information, call (606) 678-5106.

### 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.

## Baptist educator's legacy: Translating 40-plus theology books into Chinese

ARLINGTON, Texas (BP)—When Wayne Wei-Yuan Siao died from complications of a stroke in an Arlington, Texas, hospital, at age 91, he left a legacy encompassing 44 theological textbooks translated from English to his native Chinese.

Siao was a 1959 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He served as a teacher and pastor in China and Malaysia for more than 50 years. He also served on the Baptist World Alliance's executive committee and Christian ethics commission.

Siao's most significant contribution to theological education was his translation of theological books, totaling nearly 7.5 million Chinese characters. He produced most of the manuscripts from 1953-69 while serving as the translation editor for the Orient Baptist Theological Textbooks Committee.

A.H. Strong's "Systematic Theology," Robert Baker's "A Summary of Christian History" and W.T. Conner's "The Faith of the New Testament" were among the books Siao translated.

James Leo Garrett, distinguished professor emeritus of theology at Southwestern Seminary, said Siao's contribution to the Christian faith should be neither underestimated nor overlooked.

"I would think that his work of translation of American, chiefly Baptist, theological works into Chinese was one of the most significant translation projects of the kind in the 20th century," Garrett said. "Therefore, his contribution to theological education and ministerial training in lands where the Chinese language is spoken and read is indeed very significant."

Siao's daughter, Vivian, agreed. "Students for many years will benefit from his efforts in translating these works into Chinese," she said.

Roger Capps, who served with Siao at seminaries in Malaysia and Singapore, described him as "a Baptist church statesman."

Capps, now a theological educator in Bulgaria with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, said Siao "loved the Lord, His church and had a profound calling to help prepare men and women to serve the Lord through the church."

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**AVAILABLE:** Ordained Southern Baptist minister seeks conservative, Spirit-led church to pastor—full-time or bivocational. Open to traditional, contemporary or blended worship. Some experience in leading worship as well as youth ministry. Requests for resumé or more information can be sent to: Rev. George M. Bryant, 390 Nottingham Road, Lexington, KY 40517; or call and leave a message: (859) 272-7156.

**FOR SALE:** Konica 2125 copy machine. Approximately 3 years old; maintained under maintenance contract. \$1,500. For more information, contact Northside Baptist Church, (270) 765-5324.

**SEEKING:** Ministry Assistant. Calvary Baptist Church in Danville is seeking a warm, friendly, Christian individual proficient in desktop publishing, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Good writing and organizational skills also are a must. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 214 Lincoln Ave., Danville, KY 40422.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of youth for Ovesen Heights Baptist Church, Hodgenville, Ky. Salary negotiable. Currently the church has 100 to 125 in Sunday school and 150 to 175 in Sunday morning worship. We have 10 to 15 in our youth program and are expecting a large increase in the next several years as young people come out of our AWANA into the youth program. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Ovesen Heights Baptist Church, PO Box 253, Hodgenville, KY 42748-0253.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Lebanon Junction, Ky. Average worship attendance: 140. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 577, Lebanon Junction, KY 40150.

**SEEKING:** Children/family minister; individual who is passionate about relational ministry with children (birth through 6th grade) and their families. Minister will develop, coordinate and implement a dynamic in-reach/outreach program for children and families. Seminary degree strongly preferred. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 612 E 12th Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42101.

**SEEKING:** Full-time senior pastor for Thornhill Baptist Church in Frankfort. All communications should be directed to the Pastor Search Committee, Thornhill Baptist Church, 1142 Holmes St., Frankfort, KY 40601. (502) 223-7303. E-mail: thbchurch@dcr.net.

**SEEKING:** Organist for mid-sized, dynamic, growing church, Sunday morning worship services. For more information, please call Cedar Creek Baptist Church, (502) 239-2129.

**SEEKING:** Ormsby Heights Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., is receiving resúmes for the position of minister of music. This position is full time with the possible addition of a second ministry area (education, missions, administration, etc.) to be determined by the candidate's interests, experience and skills. Ormsby Heights is a conservative church with a blended style of worship (gospel, hymns, praise/worship, contemporary) and a very strong interest in developing contemporary worship opportunities targeting young adults. Please send resúmes to: Ormsby Heights Baptist Church, 2120 Lower Hunters Trace, Louisville, KY 40216.

**SEEKING:** Part-time secretary. Send resumé to Gethsemane Baptist Church, 10400 Blue Lick Road, Louisville, KY 40229, or fax (502) 969-3191.

**SEEKING:** Liberty Baptist Church in Leitchfield, Ky., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Interested candidates may submit resúmes to: Gladys Duvall, PO Box 88, Millwood, KY 42762-0088.

**SEEKING:** Minister of music/worship leader—full-time or part-time as God leads. Part-time duties include direction of adult choir, guidance of children's choir and leaders and initiation of youth choir/praise teams. Full-time duties include those previously mentioned, with the addition of a second ministry area (youth, education, missions/outreach, etc.) Gilead Baptist Church embraces music representing a blend of gospel, traditional hymns and contemporary selections. Please send resumé to: Rev. Nathan Joyce, Gilead Baptist Church, PO Box 56, Glendale, KY 42740.

**SEEKING:** Monument Heights Baptist Church is seeking a full-time associate minister of music and youth. The church supports BGAV, CBF and SBC. Salary/benefits package commensurate with training/experience. Please submit resumé by Friday, Jan. 25, to: Personnel Committee, Monument Heights Baptist Church, 5716 Monument Ave., Richmond, VA 23226. E-mail: personnel@monument-heights.org.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Highland Park First Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. Please submit resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 7321 Billtown Road, Louisville, KY 40299.

**SEEKING:** Perryville Baptist Church is eagerly seeking God's man for the position of full-time pastor. Membership: 540. Church has begun a building program. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 26, Perryville, KY 40468, or fax to (859) 332-8729. Church phone: (859) 332-8721.

**SEEKING:** Do you have a heart for missions? The Kentucky Baptist Convention, in partnership with the North American Mission Board, is seeking a Mission Service Corps (MSC) consultant. This missions-minded individual will enlist and place missionaries, identify needs and promote MSC in his or her area. This volunteer position does have an expense account and some great benefits. Interested people should contact Mission Service Corps, Kentucky Baptist Convention, PO Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253, (800) 266-6477, ext. 397, or Eric.Allen@kybaptist.org.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational pastor for Southern Baptist church. Average Sunday morning worship service attendance: 60. Send resumé to: Mt. Eden Baptist Church, PO Box 310, Hawesville, KY 42348, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

**SEEKING:** Audubon Baptist Church seeks full-time pastor to lead a moderate church that has adopted the 1963 faith and message statement. Located at the edge of the Audubon Park area. Seeking an individual who will be a partner in defining God's direction for the church. Thankful for more than 50 years of service and excited about God's plan for the future. Currently 80 to 100 in Sunday school and 100 to 150 in Sunday morning worship service. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Audubon Baptist Church, 1046 Hess Lane, Louisville, KY 40217.

**SEEKING:** Growing, Christ-centered church seeks part-time children's/preschool director (25 hours a week). Interested candidates should submit resúmes to: Personnel Committee, Bethlehem Baptist Church, 5708 Preston Highway, Louisville, KY 40219; fax: (502) 964-9678.

## Baseball opens ministry doors in Africa

By Sue Sprengle  
SBC International Mission Board

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)—A sharp crack of the bat sends the base runners in motion.

The shortstop moves smoothly to his left, fields the ball and tosses it to the third baseman. The third baseman grabs the baseball out of his glove and throws the ball as hard as he can at the muddy, square base barely a foot away.

Cheers erupt from every player as the ball rolls to the outfield. The barefoot left fielder doesn't retrieve the ball; instead he turns a few cartwheels in celebration.

"No man, you're playing the wrong sport. This isn't cricket," shouts the coach. "We're playing baseball, you have to touch the base in order to get the out—not knock it over with the ball."

The coach, Southern Baptist missionary Kurt Holiday, shakes his head as the celebration continues and looks to his wife, Janna Kay, for a little support.

It's too late; she's already hiding her face trying to conceal her laughter. Finally, Holiday smiles and throws his hands up in defeat.

Coaching baseball in Africa is different than any team the Holidays ever coached in the United States. When you factor in the different types of "delay of game"—such as shoeing chickens off the field, chasing down baboons that have stolen rolling baseballs or waiting on wom-

en carrying jugs of water across the middle of the field—there is just no comparison to the American version of the sport.

Most South Africans have never heard of baseball, let alone watched a game. Teaching the game requires starting from scratch. Despite the lack of knowledge, most schools welcome the coaching duo with open arms into their communities. The Holidays not only bring baseball with them but also an important message about the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

"We use baseball as a way to build relationships within the communities," Holiday says. "We come in and do some coaching clinics and after each clinic we do some Bible studies. After a few practices, we have a game where the parents come watch, and then we try to start some adult Bible studies which we hope eventually lead into new churches."

The Holidays teach baseball fundamentals to anyone who asks, but their main focus is in the coloured communities in the Greater Johannesburg area. Many coloureds, called this because of their mixed races, live in informal settlements made up of houses built out of tin or scraps. During apartheid, the coloureds were not accepted by the black community or the white communities simply because of their mixed races.

Coloured schools readily open their doors for the not-so-traditional baseball practice. One headmaster said that their students have nothing to do after school but walk around and

find trouble. He feels that for his students, the combination of Bible study and baseball is exactly what they need.

At practice, the 10- and 11-year-olds dive into the gear, but aren't quite sure which hand the baseball glove is supposed to fit on.

Holiday calls the group to gather around him and begins to explain the fundamentals of throwing.

"I'm a Christian, so I call this the cross position," Holiday says as he demonstrates how to separate the glove and ball for the proper throwing position. "It's like the cross Jesus died on."

During batting practice, he tells the young players to keep their eye on the ball and to never stray from it.

"How easy is it to hit the ball if you aren't looking at it?" he asks. "It's the same with Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus and keep them there."

In another corner of the soccer field-turned-baseball field, Mrs. Holiday teaches how to field a ground ball. The groups take a short rest break as a woman pushing a wheelbarrow filled with Jeri cans of water cuts across the playing field.

"You know, it's a mistake for people to assume they can't use their gifts on the mission field," Mrs. Holiday says as she tosses another grounder. "We are a family of baseball fanatics and here we are, in a sports-mad country, teaching about the two things we love the most: Jesus Christ and baseball."

"It just doesn't get any better than that."



ANGEL ANGLE Virginia Uptain of Huntsville, Ala., shows off a pair of her angel earrings. Uptain estimates she has more than 100 angel-related objects and artifacts. (RNS photo by Carucha Meuse)

## Looking for an angel? Click everythingaboutangels.com

By Yvonne Betowt  
Religion News Service

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (RNS)—Virginia Uptain started collecting angels before it became a craze. Her home has angels on mantels, on lampshades and even attached to windows. She has angel jewelry, candle huggers and napkin ring holders; books on angels; and even one outfit adorned with them.

"I've been collecting angels for more than 30 years," said Uptain, a member of Central Presbyterian Church in Huntsville. "People are always giving me gifts with angels on them. I'm sure I have at least 100."

Uptain, who is retired, is quick to point out she doesn't worship angels, but considers them to be messengers from God. She likes to think of them as protectors.

She isn't alone. A 1993 Time magazine poll, which provided one of the most in-depth looks ever at Americans' view of angels, said about two-thirds of those responding believed in angels, and almost half believed they have a guardian angel. One-third of the people claimed to have had a personal experience with an angel.

The interest in angels began about two decades ago, according to John Ronner of Murfreesboro, Tenn. Ronner has written four books on angels. His first, "Do You Have a Guardian Angel?" was published in 1985. He then wrote "The Angels of Cokeville: And Other True Stories of Heavenly Intervention" and "Know Your Angels: The Angel Almanac."

His latest work is "The Angel Calendar Book," which his Web site says "breaks new ground in angel literature by connecting each date on the calendar to the subject of angels."

"There is clearly a trend toward greater angel belief," said Ronner. "What has helped the cause of angels is actually the quantum physics developed in science ... that has given us a deeper understanding of the universe."

Ronner turned his energies to the internet and has now developed one of the most extensive Web sites on angels—[www.everythingaboutangels.com](http://www.everythingaboutangels.com).

If you want to know about angel art, merchandise or books, angel quotes, facts on angels, angel encounters, angel movies or even "Who's Who in Angelology," check out Ronner's page.

Ronner said he was not raised in a religious environment, but through his studies as an adult gradually began believing in the existence of a spiritual realm. He read Billy Graham's book on angels and said he was "very taken" with it.

"When I became interested in angels, there was very little information out there. Today there are hundreds of books on angels. More than 40 books on angels were published in 1994, which was about the height of the interest."

And while it is likely there has been some decline since that peak, Ronner believes the interest continues and points to how even Hollywood has gotten into the act with the popular television series "Touched by an Angel."

It is, of course, Virginia Uptain's favorite program.

## Focus on the Family scales back anniversary plans

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (RNS)—Focus on the Family, the Colorado Springs-based evangelical Christian media ministry, has scaled back its 25th anniversary celebration this summer because of the faltering economy, Sept. 11 fallout and other logistical barriers, organizers said.

Originally, the organization wanted to stage a massive, three-day public event at the U.S. Air Force Academy football stadium not far from the ministry's Colorado Springs headquarters.

But problems arose even before the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, including worries about transportation, parking and weather, said Steve Johnson, the manager of the anniversary celebration.

Since then, tighter security and the threat that the academy might be

closed if another terrorist strike occurred convinced Focus on the Family it should look elsewhere, Johnson said.

The celebration's centerpiece now will be an invitation-only evening July 27 at the Pepsi Center arena in Denver, 70 miles to the north, with Christian speakers and musicians. Other invitation-only events during the weekend will include a youth concert at a smaller arena in Colorado Springs.

Not everything will be closed to the ministry's faithful followers. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, a temporary pavilion on the ministry campus will feature exhibits on Focus on the Family programs and a multimedia "heritage walk" that will trace its history. On his syndicated radio broadcast last week, ministry founder James Dobson invited millions of lis-

teners to visit Colorado Springs this summer.

Scaling back seemed right because of people's concerns about travel, Johnson said. Cost was a factor too. Donations to Focus on the Family dropped in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, said Steve Kenney, community relations manager. The budget situation has improved since then, he added.

Dobson, a child psychologist, founded Focus on the Family in 1977 in Arcadia, Calif., and moved it to Colorado Springs in 1991, establishing the city as a center of evangelical Christianity. The conservative group offers advice on parenting and other topics through its radio programs, books and videos and seeks to influence public policy on hot social issues such as abortion and gambling.

## Prison Fellowship names new CEO, Colson remains chairman

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The board of Prison Fellowship Ministries has named former Virginia attorney general Mark Earley as the organization's new president and CEO, with founder Chuck Colson remaining as chairman.

Earley, a Republican who recently lost the Virginia gubernatorial race to Democrat Mark Warner, will begin his position Feb. 1.

"For four years we have been looking for two things—a president and CEO to succeed Tom Pratt, and someone who in due course will assume the responsibility I now have as principal

spokesperson and leader of this ministry," Colson said. "I am pleased to announce we have found both in the person of Mark Earley."

Pratt, who has led Prison Fellowship for 12 years, will continue as a board member, the ministry said.

Colson stated that he, too, intends to maintain an active role with Prison Fellowship, which focuses on prison outreach and criminal justice reform across the globe.

"God continues to bless me with great health, and I plan to continue to give everything I've got to Prison Fellowship and work closely with Mark

as he assumes his new responsibilities," he said.

Earley, 47, was Virginia's attorney general from 1997-2001. He previously served as a state senator. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was a staffer with The Navigators, an international evangelical ministry active in such settings as college campuses and military bases.

Prison Fellowship was founded in 1976 by Colson, a former aide to President Nixon who spent seven months in prison on obstruction of justice charges related to the Watergate scandal.

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