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N. Kentucky Baptists getting excited about Graham mission

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

COLD SPRING—Overseeing construction of a 1,500-seat sanctuary while helping direct this year's Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Billy Graham Mission has kept Larry Davis extremely busy.

"I told the committee the other day I needed my life back," joked Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cold Spring. "But I'm very glad to be part of it. It certainly has mobilized the laity like nothing has ever done with our church."

When the Graham mission concludes June 30, the four-day event will involve 20,000 volunteers, who will do everything from seating visitors to assisting disabled citizens to counseling new Christians.

Serving as vice chairman on the committee led by former Cincinnati Bengals' All-Star tackle Anthony Munoz, Davis is pleased with Kentucky Baptists' presence in planning the mission.

"Northern Kentucky is supplying about 40 percent of the workers and leadership for this event," he said. "It's very much a Northern Kentucky event."

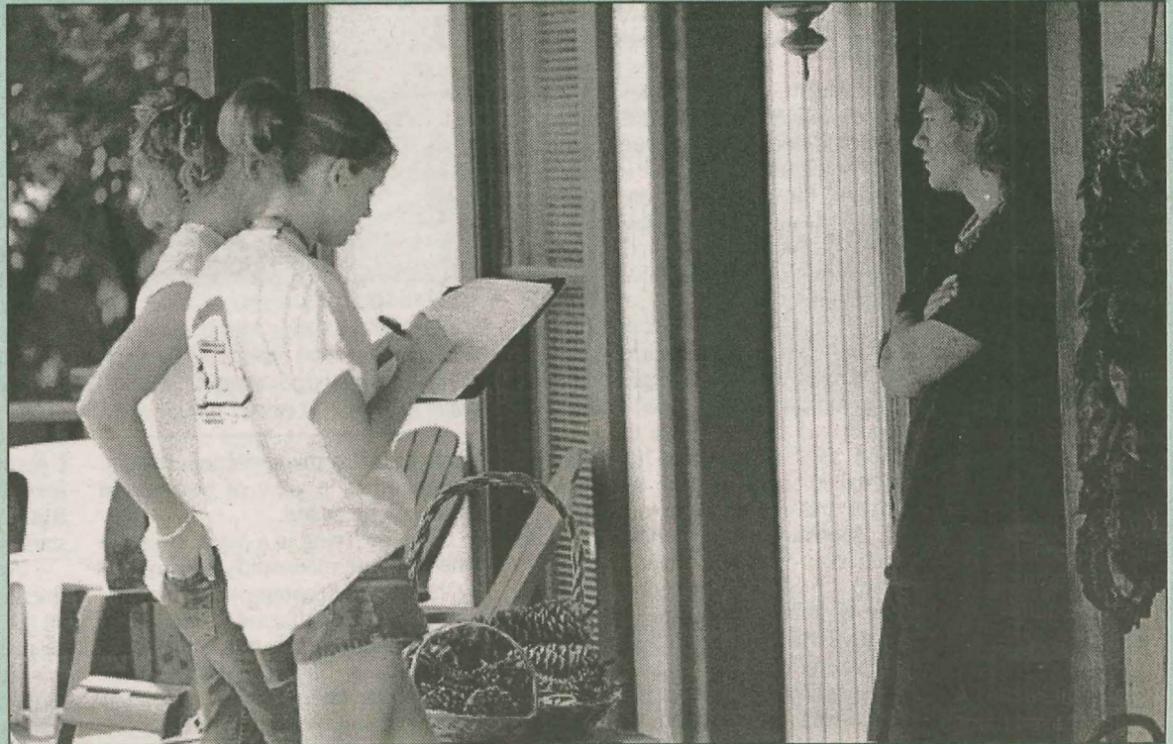
The excitement surrounding the appearance of the internationally-renowned evangelist is a unifying force, according to Rick Robbins, director of missions for Northern Kentucky Baptist Association.

"It has been one of the few events in existence where all of the Baptist family feels a similar concern in a ministry effort," Robbins said.

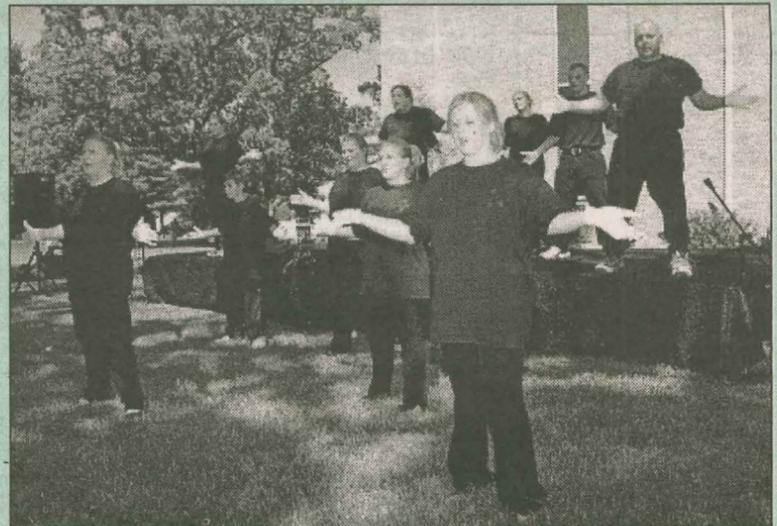
"A certain number of people are interested in Baptist Builders, or

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Kentuckians in St. Louis



More than 40 Kentucky Baptists traveled across the Mississippi River to St. Louis for Crossover, the evangelistic emphasis prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. ■ Above: LeAndrea Bell (left) and Leah Hoffman, of Bellview Baptist Church in Paducah, interview a resident during door-to-door survey work. Bellview sent 13 people to Crossover. ■ Right: Christine Edington (foreground) and the other members of Hands for Christ perform an interpretive movement at a block party. (Photos by David Winfrey)



First Father's Day 93 years ago celebrated work of single dad

By Marcia Davis
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Across the country this weekend, America observes the Father's Day legacy the late Sonora Smart-Dodd first shared as a girlhood vision with her local YMCA 93 years ago.

In decades since, experts have emphasized the vital importance of active fatherhood as they tag dads with the most noble and negative influences in contemporary families.

In 1909, the Father's Day history goes, a church sermon on Mother's Day inspired Smart-Dodd to show appreciation to her father, William Jackson Smart, a Civil War veteran who had raised her and five brothers alone after their mother's death.

Smart-Dodd had a vision of others honoring their fathers with religious celebrations, meals and small gifts.

When she shared her idea with religious leaders meeting at the Spo-

kane, Wash., YMCA, the group passed a resolution for the observance of Father's Day.

The first Father's Day celebration, according to YMCA history, took place at the Spokane "Y" on June 19, 1910—in the month of William Smart's birthday.

The tradition caught on nationally, according to historians, and in 1916 President Woodrow Wilson officially recognized Father's Day as a holiday. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge endorsed a national observance, and in 1971 President Richard Nixon and Congress proclaimed Father's Day a national tradition.

"In Ms. Smart's day, single fathers were uncommon," said Ken Gladish, national executive director of YMCA of the USA. "But today, more than 2 million men are primary caregivers to their children—and as many as 20 percent of them are stay-at-home dads."

Census reports show the number of

single-father caregivers has quadrupled since 1970. Profiles cite an absent, single or dysfunctional paternal relationship as a common factor in the nation's 17 most recent adolescent and teen school shooters. Barna Research Group in Ventura, Calif., reports that kids raised in Christian families are spending only an average of 4 1/2 minutes a day with their fathers. Religious leaders name relationship quality with earthly fathers a determining factor in bonding with a heavenly Father.

"The YMCA movement ... recognizes the crucial role played by families in this nation's vitality, its success and its future," Gladish said. "And within the family, we know the importance of today's fathers, playing such a different role than fathers played in Sonora Smart-Dodd's day."

"Fathers in 2001 may be equal part caregivers, role models, teachers, coaches and confidants."

Gladish said that the 2,400 YMCAs

across the nation are frequented by fathers trying to fulfill these roles every day. Dads merit support of organizations like the "Y" offering child-care programs and opportunities for family activities, he added.

Indian Guides, a father-son program the YMCA started in 1926, still brings boys and their fathers together for trips, crafts and camping events. The counterpart Indian Princess program fosters father-daughter interaction.

The Spokane Pioneer Society placed a granite marker recalling the Father's Day origin at the first Spokane YMCA building in 1948, according to a Spokane "Y" spokesperson, and relocated it in 1965.

The national YMCA media office reports that Smart-Dodd died at age 96. Though she left no living descendants, the strong tradition she initiated remains, focusing the attention of the country's children of all ages on fathers this Sunday.

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, June 12

SBC president: Convention losing focus on evangelism

"Quite frankly, we are not showing the passion or the aggressiveness that the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses are showing."

SBC President James Merritt

By Todd Starnes
Baptist Press

SNELLVILLE, Ga. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Convention is losing its focus on evangelism, said Southern Baptist Convention President James Merritt, pastor of the Atlanta-area First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga.

Merritt, who concludes his second one-year term as president at this week's SBC annual meeting in St. Louis, added, "I think in so many ways our denomination is strong. Having said that, I do believe we are at a crossroads to go to new levels of achievements that we have not reached.

"To be extremely candid, I am greatly afraid this denomination is getting away from evangelism," Merritt said. "I am very concerned, quite frankly. I don't believe this convention, as a whole, has a heart for personal evangelism like we ought to have and like we need to have."

Merritt said he recently shared his concerns with a former SBC president. "I told him my concerns about the convention getting away from evangelism and he told me, 'James, we are not getting away from it; we have gotten away from it.'"

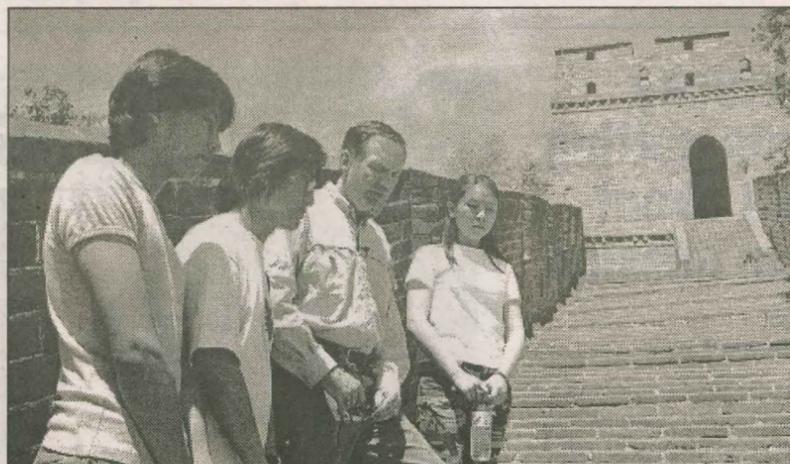
Citing statistics from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, Merritt said the Southern Baptist Convention has lost "market share" of the United States from 1990-2000.

"It takes 40 Southern Baptists to win one convert," he said, while noting that 96 percent of all Southern Baptists have never shared their faith.

Despite his concern over such statistics, some of Merritt's presidential appointments to SBC committees included individuals from churches with a baptism ratio as high as one baptism per 120 members, more than three times the average SBC ratio.

"I think there needs to be a revival of soul-winning, personal evangelism," Merritt said. "Relatively speaking, sure, we are doing more than most denominations. But quite frankly, we are not showing the passion or the aggressiveness that the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses are showing."

One reason Southern Baptists



GLOBAL TOUR SBC President James Merritt and a group of Chinese believers pray atop the Great Wall of China. Merritt visited each of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's 15 overseas regions during his two years as president. "You can be president of the convention and go nowhere," he said. "But I don't think you can be as effective as you ought to be without going." (BP photo by Eric Turner)

might be losing their evangelistic edge is the culture's view of born-again believers, he added.

"We are living in a day and an age where we are incessantly bombarded by the culture to compromise our convictions," Merritt said. "The buzz word is tolerance. No one wants to be known as a fundamentalist. Who wants to be known as an intolerant bigot? If I say, 'With all due respect, sir, Christ is the only way to heaven and without Christ you have no chance of going there,' that's exactly what I'm labeled. And I think it has taken its toll on the church.

"I do believe that our culture is having an impact on our thinking," he said, noting that "71 percent of Christians say we ought to respect other people's rights to believe what they want to believe and leave them alone."

"I don't think those two statements need to go together," Merritt argued. "I will not give up ... my right nor my responsibility to do all I can to convert a man to what I believe is the only way to salvation, which is through Jesus Christ."

Merritt cited the cultural acceptance homosexuality has gained as an example of the problem.

"The Bible calls homosexuality a sin, a perversion and an abomination to God and I'm called a homophobe," he said. "I am called intolerant and that

I perpetrate violence against homosexuals. None of those things is true. But if you repeat a lie enough, people start to believe it.

"Are we as a church going to influence the culture or are we going to let the culture influence the church?" he asked.

"God's called me to do one thing—keep the faith," Merritt said. "Right is right, even if everyone is against it. Wrong is wrong even if everyone is for it. What is right is what God says is right. What is wrong is what God says is wrong."

Merritt affirmed the SBC's fiscal and doctrinal health during his two years as president.

"The Cooperative Program is extremely healthy and doing well," Merritt said. "Doctrinally, we've never been stronger or more united. Our confession of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message, has been strengthened and I'm very pleased with the changes that were made."

Merritt attributed the success of the Cooperative Program to the leadership of Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, and the leaders of all SBC entities.

"Their leadership has given Southern Baptist strong CP support," Merritt noted. He said strong CP support "is a tribute to Southern Baptists, to the fact our people believe in where we are

headed and what we are doing."

The past two years also have seen significant development and growth in the SBC's racial diversity; he added.

Last year, Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, preached the convention sermon—a first for an African-American pastor.

"I believe the ethnic diversity of our denomination is a strength and in the future we need to look at electing a minority to the presidency," Merritt said. "I think it will happen very soon."

Citing the high-profile split between conservative and moderate Baptists in Texas, Merritt said he believes most Southern Baptists in Texas are pleased with the direction of the SBC.

The SBC president said he is especially encouraged to hear about the growth of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, a conservative group that broke away from the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

At the same time, Merritt said he made a commitment to be president to all Baptists.

Recent actions by SBC leaders, however, indicate strong affiliation with the new conservative convention in Texas. Among 17 Texas Baptists being nominated for SBC leadership positions this week, 16 are from churches aligned with the conservative convention, including 12 that have cut all ties to the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

"Let me say this about any of the groups that may not be sympathetic to where we are going," Merritt said. "My attitude has been that I want Christ to be preached. If Christ is preached, it doesn't matter what the label is.

"My word of caution to the leadership of this convention is that we need to put blinders on," Merritt said. "Any group that decides to go in a different direction, that's their business. God bless them as they go. We don't need to be distracted. Let's just keep our focus on the Great Commission, on making ourselves a kingdom convention and doing all we can to reach the world for Jesus Christ."

With additional reporting by Editor Trennis Henderson

MBC launches 'conservative' Web publication

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.—Leaders of the Missouri Baptist Convention launched a new publication last week although ties have not officially been cut to Word & Way, the convention's state Baptist newspaper founded in 1895.

Trustees of Word & Way voted last year to become a self-perpetuating board, one of five Missouri Baptist entities that took such action amid political turmoil in the state. MBC messengers responded last fall by voting to escrow Cooperative Program funds earmarked for the five entities.

In the latest action, the MBC Executive Board's newsjournal committee announced the formation of The Pathway as an official state convention publication that will "demonstrate a theological conservative perspective." The new publication will be

Web-based except for a one-time print edition to be distributed to messengers attending this week's SBC annual meeting in St. Louis.

The Pathway can be accessed at the SBC's Web site, www.mobaptist.org. The MBC Executive Board allocated \$60,000 to fund the publication through December. Plans call for a print version to be published perhaps beginning in 2003.

Committee members elected Don Hinkle as editor of The Pathway. Hinkle, a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, is a correspondent for Baptist Press. He previously was an editor and reporter for newspapers in Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia.

Word & Way Editor Bill Webb noted earlier that no action has been taken by the MBC Executive Board

to sever ties with Word & Way. He said the paper still is referenced in the MBC bylaws as part of the state convention. It also continues to occupy rent-free office space in the Baptist Building in Jefferson City.

In related action, a group of Missouri Baptists have launched a Web site, www.MissouriBaptists.org. Editor Jason Hertling said the site is designed to "provide a place where views and opinions relating to issues of importance to Missouri Baptists can be shared."

Attorney Bart Tichenor, a longtime MBC parliamentarian who helped organize the moderate Baptist General Convention of Missouri, is a frequent contributor to the site. "It gives a level of balance," he said.

Based on reporting by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press



"But I don't want to be made of sugar and spice ... I want to be salt and light."

N. Kentucky Baptists getting excited about Graham event

Continued from page 1

disaster relief or radio ministry," he said. "But everyone has a high degree of respect for Billy Graham."

In addition to bringing Baptists together, planning for the event has helped them build bridges with other denominations, business people and political leaders, Robbins said.

At First Baptist Church in Cold Spring, 350 members took the witness training course required to counsel people who respond to Graham's invitation to accept Christ. Afterward, his church will have a trained force of evangelists, Davis said.

"My ecumenical spirit has been heightened," he added. "It's been good for me to get acquainted with leaders in this area, working with them and getting to know their heart, especially my African-American brothers." Several committee members said Cincinnati's tense racial climate makes this the perfect time for Graham to return to the region for the first time since 1977.

"We're praying that God will bring harmony to our community," said French Harmon, pastor of Fort Mitchell Baptist Church and co-chairman of the men's committee. "We think this will have a long-lasting impact."

Harmon and others involved in planning for the mission say the effort has energized their churches and helped stimulate their faith.

Fort Mitchell Baptist Church will host the final men's prayer rally June 20.

In addition to music minister Tony Burdette directing a men's choir at that event, nearly 50 members of Fort Mitchell Baptist Church have signed up to sing in the 4,000-member mass choir. By early June, about half of nearly 80 members who took witness training had signed up to be counselors and others will serve as ushers and in other roles.

The church also is collecting cans of Coke and Pepsi each Sunday for a "Pepsi and Coke Challenge" on June 22. Members plan to distribute



approximately 2,500 cans of soft drinks to promote the mission.

"Being on the ground floor has been very fulfilling, and I think I've grown in my walk with Christ," Harmon said. "I've been seeing members involved in the community because of this. I think they're growing too, getting a bigger picture of the Christian life."

Pat Burkhart, a member of Fort Mitchell Baptist Church and communications facilitator for Northern Kentucky association, has helped plan four women's prayer meetings in the region.

She said she has appreciated working with women from other backgrounds and learning to appreciate differing worship styles.

"To watch them, hear their testimonies and learn what God is doing in their lives is neat," Burkhart said. "This is a time of renewal in my own life. There's a feeling we're all in this together. It doesn't matter if we're black or white, Baptist or Catholic."

Erlanger Baptist Church member Arnold Caddell said serving as treasurer of the committee has been a humbling experience.

By early June the committee had raised \$1.3 million. Organizers hope to have \$1.8 million of the \$2.8 million budget in hand by June 27. Judging by past Graham events, the nightly goal of \$250,000 in offer-

ings is a reasonable goal, Caddell said.

But Caddell, chairman of Heritage Bank, has his eyes set on greater targets than money.

"We're excited about it and looking forward to what we know God's going to do," he said, referring to an anticipated 15,000-20,000 spiritual decisions.

"It has benefited me greatly to see the spirit and cooperation that has occurred across religious and denominational lines," Caddell said. "I've watched many people give tirelessly of their time. Everyone understands the importance of this upcoming event."

Smaller churches haven't been left out, either. At Anchor Baptist Church in Erlanger, about 40 people—or a third of average Sunday attendance—are expected to participate in the mission; 31 enrolled in witness training.

Pastor Darrell Crenshaw said the church rented a 50-seat bus and has been advertising in a nearby subdivision and apartment complexes for free transportation to the mission.

Crenshaw said the excitement stirred by Billy Graham also is reflected by a mission trip scheduled for July, the first in the church's 19-year history.

"That in combination with Billy Graham has helped our church get a bit more outward looking," he said.



"I'm expecting great things. It's going to be good for us, no matter what happens. It's already been good. To get 31 people to take witness training in a church our size is awesome."

In downtown Covington, pastor Harold Pike expects about 25 members of South Side Baptist Church to become counselors, with others serving as choir members and assisting the disabled.

The church, which averages 150 people on Sundays, has rented two buses for each night and expects to take 100 children to the "Kids Gig" the morning of June 29.

Pike said he senses more expectancy and a greater realization by people that they need a touch from God than he did during Graham's 1977 appearance in Cincinnati.

"I think everyone is aware that when you get near the end of something it's significant," the pastor said. "Everyone is aware that Billy Graham is near the end of his ministry. That has intensified it a little bit."

"Sept. 11 has had an impact too," Pike added. "These things are reminders to people that life is short and whatever they're going to do, they better do it now."

BILLY GRAHAM The famed evangelist, pictured above with music director Cliff Barrows, is scheduled to be in Cincinnati June 27-30 at Paul Brown Stadium.

■ Left: A children's event called "Kidz Gig" with Psalty the Singing Songbook will be held Saturday at 10:30 a.m. (File photos)

Dead flowers lead to memorial gift idea for Homes for Children

By Dannah Prather

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children

SHELBYVILLE—In 1968, Pastor A.J. Hensley was strolling through a cemetery. Away from the neatly clipped grass and well-tended stones, he saw a gully filled with dead and dying flowers that had been removed from the nearby graves.

Hensley said he had one thought: "What a waste."

Then pastor of Salem Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Hensley knew he and his congregation had made significant contributions to that gully and others like it over the years as they honored the memory of deceased church members.

Suddenly, he said, the traditional expression of sympathy seemed somewhat empty to him.

"I thought it would be a good idea to direct the money we were

using for flowers to the children's home," Hensley said.

He took the idea a step further, deciding a plaque could be placed in a prominent location of the church to signal a gift in support of KBHC. The plaque also would have a space to include the name of the church member most recently memorialized.

Hensley took the idea to J.D. Herndon, then director of Spring Meadows Children's Home in Louisville. Thirty-four years, 340 plaques and thousands of memorial gifts later, the tradition is thriving in many Kentucky Baptist churches.

"Bro. Hensley's vision of support for KBHC is nothing short of an institution now," said Tom Townsend, vice president for development and communications. "Every year thousands of gifts are made to this ministry in honor or memory of a loved one. The Salem congregation began

a legacy of love for our children and families."

Tommy Webb, a deacon at Salem Baptist, supported Hensley's idea. "Flowers are short-lived, but this lives on," he said. "And who should be the most watched over and cared for but the children?"

Many churches bring their plaques to the funeral home and place them on a flower stand, Hensley said. "Just like people look at the cards on the flowers, the plaque is a testimony to the person belonging to the church, the people who made the gift and to the children's home."

On Dec. 20, 1970, Salem Baptist voted to make the change from flowers to funds. In 1971, the Baptist Children's Messenger began spreading the news about the memorial plaque program, informing churches they could receive a plaque from KBHC if they wanted to designate the congregation's memorial

gifts to the agency. The program was named "Living Memorials."

At one time, a book displayed at the KBHC offices contained the names of everyone memorialized through the program, but Townsend said that type of record is no longer possible to maintain. "We'd have a whole library full of now. That is a sure sign of the effectiveness of this type of memorial," he said.

Hensley said he chose the latter part of Hebrews 11:4 to be inscribed on the plaque: "And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead."

"I like that verse," Townsend said. "It reminds me of Bro. Hensley and all the other Kentucky Baptists who so faithfully support KBHC. Even when they have gone to be with the Lord, their example of Christian love and service will live on through this ministry and through the lives they touched with their generosity."

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

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I'm one fisherman who plans to catch fish

By Tim Clark

I recently saw a little sign hanging in a restaurant that read, "Everyone has to believe in something, I believe I'll go fishing." Instantly it reminded me how much I enjoy fishing. It really doesn't matter if the water is fresh or salt, the tackle light or heavy, the water moving or still. I like to fish. In fact I don't have to catch fish to enjoy being outdoors.

When I lived in Wyoming, I caught brook trout in mountain streams and rainbow trout in the lakes. In Alaska, I caught all five species of salmon and boated several halibut. While living in Georgia, I learned to catch crappie, and large and small mouth bass. I have taken fish in the Gulf of Mexico with a spear gun.

Most folks go fishing in the summertime. There have been a few times when I have gotten inspired enough to ice fish. The problem with ice fishing is not the cold weather but the effort it takes to drill holes in the ice. I'd

rather fish than work.

I readily admit I would rather fish than talk about fishing.

The little sign in the restaurant inspired another thought. When Jesus was calling His disciples He said to them, "Come follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." I marvel when I consider both the mandate to follow and the objective of the Master. Jesus wants to transform a disciple into an effective and empowered soul winner.

True disciples ought to be "fishers of men." We are now in the summer season and many Christians take vacations and trips to see families. Many Christians also take a break from church attendance. During travel, thoughts turn to rest, recreation and refreshment. Some people plan summer trips to the lake and river and talk about going fishing. Disciples ought to take the gospel story on vacation with them. True disciples are always "fishers of men."

We cannot take a vacation from being a disciple. Use the opportuni-

ties of summer to tell the story of Jesus to those whom you meet on the highway or perhaps on that secluded secret fishing spot.

Some folks like to fish. This fisherman likes to fish. These places require the fisherman to use hooks without barbs so the fish can be returned to the water. Some Christians do "barb-less evangelism." They talk about Jesus but fail to extend the personal invitation to be born again. Some churches practice "catch and release" evangelism. Once a person has joined the church these churches fail to make disciples and thus lose the hold on the new convert.

One more thought about fishing. Sometimes we go to church and act like fishermen in a sporting good store. We retell the story of our fishing exploits, but the truth is this. Talking about fishing is not the same as fishing. Are we going to talk or fish?

Jesus told the disciples, "If you follow Me I will make you fishers of men." That is profound. I believe Him.

Everyone has to believe in something, I believe I'll go fishing!

Tim Clark is executive director of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention

FIRST PERSON

Worship humbly

In question what we call "worship" in our Southern Baptist churches today. When so-called church worship is blended with the lifestyles of the world, what have we as God's children and witnesses done? Are we not becoming entertainers instead of worshippers?

Does God's Word not have any power left in it? Our hands may develop blisters from clapping, our voices may become hoarse from singing; but what ever happened to the scab on the knees?

We as Baptists always have stood

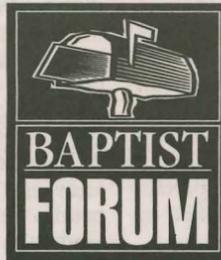
for the truth; why should we have to do what others do? Did Baptists of days gone by not please our Lord and Savior?

God's Word is able to save, change and keep us. Is it not also able to teach us?

Luke 18:10-14 states, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar

off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Jim Adams
Uniontown



PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Pray for summer camps and assemblies

I recently participated in the dedication of the A.M. Johnson and the Dewar Hurst Lodge at Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly. It was gratifying to see these new facilities that will enable the ministries at Jonathan Creek to move to a new level in accommodating guests and ministering to spiritual needs.

Rusty Ellison, executive director of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, could not contain his gratitude to God and Kentucky Baptists for the significant developments in facilities and ministries. Although great progress has been made, there still are great opportunities to be explored. All Kentucky Baptists have had a part through gifts to the Cooperative Program.

An outstanding summer staff was introduced during the dedication. The young people are from colleges and seminaries in several states and one foreign country. Please pray for this staff as they obey God in creating the spiritual atmosphere where God's

Spirit can touch and change lives. Many camps will experience this kind of environment for the first time.

I want to join with all Kentucky Baptists in praising God for the outstanding leadership that Ellison and the board of directors have provided in order to advance the ministries of the assemblies.



Bill Mackey

An equally outstanding staff has been enlisted for the Cedarmore and Baptist Assemblies. The Son Teams provide a strong addition to the youth weeks at Cedarmore and in churches.

Mission Adventure Camp at Rabro has taken on new life under the creative leadership of Dwayne Doyle, associate for missions education in the Kentucky Baptist Brotherhood department. GA Camps at Cedar Crest are making similar creative efforts.

A new addition at Cedarmore is Discover Kids Camp '02. Tom Smoot, director of the Discovery Youth Camps, has designed this new experience for children that also will

have a missions emphasis.

It was at an RA camp that I made my commitment to vocational Christian service and discovered the implications of the Great Commission for the world. At the assemblies it was encouraging to discover youth from across the country who are really committed to Jesus Christ.

The value of the camps and assemblies are many:

■ Many campers commit their lives to Jesus Christ.

■ Others make life-changing commitments to Jesus Christ.

■ Some campers make vocational commitments to missions or other careers in Christian service.

■ All campers will have a memorable experience in faith development.

■ Most will provide a positive witness and influence in their schools, homes and churches.

■ Many will build meaningful Christian relationships that will influence their life choices.

Please join with me in sincere prayer for God's protection and empowerment for these summer camping experiences.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Long-term care insurance eases financial burden

By Laurie Valentine

Do you have significant assets and income? Would you like to protect at least a portion of those assets if you needed long-term care? Do you want the widest choice of long-term care services in such an event?

If you answered yes, then your long-term care planning should include consideration of long-term care insurance.

LTCI can be purchased to cover costs associated with nursing home care and assisted living facility care. Some policies also provide coverage for home health care, personal care and services in adult day care facilities.

The cost of such insurance depends on a number of factors. These include your age at the time of your initial purchase, the benefits you select and the waiting period.

When determining how much LTCI coverage you need, consider all available income sources that could be tapped to cover at least a portion of the cost—such as Social Security, pensions, investment income and rental income. For example, if nursing home care in your area costs \$4,500 per month and your income from Social Security, a pension and investment income is \$3,000 per month, you need to purchase only \$1,500 per month (\$50 per day) of LTCI coverage.

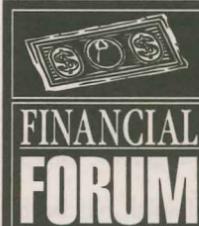
The policies have a variety of "benefit triggers" that must occur for you to be eligible for benefits. The most common benefit triggers are inability to do a certain number of "activities of daily living" (such as bathing, continence, dressing, eating); cognitive impairment; and/or a doctor's certification of medical necessity.

LTCI benefits will start after the waiting period has passed. The period can range from zero to 100 days after you enter the nursing home or start receiving home health care. The shorter the waiting period, the higher the premiums.

When considering the purchase of LTCI take your time and ask questions. Check out the financial security of the companies whose policies you are considering and carefully compare the outlines of coverages.

Long-term care planning is an often overlooked, but vitally important aspect of personal planning. Get started today.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



Summer plans? Help children grow physically & spiritually

Q: How can I make this summer a good one for my child?

Children need downtime, so don't feel like you need to plan every moment of their summer. However, it's good to have a few ideas for taking advantage of the somewhat relaxed schedule summer hopefully brings to your home and family.

■ **Encourage your child to participate in a summer reading program.** Most public libraries will offer such a program, as will some churches. If not, plan your own. Choose a book to read together as a family, such as one of the books from C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia series.

■ **Use summer months to work on physical fitness.** Don't let your children spend too much time in front of the TV or computer. Encourage them to go outside and exercise aerobically for 20 minutes four or five times a week (running, riding a bike, jumping rope, etc.). Use a simple chart to track progress, and be sure to reward their work.

■ **Do things together.** Play games. Take walks. Eat together. Go for swims and bike rides. Build models. Work puzzles. If at all possible, take a day off and volunteer to help chaperone a church trip to an amusement park or other fun destination.

■ **Look for ways to help your child grow spiritually during summer months.** This might be a good time to work on a children's discipleship resource, such as the Survival Kit for Children (available from Lifeway Christian Bookstores). Fourth, fifth or sixth graders might want to get a head start on the verses for Children's Bible Drill (contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention discipleship department at (502) 254-4176 for more information).—David Garrard

Q: I have been asked to lead a Bible study on aging for our church. What resources would you recommend in preparation for the study?

Helpful resources on aging include:

■ **"Reflections on Aging: A Spiritual Guide," L.E. Missinne. Liguori, 1990. 112 pages.** This book reflects on some fundamental questions of human existence in older age: meaning, suffering, purpose of living, Christian spirituality, aging and dying. Its particular emphasis is on the discovery of personal meaning in older age, and on the witness to the young of how much value older life can have.

■ **"The Senior Adult Years: A Christian Psychology of Aging," C.B. Freeman. Broadman Press, 1979. 204 pages.** Freeman presents a theological context for viewing demographics; psychological functions, needs and adjustment; and development, disorders and implications. Readers are encouraged to see both positive and negative aspects of aging.

■ **"A Theology for Aging," W.L. Hendricks. Broadman Press, 1986. 300 pages.** Normative Christian theology has relevance for senior adults who are coping with physical, emotional and financial realities that often are difficult to accept or understand. The experiences of normal, everyday life are used as metaphors to express the content of theology.

■ **"Toward a Practical Theology of Aging," K.B. Lyon. Fortress, 1985. 128 pages.** The relationship of human fulfillment and aging is foundational to pastoral care with older adults and forms the core of the discussion in this book. The author critically probes the claims of historic theological literature on older adulthood as well as contemporary theological and psychological interpretations of experience to produce a practical theological understanding of old age.—Jon Rainbow

Family Forum writers are Suzanne Coyle, director of Cornerstone Counseling for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children; David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; Jon Rainbow, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; 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.



Retired ministers deserve honor, support

Southern Baptists' annual Adopt An Annuitant Sunday isn't the highest profile emphasis on the denominational calendar. In fact, with the annuity schedule scheduled the same month as the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, Father's Day and many congregations' vacation Bible school, it's easy for churches to completely ignore Adopt An Annuitant Sunday.

That would be unfortunate, however, because the focus on providing financial assistance to needy retired ministers or their widows is a worthy effort.

Jesus reminded His followers in Luke 10:7 that "the laborer is worthy of his wages." Yet there are many retired ministers who labored for decades with very little financial compensation. They remained faithful to the task, however, because of their sense of call to ministry.

Besides the meager wages they earned, many of those pastors were in churches that never set aside any retirement funds to help ease the financial burden of their retirement years. Those ministers now face rising health care costs, utility bills and other basic expenses with limited financial resources.

Thankfully, many churches now earmark an amount equal to at least 10 percent of each staff member's salary for retirement. Accumulated and invested over the years, that amount helps ensure ministers will retire with adequate funds for their senior adult years. But there still are tremendous needs among ministers of past generations who failed to receive such benefits.

Here in Kentucky, 315 retired ministers have annuity incomes of less than \$200 per month, according to recent Southern Baptist Annuity Board statistics. Among that group, more than 40 percent have annuity incomes below \$100 a month, including 44 who are receiving \$50 or less.

1 Timothy 5:17 points out the significant role played

by ministers. "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor," the passage urges, "especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."

Adopt An Annuity Sunday offers churches and individuals the opportunity to help provide "double honor" to our denomination's retired ministers who have the greatest financial needs.

The SBC Annuity Board expects to distribute approximately \$7 million in ministerial relief funds in the coming year. That total includes almost \$1.4 million from Cooperative Program funds as well as some investment income from current support funds. That leaves approximately \$5 million that must come from individuals, Sunday school classes, mission groups, churches and other sources.

That's where Kentucky Baptist congregations can help. Individuals and groups can provide a one-time, monthly or annual gift as well as such options as memorial gifts, endowment funds or including the Adopt An Annuitant ministry in one's will or estate plan.

This month's Adopt An Annuitant Sunday on June 23 will highlight the theme, "Lest We Forget." If that date is not convenient, make a point to select another time to honor Southern Baptists' retired ministers.

"It is urgent that Southern Baptists step in to affirm their service and let these servants of God know they are loved and not forgotten," noted Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins. "On Adopt An Annuitant Sunday, Southern Baptist congregations across the nation join together in extending God's care and compassion to His faithful servants—providing the comfort and dignity they deserve."

For more information, contact the Annuity Board at (800) 262-0511 or www.absbc.org.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Pursuing success in marriage

By David Gushee

'Tis the season for weddings and divorces, and I'm surrounded by both right now—as a minister, friend, family member and scholar who writes about marriage and divorce.

Each day brings a blushing bride, joyful groom and vengeful "ex" my way. Our society remains romantic about weddings and enthusiastic about marriage—so enthusiastic that for many people, just one is not enough. We continue to seek the marriage of our dreams—which remains just beyond our reach—again and again.

As a Christian minister, I am sometimes asked about the secret to success in marriage. Amid the carnage of modern family life, what must a couple do to make marriage work? While there is no magic formula, here is my top five list.

■ **Understand your marriage as a lifetime covenant.** In these times, there is no longer any such thing as "marriage," but instead a nearly infinite variety of versions of marriage. The biblical understanding of marriage is as a covenant relationship binding a man and a woman to each other for life.

Marriage involves the mutual exchange of promises in which two individuals freely bind themselves to one another and promise each other a pattern of behavior that will bring

blessing into each other's lives. Marriage is a covenant, and it is for life. Do not marry someone who does not believe this.

■ **Ground your relationship on spiritual and moral commitments.** It is impossible to maintain one's marital vows apart from a deeper set of religious and moral commitments. To use the language of my Christian faith: Commitment to another person must be rooted in commitment to Jesus and to a life of following Him as Lord.

There are days in marriage when there is nothing in us that leads us to want to keep our vows other than the prior vow we have made of our lives to God our Creator. This is the rock-solid foundation that a life, and a marriage, can and must be built upon. All other ground is sinking sand.

■ **Accept with grace your partner's humanity—and your own.** When the romantic haze wears off on the way back from Aruba, the real work of marriage begins.

Two sinful, fallible, irritating, fully human people must learn to adjust their lives to each other. There is nowhere to hide. Self-deception and spouse-deception both fail. I must accept that you are a fallible human being—but you're my fallible human being. And you must do the same. We are committed to each other, and must learn to live together as flawed humans who love each other and will do

so always.

■ **Avoid the self-destruction that leads to marriage destruction.** Many times it is the self-destructive lifestyle of one spouse that destroys a marriage.

I personally have seen alcohol, drugs, pornography, laziness, compulsive spending, pathological lying and uncontrolled rage destroy marriages of people dear to me. A lifetime is a very long time. A covenant can be sustained for a lifetime only if both people, as individuals, keep themselves together rather than self-destruct.

■ **Learn the two most basic skills of marriage: communication and conflict resolution.** The great majority of failed marriages go astray over an inability to resolve differences. An unresolved conflict acts like a toxin in the marital bloodstream.

Honest and gentle communication, confession and forgiveness, on the other hand, are amazing remedies. No marriage can be successful without truthful, gentle and open communication and timely, humble and gracious practices of confession and forgiveness.

One scholar suggests only 7 percent of marriages truly flourish in our time. Just under half end in divorce and the other half end in mediocrity. We can and must do better. Too much is at stake, not merely the lives of our own children but the well-being of our children and society as a whole.

David Gushee is an associate professor of moral philosophy at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

RESOURCES

Consultant offers 10 tips for church advertising

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Advertising can help churches reach their communities, but some common pitfalls can decrease the effectiveness of such efforts, according to a church advertising specialist.

A billboard advertising "sound biblical teaching," for instance, probably will reach only people who already attend church, said Vince Garrett, a member of the media strategy team at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Non-Christians are more likely to be attracted by offers to build stronger families or connect with God. Sound biblical teaching comes as a natural outgrowth of those themes, Garrett noted.

Doing what a church likes, not what is best for the target audience, was among 10 common church advertising mistakes Garrett described during a recent workshop for pastors and missionaries.

The other nine mistakes—and the more-effective strategies—include:

■ **Doing something only because it worked elsewhere.** Every community has its own set of dynamics, Garrett noted. "There are things that are transferable, but we have to be careful about hearing about something that works and immediately doing the same thing."

■ **Targeting a medium and not an audience.** Be careful about saying, "We really need to get on the radio" rather than deciding on the message and crafting a broad-based plan for communicating that message.

■ **Using a "shotgun approach" when targeted advertising is more effective.** Garrett suggested using a "heavy-on, then off" approach of concentrating advertising into shorter periods of time for the most impact, with each campaign focused on a specific message.

■ **Using church language.** The use of words such as "fellowship" or "saved," for instance, should be avoided if the goal is to reach unchurched people, he said.

■ **Highlighting what the church doesn't do instead of what it does.** A strong children's ministry might be a goal, but advertising shouldn't over-sell. "Focus on what you are doing that is good and strong, and not what you hope to be," Garrett said.

■ **Highlighting a program instead of a benefit.** Sunday school might be an excellent ministry, but people are more drawn to messages describing the relationships and Bible knowledge their family will receive.

■ **Ignoring the calendar.** Holidays and seasons provide themes for events that can be advertised, Garrett said.

■ **Relying on one medium.** The most effective advertising reinforces the same message to audiences by multiple exposures over different mediums, Garrett said.

■ **Using media without a plan.** Churches should take the time to research and plan their advertising at least a quarter in advance—taking advantage of the expertise of individuals in the church.

NAMB media strategists are available to consult with local churches by calling (800) 519-9271 or through e-mail at ads@namb.net.

Pastor's housing tax break still might face constitutional challenge, professor says

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—A California law professor says he will challenge the constitutionality of a new law that protects a tax break for clergy housing expenses.

Erwin Chemerinsky of the University of Southern California says the 81-year-old tax break remains unconstitutional despite a recent law that attracted the support of a wide coalition of religious groups.

"This law gives 'ministers of the gospel' a benefit that no one else can claim," Chemerinsky said. "For the government to favor religion in that way is to violate the (First Amendment's) Establishment Clause."

In March, Chemerinsky was appointed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals to investigate whether the tax break violates the constitutional separation of church and state. The tax break allows clergy to deduct from their taxable income the amount spent on housing expenses.

Sensing a threat to the tax break, both houses of Congress swiftly passed a bill to protect it, and the bill was signed by President Bush on May 20. Supporters admitted the tax break's constitutionality remained uncertain.

When the bill was signed into law, the Internal Revenue Service agreed

to drop its lawsuit against California Pastor Rick Warren that started the controversy. The IRS and Warren had been at odds over how much he could deduct for his housing expenses.

Chemerinsky filed an intent to challenge the dismissal with the appeals court on May 22. In his brief, he said, "It is well established that voluntary cessation of an illegal practice is not sufficient to make a case moot."

Did you know?

Ministers and eligible employees of SBC churches receive no-cost disability and survivor benefits in the Church Annuity Plan.

Plus they can receive up to \$210 in annual matching contributions!



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August 17

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August 24

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September 7

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The campers have arrived!

They're here! Everywhere I turn there are students, and I love it! Camp has started at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. It's both our busiest and favorite season of our camp and conference ministry. Camp brings the longest days (and sometimes nights) of the year, yet to see God work in the lives of these students makes it all worthwhile.

Our first week at Jonathan Creek was last week. Our 36 college and seminary students were ready after a period of high-energy training. Our first worship service in our new facility was Sunday night. What an experience! To see the students worship and praise the Lord in our new A.M. Johnson Worship Center was very meaningful. Last year we were jammed with huge numbers of students in our Shoemake Chapel. We were out of space, and the cramped conditions were challenging. This year, with the Johnson Center, the kids can rock the place each morning and night as the place pulsates with the praise music they love! OK, so some of that music makes some of you a little nervous. That's OK. It's very, very meaningful to the students.

The student campers began arriving at Cedarmore this week.

Within the next few days, the Discovery Youth Camps, the Mission/Adventure Camps for boys and the GA camps for girls will all be underway. By this time next week, about 750 students will be at our camps each week.

Many of those students have no relationship with Christ. They have come at the urging of friends. They have come at the urging of children's ministers or youth ministers. They mostly come looking for fun, but in many cases they leave with a new relationship with Jesus. And that's our hope. Our mission is to provide an environment in which all our kids can come to know Christ or more fully experience Him.

If only all of our readers could see and feel the work God does in a camp environment! Our support would be even greater than it is now. I have written before that about half of all the decisions that kids make for Jesus are made in the camp or retreat settings. That's an incredible statistic! So pray for us daily as the summer continues. If you can't be here in body, you can make a difference with your prayers.

Rusty Ellison is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Box 43364, Louisville, KY 40253-0364. Call (502) 499-8655

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison



Education for Time
and Eternity

Oneida Baptist Institute

2002 Father's Day Offering ♦ Overcoming Obstacles ... Embracing Opportunities

WHAT IS ONEIDA?

Oneida Baptist Institute is a fully accredited Christian boarding school for grades 6-12.

OBI was founded in 1899 by James Anderson Burns. We have been ministering to young people for 102 years.

At Oneida, we teach respect for authority, honesty, high moral standards and responsible behavior.

Overcoming Obstacles

Young people in today's world face many obstacles. Half of all students who come to OBI have been making D's and F's. Many teens are hurting because of family situations and conflicts. About 60 percent of OBI students are not Christians when they enroll.

Embracing Opportunity

Oneida Baptist Institute offers opportunities to teenage boys and girls. Smaller classes, nightly study hall and Tutoring Lab can help students find the academic help they need.

OBI provides positive adult role models and a healthy, structured environment. We share the good news of the gospel daily, and many young people trust Christ each year.

Meet some of the class of 2002

Damian: His attitude was transformed

Damian came to Oneida in the seventh grade from western Kentucky at the urging of his grandmother.

"My mother and I couldn't get along back then, so I moved in with my grandma for a while," Damian explained.

A friend told her about OBI. Damian said his grandmother thought he would benefit from making new friends, and she hoped the school would have a positive effect on his grades.

"I didn't want to study," said Damian. "I always wanted to go out and do things with my friends back home."

It took Damian about a year before he started liking OBI. He remembers going to the president's office after school trying to get sent home during that first year. He said his new friends had the most impact on helping him to adjust and decide to stay.

"If it wasn't for them, I don't know where I'd be," he said. He graduated with three other boys he had roomed with for six years. "We had our ups and downs throughout the years, but we always worked it out," said Damian.

By his first OBI report card, Damian's grades were already better than his previous D's and F's. "Study hall (helped) get my grades back up," he said. The Tutoring Lab contributed to Damian's improvement in math. He



PLAYFUL HELPER Damian enjoyed his job at the daycare center and learned responsibility while caring for faculty/staff children.

spent one period a day there in seventh grade.

"One on one was a lot better than being in a classroom full of people," Damian said.

Damian held a variety of jobs on campus. He cleaned in the dorm and classrooms and supervised a yard crew. He was also a baseball and basketball team manager. "I didn't really want to play," he noted. "I liked helping people out."

His senior year, he signed up for Field Placement credit to work in the daycare for faculty/staff children. "I like playing with little kids and making them laugh," he said.

Damian entertained the children and then cleaned. His supervisor, daycare director Cindy Waslewski, observed, "As the school year progressed, Damian realized his responsibilities ... took initiative in his work and showed genuine interest in the children."

Damian earned Outstanding Worker awards and lettered in baseball and basketball. He is undecided about his career goals but said, "Grandpa always wanted me to join the military."

He has also given thought to working for his grandfather and uncle at their law firm.

Becky: She became a leader

Becky, a central Kentucky native, enrolled at OBI in the eighth grade. What brought her to this school? "My attitude," she replied.

"I had a real nasty attitude toward my mom. Second, were my grades. I was a kid who didn't do homework."

She also had problems socially. "I didn't have the friends everyone else had. I felt like the outcast. I was

the 'litle country girl.'"

Becky was excited but also scared to be away from home. "I got homesick, but I did really well. I had the help I needed, and I really liked working on the farm."

She had helped with the tobacco crop at home, so when she saw the farm on OBI's after-school job list, "I felt like I would be comfortable in that area," she said.

Except for the one season she played basketball, she worked on the farm until she graduated.

Becky became a charter member of the OBI's FFA chapter, which started in 1998. She served as an officer every year and was president her junior and senior years.

She also campaigned for and won the office of regional sentinel. She competed in numerous FFA events, but her years of training in the OBI hog house paid off with two regional wins and the state championship trophy in the area of swine proficiency.

Looking back at her five years in the agriculture program, Becky admitted there were some hard days but said, "I enjoyed it all."

She credited farm manager Ken Martin for influencing her desire to

pursue higher education. "I want to go to college. I want to make something of myself," she said. Eastern Kentucky University is at the top of Becky's list. She plans to major in animal science.

Martin commented, "Becky has been helped by OBI and has given much ... in return. Her leadership to other students ... stands as a testimony to her character."

The faculty awarded Becky one of OBI's top honors, Miss Oneida, for her outstanding Christian character and concern for others.

Becky, who participated in few activities at her old school, was a four-year OBI choir member. "I really enjoyed traveling, going to churches and singing," she said. She earned the Director's Award and the Most Improved Award. She also participated in several creative ministries chapel skits.

For a student who had to repeat the eighth grade, Becky came a long way academically. Her grades gradually improved from D's and F's until she made the B honor roll as a junior. She said being unable to skip classes at OBI was the largest influence. The faculty voted her the Most Improved freshman girl.

Tri: He overcame many barriers

Tri played team sports for the first time at Oneida.

Tri came from Vietnam to stay with his uncle in northern Kentucky in 1997. He had injured his elbow and needed medical treatment that he could not get in Vietnam.

A friend of his aunt's was a former OBI teacher and brought him to visit the school. Tri said, "My aunt thought it was a good idea for me to come and learn."

Tri was a little overwhelmed at first. "It was hard. I didn't know anybody. I couldn't speak English too well."

He wanted to go home, but his uncle and his OBI friends talked him into staying.

His English skills improved with the help of fellow students and OBI's English as a Second Language class.

Like many of his American peers, Tri struggled in school before coming to OBI. "Here, I got to do better than at home," he said.

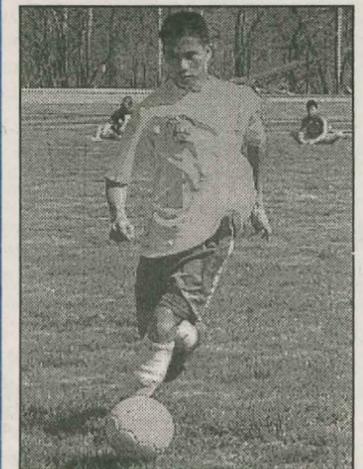
Required nightly study hall provided the time and incentive he needed to crack the books. "You have to finish your homework here," Tri said.

Tri joined an athletic team for the first time at OBI and discovered a love for sports. He earned letters in soccer, track, basketball and golf.

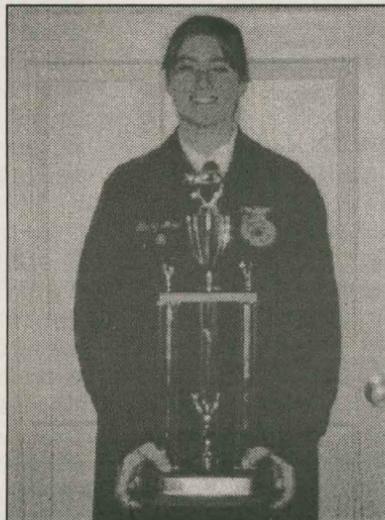
OBI principal and coach Ed Lowdenback noted, "Tri actually helped us coach golf, and we're really going to miss him. He had a great attitude ... and was really dependable."

Tri was a member of the Student Government Association throughout high school. His final year he was named the senior boy Most Studious and Most Likely to Succeed.

After finishing at Oneida, Tri will return to Vietnam for the first time in five years.



TEAM PLAYER Vietnam native Tri discovered a love for sports.



STATE WINNER Becky excelled in FFA.

Oneida Baptist Institute

A FEW MORE FACTS

- ◆ Our average enrollment is 400.
- ◆ We have approximately 150 full-time faculty and staff.
- ◆ Our classrooms have an average 1:12 teacher/student ratio.
- ◆ Oneida has a 200-acre farm and a full agriculture program.
- ◆ Our student body consists of young people from the local community, across the state of Kentucky, the United States and around the world.
- ◆ We accept students throughout the year.
- ◆ OBI provides Christian education at an affordable rate.

EDUCATION FOR TIME AND ETERNITY

Every school deals with the mind of man, but few, like Oneida, minister to the soul as well. Day after day, our students hear the gospel message. Each year, many boys and girls make positive decisions of eternal significance.

Beverly: She learned versatility

Beverly moved from western Kentucky to Oneida in 1995 when her parents joined the OBI agriculture staff. She recalled, "Dad had always talked about Oneida."

Beverly, an active sixth grader, was excited about the move but had concerns about her opportunities at Oneida, especially in the areas of piano and cheerleading.

"It was hard being away from all my relatives and the people I grew up with," she added. She was homesick but made good friends, enrolled in piano class, and helped pioneer an OBI middle school cheerleading squad.

She also acted in a school play and joined student government. She liked OBI's smaller classes, and "I liked the setting. It's beautiful here."

In high school, Beverly no longer worried about her opportunities. She performed in music, drama and sign language in chapel and at her church. She became a varsity cheerleading captain, Beta Club officer and yearbook editor.

Yearbook sponsor Laura Stockton said, "Beverly's attention to detail benefited the entire yearbook staff."

Beverly enjoyed living on the farm and said the best part was helping with the calves. For part of her freshman year, she helped in the farm office after school.

The salutatorian and Governor's Scholar explained how she was able to be so involved yet maintain top grades: "You just have to learn time management and work out a schedule. I had to study hard. I definitely didn't get anything easily."

Beverly took advanced courses to prepare for college and met the criteria for a Commonwealth Diploma. She plans to attend Western Kentucky University.



ACADEMIC HONOREES State Sen. Robert Stivers and state Rep. Barbara White-Colter offered their congratulations to OBI valedictorian Joy Beth (left) and salutatorian Beverly. Both girls are daughters of OBI staff members.

Joy Beth: She earned top grades

Joy Beth's home is just a few miles from OBI. Her brother and both sisters graduated from OBI in the 1980s.

Joy Beth said her mother wanted her to benefit from OBI's phonics-based reading program. She joined the Tutoring Lab faculty so Joy Beth could attend grades K-12 at OBI.

Like her sister, Joy Beth was the valedictorian of her class. She also earned the Commonwealth Diploma. "Just a little extra effort can be the difference between average and exceptional," she said.

While certain subjects, like math, required more effort from Joy Beth, she said, "School was more time consuming than it was difficult

for me...I was up at 4 many mornings studying."

Joy Beth did more than just study. Her activities included cross country, track, Beta Club, Student Government Association and yearbook.

In grades six through 10, Joy Beth continued her piano training in daily classes at OBI. As a senior, she performed in chapel with Silent Witness, a sign language music ministry team.

At commencement, Joy Beth was awarded OBI's highest graduation honor, the William A. Evans award.

Dan Stockton, OBI senior English teacher and Beta Club sponsor, stated, "Joy Beth is one of the most

gifted and talented young ladies with which I have ever had the privilege of working."

Joy Beth believes that "overall I've been challenged" by the OBI curriculum. Her acceptance to two prestigious summer enrichment camps added to her educational experience.

First was a three-week Vanderbilt program for talented youth her sophomore year. Last summer, Joy Beth studied philosophy for five weeks as a Kentucky Governor's Scholar.

She plans to attend Vanderbilt University in Nashville and is interested in becoming either a doctor or a teacher.

Rebekah: She learned to think for herself

Since age 7, Rebekah dreamed of following in her sister's footsteps.

Rebekah is from central Kentucky. Her family's connection to Oneida Baptist Institute began when her grandparents sent their sons to OBI as students and visited as volunteers.

In 1990, her grandmother became a full-time volunteer, and Rebekah's aunt joined the staff two years later. Two older sisters and two cousins graduated, and Rebekah grew up looking forward to her time at OBI.

"I knew God wanted me to be here since I was really (young)," she said. Like her sisters, Rebekah had to wait until her freshman year to enroll.

The girls were required to spend their first year in the dorm and then were allowed to live with their grandmother. Rebekah said,

"You have a lot more appreciation and understanding for the girls in the dorm afterwards. I'm glad we had to do it."

Like many dorm students, Rebekah joined a sport in lieu of a cleaning job. She started with volleyball but did not enjoy it.

Still, she tried her best and earned the Most Improved and Highest GPA awards. She joined cheerleading and tennis each for two seasons. Her awards included MVP, Most Dedicated, Highest GPA and Most Spirit.

She also was voted the Most Outstanding freshman girl by the faculty, and later the senior girl who was Most Likely to Succeed.

Out of the dorm, Rebekah's own interest kept her active. She began acting in ministry skits and got a leading role in her first school play as a junior.

Debbie Winters, drama director,

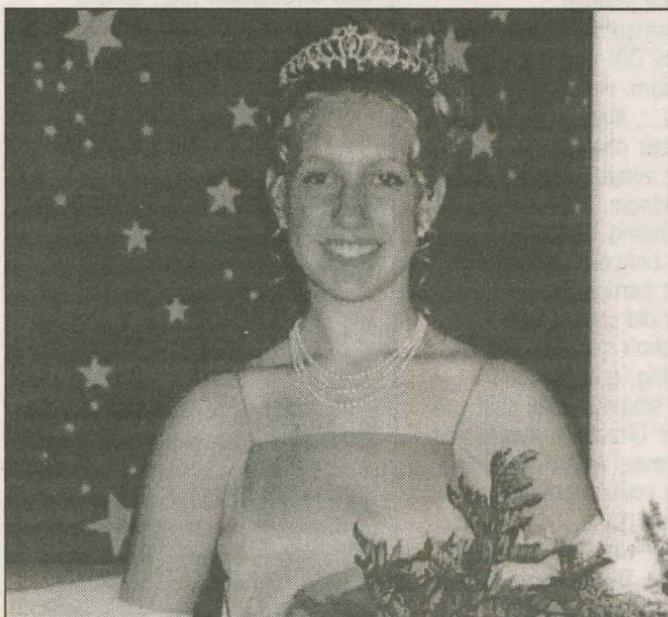
named her Actress of the Year. "Rebekah was a play director's dream.," said Winters. "She set a wonderful example for the other students."

Rebekah joined the yearbook staff and Beta Club as a senior. She also won the yearbook queen pageant. She was 7 years old when she watched her eldest sister crowned. "Ever since then, I wanted to be queen," Rebekah said with a smile. "I'm really honored that they picked me."

As a Christian, Rebekah said, "Being at OBI taught me how to be independent and think for myself."

Having completed two church missions trips to Africa, Rebekah would like to return someday as a teacher.

She graduated fifth in her class and plans to major in education at Cumberland College in Williamsburg.



PAGEANT WINNER Rebekah, OBI's yearbook queen, would like to teach in Africa.

Oneida Baptist Institute

Amanda: She received a second chance

Amanda decided to quit school after receiving a three-day suspension in the 10th grade. Conflict with her mother added to her problems.

"I knew I needed to be away from home," she said. "My grades were never an issue. It was my attitude and the friends I was hanging with." A month out of school, she decided to try OBI, where a friend of hers had attended.

At OBI, Amanda found success in many areas. She accepted Christ and got along better with her mother. Amanda was a good worker in the kitchen and campus grill, and she joined choir and volleyball.

But Amanda did not fit in with her peers. "Nobody liked me, because I had the worst attitude," she said. She got expelled for fighting her junior year. Back at home, she returned to old habits and got in more trouble. "I never realized what I had at Oneida until I left," she said.

After numerous calls and letters to OBI, she was readmitted for a trial period of summer work. Amanda

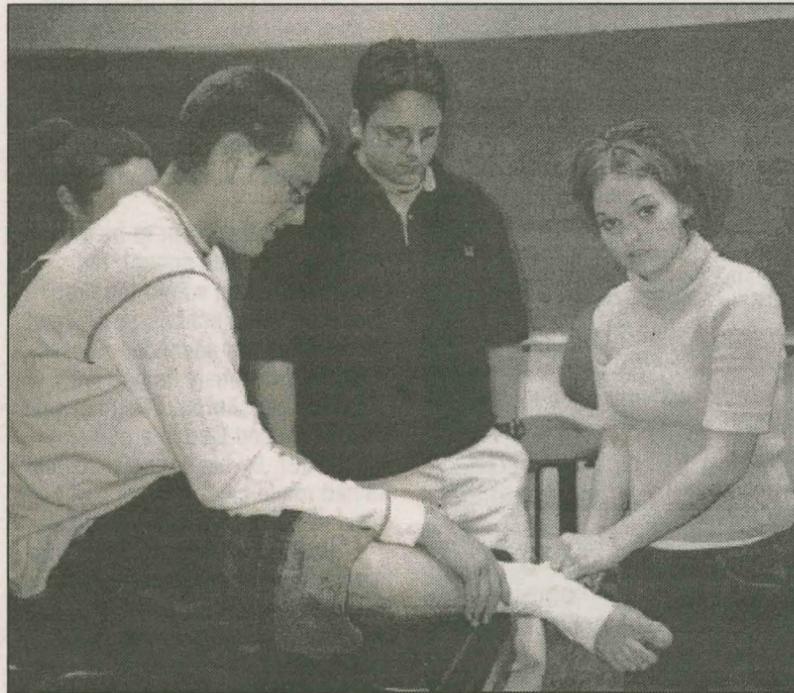
used the time to focus on God and get her life on the "right road." In the fall, she enrolled in anatomy which opened the door to another opportunity.

Glenn Phoenix, a chiropractor, started a new athletic injury training program and invited his anatomy students to join for Field Placement credit.

After learning basic skills like taping joints and assessing an injury, Amanda and the other trainers were assigned to work with the sports teams. Phoenix observed, "Amanda was very energetic and eager to learn."

Her efforts were recognized at commencement, when she was presented the President's award.

Despite her difficulties, Amanda graduated seventh in her class academically. She plans to attend Spalding University in Louisville and major in secondary education. "I want to be able to help those who were once like me and give them a second chance just like I got," she said.



CHARTER MEMBER Amanda was one of the first OBI students to complete OBI's newest Field Placement offering—sports injury training.

ANNUAL OFFERING

This is the eighth year for Kentucky Baptist churches to observe the Father's Day Offering for Oneida Baptist Institute.

FUNDING

Approximately 9 percent of Oneida's funding comes from the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

35 percent comes from student fees.

The remaining 56 percent comes from churches and individuals who choose to invest in the lives of young people. These gifts are the financial backbone of our ministry.

Kenneth: He developed the 'right attitude'



FOCUSED ATHLETE Kenneth hopes to play college basketball at Campbellsville University next season.

Kenneth, known as "Boo" to his friends, came to Kentucky with his family from Florida seven years ago. His uncle is an OBI alumnus.

Kenneth transferred to OBI in the sixth grade and began attending as a day student. He had played basketball with the public elementary school team, but he believed he would have more of a chance to play in middle school if he came to OBI.

He made the OBI varsity team by eighth grade. "I've always played basketball. My dad used to play basketball. He coached me. The one thing my dad and I could always do together was play ball," said Kenneth.

Even though he sacrificed some of his goals, he stayed at OBI through high school out of loyalty to his coaches. "They worked with me for so long and got me to where I am

now," said Kenneth.

"I felt like I should repay them by playing for them instead of leaving and going to play for (the public) school. ...It was a dream of mine to play at a state championship in Rupp arena, (but) that seemed unreachable at Oneida. I just played ball and hoped to play in college; that's how I looked at it," said Kenneth.

His first choice is Campbellsville University, where he hopes to be offered a scholarship.

At OBI, Kenneth said he learned "how to have the right attitude and to work hard for what you want to do." He spent much of his free time in the gym honing his skills.

Three seasons of varsity baseball helped him stay in shape. Kenneth earned four letters in basketball and three letters in baseball.

Varsity basketball coach Larry Allen Gritton Jr. commented, "I have enjoyed the privilege of knowing, teaching and coaching Boo for five years.

"He has grown into a mature, focused and well-respected young man. He served as my team captain this season and did a great job. I know Boo will be successful in whatever he chooses to do with his life."

Kenneth remained on the B honor roll and said, "I was challenged, but when I want to do something, it's really easy for me. I think I'm prepared for college."

Kenneth was recognized at graduation as the Most Improved senior boy.

He said his dad encouraged him to go the extra mile by taking honors and advanced placement courses.

John: He found music & faith

John enrolled the summer before his junior year. At home in central Kentucky, John had been expelled from his last private school for bad grades and the use of illegal substances.

"My mom was desperate for a school, and so was I," John said. "She got on the internet and found Oneida Baptist Institute."

He added that he had "gotten in too deep with the wrong people."

"None of the other schools would take me, because I had gotten kicked out of a top school," John admitted. "I just wanted to get away."

Reading about OBI's after-school job requirement, John said, "I figured I'd be scrubbing toilets when I got here." He was happy to see the farm listed as an option.

John had grown up working and

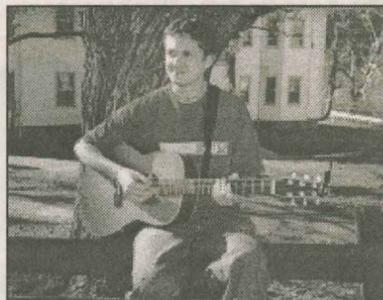
driving a tractor on his uncle's farm. He spent his first summer and fall at OBI working after school on the farm. Then, he transferred to the dorm to supervise the night cleaning crews.

It was a big job, and John was happy he was asked. "Mr. Saldaris gave me a lot of trust. I did everything I could to have it spotless," he said.

John Saldaris, dean of boys, was also John's guitar teacher. "He introduced me to music, and that was really how I connected to God through writing and performing," John said.

He also described finding time alone to play his guitar, pray, write music and read his Bible. "That helped me a lot," he said. John added his talents to the campus praise and worship teams.

John was voted the Most Im-



INSPIRED MUSICIAN John connected with God through music.

proved junior boy. His grades had gone from failing to an A average. He also earned Outstanding Worker and Cleanest Room awards.

He plans to attend Spalding University in Louisville and then the University of Kentucky's medical school to become an anesthesiologist. "I owe my life to this place."

Why do young people choose Oneida Baptist Institute?

- ◆ Some are struggling with academic setbacks.
- ◆ Others have been hurt by family conflicts and situations.
- ◆ Many need a change in peer group.
- ◆ Still others are seeking a distinctly Christian education.
- ◆ Often parents and grandparents are looking for a loving and structured environment for their teens.
- ◆ Young people enjoy the independence boarding school gives in preparation for college.

Oneida Baptist Institute

Oneida helps students overcome many barriers

This year's theme, "Overcoming Obstacles ... Embracing Opportunities," says a lot about the total ministry of Oneida Baptist Institute. Many of the young people who enroll at OBI have already encountered more than their share of obstacles in life.



W.F. Underwood

Enrollment at Oneida is often preceded by a life of turmoil and tears. Oneida Baptist Institute has a long history of ministering to young people who desperately need help in overcoming obstacles they have encountered. We do this

in a variety of ways, including encouraging them to participate in our athletic and fine arts programs.

Teaching young people the dignity that comes from developing good work habits, including work opportunities on the farm, is another way we are able to provide young people opportunities to succeed.

We help them by giving them chances to embrace success. Sharing the love of Christ is the first step in helping them to feel good about themselves. His love and healing can make the largest obstacles opportunities for success.

W. F. Underwood, president, Oneida Baptist Institute

What do students say about OBI?

- ◆ "I think I learn more here than I could anywhere else."
- ◆ "I found people here who are good role models for me."
- ◆ "I learned more here about what it means to be a Christian."
- ◆ "I'm benefiting from the extra help at this school."
- ◆ "You're somebody, because you came to Oneida."

Ways you can support the offering

- ◆ Make sure your church has received our box of offering materials.
- ◆ Offer to take charge of displaying posters and distributing brochures in your church.
- ◆ Tell others about the Oneida ministry.
- ◆ Pray for a successful offering.

Christian: He experienced God

Christian came to Oneida from central Kentucky. He described sixth grade as "the year I ended up completely and utterly failing. I was being the bad kid ... I was lazy. I had an attitude." The principal told his family about OBI. Christian enrolled in 1996.

He found the dorm to be a challenge, but he liked school. His grades improved within the first quarter. In high school, he enjoyed the challenge of advanced classes.

While previously he had felt "dragged" to church, Christian said he experienced God in a personal way at OBI. By his sophomore year, he had made close friends and had decided he would graduate at OBI.

"I probably would have had just as much fun at any other school, (but) with what I did here, I wouldn't trade it for anything, he said referring to his participation in drama, golf, Creative Ministry skits, yearbook and Beta Club.

He experienced his share of dorm work and earned worker awards in addition to a Coach's award in golf and a drama award.

He was also the chapel sound technician in grades nine through 12. Campus minister Michael Spen-



DEPENDABLE WORKER Chris contributed to campus worship by serving as a chapel sound technician all four years of high school.

cer noted Christian's dependability over the years saying, "The job entails responsibility for... equipment, a flexible schedule and supervision of other students. Christian did all this with a servant's attitude."

Considered one of the most outstanding senior boys by the

faculty, Christian received the Mr. Oneida award.

Christian said he was inspired to study engineering in college when he attended the six-week Preparatory Academics for Vanderbilt Engineers (PAVE) program in Tennessee last summer.

Betty: She prepared for college & life

Bethlehem (Betty) came to the United States from Ethiopia last June. Her aunt lives in Virginia and her family frequently vacationed here when the children were out of school.

Their father is an Ethiopian airline pilot, so transportation was no problem.

Betty's cousin graduated from OBI last year, and Betty wanted to come to OBI to prepare for college and strengthen her relationship with God.

The boarding school experience was also important to her. "It will help you live on your own without depending on your family," she said.

Homesickness was the most difficult part for Betty. "I've never been

this far away from my family," she explained.

She appreciated the support from staff. "The houseparents are like real family people," she said. They love students like their own kids."

She was also "adopted" by the Oneida Baptist Church pastor and his wife, an OBI teacher. "They helped me with anything I needed," said Betty.

She made many friends among the other Ethiopian students, whom she said were mostly all Christians. "We were like sisters. We talked about everything. Life in the dorm was really good. ... (and) easy if you respected the rules," she added.

One of Betty's teachers, Herb Case,

appreciated her "bright and cheerful" disposition in class. "Betty was a hard worker who gave her best on all assignments (and) had a concern for her classmates and their needs," he said.

Betty is interested in studying psychology and Christian ministry in college. She would like to have a career that focuses on helping others.

In her one year at OBI, Betty sang with the Sunday evening praise team, attended Baptist Student Union, and participated in the yearbook queen pageant. She said she enjoyed piano class because playing provided stress relief during the school day.

After school, Betty worked in the dining hall and campus grill. She was also a manager for the track team.

"I think (having a job) is good, because it really teaches us what the outside world is like," she observed. "It taught me how my mom and dad get tired to get the money ... to support me."

In her free time, she relaxed by writing poetry.

At Oneida, Betty's concern for others was widely known among students and faculty. She received OBI's second highest honor, the John Michael Davis Citizenship award, at graduation.

Betty enjoyed speaking at the Kentucky Baptist Convention last fall. "Everybody was so appreciative," she said. "I want to thank Dr. and Mrs. Underwood for letting me come to this school, because it has really changed my life," she said.



PASSIONATE PERFORMER Betty, a hard working student, found piano to be a creative outlet during her busy school days.

SMILE

Community

In the May 28 issue of the Western Recorder, a column ran with my name and photo that actually had been written by Tom Townsend, Kentucky Baptist Home for Children's vice president for development and communications.

It was an interesting experience because that particular column contained quite a bit of personal information. To clarify: my wife's name is Dawn, we have three children and I've never been to Ukraine. And by the way, I, unlike Tom, am not nearly old enough to have six grandchildren.

The mix-up reminds me of a similar error a few years ago when my name and photo was placed on a column written by Bill Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. It was during the week of the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. I know that when the pressure is a bit intense, mistakes like that are easy to make. I bring this up not to embarrass anyone, rather, the experience brings to mind a wonderful observation on the community of Kentucky Baptists.

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville is a long-time supporter of KBHC's Cornerstone

Counseling ministry. Not only has the college provided office space for our counselor, Clear Creek funds part of this vital ministry. This arrangement is not unique among Kentucky Baptists agencies and institutions. Cornerstone Counseling is blessed with similar support from Baptist associations across the commonwealth.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Other institutions such as Campbellsville University and Western Baptist Hospital in Paducah are also local partners. Without these relationships and the contributions of individuals in these communities, Cornerstone would not exist. This year, this ministry celebrates 10 years of providing quality, affordable Christian counseling to people all across Kentucky! Each year Cornerstone reaches nearly 2,000 people with a listening ear and sound advice.

So, it is a privilege to have my name connected with Bill Whittaker and Clear Creek, even in an innocent mix-up! KBHC is blessed to be linked with such an institution and so many others in our commonwealth.

Bill Smithwick is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Contact KBHC at (800) 456-1386 or at www.kbhc.org

Wai Hong Koong receives service award

By Robert Dunston

The T.E. Mahan Service Award is presented by Cumberland College at its annual Honors Day convocation. Wai Hong Koong received the award for 2002.

Koong, the son of Siew Pun and Sok Ying Koong of Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, is pursuing a double major in business administration and computer information systems.

For the past three years, Koong has played on Cumberland College's tennis team. This year he was recognized as an Academic All-Conference player in the Mid-South Conference.

For the past year Koong has served as a resident assistant in Cumberland's residence halls. He also has worked in Cumberland's maintenance department and at the Cumberland Inn.

Koong serves off campus as well. During the school year he assists Coach Tan, Cumberland's tennis coach, in preparing and leading tennis camps and clinics for area young people.

During the summer, Koong always returns home to Malaysia to assist his mother in operating the

family restaurant.

Linda Carter, Cumberland's dean of students, and Coach Tan both state that Koong epitomizes the role of a servant. He often labors in the background doing the many necessary things that few people notice but that contribute immeasurably to the success of any endeavor.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Whenever a need presents itself, Koong seeks to be of service. His caring and gentle spirit shines through in all he does.

After graduation from Cumberland College, Koong plans to attend graduate school and earn a master of business administration degree.

All of us at Cumberland College congratulate Koong. We pray God's blessing on him as he continues to serve.

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crossword

Across

- 1 Fiddling emperor
- 5 New Testament book
- 9 Noah's vessel
- 12 Dismounted
- 13 "For many ___ false witness against him" (Mark 14:56)
- 14 Gardening tool
- 15 "He shall not come ___ to offer the bread of his God" (Leviticus 21:21)
- 16 "Every beast, every ___ thing, and every fowl" (Genesis 8:19)
- 18 Leah's second son (Genesis 30:12-13)
- 20 Actor James ___ Jones
- 21 "Then he that had received the five talents went and ___ with the same" (Matthew 25:16)
- 23 "There met him ten men that were lepers, which stood ___ off" (Luke 17:12)
- 27 Get a perfect score on a test
- 29 Result of sunbathing
- 30 "And Jacob ___ away unawares to Laban" (Genesis 31:20)
- 31 ___-man, scary childhood character
- 33 Son of Dishon (Genesis 36:26)
- 34 Rhythm and ___
- 35 "T" in PTL
- 36 Newsman Koppel
- 37 "My couch shall ___ my complaint" (Job 7:13)
- 38 Height of Noah's ark in cubits (Genesis 6:15)
- 40 Eastern garment
- 42 "And over the course of the second month was ___ an Ahoite" (1 Chronicles 27:4)
- 45 "This is the token of the ___ which I have established" (Genesis 9:17)

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- 49 Sudden attack
- 50 "And all went to be taxed, every ___ into his own city" (Luke 2:3)
- 51 Popular brand of sneakers
- 52 Biblical city
- 53 "But ___ unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:13)
- 54 "I am the Lord, and there is none ___" (Isaiah 45:5)
- 55 Being, Lat.

- 10 Actor/director Howard
- 11 Small cask
- 17 "And thou shalt make a ___ of pure gold" (Exodus 28:36)
- 19 Gives a grade
- 22 "For this is the ___ of the Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 46:10)
- 24 "I will cause it to rain upon the earth ___" (Genesis 7:4) (2 words)
- 25 Wings
- 26 "A time to ___, and a time to sew" (Ecclesiastes 3:7)

Down

- 1 Common nickname for Grandmother
- 2 Belonging to inventor Whitney
- 3 "I am not come to call the ___, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13)
- 4 "The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the ___ Ruth" (Ruth 1:4)
- 5 Beginning of the alphabet
- 6 To sway wildly
- 7 "Every place that the sole of your foot shall ___ upon" (Joshua 1:3)
- 8 Prophet
- 9 Son of Abdiel (1 Chronicles 5:15)

- 27 Abbot, Fr.
- 28 Soft drink
- 30 Scrap of pottery
- 32 "Silly" birds
- 33 Greek letter
- 35 Calls to mind
- 38 Pathway
- 39 Rich cake
- 41 Actress Bancroft
- 43 Haughty conduct
- 44 Thought, Fr.
- 45 Milk provider
- 46 Biblical plain (Nehemiah 6:2)
- 47 Type of neckline
- 48 Golf peg

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Last week's solution

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Missionary killed, wife injured in hostage rescue attempt



ULTIMATE SACRIFICE
Missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham served in the Philippines 15 years prior to being kidnapped a year ago. Burnham was killed by his captors last week and his wife was injured during a rescue attempt by the Philippine military.

MANILA, Philippines (RNS)—A little more than a year after they were kidnapped by Muslim extremists, U.S. missionary Martin Burnham was killed and his wife, Gracia, injured June 7 as Philippine troops fought with their captors.

A third hostage, Filipino nurse Deborah Yap, died as a result of the battle between the country's military and Abu Sayyaf guerrillas. Initial reports indicated four kidnappers were killed and seven soldiers were wounded.

Asked if Burnham was killed by the kidnappers or crossfire, U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said, "The Abu Sayyaf are fully responsible for the death of the hostages."

"Our hearts are heavy over the loss of Martin and Deborah," New Tribes Mission, the Florida-based organization with which the Burnhams were affiliated, said in a statement. "We are grateful for Gracia's survival and we ache for her, their children and the rest of the families."

The couple's three children, Jeffrey, 15, Mindy, 12, and Zach, 11, are living in Kansas with Burnham's parents.

David Zelenak, resource director of New Tribes Mission, said the U.S. Embassy informed his organization of the situation and both President Bush and Philippine President Gloria Arroyo called Burnham's parents.

He said Mrs. Burnham was shot in the leg and had surgery in Zamboanga City before being flown to Manila

for further treatment.

Burnham's body has been recovered, Zelenak said.

"I guess we're in shock right now," he added. "This isn't the way we had hoped it to work out. We're grateful that Gracia's free, but ... we hoped that Martin would have been, too."

New Tribes officials and family members of the captives had long awaited word on the outcome of the

kidnapping, which occurred May 27, 2001.

New Tribes Mission had kept tabs on the Burnhams, highlighting their situation on its Web site with a count of how many days they were held hostage—377—and weekly updates.

The couple had been serving in the Philippines since 1986. Burnham was a pilot who flew missionaries, supplies and sick people in and out of the re-

mote jungles of the Philippines. His wife assisted him, often communicating with pilots.

They were kidnapped while they were celebrating their 18th wedding anniversary at a resort off Palawan Island.

"The Burnhams knew there were risks," Zelenak said. "They never dreamt there would be these kind of risks. Neither did we for them."

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I Do, What
Happens Next?"**

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Where have they all gone?

In 1899, when our founder had the vision for this school, there were scores of boarding schools along the east coast and in Kentucky. Now only a handful of boarding schools for students in grades 6-12 remain.

Most of those institutions are gone because they could not raise the funds needed to continue. Every faith-based ministry has to balance everyday needs with the financial resources available. Often, not only are the needs overwhelming, but the resources decline until finally the doors must close.

When any administrator asks people of compassion to support his or her ministry, a tremendous burden of fiscal responsibility is placed upon that administrator. When a supporter shares personal resources, it is a step of faith on the part of the donor and a commitment of stewardship for the ministry.

For the past several years Oneida Baptist Institute has had an average enrollment of 350-400 students. Our expenses for the 1994 fiscal year were \$3,557,697. Our expenses last fiscal year were \$3,615,107—an increase of a little over \$57,000 in the past seven years, or about an \$8,000 increase each year. On a \$3.5 million budget, I would say that's not too bad.

In May, your church should have received a packet of information about the annual Father's Day Offering for Oneida. I hope your pastor has provided that information to your congregation. You will notice that nothing is said about finances. The primary purpose of that information is to tell you about our ministry. If you know a young person who is suitable for Oneida, we hope you will encourage and help him or her contact us.

The second purpose for the information is to

encourage you to help us financially. Though the materials do not specifically ask for financial help, we hope you will be encouraged to support this ministry because of what we do for young people. I feel comfortable in asking for that support because of what we do, and I am confident you will find our stewardship worthy of your support.

Nearly anyone who has visited our campus has seen evidence of our fiscal responsibility. Our students clean our 15 major buildings. They keep our

campus looking beautiful by mowing the lawns and by keeping the weeds under control. The girls work in the dorm, dining room and kitchen. Boys and girls work long, hard hours on the school's farm to raise most of our pork and beef.

Additionally, our 150 faculty and staff work for very modest salaries, which average about \$6,000 per year. We try to use every donated item to the best advantage. Most of the vehicles used in our maintenance department and on the farm have been donated, as have many others. Often those vehicles have more than 100,000 miles on them when they are given to us. But for our use here

on the campus, they are a godsend. I believe God has allowed us to survive for the past 103 years, when others have not, in part because of our stewardship. Many of our friends believe a dollar given to the Oneida ministry will go further than any other investment they can make.

If you love young people and believe in good stewardship, I think you will feel good about an investment in the Father's Day Offering.

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

**THIS IS
ONEIDA**



W.F. Underwood

Family overcomes odds to attend Clear Creek

By Brian Sizemore
Clear Creek Student Writer

First year student David Butler has overcome the odds to continue his journey with Christ.

Butler and his wife, Jennifer, first met at Lexington Bible College in 1998 where they fell in love and got married Aug. 14, 1999. Butler then took a job with Kentucky Utilities, and God started speaking to him about the ministry. Butler battled with a call for some time, and obstacles stood in the way.

Their Lexington landlord was reluctant to let them out of their lease, but the Butlers prayed hard about the situation and the landlord's heart was changed. Butler transferred from Lexington to Pineville so they could start their future at Clear Creek. "God really opened so many doors for us," Jennifer said.

After acceptance at Clear Creek, they faced another obstacle. "I had a hard decision to either work full-time and go to school or find a part-time job and get my schooling," Butler said. A full-time job would limit his study time and family activities. Butler decided to trust God, and he got a job with the campus mowing crew. This student "work-

ship" program has helped him keep up his studies and still provide family income.

Butler has significant family models for ministry. His grandfather, Laverne Butler, is former pastor of Ninth and O Baptist Church in Louisville and former president of Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College in Mayfield. "My father, David A. Butler, has been a minister for over 20 years and is pastor of Springdale Baptist Church in Louisville. I've been blessed, but at Clear Creek I want to get the knowledge God would have me to have, plus the degree," Butler said.

The Butlers have a 6-year old daughter. "Ashleigh is my niece and we adopted her June 2000," Jennifer said.

"We love her so much and she is such a blessing to our family. The family atmosphere and community is what drew us here."

As a student, Butler participates in the campus Brotherhood. He is involved in intramural sports and is head coach for the college softball team. Butler is majoring in the pastoral ministry track and plans to be pastor of a church after graduation. Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977

**CLEAR CREEK
CHRONICLE**



Bill Whittaker

Debate about salvation theology due at Presbyterian meeting this week

COLUMBUS, Ohio (RNS)—When the Presbyterian Church (USA) meets this week, the hottest topic in the denomination—homosexuality—won't be on the agenda.

That does not mean there won't be fireworks.

The 2.5 million-member denomination will hold its 214th General Assembly meeting June 15-22 in Columbus, Ohio. About 554 delegates will set policy and budgets and elect a moderator.

This year's meeting will likely see a push by the church's conservative wing to define exactly how the church views salvation through Jesus Christ. A compromise statement passed last year failed to satisfy many evangelicals.

"Both heresy and unbelief have crept into our ranks," said Joe Rightmyer, executive director of Presbyterians for Renewal. He said the church must take a definitive stand that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.

"If that's up for grabs, then we have no basis for unity and purpose as a church," he said.

At least five of the church's 173 regional presbyteries will seek to have delegates affirm a document that was issued after last year's meeting by the church's theology and worship office. That statement, "Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ," received widespread support but has yet to be officially endorsed by the entire church.

The statement said: "No one is saved apart from God's gracious redemption in Jesus Christ. Yet ... we neither restrict the grace of God to those who profess explicit faith in Christ nor assume that all people are saved regardless of faith."

Congregations in California's San Joaquin Presbytery, a bastion of conservatism, said in its resolution that "many people have asked if we still believe in what the Scriptures and confessions teach about Jesus Christ, or if those are forgotten statements that we no longer preach and teach."

Welfare reform could include marriage helps

By Dalia Dabbous
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—They were taught how to be open and honest with each other. They got tips on how to talk to their children and how to budget their money.

For three weeks, two hours a week, Andre and Charmaine Boulware got premarital counseling.

They both had experienced rough times. Andre, a car retailer, had been in and out of jail. Charmaine, a clerk, had just come out of a bitter divorce and recently lived in a violent neighborhood. Both had gotten help to turn their lives around financially and personally. Now they faced a bigger decision—marriage—and their pastor suggested they receive some tips before making it.

Charmaine said the counseling helped get their marriage off to a good start and it's still going strong after two years.

The Boulwares got their counseling at United Faith Ministries in Washington, in a program of the kind that would be funded under a proposal by the Bush administration.

While the enactment of the 1996 welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, featured family strengthening provisions, Bush has pursued the idea further by proposing that \$200 million of the \$16.6 billion annual welfare budget be contributed to faith-based and secular programs that promote marriage. He wants another \$100 million in state funds.

The White House said there is abundant research showing that children raised in households with two married parents do better than children in other households. According to the 2000 Census, 62 percent of poor children live with one parent.

Bush's plan, which already has passed the House, has come under

Pentecostals, Charismatics hold secret meeting to foster unity

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Leaders of major U.S. Pentecostal and charismatic movements recently held a historic but secret meeting focusing on their common Christian heritage and prayers for unity.

Nearly 30 senior representatives of the charismatic, Word of Faith, traditional Pentecostal and Oneness Pentecostal movements met in the Washington area at the end of April, Charisma News Service reported.

Participants included officials of

What some states are doing

WASHINGTON (RNS)—While the American public may think that marriage promotion is a new idea on the public agenda, a handful of states already have tested the waters. Examples include:

■ **Oklahoma.** Having one of the highest divorce rates in the nation, Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating announced an initiative in 2000 to use 10 percent of the state welfare program's surplus funds for a marriage resource center, a public education campaign and pre-marital counseling.

■ **West Virginia.** One of the most controversial programs is West Virginia's offer of \$100 more in monthly welfare benefits to married couples with children. This year 1,834 families qualified for the bonus, according to the state's department of health and human services.

■ **Utah.** In February 2001, Utah set aside \$600,000 of its surplus welfare funds for the promotion of marriage education during the next two years. Programs include premarital counseling and vouchers for counseling and mediation services for married couples. Marriage is also promoted through high school civic classes and teacher education.

■ **Louisiana.** The state's Covenant Marriage Law offers an alternative to the traditional marriage law. Couples choosing this alternative face tougher divorce provisions. The law requires them to receive information about their rights and responsibilities as husband and wife before getting married. Couples can get divorced only if they prove such conditions as spouse abuse, adultery or separation for two years.

heated debate among religious and political leaders.

Opponents of the proposal say it is patronizing of the poor and fails to understand the reasons for poverty or single-parent households.

"Rather than listening to the welfare recipients who state their barriers to leaving poverty are lack of good and safe child care, lack of education and training and livable wages, we will focus the nation's attention on this provision," Meg Riley, director of the Unitarian Universalist Association's Washington office, told a recent Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life symposium on the issue.

Pat Russ, a feminist who lobbies on behalf of low-income families, agreed, saying poor women and men aren't marriageable because of such problems, and money should be used

to lift them out of poverty.

But Jennifer Garrett, a domestic policy researcher at the Heritage Foundation, disagrees, arguing that "the fastest way into poverty is divorce. The reason: Two incomes are better than one."

Wade Horn, who oversees the welfare program at the federal Department of Health and Human Services, said the marriage proposal funding would represent less than 2 percent of the total money available for welfare.

"Now one could argue that should be 0 percent," he said. "We think it should be a small percentage at this point to spur innovation. So we want to have (fewer children) in married households where there is violence ... and more kids in households where the parents love, nurture, respect and support each other."

the Assemblies of God, Church of God in Christ, Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), Church of God of Prophecy, International Church of the Four-square Gospel, International Pentecostal Holiness Church and United Pentecostal Church International as well as religious broadcasters Kenneth and Gloria Copeland.

Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan, dean of the School of Divinity at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Va., said the meeting was "tru-

ly a first" because it included such a range of Pentecostal leaders, including those with differing views about the triune nature of God.

Billy Joe Daugherty, pastor of Victory Christian Center in Tulsa, Okla., said the meeting fostered mutual appreciation. "People work together when they know and trust one another."

Leaders discussed the possibility of a future joint ministry effort, such as starting churches in a major city.

that strong a commitment to the faith.

"Although young people are very comfortable with faith matters and are open to integrating faith into their life, the data portray Busters to be generally disinterested in typical faith pursuits, long-accepted Christian beliefs and long-standing religious events and institutions," Barna said in a statement.

The findings were based on nationwide telephone interviews of at least 1,000 adults and had a margin of error of at least plus or minus 3 percentage points.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **The Salvation Army** will develop a training program for volunteers from faith-based groups responding to disasters after receiving a \$4.66 million grant from the Lilly Endowment. Courses will help volunteers understand various disasters and how they can respond by managing food services, offering spiritual care and providing emergency shelter. The courses also aim to help volunteers perform under high-stress conditions. The Salvation Army will partner with other faith-based groups on the program, including the Southern Baptist Convention.

■ **A Seventh-day Adventists committee** has approved spending \$1 million to start new congregations across the globe. The plans approved by the Global Mission Operations Committee will fund 732 projects, the Adventist News Network reported. The projects will cost a total of \$2.5 million, with local church organizations supplying some of the funding.

■ **Three students in Davenport, Iowa,** filed a federal lawsuit May 30 against their school board, school district and superintendent for barring them from distributing Bibles and church-event fliers on school grounds during non-instructional time. An April 3 letter from the superintendent and school board cited "restrictions placed on us as a public entity that prohibit the distribution of religious materials." The students' suit claims the district violated their constitutional right to free speech.

Poll: 25 percent of Americans believe Jesus sinned while on earth

VENTURA, Calif. (RNS)—A quarter of Americans feel strongly that Jesus sinned when He lived on earth, the Barna Research Group reports.

Twenty-five percent of Americans surveyed this year said they strongly agreed that "when He lived on earth, Jesus Christ committed sins," compared to 20 percent in 2000. Nineteen percent agreed somewhat with that statement this year and two years ago.

Forty percent strongly disagreed with the statement in 2002, compared to 43 percent two years ago. Eight

percent disagreed somewhat with the statement this year, compared to 9 percent in 2000.

The statistics are reported in "The State of the Church: 2002," a new book by George Barna, president of the Ventura, Calif.-based research firm.

Researchers also found that the percentage of adults classified as "unchurched"—those who have not attended a church service in the past six months other than for a wedding, funeral or other special event—has increased significantly in the last de-

cade. In 1991, 24 percent of all adults fit in that category; now 34 percent do.

The percentage of adults who attend church in a typical week has remained fairly steady and was 43 percent this year. Less than one in three adults attend church every week.

Researchers also found that half of adults who say they are Christians consider themselves to be "absolutely committed" to the Christian faith, a percentage that has remained stable since 1996. Thirty-eight percent of Baby Busters, the generation that followed Baby Boomers, said they had

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Missionaries Randy and Helen Greer as they make plans to begin a church to reach Russian military personnel in Moscow.

■ A new meeting place for a Bible study group that has been meeting in a veterans' center in Moscow.

■ Missionaries in France ask prayer that God will help them use their apartments effectively as places of witness and that they will build relationships with their neighbors in order to share Christ with them.

■ A permanent location for International Baptist Church in Bucharest, Romania. Each Wednesday at least 80 people cram into the apartment of missionaries James and Audrey Duke for Bible study and discipleship training. The church has \$58,000 in its building fund and is praying that God will raise up 1,000 people who will contribute \$25 a month for one year to the fund.

■ Missionary Susan Carson as she works with university students and single adults in Warsaw, Poland.

■ Ray Allen, evangelism team leader for the Baptist Convention of New England.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **BURLINGTON**—Burlington Church called **Lindsay Becker** as summer intern. **Terry Wilder** is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host a musical praise service June 30, 6 p.m., with **Brooke and Billy Joe Douglas** in concert. The event will include a fellowship meal at 5 p.m.

■ **COLUMBIA**—Columbia Church called **James Jones** as interim pastor.

■ **CORBIN**—Corinth Church called **Chris Harp** as pastor.

■ **COVINGTON**—Rosedale Church called **Dan Hillard** as pastor.

■ **FRANKLIN**—First Church honored **Kenneth Brewer** June 9 for 20 years of service as organist. **Bob Sutton** is pastor.

■ **GREENSBURG**—**Gary Landis** resigned as pastor of Green Hill Church.

■ **LONDON**—Hart Missionary Church ordained **Steve Eversole** and **Joel Wells** as deacons May 5. **Jeff Jackson** is pastor.

New Salem Church called **Matthew Howe** as youth director.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Midlane Park Church will celebrate its 39th anniversary June 22. For information,

call (502) 491-7966.

Ridgewood Church called **Derik Hamby** as pastor effective May 19.

West Broadway Church called **Fred May** as part-time minister of recreation effective May 16. **Skip Alexander** is pastor.

■ **MIDDLETOWN**—First Church ordained minister of music **Leslie Hancock** June 9. **James Cobban** is pastor.

■ **RINEYVILLE**—Rineyville Church called **Isaac McDonald** as interim pastor.

■ **ROCKHOLDS**—First Church ordained **Tommy Dodson** as a deacon May 10. **Earl Tye** is pastor.

■ **WEST PADUCAH**—Mount Zion Church ordained **Tim Smith** to the gospel ministry.

■ **WHITLEY CITY**—First Church called **Robert and Susan Burnett** as ministers to students.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—Wolf Creek Church called **Eugene Hamilton** as interim pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Ephesus Church called **Dale Hanson** as pastor. He previously was a direct care counselor for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

■ **WOODBINE**—Woodbine Church called **Jeff Ellis** as pastor.

Kentuckians among seminary grads

Twenty-three students with Kentucky ties were among recent graduates of three Southern Baptist Convention seminaries.

Kentuckians earning degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and their hometowns are:

■ **Ken Bingemer**, Henderson, diploma in church music.

■ **Tony Cecil**, Winchester, master of divinity in missions, evangelism and church growth.

■ **Rodney Cude**, Hickory, master of arts in Christian education.

■ **Adam Dooley**, Berea, master of divinity in missions, evangelism and church growth.

■ **Richard Alan Fleenor**, Williamsburg, doctor of education.

■ **John Gibbons**, Middlesboro, master of divinity.

■ **Dale Holcomb**, Mount Vernon, master of divinity.

■ **Roberta Jones**, Dexter, master of divinity.

■ **Rochelle Morgan**, Louisville, master of arts in Christian education.

■ **Ralph Neal**, Barbourville, master of divinity in missions, evangelism and church growth.

■ **John Newland**, Grayson, doctor of ministry.

■ **James Overbee**, Beattyville, master of divinity.

■ **Jon Settlemoir**, Reynolds Station, master of divinity.

■ **Jerry Shacklett**, Garrett, master of divinity in missions, evangelism and church growth.

■ **Greg Vittoe**, Louisville, master of arts in Christian education.

Graduates of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, are:

■ **Joseph Early**, Williamsburg, doctor of philosophy.

■ **Sara Fentress**, Lawrenceburg, master of arts in marriage and family counseling and master of arts in Christian education.

■ **Michael Garrison**, Lewisport, master of divinity in biblical languages.

■ **Jimmy Jasper**, Danville, master of arts in Christian education.

■ **Steven McGaughey**, Lawrenceburg, master of divinity in biblical languages.

■ **Shannon Robertson**, Hopkinsville, master of arts in Christian education.

Graduates of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., are:

■ **Jeff Doyle**, Lexington, master of arts in counseling ministry.

■ **Brad Hambrick**, Bardwell, master of divinity with counseling ministry.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: Sanibel Island, Fla. Two-bedroom, 2-bath condo for vacation rental. Large pool, tennis courts, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely beach. www.sanibelcondo.net. Call Pat, (502) 895-8752.

HEALTH: Affordable healthcare. Pre-existing conditions accepted. Only \$54.95/month, entire family. Doctors, hospitals, prescriptions, vision, dental and more. The non-insurance solution. Call toll-free: (877) 889-8844. www.healthcaredeal.net.

HEALTH: Great news for people with diabetes. Medicare pays for diabetes testing supplies. Liberty Medical Supply (you've seen us on TV). Satisfaction guaranteed. Call toll-free: (800) 301-6497.

NEEDED: First Baptist Church of Prospect is searching for 400 linear feet of pews (to seat at least 250 people) to be used in a new sanctuary. Please leave a message: (502) 228-3286.

SEEKING: Worship leader for growing church with both contemporary and traditional worship in the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati area. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church Cold Spring, 4410 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076. No phone calls accepted; resúmes accepted until July 15.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Salvisa Baptist Church, PO Box 75, Salvisa, KY 40372.

SEEKING: Minister of students and education for Southern Baptist church. Position may or may not expand to full-time. Interested applicants send resumé to: Search Committee, PO Box 21705, Owensboro, KY 42304-1705.

SEEKING: We are prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of youth. This would include grades 7-12. Please submit resumé to: Lancaster Baptist Church, 201 Richmond St., Lancaster, KY 40444.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth for a rural church in Clark County. Approximately 12 hours a week; salary: \$100 per week with some traveling expenses. Send resumé to: Search Committee, 119 Albany Lane, Winchester, KY 40391, or e-mail: ewaugh@meginc.com.

SEEKING: Young adult minister position available—full-time plus great benefits package. Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, OK. More than 6,000 membership. E-mail resumé to: rushing@councilroad.org. For additional church information, visit Web site at www.councilroad.org.

SEEKING: Part-time church musicians. Immediate opening for qualified choir director/musician. Responsibilities include providing choral and keyboard music for weekly Sunday morning worship services and other occasional special services (Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve), directing and accompanying choir during weekly rehearsals. Excellent piano and directing skills required as well as good interpersonal and communication skills. Organ and/or bell choir skills a plus. Competitive salary offered based on qualifications, experience and potential level of involvement in church music program (approximately 20 hours per week; open to shared positions). Interested applicants should contact: Buechel Presbyterian Church, 4032 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40218; (502) 499-0977, Laverne or Carol.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to: St. John Baptist, 1775 St. John Road, Frankfort, KY 40601, or e-mail: sjb@fewpb.net.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., announces a new combined position available for an assistant worship minister who also will serve as minister to singles. In conjunction with this, there will be opportunities for this person to assist with college students. Experience in music ministry is required, while experience with a singles ministry is highly desirable. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required; a master's degree from an accredited graduate school or seminary would be desirable. This will be a full-time position with full benefits. Please submit resumé to: George Thacker, chairman, Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 904, Owensboro, KY 42302.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Ky., is seeking a full-time music associate/organist. These positions currently are combined but may be separated in the future. Please send a resumé to: Richard Suggs, minister of music, First Baptist Church, 621 E 12th Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42101, or call the church music office: (270) 842-0331, ext. 104. Experience required; at least a bachelor's degree (music/arts) is preferred.

SEEKING: Grace Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of education. College degree required; seminary training preferred. Please send resumé and cover letter to: Grace Baptist Church, 811 Bryan Ave., Lexington, KY 40505, Attn: Education Minister Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time youth/recreation minister. Resúmes may be sent to Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 213 N Main St., Owenton, KY 40359. (502) 484-2430.

SEEKING: Dynamic and diverse congregation seeks skilled and experienced minister of music and worship to oversee a comprehensive music and worship program designed to develop each member to participate in worship, including direct responsibility for congregational praise and worship, adult and youth choirs. Would work in concert with team of ministers, including senior pastor, minister of youth, musicians and other church members. Resúmes accepted until position is filled. Video tape examples demonstrating skills and proficiencies welcomed. Send to: First Baptist Church, 101 West Church St., Smithville, TN 37166, Attn. Music Search Committee. No phone inquiries, please. Tapes cannot be returned.

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.

WANTED: 24 all-wood church pews in good condition, 12' or 14' in length. Call (606) 787-7247.

Purity movements

Youth pledges moving beyond just abstinence

By Michele Melendez
Religion News Service

PENNSAUKEN, N.J. (RNS)—Mickey Harris Jr. is young, strong and pure. He's 16, a 6-foot-3 athlete and a virgin who shuns risky behavior.

"Purity is abstaining from anything that can affect you mentally, physically or spiritually in a bad way," he said. "You can make mistakes along the way, but you want to come back to being pure."

In Pennsauken, Mickey's southern New Jersey town, and in communities across the country, purity is a label that goes beyond "sexually abstinent" or "drug-free." It means unsoiled in all respects, in an emerging, largely Christian movement toward straight-edged youth.

Mickey regularly joins hundreds of other young people who act, rap and dance at "Purity Jams."

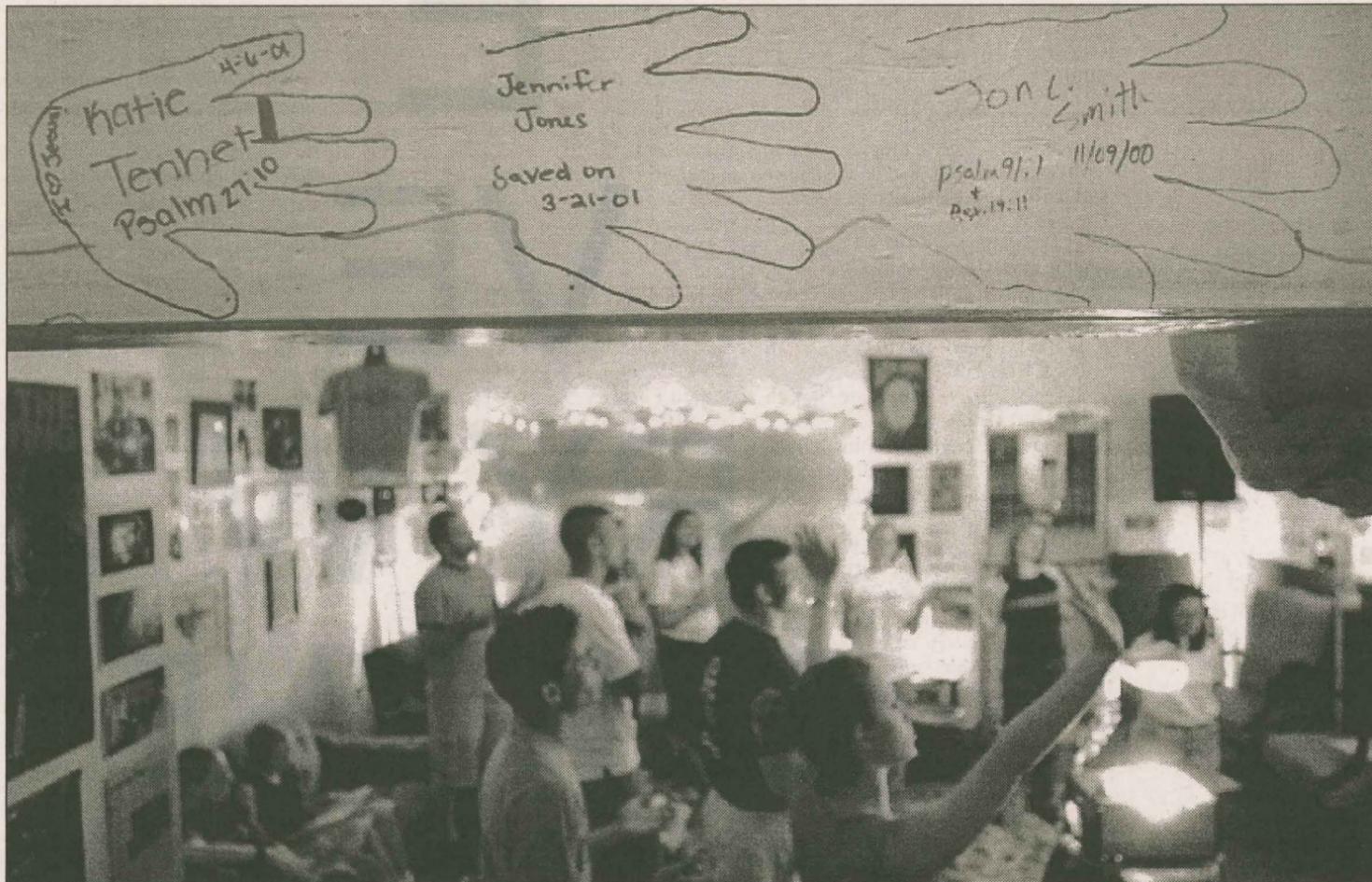
In suburban New Orleans, teens are expressing a "Passion4Purity" with role-playing and song. In the St. Petersburg, Fla., area, teens are taking the "Purity Power Pledge."

This outpouring is bubbling as Congress discusses public funding to promote sexual abstinence, the element most associated with purity. President Bush has requested \$135 million for abstinence-only education programs, a \$33 million increase from last year.

Critics argue that the programs are blind to the reality of adolescence and, by withholding safe-sex information, might even put teens in danger.

But, apart from the debate over whether abstinence education works, religious community leaders say they're convinced that devotion to purity benefits teens in all areas.

"It's not just 'Say no to sex,'" said Daphne Stevens, founder of Melody



Ministries in Pennsauken, which runs the Purity Jam in churches and schools in the Philadelphia area and throughout New Jersey. "It's about destructive behavior, violence, peer pressure, prejudice."

Purity programs involve role-playing, games, music, prayer, skits and peer counseling. Discussion often turns to talk of consequences, how a thrill can fester into torment.

Cindy Collins, executive director of Passion4Purity, a youth group in the New Orleans suburb of Slidell, said concentrating on sexual abstinence ignores other vital teen struggles. She said many people who were active in the abstinence movement that emerged in the 1990s realized the focus was too narrow.

"What I've seen is that it's only the surface of the need," she said. "You have to get deeper to the heart of this younger generation."

Passion4Purity's mission has touched Kristen Alexander, 18. By age 14, she had already decided to remain sexually abstinent before marriage and devote herself to God. At age 16, she started volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center, where she saw girls younger than she was, pregnant and distraught.

When she turned 17, Alexander joined Passion4Purity, which is affiliated with the pregnancy center. She said the weekly meetings, held in the group's strip-mall office, let young people talk about topics that they're afraid to mention in school, where purity can be unpopular.

"A lot of kids, they feel like they have no hope," Alexander said.

Last year, Marisa Tompkins, 17, of Tampa, Fla., started thinking about what her reputation would be. Her peers were getting more physical with members of the opposite sex, and some were trying drugs and alcohol.

"I was in a stage of life where I was wondering if I wanted to live a chaste life," she said.

She joined the POWER Team, a youth group sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Petersburg in Florida. The acronym stands for "Peers Offer Witness to Encourage Respect." Members meet monthly to socialize and yearly for a weekend retreat during which they talk to younger children about peer pressure and other challenges.

Encouraged by her older brother, Jack, 19, who already had signed up, Marisa took the "Purity Power Pledge," a promise "to live a life which is marked by purity and respect for all people."

Marisa said she strayed by drinking at a party and, on another occasion, allowing a boyfriend to get more physical with her than she wanted. But she said she caught her mistakes. She said she has avoided alcohol and protected her virginity.

Emma Boe, the POWER Team's coordinator, said the program teaches refusal skills. She said young people should prepare for various scenarios, from sexual to social. For example, she said, if friends are pushing to see an objectionable movie, Boe advises: "You have to offer an alternative. 'Why don't we go see this movie instead?' Or, 'There are other fun things we can do.'"

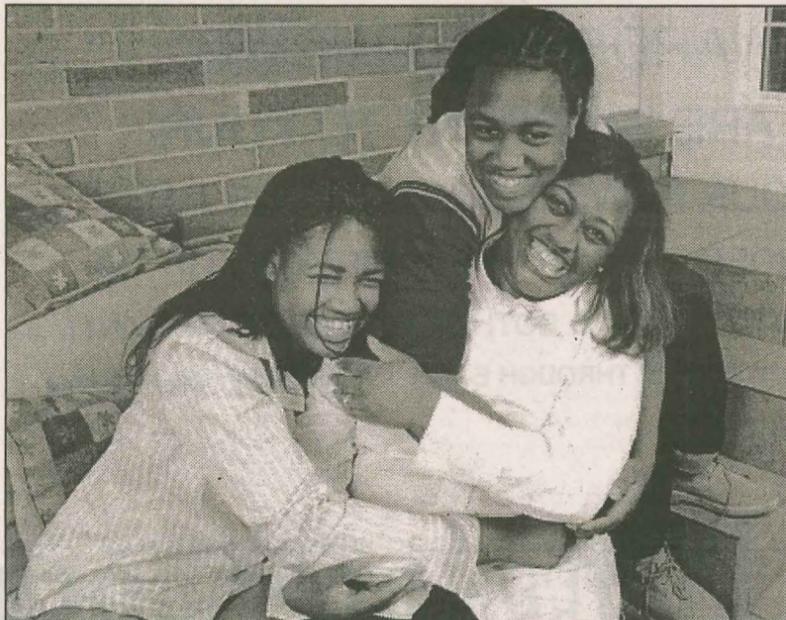
Jimmy Hester, coordinator of the Southern Baptist True Love Waits campaign, said the program has long equated purity with sexual abstinence. The international effort sponsors pledge drives, during which young people sign commitment cards promising abstinence until marriage.

But Hester said he has sensed a broadening notion of purity in the abstinence movement. This year, LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention published a study guide for youth called "Pure Joy: God's Formula for Passionate Living," which reads, "The concept of purity is more than just a sexual barometer."

For Mickey, the New Jersey teen, it means going to church, doing homework, running track and playing football and giving respect. He said his purity event, the Purity Jam, is a sanctuary, where he learns skills for becoming a pure adult.

"Everywhere you look, there's sex, there's drinking, there's smoking," he said. "When you go to the Purity Jam, this positive energy surrounds you. You know you're in a good place."

PASSION4PURITY
Teens participate in a weekly meeting of Passion4Purity in the organization's space in a Slidell, La., strip mall, near New Orleans. The youth have promised to practice purity, being sexually abstinent, drug-free and respectful. The hand outlines above show favorite Bible verses, or the date a teen committed to purity. (RNS photo by Scott Threlkeld)



PURITY JAMS Kristine and Jasmine Stevens, from left, sit with their mother, Daphne Stevens, of Pennsauken, N.J. The mother created "Purity Jams," at which young people come together to dance, sing and pray about staying abstinent until marriage, avoiding drugs and being considerate of others. (RNS photo by Jane Therese)

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