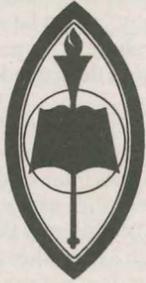


November 26, 2002
Vol. 176, No. 46

KENTUCKY NOTES



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Sheltering kids is top concern among parents

NASHVILLE (BP)—Many parents are more concerned with protecting their children from negative societal influences than about paying the bills or having enough family time, according to a recent survey.

"We found that a large majority of parents say American society is an inhospitable climate for raising children, where parents can never let down their guard in the face of popular culture, drugs and crime," reported Public Agenda, a nonprofit research organization that conducted a recent survey of American parents.

One survey question asked parents to choose their greatest challenge from a list of three: protecting children from negative societal influences, finding enough family time together or keeping up with household finances.

Forty-seven percent said they were most concerned about shielding their children from negative societal influences, which included drugs and alcohol, someone seeking to harm their children, anti-social peer groups and media messages.

In addition to the societal pressures against their children, parents said they don't believe they are doing a good job teaching their children essential values. According to the survey:

■ 74 percent said independence is an essential value, but only 38 percent said they have conveyed it.

■ 83 percent said it is essential for children to have self-control and self-discipline, but only 34 percent said they have succeeded in teaching it.

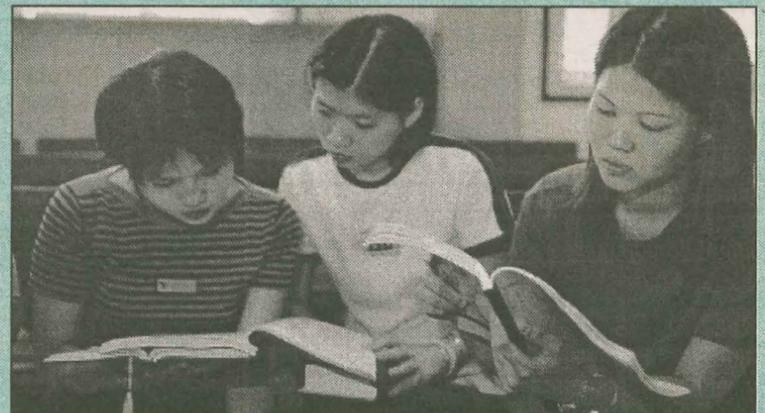
■ 91 percent said it is essential to teach their children to be honest; only 55 percent claimed to have done so.

■ 84 percent of parents said it is essential that they teach children to be courteous and polite, but 62 percent said they have succeeded.

That all may know



During the International Missions Emphasis, Dec. 1-8, Southern Baptists will focus on God's passion for every people group to know Him. The goal for the 2002 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions is \$125 million, all of which will go to support missionaries and their ministries. ■ Above: All cultures value light but not all have heard of Jesus, the Light of the World. ■ Right: The number of Chinese in Vietnam coming to Christ has slowed during the past 20 years, but younger Chinese Christians may be on the verge of reversing the trend, as they fearlessly live their faith. Stories, photos on pages 6-7. (BP photos)



Size doesn't affect missions involvement, church leaders say

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

DRY RIDGE—When David Tucker became pastor of Sherman Baptist Church eight years ago, fewer than 50 people dotted the pews.

But Tucker credits missions, not music or preaching, with more than tripling worship attendance for the Northern Kentucky congregation.

Locally, members are involved in such work as truck stop and jail ministries. Each fall, the church hosts a free pig roast for local residents of the rural community.

In recent years, members have traveled to Maine, Massachusetts, Idaho and Tennessee to perform mission work. Last spring the church commissioned its first summer missionary in 30 years, a college student who worked in Panama City, Fla.

Conditions were much different

back in 1994. When Tucker arrived, the church huddled in survival mode after recovering from a painful split that saw half the people leave.

"I told them to survive, they had to get their eyes off themselves," Tucker recalled. "There was a feeling they had to fill this place up to be what they should be. But what helps a church feel good about itself is to feel like they're doing something, that they're making an impact."

Around the commonwealth, other Kentucky Baptists say small and medium-size churches are capable of making a difference—if they'll keep their eyes on God and get involved in missions.

"They are not unable to do things," said Roy Finley, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, who has led other, small churches in the past. "That thought has bothered me for years."

□ See Size doesn't affect ..., page 3



BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB Lara Wimpy (left) and Brandi Collins, members of Casky Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, lead a backyard Bible club this past summer in Lynch. Leaders of several small churches in Kentucky insist size doesn't restrict members from taking part in ministry.

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, November 27

little churches **BIG RESULTS**

BAPTISTS

Judge declines to dismiss Missouri suit

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)—In a legal battle pitting the Missouri Baptist Convention against five former state convention entities, a circuit court judge Nov. 20 ruled against dismissing the case.

The initial ruling favors the MBC in the effort to bring the five entities whose trustee boards voted to become self-perpetuating back under state convention authority.

Cole County Circuit Court Judge Tom Brown rejected motions to dismiss the cases filed by attorneys for The Baptist Home, Missouri Baptist College, Missouri Baptist Foundation, Windermere Baptist Conference Center and Word & Way.

The entities had asked Brown to dismiss the suit filed last August by the state convention seeking a declaratory judgment on the legality of the entities' decision to become self-perpetuating.

Brown's decision came one day after he heard arguments for and against the motion to dismiss the MBC petition. At stake is control of

the five entities with a combined worth of more than \$200 million.

"It will be a good Thanksgiving season for Missouri Baptists," said Mike Whitehead, the Kansas City attorney who is serving as spokesman for the MBC legal team. He described Brown's ruling as an important step in the legal process.

Convention attorneys "served document requests on defendants last August, and now defendants will have to answer," Whitehead said. "And we also will be taking the depositions of many of the agency heads and trustees."

MBC Executive Director David Clippard said he was pleased with the ruling. "I just say praise the Lord for every little victory. I believe this little victory is going to lead to bigger ones."

In a related development, a Missouri attorney filed a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the five agencies. The brief includes more than 2,400 signatures from members in 146 Missouri Baptist churches who op-

pose the MBC's legal action.

Tichenor said the brief is significant because it challenges a claim by the MBC Executive Board and six plaintiff churches that they have legal standing to represent all Missouri Baptists.

"The plaintiffs in the lawsuit, in contradiction to nearly 400 years of Baptist polity, have asserted to the court that they possess the authority to represent all Missouri Baptist churches," Tichenor said. "Many Missouri Baptists would probably be very surprised to know that another Baptist church would even attempt to assert such a position."

Whitehead dismissed the significance of the brief, noting that "most courts routinely grant leave to file such briefs, whether or not they give any weight to the document."

Judge Brown set a status conference with attorneys for Jan. 6 to monitor the parties' progress with pre-trial discovery.

Based on reporting by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press

Baptists minister to storm victims in aftermath of killer tornadoes

CARBON HILL, Ala. (ABP)—John Davis said he "cried like a baby" when he saw his newly purchased home in Carbon Hill, Ala., destroyed by a tornado.

"But then I realized I'm alive, my family's alive, and that's what matters," he said.

Not everyone was as fortunate. Members of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Manchester, Tenn., were among neighbors who found the body of 10-year-old Hobert Martinez amid storm debris. The boy was one of at least 36 fatalities in a line of severe thunderstorms that spawned more than 70 tornadoes across the eastern United States Nov. 10-11.

Tim Callaway, pastor of Hillcrest Baptist Church, said members had lingered at the church for fellowship after Sunday evening services when some children alerted them to the approaching tornado.

Everyone huddled in a hallway. "You could hear the wind and debris hitting the building," Callaway said. The storm damaged the church's roof and air-conditioning unit and broke a number of windows.

During a break in the storm, a man walked into the church bleeding. "We set the man down and wrapped up his arm to stop the bleeding," Callaway said. "Then we went out and searched for survivors."

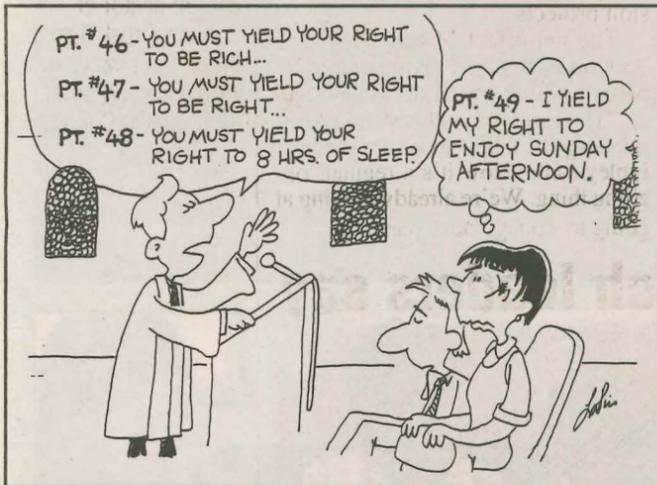
Hobert had lived with his mother and brother in a nearby house destroyed in the storm. Pastors Larry Chatman of Chapel Hill, Tenn., and Ronnie Grooms of Eagleville, Tenn., made several visits to family members offering comfort and help. The pastors are part of a crisis intervention team sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention's disaster relief ministry.

Callaway said some good came out of the disaster; he knew of at least five people who had accepted Christ as their personal Savior because of the impact of the storm.

In Alabama, Davis praised Baptist volunteers who came to Carbon Hill to aid with cleanup. "It's a blessing," he said.

"We've not had a dissatisfied customer yet," joked Alabama Baptist volunteer Charles Burns as he worked with other cooks aboard a mobile kitchen owned by Tuscaloosa Baptist Association.

According to the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, volunteers from Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi served more than 50,000 meals to victims and rescue workers.



BWA urges African drought relief

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—Baptist World Alliance officials have reissued an appeal for Baptists to assist those suffering from drought in Southern Africa.

Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, said reports from a recent visit to the region include people eating roots and leaves and fighting with animals to find water.

As the drought worsens, the United Nations World Food Programs estimates that 14.4 million people in six affected countries—approximately one-fourth of the population—will need food aid.

Baptist groups in South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe are working on programs to alleviate hunger and provide clean water.

During a recent drought-related strategy meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, BWA leaders called on "the world family of Baptists to give to BWAid's appeal." The Baptist aid organization had received project requests totaling nearly \$1 million.

For more information, contact Baptist World Aid at 405 N Washington St., Falls Church, VA 22046 or e-mail bwaid@bwanet.org.

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Louisiana adopts 2000 BF&M.** Louisiana Baptist Convention messengers voted 819-370 to add the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message to their convention bylaws during their state convention annual meeting Nov. 11-12. Messengers also approved a recommendation from the LBC Executive Board to add an amendment to the LBC constitution affirming the inerrancy of Scripture. "This convention will do all its work in accord with the principle that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God and is sufficient for all faith and practice and is truth without any mixture of error in every area of which it speaks (Matthew 22:29)," the amendment states. It was approved 725-332.

■ **Illinois cuts associate post.** Messengers to the Illinois Baptist State Association nixed funding for a key leadership position established by the state board of directors in September. Messengers to the IBSA's annual meeting in O'Fallon, Ill., voted by about 55 percent to cut \$103,000 from next year's budget for a newly created position of associate executive director. Ken Spires, a director of missions from Carlinville, Ill., said adding a new layer of management was ill-timed, with deficit spending and flat

contributions from the state's Southern Baptist churches and missions. Kevin Kerr, search committee chairman for a new executive director, said he doesn't believe the action will slow down the committee's work. He said the committee had narrowed its search from a field of 70 applications to two finalists and could recommend a new executive in January.

■ **Hawaii messengers honor Efurd.** Messengers to the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention said farewell to retiring Executive Director O.W. Efurd who has served in that post since 1989. He will retire March 3, 2003. Messengers also approved a five-year mission partnership with the Japan Baptist Mission of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

■ **Anderson College names president.** Evans Whitaker, vice president for university advancement at Belmont College in Nashville, has been named president of Baptist-affiliated Anderson College in South Carolina. Anderson trustees unanimously elected Whitaker as the school's 12th president. He will succeed Lee Royce, who left Anderson in June to become president of Mississippi College in Clinton.

■ **CBF endorses Kentucky chaplain.** Kelley Milstead Woggon of Louisville is among 15 chaplains recently endorsed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Woggon is a chaplain at Norton Healthcare in Louisville. She is among more than 260 chaplains and pastoral counselors endorsed by CBF.

■ **Baylor elects provost.** Baylor University has named David Lyle Jeffrey as provost and executive vice president. Jeffrey, who currently teaches literature and humanities at Baylor, will succeed Don Schmeltekopf who will retire in May.

■ **Chinese students seek pen pals.** The National Fellowship of Baptist Educators, an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, is seeking more than 2,000 Christian young people in college and in grades 1-7 to serve as pen pals for students in China. The educators fellowship distributes letters from Chinese students to American young people interested in participating in the program. For information, contact John Carter, executive director of the National Fellowship of Baptist Educators, by Jan. 15 at Samford University, Box 292305, Birmingham, AL 35229; e-mail: jfcarter@juno.com.

Missions director links small churches for big projects

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

MADISONVILLE—Even the smallest of churches can make a huge difference by working with other congregations to do missions, according to Bob Morrison.

Morrison is director of missions for Little Bethel Baptist Association, where a third of the 49 churches have fewer than 100 people in Sunday school each week. Most others have fewer than 200.

But together the churches have seen more than 5,000 professions of faith in the past decade through overseas missions.

Working through the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions program, Madisonville-area Baptists have helped build churches in Tobago, a church and seminary in Russia and a school in Tanzania.

"We've seen a marked increase in missions giving," Morrison added. "This has made people bolder to share their faith. People have answered the call to prayer, and young people have surrendered their lives to missions. We've seen all of that."

The association's trips put smaller churches on equal footing with larger congregations, he said. For its most recent mission trip to Tobago, 27



TANZANIA TRIP Members of Little Bethel Baptist Association work on a school building in Tanzania in this 2000 photo. More than a third of the association's churches, in and around Madisonville, have fewer than 100 people in Sunday school, but Director of Missions Bob Morrison said that hasn't stopped them from taking part in missions.

little churches **BIG RESULTS**

people from nine churches participated.

"Small churches tend to stand back and be reluctant to get involved," Morrison said. "But this way, they can do as much as a big church. Small churches with limited resources have found a productive venue."

Even with the association's success, Morrison said he still encounters objections to missions, primarily those who say, "we ought to take care of things at home first," or who question the expense of overseas travel.

But he said he usually can explain the reasons for going on mission, and how those who go tend to be more involved when they return home.

Morrison also believes in association trips because it helps define the character of an association and draws churches closer together. In many associations, churches are linked by name only, he added.

Missions also helps direct a church's vision outwardly, he said.

"One of the positive aspects of partnership missions is it helps them get a vision for missions," Morrison said. "We take people overseas, and it helps them to be comfortable sharing their faith."

Second Baptist Church of Madisonville is one of the congregations that has participated in Little Bethel's mission trips.

Size doesn't affect missions involvement, church leaders say

Continued from page 1

As the pastor of a rural church in Muhlenberg County, Finley persuaded five congregations to pool their resources so they could send members on two overseas mission trips.

He has encouraged similar activity at Second Baptist, which now maintains a mission fund to send members around the world.

"There's ways around the size issue, if we'll put our minds to it," Finley said.

At Casky Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, which averages 90 people in Sunday school, new pastor Will Stone encourages members to experience the rewards of traveling to places like Russia, Tanzania and Jamaica.

He visited those nations while at another, smaller church in the area. Stone, who marked his first anniversary in October, has helped revitalize Casky's missions program.

Two teams visited the Eastern Kentucky town of Lynch this summer and two individuals participated in missions to Russia and Africa.

From giving to going

Those were the first trips members had taken in about five years, Stone said. Planning is under way for visits to Maine and Lynch next summer.

"This church has always been a good giving church, but my emphasis was to lead past the giving," the pastor said. "One of the big results is the excitement. It's wonderful to see their growing spirit, to get out and actively share their faith, and to see the rest of the church get behind them not only with finances, but with prayer."

These churches mirror the path that

many others take when members look beyond themselves, said Vernon Cole, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church growth team.

"The first step is as always an attitudinal step," Cole said. Congregational leaders must recognize that the church exists for more than just the members who gather on Sundays, he said. "And when that attitude begins to be pervasive among the influential leaders, then they will begin to do something, either locally or otherwise."

A three-step cycle of attitude, action and affirmation often can lead churches to missions and growth, he said.

Such mission activity doesn't have to take place outside a church's community. At North Fork Baptist Church in Whitesburg, a few members have been to Poland and Romania, but most mission activities center on Whitesburg and Letcher County.

During the past four years, the small church (about 50 people attend Sunday school) has been involved in multiple, community-oriented activities.

North Fork helped start an associational food and clothing center that now is part of a Southern Baptist North American Mission Board network, according to Pastor David Robinson.

Other local mission activities include:

- Helping repair homes in the area.
- A county-wide bus ministry that brings up to 45 children to its Wednesday night children's program.
- Sunday night "Team Kid" meetings at an apartment complex.



EGG TOSS Children take part in an egg toss sponsored by North Fork Baptist Church in Whitesburg. The congregation averages fewer than 50 people in Sunday school but still sponsors a variety of ministries, including an annual Easter picnic. "We have to get out and touch lives if we're going to affect people for Jesus Christ," said Pastor David Robinson.

■ An annual Easter picnic and egg hunt at the city park and a live nativity scene staged during the town's Christmas parade.

"I constantly preach about servanthood," Robinson said. "We have to get out and touch lives if we're going to affect people for Jesus Christ. Our church is known as a caring, giving church because of the activities we do."

Evangelistic impact

Not only has giving increased, the pastor said this emphasis is stirring results. In the past year, members have prayed with 54 people who received Jesus as their personal Savior, with 24 of them baptized at North Fork.

"I feel all the ministry we've done the past four years is now reaping the

Over the past four years, 16 members have been on trips to Trinidad and Tobago. Ten teens traveled to Raleigh, N.C., last summer to participate in the Southern Baptist Convention's World Changers housing renovation program.

Pastor Roy Finley said the church volunteers are invited to report on their activities when they return.

"When people come back and share reports about what they've done, they stir the congregation to be involved in something like that," said Finley, who has been at the church since 1996. "It keeps people up to date and aware of what's going on. That really makes our people feel like they're part of it."

Second Baptist, which averages just over 100 people in Sunday school, helps members overcome financial barriers by establishing a mission fund.

The fund currently contains \$10,000, the maximum level set for the revolving fund. It is replenished by budget contributions and other donations after members go on mission projects.

The net effect of this effort has been an increase in giving and more participation in missions, Finley said.

"The church was always missions-minded, but this is more consistent," Finley said. "Now it's a regular, on-going thing. We're already looking at going to Tobago next year."

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

■ **Clear Creek Baptist Bible College** will hold its annual public Christmas tree lighting ceremony Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. at the campus gazebo. The event also will feature a live nativity scene. For more information, call (606) 337-3196.

■ **Correction:** Last week's Western Recorder incorrectly identified two Kentucky Baptist Convention committee chairmen. Jerry Oakley, director of missions for Warren Baptist Association in Bowling Green, was chairman of the KBC's 2001-2002 constitution and bylaws committee. Wendell Romans, the incoming chairman, is interim pastor of Boone's Creek Baptist Church in Lexington and a member of Beaver Dam Baptist Church.

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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A Christmas gift to remember

By Leo Endel

I'll never forget Christmas 1977. For the first time in my life I really had money. I had a part-time job working as a bag boy at the White-man Air Force Base commissary and usually took home \$5 to \$10 an hour in tips—pretty lucrative in those days. I was able to buy real Christmas gifts that year, and I was really excited about it. Funny, I can't remember what any of them were. I do, however, remember the Mr. Coffee Maker my mom wanted.

We had gone through severe financial troubles since the time when the government claimed it had fouled up Dad's pay and he didn't get paid for six months. For years, Mom and Dad didn't exchange gifts so they could buy gifts for my brothers and me.

My dad had two possessions of any value to him: his wedding ring and his watch. One afternoon, he came to me

and asked me to buy his watch so he could buy my mom the coffee maker. I tried to give him the money, but he wouldn't take it. He was so persistent that I ultimately gave in. I was really upset about the whole thing and the sight of the white ring around his tanned arm, where his watch had been, choked me up every time I saw him.

On Christmas Eve, my dad's birthday, our tradition was to open our gifts. When we thought we were all done, Dad produced his present for Mom. She protested, but was thrilled with the gift. She was on the verge of crying when I produced one more package—Dad's birthday present. Of course, it was his watch. Mom figured it out immediately, and we all sobbed. Twenty-five years later I still tear up remembering Dad's gift—not the coffee pot, but his sacrifice for Mom.

Christmas is about giving, but not about expensive presents or even cof-

FIRST PERSON

What will they say?

I am made to wonder how some of the people in authority in our convention and the Southern Baptist International Mission Board are going to respond to God when they face the judgment and there are those like Rick and Nancy Dill and the couple who were refused appointment by the IMB because they came from a church with a woman pastor. What are they going to say?

It appears that they think they will be praised, but I have a feeling it will be anything but praise because they have kept people from doing what God called them to do. There just can't be anything good come out of situations like this for anyone.

Joe Pat Winchester
Emeritus IMB missionary
Murray

Conformity confusion

Cordell Day's letter of Nov. 5 ("Arrogant display") immediately raises questions in my mind.

First, can one grant his assumption that the Southern Baptist International Mission Board-missionary relationship is only that of employer to employee if the IMB is acting on behalf of all Southern Baptist Convention churches? Who is actually the employer, all the churches or the IMB?

Second, if only those missionaries are accepted or retained who subscribe to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, what happens to those missionaries coming from churches which have not adopted that confession as their statement of faith? Shall these persons look elsewhere for appoint-

ment? If so, why should their home churches continue to give money to the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon offering?

It would seem that the churches and individual missionaries who disagree with any part of the 2000 BF&M have no alternative but to align themselves with some other Baptist mission group. Cordell Day reaches this conclusion about the missionaries, but does not address the question of the churches from which the missionaries come.

Third, if the IMB demands conformity to the 2000 BF&M, but the missionaries on the field agreed to the 1963 statement when they were appointed, does not the IMB have a responsibility to the missionaries to continue their support until they can find other employment? Not to do this suggests a betrayal on the part of the IMB.

Please, prayerfully give so "That All Peoples May Know Him."
Leo Endel is executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention

Joe M. Thomas
Owensboro

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Are you desperate for the harvest?

Kentucky Baptists were blessed with a wonderful annual meeting in Williamsburg earlier this month. My thanks go to Cumberland College for a wonderful job of hosting us and to the messengers who made this year's meeting one to remember for its spirit of harmony and unity.

It was exciting to see how God had enabled Kentucky Baptists to approach this convention more united than at any time in the past 10 years. To me this is a sign that God wants us to focus all of our spiritual, emotional and physical energy on gathering the harvest.

Jesus said the fields are white unto harvest, and yet Kentucky is the most unchurched of all of the old-line Southern states. It is my prayer that every church will embrace changes to receive the harvest.

By "changes," I simply mean that we all need to do those things that will

help individuals who do not yet know Jesus feel comfortable coming to and getting involved in our churches.

Thom Rainer, who is known for his research on church growth, has stated that 92 percent of people who are unchurched say they would come to church if invited and if someone would walk in with them. Author Kennon Callahan asserts that there are enough people within a five-mile radius of every church to double and triple their attendance—regardless of location.

Once they come, however, we also must be prepared to receive them. My daughter is expecting to give birth in December. She and her husband have been working for months to prepare a warm, caring, nurturing home for this new child. They have embraced numerous changes because she wants to nurture this child's development. We must do likewise in our churches if we



Bill Mackey

are to welcome numerous new babies in Christ into the Kingdom of God.

I long to see the Spirit of God breathing revival fire into every pulpit, Sunday school class and pew until every church is aglow with the presence and power of our resurrected Lord. This begins with a desperate hunger for God to move in convicting power in our lives as individuals and as churches. This is not a call for the faint-hearted. It is a call for Gideon's Band—individuals who are willing to be used supernaturally to rescue others from darkness.

I believe God wants to bless every church. Pray that God will send you into His harvest every day. Every day invite someone to church with you. Walk in with them Sunday.

It's this focus on the harvest that makes a mission-focused convention, a mission-focused church and a mission-focused follower of Jesus.

Are you desperate enough for Christ to lead your church into your harvest fields?

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

How much will you give to God's work next year?

By Doug Strader

The first letter arrived this week from our pastor informing us that our annual financial stewardship emphasis was beginning.

The letter was positive and upbeat about our

church's ministry and our potential for doing even greater ministries as we are faithful to give our tithes and offerings to God through our church. We also were challenged to begin praying about our financial commitment to the Lord's work in the coming year.

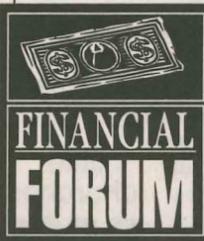
I am thankful that my wife and I have been able to give more than a tithe for several years. I am thankful that God has provided abundantly for our needs and even beyond our needs. He has not done that because we are deserving; rather He has given to us because He loves us and He desires that we share our abundance with Him and those around us who have needs.

The question is: What will we commit to give to Him this year through our church? I am reminded that according to available statistics, the average Southern Baptist gives about 2.3 percent of his or her income to all charitable causes. God desires that we give Him 10 percent, and yet Baptists give on the average 2.3 percent to God's work and to other charitable causes combined.

If Kentucky Baptists tithed, most of our churches would have four times as much money with which to do missions and ministry. As a realist, I know that most Kentucky Baptist churches have at least 50 percent of their members who give nothing through their church during a typical year to the cause of Christ. But even if half of our members tithed, we would double our giving.

How much will we give to our Lord this year through our church? We do not know yet, but we are in the process of praying for God's guidance. Since we believe God does indeed own everything, our prayer should be, "Lord, all we have belongs to You, we open ourselves to You, and ask that You reach in and get what You want." That is a better approach than to say, "How much can we afford to give?" Which approach will you use in determining your giving pattern for the new year?

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



Couples can draw closer by exploring 'sacred pathways'

Q: My fiance does not like in-depth Bible studies, and I've never seen her taking notes during a sermon. I feel that she's not as spiritual as I am. What's her problem?

I sense in your question an air of superiority about your particular spiritual pathway to God.

The way you phrase your question suggests you feel closest to God through the intellectual pathway. The church certainly needs theologians who enjoy the intricacies of theology and who love God with all their minds.

But the Apostle Paul gave a compelling picture to the Corinthians about the church being the body of Christ, diverse in gift and function. That diversity extends to how we relate most meaningfully to God on a daily basis.

Gary Thomas, in the book "Sacred Pathways," addresses the subject of the diversity God has in mind in couples' relationships. Each person has spiritual disciplines that come more easily for his or her particular spiritual path. Spiritual intimacy is more an appreciation for each other's spiritual pathway than it is a matter of having identical spiritual interests.

Some people feel closest to God during worship. Others are more contemplative and feel God's love best during quiet times of prayer. Still others are in touch with fellowship with the Creator when in the midst of His creation. Other spiritual pathways include the activist, serving God in areas of peace and justice, and the visionary, serving God in pursuing a God-size dream.

One suggestion is for both of you to explore the subject of spiritual pathways. Find one that is not the first choice of either of you that you can try together. Spiritual pathways can be a way for both of you to grow into the image of Christ by stretching in new and exciting ways.

An excellent resource for exploring this topic is the video teaching series "An Ordinary Day with Jesus" by Ruth Barton and John Ortberg. This would be helpful to both married couples and single adults as they explore how to have a 24-hour day in following Jesus.—James Stillwell

Q: How can I encourage my teenager to talk with us about sexual questions and concerns?

Open conversation about sexuality should begin in early childhood. Children need to understand that sexuality is the good gift of God rather than something of which to be ashamed.

Too many times, parental teaching (or the lack thereof) suggests to children that sexuality is wrong or dirty. How many times have we heard parents bemoaning the need to have the proverbial "birds and bees talk" with their son or daughter? By then, their silence already has communicated.

Don't avoid conversations about sexuality. When these conversations occur, give honest answers to questions and use anatomically correct terms. Remind your son or daughter that God created sexuality (see Gen. 1:27-28) and that this gift is an earthly picture that foreshadows the deepest kind of intimacy in the spiritual journey that ultimately is self-surrendering and self-giving.

If one parent is more comfortable talking about sexuality than the other, this person might need to take the lead with the teen. Use life situations, television and movies, and news in real life to occasionally introduce the topic of sexuality. Help your teenager recognize that sexual thoughts and curiosity are normal. Ask about their questions and take the opportunity to reflect a biblical perspective. Point them to Christian resources that deal with this topic.—Scott Wigginton

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.



www.WesternRecorder.org—give it a try

Last week's issue of the Western Recorder featured numerous examples of Kentucky Baptists seeking to "Let the Light Shine" through ministry efforts in Kentucky and around the world.

Reports presented during the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 165th annual meeting addressed such topics as Cooperative Program giving, international partnership missions, disaster relief work in New York, Mississippi River Ministry, Cross Over Kentucky evangelism projects and much more.

Each of those areas of ministry reflects conscious efforts on the part of Kentucky Baptists to use available resources to help spread the light of the gospel. When it comes to sharing what God is doing through Kentucky Baptists, the work of the Western Recorder is no exception.

During the Nov. 12-13 annual meeting in Williamsburg, the Western Recorder unveiled its new Web site, www.WesternRecorder.org. While the development of the site was a long and sometimes frustrating process, our staff made a commitment to do it right rather than quickly. We think you will be pleased with the results.

www.WesternRecorder.org is our staff's effort to provide Kentucky Baptists a timely, trustworthy news site that is both highly readable and easy to navigate. While it will not include all the information found in our print version, the Internet site will include major articles from each week's print edition as well as several features and resources unavailable in print.

Web users can access Western Recorder articles from several locations on our home page. One section will highlight key articles from the past week, another area will list recent stories from previous issues and one of the search buttons will provide a list of headlines arranged by categories. One click on a specific headline will bring the full article into view.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

But the site isn't limited to recent Recorder articles. Individuals also can subscribe to the print edition or submit classified ads, story ideas or letters to the editor. Subscribers to our church newpage service can upload their newsletter pages online and others who are interested in the service can get information about how their church can save time and money by becoming a church newpage partner.

Additional features still being developed include an archives service, an interactive "Question of the Week" poll and a series of local church feature articles.

The goal is neither to duplicate nor replace the Western Recorder's print edition. It has effectively served Kentucky Baptists for more than 175 years and we expect it to continue to be a valuable resource throughout the 21st century.

Rather, the Web site is an effort to expand the Recorder's ministry by reaching more people with the message of what God is accomplishing among Kentucky Baptists. It also is designed to give our readers instant access to a variety of information of interest to them.

The Web site development has been a team effort among our staff. News Director David Winfrey took the lead in working with a consultant on site design and content. Jeff Wise, our composition and computer specialist, is working on the nuts and bolts of posting articles, graphics and related support services. Business Manager Mauri Smith gave input on information for online subscriptions, advertising and newpage editions.

The result is www.WesternRecorder.org—a user-friendly news site designed specifically with Kentucky Baptists in mind. The next time you're surfing the Net, stop by for a visit. Then drop us an e-mail and let us know what you think.

Moving from capability to performance

By Tom Ehrich

DURHAM, N.C. (RNS)—Don't rely on the driving range, a golfing friend once told me. It's an artificial environment.

Play when the course isn't busy, he suggested, and take extra shots. If you hit a bad shot, hit another ball, and another. Don't worry about score.

Today, with our course relatively empty, I follow his advice. I warm up on the driving range, but I know not to make too much of success there, except the knowledge that I have such shots in me. What I do on the course will matter more.

Life swings, I think, between capability and performance. We are gifted in certain areas, and with encouragement, we can learn to treasure those gifts—both to make a living and just to enjoy life.

But we nurture our gifts by using them. Yes, we also take lessons and buy the right gear. But in the end, we grow by trying. Our best teacher is failure. Our measure isn't a scorecard, but an inner sense of capability.

Potential is a difficult companion. "You can do better" isn't always an encouraging word. But cheap praise is no better. If a child is capable of A-level work, why applaud C's? In a

down economy, a business might be satisfied just to keep its doors open, but otherwise, mere survival might be failure.

As Jesus responded to the religious establishment of His day, He contrasted capability and performance, and He saw the establishment falling short in two respects.

First, they expected too little of their people and offered them a watered-down religion that could be accomplished simply by obeying some rules and by fawning before them.

A contemporary Protestant variant is the Bible study whose aim is conformity, not knowledge or engagement. Memorize Bible verses as anchors in the storm, but don't actually allow the Word to fill your sails and send you off to lands unknown. Follow a few fundamental rules, but don't stray into seeing life in the depth and complexity that Jesus taught in His parables.

Second, the religious establishment expected too little of themselves. They preached a good word, but they didn't live it. They judged others, but were blind to their own failings. They were like the congregation that gossips and scorns, and then puts on a fine Sunday display.

They were like the preachers who proclaim a God of love but then push

on to doctrines of hate, who preach a respect for life but then deny the very foundations of life, namely, freedom and mercy. They were like the politicians who preach "democratic values" but then champion an elitism that excludes all but the "elect," who happen to fund their campaigns. They were like those who name themselves "moral" but in fact are just angling for an earthly throne.

Jesus took a different tack. He said, first, that awe, trust and basic goodness are all in you. Second, stay late in the day, knowing that you can hear the difficult word, you can re-examine your lives and nothing of faith will be beyond you. Third, leave your nets and imagine yourself as something new, for you will see and do greater things if you have faith.

Finally, don't be content with easy wins, the victories of a soft and self-serving world. You can attain more than power, for you are capable of humility. You can attain more than certainty, for you are capable of questions. You can attain more than privilege, for you are capable of servanthood. You can attain more than a full wallet or a full church, for you are capable of self-emptying.

You can attain more than the seat of honor, for you are capable of a cross.

Tom Ehrich, a columnist for Religion News Service, is a computer consultant in Durham, N.C.

In China: Muslim ties bind

WESTERN CHINA (BP)—Sitting around the table, the “Wong” family laughs, talks and tease as their elderly mother brings a dish of noodles from the kitchen.

Off to the side, smiling and reveling in the joy of family, sits the father of the house. He listens as he strokes his long, gray beard. He is blessed to have such a family. All three of his daughters are married as are his three sons. All have jobs—hard to come by.

The father glances at the clock and rises. He nudges his eldest son and then disappears. The son grabs his hat and rushes out the door.

A few doors away, a young Chinese man steps up to a microphone and belts out an Arabic call to prayer.

The father appears out of nowhere and turns west with the other old men, facing Mecca. As the last notes of the song disappear, the eldest son enters the mosque to lead hundreds of men in the third prayer of the day.

From all appearances, the Wong family looks like millions of other families in China. But peel back the Chinese appearance, and you find the same Muslim devotion expressed in other parts of the world.

More than 22 million Muslims live in China. The religion came to China more than a thousand years ago along the famous Silk Road and spice route. Today, Islam is a recognized religion by the Chinese communist government.

Most Chinese practice Islam in a more relaxed manner than adherents in the Middle East. The Koran is their holy book, but most cannot read the Arabic in which it is written. And in several mosques, men and women are allowed to pray together in the same prayer hall.

Despite the lax approach, there is a strong cultural tie to Islam. Christian researchers say this bond is the main barrier keeping Chinese Muslims from coming to Christ. Many bear traditional Muslim names such as Mohammed, Fatima and Mousa. Young people marry only within the Muslim community, keeping the family ties to the religion strong. Even the government’s approach helps strengthen the bond. No one wants to betray his or her religion or minority group.

According to Chinese Muslim culture, true religion is left mainly to the old men and women. Young families must first earn a living. Normally, adults in their 40s, 50s and 60s spend their time praying and following the other rigors of Islam. They learn the Koran at special adult night schools since most were unable to study Islam as youngsters. Now, children learn Islam in a six-week summer break course.

Wong smiles as his son-in-law speaks of his responsibilities. Wong remembers the years he worked in a factory to provide for his children. Now, he spends his time working on eternity. Five times a day he prays in the mosque with the other old men, hoping to make up for lost time and to please Allah.

At home, he pours over books about Islam in his eldest son “Mohammed’s” library. The 42-year-old is an imam at the mosque. He studied Islam at a Middle East university.

Mohammed was a Muslim missionary in Southeast Asia for several years before settling back home. He now spends his days translating Arabic books into Chinese. Very few speak Arabic, and those who can are highly revered. He is working on his sixth book.

“My father first took me to prayers when I was 10 years old,” Mohammed says. “My father taught me about Islam as his father taught him and my grandfather’s father taught him. We are Chinese, but we are Muslim first.” He reaches into his father’s desk to pull out a dusty, old book. The rice-paper pages crack slightly as he finds the spot he is looking for.

“Here, this is the Koran handed down from generation to generation in my family,” he says proudly. “It is handwritten and more than 500 years old. See? We have been and will always be Muslim.”

All names are changed to protect the family.

Chinese in Paris

Friendships lead missionaries to open doors for sharing gospel

PARIS (BP)—It’s the lunch hour in Paris, and “Jon Norris” sits in a Chinese restaurant. Motioning to the Chinese server, Norris speaks to him in Mandarin.

This draws a look from the server, who responds in French and calls to another server in Mandarin.

“I love the Chinese, but sometimes it’s like looking through a glass bowl to get to them,” Norris says.

Such is the daily struggle of Jon and his wife, “Elizabeth,” who

work among Paris’ Chinese people.

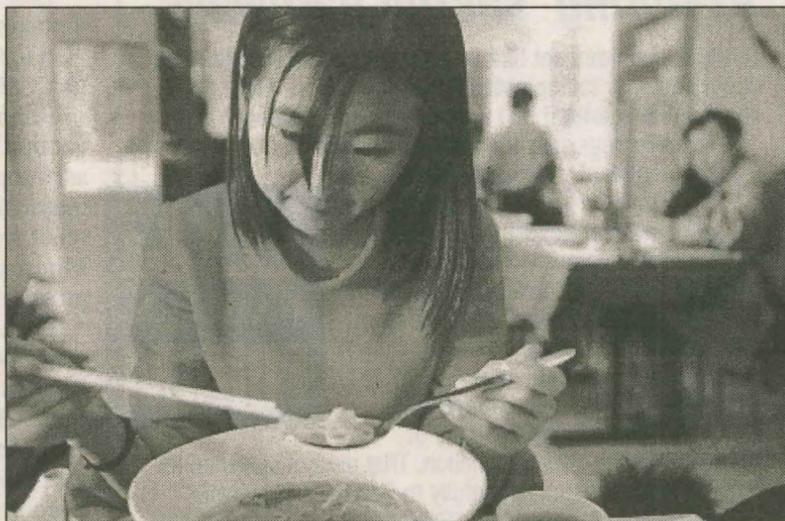
For centuries, Paris has been the home of conversation, revolution, inspiration. Its rich history has made it an international center of intellect and independence. Friends debate for hours on subjects ranging from what to serve for dessert to what country is keeping the world from peace.

But step onto the Metro, the city’s subway system, and you’ll find life strangely quiet, except for the hum and squeak of the train moving along the tracks. Whereas Parisians talk incessantly with friends, they are slow to open up to strangers.

Chinese culture includes a similar reserve, and Chinese who move to Paris quickly fall into step with Parisian attitudes. So, for Jon and Elizabeth, relationships with Chinese Parisians begin cautiously and develop slowly. When friendships form, though, they often lead to open doors to Chinese hearts.

Belief in “myself”

Take “Paul and Mae Yi Ling,” for example. Paul works as an engineer in a large corporation; his wife



HEADED HOME Many Chinese students leave Asia and head to Paris for university studies. After this student finishes her marketing studies, she will return to mainland China. Missionaries in France are working to reach students like her with the gospel before they return home. (BP photo)

stays at home with their daughters. Ask Paul what he believes in, and he quickly responds, “Myself.”

Though the couples have known each other for only two years, Paul calls Jon his “old friend.” The Lings understand the Norrises are Christians. The Norrises know the Lings aren’t, and they don’t hesitate to tell their friends they pray for them.

“I have so much to do in life,” says Paul. “I don’t think much about another life beyond.” And he admits, “We don’t know the way to relate to God.”

The Norrises try to help their friends understand Jesus made a relationship with God possible. And sometimes it seems the Lings are beginning to understand.

Each week, Mae Yi tutors Jon in Mandarin. Their sessions often lead to spiritual conversations. When Jon shares words and truths from the Bible, Mae Yi feels a deep peace.

Paul experiences a similar peace when he ventures into Notre Dame, Paris’ famous cathedral. “I believe in it,” he says. But then he clarifies: “And I don’t count too much on it.”

“Li Juan Lee” grew up with a mindset similar to Paul’s. She was born in Asia, where her education repeatedly emphasized that there is no god.

When she moved to Paris, though, a friend took her to a church for university students at the Norrises’ home. She was baptized on her birthday.

The Norrises disciplined Lee and a few other young women who accepted Christ through the house church. Before Lee left to finish business school in a neighboring country, the Norrises considered her a partner in their work as she shared Jesus with students around her. In her new location, she leads seven other young people in Bible study.

Lee understands firsthand what keeps many students from considering spiritual questions. “Paris is a beautiful world, which can distract young students,” she says. “People think more about this world than another world.”

Lee also knows the challenges the Norrises face. “They do the hardest work,” she says.

Taking the gospel back home

When Lee returns to her home country, she will begin working at her mother’s factory. While she works, she’ll start home Bible studies, beginning with her brother, whom she recently led to Christ, and mother.

For the Norrises, stories like Lee’s are why they stay in Paris, even when it seems people’s hearts are sealed tight.

They know people are waiting to hear, people whose hearts are hard but not unreachable. The Norrises continue to seek out the old men who meet for morning coffee at McDonald’s, the women who tend family Buddhist shrines, the young professionals who sit on the Metro, the students who read at cafes.

The Norrises realize that no matter how full these Chinese Parisians’ lives may seem, they really don’t know where they’re going.

And they know, if they can just get inside that glass bowl, they’ll find opportunities to share the good news of Jesus, the good news that compels them to keep loving and telling until all peoples have heard.

All names have been changed to protect identities.

That all peoples may know Him

CALL TO PRAYER

During the Dec. 1-8 International Missions Emphasis, pray for:

■ China

■ That God will burden and equip mature, Chinese-speaking Christians to plant rapidly reproducing churches. Ask that He will strengthen new believers among Chinese Muslims, challenging them to serve as missionaries to their own people.

■ For God’s protection over current Scripture translation efforts and “Jesus” film production into local languages.

■ That God will continue to work miraculously in the hearts of Chinese Muslims. Praise Him for drawing these people to Himself through miracles, His Word and believers.

■ Chinese in Paris

■ Chinese students who are living in Paris and who plan to return home to China.

■ Missionaries who seek to reach Chinese students in Paris with the gospel.

■ Chinese who have moved to Paris, assimilated into the French culture and plan to remain there.

MISSIONS

Chinese soul food

Way to hearts of Chinese residents in Peru might be through stomachs

By Chris Turner
SBC International Mission Board

LIMA, Peru (BP)—Debbie and Wayne Brinkley thought they had a plan.

The Southern Baptist missionaries decided they would eat in as many Chinese "chifas," or diners, as they could to learn where the Chinese living in Lima, Peru, gather.

When they weren't eating in chifas, they would drive around Lima, marking locations on a map.

They ate and marked, and marked some more. They noted more than 100 chifas on a single street alone. Little did they know they'd embarked on an impossible mission.

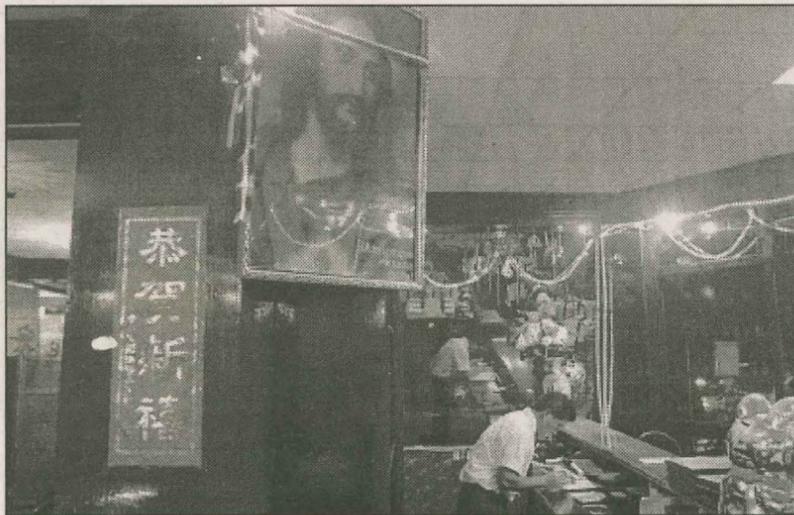
They could eat at chifas morning, noon and night, and it still would take more than five years to visit them all. Lima has almost 6,000 chifas.

The Brinkleys' missionary work recently changed from working with Spanish speakers to focusing on the more than 400,000 Chinese living in Lima.

Nearly 100 percent have no relationship with Jesus Christ.

"We were praying about how to reach the Chinese with the gospel," Wayne says. "And we had the thought, 'What if there was a church in every chifa?'"

Debbie answers the question. "We



CHIFA CHURCH A mixture of Chinese and Latin beliefs show up in this Chinese "chifa" in Lima. Debbie and Wayne Brinkleys, Southern Baptist missionaries, say the Peruvian Chinese feel uncomfortable in a traditional church setting, but could start effective bodies of worship and fellowship in their chifas. (BP photo)

could reach everybody. All of the Chinese could have access to the gospel wherever they were in the city."

Safe haven

Chifas are the center of Chinese life in Lima, regardless of socioeconomic level. Most chifas are family owned and operated.

Living in an environment that is at the opposite end of the cultural spectrum from their own, Chinese are drawn to the familiarity, solidarity and sense of safety that chifas offer.

Chifas also represent an intricate network of associates closed to outsiders.

"The benefit is that it is a ready network through which the gospel can get out," Wayne says. "The difficult part is getting into the network."

The flow of Chinese arriving in

Peru had been constant for more than 100 years until last year's presidential election. Peru had been a transit point for Chinese wanting to immigrate to Canada and the United States. But the current president has made obtaining Peruvian documents more difficult. Still, the Chinese are deeply rooted in Peruvian culture and represent almost half of the 1 million Chinese living in Ecuador, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina and Peru.

That's why the chifas are such a significant ingredient in a church-planting movement. Family is important in Chinese culture, and the chifas represent family units. Meals are important in maintaining family connectedness. And chifas allow for families and outsiders—not yet trusted—to come together in a setting where the Chinese are comfortable.

Building bridges

The Brinkleys now are building cultural bridges, finding ways to en-

CALL TO PRAYER

Chinese in Peru

- For receptiveness as the Brinkleys build relationships with the Chinese of Lima.
- For receptive hearts as the Chinese hear the gospel in the context of their Buddhist and atheistic background.
- For openness to allow Bible studies in the chifas.

Chinese in Vietnam

- Chinese believers in Vietnam boldly to share Christ with family and friends.
- Vietnamese Chinese church leaders and laypeople boldly to lead churches and train fellow believers.
- The Vietnam government to loosen restrictions on churches.

ter the network. They also are helping a few Chinese Christians develop as leaders.

From such humble beginnings, their expectation is that one day thousands of Chinese churches will be scattered across the five countries.

With Peruvian documents more difficult to obtain and a steadily declining economy across South America, many Chinese are returning to China where there is considerably less freedom to share the gospel. The Brinkleys believe the Chinese living in western South America could be missionaries to China.

"South America is a window to China," Debbie says. "If the Chinese here understand God's desire for reaching China, they will be able to go places that North American missionaries can't."

The Brinkleys believe the chifas are the key. More Chinese will accept Christ as chifa owners understand God's vision for redeeming the Chinese. Until they do understand, the Brinkleys plan to hang on to their map and spend a lot of time building relationships.



That all peoples may know Him

Taking Christ to Chinese in Vietnam means overcoming tradition

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam (BP)—Scarlet coils of incense dangle from the temple ceiling. Acrid smoke wafts from the multitude of candles and incense reverently lit in front of gruesome statues.

In one corner, an elderly Chinese woman holds incense sticks and executes a series of snappy bows.

She then places her bundle before the idol to Quan Cong, an ancient Chinese general-turned-god. As the woman exits the temple, she passes between two words etched in towering Chinese characters: faithful and righteous.

More than 1 million Chinese live in Vietnam. Of those, fewer than 3,000 are Christian.

But as Vietnam opens its borders to more tourists, Chinese believers there are gaining boldness and training on how to truly revolutionize their country, says "James Lee," a leader in a Chinese Christian group in Vietnam.

Although many Chinese in Vietnam converted to Christianity in the late 1970s, according to Lee, fewer Chinese are choosing these days to

follow Christ.

Evangelism restricted

Vietnam's restrictive policies against the church account for part of the slowdown. Churches are not allowed to evangelize outside of their church buildings, ordain ministers or conduct training. But even regulations cannot stop a movement of God.

Lee's church has joined a number of Chinese congregations secretly training Christians to lead churches.

"It's a calling," Lee says. "Once a month we study the Bible for a whole week, from morning to night. But it's forbidden; we must meet quietly."

Boldness is even invigorating church members to share their faith with family and friends. "Chang Tuan" owns a hardware shop. His wife and children assist the customers who shop there. Above their heads, written in large gold characters, hang two blazing Bible verses.

"Customers always ask about the Scriptures," Chang says. "It gives us a chance to share about Jesus Christ."

"Lam Mang's" greatest desire is to see his older brother accept Jesus

Christ as Savior. Lam's parents followed traditional Chinese religion which combines elements of Buddhism with ancestral worship.

Family responsibilities

As eldest son, Lam Mang's brother, "Lam Vien," is expected to continue the family beliefs. He maintains their ancestral altars and regularly presents offerings of food and incense to family idols.

Lam Mang is the only Christian witness his family sees. "It's difficult to have a good Christian life among family since they are always looking to me," he says.

Before Lam Mang's parents died, they also accepted Christ. Now, Lam Vien has begun to question the power of his idols.

Young people who choose to follow Christ sometimes encounter resistance from non-Christian family members. "It's been difficult to be a Christian; my parents are old-fashioned," says "Sharon Young," a student in Lee's church.

Young's father disapproves of her faith. "He says, 'People in the United



States trust God and Sept. 11 still happened," she says. "He's a businessman—he's materialistic."

"David," a Christian worker, is assembling a team of believers to bring the gospel to Chinese in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Chinese Christians in Vietnam ask for prayer.

"Pray for the faith of Christians in Vietnam," says Chang, "so we can have strength to share the gospel."

All names have been changed to protect identities.

PRAISE Upbeat, positive praise songs are an integral part of worship at Vietnam's largest Chinese church. Many of the Chinese Christians who attend say it was the hope and joy found in the church that led them to faith in Jesus. Fewer than 3,000 of the 1 million Chinese who live in Vietnam are Christians. (BP photo)

A churchless faith?

Why are some Christians leaving church to find God?

By Craig Bird
FaithWorks magazine

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (ABP) —People who leave the church aren't necessarily abandoning God, according to a pastor and sociologist studying what he calls "post-congregational" Christians.

Rather than being marginal churchgoers, Alan Jamieson found in research for his book, "A Churchless Faith," that 94 percent had been leaders—such as deacons, elders or Sunday school teachers—and 32 percent had been full-time ministers.

To Jamieson's surprise, he also found that for many the break came not because they lost their faith, but because they wanted to save it.

Rather than writing off those who leave the church due to burnout, spiritual abuse or frustration at not being allowed to ask hard questions, Jamieson believes congregations should listen to those who opt to go their faith journey alone. Ironically, he says, they might be the Christians best equipped to reach postmoderns.

Twice a month, 30 or more people gather at Jamieson's church, First Baptist Church in Wellington, New Zealand. Seated at cafe-like tables and sipping tea in the subdued light of the basement, they talk freely. No topic is off limits—the nature of God, homosexuality, spiritual abuse, the role of women.

The focus, Jamieson told FaithWorks magazine, is "on where we are going instead of what we have left."

"Spirited Exchanges is not designed to be church," Jamieson says. "It is a place where people can talk about anything they want to talk about, without any sense of being 'out of line' or being told their thoughts are inappropriate."

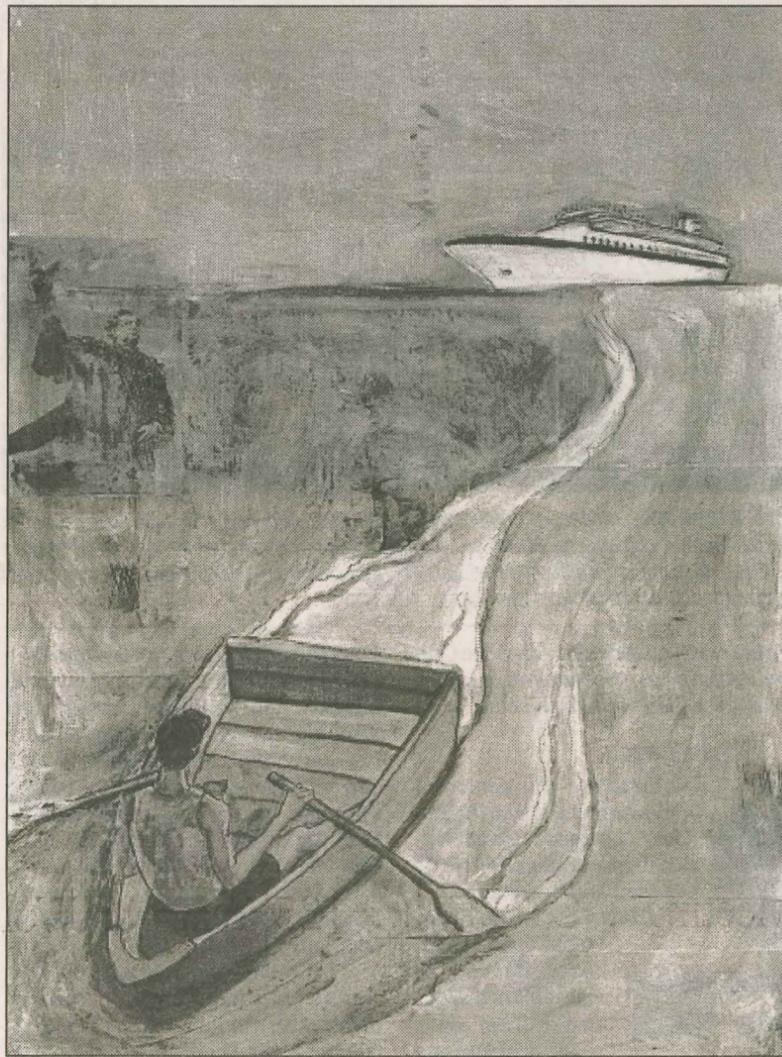
Jamieson says he is aware of about 50 other groups like Spirited Exchanges.

Criticism all around

Not surprisingly, the three-year-old program has brought Jamieson criticism from all directions. "Some people insist I am encouraging people to leave the church, and others are just as indignant that I am scheming to lure people back into the church."

But Jamieson is unshaken in his commitment to teach churches to become "leaver sensitive." The reasons: Leavers need the church; the church needs leavers; leavers take their time, skills, efforts and wallets with them; leavers tell their stories to others; and leavers take their children with them.

Other researchers back up Jamieson's findings that many of the unchurched are still spiritually inclined. "Relatively few unchurched peo-



ple are atheists. Most of them call themselves Christian and have had a serious dose of church life in the past," pollster George Barna said in "Re-Churching the Unchurched."

David Barrett, author of the World Christian Encyclopedia, estimates there are about 112 million "churchless Christians" worldwide, about 5 percent of all adherents, and he projects that number will double by 2025.

Jamieson isn't the only recent author to focus on reaching out to these churchless pilgrims.

Wounded souls

American pastor and student worker Mary Tuomi Hammond, in "The Church and the Dechurched," turns her attention to those battling emotional, spiritual or mental scars they associate with their church experience.

Included among that population, she identifies "rabid atheists, silent agnostics, committed humanists, practitioners of distinctly non-Christian spiritualities." But she also finds believers who still cling weakly to a faith they carried with them when they fled.

Hammond's wounded souls "are among the church's strongest critics, because they are outsiders who were once insiders."

Hammond has been chastised for "attacking the faith" by recounting stories of spiritual abuse, but she denies that charge.

"My love for the church compels me to challenge the church to hear and attend to the cries of its own wounded," Hammond replies. "I love the church and I wrestle with it. I love the

Lord and I wrestle with my faith as well. In that visceral relationship between loving and wrestling, I find strength, hope and life that cannot be extinguished."

She challenges congregations to become "church for the dechurched." She points out that Jesus spent most of His ministry reaching out to the "de-synagogued." But she warns it can be a long and difficult effort, as her own journey attests.

The one vs. the 99

When her husband, Steve, was called to be pastor of a Baptist church in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1979, it had 12 members. The Hammonds, who eventually became co-pastors, prayed for the church to grow but with little success. Then one morning in 1998, Mary said, she felt a definite call of God: "I have sent you to the one and not the 99."

They have since rearranged their ministry to address needs of the dechurched. Mary admits that ministering to the "one" is time-consuming and filled with contradictions. The "one" is "off the beaten trail, perhaps too unorthodox for the 99, too needy, too confused or even too cynical."

But, she insists, "As Christians we must face the issues we would rather not address, ask the questions we cannot always clearly answer, and listen to the voices that are most difficult to hear."

Jamieson, meanwhile, asks the larger question of why so many people with a deep longing for God are coming to the conclusion that they must abandon their congregational

Resources

■ "The Church and the Dechurched: Mending a Damaged Faith" by Mary Hammond.

■ "A Churchless Faith" by Alan Jamieson.

■ "Exit Interviews: Revealing Stories of Why People Are Leaving the Church" by William Hendricks

■ "Restoring a Damaged Faith," an article by Mary Hammond in the May-June issue of *The Other Side* magazine, www.theotherside.org.

■ "Ten Myths About Church Leavers," an article by Alan Jamieson in *Reality* magazine, www.reality.org.nz.

■ www.dechurched.com.

homes in order to continue growing spiritually.

Adapting the work of sociologist James Fowler's landmark "Stages of Faith," Jamieson divides "leavers" into four types: disillusioned followers, reflexive exiles, transitional explorers and integrated wayfinders.

Jamieson says many churches are unaware—and unconcerned—about those who have left. The overwhelming majority of 108 leavers he interviewed in his study said no one from their church ever talked with them about why they left.

Jamieson recalls one successful pastor's declaration that Jesus' parable of the lost sheep doesn't apply to those "who know where the paddock is and intentionally wander away."

Swimming alone

Jamieson feels differently, and he uses a different analogy to make his point. He envisions a non-swimmer attracted to the beach. Befriended by a swimming club, he enters the water and takes lessons. A quick study, he soon is going to the beach at every opportunity and inviting his non-swimming friends to do likewise.

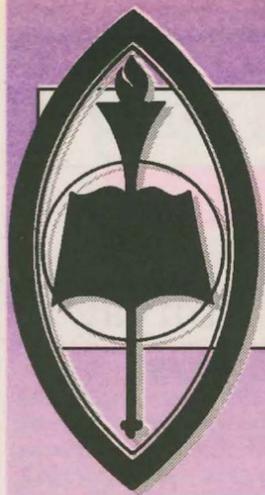
But eventually, perhaps after years, he senses a faint inner stirring to swim beyond the flags that mark the "safe" area. His old coach advises him such thoughts are dangerous. Gradually he becomes uncomfortable at the beach and begins staying at home. But the call of the deep haunts him. Eventually he plunges back into the ocean, this time to swim beyond the flags, totally alone if necessary.

Rather than abandon such swimmers, Jamieson says, the church should accompany them.

Recently someone sent Jamieson a copy of a water-safety poster that pictured a fish swimming toward the left as the rest of the school swam to the right. The caption read: "Don't swim alone."

Although he works with a lot of lone swimmers, Jamieson admits the poster is "a pretty good reflection of my feelings. That's why we need to go out beyond the flags ourselves. It's dangerous for anyone to swim dark spiritual waters alone."

This article originally appeared in FaithWorks magazine and is reprinted with permission



KENTUCKY NOTES

A quarterly publication of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union
P. O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253-6569 • (502) 244-6485 • Toll-free: (888) 254-5726
Supplement to Western Recorder

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THAT ALL PEOPLES
MAY KNOW HIM

Season of
International Missions
Dec. 1-8
Study: China

National Goal for
Lottie Moon
Christmas Offering:
\$125 million

Kentucky churches gave
\$3,416,735
to the 2001-2002 LMCO offering

Winter 2002

*Join us for
our 125th
Party!*



The Legacy Continues ... Let's Celebrate!

Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting

April 4-5, 2003

Central Baptist Church, Winchester

The 100th Annual Meeting ♦ Celebrating 125 Years of Work

Special Guests: Wanda Lee, Dee Gilliland

Special Missionaries: Three Last Frontier missionaries,
plus David Aker, Randy Record, Lonnie & Belinda Riley

Special Testimonies: Kentucky WMU women who are
"on mission"

Special Lunch: Order a box lunch and have lunch with
one of our program guests

Special Feature: Heritage Fund Tea and Hat Party

Special Displays: Church and Association WMU History
and Activities

Special Saturday: The Legacy Continues – Emphasis on Children and Youth

In case you haven't guessed ...

The 2003 Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting is going to be

SPECIAL!!!

Missionaries, conferences, great fellowship and more!
The gathering place for everyone who cares about missions!

Sessions: Friday: 9:45 a.m., 1:15 p.m., and 7 p.m.; Saturday: 9 a.m.

The Kentucky WMU business session and election of officers will be Friday afternoon.

All former Kentucky WMU Executive Board members are invited to purchase a ticket for the
Executive Board Reunion Dinner, Friday evening, 5 p.m., First Baptist Church, Winchester.

Additional information and reservation form will be mailed to church
WMU directors and contact people in January 2003

Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, PO Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253-6569
502-244-6485 • 888-254-5726 • kywmu@kybaptist.org

A Personal Word

There's nothing like an international missions trip to remind you of the importance of what we do through WMU to teach and support missions. Nothing like a missions trip to see first hand the importance of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program.



Joy Bolton
Executive
Director-
Treasurer

Kentucky WMU sponsored two partnership missions trips this fall to Germany and Poland. In each situation, we ministered alongside our missions personnel who are able to serve because of our support of missions through CP and LMCO.

I had the privilege of prayerwalking in Warsaw with missionary Steven Reece and Joy Lindsey, one of our Kentucky partnership coordinators. As we walked the streets of Warsaw and learned some of the history of the city, we were amazed at the tenacity of the Polish people to rebuild their capital city after it was destroyed in World War II.

We visited what had been the "ghetto" area of Warsaw, an area where Jewish people were walled in and then later taken to gas chambers. We prayed for the salvation of the people of Warsaw at the various memorials of the terrible things that happened in that city during the war.

In conversation over lunch that day, Steven and I discovered that he and I had been in the same church in Louisiana for a few years when we were kids. We talked about his memories of the church and Louis Ramagos, his Royal Ambassador leader during those years. Steven is an example of what can happen years later because of missions education with children and youth.

But what struck me the most was the number of churches in Poland. Poland is about 98 percent Roman Catholic. Like America, Poland considers itself to be a Christian nation, and Polish Catholics wonder why we are sending missionaries to Poland. Like America, Poland is culturally Christian but yet there are many, many lost people. Like America, many people know just enough of the Bible or participate in church ritual just often enough to think they are OK with God. The need is greater than ever to proclaim that salvation comes through a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

As you observe the birthday of Jesus, our Lord and Savior, remember the lost in prayer. Pray for workers in the harvest field. Give Jesus a birthday gift by giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

And call the Kentucky partnership missions office at (502) 245-4101 to learn more about ways that you could go and work alongside our missionaries and Baptists in other nations.

Will you answer the plea to "come over and help us"?



Information for WMU Directors



The spirit of Christmas has arrived and your church should be very aware of the praying and giving emphasis of the Season of Prayer and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. We hope that your church has used the *International Missions Emphasis 2002* planning book that arrived in October, that you have received posters, prayer guides and offering envelopes and that you are having a wonderful study about China. If you need any last minute information, go to <http://ime.imb.org> on the Internet, or call your Kentucky WMU office toll-free at (888) 254-5726.

Don't let all the Christmas hype detract from praying for international missions or giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Focus on WMU

Has your leadership team begun making plans for Focus on WMU? Don't be shy about letting your church know how God is leading you to be involved in the world "beyond the walls of the church." This emphasis provides an opportunity to set up a display or ask for churchwide assistance for projects in which you are involved.

See your *2002-2003 WMU Year Book*, pages 60-61, and your winter issue of *Dimension 2002-2003*. Some churches set aside one Sunday as "Women's Day." A few churches have breakfast at church—would you believe??—prepared by the men! We have seen a wonderful spirit of cooperation and missions celebration in the way Focus on WMU is observed.

North American Missions Emphasis

All preparation needs to be done for this emphasis by the end of this winter quarter. *Right after Christmas* you will receive from your state WMU office: a sample offering envelope, a sample prayer guide, one promotion poster, a promotion guide to help in planning this emphasis and an order card for additional envelopes, prayer guides or posters. Please avoid any last minute rush by placing your order early. Volunteers will be ready to begin filling your orders in early January.

NOTE: Your pastor will receive the promotion guide and other useful information for this emphasis during the latter part of December. You might want to tell him that this material will be coming.

—Anna Mary Byrdwell

Adults on Mission

The fall **Women on Mission/Baptist Nursing Fellowship** retreats were a wonderful time of inspiration as approximately 520 ladies from across the state gathered to hear Bobbye Rankin and Barbara Joiner motivate ladies to "Sow the Seed" wherever they go. If you missed out this year, don't fret; 2003 will be here before we know it! The dates for next year's retreats will be Sept. 19-20 and 26-27 at Cedarmore and Oct. 3-4 and 10-11 at Jonathan Creek.

Mark your calendars now to join us for one of these exciting weekends!

An exciting opportunity for women all across Kentucky is coming on April 25-26, 2003. Anne Graham Lotz will be bringing her "Just Give Me Jesus!" ministry to Rupp Arena in Lexington. The conference promises to "lead you into the pages of God's Word through proclamation and inductive study. Invite a friend to come with you. And pray! Pray that the sparks fanned into flame in this gathering will become a raging revival fire that sweeps through your family, your church, your city and our nation as together we carry this burning ember to the world: **Just Give Me Jesus!**" For more details about this conference, visit www.angelministries.org on the Internet.



Because of the "Just Give Me Jesus!" event, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's **Women's Lifestyle Evangelism Conference** will be held on Feb. 25, 2003, in Lexington in conjunction with the state evangelism conference. Further details for this event will be available through the Kentucky Baptist Web site, www.kybaptist.org. Click on "Women's Evangelism." Promotional brochures also will be sent to WMU leaders.

Tonya's Tip—Over the past three years, this has been my favorite section of my column. I hope that somewhere along the line you have found an idea that you could use to spice up your Women on Mission meetings.

Now as I leave my position as adult consultant, I will give you my last "tip" to use. I came to Kentucky WMU with a desire to motivate women to fall in love with doing missions. Our WMU tag line describes it best: "Discover the Joy of Missions."

That is my hope for each of you. No matter what it takes, no matter how much work or time or effort...enjoy yourself. Make it a habit to serve others. You'll be glad you did.

—Tonya Williams



Farewell, Tonya, and God's best to you

It is with a mixture of sadness and happiness that we bid Tonya Williams farewell. On Nov. 30 Tonya will be married to Dr. Steve Heartsill, editor of *Dimension* magazine published by national WMU.

Tonya and Steve met at the national WMU January 2002 board meeting and the rest is history! They will reside in Birmingham.

Tonya joined the Kentucky WMU staff on Jan. 1, 2000, as our adult consultant. At that time her duties included Women on Mission, Adults on Mission, Christian Women's Job Corps and oversight of our missionary and Missionary Kids gifts.

In the fall of 2001, Tonya requested to switch some of her duties and take on responsibility for our camping program at Cedar Crest, the WMU camp at Cedarmore. Under her leadership, WMU began a cooperative effort in missions camping with the Kentucky Baptist Convention Brotherhood Department, renaming our camp to Mission Adventure Camp for Girls. Camp attendance grew in 2002 under Tonya's leadership.

Tonya also has done a wonderful job with our fall retreats, in leadership training and in every area of her work for Kentucky WMU.

Thank you, Tonya, for three great years of service to the Lord and Kentucky WMU. We wish you and Steve the very best.



Tonya and Steve

Youth

The fourth annual **Youth on Mission Night** was held at First Baptist Church in Leitchfield Nov. 8 and 9. Using this year's theme of "Shine," Judy Miller, missionary to Benin, challenged the youth to "Shine" wherever they go. A team of students from the Morehead Baptist Student Union led music and seminars. On Saturday morning, youth worshipped and then spread out across the community for a time of mission service. After lunch, youth attended special interest seminars and had a closing celebration.

Stay tuned for information about Youth on Mission Night, Nov. 7-8, 2003.

Before you know it, **Exalt 2003** will be here. Exalt will be held at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown



March 21-22. Exalt is open to all young ladies in grades 7-12.

Kentucky WMU is pleased to announce the members of the 2002-03 **Kentucky Acteens Advisory Panel**:

Anna Alexander, Mt. Carmel Baptist, Fulton.
Laura Freeman, Campbellsville Baptist, Campbellsville.
Holly Gibbs, Central Baptist, Corbin.
Shelly Martinez, First Baptist, Murray.
Stephanie Southerland, Post Oak Baptist, Russellville.

Applications for the 2003-04 Kentucky Acteens Advisory Panel will be due April 15, 2003. More information will be mailed to all Acteens leaders.

—LaRaine Dail



Preschool

Mission Friends are happy! Mission Friends have fun! During the winter quarter:

Involve preschoolers in the **International Mission Study** in December. The study, an extension of the December unit in *Start*, will help them learn about ways Christians tell people in China about Jesus

Become involved in **Project HELP: Restorative Justice**. See page 3 in the winter issue of *Start* for ideas.

Observe **Focus on WMU**, Feb. 10-17, to help your church recognize Mission Friends as a part of WMU. Plan with the church WMU director for this special emphasis. Ideas are in the *2002-2003 WMU Year Book*, pages 58-59.

Begin preparing for the **North American Mission Study** coming up in March! Now is the time to set a date to have the study. The study on Hawaii will be an extension of the March unit in *Start*.

Children In Action

How can the children in your church discover the joy of missions? Provide the opportunity for them to participate in the **2002 International Mission Study for Children** in December. Children will go on an exciting journey to China and



discover ways Christians are sharing the gospel. Encourage members of Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors and Children in Action to attend. Use this special time to invite boys and girls who are not involved in missions education.

It is not too early to begin preparation for the **2003 North American Mission Study** coming up in March. The emphasis will focus on helping children understand that they can be on mission, too.

Girls and boys in Girls in Action and Children in Action are invited to the **GA and Children in Action Missions Event** on Saturday, April 5 during the WMU Annual Meeting at Central Baptist Church, Winchester. This is a special time for children and leaders to meet missionaries, make new friends, sing and have lots of other fun. The cost is \$2 per person attending. No pre-registration for the event is required. Children attending the event can get involved in a ministry project for the MK Re-entry Retreat that will be held in Kentucky in August 2003. Those attending are encouraged to bring one of the following items: glue stick, mechanical pencil, pen, eraser, marker, tape or ruler. The items collected will be distributed to the college-age missionary kids (MKs) attending the retreat. Further information will be in the spring issue of *Kentucky Notes*.



—Brenda Price



President's Perspective

After we, as Women On Mission, have journeyed to our State Fall Retreat, we really know that fall is in the air. On those trips together, we see God's beautiful handiwork across our state, whether we travel to Jonathan Creek or Cedarmore. There is not a more exciting way for Women On Mission groups to start the church year off with a bang! I know you were blessed if you attended one of the retreats. Tonya did an excellent job.



Cathy Chinn
Kentucky
WMU
president

Tonya will be leaving our staff in November as she begins a whole new life as Mrs. Steve Heartsill. Steve is the editor of *Dimension* magazine, and they will live in Birmingham, Ala. We will miss Tonya very much and wish her and Steve much happiness.

Both our mission teams to Germany and Poland returned with much joy at having been able to join God in the work He is doing in those places. Many seeds were sown by both teams, and many new friendships blossomed. If any of your church associational groups are interested in having personal reports on either trip, please call Joy Bolton about the Poland trip or call me about the Germany trip.

The Germany team ministered to wives and children at a U.S. Air Force base one week and at a U.S. Army base the next week. We conducted conferences for women and led a Bible school for children. At both locations, the team led the major portion of the Sunday services. Our team was very excited to help the church at Kitzingen/Wurzburg begin a Women on Mission group.

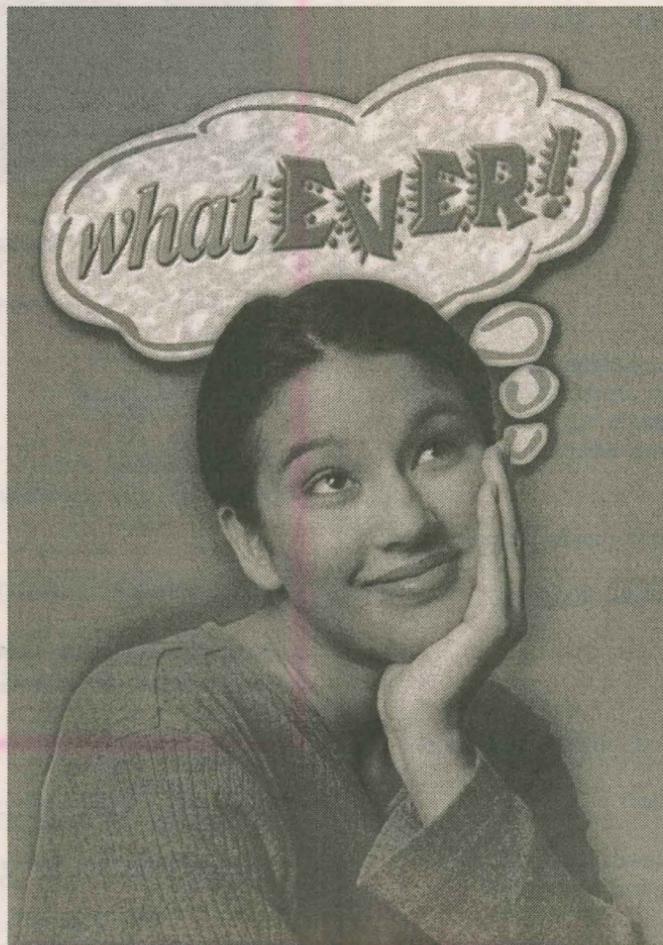
Our team certainly gained insight into military life. That particular Air Force base is guarding the air space over Iraq and the fathers at the Army base are in Kosovo. These military wives have to be a strong breed of women. They live in a strange country, without family members or friends, and most have the responsibility of children. Their church truly becomes their family. It was a privilege to witness how these families love and care for each other.

No matter how many mission trips you have taken or how many years you have been witnessing, there are situations that can take you by surprise. My own witnessing skills were challenged one day as I walked down the sidewalk of Kitzingen. Dressed like a clown, I gave folks "Smile! Jesus Loves You!" stickers. Everyone had been very receptive, and I even had my picture taken with two very jolly, elderly gentlemen who had a sidewalk vegetable market.

Then, I came upon a gray-haired gentleman getting on a motorcycle. I handed him a sticker. He looked at it and said, "No! I am an atheist!" He handed the sticker back. What are those clever things you are supposed to say when your witness is rejected? What happened to all those hours of sitting in personal witnessing seminars, writing testimonies, etc?

At that moment, they were out the window of my brain! Calmly, and in a loving way, I said, "Don't you know that God made you?" He thought for a minute and then said, "Well, if HE did, He made a mistake!" I replied, "God does not make mistakes!" I am praying that God will bless that very brief encounter and that He will cause that man to begin to question his atheistic beliefs. Hopefully, the man will seek out more information on the real, living God. This encounter also reminded me that we must prepare more for those times when our witness is not positively received.

We already are excited about our annual meeting coming up in April in Winchester. The ladies at Central Baptist are working hard on their committee assignments to get ready for us! Be sure to work on your church's or association's WMU history and bring that display to annual meeting to share with all of us. It will be an historic event, the 125th year of WMU in KY and the 100th annual meeting. I will see you there!



Exalt 2003

March 21-22
Severns Valley
Baptist Church
Elizabethtown

*"Whatever you do, do it
all for the glory of God."*
1 Corinthians 10:31

Holly Henson,
sports missionary
Joy Williams,
concert

\$20/person includes
concert, t-shirt and gift

More information will be mailed in January

SyncroNations

- ➔ Thousands from around the world
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- ➔ Nashville, Tenn.
- ➔ July 29-Aug. 1, 2003

Registration begins Jan. 1

Kentucky information mailed end of December

Questions? Call:

(888) 254-5726 or

(502) 244-6485.

E-mail: LaRaine.Dail@kybaptist.org

Visit the Website:

SyncroNations.com.

Hotels for Annual Meeting April 4-5, 2003 Winchester

**Best Western Country
Squire**
1307 West Lexington
Avenue
(859) 744-7210
Use code: WMUY
Cut-off date: Jan. 4
Rate: \$69+tax

Hampton Inn
1025 Early Drive
(859) 745-2000
Use code: KYWMU
Cut-off date: March 21
Rates: \$74 (double); \$71
(queen); \$77-\$88 (king)

Comfort Suites
960 Interstate Drive
(859) 737-3990
Use code: Kentucky WMU
Cut-off date: March 21
Rate: \$65+tax

Holiday Inn Express
5250 Revilo Road
(859) 745-3009
Ask for Michelle
Cut-off date: March 25
Rate: \$69+tax

Days Inn
1100 Interstate Drive
(859) 744-9111
Use code: KY WMU/
Denise Gardner
Cut-off date: Feb. 28
Rate: \$52+tax

Budget Inn
1510 West Lexington
Avenue
(859) 744-3800

Super 8
5100 Revilo Road
(859) 745-0751



CAMP 2003

Mission Adventure Camp for Girls-Cedar Crest (at Cedarmore)

June 16-20	Grades 4-6
June 20-21	Mother/Daughter Overnight
June 23-27	Grades 4-10
June 27-28	Mother/Daughter Overnight
June 30-July 4	Grades 4-10
July 7-11	Grades 4-6
July 11-12	Mother/ Daughter Overnight
July 14-18	Grades 4-6

Mission Adventure Camp is for all girls who have completed grades 4-10. This includes girls who are members of mission education organizations such as Girls in Action, Children in Action, Mission Kids (Brotherhood), Acteens and Youth on Mission. Girls who are not involved in a missions education organization also are invited to attend.

COST: \$140 for week-long camp (includes camp souvenir, meals, lodging and program fee)
\$35 for Mother/Daughter Overnights (includes meals, lodging and program fee)

Overnight Camp at Jonathan Creek

June 27-28	Mother/Daughter Overnight (grades 1-3 and moms or substitute) GA Overnight (grades 4-6 and chaperones) Acteens Splash (grades 7-12 and chaperones)
------------	--

COST: \$33 for Mother/Daughter Overnights (includes meals and lodging)
\$38 for Acteens Splash (includes meals, lodging and waterfront activities)

The 2003 camp information is available and will be mailed to church leaders in January. For further information, contact the Kentucky WMU office at (888) 254-5726.



Be a Summer Missionary! Be a Mission Adventure Camp Staffer!

<u>POSITIONS</u>	<u>LENGTH OF SERVICE</u>	<u>QUALIFICATIONS</u>	<u>APPLICATION DEADLINE</u>
Unit Leader Lifeguard Cabin Leader Kitchen Coordinator	6 weeks	College age	Jan. 24
Assistant Cabin Leader	5-6 weeks	High School Junior or Senior	Jan. 24
Volunteer Nurse	1 or more weeks	Certified	May 2

For application and more information about camp positions, contact Kentucky WMU office at (888) 254-5726; P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253-6569.

Ky WMU Heritage Fund to report quarterly, thanks to growth in gifts, donors

The Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund is an endowment fund that provides funds to promote, develop and sustain the work of Kentucky WMU. It is administered by the development committee of the Kentucky WMU Executive Board. The Heritage Fund is growing, not only in dollars, but in the number of people who are contributing to the fund. Because of the growth in donors, our development committee recently decided to report donors quarterly. The list has become too long to print annually in *Kentucky Notes*. We are thrilled with this growth and want to thank you for your support of Kentucky WMU through the Heritage Fund.

Earnings from this past fiscal year provided scholarships for college students to attend the 2001 Fall Retreat, training for five of our state WMU resource team members at a national WMU training event in Birmingham, funds for our first Hispanic WMU event, camp expense money for one of our associations and funding to print new Heritage Fund brochures.

Heritage Fund donors from May 1 through Aug. 31, 2002, include:

Donor:

Wilma Beatty
Irma Woodrow
Mercer Association WMU
Brenda Price
Joy Bolton
Grace Baptist Church WMU
Brenda Price

In Honor Of:

WMU Staff
Anna Mary Byrdwell
LaRaine Dail
Anna Mary Byrdwell
Boone's Creek Association WMU
Dorothy Carter
Rev. and Mrs. Ralph McConnell

Donor:

Thema Warford
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Jennifer Woodrow
Ruth Briscoe
St. Matthews Baptist Church WMU
William and Marilyn Lamkin, Jr.
Burgin Baptist Church

In Memory Of:

Eva Hundley
Carolyn Ellis
Thelma Liebert
Allie Kays
Mabel Summers
Donnie Wilson
Betty Clark
Christine Proctor
Christine Proctor
Jane Games Penn
Betty Clark
Wilma Turpin
Christine Proctor

Special Gifts:

Marie Quick

Calendar

December

1-8 Season of Prayer for International Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

February 2003

10-16 Focus on WMU
25 Evangelism Conference, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington

March

2-9 Season of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
7-8 Creative Ministries Festival and Youth Missions Workshop, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville
21-22 Exalt-State Acteens Conference, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown

April

10 KY WMU Executive Board Meeting, Central Baptist Church, Winchester
4-5 Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting and 125th Anniversary Celebration, Central Baptist Church, Winchester
6 GA/Children in Action Missions Event, Central Baptist Church, Winchester
20 Easter

Want to apply for a scholarship?

Applications for the Rubye D. Wetterer, Mrs. George B. Eager, Janie Cree Bose Anderson and Acteens Scholarships are due in the Kentucky WMU office by Feb. 1.

Acteens Scholarships are for Acteens who are in their senior year of high school and have excelled in missions involvement. Other scholarships are for those girls who are preparing for missions, WMU work or a full-time church-related vocation.

The Eager and Wetterer scholarships are specified for students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The Wetterer scholarship is the only one that occasionally is given to a man.

For additional information or an application, call toll-free (888) 254-5726, or in Louisville call 244-6485.

WORLD

Christian Coalition pledges support for Israel

JERUSALEM (RNS)—The Christian Coalition is pledging to bring thousands of Christian pilgrims to Israel as a show of support for the country and its government.

The conservative grassroots religious organization launched its first-ever tour of Israel on Nov. 18 with prayers at the Western Wall, Judaism's most holy site, and visits to controversial Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem.

The group's top leadership pledged to bring more Christians to revitalize the Israeli tourism industry, which has virtually collapsed as

a result of two years of political instability and violence.

"The Israel agenda is going to be a major agenda item. We're going to be holding rallies in all 50 states in support of Israel throughout the coming year, and encouraging individual chapters and groups to visit Israel en masse," said Ronn Torosian, media director for the coalition. "It's not enough for Americans to pray for Israel. They need to support her, and the most visible way is to support tourism."

The tour of top leadership staff follows a pro-Israel rally in Wash-

ington, D.C., in October, which was organized by the group and hosted by founder Pat Robertson.

The rally and Jerusalem visit signal a shift toward a more aggressive stance on the issue of Israel within an organization that traditionally has devoted itself to domestic debates over questions like abortion, human cloning and teen pregnancy.

"We want to bring the spiritual together with the political," Christian Coalition President Roberta Combs said. "And we're going to go back and tell our state chapters to bring people here."

Report: 354 Vietnam churches closed, pastors jailed

HO CHI MINH CITY (BP)—Information from Vietnam reports a recent wave of government repression against evangelicals in Vietnam's Central Highlands, according to a news service that monitors such religious oppression.

Compass Direct news service reported that documents acquired by religious and human rights workers assert that by the end of September, 354 of 412 "Montagnard" churches had been disbanded forcibly in Dak Lak province.

By mid-October, about 50 Christian pastors and elders in the province had been arrested or had "disappeared."

Observers have expressed concern that the remaining 58 churches in the province also will be closed.

"Montagnard" means "mountain people" and is a collective name for Vietnam's many minority tribal groups inhabiting the Central Highlands. Montagnard churches historically have been part of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South).

Last year, 26 years after the country was reunified under communism, the evangelical body was granted legal recognition. But only a handful of the many hundreds of Montagnard churches were allowed to identify with the denomination.

The United States Commission on International Religion Freedom in September recommended that the U.S. State Department name Vietnam as a "country of particular concern"—the worst category for abusers of religious freedom.

U.S. missionary killed in Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (RNS)—An American missionary nurse was shot and killed Nov. 21 outside a prenatal clinic in Lebanon.

Bonnie Penner, 31, was shot in the head as she opened the Unity Clinic, a three-year old center run by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, a Colorado Springs, Colo.-based evangelical denomination.

Police and U.S. Embassy officials are investigating the 8 a.m. shooting. Initial reports indicate someone followed Penner into the clinic and shot her three times. She was found by a co-worker.

Penner was married to a British citizen, Gary Weatherall. In a statement posted on the CMA Web site, Weatherall said, "My wife died because of her love for the church and because she loved helping the people of Sidon and Lebanon."

Williams said Penner had worked at the center for about one year. The center, which is affiliated with a local CMA church, offers prenatal counseling to local women and sees about 50 patients a day, he said.

Associated Press said the clinic had been criticized by local Muslim clerics for alleged proselytization. Robert Fetherlin, the church's vice president for international ministries, said in a statement the clinic "is well received by the community," but opposed by "the religious majority in Sidon."

Penner's murder was the second high-profile American missionary death this year. On June 7, kidnapped missionary Martin Burnham was killed in the Philippines during a gun battle between rescuers and Abu Sayyaf guerillas. Burnham's wife, Gracia, was also injured but survived and was rescued.



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MWF	8:00-12:30	World Religions
MTTh	6:00-9:00pm	Ky. Baptists/20th Century
SPRING, 2003		CLASSES RUN JAN. 30-MAY 14
M	1:00-4:00	Introduction Old Testament
T	6:00-8:45pm	Classics of Christian Devotion
TTh	1:00-2:15	Greek Reading
TTh	2:30-3:45	Missional Life of the Church II
WF	8:00-9:00	Spiritual Formation II
WF	9:15-10:30	Introduction New Testament
WF	11:00-12:15	Church History II

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Religious charities among top nonprofit groups in the nation

BALTIMORE (RNS)—Religious charities were among the largest nonprofit groups in the nation last year, according to an annual survey by The NonProfit Times.

Lutheran Services in America, a joint venture of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, claimed the top spot for the third year, with \$7.6 billion in income for fiscal year 2001.

Following in second and third places were the National Council of YMCAs and the American Red Cross, respectively. Catholic Charities USA was in fourth place with \$2.6 billion and United Jewish Communities was fifth with \$2.2 billion.

The study found that religious groups had a 4 percent increase in public support from donors or foundations.

Other faith-based or parachurch groups in the top 100 were:

- The Salvation Army (7).
- Habitat for Humanity (14).
- America's Second Harvest (18).
- Volunteers of America (20).
- World Vision (23).
- Campus Crusade for Christ (31).
- Catholic Relief Services (35).
- Trinity Broadcasting Network (48).
- Christian Broadcasting Network (51).
- Christian and Missionary Alliance (63).
- Young Life (65).
- Samaritan's Purse (68).
- Christian Aid Ministries (76).
- Christian Children's Fund (82).
- Focus on the Family (86).
- Covenant House (90).
- Compassion International (92).
- Wycliffe Bible Translators (93).
- Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (95).

Commandments display ruled unconstitutional

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (RNS)—The Ten Commandments monument placed in the rotunda of Alabama's judicial building by the state's chief justice was ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge Nov. 18.

U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson gave Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore 30 days to remove the 5,300-pound monument he installed in the state building after it had closed on July 31, 2001.

Thompson said the granite monument violates the Constitution's ban on government promotion of religion, Associated Press reported.

"This court holds that the evidence is overwhelming and the law is clear that the chief justice violated the Establishment Clause,"

Thompson wrote. The monument is "nothing less than an obtrusive year-round religious display intended to proselytize on behalf of a particular religion, the chief justice's religion."

Moore testified during a recent trial that the commandments are the moral foundation of American law. He said the monument acknowledges God, but doesn't make anyone follow his conservative Christian religious beliefs.

But the Southern Poverty Law Center argued in the trial that the monument promoted the judge's faith and was unconstitutional.

"This is a question of whether the politically powerful can impose their views on others," said Danielle Lipow, an attorney for the center, in an argument before Thompson.

Moore is a Baptist layman who came into the national spotlight for fighting to display the Ten Commandments in a county courthouse. He was elected Alabama chief justice in 2000.

Alabama Christian Coalition President John Giles, one of Moore's supporters, predicted that the ruling will lead to a backlash in the Bible Belt state.

"I am afraid the judge's order putting a 30-day limit on removal of the monument will lead to an uprising of citizens protesting removal of that monument," he predicted.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, called the decision "a big setback to Roy Moore's religious crusade."

An appeal is expected.

High court agrees to review online porn decision

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether Congress can require public libraries to install filters on their computers to block pornography.

The justices will review a decision by the Third Circuit Court of Appeals that struck down a portion of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

The three-judge panel ruled unanimously in May that the law violated the U.S. Constitution by mandating public libraries that receive government Internet discounts maintain blocking software. The

decision did not overturn the law's application to libraries in public schools.

The Children's Internet Protection Act, approved in late 2000, required libraries to install technology to screen out obscenity and child pornography on all computers and to block soft-core porn and other harmful material on those used by

children.

The Third Circuit panel said in its opinion, however, that the leading filters block thousands of pages of constitutionally protected speech.

The high court may hear oral arguments early next year and issue an opinion by summer. The case is *United States v. American Library Association*.

Thanks, Jack and Shirley

Over the course of the five years I have sought to lead Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, it has been my pleasure to work with Jack and Shirley Ellerbrook.

Many of you have met Jack and Shirley. For more than four years Jack served as director at Cedarmore. Shirley worked alongside Jack.

Jack and Shirley resigned just a couple of weeks ago to move to Texas, where they will be closer to one of their two sons and two of their grandchildren. The departure of this wonderful couple leaves a void. Having worked with them so closely over these four years, I grew to genuinely love them both.

Their dedication and love for the ministry at Cedarmore continued the pattern of those who have served so faithfully over the years in our ministry. Jack and Shirley gave all they had as they served many of you as guests. Living in "the big house" at the front of the property, they were often on call, even when they were off. They worked tirelessly around the property, even when no guests were present.

They both worked diligently on the house. Many nights I know they

went home from the office to work much of the night on the house, which needed (and still needs) so many improvements.

Kentucky Baptists owe a debt of gratitude to this wonderful couple. I know many of you have enjoyed conversation with Jack in the lobby of Boone Lodge. If you would listen, Jack would talk, passionately, about what God was doing at Cedarmore. He was enthusiastic about the vision God had given us for the ministry there.

Jack and Shirley Ellerbrook came to our ministry at a time when we were at a critical crossroads at Cedarmore. Their dedication to this ministry will forever be appreciated by our board and me. I pray that God will richly bless them as

they serve and enjoy the close company of their precious family.

—Thanks, Jack and Shirley. We love you and will miss you in the years ahead, but we know and trust that God will use you as He did here.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

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

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Artwork from the book *Messiah*, illustrated by Timothy R. Botts in calligraphy, Tyndale House Publishers. Used with permission.

SMILE

Happy Thanksgiving

As president and CEO of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, I'm grateful for many things this Thanksgiving.

I'm thankful that in the last year we have served more than 2,800 children and families through our ministries. I'm grateful for the 79 spiritual decisions our staff recorded by children in our care during the last year. I'm also thankful for the many other decisions that were made in the quiet of our children's hearts that they didn't share with anyone but the Lord.

I'm so thankful to Kentucky Baptists who gave more than \$1.5 million to KBHC during the last 12 months through the Thanksgiving Offering, Food Roundup, Mile of Pennies and other giving avenues.

I'm very grateful to the many Kentucky Baptists who stopped by our booth at the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting to express their support of the ongoing ministry to children and families.

I'm so thankful to the former residents of Glen Dale and Spring Meadows who have contacted us to say they understand that the time has come to make changes

in these programs for the benefit of today's children of Kentucky and tomorrow's.

I'm grateful to God for the opportunity to serve children and families in His name and with people who understand the importance of centering our work on the will and name of Christ. I'm so thankful to hear from our staff about the emotional healing that is taking place within the lives of our children and families as they are served by our programs. We feel the hand of God upon our work and His presence makes all the difference.

Most of all, I'm thankful to and for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without Him life has no real purpose or lasting joy.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your faithfulness in giving, praying and supporting KBHC. Please remember our children and families in your prayers during the holidays. It is always a bittersweet time for them. I know you will join us in praying that they will experience the fullest blessings of these holy days as believers in Christ.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Ministering at home and abroad

By Robert Dunston

Cumberland College senior Betsy Moore, daughter of Gene and Linda Moore of Independence, spent her summer working with a ministry team called 180 Degrees.

Cumberland College alumnus Mike Cabell founded the team while he was still a student at Cumberland. Carrie Keener Cabell (Cabell's wife and a Cumberland alumnus), Josh Martin and Adam Wills comprised the rest of the team.

The team traveled to four locations during the summer. At each location, team members worked with a visiting youth group, leading Bible studies and engaging in missions in the area.

The team began its work in West Naco, Mexico. Moore was thankful she had taken Spanish during her academic career!

In Mexico the team worked with an orphanage, cleaning and painting the boys' living quarters. They also cleaned bathrooms and the kitchen and painted the playground. Moore fell in love with the children there. One little girl named Sondra gave Moore an ornament her father had made with

Sondra's picture on it. Moore treasures the gift.

From Mexico the team journeyed to Atlanta to lead a vacation Bible school for children whose parents were receiving GED training. From Atlanta the team traveled to Houston to lead several vacation Bible schools. In both cities the children often were difficult to control. Moore had to encourage the youth volunteers while trying to teach the children. She tried to teach the youth that kindness and love matter, even if you do not see results.

The team ended the summer leading a soccer camp in Jackson County. There they worked with youth groups and led Bible studies.

Moore, an English major with minors in communication and religion at Cumberland College, feels called to work in ministry and missions. As we Kentucky Baptists emphasize international missions at this time of year, Moore's involvement and commitment inspire us all to spread the gospel to our world.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE

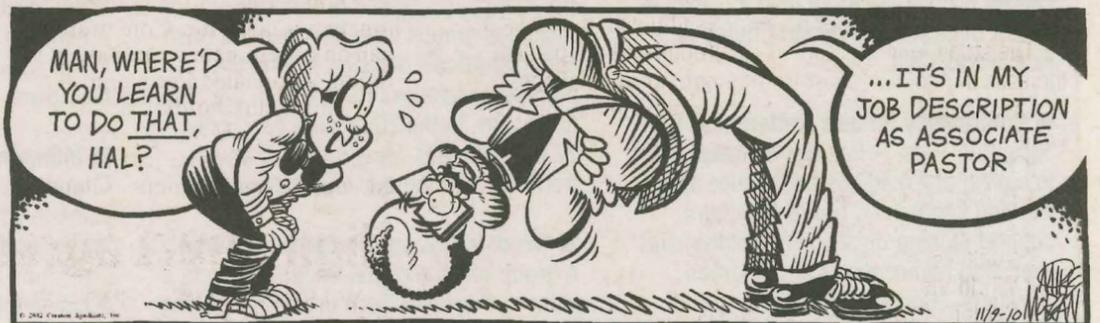


Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crossword

Across

- 1 "And when I looked, behold a ___ in the wall" (Ezekiel 8:7)
- 5 Small, pointed tool
- 8 Naomi's self-appointed name
- 12 Sixth month of Jewish calendar
- 13 Fabricate
- 14 "tomorrow is cast into the ___" (Matthew 6:30)
- 15 "___ shall my heavenly father do also to you" (Matthew 18:35)
- 17 Hollow
- 18 Compass dir.
- 19 Grandmother of Enos
- 20 That is (Lat.)
- 21 "ye are all ___ in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)
- 22 "If ye ___ chastening" (Hebrews 12:7)
- 26 "And Jesse ___ David the king" (Matthew 1:6)
- 29 Graduate degree
- 30 "Then arose Peter and ___ unto the sepulchre" (Luke 24:12)
- 31 Once popular magazine
- 32 Brother of Shem
- 33 Josip Broz
- 34 Faerie Queen heroine
- 35 By means of
- 36 "___ are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3)
- 37 She is also called Hadassah
- 39 Entreat
- 40 Right eye (abbr.)
- 41 Bird's beak
- 42 "The lot is cast into the ___" (Proverbs 16:33)
- 45 "The young lions ___" (Psalm 104:21)
- 48 "in one hour she is made ___" (Revelation 18:19)

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12					13				14				
15				16					17				
18				19					20				
			21				22			23	24	25	
26	27	28				29				30			
31						32				33			
34				35						36			
37			38				39						
			40				41				42	43	44
45	46	47				48				49			
50						51				52			
53						54				55			

- 50 "tell in the ___ of thy son" (Exodus 10:2)
- 51 Gold (Sp.)
- 52 River of SW England
- 53 Kilmer subject
- 54 Edge
- 55 Sew a sock

Down

- 1 Revolutionary War spy
- 2 Norse mythological figure
- 3 ___ of fire (Revelation 20:14)
- 4 "come down ___ my child die" (John 4:49)
- 5 "I am ___ for evermore" (Revelation 1:18)
- 6 "they that be ___ shall shine as ... the firmament" (Daniel 12:3)
- 7 Away from the wind (naut.)
- 8 Transported
- 9 Clark's costar in Mogambo
- 10 Kin (abbr.)
- 11 One (Scot.)
- 16 "many of his disciples ___ back" (John 6:66)
- 20 Elected officials
- 21 "an angel ... sat under an ___ ... in Ophrah" (Judges 6:11)
- 22 Common street name
- 23 "___ and the Thummin" (Exodus 28:30)
- 24 Proportion
- 25 Grandson of Adam
- 26 Indigo
- 27 Ages
- 28 Old Testament offering
- 29 "lest I ___ my own inheritance" (Ruth 4:6)
- 32 Pronoun
- 33 ___ sale
- 35 Foot (comb. form)
- 36 Mountain visited by Moses (Deuteronomy 34:1)
- 38 Equestrian's need
- 39 Broom (arch.)
- 41 Greek form of Neriah
- 42 Kilauea's evidence
- 43 One who acts (suffix)
- 44 Noted Quaker
- 45 Prepare flax
- 46 Row
- 47 Linking verb
- 48 Land whose name means "dwelling" (Joshua 11)
- 49 Youth

Last week's solution

H	E	E	A	D	I	N	B	O	V	E	
E	N	D	P	E	R	O	T	E	T	O	N
E	T	O	I	C	E	D	V	O	W	S	
P	O	M	M	E	L	A	T	I			
			U	C	A	B	E	S	I	D	E
P	R	A	Y	E	R	S	L	E	P	E	R
I	L		E	E			S	A	G		
C	O	U	C	H	E	M	E	R	O	D	S
S	T	R	A	I	T	I	N	E			
			N	E	A	N	O	V	I	C	E
L	A	C	K	B	L	E	U	R	A	Y	
A	C	H	E	L	O	N	G	S	O	N	E
P	E	A	R	E	S	T	H	N	E	D	

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NATIONAL NOTES

■ Ogilvie to retire as Senate chaplain.

U.S. Senate Chaplain Lloyd Ogilvie announced he is retiring in order to be with his seriously ill wife. Ogilvie's resignation will be effective March 15 and will mark the close of eight years as the Senate's 61st chaplain. Ogilvie's wife, Mary Jane, has a severe lung ailment that resulted in her transfer to a Los Angeles respiratory hospital in October. As chaplain, Ogilvie provides spiritual care for senators and their staffs. Before accepting the post, Ogilvie, 72, served more than 22 years as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, Calif.

■ Controversy follows conference.

Rep. Joseph R. Pitts, R-Pa., has canceled plans to appear at a religious conference after learning sponsoring group members support stoning disobedient children and executing homosexuals and abortion providers. "Congressman Pitts doesn't believe in stoning anybody," Pitts spokesman Gabe Neville said. Pitts was to speak last week at a conference in Ephrata, Pa., sponsored by the National Reform Association. The group supports imposing biblical law over U.S. laws. Organizer William Einwechter wrote a 1999 essay titled "Stoning Disobedient Children." In it, he wrote: "Contempt of parental authority is the death of family, law and order. The question then is: Who or what should die? The rebel, or family and society?"

■ Refugee policy hurts Lutheran agency.

Federal cutbacks in the number of refugees allowed into the United States have forced a Lutheran immigration agency to cut 14 positions and trim spending. The Baltimore-based Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service said fewer refugees, along with less government financial support and lower-than-expected private giving, prompted the cuts. In 2001, the agency helped resettle 11,627 refugees in the country. This year, the agency has helped only 4,499. Religious groups have criticized the Bush administration's decision to limit the number of refugees to 70,000 in the 2003 fiscal year. In the 2002 fiscal year, only 27,000 refugees were admitted, down from 131,000 the previous fiscal year.

■ 'Work for peace,' Pentecostals urge.

A group of Pentecostal leaders has sent a letter to President Bush urging him, along with other Christians, to "work for peace even in the face of grotesque evil" rather than pursue war against Iraq. "We humbly propose American Christians, the president included, radically rethink the rules and tools of engagement with powers of darkness, whether they are individual, societal or military weapons of mass destruction," said the Nov. 12 letter signed by more than 35 leaders. "In essence, we challenge them to be filled with the Spirit of God."

■ U.S. Jews, Arabs agree on statehood.

Despite two years of escalating violence in the Middle East, most Arab Americans and Jewish Americans in a recent survey agreed Palestinians and Israelis have the right to their own independent states. According to a survey taken last month and released Nov. 21 by the Arab American Institute and Americans for Peace Now, 85 percent of Jewish Americans said they supported the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Meanwhile, 95 percent of Arab Americans said Israelis have the right to live in a secure and independent state of their own.

■ Mormons plan to appeal case.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints plans to appeal to the Supreme Court a lower court's ruling in its case restricting speech on a Salt Lake City plaza. The decision followed the rejection Nov. 14 of a federal appeals court for a rehearing of a case in which it prevented the church from banning protests and other free speech on the sidewalks of the plaza, Associated Press reported. The appellate court ruled in October that the city should protect free-speech rights on the sidewalks because they are a traditional public forum. The city sold the land for the plaza—once a section of Main Street—to the church but kept easement rights to ensure pedestrian access.

■ Some voucher students not staying.

A newspaper study says more than a fourth of the Florida students who accepted vouchers to pay for tuition at private schools this semester have transferred back to public schools. The Miami Herald found 170 students out of the 607 statewide who in the summer had requested vouchers for the fall 2002 semester already had returned to public schools. Florida's voucher program gives students in public schools that the state deems to be "failing" scholarships that may be spent on tuition at private schools, including religious ones.

■ 'Left Behind' gets TV show.

The "Left Behind" series, which has morphed from books to movies, CDs and other items, will continue to grow with a TV show and a book about people influenced by the series. Cloud Ten Pictures, the producer of two "Left Behind" films, announced that the TV series will debut in 2003. It will be aired only in Canada but will be available on VHS and DVD in the U.S. Meanwhile, Tyndale House is searching for photos of readers whose lives have been influenced by the book series. Winners will be on the cover of a book to be released next June that will feature testimonials of people who have made faith decisions after reading the series. That contest deadline is Dec. 2. Entry forms are available at www.leftbehind.com.

'I will throw you out that window!'

This morning I received a letter from a dear friend, Mrs. Martha Bain Rice, who was my English teacher and Baptist Student Union sponsor when I was an Oneida student.

As I opened the envelope, another piece of paper fell out onto my desk. I immediately recognized a letter I had written when I was a student. I quickly read her letter and discovered that she had been going through some old keepsakes and found the letter I had written to her years ago.

I laid her letter aside and began to read the one on my desk. Sure enough, it was a letter I had written to her in September of my freshman year in college. Like many students who come to Oneida, I was not the most academically blessed young person. I had gone to 13 schools prior to enrolling at Oneida Baptist Institute as a junior. Between my frequent moves and my lack of motivation, my academic foundation had a few cracks in it.

I became acutely aware of that fact my first school day at Oneida. Every school seems to have a teacher most students would avoid if they had the option, not because they are bad or mean, but because they demand the very best. In our little school we had only one junior and senior English teacher, and it was Miss Bain, a teacher who accepted nothing less than our best. Her classroom was on the second floor of old Marvin Hall. It had those real old windows that were nearly large enough to drive a small car through. I was seated next to the window that first day in junior English. The class was doing verb tenses, which terrified me, but maybe I would get an easy verb.

I listened as each student was given a verb and then gave the present, past and past participle. By

the time my turn came, I was nearly in a state of shock. This was my first day at Oneida, and I did not want the students to think I was dumb. Miss Bain looked at me and gave me my verb: "sneak." I breathed an internal sigh of relief and somewhat proudly replied, "sneak, snuck, snuck." I would have been better off not to have answered at all. This petite English teacher gave me a disagreeable look as she stomped her feet on the floor. "No, it is not sneak, snuck, snuck! And if you ever

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

use that word in this classroom again, I will throw you out that window!" From the corner of my eye I could clearly see we were on the second floor. I was a little relieved to notice none of the windowpanes appeared to have been replaced recently. I had gotten into more than my share of trouble in school, but no teacher had ever threatened to throw me from a window!

As I read my letter written nearly 40 years earlier, I noticed a lot of corrections. I had started, "Well, Buddy, watch the spelling and punctuation as you are now writing a letter to your English teacher." She had marked 26

mistakes on that first page! I don't know if she marked them when she read the letter for the first time or prior to returning the letter 40 years later.

Her letter said, "Found this letter from you among my old papers from Oneida. Your writing has improved considerably. I enjoy your Western Recorder articles."

By the way, to my knowledge, no student ever was thrown out the window, but I have never used the word "snuck" again!

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

Joy and sadness in Russia

Clear Creek participated in the Kentucky Baptist Convention-Russia partnership during 1994-98. Since then we have assisted Novogorod Christian Evangelical-Baptist Church in its goal to complete a new building and train church planters for 40 house churches in the region.

Student teams worked the past two summers to complete the house church at Krestsy. Jason Poe, a third-year student from Lee County, Va., was part of the 2002 team. He and six others were in Russia three weeks. They used dormitory rooms and ate at the gold church in Novgorod, named for the beige stone that seems to glow in sunlight. Team members journeyed 90 minutes to the Krestsy construction site.

The 2001 team worked on the foundation and started construction of an addition onto a log cabin. The facility had one main meeting room, two rooms for inside rest rooms—a luxury in Russia—and two teaching rooms.

Typical construction in Russia is like "going back to the 1920s," Jason said. One day the men took shovels and boarded a dump truck. Backing up to a dirt pile the team

expected a front loader to fill the truck, and the shovels were to clean up.

"It took 10 of us two hours to fill the truck," Jason said. "I lost 15 pounds with all the rigorous labor." The team completed the floor, installed insulation (made with sheets of paper, Styrofoam and wood shavings), chinked the logs and put up a new ceiling.

The Krestsy church is the only evangelical congregation in a town of 12,000 people. Pastor Ivan, married with two sons, completed the 22-course curriculum at the Novogorod school taught by Clear Creek.

Before departure, the team rejoiced when the congregation of 12 members had 50 people in attendance and one person saved. Now we are saddened to hear the tragic news that the Krestsy house church burned down Nov. 8. This is the second church to burn in 12 months.

"We are very disappointed," Pastor Anatoli said in an e-mail. "It is a really hard event, and we ask you to join our prayers for Krestsy and Brother Ivan and all the believers of the church."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

'Messy missionary' Lamott finds grace in tough places

By Steve Rabey
Religion News Service

DENVER (RNS)—Anne Lamott prefers writing novels, but she's best known for soul-searching, side-splitting memoirs like 1993's "Operating Instructions," a look at single motherhood; 1994's "Bird by Bird," a guide to writing; and 1999's "Traveling Mercies," a refreshing exploration of Christian faith.

Now, Lamott is finally getting some attention for her fiction. "Blue Shoe," her sixth novel, is her first to appear on national best-seller lists.

"I just do whatever I feel inside me that wants to be written," said a worn-out but laid-back Lamott during an interview at her hotel in Denver, one of 16 cities she's visiting during a month-long publicity blitz.

"Sometimes I write about what really happened," Lamott said. "Other times I really want to luxuriate in fiction, which offers different levels of truth."

But no matter what she writes, Lamott's motivation is the same.

"I feel like I'm a kind of missionary," said Lamott, who makes a practice of kneeling in prayer when she first arrives at a hotel, and prays again before speaking to the growing crowds turning out for her readings and signings at bookstores.

"One of the things I can share with people is God's absolute love for all His children. I can also share about sobriety, recovery, creativity and the importance of finding out who you really are."

Lamott, who is 48, experienced a conversion to Christianity when she was 31, an ordeal she described in "Traveling Mercies," a book that won rave reviews in both New Age and Christianity Today magazines.

Raised by politically liberal atheists, Lamott considered Christianity as sensible as dowsing or Scientology. Unable to find solace in alcohol, drugs and sex, she reluctantly opened her heart to Jesus, who reportedly made an appearance in the hospital room where the writer was recovering from an abortion.

"I quit," she said. "All right. You can come in."

Though Lamott says she's "the exact opposite of a fundamentalist," she attends church, reads the Bible daily and prays throughout the day. Still, faith has not removed life's rough edges.

"A lot of us are a mess a lot of the time," she says, "and that's why it's so great to have a Savior."

icate the effort to God.

"I said, I'm just going to write this book for Jesus, and every step of the way, He will help me write it."

Lamott said that's exactly what happened. But her novel is a far cry from many of the predictable stories found in the inspirational fiction sections of Christian bookstores.

"These books are all about perfect Christians or the people perfect Christians need to save or defend themselves against," she says. "These people are not like anybody I know. My experience of life is that it's a mixed grill. It's not predictable. It's not pretty. It's messy."

You can have very deep faith and still experience deep disappointment and confusion. Jesus doesn't promise to take away the pain, confusion or disappointment. But He'll enter into it with you and keep you company 'til you cross over to the other side."

Life's definitely a mixed grill for Mattie Ryder, the mildly neurotic single mom at the center of "Blue Shoe." Like Lamott, she wrestles with gnawing insecurities, eats too much, struggles to be a good mom and prays at the drop of a hat.

"There's a lot of me in Mattie," Lamott admitted.

Mattie is trying to stay afloat while caring for her son and daughter, a sick dog and a cranky iguana. Along the way, she eats, drinks and worries too much. She gets involved with both her ex-husband and a new boyfriend but fantasizes about a married friend. Her father haunts her from his grave, and her ailing mother taxes her love and patience.

When things look bad, Mattie turns to God. Life isn't suddenly transformed into a paradise on Earth, but she does receive a measure of strength and guidance.

"People love to read about God if it's written in a way that could include them," Lamott said. Those gathered at Denver's Tattered Cover bookstore to hear her speak agree.

"I have a hard time with organized religion," said Julie Koeppe, an architect and spiritual seeker who has read Lamott's three memoirs. "Her talk contained many religious references, but I can take that from her."

Others aren't so positive about her take on Christianity.

"Whenever I do radio interviews, fundamentalist Christians call and complain," Lamott said. "But God tells us over and over that He loves and adores us. If so, I don't really care what people who call radio stations have to say."



Lamott



Way to Live: Christian Practices for Teens. Editors Dorothy Bass and Don Richter. Upper Room Books, 2002. 310 pages. ◆◆◆◆ (out of five)

Eighteen youth and 18 adults came together to explore 18 issues that young people face every day.

Their aim was not to provide a book of rules on dating, sex, money, prayer and other topics. They wanted to produce a manual that invites teens to explore "a way to live that keeps me involved in what God is doing in me and in the world around me."

To do this, they felt it necessary to avoid being preachy, while at the same time demonstrating why each of these issues needs a serious examination. And they wanted to show the breadth of each issue, i.e. both the personal and social implications of the decisions one makes.

After an introduction to the purpose and method of the book, the authors lay the groundwork for what follows by a survey of the importance of the Bible in discovering the way to live, as well as guidelines for how to appropriate its message.

The remainder of the book, which can be read in any order, covers the themes of bodies, stuff, food, creation, creativity, work, play, time, truth, choices, friends, welcome, forgiveness, justice, grieving, music, prayer and practice. The content of each chapter comes 50/50 from an adult and a youth.

"Way to Live" is an extremely useful and flexible resource. Teens (and adults) could read and reflect on it individually, or it could be used as a guide for a discipleship study.
Jim Holladay

The Sermon Maker: The Tales of a Transformed Preacher. Calvin Miller. Zondervan, 2002. 156 pages. \$15.99. ◆◆◆◆

This is not your typical book on preaching. But then, you would not expect a typical book from Calvin Miller.

Miller has constructed a story of a preacher who, while still performing the art of preaching well enough so that his congregation is not bored, finds that his sermons have no results. No one is changed by the sermons.

In the midst of Pastor Sam's quandary, he is visited by Sermoniel, the Angel of Homiletics. Sermoniel's mission is to help the pastor rediscover the true heart and power of preaching.

Miller's story will have points of connection with most any preacher. I have to say, however, that the story itself is not the best part of the book. At some points, the story is just too contrived. The saving grace of the book is that half the book (ev-

ery other page) is notations in which Miller expounds on the points the story is making.

It is here that my real encouragement for preaching comes and where, for me, Miller does his teaching most effectively. The notations have the feel of a personal conversation with Miller, tapping his decades of experience as a pastor and teacher. It is a trite saying, but the notations are worth the price of the book. Miller's notations would be great points of discussion for groups of preachers who meet regularly for mutual support.

The preacher may read the story in a brief time. The conversation with Miller through the notations will go on for the rest of the preacher's ministry.
Wayne Hager

Heroic Faith: How to Live a Life of Extreme Devotion. The Voice of the Martyrs. Word Publishing, 2002. 184 pages. \$12.99 ◆◆◆◆

When I first picked up this book, I thought it was going to be a devotional/discipleship guide aimed at Gen Xers (the word Extreme in the title was the cue).

That notion was quickly dispelled. The focus of "Heroic Faith" is a call to a higher level of Christian living through the voices and stories of those who have suffered and died because Jesus Christ was not simply the answer to life; He was their life.

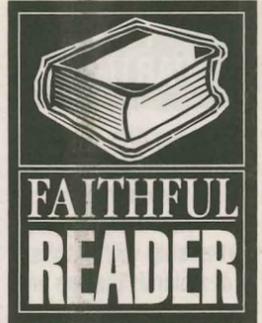
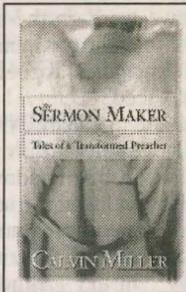
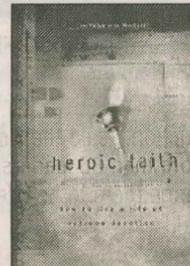
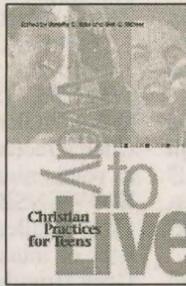
Produced by Voice of the Martyrs, a nonprofit organization that assists persecuted Christians throughout the world, "Heroic Faith" is both a devotional guide and an invitation to support the work of Voice of the Martyrs.

Beginning with the roll call of witnesses in Hebrews 11-12, the authors identify eight qualities that distinguish "heroic faith from the plain vanilla kind": eternal perspective, dependence on God, love of God's Word, courage, endurance, obedience, self-control and love.

Each of the book's eight chapters explores these qualities through both Scripture and the lives of people ancient and modern, living and dead. Each chapter ends with a set of exercises that evaluates where the reader stands with a particular quality, as well as inviting the reader to experience the potential growth of that quality in his or her life.

Heroic faith, according to the authors, is not just the call of a select group of people in certain places in the world.

Whether or not we experience the kind of persecution that Christians face in countries that are hostile to the gospel, all of us are called to a total life commitment that would prepare us, if necessary, to endure and triumph as faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ. We all must answer this question: "Is Jesus Christ our life, or just part of it?"
Jim Holladay



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; and Victoria Moon, librarian for Deer Park Baptist Church in Louisville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: jwhager@surry.net, docholladay01@aol.com or victoria.moon@earthlink.net

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Daniel, a deaf young man in Czeszochowa, Poland, who recently became a Christian. "Pray that God will use him to bring many others to Christ," writes missionary Tara Hall.

■ Three Bulgarian Baptists who are working in five Muslim villages in the Rhodope Mountains of southwestern Bulgaria. Pray for "M," "T" and "D" as they face opposition in these villages.

■ Missionaries who work with a Russian-speaking Bible study in the northern part of Belgium. "Many of the questions asked by Muslims and others are extremely difficult, and they desire immediate answers," missionaries write. "Pray that God will direct team members to appropriate Scripture to reveal His ways."

■ Baptist representatives Bob and Diane Wagstaff in Timisoara, Bulgaria, as they prepare for their language proficiency test in the Romanian language. After they complete the test, they will move to Craiova, Romania, to begin their ministry. Pray that they can find a house there.

■ A Christian refugee from the Middle East living in the Netherlands who wants to work with other Christian Middle Eastern refugees so they can go back to the Middle East and spread the gospel.

■ English language studies among Chinese students in Paris. Five students currently attend. At least two had never heard the gospel before, the missionaries write.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ BAGDAD—Beechridge Church called **Frank Farley** as pastor effective Nov. 17.

■ BOWLING GREEN—Living Hope Church ordained **Jeff Carter, Marvin Daniel, Robert Duvall** and **Brent Richey** as deacons Nov. 20.

■ CRESTWOOD—Crestwood Church's Living Christmas Tree will present "Come and Behold Him!" Dec. 6-7 and 13-14, 7 p.m., and Dec. 8 and 15, 3:30 and 7 p.m. For information, call (502) 241-8534.

■ FRANKFORT—Crestwood Church honored **Nelia Hazelrigg** on her 100th birthday Nov. 17. **Wallace Kent** is pastor.

Farmdale Church called **Dave Kruse** as youth minister. **Allen Baker** is pastor.

Thornhill Church ordained **Brad Gross** and **Spencer Huebschman** as deacons Nov. 10. **Steve Payne** is pastor.

■ LOUISVILLE—Audubon Church ordained **David Claar** as a deacon Nov. 10.

■ MOUNT WASHINGTON—First Church's music ministries will present "Christmas in the Country" Dec. 7-9, 7 p.m.; "Meet Me at the Manger" Dec. 11, 6:30 p.m.; "Born Is the King" Dec. 15, 6 p.m.; and "Laughing All the Way" Dec. 18, 6 p.m.

■ NICHOLASVILLE—Edgewood Church recently called **Matt Lockett** as youth minister.

■ OWENSBORO—Lewis Lane Church called **Steve O'Neal** as minister of music and adult education. **Greg Huguley** is pastor.

■ VINE GROVE—New Salem Church called **Gene Waggoner** as full-time pastor.

Christmas plans

Is your church planning special activities for the Christmas season? Send information about pageants, nativity scenes and other events by Dec. 3 to: Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax (502) 244-6474; www.WesternRecorder.org.

Faith group studies end-of-life care

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Among the 1.6 million Americans living in nursing homes, nearly half suffer from persistent pain that often goes unnoticed or untreated, according to a coalition including religious groups, the American Medical Association and the American Association of Retired Persons.

Where terminally ill patients die and how much they suffer depends largely on the health care network and resources available in the patient's state, the group Last Acts concluded in a study of end-of-life care across the nation's health care system.

"Dying patients and their families today suffer more than they should," said Judith Peres, deputy director of Last Acts and the study's lead researcher. "We still have a long way to go to improve health care and policy for this segment of the American population."

Previous studies have found that 70 percent of Americans would prefer to spend their final days at home, in the company of friends or family, but only 25 percent of the seriously ill die at

home, according to the study.

The group reviewed the quality of palliative care, which focuses on relieving pain and symptoms while providing emotional and spiritual support to patients and family. Most states received grades of C or lower.

Last Acts, which comprises approximately 1,000 partnership organizations, conducted the yearlong study with financial support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a health care philanthropy whose honorary chairwoman is former first lady Rosalynn Carter.

Although the survey found that 93 percent of Americans believe improving end-of-life care is important, 56 percent said care for the dying is only "fair" or worse.

Although hospice care is generally considered to be one of the best options, the study found it was not widely available in most states.

Increasingly, the average length of stay in hospices has dropped to less than a week rather than the 60 days that is recommended for maximum benefit, Last Acts reported.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Golden oak padded pews—317 feet in a variety of lengths. Excellent condition. \$15 per foot. Also, 1986 Ford B600 bus with 370 engine, automatic transmission, roof heat and air. Asking \$3,500. Contact Mark Dowdy at (270) 856-3850 or e-mail madowdy@apex.net.

HEALTHCARE: Pre-existing conditions accepted. Non-insurance solution for hospitals, doctors, medications, vision, dental, hearing and more. Representatives needed. \$54.95/month per family. (888) 645-4559. www.healthplanprovider.net; www.braxtonenterprises.net/ceo6660.

SEEKING: Part-time, bivocational youth pastor for Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown, Ohio. GBC is a growing church currently averaging 100 in morning worship service. There are approximately 15 to 20 youth currently attending. There also is a parsonage available. Georgetown is located approximately 35 miles east of Cincinnati and 25 miles northwest of Maysville, Ky. Submit resumés to: Georgetown Baptist Church, 794 S Main St., Georgetown, OH 45121, Attn: Youth Pastor Search Committee. E-mail to philipashcraft@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Northside Baptist Church, a steadily growing, evangelistic church, is seeking a minister of students (K through HS). Salary plus benefits package. If interested, please send resumé to: Northside Baptist Church, 1800 Pear Orchard Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Growing church; blended worship style; Gene Snyder and Dixie Highway; \$150-\$200/week. Southminster Baptist Church, 11780 Tierney Drive, Louisville, KY 40272. Send resumé or contact office for appointment: (502) 933-2761.

SEEKING: Drivers needed immediately. OTR/DED/REG work. Class A CDL. Call Eric: (800) 235-0212.

SEEKING: A well-established, growing, rural church is seeking a part-time youth minister who will be energetic in leading and discipling our youth. Please send resumé to: Minister of Youth Search Committee, Persimmon Grove Baptist Church, PO Box 148, Alexandria, KY 41001.

SEEKING: Baptist Convalescent Center in Newport, Ky., is currently seeking a human resources manager. Experience preferred. Must work well with all personality types, be creative and enjoy your work—this is a ministry opportunity. If interested, please call Kathy Jones at (859) 581-1938, Monday-Friday, 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m., or fax resumé to (859) 581-0190.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Fern Creek Baptist Church. Send resumé to: FCBC, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor/minister for Grant's Lick Baptist Church, Campbell County, Ky. Send resumé to: Robert Miller (search committee chairman), 6098 Hissem Ave., Alexandria, KY 41001. Phone: (606) 635-7420.

SEEKING: Part-time director of senior adult ministries (beginning 2003). Position is responsible for developing, managing and evaluating a comprehensive program for senior adults. Work week consists of 20 hours (Sunday through Wednesday). Individual must be experienced with adult ministries and be a current member of a Southern Baptist church. Send cover letter and resumé to: Richard Landers, First Baptist Church, PO Box 697, Richmond, KY 40476-0697, or via e-mail to rlanders@firstbaptistnet.com.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Boones Creek Baptist Church. Send resumé and video or audio tape to: Pastor Search Committee, Boones Creek Baptist Church, 185 N Cleveland Road, Lexington, KY 40509-9485.

SEEKING: Full-time minister to youth. Youth group averages 25-30. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, FBC Clinton, 320 Mayfield Drive, Clinton, KY 42031.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Friendship Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Youth Search Committee, Friendship Baptist Church, 5411 Bengal Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of preschool/child development center director for Fern Creek Baptist Church. Send resumé to: FCBC, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Energetic, growth-minded pastor for Henderson Memorial Baptist Church, a congregation with 385 resident members and a SS enrollment of 249. The church is located in an area with good growth potential. At least some seminary a plus. Please send resumé to: Henderson Memorial Baptist Church, 501 Noel Ave., Hopkinsville, KY 42240, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in downtown Ashland, Ky., is seeking two experienced associates to fill the positions of minister of music and spiritual formations and minister of youth and children. Each position requires a candidate who possesses organizational and people skills and is energetic and self-motivated. The minister of music and spiritual formations will be responsible for the overall music ministry of the church, and the development, promotion and direction of church education programs for all ages. The minister of youth and children will be responsible for the development, promotion and direction of programs for youth and children. Salaries based on education and experience. Please forward resumés to the appropriate search committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 787, Ashland, KY 41105-0787; e-mail to fbcashla@fbcashlandky.com; or fax to (606) 324-4344.

SEEKING: Fern Creek Baptist Child Development Center is looking for a teacher for the four-year-old preschool program. Hours are 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Kentucky Cabinet of Health Services certifies our center. Requirements: College degree preferred—high school diploma required; experience working with preschool children a plus; love for children; ability to plan curriculum and activities; and ability to be flexible. Must be at least 18 years of age. Benefits: Competitive hourly wage; paid holidays; state-certified training provided; pleasant and positive work environment; possibility of extra hours, if desired. Interested individuals should contact Fern Creek Baptist Church, (502) 239-0316, or send resumé to PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Fern Creek Baptist Child Development Center.

SEEKING: Bivocational associate pastor/music. Forward resumé: Maple Grove Baptist Church, 5911 East Manslick Road, Louisville, KY 40219.

SEEKING: Highly motivated individual to serve as part-time children's/youth minister for Tunnel Hill Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. Come grow with us! Send resumé to: Tunnel Hill Baptist Church, 734 Tunnel Hill Church Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701, Attn: Terry Chaudoin.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for First Twelve Mile Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Troy Richardson, 167-K Washington Trace, California, KY 41007.

SERVICE: America's Christian long distance. Free toll-free number; 4.9 cents/minute; 6-second increment billing; no contracts; online sign-up. www.talklongdistance.net, (888) 645-4559.

WANTED: Old grand piano that needs work—6-foot or longer. Will trade Baldwin studio piano in excellent condition. Contact Ed Norman at (270) 842-0012.

Some churches work to make coffee sales a righteous event

LOUISVILLE (RNS)—For some people, that morning cup of coffee is somewhat akin to a religious experience. An interfaith group is hoping to make it more so.

Equal Exchange a for-profit firm founded in 1986, educates North Americans about the economic difficulties for many coffee growers and encourages people to buy what they call "fair trade" coffee.

Now Equal Exchange is recruiting U.S. churches to bring the realities of global economic development down to a personal level. Many congregations are pledging to use only fair-trade coffee at church suppers and fellowships and to encourage members to buy fair-trade coffee for use at home.

Porfirio Zepeda Arana, an Equal Exchange cooperative grower in Nicaragua, has seen the days when farmers barely could sell their beans for more than it cost to grow them.

Middlemen, called "Coyotes," sometimes gut the profits. Farmers' sale prices have plunged 70 percent in the last five years, according to Equal Exchange.

"There are kids who end up in the street, homeless," Arana said, speaking through a translator recently at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) national offices in Louisville. "There are a lot of folks who are dying of hunger. In reality it is the children who are really affected by it."

Equal Exchange's organically grown, high-quality coffee is sold at above-market prices that guarantee cooperative farmers a living wage. While the world coffee price typically varies between 40 cents to 60 cents per pound, Equal Exchange guarantees the farmers will be paid \$1.26 a pound.

So far, Equal Exchange's Interfaith Coffee Program has partnerships with a half-dozen denominations, including Presbyterians, Lutherans and Methodists.

Last year, Equal Exchange sold 60 tons of coffee through its partnerships and paid the cooperatives \$960,000 in above-market premiums, according to Jill Wenke of Equal Exchange.

The project reaches across political lines, Wenke said. "It's a very easy step a congregation can take to help people in need."

When congregations talk about why they support fair-trade coffee, she said, they often cite Jesus' teachings to care for the poor, for "the least" of us, and Micah 6:8, in which God exhorts followers to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God.

'Girls of Grace'

Teen concerts link pop gospel music with straight talk

By Marcia Davis
Religion News Service

PLANO, Texas (RNS)—It's Friday night, and 7,000 teenage girls have given up football games and movie dates to go to church.

They're all assembled for the "Girls of Grace" conference, a week-end during which innocents gain confidence and prodigals meet Point of Grace.

The girls, ages 13-18, listen raptly to Heather Payne, Denise Jones, Shelley Breen and Terry Jones as the four female singers of the Christian music group Point of Grace talk straight and quote Scripture about sensitive subjects.

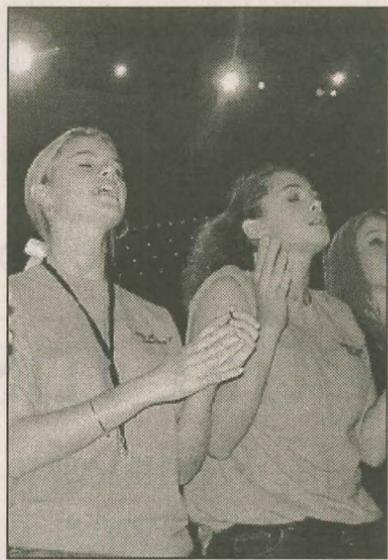
Youth leaders sit among their prodigies, and solemn-faced moms huddle to the back or side, some nodding, others taking notes.

The audience reflects wall-to-wall faded denim, splashed with pink T-shirts, ponytails and flashing smiles fraught with the glint of braces. The girls link arms and sway to the beat of "Circle of Friends" and "Keep the Candle Burning" during the weekend's mini-concerts.

The teens have traveled from throughout Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, and some all the way from Minnesota to attend.

A fashion show and make-up tips break up frank discussions from the stage on the scriptural wrongs of premarital intercourse and oral sex, and the importance of setting boundaries for dating. A counseling room draws hundreds. The makeovers are meant to move well beyond blush and brush to life changes.

The first three venues of the conference tour—Lakeland, Fla., Plano and Denver—sold out. Other spots are being added. (The closest site to Kentucky, so far, is Kansas City, Mo., in



FUN AND FACTS Young women from Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, attend the Girls of Grace concert. Point of Grace member Shelley Breen said teens need good role models for sexual purity. "Teens need to be told, 'It is possible, you can wait.'"



April.) No end date has been set for the tour.

Since its release in August, "The 'Girls of Grace' Devotional and Bible Study Workbook" has moved to the top of the Christian Booksellers' best-seller list, and the "Girls of Grace" CD has made the top 10.

Answering "cries for help"

Payne, the group's towering deep-voiced brunette beauty, said that through the years the group has received many letters and phone calls from girls wanting advice and spiritual guidance. "These conferences are our response to those cries for help and our answer to how they can be godly girls in the new millennium," she said.

The group has long awaited this kind of tour, she added. With platinum and gold recording sales, two Grammy nominations and a bevy of Dove awards since their songs first hit the charts in the early 1990s, Payne said the conference tour that opened in October is the most important work of their careers.

"We tackle self image and tell them that what the world says is cool isn't necessarily godly," she said in an interview before the Plano conference.

"We tell them you can dress cool but you don't have to look tacky and trashy and show every part of your body," she said.

"And we tell them they should choose their role models based on character," the singer said, "not just what's on the outside."

The conference pace and break times are scheduled to allow Breen, Payne and Terry Jones to cuddle and nurse their three newborns.

During a backstage break, Denise Jones and Shelley Breen talked about their teen years.

"I just didn't do it right," Jones said. "I didn't see the big picture. I want to tell the girls, 'There's a bigger picture that affects you for the rest of your lives.'"

"I was a fence sitter," Breen said. "I wanted to be popular. I pushed the lines in dating," she said, "but when a friend invited me to youth group, it

was a turning point for me.

"We were all four virgins when we married," Breen said. "Teens need to be told, 'It is possible, you can wait.'"

Parents, dating & eating disorders

Breen encouraged the girls to honor their parents and try harder to get along with their siblings. From Terry Jones, the girls heard that friendships take hands, feet and hearts. Heather Payne spoke on spiritual discipline.

Denise Jones talked about boys and dating. "Check your motives for dating," she said. "Are you looking for something in someone else you should be looking for in Christ?"

"This is the perfect time to commit your love life to God," she said. "And if you've crossed a lot of lines, God forgives."

In video interviews flashed on large-screen monitors, members of the Christian music boy band dc Talk commented from the male perspective.

Nancy Alcorn, founder of Mercy Ministries, which works with teenage girls in crises, took the stage to tell the girls to be real with God, and a former Mercy client recounted her struggle with eating disorders.

Recording artist Joy Williams drew raves as she belted out a few of her newest songs.

Lindsay Baker, 14, came to the conference with a group from her church in nearby Keller, Texas. "I'm going to go home and set some boundaries for my boyfriend," she said.

Baker said a lot of the conference advice wasn't that much different from what she had heard from her parents, "but it meant more coming from them."

Desiree Villa, 17, also with the Keller group, said, "I didn't use to think about a boy or bother to find out about him. Now I am going to make sure he is a Christian before I date him."

"I was prepared for the blunt talk about sex," said Beth Ellis, who brought her 12-year-old daughter, Landon. "I think it needed to be said, especially in this town and in my church."

POINT OF GRACE The evangelical group Point of Grace sings at one of their concerts and conferences aimed at delivering straight talk about sex and morality to young girls. The quartet said this series is their answer to the many letters and phone calls from girls seeking advice and spiritual guidance. Members are (from left): Heather Payne, Denise Jones, Terry Jones and Shelley Breen. (RNS photos by Marcia Davis)

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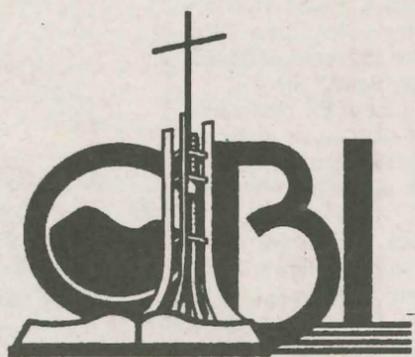


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