

January 28, 2003
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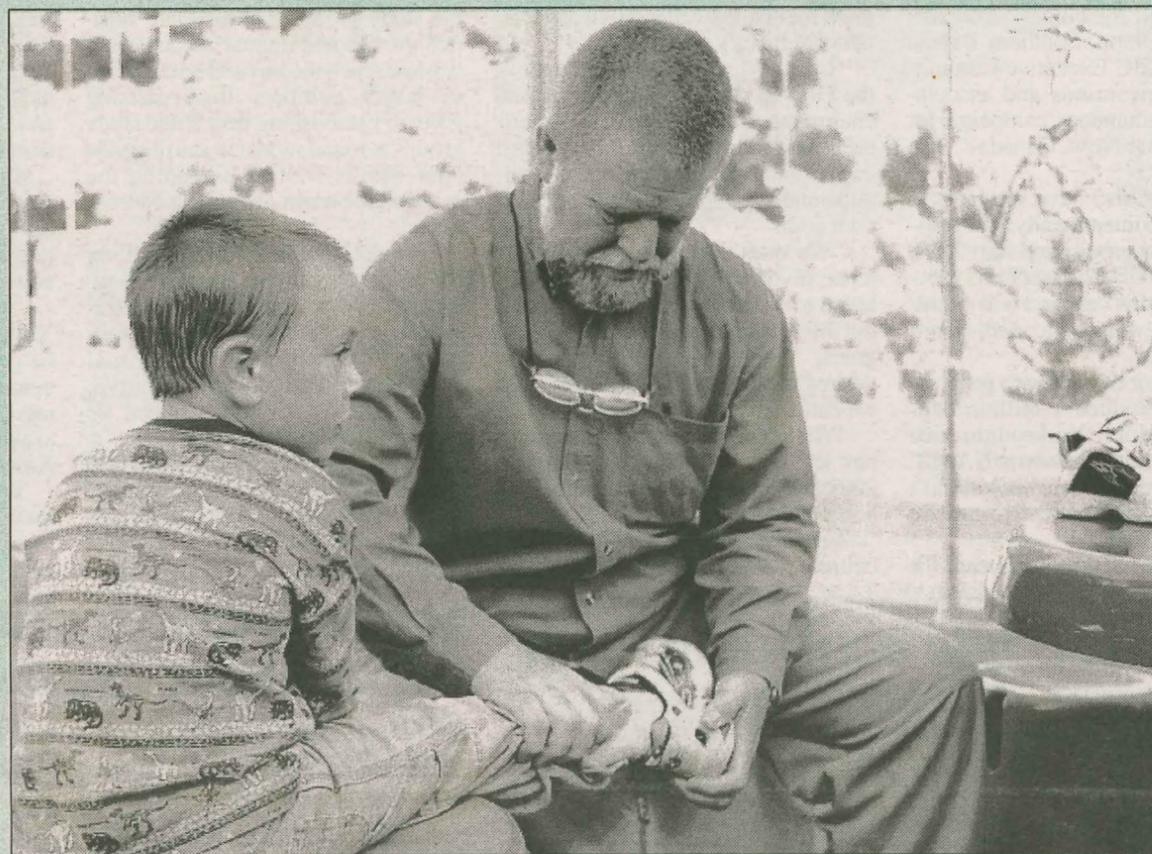
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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, January 29

Thankful for small things



Don Caswell is the lone survivor of four shooting victims in the Dec. 30 attack on Jibla Baptist Hospital. Now recovering and spending time with his wife and children, he's thankful in a new way for small things like tying 5-year-old son Caleb's shoes. (© International Mission Board photo by Mike Creswell) *Story on page 7.*

Baptist publisher popularized 'Amazing Grace'

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

FORT WORTH, Texas—A Texas Baptist layman helped put John Newton's "Amazing Grace" on the map, according to a leading Baptist hymnologist.

But the way most Americans sing the popular hymn today isn't exactly the way it was first sung in the 1770s, according to William Reynolds, a professor of church music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and editor of the 1975 Baptist Hymnal.

"Baptist layman Robert H. Coleman played a major role in the popularizing of 'Amazing Grace' as we know it today," Reynolds said. Coleman, based in Dallas, was a leading publisher of hymnals in the early 20th century.

From 1909 to 1939, Coleman published 33 hymnals, and all of the ones designed for congregational singing included "Amazing Grace," Reynolds noted.

Coleman's influence was broadened beyond hymnal publishing, Reynolds added, because he served as music leader for annual meetings of both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Northern Baptist Convention before and after World War I.

But the version of "Amazing Grace" published and promoted by

Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound 165

1. A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me!
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved;
3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares, I have al - read - y come;
4. The Lord has prom - ised good to me, His word my hope se - cures;
5. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright shin - ing as the sun,

Coleman bore at least two primary changes from its origin.

First, Coleman attached Newton's hymn text to the tune New Britain, also the practice of his printer, Edwin Excell of Chicago. They followed a practice first documented in 1835, at least 56 years after Newton wrote the hymn.

"Amazing Grace" is set in what musicians call common meter, which means it can be easily sung to a variety of tunes written in the same meter.

From 1789 to 1997, "Amazing Grace" was published in hundreds of hymnals set to at least two dozen tunes, Reynolds explained.

Two of the most popular were Arlington, best known among Baptists as the tune for "Am I A Soldier of the Cross," and Warwick, a tune not used in Baptist hymnals within the last century.

William Walker first attached the

tune New Britain to "Amazing Grace" in his "Southern Harmony," published in 1835, Reynolds said. "The tune is anonymous, and Walker named it New Britain but left no explanation for doing so."

Baptists were among the first to embrace the new tune for "Amazing Grace," Reynolds reported. "The first four church hymnals to accept the tune New Britain were Baptist collections."

Among those were collections published by Basil Manly Jr., founder of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and H.N. Lincoln, a singing school teacher and member of First Baptist Church of Dallas.

The second major change in "Amazing Grace" since its origin is the addition of what Baptists today sing as the fourth and final stanza, beginning, "When we've been there, 10,000 years."

□ See Baptist hymn publisher ..., page 8

Pastor: Church leaders should be risk takers

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LEXINGTON—Church leaders must be willing to take risks when they seek and follow God's vision, according to a Baptist pastor whose own church has broken several traditions.

"Every journey has two parts: a starting line and a finish line," Dick Lincoln told pastors and their spouses at the annual Kentucky Baptist Convention "Shepherding the Shepherd" conference, Jan. 16-18. "The real test of leadership is how people feel when you get to the finish line."

Lincoln, pastor of Shandon Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C., told listeners that God accomplishes His work through leaders.

That shouldn't be a source of arrogance for pastors, but it does mean God is looking for results from leaders, Lincoln said.

Implementing change can require bold, and even unpopular, steps, he added. Lincoln recalled a Florida minister whose church grew from 125 people to 1,200 during the past decade because he followed God's vision to grow and reach out to the community, Lincoln said.

But the decision didn't come without pain, he said, as every Sunday school leader resigned amid the changes.

Lincoln cited his own church as another example. During his 25-year tenure, Shandon Baptist has tripled in size (to 3,300), grown to a staff of 150 people and recently began a new building program.

But Shandon Baptist doesn't embrace democratic rule. It has no constitution or bylaws, no business meetings, and deacons meet quarterly instead of monthly. It also uses annual pledge cards, emphasizing tithing and preaching that failing to do so robs God.

Lincoln said he found he had to go against conventional thinking soon after he arrived at the church in 1978.

Then in a 20-year-long decline, someone suggested the long-range planning committee poll the community and members in forming recommendations to reverse the situation.

While discussing that idea, Lincoln ultimately said it was foolish to ask everyone except God what to do.

"Somewhere along the way, we ought to say, 'Lord, is there something You want that our community and church might not have thought of?'" he said. "With the democratic model, we think people are wise and all-knowing and we really aren't. God is all-wise and knows all things."

Opposing tradition might upset people, but God expects His leaders to produce change and movement instead of just motion, Lincoln said.

□ See Pastor: Are you ..., page 3

'What Now, America?' plan seeks 1 million baptisms

'What Now, America?' goals:

- 2003: 1 million people praying for revival.
- 2004: 1 million people trained in soul-winning.
- 2005: 1 million baptisms, 100,000 evangelistic Bible study groups and 2,500 new churches.

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—Southern Baptist leaders have announced plans to launch a three-year evangelistic emphasis aimed at baptizing 1 million Americans in 2005.

"What Now, America?" is a joint emphasis of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, LifeWay Christian Resources, Woman's Missionary Union, Southern Baptist seminaries, SBC Executive Committee, state conventions and associations. A simultaneous campaign for Canada, "What Now, Canada?" also is under way.

Organizers also have set goals to begin 100,000 intentionally evangelistic Bible study groups and start 2,500 churches in 2005. The emphasis is being launched this year and will culminate with an evangelistic media campaign in 2005.

"There's not a system or a program in place to produce 1 million baptisms," said John Yarbrough, vice president of evangelization at NAMB. "If we could do it, then we wouldn't need God, but with God all things are possible."

To date, the SBC's best years for

baptisms and church plants are 1972 with 445,725 baptisms and 1999's mark of 1,747 new churches, according to NAMB statistics.

Task force members describe the campaign as an effort to equip and mobilize Southern Baptists for an evangelism and church planting movement unprecedented in denominational history.

Robert White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention and chairman of the "What Now, America?" national task force, challenged each Southern Baptist church, association and state convention to set their own goals.

"We want every Southern Baptist to be involved in this exciting challenge to reach our nation for Christ, but this is not a program with assigned goals," White said. "We believe God desires to do something greater than we can even envision."

White said the Georgia convention has set a goal of 50,000 baptisms in 2005, which would eclipse the convention's current annual level of 37,000.

Bill Taylor, director of LifeWay's church resources network partner-

ships, said the SBC goals for baptisms, evangelistic Bible study units and church plants capture much of the heart of Southern Baptists.

"We have always been a denomination that wants to reach the unsaved and unchurched with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Taylor said. "New Bible study groups that facilitate spiritual growth and mutual accountability often reach the lost and unchurched in larger numbers than existing groups. Establishing new Bible study groups is foundational in starting new churches as well as extending the evangelistic reach of existing churches."

The national task force is calling for at least 1 million Southern Baptists this year to commit to pray regularly for personal repentance, personal revival and a national spiritual awakening. The prayer initiative, called "Be ... One in a Million," is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Participants can register for the prayer initiative at www.namb.net/prayer. Those who register and have e-mail capabilities will receive weekly prayer requests throughout 2003.

In 2004, Southern Baptists will be challenged to focus on soul-winning training. The emphasis calls for at least 1 million Southern Baptists to undergo evangelism training.

Yarbrough cited the 2001 "U.S. Congregational Life Survey" of 2,000 Southern Baptists as an example of the importance of evangelism training. The survey found that those who had been equipped to witness were twice as likely to share their faith and four times more likely to actually lead someone to accept Christ as Savior.

In the spring of 2005, "What Now, America?" and "What Now, Canada?" media campaigns will be launched through television, radio, newspaper and billboard advertising.

"We don't need a program," Yarbrough said. "We really need to be part of a movement of God. We need to see a movement of God never seen in our generation, a great spiritual awakening that encompasses North America."

Beginning in February, more information will be available online at www.whatnowamerica.com or by calling (770) 410-6305.

Georgia editor forced into early retirement

By Mark Wingfield & Tony Cartledge
Texas Baptist Standard & North Carolina Biblical Recorder

ATLANTA (ABP)—Bill Neal, editor of the Georgia Christian Index for a decade, has taken early retirement, reportedly under pressure from Robert White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Neal, 55, was called to a meeting with White Jan. 16. At the same time, one of White's assistants was dispatched to the Index offices to announce to the staff that the Index offices would be closed until the following Monday, Jan. 20. The GBC staff also reportedly confiscated computers.

White's office reported that neither he nor other GBC officials were available for comment to the Biblical Recorder. White released a statement to Baptist Press, however, that he and Neal had discussed Neal's retirement plans and that details would be forthcoming after a meeting of the Index board on Jan. 25.

Meanwhile, convention sources reported that White terminated three other Index employees Jan. 20. The others dismissed were Managing Editor Greg Brett, Media Coordinator Melea Goode and Administrative Assistant Laura Boltin.

The Index, which is owned by the Georgia Baptist Convention, receives major funding from the state convention. The newspaper's editor historically has been elected by the convention's Executive Committee.

A reorganization of the state convention in the mid-1990s, however, gave the executive director broad powers to hire and fire convention staff without prior action by the Executive Committee.

Neal, a 28-year employee of the state convention, had been under increasing pressure from conservative leadership for several years. The Index, they contended, was not doing enough to advance the cause of the Southern Baptist Convention and of conservatives in Georgia.

In 2001, the paper's board of directors forbade

Neal from publishing any announcements, advertisements or editorials relating to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. They also demanded that no mention be made of CBF in the Index except in news items "which the editor believes directly affect Georgia Baptists and/or Southern Baptists." They further required Neal to consult with the convention's executive director or other board members before publishing any item that referenced CBF.

Within the last year, Neal also has faced criticism within the GBC for a perceived failure to deal satisfactorily with alleged misconduct of some Index staff members. No accusations were made of personal misconduct by Neal.

Neal previously worked in campus ministry, both as a local campus minister and as director of the state convention's campus ministry program. He also served as associate editor of the Index with editors Jack Harwell and Al Mohler.

Harwell, who served the paper 21 years, took early retirement in 1987 after an effort to have him fired resulted in the formation of a "review board." Harwell was threatened with termination if his writing was deemed too critical of conservatives.

Mohler became editor in 1989, leading the paper in a more conservative direction. He left in 1993 to become president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Brett, the managing editor, came to the Index in March 2000 from the staff of Truett-McConnell College, where he had been vice president for institutional development.

Goode came to the Index in 2001 from Truett-McConnell College, where she had been alumni director.

Boltin had been with the Index four months and served as the editor's secretary. She previously worked in the Georgia Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program office.

With additional reporting by John Pierce, editor of *Baptists Today*



Neal



Vickers

Southern Baptist chaplaincy leader unexpectedly 'leaves' NAMB post

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

ATLANTA (ABP)—Kentucky native Bob Vickers has "left his position" as director of chaplaincy evangelism at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, according to a statement issued by NAMB Vice President John Yarbrough.

Others familiar with the situation, however, contend Vickers was forced to resign because he did not enforce stringently enough NAMB's newly tightened guidelines on female chaplains and chaplains with divorce in their backgrounds.

Under terms of a severance agreement, Vickers reportedly cannot speak about his departure. News of the termination had begun to filter among the chaplains endorsed for service through NAMB, however, particularly among the ranks of military chaplains whom Vickers once served alongside.

Some chaplains, as well as others close to Vickers, are angry about his dismissal, which they contend is an attempt by NAMB to exert further control of the chaplains they endorse but do not pay.

One chaplain described Vickers' dismissal as "brutal." Another person connected to the situation asserted that NAMB administrators and trustees "want total control over these people's lives."

NAMB acts as the SBC's agent to endorse chaplains serving in the military, health care, prisons, business and industry. Most chaplains, although paid by the companies or government entities that use their services, must be endorsed by a religious body to be hired.

Last year, NAMB trustees announced they no longer would en-

dorse female chaplains who have been ordained, even though the military and other organizations require all chaplains to be ordained for their roles. NAMB and its Chaplains' Commission also reportedly have been giving more scrutiny to applicants who have been divorced, even if the divorce occurred 15 or 20 years earlier.

For its part, NAMB released a brief written statement from Yarbrough, who is vice president for evangelism. About the departure, the statement said, "Robert C. Vickers left his position as director of chaplaincy evangelism at the North American Mission Board, SBC, Dec. 31, 2002." It added: "It is not NAMB's policy or practice to discuss personnel matters with those not directly involved."

While Yarbrough praised Vickers as "a tremendous Christian gentleman" whose "love, support and desire to equip chaplains is without question," he gave no reason for the dismissal.

"My family and I wait patiently and with expectancy to the opportunities God will open for future service," Vickers said in a written statement.

Vickers, a native of Lexington, had managed NAMB's chaplaincy unit since May 1998. He had been director of military chaplaincy two years prior to that. From 1975 to 1996, he was a chaplain in the United States Army, achieving the rank of colonel.

Vickers is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Lexington Theological Seminary and Vanderbilt University in Nashville. Among his degrees are two master's and two doctorates.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press



DICK LINCOLN The South Carolina pastor told Kentucky Baptists that leaders help people get to places they often wouldn't otherwise go.

Pastor: Are you willing to take risks for God?

Continued from page 1

A watch is constantly in motion, but doesn't go anywhere, he noted. "God expects us to move in some kind of direction."

Such movement often takes people to places they wouldn't travel on their own, he added. He compared it to high school chemistry experiments, when adding something new changed the color and composition of a substance.

"That's what a leader does," Lincoln said. "The giftedness is there, but when a leader gets there, he causes something to happen. Look at Moses, Abraham or David."

Leading a congregation to change calls for courage, he advised. Pastors trying new methods will not only endure a clumsy period, they also likely will face resistance, he said.

Navigating such challenges is an example of Luke 9:62, in which Jesus said no one who looks back after putting his hand to the plow is fit for service in the Kingdom of God.

"You'll never know if you're intentional until the sun gets hot and the plow strikes rock," Lincoln said. "It's when it's not much fun and you're getting negative feedback—but you're on the right path—that you discover whether you really want to keep your hand on the plow."

More than 270 pastors and spouses attended the event at the Radisson Hotel in downtown Lexington. Offered by the KBC's leadership development department, *Shepherding the Shepherd* is funded each year through a grant from the Baptist Healthcare System, the Cooperative Program and registration fees paid by the participants and their churches.

The weekend featured a variety of special workshops, multiple sessions of worship and times of fellowship. The event is designed to be a time of refreshment and renewal for ministry couples, said Richard Adams, KBC leadership development department director.

Speaker: Do you experience, share grace?

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LEXINGTON—Most people are looking in the wrong places for solutions to the world's problems, a leadership development consultant told Kentucky Baptist pastors recently.

While many people strive for positions of power or status, Dennis Hatfield said the key to changing the world is Christians shining their light as they grasp the greatness of God's grace.

"Extending grace to others may seem small, but for each one of us it's the conduit of God's work in our environment," said Hatfield, former director of the Gallup polling organization's international research and education center.

"We live in a world desperate for people who shine," Hatfield said Jan. 16 at the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annual "Shepherding the Shepherd" conference. "The extenders of grace are the stars in Christ's crown—you and me."

Living this way may sound easy, but Hatfield said a rocky road in life taught him to accept God's grace so he could give it to others.

Personal experience

Because he grew up in a non-Christian home, Hatfield failed to appreciate the realities of congregational life until he became a pastor.

At his first job, he saw a book titled "God's Plan for the Ages" in the office. Considering that presumptuous, he said to the deacon chairman, "Isn't that the most insufferably arrogant thing you've ever seen?"

"Every fall, I teach about the rapture from that book in my Sunday school class," the man replied.

"I wasn't there long," Hatfield said after audience laughter faded. "When I left, I was pretty angry."

After excelling at his second church, his Protestant denomination invited him to become an executive in its regional office.

After taking office, he learned that some pastors in the region were abusing women. Even worse, board members often rewarded such behavior with a transfer and a promotion.



Hatfield

Whittaker: Depend on God's sufficient grace

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LEXINGTON—While Christian service has its times of high rapture, ministry couples must depend on God's grace to deal with daily life's "thorns of the flesh," Bill Whittaker told pastors at the recent *Shepherding the Shepherd* conference.

Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, told couples that God's love and power will see them through difficult times.

"When you've gone through it, you can look back on it and see even more how His purpose has been fulfilled," said Whittaker, a former pas-



SINGING DUO Wess Cooper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Garrison, and his wife, Amanda, sing during the recent *Shepherding the Shepherd* conference in Lexington. Next year's conference will also be in Lexington, Feb. 15-17. (Kentucky Baptist Convention photo by Larry Brannin)

Following his nature to "grab a stick and take on the dragon," Hatfield pressed a case against one pastor, thinking he couldn't lose because of the obvious injustice. Instead, he faced a lawsuit and death threats. The perpetrator prevailed.

"I realized evil was not a theological subject but part of life itself," Hatfield said. "And it seemed to be most virulent and effective within the church. I realized I wasn't as good at obtaining grace as

I thought. But here's a simple proposition: Before we can extend grace, we have to obtain it."

This experience helped him accept a biblical view of reality. The 12th chapter of Revelation became real, he said. He accepted its premise that Satan was banished to this earth, is angry and has targeted humans.

Many people miss the significance of what Christ did to bring grace to humans, he added.

For example, Isaiah 64 depicts Israelites crying out for God to tear heaven open and save them. But in the first chapter of Mark, when Jesus saw heaven opened, nobody appreciated what had happened because they weren't looking for it, Hatfield said.

Nor were many aware that when God brought people together in unity on the day of Pentecost, it reversed His scattering of humans at the Tower of Babel, he said.



Whittaker

tor and missionary to the Philippines.

He used examples from his own life and ministry to illustrate how God provides grace in major life decisions, in times of personal crisis and in the more mundane difficulties of church ministry.

Whittaker said he first went to the Philippines as a missionary with his own calendar and agenda.

"I went with a great deal of expectations about how God ought to work," he said. That attitude led to a time of personal crisis before he began to accept God's sufficient grace and find a new humility.

Allowing God to work in His way led to a successful ministry and a new church, which continues to be

"In Acts 4, it says (the church) loved one another and were all of one mind and spirit," Hatfield said. "They saw themselves as stewards of all possessions belonging to God. It was very subtle but the world saw it for what it was. There was no form of Caesar's domination of humanity that could stand against what was going on in that church."

The irony of grace is that so many Christians fail to understand it, he said.

The importance of hope

Likewise, he said many people refuse to embrace hope—the subject of a workshop Hatfield led Jan. 17.

Through the ages, philosophers and social observers have lambasted the idea of hope, Hatfield said.

The corporate leaders he advises never use the word, he added, preferring to talk about goals. Hope sounds like it's out of human control while plans and goals are what they will do.

But pastors must emphasize the hope that exists for those who believe in Christ, he said.

"God has wired us to hope, which means we have the capacity to extend ourselves to something beyond ourselves," Hatfield said. "Where denial comes in is that most people don't want to admit that they need hope. They want to feel like their life is more in their control than it actually is, because hope opens up the reality that I want something I can't grasp."

a blessing there. "My biggest regret is (wondering) what more might He have done if I had been willing to walk in His power."

He spoke as well about how God's grace had been sufficient when he was faced with a serious family crisis. Instead of lashing out from the personal pain, Whittaker said God helped him express love instead.

"When I thought about how much Jesus loved me ... how could I do less?" he asked.

He also reminded the couples not to give up on their hopes of seeing the results of God's grace. While often they might see no results, there also will be times when the reward in ministry comes much later as God reveals Himself in changed lives.

Mercer County Ten Commandments lawsuit dismissed

LEXINGTON (BP)—The federal court in Lexington has dismissed a lawsuit brought by the ACLU challenging a display of the Ten Commandments at the Mercer County courthouse, according to the American Center for Law and Justice.

"This is a tremendous affirmation that the legal attack aimed at removing the Ten Commandments from places like the Mercer County courthouse is legally flawed and without merit," said Francis Manion, ACLJ senior counsel who is representing Mercer County.

"The court is extremely clear that the display does not violate the constitution and merely acknowledges the role that the Ten Commandments has played in the formation of our nation's heritage and history."

In a six-page opinion filed with the court Jan. 22, U.S. District Court Judge Karl Forester granted an ACLJ motion for summary judgment, which dismisses the suit.

The American Civil Liberties Union sued Mercer County after the county put up a courthouse display that included the Ten Commandments among a series of historical and legal texts.

Judge Forester said "the display clearly has a legitimate secular purpose of, including but not limited to, acknowledging the historical influence of the Commandments on the development of this country's laws, and the record is devoid of any evidence indicating a religious purpose by the government."

The decision follows a ruling by Forester last August rejecting a motion from the ACLU asking for a preliminary injunction to remove the display. The ACLU had not shown a "likelihood of success on the merits," Forester stated.

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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Worth the effort?

On John Zigler's morning program on (Louisville radio station) WHAS, in connection with the Roe vs. Wade anniversary, Zigler blandly told of how he impregnated a woman who was not his wife. He related his disinclination to take on the role of father. He spoke of the woman's indecisiveness between the motherhood she craved and an abortion, and of how a miscarriage settled matters for them.

What thoroughly astounded me was that a talk show host could talk without restraint about his sex life as if his lifestyle had been absolutely normal and should be perfectly acceptable. Zigler made a significant contribution to the continued devaluation of marriage and the diminishment of family life.

How about it, pastors? Are you going to inform WHAS management that Zigler's encouragement to immorality cannot be tolerated? Should you not advise your members to shut WHAS out of their homes? Or has the influence of Christian churches upon our culture sunk to the level of insignificance that makes it no longer worth the effort?

Donald MacDonald
Louisville

Cloning questions

David Gushee gave good reasons in his Jan. 14 commentary for banning human cloning. Those who scoff, saying human cloning can't be done, underestimate science/technology. It can be done. The seriousness of this fact underscores the need for a comprehensive discussion.

Gushee gave no scriptural basis for his reasoning, but by either injunction or inference, there are spiritual considerations. Cloning would carry to the nth degree the element of incest, defined as "sexual intercourse between persons so closely related that they are forbidden by law to marry." The cloning mentioned in the article

would amount in practical terms to a woman marrying herself, her closest possible relative. According to Leviticus 18:6, God decrees that no one may approach any close relative for sexual relations, thus making human cloning a sin.

Scriptural examples of the evil of incest are seen in the seducing by his daughters of a drunken Lot, their resulting pregnancies by him producing the progenitors of the Ammonites and Moabites, bitter enemies of Israel. Practical physical examples are seen in the often tragic products of incest, marked by extreme mental or physical deformities.

God's plan for reproduction was introduced in Genesis 1:28 and 2:24, namely, as the result of intercourse (sperm/egg, presumably natural or in vitro) between man and wife. This is reinforced throughout the Bible, calling into question whether a cloned being would be an actual person/human, since either the sperm or egg would be absent from the process.

This goes to the matter of "soul," defined as "the immaterial essence, animating principle or actuating cause of an individual life," but posited by God. Since cloning nullifies God's concept of childbearing (male/female), is the created being human, made in the image of God, who bears in Himself male and female components (Genesis 1:27)? Would the product be soul-less, perhaps animal? What?

James L. Clark
Lexington

The oneness of God

For many years, as I've moved from place to place, I have tried to share my understanding of God, teaching Sunday school, singing in choir, talking with others.

Since the tragedy of Sept. 11, I've heard some very thought-provoking

questions such as, "How can you sing songs and make speeches that glorify bloody-sacrificing?" And because I want to know the right answers, I'm spending time listening, studying, reflecting.

I fear that some denominations are spending way too much of their time while they have a captive audience, emphasizing divisive, separatist, elitist, excluding-of-so-many-souls ideas and principles. I think we need to spend more time stressing the unity and oneness of our God, the one and only, same, whole Deity.

Some denominations, I fear, are contributing to the misunderstanding, disharmony and misinformation going out into communities concerning religious principles. By silently joining ourselves to groups that continue to disseminate such distasteful trains of thought, we are by our voiceless presence defending the ideas.

I cannot defend a position that persists in inaccurately accentuating a biased God, splintered facets of Him, separate and severed aspects of His being. Christ is an example of God's ability to actively participate in time and space. I choose to pay my obeisance to only one Godhead, that would be Immanuel, Himself alone.

I owe the personification called Christ an enormous thanks for the priceless information and explanations He delivered. However, at a time when we are telling children that "some bad men do bad things and they are evil," I choose to not sing songs and support messages that glorify bloody-sacrifices. I choose to not support messages that speak of "my way excludes the validity of every other way." God Himself has "sheep in many folds" and He alone will decide in what manner He will herd us.

Jan Fee
Clarksville, Ind.

STEWARDSHIP

Donating 'stuff' to others can be a mutual blessing

By Doug Strader

"The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord" (Psalm 24:1).



We recently have begun a new year, a time when many of us try to make a fresh

start in our commitment to Christ. Psalm 24:1 is a good place to begin the year, by acknowledging that:

■ Everything we have belongs to God.

■ He lets us use it while we are alive.

■ We are accountable to Him for how we use everything He loans to us.

I lead several one-day Successful Christian Financial Management workshops in churches, and I always ask the people if they believe that everything in the world belongs to God. Without exception, so far, people everywhere have agreed that God owns everything.

Then I ask if they believe that God owns all of their "stuff." Again without exception, they have affirmed that premise. Do you believe that all of the things you call your own actually are God's and that He loans them to you to use for Him?

A few weeks ago the little city we live in had a citywide yard sale. My wife and I got in our attic and began to look around for things we could put in the yard sale. After a short time of looking, I said to my wife, "Honey, I know that God owns all of our stuff but I am not sure He even wants this stuff that we have!" But we put some of it in the yard sale and people actually paid us money for some of our stuff. What did not sell, we gave away or put in the garbage.

How long has it been since you took an inventory of all of your possessions? How many things do you have that are no longer of any use to you, but some people would be happy to have them and could use them? That could include used furniture, appliances, clothes and a host of other things. What could you do with your stuff that is collecting dust that would be most pleasing to God?

Why not have a family meeting and decide to honor God by using some of His stuff He has allowed you to have in a way that ministers to some of His other family members?

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

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Ministering couples find grace

The recent Shepherding the Shepherd conference provided a dynamic weekend for pastors and their spouses to explore God's grace—both the giving and receiving of grace as well as the sufficiency of God's grace. Using the theme "The Practice of Grace," the conference offered a wide variety of workshops, plenary sessions and worship times that focused on this vital concept.

Bill Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, captured the theme in a tremendous way in the final session. He told participants that God's grace is sufficient for us all to live with decisions, build relationships and keep going.

He shared very openly about his struggles to live with the decision to become a missionary in the Philippines. He also shared how difficult it was to share during a major family crisis. But God's grace was sufficient then and has been since.

Another speaker focused on the

need of ministry couples to accept grace themselves.

"Many couples teach grace, preach grace, and extend grace to others as a priority of life," said Louis McBurney, who is certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. "Regrettably, they often fail to accept grace for themselves and suffer the consequences of fear, guilt and despair."



Bill Mackey

Louis led a workshop for "Women Only," which was taught along with a parallel workshop for "Men Only" led by his wife, Melissa. During this lively workshop, she made the following points on "what a woman wants":

■ She desires to be connected and have a sense of oneness with her husband.

■ She wants to be valued as a person and for her role.

■ She wants to be comforted by a husband who talks and listens without always trying to "fix" things.

Deliberate measures can help stepfamilies achieve success

Q: I know that divorce is not God's ideal and that second marriages often are harder to keep on track than first marriages. But I so want to make it work this time. How can new stepfamilies achieve success?

People who experience divorce need to go through a process of recovery that is both psychologically and spiritually sound. You must focus on your own healing before you can help others heal. That includes "owning your part" in the breakdown of your first marriage and doing the hard work of forgiveness wherever that may lead.

A second principle is to never put down your former spouse in the presence of your children. Children look at both parents as part of themselves. To hear a put-down of one's parent, no matter what he or she has done wrong, is to feel a put-down of one's self at a deep level.

The next principle is to plan and prepare in advance, whether you are looking at daily and weekly schedules or big events involving your blended family. It is best when all members of the family unit affected by a decision can come to a consensus. If this is not possible, majority rule sometimes can work. Use family meetings on a regular basis to be proactive rather than reactive.

Finally, our culture does not give children enough "dad time," and divorce typically makes the situation far worse. Children should know that the two most significant adults in their life care about them and are dedicated to their well being. Since most children spell love "t-i-m-e," do your best to make the stepfamily or single parent family include plenty of time for both parents. Even when the other parent might have failed as a spouse, he or she should be given every chance to be a success as a parent.—James Stillwell

Q: My teenage son's counselor has recommended "group counseling" for him. What is this and what are the advantages?

Adolescent group counseling is a form of counseling that takes advantage of the natural peer influence of other teenagers in a group setting. Teenagers who come for counseling are carefully placed in a group that is led by a trained adult counselor. Sometimes there are two counselors in the group. As teenagers get to know one another in the group, each one has the opportunity to give and receive group feedback on the issues that have brought them to counseling in the first place.

Some group counseling is highly focused and structured. Teens struggling with their parents' divorce, for example, might come into this type of group and systematically work through a certain curriculum. The group's specific focus of working through grief would be accomplished from a very structured approach.

Some group counseling is less structured. Such a group might consist of teenagers who are dealing with various issues from depression to substance abuse to conflict with parents. The format of the group, rather than focusing on a specific curriculum, might allow for dynamic interaction among the members. In this case the group leader would help guide the process and highlight significant insights.

Group counseling can be especially powerful for teenagers who already are increasingly turning to peers for advice, feedback, understanding, modeling and validation. Each member of the group serves as a mirror to help the others see themselves more clearly. The peer pressure of the teen years is thus put to positive and therapeutic use.—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 Campbellsville University; 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.



BWA: Faith focus transcends differences

Suppose there was an international Baptist organization representing more than 44 million baptized believers in 200 nations. And suppose that organization was involved in such widespread ministry efforts as protecting religious freedom, defending human rights, encouraging reconciliation, providing hunger relief and promoting global fellowship. Wouldn't it be appropriate for Southern Baptists to be actively involved in that group?

The good news is that such a group does exist—and has for nearly a century. The Baptist World Alliance is an international ministry organization that includes Baptists from more than 200 member bodies.

And Southern Baptists are involved in the work of BWA. In fact, the Southern Baptist Convention was one of the founding members of BWA when it was established in 1905. The problem is that recent divisions in Southern Baptist life could threaten the SBC's ongoing involvement in BWA.

During last year's BWA General Council meeting in Seville, Spain, the BWA membership committee agreed to consider a membership application by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship if CBF fulfills the alliance's membership qualifications.

Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, responded by calling the committee's proposal a "swift and needless action." He said the SBC's "valued relationship" with the BWA "may have been damaged beyond repair."

As BWA leaders prepare to meet this summer in Seoul, Korea, CBF's membership application and the response by SBC leaders promise to be pivotal issues. Regardless of the membership committee's recommendation and the General Council's action, it would be tragic for political turmoil in Southern Baptist life to rupture the historic relationship between the SBC and BWA. In fact, a decision by SBC leaders to re-

duce or eliminate involvement in BWA would fly in the face of the very principles for which BWA stands.

The stated purpose of BWA is to "empower and enable national Baptist leaders to effectively witness and minister in the name of Jesus Christ and to represent and support Baptists throughout the world in defense of human rights and religious freedom." Its primary goals are to "unite Baptists worldwide, lead in world evangelization, respond to people in need and defend human rights." What could be more Baptist?

Embracing the diverse expressions of Baptist life around the globe is a hallmark of Baptist World Alliance. For example, there are 21 member bodies among Baptist groups in India, seven in Congo and three in Cuba. To suggest that the Baptist organizations in each of those nations see eye-to-eye on every issue is incredibly unrealistic, yet they are willing to set aside differences in order to cooperate under BWA's commitment to "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Here in the United States, 14 Baptist bodies already affiliate with the BWA, including such diverse groups as the SBC; American Baptist Churches in the USA; General Association of General Baptists; National Baptist Convention, USA; and Seventh Day Baptist General Convention. If such groups can find common ground, surely Southern Baptist leaders in the SBC and CBF can put aside long-term differences for the benefit of a shared global witness.

As Baptist World Alliance celebrates BWA Sunday on Feb. 2, take time to pray for the cooperative efforts of Baptist brothers and sisters around the world.

Invite your church to understand and undergird the work of BWA and take the initiative to encourage Southern Baptist leaders to support what really matters in the global community of Baptists: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Overcoming pitfalls to healthy choices

By Branda Polk

NASHVILLE (BP)—You have heard about all the benefits of eating healthier, exercise and weight loss. You are ready to feel better and have more energy. You have every good intention to begin making healthier lifestyle choices. So you commit to changing your habits.

But, without even noticing, "they" sneak in. Suddenly, those well-intentioned healthy choices are sabotaged and you feel forced to forego your plans. "They" are the pitfalls to making healthy choices.

If flashing lights and "danger ahead" signs were visible, maybe so many of us wouldn't fall prey to these pitfalls, but we do. These pitfalls can distract, sidetrack or place unrealistic expectations so we lose focus.

Consider these pitfalls and how they shape your choices. Awareness is the first step toward sidestepping these traps and walking toward a healthier, God-honoring lifestyle.

■ Statistics show that 99 percent of American homes have at least one television; many have two or three. Television steals valuable time that could be spent more productively.

Many people say they are so busy and don't have time to exercise, grow

spiritually, help a neighbor or serve God. Yet the average American watches more than six hours of television per day. You might not watch that much, but even one minute of watching TV means you really did have time to make healthier choices.

TV can control your emotions; impact your attitude; give a false view of real life; and direct the way you think, believe and act based on what you see.

Studies have shown that television is a major contributing factor to childhood and adult obesity. When you watch TV, you are more likely to mindlessly eat empty calories and sit motionless, therefore lowering your metabolism (the rate at which your body uses calories for energy).

Avoid this pitfall by limiting or omitting television viewing from your daily routine. Choose wisely what you watch and be sure you are honoring God with your time.

■ Without even knowing it, the people in your life can negatively influence your choices and behaviors. Negative comments, pushy suggestions, offering unhealthy foods and making demands of your time are all things that well-intending people do to sabotage your healthy lifestyle plan.

Be aware that the snide or joking

comments about your health choices impact you emotionally. Remember, others might be convicted by your commitment to honor God with your health choices and will make comments to try to distract you. When this happens, resolve to continue your healthy choices and set a good example. Surround yourself with those who encourage and pray for you to combat the negative impact of this pitfall.

■ Your own thinking can be a pitfall in your commitment. Negative thoughts about yourself and your value will impact your choices.

Thoughts about yourself that include words like "never," "always," "should" and "must" will lead to feelings of failure when you are not completely perfect. Ask God to reveal these negative thoughts to you and begin to replace them with positive thoughts that will lead toward progress on your wellness journey.

Remember that God loves and values you. Allow your health choices to honor that love relationship.

Colossians 3:1-2 says to set or focus your heart and mind on things of Christ. Relying on God's strength and focusing on Him will help you avoid these pitfalls and make necessary changes to honor Him with your health habits.

Branda Polk is a certified personal trainer and health consultant at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville

FIRST PERSON

BAPTISTS

Pressure mounts on IMB workers who won't affirm BF&M

"We would deeply regret losing any missionary, but we are accountable to the churches in this matter."

SBC International Mission Board President Jerry Rankin

"For us to sign would be a sin in our minds. We have sought to explain our reasoning in vain."

Leon Johnson, Southern Baptist missionary to Mozambique

RICHMOND, Va.—Some Southern Baptist international missionaries are getting "the call." But this call, they contend, is not from God.

Instead, the calls are being made by Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations with the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board.

Willis is calling missionaries who have chosen not to sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message as requested by IMB President Jerry Rankin one year ago. Willis reportedly is telling the missionaries they cannot continue to serve with the IMB if they don't sign an affirmation of the revised faith statement.

More than 30 missionaries have resigned or taken early retirement within the last year rather than affirm the faith statement. IMB leaders estimate that less than 1 percent of the 5,400-plus missionaries have not announced their decisions.

"When messengers to the 2000 SBC annual meeting revised the BF&M, it created a need to affirm that we would work in harmony with their beliefs," Rankin said. "We would deeply regret losing any missionary, but we are accountable to the churches in this matter."

Recent calls by Willis "are not be-

ing made to inform people that they are being fired," said Clyde Meador, the IMB's associate vice president of overseas operations. "Avery is seeking to counsel missionaries and persuade them to make the affirmation. Everyone was asked a year ago to decide whether or not they would make this affirmation."

Steve and Kay Armstrong, who are on leave of absence in Dallas, are among the missionaries who recently received a call from Willis.

In a written summary of that Jan. 15 phone call, Steve Armstrong recounted: "I asked if signing was still only a request. Avery said, 'Yes.' I asked if missionaries are going to be terminated for non-compliance to this request. He reacted that 'they have not made that decision yet.' But then he went on to explain that they had in fact made a decision that no missionary would be allowed to return to the field from stateside assignment or leave of absence without signing the Baptist Faith and Message statement of accountability."

When Armstrong referred to this as "termination," he said, Willis replied that the IMB is not using that word.

Armstrong said he reiterated to Willis that he and his wife could not

in good conscience sign the affirmation as required. "I asked him to please finalize the decision (about their future service) as soon as possible. He said, 'You can take that as a final decision.'"

A similar account is told by Leon and Kathy Johnson, who received a call from Willis Jan. 13. The Johnsons are serving in Mozambique and are 20-year veterans of IMB service.

The Johnsons have refused to sign the affirmation of the 2000 faith statement because they believe it is being used as a creed. To sign it "would place a man-made document in authority above the Bible and God's self-revelation in Jesus," he explained. "For us to sign would be a sin in our minds. We have sought to explain our reasoning in vain."

When Willis called the Johnsons, Leon Johnson asked him four questions, he reported:

■ "Has the SBC taken any action to require veteran missionaries to sign the Baptist Faith and Message?" Willis reportedly answered no.

■ "Have the trustees of the IMB taken any action to require us to sign?" Again, Willis answered no, Johnson said.

■ "Is there any policy of the IMB requiring us to sign?" Willis also an-

swered no to this point.

■ "Is this a request?" To this question, Johnson said, Willis answered yes.

Johnson then suggested that a request may either be granted or denied. "Since to grant this request would be a violation of our consciences, Kathy and I deny the request," he told Willis.

By Johnson's account, Willis then warned him twice that there would be "consequences" for not signing. "Dr. Willis replied that he respected our consciences but we must sign in order to avoid loss of support for the IMB from the SBC."

IMB officials point out that several missionaries also have written to affirm Rankin's request.

"When we first heard we might be asked to (affirm the 2000 statement), I was against it on principle and on hearsay, and I was glad when the trustees reaffirmed us," wrote Charlotte Acree, who has served in Nigeria since 1987. "However, when (Rankin's request) came out, I followed the suggestion of comparing the three editions of the BF&M and found no cause for any alarm or dissension in any of them."

Based on reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

2003 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference is proud to feature the
Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference

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Tuesday, February 25, 2003

Centenary United Methodist Church / 2800 Tates Creek Road
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general session / beginning 8:30 am (doors open at 7:45 am)

breakout sessions* following general session

*choose two 1-hour conferences or Dr. Stamford's 2.5-hour weight management conference

Conference cost \$10 / payable at the door if lunch is not requested

Lunch cost \$6 / served at 12:30 pm

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register at www.kybaptist.org/evangelismconference
(lunch/conference payment must be received via mail by February 17)

For childcare information, call Lauren Clark at 859.269.5715 x149.

Pre-school aged children must register by 2/10/03.

This Conference is made possible by the Cooperative Program.



For more information, contact:

Women's Evangelism Area / Kentucky Baptist Convention
(502) 254-4737 or Toll Free 1-(888) 254-5722 (in KY)



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Daytime Phone (____) _____

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My Church _____

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I/someone in my group is hearing impaired.

I/my group need(s) _____ HC accessible seats.

conference information

cost: \$10 / payable at the door if lunch is not requested

lunch information

lunch/entertainment cost: \$6

reservations/payment for lunch must be received by February 17

All fees are non-refundable; substitutions allowed.

To register, clip and mail this form to:

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P.O. Box 43433 / Louisville, KY 40253-0433

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Reserve _____ conference ticket(s) x \$10 each = \$ _____

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Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Tickets/conference materials will be mailed to the above-named contact.

sessions* and leaders

The Personality Difference - betsy ringer

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Eternal Impact through an Ordinary Life - jill hanes

I'm Not Your Typical Minister's Wife - brenda smith

Thankful to be alive

Shooting victim recalls deadly attack on Jibla Baptist Hospital

By Mike Creswell
SBC International Mission Board

JIBLA, Yemen (BP)—Don Caswell saw the armed man walking toward him and knew—just knew—the gunman was coming to kill him.

"I was looking at him and I saw him look at me. And that instant I realized he was coming right toward the pharmacy," Caswell said in his soft Texas accent.

Caswell, a pharmacist, was shot twice during the Dec. 30 attack at Jibla Baptist Hospital in Yemen, but after emergency surgery and treatment he is recovering.

Now that he can talk about the shootings, he attributes his survival to a miracle of God.

Three other Southern Baptist workers, physician Marthia Myers, hospital administrator William Koehn and purchasing manager Kathleen Gariety, were shot dead by the gunman.

For 35 years, Southern Baptists have treated 40,000 patients a year at the 45-bed hospital in Jibla, a small town in southern Yemen located 125 miles south of Sanaa, the nation's capital.

Ironically, the hospital was about to temporarily suspend operations on Dec. 30 when the attacks happened. Administrators of Southern Baptists' International Mission Board say they have struggled to keep the hospital going despite mounting costs and a lack of Southern Baptist workers to staff the facility. Plans were under way to turn administration of the hospital over to a Yemeni charity.

Don and Teri Caswell had worked at the hospital for about 18 months of a two-year term with the IMB's Inter-

national Service Corps. The ISC program connects Baptist volunteers to long-term service in IMB ministries or with IMB missionaries. The Caswells' term was to end in June.

A normal morning

Mrs. Caswell had dropped her husband off around 7:30 a.m. that last Monday in December. She made a quick stop by a grocery before arriving back home to have breakfast with their boys, Ben, 11, and Caleb, 5.

At the hospital, Caswell and a pharmacist from Russia handled a flurry of prescription refills. Around 8 a.m. they heard gunshots.

"It is now unusual in Yemen for people to shoot guns off, but normally not that early in the morning. And it sounded like it was real close," Caswell recalled.

He walked out the door of the one-room pharmacy and looked down the corridor. He saw a man come out of Bill Koehn's office.

"I noticed he wasn't running real fast but he was moving quickly and I noticed a gun in his hand," Caswell said. "It was a pistol of some kind. I couldn't tell for sure what kind it was."

As he made eye contact with the gunman, Caswell moved back into the pharmacy room, thinking he would move behind a work counter. But the gunman entered immediately behind Caswell and stood no more than five feet away.

'A certain peace'

"At that time I knew he was going to shoot me," Caswell recounted. "An incredible thing about that was that I wasn't filled with a lot of fear," he said. "I had a certain peace about all this."



GRATEFUL Don and Teri Caswell are grateful for the extended time they have together after Caswell survived the Dec. 30 attack on Jibla Baptist Hospital in Yemen. (© International Mission Board photos by Mike Creswell)

"Then a shot came, and I think probably in the back of my mind was, 'Well, where is he going to shoot and is it going to hurt very much?'"

"He got me right here in the side. It wasn't just an unbearable pain, but it did hurt pretty bad. I remember that shot and I thought I heard two more quick shots, but I didn't feel anything else."

Caswell was hit twice, once in each side, though the second shot apparently entered from the back as he spun around and fell from the impact of the first shot. If there was a third shot, Caswell speculates it missed him completely.

The bullets missed major organs, arteries or other body parts that could have killed him.

Today Caswell marvels that the gunman killed three missionaries with deadly precision, then failed to kill with two shots. "I know for sure God's hand was in on it and I didn't die for a reason. The ultimate reason I know is that God will be glorified," Caswell said.

Talking to God

In the warped perception of time in crisis events, Caswell clearly recalls talking to God in that quick-but-long few seconds between the time he was shot and when help arrived in the form of doctors and nurses.

"This whole time I was just talking to God and it did hurt a little, but ... I didn't feel like I'm dying, what-ever I didn't feel like I'm dying," he said. "But still at this time I never was unconscious. I just had this peaceful feeling."

"Seems to me maybe I was talking to God out loud. Maybe it was just in my mind, but I was asking the Lord if this was the time He was going to take me, if I was going to die there."

"I remember telling Him that, 'Lord, if you want to take me it's fine, but I would really like to stay here and not leave Teri and the boys alone here like this.'"

Doctors rushed Caswell to an operating room, where most supplies had been packed away. But missionary physician Judy Williams had insisted

on leaving out enough instruments for emergency surgery.

The phone rings

After getting a phone call telling her that her husband had been "hurt," Mrs. Caswell tried to call the hospital. When she got no answer, she drove the four or five miles or so to the hospital at breakneck speed, honking the horn to clear people out of the way.

Seeing soldiers around the hospital, she knew something major had happened. Only when she got inside did she understand that her husband had been shot. She was able to speak to Caswell and kiss him just before they wheeled him in for surgery.

Exploratory surgery discovered that the bullets had missed vital organs and that there was no internal bleeding. As soon as he recovered sufficiently, the Caswells went to another country to recuperate.

As they recently walked around town with their boys, visited a park and bought ice cream cones, the pair kept looking at each other. Gratitude shone in their faces for the extended time they now have together. After so much uncertainty, Mrs. Caswell finally can kid her husband about being shot in his "love handles."

She said with a grin: "We're just thankful he's a little overweight."

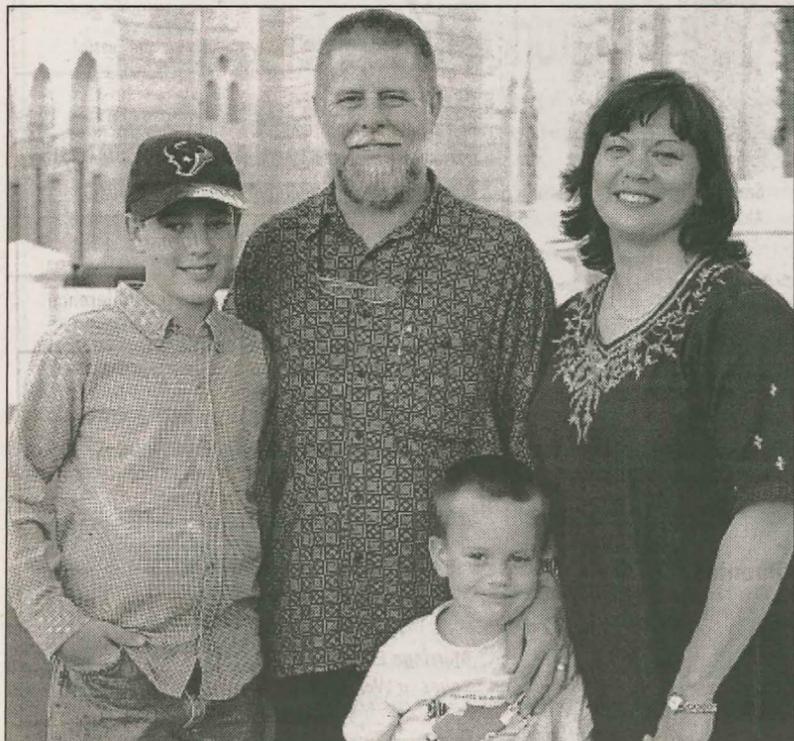
What's next?

With their current Yemen assignment almost complete anyway, the Caswells did not yet know for sure what they would do next. They planned to wait to hear what God has for them.

Would they return to Yemen? "Yes, if that's where God calls us," Caswell said.

What would they say to Southern Baptists who have supported them? "Keep praying!" Mrs. Caswell said. "We're OK! And we're going to do what the Lord wants us to do."

"We don't know exactly what that is yet," she added. "But I know beyond a shadow of a doubt, because He's that kind of God, that He's going to use this for His glory. He's going to use this to build His church. And I believe that with all my heart."



WAITING FOR GOD Don Caswell, his wife, Teri, and their sons, Ben, 11, and Caleb, 5, say they are waiting to hear from God about what He wants them to do next, even if it means going back to Yemen.

'Amazing Grace' author encouraged fighters of slavery

"It's one of the most sterling chapters in Christian history."

Kevin Belmonte, author of "Hero to Humanity"

By Greg Garrison
Religion News Service

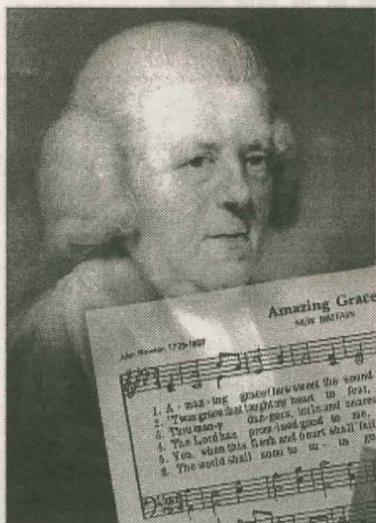
BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (RNS)—English slave ship captain John Newton turned from his wicked ways and became a pastor and lyricist whose most famous composition, "Amazing Grace," might be the greatest hymn of all time.

William Wilberforce, a British politician who led the drive to abolish slavery, was inspired by Newton's story as a boy and looked to Newton for the spiritual guidance that kept him fighting to free the slaves.

Now officials at Samford University, a Baptist school in Birmingham, have announced plans to publish the complete works of Newton, including letters that highlight the historically remarkable friendship between Newton and Wilberforce.

British scholar Marylynn Rouse, who has researched Newton's writings for many years, will compile the materials for Newton's complete works, including journals, sermon notes, his out-of-print books and letters from Newton to Wilberforce.

The series of Newton works could range from 10 to 14 volumes, with two of them published by 2007, the anniversary of the signing of the 1807 British abolition of the slave trade, according to Samford University President Thomas Corts.



Rouse has discovered many original Newton manuscripts, which never have been published. She has made especially important discoveries in Newton's influence on Wilberforce, Corts said.

Kevin Belmonte, author of "Hero to Humanity," a new biography of Wilberforce, credited Rouse for her exhaustive research on the connections between the hymn writer and the evangelical politician.

"She has unearthed this whole rich context of Newton and Wilberforce," Belmonte said. "It was Newton who set Wilberforce on the path to abolishing slavery."

Newton went to sea as a youth and eventually became the captain of a slave ship. After his Christian conversion, he wrote "Amazing Grace" about his recognition of the error of his participation in the slave trade.

Newton served as a pastor in Olney and London for 40 years. "He used to write a hymn a week and used the hymns as a teaching tool," Rouse said.

On Jan. 1, 1773, he preached a sermon on the theme "Amazing Grace," echoing the lyrics of the hymn, indicating that was probably the debut for the hymn, she said.

As a child, Wilberforce knew Newton and later sought out Newton's advice on spiritual matters. Wilberforce had a deep theological discussion about slavery with Newton that convinced him to make abolishing slavery his chief political ambition as a

member of Parliament.

"That pivotal conversation with Newton was the event that brought into focus this desire to be a reformer," Belmonte said.

Wilberforce faced death threats and physical assaults during his quest to abolish slavery. He was challenged to a duel by a slave ship captain.

In 1796, Wilberforce fell four votes short of abolishing the slave trade. He was so discouraged he nearly gave up, Belmonte said.

"He wrote to John Newton, the former slave trader now turned pastor and hymn writer, who reminded him of the difficult obstacles faced by the biblical figures of Daniel, Moses and Joseph," Belmonte said. "Newton told him that even though his life was full of setbacks and disappointments, he had made a difference. He told his friend to stay the course."

Newton lived long enough to see Britain abolish the transport of slaves in 1807. Wilberforce lived just long enough to see slavery abolished altogether in the British colonies in 1833.

Belmonte said Christian theology and evangelical fervor were the driving forces behind the abolition movement.

"It's one of the most sterling chapters in Christian history," Belmonte said. "Wilberforce said the golden rule was the prime directive from Christ Himself, that people should treat others as they would wish to be treated."

Baptist hymn publisher helped popularize 'Amazing Grace'

Continued from page 1

In 1910, Excell published "Amazing Grace" in a book titled "Devotional Hymns" and included the new stanza for the first time.

"There is no explanation of where he found this stanza," Reynolds said. "By adding it to the first three of John Newton's stanzas, it implied that Newton should be credited with all four stanzas."

But the anonymous stanza can be found attached earlier to the hymn "Jerusalem, My Happy Home."

Where Excell found it and why he chose it are not known, Reynolds said.

While Baptists were quick to embrace the new stanza, other Christian denominations were not, he explained. Methodist hymnals, for example, did not embrace the stanza until 1989. Regardless, "Amazing Grace" has become one of the most recognized songs on the planet.

It was picked up and performed by folk singers in the late 1930s and '40s, Reynolds said. And then Judy Collins brought it to an even wider audience in the late 1960s.

Collins wrote about her connection with the hymn in her book titled "Singing Lessons." She tells about attending an encounter group where everyone wanted to sing a song to cap an especially meaningful dialogue.

"The only song everyone knew all the words to was 'Amazing Grace,' and I led the singing, as I knew it well," she wrote.

"Later, Mark, my producer, told me he thought we should record it." The song became a hit on her 1970

album "Whales and Nightingales."

A year later, the tune was recorded by the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards using bagpipes and drums—a recording that also gained international attention.

More recently, the hymn was the subject of a Bill Moyers PBS special in 1990.

The hymn and the tune New Britain are so well-known today that "Amazing Grace" is "an unofficial

national hymn for America," Reynolds suggested. "An individual can start singing the hymn spontaneously in any gathering of people, and the group will join in and be able to sing two or three stanzas from memory."

Georgetown College Pastors Conference

Monday - Wednesday, April 7-9, 2003
Conference and Training Center



Dr. Will Willimon, Dean of the Chapel, Duke University, and author of many books. He will speak Monday night and Tuesday morning at the plenary session. Topics are: "Christian Worship: Dissonant Doxology" and "Christian Worship: Intrusive Glory."

Worship Leader: **Dr. Philip Wise, Pastor, Second Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas**. His theme is: "The Anatomy of the Preacher: Heart, Mind and Soul." Music: John Campbell, Professor of Music, Georgetown College.

Plenary Speaker for Wednesday morning is **Rev. Johnny Pierce, Editor of Baptists Today**.

Workshop Leaders: Richard Gaines, Pastor of Consolidated Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky; Robert Parham of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville and Dwight Moody, Dean of the Chapel at Georgetown College.

Cost is \$100 with special rates for students, retirees and ministers new to our state. Please remit payment to: **Pastors Conference, Georgetown College, 400 East College Street, Box 177, Georgetown, KY 40324; or contact Robbi Barber at 502-863-7047 or robbi_barber@georgetowncollege.edu. Please make check payable to Georgetown College.**

InterVarsity group sues Rutgers after being defunded

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (RNS)—The campus ministry InterVarsity Christian Fellowship has sued Rutgers University, arguing that the New Jersey school removed the ministry's funding because religion is a factor in its leadership selection.

The suit claims Rutgers violated the local InterVarsity chapter's freedom of speech and religion, The Washington Times reported.

Fellowship members charge that the college revoked their group's recognition in September because InterVarsity's constitution does not meet university guidelines on nondiscrimination, the suit states. That policy mandates that student groups be open to all students and permit any active member to run for office.

A Rutgers spokeswoman confirmed the school has halted funding because "the group is not willing to operate under the university's nondiscrimination policy."

HUD might help construction of religious activity buildings

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Department of Housing and Urban Development has proposed a new rule permitting federal funds to be used for the construction of buildings that include "inherently religious activities" as well as eligible social service programs.

The proposal, outlined in the Federal Register earlier this month, is being welcomed and criticized by observers of President Bush's faith-based initiative.

The proposal lists several instances in which, for the first time, future construction using HUD funds might involve faith-based groups.

"Where a structure is used for both eligible and inherently religious activities, HUD funds may not exceed the cost of those portions of the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation that are attributable to eligible activities," the proposed rule reads.

It also says HUD funds cannot be used for buildings that are solely for religious activities.

The proposal will be open for public comment until March 7, when HUD officials begin drafting a final version.

The proposal affects a variety of initiatives by HUD, which offered a total of \$7.7 billion in grants last year. It applies to community development block grants as well as programs related to owning single-family homes, housing people with AIDS and providing emergency shelter.

A HUD official said the proposal could allow a church to construct a building that would both offer shelter to the homeless and include a chapel.

Supporters and opponents of the faith-based initiative consider this a dramatic push ahead by the Bush administration. But the idea that facilities funded with public money could sometimes be used for worship services is drawing criticism and questions from some quarters.

Bob Tuttle, a law professor at George Washington Law School who has co-written analyses of the Bush administration's faith-based initiative, questioned how officials would monitor compliance with a rule that HUD money be used solely for eligible services.

"When you pay for bricks and mortar, you have no idea how that's being used," Tuttle said.

Billy Graham schedules second mission of the year in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY (RNS)—Evangelist Billy Graham has decided to hold two evangelistic missions in 2003.

A month after an already-announced event in San Diego, the evangelist plans to lead meetings June 12-15 at the Ford Center in Oklahoma City.

"I am overwhelmed to receive an invitation to come to Oklahoma City to preach at an evangelistic mission this June," Graham said in a statement read at an announcement of his plans on Jan. 21.

"Although my strength is more limited now that I am in my 80s, my burden to proclaim the gospel is as strong as ever."

Oklahoma City Mayor Kirk Humphreys welcomed the plans for the downtown evangelistic effort.

"Billy Graham holds a special place in the life and history of Oklahoma City," the mayor said in a statement. "None of us will ever forget his leadership of the memorial service in 1995 after the bombing."

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building resulted in 168 deaths and more than 500 injuries.

On Jan. 9, leaders in San Diego announced that the evangelist would hold a mission in their city May 8-11.

The Oklahoma City mission is expected to involve more than 15,000 volunteers from 500 churches in the area.

Graham previously held missions in Oklahoma City in 1956 and 1983. He held missions last year in the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati and Dallas/Fort Worth areas.

Baptists host ministries during San Diego Super Bowl week

SAN DIEGO (BP)—Baptists and Christians across San Diego hosted evangelistic ministry events throughout the metro area in conjunction with last weekend's Super Bowl.

From community block parties to street evangelism efforts at the National Football League's NFL Experience, hundreds of Southern California Baptists partnered to reach their city with the gospel of Jesus Christ, said Martin Davis, coordinator of San Diego Baptist Association's special events ministries committee.

The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board provided financial and staff support for the local efforts.

"We've got nearly 2,000 New Testaments to distribute during the events," Davis said. "And local businesses have chipped in to provide some very nice prizes at the block parties."

Carol Noland, a member of Encanto Southern Baptist Church, was excited about her church hosting a block party.

"You always try to think about your neighborhood," she said before the event. "And now this will allow us the opportunity to show our neighbors that we are thinking about them."

Among the activities during the weekend leading up to the Super Bowl:

■ Three churches hosted community block parties. The parties featured clowns, face-painting, a climbing wall, free food and chances to win prizes.

■ Nine churches hosted Super Bowl events during the game. The churches provided live coverage of the Super Bowl and a halftime video featuring pro football player Aeneas



Williams, and others sharing their Christian testimonies.

■ Oklahoma Baptist University students, along with Christians from West Virginia, Missouri and Georgia worked at the NFL Experience, sharing the gospel through their work at one of the most popular family attractions at the Super Bowl.

■ Contemporary Christian artists Kirk Franklin, Yolanda Adams and Donnie McClurkin performed at the Super Bowl Gospel Celebration. A number of Christian NFL players also appeared at the concert.

■ The winner of the Bart Starr Award for character and leadership was presented Jan. 25 at the annual Athletes in Action Super Bowl Breakfast in San Diego.

■ Indianapolis Colts head coach Tony Dungy headlined the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Super Bowl THANG, a one-day football clinic featuring NFL players and coaches.

NFL EXPERIENCE Maegen Munday, a student at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, gives 3-year-old Cierra Garza a word of encouragement at the NFL Experience. Munday was one of many Baptists in San Diego supporting ministries connected to the Super Bowl. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

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Putting a FACE on Missions in Kentucky



Marches, vigils protest 30 years of Roe vs. Wade

PROTESTS Marches and other activities marked the 30th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade. ■ **Top:** A Member of "Rock for Life" wipes a tear during a prayer vigil. ■ **Below:** March for Life participants pass the Supreme Court building (RNS and BP photos)



By Adelle Banks & Barbara Neff
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Protesters, press conferences and prayer services marked the 30th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision, which has fueled debate about abortion in the decades since the controversial Supreme Court verdict.

Tens of thousands of abortion opponents gathered Jan. 22 beneath the Washington Monument to hear religious and political messages condemning abortion, while counter-protesters supportive of abortion rights held alternative observances.

At the 30th annual March for Life, members of the crowd were wrapped in scarves and mittens on the sunny but frigid day to note the anniversary of the high court ruling

that gave women the right to abortion.

Bush addresses marchers

President Bush, who had declared Jan. 19 "National Sanctity of Human Life Day," joined religious and political leaders by telephone to address the audience at the rally.

"For 30 years, the March for Life has been sustained by constant prayer and abiding hope, that one day, every child will be born into a family that loves that child and a nation that protects that child," the president said.

Saying he shared "a commitment to building a culture of life in America," Bush cited the progress he's made on their cause, including:

- Signing the Born Alive Infants Protection Act.

- Opposing stem cell research that would involve the destruction of embryos.

- Declining to spend federal funds on international programs that promote abortion.

"We must not create life to destroy life," the president said. "Human beings are not research material to be used in a cruel and reckless experiment."

The crowd cheered Bush's remarks, especially when he said he hoped Congress would this year pass a ban on a late-term abortion procedure, called by opponents partial-birth abortions. Several members of Congress pledged to renew

their support for such a ban.

Nellie Gray, president of the March for Life Fund, called volunteers to the stage to carry little white coffins representing "pre-born children" who had been killed each year since the 1973 decision. A bell tolled after she recited each year.

"We're going to overturn Roe vs. Wade!" Gray said.

Across the crowd, people hoisted signs such as "Women Deserve Better Than Abortion" and "Abortion Kills More People Than War."

Counter demonstration

Just hours before and blocks away from the rally, people on the other side of the debate talked about mobilizing their supporters to promote their stand.

"Roe vs. Wade affirmed that it is women who should make a decision about abortion," said Carlton Veazey, president of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

The anniversary was marked by a plethora of activities, ranging from press conferences to candlelight vigils to dinners to worship services.

Anti-abortion marchers, who headed to the Supreme Court after an hour and a half of speeches,

mounted various displays to depict their view. About a block from the stage, some had set up a makeshift cemetery with crosses.

Between the speeches and the patriotic music, members of the crowd said they came to make a stand, some with many years of experience and others newer to the cause.

Ann Poole, a mother of eight from Ebensburg, Pa., has been to 14 of the marches.

"I truly believe human life is sacred from conception with all my heart," said Poole, who held an "Abortion Is Murder" sign. "Abortion shows the hopelessness of a certain segment of society who doesn't believe every person has a purpose in life."

Groups of students from Catholic high schools and colleges congregated within the crowds.

Katherine Bugos, an 18-year-old student at Ave Maria College in Ypsilanti, Mich., came with a busload of 60 students.

"Pro-life really says a lot about who you are and how you view life in general," she said. "If you don't stand up for the littlest forms of life, how can you expect to respect other forms of life?"

You ain't seen nothin' yet

I have just completed a two-day retreat with our leadership teams from Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. Our team came together for two days of praying, planning, evaluating, dreaming and all those other elements that make or break the success of a team retreat.

I come away from our time together more deeply convinced than ever that our ministries at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek are headed in an exciting direction. When I moved into this ministry a little more than five years ago, I was enthusiastic and believed God was going to lead our camp and conference centers on a new path that would have expanding Kingdom impact.

When I began in this position, I had sincere hope that we would be blessed as we sought God's perspective on what He wanted to do at our conference centers. Now, five years and five months into this ministry, I have never felt more strongly nor been more convinced that our greatest years are still ahead for Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek.

We have made progress at both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. To be sure, we've had our share of challenges (many of which remain) and a reasonable number of suc-

cesses. But when I look at where I believe we are headed over the next decade, my excitement is more than I can contain. We're already seeing God do "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us."

Two weeks ago, I wrote and urged all of our readers to move ahead and make plans for camps this summer. At that time, I reported that we had more than 3,500 people registered for Crossings at the Creek for this summer and that we were almost full. Since then, we have moved to more than 3,700 reservations for our nine weeks of camp. We know we will experience some drop-outs and no-shows, but we still will have a dramatic increase from last year.

God is blessing. We are so very thankful for the opportunity to play the part we play in God's work of camp and conference ministry. I know that it's not grammatically correct, but I believe and pray that "you ain't seen nothin' yet!"

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

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

Community Hymn Sing

Martyrs of the Faith: A Service of Remembrance and of Honor to the Lamb

Tuesday, February 4, 2003

7:30 PM · Alumni Memorial Chapel

The last days of 2002 brought news of the deaths of three medical missionaries in Yemen. Their lives reflect the last words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "This is the end, but for me it is the beginning of life."

We will remember the lives of these and others who have laid down their lives for Christ, through the singing of great hymns of courage, prayer for His kingdom and songs of adoration to God and to the Lamb.

A special prayer will be offered by Dean Thomas Rainer, veteran missionary Dr. Mark Terry and others for the families of the martyrs and for Christ's gospel light and peace to embrace among all nations.



The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
2825 Lexington Road · Louisville, KY

Bowling Green pastor explores church as bride of Christ

"You don't draw people to something that's just stale and predictable."

Steve Ayers, pastor of Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green

By David Winfrey
News Director

BOWLING GREEN—Pastor Steve Ayers recalls the woman he greeted after church one Sunday who said she wasn't coming back.

He asked why, hoping Hillvue Heights Church could learn something to better serve the next visitor.

"I'm not looking for a church that gets this serious," the woman replied. "I'm looking for a church that I can just go to."

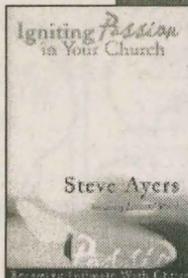
Helping Christians and churches get seriously passionate about Jesus is Ayers' goal in his new book, "Igniting Passion in Your Church."

Ayers explores the metaphor in Ephesians of the church being Jesus' bride. He calls churches to be immersed in a committed relationship with Christ that shapes everything they do, sparks excitement in the unknown and attracts unchurched people to begin "flirting" with the reality of Jesus.

Too often, he contends, churches get wrapped up in the trappings of the wedding and forget the Groom.

"Sometimes we become so focused on the mechanics of doing church that we forget to just be in this relationship with God that also produces God's order to us," he said.

Churches that embrace such a passionate relationship invite others to experience God's love and have an



STEVE AYERS The Bowling Green pastor said he hopes to help focus churches on the primary relationship with Christ, not a specific program, in his book, "Igniting Passion in Your Church." "Praise God, this is a book where you don't have to have \$500,000 to get started."

openness to wherever God is leading, Ayers said. Churches that aren't passionate tend to get stale, he added.

"Sometimes in marriage we do the same thing every day, and just staying together is enough, instead of really living and discovering one another and journeying with your spouse," he said. "The same things happens in church and it ceases to be attractive. You don't draw people to something that's just stale and predictable and the same every day."

Ayers is well-known to many Kentucky Baptists. A native of Bowling Green, he became pastor of Hillvue

Heights 12 years ago when the church had dwindled to about 30 members. Today, attendance averages more than 2,500 each week.

Ayers has spoken at several church leadership conferences in Kentucky and beyond. He also preaches, on average, 20 revivals each year.

Talking with many church leaders, he said, they too often focus on the structure and programs of the church instead of the key relationship. "I think the church really needs to know that Jesus is in love with them and they need to be in love with Jesus."

He said he finds "passionate mo-

ments" and groupings in all the churches he visits. The challenge, he said is "to allow that passion to spread throughout the body" so that it becomes the defining characteristic.

Author and professor Leonard Sweet admits in the book's foreword that he tried to dissuade Ayers from focusing on the marriage metaphor.

"There are at least 96 images of the church in the New Testament," I told him. "Pick any one of them, but not this one. This is the least likely to connect with the emerging culture," writes Sweet, who was Ayers' doctoral thesis supervisor.

But Ayers said the marriage imagery is particularly important in a culture plagued by divorce. "The church has a real opportunity to show and illustrate to a world—that struggles with commitment—what commitment means," he said. "But then we have to ask the question: What is the church truly committed to?"

True commitment in church and marriage means being willing to be selfless, he said. But too often people aren't willing to look beyond their own comforts.

"Marriage makes me uncomfortable. My bathroom got messed up. I can't leave stuff laying on the floor anymore," he said. "I have to become selfless to really live out my marriage, and I'm naturally selfish."

Just as in marriage, churches must be willing to be selfless, Ayers said. "I've got to be crucified from what I do and begin to be resurrected into what Jesus would lead me to do."

It was a good chapel service

Most faculty and students agree our daily chapel service is a blessing. We know some students do not use this time to worship and praise God, but most do cherish this time. Our chapel service is in the middle of our school day. All our faculty and students attend the 35-minute service.

Our school chaplain, Michael Spencer, does a great job of providing a variety of ways for us to worship. We often have a faculty or staff person share from God's Word, or a personal testimony may be given. We have come to appreciate greatly our Friday praise and worship time. We are blessed in many services to have guest speakers. We recently had a visiting group from Chile.

This week we had still another first. For the past two years, in our Baptist Student Union meetings, we have given our students an opportunity—we call it an open microphone—to give their testimonies or to share something that is heavy on their hearts. When you give a group of young people the opportunity to express whatever is on their minds, you'd better be prepared. I have attended some of those meetings when students poured their hearts out and were willing to reveal their deepest thoughts and concerns. I have been blessed and inspired at every one.

Even though this has been a time of blessing during the BSU meetings, you must remember attendance there is voluntary. It is not quite the same as a required chapel service when all students are present. When Chaplain Spencer announced he was going to have an open mic for chapel, I must confess I got a lump in my throat. Had he lost his mind completely? I was a little relieved when he gave very detailed instructions. We were to sing a hymn or two, and then any faculty or student who

wanted could come forward and share a word of testimony. Standing before 500-plus people in a chapel service is a little different than standing in front of a much smaller BSU group. During the hymn I looked across the chapel and saw Spencer. He appeared to be praying silently; a good idea. Both Spencer and I were relieved when five students came forward. Each one took a turn.

The first young man expressed his thanks to God for leading him to Oneida, "a Christian school." He was happy to be able to share in prayer and testimony with other students.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

One student told of his happiness at being back on our campus. This young person had gotten into trouble on and off our campus this past summer. He had decided not to return in the fall. Things went from bad to worse as he got into some pretty serious trouble. He encouraged other students to have a greater appreciation for Oneida and the opportunities here.

Two other students talked about their spiritual growth on campus. They were grateful for the discipline and spiritual leadership they had received. Two more students came to share as we sang an additional hymn. One was a young lady in her first year at Oneida. It was hard to understand some of what she said because of her tears and quivering voice.

Finally, the last young man told how happy he was to be allowed to return after having been expelled. He also shared that he received Christ as his personal Savior the previous week.

Reprinted from the Feb. 18, 1997, Western Recorder
W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972. www.oneidaschool.org; e-mail: president@oneidaschool.org

German student at Clear Creek

Second-year student Thomas Breitling took the distance record for students going home for Christmas. He journeyed to Hamburg, Germany.

"It was a wonderful reunion with my family and my home church," Breitling said. He came to Clear Creek after two years of service at International Baptist Church of Hamburg. Church members come from 15 countries and live all over the city. "I worked with small groups that meet in the homes," he said. Converted at age 9, Breitling deeply appreciates the influence of his Christian mother and the church.

A spiritual turning point for Breitling came in 1993 through a prolonged illness.

"I had surgery but continued to be sick and was out of school for six months," he remembered. "This was difficult for me as a teenager, wanting to be with my friends. I felt I couldn't do anything. Asking God what to do, I was directed to the Discipleship Training School operated by Youth With a Mission. The school was located a few minutes from my home. ... Sixteen students from eight nations helped me to know the Lord so well." The training was put into practice with another student

on a four-month YWAM mission in Canada.

He returned to Germany and secured an apprenticeship job with an automobile dealership.

"Each week I worked three days and attended school two days; I learned much about working in a secular world," Breitling said. "But the company had some practices that I couldn't agree with as a Christian. God gave me strength to say no. It was like stepping out of the boat and not knowing what was next. My supervisors were shocked that I quit and thought I was radical. I took that as a compliment.

"International students face a challenge going to school in America, but God has helped me in so many ways," Breitling said. "The Harlan Baptist Church is a wonderful encouragement. The Ditty family (John Ditty is pastor) has almost adopted me. Professors are very helpful and prayer makes a difference. I'm also glad to have good phone connections with my family. Clear Creek is the place God wants me to be."

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE

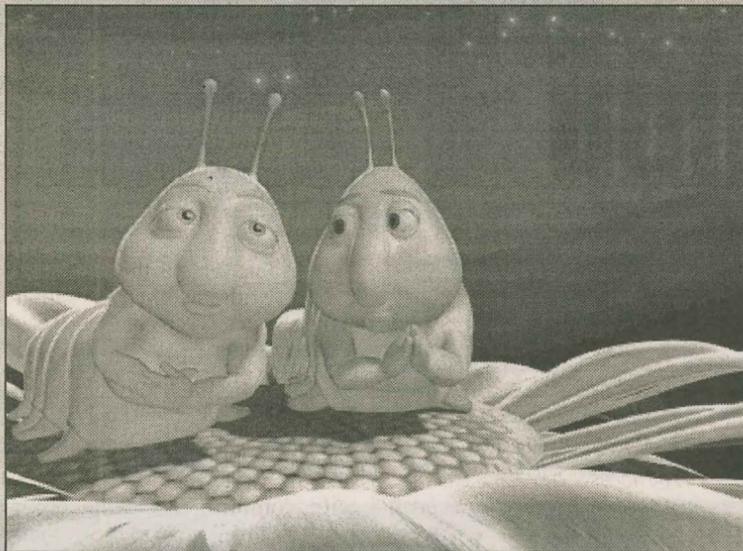


Bill Whittaker

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

BOOKS/VIDEOS

Another bug's life



HERMIE & WORMIE Two plain caterpillars who long to be special pour out their complaints to God in the new Christian children's book and video "Hermie: A Common Caterpillar." (RNS photo courtesy of Tommy Nelson Publishers)

Lucado kids' story gives lessons of caterpillar's transformation

By Ted Parks
Religion News Service

CULVER CITY, Calif. (RNS)—In a new tale for kids by author and pastor Max Lucado, a caterpillar morphs into a butterfly.

But before the story could hit Christian bookstores, it already had morphed simultaneously into VHS, DVD, a picture book, a board book, and versions in English and Spanish.

"Hermie: A Common Caterpillar" is Lucado's first "simultaneous multimedia project" according to Tommy Nelson Publishers, the children's division of religious publishing giant Thomas Nelson Inc.

"Hermie" is being released in two book formats, two video formats and two languages, all at the same time.

The VHS and DVD of "Hermie" feature the voices of comedy legends Tim Conway and Don Knotts.

"Tommy Nelson's never done anything of this magnitude," said Laura Minchew, publisher and senior vice president of the Nashville-based company. Interviewed at the California premiere of the video, Minchew said Lucado's story was originally going to be a book. But when the publisher also began planning a video, the project "started snowballing," Minchew said.

In the story, Hermie is a green caterpillar who, lacking spots or stripes, is plainer than his neighbors. Gazing longingly at sights like the rainbow wings of a butterfly and the rich black spots of a ladybug, Hermie wonders why he can't be more special.

And Hermie is a religious creature, regularly taking complaints about his commonness to God in prayer. Hermie is joined by caterpillar sidekick Wormie, who, likewise dissatisfied with his ho-hum appearance, joins Hermie atop a

daisy to lament his lackluster life to God.

In the 40-minute video, actor Conway speaks for Hermie and Knotts for Wormie. The pretty ladybug the caterpillars admire is voiced by Melissa Disney, whose credits include Ginger in the animated Nickelodeon television show "As Told by Ginger."

Author Lucado appears briefly at the video's beginning and end, where he talks to Hermie in a garden.

Larry Carpenter, general manager of Christian book distributor FaithWorks, said the same-time release of an author's work in video and print is not common for Christian publishers. Multiformat launches are generally reserved for only the hottest-selling writers, he said.

"You've got to have a big name," Carpenter said. "You could count on your hand the number of authors that are able to go with that kind of splash."

Tommy Nelson's ambitious marketing campaign for "Hermie" includes release parties in Christian bookstores and a "Hermie Fun Pack" with a Pez dispenser topped by a caterpillar-like plastic bug.

But the publisher and others who worked on "Hermie" insist that what's really important is the insects' lesson that God accepts, then transforms, imperfect human beings.

The message of "Hermie" is to "love yourself right where you're at," Disney said.

"God made us all different," she added. "I love the fact that ... we're all different for a special reason, and He knows why."

"We are forever on God's easel. He is working on us every day," Lucado said.

"Some days the progress is definitive, other days scarcely noticeable," he added. "But He doesn't give up. Neither can we!"

I Am in Fact a Hobbit: An Introduction to the Life and Work of J.R.R. Tolkien. Perry Bramlett. Mercer University Press, 2002. 254 pages. \$25.00
◆◆◆◆ (out of five)

With the release of two installments of "The Lord of the Rings" movies, J.R.R. Tolkien has been introduced to a new generation. Not only have the movies been authentic blockbusters, but sales of the epic novel have excelled.

But, who is the person behind this fascinating tale? The answer to that question might surprise you.

Born in 1892, Tolkien was a devout Catholic who was largely responsible for the conversion of C.S. Lewis to Christianity (though he was profoundly disappointed that Lewis chose to become an Anglican).

In addition to his most famous novel, Tolkien wrote poetry, children's stories, as well as several other novels and works of fiction. He even published a book of his original artwork, which received generally good reviews despite his lack of formal training as an artist. He was a devoted family man and professor. What may get lost in all the hype surrounding "The Lord of the Rings" is that Tolkien was a serious student of languages. He was a major contributor to the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.

What may surprise many fans of "The Lord of the Rings" is how long it took Tolkien to complete the project—more than 20 years. Many of the themes in Lord of the Rings reflect not only those of epic English/Anglo-Saxon mythology, but the ups and downs of the history of the period through which he wrote.

Perry Bramlett, a Kentucky Baptist and expert on C.S. Lewis, has done an excellent job of helping us get acquainted with Tolkien. Reading through the appendices to the book, one realizes that a thorough look at Tolkien's life and works could fill several volumes. Bramlett manages to help us see inside the life, mind and work of this truly fascinating, if not somewhat enigmatic, man in less than 300 pages. *Jim Holladay*

Patches of Godlight: Father Tim's Favorite Quotes. Jan Karon. Penguin Books, 2002. 224 pages. \$14. ◆◆◆

Those familiar with Jan Karon's Mitford Series immediately will know that Father Tim, the main character of the series, is an Episcopal priest who is well-read and who likes to jot down favorite quotes in his "quote book."

"Patches of Godlight" is Karon's two-color facsimile of Father Tim's own leather-bound notebook. With no introduction and no footnotes, the reader immediately embarks on a collection of quotes from religious and secular works, as well as favorite Scripture quotations.

As far as the quotes are concerned, this book is filled with some of the best that could be included. It certainly accomplishes its purpose of giving you the feel of Father Tim's notebook.

But considering the quality of the quotes, I wish Karon had expanded on the quotes in a separate addendum. While footnotes on each page would have destroyed the effect she was working toward, a great educational opportunity has been missed.

Think of all the devoted readers of the Mitford Series who could have been turned on to some of the great spiritual classics by a few comments about the author, his or her background, the importance of this thought for life, etc. To simply know why the quotation was important to Father Tim would have gone a long way toward fulfilling this goal.

Karon is in a unique position in the publishing world in that she is writing mainstream books with Christian themes and messages. I wish she had taken this opportunity not just to produce a work in anticipation of book No. 8 in the series, but also to provide some direct spiritual guidance to her readers. *Wayne Hager*

The Great Cheese Squeeze: A Gruntly and Iggy Adventure. Bryan Ballinger and Keith Lango. Zonderkidz, 2002. 36 pages. \$14.99. ◆◆◆

Gruntly and Iggy are the quintessential odd couple who discover two heads are better than one. That is the theme of the latest edition of Zonderkidz' Big Idea Books.

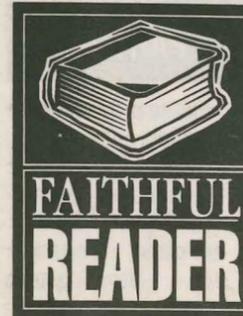
Gruntly is a brown field mouse, engrossed in making sculptures of toes out of cheese. Iggy is a country preacher, cleverly disguised as a frog, salamander or some form of amphibious reptile. In addition to preaching, he seems to spend most of his time making wind chimes from various "buggy bits," or assorted pieces of bug anatomy.

The story's tension comes when Gruntly, trying to win the prize for the best sculpture in the Praire Cheese Carver's contest, discovers quite by accident that the cheese inside a cheese-filled hot dog makes excellent sculpting material. (Actually Iggy sat on a hot dog Gruntly had left in the chair, causing the cheese to shoot across the room and stick on the refrigerator.)

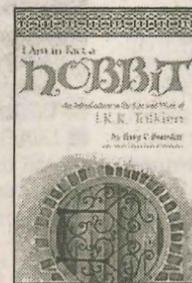
In order to get more cheese, Gruntly invents a cheese extraction contraption. Why he didn't just get Iggy to sit on a few more hot dogs, I don't know, because Iggy is no fan of cleanliness. He never washes his socks, causing quite a stink.

Exhausted from inventing and extracting, Gruntly falls asleep at the same time that Iggy runs out of socks. Trying to get a pair he can wear in public, he has the bright idea of running his socks through the extraction contraption, hoping to extract the odor. He succeeds in both extracting the odor from his socks and infusing all the cheese Gruntly runs through the machine with foot odor.

How does the story end? You will have to buy or borrow the book, I guess. This lavishly illustrated book would be a good addition to any church library. *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:

■ Praise God for six drug addicts who recently became believers through the ministry of missionaries in Moscow. The six are meeting three times a week with missionaries for counseling, accountability and discipling.

■ Praise God for several young pastors in the Wroclaw area of Poland who have caught a vision for church planting.

■ Praise God for two cows provided for two Romany/Gypsy church planters in Romania. The cows will provide both nourishment and income for the two families.

■ Work among Chinese living in Budapest, Hungary.

■ Work among the Basque of Spain and France. Missionaries report there are about 50 known Basque evangelical believers.

■ Christians in the western suburbs of Paris who will be willing to lead small group Bible studies. "While seeker interest continues to be good, leaders to help seekers are in very short supply," write Baptist representatives Sam and Joyce Catoe.

■ The need for a Christian witness among the Rumelian Turks in Bulgaria. Descendants of the Ottoman Turks, most Rumelians are Muslim or atheists. Less than 0.5 percent are Christians.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Living Hope Church called **Jeff Carlisle** as missions and singles pastor Jan. 1. **Jonathan Kittinger** was called as interim middle school director.

■ **DANVILLE**—First Church ordained **Alex Alford, Jeff Brown, David Edwards** and **Rob Wells** as deacons Jan. 8. **Tim Mathis** is pastor.

■ **HARRODSBURG**—Bruners Chapel Church called **Greg Humpert** as pastor Jan. 12. He previously was pastor of Old Yellow Creek Church in Middlesboro.

■ **HAZEL**—**Gene Orr Miller** died Jan. 16 at age 75. Miller was minister of music at Hazel Church for 50 years and chairman of deacons for 40 years.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Grace Church will

host a Valentine banquet Feb. 14 with dinner at 6 p.m. and a 7:30 p.m. concert by the **GladRingers**.

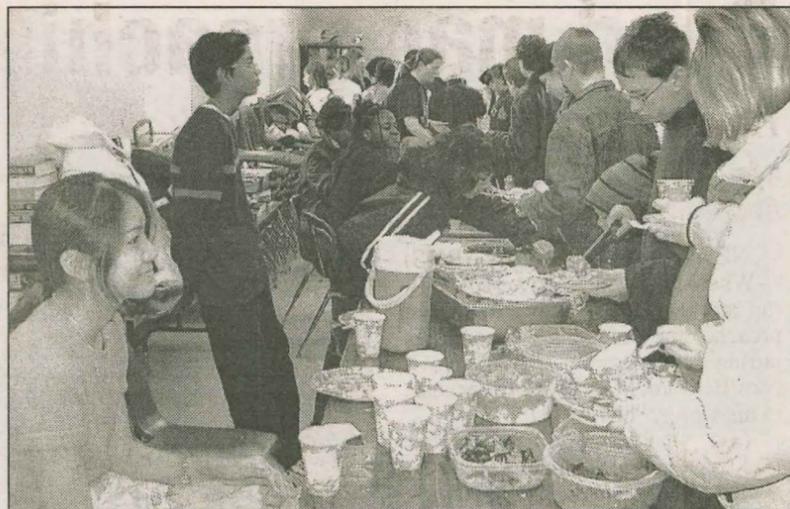
■ **LONDON**—Corinth Church called **Troy Baxter** as full-time minister of music and education. **James Blaylock** is pastor.

Pilgrims Rest Church called **Roger Williams** as pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Dale Fields** resigned his ministry position at Hillsdale Church Dec. 31 to become associate minister of music at Highview Church.

Jim Taylor recently resigned as minister of music at Woodland Church.

■ **MARION**—Deer Creek Church called **Jamie Baker** as pastor.



CULTURE FAIR Students and staff at Oneida Baptist Institute sample international cuisine during the school's third annual Culture Fair Jan. 18. The event, sponsored by Oneida's Student Government Association, gives international students an opportunity to share food, music and other customs from their home cultures. (OBI photo)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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FOR SALE: 1995 GMC 29-passenger bus. Low miles; \$23,000. Call Richard, First Baptist, Richmond, (859) 623-4028.

HEALTHCARE: Pre-existing conditions accepted. Non-insurance solution. Hospitals, doctors, dentists, prescriptions, accidental injury, vision, hearing, etc. \$64.95/month per family. Representatives needed; unlimited income. (866) 524-7685; (502) 493-1383; steph@metrol.org. ceo8761

SEEKING: Care pastor to develop a lay and professional counseling network, build a dynamic prayer ministry and give guidance to gender-based, family life and support group ministries of the church. Requirements: MDiv degree; extensive experience in pastoral care, ministry leadership and spiritual development; minimum of 10 years effective ministry experience. Please send resumé with references to: Dr. Scott Kilgore, Living Hope Baptist Church, 1805 Westen Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42104, or via e-mail to: skilgore@livinghopebaptistchurch.com.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music to lead a blended worship service and direct adult and children's choirs. Interested candidates should submit resumé and references to: Chevy Chase Baptist Church, 200 Colony Blvd., Lexington, KY 40502, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time director of preschool for Sunshine Kerner Nursery School of Greenville Baptist Church, Florence, Ky., Candidate must meet all state guidelines for preschool education and/or training. \$16,000 annual salary for Monday-Friday. Send resumé to: Greenville Baptist Church, 1050 Burlington Pike, Florence, KY 41042, Attn: Pastor Robert Golden. Training will be provided by current director. For more information you may call the pastor at (859) 525-6004.

SEEKING: Minister to single adults, Lexington/Midlands of South Carolina. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Lexington Baptist Church, 308 E Main St., Lexington, SC 29072.

SEEKING: Full-time minister to lead youth and oversee new activities center for Hall Street Baptist Church in Owensboro. Please send your resumé to: Hall Street Baptist Church, 1102 Hall St., Owensboro, KY 42303, Attn: Larry Render.

SEEKING: Full-time director of missions for Wayne-Freedom Baptist Association in south-central Kentucky. Resumés will be accepted through Feb. 7, 2003. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church of Monticello, 2124 East Highway 90 By-Pass, Monticello, KY 42633, Attn: Coy Webb.

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

SEEKING: Pianist/accompanist for Wednesday praise choir practice and Sunday morning worship services (blended service). Salary negotiable on experience. Southminster Baptist Church, 11780 Tierney Drive, Louisville, KY 40272, (502) 933-2761.

SEEKING: Associate pastor for progressive Southern Baptist church with average attendance of 500. Primary responsibilities include education and administration. Seminary training and/or experience preferred. Send resumé to: Berea Baptist Church, 310 Chestnut St., Berea, KY 40403; (859) 986-9391.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music to lead blended worship and fully-graded choirs for Oakland Baptist Church (12 miles north of Bowling Green). PO Box 154, Oakland, KY 42159; (270) 563-4011. Dr. Tom Stokes, pastor.

SEEKING: Westwood Baptist Church, a CBF-affiliated church in Springfield, Va., seeks applicants for the position of associate pastor/minister with youth and children. Candidates should have a degree from an accredited seminary, relevant experience in this ministry field and a genuine love for youth and children. Resumés should be submitted to: PSC, Westwood Baptist Church, 8200 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, VA 22152.

SEEKING: Hartford Baptist Church in Hartford, Ky., prayerfully seeks a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 415 Liberty St., Hartford, KY 42347.

SEEKING: Meta Baptist Church, located in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, is seeking God's guidance in searching for a pastor. MBC is actively involved in missions, presently supporting two mission churches; has a full-time staff, minister of music and youth, secretary and custodian; a growing children's program through Sunday school, TeamKids and children's choir; an active youth program and an outreach program for the elderly who may be shut-ins or in nursing homes. If led by God to seek this position, please forward a resumé to: Meta Baptist Church, 8807 Meta Highway, Pikeville, KY 41501.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and education for Scottsville Baptist Church, Scottsville, Ky. Send resumé to the church at PO Box 392, Scottsville, KY 42164, Attn: Sharon Davis; or e-mail to mail@scottsvillebaptist.org. Call (270) 237-3451 for more information.

SEEKING: Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, a Tennessee Baptist Convention facility, is searching for a ministry-minded individual to fill a year-round full-time foodservice supervisor's position offering generous benefits package. Experience in menu planning, staff supervision, meal preparation and purchasing required. If interested, contact (877) 354-6336 or thughes@tnbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Highlawn Baptist Church, Huntington, W.Va., is currently receiving resumé for the full-time position of minister to students. Interested applicants may review information on this position by going to www.sbc.net and clicking on "Job Search." Send resumé to: pastor@highlawnbaptist.org; or Highlawn Baptist Church, 2788 Collis Ave., Huntington, WV 25702, Attn: Pastor.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Coeburn, Va., is seeking a full-time pastor. First Baptist Church of Coeburn is a Southern Baptist church; a Southern Baptist seminary degree is required. Please send resumé and video or audio tape if possible to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 336, Coeburn, VA 24230.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for church located in a growing community. Send resumé to: Fairlane Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 5913 Herringer Road, Alexandria, KY 41001.

SEEKING: Accepting resumé for the position of director of missions. All resumé should be sent to Giles Baptist Association, PO Box 404, Pulaski, TN 38478. The deadline for receiving resumé is Feb. 21, 2003.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Dripping Spring Baptist Church in Olmstead, Ky. The church averages 125 in Sunday school and 160 in worship. If interested, send resumé to Ricky Holloway, 12978 Orndorff Mill Road, Olmstead, KY 42265.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Petrey Memorial Baptist Church. Send resumé and video/audio tape to: Pastor Search Committee, Petrey Memorial Baptist Church, 141 Alto St., Hazard, KY 41701. Resumés welcome until April 27, 2003. Call (606) 436-4716 or 439-3928 for more information.

SEEKING: Two positions: part-time minister of music and part-time youth director. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Parksville Baptist Church, 6610 Alum Springs Road, Danville, KY 40422; or e-mail: pkbaptist@kih.net.

SEEKING: Pastor for rural church (SBC affiliation). Send resumé and references to: Search Committee, 425 Pope Ave., Harrodsburg, KY 40330.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music/youth. Please send resumé to: Otter Creek First Baptist Church, 13000 Quail Run Drive, Little Rock, AR 72210, Attn: Martha Owens.

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.

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WANTED: Mid-sized central Kentucky church wants to buy a good used baby grand piano. Contact (606) 365-2116.

Dead man preaching

Baptist pastor with cancer has new message for friends

By Jeffrey MacDonald
Religion News Service

NEWBURYPORT, Mass. (RNS)—When Bradley Sell answered a calling at age 42 to become a Baptist preacher, he unloaded a sometimes jarring message on the pew-sitters of New Bedford, Mass., simply because, in his words, “hell is real.”

Five years later, in September 2000, Sell’s doctor delivered the preacher a wake-up call of his own.

Sell has advanced prostate cancer, never before detected, the doctor said, and would surely be dead within two years.

Confident of his own salvation but facing numbered days on earth, Sell rebuffed friends who urged him to take a cruise or lavish vacation, saying he had no interest in such things.

Instead, he resolved to be a tireless messenger in his last days. But for some audiences, he would offer a message unlike any he’d delivered before. This one would be called, “beat prostate cancer with early detection.”

“If I had had the (prostate screening) test eight years ago, I wouldn’t be dying today,” Sell said over lunch during an interview.

Using the time he has

“I now have a reason to bring my message to others. I have a credibility, as someone who’s going to be dead any day now, that I’ve never had before,” he said. “Maybe that’s where the urgency comes from.”

At 49, Sell has now outlived his doctor’s brightest scenario by five months. He reports neither pain nor fatigue nor fear of death. He devours every crumb from a turkey Rueben and plate of fries, a meal seasoned with smiles and laughs of his own. His appetite and ebullient spirit provide fuel, it seems, for a speaking schedule that takes him across Massachusetts, anywhere he’s invited to go.

Just about every man who sells plumbing or heating supplies in Massachusetts has heard Sell’s call to repentance for not demanding a regular screening test, or PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) exam. That’s because Sell has worked in the industry since he cut his teeth fixing bathtubs in his teenage years.

Moscow police investigate monks’ apartment used as bordello

MOSCOW (RNS)—Two months after a storm of publicity prompted prostitutes to vacate a Franciscan-owned apartment, local police and prosecutors have launched an investigation into the brothel.

“I don’t think anything will come of it. They just want to show that they are doing something,” Anatoly Pchelintsev, a lawyer for the Franciscans Minor Conventual order in Moscow, said last week.

The monks, who said they unwittingly rented out the large apartment to the bordello operators, had been appealing to the police since March, when the tenants changed the lock and refused the landlords access.



ON A MISSION Baptist pastor Brad Sell has embarked on a prostate education ministry since being told he had cancer and fewer than two years to live. Sell said his message is bearing both physical and spiritual results. (RNS photo by Jeffrey MacDonald)

A part-time associate pastor at Haven Baptist Church in New Bedford, he served as executive vice president of the New England Wholesalers Association until, he says, he got fired in autumn 2000 after disclosing his terminal illness.

Despite losing his job, he still wields considerable influence in the industry—enough to get stubborn, blue-collar stalwarts to the doctor’s office.

“At every physical, I have that simple blood test thanks to Brad,” said Pat McCartin, a manufacturers representative who lives in Lowell, Mass. and recalls many years of working with hazardous toxins. “Even if my past does catch up to me, I know that I dodged the bullet of prostate cancer, or at least the terminal version, thanks to Brad.”

“He’s kind of an unusual character,” said Jack Hester, CEO of F.W. Webb Co., a Burlington, Mass., wholesale plumbing and heating supplier with 1,200 employees. “He’s just on this kick to go and tell his story. He’ll tell it to one or to 101 people. He’s been fantastic about it.”

Since hearing Sell’s pitch, Hester has upgraded F.W. Webb’s health in-

surance for all employees to pay for PSA tests every two years. Two employees, ages 38 and 42, have detected cancers as a result of the screenings. One has eliminated the disease, Hester said, and the other is being treated.

“The prostate guy”

But despite Sell’s contagious zeal, some people are more enthusiastic about his new message than others. Both the uncomfortable prostate topic for men and the emphasis on physical health rather than salvation have led, according to Sell, to mixed reviews in various circles.

“When I speak to a group of firemen, some in the crowd will a lot of times say, ‘Oh, is this the prostate guy?’” Sell said, smiling. And in Baptist settings, “just the word ‘secular’ (describing his prostate message) causes some of my crustier overseers in the Southern Baptist church to bristle.”

Sell has, however, been undeterred in his new mission. He estimates having reached more than 5,000 men with his “secular message” through various media, from public speaking to e-mail lists. And for all his effort in that direction, he continues to preach salvation through faith in Jesus whenever the setting allows.

Every week, Sell spends at least seven hours in nursing homes, offering spiritual counseling and assuring forgiveness in Jesus’ name to people of all religious backgrounds. In December, he said, “I led five people to pray the salvation prayer,” in which a person admits his or her sinfulness, accepts Jesus as the only way to God and pledges daily obedience to Him.

For this soft-spoken preacher, who makes no apologies using what he calls a “fire and brimstone” approach, a passionate secular message is by no means an impediment to the gospel.

On the contrary, he says, the secular message might be even more effective than an explicitly Christian one for igniting ultimate concerns.

“I’m standing in front of them, less than 50 years old, saying I’m going to be dead any day now. That gets their attention,” Sell said. “Even though my message is secular, people are driven to their spiritual roots when they think about not being here.”

Russia’s largest-circulation daily newspaper, Komsomolskaya Pravda.

Days later, the most-watched television network in the former Soviet Union, the state-owned ORT, broadcast a detailed report complete with footage of the Franciscans’ superior ringing the bordello’s doorbell. A Moscow television show that boasts of a blessing from the Russian Orthodox Church weighed in next with its broadcast of “Words and Deeds of the Vatican on Russian Soil.”

The Vatican fired back. A spokesman denounced the bordello as “an ignoble operation” aimed at discrediting the Franciscans “and through them the Catholic Church.”

Hardin remembered for leading Baptist lay renewal movement

By Art Toalston
Baptist Press

ATLANTA (BP)—The late Reid Hardin is being remembered as a pioneer in the Southern Baptist lay renewal movement that bolstered church life, marketplace witness and missions during much of the 1970s and ‘80s.

Hardin, who died in December at the age of 70 in Tucker, Ga., suffered kidney failure after several illnesses.

He was an insurance agency vice president when, in 1972, he became the first layman to join the evangelism division of the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He retired from the board in 1997.

The primary catalyst behind lay renewal weekends in hundreds of churches yearly, Hardin enlisted and trained thousands of men and women to lead the events.

“Without exception, the churches experienced genuine times of spiritual renewal and refreshing,” said Larry Lewis, former Home Mission Board president, who now works with the Mission America Coalition.

“Thousands were won to Christ through these lay-led renewal weekends,” Lewis said.

Hardin gave nurture to the movement through yearly lay renewal conferences in Toccoa, Ga.

Henry Blackaby, author of the “Experiencing God” discipleship materials, said it was at one of those conferences where Hardin was the first person to encourage him to write a book on the theme “What the Spirit Is Saying to the Churches.” That request was the first in several steps that led Blackaby to write several books on the topic, including “Experiencing God.”

Reconciliation became the focus of Hardin’s passions during the 1990s. He founded Reconciliation NOW (Reconciliation Networks of Our World) and spearheaded a 1997 convocation in Coventry, England, attended by 300 reconciliation leaders from throughout the world—from Christians in the Middle East to Irish Catholics and Protestants and Rwanda’s warring Hutus and Tutsis. A similar meeting was held in 1998 in Louisville.

“The stories were powerful” at the gathering, said Larry Martin, a former HMB vice president and the current leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s missions growth team. “Today, Reconciliation NOW is worldwide.”

The lay-renewal weekends were designed to lead Christians to consider their relationship with God and their ministry in the world, according to a 1974 article in the Baptist History and Heritage journal. “It is a journey inward and a journey outward to a ‘lifestyle evangelism.’”

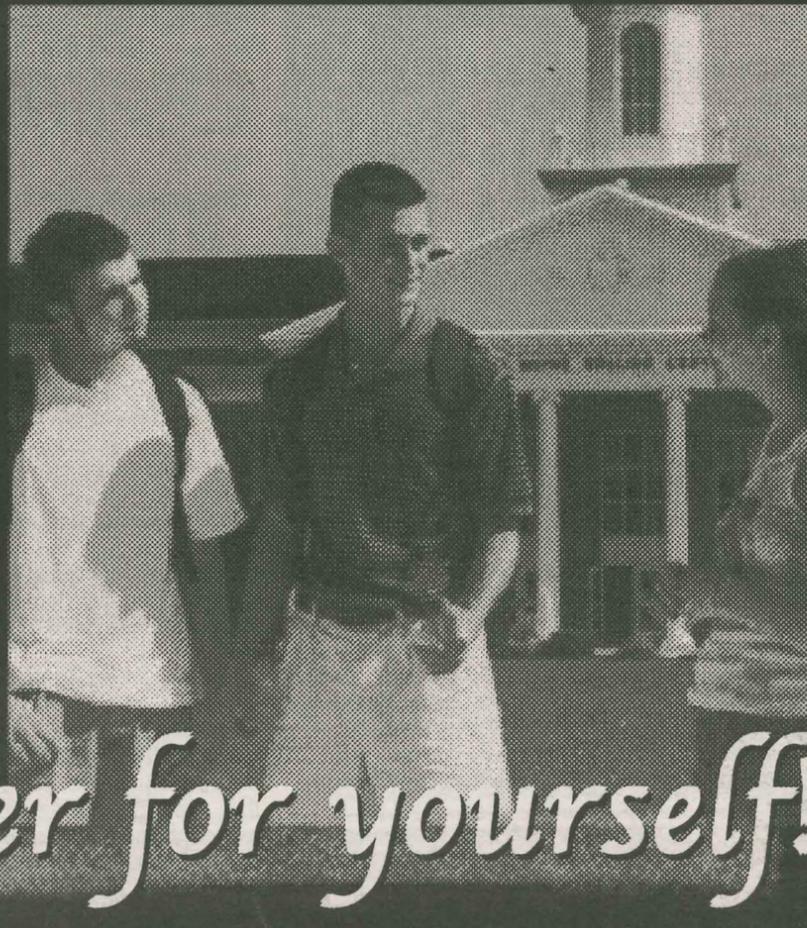
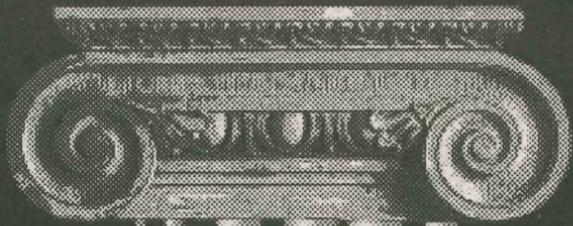
“One of the great untold stories of Southern Baptists for the last quarter of the 20th century is the impact of lay renewal,” Martin said. “Literally thousands of Christian leaders in North America—and in many countries of the world—first came to a serious commitment of their lives to Christian service through lay renewal weekends and lay ministry weekends.”

Hardin helped break ground for Southern Baptists’ use of long-term lay volunteers, Martin added. “In the beginning, when Reid brought volunteers into the organization, it was met with strong disapproval. But today, more than one-third—way over 1,500 of the NAMB (North American Mission Board) missionaries and other workers—are long-term (Mission Service Corps) volunteers. Now it is a matter of great pride at the board.”

Hardin also pioneered the concept of marketplace evangelism, Martin and Lewis noted. “He was convinced the only way Christians would ever effectively impact our nation and world was to get the gospel out of the churchhouse and into the workplace,” Lewis said.

Hardin died Dec. 2. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; a son, Doug, and daughter, Jan Hardin Young.

Memorials can be made to Reconciliation NOW, 2839 Whippoorwill Court, Tucker, GA 30084.



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