



February 4, 2003
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FOR THE RECORD

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Churches reach out to NASA community after shuttle tragedy

By Bonnie Pritchett
Baptist Press

HOUSTON (BP)—As the video of the disintegrating Space Shuttle Columbia was shown, yet again, on a local Houston TV station, the caption on the screen read that another area church was open for prayer and memorial services.

Throughout the communities surrounding NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, people were aching and searching for answers to what seemed like inexplicable questions. Churches opened their doors in an effort to provide solace.

As scientists and researchers grasped frantically to understand why Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart Feb. 1, many members of the NASA community sought spiritual comfort from God.

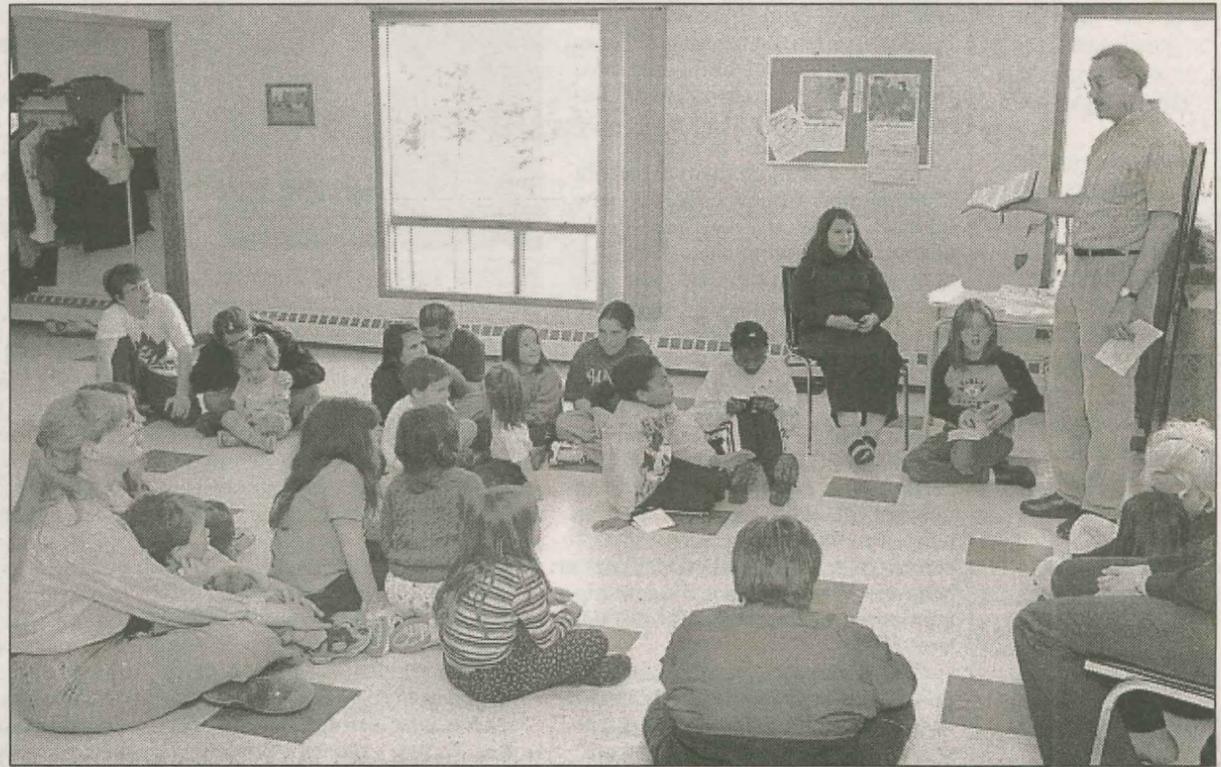
"We are dealing with a God who is in control," said Mike Red, who has worked for the NASA engineering directorate at Johnson Space Center since 1986. "God takes tragedy and turns it to triumph. I believe that."

Recognizing the sovereignty of God keeps things in perspective for David Leestma.

"This is a risky business," Leestma said regarding the space flight program. Having served as mission specialist on three shuttle flights, he is well acquainted with the potential risk every astronaut takes when suiting up for a mission. "Christians know," he said, "that life here is a vapor."

□ See *Houston churches ...*, page 8

Is your church vulnerable?



KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE Children's ministry and church safety specialists say the abuses of the Catholic church have been a wakeup call to all congregations. Churches are being urged to adopt standard procedures, including background checks for all volunteers and recruiting at least two non-related adults to lead all children's activities. (BP file photo)

Leaders: All churches must learn from scandal

By Yonat Shimron
Religion News Service

RALEIGH, N.C. (RNS)—Roman Catholics learned last year that their churches aren't always safe places for children. Now, many Protestants are worried theirs might not be either.

As the U.S. Roman Catholic Church deals with its sex-abuse scandal, Baptists, Methodists and other Protestant groups are strengthening procedures to protect children.

Steps have included installing windows on church classroom doors and requiring criminal background checks

on all paid staff and volunteers.

Church leaders say that with the nation's increasing mobility, it's no longer possible to know every member of their congregations. In addition, they say, churches are not immune to the problems of the larger society.

This past summer, two Baptist churches in Raleigh, N.C., found out just how vulnerable they were:

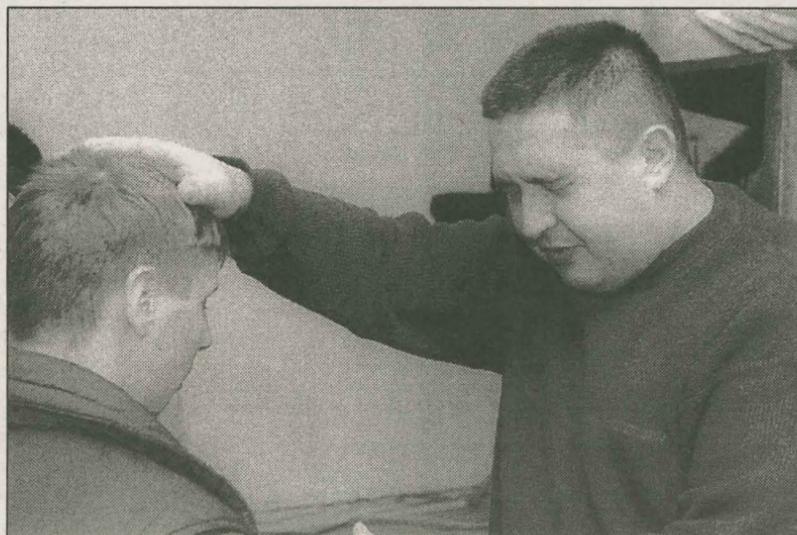
■ At Forest Hills Baptist, a volunteer English teacher confessed to abusing several children during his 30 years as a missionary in Indonesia. William McElrath's confession shocked many people who said they

should have been told earlier.

■ At New Hope Baptist, a 34-year-old man listed on the state's sex offender registry became a church member and served alongside teens on the church's sound committee. After Malcolm Young volunteered one day to help decorate classrooms at vacation Bible school, members found out about his 2000 conviction on two counts of taking indecent liberties with a minor. In September, after being told he could only attend worship, he left the church. So, too, have a few families upset that their children were

□ See *What can your church ...*, page 9

Christians in Muslim countries find themselves in tenuous spot



EVANGELISM Andrei, right, director of the Divine Love Bible School in the predominantly Muslim Khujand, Tajikistan, prays with a man who answered an altar call at the church's Sunday service. Andrei asked that his last name not be used for fear of being kicked out of Tajikistan for evangelizing the locals. (RNS photo by Frank Brown)

By Frank Brown
Religion News Service

KHUIJAND, Tajikistan (RNS)—In an unmarked church behind a public bathhouse in the center of this ancient Muslim city, a Pentecostal pastor is preaching on a subject that few Christians in Central Asia would touch with a 10-foot pole: the shortcomings of Islam as a faith.

As Pastor Artur Musalyan slowly makes his way to the main point of the hour-long Sunday sermon, many of the 200 people in the congregation are taking notes.

"It is the will of God that Tajiks and Uzbeks and Afghans and Arabs accept Jesus. But they won't know about Jesus unless you tell them," Musalyan says, pausing to let a translator turn his Russian into Tajik, the language of the majority in this Muslim nation of 5.8 million people.

Minutes later, at the altar call, three

young people come forward to accept Jesus as their personal Savior: two Tajik men and an ethnic Russian woman. To applause from the congregation, Musalyan proclaims: "Today in Khujand, three more children were born to our God in heaven. God, our Father, is very happy."

The Sunday morning scene at the Divine Love Church is a typical one, Musalyan later says, explaining that converts are plentiful, especially among young, educated people from nominally Muslim families in this city of 170,000 citizens.

But for all his apparent success, Musalyan has no illusions about the church's extremely tenuous position in Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic wracked by a civil war from 1992 to 1993 that pitted Russian-backed former communists against those seeking to found a Muslim state.

No matter how fiery his sermons □ See *Christians in Muslim ...*, page 6

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, February 5

BAPTISTS

IMB's key ministry statistics grow, volunteers decline

PHOENIX (BP)—Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees appointed 52 new missionaries and allocated funds to cover deficits caused by the growth in missionary numbers that is outstripping financial contributions from churches.

During a Jan. 24 meeting in Phoenix, trustees also memorialized three IMB workers recently killed in Yemen and heard a report about the drop in mission volunteers in 2002.

Increases of more than 40 percent in the number of new churches, new outreach groups and new believers in discipleship training show that God is at work in amazing ways through Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas Baptist partners, said Avery Willis, the IMB's senior vice president for overseas operations, and Scott Holste, IMB research director.

A total of 8,369 churches were organized in 2002, an increase of 42.5 percent over the previous year. The number of new outreach groups jumped to 9,862, an increase of 44.1 percent over 2001. And 369,069 new believers were enrolled in discipleship training, an increase of 40.8 percent over 2001.

Those increases were bolstered by growth in every one of the 10 categories the IMB uses to measure overseas progress, including 421,436 baptisms, an increase of 8.7 percent.

Trustees also were told that in 2002 IMB personnel engaged 138 new unreached people groups, representing a total of nearly 360 million people. A total of 22 major urban centers unreached by the gospel also were engaged for the first time.

"We are thrilled to see God at work in such power," Willis said. "He is glorifying His name in all the world through missionaries who possess His passion for a lost world."



MISSION SERVICE IMB President Jerry Rankin presents a certificate of appointment to new missionaries Russ and Kyleen Bare during a Jan. 24 commissioning service at North Phoenix Baptist Church. (BP photo)

Trustees responded to two motions referred from the 2002 SBC annual meeting that would have instructed the IMB to rescind policies requiring current missionaries to sign the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

The board's response noted that Rankin's Baptist Faith and Message request was an administrative action, not a board policy. As a result, there is no policy to rescind.

The trustee resolution also reaffirmed Rankin's request "in recognition of our doctrinal accountability to the Southern Baptist Convention."

Giving and going

Trustees appropriated \$4.2 million in new funds to cover over-budget expenses in 2002 caused by record growth in the number of Southern Baptists pursuing missionary service.

Two years of record missionary appointments and lower resignation rates have forced the IMB to overspend budgeted amounts for mission-

ary support, said David Steverson, IMB vice president for finance. In addition, poor returns on investment income have required the board to pull \$50 million from operating reserves over the past two years.

In November, IMB President Jerry Rankin said that, for the first time, board officials are having to consider restricting the flow of new missionaries to the field because Southern Baptist giving has not been growing as quickly as Southern Baptist going.

The record \$113.7 million Southern Baptists gave to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 2001 fell short of the \$120 million goal. The offering's basic goal in 2002 was \$125 million, with a challenge goal of \$10 million. Offering receipts would have to increase 18.7 percent (\$21.3 million) to meet the need created by the surge of new missionaries.

The appointment of 52 IMB workers brought the total number of Southern Baptist missionaries under appointment to 5,441. That total includes approximately 3,380 long-term career missionaries.

In other personnel matters, trustees voted to accept the resignations of 36 missionaries and terminated four missionaries. None of the resignations cited the request to affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message as a factor in the decision to resign. IMB reports about the personnel actions did not include the reasons for the terminations.

The IMB saw a dramatic decrease in 2002 in the number of volunteers serving in short-term overseas assignments, said Bill Cashion, director of the IMB's volunteer office.

A number of factors, including the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, led to a 50 percent decrease in the number

of high school students participating in overseas projects, Cashion said.

Even though the number of medical volunteers was up about 33 percent and collegiate volunteers were up 14 percent, the drop in high school participation helped plunge the total for 2002 to 26,767. Almost 34,000 Southern Baptists served overseas in short-term projects in 2001.

Shooting victims honored

The trustees opened their business session by taking time to remember Martha Myers, Bill Koehn and Kathy Gariety—the three workers murdered Dec. 30 at the Baptist hospital in Jibla, Yemen—and 33 other active and emeritus missionaries who died in 2002.

"When lost Yemenis looked at Martha Myers, Bill Koehn and Kathy Gariety and all their Christian colleagues, what they saw supremely was Jesus," said Randy Sprinkle, director of the IMB's prayer strategy office. Christian workers at the hospital "not only showed Jesus, but they faithfully shared Jesus and they were generous in sharing the Word."

The trustees' mobilization committee honored Bill Morgan, founding director of the IMB's Global Priority Network, which challenges Southern Baptist churches to organize themselves for active involvement in completing the Great Commission.

Morgan organized the GPN initiative, which in four years has grown to include 1,060 Southern Baptist churches. He retired at the end of January after 39 years of missionary service in Brazil and IMB headquarters.

Morgan presented plaques to trustees whose churches recently have joined the Global Priority Network, including Paul Chitwood of First Baptist Church in Somerset.



"I want to know how my sermon notes are being leaked to you and prematurely posted on your Web site!"

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Lang named Illinois executive.** Oklahoma Baptist pastor Wendell Lang was elected executive director of the Illinois Baptist State Association Jan. 28. Lang, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pryor, Okla., since 1989, is a former president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. He succeeds Bob Wiley, who resigned in October 2001 amid differences with some elected IBSA leaders.

■ **Association funds escrowed.** An Alabama Baptist church is escrowing funds to its association pending action on the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. Randy Overstreet, interim pastor of First Baptist Church of Birmingham, presented a motion to the Birmingham Baptist Association Executive Board Jan. 13 calling on the association to adopt the 2000 faith statement "and hold association member churches accountable to its content." Moderator Dan Nichols said the proposal could be considered in April and voted on in July. Overstreet said if the motion is not approved, the church will not release the escrowed funds to the association.

■ **SBC focuses on families.** The 2003 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Phoenix "is designed with the family in mind," said Tom Elliff, chairman of the SBC Council on Family Life. Activities include a Kingdom Family Rally June 16; an SBC Children's Conference for children in grades one through six June 16-18; and Student Night June 17, featuring a 6:30 p.m. worship service and concert. Registration for the Children's Conference and convention child care will open Feb. 15. More information is available at www.sbc.net.

■ **Relief teams mobilize.** Baptist disaster relief crews provided food and comfort in the wake of an explosion that rocked the West Pharmaceutical Services plant in Kinston, N.C., Jan. 29. The explosion and resulting fires killed at least three workers and injured several others. Immanuel Baptist Church, located less than a mile from the plant, served as a staging area for family members and rescue workers. North Carolina Baptist disaster relief teams prepared meals for several hundred people who gathered at the church.

■ **Barone named editor.** The California Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Board voted Jan. 23 to combine its communication and state paper ministries into a communications division. Terry Barone, director of the CSBC office of communications, was elected director of the new division. Barone, who served as interim editor of the California Southern Baptist, also was named editor of the publication. Holly Smith, the paper's news assistant, was elected assistant editor.

■ **Gay rights proposal rejected.** An effort to include sexual orientation in the student bill of rights at William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., failed to gain the three-fourths majority needed in a Student Senate vote. The vote was 12-7 in favor of the proposal. A Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Board committee is investigating reports of promosexual activity on the Missouri Baptist campus. William Jewell President David Sallee responded, "What better place to have a tough conversation on a difficult issue than a Christian college campus?"

State CP giving above previous year; 10 percent below budget

LOUISVILLE—Citing both “good news” and “bad news” in Kentucky Baptist Convention Cooperative Program giving, Lowell Ashby shared an update last week with the KBC Mission Board’s administrative committee.

Reporting receipts for the first four months of the 2002-2003 fiscal year, Ashby said, “The good news is we’re ahead of last year. The bad news is we’re still 10 percent behind budget for the year.”

Ashby, leader of the KBC business services team, said CP receipts for September through December total \$6,959,479. That is \$429,154 (6.6 percent) above the pace of the previous year but \$773,854 (10 percent) below the year-to-date budget goal of \$7,733,333.

Noting that income for the year has averaged just under \$1.7 million per month, Ashby said receipts for the rest of the budget year will need to average more than \$2 million per month to reach the budget goal of \$23.2 million.

The KBC Mission Board staff continue to limit their program expenses to 90 percent of budget for the second year, he added.

In other business, administrative committee members heard an update on the work of the Kentucky Baptist Mission Study Committee and elected a part-time instrumental music consultant.

Scott Kilgore, chairman of the 15-member Mission Study Committee, said the group is developing “a working vision statement, which we still are tweaking.”

The committee’s assignment is to review ministry needs in Kentucky Baptist life and “recommend any changes that are needed in order for the ministries of the KBC to be more effective in the 21st century.”

The committee is scheduled to present a report to the KBC Mission Board in May.

Administrative committee members approved hiring Charles Priest as a part-time instrumental music consultant in the church music department. He will be responsible for leading a comprehensive instrumental/handbell music program for churches and associations with an emphasis on training.

Priest, a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, is a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and William Jennings Bryan College in Dayton, Tenn. He has served as minister of music at churches in Tennessee, South Carolina and Louisiana.

‘Deeper’ again

Youth evangelism emphasis makes ongoing spiritual impact on teens

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—As a pastor’s daughter and lifelong member of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church in Louisville, Megan Williams is a youth conference veteran.

So when the 17-year-old student got word that her youth group would be attending “Deeper Encounter,” a Kentucky Baptist Convention youth event last August, she was less than enthusiastic.

Megan was tired of going to conferences with dozens of other youth groups, only to find that few groups were willing to mingle with others.

But within moments of arriving at “Deeper Encounter,” Megan said she knew she was in for a different kind of experience.

“It was the total opposite of what I expected,” she said. Students were given different colored wristbands and divided into groups according to the color of their bands. Megan was pleased to find she would spend the day getting to know other youth from throughout Kentucky.

But breaking up youth group cliques was only the beginning, she said. Several Deeper participants, like Megan and other members of the Mt. Nebo youth group, say that Deeper has had a lasting impact on their relationships with God.

The conference, led by evangelist David Nasser, was designed to help students develop a deeper relationship with God. During the daylong conference, Nasser shared his testimony with students and introduced them to four basic principles of discipleship: meditation, prayer, Bible study and sacrifice. At the close of the day, students were commissioned to go home and dedicate the next 40 days to fasting and practicing what they had learned.

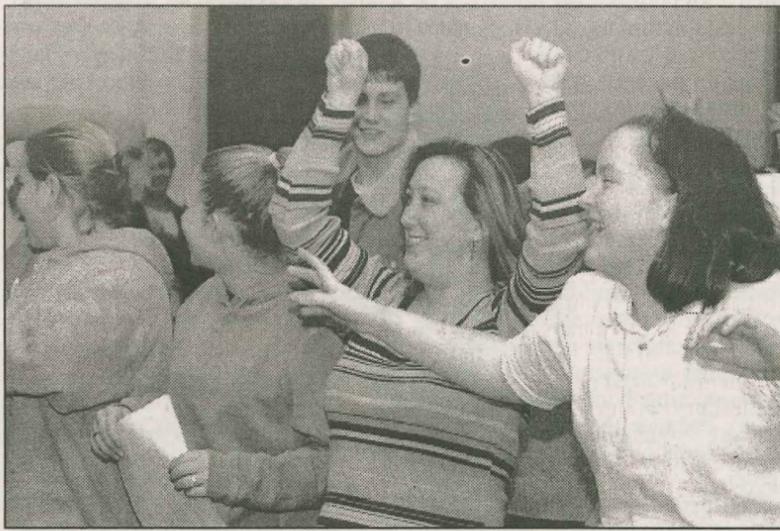
Personal impact

Nasser’s personal testimony touched Megan deeply. Raised in a Muslim family, Nasser converted to Christianity as a teen. He kept his faith secret from his family for some time, fearing they would reject him.

“I never thought, growing up in a strictly Christian household, about how you could be rejected by your family,” said Megan. She is the daughter of Ben Williams who is pastor of Mt. Nebo Baptist Church and a member of the KBC Mission Board. “It was like he (David Nasser) was speaking to me and no one else. His stories really made it personal.”

Megan chose to fast from media, particularly television, for a full 40 days. Her mother joined her in the fast as a show of support.

Instead of watching television, Megan spent time memorizing Scripture, praying, meditating and worshipping God. Learning to worship God



was one of the most significant experiences of the fast, she said.

“I thought worship was being quiet and sitting there,” Megan noted. “You do have to be quiet, but first you have to give thanks and praise to God.”

Megan has observed changes in the lives of others from her youth group who attended the conference and participated in the fast.

Jessica Kellam, 17, fasted from using the telephone and listening to secular music. Giving up the telephone and music was a sacrifice for the friendly, articulate teen, whose passion for music is evident in her rich, resonant alto voice.

“It gave me a lot of time to think, to read the Bible and actually receive the Word,” said Jessica. “I learned to really put God first, not just say, ‘After I do this, I’ll read the Bible.’”

Jessica says she now finds herself really listening in church and understanding what God has for her.

“I never knew that you could fast over anything but food,” said Jessica’s sister, Jihan, a 20-year-old Jefferson Community College student who also participated in Deeper Encounter. “It’s whatever is keeping you from God. I knew right away—friends.”

Jihan made the difficult decision to curtail or end relationships with several friends.

“My friends were everything,” she explained. “I started to stay home, read the Bible more, pray more and ask God what I should do.”

Even adults began to notice the changes.

“My son noticed the changes in my granddaughter Vanessa, and asked what was different,” said Pat Scotland, a member of Mt. Nebo. “I said, ‘prayer and ‘Deeper.’”

Pastor Ben Williams also noticed a difference in his daughter, Megan, and the other youth who attended the

DEEP REFLECTIONS More than 50 students and youth leaders attended a recent Deeper Encounter rally at Mt. Nebo Baptist Church in Louisville. The rally was a follow-up to last summer’s Deeper event sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

■ Above: Youth from several churches worship together at the Mt. Nebo event. ■ Left: Megan Williams, 17, said attending last year’s Deeper conference and embarking on a 40-day fast has deepened her spiritual life (KBC photos by Brenda Smith)

conference.

“When Megan came in she opened up her Bible and just commanded that we hear what she had learned,” Williams said. “The youth came back to church, gave testimonies during the worship service and just messed our church up. Whatever we were going to do that Sunday went right out the window.”

Passionate supporter

The change Williams witnessed in his youth made him a passionate supporter of Deeper. Mt. Nebo hosted a Deeper Encounter rally Jan. 10 for youth groups in Long Run Baptist Association. During the rally, several youth from Mt. Nebo and other churches spoke about what they had learned through the Deeper fast.

“I learned that you can’t just have something and give it up easily,” said Brandy Tyler of Kings Baptist Church in Mount Washington. “You have to strive for it. And shouldn’t we strive for Jesus?”

“The shallow stuff will not get youth through any longer,” Williams said at the rally. “We can’t let Deeper die, we have to keep it growing.”

Participants in last year’s Deeper Encounter conferences will have the opportunity to renew their commitment at the Deeper Reunion, scheduled for Feb. 25 at the University of Kentucky’s Memorial Hall in Lexington. The reunion will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will feature more teaching by David Nasser and worship times led by collegiate ministry teams from across the state. There’s no cost to attend, no pre-registration is required and attendance is not limited to those who attended Deeper Encounter last August.

For more information, visit the Web page <http://www.kybaptist.org/> yes or call toll-free in Kentucky at (888) 254-5714 or (502) 244-6465.

February events address tax law, retirement plans

LOUISVILLE—Conferences on tax law and pre-retirement planning for ministers are being offered this month by the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s annuity department at four locations around the state.

The pre-retirement conference is for participants in retirement or insurance plans with the Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board who anticipate retiring within the next five years.

The tax law conference is for church staff and leaders as well as people who prepare ministers’ tax returns and others interested in learning about unique tax laws that apply to ministers.

Conference leaders for both events are Don Spencer, director of the KBC annuity department and a certified financial planner; Mike Ford, area director of retirement services/church accounts for the SBC Annuity Board; and Weldon Doherty, a regional director for insurance marketing with the SBC Annuity Board.

Both conferences will be offered at each location:

■ London, Feb. 17 at First Baptist Church; pre-retirement conference, 1 p.m.; tax law conference, 7 p.m.

■ Winchester, Feb. 18 at Central Baptist Church; pre-retirement conference, 1 p.m.; tax law conference, 7 p.m.

■ Louisville, Feb. 19 at Bethlehem Baptist Church; pre-retirement conference, 9 a.m.; tax law conference, 1:30 p.m.

■ Princeton, Feb. 20 at First Baptist Church; pre-retirement conference, 1 p.m.; tax law conference, 7 p.m.

Both conference events are free but pre-registration is requested. To register, contact Pam Stallard toll-free at (888) 254-5703 or by e-mail at pam.stallard@kybaptist.org.

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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The gathering ...

The gathering began—outside the gates, peering through the fence to catch a glimpse or hear the words of graveside mourners. Two handmade caskets were lowered tenderly into the earth holding the lifeless bodies of servants gunned down in a long minute of misguided righteousness.

The gathering began—long lines of Yemeni people; citizens of Jibla; men, women and children weeping for those who loved them and were no more. Robed and veiled mourners, remembering and wondering, honor those who died simply because they walked in the way of Jesus on this rocky hilltop of Yemen.

The gathering began—in Texas; Wisconsin; Montgomery and Mobile, Ala.; Richmond, Va.—families, friends and those co-workers who served in Jibla. Remembering these from their birth to their death, the testimonies are sweet and strong of Christ-like love and God's faithfulness. Memories are shared and stories told of Bill carving wooden toys, Martha's healing hands and Kathy's joy in serving.

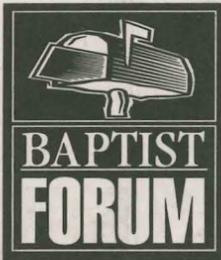
The gathering begins again and again—brave new believers who qui-

etly share the truth of Christ in dark and hostile situations. Prayer warriors interceding for the people of Yemen and beyond. The "goers" to cities and lands where their call to serve in His name is stronger than fear or death.

The faithful in every land and nation who bare the light of Christ.

"In Him is life, and the life is the light of men and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overpower it" (John 1:9).

Martha Lytle
Louisville



Words of thanks

In 1932 our dad, Bill Randolph, a police officer in Harlan County, was killed with several bullets. He left a wife, five children and a baby girl who was born two weeks after his death. The children were placed with relatives for about a year.

W.J. Bolt, pastor of Harlan Baptist Church, came to our rescue. He assisted in placing four boys and a girl in the Kentucky Baptist Children's Home at Glendale. The baby girl went to live with an aunt.

Whatever happened to the Randolph children? Five of them (W.J., Don, Thelma, C.D. and Allene) graduated from Harlan High School. During

Don Randolph
Louisville

Your life is an open letter for all to read

By Henry Blackaby

ATLANTA (BP)—"Clearly you are an epistle of Christ ... written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart" (2 Corinthians 3:2-3).

Every believer has a heart on which the Holy Spirit is writing a letter from God, to be known and read by everyone.

■ Out of the heart a life is lived:

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

■ Jesus said that the words we speak reveal what is in our hearts: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34).

■ The Scriptures also reveal that the condition of our heart determines the life: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of

his heart brings forth evil" (Matthew 12:35).

So it is on the heart of a person that the Holy Spirit is "writing a letter." How you are living out your life, in word and deed reveals your heart. Time spent in God's Word, prayer and meditation will create opportunities for the Holy Spirit to take the Father's will and write it on your heart.

Is God able to get His message to others clearly through you? Choose to be available with your heart to God, and be aware what He is writing.

Henry Blackaby, author of "Experiencing God," is president of Henry Blackaby Ministries

FIRST PERSON

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Mission Service Corps plays vital role

On a recent Sunday, I participated in a Mission Service Corps commissioning service at Southside Baptist Church in Princeton for Barbara Greenfield and Harrell Riley. Jerrell White, an MSC volunteer who serves as chaplain for the Clement Job Corps in Morganfield, coordinated the service.

Barbara, the wife of former KBC President Harold Greenfield, has witnessed the fulfillment of a dream to provide the best quality of life possible for mentally challenged adults. Barbara taught special education in public schools, earned a doctorate in education and obviously has a great passion for the individuals she has taught through the years and their families. She now operates Bright Light Farm, which is located 10 miles north of Princeton on Highway 139.

The 27-acre farm has an orchard, a pond, an administrative building, an activities building and a storage build-

ing along with the first of what is planned to be four residential homes. The home has living quarters for six residents plus spacious apartments for a supervisor couple who also are MSC volunteers. One room is dedicated to the part-time supervisors who provide time off for the regular supervisors.

Currently, there is a farm manager and buildings superintendent who coordinates construction. The beautiful farm is on a plateau surrounded by trees.

Harold affectionately and realistically calls the residents "farmers." A strong part of the vision is to help each person become self-reliant and reach his or her potential as a productive person.

Barbara says Bright Light Farm is the vision of a number of community leaders who serve on the board and support the ministry. Financial support primarily has come from donations.

Harrell Riley is interim pastor of

Chapel Hill Baptist Church in Caldwell Lyon Association. He has assisted Jerrell White with Job Corps chaplaincy and has launched a chaplaincy program at the Greenville Job Corps Center, which has about 400 clients.

Jerrell works with 1,300 clients in Morganfield. Last year, 181 clients made professions of faith in Christ. It is a true faith venture for Harrell, who has a wife and three children. Several individuals gave testimonies to his faithfulness and passion to reach people for Christ both on mission trips and in the local area.

I thank God for the leadership of Eric Allen, the Kentucky Baptist Convention staff consultant for MSC. When he joined our staff, there were just 30 MSC missionaries in Kentucky. Now there are 120 who are commissioned by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Please pray for all of these who are serving in Kentucky and across North America through Mission Service Corps. They are playing a vital role in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Remainder trusts provide variety of financial benefits

By Laurie Valentine

Charitable giving often can help solve personal financial challenges as well as provide valuable support to causes that are important to you.

One giving plan that can do that is

a charitable remainder unitrust. A CRUT is an irrevocable trust funded with cash, appreciated securities, real estate or other assets. The trust pays a designated income stream to the giver or others for life or a term of years and the remainder to one or more charitable organizations.

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■ **Financial assistance for family members.** You have been providing \$500 per month (\$6,000 per year) to your 85-year-old father for the past few years. While, at age 65, you have no current health problems, you want to make sure that support would continue for your father, no matter what your future circumstances. A gift of \$100,000 to a CRUT that will pay your father for his lifetime and then you, if you survive him, 6 percent of the value of the trust assets, establishes a plan that will provide a gradually growing stream of income to your father, and then you. It also entitles you to an income tax deduction of approximately \$38,200 and provides you the opportunity to set up a gift that will provide significant future support to ministries that are important to you.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



What are the primary benefits, challenges of home schooling?

Q: I am considering home schooling my child. Is home schooling a valid educational option?

Parents choose to home school children for a variety of reasons. Many are concerned about classroom size, increasing school violence and the ways in which public education has become distracted from primary goals. Others cite readiness for learning issues, including the need for less structure in the life of a young child. And of course, some parents are concerned about the values and ideas their children are being exposed to in public school settings.

Home school students are not truants. Home schools are required by law to register with the local board of education, keep attendance records and spend a certain amount of time each day in class. Home schooled students also are required to take periodic tests to evaluate their progress.

Most home schooled children test better and at higher levels than do public school children—often two or three grade levels higher. Why? Home schooled students receive much more one-on-one attention and instruction than they would get in a typical classroom setting.

Critics often express concern that pulling a child out of public school robs the child of important socialization experiences. While the dynamics definitely are different, most home schooled children still have plenty of opportunities to learn social skills. Many are active in their church or in other extracurricular activities, such as dance, sports and music. Some home schoolers are organized into groups that meet occasionally for parties and other social events.

Educational consultant and writer, Victoria Caruana says, "Research seems to echo what parents have been saying all along. Home schooling is a valid educational choice. It isn't done by *those kinds of people*, it's done by *all kinds of people*."—David Garrard

Q: Do friendships tend to change in the lives of older people? If so, in what ways do they change?

Psychologist Laura Carstensen of Stanford University suggests that although social networks tend to grow smaller in old age, they include very close relationships. The decline in the number of people within a social network actually is due to the reduction of peripheral relationships where emotional and meaningful bonds have not been established. Despite reductions in social contact, older adults typically describe themselves as being more satisfied with their lives in older adulthood than when they were younger.

In a recent study, participants were asked to choose which of three social partners they preferred to spend time with. When participants were told they had only 30 minutes to spend with the person before never seeing him or her again, both young and older adults preferred close family member over other social partners. When no time constraint was set, older participants still preferred the close family member but young adults were equally likely to choose other individuals.

Contrary to some stereotypes about general decline in old age, true friendships typically do not become stale or wither away over time. Instead, they continue to develop and grow throughout one's lifetime. The second half of life often brings with it a better understanding of one's feelings and emotions. With experience and a respect for the fragility of life, older adults are more capable of establishing high quality friendships and support groups. These close partnerships often mature with time and get better with age.—Jon Rainbow

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



'Termination': A matter of terminology?

Consider this scenario: You take a temporary leave of absence from your job—actually more of a transfer than a leave since you still are fulfilling assignments for your employer. When it's time to return to your primary role, you are told the company's vision statement has been revised and you must endorse it before you can resume work at your office. In fact, you are told by your supervisor that if you don't affirm the new vision, you will no longer be employed there.

You ask whether the company's parent corporation or board of directors is requiring longtime employees to affirm the statement and the answer is no. Is there a company policy requiring such action? Again the answer is no. What about the CEO? Is he making this a requirement for employment? No, you are told, he is simply making a request.

With that information in hand, you decline the request to affirm the company's revised statement. The result? Your supervisor says you can no longer work for the company.

When you express concern about being terminated, your (former) supervisor responds: No, we're not terminating you. In fact, we haven't terminated anyone over this issue. You simply will no longer be our employee.

Sound surreal? Incredibly, that is what is happening to a small group of Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries. Recent reports indicate that veteran missionaries on stateside assignment (formerly called furlough) who haven't signed an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message are being terminated by IMB officials. Even more incredibly, IMB leaders reportedly have told the affected missionaries it isn't termination at all; it's simply a matter of the missionaries' decisions keeping them from serving.

In addition to the "non-terminations," several missionaries have resigned rather than violate their convictions against signing an affirmation of a man-made document being used as a creed.

While the numbers remain comparatively small (about 1 percent of the IMB's approximately 3,400 career missionaries), IMB officials acknowledge that up to another 1 percent still have not signed the affirmation "requested" a year ago by IMB President Jerry Rankin.

Some observers have suggested it isn't that big a deal if only 32 missionaries have resigned so far and perhaps that many more will not be allowed to continue serving. Why even bother reporting or worrying about such a small number?

Of course, Jesus took a different perspective about caring for those in the minority. In the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus asked, "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it?" If Jesus cares that deeply about one lost soul, imagine His concern for a few dozen faithful, God-called missionaries who refuse to com-

promise their convictions. Surely there is a better way to handle the current IMB crisis than for an IMB official to call missionaries and warn them there will be "consequences" if they don't follow Rankin's directive. At the very least, IMB leaders should be candid enough to acknowledge that refusing to allow stateside missionaries to return to the mission field or continue employment is, in fact, termination.

Some readers will agree that veteran missionaries should be treated better. Others will view the IMB's actions as appropriate and necessary. Whatever your views, you can contact Rankin by phone at (804) 219-1207 or by e-mail at jrankin@imb.org.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Coping with life's intrusions

By Tom Ehrich

DURHAM, N.C. (RNS)—A program dubbed "SQL Slammer" recently attacked the Internet, interfering globally with basic services such as e-mail delivery and online banking.

An unrelated virus also caused a flurry of blank e-mails to subscribers to daily meditations I send out. The blank e-mails purported to come from me, but actually came from a virus on a subscriber's computer. The messages were harmless, but the blank e-mails made people nervous. Was someone attacking them?

The answer, I suppose, is yes. As with telemarketers, people have discovered they can reach into our homes and our lives and cause disruption. They can interrupt our dinner hours, lure us into conversations, force pop-up ads to appear on our computer screens, send us unwanted e-mail and probe our hard drives for passwords and personal information.

Electronic interruptions

Much of this reaching-in is a high-tech version of television ads: designed to sell, but not to injure. Some, however, represent theft, predation and personal invasion.

We can take some precautions, like anti-virus software, firewalls and services that block unwanted e-mail and pop-up ads. But the invaders are fast-

er than we are, so we should assume that breaches will occur. We should learn how to notice intruders and respond to them.

The Internet has a sophisticated system of monitors and response protocols. Microsoft releases patches to plug leaks discovered in its software.

But the fact remains, unless we want to turn off our telephones and computers, shutter our windows and never set foot outside, we cannot avoid being vulnerable.

To see sunlight, we must risk glare. To smell springtime, we must risk mud. Going to work means traffic. Falling in love means heartache. Raising children means loss of sleep and privacy and, in time, loss of their presence. Growing up means loss of security and familiarity.

When Jesus was forming His circle of friends, He reached into the lives of people. He intruded, spoke new words and called them away from home. He responded to the vulnerabilities in the lives of people—not their greed or vanity or something-for-nothing desires, but their hunger for God, their brokenness, their yearning for restoration, their willingness to dream.

To many, His intrusion felt like an assault. Jesus made them afraid. To our eyes, their fears might seem narrow-minded and self-serving. But at the time, people probably sensed cor-

rectly that Jesus represented a danger to their way of life.

In the end, many people shouted Him down. Put up the "firewall," as it were, keep the invader outside, preferably dead, but if not dead, then trivialized, marginalized, made an icon of rigidity, an occasion for greed, another avenue to privilege and power.

Many people today are closing the doors to life. They can't stand the dangers. They live indoors, and they prefer virtual encounters like "reality TV." In reaching for safety and comfort, they also miss out on the surprises and odd vistas that make human community so interesting.

Worth the risk

It seems to me that safety is an illusion. It would be better if we could learn to live dangerously, not in the swashbuckling sense necessarily, but in recognition that real life requires exposure to risk and therefore one must be alert, savvy, able to discern good from evil.

I receive almost 100 unwanted e-mails a day, many of them generated by viruses. But I am unwilling to stop using e-mail. It is too vital to my work and ministry. I refuse to let intruders drive me indoors.

Similarly, I feel the heartaches and frustrations of life, including my own. I am unwilling to raise an impregnable firewall, for that would keep God out, as well.

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

MISSIONS

Anti-Americanism continues to rise in Islamic world

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (RNS)—Sixteen months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, relations between the West and the Islamic world are at a critical point, some analysts say.

A series of attacks on U.S. citizens in the Middle East and a tide of anti-Americanism are raising fresh doubts about the potential for rapprochement between the West and Islam.

The factors responsible are many. They include U.S. support for both Israel and repressive Arab regimes, economic distress in Arab states and friction between modernity and traditional Islam.

The U.S. military buildup in the Persian Gulf, at a time when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has received little attention from Washington, appears to be adding especially combustible fuel to the flames of militancy and public anger.

"What many people in this region view as the humiliation of the Arab world at the hands of the West comes down to the Palestinian question," said Taher El-Masri, a former prime minister of Jordan. "Until you change that situation, talk of war in Iraq will only fan more hatred of America and more extremism in the Arab street."

The findings of a major international public opinion poll conducted by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center and published last month highlight this frustration.

According to the survey, based on interviews with 38,000 people in 44 countries, the image of the United States has suffered a major blow in the Middle East from a sense that Washington is ignoring the region's problems and targeting Muslim countries in the war on terrorism.

Christians in Muslim countries in tenuous spot

Continued from page 1

get, Musalyan is careful about what he says outside the church, which itself bears no cross or even a sign. The pastor says he is content to keep a low profile and considers the Tajik government wise in restricting non-Muslim religious activity.

"If they gave us as much freedom as the Muslims have, we would simply be killed," says Musalyan, who moved to Khujand in 1996 after doing missionary work in Siberia.

Danger abounds

If there were any doubts here about the precariousness of Protestant missionary enterprises in mostly Muslim countries, they evaporated with the recent attacks on Southern Baptist workers in Yemen and American missionaries in Lebanon. A gunman out to "cleanse his religion" killed three Southern Baptists in Yemen in late December.

An American missionary nurse was shot to death a month earlier in a part of Lebanon where local Muslim clerics had criticized foreign Christians for proselytizing.

While Khujand is quiet, the Tajik capital of Dushanbe has been the scene of some of the region's worst anti-Christian violence. Bombings of three churches killed 10 people during a wave of religious violence in 2000 and 2001. Police arrested two students from a local Islamic institute in the deadliest of the bombings—of a Korean Presbyterian church.

Making new missionaries

Despite such volatility, Musalyan founded the Divine Love Bible School in late 2001, just as U.S. troops were preparing to oust the Taliban from Afghanistan, Tajikistan's neighbor to the south. The missionary school has about 50 students, most of them locals and more than half of them former Muslims. Some plan to head south to evangelize the Afghans.

"Last Sunday, when the pastor was talking about sacrifice, I decided in my heart to become a missionary in Afghanistan. I'll prepare myself for that and ask God to help me," says Kuisinoy Maksudova, a local woman who "first heard about Jesus" in 1996 as a high school exchange student to the United States.

Maksudova says that initial encounter with Christianity came in a physical education class at the school she was attending in Little Rock, Ark. A girl gave Maksudova a Bible to read. "I told her, 'No way. I'm a Muslim,'" she recalls, explaining how Swedish missionaries in Khujand eventually converted her.

After learning Dari—an Afghan language similar to Tajik—Maksudova plans on moving to rural Afghanistan, finding work as an English teacher and converting local Muslims by "showing them Jesus through my love for them."

While this is a common missionary approach to evangelism—working formally in a secular field and informally at proselytizing—it infuriates some Christian humanitarian workers

in the region who feel it is deceptive and leaves all Christian aid workers vulnerable to attacks by angered Muslims.

"If one missionary organization does this, then the local people may think that all Christian organizations are doing this," says Eszter Nemeth, who lived for most of last year in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, setting up the Hungarian Interchurch Aid office.

"In Afghanistan, the situation is very explosive. This is a tribal society, a society of families. When the missionaries come in, they target the individual. They force him to confront his family," Nemeth says.

At Khujand's Divine Love Bible School, more than half the students come from Muslim families and know firsthand the intense pressure not to betray the faith of their ancestors. Musalyan says deep local allegiance to Islam is one of biggest stumbling blocks to faster church growth.

Still, despite the difficulties and occasional threats of violence to the new Christians, the director of the Divine Love Bible School says former Muslims make by far the most effective missionaries to Muslim populations.

Andrei, the school's director who asked that his last name not be printed, says it is less of a leap for someone from a former communist country to work in Afghanistan than for a Western Christian accustomed to a higher standard of living.

"It is hard to give up a warm house and hot water," Andrei says. "I don't think Russians and Tajiks have that much to give up."

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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**.

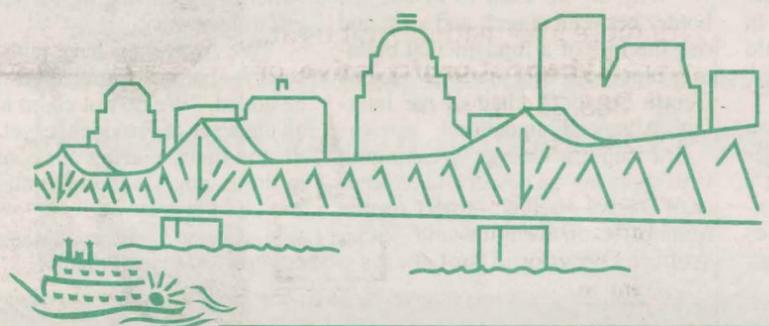
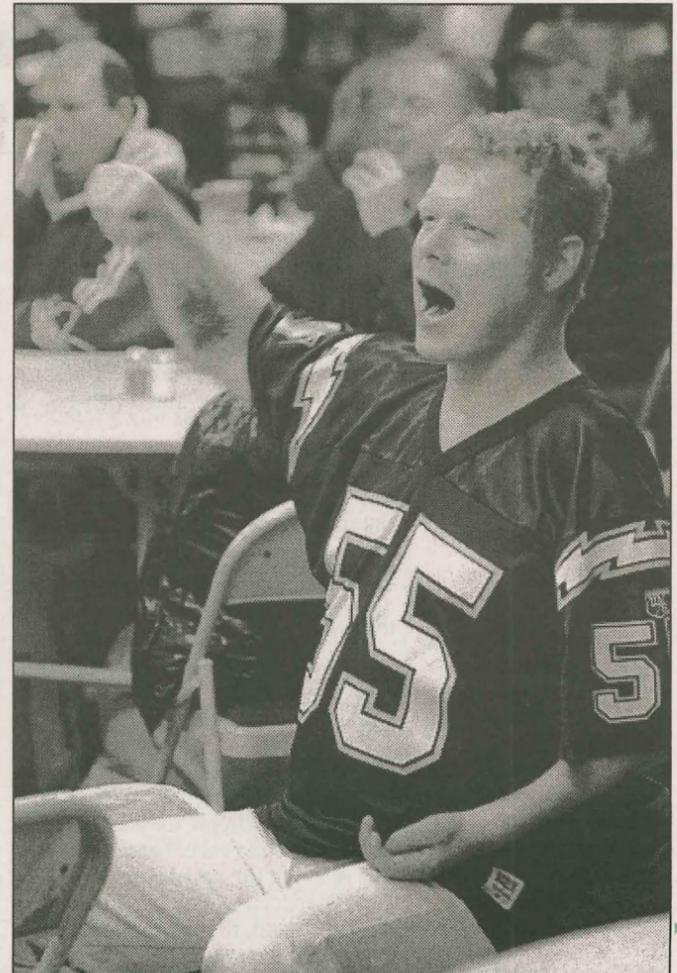
Workshop Leaders: Richard Gaines, Pastor of Consolidated Baptist Church in Lexington, Kentucky; Robert Parham of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville and Dwight Moody, Dean of the Chapel at Georgetown College.

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.**

KENTUCKY



SUPER BOWL OUTREACH Lexington-area Baptists hosted a Super Bowl party for the city's homeless and low-income residents at Calvary Baptist Church. About 115 guests enjoyed the game while eating sandwiches, chili and desserts, according to an article in the Lexington Herald-Leader. About an equal number of volunteers greeted visitors and handed out food. This was the fourth year that area Baptists have hosted such an event, according to Sandra Williams, director of church and community ministries for Elkhorn Baptist Convention. "It's an opportunity to meet people in the community and share God's love in a practical way," she said. (Lexington Herald-Leader photos by Joseph Rey Au)



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Dr. Leslie Hollon - *Pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church and Co-Chairman of the Greater Louisville Christian Reconciliation Ministries, Inc.*

Dr. Kevin Cosby (Host Pastor) - *Pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church*
A Special Breakfast Meeting

February 10, 2003 - 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. Admission is FREE!

Hosted at "The Inn" at the Bristol Cafe at 100 E. Jefferson Street. Rev. Jim Herrington will discuss the topic, "What Do We Do Next." Pastors, Evangelists, Ministers & Church Leaders are invited.

FEATURING:

Special Prayer Time - 5:00 p.m. Reconciliation Celebration - 6:00 p.m. Fellowship Reception - 8:00 p.m.

Religious leaders offer mixed views of Bush's speech

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Religious leaders reacting to President Bush's State of the Union speech seemed generally pleased with his proposal to further address the AIDS crisis in Africa but remained divided over his plans for confronting Iraq as well as domestic issues relating to cloning and faith-based groups.

Faith groups across the political and theological spectrum praised the president for addressing AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean by asking Congress to spend \$15 billion in the next five years to fight the disease in those parts of the world.

AIDS activists and relief agencies welcomed Bush's declaration that "Seldom has history offered a greater opportunity to do so much for so many."

"For millions of children in Africa and the Caribbean, President Bush's State of the Union message wasn't about war and peace, bears and bulls. It was about life and death," said Ken Casey, special assistant on AIDS for World Vision, the evangelical Christian relief agency.

Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid for the Baptist World Alliance, noted that "it was good news that U.S. taxpayers, through the U.S. government, are going to do more to prevent AIDS and assist those living with AIDS, particularly in Africa and the Caribbean."

"Already Christians are working with those suffering from AIDS, and these additional resources would be welcomed," Montacute added. "We



STATE OF THE UNION President Bush declared in his State of the Union address that "the liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity." (White House photo by Eric Draper)

need to thank President Bush for highlighting this need and providing new resources."

Iraq and war

The president's words on Iraq prompted a more divided reaction.

"We should all be concerned about the tone of the President's war rhetoric," said Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches. "Americans are right to be uneasy about the morality of a preemptive American invasion that, even with extreme care on our part, could kill a staggering number of innocent civilians."

"A unilateral assault on Iraq would surely trigger a massive growth in anti-American terrorism that would make our homeland far less secure," Edgar added.

Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners, an ecumenical organization that opposes war, said, "Despite the president's strong rhetoric, he has not made a convincing case for war. Most churches have concluded that a war with Iraq

would not be a just war."

However, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, took a different stance.

"I thought the president made a compelling case that Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction are a clear and growing danger to the safety and security of the citizens of the United States and all of our allies," Land said.

Faith-based initiative

Bush's plans to advance his faith-based initiative by including religious groups among drug treatment programs receiving federal funding sparked criticism from some supporters of church-state separation.

Bush proposed a \$600 million program to help treat drug addiction over the next three years. That plan would provide vouchers to those seeking treatment from faith-based and other groups.

To emphasize the issue, guests in the first lady's box during the annual address included a representative of Teen Challenge, a ministry that aims to help people overcome drug addiction, and the founder of Healing Place Church, a Baton Rouge, La., program with similar goals.

"Why do we want to invade the border between church and state and risk the loss of a fundamental building block of this nation?" asked Denise Davidoff, chair of the Interfaith Alliance Foundation.

Ira Lupu, a George Washington University law professor and co-leader of a legal research project for the roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy, said he believes a

voucher-style faith-based program could survive constitutional review.

White House officials "are being very shrewd constitutionally," Lupu said, "because a direct financing program that would include faith-intensive drug treatment organizations such as Teen Challenge ... would be unconstitutional under the current law."

The president also proposed \$450 million for mentors to work with disadvantaged students and children of prisoners. Chuck Colson, chairman of Prison Fellowship, welcomed the move, saying it would prompt "rejoicing for the families of the least of these."

Abortion

The president's reiteration of his opposition to cloning and the abortion procedure known as "partial-birth abortion" also prompted mixed reactions. Supporters like Focus on the Family President James Dobson said Bush's language showed "strength and courage." Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said Bush's policies would hinder medical research and "chip away at women's reproductive rights."

Bush concluded his speech by declaring that "the liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity."

"We Americans have faith in ourselves—but not in ourselves alone," he added. "We do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life, and all of history."

With additional reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

Houston churches reach out to NASA community after shuttle tragedy

Continued from page 1

Leestma played an integral part in the lives of the Columbia crew. "I knew them all," he said. As director of space flight operations from 1992-2000, Leestma oversaw the selection of candidates into the astronaut corps, including those who died aboard the Columbia.

The former astronaut watched the tense moments Saturday morning unfold from a Houston hospital bed where he lay recovering from surgery the day before.

Leestma prayed for the astronauts' families. He knew Columbia commander Rick Husband and mission specialist Michael Anderson to be committed Christians and that their families ultimately can find peace in their Christian faith.

Many non-Christians respond to such tragedies with a sense of outrage because they have no hope, Leestma said. But Christians, he added, can use this tragedy as an opportunity to minister to people who are grieving.

Nassau Bay City Manager John Kennedy agreed. A ministry of hope will be greatly needed in Nassau Bay, a "bedroom community" to NASA. It is home to nine astronauts and countless shuttle and space station personnel. The town's city hall sits directly across the road from the main



DEBRIS TRIBUTE A flag is placed in the median where a piece of the Space Shuttle Columbia landed Feb. 1 just north of Palestine, Texas. The shuttle piece missed all traffic in landing in the center median at the intersection of Highways 155 and 321. (BP photo by Richard McCormack)

NASA entrance.

Kennedy said he and his wife, Brenda, heard testimonies of the lives of Husband and Anderson during a Steve Green concert. The concert was held when Columbia was about halfway through its 16-day mission. As the shuttle orbited the earth, Green told of his friendship with the two astronauts and told of their faith in Christ. Kennedy said Green particularly noted that the two astronauts wanted to be known for their faith, not their profession.

It had been said, Kennedy added, that the two asked the members of their

church, Grace Community Church, to pray that they would have the opportunity to share their faith with the rest of the Columbia crew.

A 'faith-shaking' experience

Brad Loveall, who works on the NASA avionics software programs, admitted this event has been a "faith-shaking" experience.

With Israel's first astronaut on board the Columbia, Loveall knew NASA was on a heightened state of security alert. The potential for a terrorist act committed against the orbiter was a real concern before the launch.

"I had been praying for the crew's safety," Loveall said, "and I was thanking God that everything was going good and they were coming home."

Then the unthinkable happened. Loveall said the initial shock of the loss and the seemingly ignored prayer subsided as he returned to the grounding of his faith—God's ways and timing are not mankind's. "He is in control and (is) the sovereign God. Everything is good because it is His will," Loveall said.

It was control that Mike Red was trying to maintain as he and wife, Cheryl, scrambled the morning of Feb. 1 to get a

Bible quiz competition under way. Dozens of third- through six-graders and their families and sponsors had gathered at Nassau Bay Baptist Church for the annual AWANA competition. At 9 a.m. Central time, Red only knew that NASA's mission control had lost contact with the shuttle.

"The thought that went through my head was the vehicle had been lost," he said. Without confirmation, Red knew he had to choose his words carefully when making an announcement to the assembly. "We did not want people dealing with rumors."

It was important for the kids to know what was going on, he said, and that the way to respond to the situation was with prayer.

"And so we prayed," he said. "We prayed for the crew. At that point we didn't know (their status). We prayed for their families. And we prayed for the people on the ground" who would have to deal with the situation.

It was during his presentation of the gospel, toward the end of the morning's events, that Red told the kids and adults: "People don't understand they may not have tomorrow. ... In a world where there is so much uncertainty, people need to know that they don't have to live life in fear."

What can your church learn from Catholic abuse scandal?

Continued from page 1
placed at risk.

Although no new complaints or charges have arisen in these cases, the incidents have prompted several churches to review procedures.

"We're easy targets," said Janice Haywood, the preschool and children team leader at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. "People come in and say, 'We love children, and we want to work with them.' We're trusting. Now we're realizing the reality of the world today."

The need for background checks

Unlike the scandal in the Catholic Church, which involved mostly priests, the incidents at the Baptist churches highlight another potential source of child abuse: volunteers. Experts on church safety say 90 percent of the adults working with children in churches are volunteers.

Private youth groups such as the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts routinely run criminal background checks on volunteers. Public schools increasingly are doing it. But only a fraction of churches do, according to church safety experts.

"It's easier to do a background check on a convenience store clerk than on volunteers who guard chil-



dren," said James Becker, president of Nexus Solutions of Fort Collins, Colo., which sells kits for churches to protect themselves from child sexual abuse. The kits include screening forms and training resources.

Cost is one reason churches cite for avoiding the checks. Criminal background checks can range from \$4 to \$100, though the cost is falling now that Internet sites are posting more information. Many checks are incomplete—listing charges only in a particular county or state.

But churches often are reluctant to ask for the background checks out of fear that volunteers may recoil.

"When you're asking people volunteering already, it can seem invasive," said Suzanne Dornsmith, associate minister at University United

Methodist Church in Chapel Hill, N.C., which next fall will begin running background checks on all volunteers who work with children.

Church safety experts said they have found that most people respond well to the added scrutiny.

"It attracts people rather than repels them," said James Cobble, director of Christian Ministry Resources in Matthews, N.C., which also helps equip churches on the issue. "Parents feel good about leaving their children in programs where leaders take safety seriously."

Recommended procedures

Churches should adopt other safety procedures, too, Cobble said. Among them, he said:

- Churches should not allow people to volunteer with children unless they have been church members for at least six months.

- Volunteers should have to fill out forms and list two references from past work with children.

- Each children's activity should be monitored by two unrelated adults.

- A church's paid staff should provide supervision to guarantee that volunteers are doing their jobs well.

"It's impossible to screen out every potential molester, but it's nec-

essary to ensure a standard of reasonable care," Cobble said. The term "reasonable care," he said, is a legal one that courts would use to determine whether a church has been negligent.

These days, the issue goes beyond children. Increasingly, insurance companies are requiring churches that want to upgrade their liability coverage to re-examine their child safety policies.

If churches are not always successful in rooting out child abusers part of the problem may be their mission, which is to regard each human being as worthy of God's love. Pastors often must weigh their desire to provide people a second chance with their desire to protect church members.

"Pastors are pastors," said Ken Altom, pastor of New Hope Baptist. "We're not law enforcement officers. ... Pastors are shepherds caring for all people, one at a time."

Unfortunately, said Haywood, who has been helping Baptist churches become more aware of the potential dangers, these incidents are having their effect.

"People used to look at me like I was out of my mind," Haywood says. "Now they're realizing we've had our heads in the sand."

"We're easy targets."

Janice Haywood, preschool and children team leader at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

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Scholar insists DNA research disproves Mormon claims

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

"I don't think there is one iota of evidence that suggests a lost tribe from Israel made it all the way to the New World."

Michael Crawford, biological anthropologist from the University of Kansas

LYNNWOOD, Wash. (ABP)—Modern advances in DNA research discredit the Book of Mormon and show that Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, engaged in deception, according to a cultural anthropologist who is a lifelong Mormon.

The recently published research of Thomas Murphy, chairman of the anthropology department at Edmonds Community College in Lynnwood, Wash., drew sharp rebuke from officials with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, often called Mormons.

Murphy was threatened with excommunication from the church, a matter left pending after a hearing in December was postponed.

Murphy, 35, traces his personal lineage through the first Mormon pioneers who settled in the West. But contrary to Mormon doctrine, he contends it is highly unlikely that Mormons can trace the lineage of American Indians through a Jewish remnant the Book of Mormon calls Lamanites.

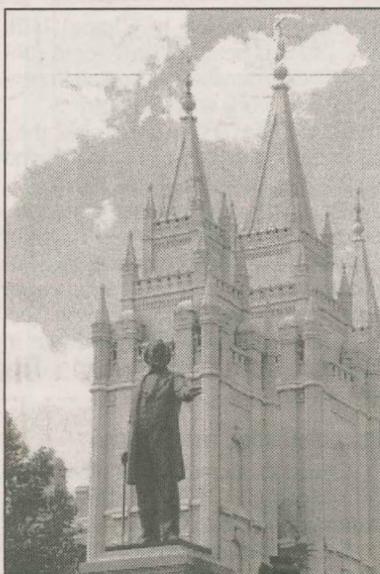
According to the Book of Mormon, a "lost tribe of Israel" migrated to the Americas in 600 B.C. The introduction to the Book of Mormon describes these Lamanites as "the principal ancestors of the American Indians."

Golden tablets

The Lamanites allegedly lapsed into apostasy, but Joseph Smith claimed to have been shown golden tablets bearing their story by an angel named Moroni. Smith said he translated these tablets in 1823 from an unknown language called Reformed Egyptian, thus creating the Book of Mormon.

Mormons contend they are the true remnant of the Christian church, the one true church.

Many Christian scholars historically have insisted Mormonism is a cult or sect, not a legitimate branch of Christianity. Although no historical support for Joseph Smith's claims has



MORMON HISTORY A statue of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, stands outside the church's Salt Lake City Temple.

been found, Mormons have accepted the church's teachings on faith, including subsequent revelations said to have been given to the church's prophet or president.

Because Latter-day Saints and the Book of Mormon have faced stiff criticism from traditional Christian churches, leaders of the Mormon church initially expressed hope that genetic research might validate their beliefs.

"The hope is that DNA research would link Native Americans to ancient Israelites, buttressing LDS (Latter-day Saints) beliefs in a way that has not been forthcoming from archaeological, linguistic, historical or morphological research," Murphy wrote in his academic paper, titled "Lamanite Genesis, Geology and Genetics."

The paper was published last fall in "American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon." Murphy is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Washington, where his dissertation work focuses on Mormon representations of Native Americans.

Any hopes the LDS church had of

gaining credence through science have been dashed, Murphy wrote in the essay. "So far, DNA research lends no support to traditional Mormon beliefs about the origins of Native Americans."

Instead, Murphy reported, genetic research conclusively demonstrates the ancestors of Native Americans arrived in North America through migrations from Asia 7,000 to 50,000 years ago. "No support for Mormon beliefs linking American Indians to ancient Israelites is evident in the data."

Murphy also quotes Native American researcher Michael Crawford, a biological anthropologist from the University of Kansas, who wrote: "I don't think there is one iota of evidence that suggests a lost tribe from Israel made it all the way to the New World. It is a great story, slain by an ugly fact."

In his essay, Murphy also casts doubt on Joseph Smith's claim to have translated the Book of Mormon from golden tablets preserved by the angel Moroni.

"The Book of Mormon emerged from Joseph Smith's own struggles with his God," Murphy wrote. "Mormons need to look inward for spiritual validation and cease efforts to remake Native Americans in their own image."

Mormon counter-assault

LDS officials and organizations committed to defending church doctrine have launched a national

counter-assault to Murphy's public campaign against his own faith.

"Mr. Murphy is working closely with those who want to damage or destroy the Church of Jesus Christ," said Allen Wyatt of the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, an LDS advocacy group known by its acronym, FAIR.

He cited as evidence the fact that Murphy's paper and a related video interview are distributed on the Web site of Mormon Challenge, an organization skeptical of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Murphy explains on the Web site's video: "We need to acknowledge a 19th century origin of the Book of Mormon. That is, we can, I think, admit that Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon in the 19th century. ... We have to confront not just the possibility but the almost inevitability that Joseph Smith was attempting to deceive people—at least at certain periods of time. When he pretended to have actual plates, for example, it is pretty clear he was being deceptive at that time."

Such statements are not intended to build up the LDS church but rather to tear it down, Wyatt contended.

LDS officials and supporters also have criticized Murphy for identifying himself as a Mormon while not attending LDS church services for a decade. Murphy acknowledged that he's not an active member of the church. "I'm a cultural Mormon," he explained. "I prefer to be called a latter-day skeptic."

'Christ in Education'

One of Kentucky Baptists' greatest advocates for "Christian schools" was the late H.C. Chiles. I came to know him when he was pastor of Murray FBC.

Since Feb. 23 is Baptist higher education Sunday in Kentucky, I wanted to share some excerpts from Chiles' "Christ in Education" for the inspiration and instruction they

provide. He wrote this many years ago while pastor of First Baptist Church in Barbourville: "Religion and education are the two greatest forces in the world. When properly coordinated, they are invaluable. Jesus Christ was the world's greatest teacher. He was always teaching people something. Christianity has ever been the great sponsor of education. During the Middle Ages all education was in the hands of the churches; in the colonial days of American history, 106 of the first 109 colleges were established by religious denominations. Modern western civilization found its inception in the Christian school.

"Education must nurture itself and complete itself in the Christian religion, because the noblest minds are drawn to God, who is the satisfaction of their service. Christian education is unquestionably the

most fruitful type of education. Secular education deals with the head. Christian education deals with the head and the heart. Secular education is concerned with cleverness, while Christian education is concerned with character. The largest contributions of our denominational schools have been through the strong characters that have gone out from them to take their places in the world. There is a greater need for Christian schools today than ever before."

According to a recent U.S. News and World Report survey, 45 members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools were listed among the nation's best higher education institutions. Kentucky Baptists should be most pleased that Campbellsville, Cumberland, Georgetown and Mid-Continent were among those 45 of the nation's best. Clear Creek and Oneida also are considered among the nation's best in their categories.

Invite representatives from these schools to your church so you can see firsthand how "Christ in education" makes a difference.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

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Barry Allen



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SMILE

Possibilities and promise

As the clock strikes midnight welcoming a new year, individuals make promises to serve God, take time to smell the roses, lose weight and to be more considerate of others. It is a new year, filled with possibilities and promise.

Now that the new year isn't so new, I challenge you to take stock in your progress and remember that we are still in a season of giving. Have you been keeping your promises and New Year's resolutions? If you resolved to make a difference this year, but haven't yet found your niche, consider the impact you can have on the lives of the kids and families of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Whether volunteering your time to lead a Bible study, taking on a campus project, making a donation or opening your home and heart to a foster child, the gift you give is important and will make a difference.

Our campuses and foster homes always have special needs. From wool boot socks for boys at the Wilderness Camp to disposable diapers for infants waiting for adoption; from peanut butter to grocery gift cards; from shampoo to acne medication, your gifts mean the world to those in our care.

Many Sunday school classes and church groups sponsor a program, cabin or cottage for monthly birthday parties. You can also send birthday cards to the kids in our care. Look for a list of birthdays in the upcoming issue of the Baptist Children's Messenger.

Your church might want to start the year by collecting a "Mile of Pennies" for KBHC. This is a fun project for children of all ages. We even have Penny Miles coloring books available for your use in vacation Bible school, GAs, RAs, Awanas and Sunday school.

Your gifts are always important to us. But the most powerful thing you can do to make a difference for KBHC is pray. Pray that we reach more children and families this year. Pray that they may come to know Jesus because of our witness.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for continuing to provide the children with possibilities and promise. Happy New Year, once again.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

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

Honoring Leah Bowling

By Robert Dunston

Each year at Cumberland College's Founders Day convocation, the alumni board of directors presents the Alumni Student Service Award to an outstanding student who has provided valuable assistance in recruiting students for Cumberland College.

Leah Denise Bowling, daughter of Wayne and Barbara Bowling of Hyden, received this year's award. Bowling is a senior at Cumberland with a major in biology and a minor in communication arts.

Bowling has worked in Cumberland's admissions office for the past four years. In her work she has assisted the office staff in many ways, including welcoming prospective students and their families, providing tours and telling people about the educational and service opportunities at Cumberland.

Bowling is involved in her home church using her musical talents as pianist and minister of music. She plays five instruments—piano, bass guitar, guitar, drums and mandolin. In addition, Bowling organizes and participates in church plays, vacation Bible school, clothing and toy drives and other church activities.

In addition to her work at Cumberland and in her church, Bowling is involved in community service. For the past two years she has volunteered at Saturday morning clinics at the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry, where she assists dental students in treating patients who otherwise would not receive proper dental care. Bowling also participates in a monthly ministry at a local nursing home and participates in the annual clean up in her community.

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



After graduation in May, Bowling will continue preparing for a career in dentistry.

Bowling's commitment to God and serving others is inspirational.

We know she will continue to allow God to use her to minister to the needs of others through her career, her church and her community activities. We pray God's blessings on her.

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

Church of the Covered Dish



Thom Tapp

Bible Crossword

Across

- 1 QEII milieu
- 4 Noun case (abbr.)
- 7 Hot _____
- 11 Pull behind
- 13 Gold (Sp.)
- 14 Feminine pronoun (Fr.)
- 15 Emanation
- 16 Comparative suffix
- 17 "he burned the bones of the king of Edom into _____" (Amos 2:1)
- 18 "Go, _____ an altar unto the Lord" (2 Samuel 24:18)
- 19 Another name for Jesus
- 21 "we receive the _____ reward of our deeds" (Luke 23:41)
- 23 Preposition
- 24 "ye that labour and are heavy _____" (Matthew 11:28)
- 27 Registered
- 32 _____-a-dale (var.)
- 33 Scold
- 34 Raised (Fr., masc.)
- 35 The sun
- 37 "Then the _____ taketh him up into the holy city" (Matthew 4:5)
- 38 Pronoun
- 39 "a _____ for a burnt offering" (Leviticus 9:2)
- 40 "his understanding is _____" (Psalm 147:5)
- 45 Son of Seth
- 49 Inescapable ruin
- 50 Pray (prefix)
- 51 Captain of the Nautilus
- 52 _____ of students
- 53 "Cain ... dwelt in the land of _____" (Genesis 4:16)

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	
11			12		13			14				
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40	41	42	43			44			45	46	47	48
49						50			51			
52						53			54			
55						56				57		

- 54 Edible root
- 55 Cooking pot
- 56 Caleb was one
- 57 _____-Tin-Tin

Down

- 1 Sixth month of Jewish calendar
- 2 "we know that thou art _____" (Matthew 22:16)
- 3 Heroine of Dr. Zhivago
- 4 "Let us make a joyful _____" (Psalm 95:1)
- 5 Classic cookie
- 6 "Joy cometh in the _____" (Psalm 30:5)
- 7 "I can of mine own _____ do nothing" (John 5:30)
- 8 "And they came to _____, where were twelve wells" (Exodus 15:27)
- 9 Feminine name
- 10 High school student
- 12 "I made me _____ and orchards" (Ecclesiastes 2:5)
- 20 Can. prov.
- 22 Not (prefix)
- 24 Boy

- 25 In the manner of
- 26 "so that _____ come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34)
- 27 "incline thine _____ unto me" (Psalm 17:6)
- 28 Constituent
- 29 The apocalypse (abbr.)
- 30 A prince of Midian (Joshua 13)
- 31 "The First State" (abbr.)
- 33 "by these were the _____ divided in the earth after the flood" (Genesis 10:32)
- 36 Jack Haley portrayed this man
- 37 Lawyer for the state (abbr.)
- 39 "be _____ always to give an answer" (1 Peter 3:15)
- 40 The seer against Jeroboam (2 Chronicles 9)
- 41 Christmas (Fr.)
- 42 Young horse
- 43 A son of Helem (1 Chronicles 7)
- 44 Cancer is one (abbr.)
- 46 "my salvation is _____ to come" (Isaiah 56:1)
- 47 He defeated Zimri (1 Kings 16)
- 48 Not later

Last week's solution

1	M	A	N		A	B	B	A		8	B	I	T		
11	A	D	O		T	H	R	O	W		E	N	A		
14	Y	E	T		A	A	A		H	A	G	A	R		
18				18	A	B	I	B		20	W	I	R	E	
21	M	B	A		22	T	A	L	I	T	H	A			
25	G	O	L	D		26	F	I	X	E	D		E	N	
28	A	N	E		29	E	R	E		30	B	I	D		
31	I	T		32	S	O	W	E	D		34	V	E	R	Y
35	T	H	R	O	N	E	S		37	I	N	S			
41	H	A	I	R		39	O	S	E		44	F	A	R	
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U.S. delegation presses Russia on religious freedom violations

MOSCOW (RNS)—A top-level religious freedom delegation from Washington recently wrapped up a weeklong fact-finding trip to Russia by expressing concern for the plight of religious minorities in the overwhelmingly Orthodox Christian nation.

"I must say the situation is a fragile one," said Felice Gaer, a human rights expert with the American Jewish Committee who heads the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. "We're confident that our concerns have been heard and the future will be different."

The commission, which advises the U.S. president, secretary of state and Congress on foreign religious freedom matters, met with Russian government officials, religious leaders and human rights activists.

The last year has been one of the most difficult for religious freedom in Russia since the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union.

At least 10 Protestant missionaries, four Catholic priests and a Catholic bishop were expelled from Russia without explanation. In December, a leaked draft government report identified Catholics as the No. 1 religious threat to Russia's national security, outranking Protestants, Muslims and Satanists.

Gaer said the commission is examining complaints from religious minorities worried that ever tighter relations between the dominant Russian Orthodox Church and the government might result in discrimination.

Visiting commissioners said they expect to release a report by May.

At least one Moscow religious freedom advocate said the group's report would resonate widely in Russia.

"They don't react to us," said lawyer Anatoly Pchelintsev, referring to complaints of religious discrimination. "But when they make noise in the West, people here do something."

Report: Vietnam cracking down on churches

NEW YORK (RNS)—A new report alleges that the Vietnamese government is intensifying repression against a group of indigenous peoples, many of them evangelical Christians, who are involved in a popular movement for religious freedom and land rights.

The report by New York-based Human Rights Watch says more than 200 Montagnards have been detained since February 2001 for their participation in peaceful protests, with 30 people arrested in the last two months, many of them during the Christmas season.

"The Vietnamese government's crackdown against the Montagnards is as harsh as ever," said Mike Jendrzeczyk of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division.

The Human Rights Watch report, issued Jan. 21, cites an October 2002 internal directive by the Vietnamese government outlining a campaign to root out "Dega Protestantism," a type of evangelical Christianity popular among many Montagnards in Vietnam's Central Highlands.

The government views "Dega Protestantism" as dangerous, the report said, because it believes the religious movement has been a rallying force for those seeking an independent Montagnard homeland.

"People are being interrogated, arrested, beaten and jailed simply because they are Christians or are suspected of supporting the popular movement for land rights and religious freedom," Jendrzeczyk said.

Highlanders have been forced to renounce Christianity before government authorities and pledge not to gather in groups or participate in demonstrations, the report said.

Many of those imprisoned have been incarcerated for more than six months at a time without trial; when they finally are granted a trial, defendants do not have access to their own lawyers, Human Rights Watch said. Defendants have been sentenced for up to 12 years for crimes that include violations of national security.

Arrests peaked during the Christmas season, the report said, when authorities detained dozens of Montagnards and also banned Christmas

church services.

Vietnam's Communist Party, which rules the country's government, has not yet responded to the latest Human Rights Watch report. But last month, the party harshly criticized the watchdog group's annual report on global human rights violations during the year 2002. That report said Vietnamese authorities were suppressing Christian church leaders and land rights activists, as well as Buddhist groups.

The government said it "flatly rejected" the allegations, calling them "gross slander," and said the problems in the Central Highlands were an internal issue.

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Something you will most likely never see

Let's face it. This is the time of year when school-age children gather anxiously around the TV to watch the streamer across the bottom of the screen. Though with somewhat less anticipation, even moms and dads pay particular attention to the list of school closings. I am sure that a school closing brings mixed emotions in most homes. For the kids, it's another day off. They can sleep in, play in the snow, watch TV and play video games; all of which seem more exciting than a day at school.

Moms and dads probably have a different perspective. If both parents work and the children are younger, who will watch them? Will one parent have to miss work and stay home? If the children are older, what assurance do working parents have that they will stay home and follow instructions about being safe and not getting into trouble? Of course one activity could be homework, but it's a day off, so who wants to do homework?

I suspect that many grandparents also pay close attention to the list of school closings. Often grandparents must help care for grandchildren who have extra days off. Speaking as a grandparent, I know it's a tough job, but someone has to do it!

Something that you most likely will never see is Oneida Baptist Institute listed among the schools that are closed. We just don't close school because of a little snow or ice.

Well, there actually was a time or two when the school did close. I was not here in 1978, but I am told that it was so cold that the water froze everywhere on campus. No water for showering or flushing toilets, drinking or preparing meals. Across the street from our campus there was a

well—an old-time, this-is-the-way-we-used-to-do-it well. Students and staff took turns carrying buckets of water to the kitchen for cooking and drinking. I believe we missed only one day, but for Oneida it was an historic day.

Then there was that day in January 1996. Our students were home for their Christmas vacation. The very weekend they were to return we had a snow totaling about 18 inches. The students were stranded on the interstate highways, in bus terminals and in airports. We had to cancel school that Monday—the first time since 1978 and only the second time in 25 years!

We have not missed a day of school since then. You can understand the extreme disappointment a new student has when there are several inches of snow on the ground and we still are having school. On more than one occasion a new student has come running to me to protest the rumors he has heard in the dorm about there being school in spite of the snow. They just know the other students are playing a trick on them.

I always smile really big when I answer their question with a question: "Why would we close school since you are already at school?" The response is nearly always the same: "Well, if all the other schools around us are closed because of the snow, it just makes good sense that we will close too."

Good sense or not, you most likely will never see Oneida Baptist Institute listed among those schools you read across the bottom of your TV screen.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Professor with a passion for discipleship

Allen England, associate professor of church ministries and administration, explains why his favorite subject is church administration:

"In my experience the most difficult question is how do we do ministry," England said. "Our students are taught that our churches are both organism and organization. We are the body of Christ but within that organism there is an organization to develop and maintain."

In May 2001, England received a doctorate in education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and now is in his third year on Clear Creek's faculty. "This is a meaningful opportunity to immediately use what I learned," He said. "I've found that our life experiences motivate us to continue on in our education as adults. That principle can be applied in our discipleship ministries. Discipleship, how we grow believers in Christ, is one of my passions."

England has demonstrated his passion in local churches. At Cynthiana Baptist Church, 1991-94, he used the church study course program materials. The church ranked ninth out of 2,300 Kentucky Baptist churches in total study courses completed in 1993 and 25th out of

38,000 SBC churches in the Christian Family courses completed. While minister of education at Highland Baptist Church in Florence, Ala., he developed a Lifelong Learning program on Wednesday evenings and saw a 40 percent attendance increase through 15 classes. In addition to his faculty duties, he is minister of education at East

Cumberland Baptist in Middlesboro. Sunday Bible study attendance has increased significantly.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention calls on England to lead conferences on discipleship. "Pastors I've worked with wanted me to grow the Sunday school and enlarge the attendance base. Most folks will not know what to do if they don't know who they are in Christ," England said. "Discipleship is obviously a dramatic way to achieve both goals."

England's father is a Clear Creek graduate and a former staff member; his dad is retired in Knoxville. Allen and his wife, Jane, have two children, Wil, 8, and Luke, 6. Jane recently took the CPA exam and works part-time as the college director of accounting.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Archaeological treasure hunt

Documentary film details discovery, display & debate over 'lost' ossuary

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher
Religion News Service

EIN KEREM, Israel (RNS)—The "corpse" is shivering ever so slightly on the cold and gray winter day as green herbs are piled on his bare chest and his toes are rubbed with olive oil.

"Don't breathe, don't breathe," hisses Canadian film director Simcha Jacobovici as he seeks to capture on film this re-creation scene of a first-century Jewish burial ritual.

Jacobovici is retracing the intricate history of the 2,000-year-old "James ossuary," believed to have held the bones of Jesus' brother, in a feature docu-drama due to air on the Discovery Channel just before Easter.

His quest to unravel the mystery of the origins of the box has taken him from the dusty shops of antiquities dealers in Jerusalem's walled Old City to ancient burial caves and plundered Roman-era graves that litter both the city's periphery and the West Bank.

The film is the first that seeks to put together the complex story of the stone box, explaining the background and meaning of the stunning find.

Critics have asked: How could such an important item remain locked away for years in a storage room of an Israeli antiquities collector, and then suddenly come to light? And how can the artifact's authenticity be confirmed when it was discovered and identified in a place far removed from its original grave site?

"I had the same questions as everybody else," said Jacobovici during a break from filming against the background of the vineyards and olive terraces of biblical-era Ein Kerem, just outside Jerusalem.

"When somebody says, 'I found a shroud,' I'm as skeptical as the next guy. And this ossuary wasn't found 'in situ' at the gravesite. But the amazing thing about ossuaries is that they tell their own story. Why? Because ossuaries were only manufactured during a specific 100-year period.

"And if you accept that the inscription is authentic, then the genealogy of names, 'James, Joseph and Jesus,' is another powerful piece of evidence," Jacobovici added.

Untangling the story of the ossuary's journey from its original grave site to a museum exhibition has something of the flavor of an Indiana Jones adventure.

Ossuaries were part of an elaborate two-stage Jewish burial procedure popular in the first century. The body of the deceased was first anointed with herbs and oils, wrapped in a shroud and laid to rest on a ledge in a cave-like chamber of hewn stone until the flesh had decomposed.

The New Testament account of Jesus' death and burial describes the first part of that process, which was interrupted by the Resurrection.

Some time later, the bones would be collected and deposited in a small stone casket, which in the case of the James ossuary is 20 inches long, 10 inches wide and 12 inches high.

The ossuary is believed to have made its way from a plundered grave site to one of the many antiquities dealers operating in East Jerusalem. But while the Antiquities Authority licenses these dealers, the government supervisors have been largely ineffective in preventing the sale of artifacts that have been obtained by vandals in raids on archaeological sites.



Owner Oded Golan insists he purchased the ossuary in the 1970s from one of three dealers in East Jerusalem with whom he was doing business at the time.

Side by side with the archaeological questions are the religious questions that have been raised involving the life and work of James, who apparently died a martyr's death around 62 A.D.

"The ossuary has suddenly prompted scholars to take a new look at James and the ripple effect will be felt for dozens of years," Jacobovici said.

The ossuary's discovery also has reignited a longstanding theological debate about James' biological relationship to Jesus. While he is referred to as the brother of Jesus in the New Testament, Catholics believe that

Mary was a perpetual virgin and James was a cousin of Jesus. The Orthodox hold that he was a son of Joseph from a previous marriage. Protestants widely regard James as the biological younger brother of Jesus, born to Mary and Joseph.

James' life has become a focus of interest for Jacobovici, an Israeli-born Canadian and Orthodox Jew whose recent films include "Quest for the Lost Tribes," a worldwide search for peoples claiming Jewish descent, and "Struma," a documentary about a Jewish refugee ship that sank in 1942.

"The ossuary forces one to get acquainted with James," Jacobovici noted. "And getting acquainted with James is getting acquainted with Christianity in its embryonic form, when it is essentially a Jewish sect."

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION
Director/producer Simcha Jacobovici (right) sets up a re-creation scene of ancient Jewish burial rituals for the upcoming Discovery film about the "James ossuary." (Photo by Zev Radovan, courtesy of Associated Producers)

'James ossuary' returns to Israel, faces uncertain future

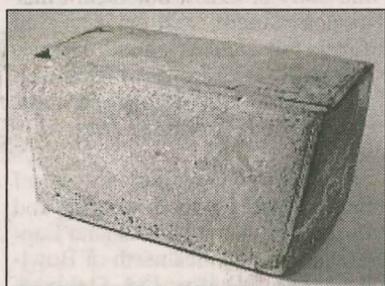
JERUSALEM (RNS)—For the first time since its dramatic unveiling in November in Toronto, the stone casket that may have housed the bones of James, brother of Jesus, has returned home to be examined by experts in Israel's Antiquities Authority.

After the hoopla surrounding the initial exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum that concluded Dec. 29, the artifact's return to Israel came amid an air of uncertainty over what will be the final fate of the religious and archaeological treasure.

Oded Golan, the Israeli owner of the ossuary, or bone box, says he would like to see the object continue to be displayed before the public, beginning with a possible Easter showing at a Houston museum, which has asked to put the object on exhibit.

Golan said he hoped the piece might eventually become an object of joint study by Christians and Jews, and even spur cooperative endeavors in the archaeological field between theologians and archaeologists.

But Israel's Ministry of Tourism is also eager to promote the new



ARTIFACT Many scholars believe this first-century ossuary once held the bones of James, the brother of Jesus. (RNS photo)

find, which could help boost Israel's sagging tourism industry.

Before the ossuary goes on display anywhere else, however, Golan must first have the box examined by Israeli Antiquities Authority officials, as required by law in the case of a newly discovered artifact of potential significance. The Antiquities Authority is authorized to hold the item for up to 90 days in order to confirm its authenticity and archaeological value.

Following that procedure, Israeli government authorities could declare

the box a "national treasure." That would mean the ossuary could not be sold outside Israel or moved permanently to another country, although it might be temporarily displayed abroad with official permission.

"We have received the request from the Houston museum to display it for Easter. We'll just have to see," said Shuka Dorfman, director general of the Antiquities Authority. "We are an independent body. But we're not going to keep the ossuary for any time longer than is necessary to examine it.

"We can't say anything about the authenticity of the ossuary yet because none of our people have examined it," Dorfman added. "At the same time, in the event that we come to the conclusion that it is authentic, then the Minister of Education is authorized to declare it to be a 'national treasure.'"

Many scholars already regard the ossuary as not only an authentic link to the New Testament James, but also an item that provides a unique archaeological reference to the figure of Jesus.

Last fall, experts at the Israel Geological Survey who examined the ossuary said it dated to the first century A.D. Andre Lemaire, a noted French paleographer, or ancient handwriting expert, said the inscription appeared to be an authentic example of first-century Aramaic script.

However, the fact that the Antiquities Authority was not informed of the ossuary's apparent significance immediately after those initial tests left lingering tension between officials there and Golan.

Even if the Antiquities Authority confirms the authenticity of the piece and declares it to be a national treasure, officials technically will have no control over who might purchase the object in Israel, and whether it would be displayed locally or remain locked in a private archive.

But officials like Dorfman are clear about their hopes and expectations.

"I'd like to see an Israeli national institution, such as a museum, eventually acquire it," Dorfman said. "If it is shown to be authentic, we would like it to be on display and accessible."

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Royce Pile

In the month of February our thoughts often turn to Valentine's Day and an emphasis on love.

As I think of my wife and our love, I remember a song from our wedding titled, "Only God Could Love You More than I Do." It might seem odd to some folks to associate God and Valentine's Day, but I believe it is relevant for two very important reasons. First, I believe God's love is the greatest love anyone can experience because it is the only eternal expression of a truly unconditional and sacrificial love (Romans 5:8). Also, I believe the experience of God's love equips and enables us to better love one another (John 13:34). I can love my wife so much more because I know God's love.

If you never have experienced God's love through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you can do so by believing and confessing that:

- God does love you (John 3:16).
- Your sin separates you from experiencing that love (Romans 3:23, 6:23).
- God will forgive and remove your sin (Isaiah 1:18, Romans 10:9-10).
- God will give you a new life and heart through faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

If you can believe and accept these truths, seek out a Christian friend or a minister for advice about finding a church where you can grow in your experience of God's love.

Royce Pile, director of missions for Ohio Valley Baptist Association, is president of the Kentucky Director of Missions Fellowship

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **ALBANY**—Cave Springs Church recently ordained **Fred Ward** as a deacon. **Mitchell Farthing** is pastor.
 ■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Eastside Church called **Roger Robertson** as pastor.
 ■ **FALMOUTH**—Turner Ridge Church called **Ward Spencer** as interim pastor.
 ■ **HARLAN**—Kelly Street Church called **Larry Parker** as pastor.
 Liggett Church licensed **Brenton Lively** to the gospel ministry Jan. 1.
 ■ **HARTFORD**—Second Church recently ordained **Ronnie Bennett** and **Robert Canary** as deacons. **Pete Leach** is pastor.
 ■ **JAMESTOWN**—Welfare Church recently called **Randall Clay** as pastor.

■ **LEBANON JUNCTION**—Mount Carmel Church called **Jimmy Parker** as pastor.
 ■ **LEXINGTON**—Calvary Church called **Robin Rains Prichard** as minister to college students and young single adults.
 ■ **LONDON**—Antioch Church called **Danny Fore** as pastor Jan. 12.
 ■ **LOUISVILLE**—Ashby Lane Church called **Karalee Murray** as minister of music and worship. **James Murray** is pastor.
 Buechel Park Church will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2003. Events include deacon emeritus service, Feb. 16; anniversary weekend, March 15-16; youth reunion, May 17-18; summer celebration, Aug. 16-17; fall celebration, Oct. 12; "Extrava-

ganza," Dec. 7. For information, call (502) 452-9541.

Crescent Hill Church ordained **Eileen Bartlett, Nancy Howard, Carolyn Posey** and **Meme Tunnell** as deacons Jan. 19.

Deer Park Church ordained **Bob Debout** as a deacon Jan. 26.

Garfield Avenue Church called **Dan Rice** as pastor.

Jeffersontown Church called **Neil Nelson** as youth minister. **Sanford Hill** is pastor.

West Broadway Church called **Terry Keith** as minister of music. He previously was at Farmdale Church.

■ **MARION**—Baker Church called **Jim Cowan** as pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Dawson Church recently called **Scott Gaddis** as minister of music. He previously was minister of youth and music at Island Church.

Walnut Memorial Church will host "Greater Vision" in concert Feb. 23,

6 p.m.

■ **RUSSELL SPRINGS**—Friendship Church recently called **Jeff Kerr** as pastor.

■ **RUSSELLVILLE**—Second Church ordained **Jimmy Cauley, Jimmy Davenport, George Offutt** and **Wallace Whittaker** as deacons Jan. 26. **Ron Wells** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—First Church ordained **Scott Hail, Brian Helton, Bill Turpen** and **Phillip Umbarger** as deacons Jan. 19. **Paul Chitwood** is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—Wolf Creek Church called **Craig Boley** as pastor. He is a student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church recently called **Darryl and Deana Cummins** as youth directors. **Steve Rice** is pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—First Church recently called **Missy Davidson** as youth director.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 1983 Plymouth 14-passenger van. 83,000 miles; good condition; \$2,250. Liberty Baptist Church, Campbellsville, Ky. Call (270) 465-6258, 465-5465.

FOR SALE: Religious books (thousands). Send e-mail for list: dudley@dam.net. Evangelist Bill Dudley, 1116 Lacy Drive, Lebanon, MO 65536. (417) 532-2665.

FOR SALE: Mini-buses by Star-Trans. Whitworth Bus Sales, Inc., (502) 894-0110. We move Kentucky safely.

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: Silverdale Baptist Church (1,200 average worship attendance) seeks a full-time minister of worship to lead our contemporary worship services, direct large choir, praise team and orchestra. Please send resumé to 7236 Bonny Oaks Drive, Chattanooga, TN 37421.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth for Faith Baptist Church. Duties include: minister to youth in spiritual, personal and educational growth through Bible study, mentoring, spiritual leadership, community service and evangelism; work with youth and nominating committees to implement youth ministry. Special qualifications: love of time spent with youth; openness to creative approaches in ministry; basic understanding of group dynamics; team-player as staff person; organizationally functional. Requirements: completion of seminary degree; theologically and denominationally moderate; supportive of CBF and KBF. Send resumé and cover letter to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Faith Baptist Church, 116 Pocahontas Trail, Georgetown, KY 40324.

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 pastor for South Side Baptist Church in Covington, Ky. We are a mission-minded inner-city church, with both inner-city and suburban members. We utilize our facility (gymnasium, cafeteria and large classrooms) to operate a variety of weekday inner-city programs. Our childcare program, inner-city ministry and new community center (each with staff in place) would require a pastor who possesses strong administrative and leadership abilities. Pastor needs to be someone who has a love for and ability to minister to all people. College and seminary degrees and pastoral experience is preferred. We are affiliated with the Northern Kentucky Baptist Association, KBC and SBC. Northern Kentucky is located minutes from Cincinnati, which is an exciting place to live, having professional sports, the arts, international airport, several colleges, good secondary schools, etc. Send resumé before April 1 to: Search Committee, South Side Baptist Church, 1501 Holman Ave., Covington, KY 41011.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth for Audubon Baptist Church. Approximately 15 to 20 hours per week. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Audubon Baptist Church, 1046 Hess Lane, Louisville, KY 40217.

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: 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: 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 preschool for Sunshine Komer Nursery School of Greenview 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: Greenview 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 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 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: 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 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: 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: 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: 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 Petrey Memorial Baptist Church. Send resumé and video/audio tape to: Pastor Search Committee, Petrey Memorial Baptist Church, 141 Alto St., Hazard, KY 41701. Resumé welcome until April 27, 2003. Call (606) 436-4716 or 439-3928 for more information.

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

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

Heifer International

Christian group nets PR windfall after West Wing cameo mention

By Cliff Vaughn
Baptist Center for Ethics

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (ABP)—When President Josiah Bartlet had a photo opportunity with a goat last month on the TV series "The West Wing," a little-known nonprofit group got a lot of prime-time publicity.

Seeking to boost a foreign aid bill, the fictional president, played by Martin Sheen, met a goat from Heifer International.

But while the show is fictional, Heifer International is not. The Little Rock, Ark.-based organization gives food- and income-producing livestock to poor families around the world.

Its goal: end world hunger.

Heifer was begun by a Christian farmer in 1944 and currently gives 27 types of livestock to families in 47 countries. Heifer's gifts include bees, cows, fish, pigs, water buffalo and goats, like the one named Ron, which Bartlet and staff surrounded for the picture at the end of the episode.

"They explained our mission in a way you could understand three or four times," said Ray White, communications director for Heifer International. "It related to the story line they were developing."

In today's TV industry, a logo on a coffee mug means significant exposure. Involving a group like Heifer's story in an episode is a rarity. "It's unusual to get that much airtime," White said. Heifer had no control over the message or portrayal, but White said the story line "was beyond our wildest expectations."

Serendipitous event

How did Heifer nab the spotlight on one of NBC's top-rated dramas?

"It's a culmination of years of effective work in the field helping al-



CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS Brad Whitford, of "The West Wing" and his wife, Jane Kaczmarek, of "Malcolm in the Middle," pose with a water buffalo, one of 27 types of livestock distributed through Heifer International. (Heifer International photo)



HEIFER INTERNATIONAL A Zambian woman participating in a Heifer International project nuzzles a baby goat. Heifer International was started by a Christian farmer as a way to provide continued food sources to help end hunger and poverty. (Heifer International photo by Darcy Kiefel)

leviate hunger and poverty around the world in the right way," White said. "It's also kind of serendipity."

When White went to Heifer two years ago, he began thinking of celebrity endorsements to raise the group's profile. Immediately he thought of Brad Whitford, best known for his role as Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Lyman on "West Wing."

When White worked at the Philadelphia Inquirer, one of his neighbors was Whitford's sister. The two were friends and she put White in touch with her brother.

White learned Whitford and his wife, Jane Kaczmarek, who plays the mom on the Fox's "Malcolm in the Middle," already supported Heifer.

That led to a photo shoot involving Whitford, Kaczmarek and a water buffalo. During the shoot, White and Whitford brainstormed about how to raise Heifer's profile even further.

"It was a collective idea," White said. Whitford took the idea to the writers and "it actually happened," White said. "It was our wildest fantasy that could happen to help promote Heifer. To be watching while that thing was aired the first time was an amazing experience."

Equally amazing, White says, is Heifer itself. "Your heart brings you to Heifer," he said. "When you un-

derstand how effective it is, that is so powerful."

Passing it on

Heifer mandates that livestock recipients share animal offspring through a program called "Passing on the Gift." For example, 105 rabbits in China in the 1980s multiplied into hundreds of thousands of offspring, benefiting more than 2,200 families.

"I don't know of any other organization that turns recipients into donors the way we do," White said. And gifts like Whitford's help get the ball rolling and energize the Heifer team.

Whitford and Kaczmarek aren't Heifer's only celebrity supporters. Others include Walter Cronkite, Ed Harris, Jimmy Carter, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Susan Sarandon, Ted Danson, Mary Steenburgen and Ed Asner.

But Whitford and Kaczmarek have repeatedly found ways to support Heifer.

"They don't act like stars or celebrities. They're down to earth."

Asked if his work load had increased since the episode aired, White joked, "Just a tad."

"People have been calling our regional offices and saying, 'How can I help?' They want to take direct action."

It's more work, but it's worth it, he said. "The work is good for the soul and is good for the earth and is good for the people."

Lighten up

Swanburg wants more Christians to be happy about their salvation

By Erin Curry
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Dennis Swanburg, whose humor is accented by his impersonations of Billy Graham and other well-known people, reflects the statement in Proverbs 17:22, that "a merry heart does good like medicine."

"I realize that folks don't always need the whole bottle, but they need a spoonful at least."

Swanburg reminds people that Jesus came to give them not just life but life more abundantly.



Swanburg

"As God's people, we ought to be some of the happiest people out there,"

Swanburg, said recently. "We're saved, we're going to heaven, we're joint heirs with the King."

A native of Austin, Texas, Swanburg was a pastor for 23 years before stepping into what he calls the fulltime "ministry of encouragement" in 1995.

With FamilyNet, he recorded 75 episodes of a weekly variety show called "Swan's Place." And in 2002, Trinity Broadcast Network tapped him for another variety show called "The Dennis Swanburg Show."

Swanburg has worked with Focus on the Family for 15 years as a motivational speaker and comedian. He also has written two books, "Is Your Love Tank Full?" and "Swan's Soup and Salad."

He currently is planning a project for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board to join Bible study authors Henry Blackaby and Avery Willis in promoting international missions.

Swanburg's best known impersonation might be Billy Graham, who he's imitated "since I was a kid."

"I'd see him on television, and at the end of the crusade in front of that camera on TV, he'd say, 'And some of you are watching by way of television. Maybe you're at your own home or sitting in a bar, but I want you to write me: Billy Graham, Minneapolis, Minn.,"' Swanburg said, imitating Graham's booming, authoritative voice. "So I've always loved Billy Graham."

As a child, he also spent hours watching "The Andy Griffith Show," so he learned to imitate Don Knotts as Barney Fife. In school, he was the class clown. While a pastor, he had a sideline of entertaining. Along the way, he learned to imitate other personalities including Muhammed Ali, Howard Cosell, Walter Brennan, Jimmy Stewart, Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton.

"As a humorous impressionist, humor doesn't authenticate the gospel. The gospel helps authenticate our use of humor," Swanburg said. "When you're a Christian humorist, there's a method to the madness: to lead people to Christ."

There's a time and place for humor, and it can be used to touch lives and knock down barriers, Swanburg said, noting that Jesus knew how to take the edge off.

"Jesus knew how to penetrate people," Swanburg continued. "He used satire and irony. Sometimes it would seem like a story was a little bit embellished, all to make a point and get people to see the twinkle in His eye."

Swanburg said the important thing with humor is that the person must get it; he or she must understand.

He recalled a time when it was especially important that someone understand his humor. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association asked him to entertain at a dinner for the staff and their families, providing Swanburg a chance to meet his longtime hero.

"My dream had come true. I met Billy Graham, and I did my Billy impression for him," Swanburg said. "When I was finished, he leaned over and said, 'Now you can take over.'"



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