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Memo to pastors: Stop looking for 'perfect' church

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Gene Mims said he spent too much time trying to build the perfect church. What he didn't realize was God was trying to build a man.

"I was a frustrated, unhappy pastor," said Mims, who now is a vice president at LifeWay Christian Resources.

"Part of the frustration was I didn't want the church I had. I didn't want a church that was a slave to the calendar," he said. "I wanted the perfect church."

Mims predicted many pastors attending the recent "Kingdom-Focused" conference at Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina were just like he was. "It's not that I didn't understand the task," he said. "What I didn't understand was what God wanted from me as a person."

Defining the church as the agency God uses to advance His Kingdom, Mims said the church is where the Kingdom meets the world.

"Your goal as pastor is to see every person engaged in ministry," he said. "And this may not necessarily be in your church, your Sunday school or on your softball team. That is a Kingdom focus—when it's not just about me and my church."

Mims reminded pastors that Jesus focused on God's timing, instructions and message rather than His own.

"The only church you can serve and change and minister to is the one you're in now," he said. "The church is the one you're in now. You don't need the perfect church, you just need the church where God has appointed you."

MOVEing experience



SOCK IT TO ME Volunteers sort socks donated to the Bright Life Farm near Princeton. The project is one of many under the banner of the Mississippi Ohio Valley Evangelism effort, a program to link churches, ministries and volunteers along the rivers in Western Kentucky. *Story on page 12. (Photo by Keith Todd)*

State's western river region gets missions focus

By Keith Todd
State Correspondent

HICKMAN—In Hickman, a group of volunteers from Paducah helped clean and remodel an unused church basement.

In Princeton, workers from Norris City, Ill., helped with work at a Kentucky farm for developmentally disabled men and women.

And Baptists from Mayfield recently traveled to Hillerman, Ill., to help with cleanup after a tornado.

Throughout Western Kentucky, Baptist volunteers are taking part in

ministry projects as part of Mississippi Ohio Valley Evangelism, a network for Christian ministry to attack spiritual and financial poverty along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.

MOVE is designed to get Kentucky Baptists more involved in the Mississippi River Ministry, a seven-state initiative for state Baptist conventions to help the poorest counties along the Mississippi delta region.

Kentucky has only a few counties along the Mississippi, but Kentucky Baptists have found similar characteristics and ministry needs along the Ohio River, said Randy Jones, direc-

tor of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions department.

"Kentucky's always been good about sending (ministry volunteers to other states), but only in recent years has that region received some help," said Jones, who coordinates the MOVE initiative.

Building awareness is still a big challenge, he noted.

"We're trying to create awareness that if you have a need, there are people, volunteers, teams and individuals who are willing to come help meet those needs," Jones said.

□ See MOVE hoping to ..., page 3

Super Saturday reflects Cole's vision for leadership training

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

LOUISVILLE—When Vernon Cole was a pastor in Ohio more than 30 years ago, he envisioned a comprehensive conference to train church leaders on a variety of issues. As leader of the Kentucky Baptist church growth team in recent years, he has had the opportunity to transform that vision into reality.

The result is Super Saturday. Established in 1992, the Kentucky Baptist church leadership conference has grown into a series of six regional events that trains more than 3,000 people a year. Topics range from Sunday school, discipleship training, church music and stewardship to training for ministries to women, families, youth and children.

Cole, who will retire the end of this year, was honored Aug. 9 in the opening session of Super Saturday at High-

view Baptist Church in Louisville.

In a video tribute, Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Bill Mackey noted that Cole's "trademark has become excellence."

"His passion for learning has driven him to seek the very best for Kentucky Baptists," Mackey said. "I'm grateful for his ministry of creativity and innovation."

"While I may have had the dream, there are many, many folks who fulfilled that dream," Cole responded, citing the work of KBC staff, conference leaders and host churches.

Turning to the task at hand, Cole told conference participants, "We hope this is a joyous but challenging learning event for you."

He said Super Saturday is designed to provide church leaders "opportunities to be better servants of the Lord Jesus Christ so you may reach more people to know His grace and love."

□ See Super Saturday ..., page 7

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, August 13



SUPER TEAM Steve Thompson (left), Kentucky Baptist Convention executive associate, presents a plaque to Vernon Cole, KBC church growth team leader, in honor of Cole's 12 years of service coordinating Super Saturday leadership conferences. Cole's wife, Pat (center), was honored for her support of Cole's ministry efforts.

Hemphill: EKG starts with God's people

By James Dotson
SBC North American Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Any great move of God must begin among His people, Ken Hemphill emphasized July 30 in his first major address as national strategist for Southern Baptists' Empowering Kingdom Growth initiative.

Drawing on both Old and New Testament texts on how God views His Kingdom, Hemphill said God has drawn others to Himself through His people only as they embrace Him in repentance and humble obedience.

"If you were thinking this Empowering Kingdom Growth is about some program that will give new juice to your Sunday school, you're going to be disappointed," Hemphill told about 350 Southern Baptist evangelism, church planting and communications leaders.

Radical lifestyle commitment

"This is about radical lifestyle commitment to our Father's Kingdom, for our Father's reward. And none of us may receive much glory for this here on earth," he said. "It's about transformation of a people called Southern Baptists so that their name is synonymous with His name, and the nation would see His name manifested in His Kingdom in such a way that the foreigners would be drawn to Him."

Hemphill delivered the closing ad-

dress of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's July 27-30 Summer State Leadership Conference in Atlanta. He became the SBC's EKG strategist this spring after serving nine years as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Empowering Kingdom Growth is a convention-wide initiative launched in 2002.

Pointing to the prayer of David in 2 Samuel 7, Hemphill said God makes clear throughout Scripture that His purpose in blessing the nation of Israel was to bring glory to Himself—not to the nation of Israel. In the same way, he said, any move of God through Southern Baptists will require the same realization.

"God does not share His glory. So His purpose is to work through a people," Hemphill said. "I believe in Southern Baptists, but the truth of the matter is this is not about us. ... It's not about anything else except the glory of God and God's name."

In Ezekiel 36, Hemphill said, God's name was disgraced when the nation of Israel was scattered because of the disobedience of its people. But God brought them back and restored them—not for Israel's glory but, as God said, "to show foreign nations that I am holy."

"If we're going to see Kingdom growth, it's not going to be another formula," Hemphill declared. "It's not going to be another program. It's go-

ing to have to be a radical transformation of God's people so that His name is made holy among us."

The emphasis is markedly different from other efforts, he said, including the church growth movement of the 1980s and '90s.

While the movement was effective in many ways, Hemphill said, "I think it did produce a carnality in us that we began to believe there was something we could do to grow the church."

Kingdom vision

The same elements of God's Kingdom vision also are found in the New Testament, Hemphill said.

"If you begin to look at Jesus' life, one of the things I see missing in our evangelism strategy is people were drawn to Him," he said. "Many of His early evangelism encounters prompted pagans being drawn to Him. What God is looking for is a people that will manifest His name through radical obedience to His Word and a lifestyle that reflects His character."

The themes also are taught in both the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer, Hemphill added.

"Folks, if we go into this hoping that Southern Baptists are going to receive the glory, we're going to miss it by a mile," he said. "The only person who needs to receive glory from anything we do—whether preaching, witnessing or planting churches—is the One whose name is above every name."

FamilyFEST teams help boost witness in Cincinnati

CINCINNATI (BP)—Volunteers from as far away as Idaho and as nearby as Kentucky joined together for a recent FamilyFEST ministry outreach in Cincinnati.

Coordinated by national Woman's Missionary Union, the intergenerational missions experience included backyard Bible clubs, vacation Bible school, servant evangelism ministry projects, prayerwalking, light construction, painting and repair work.

A total of 150 volunteers from 13 states—ranging in age from 6 to 74—worked at 13 ministry sites.

Shirley Henderson, president of Ohio WMU, said the Cincinnati FamilyFEST "generated a renewed awareness of the ongoing diligence and commitment we need to have in reaching our city for Christ."

"It was so exciting to see the Lord's hand in every aspect of the volunteers' work as He placed them exactly where they were needed to serve," Henderson added.

Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky WMU, volunteered at FamilyFEST with a group from Shelbyville. She said they enjoyed helping another congregation and, in the process, began thinking of new ministries they could do in their own community. "Sometimes getting away and helping someone else provides new insights into the place you live," Bolton noted.

The weeklong missions opportunity was a partnership with national WMU, Ohio WMU, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, the Baptist Association of Greater Cincinnati and area churches.

Missions role models

"Many parents and grandparents choose to participate in FamilyFEST specifically because it is an excellent opportunity for them to work side by side and model missions to their children and grandchildren," said Kristy Carr, WMU's Volunteer Connection specialist. "Many related that it was a real blessing to see their children openly share their faith."

FamilyFEST sites in 2004 include Pittsburgh, Pa., June 22-25, and Omaha, Neb., July 10-15. For adult volunteers 18 and older, MissionsFEST sites for 2004 are Eastern Kentucky, April 18-24; Pittsburgh, June 20-25; and New England, where participants may choose either Oct. 3-10 or Oct. 6-10.

For more information, visit www.wmu.com or call (205) 991-4097.

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Warren, Falwell team up for conference.** Rick Warren, author of "The Purpose Driven Church" and "The Purpose Driven Life," and Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., will team up to train more than 10,000 church leaders this fall. Touted as a "Purpose Driven Church SuperConference," the Oct. 5-8 event will be the first Purpose Driven Church Conference east of the Mississippi River. It will be held on the campus of Falwell's Liberty University in Lynchburg. For information, visit the Web site www.purposedriven.com.

■ **Kelly earns Black Heritage Award.** Tom Kelly, retired director of black church ministries for the California Southern Baptist Convention, was awarded the 2003 Black Southern Baptist Heritage Award during Black Church Leadership Week at LifeWay Glorietta (N.M.) Conference Center. Kelly, who retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1978, served with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board as a black church consultant for the greater Los Angeles area before joining the California convention staff in 1984. He helped start 270 African-American churches in California.

■ **Dawson to head Illinois Baptist paper.** Dennis Dawson, Cooperative Program/stewardship specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, has been named managing editor of the Illinois Baptist newspaper. He also will serve as manager of the Illinois Baptist State Association's newly created Cooperative Program/public relations group. Dawson previously was a pastor and associational worker in Oklahoma and Kansas. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma in Norman and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Annuity Board redesigns medical coverage for Baptist participants

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)—New and expanded medical plans for Southern Baptist ministers, church and denominational employees and seminary students will be offered by the Southern Baptist Annuity Board for 2004.

The new plans were announced by Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins during an Aug. 4-5 trustee meeting in San Francisco.

"The plans will offer a wide variety of costs and benefit levels," Hawkins said. "With input from churches, organizations and individuals, we've redesigned all of our self-funded medical plans."

The wider range of plan options, Hawkins said, "will better meet the healthcare and financial needs of our pastors as well as Southern Baptist employers and their employees."

Benefits of the new preferred provider organization plans include copays for doctor's office visits, a variety of coinsurance levels and deductibles ranging from zero to \$3,000.

Anyone currently participating in one of the Annuity Board's self-funded medical plans will be required to select a new plan for 2004. They may transfer to any other available Annuity Board plan the following year.

"A family may be able to save money by choosing a plan with a higher deductible or higher coinsurance level but a lower monthly rate," Douglas Day, the board's executive officer for benefit services, said. "By allowing individuals to move to a new

plan after a year, we hope participants will feel comfortable trying out our new medical plans."

In addition to the core plans, a limited benefit plan will provide a low-cost coverage option for those who might not otherwise be able to afford medical coverage. It will allow employees who previously would have been ineligible for coverage to enroll themselves and their families in an Annuity Board medical plan.

Preventive care benefits will be available in all of the core PPO plans for 2004. New features include a \$250 benefit per person for preventive care, a wider range of services covered by the wellness benefit, and no dollar limit for routine immunizations for children up to age 2. A new disease management program will help individuals diagnosed with coronary heart disease or diabetes better manage their conditions and stay healthier. Prenatal care management also will be available.

"If our people will join us in taking responsibility for their health and adopt an attitude of wellness, we could see medical claims and monthly payments decline," Hawkins said.

Details about the new medical plans, including rates, will be mailed to all current Annuity Board medical plan participants in mid-September.

Annuity Board medical plan participants who have questions about the new medical plans may call the board's customer relations specialists toll-free at (800) 262-0511.

Churches 'adopt' summer missionaries to encourage

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

MOUNT STERLING—Christine Parr's summer internship at First Baptist Church of Mount Sterling featured a rousing start: staying up all night at a youth group lock-in.

Her busy schedule included numerous activities with the church's youth, including helping lead a vacation Bible school and supervising another lock-in.

But Parr said she had plenty of energy for the task, thanks to the prayers and moral support of Ewing Baptist Church in Fleming County.

The rural congregation is among Kentucky Baptist churches that were matched with 135 college students through Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union's "Adopt a Summer Missionary" program.

"I can literally feel their prayers," Parr said earlier this summer of Ewing Baptist. "Everything has worked out perfectly. I couldn't have asked for a better beginning to the summer."

The Morehead State University student said she also enjoyed the fruits of her adopted church's generosity.

After she visited in early May, the church's WMU presented her with a basket overflowing with goodies. Her cache included snacks, toiletries, postcards, stamps, tissues, office supplies, candy and a disposable camera.

Throughout the summer, the church mailed greetings to let her know they were praying for her. They also extended an invitation to return later with a report.

Connecting churches & students

This is the fourth year for the special emphasis, according to LaRaine Dail, youth and college consultant with Kentucky WMU.

Churches that sign up agree to supply \$10 for a special commissioning gift (this year's gift included a notebook, note cards and stamps). They also commit to write the student, pray for him or her and send the person a care package.

"The idea is to help churches connect with college students and get to know them," Dail said. "It's good for students to connect with churches, too."

The matches include students working at Mission Adventure camps

for boys and girls, SonTeams based at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, those on missions in the U.S. and overseas, and youth interns.

Kristin Belcher, this year's assistant director of Mission Adventure girls camps, learned in previous summers how encouraging the prayers and care packages can be.

A senior at the University of Kentucky, the Danville native said the program was especially helpful her first summer, when she worked with girls ages 10 to 12.

"I could feel the peace, knowing they were praying for me through the summer," said Belcher, who was matched that year with Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg. "Otherwise, it would have been overwhelming work."

The project also has enhanced Ewing Baptist's missions vision, according to Tammy Cowan, the church's WMU director.

Ewing's WMU liked the idea so much it adopted two students this summer:

■ Marla Rosenberg, a student from Morehead State who participated in the Son Share players.

■ Amanda Player of Berea College,

who served as an intern at Trinity Baptist Church in Gunnison, Colo.

"This was one way we felt we could reach out to some people," Cowan said. "A lot of youth in our church have been affected by youth camps, so we felt this was a worthwhile cause. Within our group it has stirred up more interest in missions."

After working in North Dakota last summer through the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, Parr said she was delighted to have a connection with a Kentucky church again.

This was the third time she's been "adopted," and she said this summer was her best experience.

"This is the most support I've felt," Parr said. "It encourages me and lifts me up. I felt I was supported (and) that the people were proud of me and were glad I was doing this. Knowing that someone in another part of the state is thinking about you and praying for you can't help but make you feel good."

For more information about the summer missionary adoption program, contact Dail at (502) 244-6485 or (888) 254-5726. Applications will be accepted after Jan. 1, 2004.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Cumberland College** will host Christian band Sixpence None The Richer Aug. 25 at the Rollins Center. Tickets can be purchased in advance for \$7 each, with a \$2 discount per person for groups of 10 or more. All tickets will cost \$10 the night of the event. Proceeds will benefit Cumberland's student missions program. For ticket reservations, call (606) 539-4232.

■ **Campbellsville University** has named David Walters as vice president for admissions and student services. For the past three years, Walters was Campbellsville's dean of student services. Walters also is pastor of Lowell Avenue Baptist Church, where he has served since 1998.

■ **Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children** has named David Turner as vice president of child placement services. He will oversee the agency's residential and foster care programs along with the pregnancy and adoption services program. Turner was program director for KBHC's Spring Meadows Children's Home from 1998 to 2000. Most recently, he was a consultant with health and childcare agencies.

MOVE hoping to expand river ministry in Western Kentucky

Continued from page 1

MOVE field liaison Charles Blair is responsible for matching churches and individuals in need with volunteer teams. The impact of poverty on individuals along the river corridor also is reflected in the small, mostly rural churches that serve them, Blair noted.

"Many of the small churches in the region don't have the people or finances to meet some of the needs. That's where MOVE gets involved," Blair said. "I have about 60 forms here people have filled out and sent in with inquiries about how can they be connected."

Summer blitz

To kick off the MOVE effort, Blair and Jones planned a two-week blitz June 28 through July 13.

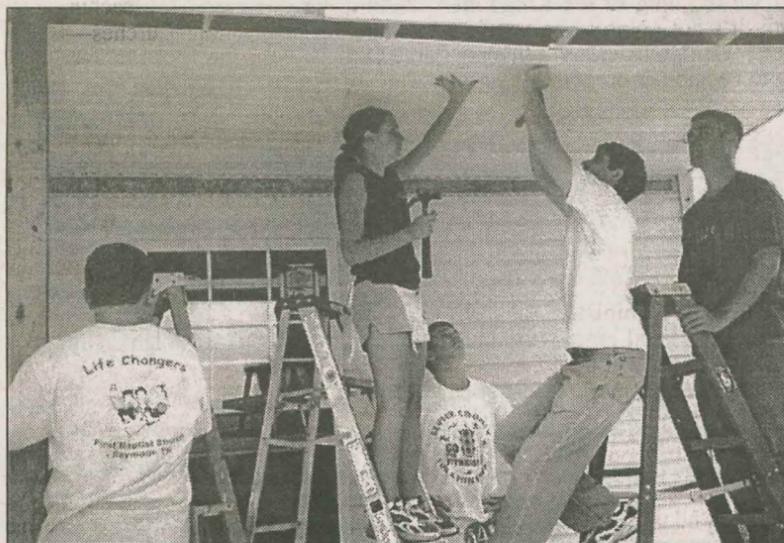
Activities range from building a wheelchair ramp for a small country church, to canvassing a neighborhood to invite children to Bible school, to assisting a free medical clinic in Henderson.

"We've had backyard Bible schools, vacation Bible schools. There were a few church repair projects and even some new facilities," Jones said. "The whole concept is to alleviate the poverty and get the gospel to people who are not receiving it, to build homes and repair homes, do evangelism ministries and discipling."

Up and down the river region, about 20 short-term projects were scheduled this summer.

Groups from as far away as Texas responded. An Arkansas group helped Sassafras Ridge Baptist Church near Hickman build a new fellowship hall. Poplar Grove Baptist Church, where Blair serves as part-time pastor, got help from West End Baptist Church in Paducah with remodeling their basement for use as a fellowship hall.

With many church groups focused



MINISTRY PROJECTS Construction work, like this project in Illinois, is one aspect of the Mississippi River Ministry, a seven-state Baptist ministry emphasis along the Mississippi River. The Mississippi Ohio Valley Evangelism program is the Kentucky-specific component of MRM. (Photo by Keith Todd)

on mission trips abroad, it's easy often to miss needs in one's own backyard, according to MRM Director Sandy Wisdom-Martin.

"The poor are the largest unreached people group living along the river. They are not in our churches," she explained. "A lot of our churches do not believe there are issues of hunger and poverty to the extent that it really exists here. They feel like the government is taking care of people with welfare, so there's no need for us to do anything. They have no idea how prevalent the problems are."

Breaking the poverty cycle

Wisdom-Martin, whose office is in the Illinois Baptist Association office building, said she has come to understand that the cycle of poverty is self-perpetuating.

"When parents spend so much of

their time working just to survive, they don't have time to impart the value of education to their children. Maybe they work two jobs and just don't have the time or energy to help their kids with homework. This is an area where our church groups can help," she noted.

While some of the churches participating in both MOVE and MRM form long-term partnerships or establish ongoing ministries, others take on one-time events.

"We had a team of Kentucky folks who went to Hillerman, Ill., to help with tornado cleanup in May. We didn't initiate it, but it is something that is part of MOVE/MRM," Blair said. "The more individual and church connections that happen the better. This is not top down where I'm telling people to do things. I'm reporting what people are doing and encourag-

ing them to do more."

With help from Kentucky Baptist churches and associations, MOVE has extended projects up to Cloverport on the Ohio River between Owensboro and Louisville.

MOVE sometimes doesn't get reports back on a project, but Jones said that's OK.

"We're not so concerned about who is getting the credit," he said. "The main thing is that God gets the glory, and needs are being met."

Developing missions at home

The 11-state Appalachian Regional Ministry is spearheading a similar attack on poverty in Eastern Kentucky. Jones envisions linking East and West with volunteers.

"If we have a church group that wants to do something and we don't have a project that matches in the MOVE region, we can direct them to a project in Appalachia," Jones observed.

Jones said the two-week summer blitz was just the beginning for what can be accomplished.

"We are strong in our mission emphasis, we're strong in evangelism and we're strong in a lot of areas. But, sometimes we don't do major mission work and ministries in our own backyard like we could. I don't know of many places in the U.S. that do it adequately. This is one of those areas where I'd like to see us grow stronger."

Jones said it doesn't have to be "either/or." It can be "both/and."

"We still have to make those overseas mission trips, and go to the uttermost parts of the earth, but we have things we can do here at home too," Jones said.

For more information about MOVE, contact Charles Blair at (270) 653-7493.

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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Beware of Harry Potter

After reading David Garrard's Aug. 5 article about Harry Potter, I knew I must respond. It is scary how many Christians are embracing these books, and especially frightening when ministers do. It disturbs me how many people the article could lead astray.

When my daughter was in second grade, her teacher read the first Harry Potter book out loud to the class. My daughter came home very upset by what she was hearing. I was glad she had enough spiritual discernment to recognize right from wrong.

I voiced my concern to her teacher. The teacher dismissed my concerns and said she could leave the room if she wanted to. My daughter did not want to leave the room, but told me she would sit with her hands over her ears and try not to listen.

The whole time this was going on she did not sleep without having nightmares. (When her teacher read the second book, my daughter and five other children chose to leave the room.)

I got the book and read it and also read "Harry Potter and the Bible" at the same time. I was very upset by what I read. In Harry Potter, kids who follow the rules are made out to be nerds. It is OK to cheat, lie and steal if you are doing it to achieve good. It is OK to be disrespectful to your teachers. Witches are shown to be good, which is just what the occult wants us to think.

The Bible teaches us to be in the world but not of the world (1 John 2:15). It also tells us to test spirits to see if they are from God (1 John 4:1). The only spirits Harry Potter embraces are those from the occult and Satan. By reading Harry Potter, children and adults are being desensitized to right and wrong; just what Satan wants.

Karen Meece
Bardstown

Gospel isn't hatred

The letter from Tom Miller of Covington in the July 22 issue requires a response to the correct misstatements that caricature Baptist preachers in general and besmirch the reputation of two in particular, namely, P.E. Taylor and me.

Miller's letter stated, "For most of my life unfortunately, I sat and served in Southern Baptist services hearing hatred toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people preached under the guise of love."

Most of his church life was spent in Madison Avenue Baptist Church of Covington while Rev. Taylor was pastor from 1948-1972, and while I was pastor from 1983-1991. During that nearly 35 years, Tom Miller "sat and served," but never did he hear one word of "hatred toward gay ... people preached under the guise of love" or in any other way.

Brother Taylor was a quiet, gentle, Christian pastor who was as nearly incapable of "hatred" as any human being could be. During my nearly nine years there, I never one time preached on homosexual activity. Others I have consulted are almost certain that Brother Taylor never did either. The subject was not an issue in those days.

Now, the issue is simply this: Is homosexual activity a sin, and does Jesus Christ have the power to save people from it? The Bible and human experience answer a resounding "Yes" to these questions.

What are you thinking?

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

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Aug. 31, 2003: End of KBC fiscal year

I am grateful for the continued strong support by Kentucky Baptists of Cooperative Program ministries and missions. This is so very important for missions and evangelism in Kentucky and around the world during this economic downturn.

At the end of July, CP Missions receipts were ahead of last year by 1.1 percent, but behind budget by 4.8 percent. Adjustments have been made in order to keep Mission Board spending in line with receipts. (Since the Kentucky Baptist Convention's fiscal year will end on Sunday, Aug. 31, it will be important for CP Missions gifts to be postmarked by the following Friday or Saturday morning if the church would like to receive credit in the 2002-03 fiscal year.)

I continue to be amazed at the extensive and effective Great Commission ministries being supported through Cooperative Program gifts. It is the faithful giving by Kentucky Baptists through their local churches

that makes all of our local, state and world ministries possible.

One of these exciting and effective ministries is the collegiate ministry that takes place on 60 campuses across

Kentucky. Twelve full-time and 12 part-time campus ministers provide ministry and outreach to more than 185,000 college students in Kentucky. This includes work with some 6,000 international students studying on college and university campuses in our commonwealth. It is a true partnership as local associations assist with program funds for collegiate ministries.

Work with Hispanics is perhaps the fastest growing missions ministry area. In cooperation with local associations and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, six full-time Hispanic missionaries now work with a growing population of more than 200,000 Hispanics in Kentucky.

There are so many other areas about which I could also glow-

ingly. I could tell you about ministries in Eastern Kentucky, the Mississippi River ministries, chaplaincy work, resort missions, literacy work, deaf ministries, metro and rural ministry centers, prison ministries and others and still not cover all of the ministries that are receiving CP support. There also are the ministries of the Kentucky Baptist Mission Board itself and the extensive ministries of KBC institutions and agencies.

Add to these the missionary work that leads to the 400,000-plus who are baptized through international churches, the work of the North American Mission Board and the 13,000-plus students being trained in Southern Baptist Convention seminaries, and you begin to see an amazing picture of what can be done through cooperation in missions.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is transforming lives because of your faithful giving. Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your heart for missions and your support of ministries and missions through the Cooperative Program!

Remarkable miracle

Probably because it was a rebuttal to a rebuttal, the recent "Baptist Forum" letter by Gene Iglehart seemed rather disjointed and confusing.

In one part he seemed to say that the biblical writers were ignorant of medical terms and simply referred to maladies as "demons." Remarkable. The Word that became flesh and through whom all things are made, Jesus, must have been equally ignorant. Just as remarkable, at the Gadarenes, this medical malady had a conversation with Jesus. After that, this talking flu was cast into swine that drowned in the lake.

I place this miracle of conversational maladies right next to drowning Pharaoh's army in two feet of water. Jesus took care of the problem by casting the demons, who were many, out of the man. Iglehart apparently would have told him to go see a shrink.

Chuck Estridge
Williamstown



FAMILY

Seek 'team' input about life's major financial issues

By Jeremy White

When will you retire? What pension option will you choose?

How will you invest an inheritance? Should you start a new business? Should you get long-term care insurance? Whom

do you consult for help?

Fortunately for Christians, we have God's counsel to help through His Word, prayer and the Holy Spirit. In addition to these, we benefit from other people God has placed around us.

Are you seeking counsel from the following consultants on your team?

■ **Spouse.** One of the best sources of counsel is a Christian spouse. By God's design, husbands and wives tend to balance each other with their strengths and weaknesses. For example, women often are more conservative than men in financial matters, such as investing or debt.

■ **Adult children.** If your children are mature adults, then they have a unique vantage point about your strengths, weaknesses and desires. They understand the immediate and extended family dynamics. They love you and want the best for you.

Keep in mind that you are not asking their permission, but seeking their counsel. It is especially important to seek their counsel if they have a professional background or knowledge base that you do not have.

■ **Church members.** The disadvantage of using only your spouse and children for counsel is that they might have a present or future vested interest in your decision. That vested interest might be emotional or financial; so broaden your circle of "counselors" to your church.

Too often people listen to the advice of acquaintances, such as hairdressers or the occasional golfing buddy. Instead, have lunch with your deacon or Bible study leader. Use them as a sounding board to let you know if you are on track biblically.

■ **Professionals.** Professionals have the advantage of technical expertise and objectivity. Consult a lawyer or a certified public accountant. Their experience with other clients going through similar decisions can help you.

As Solomon says in Proverbs 15:22, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

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



Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

'Little things' can help renew positive feelings in marriage

Q: What can I do to more effectively foster goodwill in my marriage?

In some of the most extensive research on the subject, John Gottman discovered that satisfied couples are those who maintain a ratio of five positive moments for every negative one in their relationship. How to go about getting the ratio to that level is where most of us need help.

Shirley Glass in her book, "Not Just Friends," suggests three ways to reignite positive feelings in a marriage:

■ **Be conscious that little things mean a lot.** Even slight improvements in things such as body language, affectionate gestures, giving one another space and performing small acts of consideration for each other can rekindle feelings of affection.

■ **Practice this version of the Golden Rule:** "Give unto your spouse as your spouse likes to give unto you." Your spouse will let you know his or her preferred way of receiving love by the way he or she most naturally gives it.

■ **Express appreciation.** Catch your spouse doing something good and affirm it on the spot.

Other marriage researchers point to the priority of giving attention to the well-being of the couple above the desires of either partner. In our "me" culture, couples need to focus on nurturing "us."

Most importantly, take the words of Scripture to heart in your most intimate relationship. So much of the New Testament is about treating one another with kindness, preserving unity, doing things out of love.

Consider going to marriage enrichment seminars and conferences. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's MarriageFest, held each September, is a wonderful example. For information about this year's event, visit the Web site www.kybaptist.org.—James Stillwell

Q: What should I do when my child fails?

Sooner or later, children are going to fail in some way. They might do or say something that gets them in trouble. They might bring home unsatisfactory grades. They might lose a competition or not be chosen for a team. When children fail, parents have a wonderful opportunity to teach three important lessons:

■ **Your love is unconditional.** Make sure your child knows that your love for them (and God's love) is unconditional and does not depend on their performance. You love them for who they are, not for what they do.

■ **Failure can lead to success.** Michael Jordan said, "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life ... and that is why I succeed." Encourage your child to keep working and practicing. Help your child set goals for gradual improvement and develop a plan to do better next time.

■ **Choices have consequences.** Sometimes failure results from poor choices or from lack of effort or preparation. Children need to learn that actions have consequences, and that they are responsible for their own behavior. Parents must be careful not to rescue children before this important lesson sinks in.

Winston Churchill once said, "Success is never final; failure is never fatal; courage makes the difference." With a little encouragement, parents can help their children develop the courage to keep trying, even when failure comes.—David Garrard

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@earthlink.net.



Super Saturday: What can it do for you?

Pulling into a crowded church parking lot early on a Saturday morning, Kentucky Baptists' enthusiastic response to effective leadership training is readily apparent.

Last weekend's Super Saturday church leadership conference in Louisville attracted more than 720 participants interested in gaining information and encouragement on such topics as Sunday school, discipleship training, church music and youth ministry.

Since its introduction in 1992, Super Saturday has trained thousands of church leaders in hundreds of congregations throughout Kentucky. In recent years, the conference has averaged more than 3,000 participants in a series of six regional events. In addition to the Aug. 19 training in Louisville, conferences will be held in the next few weeks in Ashland, Corbin, Lexington, Madisonville and Paducah.

Super Saturday is the brainchild of Vernon Cole, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention church growth team. Cole, who has announced his retirement effective Dec. 31, acknowledged that coordinating his final round of Super Saturday events has produced mixed emotions. While it will be difficult for him to give up leadership of the annual event, he is pleased with its ministry impact over the years.

Each year, Super Saturday leaders "keep adjusting based on the input we get from evaluations and my sense of what churches need," Cole explained.

He said primary goals have included challenging church leaders to examine the pivotal questions: "How can we do church in today's world?" and "What changes will we have to make?"

"In a dozen different ways, I hammer away at that every year," Cole emphasized. Noting that both Super Saturday and local church ministry "can always be done a little bit better," he added, "I'm always looking for that."

Current Super Saturday participants agree that the annual training event is meeting key needs among church leaders throughout the commonwealth.

"I come every year," said Don James, pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Louisville. "I hear a lot of good ideas and a lot of good material to think about."

Noting that about 20 people from his church attended last weekend's conference, James said, "It encourages our people and teachers who come. That's worth a lot."

"As a pastor," he added, "it gets me stirred up and challenged to reach for excellence."

Lisa Cromer, a member of Audubon Baptist Church in Louisville, said she frequently attends Super Saturday because "I always need to learn more. This is the best way to see all the resources and see what's new."

Describing involvement in Super Saturday training as "crucial both from the networking standpoint and from the resource angle," Cromer cited a specific example from Saturday's conference: "I got some really good, specific small church Sunday school help

which is an area I need.

"One of the most encouraging things for me was to see all the age groups of people coming here for a learning seminar," she pointed out. "To see the blending of ages is a real plus."

Whether it's a matter of attending Super Saturday to hear words of challenge and encouragement from conference leaders, view the latest church leadership resources or network with people from diverse ministry settings, the annual training extravaganza continues to meet a variety of crucial leadership needs for Kentucky Baptists.

With five more training events scheduled throughout the state in the next few weeks, why not take advantage of your opportunity to learn and grow by attending Super Saturday?

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Fakes & faith amid archaeological finds

By Steven Ortiz

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—"But wanting their ears tickled, they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:3).

The Apostle Paul wrote this warning to Timothy to guard against false teaching, but the exhortation/warning is applicable to the recent sensationalism surrounding archaeological discoveries that support the Bible.

This past year has witnessed the publication of two dramatic inscriptions supporting the New Testament and Old Testament. The first was the James ossuary, the purported bone box that held the remains of James, the brother of Jesus and bishop of the church of Jerusalem. The second is the Joash inscription purporting to recount renovations and repairs to the temple as recorded in Kings. The public and press were quick to tout these as proof of the historicity of the Bible. Recent developments in the saga have placed these objects in a dark light.

The James ossuary initially was subject to scholarly investigation and the results were presented to a conference of biblical scholars and archaeologists last November. The Aramaic inscription was analyzed by one of the

top Aramaic scholars. After the publication of this inscription, the Joash inscription also was publicized. The Geological Survey of Israel authenticated both inscriptions.

The authenticity of the Joash inscription was immediately questioned in publications in the Israel Exploration Journal. An upcoming article in Archaeology magazine will state that the James ossuary also is a fake.

There have been some recent developments. The owner of the Joash inscription and the James ossuary was arrested by the Israeli police, charged with illegally selling fake artifacts. Police found an elaborate lab used to produce fake artifacts, according to reports in the Israeli press.

If the James ossuary inscription is proven to be a fake like the Joash inscription, does this cast doubt on the historicity of the Bible?

Ironically it seems that some Christians feel that they need to support the authenticity of these inscriptions because they are defending the Bible. The proliferation of fake artifacts on the market does not say anything about the truthfulness or accuracy of the Bible. It only proves that there is a public willing to jump on the bandwagon of biblical archaeology.

The Apostle Paul constantly confronted a church that wanted to view signs and wonders instead of a reasoned faith, which was the hallmark of Paul's gospel message.

There will continue to be archaeological data that supports the historicity of the Bible and there will be artifacts that appear on the antiquities market that will be frauds.

The popularity of the "Indiana Jones" movies has conditioned people to see archaeology as glamorous with the discovery of exciting finds. Biblical archaeologists are uncovering and documenting finds that support the biblical account but it is not done by swinging with ropes while saving heroines or dodging giant rolling balls; it is done by the systematic excavation and research of the archaeological enterprise.

Unfortunately, this is too labor-intensive and financially difficult for those who want immediate gratification without the cost.

The good news is that a consortium of Southern Baptist seminaries is joining forces to establish a biblical archaeological research program in the Middle East. The work will be done by solid and reasoned scholarship, not the sensationalism of frauds and fakes.

Steven Ortiz is assistant professor of archaeology and Bible at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and director of the Archaeological Research Program

'Acteen up' in Nashville

Missionaries and ministry highlight national convention for teenage girls

By Chris Turner
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—White posts and neatly grouped chairs marked each state's territory across the sprawling floor of the Nashville Convention Center.

At first glance it looked like a political convention. But there were no Democrats or Republicans dressed in stodgy dark power suits here.

Only teenage girls, and lots of them, dressed in brightly colored T-shirts waving their hands above their heads and jumping up and down in time with the lively music.

Welcome to the National Acteens Convention, sponsored by national Woman's Missionary Union. Nearly 6,500 teen girls representing almost all 50 states and 19 other countries gathered in Nashville July 29-Aug. 1 to gain a broader perspective of God's activity in the world.

Along the way, many responded to invitations to deepen their commitment to God, including many who said they felt God drawing them into fulltime mission work. Others simply gained a realization that—wherever their lives lead—they are ambassadors for Christ.

"This opportunity helps them develop as leaders whether they go around the world or across the street," said Julie Walters, WMU communications specialist. "NAC is designed to be a time of spiritual development for the girls. This is a

once-in-a-lifetime experience that we believe will positively influence them to be on mission with God on a daily basis as they seek God's plan for their lives."

"SyncroNations 2003," the theme for the three-day convention which is held approximately every five years, was the eighth such gathering since WMU launched Acteens in 1970. Acteens is a missions organization for girls between grades seven and 12.

Kentucky contingent

Approximately 440 Acteens from Kentucky attended the conference, according to LaRaine Dail, youth and college consultant for Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

"I think they were encouraged to see so many Christian girls from around the States and the world and to be a part of that," she said.

"They were very inspired to do missions," she added. "It was just some place where they could be themselves and grow in their relationship with God."

Kentucky Acteens also gathered at Nashville's Hard Rock Café one evening for a time of fellowship.

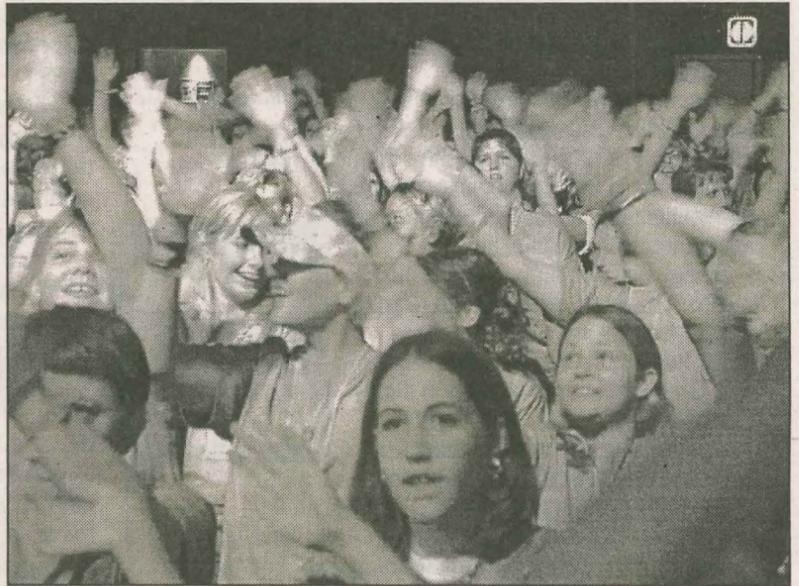
Dail said the manager at the hotel where most Kentucky Acteens stayed wrote her a letter, "thanking us for how well we behaved and stating that the girls were an excellent Christian witness."

Worship and missions

Activities ranged from worship and prayer to breakout conference sessions and missions activities.

The entire group of 6,500 participants walked five blocks from the convention center to the Tennessee State Capitol building for a prayer rally.

They also divided into groups of 100 to work in 68 elementary, middle and high schools in the Nashville area unpacking textbooks, painting, cleaning campus grounds and help-



KENTUCKY ACTEENS Teenagers from throughout the commonwealth wave during worship at the National Acteens Convention. About 440 Kentucky Acteens attended the event, July 29-Aug. 1 in Nashville. (Photo by LaRaine Dail)

ing schools prepare for the first day of classes.

"In addition to NAC being an opportunity for spiritual development it gives the girls the experience of hands-on ministry," said Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of WMU. "We believe the two combined teaches a missionary lifestyle that we pray continues for the rest of their lives."

Missions education leaders forsook lectures and canned presentations in favor of interactive walks through a "Global Village" featuring missions activities in Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Europe, Asia and North America. Missionaries from both the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and North American Mission Board served as tour guides through the village.

Missionaries' messages

During the conference's plenary sessions, missionaries underscored the missions mindset.

Greg Benno, a Southern Baptist worker in southern Africa, encouraged the Acteens to go to the nations, give money for missions and pray for unreached people out of a love for

God, not because of a conference or any other reason.

"We hope you're having a great time here, but our message more than anything is: 'Fall in love with Jesus,'" Benno said.

Benno told how in Zimbabwe one out of three people is infected with the HIV virus and at a typical high school half of the students have lost a mother or a father to HIV. Benno also reported to the girls that the average life expectancy for a 15-year-old in Zimbabwe is about 32 years.

Benno said he went to Zimbabwe as a missionary Journeyman wondering what a boy like him knew about Africa.

God said, "You don't have to do anything other than just be in love with Me and walk with Me and watch Me do amazing things before your eyes," Benno said. "That's what He always said to people in the Scriptures, 'I will do it through you.'"

Lisa Sproull, an IMB worker in Mali, shared how God works even through language barriers. She said a pastor in Mali was prepared to preach but needed an interpreter. The scheduled translator could not come, and people were eager to hear a word from the man. They brought in a man from the street to translate the pastor's message, but there was one problem: He was Muslim.

Sproull explained that the Muslim man's vocabulary did not include Christian words, but he was willing to try to translate. During the course of the pastor's sermon, the Muslim man laid out Scriptures and now is searching the Bible to see for himself if he believes it.

Vicky Smith, an IMB worker in Jordan for more than 15 years, told the teens that God has put a love in her heart for the people of Jordan, for their language and for their culture.

"These people live in darkness, and they need to know the Light," Smith told the girls. "They need to know the freedom that Jesus brings, and they need to know that they are special and God loves them."

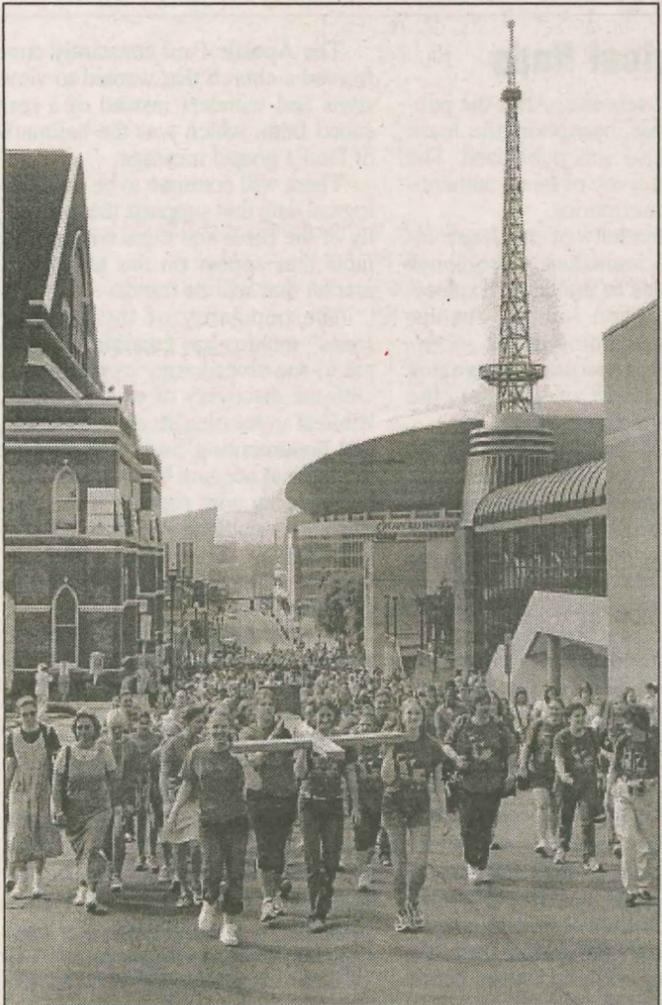
With additional reporting by Erin Curry for Baptist Press

"We hope you're having a great time here, but our message more than anything is: 'Fall in love with Jesus.'"

Greg Benno, a Southern Baptist worker in southern Africa

PRAYER WALKING

Acteens from Florida and Louisiana carry a cross July 30, leading 6,500 Acteens to the Tennessee State Capitol for a time of prayer. (BP photo by Kent Harville)



HARD ROCK PARTY Acteens from Kentucky perform an interpretive movement during a party for Kentucky Acteens at downtown Nashville's Hard Rock Café.

'Crocodile' passion can help strengthen Sunday school

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—If churches had as much enthusiasm for Sunday school as Steve Irwin does for saving wild animals, they would see increased growth, the leader of a Super Saturday workshop said.

During his discussion of Sunday school essentials, Mark LaGrone showed a short video in which Irwin, the famed "Crocodile Hunter," discussed injuries sustained while filming his popular television show.

Irwin emphasized that wildlife can't be photographed most effectively through a long lens. To teach people to love these creatures, he shows them up close.

"I love that clip," said LaGrone, minister of education at Poplar Heights Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn. "Could you not hear the Apostle Paul saying the same things when he talked about the church? It's the passion you have. People will save what they love."

"Gone are the days when we can look through the long lens of Sunday school and say, 'We've always done it that way.' Gone are the days when ministry happened just within our class. We've got to get outside the

walls and go where the people are."

Developing that kind of outlook will boost Sunday schools, said LaGrone, a consultant with LifeWay Christian Resources. He outlined four crucial areas of vision:

■ **Numerical growth.** Members of his church sometimes suggest he cares only about numbers, LaGrone acknowledged. While that isn't the whole truth, he added, numbers are a good measure of what is happening in Sunday school.

■ **Spiritual transformation.** Changing believers into the likeness of Christ is a lifelong practice, LaGrone noted. He urged workshop participants to evaluate what evidence of spiritual growth they can see in their church.

■ **Ministry experience.** Since every believer has potential for effective ministry, Sunday school should help people utilize their gifts and talents, he said.

■ **Kingdom advance and missions growth.** To stimulate individuals' spiritual growth, leaders must give them responsibility and get them involved, LaGrone said.

Encouraging church leaders to involve teachers in developing a vision for Sunday school, LaGrone suggested dividing workers into small discussion groups so they can express what

is most important to them.

A key expansion tool for enlarging Sunday school is starting new Bible study units, he said.

While that can be a painful process as people resist breaking up a familiar group, he said new classes are necessary to accommodate newcomers.

No matter what the opposition, LaGrone urged leaders to keep going. "Be so possessed by the vision, action is going to happen and it's not even optional."

LaGrone said many church members equate Sunday school with teaching. But it includes much more, he said, including evangelism, ministry, getting people involved in church, assimilating new members and building relationships.

Evangelism should come first, he said, because teachers can't reach those who aren't present.

He noted that effective outreach is difficult because it doesn't happen on Sunday morning, but during the week. Yet, studies show that one-third of unchurched people who accept Jesus as their personal Savior do so through Sunday school, he added.

Since Sunday school typically is a church's largest program, it is best suited to carry out that mission, he pointed out.

LaGrone listed teaching as the second core value in Sunday school. He said directors should set high expectations for teachers, such as tithing, attending church services and being properly prepared for lessons.

"I had a youth teacher resign recently who said, 'I don't want to spend time preparing, I just want to walk in and teach and it be good,'" he recalled. "I told him, 'It doesn't work that way.'"

LaGrone said Sunday school also plays a vital role in such areas as:

■ **Ministry.** Care groups help encourage people in need, many of whom struggle with personal relationships and other problems, he said.

■ **Getting people involved.** Giving individuals various tasks to help carry out the class mission gives them a reason to be actively involved.

■ **Assimilating new members into the church.** At Poplar Heights Church, if someone new isn't actively involved in Sunday school within three months, they often wind up going to another church, he said.

■ **Building relationships.** The world moves so fast today that people often don't take time to develop relationships, LaGrone said, noting that is one reason why Sunday school is so important.

Resources for Sunday school directors:

■ "Essentials for Excellence: Connecting Sunday School to Life" by Alan Roushton and Louis Hanks, \$5.95.

■ "10 Best Practices to Make Your Sunday School Work" by Ken Hemphill and Bill Taylor, \$10.95.

■ "Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive" by Howard Hendricks, \$12.99.

■ "Jesus on Leadership" by C. Gene Wilkes, \$10.95.

■ "Evangelism Through the Sunday School—A Journey of FAITH" by Bobby Welch, \$10.95.

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Super Saturday reflects vision for training

Continued from page 1

Leading a workshop about involving laity in a church's vision and plans, Cole highlighted the need for annual planning retreats to help plateaued or declining churches experience renewed growth.

Citing the work of California pastor Gene Wood, author of "Leading Turnaround Churches," Cole said an annual planning retreat with 35 to 50 church leaders can address the basic issue: "What great things might our church do to glorify God in the next 10 years?"

He said answers to that question can help leaders identify five key goals for the next year. Those goals, he added, should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely).

An annual cycle of intentional planning, goal-setting and ministry can make a significant difference in the life of a church, he emphasized.

"What would be the most difficult part of

doing that with your church?" Cole asked participants. Responding to concerns about time pressures and competing priorities when planning a leadership retreat, he said, "That's why you've got to bend over backwards to make it a special event for them."

The result, Cole added, is the opportunity for church leaders to help "move the church toward the desired future."

Highlighting the theme "Christ-Centered Values and Vision," the Aug. 9 conference in Louisville attracted more than 720 participants. Other Super Saturday events this year will be:

■ Aug. 16, Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

■ Aug. 23, Central Baptist Church in Corbin and First Baptist Church of Madisonville.

■ Sept. 6, Unity Baptist Church in Ashland and First Baptist Church of Paducah.

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NATIONAL NOTES

■ **"Ten Comandments judge" gets deadline.** A judge has given Roy Moore, chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, until next week to remove the 5,280-pound granite monument from the rotunda of the state court building. But Moore has hinted he might defy the Aug. 20 deadline. He already has announced plans to go to the U.S. Supreme Court to fight the ruling that the monument was unconstitutional. Groups such as the Alabama Christian Coalition that support Moore in his fight have threatened civil disobedience if authorities attempt to remove the monument.

■ **Poll: Most people back judge.** Sixty-two percent of those surveyed recently agreed with the statement that government officials should be allowed to post the Ten Commandments within government buildings. The survey, commissioned by the First Amendment Center and the American Journalism Review, also found that 68 percent of respondents said teachers leading the pledge with the words "one nation under God" were not violating the principle of separation of church and state.

■ **Former Bakker supporters get \$6.54 for \$1,000.** Supporters of televangelist Jim Bakker's former Praise the Lord ministry will get \$6.54 each as the result of a class action settlement. A 16-year-old lawsuit sought payments for the 165,000 people who joined the class action, Associated Press reported. The plaintiffs had given \$1,000 each for four-day vacation stays at a PTL resort near Charlotte, N.C., that never was built. The lawyers will get \$2.5 million of a \$3.7 million settlement fund.

■ **Whites paid to attend black church.** About a dozen white worshippers gained \$5 an hour for taking up a Louisiana minister's offer to attend his predominantly black church's worship service Aug. 3. Bishop Fred Caldwell, pastor of Greenwood Acres Full Gospel Baptist Church in Shreveport, offered the money to diversify the church. "The most racist institution on the planet is the denominational church and those of us who are born again need to cross the bridge, love one another and do what we know we need to do." Many of the whites who attended Sunday services didn't take the money.

■ **Public attitude toward Islam becoming negative.** More and more Americans perceive Islam as a religion that encourages violence, according to a new study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. According to the survey, 44 percent of Americans feel Islam promotes violence among its followers—up by 19 percentage points from March of last year.

■ **Promise Keepers holding first live conference in prison.** Promise Keepers, is holding its first live conference inside a prison this week. Organizers were expecting more than 1,000 men to attend the Aug. 12 event at the Marion Correctional Institution, a medium-security prison in Marion, Ohio. Organizers also offered the event to other prisons via Web cast. "We've received calls and e-mails from chaplains in Canada, Australia, Great Britain and across the U.S. who are interested," said Ted Padwe, technical director for Promise Keepers.

■ **Judge expands Navy chaplain case.** A district court judge has permitted a class action suit by evangelical chaplains against the Navy to be expanded based on the argument that the period of discrimination against them is longer than they first realized. The chaplains in the case, *Adair vs. Johnson*, originally thought their evidence of discrimination began in 1988, but they now believe it started in 1977. They allege that the Navy has favored liturgical Christian chaplains over nonliturgical ones.

■ **Judge backs after-school religious meetings.** A federal judge has ordered a Louisiana school board to drop its ban on religious groups meeting in school buildings during after-school hours. U.S. District Judge Ginger Berrigan of New Orleans said the St. Tammany Parish School Board's denial of a coalition prayer meeting "constitutes unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination," Associated Press reported.

Rethinking strategy

Christian conservative leaders considering where to go from here

By Mark O'Keefe
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—With such fellow believers as President Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft in office, religious conservatives have never had more friends in high places.

But a growing sense of frustration is enveloping the leadership of the political movement that began nearly 25 years ago when the Moral Majority burst onto the national scene.

A generation later, most Americans don't stand with the Christian Right. Its big agenda items have fizzled.

And as the impact the recent sweeping Supreme Court ruling that legalized gay sex sinks in, the movement is at a soul-searching crossroads.

"Obviously, in some ways, Christians are losing the culture war, certainly on this issue (gay rights)," said James Kennedy, head of Coral Ridge Ministries in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a religious broadcaster with a national following. "The time has come for us to re-examine the situation we're in."

Some see opportunity in a new battle arising from the June ruling—gay marriage. Handled correctly, strategists say, it could re-energize religious conservatives, putting them in a posture of defending heterosexual marriage instead of attacking gay rights.

There appears to be a growing consensus that the movement must find a way out of its current predicament:



LET US PRAY President Bush bows during a prayer service earlier this year with his wife and James Dobson in the background. (RNS photo)

being dissatisfied with the status quo, but reluctant to criticize it because allies control the White House and Congress.

"They're at a moment where they have to reinvigorate themselves or reinvent themselves or they'll just slowly fade away," said John Green, a professor at the University of Akron and co-editor of a new book, "The Christian Right in American Politics."

Time to criticize Bush?

A handful of national leaders, such as outgoing Family Research Council President Ken Connor, advocate a more demanding tone, even if it means criticizing Bush for not doing enough.

Connor, who left the Family Research Council July 14 for "professional and personal reasons," says fellow leaders of the Christian Right have been used, accepting rhetoric instead of results and confusing access with influence.

"They go to an East Room ceremony or a Rose Garden signing or to the White House Christmas party and say, 'Look at all the influence I have,'" he said. "In reality, they've been bought off cheap."

Paul Weyrich—head of the Washington-based Free Congress Foundation, co-founder of the Moral Majority—shares some of Connor's frustration, without criticizing a Bush.

"The president is a religious conservative. The Senate majority leader is a religious conservative. The speaker of the House and the House majority leader and the majority whip are all religious conservatives," Weyrich said. "Yet we make only marginal, incremental progress. We really have to rethink our strategy."

Justice Antonin Scalia, in his blistering dissent in the recent sodomy case, said the court's majority had decreed "the end of all morals legislation" and made gay marriage the logical next step.

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"... then all the people replied, 'Let us start rebuilding,' so they began this good work."
Nehemiah 2:18

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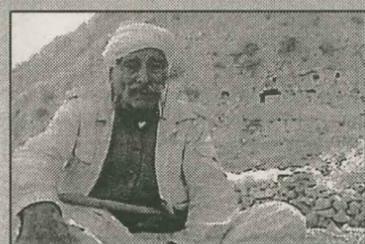
Southern Baptist workers in Iraq prepare for 46,000 food boxes

By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist workers in Iraq are excited about the expected late-August arrival of 46,000 boxes of food packed by Southern Baptist churches this past spring for hungry families in Iraq.

The workers said they are grateful Southern Baptists cared enough to send a practical demonstration of God's love to Iraqis who are struggling to put their country back together.

"I'm thrilled because I know how much the Iraqi people have suffered," a worker named Gerald said. (Baptist workers' last names are not being printed for security reasons.) "And I also know what their perceptions of Americans are, and of Christians.



PROOF OF LOVE Iraqis like this man will soon receive the 46,000 boxes of food packed by Southern Baptist churches this past spring. The 46,000 boxes are expected to arrive by boat in late August.

"To have something tangible that we can present to a Muslim family, just to say, 'We love you, God loves you and we want you to have this as a demonstration of that love,' is very significant."

In April, churches throughout the United States began filling 70-pound boxes with rice, flour, beans and other food staples. Each box will feed a family of five for about a month.

Kentucky congregations collected more than 1,500 boxes of food and another \$13,000 to buy food to be shipped.

In June, the boxes arrived at ports in Norfolk, Va., and Houston, Texas, where they were loaded into containers to be shipped overseas.

Now the boxes have left The Netherlands and are expected to arrive in the Middle East in late August to be transported overland into Iraq. Southern Baptist volunteers and other Christian co-workers will place the food boxes directly into the hands of Iraqi families in September and October.

Collecting 2.4 million pounds of food was a generous demonstration of compassion, said another worker in Iraq.

"I am very pleased and thankful for the response of Southern Baptists to the crisis in Iraq," Donald said. "It makes me proud to be Southern Baptist and for the heritage we have (that is) continuing on in this great and wonderful opportunity.

"The need for prayer is greater than ever now, as we put something tangible in Iraqi families' hands and in their homes," he added. "We now need the Lord's presence so that the message of the gospel can go forth—from generosity on that side of the ocean to the hospitality and reception of these Iraqi families—that they would receive these boxes and receive the message of Christ as well."

Workers in Iraq asked Southern Baptists to pray with them about several needs:

- The safety of the food boxes as they transit stormy seas.
- That the boxes will get into the right hands in Iraq.
- For a proper attitude in delivering the food and receptive hearts to receive it.
- For the volunteers who will help distribute the boxes.
- That the gesture would result in a network of relationships that will further God's Kingdom.
- For Jordanian Baptists who are using vacation time and personal money to reach out to Iraqis.
- For all believers who are and will be serving in dangerous places.

Controversy over James ossuary continues

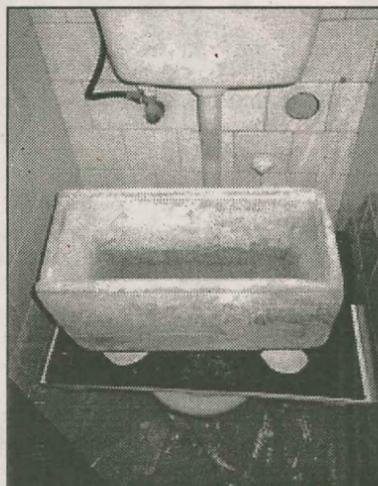
TEL AVIV, Israel (RNS)—Experts continue to clash over the authenticity of the James ossuary, a 2,000-year-old limestone burial box purported to be that of James, the brother of Jesus, that was deemed a forgery by the Israeli Antiquities Authority in June.

The debate is heating up after the arrest of Oded Golan, the Tel Aviv antiquities dealer who has been under suspicion of systematically counterfeiting relics since Israeli police discovered tools used for inscription and partially inscribed stones in his apartment. Golan, released on bail, has not been charged.

Despite the mounting evidence against Golan, a number of experts stand by his contention that the Aramaic inscription is ancient.

"I still stand by the fact that it is a genuine ossuary with a genuine inscription," Ed Keall of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, where the ossuary was on display for five weeks last winter, told Canadian Broadcasting Corporation television.

Hershel Shanks, editor of the Washington-based Biblical Archae-



GREAT DEBATE The famous "James" ossuary was discovered by Israeli police on this toilet in the attic of owner Oded Golan's Tel Aviv apartment. Antiquities authorities say the inscription linking the bone box to Jesus is a forgery. (RNS photo)

ology Review and a staunch defender of the ossuary, said the final verdict cannot be issued until the test results are published. Shanks, who is urging an international committee

be appointed to evaluate the box, accused the IAA of mishandling the matter by refusing to allow further tests after a panel of Israeli experts concluded the inscription "James, son of Joseph, Brother of Jesus" was a modern forgery.

"We're urging more tests," he said, adding that the two scientists on the panel never called the inscription a forgery. "These people haven't told us what they've done. They haven't published the results."

Scientists cited the absence of a patina, or fossilized sheen, over the inscription as evidence that it was carved in modern times. After measuring the box's oxygen isotopes, which indicate weathering, scientists concluded that the sheen over the inscription was a water and chalk paste intended to imitate ancient weathering.

But Shanks and others, including Amos Bein, the director of the Israel Geological Survey—the research institute that conducted the test—say the patina could have been rubbed off by vigorous cleaning. Golan claims his mother scrubbed the ossuary with hot water.

Could divide over faith impede U.S.-Europe relations?

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Experts on U.S.-European relations said recently that stark divides between the United States and Europe over the importance of religion might contribute to a rift over foreign policy.

At a conference in Washington last month, experts said conflicting opinions over the separation of church and state, the use of religious language by politicians and the prominence of faith in the public sphere have accentuated the diplomatic split between Europe

and America.

Justin Vaisse, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center on the U.S. and France, said France and America are at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to the church-state divide.

"The separation of church and state in France was not about shielding the church from the state—it was the opposite," he said. Whereas Americans equate freedom with the ability to practice religion openly, Europeans believe freedom is gained by confin-

ing religion to the private sphere, he said.

Craig Kennedy, president of the German Marshall Fund, an American institution fostering U.S.-European relations, said most Europeans are confounded by the eclectic nature of American religion.

But Andrew Kohut, the director for the Pew Research Center, rejected the notion that divisions over religion have real policy ramifications, saying that such differences amplify rather than cause transatlantic tiffs.

NOVEMBER 21/22, 2003

HEARTS ON FIRE

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very own Hearts On Fire Band. Our prayer is that God will use **HEARTS ON FIRE** to bless you like never before!

SMILE

See you at the fair

The archives at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children hold plenty of blue-ribbon reminders of how things used to be.

If you are a regular Kentucky State Fair attendee, you might remember the prized cattle and goats shown by children who grew up at our Glen Dale Children's Home. The kids would work year round to be able to head to Louisville and claim the top prize. Often they did just that.

Things are a bit different now, but KBHC is still a fixture at the State Fair, which kicks off Aug. 14.

Stop by and see us on Main Street Kentucky in the South Wing. You can learn how our campuses are changing to better fit the needs of the children we serve. Pick up information about our residential facilities, Family Foster Care Program, Pregnancy and Adoption Services, Independent Living program and our Cornerstone Counseling offices.

It's fitting that our booth is located on a corner of what they refer to as Main Street Kentucky, an area that is supposed to represent every nook and cranny in this commonwealth. The kids we care for come

from across the state, from cities to farmlands, from the wealthiest areas to the poorest. The majority of the children in our care are teenagers who have suffered abuse or neglect, often at the hands of their own families.

Nearly 250 children are in KBHC's care on any given day, getting help in healing. Early in the agency's history, kids came to KBHC because of their parents' deaths or inability to care for them. Today's kids come burdened with a host of society's ills, including mental, physical and sexual abuse, abandonment or the breakdown of the family.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

By taking time to stop at our booth, you can learn how to be a part of KBHC's ministry.

And it wouldn't be State Fair if we didn't have a few freebies. Pick up pencils, magnets, coloring books and more while your kids have a chance to play with toys in our booth. It's family friendly, just like KBHC.

We'll see you at the fair.

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

Thanks for the summer

By David Melber

The summer camp season is over and on record as the largest ever in Kentucky Baptist Assemblies' history. With the conclusion of the Mission Adventure Camp for boys and girls, Discovery Youth Weeks and Crossings at the Creek, we are so thankful for all God has accomplished in the lives of campers this summer. More will follow in the weeks to come regarding total faith decisions, but without question, decisions are at record levels.

At Cedarmore the demands and man-hours are numerous, and we cannot function without the service of Campers on Mission. They perform a wide range of tasks that begin early and end late each day. Ed and Wanda Lyons coordinate the volunteers. We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to them for their leadership throughout the summer. A special thanks to our Cedarmore staff for their effort during the long summer hours and their ongoing efforts now as the summer is over. I especially would like to offer my appreciation for Bert and Michelle Lacey. Bert has been serving alone in leadership since November and has served as our official director since April. For someone outside camping circles, it is difficult to understand what camp and being "on call" requires of a

family, but Bert and Michelle have done a tremendous job in leading Cedarmore. The names are too numerous to mention, but we want to say thanks to all the staff from the Kentucky Baptist Convention who contribute to their respective camps. Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood and creative ministries groups all have given their best to support camp this summer.

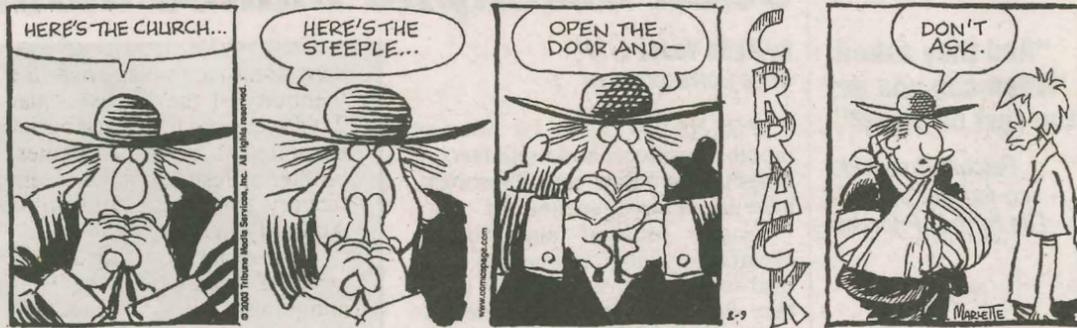
KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES

At the Creek, I am so grateful to our year-round staff who pray, prepare and then deliver first-class efforts throughout the summer. Attendance was up more than 50 percent over last year, and decisions were well in excess of twice what happened the prior year. It was truly amazing to witness what God accomplished in the lives of so many people this year. The summer program staff of 39 college and seminary students delivered efforts beyond all expectations, and I count it a great privilege to have served alongside them.

I wish to extend the invitation now for anyone to come and be amazed at how God touches so many lives through our camps. Make plans now to be a part next year. You can begin now by praying in faith that God will do exceedingly more than we can ask or imagine in the coming year.

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crossword

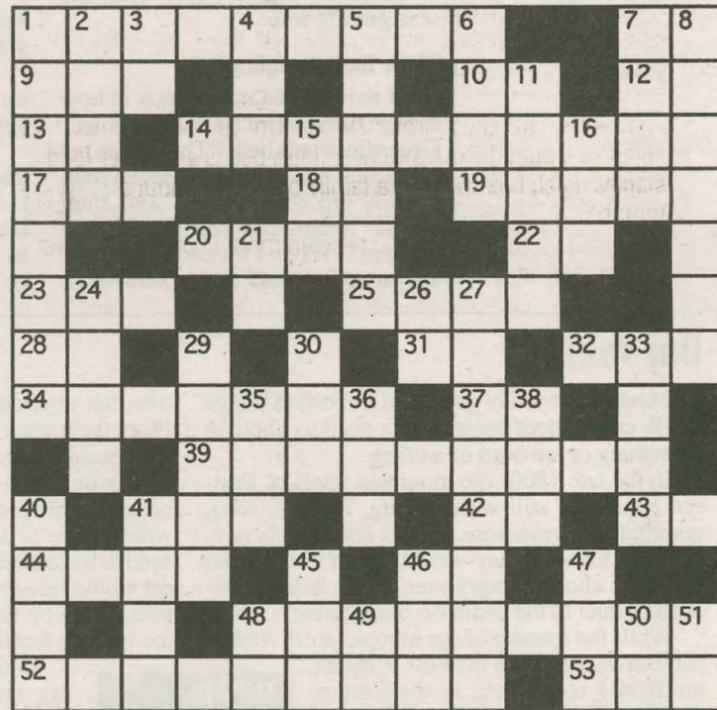
Janet Kennedy

Across

- 1 "As the _____ for silver, and the furnace for gold" (Proverbs 27:21)
- 7 Proof of who you are, abbr.
- 9 Woman's name
- 10 "Open up and say _____"
- 12 Nickel, chem. symbol
- 13 With reference to, abbr.
- 14 "The pots also, and the shovels, and the _____" (2 Chronicles 4:16)
- 17 Consume
- 18 Mountain, abbr.
- 19 Way to cook meat
- 20 "A man that beareth false witness ... is a _____" (Proverbs 25:18)
- 22 Task force, abbr.
- 23 "And pierce his ear with an _____" (Exodus 21:6 NIV)
- 25 "They sacrifice ... under oaks, and poplars and _____" (Hosea 4:13)
- 28 Compass point, abbr.
- 31 Father
- 32 "From _____ the face of the earth" (Genesis 7:4)
- 34 "She layeth her hands to the _____, and her hands hold the distaff" (Proverbs 31:19)
- 37 Tellurium, chem. symbol
- 39 "It were better for him that a _____ were hanged about his neck" (Luke 17:2)
- 41 A short time of sleep
- 42 Preposition
- 43 Californian city, abbr.
- 44 "For the _____ which is lent to the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:20)
- 46 Building cooler, abbr.
- 48 "Hide them in the clay in the _____" (Jeremiah 43:9)
- 52 "Gideon threshed wheat by the _____" (Judges 6:11)
- 53 New, prefix

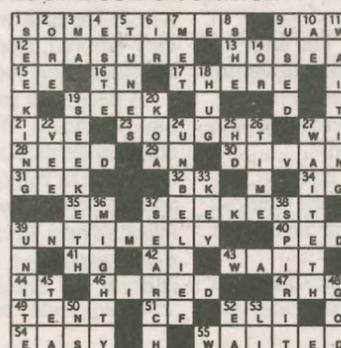
Down

- 1 "The basins, and the _____, and the bowls, and the caldrons" (Jeremiah 52:19)
- 2 A thought
- 3 Northern continent, abbr.
- 4 Nothing
- 5 "Shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a _____" (Proverbs 27:22)
- 6 Asian goat
- 7 Draws with a black liquid



- 8 "Her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the _____" (Proverbs 31:19)
- 11 Makes an owl's cry
- 15 A large Australian bird resembling an ostrich
- 16 Simpleton
- 21 "Fear not, ... arise, go up to _____" (Joshua 8:1)
- 24 "Jesus _____" (John 11:35)
- 26 Long playing phonograph record, abbr.
- 27 "Yet they had a file for the _____, and for the coulters" (1 Samuel 13:21)
- 29 To remove men from a ship
- 30 Building wing
- 33 "Come near, ... that I may _____ thee" (Genesis 27:21)
- 35 "Let him _____ his foot in oil" (Deuteronomy 33:24)
- 36 "Samuel ... arose and went to _____, and said, Here am I" (1 Samuel 3:8)
- 38 A very long period of time
- 40 "The sluggard will not _____ by reason of the cold" (Proverbs 20:4)
- 41 "He went into a city called _____" (Luke 7:11)
- 45 Make a mistake
- 46 American Cancer Society, abbr.
- 47 Noise
- 48 The temperature at which a liquid boils, abbr.
- 49 That is, Lat. abbr.
- 50 Article, Fr.
- 51 "_____ man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24)

Last week's solution



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Sock stockpile makes money & ministry opportunities

"And they asked, 'When can you get the rest of them?'"

Barbara Greenfield, co-founder of Bright Life Farm in Princeton

By Keith Todd
State Correspondent

PRINCETON—In recent months, residents and volunteers at Bright Life Farm near Princeton, have been, well, "socked" in.

Logan McNear and Tiffany Westfall say the first time they traveled to the farm to help sort socks they dreamed about socks the following night. The two were among about a dozen youth from Ditney Ridge Baptist Church near Norris City, Ill., who went to the farm to help sort socks Aug. 4.

"It's fun. You just keep sorting and sorting through a pile. Then you start on another pile," McNear said.

Bright Life Farm provides a home for developmentally or mentally disabled adults. Administrators are always looking for fundraisers and projects in which residents can stay active. Barbara Greenfield, who started the farm five years ago with her husband Harold, was told a local textile mill might donate "irregular" socks to the farm.

She didn't have a clue what she was getting into.

More than imagined

"I naively did not go look at how many they were talking about," Greenfield recalled. "They gave me a box that had a hundred dozen pair. I said 'Oh thank you,' and they asked, 'When can you get the rest of them?' When I looked at the storage area they had boxes and boxes



SOCKED IN Volunteers from Ditney Ridge Baptist Church near Norris City, Ill., sort athletic socks at the Bright Life Farm in Princeton. The surplus irregular socks from a local textile mill provide work for the disabled adults who live at the farm and money from the sale of the socks. But first, they must be sorted and matched. (Photo by Keith Todd)

and boxes of a hundred dozen pair stacked to the ceiling."

The catch is that the socks were almost all white and all mixed together.

"They gave us a trailer truck load and we're still matching socks. Most are white, they are different sizes, but they are so much alike it's work to match them. They come in three or four styles, but matching them

into pairs where they can be sold is a challenge," Greenfield said.

Selling the irregular socks has become a money-making project for the farm, but it also provides the perfect project for Bright Life residents.

"Most of the guys get so much benefit from seeing that they are earning for the farm and they get to use some of that money for themselves. Plus,

our residents gain from interacting with the volunteers who've come to help us with the sorting," Greenfield said.

According to youth leader Lora Marsh, the group was directed to Bright Life Farm when they sent an inquiry to Mississippi River Missions Director Sandy Wisdom-Martin.

Wisdom-Martin had been in contact with Charles Blair, coordinator for Mississippi Ohio Valley Evangelism, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's program connected with MRM.

After their first work day at Bright Life Farm went well, the volunteers signed up to come back several more times to help out around the farm.

Sorting it all out

The work can be tedious, but Marsh said taking on the mounds of white cotton has been fun. "When they said they had a lot of socks, they really meant it."

Working side by side, Bright Life residents and volunteers sort socks by size and style, then match and put them in packs of four pair each.

"You've got small, medium, large and extra large; you've got tube, you've got anklets, you've got footies, crew socks, the big knee socks and a few baseball socks," Tiffany Westfall observed.

The farm charges \$1 per four pair package. It is an effective fundraiser for the farm and gives churches an inexpensive source for new socks to be distributed to families who need them.

Our roots

Most of the really good and important things in life come about because of a need to improve something or are born of a crisis.

In the late 1800s the mountain feuds of Eastern Kentucky still were raging. Fathers, sons, grandfathers, grandsons, uncles and friends never knew for sure they would return home from the day's chores. Angry men might hide in ambush or duel to the death on Main Street.

While the founder of our school, James Anderson Burns, was born in West Virginia, his family roots were in the Eastern Kentucky mountains. His father had moved to West Virginia before James was born to avoid further bloodshed.

In his late teens, Burns decided to go to Kentucky. He longed to see kinfolk he had never met. Burns' father did not want him to go, but young James would not be stopped. His father had warned of the feuds and was afraid James would get involved.

Burns did return to Kentucky and soon found himself caught up in the bitter feuds. During one fight Burns nearly was killed. For three days he hid in the mountains, barely alive. God spoke to him in a dream on the third night. In Burns' words, "I was not the same—very different. The urge of vengeance was gone, and a peace reigned within. ... I dismantled my guns. My feud days were over. But I was a thousand times more determined than ever that the feuds should be stopped."

Burns did not know at the time how he was going to accomplish his dream. Not until later did he see that a Christian school teaching the love of God would be the solution.

Burns and his new friend, H.L. McMurray, a Baptist preacher from Kansas, climbed a large oak

tree that overlooked the valley here in Oneida. From the branch of that tree they decided to start the school Burns had envisioned.

It would not be a simple task. Burns would need to have a meeting with the feud leaders. They would have to share his dream. Money would need to be secured to build the building, and teachers would be needed who were committed to the idea. Little by little God moved mountains, and the feuding families agreed to try.

In the fall of 1899 Burns, McMurray and others began construction. Could they have it ready by Christmas? Cold winter weather set in, the mill up the river was broken and Burns did not have enough lumber to finish. He wanted so much to have the school ready by the first day of January.

Not often has the South Fork of the Kentucky River at Oneida frozen solid enough to drive a team of oxen across, but the winter of 1899 it did. In the distance Burns saw a man driving a team of oxen with a load of lumber. The man was Frank "Boozer" Burns, and the wood came from the loft in his house.

He crossed the ice-covered river and unloaded the wood. The men went back to work. Day and night they labored, sleeping on the wood shavings on the floor. Yes, the school would open on time.

A deep, wet snow fell the night before the first day of school. When morning came, so did the eager students; some on foot, others on mule back and some in wagons. Burns' dream had come true and his school opened Jan. 1, 1900.

Reprinted from *Western Recorder*, Aug. 4, 1998

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

Alumni receive encouragement, renewal

On Aug. 4-5, 200 guests returned to campus for the annual alumni conference. "Encouraged and Renewed" was the theme, based on Isaiah 40:31. "It is good to renew old friendships, to hear how children (for some grandchildren!) are doing and to get our spiritual batteries recharged," alumni President Bruce Newman stated.

In two messages, Kentucky Baptist Convention president and Pikeville pastor Paul Badgett emphasized the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and give priority to reaching people for Christ. "Baptists need a change in our mindset, our methodology and ministry," Badgett said. "We need a mind that is set on living 24/7 for Jesus. We now live in the 21st century and need new methods. The minister's job is to equip the person in the pew for ministry."

Theme interpretations came from KBC Director of Leadership Training Richard Adams, a 1979 alumnus, and 1973 graduates Bob and Oakie Blevins, retired missionaries to Namibia. "Leaders must learn how to slow down, learn from the hits, leave the hurts behind and bounce back," Adams said. "Listen with your heart, because if you lose

the heart you lose the ministry." The Blevins' described the pilgrimage of following God's leadership through conversion as adults, working with young churches in Ohio, developing leaders in Africa and buying a closed bar that now houses a growing church.

Graduates from six decades heard an inspiring testimony from 1983 alumnus Doyle Dunn. He recently completed a tour of duty as chief chaplain on the USS Harry S. Truman in Operation Iraqi Freedom. A film clip showed an on-board baptism of a sailor. 1963 alumnus Edgar Perry and his daughter, Debbie, came from Arizona. Debbie was an infant when Edgar was a student. The Monday night crowd heard Edgar sing "How Great Thou Art" in Apache.

New alumni officers are President Tommy Floyd (a 1989 graduate from Kentucky); Vice President Bobby Slagle (1974, Indiana); Secretary Beth Wyatt (1975, Kentucky); Treasurer Greg Humpert (1990, Kentucky); and Assistant Treasurer Barry Proctor (2001, Kentucky).

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Play ball! (Nicely)

Christian baseball league offers 'godly' way to teach sportsmanship

By Bruce Nolan
Religion News Service

NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—Jarvis Martin, a Witness, started off wobbly, walking the Prophets' lead-off man, Dustin Rigsby, then letting Rigsby take second on a wild pitch.

A drizzle pattered on a few umbrellas as darkness began to creep over Lafreniere Park in Metairie, La., on a recent late July evening.

Parents shouted encouragement to their 10- and 11-year-olds.

So did the coaches, each wearing an identical yellow shirt, no matter his team affiliation, to signal his allegiance to all the kids equally—to the Prophets and Witnesses, the Disciples, Believers, Overcomers and other teams in the Good Sports Christian Baseball League, a private baseball league of more than 100 evangelical Christian families just ending its first season.

Born of a low-grade dissatisfaction with competitiveness, rough language and the occasional beer-in-hand of some parents, the Good Sports Christian League offers a godly alternative, its members say.

It is baseball with its competitive

fires well tamped, lots of cross-dug-out encouragement, pre- and post-game prayer, and baseball skills taught by dads who have passed muster by securing letters of recommendation from their pastors.

That's a credential that counts in this group. The league is made up exclusively of parents who have signed a statement of faith.

Christian environment

For some charter members of the league it is a haven of sorts.

Many are home-schoolers, deeply devout parents who opted out of public education to teach their children in home environments tailored to their religious beliefs.

"The parents, the coaches, the environment, it's all God-based. The coaches pray with the kids before and after the game. I'm very happy with it," said Rebecca Cotton, who hauls three children to practice and games three times a week.

Good Sports is nothing if not supportive. Praise is lavish, awards frequent and pressure forbidden.

Because of its noncompetitive nature, Good Sports has attracted a whole league of relatively inexperi-



GOOD SPORTS Members of the Good Sports Christian Baseball League pray with coach Chris Arceri (right) before a game in Metairie, La. (RNS photos by Matt Rose)

enced players whose parents had held them out of public playgrounds.

Teaching the strike zone often comes with little Christian homilies that coaches offer off little blue cards distributed to the kids. "The Word of God, the Bible, is as necessary to life as bats are to baseball," said one.

Good Sports was born last fall, when Chris and Lisa Arceri became increasingly concerned about their eldest son's football experience at a local playground.

A handful of parents—no more—seemed a little over the top at the playground, a little too fiery in their bleacher exhortations for Mrs. Arceri's taste. Then there was the beer. It wasn't sold at playgrounds, but some families tailgated nearby and would bring a can into the stands, and that made the Arceris uncomfortable.

But what tore it for the Arceris was the coaches' language—just one coach, really, they said.

It wasn't blistering—"it wasn't the 'f-word' or anything like that," Mrs. Arceri said. But she said it contained a solid dose of middle- and lower-level profanity uttered not in anger, but as ordinary locker room discourse he

told them felt as appropriate to football as helmets.

As a result, the idea of an alternative league began to form, especially with Arceri, a long-time coach and self-professed baseball nut.

An idea grows

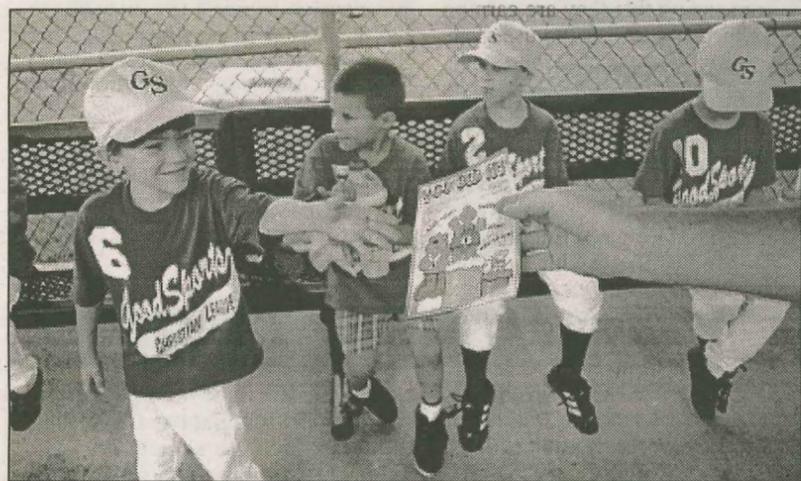
The Arceris reached out first to other families in their network of home-school acquaintances. Those people began telling other people, particularly at local churches. By spring they had a league with 14 teams, 30 coaches and 150 players ready to be formed in Christian character and the art of the bunt.

Now, with the first baseball season ending, there is talk of trying basketball in the fall; another season of baseball next year seems definite, Arceri said.

With the evening's play done, parents folded up their chairs and shepherded uniformed kids back toward their vans.

"I like this," said Doug Greengard, father of two Good Sports. "They learn to play, there's no pressure, and when the game's over the coaches gather them around to pray.

"That comforts me."



POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT Jordan Kelley, 5, receives a good sportsmanship award, given to three members of each team in the Good Sports Christian Baseball League. In the league, praise is lavish, awards frequent and pressure forbidden.

Church thanks God, 16-year-old & Hobby Lobby for building

BRANSON, Mo. (BP)—Pastor Larry Craig still finds it hard to believe.

"It was like God said, 'You tried and couldn't do it. Now let me show you what I can do,'" said Craig, who has served at Skyline Southern Baptist Church in Branson, Mo., the last five years. "We're still in awe of what has happened."

Craig and the church had tried every way imaginable the last two and a half years to purchase a vacant theater in Branson. The Skyline congregation had outgrown its building, but the asking price for the new site—as much as \$2.5 million—was too high.

The Branson church had all but given up last year after numerous purchase attempts had failed.

"I finally told the church that we have tried this long enough," he recalled. "So we just started planning for three services and three Sunday schools. I told them I guess God wants us to stay right here."

That's when God stepped in, with the help of a teenage girl.

A child shall lead them

A 16-year-old member was a waitress last year when a customer asked her about her church affiliation. She told him about the growing church that couldn't afford a new building. The man said he might be able to help and got the church's phone number.

Craig said the man called the church the next day and talked for several hours.

"He called back several days later and said if the current owners will agree to a fair marketable price, he believed they could purchase the property for us. And they did.

"Within six months the deal was completed," Craig said. "It was 3 p.m. on Dec. 31 that lawyers called and said the deal is done. We took possession that evening and had our first service in the building Jan. 1."

So who was the stranger in the restaurant?

"He was a best friend of David Green," Craig said, "founder and president of Hobby Lobby."

Craig said he still finds it difficult to believe what has happened.

"I know now that they have helped other churches, too," he noted. "We

didn't seek them out. We didn't even know they existed when it happened."

Hobby Lobby is a chain of stores specializing in home accessories, picture framing and other arts and crafts. Based in Oklahoma City, the company has 307 stores in 27 states. It is involved in several ministries and the front page of its Internet site, HobbyLobby.com, features a prayer for America by Christian author and pastor Max Lucado.

Since moving into the theater building, Skyline's Sunday morning attendance has shot up to about 650.

"I just preach Jesus and apply that to life," Craig said. "I'm a simple person, but I believe people understand the clarity of God when it is brought simply."

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Missionaries are seeking space for a reading room/library in a refugee camp in Rome, Italy. Many of the young men in the camp are well educated, missionaries write. "Pray for them to see their ultimate need of Jesus Christ in their lives."

■ Praise God for the ministry of Green Valley Baptist Association teams in Frankfurt and Kaiserslautern, Germany, last month. They did light construction, and led revival services and vacation Bible school.

■ The desire of missionaries and nationals to begin Baptist work in Shumen, Bulgaria, where there is no work among the ethnic Bulgarians or the many Muslims who live there.

■ Give thanks that more than 200 Russian-speaking residents in Belgium attended a recent "Russian Friend Day" sponsored by Baptists.

■ Missionaries in Khabarovsk, Russia, as they focus on a major church planting effort there.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ ALBANY—Green Grove Missionary Church recently honored **Ron Jones** for five years as pastor.

■ BARDWELL—Mississippi Church recently called **Mark Burnett** as pastor.

■ CECILIA—Cecilia Church recently ordained **Kenneth Hayden, Leroy Hazelip, Buddy Miller, Don Morgan** and **Bob Owsley** as deacons.

■ EARLINGTON—First Church called **Bobby Sellers** as pastor effective Aug. 3. He previously was pastor of Olive Branch Church in Hanson.

■ FISHERVILLE—Parkland Hills Church will host "Let Your Light Shine" revival services Aug. 17-21, with **David Livingston** as evangelist. **Mark Swan** is pastor.

■ GREENSBURG—Greensburg Church hosted "Back to School Day" July 27, honoring employees of the Green County board of education with a gift and a time of prayer. **Michael Carter**, president of Campbellsville University, was guest speaker. **Ferrill Gardner** is interim pastor.

■ HAGERHILL—Liberty Church recently ordained **Bob Collins** to the gospel ministry and called him as pastor.

■ HICKORY—Liberty Church recently called **Steve Gorman** as minister of music and education. **Wayne Berry** is pastor.

■ HOPKINSVILLE—First Church recently called **Betsy Glover** as

weekday ministries director. **Rodney Travis** is pastor.

■ LIVINGSTON—Pleasant Run Church recently ordained **Henry Morris** as a deacon. **Wayne Henson** is pastor.

■ LONDON—**Gary Messer** recently resigned as pastor of Arthur Ridge Church.

First Church recently honored **Jerry Wright** for 20 years as minister of music. **Terry Lester** is pastor.

■ MARION—**Tommy Hodge** recently resigned as pastor of Crooked Creek Church.

Deer Creek Church recently called **Jamie Baker** as pastor.

■ MAYFIELD—High Point Church will honor former pastor **James Tharp** and his wife, **Alvina**, Aug. 24 for more than 50 years of ministry. Tharp, who was pastor of High Point Church for more than 30 years, retired

in 1982. Activities will include an 11:30 a.m. worship service, lunch and 1:30 p.m. recognition service. For information, call (270) 247-3106.

■ UTICA—Mount Carmel Church will host homecoming services Aug. 17, 11 a.m., with **Steve Thompson**, Kentucky Baptist Convention executive associate, as guest speaker. Other activities include a noon meal and 1:30 p.m. song service with **New Heart. Frank Benton** is pastor.

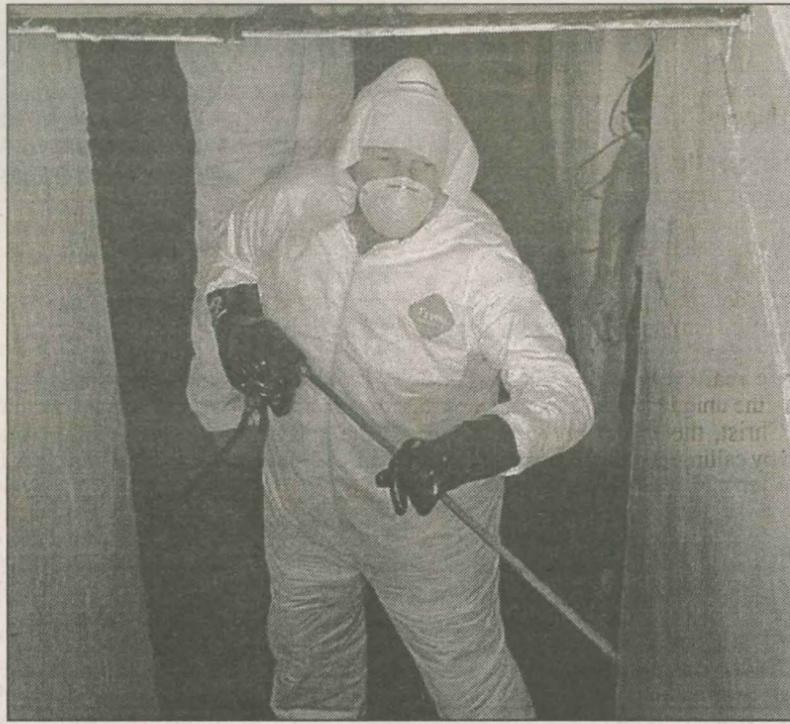
■ WEST VAN LEAR—West Van Lear Church called **Chris Caudill** as pastor.

What's going on?

Send your happenings to Mountains to the Mississippi. Mail: Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6474. E-mail: wesrec@earthlink.net.



DISASTER RELIEF Twelve Kentucky disaster relief volunteers served in Kokomo and Delphi, Ind., recently. The workers performed "mud-out" duty July 15-26 after flooding in the area. **Right:** Bill Jackson, a member of First Baptist Church of Cannonsburg, uses a pressure washer to clean the walls of a basement. **Above:** Drywall, insulation and other debris sit outside a house where volunteers have removed water-damaged building materials. Damage was widespread in three cities. Workers from Indiana, Ohio and North Carolina also served. "Volunteers are now going back in to help these families rebuild," said Larry Koch, director of Kentucky Baptist Convention disaster relief. For information about volunteering, call (888) 254-5720.



Coalition divided over 'biblical' tax hike

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (RNS)—The Christian Coalition of America has endorsed Alabama Gov. Bob Riley's tax plan after the group's state affiliate rejected it.

A conservative Republican and Southern Baptist, Riley proposed a \$1.2 billion tax plan that would raise taxes for the wealthiest families and relieve the poor.

In a statement Aug. 6, Roberta Combs, president of the Christian Coalition of America, said she supports Riley's tax plan. But Alabama's Christian Coalition, which opposes the plan, called Cobb's statement a "dramatic departure" from the organization's core views.

"We maintain that poor stewardship got us into this financial mess and the biblical principle of good stewardship will get us out," Alabama Christian Coalition chairman John Giles said in a statement.

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

SEEKING: Bilingual minister for Hispanic migrant ministry in Western Kentucky (Paducah area). Primary responsibility is to lead Sunday morning Bible study and worship service for 20-30 Spanish-speaking men. Ministry is seasonal (August to November). Pay based on experience and number of Sundays available. Weekend lodging available. Send resumé to: West Union Baptist Association, 2541 Olivet Church Road, Paducah, KY 42001. For more information, call Marty Brown at (270) 224-2465.

SEEKING: Two positions: Pastor and part-time youth minister (paid position; grades 6-12) for Mexico Baptist Church in rural western Kentucky. Average Sunday school attendance: 135. Send resumé to MBC Pulpit Committee or Youth Council, 175 Mexico Road, Marion, KY 42064, Attn: James Penn (pastor) or Brent Highfil (youth minister), or call (270) 965-2149. turnerchandler@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Full-time worship leader for Eastside Baptist Church, Richmond, Ky. Eastside averages 141 in Bible study, 221 in worship and 139 in New Community on Wednesday night. For more information, you may phone or e-mail Pastor Virgle Grant at (859) 624-9646, vgrant@eastside-baptist.com.

SEEKING: Full- or part-time pastor to care for a flock of 70-80 average Sunday morning attendance. This seeker-sensitive, mission-minded church (affiliated with SBC and Enterprise Association) is calling a flexible, versatile individual who loves the Lord and is prayerfully seeking a way to serve God in a growing church. If interested, please send resumé to: Search Committee, Fitzpatrick Baptist Church, PO Box 410, Prestonsburg, KY 41653.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Locust Grove Baptist Church, located in Trigg County, Ky. New, 10,000-square-foot facility just built after fire; rural area, but potential growth in area from unchurched. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Locust Grove Baptist Church, 73 Locust Grove Church Road, Cadiz, KY 42211.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Pioneer Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, Ky. Morning service attendance running approximately 60 to 80. Please send resumé to: Jackie Major, 315 Robb Road, Harrodsburg, KY 40330, or phone (859) 865-4447.

SEEKING: Part-time youth pastor for Canton Baptist Church. We are located on Lake Barkley near Murray University and Mid-Continent College. Please send resumé to: Canton Baptist Church, 423 Boyd's Landing Road, Cadiz, KY 42211. No unmarried candidates please.

SEEKING: Minister of recreation and outreach for Harrodsburg Baptist Church. Manage and expand Christian activities ministry, designed to reach people for Christ; minister to people in His name; and provide opportunities for fellowship and service. New gymnasium available Dec. 1. Contact Bob DeFoor at (859) 734-2339, or send resumé to: PO Box 286, Harrodsburg, KY 40330.

SEEKING: Jamestown First Baptist is seeking a full-time student pastor. Undergraduate education required. Forward to: Youth Search, JFB, PO Box 308, Jamestown, KY 42629; jfb@duo-county.com.

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 Ormdorf Mill Road, Olmstead, KY 42265.

SEEKING: West Broadway is accepting applications for administrative assistant. Knowledge of MS Office and prior church-related experience preferred. Send resumé with salary requirements to: Personnel Committee, West Broadway Baptist Church, 8420 Six Mile Lane, Louisville, KY 40220.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to children for First Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg, Ky. Experience in children's ministries preferred; pay commensurate with position. Please send resumé to Children's Minister Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 107, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342.

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Evangelicals' point man

Haggard wants evangelicals known for what they're for, not against

By Steve Rabey
Religion News Service

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (RNS)—Ted Haggard, the president of the National Association of Evangelicals, says most evangelical Christians are humble, kindly and godly folks, but that's not always how they're perceived.

"For many people, the stereotypical image of an evangelical is a very serious old man with an expensive suit who is against whatever is happening that day," said Haggard, a relaxed and smiling 47-year-old who could easily pass for 37. He was named NAE president in March.

Haggard admits that enhancing the image of evangelicals, those theologically conservative Christians who often are socially and politically conservative to boot, will be a big challenge. But he rarely thinks small.

New Life Church, the independent charismatic congregation he founded in his Colorado Springs basement in 1985, now has 9,200 members and plans to break ground on a 12,000-seat worship center next year. The church also is home to the World Prayer Center, a support base for missionary activities, and the Association of Life-Giving Churches, a network of about 250 mostly Pentecostal and charismatic congregations.

Haggard is trying to gain respect for evangelicals nationwide in much the same way he has helped his congregation grow—by focusing on essentials like salvation, Jesus and the Bible instead of divisive side issues, and by trying to love people into heaven rather than scaring the hell out of them.

"Evangelicals are in a period of transition," said Haggard, who will serve as NAE president until he is voted out. "We're moving from be-

ing defined by what we're against to being defined by what we're for.

"We support civil liberties, personal freedom, women's rights, the dignity of the individual, representative government and other ideas that came out of Christian theology 400 years ago. Now we have to articulate those values again as we face struggles with Islamic culture."

The NAE is in a period of transition as well. Since 2000 the organization has lost some of its key members, such as the National Religious Broadcasters; seen a downturn in funding; and endured the resignation of former President Kevin Mannoia. But membership and funding are up this year.

"We're resurrecting the organization," Haggard said.

A kinder, gentler tone

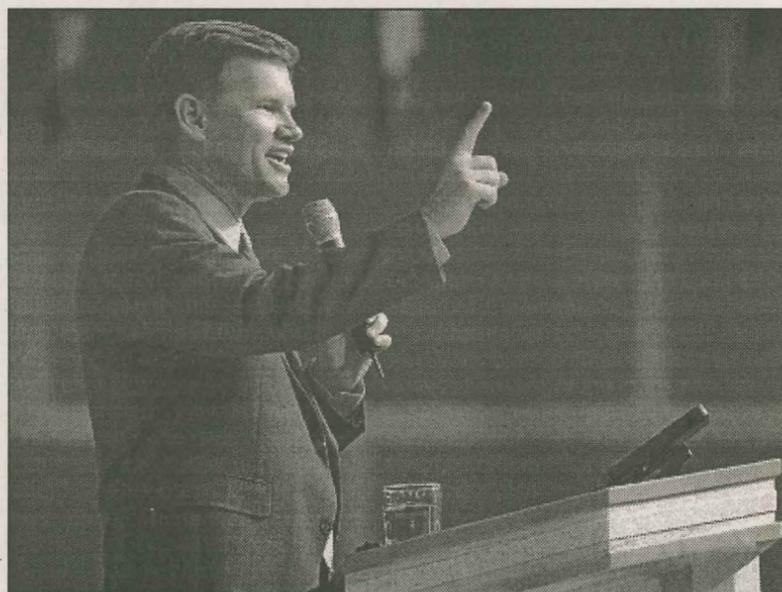
Haggard debuted his kinder and gentler evangelicalism at a May 7 forum on Islam that was co-sponsored by the NAE, an organization that represents 51 denominations with 43,000 congregations and about 250 "parachurch" organizations.

While reaffirming evangelicals' belief in the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ, the forum broke new ground by calling on evangelical leaders like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Franklin Graham to tone down their inflammatory anti-Islam rhetoric.

"The impression one gets is that Ted Haggard, in his theology and his tactfulness, is more the son of Billy Graham than Billy Graham's son is," said Martin Marty, a leading church historian from the University of Chicago, referring to Franklin.

Haggard himself invokes the image of Graham, the globe-trotting evangelist who first gained national attention with his 1949 Los Angeles crusades and remains many Americans' favorite evangelical.

"My dad was a liberal Presbyter-



TED HAGGARD The pastor of the 9,200-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., became president of the National Association of Evangelicals earlier this year. Haggard says he wants to break down the stereotypical images of evangelicals, those theologically conservative Christians who often are socially and politically conservative, who often are seen as "against whatever is happening that day." (RNS/Colorado Springs Gazette photo)

an who served the church all his life but never heard the gospel message until he heard Billy Graham on the television," Haggard said. "If Billy Graham had started by talking about the evils of liberalism in the Presbyterian church, my dad never would have heard the gospel. But instead, Billy Graham explained how wonderful it is to be born again."

Haggard grew up in Indiana and graduated from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Okla., before serving as a youth pastor at a Baptist church in Baton Rouge, La. In 1984 he and his wife, Gayle, visited Colorado Springs, where Haggard spent three days praying and fasting. He says God told him to start a church where people could worship freely. Today New Life is the largest congregation in Colorado and one of the fastest-growing churches in the United States.

Haggard is winsome, but he's not wishy-washy. And he's less concerned about being popular than he is

about carrying out Christ's command in the Gospel of Matthew to "make disciples of all nations."

Unity & the Great Commission

"I am not a peace-at-any-cost guy," he said. "I have core convictions. I am an activist and an advocate for the things I believe. But I am absolutely convinced ours is the first generation that has a realistic opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission (of making Jesus known to every person). And the only way that can happen is if we do it together. Which is why I have great hope and enthusiasm for the future of the National Association of Evangelicals. I know Christians cannot successfully fulfill the assignment given to this generation if we're separated from one another."

Haggard would like to see more evangelical congregations adopt New Life's "free market" approach to small groups. The church has 850 home groups organized around members' interests.

"Instead of some religious intelligentsia determining that everyone should study the book of Hebrews, we believe in the priesthood of the believer," he said. "So there are some groups based around Bible study and others based around motorcycling, fly-fishing or dog training. The law of supply and demand means that if there is a demand for 70 women's groups, there will be 70 women's groups."

And after the recent Supreme Court decision reversing a Texas sodomy law, Haggard is more convinced that evangelism is a better way to change the moral tone of America than legislation.

"The court's decision accurately reflected the direction Western civilization is going without divine revelation," he says, "and it highlights the need for churches to do a better job of reaching the lost."

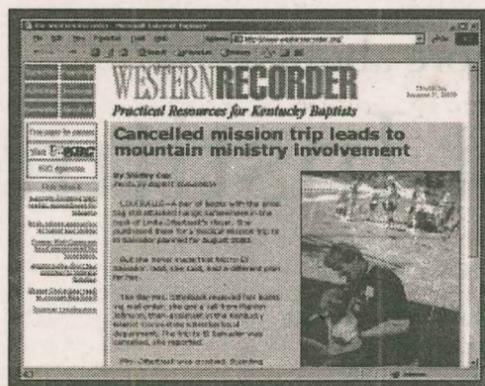
"Every Christian has a responsibility to be involved in government, but our primary responsibility is to help people submit their lives to Scripture and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

"We're moving from being defined by what we're against to being defined by what we're for."

Ted Haggard, president of the National Association of Evangelicals

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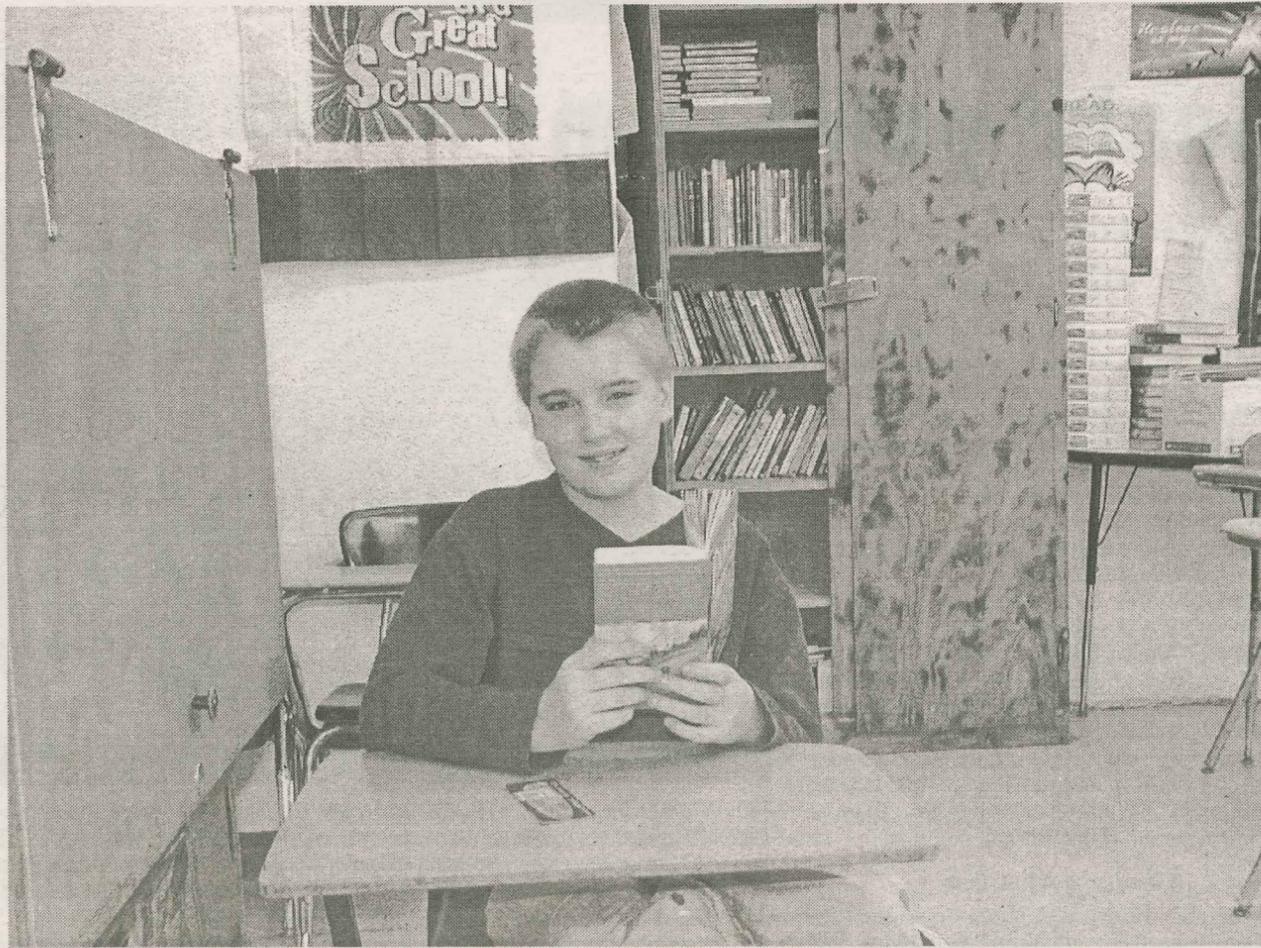
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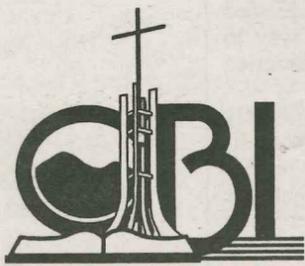


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