PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

August 26, 2003
Vol. 177, No. 33

Cross Over
Kentucky
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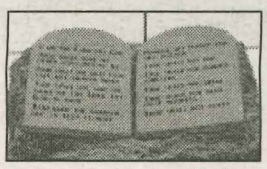

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Poll: Slight majority favors amendment to define marriage

WASHINGTON (RNS)—More than half of adult respondents in an Associated Press poll released last week said the issue of homosexual unions might affect their vote in the next presidential election. A majority also said they would support a law or constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

The issue became a subject of national debate in June when the Supreme Court threw out a Texas anti-sodomy law as unconstitutional.

The poll showed that a small majority of respondents, 52 percent, would support a law prohibiting same-sex marriage.

Fifty-four percent said they would favor a constitutional amendment defining marriage strictly as a union between a man and a woman.

A substantial constituency, 40 percent, expressed a willingness to accept laws allowing civil unions, AP said. A similar number, 42 percent, said they would oppose any laws or amendments that would make gay marriage impossible.

More than half of those surveyed also said the issue could influence the way they vote in the next presidential election. Forty-four percent said they weren't as apt to vote for someone who favored civil unions between gay people, and 49 percent said they felt the same way about candidates who support gay marriage. Only about 10 percent said they would more likely vote for a candidate who backed the unions.

Baptist Builders

Ministry duo help connect churches with volunteers

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

HORSE CAVE—In the Central Kentucky town of Horse Cave, people recognize John and Vicky Edwards.

Often they'll say, "You're the folks who built a home like the Amish—but you're not Amish."

That gives the Edwardses an opportunity to describe the miracles that led to their house on 1.5 acres, adjacent to his sister's 45-acre farm.

They recount how as soon as they made an offer on the property, a neighbor of their home in Ashland offered to buy their home there, before they advertised it for sale.

Then, when they discovered their aging house in Horse Cave couldn't be remodeled, how dozens of Kentucky Baptists helped them build a new one.

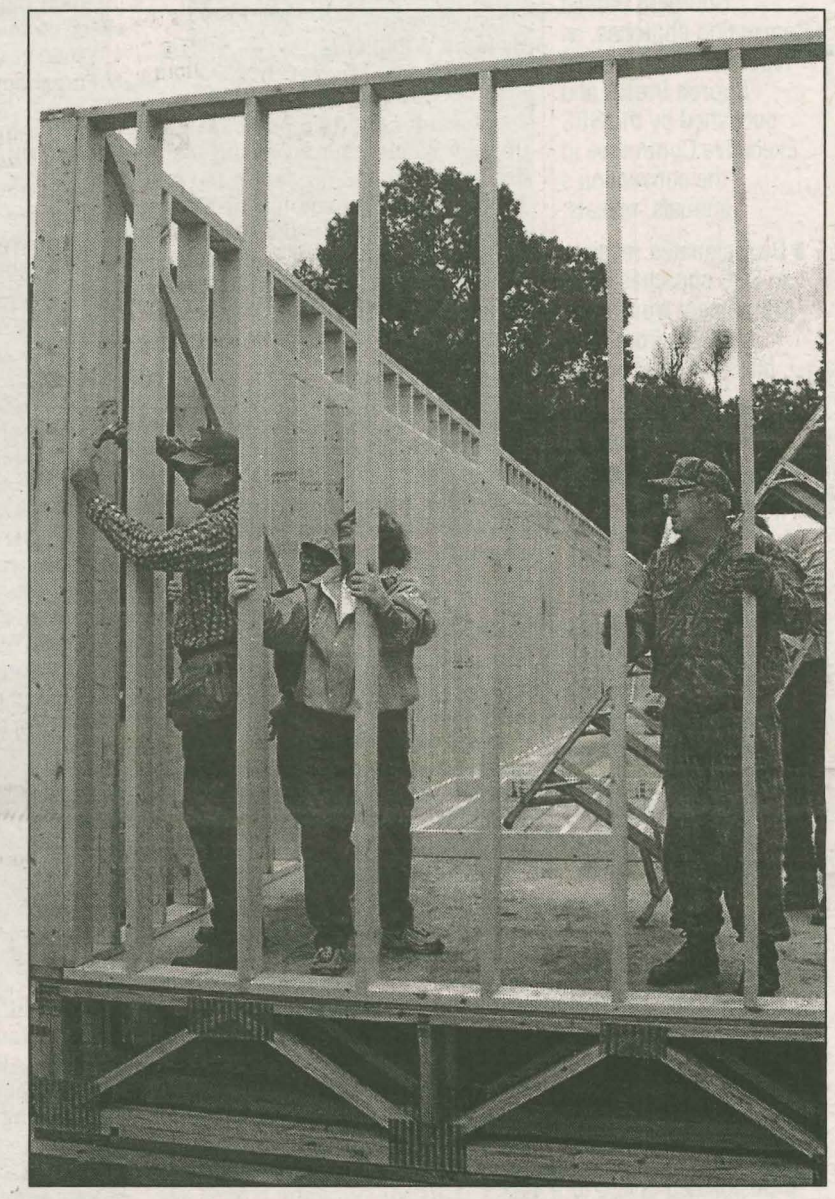
And how today, as coordinators of Kentucky Baptist Builders, when they hear about a need for a volunteer construction team, they soon get another call from someone willing to help.

"This year, God has manifested His Spirit all over the place," said Edwards, who with his wife recently celebrated their second anniversary as Mission Service Corps workers. "We haven't had to campaign for teams. We've had people from out of state calling us."

Eric Allen, director of Mission Service Corps for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said the Edwardses are among 125 MSC workers connected to Kentucky.

The state convention simply

❑ *See Ministry duo connects ..., page 3*



VOLUNTEER CONSTRUCTION *Workers from Mississippi raise the stud frame for the new building for Corinth Baptist Church in Corbin. Volunteers from Alabama and South Carolina also have worked on the new sanctuary, which replaces one that burned two years ago. Kentucky Baptist Builders coordinator John Edwards estimates that volunteer labor has saved the church at least $165,000. (Photo by Vicky Edwards)*

Privacy law puts wrinkle in hospital visitation for some pastors

LOUISA—Ric Frazier hates missing a visit to someone who's in the hospital.

As pastor of First Baptist Church of Louisa, Frazier considers a major part of his ministry being there for those who are ill, hurting and even dying.

"It breaks my heart to miss my people who could use that spiritual encouragement," he said.

But Frazier said a new federal law that protects personal information for medical patients is costing him time and ministry opportunities.

"It is absolutely a hindrance to ministry," he said. "They are so fearful in these smaller hospitals of lawsuits ... that they have absolutely shut down information."

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which went into effect nationwide in April, eliminates all public access to personal health-care information.

The act applies to health-care providers, health plans, public-health authorities, employers, life insurers, schools and universities. Officials say the rules balance the use of information with protecting patient privacy.

Previously in many hospitals, approved clergy could view a list of all patients (except those in the psychological ward). Pastors could be assured of visiting everyone from their church in one stop. Now, pastors no longer have access to a master list.

Ted Hodge, director of pastoral care at Baptist Hospital East in Louisville, said the new rules haven't affected their policies much. That facility asks entering patients if they have a church affiliation or would like a visit from a chaplain of a specific denomination.

"These rules are handed down and they're intended to help people but they may be interpreted more strictly or loosely, depending on the particular hospital," Hodge said. "If you want your pastor to visit, you ought to let him know."

Frazer noted that some hospitals give out information only about specific patients who clergy already know are there. Some hospitals are unreasonably strict, he added.

"If I have a nickname, (or) if they go by a middle name and I don't know their first name, I'm at a loss," Frazier said. "It creates multiple trips to the hospitals, and there are folks who will be in and out of the hospital before I know it."

Frazier said he understands the needs for professionalism and confidentiality. "But I also know ... there have been church members in adjacent rooms in the same hospital and I have missed them."

Some senior adults are reluctant to request a visit, he added, because they fear being a burden.

"They don't want to bother me, but that's what a pastor is (for), and if we don't meet the need, physically and emotionally, how can we be a pastor? We'll be a mere preacher."

Al Hall, a Baptist and chaplain at St. Anthony's Hospital in St. Petersburg, Fla., said the regulations can help build better relations between congregations and pastors.

"It's important enough that a pastor needs to say something about it from the pulpit," Hall said. "Things have changed. We have a responsibility as an institution to protect our patients."

Bruce Lampert, chaplain of Hendrick Health Systems in Abilene, Texas, said patients now have total control over whether or not the church knows they are in the hospital.

Frazier said he hopes that enough pastors can inform Congress of the barriers to ministry that now exist to get the law modified. "The solution's going to have to come from an outcry from the grassroots."

Compiled from reporting by News Director David Winfrey and by Hannah Lodwick and Jenny Hartgraves of Associated Baptist Press

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, August 27

Financial squeeze

State conventions' CP percentages continue to drop

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

The amount of money flowing through Baptist church offering plates has increased 112 percent in the past 15 years, but the amount of money churches give to missions causes has increased at only half that rate.

An analysis of financial data reported by Southern Baptist Convention churches shows congregations nationwide are sending smaller percentages of their undesignated offerings to the Cooperative Program unified budget. That budget funds both state and national mission programs and ministries.

In Kentucky, convention leaders adopted a zero-growth CP budget earlier this year for the 2003-04 fiscal year. Lowell Ashby, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention business services team, cited local churches' declining CP percentages as a primary factor.

Nationally, designated giving to special missions offerings also has increased at only half the pace of increases in undesignated giving to church causes.

This is a trend found not only among Baptists, explained Sylvia Ronsvalle, executive vice president of empty tomb, a Champagne, Ill., ministry devoted to increasing awareness of missions funding needs.

"These trends are common to the church in the United States," she said. "Churches seem to be turning inward. They seem to be emphasizing the comfort and happiness of members over the transformation of those members."

Church challenges

So what's going on? Are churches simply hogging more money for themselves while mission boards freeze appointments?

It's not that simple, according to several analysts.

"I personally feel Baptists' commitment to missions is as strong as ever, but it has been influenced by other factors," noted Clay Price, research director at the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Price has monitored these giving trends across three decades of denominational employment.

First, Price said, "as the education level of pastors and church staff has increased, so has cost of salaries and benefits."

"As local expenses, salaries and debt have risen," Price said, "there has been a squeeze on the missions portion of church budgets, including the Cooperative Program."

That view was echoed by Phill Martin, education director for the National Association of Church Business Administration.

Specifically, he said, rising health-insurance costs have wreaked havoc on church budgets. "With multiple years of 25 and 30 percent increases in the cost of health coverage, it is a significant impact on church budget issues."

Second, churches have faced increasing land and building costs.

Third, the price of keeping the lights on and the heat or air conditioning running has increased significantly.

Fourth, churches have experienced a long-term trend of members wanting to be personally involved in direct missions—sometimes as a full or partial substitute for giving to send others.

Cliff Tharp, research director at LifeWay Christian Resources and coordinator of the Annual Church Profile, agreed that might be a factor.

"Many more churches have groups go on trips, do volunteer missions," he noted. "That may be impacting Cooperative Program giving, but I have nothing to quantify that."

One of the explanations churches often give for reducing CP giving is increased expenditures on local missions.

The statistics support that assertion to a small degree. Total missions expenditures reported by churches grew 55 percent from 1987 to 2002, a better growth rate than the 49 percent gain in CP giving. However, that small distinction pales in comparison to the 112 percent growth of undesignated receipts.

Is politics to blame?

Political tensions in Southern Baptist life over the past two decades could be explored as a factor in missions-giving trends, but Price discounted that as not a likely influence.

Ronsvalle affirmed that the picture of SBC churches looks similar to what she sees in other evangelical and mainline churches regardless of whether they have experienced controversy.

Put another way, has the SBC lost missions money to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the group formed by moderate Baptists disenfranchised from the SBC in the 1990s?

Total dollars given to the Cooperative Program did hit a brief plateau from 1991 to 1993, the same time the CBF was launched. However, in those early years, the CBF served as an alternative pass-through funding mechanism for a number of SBC ministries.

That plateau in giving also corresponded to a national economic downturn in the second half of the first Bush administration.

SBC leaders never claimed to have taken a financial hit from churches defecting to the CBF. To the contrary, the SBC has boasted of sailing along without missing a beat.

CBF supporters, meanwhile, have contended the combined missions reach of the two organizations is greater than what the SBC could have accomplished alone.

Regardless, one fact remains unchanged: The percentage of churches' undesignated receipts going to missions has dropped by one-third in 15 years.

If denominational bodies want to increase missions giving from churches, they need to increase feedback, Ronsvalle suggested.

"We have found, repeatedly, church members will give to missions if they understand the need, if it's explained to them," she said. "But people want to know what their money is doing when it leaves the congregation."

Ashby agrees. He told KBC Mission Board members that convention leaders "have got to do a better job of educating and training and promoting the Cooperative Program in our state."

What's the answer?

While it's easy to blame churches for keeping more of the offerings for their own discretionary use, the root of the missions funding challenge lies with individual Christians, Ronsvalle asserted.

The average member of a Christian church in the United States gives only 2.6 percent of his or her income to the church, Ronsvalle reported.

If all church members gave a biblical tithe of 10 percent, nearly $80 billion in additional funds would flow into missions annually, she said.

Ronsvalle wishes churches not only would give more money to missions but would challenge Christians to be better stewards of their financial resources.

Church leaders ought to more boldly counsel church members who seek fulfillment through consumerism, Ronsvalle urged, suggesting that buying a third car and moving to a bigger house is not the stairway to heaven.

"We don't really believe what we say we do," she concluded. "Because if we did, we'd be spending our money differently."

With additional reporting by Editor Trennis Henderson

Churches keep more ministry dollars at home

An overview of giving by Southern Baptist Convention churches, as reported on the Annual Church Profile and published by the SBC Executive Committee in the convention's annuals, reveals:

- Undesignated receipts in SBC churches grew 112 percent from 1987 to 2002, from $3.2 billion to $6.8 billion.
- Total receipts in SBC churches, combining regular budget gifts and special offerings, grew 120 percent over 15 years, from $4.3 billion to $9.5 billion.
- Total missions expenditures reported by churches, including Cooperative Program, special offerings and local missions, grew 55 percent in the same period, from $663 million to $1 billion.
- Gifts to the Cooperative Program nationwide, including both the portion retained by state conventions and the portion forwarded to the SBC, grew 49 percent, from $337 million to $502 million.
- Designated giving to the SBC's special offerings—primarily the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions and the world hunger offering—grew 56 percent, from $109 million to $170 million.
- The average percentage of a church's undesignated receipts sent through the Cooperative Program decreased from 10.52 percent in 1987 to 7.39 percent in 2002. In Kentucky, the CP percentage dropped from 11.88 percent in 1987 to 8.28 percent last year. As a percentage of undesignated offerings, SBC churches have decreased their CP giving by 30 percent.

Mid-year giving: CP receipts below budget

Times are tough all over for state Baptist conventions seeking to fund their ongoing ministries.

A mid-year survey of the largest state conventions found none meeting their Cooperative Program budgets.

In almost every state for which data was available—Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas—Cooperative Program giving not only is lagging behind budget for the first six months of 2003 but also behind last year's giving. Only Oklahoma showed a slight increase over the previous year's income, but it still is below budget for CP and has a sharp decline in designated giving.

In Kentucky, CP gifts for the first six months of the year declined 2.8 percent. During the first 11 months of the current fiscal year, however, CP gifts are up 1.1 percent over the previous year, but still 4.8 percent below budget.

Kentucky also is the only state convention that has an increase (0.1 percent) in designated giving—which includes special missions offerings and donor-directed gifts.

Texas and Missouri, two states that have experienced convention splits in recent years, both are running more than 10 percent behind budget. But even some less-politicized states, such as Tennessee, are running nearly 10 percent behind budget.

Cooperative Program budget deficits at mid-year range from 3.73 percent in South Carolina to 18.55 percent in Georgia.

State budget shortfalls

For some state conventions, the picture is even more challenging regarding funds available for use in state-run ministries. In North Carolina, for example, total CP receipts are running 8.44 percent behind budget, but funds available to use in state ministries are 16.87 percent behind budget.

That distinction is possible in states such as North Carolina, Virginia and Texas that allow churches more freedom to customize the distribution of Cooperative Program gifts. In Texas, the amount of money available for state convention use is 14.03 percent behind budget, a slightly greater deficit than the 11.65 lag in total CP giving.

Clear reasons for the across-the-board slump in giving are hard to come by, although the downturn in the national economy often is cited as a factor.

"North Carolina has lost a lot of manufacturing and tech-based jobs, which probably impacts the drop, but I think there's also a growing apathy toward denominational giving, more interest in local church and self-direction of missions money," said Tony Cartledge, editor of the North Carolina Biblical Recorder.

Staff at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are holding expenses to 85 percent of budget, as are staff at the Baptist General Convention of Texas, where 20 positions were eliminated this month. In Kentucky, convention staff is limiting spending to 90 percent of budget for the second consecutive year.

The impact of this year's lower giving through state Baptist conventions is masked in some cases by the fact that budgets for 2003 were set with little or no growth. That decision was made in many state conventions because of slower budget growth last year.

That means, for example, that in some cases the 2003 budget is 5 to 15 percent less than last year's budget. When gifts fall below the new budget line, that increases the impact of the loss over previous years.

Based on reporting by Mark Wingfield of the Texas Baptist Standard and Editor Trennis Henderson

Partnerships editor Joyce Martin retiring

As partnership editions editor for the Western Recorder, Joyce Martin has worked with state Baptist conventions from one end of the nation to the other.

"Like Paul, I always try to be content, whatever 'state' I'm in," she often joked when describing her work to visitors.

Starting Sept. 1, that state will be a little more relaxed when Martin, 57, retires after nearly nine years with the Western Recorder.

Martin has been partnerships editor for nearly five years, helping smaller state conventions publish monthly newspapers. The Western Recorder currently works with five state conventions: Iowa, Minnesota-Wisconsin, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, Hawaii/Pacific and Utah-Idaho.

Previously, Martin was a part-time staff writer for the Recorder.

Prior to that, Martin served in North American missions in Michigan, Massachusetts and Georgia. In Boston, she was editor and associate editor for the New England Baptist. Her husband, Larry, was director of missions for Greater Boston Baptist Association and now is leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions growth team.

Joyce Martin also has been an adjunct professor of Christian education at two seminaries and written three books in addition to her journalistic writing.

"Editing the five partnership papers has been a joy and has allowed me to continue to fulfill the calling to missions in the United States that I first felt as a 13-year-old Kentucky teen," said Martin, a native of Waynesburg.

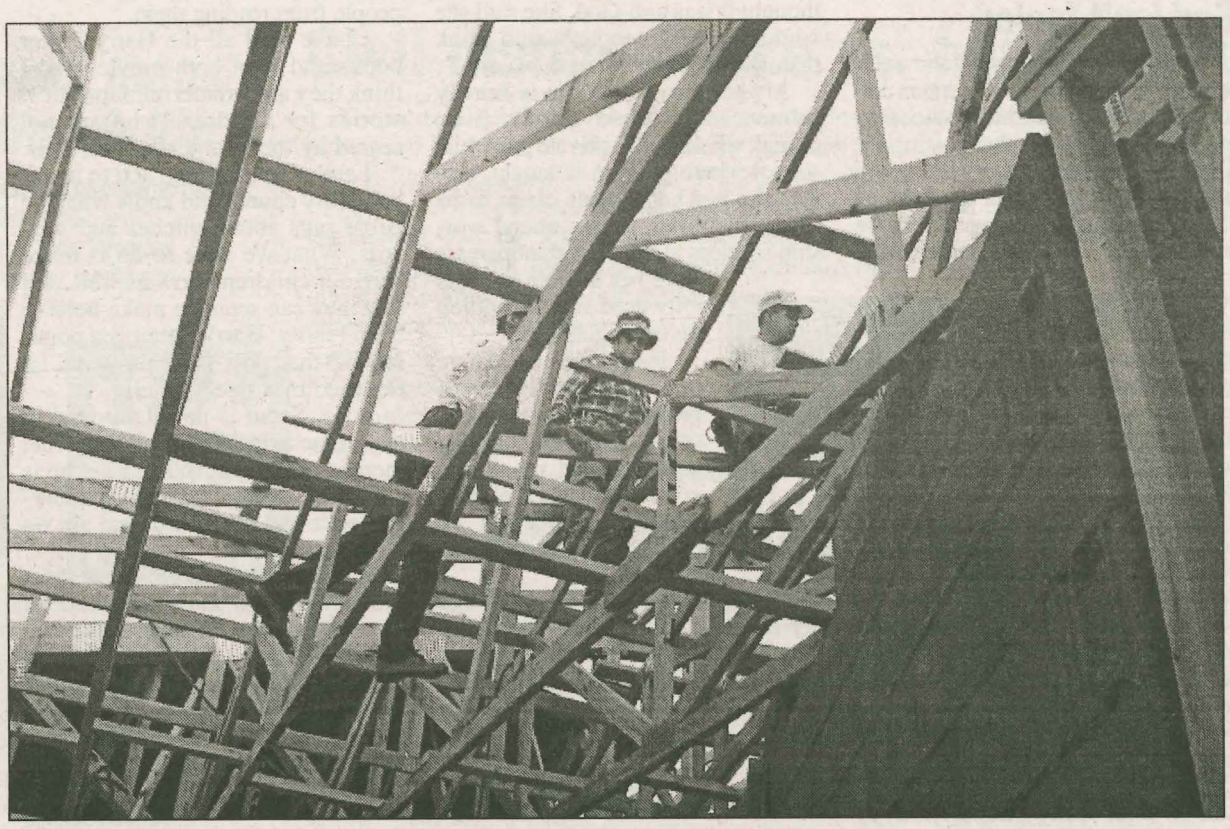
Editor Trennis Henderson praised Martin for her contributions to the Western Recorder and the partnership papers. "Her journalistic skills and missions heart have been an excellent combination for the benefit of our partnership publications across the nation," he said.

"We will miss Joyce's insights and involvement in the ongoing work of the Recorder, but wish her the very best as she retires," he added. "I am confident that God will continue to provide her many fulfilling ministry opportunities in the years ahead."

Martin said she plans to focus on family, friends and the adult Sunday school class she teaches at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, "ministering with and to them."

She said she also expects to continue writing.

"Who knows," she added, "after writing three books and writing and editing hundreds of articles, maybe there still are a few more words left in me."



NEW BUILDING *Volunteers from Holly Springs Baptist Church in Inman, S.C., walk along trusses for the new building of Elizabethtown Baptist Church. John Edwards, (below) coordinator for Kentucky Baptist Builders, estimates that volunteer labor has saved Kentucky churches and ministries more than $3 million in construction costs this year. (Photos by Vicky Edwards)*

Ministry duo connects churches, volunteers

Continued from page 1

couldn't coordinate volunteer construction without their help, Allen added.

"It's exciting to see people enjoy what they do," Allen said. "We don't have the funds to pay someone to do that job, but it is very much needed."

The two are a true team, with Edwards leading teams and coordinating work and Mrs. Edwards keeping details and paperwork in order.

"John's always wanted to do this, and it's been such a blessing to see how God has used him," Mrs. Edwards said. "My big joy is being able to work beside my husband and see him so happy and fulfilled."

A growing ministry

Under the Edwardses' direction, the program has grown in scope. Last year, 725 volunteers helped on 12 projects. This year, 925 volunteers already have completed 16 churches and mission houses.

And this year's roster isn't complete. Soon volunteers will:

- Build a new log cabin at Camp Rabro at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly;
- Install a new roof at General Association of Baptists in Kentucky's headquarters in downtown Louisville; and
- Frame a home for battered children in Georgetown.

Edwards still is searching for volunteers to build Sunday school additions at churches in the Mount Vernon and London areas, and recruiting for a "repair fair" in Lexington before the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in November.

The value of this work can be seen by last year's projects. Covering 70,000 square feet at a cost of $42 per square foot, the work equaled nearly $3 million.

The Edwardses get high marks

from other participants, including Randall Rogers of Greensburg, the first coordinator in 1987-88.

"They've done a tremendous job," said Rogers, who kicked off the statewide initiative with 300 volunteers.

"It's a whole new ballgame with John and Vicky out there," added Larry Koch, who oversees construction for Kentucky Brotherhood. "I see tremendous growth in the years ahead."

'Oh, I could do that'

One valuable aspect of their effort is better record-keeping, Koch said.

Previously, Brotherhood often never heard about many of the local projects around the state. But the Edwardses can track construction more closely—and promote it, Koch said.

"We didn't have all the stories," Koch said. "Once a church hears about Baptist Builders, people say, 'Oh, I could do that.' It helps Kentucky Baptists to understand men are out there who are willing to help. And, it challenges more men to get missions-minded."

Bruce Bays, a deacon at Edwards' former church and a longtime friend, said Edwards has sparked interest in Baptist Builders across the commonwealth.

"John's real good about getting people involved," said Bays, a member of First Baptist Church of Russell. "In talking to him, I sense the excitement."

A welder, Bays has worked alongside carpenters, accountants and retirees for the past 15 years, starting with Ohio's Baptist Builders.

In the past two years, he has seen people who aren't associated with any church stop at a construction project, ask what's going on and offer to get involved.

"That tells me John and Vicky are going to areas where there is a need for people to get into church," Bays said.

Since moving to Horse Cave last September to be more centrally located in the state, Mrs. Edwards has been able to stay home more often to field calls, keep records and design two brochures. She also edits a quarterly newsletter for ministry supporters.

Edwards is a pivotal figure to many Baptist Builders, but he said he draws inspiration from people such as Ted Garrison of Perrysville.

In his late 60s and recovering from a stroke last year, Garrison still leads a team of about 30 men.

"I told Ted if he didn't call these guys, they wouldn't come out," Edwards recalled. "I've taken people on projects who can't drive a nail. But if a carpenter is driving a nail, someone's got to hand something to him.

"We've seen all kinds of people's lives changed," Edwards said. "They'll never pray out loud or be a deacon. Their element is a day's work. Give 'em a task and they're ready to go. They grow by camaraderie. Growth comes about when men share with each other."

"We've seen all kinds of people's lives changed."

John Edwards, coordinator for Kentucky Baptist Builders

OPINION

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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BAPTIST FORUM

God isn't fooled

Murder, stealing, greed and adultery run rampant in our American culture. Does Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore really believe that posting the Ten Commandments everywhere will help curtail our penchant for sinning? (See "Judge defies order to remove monument," Western Recorder, Aug. 19 issue.)

Will God bless America more if the Ten Commandments are posted in every school and significant public place? Will their posting lessen the source of most wrongdoing—the love of money or greed? If they had been on display at Enron's corporate headquarters, could a scandal have been averted?

Public display of the Ten Commandments to show America's religiosity does not honor God. To be effective, the Commandments must be engraved on a person's heart, soul and conscience. Emanating out of such a soul will come an outward manifestation of what really pleases God—a pure and genuine religion that puts God first, others second and self last.

Many people are misguided by politicians' and Judge Moore's attempts to make religion a political issue, but God is not fooled.

Paul L. Whiteley Sr.
Louisville

Influential tales

This is in response to the Harry Potter question and answer in the Aug. 5 "Family Forum" column.

David Garrard may not have met a child yet who thinks of the Harry Potter stories as anything other than fiction, but I have! I know a 12-year-old girl named Chrissy who is so fascinated by them that she, in her own words, "would like to believe there is a place like that."

I had noticed that she was reading the latest edition so I asked her if she thought it was anti-God. She said she could see why people would think that. But she would like to believe.

My concern is that she is heavily influenced by these stories. Even though she attends a private parochial school where religion is taught, neither she nor her parents claim to be Christians. They do not attend worship services at all. Her grandparents gave her a Bible but it is only used as a decoration on her nightstand.

Jesus taught us to love one another. He even prayed that we would be safe from the evil one. He loved us that much and even more. God's Word is readily available but we choose to read anything but that.

Please pray for this young lady and her family. At this point they think they have no need for God. That is why I am concerned. Thank you.

Kathy Gough
Erlanger

Potter is make-believe

I just read Karen Meece's Aug. 12 letter about Harry Potter. While I agree with her that her daughter's teacher probably should not have read any book in class that gave children nightmares, I have to say that I think there is way too much being made of Harry Potter leading children down the path to the occult.

There was plenty of magic in Cinderella, Snow White and other fairy tales many of us enjoyed as children, and some of it was "black" magic. I don't recall a big reaction on the part of parents or the church to try to stop people from reading them.

I have read all the Harry Potter books and seen both movies and I think they are wonderful, fantastical stories for children (who are not scared by them) and adults as well.

I am a God-fearing, active member of my church and know what the Bible says about witches and wizards. What we have to do is make sure our children know as well, and that they can separate make-believe from reality. Harry Potter is a popular fad that will soon pass and be replaced by something else.

Also, Satan is not mentioned in any of the Harry Potter books. True, there is an evil "dark lord" but he is a warlock on a power trip, and Harry Potter and his friends are not on his side.

If a person looked closely at great literature that is studied in schools, there always are characters who lie, cheat and steal; sometimes for good ends, sometimes not. These are things that go in in the world, and we just need to make sure our children know it is not OK to do these things.

Becky Solomon
Dawson Springs

Drug use not funny

Concerning the Aug. 19 "Kudzu" cartoon that referenced Valium, I have had considerable experience with alcohol and drugs—using and not using. I would not wish on my worst enemy, much less my mother, the use of any drug to want someone out of the way.

I am disappointed that the Western Recorder would print this cartoon.

Bill Hutchison
Louisville

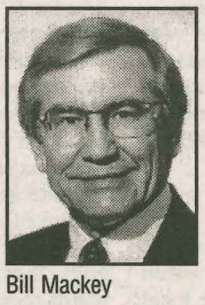
What are you thinking?

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

The joy and blessing of grandchildren

My wife, Kay, has been with our new grandson in Indian Trail, N.C. (a suburb of Charlotte) since the day of his birth on Aug. 11. He weighed 6 pounds, 12 ounces and has been given the name, John Mackey Wooten. He will be called "Mack."


Bill Mackey

Mack arrived three weeks early but has begun to eat well and grow. He looks like his older sister, Lillian Grace, whom we call "Lilly." She is very pleased to be a big sister.

It is easy to detect the joy in Kay's voice as she describes her experiences with Lilly and Mack. She and Lilly are great friends.

Our daughter, Beth, was grateful that everything went better with the pregnancy and delivery this time. Some readers will remember that I requested your prayers for Beth during her pregnancy with Lilly. That delivery was difficult and extended.

It was during that pregnancy that God impressed me to pray for my granddaughter and all the transitions of her life and to record them in writing. In doing so, God has taught me how to pray for future generations.

God is eternal and He can store my prayers in the prayer book of heaven until His sovereign time is right.

Beth's husband, Bartley, was a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at the time of Lilly's birth. Bartley now has been singles minister at First Baptist Church of Indian Trail, his home church, for 20 months.

Kay and I got a late start with grandchildren, but we soon may have three arrive within 15 months. Our older daughter, Anonda, presented us with our first grandson, John William Nepa, last Dec. 18. Anonda and her husband, A.J., have now discovered that they are expecting again next March. I know where Kay will be next March!

Anonda and A.J. are active in North Point Church, a Southern Baptist church located in a growing suburb of metro Philadelphia. The church is only three years old and has 200 people in attendance. I am grateful that all of my grandchildren are growing up in homes with Christian parents who love and praise God.

Kay and I also serve as grandparents for two children who live in Springfield, Va. In the early 1990s we helped sponsor their mother, Dorine, as an exchange student at Furman University. She has since married a military officer from Bristol, Tenn.

After her mother's death, Dorine reached out to Kay as grandmother for her two lovely daughters. Her husband, Kimm, has responsibilities related to national security. Please join us in prayer for their faith journey.

Pray as well that current generations will be faithful so future generations will know the meaning of authentic faith (Psalm 78:1-8).

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Endowment plan provides flexible giving options

By Laurie Valentine

FINANCIAL FORUM

Does your church or one of our Kentucky Baptist agencies or institutions have a particular program or ministry that you would like to support on an ongoing basis? Would you like to provide that support through an endowment fund, but are hesitant to make a single large-sum gift to fund such an endowment in these days of uncertainty in the financial markets?

A flexible endowment fund might be the answer. A flexible endowment fund is an arrangement under which you agree to establish an endowment fund that will, once fully-funded, generate sufficient earnings to support a specific program or ministry. The total amount of the principal gift to the endowment will depend on the financial support needed to run the program or ministry and how much of that support you wish to provide through the endowment fund. A timetable for completing the funding of the principal is agreed upon (usually three to five years), but there is no actual schedule of payments. When you make the principal gifts during the funding period is up to you.

In addition to your agreement to make principal gifts, you agree to provide annual expendable gifts to the program or ministry. The expendable gifts continue until you complete the funding of the principal.

Here's an example: One of our Kentucky Baptist colleges sponsors an annual preschool ministry workshop. Currently, the cost of the workshop is $5,000 per year. You agree to make principal gifts totaling $100,000 (the amount needed to produce $5,000 annually) to an endowment fund established for this purpose over the next five years. You also agree to make additional gifts each year, until the full $100,000 of principal gifts has been made, in an amount equal to the difference between the amounts being distributed from the endowment fund and $5,000.

The result: You've set up a five-year plan to create a significant endowment fund that will provide perpetual support for this program, while assuring the college has the current financial resources it needs to run the workshop until the endowment is fully funded.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

OPINION

Take time to address teens' questions about God & life

Q: My teenager has begun asking difficult questions about God. How do I explain to him why life is so hard?

We live in a world that is not the way God intended. Sin has warped every society, permeated every family and individual and distorted every thinking process.

FAMILY FORUM

Was it ever God's intention that innocent children would die at the hands of terrorists, that corporate executives would pillage their investors' accounts or that marriages would end in tragic divorces? No. This is not the way it was supposed to be. Thoughts, feelings, actions and even human will have been perverted by sin.

Yet God has not abandoned the work of His hands. Our great hope, however, is not in what is sometimes referred to as "common grace," the concept that God continues to keep things from spinning out of control. True hope ultimately comes only through the grace offered through Jesus Christ, who through His death and resurrection paid the ultimate price to restore our proper relationship with God.

The Bible foretells the difficulty of this life. The life of Jesus and the lives of God's great men and women of faith recorded in the Scripture bear testimony to the fact that believers are not exempt from difficulty. Yet James reminds us that we are to "count it all joy," an attitude that is impossible without the power of God working in and through the believer to bring about a transformation of the spirit.—*Scott Wigginton*

Q: My husband and I are interested in marriage enrichment options and a weekend away would do us much good. What marriage conferences are available this fall?

Marriage conferences, festivals, enrichment weekends, encounters—by whatever name, they are great tools to help strengthen a good marriage or to gain needed support for a struggling one.

Fortunately, Kentucky Baptists offer such a weekend each fall. This year's MarriageFest will be Sept. 26-28 in Somerset.

The weekend includes contemporary music, a meal, a wedding reception and other festivities to help you make your unique relationship special. Speakers focus on how marriage offers a sacred space between a couple and God.

MarriageFest also can be a great bonding time for several couples from the same Sunday school class as you return from the weekend with a support system of mutual prayer and encouragement. Contact www.kybaptist.org for more information.

If you are not available on those dates, here are a few other suggestions:

- Stained Glass Ministries will lead a conference Oct. 17-19 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. Presenters will share how their own marriages were reconciled in miraculous ways. View www.lifeway.com for more information.
- Author Gary Smalley, a frequent Promise Keepers speaker, will present the simulcast, "Love, Romance and Sex" Oct. 23-25. Contact www.smalleyonline.com for a simulcast site near you.
- The National Association of Marriage Enhancement will hold its international conference Oct. 2-4 in Phoenix, with numerous speakers and workshops. See www.marriageconferences.com for more information.

For a longer list of marriage education Web sites that may have information on conferences, clinics and workshops, visit www.ibc-lex.org/married.—*James Stillwell*

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.

Civil disobedience vs. honoring rule of law

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR

Trennis Henderson

The current conflict over the Ten Commandments monument in Alabama is not so much a debate over church-state issues as it is a matter of civil authority.

Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, a Southern Baptist layman, had the 5,300-pound monument installed two years ago in the rotunda of the state's judicial building. After a series of court rulings, Moore was ordered earlier this month to have the display removed.

Moore refused to comply with the federal court order, insisting that the "real question is whether or not I will deny the God that created us and endowed us with certain inalienable rights."

Yet God's Word declares in Romans 13:1, "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."

The Alabama Supreme Court's eight associate justices responded to Moore's stand by unanimously overruling his decision and agreeing to have the monument removed.

"The justices of this court are bound by solemn oath to follow the law, whether they agree or disagree with it," the associate justices wrote. They said the chief justice's ongoing failure to comply with a federal court order "would impair the authority and ability of all the courts of this state to enforce their judgments."

As the legal drama continued to unfold last week, Moore was suspended from his position in response to a complaint that he failed "to respect and comply with the law." If convicted of violating state judicial ethics, Moore could be censured or permanently removed from office. If acquitted, he could return to his duties as chief justice.

Among the challenges Moore faces is that some conservative Christian leaders who typically might be expected to support his stand have voiced concern about his course of action.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, noted that "however much sympathy I may have for Judge Moore's beliefs and convictions about the Ten Commandments, … I am dismayed at the prospect of a judge defying a court order. One of the foundational principles of American law is that we believe in the rule of law.

"In effect, Judge Moore is engaging in civil disobedience," Land added. "As I understand it, while civil disobedience may be an ultimate option for individual Christians as a matter of conscience, it would only be justified morally when all legal recourse has been exhausted."

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley, also a Southern Baptist, declared, "Although I fundamentally disagree with what the federal courts have ordered, the state Supreme Court was correct in unanimously voting to uphold the rule of law.

"The rule of law means that no person, including the Chief Justice of Alabama, is above the law," Riley said. "The rule of law means that we can work to change the law but not to defy court orders."

Southern Baptists have expressed diverse views on the issue over the years. Both the 1963 and 2000 versions of the Baptist Faith and Message emphasize that "church and state should be separate." Stating that "no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others," both documents add, "The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends."

In 1997, however, Southern Baptist Convention messengers adopted a resolution affirming that the public display of the Ten Commandments, "including display in government offices and courthouses," should be allowed.

While civil disobedience sometimes can be a necessary choice for individual citizens, that is far different from an elected officer of the court using his power and position to defy a higher court's order. The potential result is judicial anarchy.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthian church to "let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). That remains sound advice today both for government officials and individual Christians.

Beware of full calendars & empty souls

By Donald Whitney

FIRST PERSON

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—Does your spiritual life sometimes seem more like a burden than a blessing? Does your spirituality seem to exhaust you as often as it refreshes you? Have your spiritual practices become "just another thing to do" in an already overcrowded, stress-filled schedule? If so, then you need to simplify your spiritual life.

We should expect part of true spirituality to exhaust us, for it exists not merely for our own edification, but to serve the glory and purposes of God. Jesus' spiritual labors occasionally so fatigued Him that He could fall asleep in an open boat in the middle of a lake during a life-threatening storm (Luke 8:22-25).

Likewise, the Apostle Paul knew the depletion of inner resources that results from the willingness to "spend and be spent" for the sake of the souls of others (2 Corinthians 12:15).

There's a problem, though, when the inflow of spiritual renewal doesn't replenish the outflow of spiritual ministry. For the spiritual life also should be the source of inner recreation and restoration since it is the way we most directly experience the Lord Himself in daily life. Through our spiritual disciplines (rightly motivated and practiced) come many of the most refreshing blessings of knowing Christ.

An example of how the spiritual disciplines can be an ongoing means of reinvigorating the soul occurs in Psalm 1:2-3. Frequent meditation on God's Word so continually refreshes the meditator that, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

However, as everything else in our lives becomes more complex, so can our spirituality. With increasing prosperity and technology come increasing opportunities and options—even in our spiritual practices—that weren't available a short time ago. For instance, instead of simply sitting in a comfortable chair by a sunny window with our Bible, journal and pen, now we can:

- Receive devotional readings sent daily by automatic e-mail.
- Read the Bible in several of the many translations we possess, including those on our computer.
- Make journal entries on the computer by keyboard or voice-recognition software, inserting interesting graphics along with the text.
- Envelop our devotional experience with worship-enhancing audio and/or video.

But it all needs to be done faster than ever before because of the strangling demands on our time.

The growing frustrations of hurry and complexity affect the practice not only of our personal spiritual disciplines, but of our congregational spiritual disciplines as well. There's less time for church involvement than previously, and yet there are more church activities from which to choose. We're so far behind in so many things that sometimes we wonder if what we receive from church is worth the overwhelming effort just to get there.

In some ways we're doing more than ever spiritually, but enjoying and profiting from it less. Many areas of our lives are productive and prosperous, yet we've never felt so spiritually withered. Our calendars are full, but our souls are empty.

The time has come to evaluate whether what we are doing in our spiritual lives is taking us where we want to go.

Donald Whitney, associate professor of spiritual formation at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., is the author of "Simplify Your Spiritual Life"

Baylor crisis grows as Sloan faces no-confidence motion

Baylor sports: Repent, recommit, Sloan advises

WACO, Texas (ABP)—Revelations of extensive improprieties within Baylor University's men's basketball program should not cause the Baptist school to leave the Big 12 Conference but should prompt repentance and re-examination, President Robert Sloan insists.

In an interview Aug. 18, as further evidence of wrongdoing by former coach Dave Bliss and perhaps others continued to roll out almost by the hour, Sloan defended Baylor's place in the most competitive ranks of college sports.

Faced with recent dismal records in football and now the meltdown of the men's basketball program, some Baylor supporters have questioned anew the wisdom of a Baptist university competing amid the powerhouses of the Big 12, including Texas, Oklahoma and Nebraska.

"The question is penetrating because I think the Christian faces that question some ways in every day of his or her life," Sloan said. "How to be in the world and not of the world."

In previous news conferences, Sloan insisted Baylor, because it is a Christian university, must adhere to higher standards than mandated by NCAA regulations for other schools.

"Here we as an institution have clearly had our failures, and that calls us to repentance," he said. "It calls us to re-examination. But it doesn't call us to quit. It calls us to hold ourselves accountable because the Lord does, then to recommit ourselves and go back and try again."

WACO, Texas (ABP)—What began as a basketball scandal may be morphing into a full-blown crisis for the leadership of the world's largest Baptist university.

On Aug. 19, an editorial in the Houston Chronicle called for Baylor University President Robert Sloan to resign as a result of recent revelations about alleged NCAA violations in the men's basketball program of the Waco, Texas-based school.

In a related development, some Baylor University faculty leaders said Aug. 20 they will seek a vote of no confidence in Sloan, saying he is too divisive to continue guiding the school.

Chuck Weaver, chairman of the 33-member faculty senate, said most faculty concerns are only "tangentially" related to athletics. The neuroscience professor pointed to other "real concerns in a number of different directions."

Sloan has been under increasing fire in recent months, particularly from some vocal alumni, for his "Baylor 2012" long-range plan. Sloan's critics have cited concerns about his emphasis on making Baylor a major research institution and his emphasis on the role of faith in learning, as well as increasing debt and tuition costs.

Henry Walbessar, a computer science professor and former dean, announced he will make the no-confidence motion at the faculty senate's next meeting Sept. 9, or sooner if a special meeting is called.

Meanwhile, other faculty members registered their support for Sloan after they learned about the proposed no-confidence vote. According to Baylor University spokesman Larry Brumley, nearly 100 e-mails from faculty members had been copied to the chairman of the Baylor regents.

Barry Harvey, associate professor of theology, agreed that the call for a vote of no confidence in the university's top administration is "totally off the mark." Harvey said that at the university general faculty meeting on Aug. 21 Sloan "received a warm and sustained ovation, signifying broad and deep support" for the administration and its long-range plan for the school.

Sloan plans to stay

In an Aug. 18 online discussion with members of the Baylor community, Sloan said he would not resign unless the school's Board of Regents asked him to. "I am totally committed to this university, to the 10-year vision of the university, and I intend, again at the will of the board, to continue to serve the university," Sloan said.

The Houston Chronicle's unsigned Aug. 19 editorial focused on a scandal in the basketball department that resulted in the resignations of the head coach and athletic director.

"As university head, Sloan bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring Baylor runs an upright program," the editorial stated. "Having failed dramatically, it's time for him to step down.

"Failing that, the board of regents must make the decision for him," the paper added.

The call followed a weekend of compounding allegations in the controversy, which began when Baylor basketball player Patrick Dennehy disappeared in late June. His body was found in July, and his death was ruled a murder. Dennehy's teammate and one-time roommate, Carlton Dotson, was arrested and charged with the murder.

Major NCAA infractions

On Aug. 8, head basketball coach Dave Bliss and athletic director Tom Stanton resigned after an internal investigation revealed that Bliss knew of "major infractions" in NCAA rules that included coaches providing money to basketball players for tuition and car payments.

Then, over the weekend of Aug. 16-17, secretly-taped audio recordings of conversations Bliss had with his fellow coaches and the father of a basketball player revealed he tried to cover up the payments by encouraging rumors that Dennehy received the money from drug dealing.

After the allegations about NCAA violations came to light, Sloan imposed a two-year probation on the team, which meant it could not participate in post-season play.

Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, issued a statement affirming Sloan as a friend and "a man of integrity and vision."

Wade said Sloan and the Baylor regents "have my prayers as they work through one of the most difficult times in the history of the school."

The Second Annual
Pastors and Church Leaders Conference
September 25-26, 2003 · Campbellsville University

Dr. Briscoe's Theme:
The Gratitude Attitude and Other Motivation Factors

Dr. Briscoe is Minister-at-Large and former Senior Pastor of Elmbrook Church, Brookfield, Wisconsin; head of *Telling the Truth Ministries*, an international TV, radio, and web ministry; author of 40 books including *Vital Truths to Change Your Life* and books on the fruit of the Holy Spirit; preacher at events in more than 100 countries; and minister to pastors, missionaries, and lay leaders at numerous events on all continents.

For registration or more information please contact the Campbellsville University's Office of Church and External Relations at 270.789.5520 or e-mail us at jechowning@campbellsville.edu or visit us online at www.campbellsville.edu.

Campbellsville UNIVERSITY

FREE Belief Conference Coming Up!

MONDAY, September 8, 2003
7:00-9:15 p.m. (Central Time)
Mid-Continent College
99 Powell Road, Mayfield, Ky.

TUESDAY, September 9, 2003
7:00-9:15 p.m. (Central Time)
Second Baptist Church
720 W. 7th Street, Hopkinsville, Ky.

A Special Note to Acteen Leaders:
This is a possible MissionsQuest requirement for your Acteens.

Understanding Other Beliefs

Sharing the Biblical Jesus with People of Other Beliefs

Kentucky Baptists will be learning about a variety of other belief systems at an upcoming conference offered by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The conference will focus on the beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Islam, occultists and those involved in the New Age movement. All sessions are led by certified North American Mission Board trainers. Session leaders are:
Jehovah's Witnesses *- Joe Kreisle, instructor*
New Age Spirituality *- Don Metcalf, instructor*
Islam *- Jim McKinley, instructor*
Occult *- Danny Zickefoose, instructor*

"We are focusing awareness on the beliefs of major religious groups in America so that Kentucky Baptists will be informed witnesses (of their own faith)."
-- Dan Garland, KBC Evangelism Growth Team leader

*This is a **FREE** conference. No pre-registration required. Funded in part by*
Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering and the Cooperative Program.
For further information on this conference go on line to:
www.kybaptist.org *(Evangelism Growth Team Office)*

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KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

Evangelism Growth Team
10701 Shelbyville Rd. Louisville, KY 40243
502-254-4737 or Toll Free 888-254-5722

Helping marriages make it

Study finds marriage policies and counseling lower divorce rates

By Hannah Lodwick
Associated Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—In a country where half of all marriages end in divorce, a town in northern California is bucking the national trend.

Since churches in Modesto adopted a citywide policy in 1986 requiring premarital counseling, the city has reduced its divorce rate by 57 percent.

Along with the decline, Modesto's marriage rate increased 12 percent in the same 16 years, while the national marriage rate fell 18 percent.

Other towns have followed suit. Coalitions of pastors in cities from Oregon to Virginia have signed community marriage policies—covenants that commit the pastors to perform marriage ceremonies only for couples who have completed several sessions of premarital counseling.

First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls, S.D., signed such a covenant. "We did it because we saw within our own church the effects of divorce," Associate Pastor Susan Omanson said. "All you have to do is look at what is happening in society. We said, 'Enough is enough.'"

The church's members—who number more than 1,000—have experienced only four divorces since 1997.

Report: It's working

Community Marriage Policies are now in place in 170 cities nationwide, and a study reports that the policy is working in most of them.

An independent research firm compared the divorce rates in 131 cities for the three years before the policy was implemented to the rates for three or more years after its implementation. Divorce rates dropped in 70 percent of those communities. Nine cities reported a drop of more than 50 percent, and 27 cities showed declines of 20 percent or more.

Journalist Michael McManus created the first Community Marriage Policy after inspiring a group of pastors in Modesto to take action against divorce rates. A syndicated ethics and religion columnist, McManus published "Marriage Savers: Helping Your Friends and Family Avoid Divorce" in 1993.

In Kentucky, several communities have hosted area-wide promotions of the Marriage Savers program, including Lexington, Louisville, Owensboro and Hardin County, according to Sherry Hendricks, co-leader of Kentuckiana Marriage Savers.

With his wife, Harriet, McManus now co-chairs Marriage Savers, a Maryland-based organization aimed at strengthening marriages. He said the idea for a citywide or countywide policy grew out of his frustration about national divorce rates. "I'm struck by the paradox that we have a higher percentage of people who go to church in this country than other countries, but we also have the highest divorce rates."

Couples themselves are also part of the problem, McManus said. "They think, 'We have love. We are Christians. What more do we need?'"

The couples counseled by Jeff Meyers, a pastor in the Kansas City area, can be pessimistic or unrealistic about marriage. "What happens is most couples I meet with think it's a 50/50 shot," said Meyers of Christ Lutheran Church in Overland Park, Kan. "The other extreme is, 'It's not going to happen to us. We don't need it.'"

Preparedness could have immeasurable value when it comes to what McManus calls "the No. 1 problem in troubled marriages"—lack of communication.

"It's a lack of ability to resolve conflict without tearing the other person apart," he said. "It is a skill. It doesn't come naturally, but it can be learned."

Mentors, counselors & tests

Effective premarital counseling not only leads couples to evaluate whether they should wed, it also helps them develop relational skills they can use throughout the marriage, counselors say.

Most premarital counseling involves questionnaires, aptitude tests and discussions of potential areas of conflict and personal strengths and weaknesses.

Something as simple as how couples perceive "counseling" can influence how receptive they are, said Karl Babb, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's family ministry department.

"The term 'marriage counseling' carries a variety of meanings and images; especially for younger couples," Babb noted.

"I had one young man tell me, 'Pastor, we want you to marry us, but we don't need any of that counseling.' I agreed with him. My conversation centered on the importance of laying a good marital foundation and looking at some tools they could use in that process," he said. "The couple warmly responded, and we had three productive conversations."

Many community marriage policies mandate at least four sessions with a counselor, a long-term relationship with mentor couples and attendance at enrichment activities.

Omanson said the mentoring system provides a support system and promotes church health. Churches have a responsibility to teach young couples how to overcome conflict, the Sioux Falls minister added.

"The church has to step up to the plate," she said. "For too many years it has been seen as a wedding mill. They didn't step back and help people evaluate if they should actually be getting married."

A good breakup?

Ten percent of couples who go through premarital counseling break their engagements, Mrs. McManus noted. But breakups can have positive results, she said.

"Going through a preparation course, even if the relationship ultimately dissolves, is maturing," she wrote in a Web site article. "Each partner leaves the program knowing themselves on a deeper level. Now those two individuals, who have chosen to go separate ways, are better equipped to pursue someone else in the future that is more suited for them."

Not all cities that implemented community marriage policies have had the success of Modesto and others. In fact, divorce rates increased in some cities that implemented the program.

McManus said several variables affected those results, including the lack of training for mentor couples, the scarcity of full-time staff members to work with the program and a lack of press coverage.

Post-marriage encouragement

Churches aren't done after the marriage ceremony, advocates say. Churches can help discourage divorce by offering marriage enrichment programs, resources for troubled marriages and help for blended families (which statistically are more vulnerable), according to Hendricks of Kentuckiana Marriage Savers.

Lay leadership is a key to a strong church marriage ministry, added Hendricks, who has been a Marriage Savers advocate since 1993.

Pastors often shy away from such a comprehensive ministry because they see it as one more program they have to direct, she said.

"It looks like a lot of work to them, when in fact it's run by lay couples and mentors and they do the work," she said. "If pastors understood that this would save them time in the long run, they would more than likely embrace it."

According to a study by the Institute for American Values, roughly two thirds of couples who stayed together through a time when they wanted to divorce reported happy marriages five years later. Meyers said that means pastors must become "hope mongers" for couples who don't think they have a future.

"The thing that irritates me is people don't realize the couples getting divorced won't be any happier after the divorce," Meyers said. "Pastors have got to say, 'Hold on. So you're unhappy for a while. Let's fix it.'"

For more information, contact the KBC family ministry office toll-free at (888) 254-5704 or Kentuckiana Marriage Savers at (502) 744-2661.

With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey and John Hall of the Baptist General Convention of Texas

Super Saturday: Churches need an annual health check

"You've got to find some people who ... want to see the church strong when they're dead and gone."

Joe Leonard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Madisonville

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

LOUISVILLE—Many churches are not as healthy as they think they are, Joe Leonard warned during a recent Super Saturday church leadership conference.

The good news, he added, is that there are effective steps to help reverse unhealthy trends in many plateaued or declining congregations.

Leonard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Madisonville, shared his views on "Vision, Values, Goals and Implementation" during an Aug. 9 Super Saturday workshop in Louisville.

Super Saturday, coordinated by the Kentucky Baptist Convention church growth team, is a series of six regional church leadership conferences that provides training on such issues as Sunday school, discipleship training, church music, stewardship and ministry to children and youth.

Church growth challenges

Leonard, a pastor in North Carolina for 27 years before moving to Kentucky in 1997, recounted the challenges of sustained growth in one of his former congregations.

Noting that "the church had been declining for quite some time because of its location" in the inner-city, Leonard explained, "We were bringing people in, but we were not growing.

"The back door was larger than the front door," he added. "I felt like I was blowing up an inner tube with a big fat hole in it. ... I tried to open up the eyes of the folks to see what was happening because we needed to make some major changes."

Such a scenario is not unusual in many churches, he pointed out. "There are a lot of churches that think they are growing but they're not."

Leonard said some studies indicate as many as eight out of 10 Southern Baptist churches either are plateaued or declining. He defined a plateaued church as one whose membership has not grown or declined by more than 10 percent over the past five years. He said a declining church's membership has decreased from 10 to 20 percent in the past five years or more than 30 percent in the past 10 to 15 years.

Typical characteristics of a plateaued or declining church include lack of direction, low morale, an aging membership, a changing community and dated or limited facilities, he said.

The first step in stopping or reversing decline, Leonard suggested, is to conduct an annual church health check.

"I think it's reasonable for God to ask you to look over your church and see if it is healthy or not," he noted. "Gather statistics and find out what is going on in your church."

Such statistics should include a study of membership losses by death, transfer and drops as well as gains by letter transfer, baptism growth among members' families and baptisms of people previously outside the church family, Leonard said.

Other statistical comparisons he suggested include graphs of annual Sunday school and worship attendance as well as the number of guests attending worship services.

"People can't deny the figures," Leonard emphasized. He said a congregation is unhealthy "if it is declining and is not producing in some way numbers-wise."

Once the statistics are in hand, church leaders need to set a vision and values for the congregation.

"If you're going to have vision, values and goals, you've got to get your church to take ownership of the vision, values and goals," he told workshop participants. "You've got to find some people who love that church and want to see the church strong when they're dead and gone."

An image of the future

Describing vision as "an image of our desired future," Leonard said, "A statement of our vision shows where we want to go and what we will be like when we get there. A vision gives shape and direction to the organization's future."

Leonard said such goals can be produced by working with the deacons or other spiritual leaders in a church to draft a vision statement.

"The right vision attracts and energizes people," he said, adding that a church's vision should "establish a standard of excellence, give direction ... and always be tied to the transforming power of Christ."

Once a church sets its vision, "you've got to back it up with values for people to embrace it," Leonard said. Once that is accomplished, the next step is to establish realistic ministry goals to pursue.

At his current congregation in Madisonville, Leonard said goals are established through a process called MAP (Ministry Advancement Program). Various ministry study teams make recommendations in such areas as worship, Sunday school, discipleship training, youth ministry and children's ministry.

"All of these ministries have direction," he said. "The church has direction and the people are taking more and more ownership. We know where we are headed."

Urging church leaders to help their congregations "grow the Kingdom of God and enlarge the church," Leonard added, "You've got to be strong where you are so that you have a larger base so that you can reach out in your town, the state, the United States and the world."

There's still time

The Kentucky Baptist Convention's final two Super Saturday church leadership conferences for 2003 will be Sept. 6 at Unity Baptist Church in Ashland and Paducah First Baptist Church. For information, call the KBC church growth office at (502) 254-4780 or toll-free at (888) 254-5710.

Church Prayer Coordinators and Leaders Conference

Tuesday, September 23, 2003
10:30 am – 3:00 pm
Severns Valley Baptist Church
Elizabethtown, KY

Every church should send their prayer leader to this conference where they will:

- Hear nationally known author and prayer leader, John Franklin.
- Be equipped to lead their church to become a "house of prayer".
- Find assistance in developing a plan for their prayer ministry.
- Receive encouragement through networking and fellowship.
- Experience prayer with other prayer leaders.
- Hear what God is doing across Kentucky through prayer.
- Learn about resources that will help them to grow a great prayer ministry.

The conference is free and lunch will be provided.
Registration is required by Sept. 16th by contacting Linda George: (502) 245-4101 ext. 256 or Linda_George@kybaptist.org.

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For more complete information about AB Funds Trust, including charges and expenses that apply to an investment in the funds, call **1-800-262-0511** *for a prospectus. Read it carefully before you invest or send money. Shares of the AB Funds Trust are distributed by PFPC Distributors, Inc., 760 Moore Road, King of Prussia, PA 19406.*

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Cross Over The Bluegrass

November 7 - 9, 2003

A Training Guide for Tates Creek and Elkhorn Baptist Associations

Lifting Up Jesus Christ!

Purpose

CROSS OVER THE BLUEGRASS *is an effort to reach Kentucky for Christ. This will be accomplished by mobilizing Kentucky Baptists from all over the state to be involved in evangelism and mission projects in targeted areas the week prior to the Kentucky Baptist Convention,* ***November 7 - 9, 2003.***

Tates Creek Baptist Association

TARGETED AREAS:
Berea, Richmond, Big Hill and Kirksville

SERVANT EVANGELISM PROJECTS

Many of the Kentucky Baptist churches in the targeted areas will be intentionally sharing Christ by modeling biblical servanthood. A sampling of the servant projects will be leaf raking, cleaning gutters, free car washes, minor repair projects and other acts of service. These will be done in the targeted communities in order to show the love of Christ in practical ways. An invitation will be given to the Weekend or One Day Revival meetings.

Common Projects

**These projects will be held at both Tates Creek Baptist Association and the Elkhorn Baptist Association*

ONE DAY OR WEEKEND REVIVALS*

Many of the churches in the targeted areas are having weekend or one day revivals. The events on Saturday will be an opportunity to promote the revival meetings in the various churches.

COMMUNITY/PRAYER NEEDS SURVEY OF STRATEGIC AREAS*

Kentucky Baptists will fan out across the targeted areas on Saturday morning, November 8, and knock on doors. They will use a community/prayer needs survey (see page 2) and a witnessing booklet to share Christ with unchurched and lost individuals. An invitation will be given to the Weekend or One Day Revival meetings.

JESUS VIDEO DISTRIBUTION*

The Jesus film has touched more lives than any other evangelistic effort in human history. It is the inspired Word of God brought to film and video. Hundreds of these videos will be distributed in homes all across the targeted areas on Saturday, November 8. No evangelism training is required. Only a willingness to knock on doors and offer the video as a gift is needed. An invitation will be given to the Weekend or One Day Revival meetings.

YOUTH RALLY

Saturday, November 8th, 7 - 9 PM at ***"The Stadium"*** *off Reynolds Road. The Rally will include food, music, games, skits, youth speaker and more. All youth are invited.*

PRAYER WALK/CAMPUS OUTREACH *UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY and EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY*

Volunteers are needed to prayer walk these campuses and help distribute Bibles or tracts to students.

Elkhorn Baptist Association

TARGETED AREAS:
Lexington, Paris, Georgetown, Nicholasville, Versailles and Winchester

BLANKETING THE BLUEGRASS WITH LOVE

Winter can be a hard time for the homeless and low-income families. On Saturday, November 8th from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM blankets and warm clothing will be given out to those in need. The blankets and clothing will be given out at six sites in the Elkhorn Association. Blankets and volunteers are needed.

CONSTRUCTION/REPAIR PROJECTS

Several volunteers are needed to help replace or repair roofs, do minor repairs and painting and help get homes of low-income families ready for the winter.

AUTO CARE CLINIC

Volunteers are needed to help with a ***FREE CAR CLINIC*** *and* ***FREE CAR WASH*** *Saturday, November 8th from 10 AM to 4:30 PM. The location will be the Wal-Mart on Nicholasville Road in Lexington. Volunteers will check tire tread, windshield wipers, fluid levels and lights; clean battery terminals; and wash cars.*

INTERNATIONAL FOOD FAIR

Trinity Baptist Church will host an international food fair to benefit the Kentucky Refugee Ministry on Saturday, November 8 from 11 AM - 2 PM. Volunteers are needed for this project.

Cross Over The Bluegrass

Community Needs Survey

A sample of the Community/Prayer Needs Survey is given below. The basic format is that teams of three people will be assigned specific areas to survey and be given packets of materials to use. As each team goes through the survey with residents, an opportunity is extended to share a witnessing booklet with interested individuals. Each team will be assigned approximately 30 homes to survey.

COMMUNITY/PRAYER NEEDS SURVEY

❑ Not at home ❑ Busy ❑ Refused Survey ❑ Call for Appointment

_____

Names of Surveyors

_____

Address of Home Surveyed (First print the address and then knock on the door or ring the doorbell)

_____

City **State** **Zip**

At The Door Say:

Hello, I'm _____ and this is _____ and _____ (use first names only).

We are with _____ and we are trying to help our church effectively meet the needs of our community by conducting a brief community needs survey.
May we ask you a few questions?

1. What do you believe is the biggest need in our community?

_____

2. How could our church best help our community and your family?

_____

3. When you attend church, where do you attend?

_____

4. Our church would like to pray for you and your family. Are there prayer concerns our church family can pray for at this time?

_____

5. Can we call and make an appointment to share with you the ministries of our church? If yes, may we have your name and phone number?

Name _____ Phone _____

6. Comments: _____

_____

_____

Conclusion - *After each survey please complete the information below:*

❑ Shared witnessing booklet ❑ Profession of Faith ❑ Assurance of Salvation

❑ This person is a prospect -

Name _____

Phone (optional) _____

Comments _____

_____

The Community/Prayer Needs Survey of Cross Over Kentucky offers excellent opportunities to discover needs and share Christ. Many professions of faith are expected as a result.

General Instructions for Community/Prayer Needs Survey

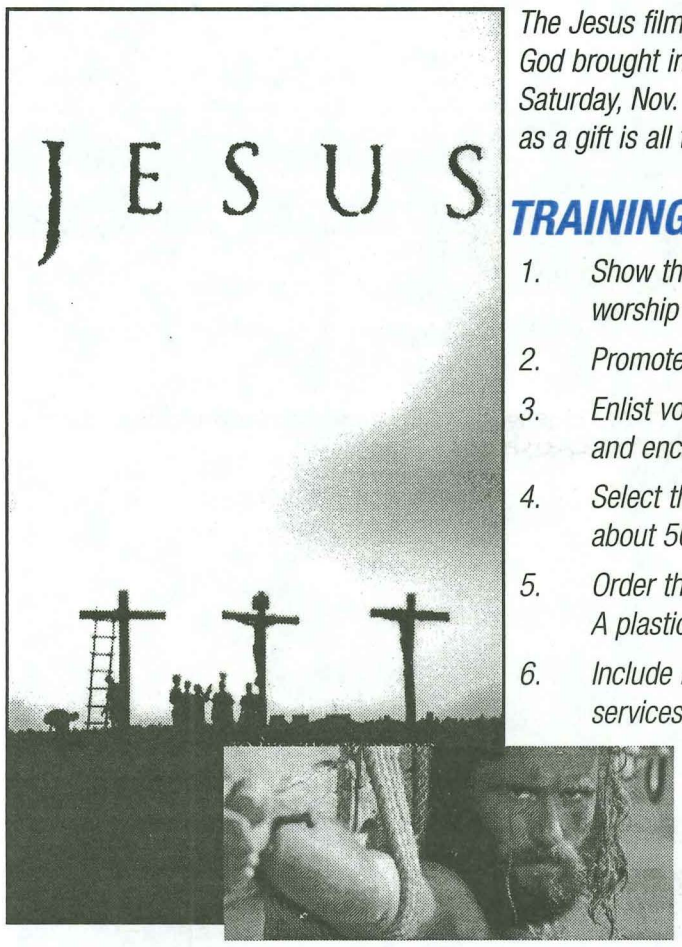
The following are general instructions for the ***Community/Prayer Needs Survey*** *to be conducted on Saturday, November 8 in targeted areas.*

- *Please sign in at the designated site for the targeted area at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 8.*
  - *Berea - Bethel Baptist Church*
  - *Richmond - Eastside Baptist Church*
  - *Lexington area - Immanuel Baptist Church*
- *You will be assigned to a team of three people with at least one person of the opposite sex on each team and one person from the church you are representing.*
- *You will be given a packet of material that contains a map that locates the area to be surveyed, the Community/Prayer Needs Survey cards and information about the church you are representing. Take time to pray together as a team for those homes you will visit and the people you will talk with.*
- *As you approach the residence to be surveyed, fill out the top portion of the survey including the address.*
- *A designated person in the group should introduce the team and share the purpose of the survey. One person on the team should record the responses while another person asks the questions. Go through the survey and if appropriate seek to share the gospel using the "Steps to Peace with God" witnessing booklet.*
- *If possible, obtain the name or names of the persons in the household and fill out the back of the survey card before going to the next residence.*
- *Leave materials about the church and the witnessing booklet. If no one is home, mark this on the top portion of the survey card indicating the address and leave materials about the church.*
- *Do not enter the residence or go to the back door. If residents ask you to come in say that you have been requested not to enter homes so as not to inconvenience anyone.*
- *After completing the surveys of assigned areas, return to the church to turn in your report forms.*
- ***HOST CHURCHES ARE TO PROVIDE LUNCH FOR THE PARTICIPANTS!***

If you have not yet volunteered for Cross Over Kentucky, now is the time. For more information or to volunteer to participate in one of many events planned, call
888-254-5722 or 502-254-4737.
You can also sign up online at
www.kybaptist.org/crossover

Jesus Video Distribution

Cross Over The Bluegrass



The Jesus film has touched more lives that any other evangelistic effort in human history. It is the inspired Word of God brought into film and video. Hundreds of these videos will be distributed in homes all across the targeted areas on Saturday, Nov. 8. No evangelism training is required to do this. A willingness to knock on doors and offer the video as a gift is all that is needed.

TRAINING GUIDE FOR THE CROSS OVER JESUS VIDEO DISTRIBUTION

1. *Show the JESUS video in your church on a Sunday night during the discipleship time or during the evening worship service.* (These are available through the Evangelism office of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.)
2. *Promote the need to distribute the Jesus videos in your area.*
3. *Enlist volunteers from within your church who will help with the JESUS video distribution* (See sample bulletin insert below.) *and encourage them to work with the other Kentucky Baptists who will be coming to participate in Cross Over events.*
4. *Select the areas you can reasonably expect to cover in about four hours. One team of three people can cover about 50 homes.*
5. *Order the Jesus videos from the Evangelism Office. The cost is $3.00 each. Order 25 videos per team. A plastic doorhanger bag labeled FREE VIDEO INSIDE will be included with your order.*
6. *Include in the doorhanger bag information about your church, an invitation to the Weekend or One Day Revival services and a response card with your church address and either a postal permit or a stamp.* (See sample below.)
7. *Follow-up. The ideal follow-up is to make a second visit to the homes about one month after the videos have been distributed. Ask if there are any questions about the video, ask for prayer concerns that can be shared with the church and give an invitation to Bible study and worship.*
8. ***HOST CHURCHES ARE TO PROVIDE LUNCH FOR THE PARTICIPANTS!***

Sample Bulletin Insert

Cross Over Jesus Video Distribution

You can help offer the gift of Jesus to homes in our area. Our church will be giving the gift of a Jesus video to local families as part of ***CROSS OVER KENTUCKY****. No evangelism training is required. If you are willing to be a part of our church distributing these videos on Saturday, Nov. 8, please complete the information below.*

❑ **Yes**, *I will help!*

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Sample Response Card

- ❑ *Please call or visit with me. I have questions about how to become a Christian.*
- ❑ *Please send me more information about a personal relationship with Jesus.*
- ❑ *Prayer requests or comments*

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

International Worship Rally

Gathering Sites

Those from outside the Tates Creek or Elkhorn Associations who wish to participate in ***Cross Over the Bluegrass*** *need to gather at the following locations on Saturday, November 8 at 8:30 AM. Instructions will be given and assignments made.*

Tates Creek Baptist Association
Bethel Baptist Church - Berea
Eastside Baptist Church - Richmond

Elkhorn Baptist Association
Immanuel Baptist Church - Lexington - Central location for all those participating in the Elkhorn Association Cross Over the Bluegrass

Prayer Walks/Journeys

The Prayer Walking/Journeys will consist of walking or driving targeted areas two weeks prior to the Cross Over effort and praying for the residents to be receptive to the Gospel.

INSTRUCTIONS

For The Churches Participating In The Prayer Walks/Journeys:

1. *Prepare maps of the areas to be prayer walked or driven.*
2. *Designate a timeframe at least two weeks prior to Cross Over to do the Prayer Walks/Journeys.*
3. *Provide a time of training for those who will participate in the Prayer Walks/Journeys.*

The key to both calling out laborers for Cross Over and touching the unchurched with the Good News is prayer. It is our desire that every targeted area of Cross Over be prayed for through prayer walking or driving strategic areas. Those who want to participate in Cross Over prayer efforts are encouraged to:

1. ***Put Cross Over on their prayer list.***
2. ***Sign up to be part of the prayer effort for Cross Over.***
3. ***Come to the training provided by the association for specific instructions and assignments.***

Lifting Up Jesus Christ!

Cross Over The Bluegrass

Servant Evangelism Projects

Many of the Kentucky Baptist churches in the targeted areas will be intentionally sharing Christ by modeling biblical servanthood. The servant projects may include leaf raking, cleaning gutters, free car washes, minor repair projects and other acts of service. These will be done in the targeted communities in order to show the love of Christ in practical ways. An invitation will be given to the Weekend or One Day Revival meetings.

No special training or experience is needed to do the servant projects. A willingness to help meet needs and share Christ is all that is needed. Those interested in participating in these projects need to notify the Evangelism Office of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and you will be assigned a church with which to serve.

Training Guide For Churches

1. *Determine which servant projects your church will do.*
2. *Determine the areas & scope of the projects.*
3. *Assign to teams and projects those who have signed up to participate.*
4. *Secure permission to do the projects from either businesses or residents.*
5. *Provide the necessary equipment and materials to do the projects, i.e. rakes, leaf bags, car washing materials, etc.*
6. *Provide lunch at the church for those who are participating in the servant projects.*

Weekend Or One Day Revivals

*Many of the churches in the targeted areas will be having **WEEKEND OR ONE DAY REVIVALS.** To prepare for these revivals, consider doing the following:*

- *Organize prayer teams to begin praying for the revival services.*
- *Secure a speaker. If you need help securing a speaker, please contact the **Evangelism Office at 888-254-5722 or 502-254-4737.***
- *Provide housing, expenses and an honorarium for the visiting speaker.*
- *Publicize the revival services in the church, the community and through the Cross Over efforts.*
- *Provide training for decision counselors using the **"Steps to Peace with God"** tract provided by the Evangelism Office.*
- *Prepare for necessary follow-up with those who make decisions during the revival services.*

Tates Creek Association Leadership Team 859-986-4224

Kenny Davis, Jr., Coordinator
Bethel Baptist / Tates Creek Evangelism Leader
P. O. Box 452, Berea KY 40403
Church Telephone: 859-986-7341
E-mail Address: HEBREWS138@alltel.net

Prayer Walking/Community Needs Surveys
Adam Dooley, Red House Baptist Church
2301 Red House Road, Richmond KY 40475
Church Telephone: 859-623-8471
E-mail Address: adambrent4@yahoo.com

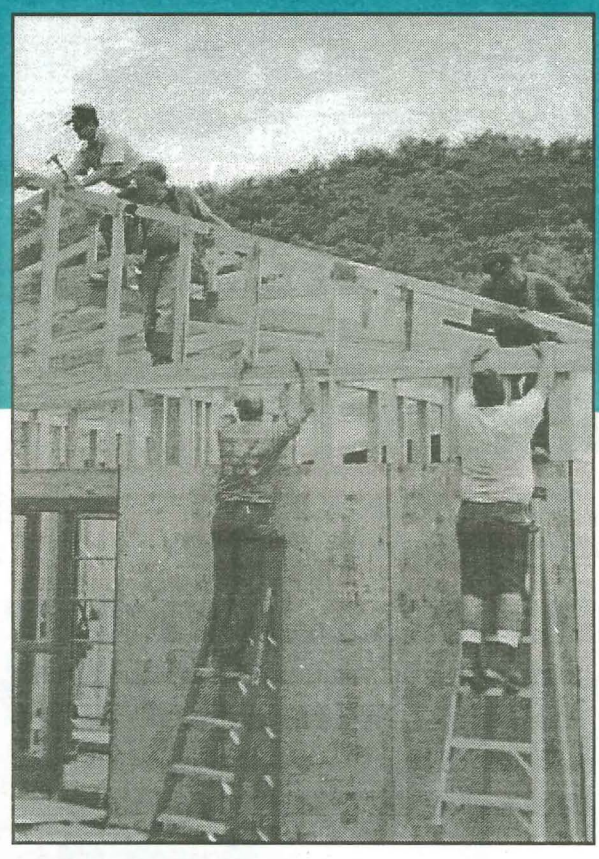
JESUS Video Distribution
Kevin Clark, Liberty Avenue Baptist Church
273 Mt. Vernon Road, Berea KY 40403
Church Telephone: 859-986-9249
E-mail Address: nhisgrip@juno.com

Weekend or One Day Revival Team
Butch Pennington, Kirksville Baptist Church
542 Kirksville Road, Richmond KY 40475
Church Telephone: 859-328-4922
E-mail Address: kbcpastor@chpl.net

Youth Rally/Outreach
Jonathan Tussey, Eastside Baptist
2010 Catalpa Loop, Richmond KY 40475
Church Telephone: 859-624-9646

Servant Evangelism
Ed Cortez, Gethsemane Baptist Church
P. O. Box 271, Berea KY 40403
Church Telephone: 859-986-0655
E-mail Address: ecortez@mis.net

Virgil Grant, Pastor, Eastside Baptist Church
2010 Catalpa Loop, Richmond KY 40475
Church Telephone: 859-624-9646
E-mail Address: vgrant@eastside-baptist.com



Elkhorn Baptist Association Leadership Team 859-254-7747

Youth Rally
Butch Vernon (859) 277-7391
1667 Alexandria Drive, Lexington, KY 40504-2198
roy_vernon@hotmail.com

Ray Van Camp (859) 254-7747
1161 Red Mile Road, Lexington, KY 40504
ray@elkhorn.org

International Worship Rally/Food Fair
Jay Robison (859) 254-6795 , Trinity Baptist Church
1675 Strader Drive, Lexington, KY 40505-4000
trinitybaplex@excelonline.com

Revivals
Stephen Ellis (859) 299-8445
1915 N Broadway, Lexington, KY 40505-1597
Steve@parkwaybaptistchurch.org

Blanketing the Bluegrass
Sandra Williams (859) 254-7747
1161 Red Mile Road, Lexington, KY 40504
Sandra@elkhorn.org

Construction/Repair
Sandra Williams (859) 254-7747
1161 Red Mile Road, Lexington, KY 40504
Sandra@elkhorn.org

Toys for Children
Sandra Williams (859) 254-7747
1161 Red Mile Road, Lexington, KY 40504
Sandra@elkhorn.org

Community/Prayer Surveys/Jesus Video
Jim McGee (859) 272-3441
4300 Nicholasville Rd, Lexington, KY 40515-4616
jmcgee6797@aol.com

Mike James (859) 273-8428
2261 Armstrong Mill Rd, Lexington, KY 40515-7501
Pastormikejames@cs.com

U of K Prayer Walk/Campus Outreach
H.K. Kingkade (859) 257-5441
3025 Stanford Drive, Lexington, KY 40517-1516
hkkingkade@ukbsu.org

Auto Clinic/Car Wash
Ron Ide (859) 224-4327
4700 Bud Lane, Lexington, KY 40514-1451
ronide@aol.com

TOYS FOR CHILDREN

The Elkhorn Baptist Association is sponsoring a Christmas Toy Project to help low income families provide a better Christmas for their children. Those attending the Kentucky Baptist Convention are asked to bring toys, Christmas paper, bows, tape and children's bibles to the Immanuel Baptist Church.

KBC KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

Kentucky Baptist Cooperative Program
This publication is made possible by the Cooperative Program.

P.O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433
502-254-4737 or Toll Free 1-888-254-5722
www.kybaptist.org/crossover

Even some supporters 'dismayed' by judge's strategy

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—As officials prepared to remove the 5,300-pound monument of the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of Alabama's judicial building, even some supporters were questioning the monument sponsor's legal strategy for fighting to keep it in place.

Moore

The granite statue was ordered removed last week from the Alabama judicial building. The state Supreme Court associate justices voted on the action, overruling their chief justice.

Their decision followed a refusal by the U.S. Supreme Court to delay a district judge's order that Chief Justice Roy Moore should remove the monument from the judicial building's rotunda.

Moore announced earlier in the week that he would not obey the order to remove the monument, leading the other justices to take action.

Suspended from duties

On Aug. 22, Moore was suspended, with pay, when the state's Judicial Inquiry Commission filed judicial ethics charges against him.

Moore will be prosecuted in the Alabama Court of the Judiciary—a group convened for the purpose of adjudicating cases against judges. That court could decide to relieve Moore of his duties permanently.

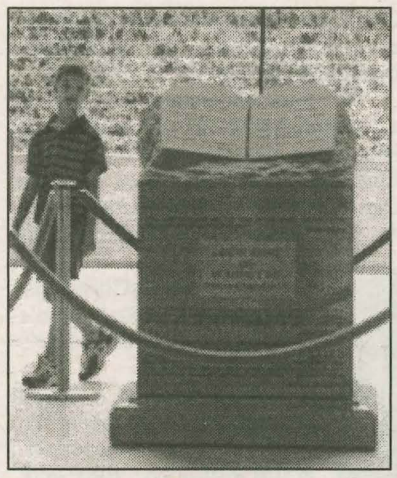
But while protestors from around the country rallied to Moore's support, even some supporters of Moore questioned his defiance of the court order.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, expressed sympathy for Moore's beliefs and convictions, but "I am dismayed at the prospect of a judge defying a court order."

Land and Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, suggested Moore failed to exhaust his legal recourse before defying the court order.

Moore could have requested a stay of the ruling of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, they said. Such delays of enforcement are routinely issued and would have allowed the monument to remain on display, Sekulow said.

Instead, Moore asked the U.S. Supreme Court to postpone the monument's removal. An article in The Montgomery Advertiser stated that such appeals have succeeded about 10 times in the past 100 years.



5,300-POUND CONTROVERSY *Alabama Supreme Court associate justices voted last week to remove the monument before the state began accumulating fines. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)*

Last week, all eight associate justices in Alabama ordered the manager of the judicial building to "take all steps necessary" to comply with the order "as soon as practicable."

They also cited the possibility of "substantial, escalating, daily fines" against the state. In his order, U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson had said he could fine Alabama $5,000 a day in the first week after the order deadline of Aug. 20 and perhaps double after that.

Moore, appearing outside the judicial building Aug. 21, said he would again ask the U.S. Supreme Court to resolve the issues of the case.

He said acknowledging God is his "duty."

"Not only does Judge Thompson put himself above the law but above God as well," he said.

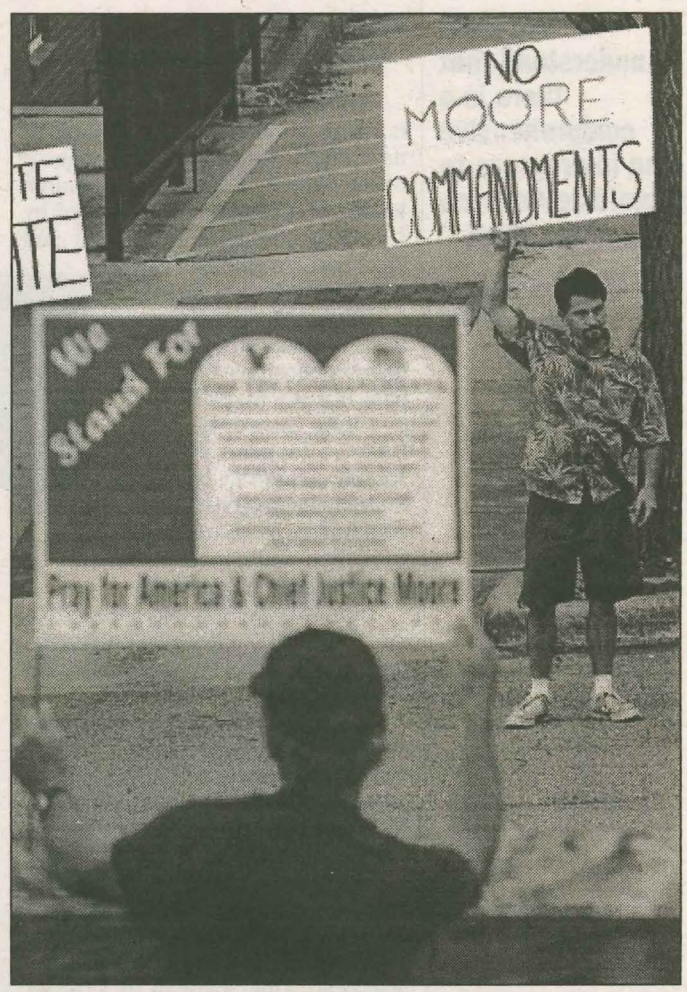
Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, applauded the associate justices for their decision.

"Moore is increasingly isolated in his defiance of the federal court," Lynn said. His group was among those that sued to remove the monument.

Protestors & civil disobedience

But some of those who have been supporting Moore remain staunchly on his side.

"My feeling is that Judge Moore should continue to stand firm against the ruling that's been handed down for him to remove the commandments," said Billy McCormack, a board member of the Christian Coalition of America. "I think he goes in the tradition of Martin Luther King Jr., who at great personal risk defied the laws of the state."



COMPETING PROTESTS *Protesters hold signs with opposing views outside the Alabama judicial building during an evening vigil Aug. 21 in Montgomery. (RNS/ Reuters photo by Tami Chappell)*

About 20 protesters, part of a group that has vowed to block removal of the monument by civil disobedience, were arrested Aug. 20 after refusing to leave the court building and jailed on trespassing charges. Most were released the same day.

The next day, Alabama Attorney General Bill Pryor announced that access to the building had been limited to those with official court business.

Compiled from reporting by Baptist Press, Associated Baptist Press and Religion News Service

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September 4 - November 20

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Islam growing because churches failing, speaker says

"We must understand that there is a comprehensive plan in progress to Islamicize America and the West."

Carl Ellis, co-founder of Project Joseph

By Rob Phillips
LifeWay Christian Resources

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)—Islam is rising in America, not because of its strength, but because of the retreat of the church, a speaker told church leaders at a conference sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Carl Ellis

If Islam continues to grow at its current rate, there will be more Muslims than Christians in every major U.S. city by 2020, according to Carl Ellis, co-founder of Project Joseph, a ministry dedicated to strengthening the Christian community by providing information and education on various non-Christian movements

Ellis was the featured speaker for the "National Conference on Islam," Aug. 15-17 at LifeWay's Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center.

Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world, with 1.2 billion devotees, and a growth of 2.75 percent per year, Ellis said. By some accounts, Muslims will overtake the current 1.8 billion Christians by 2020, he added.

In America, where there are an estimated 7 million followers, Islam is growing at a 6 percent annual rate, Ellis said. White Americans are the fastest-growing segment of U.S. Islam, and 80-85 percent of all U.S. Muslims consider themselves former Christians. If present trends continue, every major U.S. city will be predominantly Muslim by 2020, Ellis said.

"We must understand that there is a comprehensive plan in progress to Islamicize America and the West," Ellis said, adding that since 1973 the Organization of Islamic Conference has spent about $105 billion in this effort.

If this troubles Christians, they need not look at Islam's success, but at Christianity's failure, Ellis said.

"The church in America has reduced the gospel of the Kingdom to peddling personal fire insurance," Ellis said. "As I talk to Muslims who have left the church, I find that they don't feel the church addresses their issues and needs. Yet the Bible speaks to every one of them."

Two axioms must guide Christian thinking about Islam, Ellis said. First, Islam is a system, while Muslims are people. Christians must challenge Islam and love Muslims.

Second, he said, there are three things a Muslim has no defense against—the prayers of the saints, the love of the saints and the wise application of the Word of God to their core issues.

"I find among Muslims a sincere desire to be right with God—especially among American converts," Ellis said, adding that he personally has seen more than 1,800 Muslims leave Islam to become Christians.

RELIGIONS MEET *The meeting of symbols for the Christian and Muslim faiths in Jerusalem represents the face-off between the two religions worldwide. (BP file photo)*

Ellis described Islam as a "works-righteousness treadmill. There is no assurance of salvation—with the possible exception of dying in jihad." While many Muslims ultimately embrace the gospel because of its message of God's grace, Ellis said the church has not adequately prepared believers to share that message. "We have neglected the teachings of the Bible. I suspect Islam is rising, not because of the strength they have, but because of the retreat of the church."

Ellis said the decline of the church in America already has happened in other parts of the world. "People used to say Islam would never take hold in the Holy Land because Christianity was too strong. But look at Jerusalem, where the Mosque of Omar, the third most holy place in Islam, sits atop the ruins of the temple where Jesus taught."

Still, Ellis said he remains hopeful.

He said if Christians return to the Bible, embrace and engage Muslims in loving dialogue, the gospel message will water the "dry well" of Islam.

"At the end of the day, Isaiah 55:11 is still true—God's Word will not return to Him void," Ellis said. "I count on the Word of God to do its work, if we will do ours."

Don't get so wrapped up defending truth that you forget to share it

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Declaration recently spotted on a T-shirt at a mall food court:

"Abortion is murder.

Homosexuality is a sin.

Islam is a lie.

Some issues are black and white."

If this statement is intended to make the T-shirt wearer feel good about the rightness of his views, it probably succeeds. If it's intended to change anyone else's mind or heart, it fails miserably.

FIRST PERSON

Erich Bridges

Take it from a longtime pro-lifer: The fastest way to end a conversation about abortion before it even begins is with a frontal assault. If you want to shout your opinions or express righteous anger, have at it. But don't expect to convince anyone who's unconvinced.

The same goes for the "Islam is a lie" approach. It's not "hate speech," but it's also not a very effective way to initiate a discussion.

Would you introduce yourself to a Muslim on a street corner in Cairo with that line? I don't recommend it. It's a guaranteed riot starter in the 45 or so countries with Muslim majorities. It won't work in Atlanta or Dallas, either, if you want to get past square one in communicating the truth in love.

Isn't communicating the truth in love your goal? If not, you need to examine your motives in the light of Scripture and God's spirit.

In love vs. in your face

Muslims, like most people, don't respond well to in-your-face confrontation. They do respond to friendship, love and—at the right moment—the good news that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Savior of all people.

And it is news to most Muslims.

While we're talking truth and lies, the notion that Muslims automatically reject the gospel is one of Satan's biggest falsehoods. The fact that so many Christians believe this lie—or fear testing it—is a global tragedy. Most of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims simply haven't heard the gospel in a way they can understand. When they do, God begins to reveal Himself.

"Tolga," a university student, recently wrote to the producers of an evangelistic radio program that is broadcast in several Muslim cities: "Today I heard your show for the first time. The program explaining the life of Christ is rather intriguing to me, but my head's all mixed up. Some of the things you're teaching differ from what I've been taught all my life. I'd like to be better informed, but I don't know how. I'd like it if you could help me."

Christian broadcasters and Bible distributors in the Muslim world can show you thousands of similar letters.

More than 3,500 Muslims in a major South Asian city have become followers of Christ. When asked why they decided to follow Christ, group representatives cited three factors: the "guarantee of heaven," the fact that Jesus Christ is not just a prophet but God's anointed Messiah, and His healing power.

When asked if God had revealed these truths to them through the Koran (Islam's holy book), the New Testament or their personal experiences, they responded, "All three."

The same is true in the United States, a magnet for Muslim immigrants from all over the world.

Another Muslim's testimony

Guven, a Muslim from Central Asia, came to the United States to pursue post-graduate studies. A pastor at a church that prays for Muslims befriended him and supports mission work in Guven's home country.

The two discussed their religious beliefs. Like so many Muslims, Guven rejected the idea of a God in three people, the resurrection of Christ and the authority of the Bible. But the two stayed in touch, and when Guven's teeth began to ache, the pastor contacted a Christian dentist who performed a root canal on Guven without charge.

The grateful student decided to visit the pastor's church a few times, strictly as a courtesy. But the more he went, the more alive the worship songs, the pastor's words and the Scripture seemed.

"What made the most sense was the personal relationship" with God, Guven said later. "This is amazing."

Eventually, in the quietness of his heart, Guven invited Christ to be his Savior and Lord. When he told the pastor and his congregation, they stood and applauded for joy. Next year he plans to return to his home country with a team from the church to share the gospel with others who are hungry for God.

"I know it's a challenge, but I pray God makes me ready for this, too," he said, acknowledging the risks of taking the good news to his own people. "Everyone has to go through trials, and this is going to be mine."

What are the odds that Guven would have opened his mind and heart to Christ if the pastor had shown up on his university campus one day wearing a T-shirt declaring "Islam is a lie"?

Don't get so caught up in defending truth that you lose the chance to share truth with the people around you who are desperately seeking it.

Erich Bridges is a senior writer with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

SMILE

Plan now for a busy fall

HOMES FOR CHILDREN

Bill Smithwick

It's shaping up to be a busy fall for the ministries of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Pull out your calendar now and put down these important dates and events:

▮ *Friday, Oct. 3:* Remember to deliver your grocery gift cards or food donations for the annual Food Round-Up to the appropriate drop-off point. Our Web site, www.kbhc.org, has a detailed list of drop-off points and information on the need for more grocery gift cards instead of canned goods. Call us at (800) 456-1386 if you have questions.

▮ *Saturday, Oct. 11:* KBHC's Pregnancy and Adoption Services will host a picnic in Louisville for adoptive families. For more information, contact Barbara Lee at (502) 568-9117. Also, November is Adoption Awareness month.

On the horizon: The staff and volunteers at KBHC's Morehead Center, which cares for teenage girls who have been abused or neglected, are planning to dedicate their new school building this fall. The 1,200-square-foot building will be dedicated to longtime KBHC supporter Julia Cooper, whose donation covered the project's costs. Stay tuned to our Web site for more information as plans take shape.

We're also gearing up for October and November, the time of year when Kentucky's Baptist ministries come into your churches and visit your local associations to explain what we do and how you can help. The association meetings are the perfect opportunities to get your questions answered by KBHC staff members.

If your church is interested in having a guest speaker from KBHC, simply give us a call at (800) 456-1386 or e-mail us at info @kbhc.org. We're happy to share the good news of what's going on with the children in our care. Plan to get involved with KBHC. You'll be blessed, and so will we.

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

Camping ministry overseas

By David Melber

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES

The end of this camping season marks the culmination of a partnership that began more than two years ago between Jonathan Creek and Salvador Mission Camp in Trinidad.

The camp in Trinidad is modest by our standards, but in every respect leaders seek to accomplish the same goal as we do, which is to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known to all.

The Salvador Mission Camp is operated by the Independent International Baptist Church of Trinidad & Tobago, with help from the Trinidad & Tobago Baptist Mission. The camp is located on a secluded portion of the El Salvador Estate, 45 minutes from the western shore of Trinidad. The camp is comprised of a two-story building, which sits on six acres, and can handle up to 150 guests.

The vision of building a camp was birthed through Pastor Nelton Richardson. Richardson, a native of Trinidad, is an amazing man, nearly 80 years of age. Richardson, with the help of many others, began work to build the camp during the early 1980s. The camp could not have been built without the efforts of several key people, many of whom are from Kentucky.

Today the camp serves Baptist churches across Trinidad. Camp programs target youth, choirs and musicians, deaf people and pastoral training, to name just a few. Richardson has plans to build a seminary nearby, and the future for the Salvador Mission Camp looks more promising than ever.

During the past two summers, Jonathan Creek has been collecting a missions offering with every dollar going toward the Salvador Mission Camp. The nearly $50,000 collected in offerings translates to approximately $300,000 Trinidad dollars. The money will go a long way to bring about drastic improvements to the camp. The money from last summer alone was used to purchase beds and mattresses and to install tile in the bath and kitchen areas. The offering from this summer will go to many other needs, such as painting, new construction, road repair and recreation developments.

It is utterly amazing how God has impressed upon the youth at Crossings to give so generously to a place they never have seen, other than through pictures. It should encourage all of us to know that God is aware of our needs and can impress those needs upon people we do not even know. Our God is amazing and works wonders. God simply commands us to have faith and believe (Hebrews 11:6).

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

Kudzu

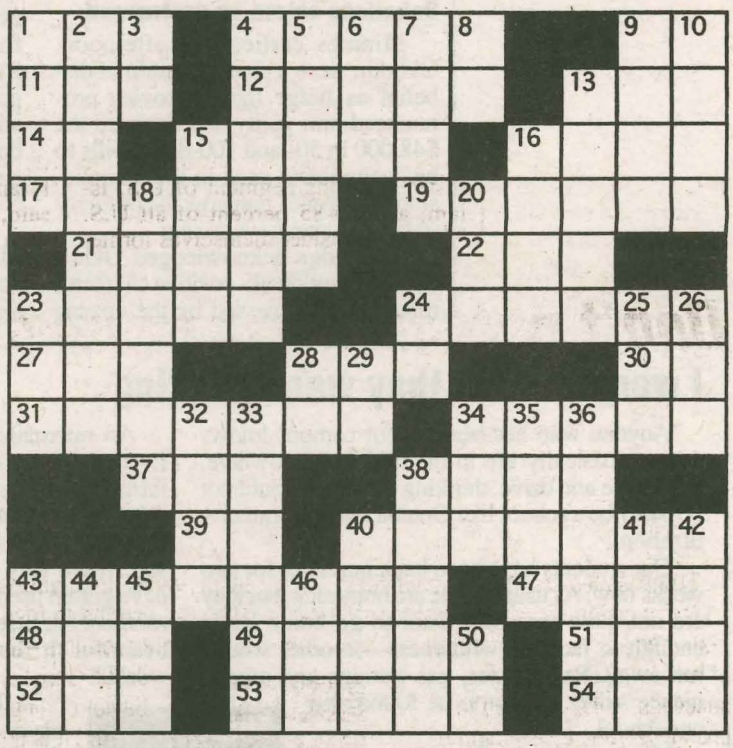
Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan

Bible Crossword

Teri Grottke



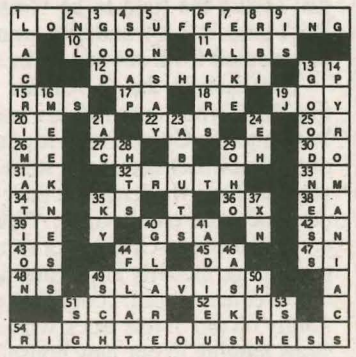
Across

1 Has ability
4 "Thou that liftest me up from the ____ of death" (Psalm 9:13)
9 Astatine, chem. symbol
11 A son of Bela (1 Chronicles 7:7)
12 "Henoch, and ____, and Eldaah" (1 Chronicles 1:33)
13 Fuss
14 A little woman
15 Chief among the captains of David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:8)
16 "Iniquity of ____ house" (1 Samuel 3:14)
17 A Colossian woman Paul greets (Philemon 2)
19 The Israelites craved this fruit in the wilderness (Numbers 11:5)
21 "He shall be like the ____ in the desert" (Jeremiah 17:6)
22 Sprint
23 Gaius was from here (Acts 20:4)
24 "Their coast was from ____" (Joshua 19:33)
27 "Out of whose womb came the ____?" (Job 38:29)
28 Obadiah, abbr.
30 Account of, abbr.
31 The woman on the scarlet beast had this written on her forehead (Revelation 17:4–5)
34 Race of giants (Deuteronomy 2)
37 Not him
38 "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every ____" (John 13:10)
39 Capital of Moab (Numbers 21:28)
40 He was the officer over Solomon's household (1 Kings 4:6)
43 Grow
47 Exhaust
48 Also
49 "____ will I sit" (Joel 3:12)
51 Poetic contraction that means early night
52 To stitch
53 Employed
54 Boy

Down

1 "Michmash, and ____" (Nehemiah 11:31)
2 "The gift of ____" (1 Corinthians 13:2)
3 Titanium, chem. symbol
4 Someone from Gad
5 Hezron's wife (1 Chronicles 2:24)
6 Stannum, other name
7 "Wise men out of ____" (Obadiah 8)
8 Southern continent, abbr.
9 Returned exiles (Ezra 2:15)
10 Throw
13 By oneself
15 Jezebel's husband (1 Kings 16:30–31)
16 6th month of the Hebrew year (Nehemiah 6:15)
18 Machir's son (1 Chronicles 7:16)
20 Before, poetic
23 Unclear
24 A laugh
25 Girl's name
26 Hosea, abbr.
28 Either
29 Near
32 Drop of sadness
33 "He that refuseth reproof ____" (Proverbs 10:17)
34 A son of Benjamin (Genesis 46:21)
35 Haze
36 Jesaiah's son (Nehemiah 11:7)
38 Adverb of location
40 "Of the tribe of ____ were sealed" (Revelation 7:6)
41 Length x width
42 Rip
43 Possessive pronoun
44 Greek form of Noah
45 Female bovine
46 Son of Abdiel (1 Chronicles 5)
50 An altar (Joshua 22:34)

Last week's solution



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Baptist convicted of smuggling in Russia, money seized

"If they stole from you, what would you do?"
Andrew Okhotin

By Frank Brown
Religion News Service

MOSCOW (RNS)—In a case being watched closely by evangelical Protestants worldwide, a judge last week convicted an American Baptist youth pastor of currency smuggling, in the process confiscating $48,000 in charitable donations collected from believers in the United States.

The part-time pastor, Andrew Okhotin, was given a suspended sentence of six months and is now free to leave Russia, where he has been stuck since March.

But Okhotin is vowing to appeal the verdict and remain in Moscow, perhaps missing the start of the fall term at Harvard Divinity School, where he is a third-year graduate student.

"I don't know how long I'll have to stay," he said Aug. 21 after hearing the verdict, calling the seizure of the $48,000 a "theft." "If they stole from you, what would you do?"

Donations seized as contraband

Minutes earlier that afternoon, Okhotin wore a crooked smile of disbelief as Judge Igor Yakovlev pronounced him guilty and declared the $48,000 in 50- and 100-dollar bills to be "contraband used in the commission of a crime" and now the property of the Russian government.

The judge acknowledged Okhotin's "exceptionally positive character references" witnessed by the dozens of faxed and mailed appeals from hundreds of evangelical Christians, Okhotin's professors and a letter from eight U.S. members of Congress.

But, in arriving at the verdict, Yakovlev ignored Okhotin's version of what happened on the morning of March 29 when Okhotin arrived on a flight with the cash in his backpack.

In sometimes conflicting accounts, two customs inspectors testified that Okhotin's choice of the green, nothing-to-declare corridor was a willful attempt at deception.

Okhotin told the court he chose the green corridor by accident, cooperated with the inspectors and immediately produced a customs declaration for the cash that he had filled out on the flight from New York. The customs inspectors ignored it, Okhotin said, choosing instead to demand bribes of first $10,000 and then $5,000 for his release.

Okhotin's case has received scant attention from the Russian media. Worldwide, however, his case slowly has taken on a life of its own by provoking the prayerful indignation of evangelical Christians. Supporters are following his journey through the Russian legal system, his 27-day hunger strike and the prayer appeals on an American Christian radio network, through e-mail and on Christian-oriented Web sites from Denmark to North America to Russia.

About 50 young Baptists at the Massachusetts church where Okhotin volunteered weekends as a youth pastor stayed up until 2:30 a.m. Aug. 21 praying for Okhotin and the families to benefit from the money.

Members of the Southwick Baptist Church in Westfield, Mass, contributed to the $48,000 sum raised to aid needy Russian Baptists, said Pastor Alexander Brover.

Specially prepared for this case

"God took Andrew on this path to prepare him for something bigger. God is teaching him something," the pastor said.

Indeed, of all the people who could have run afoul of customs officials, Okhotin is uniquely qualified to hold his own. Okhotin's father was a Soviet-era pastor in an underground Baptist church who was arrested for his faith and imprisoned for 2 1/2 years. The family—Okhotin's parents and his eight siblings—immigrated to the United States in 1989. After graduating from Harvard Divinity School, Okhotin wants to enroll in Harvard Law School and eventually specialize in defending the rights of religious minorities.

Okhotin's lawyer, Vladimir Ryakhovsky, said he would appeal the verdict to the Moscow City Court. He called the grounds for appeal strong because "the judge didn't take into account at all the fact that there is no limit how much money you can bring into the country."

CORRECTION

SEPTEMBER 6 SUPER SATURDAY

The Super Saturday booklets which were mailed this year should have stated that the Paducah-area Super Saturday will be held at **Paducah First Baptist Church.**

Also, on September 6, Super Saturday will be held in Ashland at Unity Baptist Church.

If you have a question, please phone Cheryl Davis at (888) 254-4730.

I wonder what they were thinking

THIS IS ONEIDA

W.F. Underwood

Anyone who has been to our campus knows that we basically are in the middle of nowhere. You drive and drive, thinking that there could not possibly be a school like Oneida this far from civilization.

Our students have been back in school for two weeks now. As usual, some are homesick, but they are not quite sure they want to go home badly enough to face the wilderness—in other words, run away. Pay phones, gas stations and convenience stores are not to be found near our school.

Many of our students have never been in the country like this before. They have never seen the early morning fog as it lingers in the valleys, obscuring the mountains hiding in the mist. Many of our students never have been to a place so free of honking horns, screeching sirens, noisy trains and planes, and much more. And boy, do we have fresh air! Lots and lots of smoke-free and pollution-free air. Well, I do admit that some students do not consider the aroma of our hog facility just across the field to be "fresh air." But I think it is a wonderful aroma. And you will never smell fresh cut hay in the city.

But back to the "I wonder what they were thinking" when our students made their first trip back into the Cumberland Mountains to come to our school. Let me share some of the thoughts students have written about their first trip to Oneida. One staff child wrote, "When the time did come to move to Oneida, for some odd reason the tune of the 'Beverly Hillbillies' kept playing over and over in my head. I could just picture the whole family on top of that truck with all of our possessions moving to our new house."

An international student wrote, "When I arrived in Kentucky I saw a lot of mountains and farms. I didn't see many tall buildings at all. … After more than 50 turns, we finally arrived at Oneida. I had lived in the big city all of my life, so ... it felt very strange. After three years here, I have gotten used to it and ... I like Oneida's environment because it has fresh air and it is quiet and beautiful. It feels like a place outside the real world."

A Maryland student wrote, "I will never forget our trip to Oneida as we drove through many strange mountains. Then it hit me—my mom must be taking me to boot camp!" One girl wrote, "I was from the city; I was not used to seeing so many trees, mountains and animals. ... I thought, 'This can't be real!' I was in the middle of nowhere."

Another city student wrote, "Where I am from, you don't see trees and hills and farms. All you can see are buildings and lots of people and stores." Jacky wrote, "One of the things I really disliked about Oneida when I first came was the location of the school. It was away from everything. I thought that I may as well live in the bushes."

Well, I think you get the idea. As you can tell, many of our students have had little or no contact with country living. I know country living is not for everyone, but if you are trying to wean a student away from his "old pals" back home, if you are trying to put an end to the needless cruising of the malls, if you need to get a boy or girl away from all the hustle and bustle, Oneida is the place.

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

A navy chaplain remembers Sept. 11

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE

Bill Whittaker

"God opened the door to be a Navy chaplain," 1983 graduate Doyle Dunn said in a recent testimony to fellow alumni. "Some of my family asked, 'Why are you leaving the ministry?' I've been so fulfilled as a minister these last 17 years." Dunn participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom on board the USS Harry S Truman. The ship is longer than the Empire State Building and has a 4.5-acre flight deck. "Put a chapel in the middle of 6,000 men and women from 50 states and every possible religious affiliation, and many without any interest in God and with an assignment to take care of their spiritual needs—that is ministry," Dunn said.

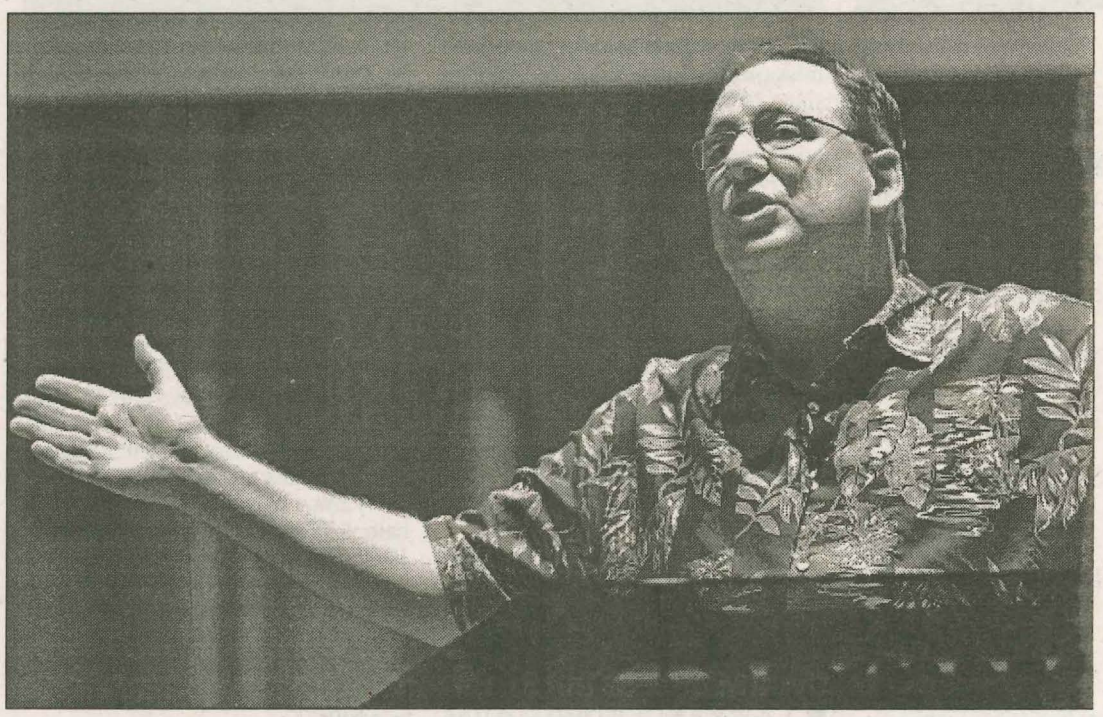
His Navy career started in Norfolk, Va., as chaplain to 300 men. Requesting a different challenge, Dunn expected an assignment to Marines in North Carolina. His orders took him to California and the family enjoyed a scenic cross-country drive without any national news during the trip. "When I checked in, headquarters told me Iraq had invaded Kuwait. I was placed with a battalion that had not deployed since Vietnam and without a chaplain for six months. The next morning we departed for Saudi Arabia and later made the invasion into Kuwait. Many of the battalion came to know Jesus. An old decontamination tank found in the desert was used for baptism. Thankfully, our battalion didn't lose a single life."

Doyle also served a tour in Somalia. While stationed in Washington, he earned a degree at Princeton University. Assigned to the Chief Chaplain's staff, he assumed he would have a three-year stint of deskwork supporting the chaplain corps. Then Sept. 11, 2001, occurred. He and 20 other chaplains delivered death notices. In the morgue, he read Scripture and prayed over bodies laid in a row, many of them unable to be identified. "I noticed an awesome silence by the forensics team when the body bags were first opened," Dunn remembered. "C.S. Lewis wrote about being 'uncomfortable in the presence of death' and this medical team was looking at someone made in the image of God. I thought if there was that much reverence in a lifeless form, how much more reverence should there be toward the living. God didn't make us for death."

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

The 'pastor to pastors'

Megachurch pastor Warren enjoys being both teacher and 'spiritual entrepreneur



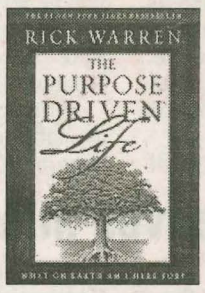
RICK WARREN *The pastor of Saddleback Church near Los Angeles sees himself as someone able to transmit the mysteries of the faith to ordinary 21st-century people. (BP file photo)*

By Ted Parks
Religion News Service

LAKE FOREST, Calif. (RNS)—Before his junior year in high school, Rick Warren knelt in a cabin at summer camp. "God, if you're really alive, I want to know You," he prayed.

The response? Nothing he could hear or see. "No thunder, lightning," Warren said. But it didn't deter him.

Some three decades later, Warren writes nonfiction best sellers and leads one of the largest evangelical congregations in America.



His "The Purpose-Driven Life" has hovered on the New York Times hardcover advice best-seller list for more than 25 weeks. His Saddleback Church near Los Angeles shot from an attendance of seven people at its founding in 1980 to more than 17,000 people who crowd into six weekend services. He has been a guest in the George W. Bush White House.

USA Today recently called him "the most influential evangelist you've never heard of."

The secret of his preaching and publishing success? Warren sees himself as a communicator, as someone able to transmit the mysteries of the faith to ordinary 21st-century people.

"I am in essence a translator," Warren said in a recent interview at Saddleback. "I love to challenge myself to teach theology to nontheological people, without telling them it's theology and without using theological terms."

'One of the best teachers'

Those who hear and read Warren believe he makes his message not only clear, but relevant.

Paul Wilkes, author and program director for Pastoral Summit, a North Carolina-based organization dedicated to strengthening individual churches, said Warren is "understandable to people. There's a hunger in people's hearts he ... has an insight into." He "really hits people where they live."

"I think he is one of the best teachers in the world," said Matt Moser, a church worker from Zurich, Switzerland, who was among the thousands of pastors and church leaders at a recent "Purpose-Driven Church" conference at Saddleback. Moser especially appreciated Warren's ability to connect with unbelievers.

There's preaching in Warren's blood. One ancestor studied under the great 19th century English evangelist Charles Spurgeon and came to America as a circuit-riding preacher, Warren said. And Warren's father was a minister. But the megachurch pastor made clear he never intended to follow in the steps of his preaching forbears.

Growing up in small-town Redwood Valley, Calif., Warren liked the challenges and opportunities of leadership, serving as class president several years. His keenest interests were politics and government, he said. While a sophomore in high school, Warren won an appointment to serve as a page in the U.S. Senate.

The summer before he was scheduled to go to Washington, Warren took a job as lifeguard at a Christian camp. Observing lives of faith he sincerely wanted to imitate, Warren said, he decided to have a talk with God. And despite the lack of proof anyone was listening, the future pastor's life began to change. No longer interested in politics, he turned down the chance to work in Washington.

Warren started a Christian prayer group at school, then he started getting invitations to speak in churches. He sidestepped, not marched, into ministry. "I just kind of veered in that direction," he said.

A call to California

After graduating from California Baptist College, Warren left for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. While in Texas, Warren wrote the country's 100 largest churches to find out what made them grow. He decided a key factor in developing healthy churches is continuity of leadership.

The conclusions of his research mirrored his own longing. If he could only stay wherever he went, Warren promised, "God, I'll go any place in the world."

And though he and his wife, Kaye, wanted to go overseas, they felt the divine answer was no. Spending their last $1,000 on a U-Haul, the couple headed back to California, hosting the home Bible study in January 1980 that eventually would mushroom into Saddleback Church.

Besides shepherding his own flock, Warren reaches out to other ministers. On his "Pastors.com" Web site Warren offers an e-mail newsletter, "Rick Warren's Ministry Toolbox." His e-mail ministry tips reach some 83,000 church leaders weekly. "I love to pastor pastors," he said.

In the second half of the 1990s, Warren took on the IRS when he saw a chance to impact the lives of his fellow pastors across the country.

Like many other clergy, Warren had claimed a housing deduction under a parsonage allowance that gives ministers a tax break on their homes. After auditing several of the pastor's returns, the IRS assessed Warren's home at what he insists was well below its actual value, ruling that he had excluded too much money from his taxable income.

Believing the tax law unclear and that he was not the only one to suffer from its vagueness, Warren mounted legal challenges and won. Later, when the government appealed, the appeals court challenged the constitutionality of the parsonage allowance itself. But after President Bush signed the Clergy Housing Allowance Clarification Act into law in May 2002, the appeal was dismissed.

For Warren, the fight wasn't about money. "I'm going to take this to court on behalf of every pastor in America," he said. "I was doing this for the other people."

Even with the national prominence, the Saddleback pastor insists his love is the local church and his goal is not fame, but positive spiritual influence.

"I'm still dealing with the day-to-day things that pastors go through," Warren said. "I'm not a bureaucrat ... I'm a spiritual entrepreneur."

Warren believes in staying on 'Purpose'

Starting with Rick Warren's first book, "The Purpose Driven Church," the California pastor has urged churches to focus on health that is measured by something other than budgets or programming.

On his PurposeDriven.com Web site, Warren lists 12 characteristics of "purpose-driven" churches:

■ **Statement.** They have a purpose statement that describes their commitment to building the church around what Warren sees as the five New Testament purposes: worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and ministry.

■ **Strategy.** They have a "purpose-driven strategy," whose general theme includes bringing people to Christ, building them up to maturity, equipping them for ministry and sending them out on a life mission.

■ **Structure.** They organize around a structure related to the five New Testament purposes, with teams responsible for each purpose or target group.

■ **Programming.** Purpose-driven churches program according to purpose, Warren said. Such churches have at least one program for fulfilling each of the five purposes and each of the corresponding constituencies.

■ **Staffing.** Such churches begin by finding volunteers to lead and serve on each purpose-based team, and develop full-time, paid positions as needed, Warren states.

■ **Preaching.** Messages and series are planned to insure the congregation receives a balanced emphasis on each of the five purposes.

■ **Small groups.** A purpose-driven "DNA" is implanted in every cell of the congregation, according to Warren. "Each small group helps the members fulfill each of the five purposes in their lives," he states. "The goal is to help every believer live a purpose-driven life."

■ **Calendar.** The purposes are the determining factor in deciding what events are scheduled. "Every event must fulfill at least one of the five purposes or it isn't approved," he states.

■ **Budgeting.** Every expenditure is categorized by the purpose it relates to.

■ **Building.** "Buildings are seen as ministry tools, not monuments," he writes.

■ **Measuring.** Purpose-driven churches evaluate how they're doing by the purposes they seek to fulfill, Warren said. "They regularly ask: Are we balancing all five purposes? Is there a better way to fulfill each purpose?"

■ **Outside-in.** Most purpose-driven churches are built from the outside-in, rather than from the inside-out. "It's far easier to turn a crowd into a core, than it is to turn a core group into a crowd," he states. "You build a healthy multi-dimensional ministry by focusing on one level of commitment at a time."

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Praise God for the arrival of Brian Kirby as pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Paris, France.

■ Praise God for the woman who recently told missionaries-to-Malta Earl and Robin Pinkston that she had become a believer more than a year ago after seeing a Christian program on television and talking with Pinkston on a follow-up phone call.

■ Follow-up to the efforts of a volunteer team from Georgetown that spent Aug. 5-15 in Malta.

■ The following churches in the European Baptist Convention as they seek pastors: International Baptist Church, Brussels; New Hope Baptist Church, Motta Santa Anastasia, Italy; International Baptist Church, Eindhoven, Netherlands; and International Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, Portimao, Portugal.

■ A mission congregation in Sofia, Bulgaria, that has seen much numerical growth recently. "They have a wonderful outreach to the poor and to the handicapped," missionaries write.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ CADIZ—**Bob Martin,** director of missions for Little River Association since 1993, announced his retirement effective Sept. 30. The association will host a reception for Martin and his wife, Joyce, Sept. 14, 2-4 p.m., at Liberty Point Church.

■ CAMPBELLSVILLE—Saloma Church will host **In His Service** of Burkesville in concert Oct. 5, 6 p.m., with potluck at 5 p.m. For information, call (270) 789-0082.

■ EDDYVILLE—First Church will celebrate homecoming Sept. 21. **J. Bill Jones,** former interim pastor, will speak at the 10:45 a.m. worship service. Activities will include a meal after the worship service. **Tim Perdue** is pastor.

Nathan Rogers recently resigned as pastor of Victory Church.

■ FRANKFORT—Thornhill Church recently called **Ned Nugent** as minister to youth/pastoral assistant. **Steve Payne** is pastor.

■ LAWRENCEBURG—Alton Church will hold revival services Sept. 28-Oct. 1 with **Ricky Cunningham,** pastor of Hardin Church, as evangelist.

■ LEXINGTON—Cornerstone Church recently called **Paul Gibson II** as minister of students. **Foy Back** is pastor.

■ LOUISVILLE—Auburndale Church called **Brian Croft** as pastor, effective Sept. 1. He previously was an associate pastor at Little Flock Church in Shepherdsville.

Cloverleaf Church will host **The Four-Fold** in concert Sept. 6, 7 p.m. For information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Highland Church recently ordained **Bill Campbell, Terri Connolly, Doris Hornbuckle, Ginny Sims, Chet Watson** and **Joey Whitlock** as deacons.

St. Matthews Church will host a regional, interdenominational Renovare renewal conference Sept. 12-13. Featured speakers are **Marti Ensign,** a former Methodist missionary to Africa, and **Keith Matthews,** executive pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church in the Washington, D.C., area. Co-sponsoring the event are Deer Park, Highland, Lyndon and St. Paul Missionary churches and Zion United Church of Christ. For information, call Jan Watts at (502) 896-8882.

Walnut Street Church recently named **Wayne Dehoney,** pastor from 1967-1985, as pastor emeritus. He was honored Aug. 24 with "Wayne Dehoney Day." **Rusty Ellison** is pastor.

■ MORGANTOWN—Bethel Church recently called **Greg Brooks** as pastor.

■ PLEASUREVILLE—Franklinton Church recently celebrated its 200th anniversary. **Jackie Newton** is pastor.

■ PRINCETON—**Jeff Hawkins** recently resigned as pastor of Liberty Church.

■ SALEM—Pinckneyville Church called **Leslie Joyce** as interim pastor.

■ SHELBYVILLE—Buffalo Lick Church called **Josh Lansford** as pastor. He previously was youth minister.

■ WILLIAMSBURG—Main Street Church recently called **Wes Roy** as associate pastor/minister of education. He previously was director of church relations for Cumberland College. **Bill Wright** is pastor.

SBC's first Kingdom Familes conference trains 218 workers

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)—"God is looking for people who will just give themselves to be a Kingdom family," Tom Elliff declared. "If you don't embrace this, it isn't going to happen in your church."

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., and chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Council on Family Life, issued the call for involvement to 218 participants at the first "Kingdom Families: Come Home to the Heart of God Conference" at the Oklahoma City-area church Aug. 11-12.

The conference, the first of four regional meetings this year, is the latest step in the SBC's Empowering Kingdom Families emphasis, launched June 16 in a rally prior to the SBC annual meeting in Phoenix. Thirty-two churches from 10 states were represented at the Oklahoma City conference.

LifeWay Christian Resources officials who helped organize the event said they were pleased with the attendance.

"Actually, we said if we had 150 people the first time around, we would have done well," said Jay Johnston, director of LifeWay's church ministry leadership area.

Emphasizing the urgency of pastors and staff taking the lead in the Kingdom Families movement, Elliff urged participants not to be daunted by the apparent scale of the task.

"Don't be so overcome with what you cannot do that you do not do what you can do," Elliff added. "The very fact that you came to this conference says volumes about how important you believe this is.

"We're not kidding about this," he said. "This is not a bottle rocket; it's a Kingdom Families movement."

Kingdom Families resources are available at the Southern Baptist Convention Web site, www.sbc.net.

Pittman, 73, leaves missions legacy

RICHMOND, Va.—Ann Mayhugh Pittman, a longtime Southern Baptist mission volunteer, died Aug. 17 in Richmond, Va., at age 73.

Mrs. Pittman, a native of Louisville, is survived by her husband, Sam. They served together 43 years in churches and through the former Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Pittman, who joined the mission board staff in 1973, retired in 1996 as executive director of public affairs.

Mrs. Pittman logged thousands of volunteer hours for the mission board in Richmond and in many other settings throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

A graduate of the University of Louisville, she served 10 years on staff as church hostess for First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va. She also taught school and was a staff development officer for Anderson County Head Start in South Carolina.

In addition to her husband, Mrs. Pittman is survived by a son, a daughter and five grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Her memorial service was held Aug. 23 at Smithland Baptist Church in Heathsville, Va., where Pittman is interim pastor.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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

SEEKING: Cedar Creek Baptist Church of Louisville, Ky., is looking for a qualified individual to serve as minister of youth. This is a part-time position that will involve general oversight of all aspects of our youth ministry (grades 6-12) including Sunday school, discipleship, outreach, fellowships, camps, conferences, etc. Cedar Creek is a growing, conservative, Bible-based Southern Baptist church seeking to reach and disciple people for Jesus Christ. Interested candidates should forward a resume to: Personnel Committee, Cedar Creek Baptist Church, 7709 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291. (502) 239-2129. www.cedarcreekbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Interim minister of worship for Glasgow Baptist Church, Glasgow, Ky. Responsible for planning Sunday morning worship, rehearsing instrumentalists (multiple instruments), choir, leading a blended worship style, and coordinating multimedia. All responsibilities could be accomplished on Sunday to facilitate travel. $475-$550/wk. Contact Pastor Scott Mackey, (270) 651-2186.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Meta Baptist Church in Pikeville, Ky. Sunday school attendance is 80 and Sunday morning worship attendance is 130. Please send resumé to: Meta Baptist Church, 8807 Meta Highway, Pikeville, KY 41501, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time youth pastor able to give creative leadership to a large middle/high school student ministry in the context of a contemporary/innovative church. Must be able to administrate a balanced ministry to students, their parents and youth workers. Substantive experience and education with a successful track record in youth ministry is required. Send resumé to: Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 W Byers Ave., Owensboro, KY 42303, or fax to (270) 685-5134.

SEEKING: Cumberland Baptist Church seeks full-time youth and young adult minister to implement Bible training, evangelism, outreach and fellowship for youth and young adults. Minimum qualifications: Baptist, college degree (seminary preferred), two years as youth and young adult minister or equivalent experience. Job description at www.cumberlandbaptist.org. Resumé to: 5600 Western Ave., Knoxville, Tn 37921, Attn: YYAM Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time youth and music minister for First Baptist Church (SBC) of Shepherdsville, Ky. A job description is available upon request. Salary range is $26K-$29K plus benefits. We prefer someone with at least 3 years experience. Contact: Gary Hardin, 254 S Buckman, Shepherdsville, KY 40165, or e-mail: gary@shepfbc.org. Deadline for resumés is 9-30-03.

SEEKING: Adult consultant/camp director. Requires experience in the work of Woman's Missionary Union and in camping programs for children and youth. Seeking expertise and enthusiasm, especially in the area of Women on Mission. Supervisory experience with camping programs a plus; master's degree required. Send resumé to: Joy Bolton, Kentucky WMU, PO Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253-6569.

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: Part-time interim minister of music. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 230 South Fifth St., Williamsburg, KY 40769.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Ordination and some seminary training required; ministerial experience also necessary. Two Sunday morning services, one Sunday evening service and a Wednesday evening service. Sunday school average attendance: 250. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Cecilia Baptist Church, PO Box 73, Cecilia, KY 42724.

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.

SERVICE: Lower your phone bill. Blessed Hope has 4.9 cents/minute (24/7); no fees; no fine print; and 250,000 happy customers. Toll-free: (866) 587-8346 or info at www.covenantphoneservice.com. Home agents needed.

Can advertising campaigns help improve church attendance?

LONDON (RNS)—Unlike their cousins on the other side of the Atlantic, the British are notoriously not very keen on going to church.

The number attending has been dropping steadily ever since World War II, and today it is merely about 7.5 percent of the population of the United Kingdom who go to church on Sunday.

Thinking about this, and recalling all the advertising he passed on his way to work every day, the editor of the evangelical monthly magazine Christianity + Renewal, John Buckeridge had the idea of asking two advertising agencies to devise a series of advertisements that would encourage people to go to church.

Interestingly, no one involved on either team was a churchgoer.

Link ICA opted for a campaign built round the slogan "Get a life—go to church." The agency's joint creative director, Jonathan Wilcock, said the slogan was picked because "most people come to a point in their lives when, although they may have a nice car, home and partner, they feel something is missing."

He said he was thinking particularly of people in their 30s and 40s. "Teens think they'll live forever, 20-somethings are busy getting a career, a partner and building their life, but when like me you get to 30-something you start to feel something is missing. Others fill it with something else like alcohol or sex or loads of holidays. For some people, the church can shed light on what life is all about."

At Khameleon, the agency's managing director, Guy Lupton, said they wanted to steer away from the typical image of church and religion. "We felt the key was to get people through the door of the church and let them make their own minds up."

Khameleon's campaign promoted the values of community life at church, the chance to have a good "sing," hear a good sermon, have a heart-to-heart chat.

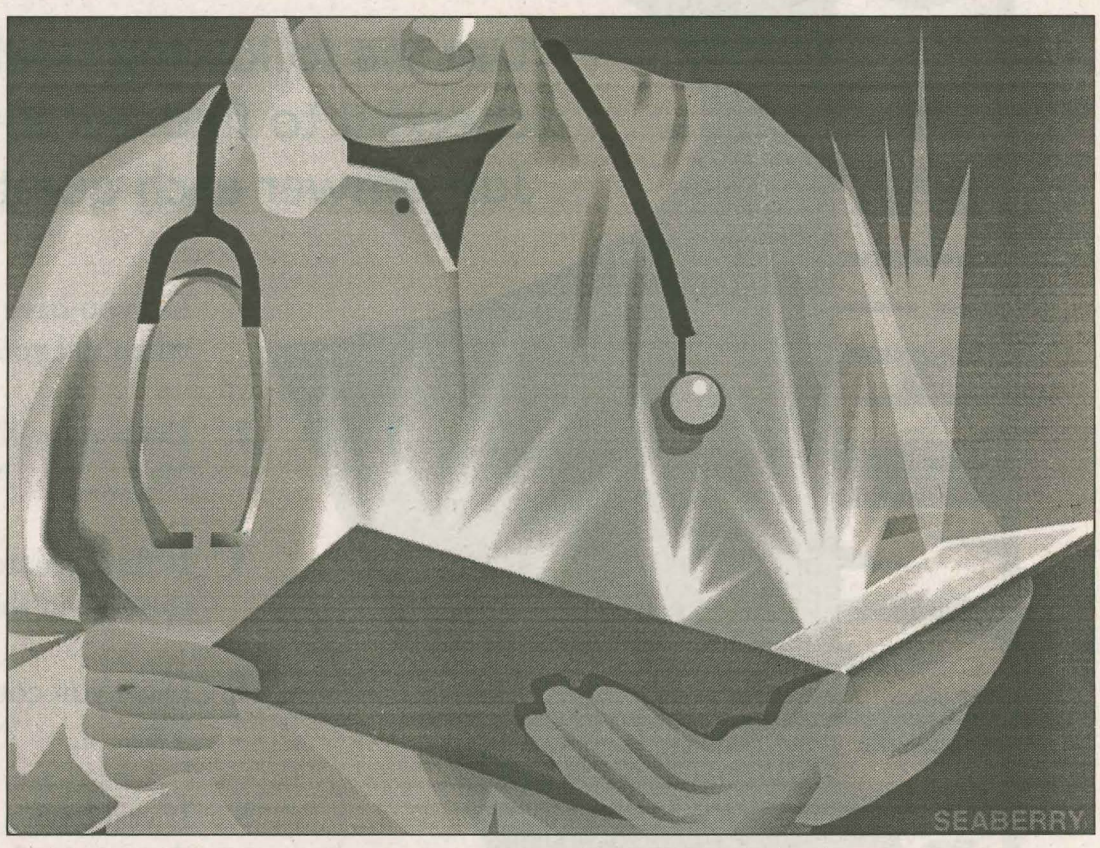
So one of their ads pictured a solitary goldfish at the bottom of a goldfish bowl and asked: "When did you last really need someone to talk to?" with the answer: "You'll always find someone at your local church—you don't know what you're missing."

Both agency representatives agreed that even the best advertisement wouldn't likely turn around someone who is not interested in church. But Wilcock said ads were particularly likely to affect people who recently had had a spiritual experience.

Spiritual histories

Doctors looking at faith bios for insight to medical healing

By Mary Jacobs
Religion News Service



DURHAM, N.C. (RNS)—When you visit a doctor for the first time, you expect him or her to ask about your health history: past surgeries, illnesses or injuries.

Now, your doctor might ask questions about your religious beliefs as well.

A small but growing number of physicians are taking patient "spiritual histories," according to Dr. Harold Koenig of Duke University.

By collecting information about each patient's religious or spiritual beliefs, he believes doctors can make more informed treatment decisions and help patients rally spiritual resources to aid healing.

"Neglecting the spiritual dimension is just like ignoring a patient's social environment or psychological state, and results in failure to treat the 'whole person,'" Koenig said.

Koenig recently described the emerging technique in a manual for health care professionals, "Spirituality in Patient Care."

A spiritual history might include questions such as: Does the patient rely on religion or spirituality to help cope with illness? Is the patient a member of a supportive spiritual community? What spiritual questions, if any, does the patient find most troubling?

Facing the inevitable

Dr. Robert Fine, director of clinical ethics at Baylor Healthcare Systems in Dallas, said spiritual histories can help. He cited an example of a patient who insisted on aggressive treatment, even though her advanced breast cancer was clearly terminal and she was in terrible pain. Puzzled, her doctors called in Fine, who learned that the patient's fear of going to hell kept her from accepting the inevitable. After a conversation with a chaplain, she was able to face death peacefully.

Some people worry that doctors, with their expertise rooted in science, aren't equipped to navigate the gray areas between faith and medicine.

Dr. Jeffrey Bishop, who teaches a course on spirituality and medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, said the example of the woman with breast cancer poses tricky questions.

Should doctors tinker with a patient's beliefs, even with the best of intentions? The ends of spirituality and the ends of medicine, he added, don't always agree—one example being the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, who refuse blood transfusions even in life-threatening situations. Nonetheless, he advocates taking patient spiritual histories because he believes that doing so gives patients comfort.

Koenig estimated that between 5 and 10 percent of doctors take some form of spiritual history; he expects the number to grow as graduating students join the field. Nearly two-thirds of American medical schools in 2001 taught courses on religion, spirituality and medicine.

But many doctors don't take histories, due to lack of time or fear of being intrusive. "Doctors don't feel comfortable bringing it up," Koenig said. "We're at the place we were 20 years ago when doctors were asked to take a sexual history."

Koenig said spiritual histories are especially useful with patients facing surgery or life-threatening, chronic or disabling conditions. With so much recent research pointing to potential benefits of spirituality to physical health, a spiritual history gives the doctor a practical way to harness those benefits.

Knowing what questions to ask

"If I know a person's spiritual background, I might ask something like, 'Would a short prayer help in this situation?'" he said. "Knowing that a person is religious frees me to be more forward in using a spiritual intervention that might bring comfort."

Koenig added that the histories allow doctors to counter potential negative effects of spirituality, citing a study suggesting that patients struggling with spiritual crises tend not to heal as well.

Doctors can't help if they don't know, he noted. "Sometimes just listening and validating will give comfort and will make the patient more likely to accept a referral to a chaplain who can help."

Jesus & Mary's glowing eyes attracting attention in Ohio town

CAMPBELL, Ohio (RNS)—The show starts at dusk, promised Tony Valvas, his eyes fixed on the Blessed Virgin Mary statue affixed to the bell tower at St. Joseph the Provider Catholic Church.

Stand at the corner of the hedge next to the church's school, he instructed. Then gaze up into the statue's eyes.

Into its glowing eyes.

"There's something happening here," said Valvas, 37, who lives two blocks from the church. "I don't know what it is, and I can't explain it. But there's something happening."

Is it a miracle or a mirage? Nobody knows for sure, but plenty of people are making a pilgrimage to the church in search of an answer.

Thousands have flocked to the town south of Youngstown since the statues on the bell tower—Jesus Christ to the east and Virgin Mary to the west—seemingly flickered to life earlier this month.

Small groups wander outside the church during the day, when the glow is somewhat visible.

The throngs come at night, their parked cars clogging the streets. They stay until all hours. On one recent night, about 1,000 people crowded a courtyard outside the church, singing hymns and taking pictures of the mysterious illumination.

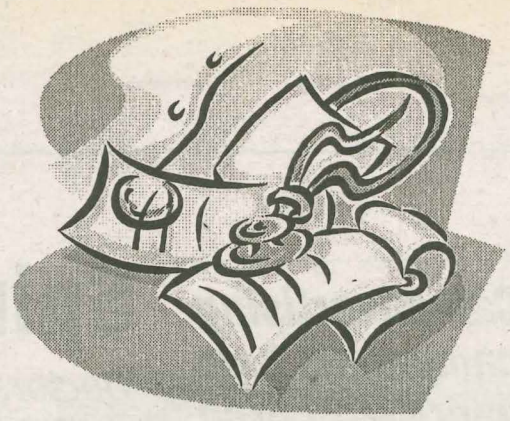
"People are straining to find anything to give meaning to their lives," said Thomas Thompson, director of the Marion Library at the University of Dayton. "That's why they reach out to these things. It's a tribute to their belief."

But few sightings qualify as miracles, and most can be explained, Thompson said.

Skeptics outside St. Joseph say the glow there may be related to gold leaf put on statues in the 1970s. No investigation is planned, church officials said.

"Don't close your mind to the possibilities," Thompson said. "But don't be gullible and naive, either."

ESTATE PLAN CHECKUP



Use the following twelve-point checklist to find out if your estate planning is on track. Just answer each question "Yes" or "No."

1. Do you have a current Will or Revocable Living Trust? If yes, when did you last review it? *Yes*____ *No*____

2. Does your Will name a guardian for any minor children? *Yes*____ *No*____

3. Is the executor/executrix of your estate still available and willing to serve in that capacity? *Yes*____ *No*____

4. Have you considered the benefits from a Revocable Living Trust? *Yes*____ *No*____

5. If you have a Living Trust, have you titled appropriate assets in the name of the Trust? *Yes*____ *No*____

6. Are you taking advantage of the estate tax marital deduction to which you may be entitled? *Yes*____ *No*____

7. Are your estate plans arranged to take maximum advantage of the exemption equivalent (formerly "unified credit")? *Yes*____ *No*____

8. Have you designated in your Will or other legal arrangements charitable gifts for a Baptist cause(s) you wish to support beyond life? *Yes*____ *No*____

9. Do you have a Durable Power of Attorney? *Yes*____ *No*____

10. Have you consulted with your financial advisor(s) about your wishes? *Yes*____ *No*____

If you answered "No" to one or more of the questions above, it may be time to give your plan a checkup.

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