



WESTERN RECORDER

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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, October 29

Youth in highly religious families report parents get along better

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (RNS) —A study of youth and religion finds that early adolescents whose families are highly involved in matters of faith report that their parents have good relationships.

The report, "Family Religious Involvement and the Quality of Parental Relationships for Families with Early Adolescents," was released last week by sociologists involved with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Researchers looked at three dimensions of religious involvement for parents and their families, including family religious activity, parental worship service attendance and parental prayer.

They found that 11 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds are part of families that are heavily involved in religious activity during the week, taking part in activities such as praying, attending church or reading Scripture together five to seven times a week.

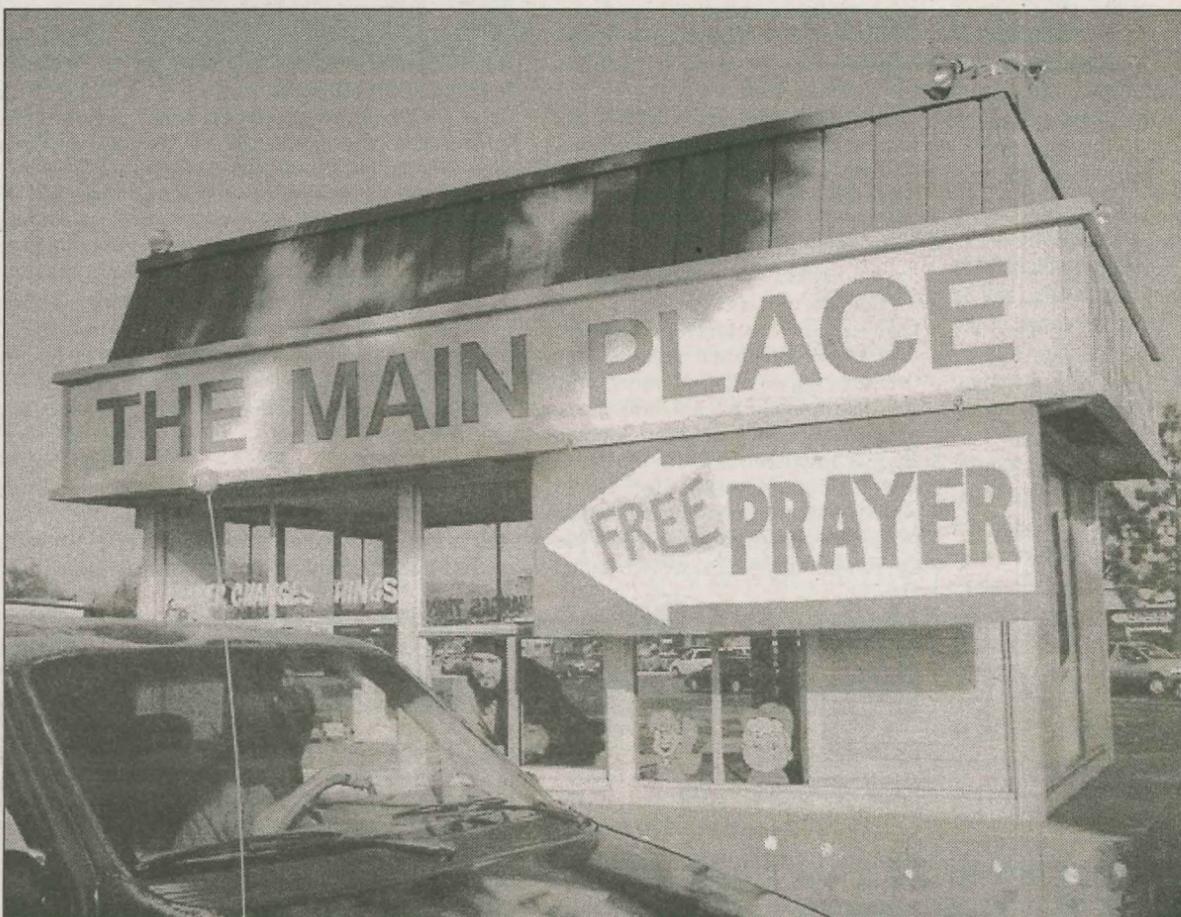
An analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that these youngsters are much more likely than youth whose families do not engage in religious activities throughout the week to report better relationships between their fathers and mothers.

Researchers also discovered that the 40 percent of youth with a parent attending worship at least once a week are much more likely than those with parents not attending such services to report that their mothers encourage their fathers and avoid screaming at them when angry.

An executive summary of the study stated that the reasons for the results could relate to three different factors: religion influencing parental relationships; parents who already have strong relationships choosing to become more religiously involved; or reduction of family religious practices as parental relationships fall apart.

"What is clear in this report's findings, however, is that, for whatever reasons, early adolescents living in religiously involved families in the United States are more likely to report stronger, more positive relationships between their parents than do adolescents in families that are not religiously active," the summary stated.

Drive-thru prayer?



PRAYER TO GO Leave it to a church in suburban Los Angeles, where residents can commute for an hour one-way, to offer a drive-thru prayer booth. Leaders at The Main Place Christian Fellowship, a Baptist church in Tustin, Calif., say the converted photo developing booth has resulted in outreach opportunities in their neighborhood. *Story on page 9*

Advisers to help guide KBC mission plan

By **Trennis Henderson**
Editor

LOUISVILLE—When the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Study Committee completed its work in May, its report called for forming a Mission Advisory Committee to help implement the mission study plan's other proposals.

The nine-member advisory committee, appointed last month by KBC President Paul Badgett, includes eight members who previously served on the 15-member Mission Study Committee.

Charles Barnes, chairman of the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee, was named chairman of the advisory committee.

Barnes, a member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville, is no stranger to the inner workings of KBC life. A retired bank executive, Barnes was elected KBC president in 1998—the first laymen to hold that position in more than two decades.

He also has served as interim president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, interim executive director of Long Run Baptist Association and chairman of the KBC's Baptist Faith and Message Study Committee.

In his role as Mission Advisory Committee chairman, Barnes will

head a group responsible for advising KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey "as requested" and monitor the progress of Kentucky Baptists in fulfilling the KBC mission statement. That statement calls for the KBC to "assist Kentucky Baptist Convention churches and ministries and associations in connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

Barnes "understands the big picture," Mackey noted, adding that he is a strong supporter of KBC ministry efforts.

Objectives highlighted by the study committee—and approved in May by the Mission Board—focus on evangelism, missions, leader training, networking, strengthening churches and partnerships with KBC agencies and institutions.

The study committee also cited a number of "major impact factors" in such areas as stewardship, technology, communication and spiritual foundations.

As the advisory committee begins its work, Barnes emphasized that the group "is there for advice and encouragement and as a sounding board."

The study committee "wanted to make sure that there was no question that Dr. Mackey had the responsibility and the authority to lead us and that he wasn't dependent on 10 different

committees to decide exactly how this was going to be done," Barnes explained. "The advisory committee was put in place with the emphasis on 'advisory.'"

Among the impact factors cited in the report, Barnes said the issues of finances and stewardship are critical to the long-term success of the mission study plan.

"We cannot continue to take the Cooperative Program for granted," he pointed out. "We find younger people wanting to know: 'What do we get out of the Cooperative Program?' That kind of question itself indicates a lack of understanding of the Cooperative Program."

Citing recent financial concerns on both the state and national levels, Barnes said, "The intent of this recommendation was to say focusing on the Cooperative Program and on stewardship has to be a major thrust of the Mission Board. If it's not addressed in Kentucky and in all of the Southern Baptist Convention, it will continue to limp along. Not only will we not keep up with inflation, but we will actually have negative growth."

In addition to urging increased levels of stewardship education and promotion, the study committee called for establishing a program to "provide increased support through direct gifts and bequests."

□ See Mission Advisory ..., page 3.

What does the future hold?
KBC MISSION STUDY PLAN

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada** marked its 50th anniversary Oct. 21. The milestone commemorates the 1953 merger of the Fellowship of Independent Baptist Churches of Canada and the Union of Regular Baptist Churches of Ontario and Quebec. Today, the FEBCC includes about 500 congregations. The anniversary also will be the key focus of the denomination's 2003 National Convention Nov. 3-6 in Toronto.

■ **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary** officials dedicated the school's newly renovated Houston campus during a chapel service and ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 13. Two years ago, Southwestern's Houston extension moved from its previous location at Houston Baptist University to Park Place Baptist Church after the church voted to deed its \$5.7 million facility to the seminary. The congregation continues to use the campus for church activities, while the seminary provides for the upkeep and renovation of classrooms and office space.

■ **Robert Burton**, professor emeritus of conducting in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's school of church music, died Oct. 8 after a brief bout with cancer. He was 78. Burton, who joined Southwestern's faculty in 1956, was chairman of the conducting department from 1958 until his retirement in 1990. He was honored in 1990 by the Southern Baptist Church Music Conference with its Lifetime Membership Award.

Baptists in Iraq launch evangelism, missions initiatives

By Mark Woods
London Baptist Times

AMMAN, Jordan (BP)—Baptists from across the Middle East gathered in Amman, Jordan, Oct. 10 to take part in a unique commissioning service.

Douglas Baba, pastor of an Iraqi congregation in the town of al-Fuhais in Jordan, was appointed as pastor/evangelist by the newly formed Baptist Union of Iraq.

Also commissioned was an Egyptian Baptist, Izzat Shehata, a graduate of Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary, as a missionary to Mauretania in North Africa.

Participating in the service were the members of Amman Baptist Church, the oldest of Jordan's 17 Baptist congregations, and representatives from the Jordanian and Lebanese Baptist conventions. Staff members from various mission organizations also were present, including the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and Campus Crusade for Christ, which has a strong presence in Jordan.

Led by the Amman church's pastor, Fawaz Ameish, the service includ-



INTERCESSION FOR IRAQ Muthafar Yacoub (right), moderator of the newly formed Baptist Union of Iraq, leads in prayer for the union's ministries. Among those joining Yacoub in prayer is Southern Baptist missionary Brian Barlow (left). (BP photo by Joni Hannigan)

ed an impassioned sermon from Charles Costa, a Lebanese Baptist. The event ended with a laying on of hands in which Baptist leaders filed past the two men and prayed for their future ministry.

Evangelistic emphasis

Commissioning Baba to work in Iraq is the first stage of an evangelistic and church-planting initiative by

the Baptist Union of Iraq. Baptist work in Iraq started in 1985 as a development within the Presbyterian church and was led by Nabil Sara, a Presbyterian elder, and Khalil Samara, a missionary from Brazil.

In 1988 there were 500 Baptists, meeting in 50 homes, but numbers declined after the first Gulf War in 1991, largely because of emigration.

Baptists became a denomination in their own right in 1997. There are now five congregations in Iraq, two in Baghdad and three in the north of the country, all meeting in homes. In September, a baptismal service for 31 people was held at a home using a portable swimming pool.

The Baptist Union of Iraq was formed to provide a unified organization for effective mission. A priority will be planting a church in the Kerekh area of Baghdad, which has 3 million residents but no evangelical church.

Muthafar Yacoub, moderator of the Baptist Union of Iraq and one of three Iraqi exiles returning as Baptist leaders, said at a BUI general assembly meeting earlier in the day, "This is a new phase in our mission. I invite

you to share in the ministry to which God has called us, and participate in this exciting adventure."

Another of the three, Mishiel Edward, who will return to Iraq when resources become available, said, "I think this is the time God wants to show His mercy. The way will be tough, but there will be blessing. I have peace inside."

"In five or 10 years I want to see more people coming to Jesus, and the cross everywhere."

"This is God's time"

Baba, who will return to Baghdad with his wife and three children as soon as accommodations can be found, said, "We believe that this is God's time for us, and that He has prepared us here to work in Iraq."

The IMB is working alongside Iraqi and other Baptists in developing ministries in Iraq.

In what one IMB worker described as a "parallel track" to that of the Baptist union, the IMB is helping develop a Baptist school in Baghdad on the model of the successful Amman Baptist School in Jordan.

Vestal: CBF structure & work becoming 'denomination-like'

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is not really a denomination, says CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal, but it is becoming more like a denomination and functions as one for some churches.

The question of what CBF will become has been an ongoing topic of speculation since the organization was formed by moderate Southern Baptists in 1991. Vestal told members of the group's Coordinating Council that CBF has undergone a "progression in the development of our identity." And while no final answer has emerged, some consensus is developing around the CBF's mission, he said.

Vestal spoke during the council's Oct. 16-18 meeting in Atlanta, during which the group adopted a budget goal of \$16 million for 2004-05, began a study of funding for "partner" ministries such as seminaries, and agreed to re-evaluate the vacant position of resource center coordinator, the organization's chief operating officer.

"Network of churches"

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship most often describes itself as a "network of churches and individuals." When it was founded, Vestal said, CBF served as "a relief and rescue operation" for moderate Baptists and their causes. It soon became a movement centered on Baptist principles, he said, and in 1993 it became a "missionary sending and supporting organization."

"In the last three to five years," he added, "we have become something of a denomination-like organization for some people."

"We have about 150 to 175 churches ... that do not have any kind of relationship to the Southern Baptist

Convention," Vestal said. For those churches that relate to CBF and no other Baptist body, CBF serves in the role of a denomination or convention, he said. For a growing number of them, he noted, CBF is becoming the most significant denomination-like organization to which they relate.

"When I get past that, however, I get real squishy about numbers," he added.

About 5,000 churches have contributed funds to and through CBF since its inception, including about 2,000 that did so last year, Vestal said. But those churches identify with CBF in various ways and for various reasons, so those relationships become difficult to classify, he said.

"Our emphasis has been not so much on membership as on partnership," he explained.

When he is asked "What is CBF?" Vestal said he often responds: "What do you want us to be? We can be for you whatever you want us to be."

While CBF is taking on more traits of a denomination or convention, Vestal said, "we are not a denominational magisterium, we are not a denominational headquarters, and God knows we are not a denominational authority" for churches.

Instead, Vestal said, CBF is becoming more defined by its vision and mission.

The Coordinating Council adopted a "not-to-exceed" figure of \$16,008,000 for the 2004-05 annual budget, the same as the reduced budget for 2003-04.

The personnel committee announced it is evaluating the scope of the resource center coordinator position, which became vacant in August when Reba Cobb resigned to work for the Children's Defense Fund.

With additional reporting by Lance Wallace of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Stanley affirms BF&M statement despite questions about revisions

FORT WORTH, Texas—Former Southern Baptist Convention President Charles Stanley declared that he is "absolutely supportive" of the SBC's 2000 Baptist Faith and Message and its stances on the role of women, although he believes one amendment should have been clarified and another not included at all.

Stanley's statements came nearly a week after an Oct. 18 article in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram stated that Stanley disagrees with the BF&M and its stances on two issues: the prohibition on women serving as pastors and the submission of wives to their husbands.

Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church in Atlanta, told Baptist Press the interview was scheduled to focus on a new book, and not the Southern Baptist Convention. He said the reporter, veteran religion writer Jim Jones, did not include his comments in context and omitted other significant ones.

"Why would a reporter who has requested to give an interview about a book get off on something and only mention one statement in the whole article about the book?" he asked. "It appeared to me to be deceptive."

Jones, in an e-mailed statement to Baptist Press, said, "I respect Dr. Stanley very much and think he has a valuable ministry. ... I'm sorry he thinks I was deceptive."

"I mentioned the book, but I also talked to him about a lot of other matters," Jones added. "I have no recollection of him saying he did not want to be quoted on Southern Baptist issues."

Stanley told Baptist Press he is "absolutely supportive" of the 2000 BF&M, and added that he cannot

think of a "single theological issue" on which he and other recent SBC presidents disagree.

Stanley said he believes, as stated in the 2000 BF&M, that Scripture reserves the role of pastor for men. He added, however, that he believes the language about female pastors would have been best left out of the BF&M. He said he believes the change has created controversy with people misinterpreting what Southern Baptists mean.

Stanley became a Christian at age 12 under the preaching of a female evangelist. He makes a distinction between "pastor" and "preacher," saying that the latter can be a woman. People sometimes confuse the two terms and thus misunderstand his position, he said.

Jones said Stanley gave him "a strong impression that he disagreed with both of the family amendments in question. He specifically said women are becoming 'pastors' in Japan and India and that we should not hold them back."

Stanley said he has no problem with the BF&M's family amendment stating that husbands and wives "are of equal worth before God" and that wives are to "submit" themselves "graciously to the servant leadership" of their husbands. But he does believe that the amendment should have included additional language from Ephesians where Paul tells Christians to submit "to one another."

Even though SBC leaders have said the statement is not intended to make women "doormats," that is the impression it gives, Stanley told Jones. "They should never have discussed the issue."

Based on reporting by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press

Cumberland's TV station receives Baptist Press broadcast award

WILLIAMSBURG—For the second time in three years, Cumberland College's Channel 19 has won first place in the broadcast division at the annual Baptist Press Student Journalism Conference.

Previously, the "Patriot News Team" took first place honors in 2001 and second place in 2002.

The award was presented Oct. 11 during the Student Journalism Conference in Nashville. The contest is judged by communication professionals from around the nation.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for students to meet with other student journalists, to have their work critiqued by professionals and to improve the quality of journalism at Cumberland College," said faculty sponsor Keith Semmel.

Semmel was a key player in bringing Channel 19 into the college's department of communication and theatre arts after the college bought the cable TV station in 1989.

Student and Channel 19 News Director Pamela Woody said the conference helped prospective journalists learn how to include their faith in their careers. "It is so refreshing to see professionals in the industry share their faith and talents with us."

CCTV-19 airs 24 hours a day. While school is in session, the students produce two extended live newscasts on Tuesdays and Fridays. Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays the news segment is a combination of information graphics, weather maps and station announcements.

Students also produce "Patriot Talk," a half hour program on campus events, and "Thursday's Discussion," a half-hour program on community news and events.

CCTV-19 General Manager John Williams said he couldn't be happier with his students. "They did all of us proud," said Williams, who also is an associate professor of communication.

The staff isn't content to rest on their laurels, he added. "When we left the 2002 conference, the talk among the staff was how to 'regain the edge.' Now that they've returned the first place award to Cumberland, they're talking about what we can do to extend ourselves beyond what was done last year."

Williams said the station recently received a grant for new technology, but won't let that distract them from their main purpose, to bring local news and events to the community. "The students know that the story—and getting it right—is the first priority regardless of what technology we use."

Mainstream conference decries creeds

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—The forced resignation of two missionaries now teaching at Georgetown College shows how fundamentalism has changed the Southern Baptist Convention, according to the leader of a Texas group.

Speaking Oct. 25 at Melbourne Heights Baptist Church, David Currie drew parallels between Don and Angie Finley—who refused to sign the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message—and historical leaders who faced religious persecution.

"That's something they (Southern Baptist leaders) said they would never do," said Currie, director of Texas Baptists Committed. "They said they would never fire people, but they did. Where's the outrage over that?"

Currie, whose group opposes the current leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention, was the featured speaker at a conference on creeds and creedalism sponsored by Mainstream Baptists of Kentucky.

Chairman Bill Shoulta said the meeting was part of the group's emphasis on preventing a "political takeover" of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"We're not all about the Baptist Faith and Message," said Shoulta, pastor of Melbourne Heights. "We're interested in missions and preserving Baptist history and tradition. We're concerned about decisions made in

Kentucky Baptist life."

Shoulta said last weekend's conference, which drew 32 participants, was aimed at clarifying differences between creeds followed by other denominations and confessions used by Baptists.

Speaker Mark Medley said 17th century Baptists adopted confessional statements to separate themselves from Congregationalists, Anglicans and others.

Confessional statements also provided a basis for fellowship among Baptist congregations, said Medley, a theology professor at Campbellsville University.

"A question of authority"

While early Baptists respected such early-church documents as the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed, they rejected using them as instruments of doctrinal accountability, Medley said.

"Ultimately, it's a question of authority," he said. "God is our authority. His authority is ultimate and rests in Jesus Christ. The Bible centers on the Person on Whom authority rests."

The Finleys pointed to the Bible to explain their refusal to affirm that they would conduct their ministry in Brazil in accordance with the SBC's 2000 faith statement.

"We must always be aware that any confession of faith is no more than human words about the divine Word," they stated in a letter distributed at the

meeting, which they weren't able to attend.

Shoulta videotaped an interview in which the couple described pressure from Southern Baptist International Mission Board officials that led to their resignation last April.

Mrs. Finley recalled an IMB leader saying he didn't have a problem with their beliefs but "it sure would be nice if you signed." She said the controversy was rooted in power and control.

"This is a blanket accusation of heresy against all missionaries, and the way you prove yourself innocent is by signing," she said of 77 missionaries who were fired or resigned.

Her husband added that leaders are engaging in creedal language and putting the Baptist Faith and Message on a par with the Bible.

Currie said the problem with this stance is its conflict with long-standing Baptist beliefs in religious liberty and the priesthood of all believers.

Mentioning such figures as Roger Williams and dozens of Baptists jailed in colonial Virginia for refusing to preach Anglican doctrine, Currie said people today should treasure such sacrifices.

"What's at stake? The freedom of Kentucky Baptists," Currie said. "What we need to get folks fired up about is Jesus and how fundamentalism hurts the cause of Christ. It always has. That's why we need to let people know this is important."

Mission Advisory Committee helps guide KBC mission plan

Continued from page 1

"No one has gone after wills and bequests to support the programs and activities of the Mission Board itself," Barnes said. "There's more than enough money to go around if we give people the opportunity to give to ministries they are most interested in supporting."

Other financial issues identified by the study committee include the condition of the Baptist Building in Middletown and the Mission Board's future facility needs. Parts of the Baptist Building date back to the 1950s, meaning that upkeep and renovation likely will be needed if the KBC remains at its current location.

"There's some ticking time bombs in a sense that some money is going to have to be spent on that building regardless of what happens," Barnes said. "How you spend that is a very important stewardship question."

"That building was built to accommodate a ministry model in the 1950s, '60s and '70s," he added. "We're now talking about a ministry model for the 21st century that will be somewhat different."

A 15-member Properties Study Committee has been appointed to evaluate facility needs and report to the Mission Board by December 2004.

Barnes also highlighted the Mission Study Committee's description of associations and directors of missions

as "vital in carrying out the KBC mission, objectives and goals."

"The associations and directors of missions are major partners in everything that is done," Barnes said. "We need to work as closely as we can with each other in order to maximize our total impact."

Mackey said messengers to next month's KBC annual meeting will hear a report about the mission study plan as part of the Mission Board's annual report.

The only recommendation requiring convention action is a proposal to allow up to 25 percent of college trustees to be non-Baptists, he added. That proposal, which will require a constitutional amendment, will be presented this year and voted on in 2004.

As KBC leaders begin to implement the mission study plan, "I'm very excited about the report," Barnes emphasized. "I think it will give us the framework to come together with greater commitment and move the work to a new level."

"We did pretty well as Baptists in the 20th century," he noted. "Now we're springing into the 21st century and we need a roadmap and some guidelines to rally around."

Describing the mission study plan as "God-sized goals, hopes and dreams," Barnes said, "This is what we're about—winning the lost and nurturing Christians."

What does the future hold? KBC MISSION STUDY PLAN

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

Georgetown to host religious freedom speaker.

Georgetown College's Danforth Thomas lecture next month will feature Paul Marshall, senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom in Washington, D.C., America's oldest human rights organization. Marshall's address, Nov. 18, is open to the public. For more information, call the school at (502) 863-8000.

Cumberland hosting Kentucky writers.

Cumberland College's English department will host "An Evening with Two Kentucky Writers" Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. Sena Jeter Naslund, award-winning author of the national bestseller, "Ahab's Wife," will read from her latest novel, "Four Spirits." Also, Louisville writer Lucinda Dixon Sullivan will read from her debut novel "It Was the Goodness of the Place." The event, reception and book signing are free and open to the public. For more information, call (606) 539-4455.

Senior summit cancelled. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's senior adult leadership summit, scheduled for Oct. 30 in Madisonville, has been cancelled. Karl Babb, director of the KBC family ministry department, said additional training events will be scheduled in 2004.

Association speaks on alcohol sales, gambling.

Messengers to Warren Baptist Association's recent semiannual meeting adopted resolutions opposing expanded alcohol sales and gambling. The resolution on alcohol calls on "fellow citizens to refrain from approving expansions of alcohol sales and to work instead to strengthen our families and communities by encouraging abstinence from this dangerous drug." The measure on gambling urges state politicians "to join with Kentucky citizens in finding ways to strengthen our state's economy on sound principles of creative and innovative industrial, educational and technological developments rather than on the false hopes of gambling." It also calls on Kentucky Baptists to contact the governor and state legislators to express their views.

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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Uphold standards

The Western Recorder has communicated its desire to present all sides of an issue in an unbiased fashion.

No matter how hard a person tries, he or she cannot entirely avoid bias when presenting information. Case in point: In the margin of the "Opinion" section the editor states that he will consider any letters for publication, "provided they do not make a personal attack on anyone." It seems as though this provision doesn't apply to those writing in opposition to the Southern Baptist Convention leadership.

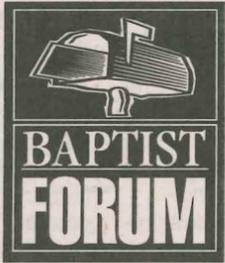
The letter by Ed Boden in the Oct. 14 issue is a good example: Calling SBC leaders a "college of cardinals," the "players of the fiddle," the "pope and high priests," that the leaders don't understand what "999 out of 1,000 Baptists understand," calling

Nashville the "holy city," saying SBC leaders "took (their) ball and went home" and that they want "complete control of seminary trustees."

If this is not an example of a personal attack, maybe we need a definition included in the margin. That letter isn't an isolated incident. As far as I can remember, every opinion article with this kind of language present has been in opposition to the SBC leadership.

I would ask the Western Recorder to uphold its standards in all cases.

Chuck Luke
Lexington



Editor's note: Strong disagreement and personal attacks are not the same thing. The Western Recorder frequently publishes letters from Kentucky Baptists who both affirm and oppose SBC leaders' actions, my editorial views and other issues. Those of us who are public figures based on

Make family connections

By Dennis Rainey

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)—Most of us live life in a crowd. From shopping malls to grocery stores to movie theaters, we are surrounded. Even in our homes and churches, we often find ourselves as one among many.

So why do many of us feel lonely? Because proximity does not equate to intimacy.

Many of us operate in a sphere of acquaintance. We probably can name 10 people who like us, but few can name even two people who really know us. Even within our families and marriages, we often live as little more than roommates. What we lack is a true connection.

The problem is that connection can't be caught "on the fly." Connec-

tion happens only after an investment of time, attention and personal vulnerability.

While there is no magic formula, there are some simple principles that can help facilitate true connection.

Principle 1: Plan time together. Whether it is a nightly (or even weekly) family dinner, an evening walk or a Saturday afternoon game session, it is important to schedule regular time for connecting with those we care about.

Principle 2: Maximize time together. It might be convenient to use our time in the car to catch up on phone calls or our dinnertime to catch up on the evening news, but we could be missing an opportunity to connect with family members. Instead, use the time to discuss what's happening in

FIRST PERSON

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

KBC staff adjustments

Kentucky Baptist Mission Board staff members are making a lot of adjustments these days for several reasons. Let me tell you about these:

First, during the past few months there have been several announcements about retirements by long-tenured staff members.

Vernon Cole, our church growth team leader, announced he is retiring after 34 years of service. He will continue to assist with churches as a consultant during the time of transition.

Doug Strader also has announced his plans to retire as director of the discipleship and stewardship department after 18 years of service. A major part of his work has been conducting Challenge to Build campaigns with churches. He has accepted the pastorate of Farmdale Baptist Church.

More recently, Guy Futral has announced his plans to retire April 30, 2004, upon completing 20 years of

service. God has blessed all of us through Guy's faithful service and direction of the leadership development team. I look forward to working with Guy on a consultant basis beyond his retirement.

Adjustments due to retirements are not the only ones we're making these days though. We've also had to adjust to plateaued Cooperative Program receipts, which led to a significant budget shortfall for the 2002-03 fiscal year, and to increased medical insurance and other fixed costs.

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board has informed state conventions that the cost of the Church Annuity Plan protection benefits will increase. We hope to be able to cover this increase and continue to provide the contribution of \$210 per year for each eligible participant's retirement plan. Currently this is an \$810,000 priority line item on the Kentucky side of the budget.

In addition, the priorities of the

our denominational positions must remain open to hearing both positive and negative feedback from our constituents. The Western Recorder is committed to maintaining that public forum for the benefit of all Kentucky Baptists.

Majority rule?

I enjoy your paper. I wish I could understand how, as James Draper's Oct. 14 commentary states, that homosexuals are 3 percent of the population.

How come if this is true they are dominating the news, whether it be extra rights or gay priests or a government that is terrified of them or a court system who is in their pocket? Maybe you could justify fooling with man's laws but not God's.

How come the Christian population is mute? I hear 92 percent believe in God. What happened to land of the free, majority rule, etc.?

Ed Edmonds
Louisville

our lives, what we've got planned for the future and how we're all doing.

Principle 3: Ask good questions and listen to the answers. If you could go on vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go? If you knew you'd be alone in an airport for eight hours, what one book would you want to have? Questions—even seemingly silly ones—can provide insight into how a person thinks and feels.

Principle 4: Look for games, books and other resources that can help you engage in meaningful conversations. You're not Superman or Wonder Woman, and you don't have to have all the answers. There are a lot of good, biblically based resources that can help kick-start connections in your family.

Isn't it time to begin connecting with those who matter most?

Dennis Rainey is president of FamilyLife, a division of Campus Crusade for Christ

GIVING

R.G. LeTourneau: A hero of business and stewardship

By Jeremy White

R.G. LeTourneau is credited with the creation of the modern mechanized earthmoving industry.

He initially got involved in the earthmoving business with a tractor in order to re-

pay a previous business debt to the bank. LeTourneau was later granted his first patent for a scraper. His last patent was granted in 1965 when he was 77 years old. In the 42 years between those two inventions, he was granted 297 more patents.

Those inventions included the bulldozer, scrapers of all sorts, dredgers, portable cranes and bridge spans. He invented mobile sea platforms for oil exploration that now dot the seas throughout the world. He introduced the rubber tire into the earthmoving industry.

When the Allied forces invaded the Normandy beaches on D-Day, they had an impressive display of machines and equipment, much of it built by the energetic American businessman, LeTourneau. His company built 70 percent of the heavy earthmoving equipment used by the Allied forces in World War II.

His business efforts—although incredibly successful—never deterred him from what he felt was his reason for existence: to glorify God and spread the gospel message. For more than 30 years he traveled at his own expense sharing his testimony about the joy of a businessman serving Jesus Christ. Each time he spoke he began by saying, "Friends, I'm just a sinner saved by grace. Just a mechanic that the Lord has blessed."

LeTourneau lived for many years on 10 percent of his income and gave away 90 percent to Christian work. He invested millions of dollars in missionary development projects in less-developed countries. "The question" he said, "is not how much of my money I give to God, but rather how much of God's money I keep for myself."

His life's verse was Matthew 6:33: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." LeTourneau proved the promise in this verse; he found he couldn't give it away fast enough. In an appropriate earthmoving metaphor, he said, "I shovel it out and God shovels it back—but God has a bigger shovel."

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant in Paducah. His Web site is www.consultcpa.com.



Concerned parents can watch for signs of alcohol, drug use

Q: I'm concerned that my teenage daughter might be drinking or using drugs. What should I look for?

If you have concerns about your daughter, you are wise not to ignore them.

Every day approximately 4,400 American youth (ages 12-17) try marijuana for the first time. The average age when children first experiment with alcohol or marijuana is 12. Surveys reveal that as many as one of every three fourth-graders feels pressure to drink. More than 4 million kids ages 13-17 said they had been offered drugs in the previous 30 days. Some telltale signs of substance abuse include:



- School attendance and/or performance drops.
- Hostility and lack of cooperation.
- Uncharacteristic withdrawal.
- Change in friends.
- Lack of interest in personal appearance.
- Frequent use of incense or room deodorant.
- Depression, fatigue or lethargy.
- Sudden use of strong perfume or cologne.
- Change in sleep or eating habits.
- Evidence of drug paraphernalia (e.g. rolling papers).
- Secrecy.
- Drug-oriented graffiti.
- Loss of interest in activities such as sports or hobbies.
- Lying, shoplifting, stealing household items or cash.
- Dramatic weight loss or gain.
- Bloodshot eyes, sunglasses.

Substance abuse and teenagers are a deadly combination. If you suspect that your child is using drugs or alcohol, go with him or her to a Christian counselor as soon as possible.—*Scott Wigginton*

Q: While I was visiting my father recently, several of his friends made favorable comments about other racial and ethnic groups. I thought most older adults tended to be more uncomfortable with diversity but these men, in general, valued diversity among people. Is that typical?

Remember that diversity comes in many forms including gender, age, culture, education levels, socioeconomic levels, function and position within the community, religious affiliation and communication styles. Many older Americans are very open to our nation's growing diversity.

Test your knowledge of diversity issues with the following true or false quiz:

1. In the year 2030, 25 percent of older Americans are expected to be members of minority groups.
2. Between 1990 and 2030, the older Hispanic population in the U.S. is projected to increase almost 400 percent.
3. Differences among people decrease with age.
4. The relationship between ethnicity and aging varies within the same ethnic group.

1. *True.* According to projections by the U.S. Administration on Aging, about 25 percent of the U.S. older adult population will be made up of minorities in the year 2030.

2. *True.* The older Hispanic population is expected to increase by 395 percent from 1990 to 2030.

3. *False.* Research tends to provide support for the idea that diversity increases with age, since the possibility of differing life experiences increases as people age.

4. *True.* Each ethnic group may include a number of smaller diverse groups, and there often are significant differences among individuals from the same group.—*Jon Rainbow*

Family Forum writers are Suzanne Coyle, director of Cornerstone Counseling for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children; David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; Jon Rainbow, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Campbellsville University; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; and Scott Wigginton, director of LifeCare Counseling at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@earthlink.net.

New IMB missionaries deserve our support

When Kentucky Baptists gather in Lexington Nov. 11-12 for the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, one of the most significant experiences will be the Tuesday evening missionary appointment service conducted by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

For many participants, the event will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness both the spiritual focus and pageantry that accompany the appointment of international missionaries.

Highlights of the 7 p.m. service in Rupp Arena will include a parade of flags and missionary testimonies. Other features will include a welcome by University of Kentucky men's basketball coach Tubby Smith, a 1,200-voice choir and a missions challenge from IMB President Jerry Rankin.

Kentucky Baptist leaders and IMB officials have been making extensive preparations for the first IMB appointment service hosted by the KBC since 1987. Former KBC Presidents Jim McKinley and James Jones have traveled throughout the state promoting the event.

McKinley, a retired Southern Baptist international missionary who served 34 years overseas, said the heightened threat of international terrorism is one of the greatest challenges new missionaries will face. "They need tremendous spiritual support," he emphasized. "Our presence at the appointment service will indicate our willingness to pray for them and support them."

Organizers anticipate several thousand Kentucky Baptists taking part in the event. Bus and van parking passes are available for church and associational groups planning to attend the service.

The appointment service comes just a few months after a series of missionary firings, resignations and retirements in the wake of missionaries being required to affirm the revised Baptist Faith and Message statement.

IMB officials also have put on hold more than 100 missionary appointments due to a shortfall in last year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and other financial struggles.

Despite such challenges, McKinley said, "There is nothing political about this appointment service." And he is correct.

Even with my personal opposition to IMB trustees dismissing missionaries over the Baptist Faith and Message issue, I still strongly support involvement in the IMB appointment service.

Why? For the same reason I supported keeping our longtime, faithful missionaries on the field: to make a direct spiritual impact in the lives of countless people around the world.

Just as the fired missionaries remained qualified to spread the gospel whether or not they endorsed the latest version of the BF&M, the new missionaries also will have many opportunities to minister in the name of Christ.

For those who continue to answer the call to international missions, Kentucky Baptists can play a vital support role through our prayers, personal encouragement and financial support.

"The appointment of international missionaries is one of the most exciting things Southern Baptists do," Rankin noted. "This represents the heart of why the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845."

Affirming that "these are your missionaries," Rankin added, "Your presence will demonstrate to them the massive support of Kentucky Baptists and enable them to go with confidence in your partnership and support as they seek to share the gospel in places of risk and danger."

For more information about the Nov. 11 appointment service, visit the Web page www.kybaptist.org/imb appointment.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Sky won't fall, however court rules

By Marv Knox

Sometime next year, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether public schools can lead children to say the words "under God" when they recite the Pledge of Allegiance. While this case will further define the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..."), it will herald neither the dawn of a new era nor the end of the world as we know it.

The case has been brought by Michael Newdow, a California atheist and father of a child who attends public school. Newdow claims his daughter's constitutional rights are violated when a teacher leads her class in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance because it includes "under God." The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals determined the words themselves are not unconstitutional but recitation of the pledge in public schools violates the Constitution. Following torrents of protest, the Supreme Court voted to hear the case.

A couple of approaches cast light on how this case might turn out.

An accommodationist approach would affirm inclusion of "under God" in the pledge, no matter when or where it is said. This theory holds that the First Amendment forbids Congress from establishing or supporting a specific religion. Short of that, government at any level can ac-

commodate the religious beliefs of citizens and their religious practices. Reciting "under God" in the pledge would not constitute establishment of religion and consequently would be acceptable.

A strict separationist approach, however, would demand removal of the words, at least when the Pledge of

Allegiance is said in public schools. According to this theory, the government vio-

lates the Establishment Clause any time it promotes religion or coerces citizens to participate in religion, both generically and specifically. So, a public schoolteacher, as an employee of the government, would violate the First Amendment by leading students to recite the pledge if it includes "under God."

"Under God" supporters face a unique challenge in this case. Justice Antonin Scalia, one of the court's most conservative justices, has recused himself. He did not cite his reason, but it's presumably because his impartiality has been questioned, since he publicly criticized the 9th Circuit Court's decision. Since a 4-4 tie would affirm the lower court, at least five justices, not counting Scalia, must agree "under God" should stay.

Even before the case is heard, we can expect a victory for "under God" very well may be hollow. Searching for a way to counter the charge that overt religious acts or statements violate the rights of religious minorities,

advocates often claim the words and deeds do not have significant religious meaning. Whether it's stamping "In God We Trust" on money or placing a nativity scene in a city park, defenders often fall back on the notion the action does not serve a specifically religious function and therefore does not violate the Constitution.

This raises an obvious question: If a religious act doesn't serve a religious purpose, why bother? Of course, many faithful Americans worry about the erosion of culture. The very idea of dropping "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance seems like one more victory for God-haters. However, one can argue that the pervasiveness of half-hearted, watered-down religion provides most Americans an inoculation of "god" sufficient to prevent them from experiencing the real God Almighty.

For example, poll after poll shows the majority of Americans claim to be Christians and affirm the value of prayer, Bible reading and church attendance in their lives. But you'd be hard-pressed to prove it by attendance at church on Sunday, not to mention the way they live their lives and make moral decisions.

No one knows how the Supreme Court will rule on "under God." But however the case turns out, the challenge will not arise when children rise and say the pledge, but when Christians try to convince a lost and dying world the only hope is to live under submission to God.

Marv Knox, former editor of the Western Recorder, is editor of the Texas Baptist Standard

Patterson inaugurated as Southwestern's 8th president

"Above all else, we shall seek the approval of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church."

Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas—Paige Patterson, one of the chief architects of the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative shift since 1979, officially stepped into the role of the eighth president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary during inaugural services Oct. 21.

Trustees unanimously elected Patterson as president June 24, following the retirement of former President Kenneth Hemphill who was named national strategist for the Southern Baptist Convention's Empowering Kingdom Growth initiative.

"We are headed to a full and thorough reaffirmation of the doctrine of B.H. Carroll and the founders of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary," Patterson said during his inaugural remarks at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. The service culminated with Patterson publicly signing the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

"We are headed to the reaffirmation of the centrality and of the incarnation of the atonement of Christ as the essential bedrock of Christianity," Patterson added.

The sanctity of marriage and the home, along with the preservation of appropriate gender relationships in the home and church, will be reaffirmed at the seminary as well, he declared.

Asked after his election in June if he would permit a woman to teach in the seminary's school of theology, Patterson said he would not do anything in the school of theology that he wouldn't want churches to imitate.

"My concern is that the New Testament is crystal clear that pastors are to be men," he said. "As we build the school of theology, where we primarily train future pastors, it is only appropriate—if we are going to stay with the biblical pattern—that we use only men in that capacity."

Former Southwestern President Dilday told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram at the time that he was not pleased to hear of Patterson's election.

"It's the final stroke in Patterson's plan to capture and radically alter the great school," Dilday said. "Already, Southwestern bears little resemblance to the institution that undergirded Baptist churches and ministries around the world for 90 years. Paige's election will complete that tragic metamorphosis."

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, called Patterson's election "one of the great moments in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention."

He described Patterson as "one of our greatest leaders and the Martin Luther in the reformation of our con-



FAMILY FOCUS During a prayer of dedication at his inauguration as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Paige Patterson is surrounded by family members (from left) son-in-law and daughter Mark and Carmen Howell, wife Dorothy Patterson, and daughter-in-law and son Rachel and Armour Patterson. (BP photo by Stephen Blan)

vention and the recovery of biblical inerrancy and authority."

Mohler and other current SBC leaders affirmed Patterson's leadership during last week's inauguration.

"Some people leave a legacy and others live a legacy," said Southern Baptist Convention President Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas. "Paige Patterson is living a legacy."

Patterson's brother-in-law, Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, cited

Patterson's role in the denominational battles of the past 20-plus years.

Comparing Patterson's efforts to emphasize biblical inerrancy in the SBC to the D-Day invasion in World War II, Kelley noted that it was necessary in order to continue the fight, but it was not the final goal.

"The real battle is to take Jesus Christ to the world, Who alone is the hope of the world and the source of salvation and Who alone can transform lives," Kelley said.

Mark Howell, Patterson's son-in-law, delivered the inaugural sermon. Howell, pastor of First Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., said Patterson's ministry at Southwestern will stand the test of eternity to the degree to which it is based on the inerrant and infallible Word of God.

Patterson said seminary leaders "will labor in the constant hope and confidence of the return of Christ at the end of the age for His church, and above all else, we shall seek the approval of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church."

Patterson, 60, is a native Texan. He served 11 years as president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., before being elected president at Southwestern.

Based on reporting by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press

Southern Seminary forum debates church-state separation

By Jeff Robinson & David Roach
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—How high a wall should separate church and state?

Panelists attempted to provide a Christian answer to this key question in a symposium sponsored by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Boyce College and Carl-F.H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement.

More than 500 students listened as panelists debated their four different views, ranging from a strict separation of church from the state to the government's acknowledging and actively working with the church.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, presented the accommodationist view of church-state relations, arguing that Christians have a responsibility to offer a scriptural perspective in public policy debates.

Christians should not, however, advocate state-sponsored religion because it inevitably compromises the

gospel message, Land said.

"We believe as Christians that we have a worldview that is informed by Holy Scripture. We have a right to express our religious convictions in the public square, and we have a right to bring our religious convictions to bear on the public policy issues of the day. And if we can convince enough Americans that we're right, we have the right to have that legislated," Land said.

When believers engage the culture with a Christian worldview, he said, they have the potential to impact society powerfully. It is important, though, to distinguish between Christians impacting culture and government-sponsored religion, Land said.

"Our job" teaching Bible

"It's our job to teach the Bible. It's our job to propagate the faith. And when people are then changed, they have the right to bring their religious convictions into the public marketplace of ideas and to express their faith," he said.

Representing the strict separationist position, Hollyn Hollman, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, argued that Christians should seek to uphold both the free exercise and the anti-establishment clauses of the First Amendment.

By advocating both a free church and a state that maintains neutrality toward religion, Christians can assure maximum protection of religious liberty, she said.

"For theological reasons, we believe in a free church and a free state," she said. "We are created in God's image, free and responsible to God. We believe that the freedom of the individual to exercise choice in reli-

gion is essential, and the separation of the institutions of church and state is indispensable for ensuring liberty."

Even with a separationist view some interaction between religion and government is acceptable, Hollman added. Examples include Bible clubs in public high schools and students expressing Christian viewpoints in class. But the U.S. Constitution's anti-establishment clause prevents the government from lending any support to religion, Hollman said.

"Some suggest that government support for religion should be permitted so long as no religion is favored over another and no citizen is forced to participate. But the weight of the evidence suggests that the framers considered that approach and they rejected it," she said.

Mohler: No religious neutrality

Seminary President Al Mohler said Christians must beware of any state that claims to be neutral toward religion.

"There is no such thing as religious neutrality," Mohler said. "There never has been such a condition, there never will be such a condition. It is because the worldview is always religious or irreligious in whatever mixture of the individual conscience."

"There is either allegiance to or hostility to the truth claims of the various spiritual, religious, theological arguments being made at any time."

Mohler cited the 1992 Supreme Court case *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* as an example of the lack of neutrality. In that case, justices admitted that the definition of life is an inherently theological concept and therefore had no warrant to take a position.

By not taking a position, the court took a position, Mohler said. Christians must be willing to argue their worldview on such issues in the public square even in the face of charges that they are attempting to establish Christianity as the dominant religion, he said.

Tom Nettles, professor of historical theology at Southern Seminary, took the separationist position, arguing that, above all else, the church should guard the deposit of gospel truth God has given it.

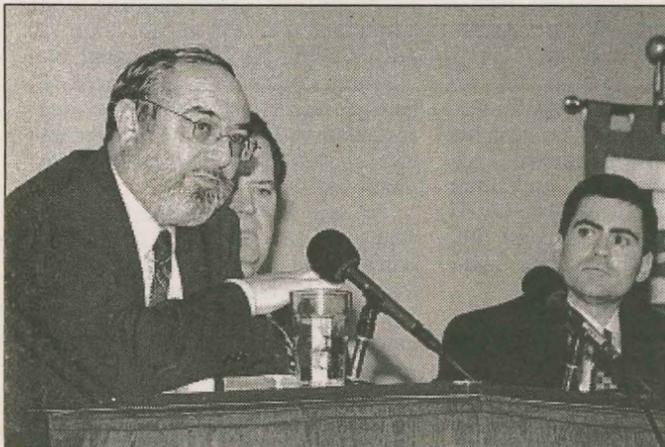
The Ten Commandments should not be used as an external symbol or historical monument in the vein of the controversial display in Alabama, because God did not give the law for that purpose, Nettles said.

Instead, the commandments should be proclaimed by the church as a standard of righteousness that reveals sin and leads sinners to see their need of a Savior. It also serves as the standard of sanctification for the believer, he said.

David Cook argued for the acknowledgment view of church and state relations. This position states that the church and state may work together to bring about the betterment of society. Cook is professor of Christian ethics at Southern Seminary and has lived in England, where the Anglican Church is the official state church.

Cook asserted that the church and state should work together, that the government may look to the church to find the impetus for teaching morality and religion in public schools. In answer to the question "how high the wall of separation between church and state?" Cook answered, "Let's break down the wall because Jesus is Lord of all."

CHURCH-STATE CONVERSATION Southern Seminary professor David Cook voices his view of the church-state relationship during a panel discussion on the campus, while Richard Land, center, and Russell Moore look on. (Southern Seminary photo)



Feeding tube dispute renews life-ethics controversy

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Is the Terri Schiavo case a clear pro-life issue, or is there a significant gray area involved?

Some pro-life groups have championed the cause of the Florida woman's parents, who have been fighting her husband, Michael, over her fate.

Terri Schiavo collapsed and suffered subsequent brain damage as a result of a previously undiagnosed medical condition in 1990. She has been in what doctors describe as a "permanent vegetative state" ever since.

In 1998, Michael Schiavo began legal proceedings to have his wife's feeding tube removed, thus ending her life. But Terri Schiavo's parents have opposed his efforts, arguing she can be rehabilitated and shows signs of consciousness.

A court-appointed doctor agreed with Michael Schiavo that his wife's condition is irreversible, and a state court granted permission for the feeding tube to be removed on his order. It was removed Oct. 15.

But Terri Schiavo's parents and pro-life groups convinced Florida's

legislature to pass an emergency law that gave Florida Gov. Jeb Bush the authority to override the courts and have her tube re-inserted.

The bill was passed and signed into law Oct. 21. Shortly thereafter, Bush ordered Terri Schiavo's doctors to reinsert her feeding tube.

Many conservative Christian groups and commentators hailed the action. "Thankfully, Terri and the people of Florida have a leader who not only takes a strong stand for life but is willing to stand up against a judiciary who does not," said Tony Perkins, president of the Washington-based Family Research Council.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the case reflected the "clash of two very disparate civilizations—the Judeo-Christian civilization, which is based upon the sanctity of all human life, and the neo-pagan relativist quality-of-life civilization."

Ethicists: Case not clear-cut

But many medical ethicists have disagreed that the case is a clear-cut example of life-ethics issues.

In a Sept. 23 Washington Post story, several physicians said Schiavo's

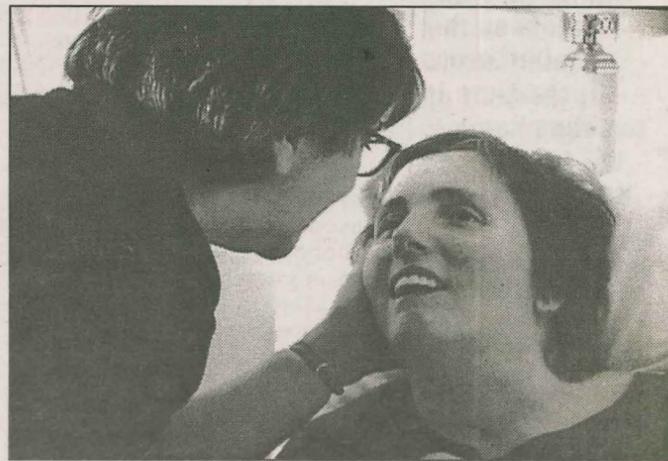
parents' belief that their daughter shows signs of consciousness is simply wishful thinking.

Her parents' case was bolstered by video showing Terri Schiavo appearing to smile and look at visitors, but such signs are simply natural instincts of someone in a vegetative state, according to many medical experts.

"The CAT scan shows massive atrophy of the brain," said Ronald Cranford, a neurologist who testified for Michael Schiavo in the trial, according to the Post. "What Terri Schiavo manifests is a classic vegetative state. It looks like she's looking at you, but really she's not. It looks like she's grinning at you, but she's really not."

Cranford added that Terri Schiavo does not show the key signs of consciousness in the videotapes: the ability to "track" with her eyes.

But Joni Eareckson Tada, a popular evangelical author and speaker and a quadriplegic, said that shouldn't matter. On Christian psychologist James Dobson's Oct. 22 radio broadcast, she said even people in vegetative states "have a right to live. They have a right to human treatment. They have a right to be fed. They have a right to rehabilitative therapy. And these are the things that up until this



point have been denied Terri."

The case is expected to return to the courts this week.

An Associated Press story stated Michael Schiavo would be in court this week to argue that Bush's order that led to the feeding tube being reinserted is unconstitutional.

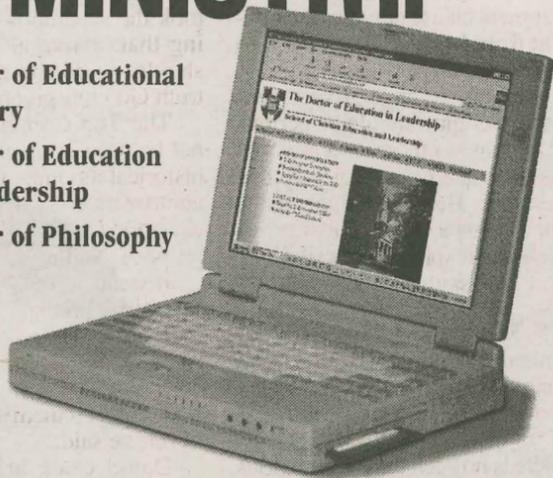
The law approved last week also requires that a guardian be appointed to represent Terri Schiavo's interests in court, AP reported. Both sides were given five days to agree on a guardian. If they can't agree, the judge will appoint one.

TERRI SCHIAVO Terri Schiavo is shown here with her mother, Mary Schindler, in a photograph taken late in 2001. A Florida judge recently sided with Schiavo's husband, ordering the removal of the feeding tube that had kept the 39-year-old alive for more than 13 years. But the Florida legislature quickly passed a law that resulted in the tube being reinserted. (RNS/Reuters photo)

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Bush distances himself from Christian general's comments on Islam, terrorism

WASHINGTON (RNS)—President Bush said last week he does not agree with controversial statements made by a defense undersecretary, while Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld says he has no plans to remove the lieutenant general during an investigation of his remarks.

Reports about comments made by Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin in church speeches have led to requests for his reassignment as well as defense of his right to free speech. Among other comments, Boykin said terrorists were trying to destroy the United States "because we're a Christian nation."

Bush, speaking to reporters on Air Force One, said the matter came up when he met with Muslim leaders in Indonesia.

"I said he didn't reflect my opinion," the president said. "Look, it just doesn't reflect what the government thinks. And I think they were pleased to hear that."

The White House went a step further, issuing a "global message" that declared: "Comments on religion by an American general weren't the views of the president or those of the

American government. We recognize that Islam is a peaceful religion which teaches respect and tolerance."

Rumsfeld, who announced Oct. 21 that an inspector general will investigate the situation, said the next day that he did not intend to ask Boykin to step down during the probe.

"He has requested an inspector general review of the matter, and I think that was an appropriate thing to do," Rumsfeld said. "And we'll let that play out."

Members of Congress have issued statements and written to Rumsfeld with opposing views on the status of Boykin, who apologized to those he offended.

In an Oct. 17 letter, Virginia Sen. John Warner, Republican chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, and Michigan Sen. Carl Levin, the ranking Democrat member, recommended an inspector general review to determine if Boykin's behavior was appropriate.

Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., who had earlier called for a reassignment or reprimand, said last week that such a review is "insufficient to deal with the growing controversy."

In a letter to Rumsfeld, Rep. Tom Tiahrt, R-Kan., and 16 other House members said removing Boykin would be an "injustice."

Religious leaders also continued to comment.

Jim Wallis, founder of Sojourners magazine, called Boykin "a product of bad theology and church teaching."

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins said senators criticizing Boykin should be more worried about Muslim chaplains assigned to work with detainees at the military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

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'Partial-birth abortion' ban passed, legal fight expected

"Any society that allows such a barbarous procedure to continue has lost the right to call itself civilized."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

By Kevin Eckstrom
Religious News Service

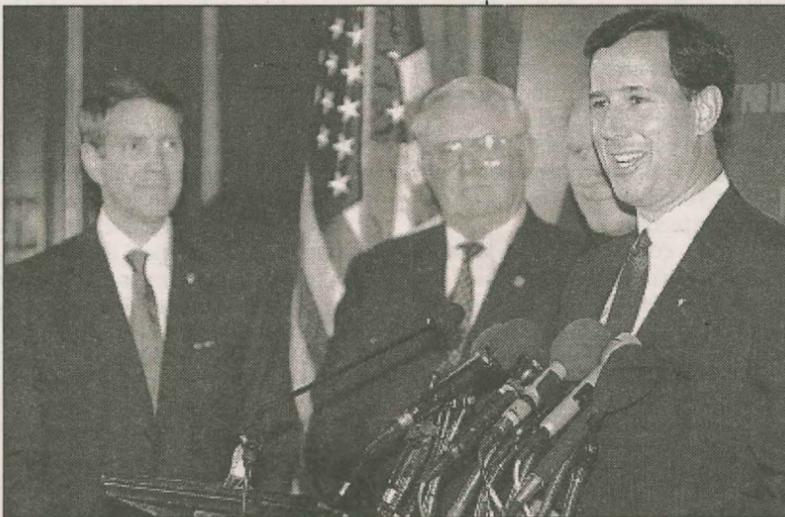
WASHINGTON (RNS)—President Bush said he will sign a bill passed by the Senate on Oct. 21 that bans so-called "partial-birth abortions," a major victory for religious groups who have tried three times to ban the procedure.

The 64-34 vote by the Senate is the most sweeping federal restriction since abortion was legalized by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973. The House voted 281-142 on Oct. 2 to approve the bill.

"We have just outlawed a procedure that is barbaric, that is brutal, that is offensive to our moral sensibilities and is out of the mainstream of the ethical practice of medicine today," said Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a surgeon from Tennessee.

Bush called the bill "very important legislation that will end an abhorrent practice and continue to build a culture of life in America."

Congress previously voted twice to ban the procedure, but both bills were vetoed by former President Bill Clinton. Three years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a similar Nebraska law because it was too vague and did not include an exception to



POST-VOTE PRESS CONFERENCE Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), right, speaks to the press after the Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill to ban "partial birth" abortion. The legislation, debated with great emotion since 1995, is expected to be challenged in court. (RNS/Reuters photo by Mike Theiler)

save the life of the mother.

Opponents have promised to immediately fight the bill in federal court after Bush signs it. Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, said the bill makes women "second-class citizens" and threatens to erode abortion rights.

The rare procedure is used in late-term pregnancies. Doctors partially

deliver a fetus before using instruments to collapse the skull and kill the fetus.

Supporters say the current bill is more precise and will survive a court challenge. The bill imposes a two-year prison sentence and unspecified fines on any doctor who performs an "overt act" to "kill the partially de-

livered fetus."

"It is long past the time that our elected representatives banned this heinous partial-birth abortion procedure, which so repulses and horrifies a significant majority of the American people," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "Any society that allows such a barbarous procedure to continue has lost the right to call itself civilized."

Abortion-rights leader Kate Michelman criticized the vote. "No one should be fooled as to the real intentions of this bill's sponsors; they want to take away entirely the right to personal privacy and a woman's right to choose," Michelman, president of NARAL Pro-choice America, said.

The final bill did not include an earlier Senate provision that affirmed support for the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion.

"Roe is extreme in every way and has been used to justify the brutal killing of infants who are almost completely born," said Gail Quinn, executive director of the pro-life office at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

With additional reporting by Tom Strode of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Bill introduced for mealtime prayers.** A North Carolina congressman has introduced a bill that would allow students at the nation's three military academies to conduct voluntary prayer before meals. Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., said his bill will "ensure the protection of our future military heroes' First Amendment rights" for students at West Point, the Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy. The ACLU has notified the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., that it is "monitoring" its mealtime prayers, but has not filed formal legal action.

■ **Supreme Court to revisit online porn law.** Conservative Christian groups are hailing the Supreme Court's decision to once again consider the constitutionality of protecting children from online pornography. The justices decided Oct. 14 to hear arguments concerning the Child Online Pornography Act. In 1997, the court struck down Congress' first comprehensive effort to penalize people who make it too simple for children to find online pornographic material. The current case will determine whether a subsequent law prevents too much material from being seen by adults, Associated Press reported.

■ **Seventh-day Adventists report increase.** The Seventh-day Adventist Church has grown to a total of 13.3 million baptized members worldwide, an increase of almost a million in the last year. Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, said the church is working to involve youth in its ongoing evangelism goals. "I think we have become better at acknowledging and affirming the creative role that young people and young professionals can and must play in our future," he said. "Fifty-five, 60 percent of our total world community are under 30 years of age." The 13.3 million figure includes only baptized adults, he added.

■ **Methodist giving gap grows.** The United Methodist Church said giving for this year continues to drop—down 5 percent, or about \$3 million—after church officials first noticed a looming deficit three months ago. Church officials said spending on some programs will need to be cut unless parishioners are able to make up the difference by the end of the year. As of Oct. 1, the church had received \$59.5 million, down from \$62.6 million at the same point last year.

■ **Court won't stop "spirit of Satan" suit.** An Iowa judge will now decide if the phrase "spirit of Satan" is basis for a slander suit after the U.S. Supreme Court declined to intervene in a dispute at a rural Iowa church. Last week, the nation's highest court rejected a petition by the United Methodist Church in Iowa to dismiss the case. That move sends the 2-year-old case back to a judge in Butler County, Iowa, for trial. On its face, the case is a simple defamation suit, but church-state watchers say it could hold important precedent on how much a secular court can or should involve itself in internal church matters.

■ **Suit over "Jesus" film settled.** A 2-year-old suit involving Campus Crusade for Christ's "Jesus" film has been settled. Film producer John Heyman claimed there were unauthorized changes made in a children's version of the film, Christian Century reported. Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright, who died July 19, had worked with Heyman on widespread exposure of the movie. A staffer at the Jesus Film Project, a Campus Crusade affiliate in San Clemente, Calif., confirmed last month that the settlement had been reached, but details were not made public. Heyman said in an e-mail: "My relationship with Campus Crusade could not be better and there are no outstanding disputes."

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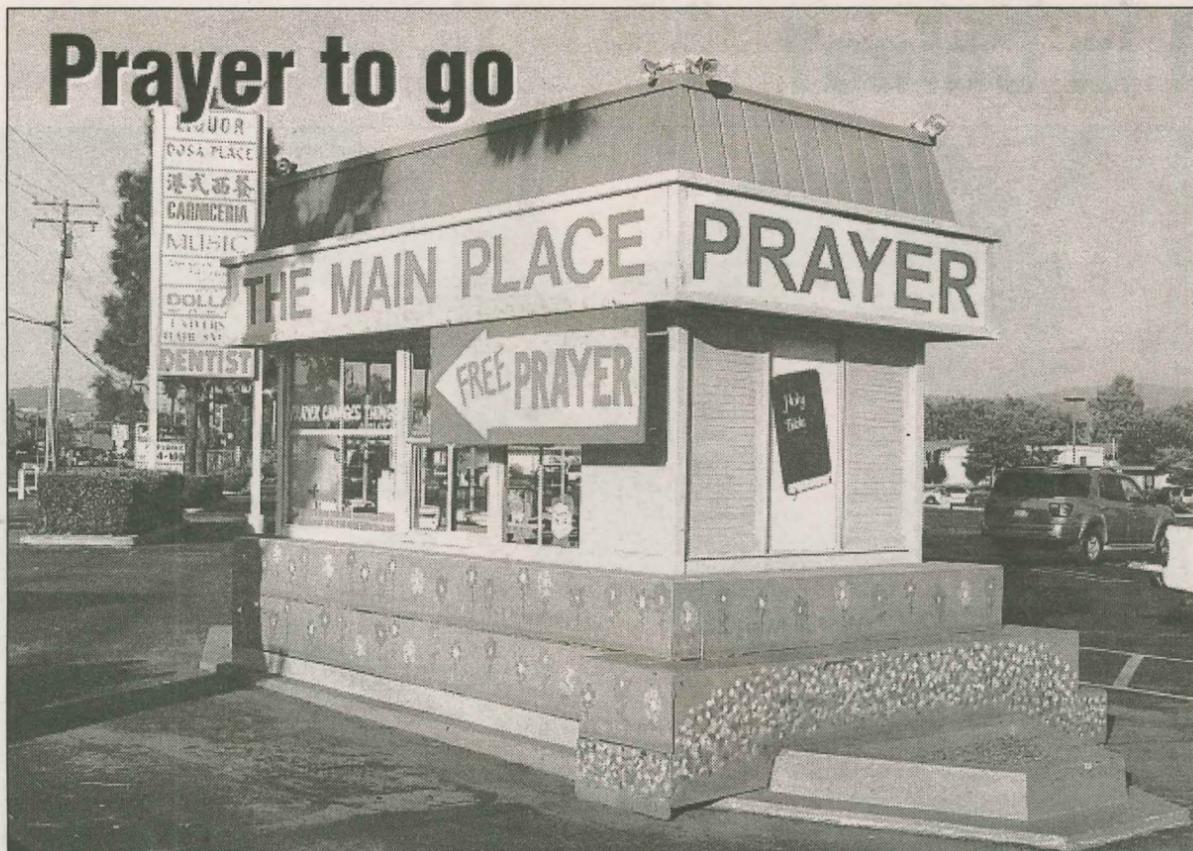
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ANNUTY BOARD



THE MAIN PLACE Leaders at a Baptist church in Los Angeles say the drive-in prayer booth near Los Angeles is serving a need in the community for people to drop by and share prayer requests, many times when they feel like they have nowhere else to go.

Prayer booth enhances church's outreach

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

TUSTIN, Calif. (BP)—Two newcomers attended a free Wednesday evening barbecue in late June at The Main Place Christian Fellowship, a Baptist congregation amid the sprawling suburbs south of Los Angeles.

One woman was embroiled in a legal dispute with her mother and other family members. The other had just escaped from an abusive relationship. Seniors Pastor Martin Mosier met both women earlier that day at the church's drive-through prayer booth, a 7-by-10 foot building that used to hold a photo developing shop.

Located in a strip mall across the street from the church, the unique outreach has prompted a stir in the community since opening in March. It also has been featured in the Los Angeles Times and on National Public Radio.

Missions Pastor David Cottrill said it has spread awareness of the church across the region. More importantly, he said he believes divine guidance is behind the project.

"Someone's coming onto our turf, which gives us an excellent opportunity to point them to Jesus Christ," Cottrill said. "We get the sense that a lot of people have nowhere else to go. They don't have a priest, pastor or ... anyone else they can talk to, and we have a lot of people who don't know what their need is."

After praying with the two women in distress, Mosier said, both had tears in their eyes. They also expressed gratitude that someone could talk with them—and provide them a meal.

"I know from being there it's a blessing," said Mosier, one of 10 staff members who cover the booth weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. "We have people come through who break down and weep because they're going through a divorce or a child custody

battle.

"We feel it's a timely ministry," Mosier added. "It gets us out among the hurting. It's exceeded our expectations in meeting needs and showing how desperate people are for prayer. This is the kind of ministry that every church can do."

Cottrill credited Senior Pastor Rich Mathisrud with the idea to open a prayer booth. A successful businessman who became a Christian at age 30, Mathisrud always is "thinking outside," Cottrill said.

"The prayer booth wasn't unusual because the church has operated a thrift store for 10 years," Cottrill said. "It's normal for staff people to pray with others. This is just one more place where people can go for prayer."

In addition to free prayer, the 500-member church offers free 16-ounce bottles of water and Bibles at the booth. During a typical week, staff give away a case of water bottles and thus far have distributed about 40 free Bibles.

The first Bibles were in English and Spanish. Thanks to a donation from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, the church recently acquired versions in Arabic, Chinese and two Indian dialects. Leaders hope to obtain some Bibles in Farsi to serve a large Iranian community in neighboring Irvine, Cottrill said.

"Just love 'em"

No census of conversions or answered prayers is being taken. But Cottrill knows that people have found jobs, clothing and places to live. Visitors also have seen other breakthroughs in their lives.

Each request is forwarded to the church's prayer group, which meets at 5:30 a.m. during the week and one Friday a month at 7 p.m., he added.

Don Rayl, the church's pastor of prayer and a high school baseball coach, recently prayed with a teenage girl who became a Christian. On each of his visits to the booth Rayl has prayed with at least two people.

The prayer pastor also looks for additional involvement as awareness of the booth's effectiveness spreads.

The church advises volunteers to avoid confrontation or trying to meet every need and simply share what Christ has done in their lives.

"We tell them not to push on people, just love 'em," Rayl said. "We don't want to grab people and be forceful. We want to approach people the way Jesus did and tell them how

they can know Him in a personal way."

Interestingly, organizers said, half the booth's visitors are members of other churches. They either have a need that day, or they know shared requests will remain confidential, Cottrill said.

A veteran of international mission trips, Cottrill said the prayer booth is similar to any outreach outside the church where people make themselves available to God.

The Main Place's most valuable aspect is that it shows members they can minister to people any time and in any place, Cottrill said.

Many Christians think unchurched people aren't interested in hearing about God, he noted, but the prayer booth has shown that many people are searching for truth.



GOSPEL SHIP Baltimore's Breakwater Church, which meets in the Inner Harbor on the Dutchess of Pintail cruise ship, is the city's first "church ship" in 150 years. (BP photo by Stephen Draper)

'Gospel Ship' takes church to Baltimore's Inner Harbor

BALTIMORE (BP)—Church planters Jay Martin and Larry Baker didn't plan to make history when they held their first worship service aboard the Dutchess of Pintail in Baltimore's Inner Harbor.

They were looking for rental space for their new church, Breakwater, when they felt drawn to the docked cruise boat and unwittingly entered history.

The last time a Baltimore church met on a harbor ship was 1852. On Aug. 10, 2003, the Baltimore press heralded Breakwater's launch service as the return of the "Church Ship" after 150 years of absence.

There are other parallels in the historic connection.

In 1846, several men took the message of Jesus Christ to sailors who might never walk into a church built on land. They towed the decommissioned merchant ship "William Penn" into the Inner Harbor, repaired her and opened the Sailors Union Church. Soon the "Church Ship" regularly drew a crowd of 600 sailors whose lives had been impacted by a ministry that met them where they were.

In 2001, Pastor Jay Martin said he felt led by God to leave a comfortable life in Greenville, S.C., and move his family to the Inner Harbor to reach professional people who might not walk into a church. He went where they were.

An estimated 32,000 people live within a mile of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. One hundred thousand people work there and 15 million people visit every year.

Martin and his wife, Steffanie, prayerwalked, joined civic groups and helped with community projects to start relationships and share their faith. Martin and the new Breakwater team began impacting lives through acts of service to businesses and individuals around the Inner Harbor.

Martin said he hopes Breakwater will provide a changing experience for everyone the church touches.

Named for a harbor breakwater that provides a calm port during storms, Breakwater's mission is to help people find peace in Jesus Christ in the midst of busy, distracted lives.

Businesspeople and residents have responded to the message. Coffee shops from Federal Hill to Canton offer free meeting space for Breakwater's small groups.

"The life of the church occurs in the small community groups," said Larry Baker, who serves as small group pastor. "They provide a safe place where people can experience the love of Jesus and can grow in their own faith. It's life transforming because we encourage each other to keep loving and serving others."

People responded to Breakwater and its Aug. 9 pre-launch block party. "Many said the only reason they came was because they knew us through the acts of service," Martin noted.

A capacity crowd returned the next day for the church's first worship service aboard the Dutchess of Pintail.

"It was more than we hoped," Martin said. "We committed every day to God and He did it all. ... William Carey was right when he said, 'Expect great things; attempt great things.'"

See no evil in China?

Protestant leaders deny existence of religious persecution, underground church

By Kevin Eckstrom
Religion News Service

Paul Marshall estimated at least 25 million people belong to the underground churches. "It could be double or triple that."

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Leaders of government-sanctioned Protestant churches in China said Oct. 22 "there are no underground churches in China" and dismissed reports of harassed Christians in the communist nation.

Officials from the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement also agreed with Beijing labeling the Falun Gong movement an "evil cult" that must be stopped.

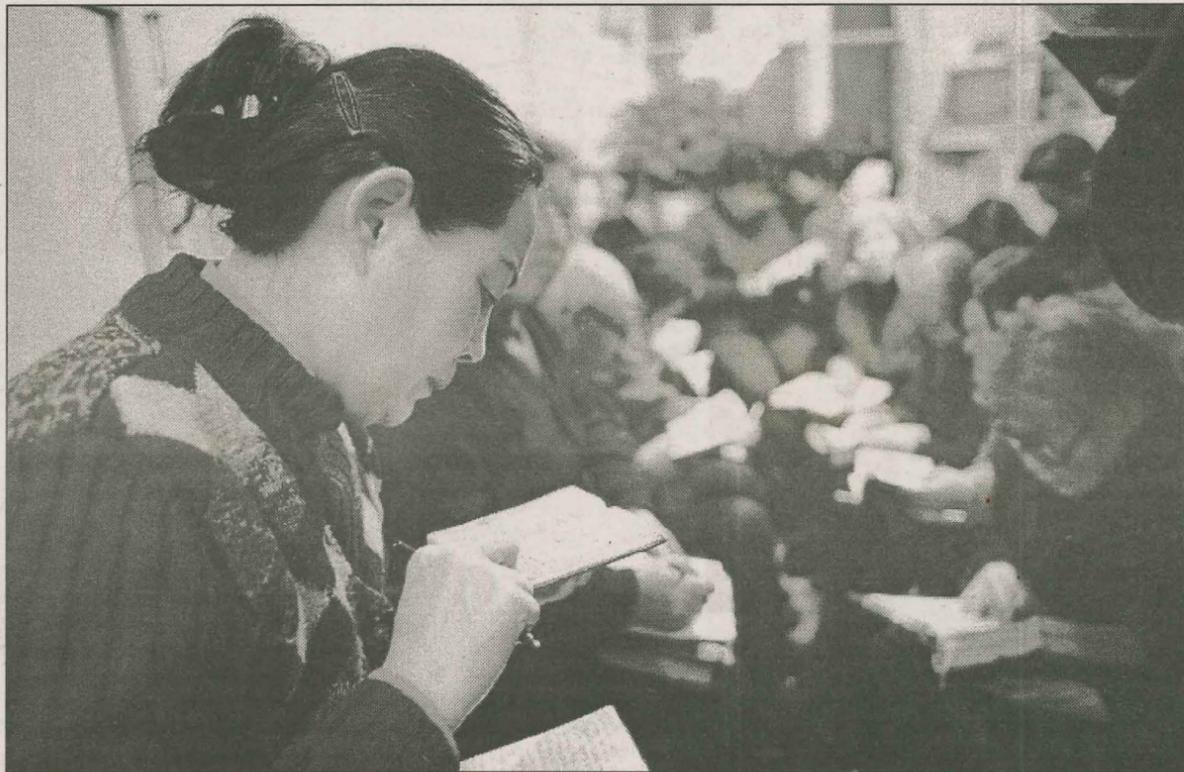
"The Chinese government is doing a better and better job of ensuring freedom of religious belief," Cao Shengjie, president of the China Christian Council, said at a news conference at the Chinese Embassy.

"If the government had not implemented this policy, the Christian church in China could not have had this development."

Cao dismissed reports of a thriving but persecuted underground church that human rights groups say has been harassed by Chinese officials. Instead, she said "only a limited number" of churches have not registered with the government.

"In the final analysis, a church is a church and there can be no underground or above ground between them," Presbyterian Ji Jianhong, chairman of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, said through a translator provided by the embassy.

U.S. officials disagree. Last May, Secretary of State Colin Powell named



KEEPING FAITH A woman follows along in her Bible in a house church meeting in Harbin, China. (BP file photo)

China a "country of particular concern" for its religious freedom policies, and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reported "widespread and serious abuses of the right to freedom of religion and belief in China."

"Wrong on both counts"

Paul Marshall, a senior fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom at Freedom House, a human rights watchdog group, estimated at least 25 million people belong to the underground churches, and "it could be double or triple that."

"They are wrong on both counts,"

Marshall said. "There is an underground church and it is persecuted."

Much of the concern by human rights groups has focused on the government's crackdown on the Falun Gong movement, which it labeled an "evil cult" that aims to subvert the government.

Cao said, "Falun Gong has nothing to do with the question of religious belief. It is an evil cult that has committed many crimes against the Chinese people."

Cao's Shanghai-headquartered conference was established in 1980 as one of five religious groups that operate with the approval of the communist government.

Together with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the two groups represent 16 million Protestant Christians who shun denominational structures and labels.

Neither group counts an estimated 4 million underground Catholics as members. The Vatican has not had diplomatic relations with China since 1951 and has not recognized an illicit patriotic Catholic Church established in 1957.

Both Cao and Ji said Western churches must not try to establish missionary outposts in China. Both groups operate under the principle that the Chinese church must be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.

"We feel it is the responsibility of the Chinese church to pass on the gospel to Chinese Christians," Cao said. "Some foreign churches have come to China to impose their own way of thinking and sectoral disputes to the Chinese church. ... It is an infringement upon the sovereignty of China and therefore is harmful."

Last week, the nine-member delegation from China met with leaders of the New York-based National Council of Churches. Antonios Kireopoulos, the NCC's associate general secretary for international affairs, said the NCC supports Falun Gong's right to exist.

"We are partners with them (the two official Christian groups). I can't comment on the restraints they may be under, but we would not agree with the statements they made," Kireopoulos said.

Panel cites 'deterioration' of freedom

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom stated the following about China in its 2003 annual report, released in May:

"The Commission has continued to monitor and report on the deterioration of protections for religious freedom in China in the current reporting year. The Chinese government commits numerous egregious violations against members of many of China's religious and spiritual communities, including Evangelical Christians, Roman Catholics, Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, and other groups, such as the Falun Gong.

"In September 2002, the Commission wrote to Secretary Powell recommending that he continue to designate China as a CPC, which he did in March 2003.

"The Chinese government remains a particularly severe violator of religious freedom. Persons continue to be confined, tortured, imprisoned, and subject to other forms of ill treatment on account of their religion or belief.

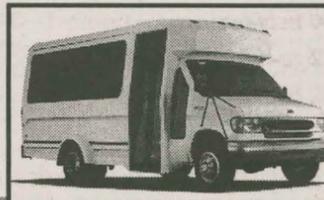
"In the past year, official respect for religious freedom in China has diminished. Chinese government officials have continued to claim the right to control, monitor, and restrain religious practice in that country, purportedly to protect public safety, order, health, and so forth. As part

of China's crackdown on religious and spiritual believers, individuals have been charged with, or detained under suspicion of, offenses that essentially penalize them for manifesting freedoms of religion or belief, speech, association, or assembly. In addition, several prominent religious leaders have been detained, often on reportedly dubious criminal charges, such as rape and other sexual violence, or financial crimes. The crackdown against religious believers was authorized at the highest levels of the government, according to reportedly official documents obtained by human rights non-governmental organizations.

"In December 2001, for the first time since the adoption of the 1999 'evil cult' law, a Protestant Christian pastor was sentenced to death. Pastor Gong Shengliang of the underground 'South China Church' was sentenced to death for founding an 'evil cult'; he also was sentenced on the reportedly questionable charges of assault and sexual violence. More than 200 members of the South China Church were arrested at the same time as Pastor Gong. In July 2002, three priests affiliated with the underground Roman Catholic Church were reportedly sentenced to three years in a labor camp after having been convicted of engaging in 'cult' activities."

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SMILE

Is life too complicated?

"It is not rocket science," so the saying goes. At Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek, we have adopted that saying for many of the tasks we are about in the camping ministry.

On the other hand, because many of the factors we face present great challenges, sometimes our ministry seems like rocket science.

This month, churches across this country have begun studying Rick Warren's book, "The Purpose Driven Life." The staffs at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek have begun the study as well. Typically, I am skeptical of the "latest and greatest" in books. I believe we are faddish people and many times we look for the latest craze with which to immerse ourselves. The difference with Warren's book is the simplicity of the theme. The basic focal question is, "What on earth am I here for?"

I am not sure about you, but I know many times I have asked God, "Why I am here?" or "Why am I in this particular situation?" Our human nature desires certainty. We want to be sure that in each stage of life we are accomplishing our purpose. "The Purpose Driven Life," in a nutshell, says

life is not rocket science. We should stop making it so complicated and return to the basic tasks God has assigned to each of us.

The yearly schedule at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek is filled with a wide variety of activities. The summer is packed with hundreds of energy-filled youth, and many times the winter months feel like life and energy have totally left the properties. How do we as a staff keep focus in such a cyclical ministry? We must have our purpose firmly grounded in God's plan for our lives, not in our identity or job title.

I pray that as we proceed through Warren's 40-day study our staff will realize why they are here on earth. If we understand our purpose and hold steadfast to that purpose, the ups and downs of camp will become less of an issue. The barriers to grow our ministry will no longer seem to hold us hostage. We will begin to see everything through the lens of God's purpose. We finally will experience a freedom that allows us to say that life and ministry are not highly complicated. As a matter of fact "it is not rocket science."

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

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Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crossword

Across

- 1 "The earth shall ____ before them" (Joel 2:10)
- 6 Edify
- 11 Repast
- 12 Father of "mighty men" (1 Chronicles 11:34)
- 14 Pronoun
- 15 Fearful things
- 17 Look, see! (arch.)
- 18 Printer's measure
- 19 Bosc, Anjou, et al.
- 20 Name of two O.T. books (abbr.)
- 21 Date approx. 100 yrs. before Babylonian captivity, to Caesar
- 23 Age of Joshua when he died: one hundred ____
- 24 "Before Abraham ____, I am" (John 8:58)
- 25 Son of Judah (Genesis 38)
- 28 "Believe not every ____" (1 John 4:1)
- 31 "To meet the Lord in the ____" (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- 32 Take advantage of
- 33 Gem in the fourth row of the ephod
- 36 Son of Pashur (Ezra 10:22)
- 39 Consumed
- 40 Owns
- 42 Article
- 43 Country part of the British Commonwealth, until 1961 (abbr.)
- 44 Sponsors
- 46 Linking verb
- 47 Conjunction
- 48 Fullness of this dwells bodily in Jesus

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51		52						53			54		
		55						56					

- 50 Number one?
- 51 "Doth not even ____ itself teach you" (1 Corinthians 11:14)
- 53 Son of Chislon (Numbers 34:21)
- 55 "A ram caught in a thicket by his ____" (Genesis 22:13)
- 56 Jobab king of ____ (Joshua 11:1)

Down

- 1 Extinguish
- 2 "What's ____?"
- 3 Suitable
- 4 Part of a castle
- 5 Maketh a mistake?
- 6 "Sow not among ____" (Jeremiah 4:3)
- 7 "Bringest certain strange things to our ____" (Acts 17:20)
- 8 Balaam's beast
- 9 Abbreviation preceding AKC winner
- 10 Son of Meraioth (Nehemiah 12:15)
- 11 What a dog often does
- 13 "Nor eat ____ grapes, or dried" (Numbers 6:3)
- 16 Feminine name

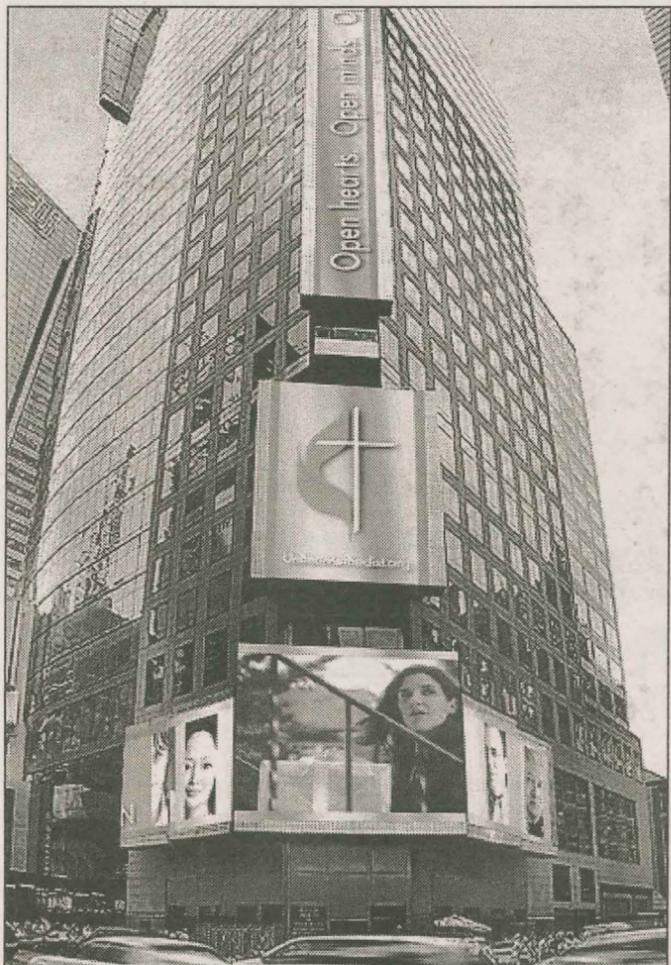
- 22 Put an end to
- 24 "They that are unlearned and unstable ____" (2 Peter 3:16)
- 26 Insolent talk
- 27 Linking verb
- 29 King of Assyria (2 Kings 15)
- 30 O.T. book
- 33 Thessalonian Christian (Acts 17)
- 34 Wife of Jerahmeel (1 Chronicles 2:26)
- 35 Island Paul visited on his way to Tyre (Acts 21)
- 36 "Will he ____ thy riches?" (Job 36:19)
- 37 One of the children of Anak (Numbers 13:22)
- 38 His son was one of Solomon's twelve officers (1 Kings 4:10)
- 41 Residue
- 44 Symbol of power
- 45 Father of Heber (Luke 3:35)
- 48 King Ahaziah was wounded near here (2 Kings 9:27)
- 49 Accomplished
- 52 Preposition
- 54 Word in a command

Last week's solution

1	R	T	E	K	I	S	H	I						
11	A	R	A	O	T	H	E	R	J	A	M			
14	S	O	W	H	E	E	L	G	A	T	E			
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37	R	O	B											
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Gospel advertising campaign rejected for Times Square



HIGH PROFILE GOSPEL An artist rendering depicts what an ad by the United Methodist Church would have looked like on the Reuters building in Times Square. The ad was rejected by Reuters because of its religious content. (RNS photo courtesy of United Methodist Communications)

By Kevin Eckstrom
Religion News Service

NEW YORK (RNS)—A \$30,000 deal to bring a glitzy United Methodist ad campaign to the heart of Times Square has been rejected because of its religious content.

The United Methodist Church's "Igniting Ministry" campaign signed a deal to show a 30-second video spot on a 22-story electronic billboard on the Reuters building.

But after the signing, Reuters rejected the contract because its policies prohibit ads for products or services that are "pornographic, political, religious, libelous, misleading or deceptive in nature."

Church officials blasted the global media company for displaying ads for beer but rejecting messages about how people "can bring order and peace to their lives."

"Reuters is an international communications company that has decided it will be the arbiter of what the public sees and hears," said Larry Hollon, chief executive of the church's Nashville-based communications agency.

The 11-screen billboard is located at the corner of West 43rd Street and Seventh Avenue in the heart of the Great White Way. Reuters says advertisements on its 7,000 square feet of signage are seen by 1.5 million people per day.

The deal, part of a \$20 million "open hearts, open minds, open doors" ad campaign, was to include a

30-second video segment called "The Gift" that was to be shown 10 times daily starting Nov. 15. The ad would have been seen during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

Reuters spokeswoman Samantha Topping said the contract was negotiated by the Toronto-based Outdoor Television Network Limited advertising agency.

Ron Walker, the CEO of the Toronto ad company, apologized to the church and offered to help find space in Times Square to offer "the same message, to the same audience, in a similar medium."

"Reuters did not choose to make the United Methodist Church an out-

cast," he said. "It was purely an oversight on our part. We apologize to the church."

The Times Square ad was to be the second high-profile Big Apple billing for the denomination. The church displayed an ad near ground zero after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that said, "Fear is not the only thing at work in the world today."

Hollon accepted the apology but said the issue is not settled.

"A policy that arbitrarily shuts out religious organizations from speaking in the public marketplace is discriminatory," he said. "I will continue to speak out against such discrimination."

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toast, coffee, juice

We need a few dedicated men and women!

It is not often that I use this column to ask for help. However, I am going to share one of our needs.

The volunteer season is over, and we have had another wonderful year of help from a host of friends. From California to North Carolina and from Florida to Ohio, volunteers have come by the hundreds this spring, summer and fall to help with a wide variety of projects.

The last two groups are now on our campus. One is from west central Kentucky. They come once or twice a year and help with projects that often include farm work. The second group is from South Carolina. It is a small but very skilled team of men and women who normally tackle some of our construction and carpentry needs. When these two groups leave us, our volunteer season officially will end.

But just because no more groups are scheduled until next spring does not mean we don't have plenty of work still to be done. We have been working this summer and fall on two projects that will come to a standstill unless we find some special friends to help in the next three or four months. Both projects are inside jobs, so one need not be concerned about the weather.

One project is the remodeling of one of our boys' dormitories. We began the renovation four years ago and completed one of the four floors scheduled for remodeling. Then we had to divert our labor resources to a more critical project. Now we have directed our efforts back to the boys' dormitory.

We can use the skills of any number of men and women, but we especially need people who can do carpentry, plumbing and electrical work.

It does not have to be a group of 10 or 15; you may come with one or two others or alone. We have plenty of work to do, and we can use your help virtually any time from now until the end of April. Don't let the size of the group deter you from considering the possibility of spending a week or two with this project.

A second project is also an ongoing process: the remodeling of one of our staff houses. Many of our friends know that Oneida provides housing for approximately 120 of our 150 faculty and staff. The best time to do any remodeling is when the house or apartment is vacant. We have just such a situation now. One of our older houses has been in need of some serious repairs and remodeling. Several groups already have helped with this project. One group of men from Ballardsville helped install a new metal roof this summer. Others have done extensive work on the inside. While much progress has been made, a lot remains to be done. If at all possible, this remodeling needs to be completed before next spring when volunteers begin to return.

If you would like to help on either of these projects give me a call. We provide housing, meals and linens. You can help for a few days or longer. One of our maintenance men or construction men can work with you if you need their assistance. Don't waste your winter inside with nothing to do! Give us a helping hand now and you will enjoy next summer a lot more knowing that you helped us this winter. I am waiting to receive your call at (606) 847-4111, ext. 202.

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

THIS IS
ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

CLEAR CREEK
CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Harlan student a role model for missions

Harlan County native Christy Flanagan didn't come far to attend Clear Creek, but she already has followed the Lord to Africa, Michigan and North Carolina.

"I've been going to church all my life, thanks to my parents," Christy said. "At age 6 I realized I needed a Savior and received Jesus into my life." At First Baptist Church of Loyall she sings in the choir and works with Mission Friends.

May 2003 graduate Shannon Benefiel and New Testament professor Roy Lucas are copastors of the Loyall congregation.

"Dr. Lucas was our interim pastor before we made the decision," Christy said. "We liked them both, and they complement each other. The church is growing. It is a great experience having both of them."

When Christy was in the fifth grade, she wanted to be a missionary. God confirmed His call on a trip to Botswana, Africa, in 2000 with Teen Mania Ministries.

"We did village ministry, going from hut to hut telling people about Jesus. They are really loving people and open to the gospel," Christy said. "On my second trip we distributed Samaritan's Purse boxes, did

VBS and visited in orphanages and a disability center. God gave me a heart for the people."

Christy also has helped with a vacation Bible school in Michigan. In North Carolina, she worked with a local church in a beach vacation Bible school.

"The first day there were no children, and we tried to round some up. We helped some children whose house had burned and ended up with nine children during the week," Christy said.

Majoring in missions and evangelism, Christy enjoys the environment of Clear Creek. "The people here are so open and friendly," she said. "The professors really care about the students."

Dr. Lucas said, "In the four years I have known Christy, she has always had a spirit of service, a 'let's go' attitude. She's never shy about sharing the gospel and is a good role model for other youth."

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

Annuity Board offering church budget workbook

GRASS VALLEY, Calif. (BP)—A good thing happened last year during the budget planning process at New Covenant Baptist Church in Grass Valley, Calif.

For the first time, the budget was prepared using a step-by-step approach to achieve a sound financial plan.

"We are a smaller church with membership of 125," pastor Mike Sanchez said. "In the past, our budget planning was the church council meeting to consider the needs of the congregation and then matching the giving to the needs. It was not always the most effective method."

But things changed when the church asked Rod Wiltrout from the California Southern Baptist Convention to meet with the council and help develop a new budget approach.

"I met with the group and together we went through the Annuity Board's Planning Financial Support workbook which gives a church an easy-to-follow budget plan and even provides sample policies and forms," said Wiltrout, director of the California convention's stewardship development department and the Annuity Board state representative.

In addition, the workbook includes information about restructuring the minister's salary away from the "package approach" to a "salary and benefits approach." A salary and benefits approach includes reviewing ministry-related expenses, protection benefits and personal income for ministers.

"With this new approach, our church council set up a blueprint for our budget that worked great for our congregation this year and puts us ahead of the game as we prepare for 2004," Sanchez said.

Annuity Board President O.S. Hawkins said "lump sum" salaries for both pay and benefits are a disservice to both the minister and the church.

"It is so important for churches to restructure salary packages in order to provide the pastor and church employees adequate pay while the church takes on the responsibility for funding the cost of protection benefits such as medical, life and disability coverage and retirement plan contributions," he said.

Sanchez called the new budgeting plan a win-win situation for himself and the church. "Our 2003 budget was designed to meet the needs of the church and of the pastor and we are seeing positive benefits all around."

The Planning Financial Support workbook is a free resource available at the Annuity Board by calling (800) 262-0511 or visiting the Web site, www.absbc.org.

Looking for a ...



Rock opera takes gospel to young adults

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WABASH, Ind. (RNS)—Veteran Christian musician Eddie DeGarmo has modernized the gospel—moving Jesus from Nazareth to New York—in hopes of turning listeners and viewers of his rock opera "Hero" back to the Bible.

"Really, what I want is for them to go back and get involved with the original gospel and learn what that story is," DeGarmo said in an interview shortly before "Hero" began its 19-city run.

The tour starts in Wabash, Ind., on Nov. 1 and ends Nov. 23 in San Antonio.

The postmodern version of the gospel has dramatic changes from the traditional King James translation: DeGarmo replaced Roman magistrates with "power politicians" and centurions with "dirty cops." The multiplication of the loaves and the fishes happens in Central Park. Jesus' transfiguration occurs from atop the Empire State Building.

And, Jesus, who is called "Hero," is black and wears dreadlocks.

"I think it's been long enough that we've depicted Christ as a blue-eyed European, and chances are He probably wasn't that and chances are He wasn't African-American," DeGarmo said.

In addition, DeGarmo said, he sees a "fairly good modern parallel" between Jews escaping bondage and being a downtrodden people in Jesus' day and the history of African-Americans.

Michael Tait, a member of dc Talk who releases his second solo album as "Tait" on Nov. 4, jumped at the opportunity to play the modern Jesus role. He grew up with a picture of a blond Jesus at the Baptist church where his father was pastor in inner-city Washington.

"To have a Jesus that was black is such a provocative step and I thought, what a great way to stir up and to invoke interest in an age-old story, the history, the Bible, the gospel," he said.



CAST Christian musicians (from left) Rebecca St. James, Michael Tait and Mark Stuart star in the new rock opera "Hero," a modern-day telling of the gospel story. In addition to the live tour, the 31-song production also will be featured on a two-CD set. (RNS photo courtesy Meax Music)

Tait is partnered in the project with Mark Stuart, lead singer of Audio Adrenaline, who plays Petrov, and Rebecca St. James, who plays Maggie. The three of them, all prominent in the contemporary Christian music scene, join a predominantly "CCM" group of artists in the 31-song production featured in a two-CD set and the live tour.

"It's definitely challenging," Tait said. "Musically, I sing everything from R&B to pop to hip-hop to Latin. ... Hopefully, somewhere in one of the songs, it will reach somebody where they are."

Jesus in today's world

DeGarmo, who spent 17 years as a keyboardist and singer with the group DeGarmo and Key, collaborated with writer Bob Farrell on the project.

He started on it in 1994 after his student-teacher daughter told him most of her students did not relate Easter to the Resurrection.

"I thought about what it would be like if Jesus walked into today's world," he said.

He said the project can compare in some ways to the Jesus-focused mu-

sical productions dating to the 1970s, but DeGarmo added that "Hero" is less historical than the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" and grittier than the musical "Godspell."

Barry Alfonso, author of "The Billboard Guide to Contemporary Christian Music," said the modernization of the gospel story could be a tricky proposition if it's aimed at evangelical audiences.

"I think it's pushing the envelope of what's acceptable in the Christian pop culture world," Alfonso said. "The very fact that they're transposing the story of Jesus to a modern setting—you're talking about a community that's based on biblical literalism."

"Hero" is told through the eyes of Agent Alexander Hunter, an updated version of a biblical Roman officer. He performs a rap song describing Jesus as a "Man on a Mission."

Tait said his favorite song is "Not in Our House," a modernization of Jesus' "holy anger" toward money-changers in the temple.

"I get to be a boy," he said. "I get to break things."

Beyond the music and the drama, "Hero" has become the latest package of products offered especially to shoppers in the Christian retail marketplace.

Aimed at the MTV generation, the story also is told in a series of comic books, a colorful graphic novel, and a novel trilogy by Stephen Lawhead and Ross Lawhead.

The second and third novels won't be published until 2004 and 2005, which DeGarmo admits is an attempt "to create longevity for the project."

Rod Kim, a senior at Greenville College in Greenville, Ill., said he's only heard the music but it's made him look forward to traveling to opening night in Wabash.

"The music is innovative and fresh," the contemporary Christian music major said. "It's tight, teeth-grinding and in your face. It incorporates not only traditional styles of rock, but newer styles such as rapcore and electronic rock."

Veteran christian musician Eddy DeGarmo said he started on the project after his student-teacher daughter told him most of her students did not relate Easter to the Resurrection.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Give thanks for the two professions of faith that resulted from an English school this past summer in Poland. Contacts continue to be made as a result of this project. Please pray for the two new Christians' continued growth.

■ A group of 10 deaf Christians in Budapest meeting every Sunday for praise, prayer and Bible stories. This is the only known deaf-led Christian congregation in Hungary. Pray for the organization of a deaf church multiplication seminar for this church that will share with them the vision of reaching the 40,000 deaf in Budapest with the gospel.

■ International Service Corps workers Richard and Wanda Clark request prayer for a youth Bible study meeting twice each month in their home. "Pray for the youth as they attend and learn more how to serve our Lord and grow stronger in Him," they write.

■ Gary and Patti Oakley, former members of Aurora Baptist Church now living in Qatar, request prayer for a Christian nanny to work in Qatar from November to June 2004. For more information, contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions office, (888) 254-5724.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—First Church will host **David Ford** in concert Nov. 6, 6 p.m. **Mark Hopper** is pastor.

■ **BREMEN**—**Rusty Trotter** recently resigned as pastor of Mount Pisgah Church.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host **Jason Dunbar** in concert Nov. 2. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns

Valley Church will host a fall festival Oct. 31, 5:30-7:30 p.m. For information, call (270) 769-5738.

■ **FRANKLIN**—First Church will host a children's carnival Oct. 30, 6-8 p.m. **Bob Sutton** is pastor.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church called **Robert Tubbs** as interim youth minister. **Rodney Travis** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Immanuel Church will host **Alathea** in concert Nov. 9, 6 p.m. Singer/songwriter

Kate Campbell will perform at Immanuel's annual single adult Thanksgiving celebration Nov. 24. For more information, call (859) 266-3174.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Carlisle Avenue Church's children's choir will present the musical, "Acorns To Oaks," Nov. 9, 6 p.m. **Shawn Merithew** is pastor.

St. Matthews Church will host a concert of sacred traditional choral music presented by **Cornerstone** men's chorale Nov. 23, 6 p.m., directed by **Doug Jones**.

■ **MOREHEAD**—First Church recently honored **Ben Hays** for his

service as a deacon, trustee, greeter, usher, committee member and representative to Bracken Association. **Don Mantooth** is pastor.

■ **VERSAILLES**—New Hope Church ordained **Richard "Dino" Payne** as a deacon Sept. 28. **Wesley Noss** is pastor.

What's going on?

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

Casting Crowns: New Christian band's CD debuts at No. 1

By Sara Horn
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

NASHVILLE (BP)—An album that debuts at No. 1 and a national tour to promote it is a dream come true for most musicians.

Mark Hall hasn't given it much thought, though. His attention is still in McDonough, Ga., where 400 teenagers are without their youth pastor for the month of October.

"This is a pretty busy month for us (with the youth ministry), so I've been thinking a lot about how things are running while I'm gone," said Hall, youth pastor for Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough. "We've got 40 adult workers so (the youth) are in good hands, but my family and the youth group are definitely on my mind."

Hall is lead singer of Casting Crowns, the seven-member Christian band recently signed by Beach Street Records, a new label under Provident Music Group.

The label is led by three key influencers in the music industry: multiple Dove-award winner Steven Curtis Chapman, lead vocalist Mark Miller of country music's Sawyer Brown and Terry Hemmings, president and CEO of Provident.

CD sets sales record

The band's self-titled album, co-produced by Miller and Chapman, debuted at No. 1 the first week of October, garnering the highest first-week sales of any debut artist, according to Nielsen SoundScan Christian Market sales chart.

"It's been exciting and kind of surreal how everything came together all at once," said Hector Cervantes, one of the band's guitarists. "I think everything has happened because we didn't pursue it—we never sent out demos or tried to get a record deal. We were just playing praise and worship for our church."

"We pray (that the CD) challenges people," Cervantes added. "We've already seen God work through this entire process and we pray we'll continue to see Him."

LifeWay Christian Stores hosted the band at LifeWay's downtown Nashville offices Oct. 8—the day before the band kicked off its first national tour opening for Rebecca St. James.

"At LifeWay Christian Stores, we're always looking for messages that can have a Kingdom impact," said Mark Scott, vice president of

LifeWay's retail division. "When we find them, we want to get behind them and do our part in helping them see the light of day. Casting Crowns is a band whose music resonates directly with LifeWay's very reason for existence—to help people and churches know Jesus Christ."

The group, now at Eagle's Landing, got its start at First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, Fla., as the home worship band there.

Each band member serves as a small group leader in the Eagle's Landing student ministry and all have been trained—and train others—in FAITH, an evangelism strategy that focuses on the strategic use of Sunday School to reach communities for Christ.

The irony of the group's success is that Casting Crowns wasn't looking for a record deal.

They were happy playing for the church's student ministry and around the Atlanta region. But word traveled quickly after the group produced two independent records. Through a fan, a copy eventually found its way into the hands of Miller who was struck by Hall's "strong vocals and honest lyrics." Miller called the youth pastor in March to offer any help he could.

"One of Mark's first questions was, 'If we do this, will I still get to stay a youth pastor?'" Miller recalled. "He didn't want to give up his youth ministry. That was extremely refreshing to hear. I told him, 'Sure, Mark, but your congregation may be a whole lot larger than you would have ever imagined.'"

Southern Baptist roots

Scott learned of the group through his friendship with Chapman, Miller and Hemmings. The band's straightforward lyrics, fresh sound and Southern Baptist roots seemed like a strong combination that LifeWay Christian Stores could support.

"In 17 years in Christian music, I've never been part of a retail partnership like this before," Hemmings said. "In our day-to-day work, we sometimes forget that these aren't just products, but they are messages needing to be heard."

LifeWay Christian Stores will help promote the new group by holding autograph signings and other in-store events.

"Most importantly," Scott said, "we will pray for them."



CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT Contemporary Christian band Casting Crowns performs in a recent musical showcase hosted by LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. Performing are (from left) Mark Hall, lead singer, and Hector Cervantes, guitarist and vocalist. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

CLASSIFIED ADS

AVAILABLE: Evangelist Wyman Copass has relocated to 436 Bellevue Ave., Bowling Green, and is available for revivals, interims and supply preaching. Several dates still open this fall and next year. Home and office phone: (270) 393-0345; cell: (270) 427-7632.

FOR SALE: 147 end-of-lease award-winning Panasonic Medallion copiers. Very low meter counts. Extremely low prices. Call Data Copy (502) 456-5511. First come, first served.

FOR SALE: Yamaha baby grand piano. Polished walnut finish; beautiful instrument in excellent condition. \$11,900. (270) 265-2395.

SEEKING: Nelson Baptist Association is receiving resumés for the part-time position of director of missions. Send resumé, along with a cover letter stating the reasons for your interest, to: David Wells, First Baptist Church, 254 S Buckman St., Shepherdsville, KY 40165.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church, 2672 Mackville Road, Harrodsburg, KY 40330, Attn: Music Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time church secretary for Elizabethtown Baptist Church. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Elizabethtown Baptist Church, PO Box 338, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

SEEKING: Childcare/daycare teachers. Top pay. Monday-Friday. Mail resumé or call Darlene, (502) 363-3300. Lynn Acres Daycare, 5007 Southside Drive, Louisville, KY 40214.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director for Waco Baptist Church. Send resumé to PO Box 560, Waco, KY 40385.

SEEKING: Part-time music director, West End Baptist Church, 324 South 28th St., Paducah, KY 42003. (270) 443-1043.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Salem Baptist Church. Please send resumés to Search Committee, PO Box 329, Salem, KY 42078, Attn: Sandra Williams.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Community Baptist Church of Henderson, Ky., affiliated with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, seeks full-time pastor to succeed retiring pastor. Submit resumés and references to: Pastor Search Committee, Community Baptist Church, 1026 Pebble Creek Drive, Henderson, KY 42420. For more information about the church, go to www.CommunityBaptistChurch.org.

SEEKING: Eastview Baptist Church of Henderson, Ky., is seeking a pastor to shepherd a loving, praying, compassionate church. Send resumés to: Eastview Baptist Church, 1017 Earl St., Henderson, KY 42420, Attn: Beverly Miller, search committee chairperson.

Big air & Jesus

Baldwin brings street credibility to Christian DVD

By Shelby Oppel
Religion News Service

PORTLAND, Ore. (RNS)—Stephen Baldwin was under the east end of Portland's Burnside Bridge, wearing an "Army of the Lord" T-shirt with camouflage pants and directing a Christian-themed DVD of skateboarders and BMX riders.

As taping began on a recent Wednesday at Burnside Skatepark, the connections—Baldwin, skateboarding, Christians?—were hard to grasp for some Burnside regulars, like 33-year-old Nate Bemiller of Portland.

"You're Stephen Baldwin?" Bemiller asked the actor, who wore a backward baseball cap with "Jesus" embroidered on one side and "God is good" on the other.

"We're just a bunch of Christian guys making a video," said Baldwin, burly and tan. As if to make his purpose clearer, he pointed to a BMX rider, high in the air above the skate park. "He gets more air 'cause he's got Jesus," Baldwin said, half-joking.

Bemiller grinned, but he didn't bite: "I'm not gonna go there," he said.

Though many people don't know it, the actor known for his role as a career criminal in "The Usual Suspects" and, most recently, as part of the cast of ABC's reality show "Celebrity Mole" is a born-again Christian.

His newfound faith, and his friendship with Beaverton-based evangelist Luis Palau, are what led him to direct and host the DVD. Called "Livin' It," the project is meant to reach teens with the gospel through the culture of extreme sports.

While the Baldwin angle adds a wrinkle, the link between evangelical Christians and skateboarding is nothing new.

Portland, in fact, is home to the nation's oldest "skate church," a ministry begun in 1987 at Central Bible



Church. Each week, 130 to 200 skateboarders show up to use 11,000 square feet in a church-owned warehouse, stopping for 30 minutes to listen to a "gospel message."

The ministry has spawned imitators from California to Florida. And Christian "demo" teams travel the country, riding skateboards manufactured by Christian skateboard companies.

'Skate evangelists'

Palau, an evangelist who holds Christian music festivals around the world, has taken notice of the skate ministries' success. Since 2000, each of his festivals has featured a skate park with professional skateboarders and "skate evangelists."

Last year, Baldwin met Palau at a festival in Syracuse, N.Y. That led to Baldwin's appearance at another festival in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., this spring, which led to his role in the DVD.

The youngest of the acting Baldwin brothers (Alec, Daniel and William are the others), Baldwin, 37, has been in film and television since the 1980s, often playing the screwball comedian while earning a bad-boy reputation off the set.

"Stephen is really the perfect host because he's not the goody-goody Christian, he's not really known for that," says Kevin Palau, Luis' son, who is executive vice president of Luis Palau Evangelical Association. The association is spending about \$200,000 to produce the DVD.

Baldwin was raised as a Roman Catholic, which for him was a "relatively meaningless" experience and "kind of a scary deal," he says. About



two years ago, he says, he was "captured by the Lord" and "born again."

He calls the change "a predestined reality," but he also credits his wife, Kennya, who is a Christian. She and the couple's daughters—Alaia, 10, and Hailey, 6—were in Portland for the filming.

"Livin' It" will feature footage of stunts by professional BMX riders and skateboarders, as well as interviews with the athletes talking about their faith. The roster includes BMX riders Rich Hirsch, John Greer and Vic Murphy, and skateboarders Anthony Car-

ney and Tim Burn.

Once the DVD is finished early next year, it will be sold to churches and Christian youth organizations for use as an outreach tool, but it also might make it to video stores, Palau says.

Finding God 'through a skateboard'

Bruce Crisman, a BMX rider who was a gold medalist at the Summer X Games in 2001, says he uses any opportunity to talk about his faith. "The Lord found me through a skateboarder," says Crisman, 24, of Tigard, Ore. "Who knows what it could be for someone else."

Jud Heald, a skateboarder from Missouri, acknowledged that skaters who actively proclaim a Christian faith are a small segment of the skateboarding world. But that makes their mission even more important, he says.

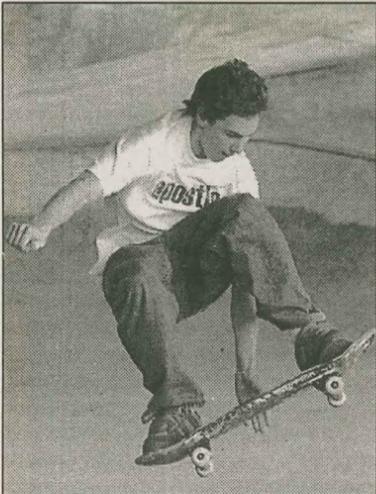
"There's a few of us that the Lord has really put it on our hearts to reach out to the other guys," says Heald, 26.

Bemiller, the skeptical skater who wandered onto the set, got a free board out of his chance meeting with Baldwin. When the actor saw Bemiller's board—illustrated with the word "terror" over an image of a woman's legs sticking out of a trash can—he gave him a new one with an image of a skull, a cross and the word "faith."

"Get this local cat some grip tape," Baldwin yelled to his crew.

He wasn't won over, Bemiller said, but he wasn't turned off, either. "They did a good job connecting with me, but I'm such an agnostic," Bemiller said. "I've dealt with evangelical types before, but these guys are pretty laid back. I appreciate the subtle approach."

PLAN OF ACTION Actor Stephen Baldwin talks with BMX rider Bruce Crisman, 24, about the route he will ride through Burnside Skatepark in Portland, Ore. Both were at the park to record a Christian-themed DVD. "We're just lovin' people, you know?" (RNS photo by Bruce Ely)



SKATEBOARDER Jaren Lee, 20, was among the Christians performing at Burnside Park in Portland, Ore., during the taping of "Livin' It." (RNS photo by Marv Bondarowicz)



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