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College worship attendance drops sharply by junior year, poll finds

Los Angeles (RNS)—The proportion of college students who attend worship services drops from more than half to less than a third between freshman and junior year, according to a study at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The Spirituality in Higher Education survey found that 52 percent of students frequently attend services before entering college. That segment dropped to 29 percent by the third year of college. Seven in 10 students said they had attended at least one service in the past year.

The findings are part of a survey of 3,680 students at 46 colleges and universities.

Researchers said college students are intensely interested in spiritual matters, but often find limited outlets to explore their spirituality on campus.

Other findings include:
 ■ Three-quarters of students pray or discuss religious issues with friends.

■ Seventy percent said a person can grow spiritually without being religious.

■ Nearly two-thirds of students said their professors do not encourage discussions of spiritual matters.

■ Just over half (53 percent) of students said time in the classroom had no impact on their spiritual development.

■ About one in five students expressed skepticism on spiritual matters, from belief in God to the creation of the universe to feeling "a sense of sacredness."

Keith Inman, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's collegiate ministries department, said the findings could say as much about how churches interact with students as it says about the students themselves.

"Many churches are struggling with how to engage the university student and assimilate them into the body life of the church," he said. "This inability to connect is sending a message that students are welcome to come and observe but not necessarily participate."

Many church leaders might not understand the perspective of college students, Inman added.

"The reality is that this generation is looking for opportunities of tangible faith development through service and leadership."

Sticks & stones



INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS EMPHASIS Missionary to Niger Susan Loftice (right) talks with a Hausa tailor in Niger. Loftice and her family are among the missionaries profiled as part of the Southern Baptist international missions emphasis, which includes the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. This year's national goal is \$133 million. (IMB photo)

Persecution routine as family shares with Hausa

By Sue Sprenkle
 SBC International Mission Board

Iniamy, Niger—This is a story about persecution.

No one physically dies or burns at the stake. This persecution is subtle and silent and pierces the soul.

In this story, a Texas family follows God's call to Africa. They are banished from villages. Children throw sticks and stones at them. Sometimes market vendors refuse to sell to them—all because they are Christian.

Despite these hardships, their hearts ache for their neighbors to know Christ. They will do whatever it takes to present the gospel and offer support to new believers (only eight after seven years of work).

Sometimes support is the hardest part of their ministry. New Christians are shunned by their families and villages and suffer more than the Texans can ever imagine.

Welcome to the reality of ministering to some unreached people groups. It can be a world of rejection and constant isolation mixed with the occasional miracle.

The experiences you are about to read are not unique. This family asks not to be put on a pedestal. They want only Southern Baptists' prayers for the thousands of missionaries who experience this same silent persecution, but whose names and stories cannot be told because of where they live.

□ See "Family faces ..." *Page 6*



That all peoples may know Him
 Follow God's Purpose



CULTURE SHOCK Making friends was difficult for Ellen Loftice, 19, as she was growing up in Africa. Spending time with one friend meant she had to visit her hut and cook. Life at Texas A&M University was hard at first, too. Managing an electronic life and bank accounts weren't skills she had developed in the African bush. (IMB photo)

Soldier thankful to be with family this holiday

By Ken Walker
 State Correspondent

LaFayette—Marc Derden has much to be thankful for this year, particularly the opportunity to celebrate both Thanksgiving and Christmas with his family.

After spending the first five months of 2003 in the Middle East—including combat in the war with Iraq—that is a blessing the Army warrant officer doesn't take for granted.

"The hardest part is being away from my family," said Derden, a longtime member of LaFayette Baptist Church.

"Here on earth, my faith is strong and comforts me. But until the Lord comes to get us again ... it's very hard to be away from them."

Derden's wife, Kim, has an even longer list that cheers her heart this Thanksgiving.

In addition to the holidays, her husband was home for their anniversary Oct. 27 and their three children's birthdays during the past month.

A native of Sulphur, La., Mrs. Derden is also thankful for their church family at LaFayette Baptist.

As young marrieds unable to visit relatives, they spent their first Christmas in 1994 with a couple from the Kentucky Baptist church.

In recent years, members often have contributed items to the care packages she has sent to her husband at his various duty stations.

"Our church family has become a big part of us, and our community," Mrs. Derden said of the small town near Fort Campbell. "Marc hasn't been back for all the holidays in so many years I can't remember. It makes this year special."

□ See "Family thankful ..." *Page 3*

Dated material — Please deliver by Wednesday, November 26

Baptists in India resolve 30-year conflict

Washington—As Americans celebrate the Thanksgiving season, Baptists half a world away in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh also have reason to give thanks. Baptists leaders there are taking steps toward reconciliation after 30 years of sometimes-violent conflict.

Denton Lotz, executive director of the Baptist World Alliance, called on Baptists around the world to pray for leaders of the Samavesam of Telegu Baptist Churches: "We call upon Baptists worldwide to pray without ceasing for unity and reconciliation among the Samavesam of Telegu Baptists so that the millions who do not know Christ will hear the good news of salvation."

The root of the conflict is over property, Lotz explained. American Baptist International Ministries made what he called a "very generous property gift" to the Telegu Baptist churches. Subsequently, three factions emerged, each with

a general secretary and president, each claiming to represent the true Samavesam of Telegu Baptist Churches.

"The conflict has been so intense that one of the presidents was murdered," Lotz said. "Rumors abound as to the perpetrators, but as yet there has been no conviction."

The Baptist group has a baptized membership of 500,000 with a worshipping community of more than 1 million.

"There are significant megachurches with a membership of more than 15,000," Lotz noted. "Hundreds of the village churches are progressing but need new leadership. The conflict has caused the seminary and other educational facilities, as well as hospitals, to fall into neglect and misuse."

Reconciliation efforts

In this context, the BWA sponsored a reconciliation gathering at the Asian Baptist Federation meeting in Manila, Philippines, in 2001. This was followed by another reconciliation meeting in Nellore, India, in 2002.

A retired Methodist bishop was accepted as the facilitator, and an interim reconciliation committee was established. However, there was little movement in the past year, Lotz said. "Deadlines were missed, agreements violated, meetings without quorums held. It seemed that there was no progress or hope."

In a meeting Lotz described as "a last-ditch effort," BWA held another fact-finding and reconciliation meeting Nov. 9-10 in Chennai, Madras.

"On Sunday evening, Nov. 9, we held a plenary session of the many people who had come to Chennai with the desire for peace and rec-

onciliation," Lotz reported. "It was an amazing experience in Baptist democracy. One after another, pastors and laity expressed the desire for peace and unity. There had been enough fighting. Pastors were concerned about the future of the church. They were concerned about evangelism and witness to Christ. They told stories of the great growth of their churches and the need for a strong and supporting convention, devoid of fighting and concentrating on glorifying Christ."

Lotz also pleaded with the Baptists to move toward reconciliation, he said. That evening, representatives of the three factions met on their own and ironed out a proposal for reconciliation.

"We were shocked and yet extremely pleased at this amazing step forward toward reconciliation," Lotz said. "We met separately with each of the three factions and reviewed the document and memo of agreement, each group assuring us they accepted the document. It was an amazing sign of God's grace."

Parties drop court cases

The parties agreed to withdraw from court cases, establish a property review committee and call for elections and final reconciliation meetings.

Elections in all the field associations will be held by Dec. 15. On Jan. 10, the new General Council will be formed and an assembly called to ratify the decisions.

"We have insisted that reconciliation is a process," Lotz said. "It is not something that happens suddenly but it is a road we must follow with Christ leading us on to make sacrifices for the good of the whole. Now the difficult part begins."

Baptist mission teams gear up to help churches in New York area

By Stacey Hamby
Baptist Press

Staten Island, N.Y. (BP)—The "crossroads of the world," as pastor Ray Parascando describes New York City, is "a great place to do cross-cultural evangelism."

Parascando is pastor of Crossroads Church, one of only three Southern Baptist churches on Staten Island, which accounts for half a million people amid a metro region of more than 21 million.

To extend its reach, Crossroads Church is partnering with other more established churches to help spread the gospel.

A seven-member team from Pleasant Valley Baptist Church in Liberty, Mo., and a group from First Baptist Church of Oviedo, Fla., worked with Crossroads in October, for example, as part of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's unfolding "New Hope New York" Strategic Focus Cities initiative.

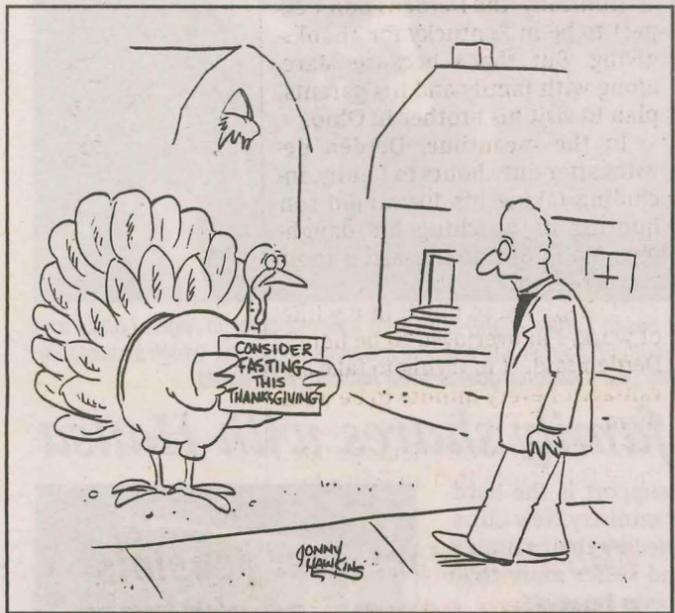
While the Missouri team's trip largely focused on establishing relationships with the Staten Island church, they also assisted the New Hope New York staff with a block party in Rutherford, N.J.

The block party, billed as a community fall festival, drew about 400 people to a park for children's games, music and lunch. The festival was designed to strengthen Rutherford's Living Gospel Baptist Church, which, under new pastor Dennis O'Neill, is restarting after several years of decline.

"We want to let the community know we are a church that cares for people and their needs," said O'Neill, a native Jersey resident. "This festival gives us an opportunity to break the ice with people and develop contacts to follow up on afterwards."

New Hope New York's mission is to demonstrate God's love for the metro area through effective evangelism, discipleship and ministry. One strategy to accomplish that is to plant new churches in the five boroughs that make up the New York area while strengthening existing churches such as Crossroads. The evangelistic emphasis also focuses on collegiate ministries, prayer support and pastor leadership development.

"We need everyday Christians to lead small groups, teach our people how to do Bible studies and fill needs in the church," Parascando said. "We need accountants and lawyers and people just to come and help us with servant evangelism projects and to spread the word about the church."



BAPTIST DIGEST

Baptists affirm Commandments.

Messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention voiced their support for publicly displaying the Ten Commandments. Messengers meeting Nov. 18-19 overwhelmingly adopted a resolution that encourages elected officials to "uphold righteousness, acknowledge the biblical foundation of government, and contend for the right of religious expression." After a brief debate, messengers deleted the mention of former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore who was removed from office for refusing a court order to move a monument of the Ten Commandments from the state's judicial building in Montgomery.

Wingfield joins Wilshire staff.

Mark Wingfield, former editor of the Western Recorder, is leaving denominational journalism after 21 years to join the staff of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas. Wingfield, managing editor of the Texas Baptist Standard since 1998, will become Wilshire's associate pastor Jan. 1. He will have specific responsibilities in the areas of communications, outreach and stewardship education.

Association ousts church.

Central Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., has been removed from membership in Halifax Baptist Association because of the congregation's female co-pastor. Sonja Phillips and her husband, Dave, were called in July as co-pastors of the 750-member church. Messengers to the association's annual meeting last month approved a motion to expel the congregation. The Phillipses take turns preaching for the Daytona Beach church, which was a charter member of the 33-church association.

Iowans honor slain missionary.

The Baptist Convention of Iowa has named its state missions offering in honor of William and Garlinda Hyde. The Hydys, who are Iowa natives, served as Southern Baptist international missionaries to the Philippines until William Hyde was killed last March in a terrorist bombing at the Davao City Airport on the island of Mindanao. Iowa Baptist messengers also voted to extend a mission partnership with the Tennessee Baptist Convention through 2007.

Virginians escrow school funds.

Citing conflicts over homosexuality and biblical authority, messengers to the Baptist General Association of Virginia voted to escrow more than \$350,000 they would have contributed next year to Averett University. The school in Danville, Va., attracted the ire of some Virginia Baptists in August when John Laughlin, chair of its religion department, wrote a newspaper article endorsing the Episcopal Church ordaining an openly homosexual bishop. In September, John Shelby Spong, a controversial retired Episcopal bishop, lectured on Averett's campus. The BGAV budget committee recommended withholding Averett's budget allocation until the convention "can reach an agreement with the university as to its future relationship."

Illinois Baptists install director.

Wendell Lang was installed as executive director of the Illinois Baptist State Association during the organization's Nov. 5-6 annual meeting. Lang, a former president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, began serving as executive director in February.

Soldier and family thankful to be reunited this season

Continued from page 1

Count Pastor Garry Thomas among those who also are grateful the entire Derden family planned to attend a Nov. 23 community Thanksgiving service hosted by Lafayette Baptist.

Despite Derden's frequent travels, he has served as Sunday school superintendent, a teacher and volunteer with Royal Ambassadors, the pastor said.

Thomas also praised Kim for stepping in when his own wife became disabled, helping fix food for church dinners, washing dishes and caring for children.

"I'd be proud to have a daughter like that," said Thomas, who has been pastor of the church since 1985.

"If not for Marc being shipped out at a moment's notice, we would have ordained him as a deacon already," he added. "You'd think they lived here all their life the way they act."

Derden, 32, left Iraq last spring, but the testing of his faith there remains fresh in his mind.

Because he fought in the first Gulf War in 1990 and in Afghanistan in 2001, the 15-year veteran said going to the Middle East this year probably wasn't as hard on him as younger soldiers.

"This is it"

Still, on multiple occasions after crossing the border into Iraq, Derden found himself asking for forgiveness of his sins and protection for his family.

"Several times I found myself



SCRIPTURE ON THE GO A makeshift religious license plate adorns the front of a Humvee belonging to the Alabama National Guard's 1166th Military Police Company in Iraq. Soldiers say their faith is helping them deal with tense conditions in Iraq. See story on page 15. (RNS photo by Mike Marshall)

saying, "This is it," he said. "I felt like I stood a chance of something bad happening. I'd pray and make my peace and the Lord would bring me through it. Ten to 12 hours would go by and there would be some exposure again."

Prayer became meaningful in such moments. Derden thinks it is easy to get caught in the rut of a daily lifestyle and see prayer turn into a ritual repeated casually over a meal or at bedtime.

But not so during life-threatening combat.

"There were times I can remember sitting and praying and feeling completely at ease," the soldier recalled. "It was like a separation from where I was at."

Still, Derden didn't become distraught. He recalls much deeper feelings when praying for family members, such as his father or during his grandfather's illness.

But when facing the prospect of dying during the next 24 hours, Derden said he found it difficult to get emotional or to ask much for himself.

Instead, Derden acknowledged his life was in God's hands and trusted in the skills and training of his fellow soldiers. Afterward, he would thank the Lord for bringing him through another battle.

Back home, his wife was praying, too. She credits her faith in God with helping her survive Marc's duty calls, which routinely keep him away two-thirds of the year.

"I know a lot of military wives who just fall apart and can't do anything by themselves," Mrs. Derden said. "But that's not me."

Relying on prayer

"I have a lot of faith," she added. "I pray continually throughout the day. It's not just something I do when I run up on a hardship. When I have a problem, I pray about it. Most of the time, if you're strong in faith, you have a peace about it."

Ironically, the Derdens don't expect to be in Kentucky for Thanksgiving. But that's because Marc, along with family and his parents, plan to visit his brother in Ohio.

In the meantime, Derden devotes after-duty hours to family, including taking his 10-year-old son hunting or watching his daughters, 8 and 6, ride horses on their two-acre farm.

"I've missed so much in my line of work, I'm overjoyed to be here," Derden said. "I'm trying to take advantage of every minute to be with them."

As the Derdens demonstrate, thankfulness is often an attitude.

On multiple occasions after crossing the border into Iraq, Derden found himself asking for forgiveness of his sins and protection for his family.

First Ashland out of association for CBF support

By John Cannon
The Ashland Independent

Ashland—Seven months after First Baptist Church of Ashland narrowly survived a vote to be removed from the Greenup Association of Baptists, the downtown Ashland church is out of the association.

Only this time, it was First Baptist's support of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, not the church's ordaining of female deacons, that led to its departure.

The association's executive committee late last month opted to invoke the terms of a resolution approved in 2001 that dictated that any church that supported the CBF or encouraged its members to do so would be considered in disfellowship with Greenup Association.

The CBF is a national organization of moderate Baptist churches that has distanced itself from the Southern Baptist Convention. First Baptist of Ashland remains a member in good standing of both the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

"As I see it, it was First Baptist's decision to withdraw from the association," said Floyd Paris, pastor of Unity Baptist Church and past moderator of Greenup Association. "All the executive board did was acknowledge that by supporting the CBF, First Baptist had decided to withdraw from the association. No vote was necessary."

First Baptist Pastor Edwin Talley said he learned of the executive board's action through a letter delivered to him by Paris and Asa Greer, director of missions of the association.

Talley said the letter stated First Baptist either supported or encouraged support of the CBF instead of the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"As a church, we allow our members to give to either the CBF or the Cooperative Program," Talley said. "We think they should have the freedom to do that."

"This is all about perceptions"

Opponents of the CBF "perceive that it is counterproductive to all the Cooperative Program accomplishes," Talley said. "Actually, the CBF is an organization that does wonderful work in the field of missions. Whether you support the CBF or the Cooperative Program, you are supporting missions. This is all about perceptions, I think."

It is the belief of Greenup Association that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship are in competition with the missions programs of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention and "diverting funds from them," Paris said.

Greenup Association is an organization of approximately 50 Southern Baptist churches in northeastern Kentucky.

The 365 messengers attending the association's semiannual meeting in March voted on a resolution to "withdraw fellowship" from First Baptist, Ashland, because of the church's ordination of four female deacons.

Although 68 percent of messengers voted in favor of the resolution, a 75 percent majority was required to oust a church.

"They couldn't vote us out so they had to go back and find a way to get us out," said Talley. "They can't embrace our diversity and the autonomy of the local church. They see the CBF as counterproductive. We see it as another cooperative program."

Although it has not been the most active of churches in Greenup Association, Talley said First Baptist has supported the association financially since the 1940s. While the amount has varied over the years, it now is about \$3,000 a year, he said.

"We won't be giving anything next year," the pastor added.

Although not forced out, at least one church—Pollard Baptist Church of Ashland—voluntarily withdrew fellowship from Greenup Association, apparently over failure to disassociate with First Baptist. Attempts to reach the pastor of the church were unsuccessful.

This story, which originally appeared in *The Ashland Independent*, is reprinted with permission.

KBC President Siler appoints standing committee chairmen

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist Convention President Eugene Siler has appointed chairmen to lead 16 standing committees of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and KBC Mission Board for the coming year.

Those appointed to chair KBC committees are:

■ **Committee on Arrangements:** Pat Ramey, member of First Baptist Church, Williamsburg.

■ **Committee on Committees:** Ed Erwin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Shelbyville.

■ **Committee on Constitution and Bylaws:** Truett Cavanaugh, director of missions, Bracken Baptist Association.

■ **Committee on Credentials:** T.A. Prickett, interim pastor, First Baptist Church, Morganfield.

■ **Committee on Nominations:** Terry Wilder, pastor, Burlington Baptist Church.

■ **Committee on Order of Business:** Willis Henson, retired pastor, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.

■ **Committee on Public Affairs:** Floyd Paris, pastor, Unity Baptist Church, Ashland.

■ **Committee on Resolutions:** Dennis Phelps, associate pastor, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

Those named to chair Mission Board committees are:

■ **Administrative Committee:** Charles Barnes, member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville.

■ **Agencies and Institutions Committee:** Sam Ballou, member of Central Baptist Church, Corbin.

■ **Business and Finance Committee:** Calvin Perry, retired pastor, Alexandria.

■ **Church Growth Committee:** Glen Cummins, minister of education, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

■ **Evangelism Growth Committee:** Michael Stacey, pastor of Buena Vista Baptist Church, Somerset.

■ **Leadership Development Committee:** Scott Kilgore, executive pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

■ **Missions Growth Committee:** M.A. Winchester, member of First Baptist Church, Stearns.

■ **Nominating Committee:** Steve Hussung, pastor of Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

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Earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.—Jude 3

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Tacit approval of IMB?

Despite Jim McKinley, Jerry Rankin and Trennis Henderson's encouragement, I did not attend the missionary appointment service on Tuesday evening of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. For me, attending would give tacit approval to the International Mission Board, its process of dealing with and appointing missionaries, and those being appointed. They do not represent me nor do they reflect my understanding of doing missions in concert with the Baptist tradition.

Those being appointed have been meticulously screened to make sure that they agree fully with, and will wholeheartedly conduct their ministry in accord with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. This means that as they evangelize and disciple people, they will:

■ Present a limited, unbaptistic, and I believe unbiblical, view of the work of the Holy Spirit to gift and call whomever the Spirit wills to leadership within the church.

■ Model and present an unbaptistic position on the authority of confessions and creeds.

■ Reflect a view of the Bible that is closer to what Muslims believe about the Koran than what Christians have believed about the Bible or that the Bible claims for itself.

■ Reflect a view of pastoral authority that runs counter to Baptist practice and teaching.

■ Back away from inter-Christian missionary cooperation, save with a narrow band of like-minded, fundamentalist groups.

Those doing the appointing:

■ Dealt with long-time career missionaries in a heavy-handed, un-Christian manner.

■ Effectively excluded the general membership of my church from being considered for missionary service.

■ Demand that those who make up the current missionary force either submit to their narrow, theological interpretations and practic-

es or leave their field of calling.

To have attended the appointment service would say that I am willing to sanction the direction the IMB is taking and the way it has dealt with its missionaries.

Jim Holladay
Louisville

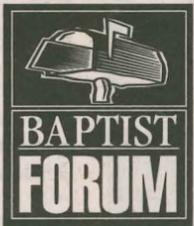
Doctrine does divide

In the Nov. 11 issue of the Western Recorder, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Keith Eitel, in a document supported by Paige Patterson and sent to members of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, stated that doctrinal issues—especially those involving

women in places of authority over men—form the foundation for jettisoning all involvement with heretic missionary groups. Women are denigrated, as usual, and missionary groups who fail to follow the leader should be dropped.

Professor Eitel, described by Patterson as "one of the cutting-edge missiologists of our day" can be seen, perhaps, as the user-friendly spokesman for fundamentalists. The "cutting" already has been accomplished in seminaries and workplaces across the convention. Those who were uprooted and cast out with neither grace nor concern are still feeling the rough "edge" to these actions.

Will we ever see that this continuing movement to control, condemn and castigate those who refuse to kneel in homage to selected doctrine and political mandate is designed to ferret out the Christians who believe in grace without politics, service without bias and



What are you thinking?

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

Thanksgiving reflections

As I reflect upon the many reasons that God has given me for thanksgiving, His awesome grace in saving and sustaining me is at the top of the list. I am so grateful for the privilege that God has given me to serve Him by serving Kentucky Baptists.

I am especially grateful to God for the fellowship that He is building among Kentucky Baptists. It becomes more evident each year in the way we conduct our business and relate to one another at the annual meeting.

God continues to raise up leaders like Paul Badgett, our Kentucky Baptist Convention president this past year, who love the Lord and Kentucky Baptists and who are committed to what is best for the great ministries of this convention. I look forward to working with the new KBC president, Judge Eugene Siler Jr. He is part of a great legacy of KBC leaders. His father and his grandfather are former KBC presidents.

During the annual meeting each year I participate in the annuitants' luncheon. As we move forward, I am grateful that we can stand on the foundation of those who have served faithfully and who are finishing well. We draw great strength and encouragement from their prayers and support.

I also am grateful for the KBC staff with whom I have the privilege of serving. The reductions in budget and reorganization have presented challenges. Please pray for our staff members as they make adjustments to new roles in ministry.

During the spring, the staff will focus on the development of strategies that will serve the churches in implementing the big objectives and goals of the Mission Study Report. These strategies will involve partnerships with associations, churches and KBC entities, and other entities where possible.

In order for the mission and big

commitment without contempt?

It is clear that doctrine does, in fact, divide us. If what has happened to educational scholars over the past 20 years of fundamental control is an example of current leadership, then it was, is and will continue to be a divisive doctrine.

The paper in question concluded with this statement of appeal to IMB trustees: "Recruit administrators committed to theological renewal of the board." This, as always, demonstrates that this is politics. When did the board accommodate unto itself a theology?

Edward Clark
Danville

Self-serving agenda?

Former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore and his Religious Right comrades would like America to become a Christian theocracy. Church and state would be one and the same; the effect of such a union would be political corruption big-time. Non-Christians would be treated like second class citizens.

A theocracy established in Jesus' name would displease Christ. Jesus rejected the temptation to rule a political kingdom. The last would be first in His kingdom. He mingled with sinners, talked to prostitutes, touched lepers. Never-failing love dominated everything Jesus did. He did not coerce anyone to follow Him.

Separation of church and state has worked very well in our country for more than 200 years and must be maintained. Were Roy Moore's actions done in love or were they done to promote a self-serving political agenda?

Paul L. Whiteley Sr.
Louisville

goals to be accomplished, it will require the involvement of every church and every Kentucky Baptist. If every church will baptize one more person each year for five years, the results will be 123,500 baptisms. And with the participation of 125 new churches, the goal of 125,000 baptisms can be exceeded.

However, please note that the mission of Kentucky Baptists is to "connect all people to Jesus Christ." That means every person must be provided an opportunity to hear the gospel in an understandable way. It means that what we want for our family spiritually, we must prayerfully and compassionately desire for every person in Kentucky, in North America and in the world.

This is why the Cooperative Program and budget gifts are so important. They enable you and me to fulfill the Great Commission on all fronts, although giving can never replace our personal participation by praying, living and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Do you control your debt or does debt control you?

By Don Spencer

One of the major financial problems many people have today is out-of-control debt.

Credit card companies and many businesses push the buy now and pay later concept. You can finance a car for five years, which means that for a period of time you likely owe more on the

car than the car is worth. Pre-approved credit cards are easy to get. It's no wonder that so many of us gradually accumulate too much debt and then it takes control.

You will never have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt. Here are some tips for dealing with and reducing your debt:

■ **Stop buying anything on credit.** This is the critical first step. None of the other tips will help unless you do this first. You cannot reduce debt if you are still adding to it. Put the credit cards away for use only in an emergency. Studies have proven that when people are shopping, they spend about 26 percent more if they use credit cards than if they use cash.

■ **Evaluate your current debts.** Write them all down including how much you owe and be sure to write down what you are being charged in interest.

■ **Evaluate your spending and develop a repayment plan.** This is a part of budgeting—or developing a spending plan. List your fixed expenses, your flexible expenses and your income. Determine how much debt you can pay off each month. Set a goal for when certain debts are to be paid off. Attack those with highest interest rates first. (The exception to that might be a debt that could be paid off quickly and eliminated.) Once you have set a monthly amount to go for debt repayment, continue to pay that amount until all consumer debts are eliminated.

■ **Look for ways to get extra money and to cut expenses.** This money could then be used to reduce debt even further or for discretionary spending.

Once you eliminate the debt it is important to stay debt free. Remember: You will never have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt.

If you cannot control the debt, credit counseling might be appropriate. For help and referrals, you can contact the National Foundation for Credit Counseling at (800) 388-2227 or visit www.nfcc.org.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department



Explore ways to help widowed friends celebrate the holidays

Q: What are some ways to help older widowed adults during the holidays?

It seems that the holidays are especially difficult for many of our widowed friends.

Older adults are often the best storytellers in the family. Their memories, traditions and talents are just waiting to be shared. But as we approach the holiday season, many older adults won't be near their families because they live far away.

SENIOR ADULTS

What better way to honor seniors in your family and community and pay tribute to their experiences than by undertaking a project this holiday season? There is a wide range of projects that individuals, families, church groups and social and service organizations can participate in with older adults.

These activities bring generations together, nurture friendships, encourage volunteerism and broaden understanding and support in a community. A few project suggestions for this holiday season are:

- Host a storytelling time for older adults to relate their favorite holiday memories.
- Visit an elderly resident of a nursing home. Many of these individuals never have a visitor at holiday time and would appreciate having someone stop by to share a smile.
- Make holiday greeting cards for residents at a retirement center.
- Ask a senior adult to share special talents, such as cooking, sculpting or quilting that can be passed on to interested young people.
- Volunteer at a nutrition center or with Meals on Wheels to prepare and deliver holiday meals or food baskets to elderly shut-ins.
- Videotape an interview with a senior about his or her life. Show it at a meeting of a youth organization and invite the star of the show to attend.
- Host a game day at a senior center featuring traditional board games.—Jon Rainbow

Q: How can I teach my child to save money?

In an affluent society that emphasizes instant gratification, learning to save poses a tremendous challenge for today's children. However, learning to control desires and even to say no to self may be one of the most important skills a child can acquire.

■ **Prime the pump!** Some banks may require a minimum deposit that you can either make for your child or contribute to. Either way, help him or her get started. You might also want to consider offering matching funds (perhaps depositing \$1 for every \$5 your child deposits) as additional motivation.

■ **Set a goal.** Help your child find something to save for. Make sure the goal is achievable in the near future and not overly ambitious. Saving for college is great, but your child will be better motivated if the goal is more immediate. Sample goals could include toys, a computer game, a special article of clothing or concert tickets.

■ **Don't advance money to your child.** Children are famous for begging to borrow when something catches their eye while shopping or standing in a checkout line. Buy the object for them if you want, but don't advance the money. Also, don't loan your child money unless he or she has the amount on hand in a piggy bank or savings account, ready to pay you back immediately.

■ **Use stories to help your child understand the wisdom and importance of saving.** Read the story of the ant in Proverbs 6, and talk about how wise the ant was to plan ahead and set some food aside for the winter.

■ **Check with your bank.** Some banks offer special programs for young savers.—David Garrard

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A Thanksgiving Top Ten list of blessings

The practice of compiling "Top Ten" lists on almost every subject imaginable has been popularized in recent years by talk show host David Letterman. Top Ten lists now pop up just about everywhere—in advertising, books, sermons, Web sites, etc.

Of course, Letterman wasn't the one who originated the Top Ten format. That honor goes to God, the Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who compiled the first Top Ten list in Exodus 20. Such concepts as "You shall have no other gods before Me," "Honor your father and mother" and "You shall not murder, ... commit adultery (or) steal" set the eternal standard for substantive Top Ten lists.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving this week, most of us focus on family, friends, football and feasting. Even more important, however, is taking time to thank God for the many blessings He has granted us.

In that spirit, I offer my own Thanksgiving Top Ten list. Among the many blessings for which I am thankful are:

10. My dog. Annie, our 5-year-old Lab (35 in dog years), technically belongs to our teenage daughters. But Annie and I have become good friends over the years. She is consistently affectionate (sometimes too affectionate) and faithful—traits that sometimes are in short supply among humans.

9. Adequate (even abundant) food and shelter. To never worry about where your next meal will come from or where you will sleep at night are blessings the vast majority of Americans take for granted. Not so in many parts of our world. Our comfortable homes and bulging pantry shelves are reminders both of God's gracious provision and our need to share with those less fortunate.

8. A positive ministry setting with gifted, dedicated colleagues. It has been my privilege to serve as editor of the Western Recorder since before the turn of the century. The Recorder staff helps make this a positive, productive work environment even amid the challenges of constant deadlines, tight budgets and hectic schedules.

7. A growing sense of unity in Kentucky Baptist life. From the 2001 Baptist Faith and Message Study Committee report to this year's mission study plan, Ken-

STRAIGHT
FROM THE
EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

tucky Baptists have enthusiastically rallied around missions, evangelism and God's Word as we focus on the priority of "connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

6. Good health. The old saying is true: "When you've got your health, you've got just about everything." As each of us walk with friends and family members who face death, disease and other tragedies, we are reminded of the incredible gift of health—another blessing we easily take for granted until it is too late.

5. A vibrant, healthy, growing church where the gospel of Christ is faithfully proclaimed. My family and I are blessed to worship and serve with our church family at Crestwood Baptist Church. I am especially thankful for the God-honoring vision and leadership of our pastor, Troy Dobbs, and the rest of our church staff and lay leaders.

4. Good friends. Faithful friends are a true treasure in life. Keep in mind the wise words of a simple chorus, "Make new friends but keep the old; one is silver and the other gold."

3. Freedom of religion, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. As a Christian journalist, all three of those cherished First Amendment rights are vital to my daily work and witness. In a world where millions of people have never been granted those rights, take time to thank God for the freedoms we enjoy in our nation.

2. A wonderful, supportive, loving family. That's not to suggest that Pam, Emily, Audrey and I always see eye-to-eye on everything as a family. But what a joy it has been for Pam and me to help guide both of our daughters toward personal faith and spiritual growth in Jesus Christ. The blessing of a Christian family is beyond words. We also are blessed to have an extended family filled with generations of Christ followers.

1. The gift of Jesus Christ and the blessing of eternal salvation. What more can be said by any Christian compiling a list of Thanksgiving blessings? I have the privilege of proclaiming with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my light and my salvation." There is no greater blessing.

What are your Thanksgiving plans this week? Why not compile your own Top Ten list of the wondrous ways God has blessed you this year?

Thanksgiving—America's gluttonous holiday

By Stephen Webb

Crawfordsville, Ind. (RNS)—Gluttony used to be one of the seven deadly sins. Now it is a national holiday called Thanksgiving.

The problem with Thanksgiving is not that it is a feast, and the problem is not that we enjoy eating a lot. The pleasure we take in eating is pretty human nature. The problem is

that Thanksgiving is the only holiday in the world where the whole point is to eat too much. If this happened just once a year, it would not be so bad, but Thanksgiving has become more and more representative of all of our meals. Perhaps it is time to ask: Whatever happened to the sin of gluttony?

Gluttony is technically defined as the inordinate desire to consume more food than one requires. A better description might be the tendency to fill our stomachs in order to heal our broken hearts.

Overeating has become a hot topic due to health concerns about the widespread problem of obesity in America. The stomach is not only the closest way to a person's heart. It is also one of the best indicators of a person's spirit. Surely the main reason we are a society of overeaters is that we feel empty inside. When we eat too much, it is a sign that something is eating us.

Our hunger goes deeper than our stomachs, and until we face

what is missing in our lives, our guts will never grow big enough to make us feel content.

At least at Thanksgiving we eat good food slowly rather than bad food quickly. Either way, eating too much food can kill us. Fast food, in fact, is slow murder. Nobody has proved that doughnuts are addictive, but our fast food

culture is as dangerous as an underage driver with a six-pack or a middle-aged man with a carton of smokes.

The problem isn't limited to fast-food restaurants. The entire food industry seems intent on turning wholesome natural ingredients into sweet, fatty and salty products. Any way you look at it, Americans are getting more obese by the minute. What is really remarkable is that the number of overweight people in the world, 1.1 billion, now equals the number of undernourished people.

Thanksgiving only makes matters worse because it seems to be saying that overeating is what it means to be an American. We should be grateful for the variety of food choices we have in this country, but instead we go for quantity over quality.

The pilgrims we honor would not be sympathetic. The pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Harbor were unprepared for the hard winter. They had to depend on beans

and corn from the Native Americans to make it through their first year. When they celebrated a harvest festival, they feasted on corn mush, nuts, fruits, popcorn, bread, pumpkin, squash, deer meat, game birds, and yes, turkey. Their feast was one of balance and variety, not gluttony.

There are good reasons why we cook so much at Thanksgiving. We want to return to that state of child-like innocence when a table full of food seemed like something out of a fairy tale. We also want to re-create those memorable meals of the past, when families were large and everyone came together, from near and far, for this one sacred meal. Even when the number of people who are eating grows smaller, however, our tables get more crowded.

Holy men in the ancient world would practice going without food for weeks at a time, restricting their diet in order to discipline their bodies. Today we work just as hard at stuffing our stomachs. The result is not only an expanding waistline. It is also a more sluggish spirit.

Our spirits need to be able to soar away from earthly concerns, and for that, we need to be light on our feet. Eat a little bit of everything this Thanksgiving, but leave the testing of physical endurance to the football players on television.

Stephen Webb, professor of religion and philosophy at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Ind., is author of "Good Eating" from Brazos Press

Family faces persecution to reach W. Africa's Hausa

Continued from page 1

As the hymn fades, Mike Loftice stands to start the sermon. The congregation listens intently. In this church of five, it's best not to drift off to "lala land"—it might mean extra chores, warns one member.

Meet the Loftices

"Dad's always asking questions to make sure we are listening," 11-year-old Brian explains. "So, make sure that you pay attention."

Older brother, Paul, pipes in that the singing alone is enough to keep most people awake. "Dad's the only one of us who can sing, the rest of us just croak," the 17-year-old teases as his sister, Ellen, whacks his arm. "Oh come on—like you can sing!"

Sitting in the corner, Susan watches the horseplay. With her 19-year-old daughter at college in the United States and Paul attending boarding school, it's been a year since everyone has been together.

She will replay this scene in her mind another day—a day that isn't quite as happy. Like the day someone left a dead, bleeding chicken on their doorstep as a symbol they were not wanted and were cursed. Or the day she went to the electric company to see why the power had been off for days and workers replied, "We don't need a church here—now leave."

The Loftices moved seven years ago to Niger, a country mostly made up of the Sahara Desert. They minister to one of the largest unreached people groups in West Africa, the Hausa (HOW-suh).

In order to reach the Hausa, the Loftices have lived in villages without electricity and running water. Now, they live in the "Taj Mahal." They have water and electricity most days. With modern technology, the family watches satellite television. They have freezers to store up to three months of supplies they bring in from Niamey, a 10-hour drive.

"The hardest part is the isolation"

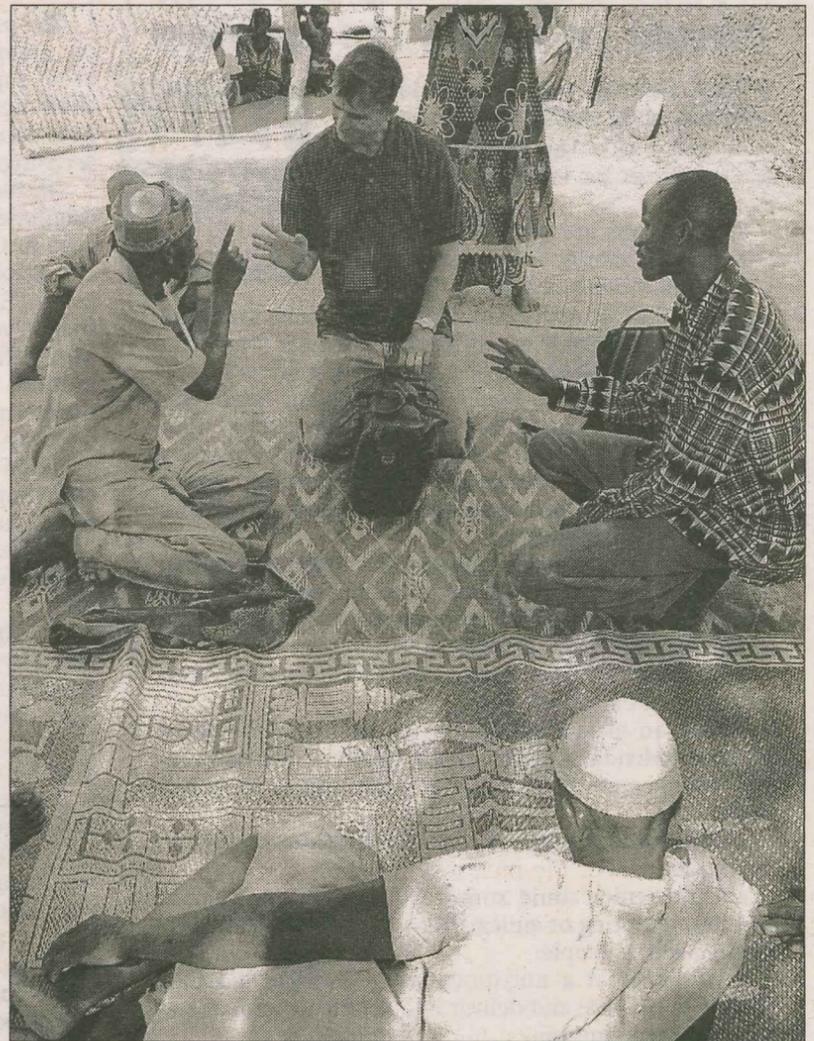
"No matter if you live with or without conveniences, the hardest part is still the isolation from like-minded people," Susan admits. "When you don't have contact with other Christians it makes it really hard."

Mike nods in agreement. Often the family feels like they are in the middle of Satan's playground, he says. They feel the weight of evil all around. For years, the family has shared the gospel and been rejected time after time.

Once Mike shared with a Muslim holy man. That day the imam knew the truth of Jesus Christ. His eyes welled up with tears, he looked at Mike and said, "There is no other god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." Then the imam got up and walked away.

Experiences like this happen almost daily.

"It's not only how much of our lives are being spent on these people that's hard," Mike says. "But to see what it's done to my family and



DIALOGUE After a "storying session," in which Mike Loftice teaches the Bible by presenting it through a series of stories, Hausa men engage him in a discussion about the nature of Allah. People in some villages have said Loftice is a god. He refutes this idea and takes the opportunity to talk about the nature of monotheism. (IMB photo)

have no results that we can see. ... I mean, look what the children have given up and their persecution."

Brian experiences more physical persecution than other family members. Around Muslim holidays, he doesn't even bother to step outside of the house. He knows that because he is a Christian, he is not wanted.

"The older guys don't like Christians. They always throw rocks and stuff at me," he says with a shrug. "My best friend and I just play in our yard—no big deal."

Life in Niger has been the hardest on Ellen. Girls are not only married by the time they are 12 years old, but they also have a ton of work and no time to play. Raising a daughter in a Muslim culture

means constantly watching out for leering men and guarding against marriage proposals.

Isolation does have its upside. The family spends hours playing games and just talking, creating a closeness they feel never would have happened if they had lived somewhere else.

Ellen, Paul and Brian see their parents' struggles. "People ask why we don't come back to the States," Ellen says. "There are plenty of people there who know Jesus and can learn to witness, but there's nothing for the Hausa.

"Most of them don't even know who Jesus is. Now tell me honestly, how can my family leave until God's work is done?"

Miracles in the wilderness

Despite the hardships, God is working in this barren land. Eight men have taken a stand for Christ despite being shunned from their village and families. Another village allows Mike to story the Bible twice a week with them.

Sometimes it is hard to watch the new Christians persecuted. Mike explains that while his family suffers from a general nonacceptance and isolation, the Hausa Christians are left to survive on their own. Despite this, the Loftices are excited that someone is finally willing to take a stand. However, many still do not know the name Jesus Christ.

"No matter how hard it is, we know that if we leave now, they won't hear," Mike and Susan agree. "We stay because God called us to this work."

Lottie Moon Offering Q&A

Why give through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering?

The International Mission Board uses 100 percent of LMCO funds to support Southern Baptist missionaries and their ministries, allowing churches to join in a strategic global effort to reach the world.

How are offering funds spent?

IMB ministries are based on strategic planning and strong accountability. Southern Baptist individuals give their entire lives to strategize how best to get the gospel to all people groups. They live among people groups, speak their languages and understand their worldviews.

How is the LMCO goal set?

After considering IMB leadership's recommendation, the Woman's Missionary Union sets the LMCO goal at its annual meeting. This year's national goal is \$133 million. The challenge goal is \$150 million.

How often do Southern Baptists reach the LMCO national goal?

Only once since 1981 have Southern Baptists reached the goal. With recent stock market downturns, investment income no longer makes up for not reaching the LMCO goal. The result is unfunded ministry requests, capital expenditures and operating expenses—and limiting long- and short-term missionary numbers.



That all peoples may know Him

Follow God's Purpose

If the \$133 million goal isn't reached, what will happen?

The IMB will continue limiting the flow of missionaries to the field. Missionary requests will remain empty without available funds to support workers.

What are the anticipated long-term effects of budget shortfalls?

When budget shortfalls are eased, short-term missionary numbers probably will recover quickly. Long-term missionary numbers may rise more slowly because many long-term workers first serve two- or three-year terms. Because budget shortfalls have limited short-term workers, fewer will be ready to feed the long-term missionary force.

If the \$133 million goal is reached, what will happen?

Reaching the national goal will allow the IMB to continue supporting missionaries and ministries according to the budget set for 2004.

What is the challenge goal?

The challenge goal embraces a "What will it take to reach a lost world?" attitude—hurrying the possibility for unreached peoples to know Christ.

What will happen if the challenge goal is reached?

Reaching the extra \$17 million challenge goal will allow the IMB to send many of the record numbers of Southern Baptists who are ready to serve on the field but, as of now, do not have funds available to support them.



FAMILY WORSHIP On Sunday afternoons, the Loftices gather at home for a church service. Susan plays the electric piano while the others take turns choosing what songs to sing from the Baptist Hymnal. After singing, Mike sits on the piano bench and teaches a lesson from the Bible. (IMB photo)

'Please tell my wife about Jesus'

Journeyman from Lexington becomes answer to prayer for village evangelism

By Sue Sprenkle
SBC International Mission Board

Gidan Bawa, Niger—Even before missionary Mike Loftice can get out of his truck, eight men surround it. They look very troubled and downcast.

This worries Mike. Just a few weeks earlier, four men from this African village rejected Christ because of outside pressures and returned to Islam. These eight men are the only Hausa Christians for thousands of kilometers in Niger.

Finally, one speaks up. "Mikko, we have been thinking. Our wives will not go to heaven with us," he says. "What can we do? We cannot tell them. Who will tell them?"

In the Hausa culture there is a large gap between genders. Men cannot approach the women—even husbands and wives.

Mike scraps the normal lesson and teaches about the power of prayer. He challenges the men to pray and ask God to send someone to live among the women of the village.

Men on bended knees

Months later, in walks Joni Strimple. She answered a job request for a "friend seeker." The



JOURNEYMAN Lexington resident Joni Strimple lives in a hut made of straw and palm fronds in Niger. "Yes, I'm having a hard time," she says. "But I'm also learning so much about God, about myself and about God's purpose in the world." (IMB photo)

journeyman missionary didn't know she was a direct answer to prayer.

Overwhelmed by God's grace when Joni first appeared, the men surround her on their knees. One by one, they beg and plead with Joni to "Please tell my wife about Jesus Christ."

Joni responds with a stream of tears. "These men want to have Christian families,"

she says. "They want their wives and children to go to heaven with them."

The journeyman lives in the village of Gidan Bawa where the Christian men take care of her as if she were a daughter.

While she loves living in the village, she is finding out that the Hausa women may,

in fact, be the hardest to reach. The women are not as open to be friends with outsiders and are always busy working. Their day consists of drawing water from the well, pounding millet, cooking, cleaning and taking care of their families.

They do not have time for socializing under the shade tree nor do they want to know about Jesus. Joni is finding this out the hard way. Her first effort at gathering the women to hear Bible stories failed, but she's not giving up.

"I am starting to story the Bible. It will be one year until they hear the gospel and that's if you live with them and tell them every day," Joni says.

So the journeyman is living in Gidan Bawa, in the compound of one of the Christian families. Strimple says that the eight Christian men treat her like a daughter. They built her two mud huts and have water hauled to her twice a week.

"Drawing water at the well is hard work," Strimple says from experience. "The people here think that I'm fragile and will break if I lift a finger to do something. They are so giving.

"Now, I want to give something back to them," she says. "Pray with their husbands and me that the women will start coming to the storying sessions and that they will accept Jesus in their hearts.

"They need to know the good news."

VILLAGE VISIT When Southern Baptist missionary Mike Loftice started work in Gidan Bawa, Niger, no Christians lived there. Today, he meets twice a week with men from the village. Journeyman Joni Strimple goes with him some days, focusing on ministering to women. (IMB photo)



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Fear factor keeping some villagers from Christianity

Ininamey, Niger—In the heat of midday, as most villagers walk in from the fields to rest, a group of men gathers under some shade.

One picks up a drum and starts playing as the others sing. Villagers go out of their way to avoid this patch of shade.

No one wants to be too closely involved or even associated with this group.

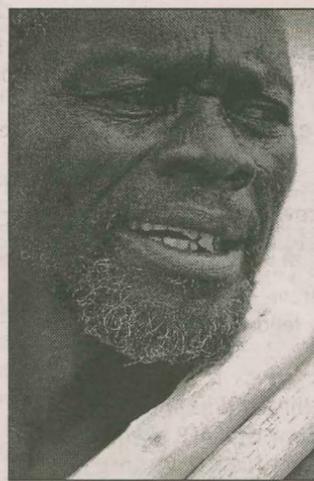
Just far enough down the dirt path to not be considered part of the group—but close enough to hear—stands the village chief, Musa.

Emotions well up and he turns from the group, but he does not leave his post. He wants to hear.

Musa is one of 28 million Hausa living on 75,000 square miles straddling the borders of Nigeria and Niger.

Almost a year ago, Chief Musa publicly professed Jesus Christ as his Savior. "I want to be the first to ask Jesus into my heart," he proclaimed after three years of learning Bible stories. "I want to lead my village in the ways of Christ."

Days later, Chief Musa asked the missionary



to leave the village and never return. He banned all Christian worship and reminded his people that they were Muslim and would always remain Muslim.

The sudden change of heart came after holy men visited. They threatened his family, his village and to take away his power as chief if he continued to be a Christian.

With fewer than 200 known Christians, it is difficult to stand alone. More than 99 percent of the Hausa follow the rules of Islam. Their belief is more than a religion—it's a culture.

This fear induced by the culture is a major barrier for the Hausa in coming to Christ.

Once a person makes a decision to change, pressures from family and the village can force him to fall back to old ways.

If he chooses to stay a Christian, he is shunned from his family—which could mean a quiet, slow death.

Many who know the truth choose to stay Muslim, just as Musa. He knows that no matter what his heart says, he will not join this small church service. For him, the cost is too high. Sue Sprinkle

Getting creative

Festivals help more churches use arts in worship & ministry

"There are expressive people in every church who are oriented toward the arts."

Buddy Lamb, a drama consultant for the Georgia Baptist Convention

By Chris Turner
Baptist Press

Ridgecrest, N.C. (BP)—Shomburg Road Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga., has a clown for a pastor.

Not only is Buddy Lamb a clown, but he's also a comedian and an illusionist. He often wears all those hats at the same time, including his pastor's hat—whatever it takes to remove barriers so people in his community can hear and respond to the gospel.

"We recently had a block party at our church," said Lamb, whose church has about 80 people in worship each week.

"We had clowns, puppets, magic tricks and did a lot of other fun things," he recalled. "There were about 70 to 80 people there from the neighborhood around our church. At the end of my act, I gave a five-minute presentation of the gospel. Nine people responded and some of those were baptized into our church."

"Creative arts are more than just fun and games," he added. "They are legitimate vehicles for evangelizing and discipleship."

More than 100 instructors and 1,200 participants who share Lamb's perspective participated in the National Creative Arts Festival at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C.

Several instructors were Kentucky Baptists, including Tom Smoot, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's creative ministries department.

Smoot taught participants that creative ministry is an excellent resource to attract non-captive audiences. But it still requires personal interaction afterward, he added.

"The performance itself is strictly a tool to gather people," said Smoot, who organizes annual cre-



MOVEMENT WITH MEANING Greg Cagle, minister of music and media at First Baptist Church of Pikeville, teaches interpretive movement to a class at the National Creative Arts Festival at Ridgecrest, N.C. (BP photos by Kent Harville)

ative ministry festivals in Kentucky

"And then you still use the gospel one-on-one with people in the crowd or when you finish the performance you talk to the people who watched."

While most creative arts teams are composed of youth, Smoot reminded adults that chaperones shouldn't be sitting in the corner drinking coffee.

Instead, he urged them to be in the crowd "talking to people ... about who they are and what their purpose is and explaining the gospel or explaining the presentation that the group has just finished."

Interpretive movement popular

Greg Cagle, minister of music and media at First Baptist Church of Pikeville, said the interest in interpretive movement presentations has increased dramatically in recent years.

"It's the most popular venue in the dramatic arts program," said Cagle who led workshops on the subject at Ridgecrest. He admits, however, that wasn't the case when he led such classes 10 years ago.

"I'd have maybe 10 in my classes and now it averages 200, 300," he said. "Two years ago I had 560 in one class. ... It depends on the song, too."

Interpretive movement classes free many students to be more expressive in worship, Cagle said, but he added that some Baptists avoid it because they see it as "dance."

The difference, he said is that interpretive movement focuses attention on God and not the performer. "More than anything, I want to teach them to move from their heart and I want it to be a worship experience rather than a performance."

Other Kentucky participants at the North Carolina event included Cindy Pelphrey, a campus minister from Owensboro; and Tyra Lokey, a creative ministry specialist at Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg.

The Nov. 7-9 event, sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of



LALA'S LESSON LaLa the clown, aka Niki Jones of Madison, Ga., uses four audience volunteers to demonstrate faith.

the Southern Baptist Convention, featured instruction in clowning, comedy, illusion, drama, interpretive movement, mime, puppetry, visual art and technical elements of production such as lighting, sound and the use of computer technology—all with an aim toward religious application.

Jamie Tubbs came for opportunities to meet other people involved in creative arts. Tubbs, a member of Valley Dale Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., is a self-described "strong introvert" who is transformed once she puts on clown makeup. Tubbs attended the festival as a newcomer to clowning and puppetry as ministries.

"I wanted to get more of a foundation in both and to find out where God wants me to go with it," she said. "I was hoping for some inspiration, and I'm certainly getting it."

Why more arts in church?

Lamb, who also is a drama consultant for the Georgia Baptist Convention, said more churches should explore ways to incorporate creative arts into their ministry.

"We live in a visual world," he said. "People in our culture are Web-savvy, exposed to all types of multimedia and are more visually oriented than at any time in the

past. We've got to tap that, meet them where they are and use the arts to communicate God's message of love to them."

Using the creative arts also involves more people in ministry, he added.

"Not everybody in the church is a Sunday school teacher or kitchen help. There are expressive people in every church who are oriented toward the arts," he added. "Giving them this ministry outlet makes them better Christians because they have a way to express their Christianity. That makes them better church members."

The Kentucky creative arts festival earlier this year attracted 2,100 people to Louisville. The event has been divided into two regional festivals next year. One will be held at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown March 5-6; the other will be at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington March 12-13.

For more information, call the Kentucky Baptist Convention's creative ministries department at (888) 254-5714 or visit the KBC Web site, www.kybaptist.org.

LifeWay conference centers also will host future festivals. Information will be available at the Christian Creative Arts Association's Web site, www.ccaonline.org or at www.lifeway.com.

ILLUSTRATIVE ILLUSION
Christian illusionist Duane Laflin, of Troy, Mont., performs during the recent National Creative Arts Festival.



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Please join our family for this special time of remembrance.

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Group retains professors despite open theism views

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Atlanta (RNS)—Members of the Evangelical Theological Society voted last week to retain two members whose status had been challenged after they published controversial views supporting open theism, the belief that God can "change His mind" depending on the actions of humans.

The memberships of scholars John Sanders and Clark Pinnock were sustained when members failed to vote by a two-thirds majority that either should be removed.

Both scholars said they were "relieved" by the votes, which had questioned whether they had violated the society's commitment to inerrancy.

Outgoing society president David Howard said the votes by more than 600 scholars attending the ETS' annual meeting in Atlanta did not focus on the merits of open theism. Rather, they addressed whether the two men agreed with the group's "doctrinal basis," which consists of two sentences affirming inerrancy and the Trinity.

The society's executive committee had recommended 7-2 that Sanders be removed from membership. In a report, it said that his book "The God Who Risks" leaves one "with a Bible that one cannot affirm teaches anything about the future except for stating probabilities."

In an interview, Sanders discussed an example he cited to the committee. In 2 Kings 20, King Hezekiah was expected to die but then did not after he prayed to God. The prophet Isaiah, who previously said the king would die, then said he would recover from his illness.

"That's the 'open' of 'open theism,'" said Sanders, a philosophy and religion professor at Huntington College in Huntington, Ind. The secret ballot about Sanders came close to the necessary two-thirds: 62.7 percent voted in favor of expelling him and 37.3 percent said he should remain. Some considered it a warning for scholars like Sanders to rethink some of their arguments.

The executive committee had recommended unanimously that Pinnock's membership be sustained after he changed a footnote of his book "Most Moved Mover."

Pinnock said in an interview that he had not denied inerrancy in that footnote but was declaring that "prophecies can be pretty vague sometimes." The reference was to Paul's statement in 1 Thessalonians about Jesus' return.

Pinnock, professor emeritus of systematic theology at McMaster Divinity College in Ontario, Canada, also was retained, with 33 percent voting in favor of expelling him and 67 percent voting against expulsion.

Both scholars say they are simultaneously inerrantists and open theists.

But Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, insisted the two concepts are "absolutely incompatible."

"If the Evangelical Theological Society does not muster the courage to define its own convictions and to determine its own membership on the basis of those convictions, then there will be, eventually, nothing evangelical about the Evangelical Theological Society," he said. Mohler said the society should develop a definition of inerrancy.

Howard, the outgoing president and an Old Testament professor at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., said some in the organization argue that it is not a church, but rather an academic society where hard issues, including open theism, can be debated.

Massachusetts mandate?

Scholars say volatile decision won't necessarily expand to other states

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—Will the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage ultimately lead to gay marriage in all 50 states?

Many advocates on both sides of the gay-marriage issue have predicted that the long-expected Massachusetts decision will result in gay marriage being forced on the rest of the states, but that outcome is by no means clear, according to two legal experts.

Last week the Massachusetts court voted 4-3 that a state agency could not deny same-sex couples the right to marry.

The decision, unless overruled by a state constitutional amendment, will make Massachusetts the first legal jurisdiction in the United States to sanction same-sex marriage. Neighboring Vermont has a civil-union law that offers same-sex couples most of the legal rights of marriage while reserving the term "marriage" for opposite-sex couples.

In the court's opinion, authored by Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, the majority said the decision was a simple matter of interpretation of the state constitution.

"The question before us is whether, consistent with the Massachusetts Constitution, the Commonwealth may deny the protections, benefits and obligations conferred by civil marriage to two individuals of the same sex who wish to marry," Marshall wrote. "We conclude that it may not."

Extended to all states?

Some activists have long insisted that one state's decision to legalize same-sex marriage would end up applying to the other states because of a part of the U.S. Constitution called the "full faith and credit clause." That clause requires states to recognize the legal decisions of other states.

That seems to make it pretty simple for a gay couple legally married in Massachusetts to move to Kentucky and demand legal recognition of their union.

But according to a legal scholar at a conservative Washington



GAY MARRIAGE CASE Ed Balmelli and Michael Horgan walk to a press conference in Boston after the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the Massachusetts constitution must give same-sex couples the rights of marriage. Balmelli and Horgan were plaintiffs in the lawsuit after they were denied a marriage license. (RNS/Reuters photo by/Brian Snyder)

think tank, full-faith-and-credit clause law is a bit more complicated than that.

"The full faith and credit clause does not apply automatically for two reasons," said Todd Gaziano, director of the Heritage Foundation's Center for Legal and Judicial Studies.

The first reason, Gaziano said, is because the clause applies to judgments or court orders of the states, and a marriage isn't a final judgment in a lawsuit, or a court order in a lawsuit.

The second reason the clause might not apply to same-sex marriages, Gaziano noted, is because "Congress has the authority and the states themselves have full authority to take things outside the scope of full faith and credit clause."

Defense of Marriage Act

For instance, Congress already has passed a measure signed into law by former President Clinton that bans gay marriage at the federal level. The federal Defense of Marriage Act also became the model for similar same-sex-marriage bans on the state level. As of Nov. 18, the date of the Massachusetts decision, 37 states had their own state DOMA laws.

Survey says

According to a poll released last week by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life:

■ 59 percent of respondents said they oppose homosexual marriage; 32 percent said they favor it, and 9 percent said they don't know.

■ Opposition was greatest among evangelical respondents: 80 percent opposed, 13 percent in favor and 7 percent don't know.

■ Respondents were evenly split on whether homosexuality can be changed; 42 percent said yes, 42 percent said no and 16 percent said they didn't know.

■ A majority of respondents—55 percent—said homosexual behavior is a sin, a view shared most strongly by "highly committed white evangelicals" (88 percent), black Protestants (74 percent) and "committed" Catholics (64 percent).

■ Although most evangelical respondents do not support homosexuality, 60 percent said they feel comfortable around gay people, compared to three-quarters of the general population.

That could mean, according to Gaziano, that gay marriage "offends the public policy" of those states.

If the courts agreed, then previous case law suggests that such a state would not have to recognize a gay marriage performed in another state.

"Even without the federal legislation, the area of marriage recognition is one where the states have been able to reserve certain issues with respect (to) public policy," Gaziano added.

For example, he said, some states allow first cousins to marry, while such a union would explicitly contradict the public policy of other states.

"We don't have to recognize those marriages," Gaziano said.

But one thing the Massachusetts decision almost certainly will do in the legal realm is provide gay couples, for the first time, with legal standing to challenge the federal Defense of Marriage Act in court.

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to lead all aspects of the music programs of the church, including a graded choir program, handbells and congregational worship, and assist the pastor with worship and other ministries of the church. The church is dually aligned with CBF and SBC. Send resume to: Barbara Beck, Lexington Avenue Baptist Church, 339 W Lexington Ave., Danville, KY 40422, or e-mail to: bbeck@setel.com.

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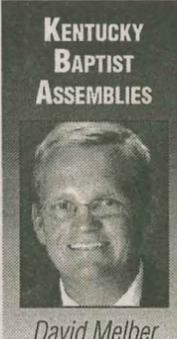
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Retreat time is here at camp

Thankful for all the groups that come here to find God

Two weeks ago we had the opportunity to share our ministry's status with messengers from across our state at the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting. I felt a great privilege to share the exciting ways God is changing lives at our camps. We are blessed to have a great staff who make real sacrifices to support our ministry. This past weekend alone, Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek combined served 12 retreat groups totaling more than 500 people.



David Melber

With busy fall weekends like this past one, it sure makes the time fly by. The staffs at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek have commented that it feels like summer just ended, but the excitement and life change that the summer brings will be here again in just 180 days.

As tempted as we all might be to look toward the future, we must stay focused daily if we are to take hold of the God-given opportunities He provides each day. This Thanksgiving season will be no different than the ones before, and time will be precious because

of the demands of this season. As believers, we must remember our brothers and sisters who serve as missionaries and in other locations. These families serve literally all over the world, and a great number of them serve in "lost" areas within our borders. Most of us will be able to spend a good deal of time with family and friends. We will spend hours with family that we otherwise would not see, but that is not the case with many this holiday season.

I would like to encourage us all to take time to send a card, make a phone call, send a gift package or simply remember these servants in your prayers. The Thanksgiving and Christmas season are amazing times of year, and we should make the most of our opportunities to encourage those who have left family and friends to minister to a lost world. The 12 groups at the camps represented several unique ministries and we are privileged for the exposure to many "missionaries" at the camps.

David Melber is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. Contact him at 3043 Beal Road, Hardin, KY 42048; phone (270) 354-8355.

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



Bible Crosswords

John H. Thornberg

- Across**
- "Sacrifice ... _____ of turtledoves" (Luke 2:24) (2 words)
 - Bashful
 - "(David) feigned himself _____" (1 Samuel 21:13)
 - "Sword of the Spirit, ... the _____ of God" (Ephesians 6:17)
 - Also known as, abbr.
 - Information
 - "Ye do _____, not knowing the scriptures" (Matthew 22:29)
 - Triple Sugar Iron agar, abbr.
 - Male singing voice
 - Jewish scriptures
 - "Neither shall the cruse of _____ fail" (1 Kings 17:14)
 - "Be it unto _____ according to thy word" (Luke 1:38)
 - "_____ unto them that call evil good" (Isaiah 5:20)
 - "The staff of his _____ was like a weaver's beam" (1 Samuel 17:7)
 - "A thousand shall fall _____ thy side" (Psalm 91:7)
 - To fill with joy
 - "Though he slay me, _____ will I trust in him" (Job 13:15)
 - "_____ and feather him!"
 - "Sharper than any two-edged _____" (Hebrews 4:12)
 - A beaver _____
 - "Shut the doors, and _____ them" (Nehemiah 7:3)
 - Accomplish
 - "_____ weapon that is formed against thee" (Isaiah 54:17)
 - Motion picture
 - "Cain ... dwelt in the land of _____" (Genesis 4:16)
 - "Where two _____ three are gathered" (Matthew 18:20)
 - Flying mammal
 - Southern Israeli desert

1	2	3	4		5	6		7	8	9
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13				14			15			
	16		17			18			19	
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30		31		32			33		34	35
	36		37		38			39		40
41		42		43			44		45	
46	47		48			49			50	
51		52				53			54	55
56					57			58		
59				60				61		

- Regulation decreed by a church council
- Animal pelt
- Motorized coach
- "Soul of Jonathan was _____ with ... David" (1 Samuel 18:1)
- "Cast him into the bottomless _____" (Revelation 20:3)
- "(Samson) _____ not that the Lord was departed" (Judges 16:20)
- "The trees of the Lord are full of _____" (Psalm 104:16)
- "Held in with _____ and bridle" (Psalm 32:9)
- Trivial
- Chinese ounces
- "_____ them about thy neck" (Proverbs 6:21)
- "The loving hind and pleasant _____" (Proverbs 5:19)
- Musical drama
- A large tub
- A furnace
- "Though they be _____ like crimson" (Isaiah 1:18)
- Small flap
- "Their laying _____ was known of Saul" (Acts 9:24)
- Light brown
- Isaac's replacement on the altar
- Restaurant
- Unruly throng
- Mechanical monster
- Piece of timber
- "Defence shall be the munitions of _____" (Isaiah 33:16)
- Mover's truck
- Shortfall
- A genus of frogs
- "A tough _____ to crack"
- "Pike's Peak or _____!"
- "_____ in the bud"
- "Men of war _____ for the battle" (1 Chronicles 12:8)
- A pig _____
- 3.14, the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter
- "_____ beseech thee" (Psalm 80:14)

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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A	D	A		P	E	L	E		H	A
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A	R	M		A	G	E	D		O	N
26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
L	O	T		I	D		L	E	A	P
33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
O	B	O		S	I	T		L	I	O
38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48
S	A	T		A	N		R	A	M	T
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53
E	L		S	O	L		A	S	S	
48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58
T	H	E		O	P	H		I	L	L
53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63
N	O	N		A	B	P		A	R	E
58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68
E	W	E		R		E	E	D		M
62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
T	E	E		N		A	D	D	S	P

Thank You!

Kentucky Baptists donated more than \$55,000 in grocery gift cards and cash plus truckloads of food during KBHC's food round-up. Thank you for giving to the children!

KBHC
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At www.WESTERNRECORDER.com:
Poll: How much time do you spend being thankful on Thanksgiving?

NATIONAL NOTES

Speedy review of abortion ban sought. The Bush administration is seeking a speedy judicial review of a new law banning a late-term abortion procedure after it was temporarily blocked from enforcement. The U.S. Justice Department filed a motion Nov. 10 asking a Manhattan federal judge to hold a single proceeding within 120 days to consider whether the injunction should be lifted as well as the merits of the law, Associated Press reported. The filing was a response to a ruling by U.S. District Judge Richard Casey, who issued a temporary stay of the law signed by President Bush earlier this month.

Court: Religious inmates law unconstitutional. A federal appellate court has declared unconstitutional a 2000 federal law that permitted inmates to follow religious dietary practices and gather for worship. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act bars the government from limiting the religious freedom of people in federally funded institutions unless there is a compelling reason. The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled Nov. 7 that the law violates the separation of church and state because it has "the primary effect of advancing religion." The ruling by a three-judge panel in Cincinnati applies solely to Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan and Tennessee. Other courts elsewhere have declared the law constitutional.

Update: Wiccan wins opening prayer case. A Wiccan who had been barred from saying an opening prayer at meetings of a county board of supervisors has the right to pray there, a federal judge ruled Nov. 13. U.S. District Court Judge Dennis Dohnal decided the Chesterfield County, Va., board discriminated against Cyn-di Simpson when it told her she could not be on a list of clergy who deliver the board's invocations. Wiccans consider themselves witches, pagans or neo-pagans. They say their religion is based on respect for the earth, nature and the cycle of the seasons.

Chapman named favorite contemporary artist. Christian musician Steven Curtis Chapman was named the favorite contemporary inspirational artist at the American Music Awards. Chapman won the honor Nov. 16, marking the third time the inspirational category was included in the program. "Thank you very, very much, American Music Awards," he said in his turn at the podium of the Shrine Auditorium. "Thank you all for acknowledging guys like Third Day, MercyMe (two other nominees for the award). We represent a whole bunch of folks who make music inspired by the love and grace of God."

Update: Judge OKs religious holiday display. Florida judge has ruled that Broward County officials cannot exclude a church's "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" display from a holiday lights event in a county park. U.S. District Judge William Zloch of Miami said the county violated Calvary Chapel's right to freedom of speech when it rejected its application to participate in the event. Aware of church-state concerns, the judge ordered that the display by the Fort Lauderdale church be slightly modified to say "Calvary Chapel Says Jesus is the Reason for the Season." In the lawsuit, the church stated it already had paid \$15,000 to participate in the "Holiday Fantasy of Lights" when it was told its original approval had been revoked.

Beliefnet.com wins online journalism award. Beliefnet.com, a Web site focused on religion and spirituality, has won the Online News Association's award for general excellence in online journalism. The judges noted the site's broad coverage of major world faiths and smaller faith groups as well as its coverage of the war in Iraq that related to opinions of different faith-based groups and plans of American missionaries. Beliefnet won in the independent category for sites with more than 200,000 unique visitors per month. It competed with finalists Slate.com and Space.com.

Truly special time of Thanksgiving

Holiday brings to mind yesterday's memories as well as today's blessings

Many readers know that I did not come from a Christian home. When I came to Oneida as a junior in high school my mother was less than excited about my attending a "Christian" school. I do not care to dwell on many memories from my childhood. However, one thing that kindles fond memories is Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving was the one holiday that seemed to come and go without family conflicts. Since most of my childhood years were immersed in poverty, the smell of all that food was a real treat. After hours of cooking, the table was set and the food placed on it for all to enjoy. It was the happiest day I remember from my boyhood years.

While most of our students will be home for Thanksgiving, there still will be about 75 students plus a host of faculty, staff and other guests here to enjoy the Thanksgiving meal with us. As in my childhood days, the preparations for the feast will have begun hours before. However, this time it will be our dedicated cooks toiling in the kitchen. For me, there is simply no other holiday like Thanksgiving. I am always a little reluctant to make my feelings known because I am concerned that people will think Christmas should be the preferred holiday.

Thanksgiving seems to have escaped the commercialism that Christmas and many other holidays have succumbed to. Thanksgiving, a day set aside for the purpose of giving thanks. Anyone who has ever been a part of this minis-

try should be able to give thanks with sincere appreciation. We have been, and continue to be blessed!

Along with the traditional Thanksgiving meal, God spreads so many new and unbelievable things before us. Every day, week and month is filled with a bountiful array of unexpected, delightful gifts. God uses the generosity of so many people to meet and exceed our needs.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Each year as I enter the large dining room decorated for the Thanksgiving meal, I am reminded of our wonderful friends who have made the meal possible. Though all gifts ultimately come from the Lord, if His people were not willing to share and follow His direction we would cease to be.

I also realize that it is not only the tasty Thanksgiving meal that is so special, but the gifts of each day that flavor our lives. How blessed we are to be surrounded with a host of loving, caring friends. You will not be able to join us for our dinner, but I will be thinking of all of the friends who made this meal possible. As we offer thanks to the Lord for his abundant provisions, I will be thanking Him for our friends, too!

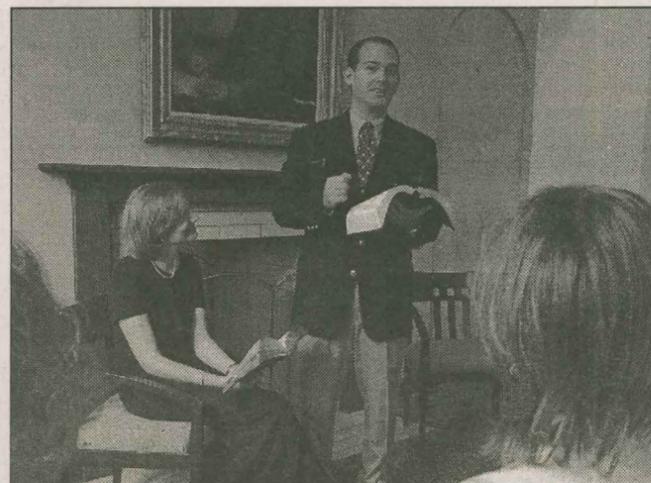
"Thank you, Lord, for all of our friends who make this ministry possible. Thank you for volunteers, faculty and staff, for our students, for sustaining us every day and for our loving friends who care enough to share!" Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

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

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Servant Evangelism

Clear Creek hosts block party for outreach to community

A bright, clear autumn sky welcomed nearly 60 guests to the community block party hosted by Clear Creek Baptist Bible College on a Saturday in late September.

More than 100 faculty, staff and students provided games, food and entertainment. The event was organized as one way to fulfill our core values of evangelism and service to the community.

One week before the block party, 50 faculty, staff and students canvassed the Clear Creek community with fliers advertising the event.

During the door-to-door distribution, two boys made a profession of faith.

Off-campus visitors came from 16 churches. It was the first time some of them had been to the campus. The registration card asked each guest, "How may our college help this community?" The comments included: "Be seen more," "Keeping on what you are doing," "Community things for children are nice," "Keep doing things like today!" and "Activities like today more often."

The block party started at 10

a.m. and concluded with a noon drawing for door prizes donated by six area businesses. Hog dogs with all the trimmings, soft drinks and homemade deserts were free throughout the morning. Clear Creek students and their children provided music, and the entertainment concluded with a performance by Christian illusionist Greg Farmer of Corbin.

"Clear Creek made many new friends through the block party," said Roy Lucas, our New Testament associate professor who was chair of the planning committee. "It also developed campus unity and demonstrated to our students an effective method of servant evangelism."

We have plans to equip an eight-foot evangelism trailer that will be filled with the supplies to do community block parties for churches and associations. Income from the Parker Missions Endowment, established in 2001 in memory of the Eastern Kentucky influence of John and Paul Parker (a former trustee chairman), supports these projects.

Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977; (606) 337-3196

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Latest Chapman book touts goals for biblical covenant marriages

By Jenny Rogers
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—To most people, a contract sounds like a fine way to strike a deal.

Make an agreement, sign it on paper, and it's done. If everyone does his or her part, everyone is happy.

Most marriages, according to Gary Chapman, best-selling author and speaker on the topic of marriage and relationships, are lived like signing a contract.

And that's missing the point, he said. Covenant, not contract, is the foundation upon which couples should build their marriage.

Chapman's latest book, "Covenant Marriage," begins with the premise that a couple's relationship with Christ is primary.

He also looks at the problems and misunderstandings that have long plagued Christian marriages and how to alleviate them.

Chapman said covenant, not contract, is the key to a winning marriage.

"Covenant marriages are characterized by unconditional promises," he writes.

While traditional marriage vows often involve unconditional terms, Chapman writes that too often couples verbalized a covenant relationship but practice a contract marriage. He writes that in a contract marriage, participants giving is conditioned on the spouse's behavior.

"We make contracts with almost anyone, even an unknown salesperson, but covenants are made only with those with whom we have loving relationships."

Such covenants mirror God's covenants, Chapman adds.

Using examples of Bible figures such as David and Ruth, Chapman paints a picture of

"covenant" in the deeper, spiritual sense transcending simple human relationships and reflecting God's constant love and promises to those who follow Him.

"The marriage relationship is so significant that God chose it as a picture of His relationship with His people," Chapman says. "When a Christian has a healthy marriage, the whole world looks bright. When the marriage relationship is empty, it negatively affects all other aspects of life."

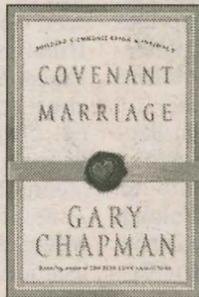
To build loving and intimate relationships, Chapman outlines some of the biggest needs in marriage: a biblical foundation, individuality of both spouses, proper handling of anger and conflict and a godly perspective toward sexuality.

Essential building blocks such as communication, when eroded, can play havoc with a marriage, he says.

"Covenant Marriage" lists five levels of communication and unhealthy patterns couples often fall into. It also offers ways to dig out of those habits.

Covenant Marriage also paints a definition of intimacy, love and sexuality in the biblical, God-given sense—in stark contrast to the world's corrupted view.

"The intimacy and fulfillment God intended for marriage can be experienced only if we are committed to a covenant marriage," Chapman writes. "This, I believe, is God's plan for marriage: two people giving their lives away to each other, understanding that the ultimate goal in life is not simply to have a good marriage, but that if married, God intends us to be His encourager to each other so that together we will accomplish more for His Kingdom than we could have ever accomplished alone."



Digital music deal

Lifeway signs plan to offer music on Web for 99 cents per song

Nashville (BP)—When it comes to digital music downloads, even Christian music lovers often are confused about the difference between sharing a song and stealing music and money from the artist who produced it.

Lifeway Christian Stores hopes to change some of that

Lifeway has launched its new digital music downloading service, offering single songs via the Internet for 99 cents and complete albums for \$10 to \$12.

The service, made possible through a partnership with online music pioneer Liquid Digital Media (formerly Liquid Audio), is the first of its kind available through a Christian retailer.

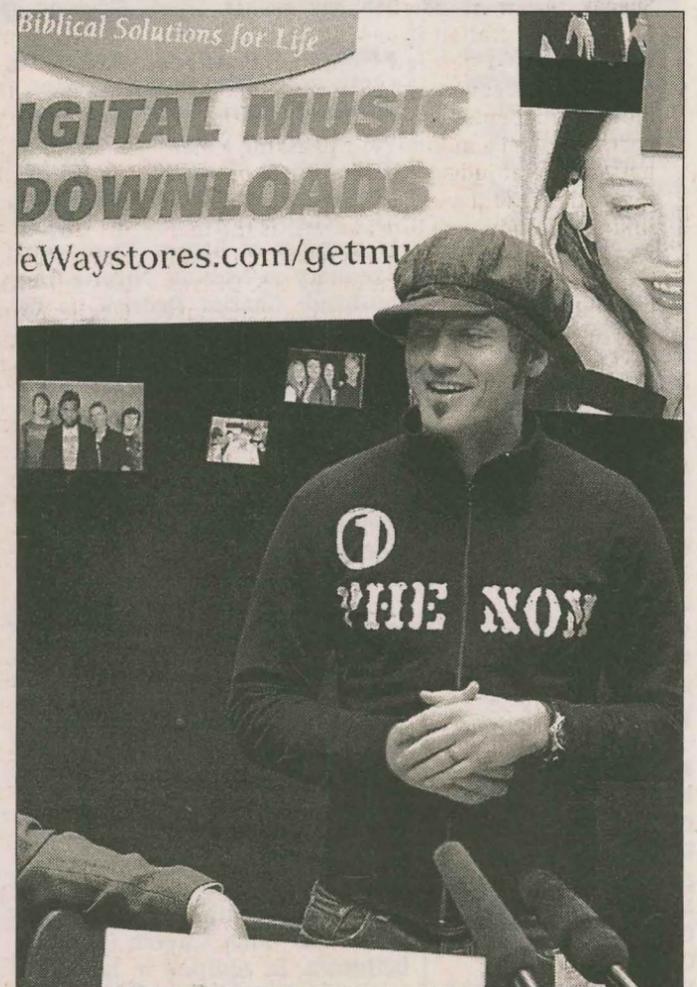
"Lifeway is seeking to bridge the illegal-downloads divide by providing people with an easy, affordable and legal way to download their favorite Christian artists," said Mark King, vice president of direct marketing for Lifeway Christian Stores.

The partnership will allow visitors to the lifewaystores.com Web site a unique shopping experience where they can purchase items such as books and gifts and download music—all in one shopping cart.

Lifeway's new service requires no monthly subscription fee as other sites do, or special software to download. All songs are offered in Windows Media format. Once a customer purchases a song, the file can be downloaded to a personal computer with unlimited transfers to portable devices and CD-burner capabilities.

Liquid Digital Media is a leading provider of software, infrastructure and services for the secure digital delivery of media over the Internet.

The company provides content owners, Web sites and companies the ability to syndicate and securely sell digital media online with copy protection and copyright management. Consumers can preview



and purchase downloadable music from hundreds of affiliate Web sites in the Liquid Music Network.

"People downloading songs without paying for them has been an industry-wide problem for years," said John Styll, president of the Gospel Music Association.

"Illegal downloads have been a growing problem in the Christian community, and they are causing economic harm to everyone involved in the music industry," Styll said. He praised the partnership as "a practical solution to this very real problem."

Lifeway also announced it will sponsor a number of national promotions with Chordant Distribution Group, including a giveaway of one song each day for 30 days to visitors to the lifewaystores.com Web site. The "30 for 30" promotion began last week.

MAC'S BACKING Christian recording artist and label owner Toby Mac of dc Talk was on hand to support an announcement that Lifeway will offer a Web site to download Christian artists' music. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

Isn't there something ...

... that can help folks know what to do with those pretty new 20-dollar bills they're getting?

You're holding it.



Every week, the Western Recorder's Financial Forum column provides practical ideas for applying biblical truths about personal and church finance. Whether the topic is tithing, church budgets or personal debt, our panel of experts has the experience and insights to help your members learn and apply sound financial concepts.

WESTERNRECORDER
PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

Prof urges deeper look at Psalms

Wake Forest, N.C. (BP)—Michael Travers' latest book, "Encountering God in the Psalms," encourages readers to begin with God as the focal point of the Psalms and challenges them to see themselves in relation to the truths in the texts.

Travers, a professor of English at Southeastern College at Wake Forest, N.C., said he wrote the book to help readers give the Psalms more than a cursory look and to know God better by examining His attributes and actions as seen in the Psalms.

"The Psalms say so much to us for our daily lives precisely because they tell us so much about the God Who made us and redeems us in Christ," Travers said.

In one section, Travers explains how the poetry of Psalms differs from prose. "Poetry places more emphasis on individual words," he said. "It is more intense and concrete than prose and it uses figures of speech to carry the weight of theology more often than prose does."

Travers said he hopes the book encourages readers to read the Psalms more slowly and carefully to understand the intended meaning in the text. "I hope (the book) puts literary tools in the hands of its readers so that they can know how to read a Psalm the way it was written."

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Small group Bible studies at Immanuel Baptist Church in Madrid, Spain.

■ The European Baptist Convention church in Nice, France, praises God that Frank and Kathy Iovieno will be moving there in February to help with the ministry. Ultimately, Iovieno is expected to become pastor.

■ The following European Baptist Convention churches in Germany without pastors: Berlin International Baptist Church, Charity Baptist Church in Vilseck, Faith Baptist Church in Kaiserslautern, Hanau Friendship Baptist Church and Kitzingen Baptist Church.

■ FAITH evangelism outreach training taking place in various regions in Brazil.

■ Earl and Robin Thomas, missionaries to Malta, as they continue to have divine appointments with their neighbors.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BENTON**—New Bethel Church recently called **John Shultz** as pastor.

■ **DANVILLE**—**Carrick Hedrick**, a member of Calvary Church in Danville, died Nov. 6 at age 60. A former missionary to Nigeria, she served as a schoolteacher and as a faculty member of Baptist Theological Seminary in Kaduna, Nigeria. Her husband, Charles Hedrick, is director of missions for South District Association. In addition to her husband, she is survived by her parents, one son, two daughters, eleven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

■ **EDDYVILLE**—First Church will hold revival services Dec. 7-10. **Tim Perdue** is pastor.

■ **FALMOUTH**—Turner Ridge Church recently honored **Alene and Bill Thomas** on their 60th wedding anniversary.

■ **HENDERSON**—Immanuel Temple will present "Treasures of Christmas" Dec. 13-14, 6:30 p.m. **Joseph Tricquet** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Ruth Kruschwitz**, a member of St. Matthew Church, died Nov. 18 at age 88. A retired schoolteacher, she was married to Verlin Kruschwitz, retired pastor of Severn Valley Church in Elizabethtown. In addition to her husband, she is survived by three sons and two grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be made to St. Matthews Church, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering or Baptist Hospital East Palliative Care Unit.

Maple Grove Church recently

called **Doug Peck** as associate minister for music. **Ray Hayes** is pastor.

Park Ridge Church honored **Todd Beasley** Nov. 16 on his fifti anniversary as minister of education.

St. Matthews Church called **Terry Seelow** as minister to adults effective Dec. 1. **Leslie Hollon** is pastor.

■ **MADISONVILLE**—First Church will host "Return to Bethlehem" Dec. 13, 15-16, 5-8 p.m., and Dec. 14, 2-4 p.m. For information, call (270) 821-3611.

■ **MURRAY**—First Church will host author, speaker and solo performer **Steven James** Nov. 30. **Wendell Ray** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—First Church recently honored **Sherry Kasinger** for 20 years of service as education secretary. **Garry Baldwin** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—First Church called **Jeremy Hudgin** as minister to students effective Nov. 17. **Kevin McCallon** is pastor.

■ **ROCKFIELD**—Clear Fork Church ordained **Barry Stahl, Chris Vaughn** and **Donald Vinson** as deacons. **David Daugherty** is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church will present "Portraits of Christmas" Dec. 13-14, 4 and 7 p.m. **Steve Rice** is senior pastor.

What's going on?

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

Baptist volunteers agree Iraq trip is life-changing experience

Central Iraq (BP)—Hal Newell is not usually an emotional person, but he wept several times during the 10 days he recently spent in Iraq helping distribute food boxes collected by Southern Baptist churches earlier this year.

Newell and other volunteers from Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., agreed that working in war-ravaged Iraq has changed them.

"You cannot help but be moved by seeing the plight of the Iraqi people," said Newell, who operates an engraving company in Clemmons, N.C. "They've been oppressed so many years, even before Saddam came along. Now they're starting to see hope. But many are still in desperate straits. They're living on about \$40 a year, and unemployment is 60 percent. This place really pulls at your heart."

Volunteer Doug Wells, who has worked on two projects in Honduras, said visiting Iraq "made me realize how good I have it at home, but also that I have a responsibility to reach out to other people."

Even getting to Iraq represented a victory for Wells, who fears flying. "I gave that over to God and He took that fear away," he said.

Jim Walker, another volunteer, left Iraq thankful that scores of Iraqi children felt free to come up, shake his hand and follow him through a village as he labored in 100-plus-degree heat to deliver food

boxes.

"It breaks my heart to think about them staying behind in their poverty," Walker said. "These kids are starved for attention, and I could tell some of them have not eaten well. But their biggest need is to know the love of Jesus Christ."

Mothers handed him their babies to hold and he gladly accepted them, thinking of his own daughter back home. Walker also admitted he had experienced some fear about coming to Iraq, but had put it aside because he had such a clear sense of God's leading to make the trip.

"They are not enemies"

"My perception of the Iraqi people has dramatically changed," said volunteer Larry Ledford. "I think Americans who get their view of the world from television get a false impression of what it is. Like a lot of Americans, I saw the Iraqis as enemies. They are not enemies. The people I've met here have been warm and open and friendly."

Newell said one of his most memorable moments came when an Iraqi boy, perhaps 9 or 10 years old, spoke to him in limited English. "He grabbed my hand and stopped me and looked at me dead in the eyes and he said, 'Please tell Mr. Bush. Please give him my warmest regards.'"

Newell vowed to do just that in a letter to the president.

IMB missionaries write thank you notes to Baptist supporters in U.S.

By Manda Roten
Baptist Press

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—"It is customary to send a 'thank you' note to acknowledge receipt of a gift. But sometimes a gift is so generous that words do not seem sufficient to express appropriate gratitude," say Cal and Patty McIntire, career missionaries to the Lebou people of West Africa.

More than 100 Southern Baptist missionaries recently wrote to Southern Baptists, thanking them for their gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Cooperative Program.

While the McIntires easily thanked Southern Baptists for the home they live in and the car they drive, they found it more difficult to express their gratitude at being able to share the gospel with people who had never heard it.

"What words can express the joy of praying for the first time with a new believer, or the honor of helping that new believer grow in his or her love for the Lord?" they ask.

Mark and Barbara Stevens serve as career missionaries in the Philippines. In their thank

you letter, they wrote of seven tribal people groups on the island of Mindanao. Last year none of those people groups understood the gospel.

"As you have prayed and supported our work here, we have seen God work and four of these tribal people groups are now engaged for the gospel and have churches!" the Stevenses recounted. "Thank you, dear Southern Baptists, for giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering."

Some who wrote work in areas where their names and specific locations can't be identified.

"Last month, we had a member of an unreached people group attend training at our center, which continues to be developed by your gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," a worker in China wrote. "There is only one known Christian among this people group. Our national staff was able to share with him and explain to him how much God loves him."

The man believed—doubling the Christian population of his unreached people group—and was baptized. Now he's sharing the gospel with his family and friends.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 1996 Dodge Ram 15-passenger van; 63,000+ miles. 1998 Dodge Ram 15-passenger van; 54,000+ miles. Call (606) 633-2161 or 633-0239.

SEEKING: Year-round part-time adult consultant for Kentucky WMU. Master's degree and experience with Women on Mission required. Position includes consulting work with churches, leadership training and directing fall retreats. For additional information, contact Kentucky WMU Executive Director Joy Bolton, (502) 244-6485.

SEEKING: Publications secretary—responsibilities in general duties and publications. Experience preferred. Send resumé to: Buechel Park Baptist Church, 2403 Hikes Lane, Louisville, KY 40218, or e-mail: rogers@bpbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Central Ave. Baptist Church. Please submit resumé to: Minister of Youth Search Committee, PO Box 736, Elizabethtown, KY 42702.

SEEKING: New Friendship Baptist Church in Auburn, Ky., is currently seeking a part-time music director. Interested applicants should forward resumé to NFBC, c/o Greg Hale, 6387 Friendship Road, Auburn, KY 42206, or e-mail to gah@logantele.com.

SEEKING: Associate pastor. Ovesen Heights Baptist Church in Hodgenville, Ky., is receiving resumé for part-time associate pastor. Primary ministry is with teenagers, but includes some preaching and pastoral responsibilities. Send resumé with references to: Personel Committee, Ovesen Heights Baptist Church, PO Box 253, Hodgenville, KY 42748, or inquire to: DRichC@aol.com.

SEEKING: Minister of youth and activities for First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville, Ky. College/seminary degree required. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 1400 South Main St., Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

SEEKING: Worship leader position at Alton Baptist in Lawrenceburg, Ky. Accepting resumé until Dec. 10. Phone: (502) 839-3487; fax: 839-3488.

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

SEEKING: An energetic, dynamic pastor for strong growing church with blended services and multi-media. Requires experience and some college. Send resumé and audio and/or video tape to: Pastor Search Team, HC 83 Box 468, Cloverport, KY 40111. Resumé need to be received by Dec. 10, 2003.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Olive Branch Missionary Baptist Church. We have a fast-growing congregation and a Sunday school enrollment in excess of 325. We are looking for the man God has prepared for this position. Prayerfully submit your resumé to: Olive Branch Missionary Baptist Church, 400 Olive Branch Church Road, Hanson, KY 42413, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

Palau's ministry marks 50 years

'Next Billy Graham' doesn't have to ride on any coattails

By Shelby Oppel
Religion News Service

Beaverton, Ore. (RNS)—In half a century of ministry, Luis Palau has taken the gospel from the halls of congress to the sands of Daytona Beach.

This month marks Palau's 50th year in evangelism, a calling that transformed a 19-year-old street preacher from Buenos Aires into an international evangelist who has met with dozens of heads of state, from Latin American leaders to former President Clinton.

Once considered the heir apparent to evangelist Billy Graham, Palau has arrived in Christian circles as a someone who is well-known in his own right.

At 68, he is a prolific author, a radio celebrity in Latin America, and president of a nonprofit ministry with an \$11 million annual budget.

His trademark Christian music festivals, held in four countries and nine U.S. cities since 1999, draw enormous crowds. Police estimated 300,000 young adults attended "Beachfest" in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., this past spring.

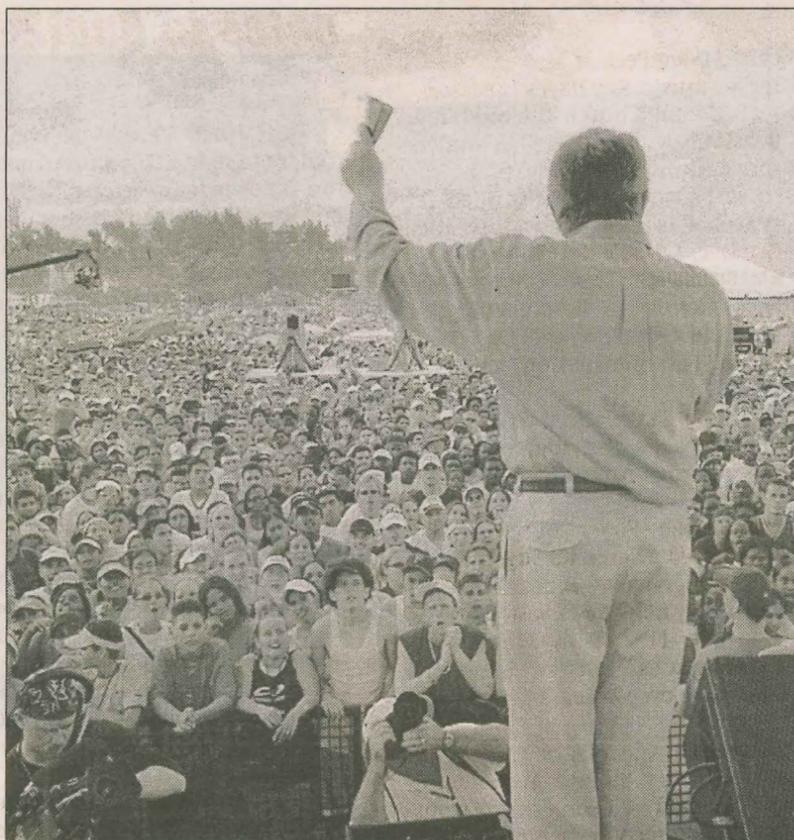
In everything, Palau sees the opportunity to persuade others to accept the claims of Christianity. He calls his life's work "spiritual warfare," God vs. Satan. Access to decision-makers is simply part of the battle.

No nose punches

Palau is uncompromising in his belief that Christianity is the only path to God. Yet unlike evangelists who attract attention for their comments about Islam or abortion, Palau rarely stakes out public positions on polarizing social issues. He's looking to win souls. Anger isn't good for business.

"Without offending or punching people in the nose, I present the case for Christ," he said.

At 5 feet 7 inches, Palau manages to be dashing—wavy silvery-white hair, an elegant charcoal suit—and moves like a prizefighter around his lectern. Back and forth, arms jabbing into the air. Bold pronouncements trail off into self-deprecating tangents, which he delivers in a gravelly continental accent shaped



BEACH REACH Luis Palau speaks to students at Daytona Beach earlier this year at one of his open-air festivals. November marks Palau's 50th year in evangelism, a calling that transformed a 19-year-old street preacher from Buenos Aires into an international evangelist who has met with dozens of heads of state. (File photo)

by his European grandparents, Argentine upbringing and British schoolmasters.

An insatiable reader, he salts the straight-ahead anecdotes in his sermons and 45 books with references to Tolstoy, Marx, Bob Dylan, the Wall Street Journal and the Bible. Reading is his only hobby.

Everything for Palau is about life and death—but he emphasizes life, what he calls the good news of Christianity. He downshifts a bit at home, a two-story of gray wood and faded brick in an affluent, hilly neighborhood near Portland.

A red-meat aficionado

Three of the Palaus' four grown sons live within four miles of their parents. At a recent family gathering, seven grandchildren scrambled across the pale hardwood floors. A hymnal rested on a piano, beside a copy of Hank Williams' "Cold, Cold Heart."

Out on the back deck, Palau is king. The meal is steak, preferably from the United States. Argentines are better cooks, he says, but U.S. cattle are better fed.

"Luis thinks chicken is an insult," says his wife, Pat, 66, half-joking.

To the barbecue?

"To the process, and to life in general."

Mrs. Palau, raised in Beaverton, was a kindergarten teacher studying to become an overseas missionary when she met Palau at Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, now Multnomah Bible College and Biblical Seminary.

After their marriage, the couple spent eight years as missionaries in Colombia and Mexico before they returned to Oregon.

The association's mission is the festivals, free to those who attend, and the fund raising that pays for them. A board of directors, made up of businessmen from around the country, sets Palau's annual salary at \$103,000, plus a \$50,000 housing allowance and the use of a 1994 Mercury Grand Marquis. Palau travels about 70 percent of the year.

At home, Palau goes to bed around midnight and is up before 6, praying and reading in his book-lined study. He hates the thought that he hasn't heard of something that he might incorporate into his next sermon or radio address. If he's not reading, he turns the television to CNBC for financial news.

His travel schedule is intense. Six festivals—in Argentina, Spain, Fiji, Peru, Reno, Nev., and Minneapolis—are planned for 2004. Another eight events are scheduled for 2005 and 2006.

At Palau's festivals, the music dominates—popular Christian entertainers such as TobyMac, Jaci Velasquez and Third Day. Palau himself preaches for only 40 minutes.

The message is simple: Jesus, and only Jesus, saves. And he is far from finished delivering it.

Christianity helping soldiers endure campaign in Iraq

By Mike Marshall
Religion News Service

Baghdad, Iraq (RNS)—The saying "there are no atheists in foxholes" doesn't quite fit here because American soldiers don't operate from foxholes in Baghdad.

But many a soldier has whispered a prayer as their Humvees rumbled across Iraq's Sunni Triangle, where improvised explosive devices and snipers are a perpetual threat.

For many members of the Alabama National Guard's 1166th Military Police Company, in the thick of the fighting since late April, religion has been a rock.

Take 32-year-old Pvt. Darrel Cartwright. Cartwright, a communications specialist and father of four, came to the Middle East with the rest of his company in March. He was baptized at a service in Kuwait's Camp Arifjan in early April, prompted by the looming war.

"It's something I had thought about doing in the past, but if I went into battle and anything, you know, happened—I wanted to be prepared," Cartwright said. "You start thinking like that when you go off to a war."

Facing snipers & "Sadam's revenge"

He was tested not long after his baptism. The Thomasville, Ala.-based 1166th saw its heaviest fighting at Gharma, near Fallujah, in late April.

Its members were asked to secure and defend a railway station, and for the whole month of May took mortar and sniper fire.

Many of them also came down with a bad case of "Sadam's revenge." At one point, diarrhea and nausea debilitated as many as 20 soldiers in the unit.

They slept in tents, dined on MREs (meals ready to eat), showered beneath 5-gallon buckets and flailed at swarms of black flies impervious to bug spray.

A dozen or so members of the 1166th join in worship services organized by one of their own, and held in their very own makeshift chapel.

On Sunday mornings, you would normally find 31-year-old ordained elder Roger Anderson preaching and praying at the New Pentecostal Holiness Church of Greensboro, Ala.

But Anderson is also a sergeant and cook in the 1166th, now encamped in former Iraqi officers' quarters near the Baghdad airport.

While the crumbling stucco buildings have no electricity, heat or plumbing, they have provided the 1166th with space to set up a small chapel.

Constant prayer services

Anderson first organized prayer sessions with fellow soldiers last February, right after the unit was mobilized by the Guard and sent to Fort Stewart, Ga.

America was girding for war. "Morale seemed pretty low, with some of the soldiers leaving home for the very first time," Anderson said. "So we started meeting three times a week out under the sky, right beside our Humvees. When it would rain, we'd just stay inside the jeeps during services."

They have prayed together ever since, whether in Kuwait or Iraq—Bible study Wednesday nights, unity prayers on Friday nights and regular services Sunday mornings. Anderson said they did this even during the MP company's toughest times back in Gharma. "We needed it then more than ever."

Last Sunday, some members of the 1166th opted to drive eight miles over to the other side of the Baghdad airport to attend services at Camp Slayer. Among them was 41-year-old Anthony Roney, an officer with the Alabama Marine Police.

Roney is shy about discussing his religion, but says that war got him thinking more about God.

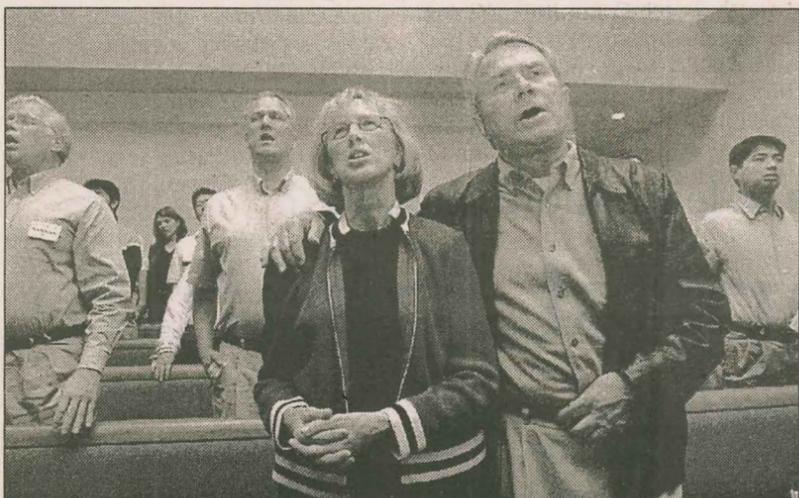
"It's not just because of the stress here, but your family back home," he said before leaving for the service.

"I worry more about them than I do about me," he added. He and his wife have three children ages 12, 9 and 6.

For Roney and the other MPs with the Thomasville and Greensboro-based 1166th, this war is far from over. Their current assignment is to provide escorts and security for the Iraqi Survey Group, special teams hunting for weapons of mass destruction.

These missions take them to the most dangerous quarters of the country.

On this Sunday morning, the MPs said they hoped they're in the prayers of the folks back home.



WORSHIP SERVICE Luis Palau sings with his wife, Pat, at Cedar Mill Bible Church in Beaverton, Ore. (RNS photo by Motoya Nakamura)

From our family to yours . . .



Happy holidays!

This holiday season we are thankful for so many things:

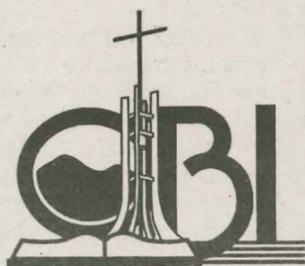
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