

December 23, 2003  
Vol. 177, No. 50

## FOR THE RECORD

**Baptists**  
A committee will recommend that the Southern Baptist Convention defund Baptist World Alliance. *Page 2.*

**Kentucky**  
2003 was a year for special events in Kentucky. *Page 3.*

**Editorial**  
KBC poised to pursue positive priorities. *Page 4.*

**Financial Forum**  
What's the difference between the two types of IRAs? *Page 4.*

**Missions**  
Missionaries go through basic training to get ready for African bush. *Page 6.*

**Nation**  
War, homosexual marriage and "Roy's Rock" dominated national religious news. *Page 8.*

**Books**  
Reviews include two new books on the 23rd Psalm and another book on how to get things done. *Page 9.*

## Bush interview gives something to both sides on gay marriage

Washington (RNS)—President Bush said Dec. 16 that he could support a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, but also said "whatever legal arrangements people want to make" should be permitted if approved at the state level.

"If necessary, I will support a constitutional amendment which would honor marriage between a man and a woman, codify that," Bush told Diane Sawyer in an interview aired on ABC News' "Primetime," according to a transcript.

"The position of this administration is that whatever legal arrangements people want to make, they're allowed to make, so long as it's embraced by the state."

The president went on to criticize the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, which ruled in November that gay couples should have the right to civil marriage.

"The court, I thought, overreached its bounds as a court," Bush told Sawyer. "It did the job of the legislature. It was a very activist court in making the decision it made."

The president told Sawyer "we're all sinners" when she asked if gays are sinners.

"I also think it's very important, on this subject, that the country be tolerant of people and understand people, but tolerance and belief in marriage aren't mutually exclusive points of view," he said.

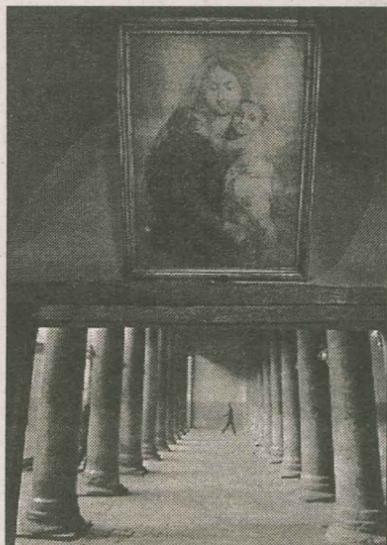
## Cross-state gift drive



Churches in and around Murray collected 1,920 Christmas toys for the Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Prestonsburg. The toys are distributed to families in the Eastern Kentucky area. This is the tenth year Blood River Baptist Association has collected toys, and this is their largest collection. **Above:** George Gray, former director of Johnathan Creek Baptist Assembly and a member of First Baptist Church of Murray, packs boxes with toys. **Right:** Steve Conner stacks boxes of toys for pickup. For the past eight years, Overnight Transportation has provided free delivery of the toys for the 380-mile trip.



## Christmas celebrations remain low-key throughout Holy Land



BETHLEHEM CHURCH A worshipper walks in the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. (RNS/Reuters photo by Reinhard Krause)

By Michele Chabin  
Religion News Service

Jerusalem (RNS)—It's Christmas-time in the Holy Land, but unless you celebrate the holiday or know someone who does, you might not even realize it.

In Israel, which is predominantly Jewish, and in the Palestinian Authority, overwhelmingly Muslim, you won't find any sidewalk Santas camped outside department stores or enticing kids to the toy department.

"Jingle Bell Rock" doesn't play in the background as you do your holiday shopping, and TV commercials don't count down the number of shopping days till the big day.

Even in such Christian enclaves as Bethlehem and Nazareth, where several thousand families celebrate the holiday with special church services, school pageants and concerts,

the atmosphere is low-key, at least by Western standards.

Part of the reason is practical: The ongoing violence between Palestinians and Israelis has scared away tourists, hurting the many Christians who derive, or used to derive, their livelihood from pilgrimages.

There's also a cultural element: Local Christians, most of them Arabs, are a minority here and elsewhere in the Middle East. Even before the intifada, they tended to maintain a relatively low profile.

Christians from abroad inevitably are surprised, even shocked, by the lack of yuletide hoopla, but many say they find the simplicity of a Holy Land Christmas not only refreshing but spiritually uplifting.

"I like the fact that it's not commercial," said Jennifer Griffin, a Fox News correspondent who has

lived in Jerusalem for four years. "It means you have to go the extra mile in creating your own Christmas environment."

For Griffin, an Episcopalian from Alexandria, Va., celebrating Christmas in the Holy Land has meant "re-creating what I remember from my childhood but without the malls and commercials telling me what Christmas should be. We can pick and choose what we want to emphasize. That makes it even better."

Griffin spent her first Holy Land Christmas in front of the camera covering the pre-millennium festivities at Manger Square.

"Unfortunately Bethlehem is a little bleak these days, but the first millennium celebration was incredible," the journalist recalled. "We were in Manger Square, and **See "Creatures hardly ..." Page 6**

Dated material — Please deliver by Wednesday, December 24

## SBC leaders propose withdrawing and defunding BWA

By Trennis Henderson & Greg Warner  
Editor & ABP Editor

Nashville—A study committee is recommending that the Southern Baptist Convention withdraw its membership and funding from the Baptist World Alliance, the worldwide fellowship of 43 million Baptists, in order to create a more conservative international body.

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz, who labeled the proposal "a sin against love," warned that the recommendation "will bring a schism within the life of our worldwide Baptist family."

"The Scripture commands us to love one another," Lotz declared. "Schism is a sin against that unity which is necessary for evangelism."

Southern Baptist leaders, who directed a successful two-decade campaign to root out "liberalism" within the SBC, have been less successful advancing their conservative cause within BWA. A proposal drafted by a special study committee accuses BWA of "advocating aberrant and dangerous theologies" and refusing to hear Southern Baptist

objections.

The proposal to withdraw accuses BWA of questioning biblical inerrancy, promoting women as pastors, and downplaying the doctrine of salvation only through Jesus.

"Continuing to allow presentations that call into question the truthfulness of Holy Scripture, refusing to support openly the idea that all who are saved must come to the salvation through conscious faith in Jesus Christ, and promoting women as preachers and pastors are among the issues that make it impossible to endorse the BWA as a genuinely representative organization of world Baptists," said the report of the BWA Study Committee released Dec. 19.

### "Spectrum of theological thought"

"The BWA rejects categorically this false accusation of liberalism," Lotz responded. "Of course there is a spectrum of theological thought in all of our conventions, just as in local churches, but we belong to one another because we belong to Christ."

"Every pastor and every deacon knows that nobody in their church agrees on everything," Lotz said. "The main orthodox beliefs are crucial—the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the cross, the resurrection, the Second Coming—that's who we are as Baptists."

Noting that current Southern Baptist leaders are not united on such issues as Calvinism vs. Arminianism, Lotz asked, "Who is aberrant in theology there?"

"The BWA does not have a liberal agenda, but we pray that we have a biblical agenda of following in the footsteps of Christ to win the world to His leadership and rule," he said. "We have rejected the theology of liberalism."

The study committee is recommending that the SBC withdraw its membership and financial support from BWA as of Oct. 1, 2004. The deleted funds would be used "to develop and execute a new and innovative strategy for continuing to build strong relationships with conservative evangelical Christians around the world as together we witness to

the saying power of our Lord Jesus Christ," the report says.

The statement adds that some of the more conservative Baptist bodies around the world already have expressed interest in the new SBC-led organization, raising the possibility of two competing worldwide organizations of Baptists.

Until recently, the Southern Baptist Convention provided \$425,000 a year to BWA. The SBC voted in June to cut that contribution by \$125,000 this year. If the new plan is approved, the remaining \$300,000 would be cut next year.

Southern Baptists, who were instrumental in founding BWA in 1905 and have always been its largest member, also provide the lion's share of BWA's budget, which this year totaled \$1.69 million.

Citing the report's claim that the BWA "seems poised to become ... a super-denomination," Lotz said, "I have never heard that in all my life. We emphasize so much the autonomy of the local church and of the national conventions. We are biblical and do believe we are bound together because we're bound to Christ."

## BWA's Lotz: SBC proposal is 'triumph of ideology over doctrine'

By Trennis Henderson

Washington—A Southern Baptist proposal to end a 99-year-relationship with the Baptist World Alliance is a "triumph of ideology over doctrine," according to BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz.

"SBC doctrine is a call to unity among its churches," Lotz said. "Why then separate from the world of Baptists? In the end, it became a question of power and control and the desire of forcing Baptists of the world to fit into one particular mode or mold or interpretation of thinking. This is contrary to all Baptist understanding of the competency of the individual and of soul liberty!"

Korean Baptist pastor Billy Kim, president of BWA, noted that "Baptist friends around the world deeply regret the decision by the Southern Baptist Convention (study committee) to withdraw their membership from the Baptist World Alliance and consequently terminate funding to the organization."

"My request is that our global friends will pray for the SBC and the BWA during this period of transition," Kim added. "Pray that we will not lose the focus of our call for fellowship, encouragement and the propagation of the gospel."

Lotz questioned the study committee's claim that SBC leaders have failed to "se-

cure a just forum" to air their concerns.

Noting that study committee members Morris Chapman, James Draper, Paul Presser and other Southern Baptist representatives have key leadership positions in BWA, Lotz said, "If you go through our members who chair key committees, I am questioned (by other BWA members) for having too many Southern Baptists in leadership positions."

### Lotz rejects 'lockstep-like mentality'

"We're family," Lotz insisted. "You can't have your way all the time. ... We don't have a lockstep-like mentality where everyone has to repeat the same thing" about issues being discussed or debated.

Chapman said the committee's discussions "could be summed up in one question, 'In this generation and for generations to come, will the Southern Baptist Convention best be represented around the world by the Baptist World Alliance, or will the convention be its own best representative?'"

"Given the wide range of theological views represented by the BWA," Chapman added, "we are convinced that it is best that Southern Baptists work directly with likeminded unions and conventions around the world rather than through the

BWA."

Responding to the committee's charge of liberalism, Lotz said, "Of course, the BWA rejects categorically this false accusation of liberalism. It is sad that in the 21st century we use loaded terms to end discussion and to eliminate the thoughts of other people. It is a form of McCarthyism."

"Since the conservative resurgence (in 1979), BWA leadership has bent over backwards to accommodate the concerns of the present Southern Baptist leadership, but alas now to no avail."

Looking to the future, Lotz said, "We, of course, will be very sad if indeed the Southern Baptist Convention in June withdraws from the Baptist World Alliance. I think it will be bad for the SBC and will further isolate their missions work overseas."

"I think it will make it more difficult for Southern Baptist missionaries," he added. "How will they relate to national conventions that are members of the Baptist World Alliance?"

"Personally, I fear for the Southern Baptist Convention," Lotz said, "because this decision follows in a long line of other decisions that, I believe, will ultimately lead to the dissolution and self-destruction of the SBC."

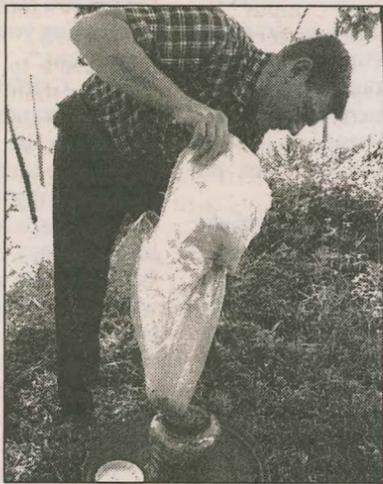
With additional reporting by Baptist Press

### SBC vote expected in June

The study committee's report will be presented to the SBC Executive Committee in February and, if approved, to Southern Baptist Convention messengers next June.

The study committee's members include leaders who have been prominent in the conservative shift in the denomination, including four former SBC presidents. They are: Morris Chapman, committee chairman, president of the SBC Executive Committee; James Draper, president of Lifeway; Oklahoma pastor Tom Elliff; and Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as retired Houston judge Paul Pressler; Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board; Joe Reynolds; Gary Smith; and Bob Sorrell.

"Our fervent hope is that the exodus of Southern Baptists from the BWA will galvanize other member bodies scrupulously to examine and to correct the present trajectory of the BWA," the report states. "Whatever the case, we wish Heaven's blessings on the BWA and its constituent conventions in every noble work for the Savior."



**FARMER & EVANGELIST** Missionary Calvin Fox, seen in action at the demonstration farm he developed in India, died Dec. 14 at age 62. (BP file photo by Don Rutledge)

## IMB's Fox relieved physical, spiritual hunger

Gentry, Ark. (BP)—Southern Baptist agricultural missionary Calvin Fox, who shared the gospel of Christ and better farming methods with hungry families in the Philippines and India, died of a heart attack Dec. 14 at his home in Gentry, Ark.

Fox, 62, had recently arrived in the United States from India, where he and his wife, Margaret, had worked since 1995 among some of the nation's poorest tribal highlanders. They brought the simple but effective SALT (Sloping Agricultural Land Technology) farming method developed in the Philippines by Fox's longtime colleague, Southern Baptist missionary Harold Watson. Fox's adapta-

tion of the method, called "Indian SALT," helped tribal farmers grow more and better food while reversing the soil erosion that has devastated much of Asia's uplands.

"In the last eight years, Calvin has led in eliminating the desperate physical hunger the people he served had been experiencing, and ministering at the same time to their spiritual hunger," said Clyde Meador, executive vice president of the International Mission Board. "The 'hunger season' was eliminated from their agricultural calendar, while he developed agricultural techniques that have been adopted throughout many parts of South Asia. At the same time, he led in outreach efforts that saw 100

churches become more than 2,000 churches in these last few years."

Combining farming and evangelism started early for Fox, who grew up in the small agricultural community of Gentry. His call to ministry came into focus during his college days at the University of Arkansas, when he went to the Philippines as a Baptist Student Union summer missionary in 1962.

"God showed me how I could use my agriculture training as I told the people about Christ," he said.

Fox is survived by his wife and three adult children. The family requested that memorial contributions be made to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

## Dream leads S.C. volunteers to bring clothing & love to Eastern Kentucky

By Shirley Cox  
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Jenkins—Instead of relaxing the day after Thanksgiving, 45 members of Grace Baptist Church in Whitmire, S.C., began a seven-and-a-half-hour journey to Eastern Kentucky.

The mission caravan to Jenkins included two Ryder trucks and 11 cars carrying 240 Bibles, 277 boxes of food, 500 pounds of potatoes and more than 300 boxes of blankets, diapers, coats and clothing.

Fifteen older members, the rest of the tiny congregation, stayed behind to pray for the church's first mission trip.

Member LaDonna Dickert said the project all began with a dream one morning in early October.

"It was like a cloud over me with God's face in it," Dickert recalled. "He told me to go feed Kentucky."

Shortly thereafter, she relayed the dream to her father and stepmother, who had just seen a television program about hunger in Eastern Kentucky.

Dickert got in touch with David Aker, director of mountain missions for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He referred her to Bessie and Lester McPeek.

The McPeeks serve as Mission Service Corps workers in Jenkins and helped coordinate the mission trip for Grace Baptist's members.

Church members requested donations from businesses and surrounding communities and were overwhelmed by the response.

It didn't take long for the team to see the results of their work when they arrived in Jenkins. The first evening, a 15-year-old boy made a profession of faith during an evening time for testimonies and worship.

The next morning, the team distributed food and clothing to more than 200 families at Skyview Park in Haymond, a small community between Jenkins and Neon.

McPeek said the team brought two important things for ministry.

"They not only brought the tangible things, they brought the Spirit of the Lord with them," he said.

Mrs. McPeek said the team brought enough clothing to give to two other congregations.

"Even the young children of the mission team showed the people of Eastern Kentucky so much love and compassion," she said.

"God has truly bonded us together. They plan to come back and share their love every year."

# A year of ministry, events

*2003 also could be remembered for what changed and what might change*

By David Winfrey  
News Director

Changes, potential changes and opportunities for spiritual change were among the more news-making events for Kentucky Baptists in 2003.

From a new strategy for the state convention to a variety of large spiritual gatherings, Kentucky Baptists have had a number of opportunities to experience change and renewal.

Doubtless, readers could come up with a list different from the one below, and some are likely to point out items we missed.

But here's a subjective, chronological list of the top 10 news-making events in 2003, based on how they did, or could, impact Kentucky Baptists and their congregations:

**January: Churches continue to endure insurance blues.** Pastors and churches saw staff insurance costs rise anywhere from 23 percent to 60 percent, according to reports from pastors throughout the commonwealth.

The increases affected church budgets and pastors' salaries, depending on how churches dealt with the rate hikes.

"It's definitely a crisis situation," said Don Spencer, head of the Kentucky Baptist Convention annuity department.

Churches that give pastors lump-sum payments likely are doing them a disservice, he added.

"They'll tell the pastor, 'We'll give you \$1,000 more.' But if a pastor is looking at a \$1,500 increase in medical insurance, he's losing."

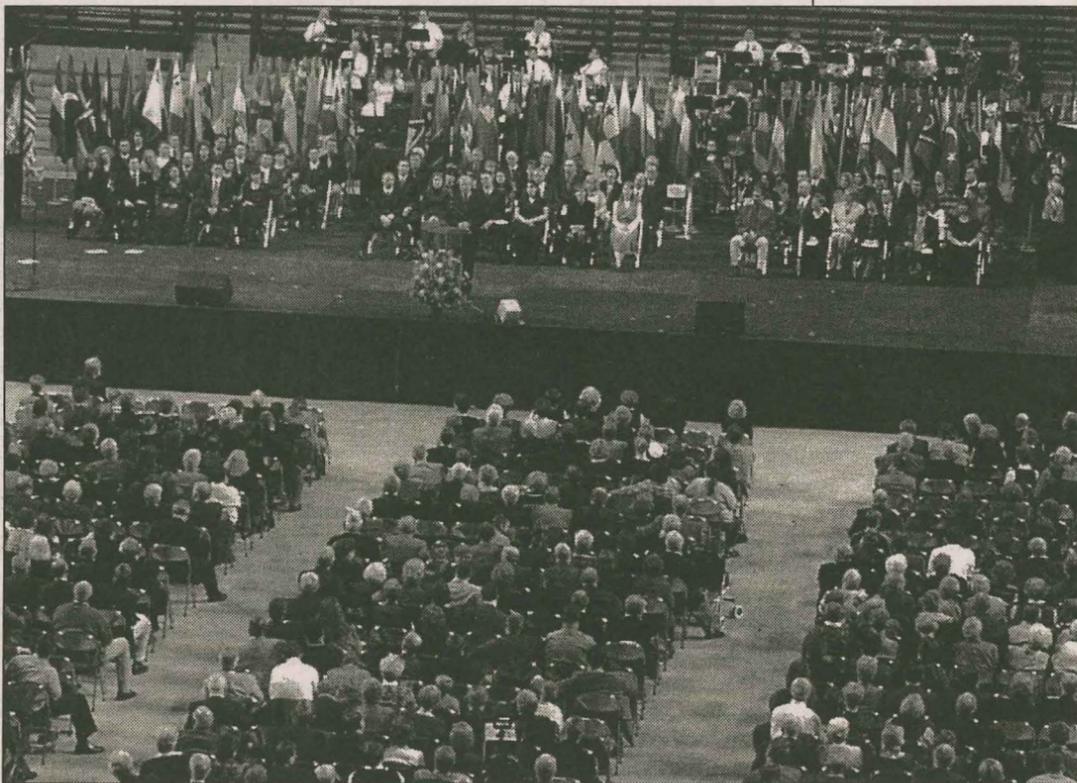
Higher malpractice insurance costs forced a Henderson medical clinic to close Aug. 1. The civic award-winning ministry, operated by Green Valley Baptist Association, found the insurance costs would increase to approximately \$35,000.

**March: Gulf war provides ministry opportunities.** Churches near Fort Campbell, home of the 101st Airborne division, were called into action to support families of servicemen and women.

The 41 churches that make up Christian County Baptist Association took part in Operation Eagle Care, taking soldiers' children to ball games, delivering food and finding other ways to help out.



**CAMPBELLSVILLE REVIVAL** A tent revival this fall at Campbellsville University resulted in professions of faith, extended periods of worship and prayer and spontaneous confessions of sin. (Campbellsville file photo)



**April: Kentucky Baptists collect food boxes for Iraqis.** Ministry in the wake of the war wasn't limited to local families.

Kentucky Baptists collected 1,500 boxes of food and nearly \$13,000 to feed families in Iraq. The 70-pound boxes, filled with rice, dry beans, tea and other supplies, were part of 46,000 such boxes shipped to Iraq for ministry.

**April, July & September: Anne Graham Lotz, Promise Keepers & Rick Gage come to Kentucky.** Beginning in April with Anne Graham Lotz speaking in Lexington, Kentucky Baptists took part in several large gatherings designed to encourage spiritual growth or conversions. Approximately 9,000 women attended the Graham-Lotz event at Rupp Arena.

About 12,000 men attended a Promise Keepers rally in Louisville in July, and more than 10,000 people attended an evangelistic crusade in London sponsored by Baptists in Eastern Kentucky. The crusade, featuring evangelist Rick Gage, resulted in more than 500 spiritual decisions, including 220 first-time professions of faith.

**April: HIPAA law affects hospital visits.** Many ministers and other church members found that their ministries to people in hospitals were affected by a new privacy law, enacted in April.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act eliminates all public access to personal healthcare information. Some hospitals that previously had let clergy see their patient list changed their practices, resulting in the loss of some ministry opportunities, pastors said.

"If you want your pastor to visit, you ought to let him know," said Ted Hodge, director of pastoral care for Baptist Hospital East in Louisville.

**May: Mission Study Committee unveils proposed changes.** With a focus on connecting churches to more ministry opportunities, a 15-member KBC Mission Study Committee released a five-year strategy for

starting new churches, strengthening existing congregations and preparing more Kentucky Baptists for leadership.

The committee's report, adopted by the KBC Mission Board, offered a mission statement that the KBC exists "to assist Kentucky Baptist Convention churches and ministries and associations in connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

**September: Kentucky Cooperative Program gifts fall below budget for second year.** CP is the funding mechanism Kentucky Baptists have for supporting state and Southern Baptist programs, ministries and missionaries.

Kentucky churches gave \$21.8 million in CP gifts in fiscal year 2002-03, nearly \$1.4 million below the budget.

The drop in giving and the Mission Study Committee's report led to several changes in the KBC Mission Board staff.

**September: Campbellsville student revival leads to "something special."** In addition to the 22 professions of faith and 21 other decisions, students took part in extended periods of prayer and worship and spontaneous confessions of sin.

"Something special is happening," Campus Minister Ed Pavy said shortly after the revival ended.

**November: Missionaries come to Rupp for commissioning.** More than 3,500 people attended the service in Lexington's Rupp Arena to honor 67 Southern Baptist missionaries committing their lives to service around the globe. The commissioning service was held in conjunction with the KBC annual meeting.

**November: Brazil partnership started for KBC churches.** During the KBC annual meeting, Executive Director Bill Mackey signed a partnership agreement for a three-year agreement for Kentucky churches to work with Brazilian Baptists in the state of Piaui.

The goals for the partnership include helping start at least 100 churches in the state, which is considered among the least church states in Brazil.

**COMMISSIONING SERVICE** Kentucky Baptists took over Lexington's Rupp Arena in November for a commissioning service for 67 Southern Baptist missionaries. (KBC file photo)

## WESTERN RECORDER

P.O. Box 43969  
Louisville, KY 40253  
(USPS 679-380)

TRENNIS HENDERSON  
Editor

DAVID WINFREY  
News Director

MAURI SMITH  
Marketing & Business  
Manager

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

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 244-6470. Fax: (502) 244-6474. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

To subscribe: Send \$12.19 for a one-year, individual subscription. Group subscriptions on the church budget plan are \$9.75 per year. An additional church newsletter service is available for churches of all sizes. All subscriptions are payable in advance, except church accounts, which require a tax exemption number.

POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to: Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253.

To register change of address: Send the mailing label from page 1, along with your new address, to the subscription department at the Western Recorder address.

To give news tips: Call (502) 244-6471, fax to (502) 244-6474 or write the editor or news director.

To submit a letter: Letters from subscribers on any subject will be considered for publication, provided they do not make a personal attack on anyone. Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for length. Submit by mail or fax or by e-mail to: wesrec@earthlink.net

To place an advertisement: Rates are available upon request by calling (502) 244-6470. Institutional columns are paid space. Claims made by advertisers are not necessarily those of the Western Recorder's staff and directors.

Directors:  
Chairman **Bill Thurman**, Lexington;  
Vice Chairman **Linda Polley**, Elizabethtown;  
Secretary **Mike Harmon**, Princeton;  
**Skip Alexander**, Campbellsville;  
**Dan Francis**, Erlanger;  
**David Harmon-Vaughn**, Louisville;  
**Ken James**, London;  
**Don Mantooth**, Morehead;  
**Bill Marshall**, Louisville;  
**Floyd Price**, Prestonsburg;  
**Rodney Travis**, Hopkinsville;  
**Marc Whitt**, Richmond.

## Kentucky connections

I am writing in regard to an article published in the Nov. 4 issue of the Western Recorder titled "God laid cross-cultural plan in their hands, church leaders say" about a Baptist church that is sharing its facilities with several ethnic congregations.

All of this is taking place in Texas, but it has strong Kentucky ties.

My husband, Paul Adams, is minister of music at Memorial Baptist Church in Murray. Our daughter, Tricia Ryan, is a Murray State University graduate. She was very active in the Baptist Student Union when she was there as a student. She was the head of the minister of music search committee that extended the call to Jair Campos, the pastor of Igreja Batista Brasileira Central, the Brazilian Baptist congregation that shares the facilities of Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Bedford, Texas.

Our daughter also is the head of the drama committee that produces the Christmas drive-through presentation of Christ's life highlighted in the article.

As you can see, this Texas Baptist ministry has Kentucky written all over it.

Patricia Adams  
Murray

## The key to certainty

With all due respect to Henlee Barnette, I respectfully disagree with his contention that those "Protestants (who) absolutize the Bible, claiming it has no errors" (among others he has listed) "results in arrogance, paranoia and hardness of heart."

I am one of those Protestants who adheres to the phrase of the Baptist Faith & Message, which states that the Bible "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture

of error, for its matter" (Article 1: The Scriptures). One cannot know about God's work, about God's will nor about God's nature outside of the special revelation of His Word. With this in mind, it does not lead to "arrogance, paranoia and hardness of heart," but toward an incredible humility that God in His grace and mercy would reveal Himself to such sinful creatures and offer the hope of Christ.

Barnette lists off a number of items to which many cling. By starting off with a question asked by his college professor, "What do you really know?", he then proceeds to tear down what many think they know.

What is his solution? He offers what we apparently shouldn't hold to, then offers no other options.

For me, I shall hold to God's Holy Word, the Scriptures, for in them through the guiding of the Holy Spirit, I meet God and His redemptive work marked by Jesus Christ, the center of all Scripture. "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). It is here with God's Word that my "search for certainty" ends.

Matthew Perry  
Lexington

## The God of Abraham

The Dec. 2 edition of the Western Recorder contained an article that quoted three "conservative Christians" criticizing President Bush for his statement that he be-

lieves Christians and Muslims worship the same God. Of the many things that I as a Christian can criticize President Bush for, this is not among the more important, especially since it is not necessarily inaccurate.

It seems these critics don't like someone else defining who their God is. To the best of my knowledge, "Allah" simply means "God" and according to Islam's prophet, Muhammad, he believed the God for whom he claimed to prophesy was the same God of Abraham and of the followers of Jesus.

Clearly, the teachings of Muhammad and of Islam about God and about what God wants of people differ from the teachings of Christianity. This means that modern Christians and modern Muslims believe different things about the God the particular group worships. The same thing can be said of different Christian groups.

Does this necessarily mean they worship different Gods? I cannot answer that question definitively, but I know I can't possibly tell someone else what they believe; only the individual can truly know what he or she believes.

To the best of my understanding, modern Muslims believe their God is the same God that Abraham worshipped. It seems to me that Christian leaders telling Muslims who Islam's God is or is not are doing the very thing for which they are upset with President Bush in the first place.

David Bowden  
Elizabethtown

## 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.

## Resolution of appreciation

My wife, Kay, and I are extremely humbled and grateful for the resolution of appreciation for Kay's ministry presented by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board's administrative committee and approved by the Mission Board at its recent meeting. Among other statements, the resolution expressed appreciation for Kay's unique service to Kentucky Baptists; commended her godly service to her husband, Kentucky Baptists and our Lord; and requested Mission Board members to uphold Kay in their prayers.

The administrative committee also presented her with a beautifully framed print titled "Bluegrass Summer." This picture will serve as a daily reminder of this memorable resolution of appreciation.

It was in the summer of 1997 that Kay and I prayed that if God could use us together in ministry in Kentucky, we would be most willing. It has been a rewarding experience for us to minister together

er among Kentucky Baptists over the past six years. We enjoy being with people and Kay has a gift for helping people feel comfortable, engaging them in conversation and connecting them with the Baptist family.

Kay remembers how this style of ministry made a vital impact in her own life. She tells about how when she was a child, a teenage girl named Louise came to her grandmother's house on a Saturday and asked permission to take Kay to church on Sunday. Kay had often listened to the music coming from the church through its opened windows and longed to go inside. Adults had previously invited her as they passed by the yard overlooking the church but it was God's use of this sensitive and obedient teenage girl that had the greatest effect.

Kay has a busy ministry. She has spoken in numerous women's conferences, Women on Mission retreats and ministers' wives con-

ferences. She has been available to Kentucky Baptists wherever we might end up on a given weekend.

She is also very committed to and active in promoting missions. On a recent Sunday afternoon, Kay wanted to stop at New Washington and become acquainted with the historic site developed by early settlers. As she looked through some books, she found one written in the 1930s to promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. It seems that more than 120 missionaries had returned home due to a lack of funds.

We were amazed at how relevant the book is for today. This would be a wonderful time for you to demonstrate your commitment to missions by giving the largest individual gift to missions that you have ever given. That is what Kay and I plan to do.

It may be that you know someone who is deserving of a resolution of appreciation. The cost is only a little thought and a piece of paper, but the value can only be calculated in eternity!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## STEWARDSHIP

## Traditional vs. Roth IRAs: What's the difference?

By Don Spencer

As we come to the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004, many people start thinking about the approaching tax season.

This is the time of year when you will see more advertising about IRAs. This is especially true at

the beginning of the year because you still have until April 15 to contribute to your IRA for 2003.

Whenever I discuss IRAs, I find most folks lack a clear understanding of the differences in the traditional IRA and the Roth IRA. Here is a brief overview of the primary differences.

■ **Eligibility.** For both types of IRAs, you or your spouse must have taxable earned income. For the traditional IRA, you must be under age 70 and a half. There is no age limit on the Roth IRA.

■ **Contribution limits.** You can contribute 100 percent of your taxable income up to the annual limit (see additional information below). For the Roth IRA, contributions are phased out as your taxable income rises.

■ **Tax deductibility.** Contributions to a traditional IRA might be deductible on your tax returns, subject to your income and participation in other retirement plans. The Roth IRA contribution is never tax deductible.

■ **Annual limits on contributions.** For 2003 and 2004 the limit on both types of IRAs is \$3,000 if under age 50 and \$3,500 if age 50 or older. (This limit is scheduled to increase in future years.)

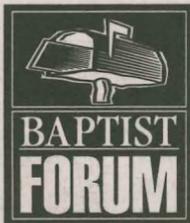
■ **Future tax liability.** Deductible contributions and all earnings in a traditional IRA grow tax-deferred but are taxable when withdrawn. From a Roth IRA, contributions and qualified distributions of earnings generally can be withdrawn tax-free.

■ **Early distributions.** For both, before age 59 and a half, early distributions are subject to a 10 percent tax penalty except under specified circumstances.

■ **Required distributions.** Minimum distributions are required from a traditional IRA at age 70 and a half. For the Roth IRA, there is no required distribution during the lifetime of the account holder. This is a major and unique advantage of the Roth IRA.

Note that a Roth IRA, although not tax deductible, allows the money to earn tax-free in all future years.

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



## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

## Serving others reflects true spirit of Christmas season

**Q: How can I help my child capture the true spirit of Christmas?**

The days leading up to Christmas are exciting times for boys and girls! As Dec. 25 approaches, a simple ministry project can provide lots of fun while at the same time gently guiding children toward the true meaning and spirit of Christmas.

Holidays can be dismal days for those who are sick or homebound, or who do not have family with whom to celebrate. Children's voices bring cheer, so record a Christmas greeting! You will need a cassette recorder that records and a blank tape.

Begin the tape with a simple hello or introduction. Then go around and let each person in your family say their name. Next, sing several simple Christmas carols. Be sure to include a fun song or two, such as "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" or "Jingle Bells." Read the Christmas story from Luke 2. If your child is able, let him or do the reading. Finish by singing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

Children can help wrap the gift. Be sure to include a picture of your family. You won't have any trouble finding someone to receive your present. Many churches have special ministries to homebound members. If not, contact a local nursing home or hospital.

During December, children also might enjoy making and leaving Christmas cookies for the mail carrier or garbage collector. Be sure to include a card that gets at the real meaning of Christmas. These can be handmade by the child.—David Garrard

**Q: As my wife and I grow in our relationship with Christ, our marriage is getting better and better. I struggle, however, with my desire to measure my spiritual growth. Are there any tangible ways for me to monitor my growth?**

What a significant question. Let me first sound a cautionary note lest any of us be tempted to confuse authentic sanctification with justification by works. Having the Holy Spirit as both "resident" and "president" of your life will mean that each day you will be less conformed to the image of the world and more conformed to the image of Christ. This "inside-out" process reflects the renovating power of God in the sanctuary of the human soul.

One of the prominent spiritual leaders whose writings had a profound influence on both John Calvin and Martin Luther was Bernard of Clairvaux. His well-known treatise "On the Love of God" suggested four degrees of love that serve as useful evaluation points concerning spiritual maturity.

■ "Love of self for self's sake" is love on an infantile level that considers oneself as essentially the center of the universe. While excessive love of self might be held in check by the command to love our neighbor, individuals living at this level basically are egocentric.

■ "Love of God for self's sake" occurs when we begin to learn that God is the source of all things good, and is our sole Provider and Protector in this life. We begin to love God for what He can do for us.

■ "Love of God for God's sake" occurs as people are moved by the remarkable love of a Heavenly Father who brings us through time and again. We begin to love God, not for our necessity, but for Himself. We love because we recognize how He loves us.

■ "Love of self for God's sake" is the fourth degree of love. Here the believer begins to see his life only in terms of his usefulness to God. As individuals take on this "mind of Christ," the desire is that their wills become transfused into the very will of God.—Scott Wigginton

Family Forum writers are:

**David Garrard**, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. E-mail: dgarrard@smbclouisville.org

**Jon Rainbow**, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Campbellsville University. E-mail: jrainbow@campbellsville.edu

**James Stillwell**, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. E-mail: jamess@ibs-lex.org

**Scott Wigginton**, director of LifeCare Counseling at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. E-mail: swigginton@sbs.edu  
Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail wesrec@earthlink.net.



### PARENTING

### MARRIAGE

## KBC poised to pursue positive priorities

As the year 2003 fades into history, two key phrases in Kentucky Baptist life appear likely to endure: "Connecting all people to Jesus Christ" and "Missions Beyond the Edge."

The first, "Connecting all people to Jesus Christ," is the primary focus of the mission study plan approved earlier this year by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board.

Scheduled to be officially launched at next year's KBC annual meeting, the mission study plan already is beginning to make an impact among Kentucky Baptists. A staff reorganization plan designed to enhance the KBC's overall ministry strategy is set to take effect Jan. 1.

Even more significant than the personnel adjustments is the philosophical change that accompanies the plan. According to KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey, the Mission Board staff will "move from conferencing to consulting and coaching."

Additionally, he noted that the mission plan and staff reorganization will help streamline bureaucracy, eliminate duplication, involve a holistic ministry approach based on people rather than programs and help convention leaders and staff connect more effectively with local churches.

One of the key components in accomplishing those goals is a network of four regional church development strategists who will work closely with local churches and associations to determine specific ministry needs and help provide vital resources. Three of those four regional strategists were approved earlier this month and will begin their ministry efforts throughout the commonwealth in January.

As KBC staff, associational leaders and local churches strive to "connect all people to Jesus Christ," primary goals include encouraging each church to increase its number of baptisms by at least one each year; launching 75 churches and 50 church-type language ministries by 2010; and train-

ing thousands of leaders in such areas as worship, men's and women's ministries and Sunday school development.

The context for connecting people to Jesus is spelled out in the KBC's mission statement which declares: "The mission of the Kentucky Baptist Convention is to assist Kentucky Baptist Convention churches and ministries and associations in connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

If Kentucky Baptists truly stay focused on the goals and objectives of the mission study plan in 2004 and beyond, there is little doubt that we will be effective in connecting more people to Jesus in the years ahead.

Hand-in-hand with that goal is the theme of the 2003 KBC annual meeting, "Missions Beyond the Edge." While most convention themes offer a positive message or ministry challenge for messengers

gathered at the annual meeting, those themes typically fade from memory fairly quickly.

The call to "Missions Beyond the Edge," however, has taken on a life of its own. Beside being interwoven into virtually every aspect of last month's KBC annual meeting, the powerful, succinct theme has been repeated by convention leaders in numerous other settings.

The convention's action to enter a missions partnership with Baptists in the Brazilian state of Piaui is an obvious example of missions beyond the edge. But many other ministry projects throughout the Bluegrass State—whether social ministry projects in Eastern Kentucky, disaster relief work, ethnic church-starting efforts or local evangelism emphases—also reflect missions and ministry beyond a safe, sterile comfort zone.

As Kentucky Baptists welcome the ministry opportunities and challenges of 2004, we can have no better goals and priorities than to actively pursue "connecting all people to Jesus Christ" while practicing "missions beyond the edge."

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Tannis Henderson

## 'Small' but 'loved' in the vast cosmos

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va. (BP)—When beset by life's myriad troubles and distractions, it helps to take the long view.

In this case, the really, really long view: 14 billion light years long.

That's the approximate size/age of the visible universe from our vantage point, according to current scientific consensus.

How many stars shine out there? "Billions and billions," as the late astronomer Carl Sagan used to say.

More specifically, NASA estimates that if the 100 billion or so galaxies thought to exist contain about 100 billion stars each, the number of stars in the universe is about 10 thousand billion billion. That's 1,000,000,000,000,000,000—more than the number of individual grains of sand on all the world's beaches.

For a humbling visual perspective of our own little sliver of the cosmos, check the "Powers of Ten" online tutorial offered by Florida State University's National High Magnetic Field Laboratory (at <http://micro.magnet.fsu.edu/primer/java/scienceopticsu/powersof10/index.html>).

A "photo" series starts out 10 million light years away and zooms in toward our solar system in decreasing orders of magnitude. At maximum distance, the majestic Milky Way—which would take 100

millennia to cross in a starship traveling at light speed—appears as a bright splotch among thousands of other splotches. Far out on one of the Milky Way's spiral arms, our own sun doesn't become visible until we're one measly light year out. The earth becomes a tiny dot at 10 million kilometers.

That's just the immediate neighborhood. Visit an even more amazing Web site, "An Atlas of the Universe" (<http://www.anzwers.org/free/universe/index.html>), and navigate maps of galactic superclusters bunched together in great sheets stretching across billions of light years. Behold the Hubble Deep Field Image, a slice of sky in Ursa Major photographed over 10 days in 1995 by the Hubble Space Telescope. It reveals the light of remote galaxies as they appeared as long as 10 billion years ago. And bear in mind: We're only talking about "visible" space.

To many scientists and skeptics, and some unsteady believers, such vastness suggests a God-less cosmos—or one ruled by an impassive, clockwork intelligence unconcerned with us and the mote of dust we call home.

"Religion used to teach that the earth was the center of the universe, the single most important place that God created," reflects Adrian Barnett, an energetic exponent of atheism. "We think we are special, and that supremely powerful beings look after us. We are not

special. We are simply the result of a (probably very common) chemical accident billions of years ago, in a place where the conditions were right for life to flourish."

King David thought differently. As a youth, he probably spent a lot of time watching the night sky as he tended his father's sheep.

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth, Who hast displayed Thy splendor above the heavens!" David wrote in one of his greatest songs of praise and awe. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, And dost crown him with glory and majesty!" (Psalm 8:1,3-5, NASB).

While teaching a Sunday School class for middle-schoolers recently, I asked them how the size of God's universe made them feel in light of David's words.

"Small!" blurted one.

"Loved," said another, more quietly.

If the God of all time and space personally entered human history 2,000 years ago, as a bright star shone over David's city, do we not owe Him all we have and are—until His name is called majestic among all the peoples of the earth?

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

## Franklin Graham banters with Sudan president over faith

**Khartoum, Sudan (RNS)**—Evangelist Franklin Graham discussed religious freedom and peace issues earlier this month with Sudanese President Omar el-Bashir at a meeting in Khartoum.

Graham visited el-Bashir in the presidential palace during a three-day trip to the country that has been torn by civil war, his relief organization, Samaritan's Purse, announced.

"I hope as peace comes to your nation, that equality will come and that Christians will be able to worship as Muslims can," Graham told el-Bashir during the 35-minute meeting. "Muslims and Christians can live together peaceably, and I believe that pleases God."

The Sudanese president said religious freedom problems have been linked to the war.

"As soon as the war is over, the pressure against Christians will be over," el-Bashir said, according to Graham's organization. "We have to be sure that the freedom of religion of Christians is not less than the freedom of Islam."

The two leaders took time for a bit of religious banter.

"I want freedom of religion because I would like to convert you—we will try to make you a Muslim," said el-Bashir, prompting laughter.

Graham retorted that after a peace agreement is in place, "I would like to come back to Khartoum and preach, because I would like to convert you."

Graham was in Sudan to meet a cargo plane filled with tens of thousands of Christmas gift boxes for children that had been donated by Americans through Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child program.

## New African missionaries get 40 days of basic training

By Clinton Wolf  
SBC International Mission Board

**Nairobi, Kenya (BP)**—In much the same way biblical prophets were led into the wilderness for a time of preparation, two dozen new Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries recently completed a new "Forty Days, Forty Nights" training program.

True to its name, the program includes nearly six weeks of hands-on training, including 24 days living in a tent in East Africa's bush and a full week's stay in a Kenyan village home.

The program's first session, which began Sept. 20, proved to be an intense and rewarding experience for the participants.

"It confirmed that God has called me for this," said Kay Frost of First Baptist Church in West Monroe, La. Frost will be serving as strategy coordinator for the Subi people of Tanzania. "This is what I was made to do."

Such confirmation of calling is only part of what program developers hope new missionaries gain in the process.

Jack and Judi Sprayberry, who direct the program, want new missionaries to understand the African people and their way of life, to trench into their mission calling sensitivity, perseverance and effectiveness, as well as a balance of empathy and skill.

The program seeks to prepare new missionaries not only for situational survival and life in the African bush, but also in such areas as basic vehicle repairs and maintenance; supplies and shopping; culture and anthropology; language learning skills; diet, hygiene, health and medical care; spiritual growth; environment and ecology; and travel, communications, security and finances on the field.

New missionaries begin their "pilgrimage" at Brackenhurst International Conference Center, 45 minutes north of Nairobi, Kenya.

## Creatures hardly stirring in Holy Land for this Christmas season

Continued from page 1

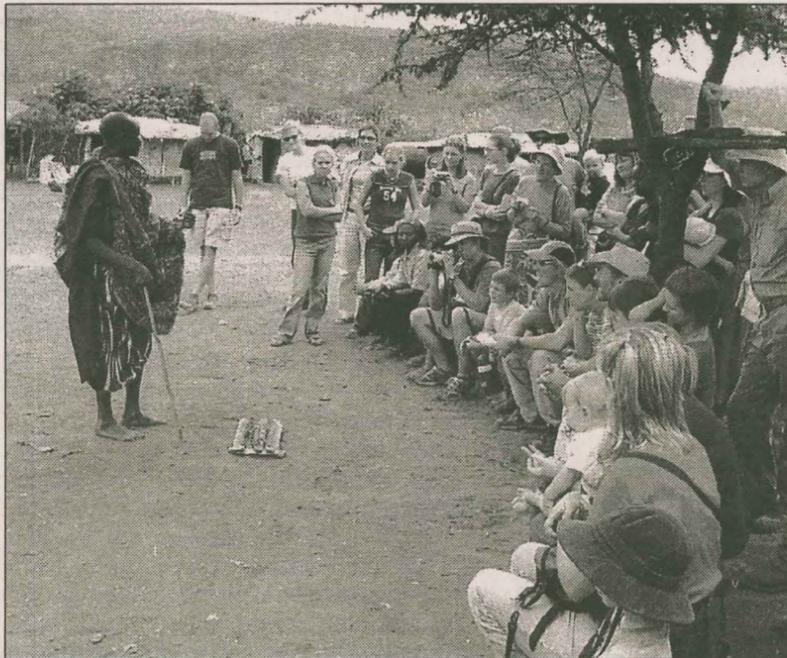
people from around the world were singing Christmas carols. We had to do live shots all night long and I remember watching the sunrise over the Church of the Nativity. It was one of my most memorable experiences here."

### Not missing commercialism

While Griffin, the mother of two little girls, admits to feeling some nostalgia for holiday movies and Nat King Cole tunes, "there's the flip side," she said. "Our older daughter isn't being inundated with commercials and people marketing things to her. She's not talking about Santa Claus all the time. She's asked for only one present this year."

"I don't miss all the commercial aspects," agreed Griffin's husband, Greg Myre, a Jerusalem-based New York Times correspondent. Even so, he marvels at just how understated a Holy Land Christmas can be.

"I've gone to work and my Jewish and Muslim colleagues didn't even realize it was Christmas Day," said



**BRAVING THE BUSH** Two dozen new Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries recently completed a "Forty Days, Forty Nights" training program to help build their understanding of the African people and their way of life. The program includes nearly six weeks of hands-on training, including 24 days living in a tent in East Africa's bush and a full week's stay in a Kenyan village home. (IMB photo)

In the relative comfort of the center's cottages and dining hall, participants receive a three-day orientation to East African culture through a blend of lectures and hands-on training.

The next five days are spent at Cross Currents Indigenous Conference Center, where missionaries learn to cook outside, wash clothes by hand and begin to make the transition to bush living.

For the next 24 days, missionaries live in tents in the African bush near Kijabe, Kenya. The program culminates with seven days living in the home of a Kenyan family, after which participants find their own transportation back to Brackenhurst for two days of debriefing.

### Hitting the ground running

Many of the new missionaries said the program helped prepare them for their future service.

Myre, a Presbyterian raised in St. Louis. "It's not that they were dismissive, it's just that they didn't notice. It's like when many Americans aren't aware of a Jewish or Muslim holiday."

David Parsons, an evangelical Christian who serves as the information officer of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, said, "There is something special about being here in the land of Israel because it is the land of His (Jesus') birth."

Parsons, from Kill Devil Hills, N.C., said the many years he has lived in the Holy Land have strengthened his faith.

"When the Bible talks about the stable" where Jesus was born, "I understand it's talking about a cave. There are still shepherds today who keep their sheep in caves. Therefore, I appreciate just how lonely (Jesus') birth was," Parsons said.

Being in the land of the Bible also helped him delve deeper into the Jewish roots of Christianity, he said.

"I've learned a lot more about

"It makes us more effective more quickly," said Kimberly Samuel of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C. "It would have taken me five months to get to where I'm at after only 40 days."

Jody and Emily Jennings of North Wake Church in Wake Forest, N.C., were among those couples taking their children with them during the training. Commenting on the effect the program had on them and their 7-month-old son, Silas, Jody noted, "We can survive whatever the conditions may be—not just survive, but thrive in conditions much more difficult than those we came from." The Jennings will serve as church planter in Jinja, Uganda.

For 15-year-old Nathan Simmons, son of Eddy and Amanda Simmons of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., it was an opportunity to see how his family

can minister together.

"It changed my perspective on what our family would be doing," the teenager said. "I thought we'd kind of have a normal life and stay home while Dad when out. Now I see how my mom can have a ministry to women, I can have a ministry to other kids. It's not just my dad. We can all have a ministry."

### Understanding local issues

Amanda Simmons noted that living with a Kenyan family gave her a greater appreciation for the lives of the women she'll minister to.

"How do you minister to a woman who is busy from 6 in the morning to 6 at night?" Amanda said. "How do you get the Word of God into her life?"

The program came about through a desire to improve orientation for the region's new missionaries, said Bob Allen, a leadership team member for the IMB's East Africa region.

The program is modeled on one that was administered by another organization but later cancelled.

Soon afterward, the Sprayberrys were appointed to direct the IMB's own program.

"Judi and I originally wanted to call the program 'East African Training with Biblical Use, Growth & Study,'" Sprayberry said, tongue in cheek. "So, in keeping with the 'acronymophobia' of our organization we would call it 'EATBUGS.'"

The "Forty Days, Forty Nights" relates the experience to Jesus' time in the wilderness, Sprayberry said, "in keeping with a time of testing, growing and becoming more like the One we are here to serve."

Allen noted that all new missionaries to the East Africa region are to participate in the orientation, in addition to normal language study. Veteran missionaries in the region also are being encouraged to take part in the program during the next few years.

the land and culture Jesus was born into," he said. "When you're here this time of year and see how Jews celebrate Hanukkah, you understand how Jesus kept Hanukkah—the Feast of Lights or Feast of Dedication."

Which is not to say Parsons and his wife, Josepha, who recalls elaborate family Christmas celebrations in her hometown of Delft, Holland, do not appreciate the way things are done in the West.

"Several years ago, my wife and I were in Antwerp at Christmastime," Parsons said. "There was music and it was colorful and there was something very joyful about it. But it also creates pressure to buy, buy, buy. Suddenly, the holiday isn't about giving but about buying, and that atmosphere detracts from the holiday's spirituality."

### Feeling closer to Jesus

Brother Lawrence Bode, the caretaker of Bethlehem's tiny Milk Grotto Church, the place where, according to tradition, Mary hid in order to breastfeed Jesus when she and Jo-

seph were fleeing King Herod, said he wouldn't want to be anywhere else at Christmastime.

"We're right here where Jesus was born, so if anything we feel even closer to Him here," the Franciscan said of his small community of brothers, who are responsible for maintaining the large and small Catholic churches and shrines that dot the Holy Land.

Despite the hardships that he and other Bethlehem residents have endured during the ongoing Palestinian uprising and Israeli security closures of their small West Bank town, Bode, who was born and raised in Manhattan, expresses optimism for the future.

"Pilgrims almost stopped visiting due to the political problems, but they started coming back three or four months ago," Bode said cheerfully. "And to the best of my knowledge, pilgrims are not having troubles at the (Israeli) checkpoints we saw a year ago."

With the optimism of a true believer, Bode said, "Hopefully it will continue."

### Bring the mission field into your home

#### Foster parenting is a calling by God to care for His

Hundreds of Kentucky's abused and neglected children won't be home for Christmas this year.

The lucky ones will be in foster care homes, receiving the unconditional love and care that their own families would not or could not provide.

Foster families are a special group. At Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, we like to think of them as a called group—called by God to care for His children.

Foster parenting is mission work. That might be hard to comprehend for those of us who have grown up learning about missionaries and mission projects overseas or in the poorest and most rural sections of the United States. But God's mission field is greater than that and can begin in our own homes.

KBHC's foster families are considered "in-home missionaries," feeding, clothing and sheltering the most vulnerable of God's children.

These are kids who need to be cared for physically, emotionally and spiritually. I can think of no greater mission field.

The Kentucky Baptist Conven-

tion's Mission Service Corps and Woman's Missionary Union also recognize the need for such in-home missionaries. KBHC is partnering with these ministries to promote opportunities for in-home missionaries and those who wish to offer these families prayer and support.

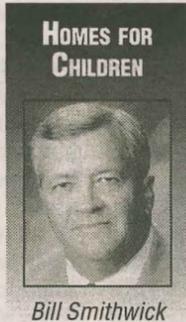
If only 10 percent of Kentucky's Baptist churches commissioned foster parents as in-home missionaries, we would have 250 foster homes built on the solid foundation of Christ's love and compassion, supported by entire congregations.

KBHC's in-home missionaries also have around-the-clock support from our staff of foster care directors and specialists throughout the state.

KBHC needs hundreds more families willing to bring the mission field to their homes and care for children in need.

Call us at (800) 456-1386 to find out how you can become a missionary without leaving home. Help us change the world one young life at a time.

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



Bill Smithwick

### Camping in Moldova

#### Trip could lead to ministry partnership for assemblies

Greetings from Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. I am writing this upon my return from Moldova. Moldova is in Eastern Europe between Romania and Ukraine. Moldova originally was part of the Soviet Union, and it still bears the look of communism.

The trip was great and as always, it challenged me personally in many ways. The people in Moldova live in a harsh environment that is full of difficulty, but they amazed me in their warm and engaging personalities.

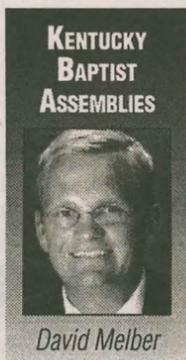
The primary focus of the trip was to evaluate a potential camping partnership with Moldova. During the time in the small country, I met with many Christian leaders. These leaders included pastors, youth pastors, Baptist union leaders (somewhat the counterpart to our Southern Baptist Convention), and people who lead Christian camps. I also toured many camps that currently are empty. Years ago they were filled with youth of all ages. Camping is very much a way of life in their country, but this habit developed under a vastly different worldview

than Christian camping.

The numerous camps located throughout Moldova originally were built for communist education. Many of these camps are littered with guard towers, high concrete fences and multistory concrete dorms—a great contrast from lodges, lakefront views and vast wooded properties as found at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. The Moldovan camps were used to spread the names of communist leaders and communist philosophy, but now we see them as opportunities to be used to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the ultimate freedom.

At this point, I am not sure exactly what our partnership will entail, but I feel absolutely certain that it will be one of the most exciting adventures in the history of our Kentucky camps. I ask for your prayers as we consider how God is leading us through this process. God continues to amaze me as He opens doors for our ministry that are far beyond what we could ever do in our own power or ability.

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



David Melber

Merry Christmas!

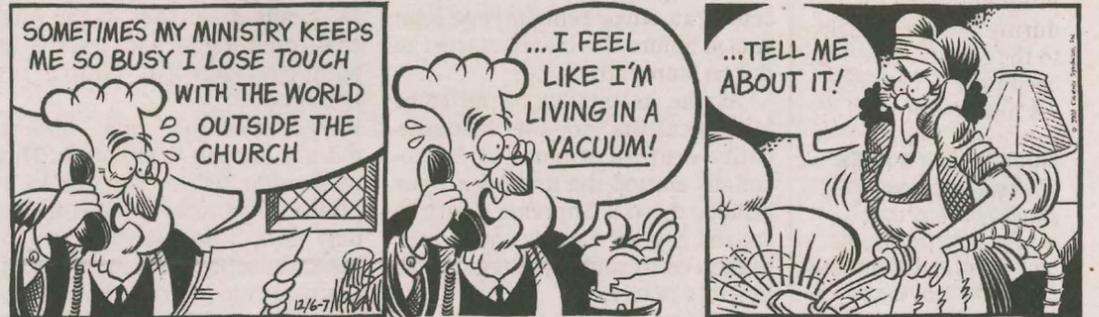
WESTERNRECORDER

### Kudzu



Doug Marlette

### For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

### Bible Crosswords

#### Across

- 1 "Do him no \_\_\_\_" (Jeremiah 39:12)
- 5 Abbott, Fr.
- 9 "Also I shook my \_\_\_\_" (Nehemiah 5:13)
- 12 Oil of \_\_\_\_, skin softener
- 13 "The \_\_\_\_ of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever" (Psalm 19:9)
- 14 "Do they not \_\_\_\_ that devise evil?" (Proverbs 14:22)
- 15 Puts on
- 16 "And it is a \_\_\_\_ thing that the king requireth" (Daniel 2:11)
- 17 "Now as he walked by the \_\_\_\_ of Galilee" (Mark 1:16)
- 18 Father of Enos (Genesis 5:6)
- 19 "Blessed \_\_\_\_ the pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8)
- 20 "And \_\_\_\_ ye not, but pursue after your enemies" (Joshua 10:19)
- 21 One of the sons of Gad (Genesis 46:16)
- 23 Librarian's whisper
- 25 "Ye have \_\_\_\_ treasure together for the last days" (James 5:3)
- 28 "For \_\_\_\_ is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10)
- 32 "And it shall be unto them ... that have sworn \_\_\_\_" (Ezekiel 21:23)
- 33 Weird
- 34 Welcomes
- 36 "\_\_\_\_, and be baptized every one of you" (Acts 2:38)
- 37 "He ... chooseth a tree that will not \_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 40:20)
- 38 "That which groweth of \_\_\_\_ own accord" (Leviticus 25:5)
- 39 "I will bless the \_\_\_\_ at all times" (Psalm 34:1)
- 42 "Let us \_\_\_\_ with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1)
- 44 "And I will give unto thee the \_\_\_\_ of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19)
- 48 \_\_\_\_ Maria
- 49 Mongrels
- 50 "And the rest will \_\_\_\_ in order when I come" (1 Corinthians 11:34) (2 words)
- 51 22nd letter of alphabet
- 52 Swedish name
- 53 Nickname for Nathaniel
- 54 "Make thee an \_\_\_\_ of gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14)
- 55 "That the \_\_\_\_ men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith" (Titus 2:2)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19				20				
			21	22			23	24				
25	26	27					28		29	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			

Elaine Okupski

56 "I will give thee ... a \_\_\_\_ of apparel" (Judges 17:10)

#### Down

- 1 Bricklayers' troughs
- 2 "Burn plant"
- 3 To speak vehemently
- 4 "The Lord is \_\_\_\_" (Psalm 23:1) (2 words)
- 5 "They fell on their face, and were sore \_\_\_\_" (Matthew 17:6)
- 6 "\_\_\_\_ ye one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2)
- 7 "Because thou \_\_\_\_ the ark of the Lord God" (1 Kings 2:26)
- 8 "And \_\_\_\_ the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:3)

- 9 "Neither shall ye touch it, \_\_\_\_ ye die" (Genesis 3:3)
- 10 Length times width
- 11 "\_\_\_\_ without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- 20 "They wandered about in \_\_\_\_ and goatskins" (Hebrews 11:37)
- 22 "Return unto thy \_\_\_\_ my soul" (Psalm 116:7) (2 words)
- 24 "A great \_\_\_\_, knit at the four corners" (Acts 10:11)
- 25 Domesticated swine
- 26 "That which ye have spoken in the \_\_\_\_" (Luke 12:3)
- 27 "I \_\_\_\_ no pleasant bread" (Daniel 10:3)
- 29 Anger
- 30 \_\_\_\_-tin-tin, hero dog
- 31 "And God \_\_\_\_ them in the firmament of the heaven" (Genesis 1:17)
- 35 Put beads on a string
- 36 "It shall be both scoured, and \_\_\_\_ in water" (Leviticus 6:28)
- 39 Molten rock
- 40 "Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod \_\_\_\_ the streams" (Exodus 8:5)
- 41 To stink
- 43 "The Pharisees began to \_\_\_\_ him vehemently" (Luke 11:53)
- 45 Jacob's brother (Genesis 25:26)
- 46 Abominable snowman
- 47 Editor's instruction
- 49 Government agency

#### Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N	U	N		H	O	R	N	E	T
A	S	A		O	N	E	A	S	T
Y	O	K	E		L	A	S	T	E
			17						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
L	Y	D	I	A		S	T	R	O
B	E		L	I	F	E		T	R
S	A	V	E	D		V	O	W	S
			34						
37	38								
S	I	N	A	I		L	E	N	T
O	R	E				N	T		
N	O		46	47	48	49	50	51	52
G	N	A	S	H	I	N	G		R
S	Y	R	I	A	N		O	N	I

## 2003 a year for war, sexual controversy & 'Roy's Rock'

By Kevin Eckstrom  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—2003 dawned with war clouds gathering over the Iraqi skies as President Bush prepared for a pre-emptive strike to dislodge Saddam Hussein.

Many Catholic and mainline Protestant leaders rallied opposition to a war they said was unjust, while evangelical and some Jewish leaders stood by the White House.

Bush largely ignored the protests from the pulpits. He reluctantly accepted an envoy sent by Pope John Paul II before the bombs started to fall on March 19.

At the same time, a different kind of culture war—over homosexuality—erupted at home as Episcopalians elected the first openly gay bishop, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay sex and Massachusetts' highest court said gays should be allowed to marry.

It seems unlikely at the close of 2003 that either war will end quiet-

ly, or that religion will surrender its place in the headlines.

In June, New Hampshire Episcopalians overwhelmingly elected the openly gay Gene Robinson as their next bishop, a decision that later was ratified by the national church and denounced by sister Anglican churches around the world.

"This is an attack on the church of God—a satanic attack on God's church," Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola said after Robinson's election. By year's end, nine of the 38 member churches in the Anglican Communion had severed ties with the Episcopal Church over Robinson.

The Robinson vote, however, did not happen in isolation. Three weeks after his election, the U.S. Supreme Court voted to overturn sodomy laws, a decision that led the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to rule in November that gay couples should have the right to civil marriage.

In July, the Vatican said there were "absolutely no grounds" to support gay marriage, and warned Catholic politicians that a vote in favor of it was "gravely immoral."

New Hampshire and Massachusetts had thrust the issue of homosexuality into every newspaper and living room in America, fueling a backlash among conservatives for a constitutional amendment to protect traditional marriage.

"These external forces trying to shape culture are galvanizing the faith community to work even harder for those historical and traditional views that America is known for," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council.

There were, of course, other religion stories that topped the headlines in 2003. Among them were:

■ **Roy's Rock.** Among the most notable religion stories of 2003 was the defiant standoff in Montgomery, Ala., between former state Chief Justice Roy Moore and opponents who demanded he remove a 5,300-pound monument to the Ten Commandments.

The monument, nicknamed "Roy's Rock," was removed under federal order in August to a back room out of public view. Moore himself was removed from office on Nov. 13 by a state panel, for disobeying the federal order.

"It is a sad day in our country when the moral foundation of our law and the acknowledgment of God has to be hidden from public view to appease a federal judge," Moore said when the monument was hauled away.

■ **"One nation, under God."** At the U.S. Supreme Court, justices agreed to hear the case of a California atheist who says the phrase "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is unconstitutional. The court heard arguments in early December on whether a public scholarship can be used for theology studies. Decisions in both cases are expected in the spring.

■ **Mel's movie.** Also expected next year is actor/director Mel Gibson's controversial film, "The Passion of the Christ," scheduled for release on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25. Jewish groups have criticized early versions of the \$30 million film for allegedly blaming Jews for the death of Christ, a charge Gibson vehemently denies.

"To be certain, neither I nor my film are anti-Semitic," Gibson said in June. "Nor do I hate anybody—certainly not the Jews."

### MOVING "ROY'S ROCK"

The court case and resulting outcry over the Ten Commandments monument in Alabama was among the top religion stories of the past year. (RNS file photo)



## 15-Passenger Van Safety is Big News these Days!

LifeWay has the solution—a 15-passenger mini-bus that meets Federal safety standards.



- Mini-Bus
- 15 Passengers (No CDL)
- 2/1 Seating
- Center Aisle
- Low First Step
- Raised Roof
- Longer Wheelbase
- Dual Rear Wheels
- Steel Construction

### SERIOUS CONCERNS

- How much financial liability can your church bear?
- Insurance rates are going up!
- Legal Advisers are saying, "Remove the last row of seats!"
- Some states have already put mandatory replacement deadlines in action!
- Charitable Organizations and Child Transportation Businesses are at Risk!

- Call us: 1-800-370-6180
- Visit us: [carpenterbus.com](http://carpenterbus.com)

**LifeWay**  
CHURCH BUSES  
Carpenter Bus Sales, Inc.  
Nation's #1 Church Bus Dealer

## 'I really wanted to thank you'

### Assistance for new Oneida student results in both shoes and a smile

On the bottom of my mail basket was a sealed envelope with a letter from a student. It is not often that I get to the bottom of my basket, so I suspect the letter had been there for several days. It was from "Philip" (not his real name). I interviewed Philip when he enrolled in August as an incoming freshman.

He was being raised in a single-parent family after the accidental death of his father when Philip was a small child.

Philip was not able to make even average grades. He told me there were two primary reasons for this. First, he "didn't understand" what was being taught. Second, because his comprehension was so limited, he "didn't do much homework." Philip was making mostly D's and F's.

Philip is a quiet boy and is now doing much better academically. At mid-term of the second quarter, he was failing two classes, but doing improved work overall. He is receiving tutorial help, and I believe that by the end of the third quarter he will be passing all of his classes.

Here is part of what Philip wrote: "I really wanted to thank you for the ... shoes that you found for me at the Friendship House. I really appreciate them so very much because I ruined a pair of my old shoes trying to get the drain unclogged in back of the grill."

My wife, Kay, sometimes takes dorm girls to our used clothing store, the Friendship House. After the girls have had a turn, the boys can shop.

The clothes are provided to the students free of charge. Philip had been to the Friendship House but could not find any shoes his size.

I had just helped unload some shoes a few days earlier, and I had seen several pairs of large shoes and boots. I had Philip return to the clothing store and showed him the shoes he had not seen. He went away very happy to have received three pair of shoes and one pair of boots.

God has blessed our lives with many wonderful things. I am grateful to the many friends who make all we do possible, including the used clothing we receive throughout the year.

Philip was not going around barefoot, but he did need some shoes. The fact that he took time to write a letter of thanks indicates how appreciative he was.

Like Philip, I want our friends to know of our appreciation for all that you have done for us.

The past three years have been very difficult financially. Yet we have carried on. We have paid our bills and we have not denied a single student scholarship funds if there were legitimate financial needs. In fact, the number of students on full scholarship has increased again this year.

To all our many friends, we say, "Thank you." May God bless each of you for the support you provide this ministry. I hope you have a very merry Christmas!

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972. [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org); e-mail: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Celebrating one year of marriage

### Berea duo say Lord meets their needs at Clear Creek

Berea native Jeff Bullens had to go to church when he didn't like it.

"Mom brought me up in a Christian home," Jeff said. "That background helped me find the Lord as a teenager."

After high school, Jeff worked for a while at McDonald's; the guy next to him on the serving line was a Christian. "He witnessed to me and led me to the Lord," Jeff said. "We discussed the Bible and he helped me learn some Scripture and taught me much about prayer. We witnessed to others at work."

Jeff married Michelle Eirich on Dec. 28, 2003, and moved to Clear Creek the next week. Both of them agree that was a real adjustment. "We were shocked by how nice people were to us and that helped make it a better transition," Jeff said.

"It's been wonderful," Michelle added. "As soon as we arrived our neighbors helped us move in and fixed supper for us."

Through the student adoption program, Jeff and Michelle are linked with Howard's Mill Baptist

Church in Mount Sterling. "They send us money every month," Jeff said. "We've made two trips to the church, once to meet them and then to give our testimonies." The church gave the Bullens a wedding shower that stocked their kitchen.

"I remembered my time at Clear Creek," Pastor Gary Ralls stated. "I wanted to get the church more involved with the school. Helping a Clear Creek family is an investment in missions."

At East Cumberland Baptist Church in Middlesboro, Michelle teaches preschool Sunday school. They both help with Team Kid, and Jeff assists with the youth group.

The campus workshop program employs Michelle in the library, and Jeff is on the maintenance crew. "When we started to school we were stressed out about how we could pay our way," Jeff said. "The Lord has blessed us abundantly. I've also learned so much in my classes."

Happy anniversary and merry Christmas!

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

## Music gift options abound as Christian artists get in spirit

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—From the Blind Boys of Alabama's soul to Andy Griffith's country to Relient K's rock, musical artists are putting their particular twist on this year's Christmas music.

Whether you're looking for a last-minute gift or seeking to stock your own musical library, you'll find Christian artists are featured on a number of recordings this holiday season.

Their Christmas tune offerings vary from the contemporary to the traditional and from vocal to instrumental.

The **Blind Boys of Alabama** team up with numerous artists for mostly recognizable tunes

of the season on their "Go Tell It on the Mountain" CD. Tom Waits offers guest vocals on their rhythmic arrangement of the title track.

Aaron Neville joins them for an a cappella version of "Joy to the World" with rich harmonies. That peaceful rendition is followed by the group's more upbeat and drum-accented arrangement of "Born in Bethlehem" featuring Mavis Staples and George Clinton's contribution to their bluesy arrangement of "Away in a Manger."

**Andy Griffith** mixes narration with some of the more well-known Christmas melodies in his album, "The Christmas Guest: Stories and Songs of Christmas."

The title story tells of a shop owner who had a vision of a coming visit from God but didn't realize the arrivals of a beggar, an old woman and a lost child at his door each had a divine quality. That and other stories—including his recitation of the Gospel of Luke's telling of Jesus' birth—are interspersed with his guitar-accented version of "Joy to the World" and his gentle arrangement of "Away in a Manger" that is combined with the lullaby "Golden Slumber."

**Relient K** opens its "Deck the Halls, Bruise Your Hand" with a fast-paced, rocking version of "Angels We Have Heard on High." The drum-heavy beat continues in "Deck the Halls" and "12 Days of Christmas" and even the "Handel's Messiah" track featuring their version of the "Hallelujah" Chorus.

But the group quiets down for its combination track of "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger" with a simpler piano accompaniment.

The CD, which features originals including "Santa Clause Is

Thumbing to Town" and "I Hate Christmas Parties," is packaged with the band's album "Two Lefts Don't Make a Right ... But Three Do."

For those who like compilations' delivery of many artists per CD, two recordings to consider are "T.D. Jakes-Presents Follow the Star" and "Integrity's iWorship—A Total Christmas Worship Experience."

Jakes' CD features the Pentecostal preacher's narration and piano playing and contemporary and traditional tracks from a range of artists.

**Mary Mary** performs the contemporary "Gift of Love" that de-emphasizes the gifts under the tree while **El Trio de Hoy** puts a Latin beat to "Silent Night." The CD closes out with a stirring "3 Wise Men Medley" featuring **Cook, Dixon & Young** (formerly known as Three Mo Tenors).

iWorship's two-CD package features a substantial array of instrumental and vocal selections. Harps accent "Good Christian Men Rejoice" for the instrumental opening of the first disc and the **Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir** closes out the package's last track with a medley ending with the worshipful "Jesus the Son of God." In between are such artists as **Sonic-Flood**, contemporizing "Angels We Have Heard on High," and the **Colorado Mass Choir**, performing a "Joy to the World" medley.

Other artists' offerings include CDs by The Katinas, Rivertribe and Steven Curtis Chapman. **The Katinas'** four-track CD, "Christmas" is packaged with their album "Roots." Their smooth harmonies accent the traditional "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow" as well as their more contemporary adaptation of "Mary, Did You Know?"

**Rivertribe**, an Australian ensemble featuring violin, African drums and Native American flutes, offers its unique instrumental versions of "Silent Night" and "First Noel" and other traditional carols on its CD simply titled "Christmas."

**Steven Curtis Chapman's** "Christmas Is All in the Heart," is available only in Hallmark Gold Crown stores and features the artist using two instruments, his voice and his guitar. Chapman's clear tones highlight his comfortable arrangements of such favorites as "Winter Wonderland," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" and a medley including "Silent Night" and "O Holy Night."

**Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done.** Larry Bossidy and Ram Charin. Crown Business, 2002. 278 pages. \$27.50. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Larry Bossidy, chairman and former CEO of Honeywell International, and Ram Charin, a consultant to CEOs worldwide, contend that the major failure of most enterprise is the failure to execute.

More specifically, the failure of most leaders is the failure to lead their organizations to execute their plans. They point out, painfully I might add, that most leaders are good about coming up with ideas and philosophizing, but weak on implementation.

In fact, they argue that most leaders they encounter in business are content, for a variety of reasons, to delegate the task of execution. They believe this is a fundamental mistake. Nowhere is the leader more needed than at this crucial point.

The bulk of the book deals with two major themes: the character and qualities of a leader who effectively leads an organization to execute its mission and plans, and the cultural system an organization needs to develop if it wants to be effective. They point out that the leader must be involved in every aspect of the business, not as a micro-manager, but as one who can engage people at every level. Further, the leader is responsible for placing and keeping the right people in the right job.

The leader must help the organization build systems and processes that serve the mission and goals of the organization.

I found myself being challenged by their insights on planning, assessment, evaluation and accountability. A direct transfer of their insights into the church might not be advisable or possible, but their insights are not lost on the church or on pastoral leadership. *Jim Holladay*

**The Lord Is My Shepherd: Healing Wisdom of the Twenty-Third Psalm.** Harold Kushner. Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. 175 pages. \$19.95. ♦♦♦♦

Next to The Lord's Prayer, the 23rd Psalm is perhaps the most used passage of Scripture in the ongoing worship life of the church. Most often we hear it read or quoted in times of death, illness or when life is difficult.

In this short, yet densely packed book, Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of "When Bad Things Happen to Good People," explores the power behind this familiar piece of Hebrew poetry.

Kushner proposes that the 23rd Psalm offers "us a way of seeing the world that renders it less frightening, teaching us to deal with the

loss of people we love and with conflict with people who don't like us. ... It shows us to recognize the presence of God ... where we think God was absent. ... It has the power to teach us to think differently, and, as a result, act differently."

In this book, Kushner takes on a line-by-line walk through the 23rd Psalm. As he does, he weaves a tapestry of insight and inspiration that draws from many streams: rabbinic wisdom and storytelling, Hebrew word studies, insights from the behavioral sciences, etc. I was amazed and encouraged by the things he drew from the words of this psalm.

For example, Kushner notes that the Hebrew phrase commonly translated "straight paths" literally means "roundabout ways that end up in the right direction." His subsequent showing how that works itself out in our lives was a powerful affirmation of the guiding hand of God in all circumstances.

Kushner's look at the 23rd Psalm will enrich any pastor's public reading of this psalm in times of grief and sorrow, and would be a wonderful gift for anyone going through tough times. *Jim Holladay*

**Shepherd Leadership: Wisdom for Leaders from Psalm 23.** Blaine McCormick and David Davenport. Jossey Bass, 2003. 149 pages. \$14.95. ♦♦♦♦

Blaine McCormick and David Davenport see Psalm 23 as more than just a source of spiritual comfort for young and old alike.

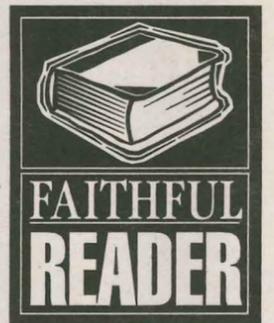
In "Shepherd Leadership" they propose Psalm 23 as a model for leaders, not only of churches but in business as well.

In order to make their point, the authors sometimes stretch the analogy of the shepherd a bit too far. Sometimes even they admit that they are moving beyond the strict boundaries of the image of a shepherd. Nevertheless, this is an excellent book that points leaders to how they can be vigilant without being adversarial, serve without being passive, and guide without commanding.

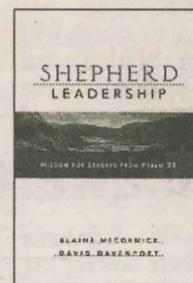
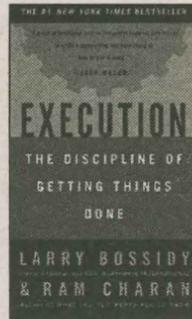
The chapter I particularly took to heart was titled, "Shepherds Transform Conflict." Most leaders attempt to keep conflict from happening, but the authors point out there is such a thing as "healthy" conflict. The problem is that most conflict is interpersonal rather than intellectual. The shepherd leader seeks a culture in which destructive conflict is held in check, while healthy conflict contributes to productivity. I also found their concept of "seeing the immortal soul" within people as an important adjustment to the attitude of a leader.

This book is well-written and not overly detailed. It can be used by anyone and in any job situation in which you must provide leadership or in which you supervise someone.

"Shepherd Leadership" is not a book of techniques but rather a guide to a particular spiritual life that will make a leader better. *Wayne Hager*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; and Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: [jcwahager@earthlink.net](mailto:jcwahager@earthlink.net); or [docholladay01@aol.com](mailto:docholladay01@aol.com)



## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ **International Service Corps workers** Hilton and Alice Jo Olive, who work with International Baptist Church in Bucharest, Romania, request prayer as the church begins a children's Sunday School and as Hilton develops a men's ministry.

■ **Workers in Bulgaria** request prayer for witnessing opportunities among Rumelian Turks (Muslims).

■ **Workers in Rome** rejoice that three refugees recently became Christians.

■ **John and Jan Strimple** praise God for the new leaders that are rising up among Polish Baptists.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—First Church will present "The Christ Candle" Christmas Eve Communion and vesper service, Dec. 24, 6 p.m. **Mark Hopper** is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church will present a candlelight service celebrating the birth of Christ, Dec. 24., 7 p.m. **Skip Alexander** is pastor.

■ **COVINGTON**—Latonia Church will host a Christmas eve candlelight Communion service, Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. **Steve Hollaway** is pastor.

■ **EDDYVILLE**—First Church will hold a candlelight Lord's Supper service Dec. 24, 5 p.m. The congregation also honored **Dale and Juanita Dunning** on their 50th anniversary Dec. 13. **Tim Perdue** is pastor.

**Keith Wilkerson** recently resigned as pastor of New Bethel Church.

■ **FINCHVILLE**—Finchville Church will hold its annual Christmas Eve Communion service, Dec. 24, 10 p.m.

■ **FLORENCE**—Florence Church's worship choir recently recorded a CD, "High Praises: Songs of Worship, Celebration and Ministry." For more information, call (859) 371-7141. **Philip Hearn** is associate pastor of music and drama.

■ **FOREST HILLS**—First Church will hold Christmas eve services, Dec. 24, 10 p.m. **Carl Hess** is pastor.

■ **FRANKLIN**—Providence Church will host a one-day revival Jan. 4 with **David Livingston** as evangelist. **Steve Curtis** is pastor.

■ **GREENVILLE**—First Church will hold a candlelight, carols and Communion service Dec. 24, 5 p.m.

■ **HARRODSBURG**—Harrodsburg Church called **Larry Camic** as minister of recreation and outreach effective Jan. 1.

■ **HENDERSON**—Immanuel Church will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service Dec. 24, 6:30 p.m.

■ **JAMESTOWN**—First Church recently ordained **Gary McClure** as a deacon.

■ **JEFFERSONTOWN**—Jeffersontown Church will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service Dec. 24, 10 p.m.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Chevy Chase Church will hold a Christmas Eve service Dec. 24, 6 p.m.

Grace Church will hold a Christmas eve candlelight service Dec. 24, 6 p.m. **Terrence Freeman** is pastor.

Immanuel Church will host a "Marriage Tune Up" Jan. 16-17 led by **Jeff and Debby McElroy**, marriage and family teachers for Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. For information, call (859) 266-3174.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Deer Park Church will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight service Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. **David Platt** is pastor.

Lyndon Church recently honored **Dixie Cox** for 35 years as a Sunday school leader, including 25 years with the church's Delcie Wakefield class. **Jim Holladay** is pastor.

South Jefferson Church will pres-



**CHRISTMAS MINISTRY** The Girls in Action missions organization at Hawesville Baptist Church helped organize a churchwide collection for Operation Christmas Child, an annual ministry by Samaritan's Purse for needy children around the world. Church members donated more than 50 boxes of toys that were delivered by GA members to the pickup point. Among GA's participating in the project were (from left) Andrea Tyler, Brittany Kratzer, Lindsey Cook, Allison Henning, Emily Veach and Shelby Brown.

ent an "Olde Fashioned Hymn Sing" Dec. 28 in the evening service.

■ **MORTONS GAP**—Freedom Church recently called **Larry Pierce** as interim pastor.

■ **MOUNT WASHINGTON**—First Church will hold a Christmas eve service Dec. 24, 6 p.m. **Paul Chitwood** is pastor.

■ **MURRAY**—Sugar Creek Church recently called **Darrell Walker** as pastor.

■ **NEW CONCORD**—Blood River Church recently called **Hal Barrow** as pastor.

New Mount Carmel Church recently called **David York** as pastor.

■ **SCOTTSVILLE**—Scottsville Church

will hold a Christmas Eve Communion service Dec. 24, 5 p.m.

■ **SIMPSONVILLE**—Simpsonville Church will hold a Christmas Eve candlelight Communion service, Dec. 24, 5 p.m.

■ **WATER VALLEY**—Water Valley Church recently honored Pastor **Howard Copeland** and his wife on their 15th anniversary.

■ **WEBSTER**—**Terry Settles** has resigned as pastor of Raymond Church effective Dec. 28. He is available for supply preaching.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—First Church will hold a Christmas Eve Communion service Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. **John Lepper** is interim pastor.

## Southern awards degrees to 26 students with Kentucky ties

Louisville—Twenty-six students with Kentucky ties were among 131 graduates at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's fall graduation ceremony Dec. 12.

Kentucky-related graduates, their hometowns and degrees are:

**Kyle Abel**, Florence, master of divinity.

**Mickey Ballard**, Richmond, master of church music.

**Peter Beck**, Louisville, advanced master of divinity.

**Todd Belcher**, Glasgow, master of divinity.

**John Christerson**, Louisville, mas-

ter of divinity.

**Mark Combs**, Hazard, master of divinity.

**Jeffery Dayton**, Louisville, master of arts in Christian education.

**Mark Dearing**, Winchester, master of arts in Christian education.

**Kari Dawn Deatrick**, Louisville, master of divinity in pastoral counseling.

**Stoney Douthitt**, Paducah, master of divinity.

**Andrew Dyer**, London, master of divinity.

**Corrie Dyer**, Campbellsville, master of divinity in pastoral counsel-

ing.

**Doug Hamblin**, Frankfort, master of arts in Christian education.

**Kenneth Hollis**, Louisville, doctor of philosophy.

**Kelly James**, Bowling Green, master of divinity.

**Gary Mounce**, Louisville, master of arts in Christian school education.

**Brian Niemeier**, Lexington, doctor of philosophy.

**William Noe**, Lancaster, master of divinity.

**Richard Ramsey**, Louisville, doctor of philosophy.

**Bryan Ray**, Bardwell, doctor of ministry in expository preaching.

**Kristy Leigh Reeder**, Bowling Green, master of arts in Christian education.

**Mark Schuerman**, Walton, master of divinity in Christian education.

**Stephen Sims**, Bardstown, master of church music.

**Sarah Sleet**, Florence, master of divinity.

**Christopher Turner**, Paducah, master of divinity in Christian education.

**Jarvis Williams**, Red Fox, master of divinity.

## Johnson resigns as Job Corps leader

Birmingham, Ala. (BP)—Trudy Johnson, the founding director of national Woman's Missionary Union's Christian Women's Job Corps, has resigned effective Jan. 5. She has accepted a position as director of Jeremiah's Hope Skills Center at St. Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham.

CWJC, established as a ministry of WMU in 1996, seeks to help equip women in need for life and employment. Clients range from former welfare recipients to underemployed single moms to former prisoners.

During its first six years, Christian Women's Job Corps has grown from six pilot projects to more than 130 ministry sites in 21 states.

Johnson's new position also will focus on helping individuals gain needed education and entry-level jobs.

"While we always regret losing

valuable staff members, we share in Trudy's excitement for this new opportunity God has opened to her and wish her well," said Wanda Lee, national WMU executive director. "We greatly appreciate her commitment and dedication to CWJC and are committed to building on the foundation she helped establish to propel this ministry into the future."

During the search for a new director, the ministry will be coordinated by WMU's missions involvement team led by Debra Berry, adult ministry consultant.

Carol Causey, director of WMU's missions resource center, said WMU leaders are "excited about CWJC's growth potential as we take steps to provide accessible training to more mentors and site coordinators and produce resources for the advancement of the ministry."

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** 1983 15-passenger Dodge van. Approximately 113,000 miles. \$1,000. Call (502) 368-2521 Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music for Elkton church to lead morning/evening worship services. Submit resumé to: Elkton Baptist Church, PO Box 547, Elkton, KY 42220.

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister for Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. Submit resumé to: Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, 954 Stacker St., Lewisburg, KY 42256, or brojoe@logantele.com.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for South Campbellsville Baptist Church. We are looking for the man God has prepared for this position. Prayerfully submit resumé to: South Campbellsville Baptist Church, 601 S. Central Ave., Campbellsville, KY 42718, Attn: Darrell Mays.

**SEEKING:** Music director, Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, Woodford County. Please call: (502) 863-1433 after 5 p.m.; or (859) 873-3337.

**SEEKING:** Associate pastor of youth and single adults. We have a fast-growing congregation with an average Sunday school attendance of more than 600. Desired candidate should have a seminary degree and 3-5 years experience leading youth ministries. Resumés with references should be submitted to: Search Committee, Zion Baptist Church, 8158 Highway 351, Henderson, KY 42420.

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

## A Christian 'Ring' to it

*Many see Tolkein's faith reflected in fantasy trilogy*

By Charles Honey  
Religion News Service

Grand Rapids, Mich. (RNS)—Ever since he broke his arm in sixth grade and killed time in the hospital by reading "The Lord of the Rings," Phil Ammar has made reading the fantasy classic an annual ritual.

He also has read most of the other writings by J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the "Rings" trilogy that has been gobbled up by more than 50 million readers.

But truth be told, Ammar is not wild about the movie versions of Tolkien's tale. The third and final installment, "The Return of the King," hit theaters Dec. 17.

"It's lost the depth of the books," laments Ammar, a 21-year-old physics major at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Millions of movie-goers beg to differ. The first two "Rings" films have grossed almost \$1.8 billion worldwide, enthraling viewers with an epic story of good vs. evil in an enchanting land called Middle-earth.

Tolkien's world is rich with religious and moral themes, according to scholars and devoted readers. Although many readers and movie goers enjoy the tale simply as a mythic adventure story, others argue the "Rings" trilogy resonates deeply with a Christian worldview.

### "Bible story retold"

As such, the books and movies have become suitable fare for church study groups, youth ministry outings and scholarly discussions of their Christian symbolism.

"It's really the Bible story retold," says Mark Moes, assistant professor of philosophy at Grand Valley State University, who has taught courses on the "Rings" trilogy.

Moes sees the story's structure as parallel to the Bible's pattern of creation, fall and redemption, with dozens of biblically related themes and characters.

A key concept is Tolkien's view of people as creatures made in God's image and instilled with God's creativity.

"The ring represents the disordered exercise of creativity," Moes says. "'The Lord of the Rings' is about redemption in the sense of getting rid of that disordered use and getting back to the right use of creativity."

These themes are subtly woven through the three Rings books, published in 1954 and 1955, and more overtly in the "Silmarillion," a massive history that takes place prior to the trilogy but was not published until 1977. The prequel to the Rings, "The Hobbit," is a relatively simple children's tale that was published in 1937.

His works reflect Tolkien's convictions as a devout Catholic, his deep interest in mythology and language and his traumatic experience in World War I, scholars say. He began writing "Silmarillion" in tents



**FRODO** Elijah Wood stars as the hobbit "Frodo" in "The Return of the King," the final film installment of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. Tolkien's world is rich with religious and moral themes, according to scholars and devoted readers. (Pierre Vinet/New Line Productions photo)

and trenches during a war that claimed most of his friends.

A scholar of Old and Middle English at Oxford who died in 1973, Tolkien wrote late into the night inventing languages for the elves of Middle-earth and constructing an elaborate history of that ancient realm.

### Theology shining through

Much of the trilogy's religious subtext is found in the "Silmarillion" with its portentous, biblical prose. It opens with a description of creation that is "like reading the first couple chapters of Genesis," says Chad Engbers, a Calvin College English professor.

The author did not set out to tell a Christian story but his theological ideas shone through, Engbers says.

"He didn't start out with a Christian theme and then figure out how to clothe that with hobbit flesh," says Engbers, who taught a minicourse on the trilogy earlier this year. "He started out with a story."

"By leaving explicit references to Christianity out of it, he maybe made it a more lasting story."

Indeed, Tolkien's friendship with C.S. Lewis cooled after the latter's publication of the allegorical "Chronicles of Narnia," Engbers says. "I cordially dislike allegory," Tolkien wrote. Instead, says Engbers, he insisted universal truth should emerge from storytelling and myth.

Even so, Engbers and others detect unmistakable Christian elements. Frodo, Gandalf and the warrior-king Aragorn all show Christ-like qualities, such as Frodo's self-sacrifice and Gandalf's return from death.

Moes said he sees the grotesque creature Gollum, who is enslaved by the ring's power, representing "the fallenness of the hobbits."

### Church discussions

Such ideas lend themselves well to ministry, some church leaders say. At Daybreak Church in Hudsonville, Mich., youth minister Clint Dupin takes teen groups to the "Rings" movies. Most students love them.

"It's easy with those movies to talk about Christ and talk about God," Dupin says.

The quest of Frodo and company is a spiritual journey offering clear choices between good and evil, he adds. "The ring (is) something that can be used for evil or it can be used for good. We deal with that a lot in student ministries: You have these gifts. Are you using them for the right purposes?"

By making the humble hobbit Frodo a strong, David-like character, Tolkien shows that "anything is possible ... with the power of God and others around you," Dupin says.

The story's battle between good and evil, both in people's hearts and in the world, resonates strongly today, says Matt Krick, who leads a film-discussion group at Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Mich.

The fellowship that sets out with Frodo on his journey to the dark land of Mordor is a "picture of the global church," with its diverse believers arrayed against spiritual evil, Krick says.

"There's a sense in which we're all a part of the fellowship," he says. "Helping Frodo get to Mordor is like marching against the gates of hell."

## Super outreach



**SUPER BOWL MINISTRY** A youth hauls in a pass during an "NFL Mini-Experience" prior to the Super Bowl last year. Such events, like this one are among the projects that Texas Baptists are planning before Super Bowl XXXVIII, Feb. 1 in Houston. (BP file photo by Morris Abernathy)

## Baptists prepare to minister to fans at Super Bowl in Houston

By John Hall  
Associated Baptist Press

Houston (ABP)—The Dallas Cowboys and Houston Texans might not make it to the Super Bowl this year, but Texas Baptists plan to be there anyway.

They hope to share the gospel with many of the 200,000 people, including 35,000 media personnel, who will descend on Houston for the Feb. 1 game. Most of the crowd will not go to the game but will attend events surrounding the competition.

"We have a great opportunity to share God's love through Christ. It's not only people in the Houston area but the whole world," said Wayne Shuffield, an evangelism consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

The Super Bowl evangelism steering committee is looking for churches to reach out to football fans the week leading up to the game by holding block parties or Super Bowl-watching gatherings. The group also is organizing volunteers to do street evangelism and encouraging mission teams to do projects throughout the city. Believers will distribute tracts and Bibles.

About 10,000 volunteers are needed to serve in 30 projects. Available positions include airport greeters, half-time volunteers and game managers. Volunteers can work events such as Taste of the NFL and the NFL Experience. Workers are needed to stuff bags and put them on stadium chairs.

Opportunities to share the gospel evolve naturally as church members serve in secular capacities, said Timothy Knopps, who has been contracted by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to work with the steering committee. When other workers ask why someone volunteered, a person can talk about their faith.

"It gets (church members) involved in the community," Knopps said. "What we've found is when a church member gets involved in the community, the community gets involved in the church."

Cooperation between Texas Baptists and Super Bowl officials benefits both parties, Knopps added. As many as 3,000 people have made professions of faith through efforts prior to the Super Bowl in the past, and the National Football League has looked to local groups to facilitate the events.

"The NFL wants to leave a legacy of good things they've done locally," he explained.

Because of the league's preference for area workers, there is ample opportunity for Baptists to minister during the Super Bowl weekend, Shuffield noted.

"Hundreds of churches carry a greater impact for the cause of the Kingdom than any one single church has," Shuffield said. "All Texas Baptists are invited to Houston."

# ~ Legacy Giving Ideas ~

Perpetuate your Christian witness *and* assure your continuing financial support to your church and/or other Baptist causes through one or more of the following legacy giving options.

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR TITHE LAST FOREVER ENDOW IT!

Assure the financial support you have provided your church during your life will continue, even after your death, by establishing an *Endowment Fund*. An endowment fund is a permanent, perpetual fund created during your lifetime, or at your death, for the support of your church and/or other Baptist causes. Only the earnings of the endowment fund are distributed/used; the original value of your gifts/bequest is never distributed. It generally takes 20 times your current annual tithe amount to create an endowment fund large enough to generate the earnings necessary to fund your tithe in perpetuity.



## INCOME FOR LIFE AND A SIGNIFICANT LEGACY GIFT

A *Charitable Gift Annuity* is a legacy giving option that permits you to provide significant financial support to your church and/or other Baptist causes, while benefiting from lifetime payments that may be partially tax-free *and* income and estate tax savings. This simple gift plan makes fixed lifetime payments to up to two beneficiaries at rates higher than those currently paid by most bonds and CD's. The annuity payment rate depends on the value of your gift and the age of the annuitant(s) at the time the gift is made—the older the annuitant(s), the higher the payment rate.



## A GIFT THAT CAN COME BACK OR BE PASSED ON



A *Charitable Lead Trust* is an irrevocable trust that provides a designated income stream to your church and/or other Baptist causes for a predetermined term of years; at the end of the trust term the remaining trust assets can be returned to you or pass to other family members. Fund your capital campaign or building program pledge through the income stream set up for the church, while assuring that some portion of what you give will come back to you or other family members at a later date. You provide significant support to the church or other Baptist cause and leverage the cost of the future gift to your family.

## A GIFT PLAN THAT ALLOWS YOU TO GIVE...AND RECEIVE

Interested in a legacy giving option that will pay you and/or others a designated income stream for life or a term of years and the remainder to your church and/or other Baptist causes at the end of the trust term? A *Charitable Remainder Trust* can do that. These irrevocable trusts can be established during life or at death. Charitable remainder trusts can provide a means of increasing income from low-yielding assets, diversifying your investments without substantial capital gains tax liability and/or creating a source of income for children, parents or other loved ones and the joy of making a significant gift to your church and/or other Baptist causes that might not otherwise be possible.



For more information

Contact:

KENTUCKY  
BAPTIST  
FOUNDATION

P O Box 436389  
Louisville, Kentucky 40253-6389

(502) 244-6466

(888) 254-5701 (Toll-free, KY only)

[www.kybaptistfoundation.org](http://www.kybaptistfoundation.org)