

February 10, 2004
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FOR THE RECORD

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Study: Some smaller churches having trouble drawing pastors

Durham, N.C. (RNS)—A Duke Divinity School report on clergy serving in America's churches shows there is a shortage of pastors willing to lead small congregations.

Patricia M.Y. Chang found in her study that there is not an overall clergy shortage but rather a "problem of balance" between available ministers and pastoral vacancies.

"The number of small congregations that cannot afford a full-time or fully ordained pastor is increasing, and the number of ordained pastors willing to serve in small congregations is decreasing," she said in the report titled "Assessing the Clergy Supply in the 21st Century."

Chang, the assistant director of Boston College's Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, said the problem seems to be widespread and increasingly acute among denominations that have declining memberships.

Churches without full-time clergy are relying instead on lay pastors, part-time clergy and pastors who are supported by either a spouse's income or retirement benefits from previous careers.

Congregations in rural areas and those with growing ethnic populations also are facing challenges in filling their pulpits.

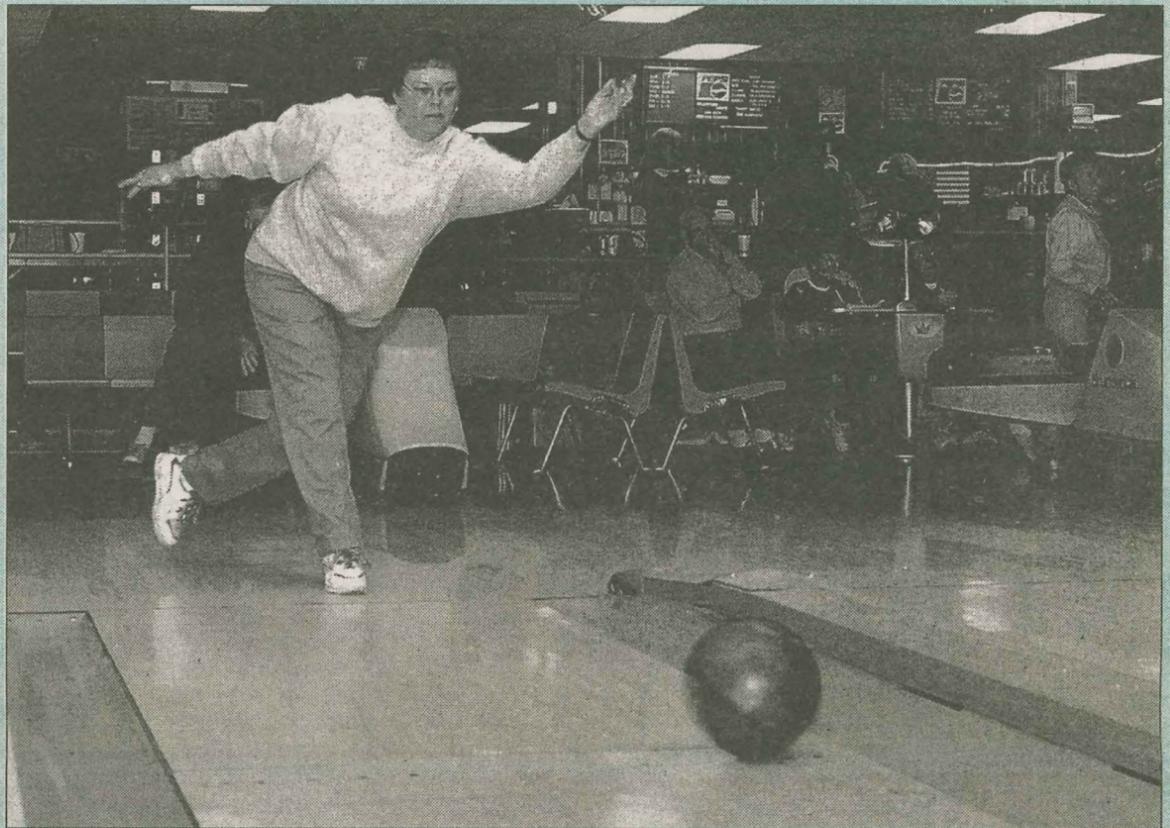
Chang said pastors of small congregations have the advantage of more "hands-on" ministry and closer relationships with members, but those congregations have trouble meeting the economic needs of full-time clergy due to limited resources.

The report's author said her findings reflect patterns within American religion where the majority of congregations have fewer than 100 regular participants but the majority of churchgoers attend medium and large congregations with more than 350 attendees. The smaller churches usually can't afford a full-time pastor while the larger ones can and may hire a pastoral staff.

Chang recommends that denominations create better systems to track active clergy and congregations in need of pastors as well as consider a restructuring of compensation and pension benefits to help small churches.

"At present, they seem to be recruiting and training clergy who aspire to work in large, well-funded congregations," she concluded. "Unfortunately, these are precisely the kinds of congregational opportunities that seem to be decreasing."

Baptists on a roll



For about 60 years, Louisville's Baptist Bowling Association has sought to create a Christian environment for local bowlers. The group, which owns its own 20-lane bowling alley, is looking to grow after surviving some lean years. **Above:** Linda Hornback, a member of Shively Heights Baptist Church, bowls in a Tuesday night league game. **Right:** Holand Warren, also of Shively Heights, opens the league games with prayer as association board secretary Gladys Minton joins in. "If we get a chance to talk to someone about the Lord, we do," Minton said. *Story on page 6.*



Kentucky churches using 'Passion' in outreach



THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST Several Kentucky Baptist churches are using Mel Gibson's film about Jesus to help members share their faith. (Icon Films photo)

By David Winfrey
News Director

Hopkinsville—Coming back from Chicago to see a screening of "The Passion of the Christ," Nick Sandefur and Keith Sanderson, started brainstorming about how they could share the movie's message with others in Hopkinsville.

"We realized it's a pretty powerful thing," said Sandefur, pastor of Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville.

Edgewood is part of a growing number of Kentucky Baptist churches using the film as an outreach for members to share their faith with unchurched friends.

Throughout the commonwealth, pastors say the movie is a powerful witness that will impact

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, February 11.

See A 'Passion' for ..., page 3

Rankin: IMB partnerships unhindered by BWA proposal

By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

Richmond, Va. (BP)—The proposed withdrawal of the Southern Baptist Convention from the Baptist World Alliance is not expected to affect the ministries of Southern Baptist missionaries or the International Mission Board's partnerships with Baptist unions around the world, IMB President Jerry Rankin told the board's trustees.

"A lot of publicity has been generated by the recommendation of a task force that had been meeting for several years that the Southern Baptist Convention withdraw from membership in the Baptist World Alliance," Rankin said during a Feb. 2 IMB trustee session in Richmond, Va. "This recommendation is a matter of organizational affiliation that does not affect the bilateral relationships between the International Mission Board and Baptist conventions and unions which may be members of the BWA or participate in regional fellowships."

Doctrinal parameters

While the BWA emphasizes unity in diversity, Southern Baptist leaders feel there must be parameters in terms of theology and doctrine in

order to have an authentic basis of fellowship, Rankin said.

"Our commonality must be biblically based and represent more than the common identity of the name 'Baptist,'" Rankin said. "It is felt that the BWA has become a forum for those advocating aberrant theological positions, and Southern Baptists have been increasingly concerned about the pattern of disrespect for conservative positions being expressed in BWA commissions and sessions."

BWA leaders have repeatedly refuted those charges. "Of course, the BWA rejects categorically this false accusation of liberalism," said BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz. "It is sad that in the 21st century we use loaded terms to end discussion and to eliminate the thoughts of other people."

Rankin's views also stand in contrast to those of national Woman's Missionary Union leaders who voted last month to maintain WMU's ties to BWA.

"As members of the body of Christ, we need each other," said Wanda Lee, national WMU executive director. "In the context of our mission task, it is through this fellowship that we become effective as we

grow in our passion and a sense of urgency to be light in a dark world."

Rankin also noted that, while it wasn't mentioned in the task force recommendation, the acceptance of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship into BWA membership influenced the recommendation. He claimed that the BWA action in effect endorsed a schism among Southern Baptists.

Ben McDade, CBF's director of communications and marketing, responded, "We regret that our brothers and sisters in the Baptist World Alliance are beginning to experience the same level of malicious attacks that the Fellowship has endured for more than a decade. ... It is most unfortunate that BWA is experiencing firsthand what the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention has adopted as its pattern: conquer, destroy or vilify."

No alternate organization?

Rankin, a member of the SBC study committee, said he does not anticipate that Southern Baptists will attempt to form an alternate organization, but will seek opportunities for training, spiritual nurture and missions advance through global and regional conferences

and events in partnership with like-minded Baptists.

But the SBC study committee report released in December stated that the committee anticipates a "new entity (that) would doubtless remain a fellowship of like-minded Baptists and similarly committed Baptists."

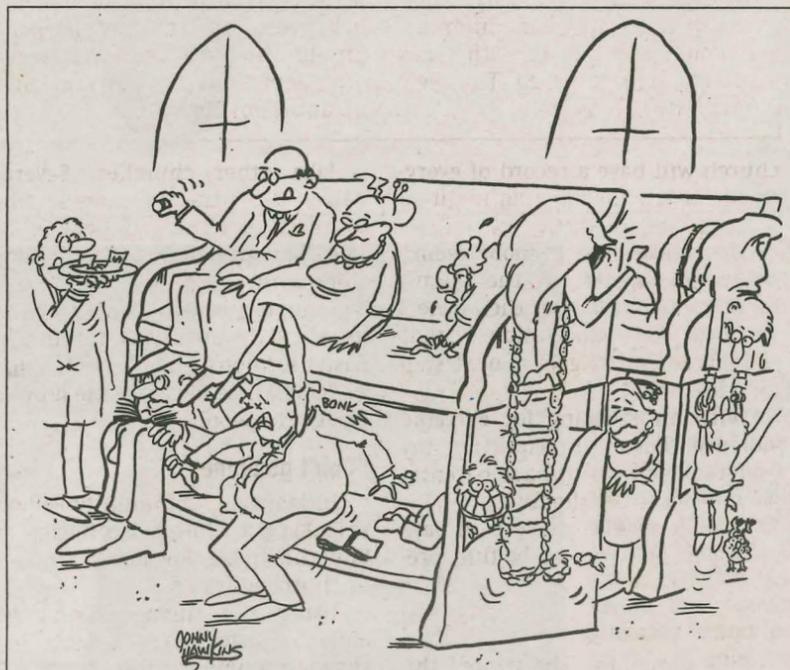
While some Baptist unions around the world might be reluctant to continue cooperation in mission efforts because of the proposed SBC action, IMB leaders do not anticipate the decision having any impact on the work of Southern Baptist missionaries, Rankin said.

"We will continue to be committed to working in partnership with local Baptist entities that hold to sound theology consistent with a biblical faith and are committed to proclaiming Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation," he added. "It is the desire of the International Mission Board to continue to work together in mutual respect with Baptist entities around the world to fulfill the Great Commission, and we have asked our regional leaders to communicate that and affirm our continuing partnership."

With additional reporting by Editor Trennis Henderson

"We will continue to be committed to working ... with local Baptist entities that hold to sound theology consistent with a biblical faith."

IMB President
Jerry Rankin



The newly installed bunk pews were the answer to Mountain Valley's rapid growth, though they took a little getting used to.

NAMB votes to stop endorsing women as military chaplains

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Alpharetta, Ga. (RNS)—The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board will no longer endorse women as military chaplains, based on a policy change adopted Feb. 4 by NAMB trustees.

"I think this sets a clear, concise direction to where the chaplaincy ministry of the North American Mission Board is going to be in the future," said NAMB trustee chairman Terry Fox, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan.

"It brought our agency in line with the larger family of Southern Baptists," he added.

The eight-member task force, chaired by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Phil Roberts, included chaplains, trustees and other Southern Baptist leaders, including former SBC President Paige Patterson.

"In the future the North American Mission Board will endorse only ordained men to the office of chaplain to serve in the military or any place where the role and function of the chaplain would be seen the same as that of a pastor," the board wrote in an official response to a motion made by a Navy chaplain at last summer's SBC annual meeting. Southern Baptist records indicate that women have been endorsed as chaplains since 1964.

Fox said the policy change resolves a "dilemma" NAMB faced after its 2002 decision that it would not endorse ordained women chaplains.

Military chaplains had responded that ordination was necessary because their role is similar to a pastor because they preach and perform baptisms, weddings and funerals.

"We asked them to either allow ordained females to come in or not allow them at all," said Chaplain (Capt.) Randy Cash, executive assistant to the Navy's chief of chaplains.

"For us, it was not a female issue. It was more an ordination issue," he said.

Chaplain (Capt.) Al Hill, who made the formal request for a policy change, said the decision ended up being "the only honorable position" the agency could take, given a Defense Department requirement that chaplains be "fully and professionally qualified" and the SBC's 2000 Baptist Faith and Message that states, "The office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

"What we hoped to achieve was a reaffirmation of ordination," said Hill, command chaplain at the Naval Amphibious Base in Little Creek, Va.

"The implication for women is an unfortunate consequence of the position," he added.

Karen Massey, president of Baptist Women in Ministry, voiced concern about the latest development in Southern Baptist policy.

"They continue to more narrowly define who God can call and who God can't and how God can use people in ministry or how God can't," Massey said. "I think God can call and use whoever God chooses."

There currently are 196 women among about 2,500 chaplains endorsed by NAMB.

The revised policy primarily will affect military chaplains but the 20 Southern Baptist women currently serving as military chaplains will not be affected unless they request a change in the category of chaplaincy in which they serve.

BAPTIST DIGEST

Disaster relief, pilots form partnership. The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board has signed a partnership agreement with Mercy Medical Airlift to assist in Southern Baptist disaster relief operations as needs arise. Mercy Medical Airlift, a part of Angel Flight America, works with a network of 6,000 private pilots who volunteer their time and expenses to transport individuals needing medical care. The agreement will help disaster relief coordinators place leadership on the scene of disasters more quickly and transport priority cargo.

Baptist chaplain earns Bronze Star. A Baptist chaplain has been awarded the Army's Bronze Star for "exceptionally meritorious service" while serving in Iraq. Maj. Scott Sterling was deployed with the 260th Quarter Master Battalion last February and remained with the battalion until their return in November. Sterling, endorsed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 2002, has served in the military 16 years.

True Love Waits ready for Olympics. The first 1,000 True Love Waits commitment cards have arrived in Athens, Greece—signed by Zulu youth of South Africa—as part of an international display celebrating moral purity during the 2004 Summer Olympic Games. Valentina Khokhriakova, a Russian student at a Christian teachers college in South Africa, delivered the cards to the Athens warehouse where True Love Waits commitment cards from at least 100 nations will be stored. Nearly 1 million signed promises of sexual purity from Christian youth around the world are expected to be displayed during the international True Love Waits celebration Aug. 22.

Correction. Dates of the 2004 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting and related events published Feb. 3 in a Baptist Press article were incorrect. The correct dates are: SBC annual meeting, June 15-16; SBC Pastors' Conference and WMU annual meeting, June 13-14.

Johnson named Baptist campus minister at WKU

Louisville—Tommy Johnson has been named Baptist campus minister of his alma mater, Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

Johnson, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's international student campus minister since 2000, was elected to the WKU position Feb. 5 by the KBC Executive Board's administrative committee.

He will succeed Bryant Rudolph, who has announced his resignation effective May 31.

Keith Inman, director of the KBC's collegiate/young adult ministry group, said the full-time international campus minister position will be eliminated due to budget cuts. He said the international student ministry emphasis will be staffed with part-time and volunteer personnel.

"I believe Tommy Johnson's presence at Western Kentucky gives us the opportunity to have one of the premier campus ministries in the country," Inman said. "His heart is the campus."

Johnson previously was associate campus minister at the University of Louisville and campus minister at Campbellsville University. He holds degrees from WKU and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Rudolph has served as WKU since 1995. He previously was campus minister at Elizabethtown Community College and Baptist Student Union western area director.

Rudolph "has a shepherd's heart and cared deeply for his students," Inman noted. "He is a long-time friend of the campus ministry family in Kentucky and he will be missed."

In other personnel-related actions, administrative committee members approved three contract positions:

David Haskell was named part-time missions education specialist in the KBC Baptist Men on Mission department. Haskell, a student at Southern Seminary, will be responsible for developing mission education programs across the state.

Heather Nunn was named part-time Kentucky Changers coordinator for Baptist Men on Mission. Nunn, also a student at Southern, will be responsible for planning and implementing Kentucky Changers mission programs.

Brandon McGrew was named part-time help desk support services specialist for the KBC information services department. He will provide computer services support for KBC Mission Board staff. He served in a similar position last summer as a KBC intern.



Johnson

A 'Passion' for evangelism

Kentuckians use Mel Gibson film in outreach

Continued from page 1

both Christians and non-Christians who see it.

For Sandefur, what began as a one-church brainstorm has mushroomed into a community-wide effort.

He and Sanderson, Edgewood's music minister, initially considered organizing church members to hand out evangelistic fliers to everyone seeing the movie locally.

But then they decided to broaden their efforts to include other area churches.

"I was afraid if we didn't coordinate our efforts, it might look like we were in competition," he said. "I didn't want at the end of the movie 14 different churches handing them (viewers) brochures."

After prayer and conversations, he said, local pastors decided to rent a storefront at Bradford Square Mall, adjacent to the theater where the movie will be shown.

Starting Feb. 24, church volunteers will open an information and counseling center for those who have questions related to the movie.

"Right now we've got about 20 churches," Sandefur said.

Evangelistic materials will include a list of participating churches with the statement: "This message is affirmed by the following churches. If you do not attend church, we encourage you to worship with them."

The diversity of denominations has been a blessing, Sandefur added.

"The guys have been very willing to put Jesus first. That's our goal," he said. "There's been a lot of energy and people who said, 'Hey, we're in this. Just let us know what we need to do.'"

Youth outreach

At Crestwood Baptist Church in Crestwood, Youth Minister Jeff Fuson found that the film's Wednesday, Feb. 25 opening night matched the church's weekly youth emphasis.

Crestwood rented all 481 seats at the nearby Tinseltown theater where the movie will be shown.

Renting the entire theater costs \$14.50 per seat, which includes popcorn and a drink for every viewer, Fuson noted. "We've got \$6,400 on the line."

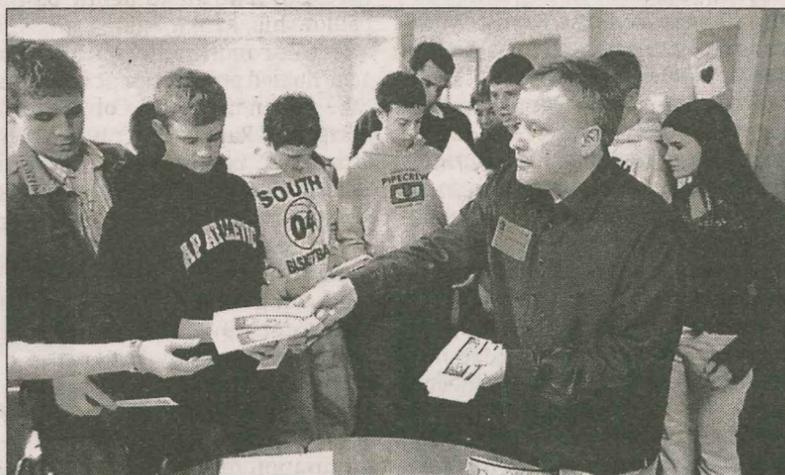
But to make it affordable for youth, Fuson is charging only \$5 per person and has challenged every youth ministry member to buy tickets for two unchurched friends.

"This is a shot we can't afford not to take," he said.

A Mel Gibson-directed movie about Jesus is "going to unpack it (the gospel) for this generation like it's never been done before," Fuson added.

"It's their language," he said. "It's totally visual."

By registering visitors, the



INVITING FRIENDS Jeff Fuson, youth minister at Crestwood Baptist Church in Crestwood, explains efforts to youth group members to invite unchurched friends to see "The Passion of the Christ." The church reserved all 481 seats at a local theater for the film's opening night.

Gibson removes 'blood curse' from film

New York (RNS)—Director Mel Gibson apparently has cut a controversial "blood curse" scene from "The Passion of the Christ" after criticism from Jewish groups and focus groups.

The scene, in which the Jewish high priest assumes guilt for the crucifixion, saying, "His blood be upon us and our children," did not pass muster with focus groups, according to The New York Times.

"It didn't work in the focus screenings," an unnamed Gibson associate told the newspaper. "Maybe it was thought to be too hurtful, or taken not in the way it was intended. It has been used terribly over the years."

"Passion," scheduled for release Feb. 25 (Ash Wednesday), has been criticized by Jewish groups who are worried that negative depictions of Jews could stir up anti-Semitism.

church will have a record of everyone who attends opening night so follow-up will be possible.

"It's not so much about seeing the movie. It's about the discussions we can have after the movie," he said. "Our expectation is that this night will trigger a next step for a lot of us."

With an R rating for extreme violence, Fuson is requiring any underage viewers to have parental permission to see the film.

Still, "everything I've read says there's no way you can be fully prepared," he added.

Violence concerns

Billy Compton, who viewed the movie at a screening, said the film, while bloody, doesn't concentrate on gore to make its message.

"The violence is graphic but it's sensitive, in that it points you to the emotional impact of the crucifixion and not just on the blood and ripped flesh."

Compton said the film made him realize how much churches have glamorized the cross and members haven't always understood the suffering Jesus went through.

"My feeling at the end of it was, 'Oh, I forgot how much this really hurt, ... how much it really cost Jesus to die on this cross.'"

Compton added that he doesn't share the concerns of some critics who are concerned that the film blames Jewish leaders for Jesus' death.

"For me—having read the Gospels, having been a Christian—the issue he (Gibson) made in the movie was not who killed Jesus. ... Mankind and his tendency to sin and his separation from God is what nailed Jesus to the Cross."

Like other churches, Severns Valley also plans to use the film to reach unchurched people, he said, though details are still being worked out.

Compton said he also plans to use the "Passion" theme for his pre-Easter sermons.

"Our whole idea is to use it build bridges to people."

"Don't go alone"

In Mayfield, Community Fellowship Baptist Church is offering to buy the ticket for any member's unchurched friend.

Using the theme, "Don't go alone," Pastor Rusty Wirt has shown a promotional trailer at the church and bought promotional cards from Outreach Marketing, the official promotional resource distributor of the film.

Members will use door hangers and other items to promote the movie in the area, he said.

"It gives a professional presentation to the invitation and that's appealing to most," he said.

Likewise, in Hawesville, Robert White has led Blackford Baptist Association's 18 churches to rent Tell City Cinemas in Indiana on March 13.

With a price break, church members can buy \$4 tickets and invite their friends, he said.

"We hope that folks will see that in today's society innovative ways have to be used to enable people to hear the gospel," said White, the association's director of missions.

"We hope it will build relationships where people have a hook, or some means of sharing their faith with lost friends in a comfortable setting," he added. "We're excited about the potential of it."

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Cooperative Program** educational resources are now available to Kentucky Baptists just for the asking. Materials are free and include resources such as bookmarks, posters, a missionary prayer guide, a five-minute video and bulletin inserts. Resources may be ordered online at www.kybaptist.org/cpmissions or by calling (888) 254-5713.

■ **Cumberland College** will host its Discovery Day for high school seniors and their parents Saturday, Feb. 21. For reservations or information, contact the admissions office at (800) 343-1609 or admiss@cumberlandcollege.edu.

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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Double standard?

As I continue to read scathing articles aimed at the Southern Baptist Convention for withdrawing support from the Baptist World Alliance, it seems there is a double standard being employed.

When the SBC returned to conservative doctrine and leadership, were there not many disgruntled moderates that parted to form their own organization? Once that organization was formed, did not many moderate editors and leaders even go so far as to solicit churches to divert money from the Cooperative Program for Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missions? When moderates made this shift to the CBF, did not many in the press and in this state celebrate the bravery of these moderates as they stood up for their convictions against the "tyranny" of the SBC leadership?

Now the SBC leadership finds itself in disagreement with the BWA over doctrinal and leadership issues. Do we not have the right to part company with this organization and form another organization for Baptist world missions? Do we not have the right to remove our funding from the BWA and direct it to a mission organization that shares our beliefs? Do we not have the right to stand for our convictions rather than submit to leadership and decisions with which we do not agree?

The SBC has missionaries who can't go to the field due to the lack of finances. They could be on the field in a heartbeat if CBF finances were directed back to the Cooperative Program.

Moderates want to vilify the SBC for withdrawing from the BWA and negatively affecting world missions. What you fail to acknowledge, however, is that you yourselves have made the exact same decisions in recent years. You were quick to part company when you couldn't "rule" an organization, so save all your hypocritical speeches on "unity for missions" for someone else.

Shawn Merithew
Louisville

Support SBC missions

In his Feb. 3 editorial, the Western Recorder editor promoted a plan that will directly and negatively impact our Southern Baptist missionaries. The recommendation would give half a percent (or \$71,000) of the Southern Baptist Convention's share of Cooperative Program dollars to the Baptist World Alliance. But who loses that money? Our missionaries.

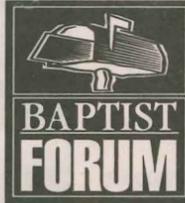
As pastors promote support for the CP, we remind our people that the money goes to "missions." "Missions" in the mind of the typical Baptist means "missionaries." Of every CP dollar given, the Kentucky Baptist Convention keeps 64 cents and forwards 36 cents to the SBC. The SBC then utilizes 72 percent of its 36 cents for direct missions support. In the end, only 26 cents of each dollar given through the KBC directly supports our Southern Baptist missionaries. Reducing the SBC's funding is reducing our missionaries' support.

And now, the editor suggests we reduce the money going to our missionaries. This represents a serious misunderstanding of church support for our missionaries. While we love our BWA brethren, our first allegiance is to our missionaries—that is where "our heart" is!

If the KBC leadership desires to "significantly contribute" to the BWA, then we should take the money from the KBC's 64 percent. The "beauty" of this proposal is that those in the KBC who feel strongly about supporting the BWA are the ones making the sacrifice, instead of our missionaries.

Taking money from our SBC missionaries will force churches to evaluate ways to direct more resources back into missions. Undoubtedly, some would even evaluate what they send to the KBC. Instead, Kentucky Baptists should support our SBC missionaries and then consider ways to help others in our Baptist family.

Jerry Gifford
Louisville



Don't hinder BWA

The Baptist World Alliance is an effective organization for the cause of Christ and one that Southern Baptists should not only support with our money, but with our participation as an active partner.

Anyone who has attended any BWA event knows the quality and Christ-centeredness of this organization. Why would we pull out? With our "Empowering Kingdom Growth" movement being emphasized on a national level, why are we thinking so narrowly (just our own denomination) and not globally (the Kingdom of God)?

The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee is making a terrible mistake which seems to most of us to be based solely on jealousy. The fact that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship was granted membership into this fine organization should not cause us to leave the BWA. What if my church, or any Southern Baptist church, began to cut its Cooperative Program giving and mission giving every time it had a slight disagreement with something said or done on a national level by one of our SBC leaders!

Our church sacrifices to give to the Cooperative Program and all our SBC mission causes. If the SBC pulls out of the BWA, I will ask my church to give at least \$1,000 to this ministry each year and challenge 425 other Baptist churches to do the same so that the important work of the BWA is not hindered.

Mike James
Lexington

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. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

Ministry across Kentucky

During a recent week I had the privilege of meeting with directors of missions and teaching the Winter Bible Study. Both were great experiences.

Randy Jones, state missions department director, arranged the four regional meetings with directors of missions. The purpose of the meetings was dialogue related to the roles of our new church development strategists and the implementation of Kentucky Baptists Connect, the special emphasis that is coming out of the recent Mission Study Report.

I have conducted listening sessions with DOMs and met with them during their annual workshop, but this was the first time for me to meet with them in small groups to dialogue about our mutual ministries. This was especially significant due to the high value that I place on our partnership with associations and their leaders. We are all working to connect all people to

Jesus Christ and to enable them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

The value of small groups is that everyone has an opportunity to engage in conversation, dialogue about issues and sense a personal connection with others. High tech cannot replace this kind of high touch. I hope to have the opportunity again.

During the same week, 140-plus pastors and staff members gathered at Severns Valley Baptist

Church in Elizabethtown to share concerns and learn from each other about the great things that God is doing across our state. Dan Garland, our church development and evangelism team leader, coordinated the day. These local church leaders learned from one another about the ministries that are truly effective. This one-day session is a good example of how church leaders can benefit from networking.

That same week, I had the privi-



Bill Mackey

lege of teaching the Winter Bible Study, "Kingdom Churches," based on 1 and 2 Timothy, at First Baptist Church, Somerset. In keeping with their tradition, breakfast was served on Saturday at 6 p.m. followed by two hours of Bible study.

It was gratifying to worship with the family of God on Sunday and bring messages from 2 Timothy. It was also a privilege to be with Bill Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, who is serving as interim pastor at this church.

I was also impressed with the growth of ministries in the church's new facilities. Upward Basketball is strong, along with youth ministries. The staff has continued strong leadership in the absence of a pastor.

First Baptist Church members have been led to have a great vision for missions support. FBC has been among the top six Baptist churches in gifts to the Cooperative Program for most of the past 30 years. On behalf of ministries and missions in Kentucky and around the world, I say "thank you."

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Regularly review estate plan for needed changes

By Laurie Valentine

Keeping up with the details of life and changes in our lives takes more time than most of us give it. Many people are so busy watching and planning around the changes occurring at work or school, we don't take time to consider changes that might be occurring in our day-to-day lives and the impact of those changes on planning we have done.

Estate planning is one area of personal planning that doesn't get a lot of "revisiting." Your estate plan—your will, power of attorney, health care advanced directives and beneficiary designations—should be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure it continues to accomplish your planning objectives. Your plan also should be revisited when there are changes in your life and/or that of your family—marriages, births, deaths, divorces, change in state residence, changes in financial status.

Focus on the following as you review your plan:

■ **Fiduciaries.** Are the individuals you've named to serve as executor under your will or successor trustee of your living trust still willing and able to serve? Are you and your spouse still comfortable with the people you have named to serve as guardians for your children? Is the person named to act under your power of attorney still willing and able to do that?

■ **Beneficiaries.** Have there been deaths or births not considered when you had your will or living trust prepared? Have you or one of your beneficiaries married or divorced since then? Do you have an ultimate beneficiary named to receive your estate if all of your family dies before you?

■ **Death benefits.** Are beneficiary designations of life insurance, retirement or IRA benefits coordinated with the plan of distribution under your will or trust?

■ **Assets.** Is the value of your estate (real estate, investments, bank accounts, business interests, life insurance and retirement accounts) more than, or less than, \$1.5 million (the current federal estate tax exemption)? If you have a living trust, have you funded it? Does the way in which your assets are titled defeat the plan of distribution under your will or trust?

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



Use Valentine's Day as a time to affirm, encourage friends

Q: What can a single adult do with Valentine's Day? It's such a lovey-dovey couples' celebration, I just want to run and hide.

It is amazing that the martyrdom of a Christian physician on Feb. 14, 269 A.D., who gave a goodbye note to his jailer's daughter that closed with the words, "love, Valentine" would lead to the couples' day we have today! Why this is not a day for proclaiming one's faith or remembering those who gave their lives for Christ, I'm not sure. But like most holidays, the origin of the day gets lost in centuries of tradition. So one thing you can do is remember the real meaning in the name of this hero of the Christian faith.

Another thing is to use the day to celebrate your singleness. That's right—celebrate it! With the divorce rate at near historic levels, good marriages are hard work. There are married couples who are happy. But there also are millions who are miserable without the skills or information needed to make their marriages better. As single adult author Harold Ivan Smith has often said, "The most lonely person in your zip code tonight is not a single adult—but rather a married adult sleeping eighteen inches away from their spouse and crying themselves to sleep."

When God said, "It is not good that man should be alone." He wasn't just talking about marriage. There's also that biblical concept of Christian community—the family of God. Find a group of single people in your town and have a party on the anniversary of the martyrdom of the saint who sent an encouraging note signed with love.

For that matter, take this as an opportunity to write encouraging notes to others. Rather than being sad for what you do not have (a marriage relationship), be an encourager to those who do not have close friends. They are all around you.—James Stillwell

Q: My wife and I have been married 10 years. How can I be creative in extending my anniversary and Valentine's Day commitment this year?

Congratulations on your 10 years of marriage and your desire to keep the spark in your relationship. Let me give you a "Top Ten" list of ideas for continuing to celebrate your marriage that won't be either too expensive or too mundane!

1. Schedule an appointment with a Christian minister or counselor for a "marriage check-up." Remember that smart people get regular physical check-ups even if they are not sick!

2. Take a trip down memory lane and put together a marriage scrapbook or video.

3. Talk with your spouse and choose three to five couples who have provided you with healthy marriage models. Pray for them and write them a note of thanksgiving and encouragement.

4. Give your spouse some handmade coupons good for personal services (e.g. one 15-minute massage or "five nights of kitchen clean-up").

5. Pray about serving as "marriage mentors" to engaged and newly married couples in your church.

6. Set up a date night with your spouse once every week (or at least twice a month) and take turns planning it.

7. Commit together to read aloud a chapter of the Bible once a day and pray together for the next month.

8. Serve food at a homeless shelter twice in the coming year. Invite another couple along.

9. Spend a warm spring evening outside dreaming together about ways God might desire to use your marriage for His glory.

10. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal one area in which you withheld forgiveness from your spouse. Pray for the ability to surrender this stronghold to God.—Scott Wigginton

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Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail wesrec@earthlink.net.

SINGLES



In honor of True Love Waits—a parable

Feb. 1: Justin and Janet's lewd Super Bowl half-time exploits. **Feb. 3:** A press release announces the first 1,000 True Love Waits sexual purity commitment cards arrive in Athens, Greece, for a display during the Summer Olympic Games. **Feb. 4:** The Massachusetts Judicial Supreme Court sets the stage for Massachusetts to become the first state in the nation to legalize same-sex marriages. **Feb. 14:** Valentine's Day.

In the midst of our society's rampant immorality, Southern Baptists' decade-old True Love Waits emphasis stands as a shining tribute to thousands of young people's commitment to remain sexually abstinent "until the day I enter a biblical marriage relationship." TLW has grown into an international sexual purity movement that has spread to nearly 100 organizations in dozens of nations.

As Valentine's Day approaches, I offer the following parable I wrote several years ago in honor of True Love Waits:

It was a small, simple wedding attended by relatives and a few close friends. The bride, dressed in a flowing white gown, was radiant. Her cheeks were flushed with pride and excitement as her dad escorted her down the aisle. Her eyes sparkled with joy—especially as she exchanged loving glances with her handsome groom.

He was beaming. Despite his nervousness, the broad smile never left his face. The ceremony went smoothly—just as they had carefully rehearsed.

The wedding reception continued the joyful celebration. Hugs, kisses and congratulations were offered by aunts, uncles, co-workers and lifelong friends.

Stacked on a brightly decorated folding table near the cake and punch were dozens of beautifully wrapped wedding gifts sporting shiny ribbons and bows. Just as she finished opening the four-slice toaster from Aunt Alice, a package in the center of the table caught her eye. It wasn't the wrapping paper or the size of the box that grabbed her attention; it was the tag attached to the present. Carefully printed in her new husband's handwriting were the sentimental words: "To my darling wife, the love of my life."

Determined to control her curiosity, she decided to focus on all the other gifts for now and wait until they were alone together to open this most special

gift of all.

The newlyweds soon climbed into his waiting car. Leaving family and friends behind, the two started down the road together—both literally and figuratively. She clutched the precious gift on her lap.

Later that evening, they stopped in front of the romantic cottage they had rented for their honeymoon getaway. Amid constant giggles and grins, he effortlessly lifted her into his arms and carried her across the threshold.

Once the trunk was unpacked and the cottage door was closed, she eagerly reached for the package she had carefully placed on a nearby table. Snuggling on the couch in his arms, she began to gingerly unwrap the box. Watching her anticipation grow, he began to think about the contents of the package. His smile faded.

As she opened the box lid, she squealed with delight. She immediately recognized the beautiful crystal vase she had so often admired in the jewelry store window. It

would look perfect as the kitchen table centerpiece in their new apartment.

But wait! As she pulled it from the box, she noticed the hairline crack running the length of the vase and there was a huge chip in the gold-rimmed lip. Worst of all, it didn't look like the bright, sparkling vase she had adored in the store window. The inside was faded—as if it has been used as a pitcher and never washed clean.

She was crestfallen. It was the exact gift she had longed for on her wedding night—and yet now to receive it used, cracked and chipped was devastating. This night was not at all what she had imagined. Her tears began to flow.

"I ... I meant to keep it nice and new for you," he stammered apologetically. "It's just that it was so beautiful, I couldn't help taking it out of the box and trying it out. And then when it broke, ... I'm so, so sorry. I wanted to buy you another one but it's a one-of-a-kind—irreplaceable. I hope this one will do ... I meant for tonight to be perfect."

The moral: Teenagers and other singles, what is the most special wedding gift you can give your future spouse? Make a commitment to keep your gift pure and spotless for that one special love of your life. If you've already fallen short of that goal, decide today to reserve that gift from this day forward for your future mate. True Love Waits.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Pursuing God's cultural strategy

By James Draper

Nashville (BP)—The church doesn't exist for Christians. The church is designed for those who are not members.

I recently made that comment and it drew quite a response. The context of the comment was within a discussion about discipleship. I said Jesus is searching for true disciples in the evangelical church in America but it is having difficulty finding many.

Need evidence? Read the headlines. The evangelical church in America is losing ground when it comes to effecting change in our culture. Instead of a trend in our nation toward godliness, the trend is toward secularism devoid of anything godly. Western Christianity has retreated from the battle for the souls of men to the hollow pursuit of self-comfort. True disciples follow Christ into the fray.

God's design for the church is not that it exists for my comfort or for the convenience of its members, but as an equipping station to thrust us into the harvest for souls.

The church at Ephesus was surrounded by false religions and

egocentric philosophies. People were consumed by their sexual appetites and practiced "every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more" (Ephesians 4:19). Did the Apostle Paul tell the Ephesian Christians to get inside their buildings, close the door and lock out the evil that permeated their society? No, and in fact, he told them to walk worthy of their calling, obey God's commands, stay true to the divine strategy and be Christians right where they were.

We must first realize that the church is a divine institution. It was not an afterthought with God.

We are the strategy God designed to confront the godlessness of our culture. When Christ says we were the light on a hill, He meant that we are to shine in such a way that those struggling with the turbulence of life could safely navigate to the harbor of God's grace. When the light from our churches sweeps across our culture, people see our good works and give glory to God in heaven (Matthew 5:16). It's an intentional effort on our part to understand that church is not about us; it

is about God and His Kingdom.

However, we become ineffective when we turn inward and our culture has no visible measure of eternal truth. There is no incarnational witness of the Savior. We rob hope from individuals who are on a collision course with eternal separation from God when we focus our energy on ourselves.

As we project the gospel outward from our churches, we must follow the leadership of God. God does not overlook people's sin. He extends grace and forgiveness in spite of it. We must be accepting of individuals without condoning their lifestyles.

I like the chorus of the song, "This Must Be the Place," co-written and sung by Steve Amerson: "This must be a place where a broken heart can mend. This must be a place where the outcast finds a friend. For we cannot lift the fallen if our hand still holds a stone. And their sin that seems so great to us is not greater than our own. There must be a point where shame meets grace. And this must be the place."

Is your church that place?

James Draper is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention

COMMENTARY

Baptist Bowling Association

60-year-old group keeps rolling along with fun, fellowship

"Other lanes have a more dog-eat-dog attitude."

Jerry Carter

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Shively—Fellowship Lanes isn't one of Kentucky's largest bowling alleys, but it might be one of the most unique.

Located just southwest of Louisville, the 20-lane facility is owned by the Baptist Bowling Association.

The group has no official ties to the Kentucky Baptist Convention or the local Baptist association.

It was organized by members of various denominations about 60 years ago to promote Christian fellowship. Reflecting its spiritual values, the group prohibits any swearing at the alley.

Smoking is permitted, but cigarettes are banned in lane areas. Prior to league play and private parties, group representatives offer prayer over the loudspeaker.

"We've lost a lot of business because we don't have an open bar," said Mike Strange, Jr., 26, who took over as manager last spring. "But we get a lot of business because we don't have it. Alcoholics Anonymous has a party here once a year."

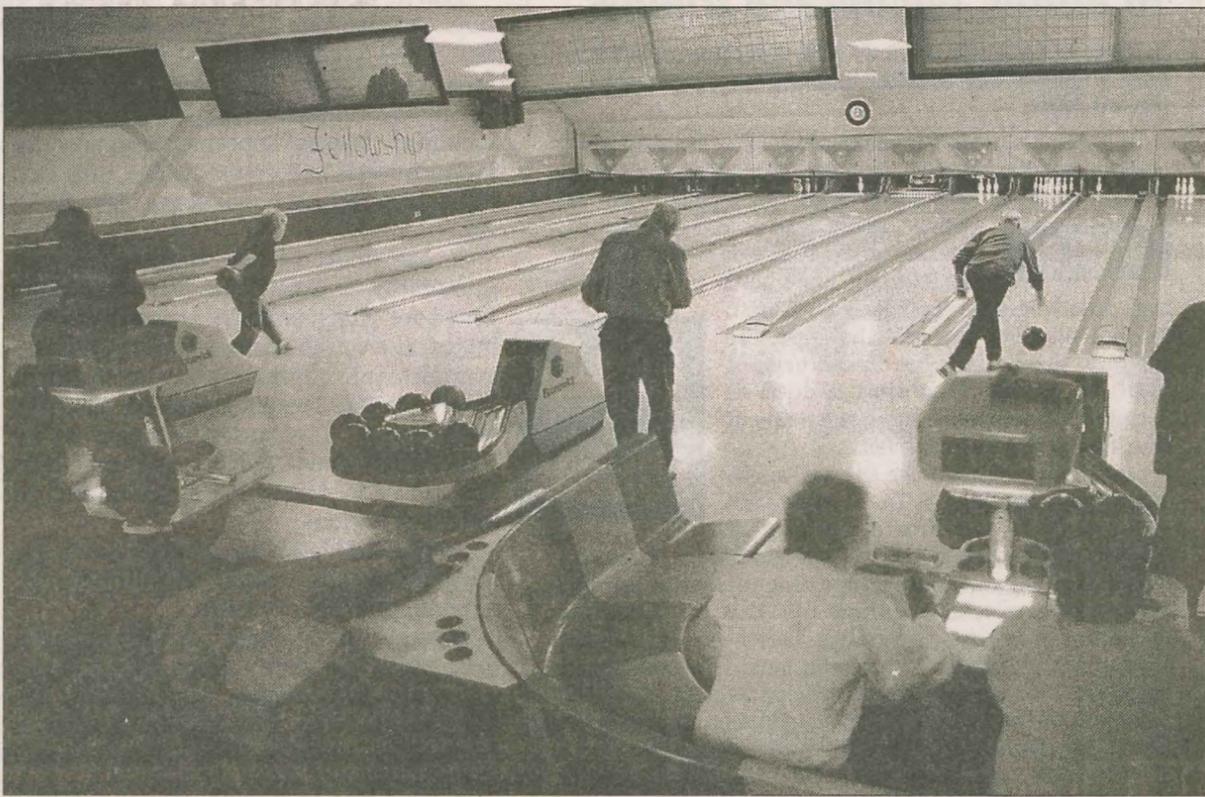
Fellowship Lanes is governed by an eight-member board of directors, three of them from Kentucky Baptist churches.

Kentucky Baptists were also integral in forming the association. The non-profit organization raised the funds to buy its first alley in 1969 by charging members an extra 15 cents a game—for more than two decades.

Linda Hornback of Shively Heights Baptist Church said that in the 1960s the group discussed building on property owned by Long Run Baptist Association. Ultimately, members vetoed the idea.

"The uniqueness is no one individual has ever owned the alley," said Hornback, a member of association-run leagues for 40 years. "It's the bowlers. Anybody who comes in has a say so."

Six years after the group bought its first alley, it was destroyed by fire, forcing a temporary reloca-



TUESDAY NIGHT LEAGUE Bowlers from Baptist churches throughout Louisville gather at Fellowship Lanes for Tuesday night's league. The Baptist Bowling Association has owned Fellowship Lanes since 1976.

tion until they purchased Fellowship in 1976.

Nearly in the gutter

But decaying facilities and the absence of a fulltime manager nearly cost the group its existence, according to Robert Kurtz, board chairman since 2002.



Strange

"We were in dire straits when I took over," said Kurtz, who attends Morningside Baptist Church. "We were on the verge of losing the bowling alley because we couldn't make our payments."

The association consulted with an attorney. He helped them refinance their loan and half a dozen members each kicked in \$1,000 to help pay off the old note, Kurtz said.

In addition, Kurtz said, conditions have improved under Strange, who quit his job at United Parcel Service to run the alley.

"Mike has done a great job," Kurtz said. "We had a feeling that we needed someone in here who was younger to bring in younger bowlers. Friday and Saturday nights have been packed, and he's got new game machines in."

"It was barely functional when I got here," said Strange, who started doing mechanical repairs in November 2002. "Fourteen lanes were broke down, and there was no arcade and only one video game. And it was broken."

Today, all 20 alleys are functional, along with a game room that has three pool tables, air hockey table and six video games; vending machines and refreshment service.

The lanes have automatic pin-setters, but bowlers keep their own scores, a feature that Strange said many bowlers appreciate.

Automatic scorekeeping is prevalent elsewhere but it can damage team unity, he explained, because players no longer gather around the scorekeeper.



Price is another attraction. Games are just 99 cents on Sunday and Monday and \$1.50 the rest of the week, except Wednesdays, when the alley is closed.

League play ranges from \$8 to \$8.50 for three games, compared to \$12 or more in other places, Strange said.

Groups can also rent the entire facility for parties for \$250 for three hours.

"Christ-centered" atmosphere

Still, ask bowlers why they like Fellowship Lanes and the typical answer is, "Atmosphere."

Board secretary Gladys Minton bowled elsewhere for 15 years but tired of the foul language and drinking. A member of Peace Chapel General Baptist Church, she called Fellowship a second church home.

Minton said visiting youth groups often hold services prior to bowling and one time seven teens accepted Christ as Savior during a post-bowling devotional.

"If we get a chance to talk to someone about the Lord, we do," said Minton, noting that leagues are open to non-church members. "If people are having problems, we talk to them about that."

Fifteen-year Baptist Bowling Association veteran Jerry Carter has noticed the difference on occasional visits to other establishments.

"This is a more friendly situation," Carter said. "Other lanes have a more dog-eat-dog attitude."

Bruce Holmes has been coming to Fellowship for five years, soon after he accepted Jesus as his personal Savior.

An electrician, he likes associating with people of all ages and the calm feeling he has when he leaves.

"I bowled at other alleys and bowled for money, beer and everything else," Holmes said. "I'd go home so mad I was ready to throw my ball over the Ohio River Bridge. I just come here and bowl and have a good time."

Board member Michele Williams, who attends Walnut Street Baptist Church, wants to see more churches get involved in league play.

"Anybody who comes here knows it's Christ-centered," Williams said. "But a lot of people don't know we're here. We don't have the money to advertise and get the big shiny lights."

Even if it did, the group would be bucking a downward trend. While no figures are available, its number of participants has dwindled for the past 25 years.

The decrease reflects national trends. Participation in sanctioned men's, women's and youth leagues declined from 9 million during 1979-80 to 3.2 million for the current season.

Mark Miller, communications officer with National Bowling Headquarters in Milwaukee, Wis., attributes the drop to dramatic shifts in society, including more working couples and busy schedules.

"People never thought of committing to something once or twice a week," Miller said. "But we live in a much different society than 25 years ago. It's the times we live in; people lead busy lives. They have a lot of choices with how they use their time."

Still, Fellowship's manger says, don't discount the possibility of a revival.

"This place can make a comeback," Strange said. "If you care enough, you can make anything work. It will take us, the board, the public and God. We're all going to have to do it together."



BLIND BOWLER Earl Bunch, 73, is legally blind with macular degeneration, but that doesn't keep the pastor of West End General Baptist Church from bowling an average 138 score, according to his wife, Jeanetta (above). "When he could see, he carried a 175."

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Basic Training is a time of Information and Inspiration!

Creativity comes down to simple math, pastor says

Grapevine, Texas (BP)—Calculating a church's creative ID is simple math—God's math.

Ed Young Jr., senior pastor of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas, told church leaders recently that the Great Commission "is all about math."

"God is always adding, dividing, subtracting and multiplying," Young said during "Creative Church Conference" last month at Young's Dallas-Fort Worth-area church.

"What kind of math does God want to do in your life?" asked Young, whose church grew from 150 people 14 years ago to 18,000 people attending five weekend services.

To do the math, Young advised: **Add clarity to vision and keep it pure.** "Where there is no vision, the people perish," Young said, referring to Proverbs 29:18.

"Put another way, where there is vision, people flourish. All of us should have a constant craving to keep the vision pure."

Find and equip leaders, Young then counseled.

"Most church members want control without responsibility. Equip leaders in your church who say, 'I want control and responsibility.' Every leader at Fellowship Church is a 'control freak'—freaky about the church's vision and the innovation to get there."

Subtract the surplus. "Subtraction refines the vision and keeps it sharp," Young said. "Ruthlessly subtract anything that gets in the way of God's vision for the church. ... Don't try to be all things to all people."

Keep people wanting more, he said. "Simplify for the sake of reaching more people for Christ."

Most churches, Young noted, "have worship formats that go too long. They sing too long or preach too long. Creativity challenges us to check our egos at the door."

Multiply to evangelize. Measure everything, Young advised. "We count people because people count," he said.

"Is your church effective at multiplying?" he asked. "Measure your effectiveness by detailed attendance records, baptisms, giving and life-changing stories."

Young offered a measuring benchmark of thirds. "One third of church attendees should be non-Christians; one-third new believers; and one-third mature believers," he said. "Which one of these needs growth in your own church?"

In order to multiply, pastors and other church members should explain the gospel often, he said.

"Evangelism should be in the DNA of a believer. The greatest growth in a believer's life occurs when they get out and share their faith."

Divide and conquer. Never do what you can delegate, Young counseled to pastors.

"Discernment and timing play crucial factors in delegation," he added. "Give tasks to people who have strengths in those areas and save unnecessary stress."

And develop a team approach.

"Don't be afraid to seek input from your staff when planning your messages," Young said. "By facilitating the message planning, you're training people to speak when you're not there. God wants to use other vocal cords to communicate His truth. Your wife and kids will thank you."



Young

Poll: Religiously active more satisfied than other Americans

Princeton, N.J. (RNS)—Americans who are actively religious rated themselves as more satisfied with life than those without faith in a recent Gallup Poll.

More than 70 percent of all respondents said they are satisfied with their lives. Of those surveyed who identified with a religious community, 77 percent said they are satisfied, while the results dropped to 62 percent for nonreligious respondents.

The study also found that those who said they had attended worship services in the past week were more likely to be satisfied with life than those who did not attend services, 45 percent to 33 percent.

The survey asked 1,500 respondents how strongly they agreed with the statement "I am completely satisfied with my life." Researchers spoke to 1,000 adult members of churches, synagogues or other religious communities, and 500 non-members.

The study, conducted in October and November 2003, also found that Catholics had higher levels of life satisfaction than Protestants surveyed, and that Catholics' life satisfaction has increased over past studies.

Just 39 percent of Protestants said they were satisfied with life, in contrast to 47 percent of Catholics responding that way.

The survey also showed that members who gave \$2,000 or more annually to their faith communities were more likely to be satisfied with their lives than those who gave less than that amount, though income did not seem to play a role in life satisfaction among respondents.

"It seems that people who give significantly to their congregations gain a sense of satisfaction from their giving—they aren't giving begrudgingly out of a sense of obligation," said Al Winseman of the Gallup Organization, in a commentary on the report.

Basketball & vision for excellence

Striving for excellence, whether in a church of 30 or 3,000, requires creativity, innovation and thorough organization, Young added.

"Creativity is about change, it's not about style," he said in a C3 message on vision within the church. "The bigger you get, the more complex creativity gets."

His vision for Fellowship came while a college student at Florida State University. One of three Christians on the basketball team, Young frequently invited teammates to the traditional Southern Baptist church he attended.

He began seeing church through their eyes, hearing religious terms they didn't understand, seeing customs that didn't make sense to an outsider.

"I decided if I ever had a church, I wanted it to be relevant to non-Christians," Young said. "I didn't realize God was planting the vision for Fellowship."

This year's C3 conference, Jan. 24-25, attracted nearly 1,900 pastors and church leaders.

Conference speakers challenged the leaders to think about vision, evangelism and keeping church relevant to their own communities.

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Bowling Green, Kentucky

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This event is made possible through the Cooperative Program.



Featuring these evangelists:



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A healthy living sacrifice

More churches promoting health & fitness among clergy, members

"Let's take our time of movement and turn it into a time of worship, a time of praise."

Victoria Johnson, author of "Body Revival"

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Pittsburgh (RNS)—Minister Larry Swain is proud of the fact that he's lost more than 50 pounds in the last year and a half.

He attributes it to several factors. At the top of the list, he wanted very much to wear a smaller tuxedo to his daughter's wedding.

A doctor's visit also showed his cholesterol and blood pressure were at unhealthy levels. And, it didn't hurt when his Pittsburgh Baptist Association invited an annual meeting speaker who focused on the self-care of clergy.

"He did ask me, 'Larry what are you doing to take care of yourself?'" recalled Swain, executive minister of the association.

Swain recently was the recipient of a \$300 "wellness grant" from the American Baptist Churches USA and he used some of that money to hear that same expert address his fellow pastors at a national conference in late January.

Others among the nation's denominations are sponsoring fitness walks or runs during their major meetings. Books like "Body by God" have been best sellers. And "gospel aerobics" classes seem to be on the rise.

With almost 65 percent of Americans overweight, the nation's churches are working to get ministers and church members to lose weight and take better care of themselves overall.

Health consultants

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hired a medical doctor as a consultant three years ago to help in its efforts.

When her work began, Dr. Gwen Halaas, the ELCA's director of ministerial health and wellness, found that its ministers and lay leaders were more overweight than the average American and were more prone to be under stress, depressed and less physically active.

Now, the denomination has teamed with the Mayo Clinic and set up a Web site focused on healthy living, including nutrition and exercise advice.

Halaas said they're simply following the commandment "to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love others as we love ourselves."

"What we have, through our American culture, ended up doing is really forgetting or suppressing that 'love yourself' phrase," she said.

Halaas, who works for both the Board of Pensions and the Division for Ministry of her denomination, said church leaders hope by having healthy leaders, they will eventually be able to redirect church money used to treat illness to better uses. Leaders with less stress might also be more likely to attract younger people to join their ministry ranks.

Ministers say these arguments are hardly a tough sell. A total of 227 participants rose early to join the "Run Walk 'n' Roll" during the Lutherans' churchwide assembly in Milwaukee last summer, logging more than 2,500 miles

in four days.

Vern Christopherson, senior pastor of Transfiguration Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minn., plans to emphasize wellness during a series of Lenten evening services, by talking about its various facets—social, emotional, physical, vocational and intellectual.

He said a post-Christmas Bible study series drew about a dozen people but about 50 signed up for a Bible study series that was coupled with an exercise class.

"People see this hook for the chance to couple spiritual things with more physical kinds of things," he said. "They really are looking for that."

SBC health screenings

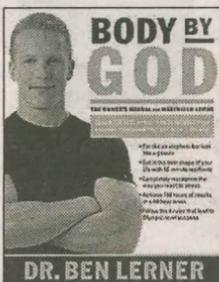
The Southern Baptist Convention has joined other denominations on the road to healthier members by conducting health screenings at annual meetings and giving away books on topics such as reducing stress. The Southern Baptist Annuity Board has recently launched a Web site for medical plan participants that includes a health assessment, "virtual trainer" and calorie counter among its options.

"They can look at restaurants and foods that are served in restaurants," said Curtis Sharp, spokesman for the Annuity Board. "They can determine whether they should eat a Big Mac or a Fajita Pita."

Last June, when Southern Baptists held their annual meeting in Phoenix, more than 300 participants showed up for a first-time, 6:30 a.m. "Run for the Son."

The one-mile run might be expanded to a five-kilometer event this year when they meet in Indianapolis.

When people aren't running with fellow members, some of them are reading up on how to fit.



DR. BEN LERNER



RUN FOR THE SON Participants at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Phoenix last year line up for the beginning of the first Run for the Son. Organizers say the one-mile walk/run attracted 300 people and likely will become an annual event. (SBC Annuity Board photo)

"Body by God" by Dr. Ben Lerner has been on the New York Times and Christian retailing best-seller lists.

The author says he considers his book, which includes tips on exercise, diet and reducing stress, to be "a supplement to the Bible." He encourages readers to eat foods on his "Food by God List"—which includes fruits, vegetables, turkey breast and lean beef—and to reduce their diet of "Food by Man"—shellfish, fast and fried foods and refined sugar.

"I believe if people see the body as the temple of God and that it's a gift from God and it's in fact the body by God, that they'll be more than motivated short-term to care for it," said Lerner. "They'll be inspired long-term."

Salad vs. fried chicken

LaVita Weaver, author of "Fit for God" agrees and said healthier diets within the church are also a part of the faith-related focus on fitness.

"You see all the time the macaroni and cheese, candied yams, ham, fried chicken," she said.

Weaver, a fitness trainer and an assistant to the pastor at her non-denominational Clinton, Md., church, has fostered a menu change in her own congregation.

"Now we bring salads," she said. "We also bring pasta salad, so people are now experimenting with healthier dishes."

Marie Griffith, an associate professor of religion at Princeton University, said there is no definitive research on whether religiously

based fitness programs are more successful than secular ones.

"Everybody's got sort of the pitch that our way is the best way," said Griffith, who has focused on religion and dieting and has a forthcoming book called "Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity."

"I don't think we really know."

But she said the more holistic focus on mind, body and spirit has become popular across the board, in religious circles and outside them. People who don't have time to go to church and the gym in different places are combining their needs in a package plan.

"I think it does make ... sense that people bring all these aspects of their lives together," she said.

Hence, perhaps, the increase in gospel aerobics classes.

Victoria Johnson, a Portland, Ore.-based author and fitness expert, has started an online "Gospel Aerobics Directory" that features churches and community centers with weekly or biweekly workouts set to energetic Christian music.

She estimates that there are hundreds of classes across the country.

Johnson, who has written the book "Body Revival" and developed exercise videos, says worship can be combined with workouts.

"I encourage everyone that walks on a treadmill to make that their morning devotional or their evening devotional," she said. "Let's take our time of movement and turn it into a time of worship, a time of praise and a time of devotion, a time of prayer."

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NATIONAL NOTES

Graham out of hospital after hip surgery. Evangelist Billy Graham was released from a Florida hospital Feb. 2 and will continue his recovery from a broken hip as an outpatient. "Doctors are encouraged by his progress and expect that he will be able to resume his ministry schedule after ongoing physical therapy," said Graham spokesman Larry Ross. After breaking his left hip Jan. 6, Graham, 85, had partial hip replacement surgery. His evangelistic association already has announced Graham's plans to hold a crusade June 17-20 in Kansas City, Mo. It also is making plans for a second 2004 crusade in Los Angeles.

Methodists donate phone cards to overseas soldiers. Members of the United Methodist Church have given 1,326 prepaid phone cards to members of the military stationed around the world. The message? It's time to call home. The phone cards, worth 133,375 minutes, were donated by local congregations as part of a churchwide appeal to help service members keep in touch with their families. The campaign started Nov. 11—Veterans Day—and so far the cards have been distributed to 42 Methodist chaplains around the world.

Update: NFL rescinds fine for Christian cap. The National Football League has rescinded a fine it had levied against Cincinnati Bengals' quarterback Jon Kitna for wearing a baseball-style cap with the Christian cross. The NFL had fined Kitna \$5,000 for wearing unauthorized head gear too close to game time during a television interview. Kitna did not say why the NFL changed its mind. The cap in question—a symbol of the Pro-Bowl quarterback's devotion to Jesus—instantly became a cause celebre in mid-December, when like-minded fans throughout the region showed their support for the Pro-Bowl quarterback.

Bush budget cuts AIDS funding. Shrunk AIDS funding in President Bush's 2005 budget proposal dampened the spirits of Christian groups who said he is not following through on his promise to combat the disease globally. Bush's Global AIDS Initiative is accompanied by other multilateral programs to total \$2.8 billion toward fighting AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. Groups such as the National Association of Evangelicals pressured Bush last month to include in his budget proposal a \$3.6 billion catch-up on his 2003 Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief that promised \$15 billion over five years. The first installment last year was \$2.4 billion.

Groups launch voter registration drive. Religious organizations and grassroots voter mobilization groups launched a program Feb. 4 aimed at encouraging people of faith to register and vote in the 2004 election year. The Interfaith Alliance's "One Nation, Many Faiths: Vote 2004" kickoff brought together leaders of faith-based groups representing Christian, Sikh, Muslim and other agencies. About 51 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in the 2000 election. "We simply have to do better," said Alliance President Welton Gaddy. "It is a matter of good government and it is a matter of good religion."

Will marriage decision trigger amendment?

By Deborah Caldwell
Beliefnet

Washington (RNS)—Conservative Christian leaders, less than satisfied with President Bush's public statements on gay marriage, have been looking for a "trigger"—an event that would force the president to back a constitutional amendment defining marriage as a heterosexual institution.

Last week they got it:

On Feb. 4, Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court backed up its November decision calling laws against gay marriage unconstitutional with a new opinion, telling the state Senate that a bill to create civil unions similar to Vermont's would not satisfy its mandate.

Some conservatives had hoped President Bush would make an announcement as early as the next day, when he spoke at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. The annual breakfast always draws hundreds of people—many of them the evangelicals who form Bush's base of support. He did not address the issue.

"The President has been looking for an appropriate trigger, and this is it as far as I'm concerned," said Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. "I've never seen anything that has energized our base like this has."

Former presidential candidate Gary Bauer said he and other conservative Christians had received word from the White House that "the president is now prepared to officially endorse a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman." Bauer said the formal announcement was "forthcoming."

He added: "I cannot overstate the importance of the president's support for this effort. ... With the 'bully pulpit' of the White House fully engaged, I believe our chances for success have greatly improved—and this news could not have come at a better time."

On Feb. 4, the White House described the ruling as "deeply troubling" and the kind of med-



PRAYER BREAKFAST President George Bush is introduced before speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast, Feb. 5. Some conservatives hoped he would endorse a constitutional amendment limiting marriage between one man and one woman. But Bush did not address the subject. (RNS/Reuters photo by Larry Downing)

dling by "activist" judges President Bush warned about in his State of the Union speech. During the address last month, Bush said if such rulings continue, a constitutional amendment may be needed.

But he stopped short of an outright endorsement, which many observers took to mean that Bush was trying to appease conservative voters while not alienating moderates.

Political hot-potato?

The political calculation is tricky. Polls consistently show Americans opposed to gay marriage but nervous about a Constitutional amendment. Support for a marriage amendment could help get Bush's base to the polls in November. On the other hand, supporting such an amendment in an election year could make the president look too conservative in the eyes of independent voters.

Presidential spokesman Scott McClellan said last week that the president is "firmly committed to protecting and defending" marriage—defined as between a man and a woman.

Bush has flirted with both sides on the issue, saying in a December

television interview that the Massachusetts court had "overreached its bounds." But he infuriated conservatives by adding that "the position of this administration is that, you know, whatever legal arrangements people want to make, they're allowed to make, so long as it's embraced by the state."

According to conservative activist Charles Colson, Bush recently "stated his unequivocal support for a proposed version of a constitutional amendment known as the Musgrave Amendment." It reads: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this Constitution or the constitution of any State, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

Meanwhile, a variety of conservative groups weighed in last week after the news of the Massachusetts decision broke. The Arlington Group, a coalition of more than 20 conservative Christian organizations, said in a statement that "a federal marriage amendment is absolutely necessary. Congress must immediately pass it."



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WESTERN RECORDER PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

What makes a cold winter exciting?

Mailbox anticipation grows as we prepare for summer

I remember as a youth wanting it to snow, and not just a little, but a great deal. January was always the month with the greatest likelihood for snow days, as in out-of-school days. I guess I am getting old because I find myself looking forward to summer before winter even begins.

While it is not in the form of snow, January does bring great excitement for me and our camps. During the early months each year, registrations for Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek summer camps begin to fill our mailboxes on a daily basis. These registrations give us a taste of what is to come, and they create a much-needed feeling of warmth in the midst of daily high temperatures in the 20s.

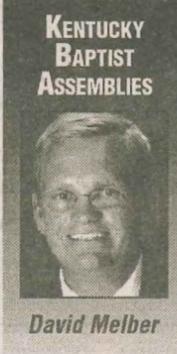
Many people might wonder why we eagerly want registrations early each year. We have several reasons, but I will only share a couple. First, we literally plan for summer during these months, and we hire summer staff based on registration numbers. These staff positions include collegiate program staff, cooks, grounds keepers, camper

volunteers and many others. Our staff during the winter months ranges from 10 to 20 people, but during the summer we will have more than 140 workers serving in a variety of ways. It takes a great deal of time to coordinate and hire all these positions, and we need to start as early as possible.

Second, as churches firm their reservation numbers, we see some adjustments in our total camp projection. This adjustment allows us the ability to make room for other churches that have yet to register. We typically will receive reservation requests through the end of March. By having a January deadline, we can obtain a realistic view of our vacancies now, which will allow us to place other churches during the next two months.

January and February can seem cold and dreary, but registration requests that fill the mailboxes provide a great encouragement and provide a glimpse of the warm and exciting summer to come.

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



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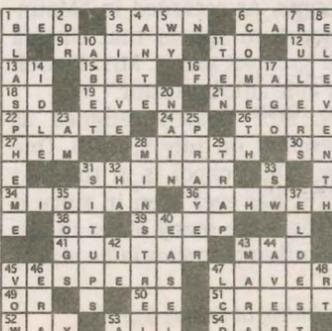
Elizabeth B. Smith

- Across**
- 1 "I ___ not want" (Psalms 23:1)
 - 6 "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the ___" (Isaiah 11:8)
 - 9 Father of Hophni and Phinehas (1 Samuel 2:27, 34)
 - 10 "Lie down in green ___" (Psalms 23:2)
 - 14 "Then I will ___ your flesh" (Judges 8:7)
 - 16 "___ the people together" (Deuteronomy 33:17)
 - 17 Mother, for short
 - 19 Sandwich shops
 - 21 Maiden name
 - 22 "I will fear no ___" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 24 "All the days of my ___" (Psalms 23:6)
 - 26 "He will not ___ thee" (Deuteronomy 31:8)
 - 28 "Thy rod and thy staff they ___ me" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 31 "Thou preparest a ___ before me" (Psalms 23:5)
 - 34 Yukon Front, abbr.
 - 35 Mined matter
 - 37 "Even unto the ___ of the jubilee" (Leviticus 27:18)
 - 38 "Lord, be not ___ from me" (Psalms 35:22)
 - 40 What?
 - 42 "Thy ___ and thy staff" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 44 "Valley of the shadow of ___" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 46 "None that doeth good, no not ___" (Psalms 14:3)
 - 47 Maryland's neighbor to the south, abbr.
 - 49 Flightless bird
 - 51 "In ___ time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6)

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						61			

- 54 "To lie down in ___ pastures" (Psalms 23:2)
 - 57 Assistant, abbr.
 - 59 Not Jr.
 - 60 Edible root
 - 61 Inhabitant
- Down**
- 2 "___ maketh me to lie down" (Psalms 23:2)
 - 3 Height, abbr.
 - 4 "___ down in green pastures" (Psalms 23:2)
 - 5 Organization for veterans, abbr.
 - 6 Preposition indicating when or where
 - 7 "I ... will ___ with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20)
 - 8 Fruit
 - 10 "Thou ___ a table before me" (Psalms 23:5)
 - 11 "Beside the ___ waters" (Psalms 23:2)
 - 12 Wind direction
 - 13 "The Lord is my ___" (Psalms 23:1)
 - 15 In the year of our Lord, Lat. abbr.
 - 17 "___ shall follow me" (Psalms 23:6)
 - 18 Audio-visual, abbr.
 - 20 Yes, Sp.
 - 23 "___ hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:14) (2 words)
 - 25 "___ their skin from off them" (Micah 3:3)
 - 26 "Fear no evil: ___ thou art with me" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 27 "God saw that ___ was good" (Genesis 1:10)
 - 29 Not on
 - 30 "Dwell in the house of the Lord ___" (Psalms 23:6) (2 words)
 - 32 "The well ... is between Kadesh and ___" (Genesis 16:14)
 - 33 Southeast Asian
 - 36 Myself
 - 39 Paid announcement
 - 41 "I will dwell in the ___ of the Lord" (Psalms 23:6)
 - 43 Medium, abbr.
 - 45 "Annointest my ___ with oil" (Psalms 23:5)
 - 48 "Thou ___ with me" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 50 Social worker's graduate degree
 - 52 "___ not vain repetitions" (Matthew 6:7)
 - 53 "Do not ___, my beloved brethren" (James 1:16)
 - 55 Apiece, abbr.
 - 56 "I will fear ___ evil" (Psalms 23:4)
 - 58 Thallium, chem. symbol

Last week's solution



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Scholar wants favorite Bible translation to dominate

By Douglas Todd
Religion News Service

Vancouver, British Columbia (RNS)—A noted American academic wants to see a Bible translation put together by scores of conservative scholars become the one Bible everyone uses.

Alan Jacobs, an English professor at Wheaton College near Chicago, said the new English Standard Version Bible, whose translation was overseen by Vancouver's James Packer, is the only one with the potential to become the universal Bible of all English-speaking Christians.

Jacobs, a respected professor at Wheaton, a major evangelical university, said he laments the end of

the era when most English-speaking Protestants read and quoted from the same Bible—the King James Version, first published in England in 1611.

"Everyone who grew up with the (King James Version) feels the loss of a shared language, of particular words and phrases that resonated in the common ear," Jacobs wrote in the recent issue of *First Things Magazine*, a Christian journal.

"Best available?"

With more than 100 English-language Bible translations now competing against one another, Jacobs called the English Standard Version "the best available English Bible."

It was created two years ago by a team of about 100 conservative Protestants led by Packer, of Regent College, an evangelical postgraduate school on the University of British Columbia campus.

But some Bible scholars say Jacobs' high-profile campaign to champion one common English-language Bible is quixotic and misguided at best and imperialistic at worst.

"It sounds like ecclesiastical and scholarly tyranny we shouldn't put up with," said Professor Lloyd Gaston, a veteran Bible scholar at the Vancouver School of Theology.

"The more Bible translations we have the better," Gaston said. It's good for people of faith to realize, he said, that there are many different ways of interpreting ancient Bible stories, which were first told orally and then written down in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Additionally, convincing Southern Baptist leaders to endorse the English Standard Version could be problematic, as LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention has prepared its own Holman Christian Standard Bible. LifeWay already has released the Holman New Testament and plans to release the full Bible in April.

Although Jacobs had no role in translating the ESV, he is a friend of Packer and a fellow evangelical.

The literary chairman of the ESV translation team is Jacobs' English faculty colleague at Wheaton College, Leland Ryken, who routinely criticizes modern Bible translations.

Even Packer, the translation's general editor, backed away from Jacobs' hope that one Bible translation

would dominate the world's English-language Christian community.

"Foolish" idea

There is no such thing as a definitive translation of the Bible, Packer said in an interview, and it would be "foolish" of him and his colleagues to suggest that theirs is the last word.

"People have different cultural backgrounds. They talk and read English at different levels," said Packer, 77.

Packer said the audience for his team's translation is "the kind of people who are bewildered by the pressure to embrace novel understandings of the faith and paraphrased translations of the Bible. We believe there's a large constituency of people who appreciate a more conservative Bible."

The ESV translation, which Packer prepared with other biblical scholars from throughout North America, is a more literal translation than other translations, he said, and sought to use as many of the precise words used in original texts as possible.

Jacobs said one of his main reasons for arguing for the supremacy of the ESV is his concern that other modern Bible translations lack good English style.

The ESV slightly reworks the popular 1952 Revised Standard Version, for instance, dropping "thees" and "thous."

Still, Jacobs favors "deference to existing excellence"—if a King James or Revised Standard Version phrase is accurate and understandable, keep it.

Lost in the translations?

With more than 100 English-language Bible translations, the options appear almost limitless. Here are how some of the more popular versions translate 2 Corinthians 10:13:

English Standard Version

But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you.

Holman Christian Standard Bible

We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but according to the measure of the area (of ministry) that God has assigned to us, (which) reaches even to you.

The Message

We aren't making outrageous claims here. We're sticking to the limits of what God has set for us. But there can be no question that those limits reach to and include you.

New American Standard Bible

But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.

New International Version

We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.

New King James Version

We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.

New Living Translation

But we will not boast of authority we do not have. Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us, and this plan includes our working there with you.

Two grand ladies, part 1

Trustees sought God's man, but 'Lord had seen fit to send them a woman'

The name affixed to the outside of the building which houses our library, chapel, two classrooms, two computer labs and the main office is Sylvia W. Russell. Mrs. Russell was one of two grand ladies who played critical roles in the history of this ministry.

World War I had just ended. The war had been difficult for everyone and especially trying for faith-based ministries like Oneida Baptist Institute. The war years were very lean years financially. Paying the bills became more and more difficult. Creditors were worried about extending additional credit.

Professor Burns, the founder and first president of OBI, was dealing with serious health problems. He had traveled extensively and worked tirelessly for two decades to procure the necessary funds to support this school. In April 1921, Burns resigned. His associate of four years was asked to serve as president. Facing many daunting trials and having gone for as long as a year without a salary, the new president resigned after only nine months. Most of the faculty had endured similar hardships. Had the end come for this modest school in the mountains?

Here is how it was recorded in "Mountain Rising," a thorough history of Oneida written by Darrell Richardson: "The school was in desperate straits. The trustees sought high and low for a ... man big enough to take the helm and save the sinking ship. The Oneida Mountaineer had ceased publication. ... The trustees finally decided that it would be wise to close the school

because of pressing debts and lack of funds."

Like so many other times in OBI's history, devoted friends came to the rescue. Several people underwrote the school's expenses to the end of the year. Then, if no president could be found, Oneida would close.

Oddly, it was the daughter of a trustee who offered a solution. She reminded her father of Mrs. Sylvia Russell of Filson. A time was arranged with Mrs. Russell to meet with Oneida's board. Mrs. Russell was an educator and a confident person. As Richardson recorded in his book, "The Board of Trustees was impressed. They had prayed for a man but the Lord had seen fit to send them a woman."

Russell found Oneida to be in every bit as bad a condition as she had been told. It appeared that the life or death of this school rested fully on her shoulders. Could Mrs. Russell do what the trustees could not find a man to do? Burns was encouraged to know of Russell's presidency. Gradually he began to regain some of his strength. He even accepted a few speaking engagements. As recorded in "Mountain Rising," "It began to appear that Oneida had weathered her greatest storm. Mrs. Russell proved to be a very able administrator."

After six years, Mrs. Russell resigned as Oneida's third president on July 9, 1928. One trustee said of her, "Our school is in the best financial condition it has ever been in since it was founded, and there are many other things too numerous to mention that should be placed to her credit."

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



THIS IS ONEIDA

W.F. Underwood

Skateboard evangelism

Georgian shares gospel in world of wheels & ramps

Evangelism seeks to use "all things in order to win some." First-year student Cody Jones uses skateboarding to witness.

A Tazewell, Tenn., pastor built ramps at his house for community kids to skate on Sunday afternoons, followed by a Bible study. The attendance averages 20.

"There are not many places to safely skate," Cody noted. "Many of the kids need salvation. It's a really good outreach and I like to skate."

Cody also works with Gap Fellowship, a new church in Middlesboro. He helps with the equipment and plays bass for the worship service.

"My Grandma took me to church and Royal Ambassador meetings, starting about age 6," Cody said. "At age 10 I understood there was sin in my life and I gave everything to Jesus. Shortly after that my parents started attending church, and three to four months later they became Christians." The youth minister at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Hoboken, Ga., helped disciple Cody as part of a 40-member youth group.

Cody heard about Clear Creek

while working in Camp Jubilee, a youth camp in Tazewell, Tenn., directed by Clear Creek alumnus and evangelist Ronnie Owens. "Bro. Ronnie came to our church for a revival, and later for a community-wide tent crusade," Cody said. "He has really encouraged me." At camp Cody gained experience working with younger children, doing clean up, and as a youth counselor. He plans to be at Camp Jubilee again this summer. "Last summer, my south Georgia cousin attended and got saved," Cody said. "I had opportunities to witness; there were many rededications and some called into ministry."

How does a single guy like a school where most students are married with children? "I like the environment at Clear Creek," Cody said. "I enjoy the classes and the professors. It's been very good. I also have a good time with other singles." Cody also oversees the chapel sound and prepares the tapes for Clear Creek Chimes, our weekly radio program.

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



CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE

Bill Whittaker

Experts & parents: Show part of continued slide in decency

By Mark O'Keefe & Michele Melendez
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—While there were apologies all around for the now-famous exposure of Janet Jackson's breast during the Super Bowl halftime show, parents—and the Federal Communications Commission—might not be so easily pacified.

Some see the incident as part of an escalating cycle of celebrity outrageousness in which previous standards of decency are obliterated, bringing increased fame and fortune to those who violate the old taboos.

"These are calculated publicity stunts," said Michael Josephson, president of the Josephson Institute for Ethics. "These are not artists pushing the limit, saying, 'I'm doing this because it's true.' When the media allows people like this to succumb to media stunts, they invite this behavior. It's like paying hijackers. You pay them and you get more of them."

Indeed, this time there may be consequences. FCC Chairman Michael Powell announced last week an investigation of the Jackson-Timberlake incident.

NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue called the show "offensive, inappropriate and embarrassing" and promised a policy change to better monitor future halftime shows.

CBS, the network that broadcast the halftime show, and MTV, which produced it, both apologized, saying Justin Timberlake's partial removal of Jackson's leather gladiator outfit was unscripted.

Parents appalled

Many parents and family-advocacy groups were quick to condemn the stunt.

"As a mother of a 12-year-old girl and a 6-year-old who watched most of the Super Bowl, I am disgusted and saddened because I can't seem to screen out all this obscenity unless I throw away the TV and all of our radios," said Margaret Ritsch, 45, of Kensington, Md.

"What can you do about this? You become a missionary or join the Peace Corps and bring your kids. I'm only half joking. The only way it seems you can deal with this stuff is to leave the culture."

Focus on the Family and Concerned Women for America, conservative Christian groups, asked parents and others to contact the FCC and the offending networks to express their outrage.

In Newport Beach, Calif., Debbie Werk watched Sunday's halftime show with her husband, three of her daughters and their grandparents.

Werk has a 10-year-old daughter who tries to emulate moves done by Jackson and others. But Werk said she was most worried about her 15-year-old, who likes to push her mother's boundaries in what she wears.

"She might say, 'How bad can it



JUSTIN & JANET Media observers say their stunt is just the latest effort to push the bounds of what's acceptable. (RNS/Reuters photo)

be if my shirt goes above my belly button if Justin Timberlake is ripping off Janet's shirt on TV? This just makes our battles with our kids that much harder. The more kids see this stuff, the more they tolerate it."

Other incidents

The incident was the latest in a series of boundary-pushing incidents by American celebrities in recent years.

In 1999, rapper Lil' Kim presented an award at the MTV Video Music Awards in a gown that exposed her entire left breast, with a seashell-shaped sticker over her nipple. R&B legend Diana Ross, also on stage, bounced Kim's bare breast with her hand.

During the 2000 Grammy Awards, Jennifer Lopez strutted across the stage in a sheer, floral-print dress, cut below the belly-button and revealing her underwear.

At last year's Golden Globe award ceremony, Bono, the single-named lead singer for the rock group U2, used the F-word on broadcast television while accepting an award. And, during a performance at last year's MTV Video Music Awards, singers Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears kissed Madonna on the lips, with open mouths.

"In the media world, to get attention, you've got to shock," said Jeffrey McCall, a communications professor at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind.

The uproar over the Super Bowl incident appears to be exceeding the outrage from those previous moments. The difference, say media and morality experts, is the venue.

"The Super Bowl is the highest-profile sporting event of the year with a huge youth audience," said David Walsh, president of the Minneapolis-based National Institute on Media and the Family. "To have adult entertainment as not just a piece, but the dominant theme, of what we could call the ultimate family viewing event is disturbing to a lot of people."

The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church. Reggie McNeal. Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2003. 149 pages. \$23.95. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

The purpose of Reggie McNeal's book is simple: to spur church leaders to address the future as it is and not how they wish it might be.

Most ministers were trained for the ministry in a time that was vastly different than the world in which we now live. McNeal contends that for the church to face the future with some hope of addressing the needs of people, we must ask the questions that come from today's reality, not from our training or from wishful thinking.

McNeal's main indictment for today's church leadership is that we are missing the real context in which we must do ministry.

To help solve this problem, McNeal highlights six new realities that change the playing field for "doing church." In fact, when these realities are properly considered in each individual ministry situation, McNeal has hope we will stop just "doing church" and instead be involved in Kingdom building.

This is not an easy book to read. Not because it is not well-written (because it is) or has overly difficult concepts (because they are not). It is hard to read because it calls into question many of the tools ministers of my age (47) have in our tool box of ministry. Even when we are "successful,"

McNeal's book calls into question whether what we are doing has any real eternal value. Are we doing ministry to further "churchianity" or Christianity?

I highly recommend this book for individuals to read or to participate in a discussion group with other ministers. McNeal's passion is that the church be ready for the future that is already upon us.

If taken seriously, this book would go a long way toward helping church leadership be ready for the "present future." *Wayne Hager*

Mercy Streets: Seeing Grace on the Streets of New York. Taylor Field. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003. 171 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦

For 18 years, Taylor Field's life has been invested in the people who pass by and through the East Seventh Street Baptist Church and Graffiti Center. He has journeyed to this place by way of Wake Forest University, Princeton Theological Seminary and Golden Gate Baptist Seminary.

Ministering to people who live in one of the poorest, most drug-infested areas of the city might seem like a strange place for a person of his credentials to be. But he has made his home in this place. And this book demonstrates that he is still learning about how God works.

"Mercy Streets" is a continuation of the story Field began in "A Church Called Graffiti." In this book he moves beyond the walls and people of the church to the streets of New York.

Through this collection of stories, he helps us see how God's grace is both revealed and extended in and through people in one of the world's largest cities. In and through the stories, he weaves insights from Christians, past and present, to help us see and interpret God's hand at work.

The strongest part of the book came out of his post-Sept. 11 experiences and reflections. I could feel the tension he felt as he struggled to find his son, whose school was only two blocks from "ground zero."

I was challenged by a quote he shared from Abraham Heschel, noted expert on the prophets: "We have failed to fight for right, for justice, for goodness; as a result we must fight against wrong, against injustice, against evil." I was struck that the Bible begins and ends with the image of the tree of life. *Jim Holladay*

Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible. Editors. James D.G. Dunn and John Rogerson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishers, 2003. 1,629 pages. \$75. ♦♦♦♦

I am impressed. Not many one-volume commentaries on the Bible manage to do what the Eerdmans Commentary has done as well as they have done it.

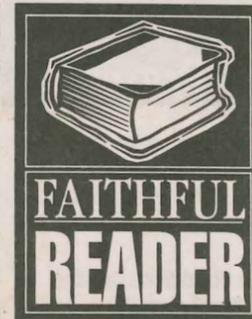
Recognizing that a one-volume commentary cannot begin to do a verse-by-verse exposition of Scripture, the editors have chosen to focus "on the principal unit of meaning," with the primary objective being to "clarify the meaning (and possible meanings) of each unit and to bring out its interconnectedness with the rest of the text." This allows the writers to give a fairly thorough look, not only at the meanings of narrative block, but to touch on key issues related to the text.

In addition to the expected help with the biblical text, the commentary includes the traditional introductions to each book, as well as background articles on such topics as: "The History of the Tradition" (both Old and New Testament), "New Testament Apocrypha" and "Introduction to Prophetic Literature" (written by Paul Redditt of Georgetown College).

Of particular help and interest to anyone who engages in regular Bible study and teaching would be Joel Green's article on approaches to interpreting Scripture.

The editors collected an impressive and varied cast of writers. Thus the commentary, while originating in the evangelical stream of Christianity, reflects some of the best thinking and work being done in biblical study today. The language is not technical, so the audience need not be limited to seminary trained readers.

While the price might seem a bit steep, the overall content and usefulness of the commentary make it a bargain. For folks who cannot afford to invest in an entire commentary set, this volume will be a more-than-adequate resource. *Jim Holladay*



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: whager@trifluent.net; or lyndonpastor@aol.com

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following ministries and churches throughout Kentucky:

■ **Food Distribution Warehouse in Berea.** Three Baptist associations are working together to secure and coordinate the distribution of large shipments of food to local ministry centers throughout Eastern Kentucky. Pray that God will provide needed resources, such as food, trucks and more volunteers.

■ **Earle Clements Job Corps Center in Morganfield.** MSC missionaries Jerrell White, Harell Riley and Ed Henson minister regularly to many of the center's 1,400 students and saw 130 professions of faith last year. Pray that the new administration will be more receptive to their witness and allow continuation of the ministry on campus.

■ **Lakeside Community Church in Taylorsville.** The church was launched in September 2002. Leaders request prayer as they seek to connect with and reach the unchurched of Spencer County.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BENTON**—Sharpe Missionary Church recently honored **Jeremy Short** for five years as pastor.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—First Church recently honored **Rodney Vincent** on his fifth anniversary as minister of education and administration. **Mark Hopper** is pastor.

■ **BURLINGTON**—Woodhaven Church recently celebrated its 18th anniversary. **Walter Hulette** is pastor.

■ **CALIFORNIA**—Mentor Church will dedicate its new multi-purpose facility, Feb. 22, 2 p.m. For more information, call (859) 635-7300.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host **Shawn and Sheri Critzer** in concert Feb. 29, 6 p.m. Activities also will include a 5 p.m. potluck meal.

■ **CORBIN**—First Church called **Tom Allen** as pastor effective Feb. 15. He previously was pastor of First Church, Mount Vernon, Ga.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church will host a Marriage Tune-up Seminar April 16-17 with **Jeff and Debby McElroy**. For information, call (502) 241-8534, ext. 19. **Troy Dobbs** is senior pastor.

■ **EUBANK**—Bethel Church called **Philip Fisher** as pastor effective Feb. 1.

■ **JEFFERSONTOWN**—Jeffersontown Church will hold an annual Agape Banquet Feb. 15, 6 p.m. **Sanford Hill** is pastor.

■ **JENKINS**—Emmanuel Church recently called **James Overbee** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Faith Church, Beatyville.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host the **Journeymen** in concert Feb. 15, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Parkland Church honored **Jim and Geneva Pitcock** on their 50th wedding anniversary Feb. 7. The church will host a men's prayer breakfast Feb. 14, 7:30 a.m. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

St. Matthews Church will hold an annual father-daughter banquet Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m. Guest speakers will be **Ashley Rowatt** and her father, **Wade Rowatt**. For information, call (502) 896-8882. **Leslie Hollon** is pastor.

■ **MORTONS GAP**—Freedom Church recently called **Larry Pierce** as full-time pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Lone Oak First Church will present "He's Alive" April 10-11. **Randy Holt** is minister of music.

■ **RUSSELLVILLE**—First Church recently honored **John and Betty Thompson** on their 50th wedding anniversary. **Randall Neal** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—High Street Church recently called **Jonathan Hall** as minister to youth.

Southern makes plans to offer master of divinity in Spanish

Louisville (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will offer a master of divinity program this summer taught entirely in Spanish—a first for an accredited Protestant seminary in the continental United States, according to the Association of Theological Schools.

The program, coordinated through Southern's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, will include theological instruction and practical training for ministry in Hispanic communities.

"We are very excited about offering training to ministers in the

fastest-growing demographic segment in America," said Thom Rainier, dean of the Graham School.

According to the program's coordinators, David Sills and Twyla Fagan, the master of divinity in Spanish will help address the growing phenomenon of Hispanic churches that lack adequately trained leadership.

"The sad fact is that there are very few trained Spanish-speaking pastors and many Hispanic pulpits are empty," said Sills, who serves as associate professor of missions and cultural anthropology at Southern. "Currently, there are



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

- 16 Regional Annuity Conference, First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.
- 16 Small Church Growth Tour, Rosebower Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 17 Regional Annuity Conference, Elizabethtown Baptist Church.
- 17 Small Church Growth Tour, Second Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 17 Regional Annuity Conference, Buena Vista Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 18 Regional Annuity Conference, First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg.
- 19 Regional Annuity Conference, Immanuel Baptist Church, Frankfort.
- 21 All-State youth choir & orchestra auditions, Victory Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 21 Love 101 (True Love Waits), Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 23-24 Evangelism Conference, Hillvue Heights Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 23 Youth leaders' dinner, Hillvue Heights Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 28 All-State youth choir & orchestra auditions, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

28 Regional Keyboard Festival, First Baptist Church, Murray.

March

- 5-6 Creative Ministries Festival-West, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 5-6 State Handbell Festival, Cave City Convention Center.
- 12-13 Creative Ministries Festival-East, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 12-13 Mission Service Corps Basic Training, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 13 All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra auditions, First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.
- 10-20 Kentucky Changers, collegiate, Morehead.
- 19-20 Great Commission Prayer Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 19-20 Youth Bible Drill & Speakers Tournament, Cedarmore.
- 20 All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra Auditions, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 20 Regional Keyboard Festival, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 20 Youth Bible Drill & Speakers Tournament, Jonathan Creek.

For more information, call (888) 266-6477 or click www.kybaptist.org

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Gano Avenue Baptist Church at 519 Gano Ave., Georgetown, Ky., is selling its present facility and building new. The facility has approx. 9,000 square feet and seats 250 (with ample parking). In has great potential with many updates. Please call (502) 863-3454 between 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. to see the facilities and make an offer.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of students for Rineyville Baptist Church. Please send resumés to Pastor Mitch Ash at 5629 Rineyville Road, Rineyville, KY 40162. Fax: (270) 737-5721.

SEEKING: Secretary/administrative assistant for Green Acres BC in Louisville. Skills required: receptionist, file/financial clerk, computer experience (desktop publishing, MS Office, QuickBooks2003). Pay and benefits negotiable. Send resumé or application to GABC, 5189 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40219; e-mail: dpowell198@aol.com. For more information, call (502) 964-8165.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister for White Sulphur Baptist Church. Send resumé to church at 5300 Ironworks Pike, Georgetown, KY 40324, Attn: Roger Davis.

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

SEEKING: People who love to sing for a new community choir being launched by Lakeside Baptist Church. An informational meeting will take place on Monday, Feb. 16, at 7 p.m. at the church, 11412 Taylorsville Road in Jeffersontown. For more information, contact Craig Crawley at (502) 267-4446 or by e-mail at craig@lakesidebaptist.us, or log on to our Web site (www.lakesidebaptist.us) and click on the "Community Choir" link on the menu.

SEEKING: Coral Hill Baptist Church, Glasgow, is seeking a part-time children's ministry director. Resumés must be received by Feb. 16. Send to CHBC, 292 Horton Rigdon Road, Cave City, KY 42127.

SEEKING: Church secretary. Needed: proficient computer skills; ability to perform administrative tasks; people skills and confidentiality is a must. Office hours: 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. Send resumés to: Broadway Baptist Church, 4000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207, Attn: Roger Lamb.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Bethany Baptist, Louisville. Will consider bivocational candidate. Submit resumé to Bethany Baptist, 2319 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40205.

SEEKING: Administrator to oversee multiple business aspects of large, multi-ministry church in Lexington. Send queries or resumés to PO Box 22022, Lexington, KY 40522-2022.

no SBC seminaries with an MDiv in Spanish—although Hispanics are the largest minority group in the USA."

In addition to offering Spanish-language theological training, the program will help prepare students for the unique cultural challenges associated with ministering in Hispanic communities, Sills said.

"Ministry to Hispanics must not be approached as if they were Anglos who happen to speak Spanish," he said. "We tend to think that the primary, or only, difference is the language. But churches need to understand that language is just one

hue of the cultural prism. There are many other cultural aspects that will impact effectiveness when ministering across cultural lines." "Hispanics have a different worldview," he said. "As a rule, most of them come from churches saturated by Latin American Catholicism ... and have been heavily influenced by Catholic doctrine and practice—Mariolatry, prayer to saints, works righteousness and authoritarian church leadership."

Enrollment for the Spanish-language master of divinity program is currently open for the summer semester.

SEEKING: Full-time youth minister for Campbellsville Baptist Church. Send resumés to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Campbellsville Baptist Church, PO Box 530, Campbellsville, KY 42719. Priority resumés due by Feb. 20, 2004.

SEEKING: Northside Baptist, a steadily-growing church, is seeking an interim part-time minister of worship (salary) and a full-time minister of worship (salary and benefits package available). If interested, please send resumé to: Northside Baptist Church, 1800 Pear Orchard Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

SEEKING: Pianist and part-time music minister (separate positions). New Bethel Baptist Church, PO Box 100, Verona, KY 41092. Send resumé to church or call Pete MacAdams, (859) 485-7845.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Apply to Liberty Baptist Church, c/o Joy Fletcher, PO Box 208, Russell Springs, KY 42642.

'Sesame Street' style Sunday school

Some youth ministers using technology, fast-paced programs to educate youth

By Barbara Neff
Religion News Service

Grayslake, Ill. (RNS)—Six years ago, Dan Huffman abandoned his lucrative career as a software development consultant to become a full-time youth minister.

"I don't have any formal religious training," he said, "but I believe that when God calls you, He will equip you."

For Huffman, part of that equipment turned out to be his computer science background.

Huffman, the pastor of children's ministries at The Chapel, a nondenominational church in Grayslake, Ill., belongs to a growing group of youth ministers using technology and other innovations to attract today's multimedia-savvy kids to biblical teachings.

The ministers rely on tools like PowerPoint, videos, rock music and interactive exercises to make their lessons relevant to kids.

"The messages don't change, but the methods do," said Dale Hudson, children's minister at First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark. "Churches can't teach in the way they did in the 1950s or '60s."

Both Hudson and Huffman instituted dramatic changes to the existing Sunday school programs when they took over their churches' youth ministries.

Huffman recalled watching three fifth-grade boys sit with their arms crossed over their chests as their teacher stood in front of the

classroom singing a hymn.

"I knew this wasn't working, so I looked to see who was communicating well with kids," he said.

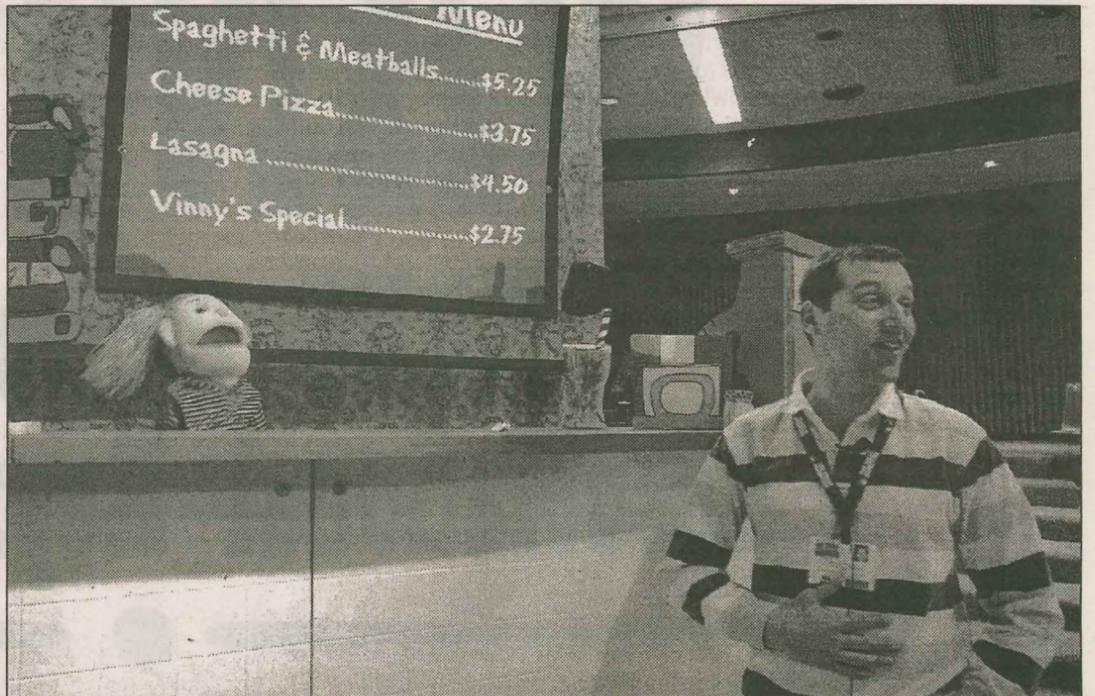
Hudson said his church also fell short of connecting culturally with the children before he moved to a fast-paced, "Nickelodeon style" that incorporates high-energy, sloppy games and numerous visual devices, broadcast on large screens with music and graphics. "You have to let kids be kids," he said. "We make church a fun, exciting place."

Stopped meeting in funeral room

Hudson's program, which serves 600 children in first through fifth grades each week, takes place on elaborate sets known as Toon Town and Space 45. He said the children's worship program was held in a chapel that also was used for funerals when he started in Springdale.

"The first radical thing we did was change the environment," Hudson said. Searching the Internet, Hudson connected with Bruce Barry, a set designer who previously worked for Universal Studios, Busch Gardens and the Rain Forest Cafe. "You can't stick kids in a room with beige walls," Hudson said. "We tried to look through the eyes of a child when we created our rooms."

Huffman's program, called The Great Adventure, currently operates in a theater-in-the-round at the local high school, serving about 400 kids in two sessions every Sunday. He said the move from a classroom



to the theater meant he could do more elaborate teaching.

Huffman had heard that children have an attention span of one minute for each year of age but knew they watched television for long periods of time. "I kept coming back to Sesame Street," he said. "It moved fast and kept the kids' attention, and it always had a common thread, like the letter E and the number 9, with everything revolved around that theme."

Programs match attention spans

Huffman breaks each week's lesson into segments of no longer than five minutes. A recent lesson, which focused on jealousy, played out in a diner, with a cash register, high chrome stools lined up at a counter and a video screen. Minutes before about 200 kids poured down the aisles to their plastic-molded seats, several adults and fifth-grade children squeezed in more rehearsal for the puppet show segments.

"I don't want any dead space," Huffman directed. The 45-minute lesson included scenes in a continuing puppet story, broken up by video clips, interactive time when the children offered personal expe-

riences with jealousy, a Bible teaching, a rollicking worship song and a lesson review game.

This is not your father's Sunday school, but Huffman and Hudson said they've encountered little resistance to their ideas. "Every once in a while you may have an extremely conservative family, but 99 percent of the people love the changes, and you have to program for where the majority of people are," Hudson said.

Still, the new approaches are not without their critics, who complain that the methods emphasize entertainment over education. Huffman agrees that the teaching is the key component of the children's ministry but said the kids won't come back if they don't enjoy the lessons.

"Why do they make Gummi Bear vitamins these days?" Huffman asked. "Critics say you're just making them attractive to kids. Well, yeah; the end result is they're getting their vitamins." Similarly, the new youth ministry programs teach God's Word to kids in the most digestible way, he said. "We do have a lot of fun, but we don't compromise the message."

YOUTH MINISTRY Dan Huffman leads a recent Sunday school lesson on jealousy, illustrated by a puppet show, videos and PowerPoint. Huffman, pastor of the children's ministries at a church in Grayslake, Ill., aims to teach Sunday school "Sesame Street" style. (RNS photo by Bob Black)

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PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
WESTERN RECORDER

How did St. Valentine become linked with cupid?

Washington (RNS)—How did a priest martyred for his faith in third-century Rome become a symbol of romance for sweethearts the world over?

History says little of St. Valentine, whose feast day is celebrated Feb. 14. Scholars agree he was a priest and physician who lived in Rome during the reign of Claudius II. Arrested for aiding his fellow persecuted Christians, Valentine was beaten and beheaded about 270 A.D.

Yet Valentine's Day—with its traditions of Cupids, billets-doux, greeting cards, red roses, and heart-shaped boxes of candy—has little to do with religion.

Rather, scholars believe the modern romantic holiday has its roots in medieval lore. Recorded in some 14th-century English literature is the belief that birds choose their mates on Feb. 14. Because Christianized Europe venerated St. Valentine on that same day, religion and romance became inextricably linked.

The earliest example of a sweetheart refer-

ring to her paramour as Valentine is found in "The Paston Letters," a collection of personal and business correspondence mostly among members of a Norfolk, England, family between 1422 and 1529.

Elizabeth Drews had a daughter, Margery, whom she wished to see married. Elizabeth wrote in February 1477 to John Paston, a relative and prospective bridegroom:

"And, cousin, upon Friday is St. Valentine's Day and every bird chooseth him a mate, and if it like you to come on Thursday at night ... I trust to God that you shall speak to my husband, and I shall pray that we shall bring the matter to a conclusion."

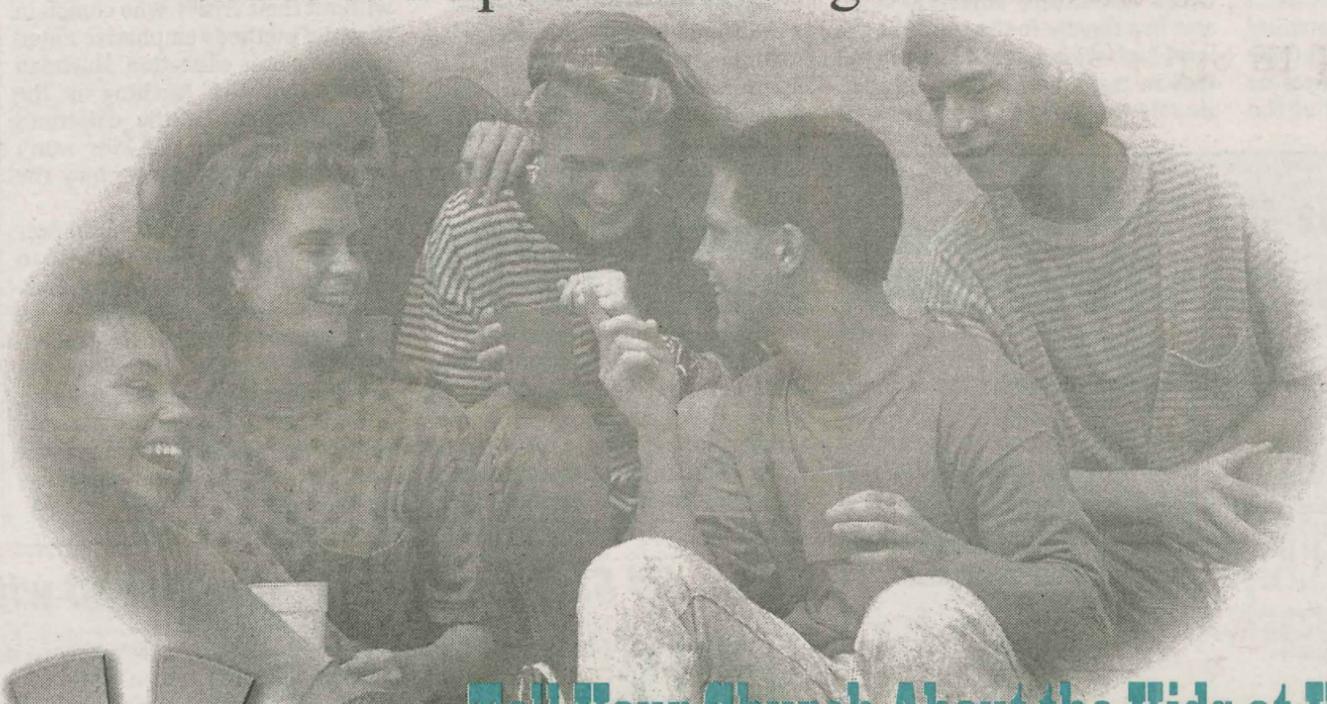
Later that month, young Margery herself wrote to John, apparently becoming the first to connect the name of Valentine with notions of mating and love. "Unto my right well beloved Valentine ... I recommend me unto you, full heartily desiring to hear of your welfare, which I beseech Almighty God long for to preserve unto His pleasure and your heart's desire."

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