



WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

Baptists
Southern Baptist missionaries and partners see 500,000 baptisms in 2003. Page 2.

Financial Forum
Options abound for children's education savings. Page 4.

Editorial
From Kentucky to New England and beyond. Page 5.

Family Forum
What exactly are "emotional needs"? Page 5.

Nation
Survey finds teens' faith affects movie choices. Page 6.

Books
Debunking "The Da Vinci Code." Page 9.

Music
Steven Curtis Chapman receives most Dove Award nominations. Page 9.

Out of reach?

Many churches, pastors deciding they can't afford health insurance

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Edmonton—Frank Fishback returned to the pulpit Feb. 1 after a five-week absence, but the bivocational pastor doesn't know when he can resume his carpentry trade.

Surviving temporarily on Social Security, the 62-year-old pastor faces a bigger problem than a forced layoff. He owes more than \$100,000 in medical bills and has no insurance to pay them.

"I've been talking to God about it, and the word I get is to be patient," said Fishback, pastor of Sulphur Springs Baptist Church in Edmonton. "I'm just trusting Him and see what comes up."

The veteran carpenter was injured Dec. 26 when he slipped off the roof of his son's house. The 14-foot plunge fractured his skull and broke both wrists.

Now recuperating at home, Fishback doesn't know how he will resolve the \$98,000 hospital bill or the \$11,500 cost of the emergency medical helicopter that flew him to Louisville for treatment.

This isn't an isolated case. Throughout the commonwealth, numerous Kentucky Baptist pastors find themselves in a similar plight.

Some work part-time jobs to obtain coverage, while others rely on their spouse's job-related benefit or look to God for help.

Don Spencer, director of the annuity department for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, has talked to many pastors who do substitute teaching or drive a school bus to obtain insurance coverage.

No data is available on the numbers who risk expensive illness or injury without insurance.

But a 2002 compensation study funded by 35 state Baptist conventions revealed that 25 percent of full-salaried pastors and 85 percent of bivocational pastors do not receive such a benefit.

□ See *Some pastors, ...* Page 3



Corbis photo

Speaker offers church outreach lessons from U.S. youth study

By Ken Walker
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Indianapolis—A national study on the moral compasses of youth has significant lessons for churches, according to a member of the group that released the study.

Bill Stanczykiewicz, who is among the speakers at next week's Kentucky Baptist Convention Evangelism Conference, said the Commission on Children at Risk study reported two significant findings:

■ Humans are born with the desire to connect to family and community.

■ Humans both want and need connections to spiritual and moral truths.

"I think the world wants answers to the questions, 'What is spiritual truth? ... What about God?'" said Stanczykiewicz, president of the Indiana Youth Institute, and one of 33 members of the national Commission on Children at Risk.

In an interview, Stanczykiewicz noted that a recent Gallup Poll found 95 percent of teenagers believe in God.

That means Kentucky Baptists have an opportunity similar to the one for the apostle Paul, Stanczykiewicz added.

At Mars Hill in the Book of Acts, Paul didn't have to convince people of God's existence, Stanczykiewicz noted. Instead, Paul used their interest in spiritual topics to say, "Let me tell you about the One True Way."

"From a spiritual standpoint, this report gives folks like pastors in Kentucky fertile ground," said Stanczykiewicz, an evangelical Christian.

"They can say (to children), 'We know you're born, not only needing but wanting, a connection with moral and spiritual truth. Let me tell you about the One who is the way, the truth and the life.'"

At the evangelism conference, Feb. 23-24 at Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green, Stanczykiewicz will share lessons for churches from the 82-page study.

The document identifies shocking increases in recent years of mental or addictive disorders, suicide, sexual activity, drug abuse and binge drinking among young people.

It concludes the primary solution to such problems is more "authoritative communities." The report defines these as multi-generational groups that help guide children and—among other things—provide them with clear limits and expectations.

□ See *Speaker suggests ...* Page 6

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, February 18.

BAPTIST DIGEST

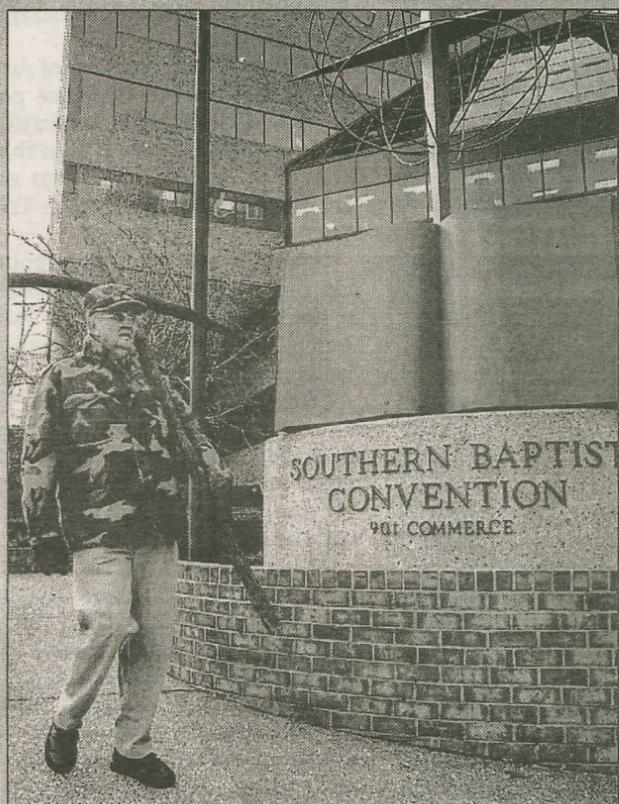
Easter offering video available as Web download. A video update on the North American Mission Board's work is available as a free Internet download. The segment is intended for use during Southern Baptists' March 7-14 North American Missions Emphasis, which includes the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. The video is available through a link on the www.AnnieArmstrong.com Web site, which also includes a variety of other resources for churches participating in the North American Missions Emphasis.

Tax guide ready from Annuity Board. The Southern Baptist Annuity Board's annual Ministers Tax Guide for 2003 Returns is now available in print and online at www.absbc.org. Free printed copies are available by calling (800) 262-0511. The guide, which supplements IRS materials, focuses on tax issues most likely to affect active and retired ministers. It provides a guide for preparing ministers' tax returns, and it highlights tax changes during 2003.

Church compensation survey mailed. Data to help church staff search committees provide competitive salaries and benefits to prospective candidates currently is being compiled by 41 Baptist state conventions in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. The state conventions began mailing surveys for the 2004 compensation study in January to churches to be returned to their state convention by April 15. Churches that did not receive a survey can access it at the Annuity Board's Web site, www.absbc.org.

LifeWay adds "Passion" to online resources. LifeWay Christian Resources has launched a new Web page at www.lifeway.com to help people and churches promote and explain Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." Free content from LifeWay resources, such as T.W. Hunt's "The Mind of Christ" and Beth Moore's "Jesus the One and Only," are designed to reinforce the movie's message. Visitors at the site also can order movie ticket vouchers, free fan kits and other promotional materials that churches may distribute in their communities.

New Orleans prof Jim Headrick dies. Jim Headrick, associate professor of pastoral counseling at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, died Feb. 4 of heart failure. He was 61. In 1999, after serving two years as assistant professor of psychology and counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas, Headrick joined the New Orleans faculty, occupying the Baptist Community Ministries Chair of Pastoral Care and Counseling.



BWA PROTEST Bob Casey, a retired Florida pastor and physician, recently held a weeklong fast and daily prayerwalk around the Southern Baptist Convention headquarters building, attempting to urge leaders not to vote to leave the Baptist World Alliance. The issue was expected to be voted on by the SBC Executive Committee during its meeting, Feb. 16-17. If approved by the Executive Committee and annual meeting messengers in June, then all SBC funding of BWA—until recently, \$425,000 a year—will end Oct. 1. (Associated Baptist Press photo)

'Cause for rejoicing'

IMB missionaries, ministry partners see 500,000 baptisms

By Mark Kelly
SBC International Mission Board

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist missionaries witnessed double-digit increases in eight of their 13 categories of work in 2003, including for the first time more than 500,000 baptisms, trustees of the International Mission Board were told Feb. 3 in Richmond, Va.

While more than 5,000 people groups still have little or no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas partners opened work among 192 new people groups during 2003, said Avery Willis, the IMB's senior vice president for overseas operations.

Those new works included 146 unreached people groups with a total population of more than 359 million.

God's Spirit is moving dramatically and people are responding to the gospel in an unprecedented manner, Willis said.

Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas partners baptized 510,357 believers in 2003, a net increase of 76,838 (17.7 percent) and the first time the number of baptisms has passed a half million.

"That's a wonderful, wonderful mark," Willis said. "This is a cause for tremendous rejoicing. God is blessing as we are proving faithful to the vision of bringing all the peoples of the world to saving faith in Jesus Christ."

The total number of congregations worldwide reached 87,419, a net increase of 15,516 (21.6 percent) over 2002. That growth was fed by 16,721 new congregations, an increase of 8,314 (98.9 percent) over 2002, Willis said. He also noted that the IMB uses seven criteria distinctive of Baptist churches to ensure that only churches that are Baptist in faith and practice are being reported.

A total of 10,031 outreach groups also were started in 2003, Willis said. While that represented 38 fewer than in 2002, it still brought the total number of outreach groups to 47,103, a net increase of 5,648 (13.6 percent) for the year.

In other categories:

Falling dollar hurts missionary sending

By Erich Bridges
SBC International Mission Board

Richmond, Va. (BP)—The steep decline of the U.S. dollar's value abroad might help American exports and trade deficits, but it's also increasing the cost of doing missions overseas.

The once-mighty dollar long dominated global currency and financial markets. But it has dropped in value against most major foreign currencies from Western Europe to East Asia because of low U.S. interest rates on foreign investments, among other factors.

The fall is particularly drastic in Europe, where the dollar has lost 35 percent of its value against the euro since early 2002.

More than 20 percent of the decline has come in the past year, and the dollar is expected to lose another 10 to 20 percent in value against the euro in 2004.

How does that affect missions? The lower the dollar goes, the more it costs missionaries to live, work and fund ministries in nations where the exchange values of local currencies go up.

"It definitely decreases the buying power of our missionaries overseas and their ability to do their work," said David Steverson, vice president for finance at the Southern Baptist International-

al Mission Board.

Cost-of-living adjustments from the IMB help missionaries pay basic family bills as exchange rates rise and fall. That "somewhat protects" missionaries from the impact of steep dollar declines, Steverson said. "But mission operating budgets don't have that protection."

Operating budgets provide the funds missionaries use to carry out their ministries day to day. Last year saw slight operating budget increases, but an overall per-missionary decrease resulted from the influx of new personnel. This year, work fund decreases are a given, due to a tight overall IMB budget.

"When you throw in the loss of value of the dollar, it really hurts," Steverson said.

On the bright side, the budget squeeze has compelled missionaries to work even more closely with local Baptists and other Great Commission groups to leverage every dollar for maximum ministry impact.

Whenever possible, missionaries now use "indigenous strategies that don't call on outside support," reported Ed Cox, IMB regional leader for Western Europe. "We've had national Baptist partners step up. In that way it's been positive."

■ Overseas church membership surpassed 7.04 million, a net increase of 336,411, for an annual growth rate of 5 percent.

■ Bible teaching enrollment increased 182,806 (5.1 percent) to 3.77 million.

■ New believers in discipleship training increased 42.8 percent (128,035) to 426,849.

■ Church members in discipleship training grew 24.9 percent (180,255) to 894,470.

■ Non-residential leadership training enrollment grew by 27,832 (47.8 percent) to 86,059.

■ Residential leadership training programs showed a net increase of

557 (2.6 percent) to 22,366.

■ The total number of international missionaries fielded by Baptist partners grew at an annual rate of 11.9 percent to 1,523.

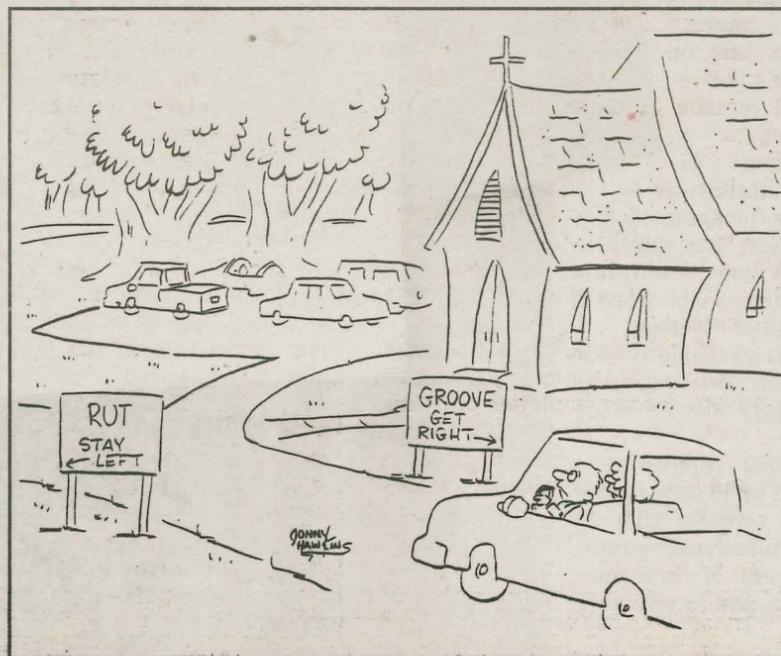
■ The total number of Baptist partner "home" missionaries dropped by 231 (-9 percent) to 2,339, in part because of better application of the definition of home missionary as someone who goes to a people group other than his own within the same country.

When the number of new congregations is rapidly multiplying in a church-planting movement, leadership training and doctrinal integrity become vital concerns, Willis noted.

Trustees responded by adopting a plan to create three permanent subcommittees to exercise "careful watch-care" over new work. The committees will "review and monitor" efforts in the areas of general administration, leadership development and global strategy and research.

"The idea is that this helps us do our job a little bit better," said Jay Owens of Roanoke, Va., chairman of the trustees' overseas committee. "When there are issues to be brought up, we will know where to send them to be reviewed and then brought back to the overseas committee for action."

In a later session, trustees adopted a motion from the floor directing the overseas committee "to perform routine audits of new IMB church plants and submit an annual report to the board of trustees."



Some pastors, churches going without insurance

Continued from page 1

Spencer said more churches should consider providing insurance for pastors, because without it congregations also assume a risk.

"Generally, we can't help," Spencer added. "More than anything what we encourage is making sure the protection is there—not only just for the pastor, but his family."

Weldon Doherty, regional marketing director for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, called the situation symptomatic of a national crisis that has left tens of millions of Americans without health insurance coverage.

To help pastors cope with rising costs, this year the board instituted a plan with a \$3,000 deductible.

Still, a small church would be hard-pressed to provide a family plan under that option, which costs about \$9,900 a year for a 50-year-old Kentucky pastor, Doherty said.

"If a church has a \$40,000 budget, there's no room for medical insurance," said Doherty, a pastor for 20 years before joining the Annuity Board staff. "It puts them in a difficult situation."

The Dallas-based agency also has designed a plan for pastors with existing health problems or limited finances.

Costing just \$80 a month, it features a \$20 co-pay for doctors' visits and a \$100 annual deductible. However, its maximum annual benefit is only \$2,000.

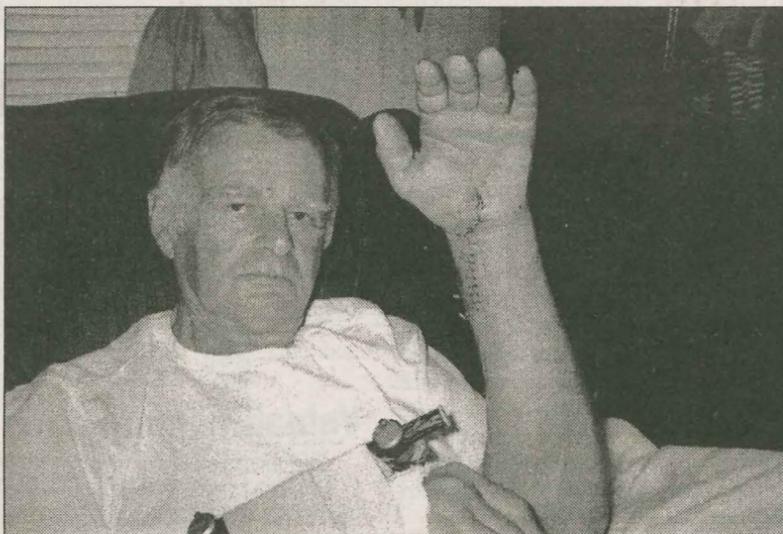
Avoiding the doctor

Over the long term, Doherty said, one solution is for pastors to take better care of their health.

On Jan. 1 the agency instituted a members-only Web site (www.baptistwellness.org) to provide nutritional and exercise tips and other information to promote personal fitness.

"So many of our pastors are so busy caring for others they're too busy to take care of themselves," Weldon said. "But I tell pastors, 'As much as your church family and deacons love you, they're not going to make you take care of yourself.'"

Spencer said congregations that insist on having a full-salaried pas-



WALKING WOUNDED Frank Fishback, pastor of Sulphur Springs Baptist Church in Edmonton, owes more than \$100,000 in medical bills after a fall from a roof. With no medical insurance, Fishback said he's having to rely on God. "I'm just trusting Him and see what comes up."

tor who doesn't work anywhere else should be willing to pay for insurance as well.

"I think it already has created more bivocational pastorates," Spencer said. "My general impression is there are more pastors having other jobs to get that coverage needed for their families."

None of this is news to Kendall Brainard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Sandy Hook.

56 percent rate hike

After turning 50 in 2001, Anthem Blue Cross raised his monthly premium from \$480 to \$748, causing him to drop his policy.

Because his wife had three surgeries in recent years, the Brainards retained her coverage. But neither his son nor his son-in-law—pastors of churches averaging 50 people at Sunday worship—have insurance.

"It's just impossible to come up with that extra \$400 or \$500 a month for coverage, unless we drop everything else," said Brainard, who also works as a machinist 30 hours a week. "I don't want to live and work for the sole purpose of paying the insurance company."

Ron Barnett of Campton Baptist Church lost coverage about four years ago at age 55 when his compa-

ny quit writing individual policies.

They later offered to reinstate it, but he couldn't afford the \$500 monthly premium for a couple.

Barnett, who has spent most of his 33 years in the pulpit in Kentucky, said they have to trust God to take care of them.

The impact goes beyond the walls of existing churches to affect mission work, some pastors said.

In 2001, Campton Baptist sponsored a weekly Bible study at a restaurant in Hazel Green, hoping to start a new mission. But 14 pastoral candidates rejected the job because the salary didn't include medical coverage.

"I can see a day when churches will be hard pressed to have full-time pastors," Barnett said.

Bus-driving, teaching for insurance

Ed Caudill, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Ashland, has been driving a school bus since last August, a month after moving there.

He already knew the routine, having driven a bus for 30 months in Martin County to supplement his pay at First Baptist Church of Warfield.

But Caudill isn't driving for the money; he said he nets about \$24 a week after taxes and his \$554-a-

month share of a state-operated medical plan.

The former American Electric Power employee tried to obtain insurance elsewhere. But companies refused him because he and his wife have diabetes and high blood pressure.

Prior to driving buses, he went without insurance coverage.

"When I did without it, I operated partly by faith," Caudill said. "The Lord kept us in good health, and we paid for things out of our own pocket."

Bennie Bush, pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Corbin, was formerly a substitute teacher about two days a week to help pay his share of coverage under his wife's state plan.

But Bush stopped teaching two years ago when the church agreed to reimburse his portion of the premium, which is currently about \$500 a month.

"We've had to take a little less coverage to get a little less premium," Bush said. "A lot of small churches are financially unable to come up with the funding. Not only are pastors feeling the crunch, everyone is feeling the crunch."

Fishback knows that feeling, although this isn't the first time he has faced a mound of expenses.

His wife, who has diabetes and withstood cancer of the liver and pancreas, has had 26 surgeries. The most recent, a painful reconstruction of her left ear, cost them more than \$40,000.

A local insurance agent offered to write a policy. But he warned that the company likely would term any ailment of Fishback's wife a pre-existing condition and refuse to pay.

Meanwhile, the veteran carpenter is waiting to hear from his surgeons, who haven't sent him a bill. A recent benefit sing at Edmonton Worship Center raised nearly \$11,000, but that still leaves Fishback with a huge deficit.

"After they get it together, we'll talk to them and see what we can do," Fishback said. "I'll just have to make payments on the bills. If I pay this one off, I'll be a very old carpenter."

Some turn to cost-sharing network for help with medical bills

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Glasgow—When David Dennison took his wife to the hospital for surgery in early February, he didn't use the Blue Cross coverage he provides for his muffler shop employees.

Instead, Dennison relied on the Christian Brotherhood Newsletter, a health-cost-sharing ministry.

Started in 1982 in Barberton, Ohio, the program enables Christians to share each others' medical expenses. More than 180 Kentucky families (about 300 people) are members of the Brotherhood.

Advocates of traditional insurance say non-traditional cost-sharing networks are highly risky, but some participants say they help when insurance is unaffordable.

While all the bills haven't arrived, Dennison expects his wife's medical expenses to total about \$6,000. Other than his monthly

ministry participation costs, the only added expense will be \$500. This will mark the third time Brotherhood reimburses his family's surgical expenses since 1992.

"So far I don't have any complaints," said Dennison, a member of Maple Grove Missionary Baptist Church. "Blue Cross wanted \$800 a month to cover my family. I couldn't afford that and I got better coverage for \$405."

The Brotherhood is the oldest such sharing ministry. During the 1990s, former employees or consultants started two others: Christian Care Ministries of Melbourne, Fla., and Samaritan Ministries, based in Washington, Ill.

Collectively, the groups provide a network of assistance to more than 34,000 families (totaling an estimated 115,000 people) in the United States and overseas.

All cite Galatians 6:2, "Car-

ry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ," as their foundational verse and have similar requirements.

Participants must be a member of a local church, abstain from the use of tobacco and illegal drugs, shun sexual activity outside of marriage and limit alcohol use.

Those who qualify receive help from other members to pay medical expenses of up to \$100,000 or more, depending on the program and options selected.

Caution urged

But Don Spencer urges anyone considering such groups to "proceed cautiously."

"I never recommend them," said Spencer, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department.

Cost-sharing ministries lack the financial reserves that states man-

date for insurance companies, Spencer noted. If several high-dollar requests are made, such ministries could be in a financial bind, he said.

"They obviously are attractive for some folks," Spencer said. "But people need to be aware they aren't insurance. ... The (Southern Baptist) Annuity Board goes by those guidelines so if they have a year where there are excessive claims, you're still covered."

Howard Russell, executive director of Christian Brotherhood, said ministry members shared an estimated \$20 million in medical bills last year, and \$400 million since its inception.

"As a Christian ministry the strength we have isn't found in the business sense," Russell said. "(It's) found in the faith Christians put in their fellow Christians and the ability to provide for their needs."

"My general impression is there are more pastors having other jobs to get that coverage needed for their families."

Don Spencer,
KBC annuity department
director

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

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Explore, answer doubts

In a Feb. 3 letter, Matt Perry called Southern Seminary a "bastion for the truth." Going further, he lamented a time at Southern when he and fellow students examined such questions as "Did Moses really write the Pentateuch?"

Unfortunately, I'm unable to share Perry's unbridled enthusiasm for a seminary administration that discourages our future leaders from searching for the answers to such questions.

My late father (a proud graduate of Southern prior to it becoming a "bastion for the truth") strongly encouraged me to explore my doubts, and even more, to search out difficult questions such as, "How do we deal with Bible manuscript copies that don't agree?" and find my own answers.

Instead of just looking to a figurehead such as seminary president Al Mohler to "give me the truth," my father taught me to find out for myself. His favorite example was a chair. I can see you sit in a chair, and you can tell me that it will support me. But I don't really "believe" it until I sit down on it for myself, and

allow the chair to fully support me.

In much the same way, most Christians never "sit down on the gospel" for themselves. They either rely on the understanding and faith of their parents, or wander through life, powerless and filled with doubts that they never satisfactorily resolve for themselves. It's been my experience that the true power of the Christian walk comes only after I explore my doubts, and answer them to my own satisfaction.

Based on what I've heard from recent Southern graduates, and more so from Mohler, Bible study that applies well-known techniques for literary criticism and analysis (such as the methods lamented by Perry) are as unwelcome as suggesting (to me) that science and faith are incompatible.

Tim Gooch
Goshen

Keep supporting BWA

I am a very old lady. I am truly saddened to think that the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee would even consider withdrawing support from the Baptist World Alliance.

Choosing the Kingdom of God

By Henry Blackaby

Atlanta (BP)—Every January the president delivers his State of the Union address to the nation. He reviews the past achievements as he sees them and projects his agenda and hopes for the year ahead and beyond.

Of course, not everyone sees things as he sees them. But he is the president, and he will be moving the country on to his agenda for the national and international directions he senses to be best. He does this in spite of his detractors, especially those who themselves would like to be president.

Jesus often made what I call "state of the Kingdom of God" ad-

resses to His disciples and any crowd that may have gathered. We see this in Matthew 5-7 (what we call the Sermon on the Mount) and Matthew 10. Really, He consistently spoke of "the Kingdom of God"

FIRST PERSON

throughout His entire ministry. This was the Father's agenda for His rule in our world. Jesus always spoke with confidence and invited people to participate in it with Him.

When Jesus laid out the Father's agenda, not everyone agreed with Him either. Like the president, He had His critics and detractors but moved forward confidently. Ultimately, each disciple had to decide how to respond to Jesus as his leader.

W.B. Bingham—a visionary pastor

W.B. Bingham was a wonderful father, husband, preacher, friend, pastor and soul winner, according to the people who knew him well. I recently attended the family visitation at Binghamtown Baptist Church following his death on Feb. 1 and learned much about the life of this visionary pastor.

During his tenure as the sole pastor of the church from 1950-1997, Preacher Bingham, as he was known, baptized 1,400 people and had 2,500 total additions.

Preacher Bingham ministered all of his life with problems with his physical vision. His wife of 62 years, Mae, was his driver and constant companion in ministry. But he had clear spiritual vision.

In fact, this pastor seemed to have a dream from God that pulled him into the future. At some point, Bingham, referring to the church's heritage and future, expressed the following vision in writing:

■ Sunday School overflowing

facilities.

■ Three to five TV specials each year.

■ Full-time youth program.

■ Enlarged outreach.

■ Future religious broadcasting over church-owned FM radio station. (The church currently owns WMIK, AM and FM.)

■ Increase church staff.

■ Increase personal ministries.

■ Reach all people.

During his 54 years of ministry, much of his vision has become a reality.

In 1977, his son, William Boyd, became co-pastor and has become well known as a preacher and visionary leader in his own right. The current membership is more than 3,100. In 2001, the church reported 171 additions—including 125 by baptism.

I have some personal history with Preacher Bingham. When I arrived in Middlesboro, just out of seminary years ago, Preacher Bingham treated me as his equal. That was the way he treated everyone. Everyone felt loved

As a child in the early 1900s, I remember by grandfather, Goldman Patterson, talking about the BWA. He was so pleased that our little country church, Hopewell in Mercer County, had the opportunity to help spread our Lord's message to the world.

Almost a century ago, were Christians more interested in the salvation of people than they are today?

What is happening to our Baptist leadership? First they fire missionaries and now they are thinking of withdrawing support from the BWA.

L. Bea Simms
Louisville

Valuable information

Concerning David Winfrey's Feb. 3 commentary "What are we going to do now?" that discussed the Justin and Janet fiasco at halftime during the Super Bowl, I learned valuable information that was unknown to me before I read his piece. I can actually eliminate channels through my VCR.

So long, TBN! So long, 700 Club! David Winfrey, God bless you for your ministry.

Kirk Hall
Pineville

The future of their lives rested upon themselves. Jesus certainly knew what God wanted to do, but the disciples would participate only in accordance to their belief in Him and their obedience to Him.

Jesus knows the Father but also knows that our experience of the Father, and all the Father has in mind, will depend on whether we believe Him, obey Him and participate with Him in the Father's agenda.

All of this is a choice—a life choice. We will either participate in the rule of God as His Kingdom comes on earth and His will is done, or we will miss out on this incredible and certain experience with Him. It remains a choice of the heart.

Henry Blackaby is president of Blackaby Ministries International based in Atlanta

by him.

More recently, when I conducted listening sessions in 1998, he enlisted someone to drive him to Lexington for the session. His statement was that he had come to show his support for the new executive director even though he had not seen me in 20 years.

The sanctuary at Binghamtown reflects much about the important values and beliefs of Preacher Bingham as well as the congregation. It has an impressive dome, 62 feet high, with a cross that is surrounded by illustrations of the 12 apostles on the outside and a Star of David surrounded by illustrations of Psalm 23 on the inside. The pulpit is located on the side of the oval-shaped sanctuary with the baptismal pool on one side and the Lord's Supper table on the other. An open Bible is centered above and behind the pulpit.

Preacher Bingham's favorite verse was Deuteronomy 33:27: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Praise God for another servant who has finished well!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Explore savings options for your child's education

By Don Spencer

The first, and most important step, in saving toward your children's education is simply to make a commitment to save a regular amount each month. Too many parents never make that commitment.

Even a small amount saved regularly can result in a significant amount

toward college expenses. For example: If one saves \$50 per month for 17 years, earning a modest

6 percent per year, you will accumulate \$17,662. At 8 percent per year that accumulation grows to \$21,590.

Once you start saving, the next question is what kind of investment approach to use. A good flexible option is to simply invest in a good mutual fund and know that money is set aside for education. However, the earnings will be taxable. There are several tax advantaged options that might also be considered:

■ **State-sponsored 529 plans.** This allows large contributions and money to grow tax-deferred. If money is withdrawn for education purposes, it is free of federal income tax. If one child does not go to college, it can be transferred to another family member. If is not used for education purposes, then it will be subject to tax and penalties when withdrawn. For complete information about Kentucky's 529 plans, visit the Web site, www.kentuckytrust.org/overview.html.

■ **Roth IRAs are more flexible than 529 plans.** There are more investment options and if the child does not go to college, you can use the money for retirement without penalty after 5 years once you reach age 59½. But there are income and contributions limits that are much lower than 529 plans.

■ **Coverdell Education Savings Accounts let you invest up to \$2,000 per year.** Again you have a choice of investments and you can set up the account to keep control of the money into the child's adult years if the child does not go to college. Money withdrawn for education is tax-free.

■ **U.S. Savings Bonds allow you to invest in a very safe and stable investment.** At the time of investing in these bonds, no designation is made regarding education use. However, when they are withdrawn, if used for qualified education expense they are tax-free. If not used for education when redeemed, you pay federal tax but no state tax.

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



How can spouses meet each other's top emotional needs?

Q: My wife and I have been married for two years. She says I need to do better meeting her "emotional needs." I am not exactly sure what she means. Any suggestions?

When you got married, you and your spouse both promised to care for each other, and you expected care from each other. You were in love, and you likely were highly motivated to make each other happy.

But it might not have occurred to you at the time that if you didn't care for each other the right way, you might

MARRIAGE

lose your love for each other. Along with a loss of love, you might lose your willingness to care for each other.

To care the right way, you must make large caring actions. The best way to make those actions is to meet each other's most important emotional needs.

What is an emotional need? It is a craving that, when satisfied, leaves you with a feeling of happiness and contentment, and when unsatisfied, leaves you with a feeling of unhappiness and frustration. There probably are thousands of emotional needs. If you feel good doing something, or when someone does something for you, it's meeting an emotional need.

But not all emotional needs are created equally. When some are met, you might only feel comfortable; these are small caring actions. There are others, however, that can make you feel downright euphoric when met. In fact they make you so happy that you're likely to meet in love with the person who meets them. Those are our most important emotional needs because, when met, they make the largest caring actions of all. And those are the very same emotional needs that a husband and wife expect each other to meet in marriage.—Jon Rainbow

Q: How significant are my children's grade school years to their spiritual development?

An important part of our responsibility as parents and as members of faith communities involves exposing our children to the history, expectations and ways of God, and helping them incorporate that way of thinking into their decision-making patterns. The best time to do this is while they are young.

PARENTING

George Barna says, "If people do not embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior before they reach their teenage years, the chance of their doing so at all is slim." Moral foundations are generally in place by age nine. Decisions regarding Christ are usually made early in life or not at all. Life-long spiritual beliefs are formed by the time children are pre-teens. "In essence, what you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing," Barna noted. His research also showed that today's church leaders were almost all actively involved in church when they were young.

If our children are going to live lives that are purposeful and meaningful, if they are going to survive in a culture that continues to lower its standards, they are going to need to enter the future with faith that is solid and sound, and with character that is committed to that which is right and good.

Be actively involved in the spiritual development of your child. Beyond taking your child to church, talk with him or her about faith. Express your interest in helping your child understand Who Jesus is and how He wants each of us to live.

Monitor your children's spiritual growth just as you do their physical development, and make sure they are always on the move to the next level of maturity.—David Garrard

Family Forum writers are:

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

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

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Scott Wigginton, director of LifeCare Counseling at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. E-mail: swigginton@sbs.edu.

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



From Kentucky to New England & beyond

Vermont in February is worthy of one of C.R. Daley's memorable editorials about the incredible beauty of God's creation. While I can't do justice to either the landscape or Dr. Daley's captivating prose, I'll give it my best shot:

Driving across Vermont, the picturesque Green Mountains give way to pristine, snow-covered hills that frame quaint New England villages. Many communities center around a serene village commons complete with a white clapboard church whose steeple punctuates the wintry Currier & Ives scene.

Such was the setting for last week's annual meeting of the Association of State Baptist Papers in Stowe, Vt. ASBP, the professional organization of Baptist newspaper editors, offers professional development and fellowship for colleagues from across the nation.

One of the highlights of last week's meeting was a one-day bus tour of Vermont Baptist ministry sites led by Terry Dorsett, director of missions for the statewide Green Mountain Baptist Association.

With Vermont being one of six states affiliated with the Baptist Convention of New England, I had the opportunity to gain a firsthand perspective of some of the ministry efforts under way in New England, one of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's mission partners for the past several years.

Noting that Vermont was the final state in which Southern Baptist work was established, Dorsett said the evangelical Christian population in some communities is as low as 3 percent. There currently are only 25 Southern Baptist churches in the entire state.

Amid such challenges, the Baptist work in Vermont is strongly evangelistic. Dorsett said Baptist churches in the state report a baptism ratio of 10-1 (the number of church members compared to the annual baptism rate). That is more than four times better than the Southern Baptist Convention's national baptism ratio of 42-1.

Among the mission tour stops were a soup kitch-

en operated by a 20-member congregation, a small retreat center operated by the association, a church start led by Texas Baptist mission volunteers and the new worship facilities of one of the state's largest Baptist churches with more than 100 members. At most of the ministry sites, leaders joyfully shared about recent adult professions of faith.

The focus on North American missions meshed well with a presentation by Nate Adams about the "Acts 1:8 Challenge." Adams, vice president of mobilization and media for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, briefed editors on the missions emphasis being promoted by NAMB and the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Describing the strategy as a "win-win-win opportunity" for Southern Baptist mission efforts, Adams said the emphasis aligns Acts 1:8's call to missions in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth with a focus on associational, state, North American and international missions.

The Acts 1:8 Challenge majors on missions and evangelism as "Southern Baptists' most unifying reasons for cooperation," Adams said, while emphasizing that "the local church has the primary responsibility for the Great Commission."

The Acts 1:8 emphasis will be highlighted in June at the SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis. As mission leaders seek to enlist churches in the emphasis, Adams said the goal is to strengthen cooperative mission efforts while reducing a sense of competition or confusion among various missions entities.

"We're trying to set a model before our people that is not a program or a checklist," said IMB spokesman Van Payne. "This is not the next diet; it is a lifestyle change. It is not doing; it is being."

Whether churches participate in the Acts 1:8 Challenge or get involved in mission projects in New England or pursue local ministry options, Acts 1:8 remains a crucial missions strategy in Kentucky, Vermont and to the ends of the earth.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Think globally, train locally

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Jesus commanded us to make active disciples—not passive converts—among all nations.

If 2003 Southern Baptist International Mission Board statistics are any indication, that's exactly what Southern Baptist missionaries are doing.

New believers baptized and new churches started overseas usually get the most attention back home. But two less-glamorous categories in the IMB 2003 Annual Statistical Report point to the increasing strategic importance of disciple training to the global mission task.

Last year, missionaries and their local partners enlisted 426,849 new believers (those who had become Christians within the past year) in personal discipleship training. That's a nearly 43 percent increase over 2002 and more than triple the total for 2000. Missionaries reported increases in 12 of the 15 geographical regions where they work.

"This continues to be a huge emphasis," IMB strategist Scott Holste notes—particularly in church-planting movements, where "just-in-time" training of new believers

to train others and lead rapidly multiplying churches is critical to sustained growth.

"We want not only to do it, but to help our partners do it," Holste says.

Another key statistic for 2003: In addition to some 22,000 participants in residential pastoral training programs, more than 86,000 overseas

believers participated in non-residential leadership training. That

includes theological education by extension, correspondence courses, short-term seminars and similar on-the-job training approaches. The total marked a 48 percent increase over 2002 and capped an average annual growth of 29 percent over the last five years.

"That is just a phenomenal number of people in training, particularly when you consider that in 1997 we had only about 20,000," observes Avery Willis, chief of IMB overseas operations. "A lot of people say, 'Support national Christians, not missionaries.' The truth is we're working with 100,000 national Christians, equipping them to reach their own peoples and others."

"This is a huge missiologial shift. We're not just sending missionaries to do the work but to mobilize and

train and equip the masses to do the work."

That fact counters the perception in some circles that IMB missionaries have gotten out of the leader training to focus exclusively on direct evangelism and church-starting.

"Our catalytic role in completing the task is going to gravitate more and more toward strategic training," IMB President Jerry Rankin said. "We're not just out there baptizing and moving on."

The payoff? One example:

At the end of a recent training conference in South Asia, a participant went to the platform and said, "I am poor and live in a mud hut. Each week a small group of believers gathers in my home for worship. I am going back to my fellowship and form a team, train my team in what I learned here and send them out to the 12 surrounding villages—none of which has a church of any kind."

Completing the task of making disciples among all peoples depends upon the training and equipping of thousands upon thousands of such local visionaries.

Five thousand—or 50,000—missionaries can't do it alone. Not in a world of untouched billions.

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

Speaker suggests outreach lessons from youth study

Continued from page 1

Churches, with their multi-generational make-up and teachings on finding moral and spiritual truth, are well-suited to provide the nurturing that children crave, Stanczykiewicz said.

"I'm hoping people will see the potential in this," he said. "Even though this report doesn't say, 'You need Jesus as your Lord and Savior,' I think what it does do is provide a road map to a culture."

Stanczykiewicz outlined three applications for churches that want people not only to find Christ, but also to live better lives on earth:

Strengthen families. Because the family is a child's first contact with an authoritative community, it only makes sense for churches to help improve this environment, he said.

This can include honoring families and encouraging husbands to not just stay in the marriage, but be emotionally involved in their children's lives, Stanczykiewicz said.

Other steps he suggests include maintaining "Marriage Covenant" policies, which promote pre-marital counseling; and offering marriage mentoring, where mature couples provide guidance to those married five years or less.

Attract young adults and their children. While Scripture and Christian teachings should never be watered down, congregations must be relevant in ways that make young people thirsty for the truth, Stanczykiewicz said.

He points to traditional hymns written by legendary spiritual leaders John and Charles Wesley.

Such songs originally were simply new lyrics to popular saloon songs of their era.

Get involved in the communities to reach out to emotionally-needy youngsters.

Stanczykiewicz said he knows of seniors organizations whose mentoring programs match elderly people with children, and schools that are open to such activities as adults reading to children.

By becoming aware of what's available in their communities, churches can build bridges with other organizations to benefit children, he said.

Jesus a "neighborhood guy"

"The bottom line is Jesus was a neighborhood guy. We don't open up Scripture and see Jesus in the temple all that often. He's out in the streets, the neighborhood, the community."

Stanczykiewicz said the problems with youth are so overwhelming that they will require involvement from many organizations other than churches. But he added that society is increasingly aware that faith-based organizations can make a huge difference in communities.

While Christians must be wise as they interact with society, there are many opportunities to work with the culture that fit the church's mission, he said.

"You look, biblically at Nehemiah," Stanczykiewicz said. "Nehemiah used pagan money and the authority of the pagan king to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. I think there's an important lesson there for today's church."

The report, "Hardwired to Connect," funded by Dartmouth University, the Institute for American Values and the YMCA of the USA, can be ordered for \$7 at www.americanvalues.org.

For more information about the Kentucky Baptist Convention Evangelism Conference, visit www.kybaptist.org/evangelism conference.

Survey: Religion affects what movies teens decide to watch

Washington (RNS)—Religious faith plays a key role in the movie-watching habits of teenagers, according to new research for the National Study of Youth and Religion.

The percentage of teens surveyed who watch mostly R-rated movies climbs steadily from just 17 percent among extremely religious teens to almost 50 percent for teens who said religion is not important in their lives.

Only a quarter of teens who said religion is "very important" watch all or mostly R-rated movies.

In a comparison of movie selections across denominations, Mormon teens watched R-rated movies the least of the time. Among conservative Protestant teens, only 22 percent said they watched all or mostly R-rated movies. Meanwhile 32 percent of mainline Protestant teens said they watched primarily R-rated movies.

Twenty-six percent of the Jewish teens surveyed said they watch mainly R-rated movies, and 31 percent of Catholic teens said they watch mostly R-rated movies.

Christian Smith, principal investigator of the study, said in the report that the data have some limitations.

"Clearly, different kinds of religious teens are more or less likely to consume R-rated movies. This could mean that certain religious traditions, congregations or parents are more successful in having their teens avoid R-rated movies generally," Smith said.

The study surveyed more than 3,350 teens from 13 to 17 years old, as well as one of their parents, by random telephone survey.

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Bankrolling the family

Beware of pitfalls when relatives ask for loans

If you are in a position to lend money to relatives or invest in their businesses, are you deriving great joy by doing it, or are you on the path to disaster?

Based upon my experience, from the perspective of the person providing the money, it could be unpleasant either because you say no, and they dislike you, or you say yes and try to hold them to the business arrangement to which they agreed, and they dislike you for that. By the way, I am making a distinction between helping relatives in need and those who want to create or capitalize on a business or investment opportunity. I am also making a distinction between lending to your children and to the rest of the clan.

When a relative comes to you with the greatest opportunity since sliced bread, not only do you have to evaluate it from an economic perspective, but also from the perspective of mixing family and finance. Only you can decide whether you should make a loan or investment involving a family member. If you do, there is a body

of wisdom available as how best to do it. I encourage you to consult a professional advisor.

Of course, rule No. 1 is to make it businesslike. The structure should resemble a commercial transaction. This will minimize, if not eliminate, any misunderstandings. Rule No. 2 is to put everything in writing, review it and have all parties sign it. This not only creates a legally binding document, but also ensures clarity. I recommend having an attorney draft the document. Furthermore, in the case of loans to family members, there are tax issues to consider, especially as it relates to below-market interest rates and defaults.

Given the financial and emotional issues involved, the best thing might be to co-sign a note from a bank guaranteeing only the principal. As a co-signer you are providing valuable help, but the relative will be dealing directly with the bank, which will minimize any tension, should there be problems.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and ____ (Genesis 1:22)
- 8 Without, Fr.
- 12 What Samuel does to Saul to show he'll be Israel's king
- 13 Clothing that covers the back
- 14 The prodigal son almost ate their food (Luke 15:16)
- 15 "____ not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne" (Matthew 5:34)
- 17 A metal burned by fire (Numbers 31:22-23)
- 18 Eleven, Romans num.
- 20 "I am Alpha and the Omega, beginning and the ____" (Revelation 22:13)
- 21 Ma's husband
- 22 To trap
- 24 Gideon saw men lapping water like this animal (Judges 7:5)
- 26 Address abbreviation
- 27 A rough rock where the eagle dwells (Job 39:27-28)
- 29 At the end of the world we will hear rumors of these (Matthew 24:6)
- 32 Large feline
- 34 Dover is the capital of this state, abbr.
- 35 A soft, lustrous fabric made by worms
- 38 Hebrew custom of allowing the poor to follow the reapers and gather grain
- 40 Jesus said not to speak these kind of words (Matthew 12:36)
- 41 The initials of the man who came up with the theory of relativity
- 42 After eight days, Jesus was circumcised and ____ (Luke 2:21)

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- 45 Negative
- 46 Tensile strength, abbr.
- 47 To direct the course
- 48 Gideon hoped this would be wet, then dry
- 50 Exclamation of surprise
- 51 A name for Mother
- 52 Ourselves
- 53 Homonym of sew
- 54 A tall pasture grass
- 56 A printer's measure
- 57 A Levitical city in the hill country of Judah (Joshua 15:51)
- 58 Briefly lowers the head

- 11 Produces hot, moist air
- 13 "God ... shall ____ his angel" (Genesis 24:7)
- 16 Us
- 19 Supply with water by artificial means
- 23 If we wait upon the Lord, we will mount up with wings like these birds
- 25 Seventh son of Jacob, firstborn of Zilpah (Genesis 30:11)
- 28 Word to make a horse turn to the right
- 30 What Christ did for us
- 31 Everything
- 33 "The Son of man came ... to give his life a ____" (Matthew 20:28)
- 35 Marked by sin
- 36 "Little children, keep yourselves from ____" (1 John 5:21)
- 37 City in south Judah, conquered by Joshua in the northern campaign (Joshua 12:22)
- 39 Prophet during the reigns of David and Solomon
- 43 Myself
- 44 Persian coins (Ezra 2:69)
- 49 The sound of a dove
- 54 The opposite of stop
- 55 The article that precedes words beginning with a vowel

Down

- 1 Ruler, lord, teacher (Matthew 8:19)
- 2 To reverse the winding
- 3 When you wear the armor of God, you should have your ____ girt with truth (Ephesians 6:14)
- 4 A soft metal
- 5 Not exact
- 6 Two cups, abbr.
- 7 Life support system, abbr.
- 8 "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ____ of death" (Psalms 23:4)
- 9 Jesus spoke of the fowls of the ____ (Matthew 6:26)
- 10 Not rated, abbr.

Last week's solution

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Poll Question: Does your church provide insurance for your pastor?

Louisville speakers attest to power of reconciliation

By Matt Batchelor
Louisville Courier-Journal

Louisville—The root of terrorism is a clash between religions, and racial and religious reconciliation can stop it, a former British official told 300 people Feb. 8.

Harvey Thomas, who was Margaret Thatcher's press secretary when she was prime minister, was one of several speakers gathered at St. Matthews Baptist Church for the fourth annual Reconciliation Celebration. The ceremony, organized by Greater Louisville Christian Reconciliation Ministries, brings together congregations of different denominations and races.

"Reconciliation is probably the single most needed thing in the world today," Thomas said. "If the work of Christians had been a little

more sensitive at some time, a little more active, a little more loving, just maybe September 11th may not have happened."

Forgiving a bomber

Thomas' talk centered around how he forgave Patrick Magee, the terrorist who planted a bomb that exploded under his bed in a Brighton, England, hotel in 1984, injuring Thomas.

He said he made the decision to forgive in 1998 in Louisville, while he was attending the second international conference on racial reconciliation. He decided he could not speak about forgiveness when there was someone he had never personally forgiven.

He wrote Magee a letter, and he "wrote a very gracious letter back," Thomas said. He said Magee, who was released from prison in 1999, is now a good friend with whom he shared coffee just last week.

"Louisville changed my life," Thomas added.

People have the misconception that terrorism is centered in the Middle East, Thomas said. But he said there are more terrorists in England.

Thomas said people confuse reconciliation with justice. "Justice means one is right and one is wrong," he said. "The Bible says we are all sinners. We can't all be totally right or totally wrong."

Thomas now is a communications consultant and works in various roles for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He said one thing that guides his view toward others is something that Graham

told him before a visit with then-President Richard Nixon.

Thomas asked, "Isn't it a huge strain trying to work with terribly important people?"

Graham responded, "They're just people."

South Carolina state Sen. Maggie Glover spoke about how the key to reconciliation is patience.

"We first must listen to each other, reconcile with ourselves to know there indeed is a better way and a better day," she told the audience. "Let this conference be your starting place to get to your better days."

Relationships, not just race

Leslie Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist, said in an interview that the Greater Louisville reconciliation group has thrived for six years by bringing people of different rac-

es and denominations together not just in church but in personal relationships.

"We really believe that working one on one is a way of building credibility in a community," he said. "It's not a movement with one leader; it's a movement with many leaders."

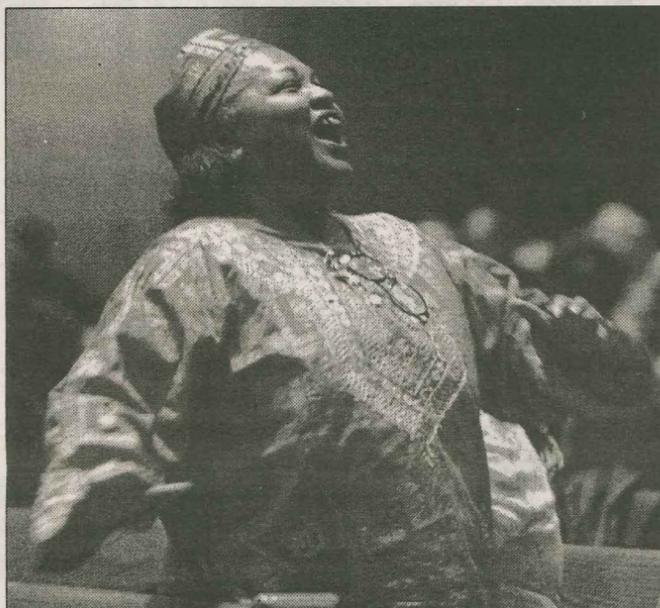
For example, his church, which is mostly white, has partnered with St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, which has a mostly black congregation. Choirs from both churches stirred the crowd at the Sunday evening service.

Attendee Ruth Rios said that racial reconciliation is a duty.

"If we want to fulfill what Jesus wants us to do, we have to work to get the Kingdom of God together," she said.

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WORSHIP Zephra May, a St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church member, sings along with the choir at the Reconciliation Celebration at St. Matthews Baptist Church. (Louisville Courier-Journal photo by Jamie Rhodes)



Two grand ladies, part 2

Petite 'Mai Mai' Sparks was a big presence, taking charge on campus

There is another lady who was a wonderful blessing to this ministry. She was the wife of D. Chester Sparks, Oneida's seventh president from 1948 to 1962. At his side was one of the most godly women I have ever known.

The staff and students affectionately called her "Mai Mai." As a student I knew that her husband was the president, but it appeared to me that she actually ran the school. Everywhere I went and seemingly every time there was a problem, Mai Mai was there. She was never bashful about taking charge, and no one ever questioned her authority or resolve.

Her title was dean of the school. Unofficially, it appeared she was in charge of just about everything. She could always be seen in the dining room, correcting anything that was out of line. She frequently visited in the girls' dorm to settle any issues between the girls, and she managed the evening study hall. If you got out of line, I don't care how big you were, boy or girl, you knew you had to face Mai Mai.

She was a relatively short lady in her mid-60s, but no six-foot boy wanted to tangle with her. Nearly every time I saw her she had a whistle around her neck and a paddle in her hand. When we heard her blow that whistle, we knew it was time to get serious.

It was not uncommon for the boys in the dorm to get a little rowdy at times. The dean of boys would call the president's house and here she would come with a full head of steam across the campus. Whistle blowing and

paddle firmly in hand, up the stairs she would come. We had to stand outside our doors and get a good talking to, and there'd better not be any funny business either!

On one occasion a few of us were not being as serious as she thought we should have been, so we were told to march right down stairs across the street and into the gym.

It was about midnight, and some of us were in our pajamas. She told us to start running laps around the gym. At first I thought it was a joke but I soon learned that this was a serious matter, so I ran. I now realize that she was trying to wear us out so we would go to bed.

It did not take long for her to decide that we were not being serious enough to suit her, so as we ran past her she gave each boy a good swat on the fanny. Actually, she caught the first three or four boys off guard so they got the full treatment. But the rest of us simply sped up when she swung the paddle, missing us completely.

With a smile from ear to ear she put her hands on her knees and asked us if we would please go back to bed and behave so she could get some rest. We all gave her a hug and promised to be good boys the rest of the night.

She was a grand lady! I think of her often and am so grateful that when this poor boy from Ohio wanted to enroll but didn't have any money, she said to not worry about it, just pack my bags and get here.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

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

Experience does work

Grandmother shares skills at Child Development Center

By Jay Sulfridge
Director of College Relations

Things are always a bit busy at Clear Creek's Child Development Center, but Feb. 10 was an especially hectic day.

Along with the infants, waddlers and toddlers (three of the CDC's age groups), an unusual number of adults were added to the mix. The center was being visited by people from nearby Middlesboro, and as far away as Arlington, Va. Besides the campus public relations staff and local newspaper reporters, there were visitors from Middlesboro, Corbin and just outside Washington, D.C. Most of the visitors represented different offices of an organization called "Experience Works."

Experience Works is a national, nonprofit organization that provides training and employment services for mature workers. Established in 1965 as Green Thumb, and renamed Experience Works in 2002, the organization reaches more than 125,000 mature individuals in all 50 states and Puerto Rico each year. Of that vast field of service, Clear Creek's Child Development Center was selected for a visit to see

firsthand how well the program is working in a faith-based children's organization.

Carol Miller, an assistant teacher at the Clear Creek Child Development Center, came to the center through Experience Works. Hired by CDC Director Jackie LeFevers, Carol began on-the-job training with 50 percent of her salary reimbursed by Experience Works. The reimbursement was contracted for 150 hours of employment. Miller's contract ended in December 2002. Due to the success of the relationship, Miller, 66, continues to work at the CDC assisting with infants and waddlers. She lives on a secluded mountain ridge in the Frakes community, about 14 miles from campus. "We can't even get a television connection," she said. "But TV is a waste anyway; I read."

"It is good to be working again," Miller stated. "Having this position makes me feel more independent and self sufficient. I appreciate all the services I received from the Bell County Jobsight in Pineville, especially Experience Works!"

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

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Debunking 'Da Vinci'

Christian pastors, scholars mount effort to fight claims of popular book

By Mark O'Keefe
Religion News Service

Chicago (RNS)—After reading "The Da Vinci Code," Holly Jespersen wondered if Jesus Christ did, in fact, wed Mary Magdalene and father her child, as the novel claims.

"It definitely made me question all that I have been brought up to believe," said Jespersen, a Presbyterian who lives in Chicago.

Glen Gracia of Boston had a similar reaction, questioning the validity of the Bible if, in fact, it was commissioned and manipulated by the Roman emperor Constantine for political purposes, as the book asserts.

"I was basically floored," said Gracia, a former practicing Catholic who said he can't wait to confront his devout mother with "this historical information."

Alarmed by reactions like these, defenders of traditional Christianity have launched a counter-offensive on author Dan Brown's fast-paced thriller, which is in its 47th week atop The New York Times' fiction best-seller list, has sold more than 6 million copies, is being translated into more than 40 languages and will be made into a Columbia Pictures film directed by Ron Howard.

Books and articles with titles like "Dismantling the Da Vinci Code" and "The Da Vinci Deception" have been or are about to be published. Preachers are giving sermons in response to church members who ask why they were never told there was a Mrs. Jesus. Web sites and discussion groups are humming over the book's "heresies."

A collective Christian outcry is rising, with some of the country's most influential clerics joining in.

In The Catholic New World, the newspaper of the archdiocese of Chicago, Cardinal Francis George calls the book "a work of bizarre religious imaginings" based on "a facade of scholarship" that exploits the public's "gullibility for conspiracy."

When "The Da Vinci Code" was released in March 2003, church leaders paid little attention. Brown was an obscure author; this wasn't the first time a novel had taken shots at Christianity. And it was, after all, fiction.

But as the book became a publishing phenomenon, religious leaders noticed that readers, even in their own congregations, were taking the novel's historical claims as fact. "Jesus, Mary and Da Vinci,"



HAS QUESTIONS Raised a Presbyterian, Holly Jespersen of Chicago questioned some of her beliefs about Jesus Christ after reading the best-selling novel "The Da Vinci Code." (RNS photo by Bob Black)

a November ABC special that seriously explored Brown's themes, made clear that this was a cultural force to be reckoned with.

Threat or opportunity?

Yet where some Christian leaders perceive a threat, others see an opportunity.

The book has sparked interest in early Christian history, with the public suddenly fascinated with topics like the Council of Nicea in 325.

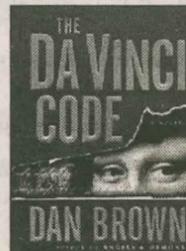
"It's only a threat if people read this fictional book naively, don't think critically about it and don't pursue truth," said Mark Roberts, pastor of Irvine Presbyterian Church in Irvine, Calif. "Now that we have people thinking and talking, we can look at the real evidence of Jesus."

Brown has stopped giving interviews. But on the book's first page, he makes an assertion that galls his critics: "All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate."

The plot centers on the search for the "Holy Grail" by a brilliant Harvard symbologist and a beautiful French cryptologist, who follow clues in the work of Leonardo Da Vinci.

The greatest protest has been over the book's negative portrayal of central Christian beliefs, including:

Jesus' divinity. Brown writes that Constantine collated the Bible, omitting some 80 gospels emphasizing Jesus' human traits in favor of



four that made him God. This was supposedly done at the Council of Nicea, "in a relatively close vote."

But the actual vote was 300-2, said Paul Maier, professor of ancient history at Western Michigan University, and it did not determine Jesus' divinity. That was attested to much earlier "by many New Testament passages, as well as by the earliest Christians and all the church fathers, even if there was some disagreement as to the precise nature of that deity," Maier said. The Council of Nicea "did not debate over whether Jesus was only mortal or divine, but whether he was created or eternal."

The Bible's inerrancy. Peter Jones, co-author of the soon-to-be-released "Cracking the Da Vinci Code," says that in trying to establish that the Bible was cooked by Constantine and his cronies, Brown overlooks the fact that four-fifths of what is now called the New Testament was deemed divinely inspired in the first century—two centuries before Constantine and the Council of Nicea.

Jesus' celibacy. Even feminist scholars, such as Karen King, a Harvard professor who may be the world's leading authority on early non-biblical texts about Magdalene, have said there is no evidence that Jesus was married to her or to anyone else.

George and other traditional Christians treat the claim as absurd. "All those martyrs the first 300 years, they were covering up the fact that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene? Why in heaven's name would someone go to their death to protect that secret? It's absurd."

The controversy leaves Jespersen confused. She is "still absolutely convinced that Christ is God," but thought Brown "made a compelling argument" that Jesus was married. Jespersen plans to attend "A Discussion on 'The Da Vinci Code'" at Chicago's Old St. Patrick's Catholic Church later this month, featuring two college professors.

Regardless of what she learns there, Jespersen is glad she read the book.

"It has been a great conversation piece for me," she said, "and has encouraged me to question what I have always accepted just because it is what I was taught."

Michael W. Smith, Randy Travis & Audio Adrenaline win Grammys

Los Angeles (RNS)—Michael W. Smith earned his third Grammy Feb. 8 when his "Worship Again" album was named the best pop/contemporary gospel album.

"All of the nominees in this category—Jars of Clay, Third Day, Stacie Orrico and Newsboys—are amazing artists," Smith said in a statement.

"I was thrilled to be included

among them and even more honored to win."

The Grammy Awards were announced at a Los Angeles ceremony.

Winners in the other gospel music categories are:

Best Rock Gospel Album: "Worldwide" by Audio Adrenaline

Best Southern, Country or Bluegrass Gospel Album: "Rise and

Shine" by Randy Travis

Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" by the Blind Boys of Alabama

Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album: "... Again" by Donnie McClurkin

Best Gospel Choir or Chorus Album: "A Wing and a Prayer" by the Potter's House Mass Choir, directed by Bishop T.D. Jakes.

Steven Curtis Chapman leads Dove nominees with seven

Nashville (RNS)—Contemporary Christian musician Steven Curtis Chapman earned the most nominations for the 35th Annual Dove Awards, the Gospel Music Association announced Feb. 10.

Chapman, whose "All About Love" album prompted many of his seven nominations, was followed by Switchfoot and Third Day which each earned six nominations.

The Dove Awards will be presented April 28 in Nashville. Nominations include:

Artist of the Year

MercyMe.
Stacie Orrico.
Michael W. Smith.
Switchfoot.
Randy Travis.

Female Vocalist of the Year

Nichole Nordeman.
Stacie Orrico.
Rebecca St. James.
Joy Williams.
CeCe Winans.

Group of the Year

Jars of Clay.
MercyMe.
Newsboys.
Switchfoot.
Third Day.

Male Vocalist of the Year

Jeremy Camp.
Steven Curtis Chapman.
Bart Millard.
David Phelps.
Mark Schultz.

New Artist of the Year

Across the Sky.
Todd Agnew.
Jeremy Camp.
Casting Crowns.
Kristy Starling.

Song of the Year

"All About Love," written by Steven Curtis Chapman.
"Child of Mine" by Mark Schultz.
"Everything to Me" by Chad Cates and Sue Smith.
"Great Light of the World" by Bebo Norman.
"He Reigns" by Peter Furler and Steve Taylor.
"If We Are The Body" by Mark Hall.
"Lord Have Mercy" by Steve Merkel.
"Meant to Live" by Jonathan Foreman and Tim Foreman.
"Three Wooden Crosses" by Doug Johnson and Kim Williams.

"Word of God Speak" by Pete Kipley and Bart Millard.

Rock/Contemporary Album of the Year

"Furthermore: From the Studio, From the Stage" by Jars of Clay.

"Grace Like Rain" by Todd Agnew.
"So Much for Substitutes" by Downhere.
"The Beautiful Letdown" by Switchfoot.
"WorldWide" by Audio Adrenaline.

Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year

"All About Love" by Steven Curtis Chapman.
"Casting Crowns" by Casting Crowns.
"Simple Things" by Amy Grant.
"Stacie Orrico" by Stacie Orrico.
"Stories & Songs" by Mark Schultz.

Southern Gospel Album of the Year

"A Capella" by Gaither Vocal Band.
"Best of Friends" by Joyce Martin McCollough, Karen Peck Gooch and Sheri Easter.
"Great Day" by The Hoppers.
"Quartets" by Greater Vision.
"The Walk" by The Crabb Family.

Bluegrass Album of the Year

"Blue Ridge Sunday" by George Hamilton IV.
"Mama's Letter to Jesus—The Hits" by The Principles.
"On the Journey Home" by The Churchmen.
"There's No Other Way" by Jordan River.
"Wondrous Love" by Blue Highway.

Country Album of the Year

"Colors" by The Oak Ridge Boys.
"Love Never Fails" by Connie Smith, Sharon White and Barbara Fairchild.
"Refuse to Be Afraid" by LordSong.
"The Christmas Guest" by Andy Griffith.
"The Other Side" by Billy Ray Cyrus.
"Worship and Faith" by Randy Travis.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ **Urgent need:** New Colony Baptist Church in Billerica, Mass., needs volunteer groups to replace recent cancellations for its annual summer Kid's Camp, June 28-July 2, July 12-16 and July 19-23.

■ Please pray for wisdom and discernment for the committee searching for a new director of missions for the Greater Boston Baptist Association.

■ Missionaries to Bulgaria request prayers for Bulgarian believers to see God's heart and vision for the Muslims in that country. Pray that prejudices and bigotry would be removed, missionaries ask.

■ Missionaries to Italy ask for prayer for the many immigrants in Milan. Ask God to work in their lives during this possible time of openness as they transition to a new country.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **ALBANY**—Stony Point Church called **Terry Settles** as pastor, effective Jan. 25. He previously was pastor of Raymond Church in Webster.

■ **BEREA**—Westside Church recently called **Allen Livingood** as pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSBURG**—Campbellsburg Church recently call **Bert Montgomery** as pastor. He previously was minister to students at Melbourne Heights Church in Louisville.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Pleasant Hill Church recently called **James Jones** as pastor. He served as pastor of Campbellsville Church for 20 years.

■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church will host a senior adult luncheon Feb. 28, 1 p.m. Call (859) 727-2588 for information. **Dan Francis** is pastor.

■ **FLORENCE**—Greenview Church recently called **Bob Rainey** as minister of music. He is a student at Cincinnati Bible College.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church recently called **Phil Champion** as minister of youth and children. **Wallace Kent** is pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Airline Church will host **The Gospel Envoys** in concert Feb. 22, 6 p.m. **Nathan Whisnant** is pastor.

Geneva Church recently called

Kenny Foster as pastor.

Glenn Riggs recently resigned as minister of youth at Immanuel Church.

■ **JEFFERSONTOWN**—Jeffersontown Church will host a children's department "Lunch & Movie with Dad," Feb. 21 at noon.

■ **KUTTAWA**—First Church recently ordained **Mitch Coomer** as a deacon. **Carl Nelson** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Edgar Hatfield** and **Mark Seifrid** are serving as co-interim pastors of Bethany Church.

Yaacov and Esther Horesh will speak at Hillsdale Church, Feb. 22 at 10:30 a.m. **Tim Harris** is pastor.

St. Matthews Church recently called **Fabio Moreira** and **Jeff Miller** as interim youth ministers.

Shively Church called **Adam Chanin** as minister of singles. **Bruce Truman** is pastor.

West Broadway Church recently honored **Albert and Ceres Adkins** on their 50th wedding anniversary. **Sherman Ramsey** is pastor.

■ **MAYFIELD**—High Point Church recently called **Seth Hawkins** to serve as age group minister. **Don Embry** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—First Church or-

Challengers celebrate new missionaries, hear challenge to serve

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)—More than 700 Challengers from across the country joined in a commissioning celebration for 59 new Southern Baptist North American missionaries Feb. 7 in Gatlinburg.

For the first time, the celebration was held in conjunction with the annual National Challengers Rally, a weekend event designed to encourage and mobilize high school boys who participate in the church mission education organization. Chal-

lengers is sponsored by the North American Mission Board.

Among the NAMB missionaries being commissioned were church planters, church planter strategists, inner-city ministry center directors and staffers, associational missionaries and collegiate evangelism specialists.

Through commitment cards and an invitation at the close of the service, 68 people committed to either short-term or full-time missions



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

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.

27-29 International Christian Growth Retreat, Kavanaugh Retreat Center, Crestwood.

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.

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

ained **Casey Clark**, **Jeff Gray**, **Matt Heft** and **Matt Robbins** as deacons Feb. 8.

■ **PADUCAH**—Reidland Church called **Jim Wright** as minister of evangelistic outreach and education. **Thom Clark** began duties as minister of youth and activities. **Larry Lewis** is pastor.

Rosebower Church recently

called **Michael Cruce** as minister of youth and children. **Kenneth Puckett** is pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—**Mike Easley** is pastor of Quinn Church and **Jerry Easley** is associate pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—Wallacetown Church recently ordained **Mrs. Rob Brock**, **Wendell Lake** and **Howard Mayfield** as deacons. **Gary Bonnell** is pastor.

service through NAMB. The next morning, additional commitments included 11 who said they had been called to serve as a missionary or pastor.

Paul Gotthardt, a church starter in Las Vegas, shared how God gave him a passion for ministry and people when he was called in 1995.

"Some of you today might be in a similar situation where you're starting to feel the tug and the pull of God possibly toward ministry,"

he said, later adding, "Don't rush the call, but when God does (call) respond passionately with all your heart."

Heather McIver, who works in campus ministry in Syracuse, N.Y., noted that Jesus never promised it would be easy—but it would be worth it.

"It might cost you something to go and follow God with your whole heart, but the rewards you gain are just incredible," she said.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: Gatlinburg 2/2 condo. Close to town. Owners rent by day. (251) 666-2175, 689-9982. pdw@worldnet.att.net.

FOR SALE: 1989 Ford 15-passenger church van. \$2,800. (270) 358-4500.

FOR SALE: 1991 White Ford van; 15-passenger; 72,000 miles; runs; good condition. Asking \$5,000. For more information, call (502) 454-4681.

FOR SALE: Beautiful baby grand piano. Excellent condition. Located in Versailles, Ky. Asking \$5,500. Contact Mike Rogers at zlfemike@yahoo.com, or call (727) 736-6077.

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: Music director for Hustonville Baptist Church. Job description available upon request. If interested, call (606) 346-4931.

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

SEEKING: Energetic minister of music, worship and praise. Growing church seeks a bivocational leader. We have a blended style of music accompanied by a worship band. If you are seeking a way to serve God, submit a resumé to: Music Minister Search, Meadow Land Baptist Church, 1188 Detour Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

SEEKING: Minister with children. Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala., is seeking a seminary-trained and experienced individual to join our pastoral staff team to give leadership and coordination to our ministries with preschoolers, children and their families. We are a growing church reaching many young families and we desire to build a ministry that is creatively reflective of our historic Baptist witness. We are a congregation of 1,600 members affiliated with both the CBF and SBC. Send resumé to: Minister with Children Search Committee, Shades Crest Baptist Church, 452 Park Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35225, or attach your bio to an e-mail directed to our pastor, Dr. Dennis Foust, at dfoust@shadescrest.org. To learn more about us, please visit www.shadescrest.org or call (205) 822-1360.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pulpit Committee, Cumberland Missionary Baptist Church, 408 Spring St., Cumberland, KY 40823.

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

SEEKING: Temporary workers—individuals with secretarial experience and computer application skills to work temporary positions. Competitive hourly wages; no benefits. Contact: Administrative Services department, KBC, PO Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433. (502) 244-6468.

SEEKING: Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, Ky., is presently seeking a discipleship and evangelism pastor. Beacon Hill is a purpose-driven church with an average worship attendance of 600 and Sunday school of 525. You may visit our Web site at www.beaconhillbaptist.com for more information. If interested, please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, 274 Old Monticello Road, Somerset, KY 42503.

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: Forest Park Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of music/youth. Seminary education and/or prior experience preferred. Interested applicants may send resumé to: Minister of Music/Youth Search, Forest Park Baptist Church, 520 Old Morgantown Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101, Attn: David Morrow, chairman. E-mail: ForPrkBapt@aol.com.

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

SERVICE: America's fastest-growing Christian long distance company. 3.9 cents/minute; no monthly fees; no codes or restrictions; 6 second billing; 250,000 happy customers. Toll-free: (866) 587-8346 or www.covenantphoneservice.com. Home agents needed.

Students more spiritual than courses reflect

Los Angeles (ABP)—Most American college students are more interested in discussing spiritual matters than are their professors, preliminary results from a massive nationwide study suggest.

The study, by researchers at the University of California at Los Angeles' Higher Education Research Institute, has tracked the spiritual activities and attitudes of 3,680 undergraduate students at 46 colleges and universities across America since they enrolled in the schools as freshmen in 2000.

The preliminary results show that, while more than two-thirds of the students "demonstrate a substantial level of religious engagement and commitment," only 8 percent of the students reported that their professors encouraged classroom discussion of spiritual matters. Well over half—62 percent—of the students said their professors never encouraged such discussion.

Nonetheless, 39 percent of the students said their spiritual beliefs had been strengthened by "new ideas encountered in class." Only 9 percent said their religious beliefs had been weakened by ideas encountered in class.

More than three-quarters of the students reported discussing religious or spiritual matters with their friends.

The students also showed a steep decline in attending religious services over the years since beginning college. In 2000, 52 percent of the students reported frequent attendance at religious services. By 2003, that percentage had declined to 29.

Graham L.A. bound

Evangelist planning seventh crusade in 'City of Angels'

By Kelli Cottrell
Baptist Press

Hollywood (BP)—Returning to where he first attracted national attention, evangelist Billy Graham will hold his seventh crusade in the Los Angeles area July 29-Aug. 1 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

Nostalgically, Cliff Barrows read a letter of acceptance from Graham during an "Announcement Celebration" Feb. 9 at First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood.

"Billy loves Los Angeles," Barrows said in an interview. "His desire before his time is over is to hold a crusade on the West Coast and one on the East Coast."

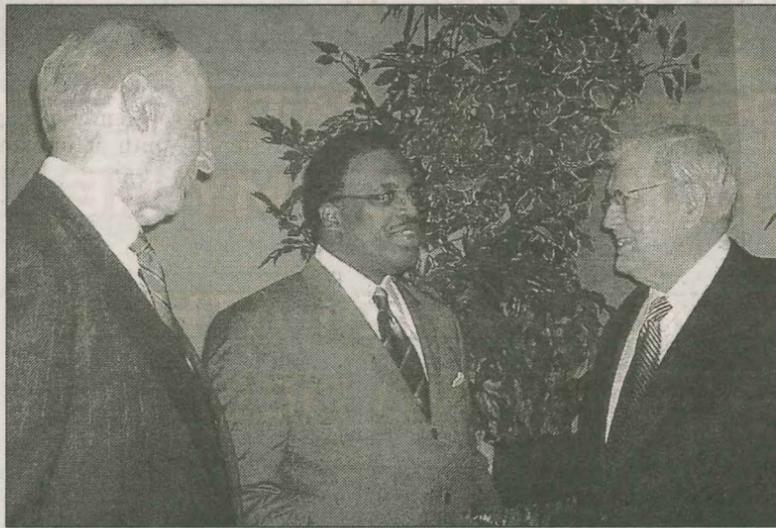
On Jan. 8, Barrows announced Graham's first 2004 crusade will be held at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium in June.

At the age of 25, Graham, then president of Northwestern Schools, held his first large crusade in a tent in downtown Los Angeles. The crusade extended to eight weeks, drawing 350,000 people and registering 3,000 decisions for Christ.

Still preaching at age 85

"It is overwhelming to receive an invitation to once again come to Southern California to proclaim the gospel. I never dreamed I would still be preaching at the age of 85," Graham wrote in the letter Barrows read. "But the call the Lord has laid upon my heart to share the Good News is as strong as when I was much younger. God has granted me renewed strength, energy, freedom and determination to preach the gospel."

Graham was released Feb. 1 from the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Fla., where he had been recovering from a partial hip replacement. He will undergo outpatient therapy for sev-



CRUSADE CREW Pastors Jack Hayford (left) and Ken Ulmer, co-chairs of the Greater Los Angeles Billy Graham Crusade slated July 29-Aug. 1, talk with longtime Graham associate Cliff Barrows (right) after he read an acceptance letter from Graham to lead the outreach in the Rose Bowl. (BP photo by Kelli Cottrell)

eral weeks after which doctors expect a full recovery, said Larry Ross, Graham's media director.

"I feel somewhat like the Apostle Paul in wanting to go back to places where we have 'preached the Lord to see how they are doing,'" Graham wrote. "More important, however, there is a new generation that needs to hear the gospel since our last crusade here in 1985."

After his initial crusade in Los Angeles, Graham returned to the area in 1958, 1963, 1969, 1974 and 1985. More than 75,000 decisions for Christ have been recorded during Graham's L.A. efforts.

Overseeing the upcoming crusade as honorary chairman will be Lloyd Ogilvie, former chaplain of the U.S. Senate and pastor emeritus of First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood. Co-chairs will be Jack Hayford, pastor of The Church On The Way in Van Nuys and Bishop Kenneth Ulmer, pastor of Faithful Central Bible Church, which meets at the Los Angeles Forum.

"We want to love L.A. to life," Hayford said during the gathering. "We are so sure God ordained this

moment in history. The Billy Graham campaign sets a historic moment before our city, as spiritual lightning has struck L.A. in his former crusades and I believe it is about to again."

"Awesome threesome"

Graham will be joined in the Los Angeles outreach by Barrows, who has been with Graham for more than 50 years, and 95-year-old singer George Beverly Shea.

Graham, who suffers from Parkinson's disease has averaged two crusades annually in recent years and "has no plans to retire," Ross said. "He is still strong in the pulpit but makes fewer plans with shorter commitment times."

Traditionally, a crusade is planned 12-18 months in advance, Ross said. "Now we have five to six months from the time he accepts them to the actual crusade. ... Mr. Graham wants to make sure he can fulfill his commitments."

Local organizers issued the invitation to Graham late last year, anticipating the involvement of 1,000 churches from 50 denominations.

"God has granted me renewed strength, energy, freedom and determination to preach the gospel."

Billy Graham, in letter accepting invitation for Los Angeles crusade

Commandments back in courthouse, but not as judge planned

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Montgomery, Ala. (ABP)—The Ten Commandments are back on display in Alabama's judicial headquarters, but their biggest cheerleader reportedly isn't happy about it.

On Feb. 5, workers installed a display containing a manuscript of the Commandments as well as other historical law documents in the rotunda of the state's Judicial Building in Montgomery. The display is located near where the state's now-deposed chief justice, Roy Moore, had installed a different display of the Decalogue.

That display, removed by federal court order last August, was a 5,280-pound granite monument that featured, on top, a carving of the King James translation of the Commandments. The sides contained quotations from historical figures about the roles of God and government. It sat at the center of the rotunda.

The new exhibit is a bit different. Besides being located away

from the center of the rotunda, it contains a reproduction of the oldest known manuscript of the Commandments alongside seven other historical legal documents. They include the Constitution and the Magna Carta.

Federal courts have said displays that include the Commandments in educational exhibits along with other documents that contributed to the history of lawmaking are constitutionally permissible. Alabama Gov. Bob Riley (R) installed such a display in the state Capitol building.

Moore was removed from his office Nov. 13 after the state's Court of the Judiciary ruled unanimously that he had violated judicial ethics by defying federal court orders.

During the summer, Moore was at the center of a highly publicized legal battle over the original monument.

He had the statue installed in the rotunda of the state's judicial headquarters building in 2001 without consulting with or inform-

ing his colleagues on the Alabama Supreme Court.

Two federal courts ruled that the monument was a violation of the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion. After the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear Moore's appeal, a federal judge ordered the monument removed.

Moore refused to comply with the order, saying it would violate his oath of office. That oath to uphold the Alabama and federal Constitutions required him to "acknowledge God," he said.

Moore's colleagues voted to suspend him temporarily from office, and workers in the building moved the statue to a room where it was locked away from public display.

Moore dissatisfied with new display

But Moore is reportedly dissatisfied with the new arrangement. "First, they hid the word of God in a closet, and now they tried to hide it among other historical documents," he said, according to As-

sociated Press, about his former colleagues' decision to set up the new display. "Neither is an acknowledgment of God, and they know it."

But the Huntsville (Ala.) Times' editors, in the paper's Feb. 9 edition, said Moore's own words on the topic betrayed his true motives.

"Did you need any more evidence that Moore's goal throughout all this has been to promote his particular brand of religion?" the editorial asked. "Does anyone fail to see why the federal courts ruled that Moore's monument promoted one faith over another?"

Moore has appealed his dismissal to the Alabama Supreme Court. His former colleagues have recused themselves from hearing the case, and a specially-appointed Supreme Court recently was sworn in. That panel will hear Moore's appeal later this year.

Moore also has filed a federal lawsuit to attempt to regain his position, claiming his removal amounted to an unconstitutional "religious test" for public office.

The new exhibit contains a reproduction of the oldest known manuscript of the Commandments alongside seven other historical legal documents.

PSALMS 119

**I RUN DOWN THE PATH OF YOUR COMMANDS,
FOR YOU HAVE SET MY HEART FREE.**

**DIRECT ME IN THE PATH OF YOUR COMMANDS,
FOR THERE I FIND DELIGHT.**

**IS YOUR SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCING THE DELIGHT FOUND IN
KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN?**

**DO YOU LEAD A TEAM THAT NEEDS TO BRING FOCUS AND
CLARITY TO ITS PURPOSE?**

ARE YOU CALLING ON YOUR CHURCH TO SOLIDIFY ITS MISSION?

**FUEL THE DELIGHT.
SHARPEN THE FOCUS.
ESTABLISH THE FOUNDATION.**

AT CEDARMORE.

CEDARMORE IS A GREAT PLACE TO RUN DOWN THAT PATH WITH YOUR GROUP, TEAM OR CHURCH.

WHETHER YOU ARE LOOKING TO CHALLENGE YOUR GROUP ON OUR TEAM BUILDING COURSE OR FOR A PLACE TO SET YOUR GROUP FREE TO SEEK GOD'S STILL, SMALL VOICE, CEDARMORE CAN HELP. WE HAVE CONFERENCE AND WORSHIP FACILITIES EQUIPPED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF MODERN-DAY CONFERENCE AND RETREAT PLANNERS. WE CAN ACCOMMODATE GROUPS AS LARGE AS 400 OR AS SMALL AS A LEADERSHIP TEAM OR SMALL GROUP.

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