

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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Pastors tell poll: Church-state split 'gone too far'

Nashville (BP)—More than three-fourths of Protestant clergy believe the separation of church and state in the United States has gone too far, according to research released by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

According to LifeWay's Facts & Trends magazine, a poll found that 78 percent of Protestant clergy say their personal opinion is best reflected in the statement: "The separation of church and state in the U.S. has gone too far, or in ways it was never intended to go."

Eight percent of Protestant clergy said they agree with the statement "The separation of church and state in the U.S. has not gone far enough; more is needed."

Thirteen percent agreed with, "The current separation of church and state in the U.S. is right about where it should be."

The study gave clergy an opportunity to weigh in on a number of specific church-state issues.

■ 95 percent of Protestant clergy said the words "under God" should continue to be included in the Pledge of Allegiance.

■ 86 percent said courthouse displays of the Ten Commandments should be allowed.

■ 79 percent said displaying a Christmas nativity scene on government property should be allowed. At the same time, 71 percent of ministers said displaying a Jewish menorah on government property during Hanukkah should be permissible.

Hidden abuse



Evangelist finds healing by sharing about past

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Monticello—When evangelist Dale Rose strode to the pulpit at his home church Dec. 29, not even his mother knew what he was about to reveal.

As a young teen, Rose was molested by a man close to his family. "She was shocked," Rose said. "I

kept it hidden as a teenager. It was several years before I told anyone and then it was very limited."

However, since his sermon at First Baptist Church of Monticello, the bivocational evangelist said he has found freedom from internal strife and sees God doing more through his ministry.

Several individuals have sought

him for counseling, and others have gone to the pastor of First Baptist for help.

Rose credits two books by best-selling author John Eldredge, "Wild at Heart" and "Waking The Dead," with helping him achieve an emotional breakthrough in the fall of last year.

□ See Evangelist finds ... Page 3

Prayer event calls attention to West Kentucky river ministries



PRAYER CIRCLE A small group of participants from four Baptist associations throughout Western Kentucky gather to pray for area ministries.

By Keith Todd
State Correspondent

Wickliffe—Threatening weather might have reduced their numbers, but what the half-dozen who gathered lacked in numbers, they made up in dedication.

Representatives from four Baptist associations gathered in Wickliffe, overlooking the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, for "Come to the River and Pray."

The event was designed both to pray for and bring attention to ministries along the Mississippi and Ohio River corridors.

"This is not an agenda event. It has no program it has no speaker," said Charles Blair, a Kentucky Baptist Convention missions consultant for Western Kentucky.

Participants prayed for projects and people related to Mississippi River Ministry and Mississippi-Ohio Valley Evangelism, or MOVE.

Mississippi River Ministry is a seven-state consortium of Baptist churches and organizations attacking poverty in the corridor that runs along the banks of the Mississippi River. MOVE is the Kentucky arm of that effort which also extends to the counties along the Ohio River in Kentucky and Illinois. Blair is Kentucky coordinator for both programs.

"All seven MRRM states from Illinois and Missouri down to the Gulf at New Orleans have had Come to the River and Pray events," Blair said.

□ See Prayer event ... Page 8

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, June 30.

Kentucky sends most messengers to SBC in Indy

Indianapolis (BP)—Ten percent of messengers to the recent Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting were Kentucky Baptists. Kentucky churches sent a total of 861 messengers—the largest number of messengers of the 8,600 who attended the June 15-16 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis.

Other leading states were Tennessee with 778 messengers, Georgia with 624, Indiana with 568 and North Carolina with 567, according to figures compiled by SBC Registration Secretary Jim Wells.

The number of messengers registering online was 4,907 (57 percent), up from 40 percent last year.

The final messenger count of 8,600 included participants from 48 states and the District of Columbia. Last year's registration total in Phoenix was 7,077.

Lotz urges Baptists to 'break down walls'

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Birmingham, Ala.—One week after Southern Baptist Convention messengers voted to cut ties to the Baptist World Alliance, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship participants welcomed BWA with open arms.

During CBF's June 24-26 general assembly in Birmingham, Ala., participants adopted a budget that doubles the allocation for BWA from \$20,000 to \$40,000. Participants also contributed more than \$47,600 in a pair of special offerings for CBF.

BWA's acceptance of BWA last year as a member body has been cited as a primary reason for the SBC's decision to end its 99-year partnership with BWA. A February report from the SBC's BWA study committee stated that BWA's vote to include CBF "merely served as a confirmation that we must, as a convention, allow the world to see us without having to look through a BWA lens—a lens which, for us, has become too cloudy."

Lotz to CBF: "Welcome home"

There was nothing cloudy, however, about BWA's affirmation of one of its newest member bodies.

"Welcome home," BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz told CBF participants June 25. "Let's move on and forget the past and move on to the glorious future in Jesus Christ."

BWA's vote last year to accept CBF "affirmed the Baptist principle of voluntary association," Lotz said. "We want to embrace all Baptists."

Speaking earlier in the day at a BWA breakfast, Lotz urged believers to tear down walls that hinder min-

istry efforts, noting that "we've got to overcome those terms of conservative and liberal and moderate."

"I want to be a Baptist, a biblical Baptist," he declared. "I want to be a Baptist who defends religious liberty and believes in the separation of church and state. I want to be a Baptist who is a drum major for justice like Martin Luther King. ... I want to be a Baptist who believes in the priesthood of all believers."

"I want to be a Baptist who believes in freedom," Lotz continued. "Freedom does not come from Washington. It doesn't come from Beijing or from Moscow. Freedom comes from Jesus Christ, and Baptists better discover that again."

Reflecting on BWA's 99-year history as a global Baptist fellowship, Lotz said, "In 1905, Baptists gathered together in London to show the essential oneness of the Baptist people in the Lord Jesus Christ. ... We did not come together to tell you what to believe, but we came to affirm what we do believe and that is that Jesus Christ is our Lord and that He is our unity."

Lotz called on Baptists to help tear down such walls as materialism, tribalism, gender, racism, poverty, paganism and secularism.

"We've been called to be wall-breakers," he explained. "The tragedy of the conflict in the church today is that there is a secular society that's hurting and has no hope. And what are we doing? We are fighting about who believes what more."

Lotz said believers can help break down walls "through prayer, through the cross, through love and through joy."

Citing Christ's words in John 12:32, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all humanity to myself," Lotz said the gospel involves lifting up Christ alone—"not the Baptist cause, not America, not colonialism, not imperialism."

Defending religious freedom

Detailing BWA's role in lifting up Christ around the globe, he said, "Your brothers and sisters in many countries of the world are suffering today for lack of religious freedom. That's why the Baptist World Alliance is concerned about religious freedom—not only for ourselves, but we want religious freedom for everybody."

"We can't defend religious freedom for ourselves if we're not willing to give it to others of other traditions," he added. "We want our Hindu and Muslim and Buddhist brothers and sisters to have freedom. But we also want the freedom to tell them, 'If you want peace and if you want hope, you've got to come to Jesus Christ because He is the source of all hope.'"

Issuing a call for Baptist unity, Lotz urged Baptists to "become a loving people."

"How can a world hear the gospel when we're filled with hatred, bitterness and anger and we're not loving?" he asked. "We need to love everyone as Baptists, whether we're on the right or the left, in the middle—all these dumb terms we've got. We've got to love people into the Kingdom. ... Let's break down the walls."

With additional reporting by Associated Baptist Press

SBC, BWA leaders continue to trade charges

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, claims the organization was "slandered" and "maligned" by Southern Baptist Convention leader Paige Patterson during a report at the recent SBC annual meeting.

Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, said he stands by his earlier charge that BWA has experienced "a continual leftward drift."

"Baptists of the world, and the Baptist World Alliance in particular, were slandered by statements made to messengers at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention," Lotz said in a sharply worded statement released June 21.

Patterson, a former SBC president and a member of the study committee that recommended the SBC break ties with the BWA, issued a response June 22.

Patterson stated in his SBC report that BWA continues to be affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA, which has accepted a new regional association in the Pacific Northwest that includes two gay-friendly churches.

Although American Baptists' general board is officially on record as opposing homosexuality, Patterson accused the ABC of being too open to gay-friendly churches.

"Southern Baptists have not said that the BWA promotes gay marriage or homosexuality," Patterson said. "We have said ... that some unions now tolerate churches which welcome practitioners of homosexual behavior."

"We have also said that if the BWA tolerates a convention or union which is accepting of churches with this anti-biblical agenda, then we can no longer lend our name or resources to that alliance," Patterson said.

Lotz cited a 1994 BWA General Council resolution opposing same-sex marriage. "The BWA does not support homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, believing it to be incompatible with the teachings of Scripture," he said, adding that BWA "affirms without reservation that marriage is a holy state and only between a man and a woman forever."

Lotz also dismissed as "ridiculous" SBC leaders' charges that the BWA has given a platform to "anti-American" sentiments expressed by international Baptists without allowing Americans to respond.

"We are citizens of the Kingdom of God and loyal citizens of our own nations," Lotz said. "As Baptists who believe in the authority of the Word of God, we believe that all of us must be open to the prophetic voice from God as it applies to our nations and to the world."

Patterson said his criticism was

that BWA leaders provided insufficient opportunity for Americans to respond to what he perceived as anti-American sentiments at BWA meetings.

Patterson also raised the issue of BWA tolerating member bodies that support women as pastors. He said that refuted Lotz's claim that BWA is a "conservative, evangelical" fellowship.

Lotz said BWA neither promotes nor condemns the issue of women as pastors. "Since we affirm the autonomy of Baptist bodies," he said, "it is the prerogative of local churches and their member bodies to make decisions on ordination."

Patterson also said that BWA had repeatedly provided a platform at its events for "liberal and neo-orthodox presenters" such as former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa and American Baptist sociologist Tony Campolo.

"Southern Baptists have no intention of engaging in any further tit for tat with BWA leadership," Patterson concluded. "There is a world to reach for Christ. Southern Baptists shall now turn our attention to that. We would risk the suggestion that the BWA do the same."

Lotz said the BWA "hopes for and will work for reconciliation with our Southern Baptist brothers and sisters and prays for their return to the historic and international Baptist world family."

CBF votes to help establish national ecumenical group

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

Birmingham, Ala. (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship voted to help start a national ecumenical organization, approved a \$16 million budget and elected new leaders during its annual June 24-26 general assembly in Birmingham, Ala.

A total of 2,397 registered participants attended last week's CBF gathering—a drop of 45 percent from last year's total of 4,357 registered participants. This year's total included 113 Kentucky Baptists.

During the business portion of the three-day meeting, CBF participants agreed without debate or dissent to become a founding member of Christian Churches Together in the USA, a new organization expected to encompass denominations from across the spectrum of Christianity.

Christian Churches Together will involve evangelical, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, historical Protestant, and racial and ethnic Christian churches in America, said Sonja Phillips, co-chair of the task force and co-pastor of Central Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, Fla.

Membership will include churches that "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior," embrace the historic understanding of God as Trinity and "seek ways to work together to present a credible Christian witness" to society, Phillips added.

The American Baptist Churches, USA; the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and the United Methodist Church already have affirmed the new organization.

It will be launched when 25 denominations and religious organizations vote to join, said co-chair John Finley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Savannah, Ga. That is expected to happen by May 2005.

The CBF's \$16 million 2004-05 budget is almost the same as the current budget, which was cut back last year after the CBF failed to meet its 2002-03 budget, said Philip Wise, chair of the CBF finance committee and pastor of Second Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas.

Major budget items include more than \$9 million for global missions and ministries, including funding about 150 career missionaries, as well as \$1.9 million to help fund affiliated seminaries, divinity schools, collegiate ministry and other leadership development programs.

New officers include moderator Bob Setzer, pastor of First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon, Ga., and moderator-elect Joy Yee, pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church in San Francisco.

Counselors: Facing truth first step toward healing

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Lexington—Two counselors who have dealt extensively with people suffering from the effects of sexual abuse agree that facing the truth of what happened is the first step toward healing.

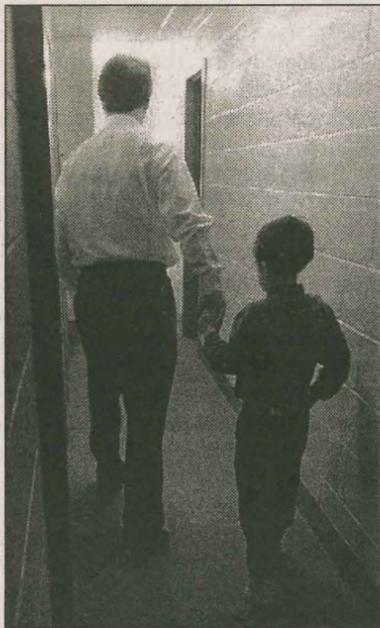
Rashmi Adi-Brown, program director for Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky, said counselors to victims try to help them overcome guilt.

"No counseling or therapy is going to make the event go away in the person's head," said Adi-Brown, formerly a therapist who specialized in helping abuse victims in two central Kentucky counties. "They need to recognize what happened, but that it wasn't their fault. There's a lot of guilt and shame associated with it."

There are a multitude of reasons for guilt, she said. Sometimes the perpetrator says things to persuade the victim he or she caused the incident or victims' bodies innately responded to the abuser, which later causes confusion.

This is why victims must hear the message that it wasn't their fault, Adi-Brown said.

Once that is reinforced by police, prosecutors, counselors, victims' advocates—and in the case of church



HIDDEN ABUSE Counselors say one of the best things victims can do is get it out in the open. (File illustration)

members, other Christians—the idea will sink in, Adi-Brown said.

"You can overcome this" is another message victims should hear, Adi-Brown said.

"They will never forget about it, but they can reach a point where it doesn't overtake their existence 24

hours a day," he said.

Getting past denial is also a key to dealing with anger, according to Mitch Holbrook of Cornerstone Counseling, who said in 80 percent of the cases the victim knows the offender.

"Talking about it and getting rid of the guilt helps," Holbrook said. "Many can't believe they feel this way about an individual who supposedly cared for them. Before they can forgive, they have to walk through the hate stage. Anger is a healthy response to being violated."

Talking to a counselor

Meeting with a counselor or other trusted adviser is also part of the healing process, Holbrook said. While it won't be easy, someone struggling with bad memories should be able to explore those feelings, the counselor added.

Churches can play a role in helping victims, Adi-Brown said. Church members should remember that they are part of a community where the best thing they can do is look out for each other, she said.

If children reveal that someone has taken advantage of them, adults should be responsive and empathetic, while also contacting

authorities, she said.

If another adult confesses struggles, the best answer is, "What can I do to help?" Adi-Brown said. "Ask, 'Can I go with you to talk to someone' or 'Can I help find someone for you to talk to?'"

Congregations also can act to prevent abuse from occurring in church settings, Holbrook said.

In the past, churches were ill-prepared to deal with potential dangers, which created avenues for predators, he said.

But more churches today are instituting screening procedures, including personal background checks, because of widespread news accounts about the problem, Holbrook said.

Several churches in Berea have taken this step in recent years, including Holbrook's church, Berea Baptist.

"Pay close attention to who's there and who wants to be with kids," Holbrook said. "Question any behavior that seems to be inappropriate. See that adults aren't alone with children."

"Most of the time the response is, 'I've been a member for (many years), why should I do this now?' Sometimes it's not an easy thing to do in a church community."

Indicators of sexual abuse

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the following could be indicators of sexual abuse taking place.

When a child:

- Has difficulty walking or sitting.
- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities.
- Reports nightmares or bedwetting.
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite.
- Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under 14.
- Runs away.
- Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another adult caregiver.

When a parent or adult caregiver:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex.
 - Is secretive and isolated.
 - Is jealous or controlling with family members.
- If sexual abuse of a child is suspected, it should be reported to a child protective service or to the police.

Any professional who fails to report a suspected case of abuse may face criminal charges for not reporting their suspicion. However, it is not the responsibility of the person suspecting abuse to prove that abuse has occurred.

It is important for the victims to receive medical attention for injuries or complaints, support for their situation and not to be blamed for the sexual abuse.

It is also important for these children to receive professional help from those who are trained to counsel sexually abused children.

For more information, visit www.preventchildabuse.org.

Evangelist finds ministry enhanced by discussing childhood abuse

Continued from page 1

"They caused me to open up and cry out to the Lord," he said. "I had some deep feelings of anger and resentment. I had to release that. I did it privately. I would read at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. When I sat and wept, God brought healing to me."

Rose's status as a victim isn't unique, according to the executive director of Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky.

Jill Seyferd cited a report from her parent organization—based on a study by the Packard Foundation—that estimates at least 20 percent of women and up to 16 percent of men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children.

Seyferd said Kentucky doesn't deviate much from national statistics.

"Roughly 80 percent of (prison) inmates experienced some kind of abuse as a child," Seyferd said. "This is historical data spread out over many years, that weren't necessarily reported or investigated (at the time)."

Abuse not uncommon

Mitch Holbrook, a pastoral counselor with Cornerstone Counseling—a department of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children—deals regularly with people who have problems stemming from sexual abuse.

Holbrook, who is based in Berea, estimates 30 percent of his clients discuss such experiences.

The counselor said there are numerous indicators of molestation or other forms of abuse, including a history of isolation, failed relationships, depression or self-destructive behavior.

While few people are willing



to talk publicly about their pain, Holbrook said he hopes the step by a public figure such as Rose will encourage others to come forward.

"The secretiveness of it is one thing that gives it its power," Holbrook said. "People don't stop to think that when it happened they were too young to do anything about it. When they talk about it with someone they can trust, they can look at reality:

They didn't do this, didn't want this and didn't have a role in it."

Rose agrees, saying Satan is a master at prodding someone to commit a perverted act and then convincing the victim that he or she is to blame.

The Monticello resident doesn't

like to discuss details of the incidents, although when he called them "mild" another victim told him, "No abuse is mild."

But Rose said the acts caused confusion and questions about his identity as he sorted through the maturing process of adolescence.

Ironically, the evangelist said the molestation allowed him to minister effectively to others because he is sensitive to their hurts and needs.

Once, after talking for 15 minutes with a couple experiencing marital difficulties, he asked the wife if she had been abused. She broke into tears as she described childhood molestation by her grandfather, a deacon in her church.

During a revival last year, a young woman who came to the altar later admitted she had been

molested by her uncle, a respected community leader.

"It's their nature; there's a burden there," Rose said of his ability to spot victims' problems. "You learn to see through it."

A wholesale shoe dealer who preaches at about two dozen revivals and other events a year, Rose often uses a six-foot mannequin. The figure "rises" from the dead, a biblical parallel to Lazarus.

The evangelist said he uses the prop while talking about the "grave clothes" people wear—including abuse—that keep them from experiencing the abundant life God wants them to have.

Churches should allow people the freedom to confess such situations and find the help they need to overcome them without feeling any judgment or condemnation, Rose said.

Steps toward healing

For those who struggle with the emotional effects of abuse, Rose suggests a four-step process:

- Don't blame yourself because a person with a stronger will than yours overpowered you.
- Don't feel dirty. Satan loves to put people on guilt trips.
- Seek godly counsel to get rid of guilt, anger and shame.
- Go to Jesus as the "balm of Gilead" and allow Him to bring healing.

While that is a start, Rose noted that he can't fully explain the freedom that God provided, since it didn't follow a neat pattern.

"Sometimes we are guilty in the Christian faith of giving steps to get from point A to point B to point C," he said.

"But there is a part to the Christian faith that is mystical. It can't be described other than in spiritual realms."



Dale Rose

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

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Is the SBC a frog in the kettle?

By James Draper

One way to boil a frog is to put it in a kettle with lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat. The frog doesn't really sense the changing temperature and before the frog knows it's too late, well, it's too late.

I'm afraid the Southern Baptist Convention resembles the frog a bit too much these days, and it's time for us to realize the water is heating up.

During the recent Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, I introduced two concerns I have about the future of our denomination.

My first concern stems from the decrease in baptisms as reported for the fourth consecutive year in the Annual Church Profile. It reflects a denomination that's lost its focus on evangelism. It is hard for someone to argue to the contrary when more than 10,000 Southern Baptist churches did not baptize a single person last year. Although we've seen tremendous strides in overseas baptisms, we are not keeping up with the population growth at home or around the world.

I fear there is a lack of urgency in our churches to baptize. I've heard

from a number of people across our denomination that professions of faith are good enough. They are not teaching the importance of publicly identifying with Jesus through baptism—and they're ignoring His command to baptize His followers.

Perhaps the main reason for the decline in baptisms is that our denomination is simply failing to reach people for Christ.

My second concern is a lack of denominational involvement and loyalty I see among younger ministers. Some of us older folks need to fess up that the fault for this lies with us. We have failed the younger generation by not creating a dynamic atmosphere and showing them the relevancy of being Southern Baptist. We've not taught people in our churches how the SBC and its entities work and relate to one another. We battle today over trivial issues like forms of worship, styles of leadership and approaches to ministry. These younger folks may not do it the way you or I do it, but who said our way is the only way?

Younger leaders are asking, "Is there a place for me at the table in the SBC?" That question hits me right in the gut. There needs to

COMMENTARY

Share the good news

Jesus spent much of His ministry here on earth among the sinners of the world—prostitutes, thieves, etc. That is why I am amazed (actually, appalled) by the resolutions proposed by messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

The vote to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance was no surprise. After all, other BWA participants do not always think like Southern Baptists. Therefore, they must be sinners so Southern Baptists should not support them.

The proposed resolution that really upset me was the Christian education resolution. As a public school teacher, I am surrounded

by a Christian faculty. Our principal, many teachers and other staff members are Christians. We live out our Christianity while teaching our students.

Every Monday in my classroom, students write about their weekend. As students share, many of them mention church. I prompt them to share more details. Other students add to the conversation or ask questions that lead us to more discussions about Sunday school lessons, sermons, etc.

I teach heavily about Christian beliefs during holidays. Yes, I teach about beliefs and celebrations of others as they appear on the calendar, but I spend much more time on Christian beliefs. Last Christmas, my

be a greater connection between them and those of us in positions of leadership—from the associational level to the state conventions and on to the SBC. We'd better address the question or the 50-something leaders will be turning out the denominational lights when their ministries draw to a close.

The struggle over the last 25 years within the Southern Baptist Convention was for scriptural fidelity—and we won. Let's do something with the victory. Unfortunately there is a mindset that the younger ministers weren't there during the struggle so they don't have a part in the concentration of power that has emerged. I think many people associate youth with theological liberalism. That's simply not true. All younger ministers are asking for is a voice to help determine the future direction of the SBC. We have a choice: selfishly hoard the power and see our denomination die within the next 20 years, or transfer leadership, theology and passion to future generations.

Is the Southern Baptist Convention the frog in the kettle? Time will tell, but if we cook, we have no one to blame but ourselves.

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

students even made a nativity scene as they learned how and why Christians celebrate Christmas.

My school has a diverse population of children and staff. Many Protestant denominations are represented as well as the Catholic, Muslim and Jehovah's Witness faiths. While I do not always agree with others' beliefs, I do not isolate myself from them.

I am thankful the Christian education resolution was not affirmed by messengers. They also should have voted down withdrawal from BWA. If we pull ourselves out of the sinful world we live in, how will we sinners who have been saved by grace ever share that good news with the rest of the world?

*Kimberly Mattingly
Louisville*

family after he accepted Christ. His witness led first to the conversion of his best friend, then to the conversions of many people in his village. Now, more than 200,000 believers have been baptized.

Prayers for Iraq

There are many families in Kentucky affected by the military deployments to Iraq. On a recent weekend I spoke at Irvington Baptist Church where the pastor, Jerry Shacklett, is facing the possibility of active duty in Iraq as a chaplain. Likewise, the couple with whom we spent the night—Estil and Peggy Banks—is anticipating that their son, Estil Darrell, will be deployed this summer for his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Please join me in praying for peace to come to Iraq and for the loss of lives to cease. Also, pray diligently for the missionaries who are serving in challenging places that they will be protected and have open doors to share the gospel so all nations might come to Jesus Christ.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

How do you rate your satisfaction with financial priorities, goals?

By Don Spencer

Below are a series of statements. Enter a score of 1-10 to indicate your satisfaction with that aspect of your financial life. (10=Very Satisfied, 5=Moderately Satisfied and 1=Not Satisfied)

I am satisfied:

___ 1. With my level of giving to my church and other charitable giving.

___ 2. With my level of debt.

___ 3. With my spending habits.

___ 4. With the current level of my retirement savings.

___ 5. With my investment choices.

___ 6. With my current insurance coverages.

___ 7. With the ability I have to meet my financial obligations.

___ 8. With my savings for my children's education.

___ 9. With the feelings I have about my financial life.

___ 10. That financial issues do not cause stress in the relationships that are most important to me.

___ 11. With the status of my current estate plans.

___ 12. That I have taken advantage of ways to reduce my tax obligation.

___ 13. With the income potential my current job or career provides.

___ 14. With the "extras" that I am able to buy for myself and/or loved ones.

___ 15. With the way I keep my financial records.

___ 16. With how I respond emotionally to financial issues.

___ 17. With the working relationship I have with financial professionals (bank, brokers, accountant, insurance agent, etc.).

Space here does not allow me to address each of these statements in depth.

Hopefully these statements will help you identify those areas (those with the lowest scores) where you should give serious attention and get professional assistance where needed.

If you have a large number of answers with low scores, avoid the tendency to avoid doing anything.

Take the two or three that are the lowest and deal actively with those.

It's likely that dealing with two or three issues on the list will help improve many other areas of your financial life.

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

Celebrating endearing relationships

I recently had the privilege of conducting the wedding ceremony for a special couple, Josh Adams and Blaire Poague. Jerome Browne, a former pastor at First Baptist Church of Calvert City, assisted.

This wedding was special to me and to Jerome because of the many personal connections we have had with the families of this couple. He had performed the wedding for Blaire's parents and I had performed the wedding for Josh's parents when I was pastor at First Baptist Church of Whitesburg. Blaire's grandmother had been the church secretary for Jerome and Josh's grandmother had served as church secretary for my 10 years in Whitesburg.

There were other connections as well. It had been my privilege to perform the wedding for Josh's aunts and uncles—Diane and Homer Combs, and Moneica and Steve Hogg. It also was my privilege to baptize Josh's father, Steve Adams,

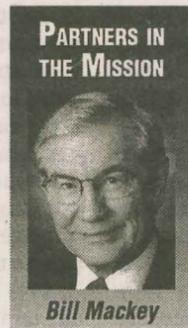
and grandfather, Jack Adams.

Blaire's extended family at the wedding included ministers and an International Mission Board missionary. Pray that Josh and Blaire, as well as other newly married couples, will experience a growing and endearing relationship of Christian love empowered by the grace of God.

Special testimonies

During the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, the IMB report featured powerful testimonies. One was from Carrie McDonnell, who saw her husband and three other IMB missionaries killed while traveling in northern Iraq on March 15. She was seriously wounded in the attack but continues to encourage Christians to reach out to people in the "hard places" of the world.

Another testimony was from a converted Muslim who described persecution and rejection by his



Parents can help teach kids honesty through modeling

Q: How can I help my child learn to be honest?

A 1999 survey of high school high achievers reported that 80 percent of teens at the top of their class had cheated in school. In 2001, 82 percent of CEOs of large companies admitted cheating on their golf scorecards.

PARENTING

Organizational psychologist Ken Siegel says, "People are losing the ability to distinguish what is honest and what is not. Lies are getting bigger and bigger. We're seeing this played out everywhere now from Tyco to Enron." Even Christians are having trouble connecting belief and behavior. A 1994 survey reported that 68 percent of Southern Baptist teenagers lie to their parents and 44 percent cheat on tests.

In an article titled "The Gift of Honesty," author Bonnie Bruno passes along several suggestions for helping children develop a finely tuned conscience while living in a society that continues to lose its way:

Parents should commit to modeling honesty, even when it hurts or costs. Casually, but clearly point out even the small and seemingly insignificant situations when honesty comes into play in everyday life.

Share a time when you had to make the difficult choice to be honest. Discuss hypothetical situations dealing with honesty with your children. Help them talk and think through what they would do.

Talk together about people who have displayed honesty. Examples can be found in almost every area of life, as well as in literature. William Bennett's "Book of Virtues" contains a variety of stories that deal with truthfulness and honesty.

Finally, remind boys and girls that God wants them to be honest. Read and memorize Scriptures such as Psalm 51:6 and Zechariah 8:16.—David Garrard

Q: Early in our marriage, my wife and I had special ways we would communicate with each other. For example, sometimes in church one of us would reach for the other's hand and place one finger, then four fingers and then three fingers in their hand. This meant "I love you, 1-4-3" in code. I cannot remember the last time we communicated in this way. We have lost touch. I still love her but I am not happy with the status quo of our relationship. What can I do?

Couple rituals are special ways to communicate our love for our spouse. These rituals woven into the daily routine remind us of the value and special feelings we have for our mate.

In his book, "The Intentional Family," William Doherty writes, "When couples are falling in love, they are experts at creating. After they marry, they often lose their touch." Doherty explains this failure by pointing out the degree to which courting couples are intentional and make it a priority to engage "in couple-oriented activities that help them feel close."

When I was a child, my father would kiss me goodbye before leaving for work. I can remember the slight scratchiness of his face and the scent of aftershave. Early in my marriage I shared this memory with my husband and asked him to do this with me since he is an early riser. Throughout our marriage my husband has maintained this couple ritual. It is comforting and helps me feel loved and connected to him.

Couple rituals are vital in courting behavior in order to help a couple together. In marriage they are essential to nurturing the close feelings associated with loving your mate. Ask your wife about the courting rituals she most enjoyed and reintroduce those into your marriage relationship. Share with your wife any couple rituals you value. Take action! Surprise your wife by starting a new couple ritual that expresses your love and adoration for her.—Valerie Vincent

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



Baptist editors evaluate 2004 SBC actions

Missions and evangelism? Yes. Baptist World Alliance? No. Reject anti-public school rhetoric? Yes. Study Southern Baptist Convention name change? No.

Convention messengers took a variety of stands on key issues during the SBC's recent annual meeting in Indianapolis. Reflections by state Baptist paper editors across the nation include:

Marv Knox, Texas Baptist Standard: As this year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting neared its conclusion, a veteran reporter from another state looked up from her work and announced, "I've never been to an SBC like this before."

She was right. The Indianapolis meeting marked my 25th national convention, and I've never seen another one like it. ...

Even more unusual than contested elections and overturned motions were comments made by convention leaders. For the first time since fundamentalists gained control of the convention, they seemed willing to wring their hands in public. Now that their political victory has been sealed for more than a decade, perhaps they feel secure enough to confront looming issues in front of the rank-and-file. ...

The world is going to hell faster than Baptists are baptizing. The challenge of evangelism, missions, church-starting and ministry is greater now than ever. All Baptists need the spark of divine creativity to rejuvenate lagging efforts. ...

While public expressions of doubt may have made many SBC leaders cringe, the discussions they should raise are necessary for the SBC to move ahead. Enough of looking back on its "conservative resurgence." Without a vision for the future, the SBC will decline.

James Smith, Florida Baptist Witness: The annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis provided clear evidence that there is a growing level of restlessness among grassroots Southern Baptists with their leaders. The good news is that at least several leaders were paying attention—and are already taking steps to demonstrate their concern.

From the vote on a motion to study whether to change the name of the Southern Baptist Convention, to the last-minute nomination from the floor of an additional candidate for SBC president, messengers took several opportunities during the annual meeting to send the signal that they wish for their views to be taken more seriously than they currently perceive them to be taken. ...

Like any large organization, the Southern Baptist Convention bureaucracy runs the danger of losing touch with the people who really make it work. It is, however, a sign of the health of the SBC that we function in a manner which offers the opportunity for dissenting voices to be heard.

Still, there's little doubt that there is a growing perception that the SBC leadership is indifferent to the concerns of grassroots Southern Baptists. Those leaders have an obligation to demonstrate ... that they too are truly interested in hearing from and being responsive to the grassroots.

Lonnie Wilkey, Tennessee Baptist and Reflector: Another annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention has come and gone.

And, as in recent years, the 2004 version had both its positive and negative elements.

On the plus side, I saw something I have not seen in recent years. Messengers showed a capacity to "think for themselves," an indication that they are not happy with being just "rubber stamps." ...

This year's attendance gives credence to the fact Southern Baptists are being cautious with their time and money. Attendance failed once again to reach 9,000 messengers. Indianapolis was not a hard place for messengers to get to. We are seeing a lack of interest across the board in what is happening on the national level. ...

On the negative side I was saddened to see Southern Baptists end a 99-year-old relationship with the Baptist World Alliance. What saddens me more, how-

ever, is the apathy I saw about BWA and an unwillingness to allow BWA to give their "side" to messengers at the convention. ...

As a denomination we are far from perfect. The good news, however, is we serve a perfect God with a perfect Son (Jesus Christ), who loves us unconditionally.

Pray that Southern Baptists, as a denomination, can continue to share the love of a perfect God with an imperfect world.

Charlie Warren, Arkansas Baptist News: The SBC Resolutions Committee and messengers themselves were wise to reject a controversial resolution submitted by T.C. Pinckney of Virginia and Bruce Shortt of Texas, which asked Southern Baptists to remove their children from "godless" and "anti-Christian" public schools.

Many Christian parents opt to homeschool their children or send them to private Christian schools. We commend them. But many others can't afford private school tuition and may not have the time, energy or education to teach their own children. Many also feel public schools need the influence of Christian parents and children. The Resolu-

tions Committee basically said parents should make their own decisions about their children's education. I was pleased with the committee's decision and with the messengers' rejection of Pinckney's proposed amendment to the resolution on secularization.

Lynn Clayton, Louisiana Baptist Message: The big secular media note was that messengers did not approve a resolution to urge Southern Baptists to withdraw their children from public schools. The Resolutions Committee did not bring the resolution to the floor and a motion from the floor to approve the previously publicized resolution did not come close to passing.

Whatever else the failure of the resolution means, it does mean that the messengers present are not ready to abandon public schools. Now, we can hope that Southern Baptists as a whole will become involved in making their public schools better in every way.

In an action that surprised absolutely no one, messengers affirmed the Executive Committee's recommendation to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance. Hopefully, the convention leadership and leaders of the Baptist World Alliance will work together to bring the two bodies back together. They need each other.

Bob Terry, Alabama Baptist: If there were a single moment that defined the just-completed 147th annual session of the Southern Baptist Convention, it was when wounded international missionary Carrie McDonnell stepped to the microphone during the closing session Wednesday evening.

McDonnell was severely wounded in a drive-by shooting in Iraq on March 15. Her husband, David, together with three other International Mission Board representatives, died in the attack.

McDonnell braced both of her elbows on a walker as she moved to the podium with the help of an attendant. Then, in a clear voice, she shared how some had asked about her sacrifice and suffering for the cause of the gospel.

Recounting how Jesus suffered and died for her and for all who will believe on His name, she asked, "How could I do any less?"

Messengers gathered in the Indianapolis Convention Center greeted McDonnell with a sustained standing ovation as she was introduced. As she turned to go back to her seat, the messengers stood and applauded once more.

Before them was one who embodied the reason the Southern Baptist Convention existed—to share the news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. ...

The heartbeat of Southern Baptists, whether in this nation or in the distant parts of the world, is evangelism. That is our prime value, and this year's convention repeatedly stressed that commitment.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

NATIONAL NOTES

Los Angeles removes cross from county seal. Government leaders in Los Angeles County voted to remove a small cross from their county seal after the American Civil Liberties Union challenged the seal's constitutionality. During a raucous three-hour meeting June 8, county supervisors voted 3-2 to remove the cross—meant to represent the Spanish missionaries who settled the area—from the seal. More than 1,000 angry citizens gathered at the supervisors' chambers to protest the decision, and more than 100 people condemned the decision in three hours of testimony.

Gibson sues company over 'Passion' revenues. Mel Gibson, who produced the blockbuster film, "The Passion of the Christ," has sued the Regal Cinema theater chain for allegedly breaking its contract on the film's box office revenues. In a lawsuit filed June 7 in Los Angeles Superior Court, Gibson said the 6,000-screen company owes him more than \$40 million, plus punitive damages, according to Reuters news agency. Gibson charged he was due 55 percent of gross ticket revenues, but Regal gave him only 34 percent.

Denomination backs legislation for traditional marriage. The Presbyterian Church in America has adopted a statement urging North American governments to ensure that marriage is defined as "exclusively between one man and one woman." The conservative denomination's General Assembly approved the statement June 17 during its annual meeting in Pittsburgh. "Among the truths that God has declared to human beings is the truth that the institution of marriage has been created by Him, ... and that it is ordained and defined by Him to be the lifelong union of one man and one woman," the statement reads.

Poll: Confidence in organized religion inches up. The public's confidence in organized religion has inched back up after reaching a historic low in 2002, according to a Gallup poll released last week. The percentage of Americans who said they had a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in "the church or organized religion" reached 53 percent in May, up from 50 percent last year. Confidence sank to 45 percent in 2002—the lowest point since Gallup began polling on the subject in 1973. The drop-off "was probably driven largely by high-profile child sexual abuse scandals that shook the Catholic church," said Albert Winseman, Gallup's religion and values editor.

Poll finds wide support for stem cell research. A new survey shows public support for stem cell research has grown in the aftermath of former President Ronald Reagan's death. The Opinion Research Corporation survey found three-quarters of all Americans say they back Nancy Reagan's call for lifting restrictions on stem cell research to find cures for diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Stem cell research remains controversial because some cells might come from destroyed human embryos, a practice opposed by many faith groups. But the recent poll shows high level of support is found across the religious spectrum, including in a majority of conservatives (62 percent), fundamentalists and evangelicals (62 percent) and moderates (79 percent).

RCA: 'Christian Zionism' obstacle in Middle East. A popular reading of Scripture embraced by evangelical leaders Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, and played out in the "Left Behind" books, was declared a "distortion of the biblical message" by leaders of the Reformed Church in America. The RCA's annual General Synod, which met in Wheaton, Ill., adopted a resolution June 8 that calls Christian Zionism—the belief that Israel must control the Holy Land before Christ returns to Earth—an obstacle to Middle East peace. "There has to be compromise, understanding and cooperation. (Christian Zionism) is a trump card that undermines that process," said Jim Brownson, academic dean at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Mich.

Religious freedom urged in Iraq, Saudi Arabia. A federal advisory panel on international religious freedom urged Secretary of State Colin Powell to make religious freedom in Iraq a top priority for the new U.S. embassy in Baghdad. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, in its annual meeting with Powell earlier this month, asked that a "high-level official" be appointed to ensure "freedom of thought, conscience, and religious belief and practice" in Iraq. The commission also urged Powell to designate Saudi Arabia a "country of particular concern" for its "violations of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief."

Evangelicals urged to shape public policy

NAE document goes beyond just voting to include issues such as recycling, poverty

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—The National Association of Evangelicals has drafted a proposed statement on civic engagement that urges America's evangelicals to be more involved in public policy.

"Never before has God given American evangelicals such an awesome opportunity to shape public policy in ways that could improve the well-being of the entire world," reads a draft released last week. "Disengagement is not an option."

The declaration—which touches on topics ranging from addressing poverty to practicing recycling—is being circulated among 100 evangelical leaders for comment before the association's board votes on it in October.

The Washington-based NAE represents at least 10 million U.S. Christians in about 51 denominations and 250 other ministries.

The document delineates areas on which evangelicals tend to agree—such as opposition to abortion and gay marriage—but also urges cooperation with those with whom they may differ in order to help improve society.

"American evangelicals continue to be ambivalent about our

commitment to civic engagement," the document states.

"Christianized versions of interest group politics during the last two decades of the 20th century produced access without influence and discouraged many who had become engaged for the first time," it continues.

The 12-page declaration, titled "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility," also cautions evangelicals in how they approach national and international affairs.

Statement: Faith, not politics

"Evangelicals should join political parties and fully express their biblical values," it states. "In doing so, they must be careful not to equate Christian faith with partisan politics."

It also urges them to "avoid the excesses of nationalism" and says they should balance support of the United States "with a love for people of all nations and an active desire to see them prosper."

The document is part of the NAE's Evangelical Project for Public Engagement, which began in 2001 and will include a book that is to be released next year by Baker Book House.

Ron Sider, co-chairman of the project and founder of Evangelicals for Social Action, said the declaration intends to give evangelicals a framework for greater involvement.

"The assumption is that it will be a very crucial document in shaping how the NAE, in the next while, works at its public policy work," he said.

Diane Knippers, co-chairwoman of the project and president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, said she hopes the declaration will lead to more regular contributions from evangelicals to matters of public policy.

"I think that evangelicals should be inspired to be involved in politics day in and day out, not just when there's something big and controversial," she said in an interview. "I think that's happening already. This will encourage it."

If politics is the art of compromise, Knippers said she hopes the document will show evangelicals it is possible to uphold moral absolutes while also making pragmatic decisions shaped by political realities.

"You're not compromising your faith," she said. "You're not compromising your convictions. You're making prudential judgments about what you can accomplish."

The full document can be accessed at www.nae.net.

Senate leader sets mid-July vote for marriage amendment

Washington (ABP)—The Senate's Republican leadership has scheduled a mid-July vote on a proposed amendment to ban gay marriage nationwide, despite objections by Democratic lawmakers.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) has scheduled debate on the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment to begin the week of July 12. The amendment would outlaw marriage for same-sex couples in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution June 16 supporting the Federal Marriage Amendment.

Key supporters of the amendment have said they do not intend for it to outlaw state-enacted "civil unions" or other legal relationships that offer many of the same benefits of marriage to same-sex couples.

But gay-rights supporters and some legal scholars have criticized the amendment in that regard, saying its language is vague enough that some judges easily could interpret it to ban civil unions and similar arrangements—even when enacted by state legislatures.

Democrats have pushed for the vote to be postponed until after the November elections, particularly because a vote against the amendment could harm some Southern Democratic senators up for re-election.

If Frist carries through with his promise, then Democrats are expected to use parliamentary tools—such as filibustering—to prevent a vote on the amendment.

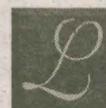


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Don't wait!

Too many people put off will and other vital documents

At the end of every Christian Estate Planning Basics seminar we conduct, Laurie Valentine's final comment to the participants is, "Don't wait!" Don't wait, if you do not have in place the basic estate planning documents you need. Don't wait, if you have a plan in place but have not reviewed that plan in the last three years. Laurie provides each seminar participant with an estate planning checklist, which includes 12 helpful questions relevant to giving one's plan a check-up.

Procrastination seems to be a primary reason why 60 percent of the people who die each year die intestate, without a will, which is the cornerstone document of any estate plan. If you and I knew the exact moment we were going to die, perhaps we could get by with a little procrastination. Since we do not know when we are going to die, we should not procrastinate.

To fail to take care of this vital responsibility is to fail as a Christian steward. We fail God; we fail our family; we fail God's family. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Tim-

thy 5:8, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

If you are a parent of a child under the age of 18 and do not have the basic estate planning documents in place, please "don't wait!" If you became incapacitated today and were unable to make personal, healthcare and financial decisions, have you executed the documents necessary to empower someone of your choosing to make those decisions on your behalf? If not, please "don't wait!"

To the extent you need assistance to put in place a plan, or to review your existing plan, please give Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, the privilege. There is no charge for her consultation assistance, because you already have paid for it by your contributions through your church and your church's contributions through the Cooperative Program or through the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; (888) 254-5701; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

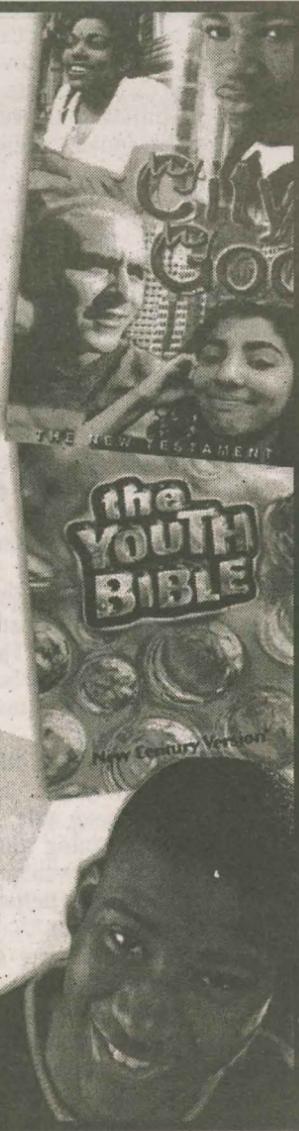
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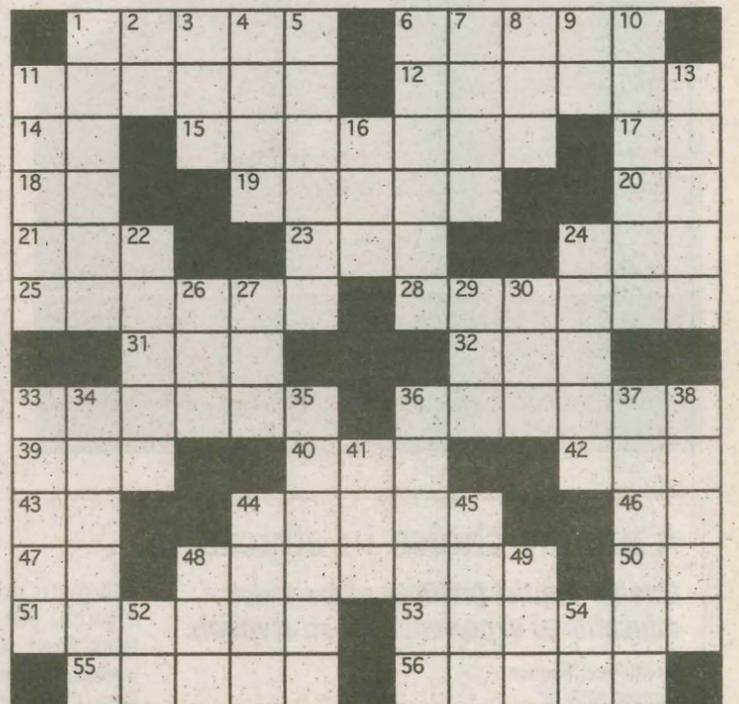


Bible Crosswords

Terri Grottko

Across

- 1 Dignity
- 6 Solomon's throne had six of these
- 11 What Benjamin was first named
- 12 Trusts (arch.)
- 14 Son of Aram (Genesis 10)
- 15 Brother of Rephah (1 Chronicles 7:25)
- 17 City near Bethel
- 18 O.T. book (one of two)
- 19 Stickers
- 20 Union Pacific, e.g.
- 21 Airport code on the Big Island
- 23 "Of Keros, the children of _____" (Nehemiah 7:47)
- 24 Son of Jether (1 Chronicles 7:38)
- 25 Baby
- 28 One of Levites named in the book of the kings (1 Chronicles 9:15)
- 31 Mountain (comb. form)
- 32 "They have gone in the way of Cain, and _____ greedily" (Jude 1:11)
- 33 Became stable
- 36 Jesus healed his mother-in-law
- 39 Biblical verb (KJV)
- 40 Fish eggs
- 42 O.T. book
- 43 Laughing sound
- 44 Where Abraham pursued those who had captured Lot (Genesis 14:15)
- 46 _____ a tee
- 47 Preposition
- 48 He accompanied Paul into Asia (Acts 20:4)

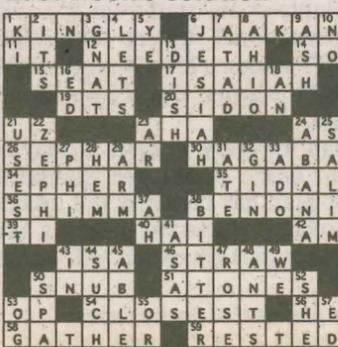


- 50 Pronoun
- 51 Interior or inner part
- 53 Among the new generation of Israel (pl., Numbers 26:16)
- 55 Prepared
- 56 Amorite king (Joshua 10:3)

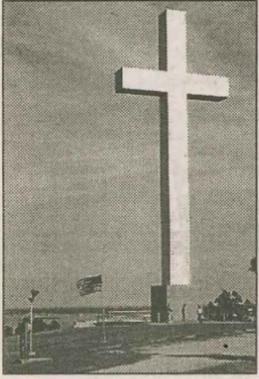
Down

- 1 Father of Tabrimon (1 Kings 15:18)
- 2 Subatomic particle (suffix)
- 3 Conjunction
- 4 Column name in multidigit addition
- 5 Got up (arch.)
- 6 Son of Judah (Genesis 38:5)
- 7 A-one
- 8 N.T. book
- 9 Subject taught by a coach? (abbr.)
- 10 Comics heroine Brenda, and others
- 11 Son of Jogli (Numbers 34:22)
- 13 Adullamite who was Judah's friend (Genesis 38)
- 16 City near Bethel (var.)
- 22 "Many knew him, and ran _____ thither" (Mark 6:33)
- 24 John the Baptist baptized here (John 3)
- 26 Masculine nickname
- 27 "But as the days of _____ were" (Matthew 24:37)
- 29 "Of _____, the family of the Erites" (Numbers 26:16)
- 30 Strike with force
- 33 She hid the Hebrew spies
- 34 Keynote speaker
- 35 Jesus healed a man with this disease on the Sabbath
- 36 "There, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he _____" (Deuteronomy 33:21)
- 37 Lying below the earth's surface
- 38 The _____ of the Fisherman (West novel)
- 41 O.T. minor prophet (abbr., var.)
- 44 Out or over
- 45 There's companion
- 48 Baltic, for example
- 49 Tease
- 52 "As _____ forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12)
- 54 Note on the diatonic scale

Last week's solution



Prayer event highlights West Kentucky river ministries



Continued from page 1

The prayer time was aimed at harnessing God's power on behalf of the hundreds of ministry efforts in the region, and to make more church groups aware of the needs, he said.

The Wickliffe cross location emphasized the interrelatedness of all the river ministries, Blair said. "In Kentucky they run from Hickman on the southwest corner to the job corps ministry at Morganfield, and Bright Life Farms at Princeton, all the way up to Owensboro as well as Illinois ministry efforts."

Participants prayed for specific events, activities and organizations, listing dozens of ministries one by one. Blair says the goal was to have an intensive time of prayer and celebration for what is happening, and to pray for additional needs in the river region.

James Bryant, director of missions for West Union Association



COME TO THE RIVER Representatives of four different Baptist associations recently met at Wickliffe to pray for ministries based in Western Kentucky. They met at the "Wickliffe Cross" overlooking the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

since October, knows something about those needs. He was coordinator and board member for the MRM program when he worked for the Missouri Baptist Convention. As a prayer coordinator there, he also knows something about applying the power of prayer.

"We're praying for our own involvement in underwriting and supporting these ministries," Bryant said.

"Often, there is a lot to do and very few people to do it," he said. "We're praying for a greater awareness on the part of churches and associations as well as praying for the people who are the victims of a life of poverty that doesn't seem to change a whole lot along the river."

While the rivers are physical

boundary between the states, Bryant says the MRN/MOVE effort is pulling together resources and boosting cooperation to overcome those barriers.

Uniting state efforts

"There's a lot of hands across the boundaries to where people from the different states actually have teams that go to the other states and work along the river. Every year we publish a handbook that lists the needs," Bryant said.

"Churches and associations can find something that matches their interests and abilities. It's a hands-on thing. If they can provide material needs or participate in some hands-on building or evangelism projects," he added, "there's plenty

to be done."

For those who might not be able to take part in the hands-on work, Bryant says prayer plays an equally important role.

"I don't think we've even touched the hem of the garment on prayer," Bryant observed. "What we've done is have prayer times and lifted needs, but we've not really gotten the mind of God."

Christians too often fail to consider God's plans and share in His love vision, Bryant said.

"If we do that, then we're going to reach out further than we normally do," he said. "We're going to be putting more feet and hands to our prayers than we do ordinarily."

The prayer list for "Come to the River and Pray" included specific items such as a worship services for campers at Columbus-Belmont State Park through the summer, Blair said.

The ministry in the park soon will include a prayer walk, prayer garden and nature trail adjacent to the park.

The prayer list also included efforts by two Southern Illinois associations to construct a new sanctuary for Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Buncombe, Ill., and efforts to revitalize the Hillcrest Baptist Campground near Cave-in-Rock, Ill.

Blair said he still has a substantial list of MOVE/MRM projects in the river region and welcomes church groups or organizations who would consider filling some of those needs.

For more information, contact Blair at (270) 653-4793 or by e-mail at pr.eprayer@iolky.com.



A unique choice in education

Oneida Baptist Institute offers a rich educational experience for all students

By Michael Spencer
Campus Minister

Education has been much on the minds of Southern Baptists this past month, as messengers at the annual convention prepared to study resolutions concerning Christians and education.

With discussion about public schools, church-sponsored schools and home schools, it is a good time to mention how Oneida Baptist Institute is a unique choice for students. OBI combines many advantages that Christian parents might need, but might not be able to find elsewhere.

Public schools obviously offer many opportunities for extracurricular activities that students value. Sports, fine arts, music, drama, Future Farmers of America and other clubs are activities students enjoy, but might feel they would miss at a smaller school.

Not at Oneida. OBI offers 11 different sports, and our athletes excel on and off the field. Christian coaches make these experiences special for our students, who compete against public schools and other Christian schools. Oneida's policy of allowing all students to participate opens a door that no public school can open, and we are happy to see many first-time athletes competing each year. Even middle schoolers have an opportunity to play in most sports.

OBI's farm and FFA are unique opportunities that involve approximately 30 students each year in activities from farm work to steer shows; conventions to concerts and competitions. Our drama and music programs provide the experience of real theater performance, a touring choir

and many other opportunities. OBI doesn't have a prom, but our seniors have many memories from their senior trip, senior picnic and senior banquet. The yearbook, student newspaper and Beta Club are also "public school" experiences that are part of OBI.

What about the academic excellence and quality instruction offered in many private schools? Is OBI so oriented toward helping students that college prep students are left out? No. In fact, Oneida graduates who choose to go to college are thoroughly prepared.

OBI's small class sizes make the learning environment a positive one. Our teachers go the extra mile every day, challenging students, staying after class, working in our study hall. Advance placement classes offer students the opportunity to earn college credit in biology, English, history and calculus. OBI's top students are equal to the best students in any other Kentucky school.

Some things that make OBI special can't be found anywhere else: our rich 105-year Christian tradition; our volunteers and staff from all across America; the international student community that prepares OBI's students for a diverse world; work, worship and the generosity of a worldwide network of friends.

God has a plan for every student. It may be public, private or home school. For thousands of students, that plan has included the unique journey to our school, where we believe a life-changing experience and education will enrich them forever.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Austin and Barbara Campbell retire

Couple concludes 13-year ministry in Kelly Hall

On June 30, Austin and Barbara Campbell retire from Clear Creek and move to Pulaski County. Since 1991, Austin has served as Kelly Hall's director and Barbara as director of food services.

"We've worked to care for physical concerns but feel it has been a needed and important part of Christ's work," Austin said. "The Bible teaches the body has different members and each is important."

"These have been full and enjoyable years," he said. "We've been able to interact with young ministry students, watched them grow and helped guide some of them."

Barbara noted the interaction with other Kelly Hall guests, "Some of the volunteer work groups have come for many summers. I'll always treasure the special memory of sitting around the table at lunch sharing with students, faculty and staff, coming to know and loving each other."

During some of these 13 years the distinguished faculty who lived at Kelly Hall included Dr. Jackson Robertson, Dr. and Mrs. Earl Clark and Dr. and Mrs. Bill Tichenor.

The Campbells first came to

Clear Creek as students in 1984 and lived on Bear Trail. During the recent renovation of Kelly Hall, they lived temporarily across the street from that house. Austin served as pastor nearly nine years in two Pulaski County churches. Last year he concluded six year as bivocational pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Middlesboro.

They retire to a residence they bought in 1972. Austin hopes the future includes the opportunity to be a pastor or interim preacher. "We're going to babysit some with grandchildren," Barbara said. "I love to garden and read." They have two sons, the oldest lives in Charlotte, N.C., and the youngest in Pulaski County.

Austin and Barbara Campbell have witnessed the transition of three four-year student groups and shared in the total renovation of Kelly Hall. We were hoping they would enjoy that renovated director's apartment a few more years. Not many people are willing to live in a dormitory. But they loved their work; it was done well and with joy. We are thankful for these good and faithful servants.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

New music shows breadth of contemporary Christian genre

By Cecile Holmes
Religion News Service

Columbia, S.C. (RNS)—Three recent releases from Christian contemporary groups offer fans a cross section of sounds from this increasingly diverse musical genre.

The Grammy and Dove Award-winning rockers of **Third Day** bring their best to their seventh studio album, "Wire," on Essential Records/Provident Label Group.

The CD's title song compares hitting Christian music's big time to walking a high wire.

Indeed, the Atlanta-based group is a leader in its genre, having earned four gold albums, a platinum album, a Grammy and 21 Dove awards.

But these guys don't intend to rest on their laurels. Despite a comfortable relationship with their producer, the band brought in a new one for this album, producing a CD that is both energetic and introspective.

"This album is a lot more powerful than anything that we've done," says vocalist Mac Powell, adding it's also universal enough to "reach out to people in many different situations."

"Wire" feeds off the group's desire for a broader reach with several songs playing off the title image of a circus acrobat. Stunned by the audience he faces, the acrobat reflects on the uncertainty and unpredictability of his vocation.

With this album, so does Third Day. At least three other songs—"Billy Brown," "San Angelo" and "RockStar"—describe the difficulties of living in the performance fast lane. In such a world, musicians face loneliness, risk and struggle. All of Third Day's members are married and have children. Others among the group's songs explore members' efforts to balance their personal and professional lives.

Caedmon's Call, another winning name on the Christian contemporary circuit, covers every season of the gifted band's career in "Chronicles," its spring release from Essential Records. A limited edition, the CD goes far beyond a collection of greatest hits. It includes a selection of live recordings of No. 1 songs such as "Hope to Carry On" and "Before There Was Time" and a radio remix of the fans' favorite, "Hands of the Potter."

The group's thoughtful, acoustic approach has served it well through the years.

Other featured hits of this record include "There You Go" and "Only Hope." The CD truly collects "our most well-known and liked songs," says Cliff Young, the

band's front man.

"It was time to release something retrospective, not only because we've been together for a decade but also because we are about to enter a new phase in the way we approach music," he says.

In more than a decade of performing and recording, Caedmon's Call moved from playing dates at smaller colleges to the band getting deeply involved in relief ministries in Third World nations.

Band members' individual travels to such nations as Bolivia, Haiti and Ecuador fired that enthusiasm so much that the members support Peace Gospel Ministries, Compassion International and Dalit Freedom. The Dalit alliance assists people in India—especially the so-called "untouchables"—who are oppressed by the caste system.

An enhanced segment of the "Chronicles" CD covers Caedmon's Call's outreach into those needy countries and foreshadows the group's next release. Tentatively titled "Third World Symphony," that fall release draws upon the band's familiar acoustic rhythms, blending them with 60 instruments from hand flutes to sitars to African drums.

In "Love Comes in All Colors," the 350 young voices of the **Youth for Christ Choir** from Jacksonville, Fla., sing in favor of hope and racial harmony.

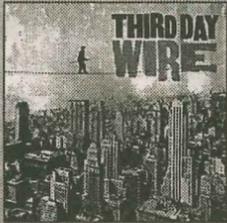
Recorded live before a church audience of 4,000 people, this CD blends renditions of such traditional hymns as "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" with newer songs including "I Give You Praise" and "Colors" by Troy Sneed, the group's producer and director.

The result is gospel with a classic, upbeat sound, hip-hop and contemporary praise. The CD resonates with the joy of youthful voices. On "Colors," they sing of who they are—diverse races and denominations unified in music and Christian service.

"We forget about our skin color and denominational backgrounds to sing in one accord," says Sneed, who served for over a decade as assistant minister of music for the Georgia Mass Choir. In 1998, he formed the first Youth for Christ choir of young people aged 8 to 18. Many were relatives of Georgia Mass Choir members.

He took out radio ads to form the one in Jacksonville. He'd like to see the choirs become a national movement of song and reconciliation.

"Kids don't carry around the emotional baggage that adults do," Sneed says, "so their innocence brought a whole new dimension to the project, making it natural and fun."



The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery. David Benner. InterVarsity Press, 2004. 114 pages. \$11. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Can, or perhaps more aptly, should self-discovery be a significant part of a Christian's spiritual journey?

Many of us probably would shy away from self-discovery as an integral part of our relationship with God. After all, doesn't Jesus encourage us to lose our lives for His sake and the gospel's? Isn't the kind of love Jesus calls us to a sacrificial and self-giving love?

Then what possible gain is there in spending time in discovering who we are?

David Benner, director of the Institute for Psychospiritual Health, argues that self-discovery is a central task of our spiritual growth and formation. In fact, he contends that to obey the commands of Jesus to die to self and to give ourselves completely to Him, we have to know who we are.

At the same time, Benner is not arguing for an understanding of self-discovery that is essentially self-definition (a far too prevalent tendency, even among Christians). In this brief little book, he invites us into the process of discovering our authentic selves. While at first blush this might seem selfish and self-gratifying, Benner points out that this process is painful, cleansing and one that we really seek to avoid.

Benner sets the tone for his book when he states, "God is the only context in which (our) being makes sense." From the outset, we are invited to see ourselves as God sees us, warts and all. This process involves a willingness to be brutally honest with ourselves and with God. Throughout the book, Benner raises issues that we should examine and provides guideposts for exploring them.

"The Gift of Being Yourself" would make an excellent tool for people involved in the practice of spiritual direction; or it could even be used as part of a premarital counseling regime. *Jim Holladay*

Invitation to Solitude and Silence: Experiencing God's Transforming Presence. Ruth Haley Barton. InterVarsity Press, 2004.

143 pages. \$15. ♦♦♦♦
"Solitude and silence are the most radical of the spiritual disciplines," Dallas Willard writes in the preface, "because they most directly attack the sources of human misery and wrongdoing. To be in solitude is to choose to do nothing."

Ruth Haley Barton, co-founder of The Transforming Center, a place to nurture the souls of leaders, agrees with Willard's assessment. It is to help evangelical Christians experience the discipline of silence that she writes this book.

Elijah's experience in 1 Kings 19:1-19 provides the foundation for Barton's presentation of the nature and practice of solitude. Going beyond the practices of prayer and meditation, she points out that silence in solitude is a much deeper, more

difficult and perhaps more healing discipline than our more common practices of corporate or private worship. Entering into the silence, even into the silence of God, brings us face to face with those places in our lives where we most resist the transforming grace of God. We are challenged by our pretensions and confronted with our basic belief that we can improve the world by doing something.

"Invitation to Solitude" is a series of reflections on the various dimensions of silence and solitude, along with suggestions on how to enter into that dimension.

I was more impressed with Barton's presentation than I thought I would be. Her insights into Elijah's experience with God are clear and insightful. The suggestions she makes to help us practice this discipline are clearly stated, but challenging. In her simple, yet profound presentation, I could hear God calling me to stop and be with Him alone ... in silence. *Jim Holladay*

Jesus in America: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession. Richard Wrightman Fox. Harper San Francisco, 2004. 496 pages. \$27.95.

♦♦♦♦
If this year you read only one book that deals with some aspect of American history, this is the book you should read.

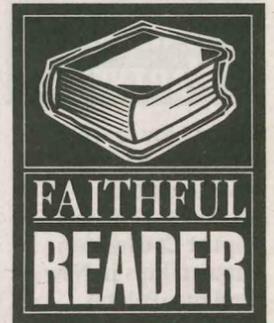
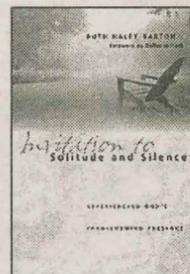
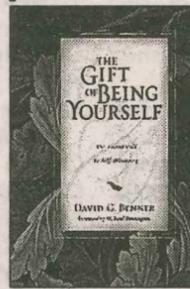
Fox has done a masterful job tracing the cultural history of America and how Jesus plays a part decade after decade. Fox begins with the arrival of the English Puritans and concludes with the influence of Jesus in today's politics and entertainment. Along the way, Fox shows with extensive illustrations how Jesus has influenced most of the turning points in American history.

What is consistent in Fox's exploration is how people of every generation have managed to interpret Jesus in such a way as to serve their own political or cultural ends. No matter where one stands on the conservative-liberal continuum, Fox gives all of us pause to reconsider our own view of Jesus. When we see how the image of Jesus has so often reflected, and supported, the prevailing culture—or been used to oppose the culture—our level of dogmatism about our view of Jesus

is sure to drop. We might just be the ones whom future cultural historians look at as major re-imaginers of Jesus.

For the historian, Fox provides details of American history. For the theologian, Fox explores the theological ramifications of competing images of Jesus within one culture. For the believer, Fox affirms the place of Jesus as the most influential Person to walk the earth while recognizing the belief in His divinity. For the non-believer, Fox unveils the impact of Jesus in ways many people would not easily recognize.

Fox's writing is personal enough to convey the passion about Jesus held in every generation. His writing is professional enough to demonstrate the work of a cultural historian at the top of his game. *Wayne Hager*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; and Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: whager@triffluent.net; or lyndonpastor@aol.com

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following churches and ministries related to Kentucky Baptist Convention partnerships in New England, Poland, Brazil and with the International Baptist Convention in Europe.

■ **Missionaries Scott and Joyce Pittman**, who are returning to Reresina, Brazil, from the U.S., and the nine teams from Kentucky that will work with them in upcoming months.

■ **The ongoing ministry in Turon, Poland**, after a Kentucky volunteer team recently completed a two-week mission trip for construction and evangelism work.

■ **Two English camps** that will be held in or near Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, this summer.

■ **Missionaries Lynn Olmstead and Mildred Verbeck** as they help direct the second stage of a training event in Ipixuna, Brazil.

■ **Summer vacation Bible schools** held in churches throughout the International Baptist Convention.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BEAVER DAM**—Ridgecrest Church recently honored **Jesse Tichenor** for 40 years as pastor. The church presented a plaque and gifts to Tichenor and hosted a fellowship meal in his honor.

■ **DAWSON SPRINGS**—Adriel Church will hold revival services July 9-11 with several guest speakers: **Jim Lantrip**, **Ronnie Sivells** and **Eugene Wyatt**. **David Frisby** is pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will celebrate "Freedom 2004" July 4, 6-9:45 p.m. For more information, call (270) 737-9309.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Buck Run Church recently called **Chuck Henderson** as associate pastor.

Farmdale Church recently called **Jonathan Richardson** as pastor and **Christopher Miller** as minister of youth.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—Henderson Memorial Church recently called **Rodney Knous** as youth pastor. **Ron Hicks** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Gethsemane Church will host a July 4th picnic

after the morning service, **Robert Wright** is pastor.

West Broadway Church will present the musical "One Nation Under God" during a combined worship service July 4, 10:45 a.m. **Sherman Ramsey** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Wing Avenue Church recently called **Anthony Cobb** as interim pastor and **Neil Bradley** as interim music minister.

■ **PLEASUREVILLE**—Cropper Church's choir will present a patriotic program July 4, 11 a.m.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—The children of Williamstown Church's children's choir will perform the mini-musical "United We Stand" July 4 during the morning worship service. **Steve Rice** is senior pastor.

What's going on?

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



TEAM EFFORT Team Taylor County, formed in 1998 as a partnership of government agencies, area businesses, school systems and Campbellsville University in response to the area's economic hardships, has helped attract 13 new companies to the area. **David Sampson**, assistant secretary for economic development, recently presented the U.S. Department of Commerce's 2004 Excellence in Economic Development Award to Campbellsville leaders (from left) **Kevin Shelley**, executive director of Team Taylor County; **Taylor County Judge/Executive Paul Patton**, **Campbellsville Mayor Brenda Allen**, and **John Chowning**, chair of Team Taylor County and vice president for church and external relations at Campbellsville University.



DISASTER RELIEF **Buddy and Elaine Frazier** work together to help flood victims as part of Kentucky Baptists' recent disaster relief efforts in Eastern Kentucky. The Fraziers, members of Cherryville Missionary Baptist Church, also have been involved in relief efforts after floods in Athens County, Ohio, and the recent tornado that hit Eminence.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July

- 2-5 Baptist Men on Mission wrangler trail ride, Land Between the Lakes State Park.
- 3-10 Kentucky Changers, Frankfort.
- 5-9 Discovery Youth Week, grades 7-9, Cedarmore Camp.
- 5-9 Mission Adventure Camp for Boys, grades 4-10, Campbellsville University.
- 5-9 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, grades 4-10, Cedar Crest Camp.
- 9-10 Mission Adventure Camp, father/son overnight for boys, grades 1-3, Campbellsville University.
- 9-10 Mother/Daughter Overnight for Girls, grades 1-3, Cedar Crest Camp.
- 12-16 Discovery Youth Camp, grades 7-12, Cedarmore.
- 12-16 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, grades 4-10, Cedar Crest Camp.
- 13-18 Women's Chorale Kentucky Tour.
- 16-17 World Missions Unlimited, First Baptist Church, Shelbyville.
- 19-23 Discovery Youth Camp, grades 7-12, Cedarmore Camp.
- 19-21 Mission Adventure Express Camp for Boys, grades 3-6, Campbellsville University.

- 22-23 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Haven of Rest Family Ministries, Inez.
- 23-24 World Missions Unlimited, First Baptist Church, London.
- 26-30 Discovery Youth Camp, grades 7-12, Cedarmore Camp.
- 26-28 Mountain Missions Conference, Oneida Baptist Institute.
- 30-31 World Missions Unlimited, First Baptist Church, Madisonville.

August

- 2-6 Discover Kids Week, Cedarmore.
- 14 Super Saturday, Erlanger Baptist Church.
- 14 Super Saturday, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro.
- 16 Understanding Other Beliefs Conference, Warren Association Office, Bowling Green.
- 17 Understanding Other Beliefs Conference, Northside Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 21 Super Saturday, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 28 Super Saturday, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

September

- 3-6 Baptist Men on Mission wrangler trail ride, Land Between the Lakes.

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

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Church pews. Beautiful, high-quality hardwood pews (580 total linear feet). Excellent condition. For more information, please call (859) 635-5725.

FUNDRAISING: Fundraising professional since 1988. Extensive work with churches and Christian organizations. Represent over 30 national companies. Bramblett Marketing Associates, (800) 867-1876; bma@ziggy.com.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Oakland Baptist Church. The ideal candidate should have a college degree and some experience with youth. Please send a resumé to: Youth Search Committee, Oakland Baptist Church, PO Box 154, Oakland, KY 42159.

SEEKING: Full-time director of missions for Severns Valley Association of Baptists in central Kentucky. Resumés should be postmarked by June 30, 2004, and addressed to: DOM Search Committee, Severns Valley Association, PO Box 541, Elizabethtown, KY 42702-0541.

SEEKING: The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship is seeking resumés for the position of associate coordinator for missions. The person who fills this full-time position will: provide leadership for missions participation and education in Kentucky; engage individuals and churches in hands-on mission work; and network with individuals, groups and churches to develop and expand ministry possibilities. Please submit resumés to: John Lepper, coordinator, Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, 225 South Hurstbourne Parkway, Louisville, KY 40222. Contact same for a position description (jlepper@kybf.org or (502) 426-1931). Deadline for receiving resumés: Aug. 6, 2004.

SEEKING: Part-time (1/2 to 3/4 time) youth minister for Immanuel Baptist, Henderson, Ky. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, 540 2nd St., Henderson, KY 42420.

SEEKING: Ministry assistant for the Adult Sunday School/Discipleship Group. Position requires three to five years related experience; strong organizational and computer applications skills. Attractive compensation and benefit package. Contact the Administrative Services Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, Ky. (502) 244-6468.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Old Yellow Creek Baptist Church, Middlesboro, Ky. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Old Yellow Creek Baptist Church, 225 S. 38th St., Middlesboro, KY 40965.

SEEKING: Minister of music, Culpeper Baptist Church, Culpeper, Va. 1,000 members; two worship services (contemporary and traditional); moderate conservative church founded in 1774. Resumés received at: Personnel Committee, 318 South West St., Culpeper, VA 22701; tfusion@culpeperbaptist.org; (540) 825-8192. Affiliated with Shiloh Baptist Association and Baptist General Association of Virginia.

SEEKING: Immediate opening for administrative assistant (35 hours per week). Compensation includes health, dental and vacation benefits. Must be computer-literate with excellent written and oral communication skills; bookkeeping experience helpful, but not required. Resumés should be mailed to: John Lepper, coordinator, Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, 225 South Hurstbourne Parkway, Louisville, KY 40222; or e-mail to jlepper@kybf.org as a Word attachment. Contact same for position description.

Christian leading man

Stephen Baldwin becoming popular spokesman for faith

By Greg Garrison
Religion News Service

Nyack, N.Y. (RNS)—Stephen Baldwin was driving his family to a daughter's recent ballet recital when a man at a stop light yelled out that he loved Baldwin's recent documentary on Christian skateboarders.

Such is life these days for the hunky movie star who converted to Christianity two years ago.

Baldwin, 38, said his famous acting brothers, Alec, Daniel and William, have been supportive of his new spiritual outlook.

"It's gotten a lot of people praying for them to get into the Kingdom," Baldwin said. "I don't pressure them or anybody else for that matter. I've come to realize very early in my walk that it's usually by example that people can be most receptive. If you lead by example, people will be intrigued and curious and maybe it will get them to read the Word."

Baldwin said he became a Christian after watching his wife immersed in Bible study and prayer.

"I watched her devoutly in prayer every day," Baldwin said. "It really blew my mind."

At first he didn't know how to react, he said. "One of the smartest things you can do in a marriage when you're scared is keep your mouth shut."

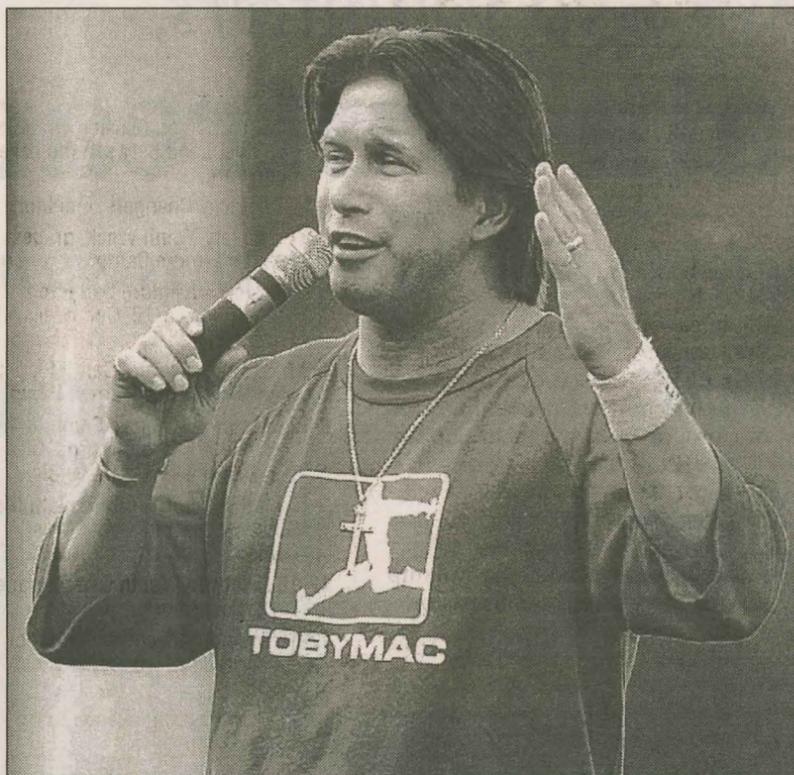
"She was my wife and best friend," he continued. "Every morning and evening, she spent 30 to 45 minutes in prayer. She still does it. I clearly saw less of a worry in her personality in regard to the things of the world."

A lack of "cool Christian stuff"

Once he became a born-again Christian, Baldwin said, "I went out and looked for all the cool Christian stuff, and there wasn't any."

But he attended a Luis Palau Evangelistic Association festival that featured a skateboarding park, which he saw as an opportunity to "make Christianity cool."

He suggested the possibility of an extreme sports documentary on Christian skateboarders and



TALKING THE TALK Actor Stephen Baldwin gives his testimony during a Christian rally in Birmingham, Ala. Baldwin said he became a Christian after watching his wife immersed in Bible study and prayer. (RNS photo by Jeff Roberts)

motocross bikers.

"I said, 'I wonder if there's something we can do,'" Baldwin said. "I'll edit it for you; we'll put it to cool music."

So he became the host and director of a PalauFest Productions DVD called "Livin' It," which mixes footage of eight top skaters and four top BMX riders in action, along with features on their faith. It's being used as an evangelistic outreach.

"We're onto something," Baldwin said. "Using new, exciting methods to reach the youth of this country is the best way to get a response. The response to 'Livin' It' has been so overwhelmingly positive."

Baldwin said he sees great potential for Christian faith to be portrayed in popular culture with cutting-edge quality media.

One example of that was Mel Gibson's controversial movie, "The Passion of the Christ," which Baldwin said he's seen three times.

"As a filmmaker I thought it was quite extraordinary," he said. "As far as Mel Gibson's artistic interpretation of the Crucifixion, I thought it was amazing as well."

With all the hype leading up to it, I thought it was God at work. When God wants something done, He does it."

Many of Baldwin's past acting jobs in dozens of movies put him in roles that he might shy away from or be ashamed of now. "Almost all of them," he said.

Mixing faith & acting

Baldwin said he hasn't ruled out the possibility of doing future love scenes as an actor, if appropriate. "I would do a majorly hot love scene if it was done tastefully and if it was a character that was his wife," he said. "I can't say one thing and do another."

Baldwin said those issues arose when he got a call from his agent about the possibility of playing "Alias" actress Jennifer Garner's boyfriend.

"It was interesting to me to get into some questions about what that would entail," Baldwin said. "It didn't work out."

Baldwin, whose movies include starring in "The Usual Suspects" and playing Barney Rubble in "The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas," says he has several secular projects in the works.

He's got a reality show in development and plans to produce and act with his brother William in an independent film to be shot in Santa Fe, N.M.

But he seems most energized about the prospects of merging media and ministry.

"In the spiritual realm, I'm excited to be who I am in the position I'm in," Baldwin said. "I have every intention of doing what the Lord wants me to do. 'Livin' It' is the beginning of something big."

Becoming a spiritual spokesman and evangelical media figure has been a fun turn of events, he said. "It's awesome for me to consider what the Lord has done and how He's orchestrated this whole thing."

Pastor acts up



PLAYING THE ROLE Evangelical pastor Alistair Begg (left) plays golf pro Stewart Maiden in the movie "Bobby Jones: Stroke of Genius." James Caviezel (right) plays Bobby Jones.

Minister finds spiritual lessons from playing Bobby Jones' coach

By Michael Heaton
Religion News Service

Cleveland (RNS)—Members of Parkside Church near Cleveland might have been dismayed to see their nationally acclaimed pastor, Alistair Begg, drinking liquor, cursing in public and being rude to people seeking instruction.

But apparently the native of Scotland has a congregation with merciful hearts. Because that's exactly what he does as the character Stewart Maiden in the movie "Bobby Jones: Stroke of Genius."

"I think they were more intrigued than anything else," Begg said. "There's been no real negative reaction."

Robert Tyre Jones Jr. was the legendary golfer who in 1930 won the U.S. Amateur, the U.S. Open, the British Amateur and the British Open.

The role of Maiden, Jones' Scottish golf instructor, came to Begg circuitously.

Begg, 52, came to Cleveland in 1983. His grasp of Scripture and brilliant, no-nonsense sermons soon won him national prominence. Today, Parkside has approximately 4,000 members, and Begg can be heard on the radio five days a week in more than 30 markets from Los Angeles to New York, including Louisville.

Unlikely "audition"

A year ago, Begg was speaking at a religious conference in California with Chuck Colson, the Watergate felon turned Christian prison minister. The two began bantering about the pros and cons of golf. Begg, a golfer, said that the sport champions the qualities of sportsmanship, fair play and staying out of the rough and that those virtues had spiritual parallels.

In the audience that day was movie producer John Shepherd, who was looking for someone to play Maiden to actor Jim Caviezel's Jones.

After declining because of a scheduling conflict, Begg later agreed with just two days' notice before filming.

"If I'd had a long time to think about it, to weigh it over in my mind, I most probably would have passed on it."

In his first line in the movie, Begg's character complains about having a sore rear end from the long trip from Scotland. In his second scene, he pulls a flask of whiskey from his breast pocket and takes a nice slug. Later, he tells a hopelessly bad golfer to "take two weeks off, then quit the sport completely."

Initially concerned about Maiden's rough persona, in retrospect Begg has no regrets. "I was playing a real person and being true to that person's character. Most of my lines were exact quotes from Maiden."

The \$18 million film opened poorly at the end of April, earning only \$1.4 million in its first weekend. But Begg has found memories of his first foray into show business and found spiritual messages in his role, as well.

"It's an example of a small man having a big influence," he said. "There would have been no Bobby Jones if there hadn't been this rather blunt and taciturn Scotsman to guide him. The national flower of Scotland is the thistle. It's beautiful, but when you grab it, it grabs you back. The smallest of actions can have profound effects on others, for good or ill."

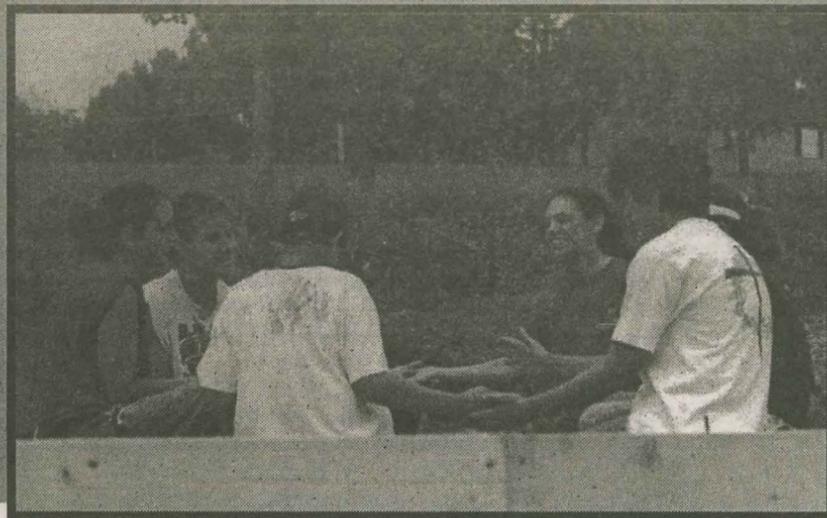
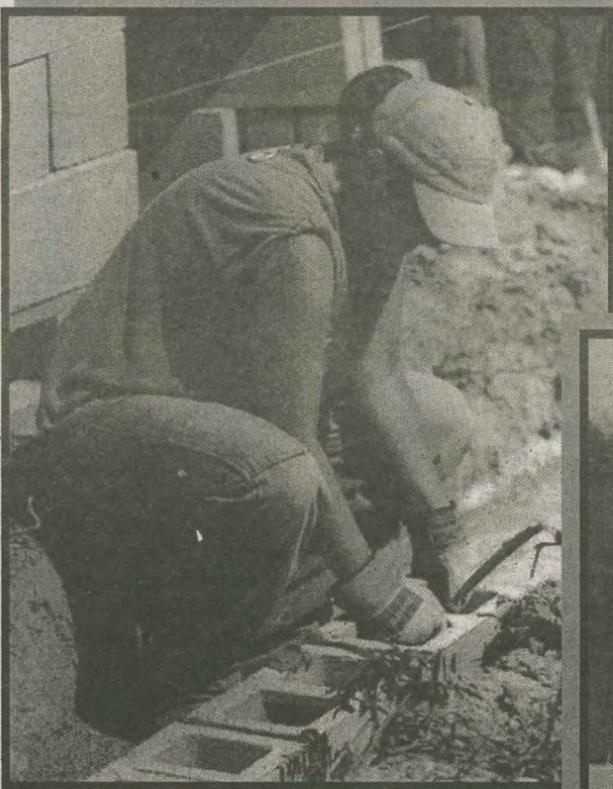


CHRISTIAN DVD Actor Stephen Baldwin talks with BMX rider Bruce Crisman last year during the shooting of a Christian-themed DVD. (RNS photo by Bruce Ely)

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