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FOR THE RECORD



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Southern Baptist teens among highest weekly Bible readers

Chapel Hill, N.C. (RNS)—Nearly one-third of U.S. Protestant teens say they read the Bible by themselves once a week or more, according to the National Study of Youth and Religion.

The survey by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found 32 percent of Protestant teens reported reading the Bible at least once a week. Breakdowns by denomination reflect the differing emphasis Protestant denominations place on Bible reading.

Only 8 percent of Episcopalian teens say they read the Bible at least once a week. African-American Baptists (38 percent), Southern Baptists (39 percent) and adherents of the Assemblies of God (44 percent) were among groups of teens reporting the highest level of Bible reading.

"That's pretty consistent in a lot of research, that you'll see the higher levels of religious practice and commitment among the conservative Protestant traditions or black Protestant traditions," said Melinda Denton, project manager for the national study.

Protestant tradition generally emphasizes Bible reading as a crucial part of spiritual growth, but some denominations make additional efforts to encourage memorization and intense Bible study.

About 10,000 children in the Assemblies of God compete in Junior Bible Quiz.

The stated purpose of the Bible quiz programs is to "help children develop a love for the Bible and an understanding that its truth can guide their lives daily."

Full tilt in Brazil



A dozen volunteers from Central Baptist Church in Corbin recently took part in a mission trip to Salvador, Brazil. **Above:** Brandy Smith and Jen Parham of Corbin (third and fourth from right, respectively) work with students from Georgia and Florida to demonstrate the creation story to students at a school in Brazil. **Left:** Kasey Cox tells students about her life in Corbin with the help of a photo album she brought from home. About 140 Baptists were expected to travel to Salvador during two weeks of work organized by International World Changers, a ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board. (IMB photos by Jim Burton) *Story on page 8.*

Adult reading, writing ministries scarce in Kentucky churches

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Pineville—John Aldridge grew up watching his parents teach people to read and write.

In the process, their work and the efforts of countless others in the area helped Bell County become the launching pad for Southern Baptist literacy missions.

But today, John wonders if that national ministry might disappear from the state where it began.

D.M. Aldridge was president of Clear Creek Baptist School (now Bible College) in 1959 when he and his wife, Kay, helped establish literacy missions.

"Clear Creek was open to any adult who felt called to ministry," John Aldridge said. "There were individuals who came who couldn't read."

Instead of sending them away, "Mom and Dad were concerned enough to set up classes to teach them, mostly men, how to read."

The county-wide effort by Baptists, led by the Aldridges and the Bell County Baptist Association Woman's Missionary Union, evolved into the template for using the Bible and other Christian materials to teach adults to read and write.

But today, according to a Kentucky Baptist—the birth report of Southern Baptist literacy missions—no churches are hosting adult reading and writing classes.

Many Kentucky Baptists are teaching Hispanics and other international residents or visitors how to read and speak English. But only six Kentucky Baptist churches or ministries in the commonwealth sponsor classes for "native" adult Kentuckians, according to Rebecca Carnell, literacy consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

It's not for lack of need. ■ The most recent state literacy survey indicates nearly 1 million Kentuckians ages 16 to 64 read

poorly, if at all.

■ Half or more of the adults in Bell County—and 27 other neighboring counties (mostly in the east)—read at the two lowest levels of literacy.

These men and women cannot fill out a job application or read the local newspaper. They struggle to read a utility bill or a ballot on election day. Reading the Bible or helping their child with homework is impossible.

■ According to a report by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, those same counties have unemployment rates of approximately 7.9 percent compared to an average of 5.5 percent of the rest of the commonwealth.

Baptist literacy ministries today fall into three categories: adult reading and writing, English as a second language and tutoring children and youth.

"The primary emphasis in recent years has been on English as a sec-

ond language," said Tony Hough, director of extension-ministries for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

As more Hispanics move to Kentucky to look for jobs and opportunities, many are eager to improve their English reading and writing skills. Today, there are 27 English as a second language classes sponsored by Kentucky Baptist churches and ministries.

Fifteen Kentucky Baptist associations host some form of literacy ministries, Carnell said. Of those, 12 have English as a second language classes; five report hosting an adult reading and writing ministry. Three associations host tutoring classes for children and youth.

Hough said there is "a lack of perceived need" among Kentucky Baptists for adult literacy and children's tutoring classes, in part, "because people want to hide the cultural embarrassment of not knowing how to read and write."

□ See *Adult reading, writing ... Page 3*

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, August 4.

BWA leaders unveil 5-year global evangelization plan

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Seoul, Korea—Baptist World Alliance will launch a global evangelization strategy during next year's centennial BWA World Congress in England, alliance leaders announced last week.

Playing off the 2005 congress theme, "Jesus Christ: Living Water," the five-year evangelism emphasis will feature "Living Water" conferences around the world.

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz said the alliance has received a \$600,000 matching grant to help fund evangelism training and rallies throughout the effort. Tony Cupit, BWA's director of evangelism and education, will coordinate the world evangelization strategy.



David Coffey

"We want to encourage in the next quinquennium a strategy for world evangelization to bear witness to Jesus Christ," Lotz told participants at the July 26-31 BWA

General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea.

"Let me be very clear that as Baptists we believe that Jesus Christ is our only way of salvation," he said. "There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved."

In other action, council members approved bylaw changes that will permit associate membership for local Baptist churches and other organized Baptist groups such as state Baptist conventions, colleges and mission organizations. The changes also permit individual Baptists to become personal members. BWA membership previously was limited to national or regional Baptist conventions and unions.

"This has nothing to do with the present controversy we have," Lotz told council members. "We began almost 10 years ago to question: 'What does membership mean in the 21st century?'"

"This was a long time coming," he added, noting that the proposal addresses "the new understanding of koinonia, what fellowship is all about."

Council members unanimously affirmed the nomination of David Coffey, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, as BWA president for 2005-2010. His election will be held during next year's Baptist World Congress in Birmingham, England. The council also elected Lotz to another five-year term as BWA general secretary.

Participants approved a 2005 budget of \$1.85 million, the same amount as the alliance's 2003 income prior to the SBC eliminating its \$425,000 annual contribution.

While gifts from member bodies are expected to be down approximately \$255,000 from the current year, major increases are projected from individual donors and investment income.

Council members approved Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church, a convention of 80 churches in northeast India, as the BWA's newest member body.

Alluding to the convention's 21,000 members compared to the withdrawal of the 16-million-member Southern Baptist Convention, T.H. Vanlalzaava, Lairam's general secretary, told council members, "After the withdrawal of the SBC from BWA, we are the first to play the role of rebuilding BWA's membership."

The council also voted to temporarily suspend the membership of Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches in India which has split into three groups due to conflict over property. Noting that the conflict has escalated into violent clashes, Lotz said the internal controversy "has been a tragic witness for the cause of Christ."

As BWA leaders seek to help facilitate reconciliation, council members voted to suspend the convention's membership until March 2005 and re-evaluate reconciliation efforts at that time.

Council members also heard a progress report from BWA's 21st Century Committee, which will present its final report next March.

The committee, chaired by David Goatley, executive secretary of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Missions Convention in Washington, D.C., is seeking to provide a long-range strategy for BWA ministry.

Affirming that BWA is "highly valued, greatly loved and deeply appreciated" by member bodies around the world, Goatley said committee members are seeking to maintain "appreciation for history yet innovation for a vibrant and vital witness for the future."

BWA reviews SBC action, turns to future

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Seoul, Korea—Pledging to focus on the future, leaders of the Baptist World Alliance held their first global meeting since the Southern Baptist Convention voted in June to withdraw from the international Baptist body.

The July 26-31 BWA General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea, attracted participants from more than 30 nations, including such diverse settings as Australia, Croatia, Ghana and India as well as the United States.

BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz, speaking during the General Council's opening session, noted that BWA "has gone through a tremendous year of encouragement and support from Baptists all over the world."

While not specifically referencing the SBC conflict, Lotz told participants, "It would be wrong to say we did not have a break in our fellowship." Noting that BWA has gone "through some deep waters," he said the division has caused "great distress ... particularly to our minority conventions all over the world."

"But we are not here to look at the past," he declared. "We're here to look at the future."

Emphasizing that "unity is a central doctrine of all Christian faith," Lotz said, "We believe Jesus' prayer in John 17 for unity is part of the authority of Scripture for all Baptists and all Christians."

"When we do not work for unity, then we are part of the movement of disunity," Lotz warned. "One of the greatest hindrances to evangelism in the world is the lack of unity in the church."

While several Southern Baptists attended the weeklong meeting in Seoul, Wanda Lee, executive director of national Woman's Missionary Union, was the only one of the SBC's 17 BWA General Council members



WELCOME Musicians in traditional Korean attire perform during the opening banquet at last week's Baptist World Alliance General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea.

who attended.

Though the SBC's withdrawal from the BWA doesn't officially take effect until Oct. 1, Southern Baptist leaders such as BWA Vice President Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee; BWA Executive Committee member Jimmy Draper, president of LifeWay Christian Resources; and BWA Study & Research Committee Chairman Richard Land, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, declined to attend their final meeting as BWA representatives.

In his written report to council members, Lotz refuted charges leveled by the SBC's BWA study committee in recent months.

"The BWA is not a liberal organization," he wrote. "It strongly affirms the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith as proclaimed in Holy Scripture which we accept as the authoritative Word of God."

"The BWA does not promote women as pastors of churches nor does it argue against the practice," he added. "Since we affirm the autonomy of Baptist bodies, it is the prerogative of local churches and their member bodies to make decisions on ordination."

Lotz also countered the study committee's charge of anti-Ameri-

canism. "The BWA is not anti-American," he wrote. "We are citizens of the Kingdom of God and loyal citizens of our own nations. ... We believe that Baptists should be good and patriotic citizens of their countries, but patriotism must always be limited to and judged by the Bible's call for ultimate loyalty to Christ Who is above all!"

He also addressed a charge concerning a pair of gay-friendly American Baptist churches raised by former SBC President Paige Patterson during debate about the SBC leaving the BWA.

"The BWA does not support homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, believing it to be incompatible with the teachings of Scripture," Lotz wrote.

Emphasizing that BWA "affirms without reservation that marriage is a holy state and only between a man and a woman forever," he added, "There is not one BWA member body that affirms, promotes or approves of gay marriage."

Despite the SBC's decision to withdraw from BWA, Lotz said BWA still "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."

BWA: SBC's vote harms global Baptist witness

Seoul, Korea—The Southern Baptist Convention's withdrawal from the Baptist World Alliance has caused "a compromise of the worldwide testimony of all Baptists," declares a BWA General Council resolution adopted last week.

Declining to cite specific accusations aired by an SBC study committee, the resolution notes that BWA "rejects the charges made by the SBC leadership and supports the efforts of the BWA officers and staff to respond to these charges."

The SBC, one of the founding members of BWA in 1905, voted in June to withdraw from the international Baptist organization. The SBC study committee accused the BWA of a "continual leftward drift" in recent years.

BWA leaders around the world strongly denied the charges, but were unable to persuade SBC officials to remain part of the alliance. The SBC's withdrawal, set to take effect Oct. 1, will reduce BWA's global membership from approximately 48 million baptized believers to 32 million.

BWA also will lose the SBC's

\$300,000 annual contribution, which was reduced last year from \$425,000. The split comes one year before BWA's 2005 centennial world congress in England.

Despite the SBC action, the resolution expresses gratitude for "the enormous contribution made by the Southern Baptist Convention in the formation of the Baptist World Alliance 100 years ago and in the continued development and effectiveness of the Baptist World Alliance since its inception."

It also cites regret over the SBC's decision "to withdraw from the world Baptist family, resulting in loss of unity and a compromise of the worldwide testimony of all Baptists."

The resolution also expresses hope "for a future reconciliation and renewal of SBC membership" and "welcomes those from the SBC who wish to participate in the life of the BWA."

Other resolutions adopted by the council:

■ Encourage all Baptists to attend BWA's centennial world congress July 27-31, 2005, in Birmingham, England. The congress is held every

five years and organizers anticipate more than 12,000 participants from around the world.

■ Urge Baptists to participate in the BWA's 2005-2010 "Christ the Living Water" global evangelism emphasis. The resolution affirms BWA's "strong conviction that salvation is offered to the world through Jesus Christ alone by means of His life, death and resurrection and continuing mission."

■ Endorse the Micah Challenge, an initiative by more than 270 evangelical Christian organizations to help reduce world poverty by 50 percent by the year 2015.

■ Affirm the Korean Baptist Convention, the meeting's host organization, for its "faithful witness to the gospel both within South Korea and in its mission work throughout the world." The measure also expresses concern for "the continued division of families and communities in the north and south of Korea," urges "a peaceful resolution of the inspection regime for nuclear power facilities in North Korea" and expresses hope for "the ultimate peaceful reunification of the peoples of Korea."

Literacy missions

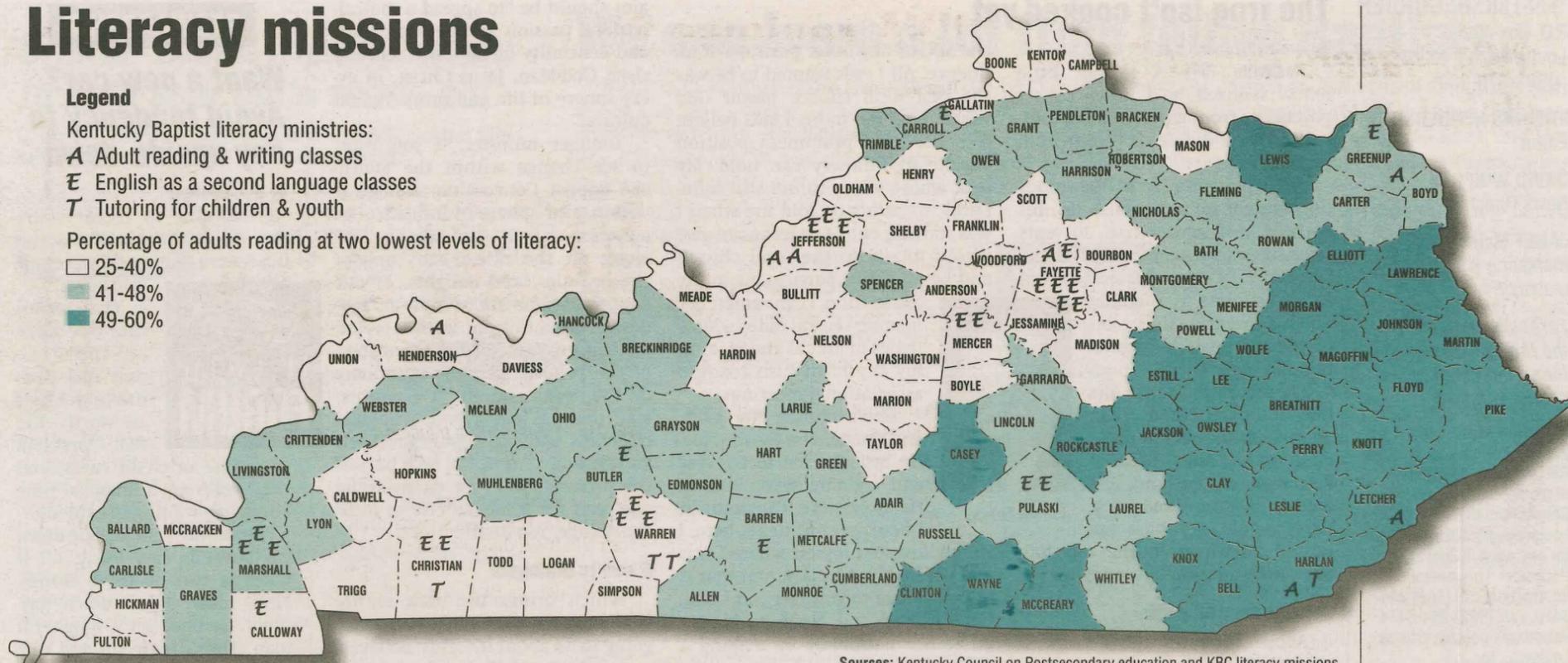
Legend

Kentucky Baptist literacy ministries:

- A Adult reading & writing classes
- E English as a second language classes
- T Tutoring for children & youth

Percentage of adults reading at two lowest levels of literacy:

- 25-40%
- 41-48%
- 49-60%



Sources: Kentucky Council on Postsecondary education and KBC literacy missions

Adult reading, writing classes rare in Kentucky churches

Continued from page 1

Bessie McPeck, a Mission Service Corps long-term volunteer missionary in Letcher County, said she sees the embarrassment from illiterate adults nearly every day in her job as an office manager.

"I know exactly the ones who can't read," she said. "They'll say, 'I left my glasses at home.'"

McPeck, her husband, Lester, and Jean Hall have begun an adult reading and writing ministry in their Eastern Kentucky community of Jenkins. Hall is a retired educator, having worked 30 years as a teacher and assistant principal.

The McPecks operate "My Father's House," a ministry center that provides assistance to the underprivileged in the community. Hall's tutoring sessions will take place in the center.



READY TO TEACH Jean Hall is in the computer lab at "My Father's House," a ministry center located in the Letcher County community of Jenkins. Hall, a retired educator with 30 years experience, is volunteering her time to teach adults to read and write. (Photo by Dannah Prather)

Teaching to read the Bible

Carnell said she knows of only one other Eastern Kentucky adult reading and writing ministry. It is located in Lynch in Upper Cumberland Baptist Association. Mission Service Corps volunteer Pauline White coordinates the effort through Meridzo Ministries.

Equipping residents to function better in society and in the job market is just part of the goal for Hall, Carnell and other Baptist literacy workers. Teaching someone to read the Bible is the brass ring.

"It's why I'm doing this," Hall said.

One of Carnell's adult students "had been told that he wasn't smart and that's why he couldn't read," she said. Eventually the student's skills reached the point that Carnell could introduce the Bible into their sessions.

She said she never will forget the look of wonder on the man's face as he read from the Bible for the first time. It was the New International Readers Version, written at a third-grade reading level.

"He looked at me and asked, 'Where did you get this?'" Smiling at the memory, Carnell said, "Those are the moments that fuel me."

Today those moments are just memories in Bell County, where literacy missions began.

"I think that when the state government started literacy programs in the counties, maybe the churches thought, 'we're not needed anymore,'" Carnell said. "But our motivation is different. We can witness to people while we teach them to read."

"Each one teach one"

John Aldridge recalls that 45 years ago, when so many Clear Creek students struggled with the written word, his mother rewrote Sunday school quarterlies to make them easier to read.

The Aldridges' work at Clear Creek inspired others to come on board. The Bell County Literacy Council was formed, with Lillian Isaacs as chairman.

A workshop to train Baptist women to be tutors was scheduled at Clear Creek. The Bell County WMU collected money for teaching materials. The former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board sent a teacher from Baylor University in Texas to train prospective tutors.

The Middlesboro Daily News called the event "a historical project

for Kentucky."

One photo in the Middlesboro paper shows a sign posted at the intersection of U.S. Highways 119 and 25-E urging "Each one teach one." The sign showed a Bible in one corner and literacy training materials in another.

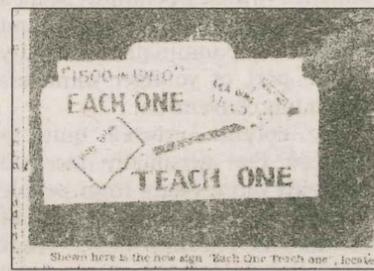
In 1960, organizers set a goal of teaching 1,500 adults to read. D.M. Aldridge went on to head the Appalachian Literacy Council to bring training and tutors to other Eastern Kentucky counties.

Eventually these programs evolved into the national Southern Baptist ministry coordinated by the Home Mission Board. Today, it is organized by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

John Aldridge said he is disappointed that so few churches are continuing the ministry his parents helped start. "I would love to see the work (my parents) spent a lifetime developing continue."

Making it work

Carnell said that literacy ministry is for believers with patience. "God really has to call these people out. You may work with a student two or three years before he can read proficiently," she said. "And for



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT A photo in a 45-year-old copy of the Middlesboro Daily News shows a sign promoting literacy missions in Bell County. (Photo courtesy of University of Kentucky Libraries)

ESL (English as a second language), it might take 10 years for someone to learn to speak English fluently."

Planning is key, Carnell said. "There has to be someone in that community or church who will be in charge." Another important factor is identifying prospective students. "The most successful ministries already know where their students are (before a program begins)," she said.

Because many "native" Kentuckians have hidden their illiteracy, Carnell said they are more difficult to identify than English as a second language students who do not speak English well.

Carnell said she is ready to equip Kentucky Baptists to see the signs of illiteracy in their community. "There are all these centers in Eastern Kentucky that give away clothes and food," she said. "Some of them are very well organized. If they would make a brief literacy evaluation part of their registration process," she said, adults who need help could be identified easily.

The next step is convincing adult students that reading and writing is within their grasp. "We have our students reading with the first lesson," Carnell said. "That way, they know they can do it."

For more information about Kentucky Baptist literacy missions, contact Carnell at (606) 379-0838 or toll-free at (888) 254-5725. Carnell can also be reached by e-mail at rebecca.carnell@kybaptist.org.

"Our motivation is different. We can witness to people while we teach them to read."

KBC Literacy Missions Consultant Becky Carnell

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

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The frog isn't cooked yet

By **Jimmy Draper**

Nashville (BP)—A skinny little fellow realized he'd never collect paychecks from a professional football team. It didn't keep him from success.

He wrote out a list of 100 things he wanted to accomplish in his lifetime, and more than 30 years later has done nearly all of them. Lou Holtz, of course, is best known for his success as a coach, but his intentional pursuit of specific goals is inspirational.

I've never created a list like Holtz's. If I had, I can assure you that being president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention most likely would not have appeared anywhere in the top 100. Stick with me; you'll learn why.

Column created a stir

About a month ago I wrote a column titled, "Is the SBC a frog in the kettle?" In it I expressed my concerns over the decrease in baptisms as reported by Southern Baptist churches (which I believe reflects a lack of evangelistic emphasis) and the lack of denominational loyalty on the part of younger ministers within our convention.

The column created quite a stir and I've personally received hundreds of messages from people across the country, nearly all of which have been positive. What I said struck a chord, so much so that I'm going to take up my own challenge: "What [am I] going to do about it?"

More on that in a bit, but first back to my Lou Holtz analogy.

Holtz's list inspired him to reach new heights and lifted him to a place of prominence. He is an easily recognizable sports figure. Conversely, I never aspired to be president of LifeWay, president of

the SBC or any other position of influence. All I ever wanted to be was the best local church pastor God would help me to be. I still believe it is the most prominent position anyone in ministry can hold. My dad, whose wise counsel still influences my ministry, told me when I was starting out 54 years ago to give myself totally to the local church and be an active participant in my association. I can remember loading several older widow ladies in my car and making my way down dusty roads to associational meetings.



Jimmy Draper

God's chosen my path, and I've held on for the ride. He brought me to LifeWay and I gladly serve Him as He directs me. The point is, I never set out to get here. I

simply invested myself where I was and got involved locally. And that is my challenge to younger ministers. Get involved and begin making a difference nationally by making a difference locally.

Act locally, impact globally

John Loudat, editor of the Baptist New Mexican newspaper, astutely observed in response to my column that for the SBC to overcome the challenges I expressed it will take all of us doing our parts: older ministers opening doors and younger ministers walking through them.

Younger ministers, you have got to be agents for change, right where you are first. There is such a minuscule probability that you will become the president of the SBC, LifeWay, the International Mission Board or any other denominational entity. Do the math: there are a handful of entities—including seminaries—and more than 42,000 pastors alone.

Instead, I recommend the challenge given by John Piper in his excellent book, "Brothers, We Are Not Professionals." Piper says our

aim should be "to spread a radical, pastoral passion for the supremacy and centrality of the crucified and risen God-Man, Jesus Christ, in every sphere of life and ministry and culture."

Younger minister, if you want to see change within the Southern Baptist Convention, change it within your sphere of influence—at a grassroots level—and take the SBC along for the ride. That's one of the beauties, and delights, of our denomination: We're not a "top-down" organization; we honor the biblical principle of the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church. It's pastors, staff, deacons and laypeople in local churches who drive the Southern Baptist Convention. So, be a part of the process. Don't sit passively by and wait for someone else to initiate change. You do it!

A call to dialogue

Which brings me back to my challenge to myself: "What am I going to do about it?" This: Between now and Sept. 15 I want anyone so inclined to send me a message (e-mail, letter) with your contact information and let me know you want to be a part of the solution. Send me the names and contact information of others in your sphere of influence. I want to listen to what you've got to say and to what ideas you have. I may come to you or I may figure out a way for you to come to me; probably both. I'm not real sure at this point how we are going to get it done, but what we are going to do is start a face-to-face dialogue. Now is your opportunity to step up to the plate. I'm willing to, but I need your commitment.

The frog may be in the kettle, but it's not cooked yet. Together I believe we can get the frog hopping out in the world where the frog most needs to be.

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

Kentucky Changers

Kentucky Changers might be one of the best ministries involving young people in Kentucky Baptist life. Nearly 600 youth participated this summer in this hands-on ministry experience, working to repair homes for elderly or needy individuals in three Kentucky towns.

The program is an exciting one because it not only has a profound impact upon the people being helped but upon the young people themselves. For instance, by Wednesday night of the Kentucky Changers' week in Murray, 20 youth had made commitments to vocational ministry. Sixteen had made professions of faith and others had made decisions of recommitment. Similar decisions were made during the Kentucky Changers' projects in Maysville and Frankfort.

In addition to the spiritual impact, youth have an opportunity to learn building and home-repair skills that boost their self-confidence as servants of Jesus Christ. In Murray, I visited 17 of the 22 projects that had been completed and was

impressed by the high quality of the work completed by Kentucky teenagers.

Adults direct the youth. The young volunteers work with a crew chief and assistant crew chief on every job.

Work projects included replacing roofs, replacing windows and doors, painting and cleaning up the yards. Young people also installed aluminum siding in some cases. One group of college students helped finish installing dry wall and painting two Habitat for Humanity homes in

Murray. In the evenings, the youth participate in worship services that are inspirational and instructive. Many hours are spent counseling with youth who have made various decisions for Christ.

The youth and adults who participate in Kentucky Changers do so with a real heart for missions. The youth pay \$160 each to participate in Kentucky Changers and then spend the week in hard but rewarding labor. They are housed in local

school buildings where they spread out their sleeping bags.

Kentucky Changers is a great cooperative effort between the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the local communities, local churches and associations. Local governments select homes for repair based on need and furnish the materials for the repairs. Local churches provide all meals either at the school or on the job sites.

A ministry team, composed of five college students, assist with worship and the initial set up for the week as well as counseling. The local association and directors of mission provide guidance and the meal schedule for the churches.

The homeowners are invited to the Friday night worship time and often share words of appreciation with the group. Some homeowners make decisions for Jesus Christ during the week.

The project coordinators are to be commended for their outstanding work in certifying needs and assisting the Baptist Men on Missions Department assign youth to projects.

Praise God for another outstanding Cooperative Program ministry. *Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*

STEWARDSHIP

Want a new car?
Avoid tendency to
buy upside-down

By **Don Spencer**

According to recent statistics, nearly three in 10 new car buyers are finding they are "upside down."



That means they owe more on their current cars than the vehicles are worth. Add that problem

to misuse of credit cards, and these folks are a financial time bomb just waiting to explode.

Becoming an upside-down car buyer is easy today. All it takes is two or three things. First, make a low down payment. Second, get a long-term loan. Third, trade up and refinance for a new car before the old one is paid off.

Too often people are enticed into buying more car than they can afford. Low down payments and extended loan periods of 60 or 72 months (or longer) make it possible.

The biggest problem occurs when folks purchase a new car before the old one is paid off. Upside-down buyers are rolling an average of \$3,700 in old car debt into their next car. Dealers and lenders encourage this. Big incentives and extended loans reduce the monthly payment, but all that does is delay the time bomb a few years.

The best approach always is to save your money and buy only a car you can afford for cash. Do that consistently, and you will be well on your way to financial freedom. If you feel you must have a more expensive car, here are three ways you can avoid becoming an upside-down car buyer:

Put at least 10 percent down on a car; 20 percent is better. Not only will you lower your monthly payment, but you will pay less interest and build equity in the car.

Limit your car loan to 36 months. If absolutely necessary, get the loan for 48 months but never any longer, no matter what the dealer or lender says. Once paid for, your car will still be fresh enough to trade for good money—or to keep for a few years with no car payments. During that time, you can save to pay more cash down for the next car.

Hang on to that car until you pay it off. Do that and the only place you'll hear about upside-down is in cake baking.

Remember, you will never have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt. The financial time bomb has a long fuse that gets hidden when you look only at the monthly payments.

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

Create 'friend friendly' home to help your child reach out

Q: My son will be attending a public middle school this fall. How can I help him make new friends?

Especially in larger cities, the move from elementary to middle school can be awkward because groups of friends often disperse to many different schools. The loss of these early "friendship anchors" can be compounded by the physical changes and emotional roller coasters that often accompany the onset of puberty.

PARENTING

Normalize this time with your son by letting him know that middle school will present some unique challenges and social opportunities for him. Encourage him to involve himself in extracurricular activities at school such as band, athletics or organizations and clubs. Be willing to take him to school a bit early to attend a Christian group such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Boys are especially prone to develop friendships around "doing" something.

Remember that your son might need encouragement to take initiative with classmates and potential friends. Make your home "friend friendly" by keeping the refrigerator and pantry well stocked and by regularly feeding teenage visitors. Volunteer the use of your home to the student minister in your church and encourage your son to have buddies over to spend the night. Consider setting up a game room with a ping-pong or pool table and some comfortable furniture; think of these things as an investment you are making in helping your son develop friends.—*Scott Wigginton*

Q: My husband is an active worker in our church and has been for many years. Early in our marriage things seemed fine but then he began to be violent. I have tried to be a good Christian wife but I don't think I can take any more pain. No one at church has any idea what our home life is like. I don't want this kind of marriage, but what can I do?

The secrecy that often surrounds an abusive marriage isolates the abuser and the abused from receiving the help both need to make changes.

MARRIAGE

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, "Have nothing to do with the worthless things that people do, things that belong to the darkness. Instead, bring them out to the light."

Talking to someone about the abuse can be scary. God has placed us in community for support, encouragement and accountability. First and foremost there is an issue of safety. If you are being physically abused (hit, punched, kicked, slapped, etc.), seek the support of family and friends or community resources in order to reach safety. Once you are safe, be proactive in seeking wise counsel from a woman's care center, a physician or a counselor. Seek the support of caring Christian men to approach your husband.

If your husband can recognize his need for help and is willing to do the long-term work in dealing with his out-of-control behavior, God can bring healing to your marriage. Time apart does not bring healing. God brings healing over time as both of you seek to change the cycle of abuse bringing darkness into the marriage relationship.

Christ sacrificed His human existence, friendships, family, all for us. This is the supreme example for how we are to relate as husbands and wives. Christ did not respond to our sin by hitting us, ignoring us or speaking to us in ways that tear us down. Instead, He laid down his life so that we might live eternally. Consider the words your husband speaks to you and his actions. If Christ would not speak to you in this way or act in this way toward you, then it is not all right for your husband to do so. Seek help. Abuse in a marriage keeps both spouses from becoming the woman and man God wants them to be.—*Valerie Vincent*

Family Forum writers are:

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We can learn a lot from fellow Baptists

Baptists in Kentucky and throughout the United States can learn much about spiritual depth and commitment from our Baptist brothers and sisters around the world. I was particularly reminded of that truth while attending a church renewal seminar during last week's Baptist World Alliance General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea.

David Hahn, pastor of Seoul Baptist Church, led a portion of the workshop on church renewal in Korea. As many Western Baptists know, the Christian faith has multiplied rapidly in Korea in the past several decades.

South Korea has become one of the major Christian regions of the world, with approximately one-third of the nation's 45 million people affiliated with Christian congregations. Daily early-morning prayer meetings as well as all-night prayer services each weekend attract thousands of faithful worshippers throughout the nation.

In the midst of that spiritual movement, Hahn graduated from seminary more than 40 years ago at age 26. Declining the invitation to serve as pastor of a large, successful church, he sensed God's will for him to become pastor of a small, struggling congregation of eight members. (When was the last time you heard of an American pastor making such a choice?)

As God blessed Hahn's obedience and his commitment to witness to non-Christians, the congregation grew tenfold to 80 members in one year.

"I gave all that I had to that church, and I loved that church with pure love," Hahn told workshop participants. Warning that the failure of many churches can be traced to pastors who stop being personal witnesses, Hahn said, "The priority of all of our ministry should be to win souls. The reason why Jesus came to earth is to win souls."

As the church continued to grow, Hahn accepted a call to lead a church with only four members. As he fasted and prayed, "the church began to grow."

Continuing his commitment to follow God's call

to "revive the church and win the lost," Hahn's third church had 12 members. "All I did was pray hard and preach the Word of God," he reflected, and that church also experienced significant numerical and spiritual growth.

During a time of martial law in South Korea, Hahn was imprisoned for eight months, eventually being released without being charged with any crimes. Before he was released, however, he led 200 fellow prisoners to faith in Christ, including North Korean spies who eventually were executed.

Describing his incarceration as a time of personal spiritual growth, Hahn noted, "I was able to read the entire Scriptures 18 times while I was in prison those eight months."

Since that time, Hahn has served his current congregation 19 years, helped start 18 other churches and has seen more than 7,000 people become Christians.

"Love your church more than anything else in the world," Hahn urged. He said pastors "must become renewed day by day and then our church will be renewed."

Hahn's testimony is just one example of the incredible work God is doing through dedicated Baptist ministers and laypeople throughout the world. While the Southern Baptist Convention has made its decision to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance, hopefully all Southern Baptists will continue to pray for the work of our brothers and sisters in challenging situations around the globe.

Remember that the SBC study committee's initial report released last December emphasized that "we wish Heaven's blessings on the BWA and its constituent conventions in every noble work for the Savior."

Whether or not the SBC and BWA ever walk together again in formal fellowship, we all can learn valuable lessons from the David Hahns of the world and commit to pray for God's Kingdom to be honored.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Four biblical principles for spiritual warfare

By Rick Warren

Lake Forest, Calif. (BP)—Every Sunday when I get in my car and drive the 20 minutes it takes me to get to church, I put on the whole armor of God, and then I do it again before every worship service.

I say, "Lord, I know eternity hangs on what I'm talking about today. There may be somebody who's in the worship service who will never come to church again."

I recognize that I am in a spiritual battle, so I use four biblical principles in the fight:

First, I acknowledge the adversary. Satan is real (1 Peter 5:8-9).

When you're being attacked, welcome to the club. It's proof that you're a believer. The fact is, the more you make an impact for God, the more the devil is going to fight you. You never outgrow it. It just gets more intense.

If there were no devil, why would God send His Son to fight what does not exist?

The Bible says God sent Jesus Christ to defeat the works of Satan. The Bible says that Satan is the prince of this world. Jesus said so. He never disputed Satan's right to work all across the world. The Bible says in 1 John 3:8, "The Son of God came for this purpose: to destroy the devil's work."

Second, I accept God-given authority. Most believers are very igno-

rant about the authority they have for use against the devil. Matthew 28:18-19 says we have all authority in heaven and earth. Then Jesus says, "Therefore go and make disciples...." He transfers the authority to you and me.

He does that because He's given us a specific mission (2 Corinthians 5:20).

When you send an ambassador to another country, the ambassador has the full authority to represent that country. The Bible says that you—as a believer in ministry—are Christ's ambassador.

Third, I put on the full armor of God. Take a look at the famous passage on spiritual armor in Ephesians 6:11-17. When the Apostle Paul wrote this, he was in prison. He was chained 24 hours a day to a Roman guard. Sitting there chained to this centurion, Paul looked at him and saw a model for spiritual armor.

The Roman had on a breastplate—a piece of metal to protect his chest from spear attack. He had a strong, leather girdle around his waist to protect him. He had on boots, a shield, a helmet and a sword. Paul says just as the Roman soldier goes out to do battle, when you're in ministry you'll need to be dressed for battle.

You put it on—before you teach that Bible study, before you teach that Sunday school class, before you play that note in worship. In

all these things, you need to put on your armor of God.

I do this every time I speak. I mentally run through this list, putting on the full armor of God.

I say, for instance, "Lord, I put on the helmet of salvation that will protect me from the thoughts the devil will try to give me. I don't want to think the devil's thoughts. I don't want to think my thoughts. I want to think Your thoughts, that I may be a voice for You. I put on the belt of truth. Lord, I want to share the truth, not falsehood. I want to lead people into righteousness."

Fourth, I aim the weapons God gave me for warfare. Not only do we have some armor, but we also have some weapons to use when we're involved in ministry. Remember, we're not fighting against physical people. We're fighting against spiritual forces.

The battlefield for spiritual warfare is primarily in the thought life, in your mind (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Notice what Paul says the weapons do: They demolish arguments—that's the way people think. They pull down pretension—that's the way people think. We take every thought captive.

In this battle for thoughts, you have four weapons: humility, faith, truth and praise. I use them every day, but especially as I'm preparing to teach God's Word.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., is the author of "The Purpose-Driven Life"

Two white KBC churches join black state convention

Congregations cite reconciliation as motivation to join General Association

"In 136 years, this is the first time I know of where whites are joining a black association."

Lincoln Bingham, KBC director of cooperative ministries and moderator of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Louisville—With a banner welcoming them to "our family," the mostly black General Association of Baptists in Kentucky accepted two predominantly white Kentucky Baptist congregations as members July 28.

St. Matthews Baptist Church of Louisville and Saloma Baptist Church of Campbellsville joined 564 other churches in the statewide association, which is affiliated with the National Baptist Convention.

The action came at the group's 136th annual convention at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Louisville.

"We're making history," said Lincoln Bingham, moderator of the General Association the past two years. "It's quite a pioneering moment that demonstrates (racial) reconciliation fraternally."

"Black churches have always joined white associations and state conventions," Bingham said, a reference to the 74 African-American churches in the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "But in 136 years, this is the first time I know of where whites are joining a black association."

George Dunn, chairman of the reconciliation ministry at St. Matthews Baptist, said the move had been discussed for the past three years. He said members voted last summer to first join the Central District Baptist Association.

Composed of 156 churches in 11 counties, Central is one of 17 districts in the General Association, Bingham said.



Bingham

"Getting serious"

"Our pastor's most consistent theme of his 10-year pastorate has been reconciliation," Dunn said of Pastor Leslie Hollon.

"We're still growing in learning how to minister to the entire community," Dunn added. "Being part of an association that is predominantly African-American is part of God's calling."

John Chowning, pastor of Saloma Baptist, said his church voted this spring to join the General Association to show that it is serious about racial and ethnic reconciliation.

The church also is considering affiliating with a local African-American association.

"For years, I have come under increasing conviction that we as Christians must be reconciled, not only to

God but also to one another before we can effectively bring the world to Christ," Chowning said.

Also during the four-day meeting, the Kentucky Baptist Convention contributed \$2,000 to fund operations of the Lincoln N. Bingham Mission House, a three-bedroom home next to the association's headquarters in west Louisville.

Once slated for demolition, the house was restored under Bingham's leadership.

"We're partners"

Larry Martin, missions growth team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, presented the check on behalf of the KBC.

"We're partners," he said later to explain the reason for the donation.

Noting that Bingham directs the KBC's cooperative ministries, he added, "Lincoln is a key person in helping churches and individuals in the General Association relate to churches and pastors in the Kentucky Baptist Convention."

Pastor of St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville for 14 years, Bingham has longstanding ties with Kentucky Baptists.

Both and he Martin were commissioned as Southern Baptist missionaries in 1976, and later they served together in Detroit.

Bingham has taught evangelism classes at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and expository preach-

ing seminars for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Strengthening a 90-year bond

Martin said the action by St. Matthews and Soloma marks the deepening of a partnership that extends 90 years, when associations from both groups started Louisville's Baptist Fellowship Center.

More recently, last summer a group of 45 Baptist Builders and men from Central District churches installed a new roof on the General Association's headquarters.

Martin said the two participate in each other's training workshops, such as KBC's "Super Saturday" and Central District's J.L. Roberts School of Ministry.

About 25 members of St. Matthews attended the latter event this spring, which Martin said draws thousands of participants.



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Coming
In August!

Understanding Other Beliefs

Kentucky Baptists will be learning about a variety of other belief systems at an upcoming conference offered by the Kentucky Baptist Convention

Monday, August 16
7:00 - 9:00 p.m. CDT

Warren Associational Office
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Tuesday, August 17
7:00 - 9:00 p.m. EDT

Northside Baptist Church
Elizabethtown, Kentucky

The conference will focus on the belief systems of Islam, Mormons, occultists and those involved in the New Age movement.

All sessions are led by certified North American Mission Board trainers.

Session Leaders Are:

Islam - Tal Davis

Mormonism - Arthur Sido

New Age Movement - Don Metcalf

Occult - Danny Zickefoose

"We are focusing awareness on the beliefs of major religious groups in America so that Kentucky Baptists will be informed witnesses (of their own faith)."

- Dan Garland,

KBC Church Development and Evangelism Team leader



For directions and further information, call the Warren Association of Baptists at 270-842-4160 or Northside Baptist Church 270-765-6424

KENTUCKY BAPTISTS
Connect

For further information on this conference go online to:

www.kybaptist.org

(Church Development and Evangelism Team)



KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

Church Development and Evangelism Team

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Toward a greater propensity to serve

Foundation keeps striving to better serve KBC churches

In real estate, the three most important factors in the price of the property are: location, location, location. With the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, the three most important factors in describing its role are: service, service, service.

Although the KBF has been serving Kentucky Baptists for more than 59 years, we are striving always to enhance our level of service. Each word in the title of this column was selected carefully and has significance in our commitment to serve Kentucky Baptists with distinction: "toward" means along a course, which if pursued, is bound to result in; "greater" means being much above average in magnitude, intensity and importance; "propensity" means a natural inclination, bent or leaning, a favorable disposition, a liking, a bias; and "to serve" means to exert oneself for the benefit of another. So, the commitment of the KBF to you is captured best in this statement: the directors and staff will pursue a course which is bound to result in an above average—we trust excellent—inclination to exert ourselves

for the benefit of those we serve and for the sake of Christ.

September is "Baptist Foundation Month." It provides an occasion for churches to inform their members about the "prepaid" stewardship services available to them from the KBF. We have produced some aids for use in this emphasis. Such aids as pulpit announcements, power point slides and bulletin/newsletter announcements are available at no cost. To order, call Barbara Spencer toll-free.

Encouraging, educating and enabling church members in the Christian discipline of financial stewardship is at the heart of the mission of your KBF. The benefits to your church of participating are: a more informed membership about their stewardship responsibilities, including all the ways they can make gifts for the church's benefit; and increased opportunities for the church to benefit from legacy gifts from some of its most faithful members. We look forward to hearing from you.

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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We'll Be There

FOURTH ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER & AUCTION

for the abused and neglected youth in Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's care

6 p.m. Saturday, August 21 Owensboro Sports Center



Daren Streblow

FEATURING

- ◆ Christian comedian Daren Streblow
- ◆ Music by David Taylor
- ◆ Meal by Moonlite Bar-B-Q
- ◆ Auction to follow dinner
- ◆ Event sponsored by: WBIO; Moore Ford & Dodge of Hartford; and Bruce Burton, M.D.

Tickets are \$40 each or \$300 for a table of eight. Call Joann Mason at (270) 685-0110 or (270) 683-0692 for tickets.

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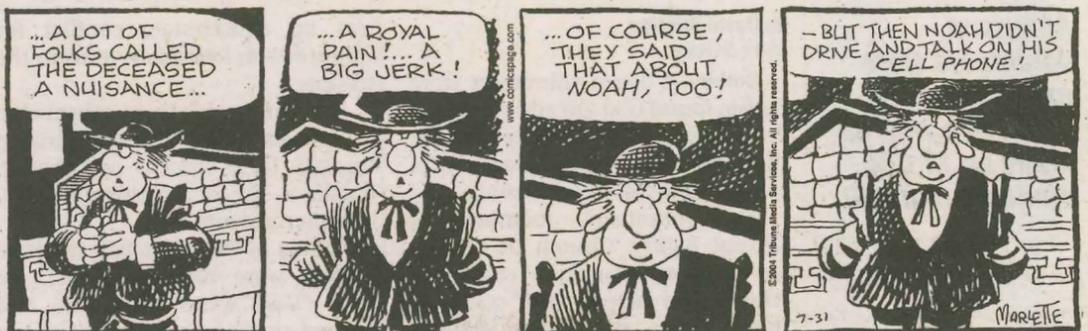
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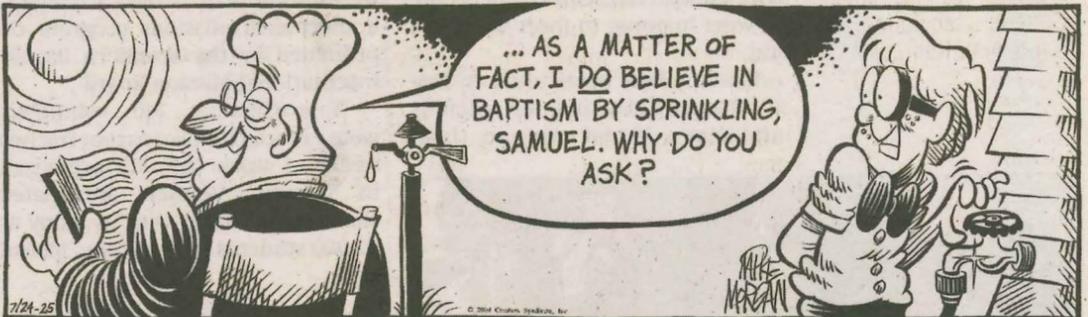
Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan

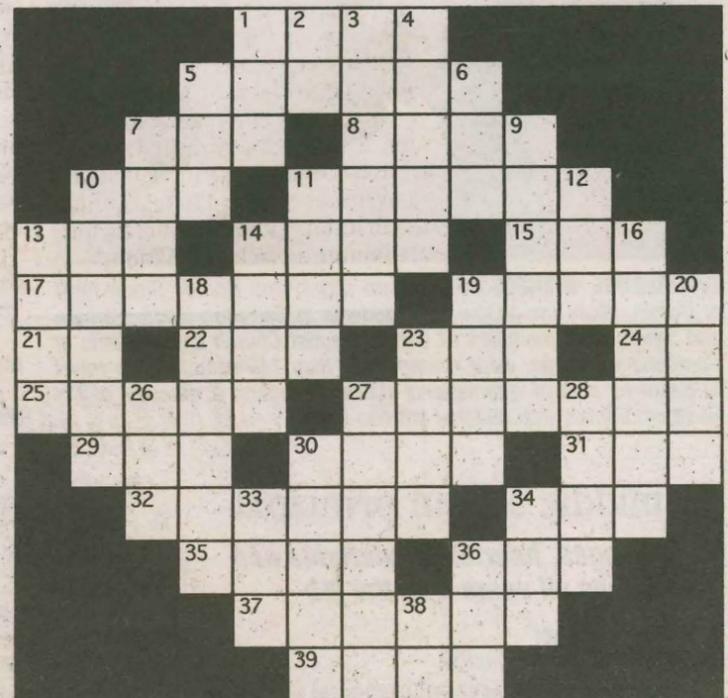


Bible Crosswords

Janet W. Adkins

Across

- 1 Priestly garments
- 5 "Except your righteousness shall ___ the righteousness of the scribes" (Matthew 5:20)
- 7 Linking verb
- 8 Replied
- 10 "Give unto the Lord the glory ___ unto his name" (Psalm 29:2)
- 11 "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her ___?" (Jeremiah 2:32)
- 13 Of flying (comb. form)
- 14 Son of Seth
- 15 "Israel did ___ manna forty years" (Exodus 16:35)
- 17 "Yea, the ___ hath found an house" (Psalm 84:3)
- 19 "Employer" of Hagar
- 21 Oft-used abbr.
- 22 One (Ger.)
- 23 Rate of speed (abbr.)
- 24 Where Montauk is (abbr.)
- 25 "All they that cast ___ into the brooks shall lament" (Isaiah 19:8)
- 27 "They ___ in thee, and were not confounded" (Psalm 22:5)
- 29 "Agnus ___"
- 30 Pay attention
- 31 "Yet will I bring ___ plague more upon Pharaoh" (Exodus 11:1)
- 32 "___ ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15)



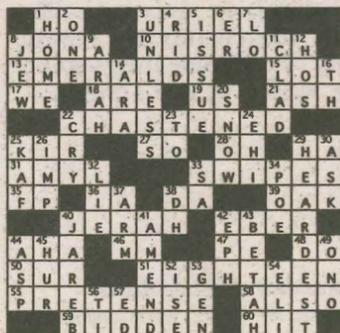
- 34 "And Nathan said to David, Thou ___ the man" (2 Samuel 12:7)
- 35 End or line
- 36 John, to a Scot
- 37 "He made a ___ about the altar" (1 Kings 18:32)
- 39 "He shall be like a ___ planted by the rivers" (Psalm 1:3)

- 12 Serving of corn
- 13 "All they which dwelt in ___ heard the word of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:10)
- 14 Great Lake
- 16 "I was afraid, and went and hid thy ___ in the earth" (Matthew 25:25)
- 18 Trusted, with "upon"
- 19 Potato
- 20 "I flee unto thee to ___ me" (Psalm 143:9)
- 23 "___ not thyself because of evildoers" (Psalm 37:1)
- 26 European lang.
- 27 "Leah was ___ eyed" (Genesis 29:17)
- 28 Ripped
- 30 "If thou seek him with all thy ___" (Deuteronomy 4:29)

Down

- 1 Chopping tool
- 2 Public national library (abbr.)
- 3 "Upon these we ___ more abundant honour" (1 Corinthians 12:23)
- 4 "He hath put down the mighty from their ___" (Luke 1:52)
- 5 Before (poet.)
- 6 502, according to Cicero
- 7 Charismatic atmosphere
- 9 God spoke in Bible times through these
- 10 Rely
- 11 Immediately (arch.)

Last week's solution



Corbin volunteers take God's love to Brazil children

American volunteers were expected share their faith with as many as 12,000 students in Brazil.

By David Winfrey
News Director

Corbin—A dozen volunteers from Corbin found God already at work in Brazil when they recently traveled there for a week-long mission trip, according to leader Jeff Moran.

The volunteers, members of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, led religious education classes in schools and helped with construction projects, said Moran, who is youth pastor at Central.

"I believe that God went before us and prepared the hearts of people we were to go to meet with," he said.

Public school curriculum in Brazil often includes time for religious instruction, Moran said, so there

was no church-state conflict for volunteers to talk about Jesus in the schools.

Still, he noted, their appearance in schools had to be coordinated through local officials in Salvador, Brazil, a city of approximately 10 million residents.

"Many of the principals of these schools were not Christians," he said. "God went before us and opened up the doors for us so we could share."

The Corbin volunteers took part in International World Changers, a short-term missions program coordinated by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Approximately 140 volunteers were expected to take part in the two weeks of work the IMB organized in Salvador. Workers anticipated sharing their faith with as many as 12,000 students in that time, Moran said.

EvangeCube & gaining confidence

Often using "EvangeCube" tools to talk about Jesus, the volunteers shared with youth ages 4 to 17. Teams had to adapt their messages to meet the level of the students, Moran noted.

In addition to seeing students make professions of faith in Jesus, volunteers in other teams reported some teachers and principals also became Christians, Moran said.

Volunteer Lindsey Goins, 18, said the trip was eye opening, humbling and "a lot of fun."

Before going, she said, she feared not speaking Portuguese would be a major barrier, but hand gestures, the EvangeCube photos and transla-



HARD LABOR J.T. Zik (left) and Andy Salmons worked on home construction and renovation projects while their friends spoke in schools. (IMB photos by Jim Burton)

tors helped.

Besides, she said, when sharing love with the kids, "it doesn't take words."

Goins said one of the things she'll remember most will be the last day she spent in the school, when she led an 11-year-old boy to become a Christian.

In addition to strengthening friendships in the team, Goins said the trip gave her more confidence to share her faith.

"I came away with a confidence in being able to share my faith and not being so scared to do it," she said.

Traveling overseas gave her a new perspective on how different life in the United States is from many other countries.

"But kids here need Jesus just as much as kids in Brazil do," she added.

Members at Central supported

the volunteers through fundraising events.

Valentine's Day bouquets, a golf scramble and a Christmas dinner theater helped raise money to send the volunteers. The program cost \$1,526 per volunteer, including airfare, Moran said.

This was the second consecutive year that Central sent volunteers to Brazil through the International World Changers program.

Moran said he expects to lead another group next year, possibly in Brazil or Moldova. "It just depends on where God leads us and how He wants to use us next summer."



EVANGECUBE WITNESS Jen Parham (right) and Brandy Smith (left) of Corbin, share the gospel with students in Salvador, Brazil. Parham and Smith, both members of Central Baptist Church and students at Cumberland College, were among more than 140 volunteers to travel to Brazil as part of International World Changers, a ministry of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

A middle school principal

Challenges, heartache, victories and blessings all come with the job

By Connie Belcher
Oneida Middle School Principal

You're a middle school principal so you can teach the little ones to know Jesus ... so they can see the Bible translated ... so you realize that every interruption is an opportunity ... so they can hear how to sing praise songs to the Lord ... so they can discover other languages ... the language of kids playing.

You're a middle school principal so you can call the maintenance man, only to find a pencil lead in the broken pencil sharpener ... so you can be there to console the students of the losing team ... so you can learn to mend broken hearts and broken dreams ... so you can enjoy your teachers and help them love the little ones more ... so you can go without sleep when you can't seem to understand

why they came with the baggage that they did ... so you can be the first one to pat that proud student on the back because he overcame a difficult situation ... so you can learn how to face heartache and trust in the Lord.

You're a middle school principal so you can be the first to notice the need for deodorant ... so you can lose sleep waiting for the student to realize that all he needs to do is apologize ... so you can laugh at that joke for the umpteenth time ... so you can learn bravery by pulling things out of an old backpack ... so you can see that smile when you remembered her name and she wasn't in trouble ... so you can learn to be a good sport about competition ... so you can assure them that it is OK to have emotions

... so you can see yourself younger over and over again.

You're a middle school principal so you can learn to be the "role model" in the youngsters' lives ... so you can learn to say "Goodbye" and "Have a good day" ... so you can anticipate with them the coming of a new day ... so when a student leaves you a note saying, "Thanks for showing up every day. You're the only one in my life who does," you were glad you didn't call in sick.

You're a middle school principal because you know that you will nurture a unique, wonderful human being ... you'll get lessons on trust, forgiveness and unconditional acceptance ... you can anticipate with them their going to high school (the expectancy is greater than any you have ever known) ... you'll live with the knowledge that your investment in another life helped make the world a better, brighter place and most im-

portantly the Lord loves you so much that He wanted to teach you to pray.

Nothing you do for a child is ever wasted. Being in this position is an awesome calling and one that is not taken lightly. The rewards are priceless. Every one of these lives sent our way is a fairy tale, written by God's fingers.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

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

Waiting on the Lord, an answer comes

N.C. graduate becomes pastor of Virginia church

Trent and Angela Moody approached graduation in May waiting on the Lord.

The Lord opened an unexpected opportunity in Jonesville, Va. Clear Creek's Dean of Institutional Advancement Donnie Fox was interim pastor at First Baptist Church of Jonesville and asked Trent to preach when he had to be away. On July 4, Trent became the pastor.

The Moodys—the family includes Carter, 4 1/2, and Jenna, 2—came to Clear Creek from Fruitland Baptist Institute in Hendersonville, N.C. Clear Creek accepts the school's two-year program toward completion of our bachelor's degree in ministry.

"It has been a learning experience," Angela said. "We've grown as a family and in the Lord, and enjoyed many opportunities to serve." As members of Pump Springs Baptist Church, they appreciated the dynamic couples Bible study class taught by 1993 alumnus Bernie Secrist and the leadership of Pastor Gary Miller, a 1987 graduate.

Trent wasn't a preacher when they married. "I was scared at first and wondered, 'How could God use

me?'" Angela said. "Coming here and meeting others in similar situations, I realized God can and will use me." Angela appreciates the valuable lessons she gained in two courses of the Women in Ministry curriculum. She affirms Trent's good balance between work and time with the children.

Angela received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Appalachian State College. She said God has helped her become a good listener in counseling situations as she combines her studies with biblical knowledge.

While at Clear Creek, Angela worked in the library. "The job enabled me to meet lots of students and student wives," she said. "I located materials, assigned equipment for classrooms and worked at the front desk. It was nice to work on campus, and the job provided needed family income."

Before Trent was called as pastor, the Jonesville church asked him to conduct a baptism. "We already felt we were part of their family," he said. "I am amazed how God put everything in place to bring us here."

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

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CLEAR CREEK
CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Former feminist's book teaches women to fight permissive culture

Nashville (BP)—Don't be fooled by the innocent-looking cover of "Your Girl."

Inside, author Vicki Courtney has penned a battle plan to train women—young and old—how to live godly in today's permissive society.

"This is a survival manual," said Courtney, a mother of three and founder of Virtuous Reality Ministries in Austin, Texas.

"Face the culture for what it is," the former feminist said. "We can retreat to the nearest Amish community and not get cell phones or computers or TV, or we can live in the world without becoming of the world."

Courtney's wakeup call and catalyst for the book came during an event she organized in 2000 called "Yada Yada," a recurring conference held for teen girls in the Austin area. "I was caught off-guard (by what the girls were experiencing). We mothers have our heads in the sand and don't want to believe things are as bad as there are."

How bad are they? Pre-teen girls from that event asked anonymous questions indicating attempted suicide, sexual abuse, date rape, promiscuity and low self-worth, Courtney said.

"While God did His work at the conference, and it was successful, I couldn't get those questions out of my head," she recalled. "The women's movement has failed young girls. Our culture has failed them. They long for rest in their

souls. We have the answer. We know the way."

In "Your Girl," Courtney advocates Bible-based living as the key to effectively engaging the culture. She points to the Bible for answers to such issues as gossip, jealousy and peer pressure. "Great is the investment in teaching our daughters that the Bible is a revelation of God. The most important factor when it comes to raising daughters who love God's Word will be modeling that we, ourselves, love God's Word."

Chapters include motherhood, modesty, countering the culture, teen views on sex and three detailed primers on using the Bible, prayer and faith to "arm our daughters for battle."

Courtney encourages moms to be introspective and not give mixed messages. The adage, "Do as I say, not as I do," doesn't fit this plan; instead, it's "Walk the talk and talk the walk."

"Sometimes it's painful even for me," Courtney said. "I want to pass on truth to my daughter, but before I can share these things I have to look at these issues myself. Moms can't teach their daughter she's 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (as Psalm 139 teaches) if she doesn't believe it herself."

Courtney wants mothers—and fathers—to engage the culture with confidence. "There is hope. And God has equipped you with everything you need to counteract the culture."



New York Times column criticizing latest 'Left Behind' book draws professors' protest

Nashville (BP)—A New York Times column comparing the theme of the "Left Behind" book series to ethnic cleansing has sparked a reaction by two Baptist professors.

In a July 17 column, The Times' Nicholas Kristof criticized the belief that Christ someday would judge non-believers and cast them into hell.

Kristof said his column was triggered by the popularity of the latest book in the "Left Behind" series—"Glorious Appearing"—released earlier this year.

"It's disconcerting to find ethnic cleansing celebrated as the height of piety," Kristof wrote. "If a Muslim were to write an Islamic version of 'Glorious Appearing' and publish it in Saudi Arabia, jubilantly describing a massacre of millions of non-Muslims by God, we would have a fit."

"We have quite properly linked the fundamentalist religious tracts of Islam with the intolerance they nurture, and it's time to remove the motes from our own eyes."

Americans, Kristof argued, "should be embarrassed when our best-selling books gleefully celebrate religious intolerance and violence

against infidels."

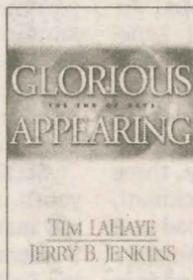
Two Baptist professors wrote Kristof, saying that the theme behind the Left Behind series—the final judgment—represents traditional Christian beliefs.

"The idea that Jesus Christ will one day return to earth to separate the sheep from the goats may be objectionable in many ears, but this tenet is certainly not the invention of American evangelicals," wrote Denny Burk, professor of biblical studies at Criswell College in Dallas. "This expectation is nothing less

than historic Christian faith. When you deride this aspect of our faith, you are not just criticizing American evangelicals, but all Christians who cherish the teachings of Jesus."

James Hamilton, assistant professor of biblical studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, agreed.

"Note well that the authors are not urging Christians to seek to bring about the final judgment by their own strength in the present," Hamilton wrote. "No, the authors are merely giving their interpretation of what the Bible says about that final judgment."



Father Joe: The Man Who Saved My Soul. Tony Hendra. Random House, 2004. 271 pages. \$24.95. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Though the title features an English Benedictine monk named Father Joe, the book is really Tony Hendra's spiritual autobiography.

But like most spiritual autobiographies, the journey is never a solitary one. Relationships are central to our spiritual growth and development. For Tony Hendra, the relationship that lashed him, often times tenuously, to God was with a quirky monk.

Tony Hendra was the original editor of National Lampoon and editor-in-chief of Spy magazine. His close association with John Cleese and Graham Chapman of Monty Python witness to his important role in modern American satire in the 1970s and 80s. But by his own admission, while this is an important part of his spiritual journey, it is not the key to understanding him.

Hendra first meets Father Joe when, as a 14 year old boy, he is hauled off to the Quarr Monastery by an aggrieved husband. Fully expecting to be severely punished by a stern Benedictine, he encounters a quiet, wise, tender, and non-judgemental monk. At the end of his first confession, he is surprised that Father Joe does not exact a penance, stating that Hendra, whom he always calls "Dear," has probably done more than his share of penance.

Father Joe is a witty, sometimes shocking, at times painfully self-revealing, honest and insightful record of one man's journey into his authentic calling in life. Hendra's insights about life, the world and God at the end of the book are profoundly moving. One could read this book through in a day, but the story really demands a more reflective approach.

It is a reminder that despite our wanderings and detours, God is more faithful than we can imagine; and that faithfulness is, more often than not, experienced in relationship with others. *Jim Holladay*

Hope Notes: 52 Meditations to Nudge Your World. Wayne Willis. Westminster John Knox, 2004. 114 pages. \$12.95. ♦♦♦♦

Wayne Willis, the former director of pastoral care at Norton Healthcare in Louisville, is unabashedly a hope filled person.

Willis is convinced that human beings are "hard-wired" for hope. This book is his effort at spreading that hope to all who will listen.

These 52 meditations are not meant to be read in successive days. Rather, Willis intends for the devotions to be read once a week for 52 weeks.

The theme of each meditation is set by the opening quote from a famous person. A short and straightforward meditation follows the quote. Thoughtful personal illustrations punctuate the inspirational

thoughts. Symbols of hope decorate the opening page of each meditation. Space is provided at the end of each meditation for the reader to record thoughts that have stirred from the reading.

This is a book that, at first glance, might be considered somewhat lightweight. But it accomplishes its purpose of encouraging the reader to contemplate the possibility of hope in any situation. Unlike some other books that try to encourage people toward hope, sound theology stands behind each observation Willis makes.

This book accomplishes more than just making you feel good; it helps you understand why feeling good is possible. People who are dealing with illness, or are in recovery, or experiencing grief would benefit from this book as a gift. *Wayne Hager*

A Musician Looks at the Psalms: 365 Daily Meditations. Don Wyrzten. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004. 404 pages. \$19.99. ♦♦♦♦

Shepherds, pastors, theologians and Bible scholars have written devotional material on the Psalms. Now a noted church musician takes a crack at it.

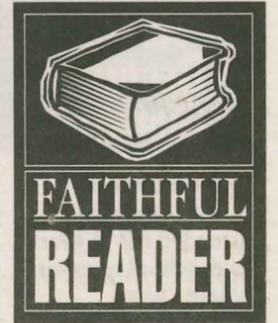
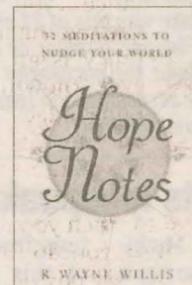
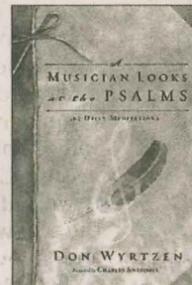
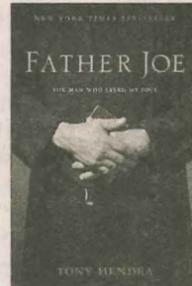
One wonders why this has not been done more often. After all, the Psalms were the center of musical expression in the Temple. For centuries they also formed the musical core of Christian worship. Throughout the history of the church, people have continued to find their voice in the words and emotions of the psalmists'.

In "A Musician Looks at the Psalms," Don Wyrzten guides us on a daily journey through all 150 Psalms. Unlike other devotional books, this one does not touch on certain verses of certain Psalms. Faithfully working through this devotional guide every day for a year will expose the reader to every verse of every Psalm (yes even the lengthy Psalm 119).

Wyrzten's insights are not so much better than others, but his sense of musical kinship with the writers brings a freshness to some otherwise common insights.

Wyrzten not only introduces us to the Psalms, but to the psalmists as well. In the pages, we meet Asaph, the Sons of Korah, David and several whose names are unknown to us. In the daily meditations, Wyrzten lets us into the psalmists' world just long enough to allow us to make a connection before he asks us to consider how to make their words ours.

Each day's reading begins with a Psalm, moves to some thoughts for meditation and closes with a prayer. From time to time, Wyrzten will add a contemporary musical note. Sometimes that takes the form of a hymn verse or chorus. At other times it is a vocabulary lesson on a pertinent musical term. Wyrzten has provided an excellent tool for a disciplined and meaningful reading of Psalms. *Jim Holladay*



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

How to Become a Christian

By Chuck Lawless

This summer, I attended my 25-year high school reunion, where I was reacquainted with some old friends. Going there made me think of Randy, my junior high classmate who first told me about Jesus. I am thankful he loved me enough to tell me the simple truth of salvation:

■ There is a holy God who created us and who holds us accountable to His standards (Genesis 1:1, 27; Leviticus 19:2). We are responsible to love and obey our Creator (Matthew 22:37-38).

■ However, all of us have rebelled against God's standards (Romans 3:23). We are sinners by our nature and by our choices (Romans 5:12). The consequence of our sin is death (Romans 6:23). Nothing we can do on our own will change this situation.

■ Still, God so loved us that He sent His Son—Jesus—to die for sinners (John 3:16, 1 Peter 3:18). Jesus became our substitute, taking on Himself our penalty for sin. By His physical resurrection, He then defeated death for all who would follow Him (1 Peter 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

■ To follow Jesus, we are commanded to turn from our wrong (repent) and believe (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 17:30, Acts 20:21). God welcomes those who receive Christ (John 1:12).

Almost 30 years ago now, God graciously heard my cry for forgiveness and made me His child. If you have not followed Him, why not turn from your wrong and trust Him today? Ask Him to forgive you, and thank Him for the gift of salvation.

If you are a Christian, tell somebody about His grace. Today, you might become a "Randy" in somebody else's life.

Chuck Lawless is associate dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth

Mountains to the Mississippi

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BARDSTOWN**—Bardstown Church called **David Stokes** as pastor, effective in mid-August.

■ **BENTON**—**David Brasher**, pastor of New Harmony Church, retired Aug. 1. Brasher, a pastor for 45 years, will continue to be available for revivals, supply preaching and interim pastorates.

■ **COVINGTON**—**Flora Roland** will celebrate 50 years as secretary at Latonia Church Aug. 9.

Decoursey Church called **Ashley Beagle** as senior pastor, effective June 6.

■ **CUMBERLAND**—Central Church recently called **Roger Colinger** as pastor.

■ **FORT MITCHELL**—**Maria Reyer** recently resigned as youth director at Fort Mitchell Church. **Harold Pike** is interim pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Immanuel Temple will celebrate its 90th birthday celebration and homecoming Aug. 15.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church will host **Paid in Full** in concert Sunday

Aug. 22, 10:45 a.m. **Rodney Travis** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Grace Church will celebrate its 80th anniversary Aug. 29. Special activities include a reunion choir. The church also recently honored **Norma and Ernie Nickoson** on their 50th anniversary Aug. 7. **Terrence Freeman** is pastor.

■ **LONDON**—Hart Church will host the drama *Heaven's Gates, Hell's Flames* Sept. 19-21. For information, visit www.hartbaptistchurch.org or call (606) 864-9366.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Beechmont Church will host **Stillwater** in concert Aug. 29, 6:30 p.m. For information, call (502) 368-5806.

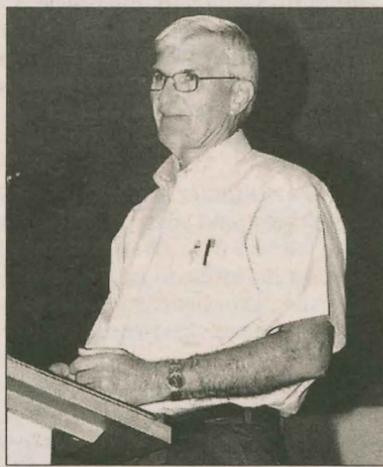
■ **MAYFIELD**—Sharon Missionary Church recently ordained **Chuck Flowers, Carl Key, Gary McClain, Kevin Newell** and **Ernie Peterson** as deacons. **Tony Steele** is pastor.

■ **MURRAY**—First Church recently ordained **Chris Drew** and **Allen Fowler** as deacons. **Wendell Ray** is pastor.



MOUNTAIN MISSIONS CONFERENCE

Approximately 120 people attended this year's annual Mountain Missions Conference, July 26-28 at Oneida Baptist Institute. That's a significant decrease from last year, according to **David Aker**, mountain missions director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. One reason for the decline, he said, was "a tremendous number of volunteer teams in (Eastern Kentucky) this week and folks on the receiving end needed to be there to work with them. That's a wonderful problem to have." Above: **Whitney Graham** of Franklin, Ohio, (right) gives **Jake Nichols** a hand with a craft project. Whitney, her parents and grandparents are Campers on Mission, volunteering at Oneida for part of the summer. **Jake** was one of 21 children participating in activities at the conference. Right: **Jack Fletcher**, director of missions for Red River Baptist Association, tells participants about the successful partnership among Red River, Little Bethel and Christian County associations in reaching Eastern Kentucky with the gospel message. (Photos by Dannah Prather)



Town's vote permits louspeaker calls to prayer

Hamtramck, Mich. (RNS)—A Michigan mosque can continue issuing a call to prayer over its loudspeakers after residents recently OK'd an amendment to the town's noise ordinance.

The vote last month upheld an amendment passed earlier by the town's city council after a mosque sought permission to start broadcasting the Arabic chants that are traditionally issued five times a day.

The Hamtramck City Council's unanimous action prompted pro-

tests from some longtime residents of this once-predominantly Polish city of 23,000 people. In recent years the Detroit suburb has seen a rapid increase in immigrants from Yemen, Bangladesh and other nations.

Lutful Choudhury, a Muslim who voted to maintain the ordinance, said opponents blew the matter out of proportion.

"They're trying to make it a big deal, but it's not," he said. "If you go two or three blocks, you can't even hear it."



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August

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.

4-6 Soak A City Youth Evangelism Conference, Ashland.

11 Super Saturday, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.

11 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Somerset.

13-14 Daycare Orientation, KBC building, Middletown.

17-18 Collegiate Creative Ministries Workshop, Calvary Baptist Church, Lexington.

18 Children in Action Missions Day Camp, Cedar Crest.

18 Keyboard Clinic-East, First Baptist Church, Richmond.

18 Keyboard Clinic-West, Beaver Dam Baptist Church, Beaver Dam.

18 Ministers' Wives Retreat, Northside Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

20-21 State Ministers' Golf Tournament, Cherry Blossom Golf Course, Georgetown.

23-24 Men's Chorale Retreat, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

23-23 Wind Orchestra Retreat, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

24-25 Women's Chorale Retreat, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

24-25 Women on Mission Fall Retreat, Jonathan Creek.

October

1-2 Celebrate the Mission, Executive Inn West, Louisville.

1-3 Focus-2004, Hillvue Heights Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

8-11 Soak A City Youth Evangelism Conference, Franklin.

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

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SEEKING: Pianist for Wednesday choir rehearsal and Sunday morning service. Please call (859) 277-6147.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 230 S Fifth St., Williamsburg, KY 40769.

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister for growing church in Oldham County. Please send resumé by Aug. 20 to: Personnel Committee, Ballardsville Baptist Church, 4300 S Highway 53, Crestwood, KY 40014.

SEEKING: Director of missions for Greenup Baptist Association (Ashland, Ky.) Resumés received through Sept. 15, 2004. Mail to: **Clyda Hester**, 1173 Bethel Lane, Catlettsburg, KY 41129, Attn: DOM Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time associate/worship pastor. Highland Hills Church is in Fort Thomas, Ky., three miles from downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, and ministers to a broad and diverse metropolitan area. We are a growing church of 550 in attendance on the weekends and continue to strive to be relevant in our community and world. We are a Spirit-driven church that focuses on leading people to a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and are willing to do "whatever it takes" to accomplish this mission. Candidate must have a college degree and prior experience. This position offers a competitive salary and benefits package. E-mail resumé to: rob@highlandhills.org; or mail to **Rob Roy**, Highland Hills Church, 132 South Grand Ave., Fort Thomas, KY 41075. If possible, please include a video or DVD of yourself leading worship.

SEEKING: Full-time church secretary. Send resumé to: Farmdale Baptist Church, 1238 Durrett Lane, Louisville, KY 40213.

SEEKING: Full-time youth minister to lead middle and high school ministry. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist, 300 W Main, Princeton, KY 42445. (270) 365-5591.

SEEKING: Full-time youth pastor/children's educational coordinator for an independent Baptist church. Prefer some experience and/or formal training. Submit resumé to: **Elliottville Baptist Church**, PO Box 160, Elliottville, KY 40317. E-mail: pastortim@adelphia.com.

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

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth. Seeking a dynamic, spiritually mature individual to lead active 80-member youth program, assisting Calhoun Baptist Church in fulfilling its mission of leading people to faith in Christ and on to spiritual maturity. Ministering to the heart of McLean County. Generous compensation package includes benefits and housing. For more information, contact: Youth Search Committee, Calhoun Baptist Church, PO Box 283, Calhoun, KY 42327.

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Ministry spot mixes ice cream & Jesus

By George Jaksa
Religion News Service

Flint, Mich. (RNS)—How about this for a curious combination: an ice cream parlor on one side of the room and a religious ministry on the other?

It's easy to explain, according to owner Andrew McGarry.

"I have yet to see anyone who comes in to get ice cream who is not in a good mood or at least receptive to it," said McGarry, who has gone biblical with the name of his recently opened ice cream parlor, Isaiah's.

Across the 3,000-square-foot space is the real focus of McGarry's attention: Common Ground, a religious meeting place and performance venue.

"I want people to see and hear discussions while they are here eating some ice cream," he said. "That's why there is no wall between the ministry and the ice cream business."

Common Ground has six sofas, a stage, sound equipment and stacked plastic chairs where people can gather to listen to spiritual music. Available books include 20 copies of the New Testament, "More Than a Carpenter: The Life of Jesus" and "Pocket Positives."

McGarry said he chose to name the store after the prophet Isaiah "because he called kings and people



WE ALL SCREAM Brittney Elchert, 15, of Flint, Mich., wanted to work at the ice cream shop to make extra spending money. She says she has no intention of becoming religious, but admits shop owners Andrew and Lisa McGarry, "helped me open up to God." (RNS photos by Megan Spelman)

of his time to reform in a time of moral and religious decline."

He said he wants customers—more than 7,000 since Isaiah's opened in April—to ask about the store's name so he can explain. "We don't reach out to God now until we need Him," said McGarry. "Isaiah was looking for (people to have an) unconditional love of God."

Mixing market & ministry

McGarry, 32, who lives near his business with his wife Lisa, 24, said the idea for a combination business and ministry came to him after he reflected that when people want to get to God, they go to church.

"But more than 50 percent of the churches are locked during the week," said McGarry. "If we need help in between Sundays, it's not easy to get it."

Common Ground, with its informal setting, can fill that gap, he said.

"I think it's cool," said Rick Sadler, 17. "It's not as intimidating as a big stone church."

Sadler was at Isaiah's for an open house in late June, when the ice

cream parlor and religious center were introduced to the community.

He and his mother, Gail, lay leader at nearby Lincoln Park United Methodist Church, munched a sandwich while they listened to gospel music by a three-piece band led by McGarry's pastor.

"I think it's a great idea," Gail Sadler said. "It's meeting people where they are."

At a nearby table, Margaret Baker of Flint was having ice cream with her twins. "I was next door when I heard about it so I came, and of course my kids love ice cream," she said. "I am not really a regular churchgoer, but I like spiritual music."

Andrew McGarry hopes for support from 20 to 30 churches, youth groups and others. Some already have booked space for gatherings.

Churches or groups that support the ministry will get an 11-by-17-inch space on a display board in the business to promote themselves.

"This is marketplace ministry at its finest," he said. "I want this to be a place, however small it is, for people to come and benefit from it."

Christian pollster George Gallup retiring, not quitting

By Jeffrey MacDonald
Religion News Service

South Hamilton, Mass. (RNS)—For the past half century, the Gallup Poll has been phoning strangers, asking personal questions and then telling the world what Americans believe on topics from prayer to haunted houses and the afterlife.

The Gallup Poll's fascination with religion and spirituality has had little to do with the usual rationale for polling—a client's need to accrue market research data. Instead, the polling giant has been probing the inner life of Americans for a far more personal reason: the boss wants to see souls saved.



George Gallup

"The most profound purpose of polls is to see how people are responding to God," said George Gallup Jr. earlier this year after giving the commencement speech at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary near Boston. "When I ask a question on these subjects, what I'm always trying to find out is, 'Are we doing the will of God?'"

At the end of May, after 50 years in the family business, Gallup traded his pollster's cap for quieter days in retirement. Though he plans to remain influential in the business and active in its outreach projects, he will no longer be crafting the questions or writing the analyses that have earned him opportunities to give weekly public speeches and author 16 books.

Before stepping aside, however, Gallup seized the chance to share more than the latest survey data with a graduating class of soon-to-be evangelical pastors. After rattling off a few significant figures, he went where he never goes in his "Tuesday Briefing" or other official analyses, adding a sermonic spin that tells where his heart has been all along.

"The world knows a lot about Jesus, but do they know Him?" Gallup asked the commencement crowd. "It is for the churches to seize this moment, to take the vague spirituality of the day and turn it into a faith that is solid and transformative."

Polling as a ministry

Gallup, now 74, could have been a priest at age 24. He explored the calling then while volunteering at an Episcopal church in Galveston, Texas. But he came to believe that the enterprise founded by his father, George Gallup Sr., in 1935 "could be a ministry." So upon graduation from Princeton University with a degree in religion, he went to work beside his dad as an assistant editor. His primary task: to write good questions.

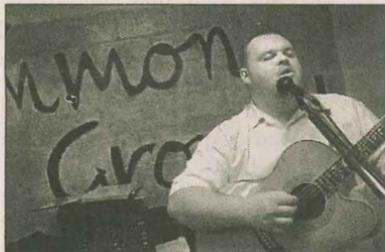
Over the decades, the enterprise of polling transformed from a wonkish interest practiced by a smattering of eccentrics to a dominant force in American marketing and politics. All the while, Gallup was writing questions that would take the nation's pulse on crucial issues: abortion, gun control, the Vietnam War. Through times of peace and tumult, however, he never lost interest in also "measuring" what he understands to be the work of the Holy Spirit.

For instance, at the start of this new millennium, Gallup has found that 50 percent of Protestants feel uncertain of their salvation. On one level, Gallup infers from this a generally anxious society. But on another level, he sees the effects of neglected teachings on the sufficiency of God's grace through Jesus Christ.

"Churches have neglected what they should be all about, and that's discipleship," Gallup said in an interview. "Therefore, there is no transformation. People look at churches and they don't see lives being changed. The core is getting mushy. ... Anything that doesn't lead to Jesus should be cast off."

As for the Gallup Poll's future, questions on religion and spirituality are sure to continue, Gallup said, under leadership that shares a keen interest in the topic. And because George Gallup Jr. still carries his pocket-sized notebook, for scribbling down survey questions that might come to him at any hour of day or night, his ideas might even find their way into a questionnaire now and then.

"The inner life is the new frontier of survey research in coming years," Gallup said. "We know so little about mystical experiences, yet the religious dynamic is perhaps the most powerful of all in American culture. This is a way to unite our country on a deep level and produce a more peaceful world."



SINGING FOR JESUS Pastor Don Browning Jr., of Flint, Mich., sings at the Common Ground, a meeting space in an ice cream parlor where ministry is served up with the ice cream cones.

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