

August 10, 2004
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Seven years later, what impact has the boycott had? *Page 13.***Study: Strongly religious students don't always hold conservative view****Los Angeles (RNS)**—Strongly religious college students have conservative views on sex, abortion, gay rights and drugs, but more liberal views on gun control and the death penalty, a new study says.

The study by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute polled nearly 3,700 college juniors at 46 schools across the country, and found that one-fifth of college students are "highly religious." A similar percentage said they have little interest in religion.

Those two groups have widely divergent views on a number of social issues, the study found.

While 80 percent of the least religious students said they felt casual sex was acceptable, only 7 percent of the most religious students felt the same way.

But while highly religious students tend to be more conservative than less religious students on certain issues, they can be more liberal on other issues, the study found.

Compared to those with little or no religious interests, a higher percentage of highly religious students supported federal controls on handguns sales (75 percent to 70 percent) and they also were more likely to support abolition of the death penalty (38 percent to 23 percent).

One busy summer*Son teams are wrapping up a summer of ministry at churches throughout Kentucky. The five creative ministry teams are composed of state Baptist Student Union members who audition for spots. From staffing youth camps at Cedarmore Baptist Conference Center to leading worship services in churches, Kentucky Baptist college students use sports, music, drama and other creative arts to share the Christian faith. SonShare alone logged more than 5,000 miles during the summer, sometimes more than 500 miles in one weekend, to lead ministry events. Above: SonShare member Ashley Clark rehearses an interpretive movement performance with Megan Phillips, 17; Kristin Phillips, 14; and Shae Luper, 11, at Southminster Baptist Church in Louisville. Right: SonShare member Jeremy Shulta leads day camp participants in a game. (KBC photos by Brenda Smith) More photos on page 6.***Activists say grassroots gambling foes hold winning hand****By Kirsten Pasha & Greg Warner**
*Associated Baptist Press***Jacksonville, Fla. (ABP)**—In the Bible, casting lots—what many consider original gambling—was a way for God's sovereignty to reign through randomness.

Today, gambling is drawing lots—lots of people, that is.

According to a survey released by the National Gaming Association, 2 million more Americans visited a casino in 2003 than in 2002. Consumers spent more than \$27 million at commercial casinos in 2003, more than twice as much as the \$11 million spent 10 years before.

But even those numbers—from the gambling industry itself—vastly understate the extent and impact of gambling, according to John Kindt, a professor and researcher at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and an outspoken critic of the gambling industry.

While the AGA reports 26 per-



cent of the public gambles regularly, Kindt notes that 80 percent of Americans gamble in some form or another.

While gambling opponents can claim some impressive victories recently, the popularity of gambling remains strong. Nonetheless, some Christians say they are fighting the gambling urge with a hope based on more than luck.

"The whole culture of building our hope for our future on something so random as winning the

lottery ... or a roll of the dice ... is an underlying spiritual value—a form of nihilism that we don't have anything to hope for," said Suzii Paynter, director of public policy for the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. "We (Christians) believe in hope grounded in our faith, not on sheer luck."

More than 80 percent of people surveyed by the AGA—regardless of age, income, U.S. region or religious participation—believe casino gaming is acceptable for themselves or for others. According to the North American Association of State and the District of Columbia—plus the District of Columbia—lotteries. Only Utah and Hawaii prohibit all forms of gambling, according to the National Council Against Legalized Gambling.

"There's so much gambling in America, no one can wake up and say they've got an itch they can't scratch," said Thomas Grey, execu-

tive director of NCAIG and a Methodist minister.

Although Grey said the tide is now pervasive, Grey said the tide is turning. "In 2003, gambling tried to expand in 46 ways in 30 states," he said. "We won 43 and lost three."

Gambling interests always will outspend opponents in advertising and campaign efforts, Grey said, but he added that gambling opponents have the advantage of popular support. "We're beating them with our people against all their money," said Grey, whose organization has an annual budget of \$120,000.

"As long as the opposition organizes, they can beat gambling anywhere," said Grey, who recently was in the Branson, Mo., area to fight an Aug. 3 casino initiative.

By a 56-44 percent margin, Missourians defeated Amendment 1, which would have allowed casinos on the White River near Branson.

□ See *Grassroots wins ... Page 8*

World Baptist leaders see promising future for BWA

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Seoul, Korea—What does the future hold for Baptist World Alliance as it approaches its centennial celebration next year—minus its largest member body?

According to several influential Baptist leaders around the world, the global organization's best days are ahead despite the Southern Baptist Convention's recent decision to withdraw over BWA's alleged—and repeatedly denied—"leftward drift."

"I strongly believe in the future success of BWA," declared Theo Angelov, general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

While Baptists in Europe "are very hurt by divisions which have played a very negative role" in Baptist ministry efforts, Angelov added, "We are looking to the future. We have very important tasks to fulfill all over the world to reach people, to plant new churches, to develop the Baptist work in society and to show that unity is more important than anything else."

Gary Nelson, executive director of Canadian Baptist Ministries, described the SBC's withdrawal from BWA membership as "sad."

"There's a level at which it's not just the words we proclaim but how we live out the gospel," Nelson emphasized. "As Canadians, it always felt like we were entering into someone else's family fight that was taken outside the house and into the world."

"Will we be different" without SBC involvement, Nelson asked. "Of course. It's like losing your big brother."

He added, however, that "in some ways, we'll probably find a more true world voice as Baptists because we have to. When you remove someone who is so influential, now there are more people at the table who can be heard."

"I think it can be very exciting for BWA as we find that voice," Nelson said. "It's a real time for the Baptist World Alliance in general to mature."

Describing the SBC conflict as "an in-house fight that has been distracting to our work," the Canadian Baptist leader added, "The real battle is stepping out with the gospel and presenting the gospel to the world."

"Evangelists and missionaries at heart"

Fausto Vasconcelos, president of the Union of Baptists in Latin America, agreed that "it is a sad thing that the SBC has decided to leave BWA."

Recalling that the SBC "was instrumental in God's call to evangelize Brazil," Vasconcelos explained that widespread Baptist ministry in the South American nation "is a direct product of SBC efforts."

The Brazilian Baptist Convention voted earlier this year to encourage BWA and SBC leaders to find a way to remain together. "We wish this thing had never happened," he added.

Looking to the future, Vasconcelos cited a \$600,000 grant to help BWA fund a five-year global evangelism emphasis.

Affirming that Baptists around the world "are evangelists and missionaries at heart," he said, "I believe God is saying, 'Whatever has taken place, do not shift your focus from missions and evangelism.'"

Alistair Brown, general director of BMS World Mission, the Baptist missionary society affiliated with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, said he views BWA's diversity as a strength.

"Baptists around the world are not one kind of creature," he noted. "We are all children of God, but we reflect different cultures, languages, histories and sometimes different understandings of matters."

While Baptist bodies around the globe "are at one on the most essentials of the faith," he added, "We grow by listening to those who don't immediately see things the way we do. If only people come together who think identically, how can there be growth?"

David Coffey, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, was nominated at the Seoul meeting to succeed Korean Baptist pastor Billy Kim as BWA president. If elected during next year's Baptist World Congress in Birmingham, England, Coffey will serve a five-year term as head of the global Baptist organization.

While BWA leaders "would have wished for the sake of the gospel and the good name of Jesus Christ that all we've gone through would not have happened," Coffey added, "There is still a BWA. ... The heartbeat of BWA is God's heartbeat."

Global ministry partners

Baptist leaders in U.S. maintain BWA involvement

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Seoul, Korea—While the Southern Baptist Convention has voted to cut ties to the Baptist World Alliance effective Oct. 1, many Baptist leaders in the U.S. have pledged to continue to support BWA.

That fact was evident during the recent BWA General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea—the alliance's first global event since the SBC's action in June.

Among Southern Baptist participants at the BWA gathering were state convention executive directors, national Woman's Missionary Union leaders, Baptist college administrators and professors and retired SBC agency employees.

Charles Wade, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, was among the most high-profile Southern Baptists at the Seoul meeting. He preached during a Friday evening evangelistic rally that attracted more than 4,000 participants. Grammy Award-winning Christian recording artist Larnelle Harris, a member of Maple Grove Baptist Church in Louisville, was the rally's featured musician.

Preaching a fervent evangelistic message, Wade told the crowd, "Jesus is our only way between the heart of sinful man and the heart of holy God. He died on the cross that He might bring us to God."

Jesus Christ "did not run away from death, but He embraced the cross that He might bring us to God," he added. "When you come to see Jesus, you come to see God as He truly is."

Highlighting Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, Wade urged listeners, "Come to Jesus tonight. He will bring you to the God Who loves you and will never let you go."

Wade's straightforward message stood in stark contrast to SBC leaders' charge that BWA "no longer efficiently communicates to the unsaved a crystal clear gospel message that our Lord Jesus Christ is solely sufficient for salvation."

Jesus is "only way of salvation"

Wade's views echoed those of BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz who told General Council members, "Let me be very clear that as Baptists we believe that Jesus Christ is our only way of salvation. There is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved."

Introducing BWA's five-year "Living Water" global evangelization strategy set to begin next year, Lotz added, "That's who we are as Baptists. That's why we come together. We're a missionary movement."

Wade, a member of BWA's church renewal workgroup, said he remains deeply committed to the work of BWA.

"On a personal level, I have been so blessed over the last four years witnessing the courage and faithfulness of our Baptist brothers and sisters who live in such trying,



EVANGELISTIC RALLY Charles Wade (left), executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, preaches during an evangelistic rally held in conjunction with the July 26-31 BWA General Council meeting in Seoul, Korea. Joseph Kim, a Korean Baptist pastor, served as Wade's interpreter.

even dangerous places and who have been and are faithful to the gospel of Christ," Wade said. "I am inspired by them."

Emphasizing that "Texas Baptist churches need to know how rich and varied our Baptist family is," he added, "The Baptist World Alliance offers Baptists around the world a fellowship in which to celebrate our fidelity to Jesus Christ, our passion for people to know Him and the richness of our Baptist distinctives."

Wade isn't the only state Baptist executive director speaking out in support of BWA.

David Waltz, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, noted that his convention's administrative committee adopted a resolution earlier this year urging SBC and BWA leaders to seek reconciliation.

"I was very disappointed personally at the action that was taken" by SBC messengers, Waltz said. "I continue to hold out hope that we may soon be reconciled and back with the BWA just as the SBC recommended."

Neither group, however, appears likely to concede to the other's views.

The SBC study committee's nod to "restoration of fellowship" declares, "We pray for the day when the BWA will return to the faith on which it was founded and which has been historically held by Baptists for centuries. We pray for the restoration of fellowship that such a return will bring."

Highlighting BWA's perspective, General Council members adopted a resolution citing 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 expresses hope "for a future reconciliation and renewal of SBC membership."

Despite the impasse, Waltz said his personal involvement in BWA "has given me a great appreciation for the faithfulness of Baptists around the world. I have often been humbled by the price other Baptists have had to pay to remain faithful to Christ."

Waltz, a member of BWA's Freedom and Justice Commission, added, "I hate for Southern Baptists to be cut off from those

experiences and to miss the opportunity to learn and grow from our Baptist brothers and sisters around the world."

Wanda Lee, national WMU executive director, and Janet Hoffman, national WMU president, also participated in the BWA meeting in Seoul. Among 17 Southern Baptist leaders who are voting members of BWA's General Council, Lee was the only one who attended the July 26-31 BWA meeting in the wake of the SBC action.

WMU affirms BWA partnership

Citing WMU's commitment to continue working in cooperation with the BWA Women's Department, Lee said, "The women's department is an auxiliary to BWA just as WMU is an auxiliary to the SBC."

Noting that WMU helped establish the BWA Women's Department in 1911, she added, "For us to not participate in prayer with all the women of the world in unthinkable.

"When you look at the world climate in which we live," Lee said, "Baptists need to speak with one voice in regard to religious freedom, separation of church and state and on behalf of those who have no voice and are persecuted."

Roy Edgemon, who retired in 2000 after 23 years as a discipleship leader with LifeWay Christian Resources, is chairman of BWA's Christian education and literature workgroup.

Edgemon, also a former missionary to the tiny Japanese island of Okinawa, recalled the spiritual impact of helping sponsor a trip for area pastors to the 1970 Baptist World Congress in Tokyo.

Noting that the pastors attending the BWA global conference were from "such a small place where they were always in the minority," Edgemon said, "When they realized there were part of something so huge, they were never the same again."

"To me, that is the essence of BWA. It is the fellowship of like minds and like hearts," he said. "I wish every Southern Baptist could hear the stories of their fellow Baptists and the suffering and triumphs they've gone through. ... When they are in BWA, it is a healing fellowship."

'Living Proof Live'



GIRL TALK "I'm just nuts about you all," Christian author and speaker Beth Moore told the 17,000 women gathered in Rupp Arena Aug. 6-8 for her "Living Proof Live" event. Using her trademark humor and personal stories, Moore led the women in a two-day study of some of the names of God.

Moore, audience 'set up' for word from God

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Lexington—Christian author Beth Moore said she "was being set up to receive a fresh word from God" and so were the approximately 17,000 women attending last weekend's "Living Proof Live" event in Rupp Arena.

Moore said a 14-day devotional written by a member of the Lexington event's steering committee had asked volunteers to pray that God would "manipulate my circumstances . . . to put me in the right frame of mind," for the Kentucky event.

"I want to thank you," Moore said with a hint of sarcasm.

She went on to explain how her family had experienced "a deep heartbreak this summer that left my child with a heart in shreds."

In addition, Moore said, "a bomb had dropped" in her extended family, resulting in shock and confusion. "Life is just a problem," she told the audience.

As Moore and her family faced the difficulties, she said she was reminded that "our bodies are subject to time but our hearts are subject to eternity."

Most Christians are like Abraham, who "had the constant reminder that he was an alien" in a world of conflict, she said.

During the Friday-night session, Moore encouraged women to act upon Psalm 27, using the truths of Scripture to "construct a triumph tower we can run to . . . a wall around us that is unscalable," to protect them in troubled times.

Sheila Myers, co-coordinator of the Lexington event, Aug. 6-8, said the worship and Bible study were "awesome. . . . It was just electric."

Worship leader Travis Cottrell and the praise team that has traveled with Moore for six years injected a bit of bluegrass music in Saturday morning's worship.

"God doesn't just like choruses, He likes hymns," Cottrell said. "He doesn't just like hymns, He likes gos-



LOCAL COLOR Travis Cottrell and his praise team got a rousing response from the crowd by adding some bluegrass flavor to the weekend's worship time.

pel songs and I think He even likes bluegrass."

On Saturday, Moore asked the audience to examine themselves and their churches regarding church unity. "Are you in the washer or the dryer?"

The "washer" is the church of sensationalism, Moore said, noting that many believers and churches are preoccupied with seeking "signs and wonders."

The "dryer" is the church of cessationism that believes miracles are a thing of the past. "As evangelicals we are almost faithless," Moore said. "We're afraid to express faith because we'll look like an idiot."

"Weird" but loved

Using her trademark humor, Moore encouraged believers to seek unity with one another. "Even if your belief stays the same, can we at least love each other?" she asked. "Can't we say, 'You're weird to me, but I love you to pieces?'"

Moore said that in her more than 20 years of speaking she never has seen such prayerful effort go into one of her events.

"I have never witnessed this kind of preparation," Moore said. "And I don't say that lightly."

She expressed gratitude to the hundreds of volunteers in and around Lexington who helped organize the event.

"Every seat in here has been prayed over," she told the mostly-female crowd.

"God's been doing something in Central Kentucky," said Amy Cato, event coordinator for LifeWay Christian Resources. Cato said as she and other event coordinators worked to "find the pulse" of the local community, the message they brought back to Moore was, "Revival is ready to erupt."

Myers, a member of Southland Christian Church in Lexington, said 10 invitations had been made to Moore to come to Lexington. "We contacted all the ones who had made those other nine invitations," to start a steering committee.

After Moore accepted the invitation, the steering committee organized a "wall of prayer," with 100 women serving as "bricks" so the conference would be lifted up in prayer constantly for nine months.

"We viewed this as a gestational period," Myers said. "It was like a pregnancy and we were getting ready to deliver a baby."

Shirley Mitchell of Gardenside Baptist Church in Lexington wrote the devotional used two weeks before the conference. Myers said LifeWay is interested in using the guide for subsequent "Living Proof Live" events.

The unity Moore described during Saturday's session was reflected in the core of volunteers who worked to bring the author to Lexington, Myers said, noting that approximately nine denominations were represented on the steering committee.

"We have grown in sisterhood. Nobody wants to let it die," Myers said. The committee plans to organize quarterly community-wide worship services to continue the work begun with the conference.

"Now it's time to start raising the child," Myers said. "The question is: One year, three years, 10 years from now, will we have women out there spreading the word, sharing the gospel?"

Rusty Ellison, Hershael York nominees for KBC presidency

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—A former president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies and a current professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will be nominated for Kentucky Baptist Convention president this fall.



Ellison



York

Rusty Ellison, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville since May 2004, served five years as the first CEO and president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies Inc. Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in

Frankfort since December 2003, also is professor of Christian preaching and associate dean of ministry and proclamation in Southern Seminary's school of theology.

Both men will be nominated by former state convention presidents during the Nov. 16-17 KBC annual meeting in Louisville. Ellison, 55, will be nominated by Billy Compton, pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. York, 44, will be nominated by Paul Badgett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pikeville.

Describing Ellison as "passionate and energetic about Kentucky Baptist Convention work and the local church," Compton said, "He's a centrist but he's a conservative theologically. He's strong evangelistically and very committed to missions and what we do through the Cooperative Program. I think he represents a broad spectrum of Kentucky Baptists."

Badgett described York as "a preacher's preacher." Noting that York's "connection with Southern Seminary will bring a new dimension to Kentucky Baptist life that would just be great," he added, "He's just a good, strong Bible man and Cooperative Program man. I think he would provide good leadership for the Kentucky Baptist Convention."

According to Ellison, "Having come through the camp and conference ministry over the last five years, I've had the opportunity to go from one end of the state to the other. During my travels, it really expanded my appreciation of the work of Kentucky Baptists. . . . I thought this would give me the opportunity to stay really deeply connected to Baptists across the state."

Affirming a desire to "keep us moving in the direction we're going in cooperation with one another," Ellison said, "I don't have a sense that there's a lot wrong. I think the direction that Bill Mackey has led is tremendous. . . . We've not been sidetracked by the political issues. That's been a plus for the work here in Kentucky."

York said several people, including some of his former seminary students, approached him about being nominated for KBC president.

Noting that he "agreed virtually immediately" to be nominated, York explained, "I still really believe that the KBC has a great future; that we can do some tremendous things here in the state and around the world. I wanted to have a part in that."

As a professor of preaching, "I'm committed to the preaching of the Word," York added. "Only the preaching of the Word can change the hearts of men and women and ultimately society. I'm praying for a revival of sound biblical exposition; that Kentucky Baptists will be absolutely committed to that."

All four men agreed that they don't view the two nominations as an "us against them" political contest.

"I believe genuinely that there is a mutual respect," Ellison said. While the two men "are being represented by two different groups," he added, "I don't want to run against somebody. That's not my desire."

"I don't want this portrayed as one ideology set against another—it's not that," York emphasized. "Hopefully Kentucky Baptists win, no matter who is elected."

Ellison, a native of Louisville, is a graduate of High Point College in North Carolina and Southern Seminary. He previously was pastor of Cedar Creek Church in Louisville and First Baptist Church of Benton.

York, who grew up near Hopkinsville, is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. He is a former pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington and preaching associate at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville.

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

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Faith versus proof

Here's an opinion: The decades-old controversy within the Southern Baptist Convention is not about God, Jesus, Scripture or doctrine. It's about power.

Consider this: With the exception of some historical and geographical facts, there is nothing in the Bible that can be proved. As I read it, the Bible makes only faith in the risen Jesus necessary for salvation. Nowhere is there an additional requirement to "faith" that everything in the Bible is true. The Bible is not God or Jesus or the same as God or Jesus. The Bible is a book that tells us about God and Jesus. Bible interpretation causes division among people and groups. It is the attempt to make one's interpretation the norm that has at its core a desire to exercise power over others.

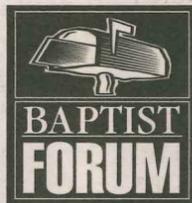
Convention leaders do not have an inside track on the truth. They can't prove anything they say. Relative to others, their faith is just as tentative, their knowledge about God is just as questionable, their guesses aren't any better and their faith statements aren't any more valid than those of anyone else. It doesn't make sense to give mindless adherence to those who grab up the positions of power. No Christian needs to follow any leadership that claims to have the knowledge of unquestionable truth.

A searching and thinking Christian can use the Bible only as a faith reference to ponder the nature and character of God as best perceived in Jesus. But if those things pondered become one's proof, it is a foolish proof because to believe one has the answers is to compromise, if not displace faith.

G.H. Nickle
Greenville

Keep trustees Baptist

Our Kentucky Baptist colleges are in for a tremendous leap in the wrong direction if the amendment to our Kentucky Baptist Convention constitution is passed at the convention in November. The proposed amendment will change the makeup of the trustee boards at Campbellsville University, Cumberland College and Georgetown College.



If passed, the amendment will begin to allow non-Baptists to sit on the boards of trustees at these colleges. I believe that would go against a basic principle we should hold in Kentucky Baptist life—that Baptist colleges should have Baptist trustees. The only qualification the new non-Baptist trustees would have to meet is that they are professed Christians. They wouldn't even have to be a member of a church.

Those who favor the amendment say that we need to do this because our colleges are short on cash. The idea is that if we bring wealthy non-Baptists onto the trustee boards that they will contribute to the college.

In response, I believe the identity of our colleges to be much more important than any amount of money losing that identity might bring in. Are we going to sell the identity of KBC colleges to the wealthiest contributor?

I know that Dr. Bill Mackey and the KBC Mission Study Committee have good intentions in proposing this amendment. They don't want to see our colleges struggle to make ends meet. However, sacrificing our Baptist identity on the altar of more money is not the right direction for the KBC.

I encourage all messengers to the November convention to vote no on the proposed amendment. Baptist colleges should have Baptist trustees.

Chuck Luke
Lexington

Wanda Howard
Penrod

Don't dishonor God

There is only one reason for divorce. In Matthew 5:32, Jesus says it is fornication. After marriage, one finds out the other has had sex before marriage. Only then can they get a certificate of divorce.

Hebrews 13:4 says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled. For fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

Is it right for the pastor and church leaders to give consent by permitting marriage to take place in the church for those who have living spouses? The Bible I read speaks out against it. It dishonors God and the churches that give approval to adultery (Romans 1:32, Luke 16:18).

When breaking nine of God's commandments, one sins against God. The sin of adultery is the only one that when broken, people sin against their own body (1 Corinthians 6:18).

It appears to me if individuals have the Holy Spirit living in them, then to commit adultery is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Upon giving approval to this, the pastor and church leaders bring shame to the name of Christ (1 Timothy 1:20).

1 Timothy 3:2 says the overseers of the church must be above reproach. In my eyes, they are not doing a very good job. As you can see, I am on God's side.

It scares me that those I love who give consent to this tragic act of these marriages and also use the church for the same consent, disobey God's command concerning marriage, divorce and adultery with punishment for the same.

I request a lot of input on this subject of church pastors and leaders who give consent to marrying couples who have living spouses.

Involvement in the mission

I recently had the privilege of representing Kentucky Baptists at two significant celebrations—the dedication of a new Graves County Baptist Association ministry center and the celebration of the 39th anniversary of Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset.

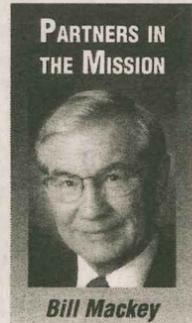
Ministry center dedication

The new ministry center is the fulfillment of a 20-year dream by Graves County Baptists. The facility has about 5,000 square feet including offices, a large assembly room, boardroom, kitchen, guest bedroom and a back porch extending the length of the building.

Charles Clark, director of missions for the association, said the construction of the ministry center involved the contributions of so many people that it would be impossible to name all of them.

Moderator Ronnie Stinson, pastor of Trace Creek Baptist Church, paid tribute to those who had a vision for the original formation of Graves County Association. He reminded

the large audience that the future use of the center for ministry would depend on the vision and commitment of those present.



Bill Mackey

The weekend of the dedication, I spoke on Sunday morning at High Point Baptist Church where Don Embry is pastor, and then Sunday evening at Sharon Baptist Church where Anthony Steele is pastor.

Bro. Embry baptized five people during the morning service. He has a deep passion for evangelism and I have discovered the congregation to be most receptive to the preaching of God's Word.

Bro. Steele is a member of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board and is an enthusiastic supporter of missions. Both churches are strong in their financial support of state, North American and world missions and seminary education through the Cooperative Program.

Anniversary celebration

Beacon Hill Baptist Church celebrated its 39th anniversary on July

18 under a tent—the same way it started. The congregation has grown significantly over the last few years and construction of new homes continues to explode near Lake Cumberland, which is only five miles from the church.

The church has just purchased 3.5 acres of additional property. It is completing a 33-day stewardship emphasis and hopes to be able to pay for the new property in 12 months.

The special anniversary was an excellent opportunity for the congregation to celebrate its commitment to missions through the Cooperative Program. Pastor John Mark Toby used the occasion to present a check for \$7,285.67 to KBC. This gift pushed the church over the \$2 million milestone in total gifts through the Cooperative Program.

It was a powerful day in worship and I will long remember the prayer of thanksgiving offered by a young deacon for the ministries of the Cooperative Program.

Please join me in prayers of thanksgiving for the life-changing and Kingdom-building ministries supported by your church gifts through the Cooperative Program!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

How can you give 'over and above' to building fund?

By Laurie Valentine

Church building campaigns can provide a great opportunity for making the kind of gift you



never would have dreamed possible. The challenge is to develop a plan that allows you to give "above and beyond"

your tithes and offerings, without feeling you have placed yourself in a "cash crunch."

Sam and Margaret Jones were in just this situation recently. Their church was in the first phase of a Together We Build program and the Joneses wanted to do all they could to meet the stewardship challenge presented by the TWB committee.

As they began to prayerfully consider what they could give, they thought of the two rental houses they had owned for many years. As a result of Sam's recent retirement, the couple was planning to do a lot of traveling in the next few years. They had decided to sell the houses to free themselves from real estate management responsibilities and provide funds for travel. Their concern with this plan was the large capital gains tax they would have to pay on the sale of the houses.

An alternative for Sam and Margaret would be an outright gift of a one-tenth interest in the two houses to the church for the building campaign and a gift of the remaining nine-tenths interest in the houses to a Charitable Remainder Unitrust which will pay the Joneses a 10 percent unitrust payment each year for the next 15 years, with the remainder to be distributed to the church at the end of the 15-year trust term.

If the two houses have a current market value of \$120,000, the Joneses will be entitled to a \$12,000 charitable contribution deduction for the one-tenth outright gift, a \$23,400 contribution deduction for the gift to the CRUT, and they avoid the capital gains taxes they would have incurred if they sold the property. Over the next 15 years, they will receive a total of approximately \$131,100 in payments from the CRUT.

The church receives an immediate gift for the building campaign of one-tenth of the sales proceeds when the two houses are sold, as well as the remainder of the CRUT, which will fund an endowment for the upkeep and maintenance of the church facilities.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

How can parents overcome 'fear factor' of today's world?

Q: As a parent seeking to protect my children in a dangerous world, how can I overcome the fear factor?

The "terror of randomness," as philosophy professor and author Gerald Sittser calls it, strikes fear in the heart of every parent. Our world and society offer plenty of opportunities for our children to be harmed, hurt and even killed. We can only do so much to protect them. Sometimes, no matter how many precautions we take, accidents happen; tragedy strikes. How can parents overcome the reality of such fear?

First, we must accept the fact that life is dangerous while at the same time remembering that the danger also makes life exciting and meaningful. God does not micromanage the world He created. Instead, He gives us the incredible gift of freedom. Our freedom results in a world where bad things can happen. Parents have to understand and accept this truth.

Secondly, we have to give up our quest for control and choose instead to live in hope—a distinctively faith position. As Sittser says, we have to live life expecting the best, and if or when it comes time to face the worst, we accept it as part of the bargain of living in a fallen world.

Finally, we have to exercise our faith. God loves our children even more than we do. We have to trust them to His care and keeping. We have to believe that God's grace will be enough to carry us through anything that happens. We must constantly remind ourselves of the transient nature of life, good or bad, choosing instead to look at life's experiences through the lens of eternity and in the context of the eternal life God promises.

Fearful parents can find comfort in two special Bible verses: "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you" (Isaiah 26:3). "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).—David Garrard

Q: Recently I have been thinking about leaving my husband. We have been married for 23 years. Our son is grown and living on his own. I don't feel like a wife. Sometimes I don't even feel like a person. Having grown up in church I was taught marriage is for life, but I don't want my life to be this way anymore. What can I do?

I would encourage you to talk with your husband about how you are feeling. Sometimes we develop patterns of holding important feelings inside and don't tell the person who most needs to hear them. This includes God. God cares deeply about how you are hurting. Share with God your fears, hurts and regrets. Seek God's guidance and ask for courage in sharing your feelings with your husband.

Ask your husband for time to talk that is focused on your relationship. It could be that you have allowed the circumstances of living to press in and squeeze the life out of your marriage. If this is the case, just as God first breathed life into Adam, you and your husband can breathe life into your marriage.

If you are simply bored with your life as it is, leaving your husband will not solve all your problems. Before making such a major decision, pray for God to reveal to you truths about your life, such as who God has created you to be and how you are meant to live that life out here on earth. When we are living out who we are meant to be according to God's design and fulfilling our personal mission, then we are filled.

Perhaps you would be willing to consult your husband on the strengths and giftedness he has observed in you for 23 years. Talk with friends and family members as well as your son to shed light on your unique gifts and abilities. Seek the truth about yourself. Scripture promises that the truth will set us free.—Valerie Vincent

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



Discover the joy of 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Kentucky Baptists have been involved in a variety of prayer ministries in recent years. From the statewide "100 Days of Prayer" emphasis the past two years to quarterly prayer meetings for spiritual revival held across the state to local church prayer ministries and prayerwalks, thousands of Kentucky Baptists are committed to faithful prayer efforts.

At the same time, however, many churches still fail to make prayer a top priority in their ongoing ministry endeavors. Many so-called "prayer meetings" often include brief opening and closing prayers with the bulk of the service focused on such elements as singing, Bible study and announcements. While each of those things is important, it is vital that congregations and individual believers also find time to make sincere, focused prayer a key spiritual discipline.

One shining example of vibrant prayer in today's world is found in Christian congregations throughout South Korea. During my recent visit to Seoul, I had the privilege of visiting several churches—each of which has an in-depth prayer emphasis. And it isn't just our sister Baptist churches leading the way in this effort; Methodist, Presbyterian and Pentecostal churches in South Korea also rely on the power of prayer as they seek to impact their nation with the gospel.

Among the prayer services I attended was a 6 a.m. prayer meeting at Myungsung Presbyterian Church. The church conducts four early-morning prayer meetings each day, with the first one beginning at 4 a.m. The 6 a.m. service attracted about 2,000 people of all ages who gathered to begin their day in prayer.

Also during the week, I attended a Friday evening prayer service at Yoido Full-Gospel Church, considered the largest church in the world with more than 800,000 members. In addition to its early-morning

prayer meetings, Yoido hosts an all-night prayer service each Friday. When our group arrived about 11 p.m., thousands of people already had gathered for prayer. Dozens of participants unable to pack into the crowded sanctuary knelt on mats on the sidewalk, watching the service on an outdoor screen.

Many Christian leaders in South Korea point to the churches' emphasis on prayer as a primary reason God has blessed that nation's Christian growth and witness in recent decades. While rising early for daily prayer or praying through the night aren't automatic formulas for spiritual growth, the Korean believers' faithful example is a reminder of our need to continually make prayer a major part of our personal and corporate worship here in Kentucky and beyond.

As Jesus drove the moneychangers from the Temple in Mark 11, He quoted the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?'"

Both Isaiah and Christ could have chosen many words to describe the house of God: a house of worship, evangelism, discipleship or fellowship. All of those descriptions would have been accurate, but each chose to use the phrase "house of prayer."

As we involve ourselves in times of worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship and many other worthy tasks, it is important to remember that prayer provides every believer a precious opportunity to interact intimately with our eternal God.

Whether you make daily quiet time a personal priority, participate in churchwide or denominational prayer efforts or help begin an early-morning prayer service in your congregation, continue to discover fresh ways to celebrate the challenge of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to "pray without ceasing."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Beware of 'ratings creep'

By Phil Boatwright

Thousand Oaks, Calif. (BP)—It's now being called "ratings creep," the steady progression of offensive content seeping from one film ratings category into another. In 2002, I wrote a piece for ParentLife addressing the subject titled, "Are PG-13 Films Appropriate for Your Kids?"

But now that there's a catchy phrase for it, ratings creep is coming to public awareness on a larger scale.

In a recent column for the Boston Globe, Geoff Edgers wrote, "A Harvard University study confirms what parents suspect: Violent films that 10 years ago would have received an R rating—therefore keeping children and most teenagers out of the audience, unless accompanied by an adult—today are far more likely to be designated PG-13, meaning young people can attend on their own."

As a 16-year veteran in the field of film criticism, I can assure you that many offenses formerly found only in R-rated movies are now staples in PG-13 movies. And material once found in PG-13 movies can now be seen and heard in PG films. With coarseness, crudity and obscenity increasing in Tinseltown's product, movie ratings have become less effective and often more misleading.

A July 20 editorial in the Kansas City Star pointed out: "The ratings are assigned by a film industry trade group, the Motion Picture Association of America. The association has

refused to come up with clearly defined rules for its ratings. There are too many gray areas, and filmmakers know how to manipulate the review board. An independent review board would have more credibility than the lobbying arm of the movie studios."

FIRST PERSON

Hey, we had that once. It was called the Motion Picture Code, spearheaded by Catholic and Protestant groups. The code set standards studios adhered to between the early 1930s and late '60s.

My theory is that the beleaguered members of the MPAA are assessing film content without allowing their decisions to be predicated upon biblical standards. In other words, they leave God's instruction out of the factor. To secular America, that statement would seem fanatical. But if God exists, then wouldn't leaving Him out of any equation be imprudent?

So, will the pendulum ever swing back, providing moviegoers with gentler film content? It would be naive to think so. Unlike Washington, D.C., which sways from conservative to liberal every decade or so, Hollywood is not as compelled by the general society to re-examine its moral and social standards. That said, we should continue to apply pressure. After all, the entertainment community also is made up of moms and dads, many of whom are concerned with what their children are viewing.

When it comes to the content

children are absorbing, how can Christian parents best protect their children?

There are now several Christian film reviewers who examine films from a family perspective; our reviews can be read via the Internet. But be careful. While I have many excellent colleagues in criticism, the Internet has opened the door for anyone who wants to give an opinion on movies. If you seek the Holy Spirit's discernment when choosing a film reviewer, I'm sure you'll find one that suits your needs.

More important than keeping the world's perspective out is to get biblical instruction in. So allow me to pass along something that has influenced my life every year of the way.

When I was about 8, my parents rededicated themselves to Christ. Bible study and prayer soon became part of our lives. Before Dad went to work, we began our day by reading Scripture and kneeling in prayer. When a father heads such a regimen, it drives home a lasting message to his children. ("Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it," Proverbs 22:6.)

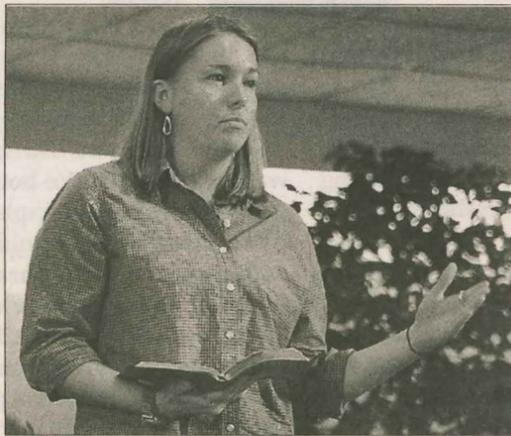
The Bible is a guidepost that keeps us in harmony with the Heavenly Father and with our fellow man. By studying Scripture, we gain an understanding of the nature of God. What's more, knowing God's Word will help us see through any ungodly standards that creep into our daily lives.

Phil Boatwright is a film reviewer in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

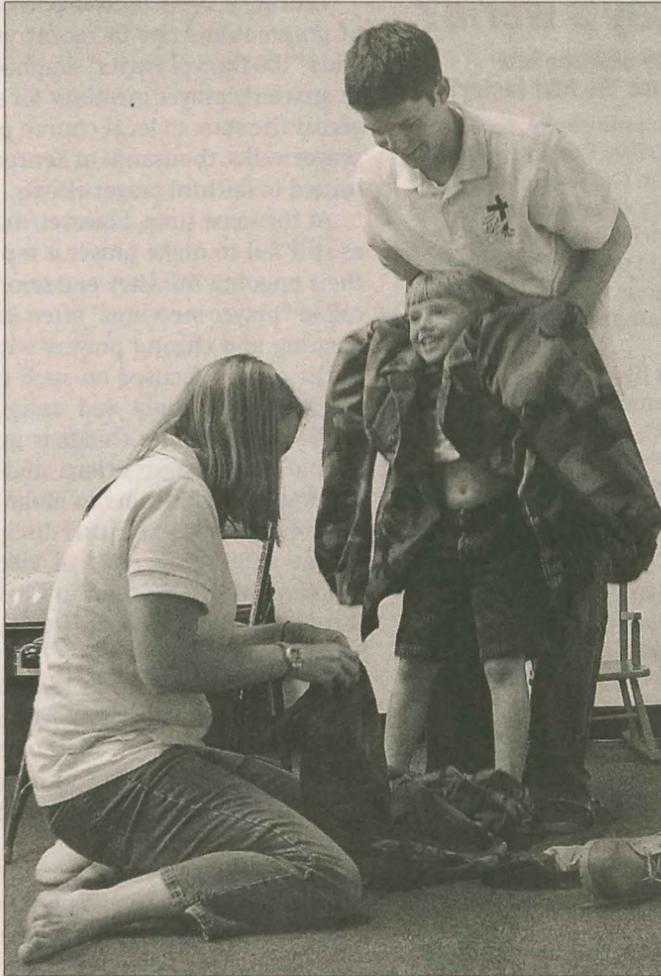
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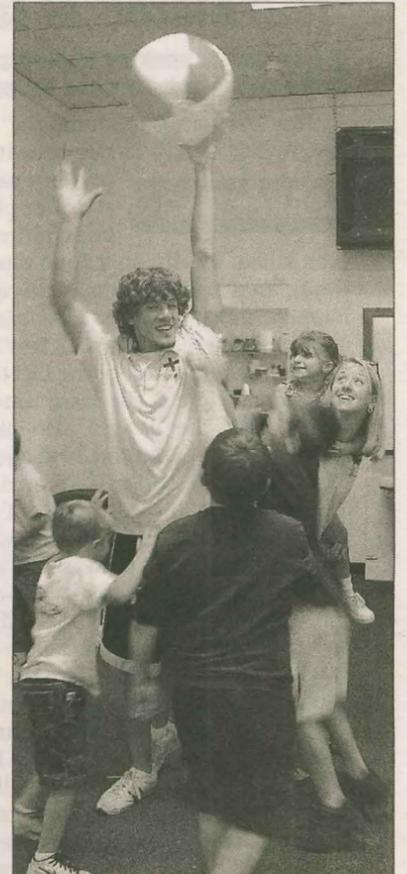
FAST FRIENDS Campers often form fast friendships with members of Son teams, college students who serve as summer missionaries on creative ministry teams, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Camryn Williams, 6, and Victoria Seamour, 10, play with SonShare member Ashley Clark. Victoria said she wants to audition for SonShare when she's old enough. (KBC photos by Brenda Smith)



DEVOTION TIME Carolyn Whaley takes a moment to share a Bible verse between skits. Son team members say dramas are chosen to illustrate Scripture.



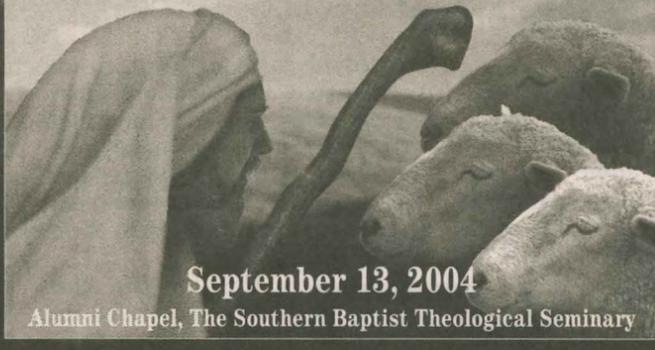
QUICK CHANGE SonShare members Carolyn Whaley and Jeremy Shoulta help Nathan Durbin, 6, struggle into a special outfit as part of a relay race.



INDOOR FUN Son team members often must adapt to local conditions. A recent rainy day didn't dampen the enthusiasm of SonShare member Nathan Barnes, or the day campers. Barnes moved the fun inside, leading the youth in several high-energy games.

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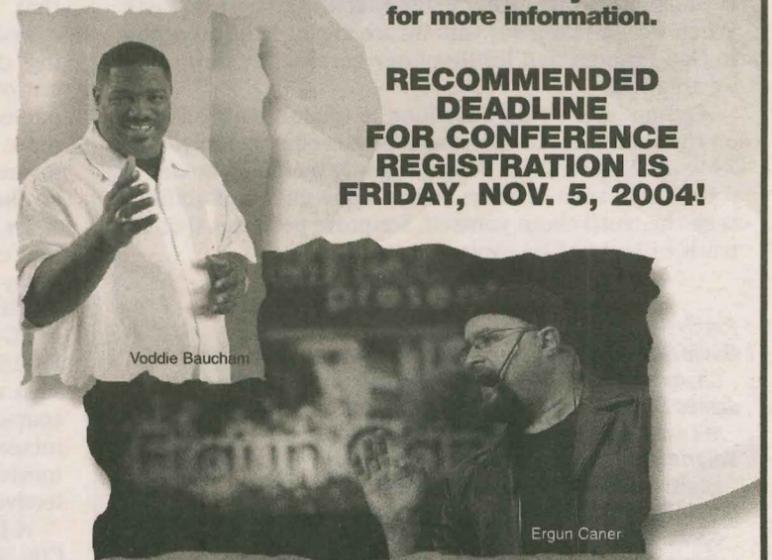
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NAMB urges jump in baptisms, churches

Orlando, Fla. (BP)—Describing the United States as “the most religiously diverse nation in the world” on “the only continent in which Christianity is not growing,” Robert Reccord said he remains optimistic that unprecedented advances in Southern Baptist baptisms, church starts and missionary mobilization are possible by the end of this decade.

Reccord, president of the Southern Baptist American Mission Board, introduced goals for increases in evangelistic training opportunities, intentional church planting and North American mission efforts during NAMB’S Connection 2004 “Preparing for Kingdom Growth” conference for Southern Baptist pastors, missionaries and directors of missions July 25-28 in Orlando.

“I want us to get to the point where the logos and egos are left at the door, and where the main driving issue is not who gets the credit, or who has the control, and who manages the cash,” Reccord said. “The driving issue has got to be how does the job get done, and how do we get the job done together.”

Soul-winning training to equip Southern Baptists to effectively share their faith is essential for the convention to move beyond its average since 1950 of 385,000 baptisms per year, Reccord said.

NAMB studies show that Southern Baptists who participate in evangelistic training are twice as likely to share the gospel and four times more likely to lead someone to become a Christian than those who

have had no evangelism training.

Consequently, NAMB has set a goal to help state conventions, associations and local churches train and equip 1 million Christians each year to intentionally share the gospel. Reccord suggested that if every Southern Baptist church increased its baptisms by one each month for a year, the convention would total 504,000 baptisms in a single year, breaking its record high of 472,000 baptisms in 1972.

By 2010, NAMB has a goal of enlisting and equipping 25 percent of all Southern Baptist churches to be involved in starting new churches as well as 10,000 missionaries and chaplains serving throughout North America and 750,000 short-term mission volunteers annually.

Baylor president survives threat of dismissal

Waco, Texas (ABP)—In spite of boasts by opponents that they had the votes to fire President Robert Sloan, Baylor University regents took no vote on their embattled president, other than affirming the long-range plan that has become the centerpiece of his presidency.

Sloan, who survived a 17-18 dismissal vote in May, apparently survived another milestone in his tumultuous nine-year tenure as Baylor’s president when the school’s regents met July 21-23 for a three-day retreat to discuss Baylor 2012, the school’s

ambitious 10-year vision.

They emerged from the meeting with chairman Will Davis of Austin announcing the regents unanimously had reaffirmed their commitment to Baylor 2012. He also told reporters the board had taken no vote regarding Sloan’s presidency.

Baylor 2012 is a plan championed by Sloan to make Baylor, already the largest Baptist university in the world, a top-tier university by expanding the school’s facilities, reducing class sizes and recruiting professors committed to academic

excellence, scholarly research and Christian values.

Critics claim the plan has increased debt to a quarter-billion dollars, pushed the tuition levels unaffordable by students from middle-income families and forced instructors to meet narrow and rigid religious tests.

Sloan said he was “very encouraged” by the regents’ strong affirmation of Baylor 2012.

“I am committed to Baylor University,” he said, “and I plan to remain as Baylor’s president.”

BAPTIST DIGEST

GuideStone offers online retirement planning. Investors with GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (formerly the Annuity Board) now can use the Web to view online presentations or participate in interactive online seminars for retirement planning. The presentations cover such topics for ministers and church employees as “Advantages of Consolidating Your Investments” and “How to Know If You are Invested Appropriately for Retirement.” For more information, visit the Web site at www.guidestone.org or call toll-free (800) 262-0511.

Retired Southern professor Jim Blevins dies. Retired New Testament professor and author James Blevins died July 24 after a long illness. Blevins, the author of several books, including “Revelation as Drama,” was professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville when he retired. He was a professor of religion from 1969-1974 at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, N.C.

Retired Southwestern prof David Garland dies. David Garland, distinguished professor emeritus of Old Testament and Hebrew at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died July 21 in Fort Worth, Texas, after a brief illness. “He made the Old Testament come alive as a book that speaks to the contemporary period,” Bruce Corley, former dean at Southwestern, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Garland, 83, taught at the seminary from 1958 to 1991. He previously was a pastor in Arkansas and Indiana.

Canadian Southern Baptists to consider name change. The Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists has decided to study whether it should change its name. During their annual meeting in Toronto, messengers voted to have their national leaders create a committee to study a possible name change “that will better reflect our mission in our nation and our world.” “When Canadians think ‘South,’ they think ‘America,’” said Ian Buntain, a professor at the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary in Cochrane, Alberta, who introduced the idea. “And so we’re called ‘the American denomination.’ That’s not helping us reach Canadians.”

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Grassroots wins encourage gambling opponents

"Gambling corporations are huge, with very deep pockets. ... And they do not fight fair."

Suzi Paynter, director of public policy for the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission

Continued from page 1

The gambling industry's most prominent victory this year came in Pennsylvania, where state lawmakers enacted legislation July 4 to bring 61,000 slot machines—second in number only to Nevada—into horse tracks, resorts and slot parlors. (See story below.)

New York and Maine authorized slot machines at racetracks one year ago. And as of June 21, five American Indian tribes in California can add an unlimited number of slot machines to their casinos.

Michael Geer, chairman of Pennsylvanians Against Gambling Expansion, said the organization is "very troubled" that the years of working with church groups, grassroots organizations and within the legislature have failed to stop the expansion of gambling.

"The bottom line is that many Americans and many church-going Americans believe (gambling) provides free money to the government," said Geer, also president of the Pennsylvania Family Institute. They're happy to see poor and elderly lose lots of money just so they don't have to pay more taxes."

Kindt, who teaches business and legal policy at the University of Illinois, said gambling opponents are successful in defeating gambling proposals more than 90 percent of the time. But the gambling interests will accept a low success rate, he said, because they gain so much financially from each occasional victory.

Although Pennsylvanians Against Gambling Expansion suffered a substantial blow, gambling opponents in other states triumphed. "The picture is not altogether bleak," said Weston Ware of Dallas, a board member of the National Council Against Legalized Gambling.

In Kentucky

Kentucky has been an "ongoing victory site" against the expansion of gambling, according to Nancy Jo Kemper, media spokesperson for Kentucky Citizens Against Gam-



bling Expansion. Kentucky has a lottery and a thriving thoroughbred horseracing industry. But attempts to bring free-standing casinos and slots have failed. The latest attempt failed, Kemper said, because of squabbling among gambling advocates.

In Texas, gambling opponents recently made headway during a special legislative session with the denial of a proposal to fund Texas schools with a percentage of proceeds from video slot machines—a victory based on the activism of church members, Paynter said.

"Gambling corporations are huge, with very deep pockets. ... And they do not fight fair," Paynter said. "They don't like opposition, and it takes courage from our church communities to stand. But we stopped it here—a hard-fought fight."

Cyrus Fletcher, a lay member of First Baptist Church in Baytown, Texas, was one of those activists. "I find it strange that this is supposed to be the most family values-oriented administration in Austin in years ... and they want to fund education on the backs of (gambling) victims," Fletcher said. "It's a moral issue."

But Judy Patterson, senior vice president and executive director for the American Gaming Association, compared gambling to golfing or

seeing a movie. She said gambling is a form of entertainment, which is not moral or immoral. "Gambling is a way to spend our leisure time, essential to our health and well being, that makes it easier to get up and go to work Monday morning."

Kindt: Society costs exceed payoff

But gambling opponents say comparing gambling to the entertainment industry is unfair and misleading. "Movies and Disney World don't create addicts," said Kindt, who has testified about gambling before Congress.

While gambling supporters—including many legislators—tout the increase in tax revenue from gambling, Kindt cited studies that indicate each tax dollar generated by gambling will cost governments \$3—in industry regulation, increased social services and criminal-justice expenses.

In fact, Kindt said, the socio-economic impact of gambling addiction is comparable to drug and alcohol addiction. When governments legalize and encourage gambling, they are "creating addictions among their citizens," he said.

Ware, who is also the legislative director of Texas Against Gambling, said about 70 percent of all revenue to casinos comes from slot machines, which rely on consumers' addiction to play.

Ware said slot machines, known as the "crack cocaine of gambling," have the potential to double the number of compulsive gamblers in a state in one year.

In addition to increasing addiction, Ware said, gambling produces

more bankruptcy, crime and corruption. He said most studies don't measure gambling's social and economic costs, like embezzlement, borrowed money and broken homes.

Karen H., international executive secretary for Gamblers Anonymous, said the nationwide organization had to increase the number and locations of meetings for addicted gamblers. But the organization doesn't keep statistics on the increased need or know the reason for it.

Patterson, the gambling spokesperson, said the gamblers organization is an "incredible tool" for addicted gamblers. However, she said research suggests new support groups don't reflect an increase in addicted gamblers, rather more public education on gambling problems and resources made available.

A new threat to increase compulsive gambling, opponents say, is the Internet. According to Ware, Internet gambling is "devastating" because it makes gambling even more accessible. Congress has yet to reach a consensus on how to handle it, and Ware said it might not be stoppable.

Meanwhile, Pennsylvanians Against Gambling Expansion are looking into filing lawsuits to counter the industry's recent victory because the legislation, Geer said, was passed unconstitutionally. But Geer admitted it's "a long shot" to win a legal battle against casinos.

Apathy among Christians

In Pennsylvania and perhaps elsewhere, the inactivity of churchgoers in the fight against gambling might be more troubling than gambling advocates' success.

"Those who support legalized gambling—many of them church-going—have a lack of concern for other people," Geer said. "And that's a troubling trend."

Grey of the National Council Against Legalized Gambling said he also gets frustrated with the apathy of many Christians. But he said the David-vs.-Goliath successes of grassroots opposition—when it does develop—should invigorate Christians and scare the gambling industry.

"It makes us look like we're players," he said. "We hold the winning hand."

"I think we're at a tipping point," he added. "We're going to lose a few more (battles), but the real story here is the wins."

Pennsylvania legislature pulls fast move for slot machines

Harrisburg, Pa. (BP)—During the last hours of legislation for their summer break, Pennsylvania legislators passed a law allowing as many as 61,000 slot machines into the state, a number that would be exceeded only by Nevada.

The most expansive gambling measure to be enacted by a state in several years was pushed by Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell as a solution to the state's property tax problem.

Officials predict the slot machines will bring in \$1 billion a year for reducing taxes, according to The New York Times.

But advocates against gambling are angered by the last-minute law, saying it was not passed with the best interest of the citizens in mind.

"I am really mad," said Dianne Berlin, vice chair of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling. "One of the things that we knew was that they would try to pull a stunt, but we had no idea how bad the stunt was going to be."

Berlin explained that the slot machine measure was proposed as an amendment to a bill that was on its third consideration in the final hours of the legislative session. It was not

a standalone bill, and the total legislature did not have a chance to review it.

"They cheated the public out of an opportunity to examine the bill and all its components and have it go through due process," she said.

Berlin expressed concern over the loopholes in the law, particularly those that grant the newly-created gambling board "unbelievable powers." The law also includes a provision for elected officials to own 1 percent of the gambling venues.

State and local governments gained about \$6 billion from taxing casino gambling last year, according to a USA Today article last month, and slot machines accounted for more than two-thirds of that money. Currently, only 15 states, including Kentucky, have no legal slot machines.

The National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling calls slot machines the "crack cocaine" of the gambling industry because of their addictive nature.

Collectively, slot machines gross more annually than McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King and Starbucks combined, the USA Today article said.

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Just what can a church do during election time?

By Chip Grange, Stephen King & Stephen Kao

McLean, Va. (BP)—During election time, and especially during presidential elections, many churches and other tax-exempt organizations face legal issues related to their tax-exempt status and their role in influencing society.

Since the inception of the federal income tax in 1913, Congress has granted churches an exemption from paying this tax. But in 1954, Congress enacted an additional condition for maintaining Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) exempt status: a prohibition from engaging in "any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office."

This article, prepared by three attorneys, addresses questions commonly raised by churches concerning this issue.

How much political campaign activity is permissible for a tax-exempt church?

None. Section 501(c)(3) provides an absolute prohibition on churches from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. This absolute prohibition on politicking is in contrast to the limited amount of lobbying activities in which a tax-exempt church can engage.

Hasn't Congress changed the law recently to make it legal for churches to be involved in political campaign activity?

Recent efforts to amend Section 501(c)(3) so that tax-exempt churches are no longer subject to an absolute prohibition on political activities, such as the Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act, have yet to garner sufficient support in Congress. If such legislation should pass, it likely will not be a blank check on politicking but provide for limited exceptions to the blanket prohibition.

Is a church allowed to encourage its members and others to vote?

Yes. Nonpartisan encouragement of members to be responsible citizens who vote and take an interest in the political process is not prohibited political campaign activity. A church also may organize voter registration campaigns, provided that the campaigns are strictly nonpartisan. Our law firm has been engaged in providing guidance on the iVoteValues.com campaign of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Committee to ensure that it is fully compliant with Internal Revenue Code provisions for tax-exempt organizations.

Does the political campaign prohibition prevent churches from taking stands on moral issues?

Tax law does not prohibit a church from teaching about moral issues and advocating biblical values. However, such teaching and advocacy may not include expression of support for a particular political candidate or party.

Is a pastor allowed to endorse or raise funds for a particular candidate in his personal capacity?

Yes, pastors and other church leaders are free to become involved in their individual capacities in political campaigns so long as they

Second Southern Baptist pastor gets complaint for political message

Springdale, Ark. (ABP)—A second Southern Baptist pastor is the subject of a complaint that his sermon crossed the IRS's line prohibiting non-profit organizations from engaging in partisan politics.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a religious-liberty watchdog organization, filed a complaint July 20 with the IRS against the 14,000-member First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., the largest church affiliated with the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

The church's pastor, Ronnie Floyd, preached a patriotic sermon July 4 during which he encouraged members to "vote God" in the November election. Floyd did not mention either President Bush or Democratic challenger John Kerry by name, nor did he indicate which candidate he personally favored. Rather, he urged members to vote "by the authority of God's Word, Christian values, convictions and beliefs."

But Americans United claims the message crossed the line of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code for tax-exempt churches, which prohibits churches from participating or intervening in political campaigns on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

During the sermon in question, Floyd called the November presidential election "one of the most critical elections in U.S. history. ... Rarely have we seen two candidates so diametrically opposed in their convictions."

Contrasting the candidates' stands on same-sex marriage, Floyd stated, "One candidate believes marriage is a God-ordained institution between one man and one woman and has proposed a constitutional amendment protecting marriage." A photo of Bush appeared on a screen behind Floyd as he spoke those words.

"The other candidate was one of only 14 U.S. senators to vote against the Defense of Marriage Act of 1996," Floyd continued as a photo of Kerry appeared. Similarly, he contrasted the candidates' views on abortion and other issues.

An IRS tax guide for churches notes it is acceptable for churches to speak out on moral issues, provide non-partisan voter-education guides and encourage people to vote, but they must not "favor one candidate over another."

According to an IRS press release: "Even activities that encourage people to vote for or against a particular candidate on the

basis of nonpartisan criteria violate the political campaign prohibition of section 501(c)(3)," the part of the tax code that governs churches and other not-for-profit organizations.

Floyd rejected the assertion that he was using his pulpit to re-elect Bush.

"I'm using my pulpit to share the Word of God," he said on Fox News Channel's "Heartland with John Kasich."

"I'm using my pulpit for the purpose of encouraging people to register to vote, as well as when they vote to go and vote God," he continued.

But Lynn told Kasich a video of the sermon repeatedly shows Floyd's message implied Bush is good and Kerry is bad.

"Now he says he didn't use the word 'Bush,' but he did talk about George Bush favorably six times. If a picture is worth a thousand words, as they say, he gave about 10,000 words for George Bush," Lynn said.

Americans United filed a similar complaint July 15 against Lynchburg, Va., pastor Jerry Falwell, saying Falwell endorsed Bush in a July 1 e-mail to supporters and also urged followers to send money to a political-action committee that supports Republican candidates.

do so without using the church's financial resources, facilities or personnel either directly or indirectly. Also, they must clearly and unambiguously indicate that their actions and statements are on their own behalf and not on behalf of the church. In contrast, a minister's endorsement of a candidate at an official church function or in an official church publication, even with a disclaimer, would violate the politicking prohibition, since the audience and the media of communication are created and subsidized by the church.

Has the IRS ever penalized a church for political campaign activity?

Yes, the IRS revoked the tax-exempt status of a church in Binghamton, N.Y., for its placement in two national newspapers of a partisan political advertisement opposing the presidential candidacy of Bill Clinton four days prior to the 1992 presidential election. Our firm has been involved in defending churches tagged by the IRS for politicking. All have ended in settlements without loss of tax-exempt status.

Is a church allowed to distribute voter guides?

Yes. A church may distribute voting records, candidate surveys and other voter guides as long as they are nonpartisan and do not indicate a preference toward any particular candidate or party. Voter guides are more likely to be considered nonpartisan if they cover all candidates, address a wide variety of issues and do not compare candidate positions with positions of the church, and otherwise do not indicate bias.

May a church provide political candidates with a forum for speeches and debates?

A 1974 IRS ruling concerning a broadcasting station held that a tax-exempt organization could provide airtime to qualified candidates for public office, so long as it

made such time equally available to all candidates. The station had expressed that the candidates' views were not necessarily those of the station and that the presentation was a public service to educate its viewers. Similarly, a church may provide a public forum to political candidates as long as all candidates are invited and the church carefully avoids indicating its own views, commenting on candidates' statements or otherwise implying endorsement of or opposition to any candidate.

What options, if any, exist for a church to engage in political campaign activity?

A church may establish a related, though separate 501(c)(4) organization to promote "social welfare." Such organizations are exempt from federal income taxation, but unlike their 501(c)(3) counterparts, contributions to them are not tax-deductible. Although subject to limits, a 501(c)(4) entity is not totally barred from political campaign activities, and a 501(c)(4) may form a political action committee (PAC) that would be free to participate in political campaigns, a church setting up such affiliated entities must carefully ensure that no church funds or other resources are used to support the entities engaged in political campaign activities.

What are prohibited political campaign activities?

Among the political campaign activities that Section 501(c)(3) prohibits a church from engaging in, directly or indirectly, are the following: endorsing, supporting or opposing any political candidate; permitting a church trustee, pastor, other officer, employee or representative to use his or her position, or the reputation or resources of the church, to endorse, support or oppose a candidate or make any statements to encourage its members to vote for or against a particular candidate or party; contributing to or fundraising for the campaign

of any candidate, party or PAC; permitting the facilities, name, reputation or resources of the church to be used by a candidate, party, PAC, church member or others to support or oppose a candidate; distributing partisan voter guides or other candidate information that favors or disfavors a particular candidate or party; and any other activity that intervenes or otherwise supports or opposes a candidate.

What penalties does the IRS impose on churches that violate the 501(c)(3) prohibition on political campaign activities?

A church that participates in political campaign activities jeopardizes both its tax-exempt status and its eligibility to receive tax-deductible contributions. The IRS also may subject a church that engages in political activities to an initial tax of 10 percent of its political expenditures, and impose a tax of 2.5 percent of the political expenditures on the church's leaders who agreed to the expenditures knowing they were political expenditures. If an initial tax is imposed, and the church does not correct the expenditures within the period allowed by law, an additional tax equal to 100 percent of the expenditures is imposed against the church and 50 percent of the expenditures (up to \$10,000) is imposed against the church leaders who refuse to make the correction.

Chip Grange, Stephen King and Stephen Kao are attorneys with Gammon & Grange, P.C., McLean, Va., which serves as legal counsel for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Liberty Commission. This article constitutes legal information and is not legal advice. The information in this article is current as of the date of publication. Because the relevant laws might have changed since that time, you should not rely upon this information, but rather should consult legal counsel. The authors can be contacted about the content of this article and any other questions regarding tax-exempt church issues at grg@gg-law.com, shk@gg-law.com and ssk@gg-law.com, respectively.

NATIONAL NOTES

White House appeals blockage of abortion ban. The Bush administration has appealed a California judge's ruling that the Partial-Birth Abortion Act is unconstitutional. The government appealed the June 1 decision to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, challenging U.S. District Judge Phyllis Hamilton's ruling that the law was written vaguely and placed an "undue burden" on the right to choose. Federal judges in Nebraska and New York also have heard challenges to the law but have not yet issued rulings. Those judges temporarily prevented the government from enforcing the act.

U.S. visa regulations expel Finnish theologian. A renowned Finnish theologian and tenured professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., has been forced to leave the United States because he did not qualify under new visa regulations for religious professionals. In one of the stranger cases of stricter visa regulations in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Veli-Matti Karkkainen was unable to appeal government decisions that denied him an extension of a visa and a work permit, prompting a July 31 deadline for him and his family to leave the United States. The case is ironic in part because the order affects a man who, like Attorney General John Ashcroft, is a Pentecostal.

Bishops issue joint Communion denial. Catholic politicians who support abortion rights in three Southeastern states will be barred from Communion until they publicly recant and receive the consent of their bishop, three dioceses said last week. In an unprecedented show of solidarity, the bishops of Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C., and Charleston, S.C., said unrepentant politicians "are not to be admitted to Holy Communion in any Catholic church within our jurisdictions." The directive marked the first time a group of bishops had worked together to sanction politicians.

Moore make last-ditch effort for office. Roy Moore has filed his final appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court in an attempt to regain his job as Alabama's chief justice. Moore's attorneys asked the court to review a ruling by the Alabama Supreme Court that removed Moore from office. Moore originally was ousted by an Alabama judicial-ethics panel for defying an August 2003 federal court order to remove the Ten Commandments monument he had placed in the state judicial headquarters building. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to decline to hear the case. But nothing in Alabama law prevents Moore from running for the same office again in 2006, when the current chief justice's term expires.

New "Davey and Goliath" books coming soon. Davey and Goliath, the beloved feel-good animated series featuring a boy and his talking dog, will be resurrected this year in a new line of children's books. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America signed a deal with Scholastic Children's Books to produce two books and two coloring/activity books. The stop-motion animated series (similar to claymation) was produced by Lutherans from 1960 to 1975. The denomination is spearheading a campaign to bring Davey and Goliath back to life. In addition, an animated "Davey and Goliath's Snowboard Christmas" television special is scheduled to be ready by Christmas.

Evangelicals urge action in Sudan crisis. Evangelical leaders have sent a letter to President Bush urging U.S. government action to address the crisis in Darfur, Sudan. "Now is ... the time for the United States government to take a more decisive role to prevent further slaughter and death," states the Aug. 1 letter, signed by National Association of Evangelicals President Ted Haggard and 35 others. The evangelical representatives said they are urging churches and ministries to donate to relief agencies already working to address the crisis. Millions of people have fled from their homes in the midst of intensifying warfare in the region.

Call to Renewal: Retain faith-based office. Call to Renewal, a Christian-based anti-poverty group, has urged President Bush and Sen. John Kerry to keep the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives in the next presidential administration. "Shutting the door on efforts to find the right mix of partnership between the government and churches ... is akin to saying the faith community is not willing to be creative when it comes to serving 'the least of these,'" wrote Jim Wallis, convener of the Washington-based organization, in letters to Bush and Kerry. The letters were prompted by calls from other faith-based community leaders to eliminate the office.

Gay marriage showdowns

Missouri passes marriage amendment, Washington judge strikes down state law

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—In the continuing battle over same-sex marriage, both supporters and opponents found victories in the opening days of August.

Missourians voted overwhelmingly Aug. 3 to amend that state's constitution to ban same-sex marriage. Meanwhile, a Seattle judge ruled the next day that Washington's ban on same-sex marriage violates that state's constitution.

Missouri voters approved the constitutional amendment by a 70-to-30 percent margin. Although the state already had a law banning same-sex marriage, some activists feared that a state judge might overrule the law.

That is exactly what happened in the state of Washington Aug. 4. King County Superior Court Judge William Downing said a state law similar to Missouri's—modeled after the federal Defense of Marriage Act and thus labeled by many a "state DOMA"—violated the Washington constitution.

A group of gay couples, denied marriage licenses by King County authorities in March, sued the county and state under two sec-

tions of the constitution. One provides all citizens equal rights to the protections and privileges offered by the state's laws, and the other provides for due process of law.

Downing agreed with the gay couples, rejecting the state's claim that there are legitimate secular reasons—such as protecting children who might be raised in same-sex marriages—to limit marriage rights to heterosexuals.

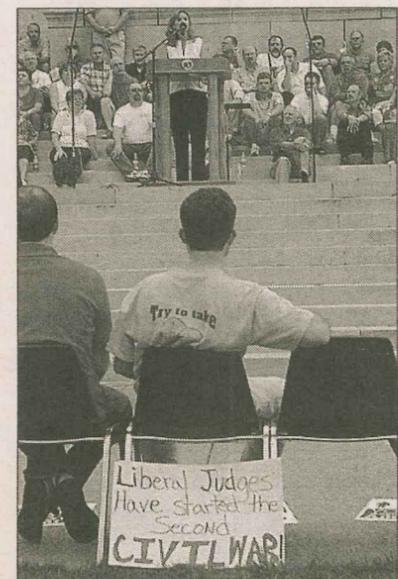
"The exclusion of same-sex partners from civil marriage and the privileges attendant thereto is not rationally related to any legitimate or compelling state interest and is certainly not narrowly tailored toward such an interest," Downing wrote.

A ruling last year by Massachusetts' Supreme Court made it the first state to legalize same-sex marriage. The ruling stoked the fires of debate over the subject nationwide, with religious conservatives pushing to get gay-marriage bans added to state and federal constitutions.

National hot-button issue

The issue has also cropped up in this year's campaigns for the presidency and Congress. Polls show that a large majority of Americans oppose the idea of same-sex marriage, but they place the issue relatively low on their list of priorities—after national security, health care, education and other issues.

Missouri is the first of several states scheduled to hold popular



VOTE RALLY A "Sanctity of Marriage Rally" at the Missouri state capitol in Jefferson City drew more than 1,000 people from area churches Aug. 1. (Missouri Pathway photo by Bob Baysinger)

votes on same-sex-marriage bans, and is generally considered a bellwether state politically. Gay-marriage opponents said the large majority proves that, when left in the hands of voters, efforts to protect "traditional marriage" will succeed.

"We believe today's win for traditional marriage in Missouri will prove to be just one of many victories for marriage this fall," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council.

Democrats' religion liaison resigns after 2 weeks

Washington (RNS)—After less than two weeks on the job, the Democratic Party's first-ever director of religious outreach resigned last week after her public positions came under fire.

Brenda Bartella Peterson said Aug. 4 it was "no longer possible for me to do my job effectively" after the New York-based Catholic League issued three blistering press releases attacking her positions.

"As of today I am resigning my position as the director of religious outreach because it is no longer possible for me to do my job effectively," Peterson said in a statement to Religion News Service.

Peterson, who was hired by the Democratic National Committee on July 23, is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples

of Christ). She is also the former director of the Clergy Leadership Network, a fledgling platform for liberal clergy who opposed President Bush.

Reached last week, she said she could not comment further on her resignation.

Calls to the Democratic National Committee, which had tried to ignore the controversy generated by the Catholic League, were not immediately returned.

The Catholic League blasted Peterson for a "friend of the court" brief she signed with 31 other clergy members that supported removing "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance. The league also criticized left-leaning positions on taxes and gay marriage taken by the Clergy Leadership Network.

"And this is the person the Democrats want to dispatch to meet the heads of religious organizations? Are they out of their minds? Would they hire a gay basher to reach out to homosexuals?" asked the league's president, Bill Donohue, in a press release.

Donohue was also successful in muzzling Mara Vanderslice, who was hired to do religious outreach for the Kerry campaign. Donohue criticized Vanderslice as a "far left-wing activist who has spoken at rallies held by the notoriously anti-Catholic group, ACT UP."

Peterson was hired by the DNC to help mobilize "progressive" people of faith for Kerry and help shape public policy issues such as poverty, health care and the environment in religious and moral terms.

Suit filed in California 'church van' rollover cites negligence

Yermo, Calif. (RNS)—The estates of five young people killed in a single-vehicle church van rollover accident last year have sued Ford Motor Co. and Enterprise Rent-A-Car, claiming Ford was negligent in manufacturing its Econoline E-350 15-passenger van, and Enterprise knew the vans are dangerous.

The young people were on their way to a religious retreat.

Calling the 2002 Econoline E-350 "a death trap waiting to happen," plaintiff's attorney Brian Panish said inexperienced drivers and full loads increase chances such vans—often called "church vans" because of their popularity with religious groups—will roll over.

Ford has made changes to its 2006 model vans designed to provide more stability when sensors detect unusual side-to-side movement, but the company said in a statement, "We remain confident that this is a very safe vehicle."

Earlier this year, Ford reached a confidential settlement with the families of three young American missionaries who died in an Econoline 350 rollover crash near Monterey, Mexico, in June 2002.

The National Transportation Safety Board said in 2002 that the center of gravity of 15-passenger vehicles rises when the van carries more than 10 passengers, and rollovers are more likely.

Because of this finding, the NTSB recommended in July 2003 that Ford strengthen the roofs of its 15-passenger vans and provide more safety belts. The NTSB also called for training Econoline drivers to better maneuver in emergency situations.

The current suit, filed in Alameda Superior Court in California, stems from an accident in Yermo, Calif., between Los Angeles and Las Vegas. On March 29, 2003, a van carrying 14 young adults rolled over on Interstate 15, killing five passengers.

The group had gathered at St. Antonius Coptic Church in northern California the previous day and set out on the 400-mile trek, crashing 20 minutes from their destination.

'This campus is anointed'

Summer staff member sees God working at 'Crossings'

By Erin Parker
Crossings at the Creek Staff Member

If asked to define "camp," one might respond by saying, "a place where students go to get away from cares and concerns of everyday living, where they are encouraged to read the Bible and pray to God, a time set aside for students to spend completely focused on God in hopes that they will grow more intimate in their relationship with the Lord or possibly encounter Him for the very first time."

Camp, especially at Jonathan Creek, is all of these things and so much more. "Crossings at the Creek" has been my home for two summers and will forever hold a very special place in my heart. This campus is anointed, set apart, holy ground. When I drove onto the property of Jonathan Creek for the first day of staff training this summer, I was completely overwhelmed by his Spirit's dwelling here. Throughout this summer, the Lord has continued to take my breath away. Such as when Angela better understood God's calling on her life, when

Holly remembered that her hope is found in Christ and Christ alone, and when Jessica was set free from the bondage of a bad relationship. I was overwhelmed as Marissa saw healing take place in the lives of those around her and began to pray for that same healing in her own life. I was speechless as I watched Paige finally say "yes" to the Lord and "no" to everything else the world was offering her. I stand in awe of how perfectly the Lord works miracles in our lives. I have seen more than 200 students be rescued from death and graciously granted life before my very eyes this summer.

In addition to God working in hundreds of students' lives here on campus, I have seen the Lord perform miracles in my own life as well. This summer has been a summer of getting to know my Father as the Healer, and learning in the process all the beautiful ways His hands move in my life. The past few months have not just been "camp" to me but truly a time filled with genuine transformation.

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



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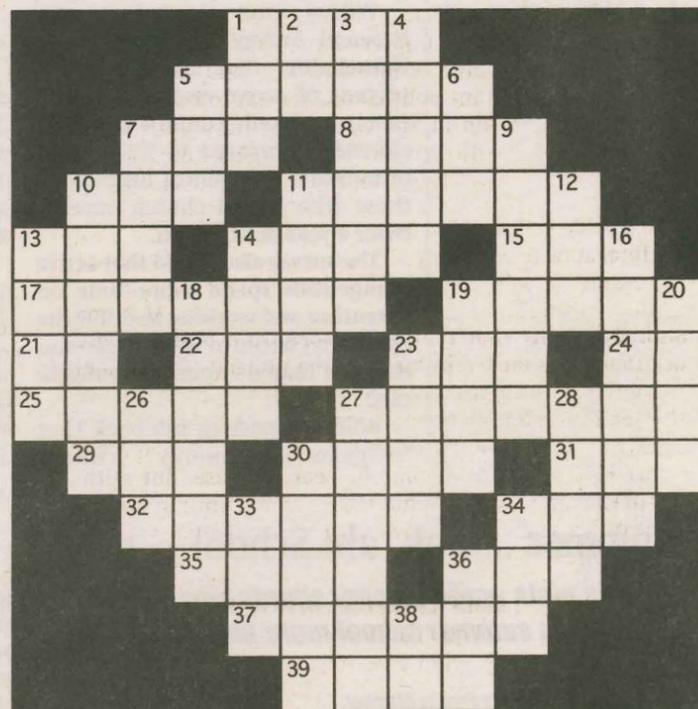


Bible Crosswords

Janet W. Adkins

Across

- 1 Belonging to the Jairite who "was a chief ruler about David" (2 Samuel 20)
- 5 Lures
- 7 "Even of your lusts that ___ in your members" (James 4:1)
- 8 Name for a boy in Barcelona?
- 10 French export, to Emile
- 11 Really (arch.)
- 13 "Without the word be ___ by the conversation of the wives" (1 Peter 3:1)
- 14 New cars on the road
- 15 Person concerned with (suffix)
- 17 "But the righteous into life ___" (Matthew 25:46)
- 19 Advantage
- 21 City near Bethel
- 22 Electric ___
- 23 "But ___ thing is needful" (Luke 10:42)
- 24 Irish Pop
- 25 "And put a ___ to thy throat" (Proverbs 23:2)
- 27 "If he that cometh preacheth ___ Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4)
- 29 Ford model
- 30 Formerly Persia
- 31 Shem's home, for a while
- 32 Prayer

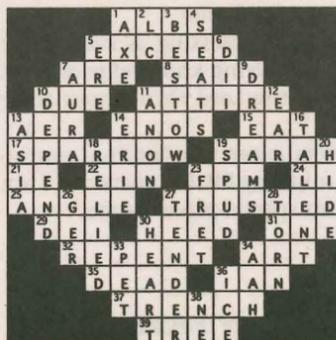


- 34 Hirt, and others
- 35 Region in NE Poland with many lakes (abbr.)
- 36 Like alt.
- 37 Person afflicted with tuberculosis (colloq.)
- 39 "Esau, who is ___" (Genesis 36:1)
- 12 Biblical exclamation
- 13 "All knees shall be ___ as water" (Ezekiel 21:7)
- 14 Joint
- 16 ___ of the Purple Sage (Z. Grey book)
- 18 Change for the better
- 19 In the very near future (arch.)

Down

- 1 Noun-forming suffix
- 2 Paper measure (abbr.)
- 3 "I ___ unto Caesar" (Acts 25:11)
- 4 "I will exalt my throne above the ___ of God" (Isaiah 14:13)
- 5 To M.D.s, summer scourge
- 6 Middle-school subject
- 7 "Do not drink ___ nor strong drink" (Leviticus 10:9)
- 9 Bible mount
- 10 November activity
- 11 "Then Samuel took a ___ of oil" (1 Samuel 10:1)
- 20 Whim
- 23 Second son of Judah (Genesis 38)
- 26 Certain California judge
- 27 In the vicinity
- 28 "How long ___ ye between two opinions" (1 Kings 18:21)
- 30 Release
- 33 Suitable for (suffix)
- 34 Farm science (comb. form)
- 36 "They might only touch the ___ of his garment" (Matthew 14:36)
- 38 Word in the Great Commission

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Sociologist studies evangelical men, family violence

"Men are the weak link oftentimes in family life."

Author Bradford Wilcox

By Johah King
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—The less they attend church, the more likely evangelical husbands and fathers will physically abuse their spouses and children, according to author and University of Virginia sociologist Bradford Wilcox.

In a new book, "Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands," Wilcox examines the familial behaviors of evangelical men with different religious practices as shown in three large-scale surveys taken in the early 1990s. Among those behaviors is the frequency of physical abuse.

"What we find is the lowest rate of reported domestic violence in the early 1990s is among active evangelical husbands," Wilcox said. By "active," he means husbands who attend church regularly.

Wilcox cites data from the National Survey of Families and Households that indicated 2.8 percent of active evangelical Protestant husbands commit domestic violence, compared to 7.2 percent of nominal evangelical husbands—those who attend church once or twice a year or not at all.

The survey also found that active evangelicals spend more time on parenting and working to fulfill the emotional needs of their wives and children than do nominal evangelicals.

Wilcox argues in his book that "religious community" culture

"domesticates" men, making them more attentive to the emotional needs of their wives and children even though the study also shows such men do less of the housework.

Strong accountability

John Bartkowski, professor of sociology at Mississippi State University, has studied the evangelical community extensively, and agrees with Wilcox. He said that in many cases the male peer group in a church serves to keep fathers and husbands in line, reminding them of their responsibilities.

"Men often have very frank conversations with one another about their marital relationships in a way that would—outside evangelical churches—be seen as inappropriate, that would be seen as 'my private business; nobody else should be checking into that,'" Bartkowski said.

The focus on men is not an accident.

"One of the things that has been recognized is that men are the weak link oftentimes in family life. To strengthen that link, there's been the focus on making men more attentive to their wives and to their children," Wilcox said.

In 1998, the Southern Baptist Convention amended its "Baptist Faith and Message" statement, declaring that wives should be submissive to their husbands, the rightful heads of households. Many observers challenged the claim, fearing the promotion of male



dominance would lead to increased rates of domestic violence.

But Russell Moore, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, said the statistics in Wilcox's book show that a hierarchical family structure with men at the top fosters a more harmonious family life.

"I think you have a lot of secular scholars surprised by this data, because the very fathers who hold to traditional gender roles are also the ones who seem to be so committed to their wives and their children," Moore said.

Wilcox and Moore disagree

on whether the Southern Baptist statement of male headship might explain the much higher incidence of domestic abuse among nominal evangelicals.

"Nominal evangelicals may take that (Southern Baptist) message to legitimate their own bad behavior, but the active evangelicals take that message as a guide for what a good husband tries to be—like Christ—to his wife," Wilcox said.

But Moore said, "I really do not think that you have abusive husbands in a large-scale fashion providing theological justification for their behaviors."

Summer ... ooh, ah! School ... ugh!

Oneida ninth grade teacher shares how she makes summer school more fun

By Debbie Winters
Oneida Baptist Institute Faculty Member

The headline captures the usual reaction of most students. But summer school at Oneida Baptist Institute is "fun." I am the ninth grade English teacher, and my classes include summer school.

I will begin my 25th year of service at OBI this fall. I have had several areas of service during the years: tutoring lab instructor, principal's secretary, cheer-leading sponsor, 4-H leader, study hall supervisor, grill cashier, drama coach and teacher.

I have enjoyed all of these areas, but teaching in the classroom is my favorite. I look forward every day to seeing the freshmen. They are precious. We study grammar, poetry, composition and literature. We read and study "The Outsiders," "Animal Farm," "The Pearl," "Oliver Twist" and Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."

Whenever the students are doing class work, I play contemporary Christian music so the Word of God will dwell in their spirits. We know from Isaiah 55:11 that, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." I have enjoyed decorating my classroom to bring about a welcoming atmosphere to learn English and God's Word.

Summer school is a wonderful time to catch up or get ahead. Summer school is in session for six weeks. Class begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. The atmosphere is relaxed. High school

students concentrate on one subject, while middle school students focus on core classes.

After school, the students go to the dorm, the student store and then on to afternoon jobs. The campus grill is also open.

My husband, Mike, operates the campus grill, and I work with him after school. The grill is a favorite student hangout. It is a place to relax, eat and talk. Some of the students work in the grill for their jobs. The workers gain experience for the future. We enjoy working and socializing with the students.

Each student who comes to us is sent by the Lord for a reason. It is not an accident or a coincidence that sends students to OBI. God has chosen each faculty member and staff for a specific purpose. All of us are richly blessed to play a small part in each student's lives.

It is a blessing to see former students return to visit, attend Homecoming, send an e-mail or phone. It is also a blessing to see former students come back to Oneida to serve. When former students visit, they say it is like coming home.

The most important blessing is seeing the students come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to serve the Lord throughout their lives.

Oneida is a special place. The Lord has continued to bless this ministry for 105 years and I am honored to call this special place "home."

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



THIS IS ONEIDA

W.F. Underwood

Bridging the gap

Alumni celebrate tradition and commit to the future

Graduates of 27 different class years, from 1952 to 2004, returned to campus for the annual alumni conference, Aug. 2-3.

With the theme of "Bridging the Gap, Tradition and Today," alumni faced again the reality of a changed

world and the necessity of sharing the unchanging gospel. Stephen Davis, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, reminded alumni "the only thing that bridges the gap is God's Word. Each generation must commit to the Word." His second message, based on Daniel 1:1-8, asked, "Do we care about the next generation?" and offered practical guidance for reaching youth.

Theme interpretations were presented by Leitchfield pastor Arnold Moon, class of '59, and Ohio pastor Alan Dodson, '96. Faculty member William McGibney directed congregational music; his wife, Martha, accompanied at the piano. Gary Vidito, founder of Generation Reconciliation Ministries, provided special music with a unique focus on the need for different generations to unite in worship rather than experience a "worship war."

Monticello pastor Tommy Floyd, '89, completed a term as alumni president and was succeeded by Indiana pastor Bobby Slagle, '74. Other officers elected include vice-president Mark Whicker, '92; secretary Beth Wyatt, '75; treasurer Greg Humpert, '90; and assistant treasurer Emery Kinslow, '69.

Danville native and 1991 graduate Dan Stallard received the Delta Epsilon Chi Award for "outstanding intellectual achievement, Christian character and leadership ability." Stallard is a Marine chaplain who serves as deputy executive assistant to the chief of chaplains. A Southern Seminary graduate, he completed a master's degree at the Army War College and is pursuing a PhD.

Stallard expressed appreciation for the solid foundation he received at Clear Creek and asked all to remember service people in the war on terror.

The alumni conference continues the tradition of Bible-centered training for church leaders that first occurred alongside Clear Creek under a tent the first week of August in 1926.

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



CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE

Bill Whittaker

The Disney boycott bounce

Author contends protest didn't hurt Mickey but helped position SBC & leaders

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

Orlando (ABP)—The Baptist boycott of the Walt Disney Co. had little effect on the media conglomerate, but it succeeded in establishing the Southern Baptist Convention as the dominant denominational voice for conservative values, according to the author of a new book.

In "The Gospel According to Disney," Mark Pinsky, religion writer for the Orlando Sentinel, offers an assessment of the Southern Baptist boycott, which targeted the entertainment giant for gay-friendly policies and "anti-Christian" messages in its movies.

Pinsky said the boycott of Disney products did not have the intended effect of curtailing sales or changing the company's practices, but it did bolster the reputation of Southern Baptists as cultural crusaders.

"Despite fears that the boycott would make them look like backwoods, knuckle-scraping yokels—as some feared when the boycott was first proposed—Southern Baptist leaders found that this publicity helped them," Pinsky wrote. "In the domestic religious marketplace, at least, their controversial stands established and burnished their own brand as the conservative, family values denomination."

The book, subtitled "Faith, Trust and Pixie Dust," offers a chronological analysis of the religious and social messages in Disney's feature films from 1937 to 2003. Separate chapters are devoted to Disney's theme parks and the "cultural clash" presented by the boycott.

This summer marks the seven-year anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention boycott. After challenging Disney to change its ways in a 1996 resolution, the SBC joined several smaller Christian groups to boycott Disney in 1997, complaining that Disney—through its feature films and a myriad of subsidiaries—had abandoned the family-friendly image cultivated by founder Walt Disney.

"In the months and years following the boycott vote and ensuing controversy, essentially nothing happened," wrote Pinsky, who is Jewish. "The denomination, as some within it feared—and warned—appeared to be an economic paper tiger."

Disney's financial fortunes "did decline dramatically" during the late 1990s and early 2000s, Pinsky wrote, and Southern Baptists justifiably took some credit. But no research validated their claim, he added. Financial analysts instead blamed recession, terrorism, sluggish retail sales and the low ratings of Disney-owned ABC-TV.

Making media's "Golden Rolodex"

Meanwhile, only 30 percent of Southern Baptists complied with the boycott, according to a poll taken a year after it began. The New York Times last year called the boycott an "utter flop" and stated no media company would fear the wrath of Southern Baptists, Pinsky reported.

But publicity for the boycott brought "considerable exposure" to Richard Land, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty

Commission, landing him on the news media's "Golden Rolodex" and helping establish his daily syndicated radio show on 600 stations, Pinsky wrote.

Likewise, the media attention elevated the stature of Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Land's "telegenic rival in the denomination."

But Dwayne Hastings, an ERLC vice president and spokesperson, said Land and Mohler were not products of the boycott. "They were rising stars anyway," he said.

Pinsky, who wrote extensively about the boycott for the Orlando Sentinel and other publications, benefited from the event, Hastings said. "It put his name out there. All three of them benefited from it somewhat."

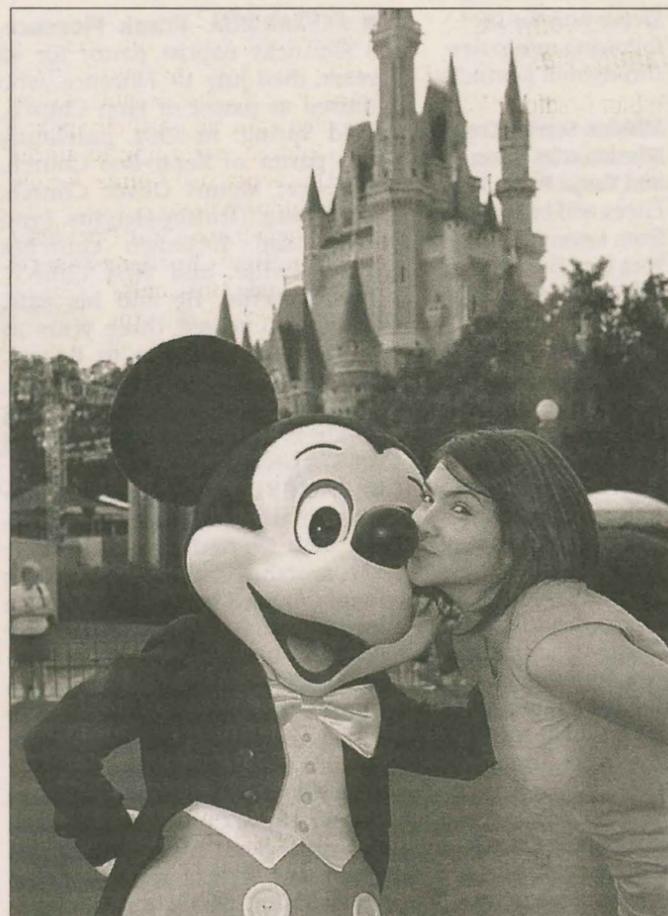
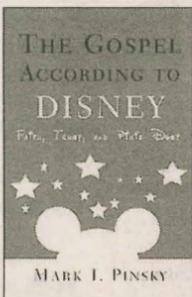
Hastings disputed the conclusion of Pinsky and others that the boycott was ineffectual. "It had to have an impact," he said.

"I would not take credit for a down-tick in their stock," he noted, adding, "It's very, very difficult to extract out and say 'we did this' or 'we did that.'"

But too many people boycotted Disney not to have some effect, he said. "Too many people in my circle made decisions (to avoid Disney products) that it had to have an impact, because my family isn't that unique," Hastings reasoned.

Beyond the economic effect, he added, the boycott "shined a spotlight" on Disney that CEO Michael Eisner did not welcome, highlighting the company's moral inconsistencies. The boycott "definitely sensitized a lot of Americans to what Disney was," Hastings concluded.

Before and after the boycott, Baptist critics complained Disney allowed large-scale "Gay Days" promotions in its theme parks and offered health benefits for partners of gay employees, who by one insider



estimate number 40 percent of Disney's workforce of 100,000.

Land and other critics say Disney was singled out from among even more offensive entertainment companies because it cultivates a clean-cut image, while at the same time pandering to non-Christian and anti-family influences.

Shaping or reflecting culture?

But, Pinsky argues in his book, Disney always has been more a reflection of America's moral direction than a shaper of it, gradually changing over the years as the predominant culture changed.

In one sense, Pinsky said, the showdown between the SBC and Disney reflects the increasing polarization within American society.

"The collision of these two titans was a dispute deeply rooted in the disconnect of politics, culture and geography," he said.

Hastings conceded the Disney-Baptist conflict mirrors cultural shifts, and that Disney is a reflection of a changing America. "There's more than a fair measure of truth in that," he said. "But (Disney executives) haven't been willing to go very far beyond the culture," he added. To justify its family-friendly image, he said, Disney should be more willing to challenge cultural assumptions and stereotypes.

After seven years, Hastings said, he doesn't see an imminent end to the Baptist boycott. "When it gets beyond a certain point, you'd look for a little movement on both sides to call an end. But we haven't seen that."

He said Southern Baptist attention hasn't waned—the ERLC still gets "one or two calls a week" for information about the boycott. But, he conceded, "We have no idea how many families are observing it."

"Being Southern Baptists, it's up to individual families to do what they want to do with it."

MAGIC KINGDOM
Contemporary Christian music artist Jaci Velasquez kisses Mickey Mouse during the 2002 Night of Joy Christian music event at Walt Disney World. A new book says the Southern Baptist Convention boycott of Disney didn't hurt the company but boosted the SBC's reputation for conservative family values. (The Walt Disney Co. photo, © 2004)

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Please pray for the following ministries throughout Kentucky:

Mission Service Corps Missionaries Jason and Tonya Price. The Prices will be moving from Lexington to New York City this month to begin their work as children's ministers with Mosaic Manhattan Church. The Mosaic church was planted less than two years ago near the site of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center. Pray that the Prices will experience God's power and presence in their lives as they work with children and families in Manhattan. Pray also that their financial needs will be met as they make this major move.

First Baptist Church of Danville. Pastor Tim Mathis and his congregation have been involved in a partnership effort with Greater Mt. Sinai Baptist Church of Lynch. Mission groups from Danville have made several trips to Lynch to help with vacation Bible school, remodeling, construction and evangelistic events. Pray that those going will experience a renewed missions awareness while accomplishing all that is requested. Pray also that many residents of Lynch will pray to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

Campus ministers in Kentucky. Kentucky Baptists have 26 student ministers serving on 32 college and university campuses through evangelism and discipleship strategies. We praise God for the 380 first-time decisions for Christ witnessed by our campus ministers during the last school year. During August, thousands of students from all over the world will converge on Kentucky campuses as the school year begins. Pray that our campus ministers will have clear direction from God about how to reach the spiritually hungry students. Pray that young people across the state will experience spiritual revival and renewal.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **ALEXANDRIA**—**Frank Florence**, a Kentucky Baptist pastor for 45 years, died July 10. Florence, who retired as pastor of First Church, Cold Spring, in 1981, previously was pastor of Kento-Boo Church, Florence; Mount Olivet Church, Willisburg; Ormsby Heights, Lynn Acres and Yorktown churches in Louisville; and First Church, Tompkinsville. He and his wife, Betty, also served three years as missionary associates to Bogota, Colombia. In addition to his wife, Florence is survived by three adult children. His funeral service was held at Grants Lick Church.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will celebrate homecoming Aug. 29. Activities include 11 a.m. worship and a noon potluck meal followed by a concert by **The Joymakers**. For information, call (270) 789-0082.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Elizabethtown Church will host **Kyle Reeder** in a sacred guitar concert Aug. 29, 6 p.m.

■ **EKRON**—**Linda Linder**, secretary of Buck Grove Church for 32 years, will retire Sept. 1. The church will honor her with a retirement reception Aug. 29, 3 to 5 p.m.

■ **FORT THOMAS**—**Joyce Franklin**, minister of music at Highland Hills Church for 18 years, recently resigned.

■ **FRANKFORK**—Memorial Church recently licensed **David Blankenship** to the gospel ministry.

Thornhill Church's CRUSH student ministries will host contemporary Christian band **Casting Crowns** in concert Oct. 8, 7 p.m., at the Frankfort Civic Center. For information, call (502) 223-7302 or visit www.thornhillbaptist.com.

■ **GLENDAL**—Gilead Church is hosting a neighborhood block party Sept. 25, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The church will celebrate homecoming Sept. 26.

■ **HEIDELBERG**—Heidelberg Church will host homecoming activities Sept. 5.

■ **HENDERSON**—Community Church recently called **Tim Hobbs** as senior pastor.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church will present the Family Follies talent show Aug. 18, 6 p.m.

■ **LaCENTER**—Ohio Valley Church recently celebrated its 100th anniversary with former pastor **Kenneth Hamilton** as guest speaker. **Tim Smith** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host the **Sons of Liberty** in concert Aug. 21, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218.

Parkland Church will host a FAITH Sunday school banquet Aug. 20, 6:30 p.m. **Bill Mackey**, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will be the featured speaker. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

Penile Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary Aug. 15. Activities include a noon potluck dinner and a 2 p.m. service featuring the **Fishers of Men**. **David Brading** is pastor.

■ **MANCHESTER**—Horse Creek Church will hold revival services Aug. 16-18, 7 p.m.

■ **NEBO**—**Bob Bridges** resigned as pastor of Johnson Island Church effective July 25.

■ **PADUCAH**—Lone Oak First Church recently called **Jeff Wallace** as minister of missions and senior adults.

■ **SALYERSVILLE**—**David Proffitt** recently resigned as pastor of Licking River Church.

■ **SOMERSET**—Camp Ground Church recently called **Damian Phillips** as pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—First Church will host a booth at Old Fashioned Trading Days Sept. 9-11.

What's going on?

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



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, Baptist 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.

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



LIBRARY EXPANSION Irene Colvin, widow of the late A.B. Colvin, and their grandson Rick Weller unveil a plaque for the A.B. Colvin Baptist Collection and Archives Room at Campbellsville University's Montgomery Library as college officials and other family members look on. Colvin and the late Ed Montgomery, both former Campbellsville trustees, were honored during a July 22 dedication of the archives room and rededication of the library.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 2001 Dodge 15-passenger van; less than 37,000 miles. (606) 379-5716.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor with emphasis on ministry to children and youth for First Baptist Church, Middlesboro, Ky. Seminary degree preferred. FBCM is affiliated with CBF, SBC and ABC. Please send resumé to: Dr. Chuck Summers, First Baptist Church, PO Box 839, Middlesboro, KY 40965, or e-mail to csummers@fbcmmiddlesboro.org.

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.

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

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

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

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: Full-time pastor for Junction City (Ky.) First Baptist Church. We are looking for the man God would have lead our congregation as we seek to do His will in this community. We are currently accepting resúmes, tapes, etc. Please call (859) 854-3253, (859) 236-0449, or Fax: (859) 854-0507.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Southern Baptist congregation that enjoys a blended style of worship. Duties include planning and leading Sunday morning and evening worship services, and leading adult choir rehearsals on Wednesday evenings. Send resumé to: East Frankfort Baptist Church, 457 Versailles Road, Frankfort, KY 40601.

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

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.

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Seeds of faith

Biblical garden attracts visitors from around globe

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Pittsburgh (RNS)—Tucked behind hedges and an iron gate on a corner of Pittsburgh's busy Fifth Avenue lies a natural resource that combines age-old Scriptures and plants whose histories are just as ancient.

The Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Garden has attracted gardeners and the faithful from across the country and the globe since it opened almost 20 years ago.

Under the watchful eye of co-director Irene Jacob, the one-third acre site designed in the shape of Israel is one of the country's largest biblical gardens—outdoor collections of plants with links to the Scriptures.

Jacob, 76, said her drive to maintain the garden is split between her interests in faith and flowers. Plants are decorated with labels explaining their connection to the Bible.

"I'm a rabbi's wife and I am a plant nut," said Jacob, whose husband, Walter, has been affiliated with Rodef Shalom Temple for 50 years.

Allan Swenson, author of "Herbs of the Bible," lists the Pittsburgh garden among almost two dozen in his 2003 book but estimates that there are probably now close to 50 biblical gardens across the country run by Jews, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and other religious gardeners.

Some are tiny, offering less than a dozen plants, he said. At least one church grows enough grapes to make juice for its Communion services.

Biblical plants on "every page"

As Irene Jacob gave a personal tour of her garden on a recent Sunday morning, she occasionally stooped down to pull up a random weed among the biblical plants.

"If you read your Bible, on almost every page, plants are mentioned," she said, passing small tan signs for herbs like coriander (Exodus 16:31), and millet (Ezekiel 4:9), a grain.

The signs indicate the plant names in English and Hebrew, with additional plant family and species information. At the bottom of the



MILLET A grain mentioned in the book of Ezekiel grows at the Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Garden in Pittsburgh. The garden is one of the largest of its kind in the country. (RNS photos courtesy of the Rodef Shalom Biblical Botanical Garden)

tan signs are a verse from the Bible that features the plant name.

Some of the labels lack a verse because they designate plants that have religious names but aren't referenced in the Bible. For example, the "Wandering Jew," a common houseplant, is planted near the gently bubbling fountains of the garden's entranceway.

For Jacob, the significance of the garden's 100 biblical plants goes beyond the pleasing scent or beauty noticed by an untrained observer. The purpose of a plant must also be noted.

When a visitor admires the greenish and yellow flowers of the papyrus (Isaiah 18:2), the former teacher of economic botany said: "That's not what is important. (The material) inside of the stalk is used for making paper."

Tourists and Pittsburgh residents alike find their way to the garden, which is mentioned in the AAA

TourBook.

"The garden is in one of the city's most popular cultural sections and visitors can expect docents to share the unique history of biblical plants," said Beth Geisler, associate director of the Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau. "It's a fabulous destination for visitors interested in gardening, biblical history or Pittsburgh's diverse religious institutions."

The site used to be a plain, grassy area. It was turned into a biblical garden in 1986 after the Jacobs first drew their idea on a brown shopping bag. After researching a 1985 guide to "Gardens of North America and Hawaii," they learned that not many biblical gardens existed.

After finding benefactors who seized on the notion, their garden now contains a replica of Israel's Sea of Galilee and Dead Sea, connected by the Jordan River.

Swenson said a botanical biblical garden such as the one in Pittsburgh, is more distinct than the typical biblical garden.

The nonbotanical variety might have plants that are not actual species that grew in the lands of the Bible but rather are a close relative that can grow in the United States.

Because it does carry botanical plants truly rooted in the Bible, the Pittsburgh garden is open only from June 1 to Sept. 15.

"Over two-thirds of our plants are tropical, so they have to be taken in winter, which in Pittsburgh means middle of September," Jacob said. Before the first frost, the plants are transplanted to a greenhouse on the grounds of the Reform temple's cemetery.

"The greenhouse is sort of their Florida," she said.

'Stadium' churches new trend among some megachurches

By Bob Smietana
Religion News Service

Inglewood, Calif. (RNS)—Stop by a typical church on a weekday night and you might find an Alcoholics Anonymous group or Boy Scout troop meeting there.

At Faithful Central Bible Church, you just might find Madonna.

That's because Faithful Central is among a small but growing number of megachurches using sports and entertainment facilities as their houses of worship.

This spring, the pop star spent six weeks rehearsing for her "Re-Invention Tour" at the Great Western Forum in Inglewood, Calif., the former home of the Los Angeles Lakers, now owned by Faithful Central. Madonna also used the church/arena to kick off her tour with a May 24 concert.

For most of the time, "Madonna's set was on one end of the Forum and ours was on the other," said Bishop Kenneth Ulmer, pastor of Faithful Central, which bought the Forum in 2000.

The church had been planning to build a new building when it became available.

"To build a new, 5,000-seat church would have cost \$18.5 million," Ulmer said. "To buy the Forum cost us \$22.5 million, and we have unlimited space to grow. It's not a bad investment."

The Forum isn't completely converted to a church space. It still hosts concerts and sporting events when not being used for worship.

Ulmer said that the building is a "tool for ministry"—offering the public various forms of entertainment while employing "500 to 600 people at each event."

Besides, he said, what else do you do with a building that seats 18,000 people on the other six days of the week?

Houston Rockets' former home now site for worship

Faithful Central is not the only church to take over a sports arena. In Houston, the Compaq Center—former home of the Rockets—is being converted for use by the 30,000 member Lakewood Church. It's scheduled to reopen next spring after a \$75 million renovation. Lakewood has signed a 30-year lease on the building, which will seat 16,000 for worship.

Scott Thuma of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research doesn't think many other churches will follow in the footsteps of Lakewood and Faithful Central.

Instead, he said, most megachurches build "a sanctuary that looks like a stadium," complete with giant projection screens and stadium-style seats.

At least two churches, he adds—Creflo Dollar's World Changers Church International in College Park, Ga., and the Crenshaw Christian Center in Los Angeles—meet in buildings that resemble the Astrodome. Crenshaw Christian Center's building is called the "Faith Dome."

Arena-like megachurches are nothing new. In the 1920s, Amy Semple McPherson built the "Angelus Temple," which drew crowds as large as 7,500. The Mason Temple, built in the 1940s by Charles Mason, founder of the church of God in Christ, looked like an arena from the outside, Thuma said.

Still, Thuma said, there is something fitting about a former stadium becoming a church.

"It's not that much of a stretch to go from one national religion—football, baseball, and basketball—to another," he said. "The stadium space, in some sense, already has a sacred feeling."

Ulmer admits that it feels odd to be preaching in the same venue where he once watched the Lakers play. But what makes worship sacred, he said, is not the place—it's God working in the lives of people.

"Theologically," he said, "we emphasize that the church is the people. The building has been sanctified and consecrated when the people of God are gathered and the presence of God fills the place."

Worshippers at Faithful Central can't escape the Forum's past.

Some of the banners from Laker championships are still in place, Ulmer said.

"The memory of the Lakers still lingers in that place," he said, adding that the church has used that memory in its ministry.

"We say that we are still building champions," he said. "We are continuing the legacy of building champions."



BIBLICAL GARDEN Visitors check out the plants, which are labeled by species as well as by Bible verses that mention them.

Any time can be back-to-school time at Oneida Baptist Institute.

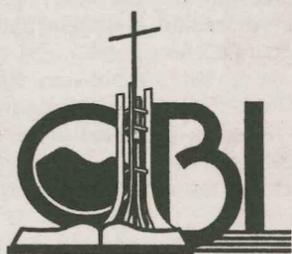


August is the time to shop for notebooks, sharpen pencils and prepare to study once more.

At Oneida Baptist Institute we accept new students not only in August, but throughout the year. We have always believed in meeting a child's need when the need arises. Academic difficulties, family conflicts or peer problems may necessitate a change of schools at any time. Our admissions staff works year-round to enroll young people in grades 6-12.

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