

WESTERN RECORDER

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

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ELIZA BROADUS
OFFERING
See Insert

FOR THE RECORD

Baptists
SBC president's road tour urges churches to increase baptisms. Page 2.



Kentucky
Church ready for more international ministry after Brazil trip. Page 3.

Editorial
State missions: Sharing Jesus with friends. Page 5.

Youth ministry
New monthly column debuts. Page 5.

Resources
Pastor shows how his church reached out to unchurched men. Page 6.

Nation
Baptist disaster relief volunteers forced to flee Florida as Hurricane Frances arrives. Page 8.

Survey: Ministers often know little about other beliefs

Phoenix (RNS)—Most Protestant ministers expressed little familiarity with the key beliefs of several non-Protestant faith groups, a survey has found.

The faith perspectives most likely to be "extremely familiar" to Protestant clergy were Roman Catholicism (41 percent), Judaism (33 percent), Mormonism (21 percent), Jehovah's Witnesses (21 percent) and Islam (21 percent).

The findings by Ellison Research were reported in *Facts & Trends*, a magazine by Life-Way Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

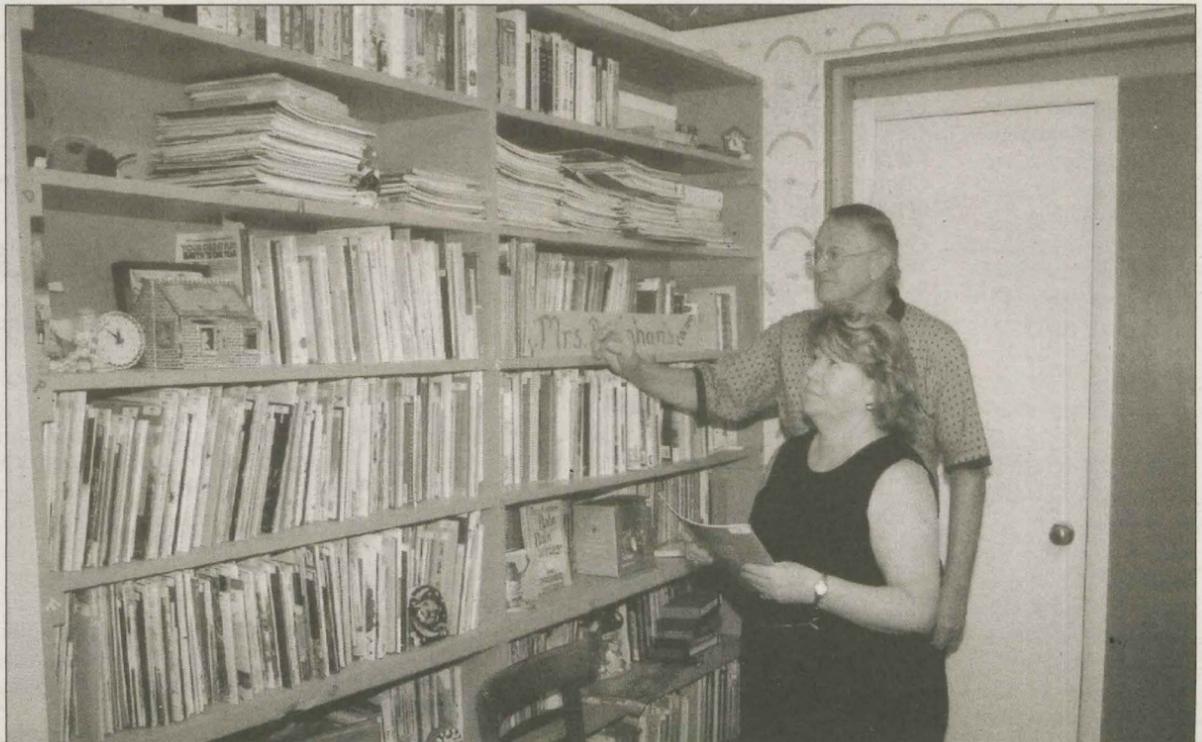
When researchers combined the top two levels of familiarity stated by Protestant clergy, 85 percent said they were relatively familiar with the core tenets of the Roman Catholic Church and 80 percent expressed similar knowledge of Judaism.

A minority of Protestant ministers expressed relative familiarity with these non-Protestant groups: Islam (47 percent), New Age beliefs (43 percent), Satanism (31 percent), Buddhism (28 percent), Hinduism (27 percent), Scientology (15 percent), Wicca (13 percent) Baha'ism (13 percent) and Sikhism (5 percent).

"Given the importance these pastors often place on evangelism, one might expect just the opposite, so this is a surprise," said Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research. "Trying to reach people who hold other beliefs is more likely if you understand what those beliefs are."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

Love from a diaper bag



MRS. BINGHAM'S CORNER Bessie and Lester McPeck of Jenkins look over the children's library at "My Father's House," a ministry center in their Letcher County community. A retired teacher from Knoxville, Tenn., donated the collection, along with the sign that used to hang in her classroom. The McPeeks, Mission Service Corps volunteer missionaries, opened "My Father's House" earlier this year. (Photo by Dannah Prather)

Jenkins missionaries: God regularly supplies ministry

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Jenkins—When Lester and Bessie McPeck tell prospective donors that any item can be used in ministering to the people of Eastern Kentucky, they really mean it.

Children's books, a can of coffee, diapers, a computer monitor. All are welcome at My Father's House, a ministry center the McPeeks opened earlier this year in the Letcher County community of Jenkins.

"Something new happens every day because every day we ask for a miracle," said Lester, who, with

his wife, is part of Mission Service Corps, a network of long-term volunteer missionaries coordinated by state Baptist conventions and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

"We've utilized every bit of space in this building," Bessie said. "We've got a lot to do."

The McPeeks had plenty to do even before they converted the old NAPA Auto Parts store into a ministry center.

Three years ago, Bessie took her own money and purchased baby-care items for needy families. When word got out about the ministry,

she soon became overwhelmed with donations.

Until recently, the headquarters of "God's Love from a Diaper Bag" was Bessie's car.

Lester kept busy volunteering for a food bank in nearby Prestonsburg, delivering and sorting donations. During the winter, as many as 160 families are served each month.

In her job as an office manager for the local welfare office, Bessie sees the unemployed, disabled and impoverished every day. She and Lester dreamed of doing even more for their neighbors.

□ See *Jenkins missionaries* ... Page 3

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, September 8.

Minister: Fellowship important for growing Sunday school class

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Hopkinsville—Sunday school classes can double in size if they learn how to have fun, according to one Hopkinsville pastor speaking at Super Saturday workshops.

Aaron Reed, minister of education at Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, said classes that hold fellowships and maintain ongoing contact with members and visitors are likely to expand.

"There is an epidemic of loneliness in our culture," Reed said. "People need a place to fit in."

Reed will present his workshop again this Saturday, Sept. 11, at First Baptist Church of Somerset. Another Super Saturday conference will be held Saturday in Paducah at Lone Oak First Baptist Church.

Reed bases his instruction on

material by Josh Hunt, a Southern Baptist pastor from New Mexico who wrote the book, "You Can Double Your Class in Two Years or Less."

But fellowships aren't the sole answer, Reed cautioned.

Teachers must prepare interesting lessons and be committed to attracting new members, he added. "I've never seen a Sunday school class blossom and grow unless the teacher is committed to growth."

Still, fellowships are important to growing both classes and the church, Reed said.

He referred to a study Hunt did at his church. Overall, only 11 percent of visitors joined. Of those invited to someone's home for fellowship, 90 percent eventually became members.

Fellowships can involve a variety

of ideas, Reed said, but board games at someone's home are a good option.

The cost is low, which Reed called important. In the past, he saw participation in some class fellowships decline because outings became too expensive for certain members.

Besides, the key is the fellowship, not the activity, Reed added: "You're there to talk."

Hunt favors weekly gatherings, saying, "Give Friday night to Jesus." Reed noted that might not be possible for everyone, especially parents with children in numerous school activities.

But the point is to schedule activities consistently, whether monthly or bi-monthly, he said.

"The key is you invite people to get to know each other on a sys-

tematic basis," he said. "The sky's the limit. It's open to the creativity of the class in ways they can be involved. But it has to involve everyone and not (be) something only a few people can do."

Even though the goal of home fellowships ultimately is to lead non-Christians to accept Jesus as their personal Savior, Reed recommends avoiding Bible studies during the evening.

These events should strictly be social, he said.

"Develop the relationship first and then get them into Bible study and present the gospel to them," Reed said.

"In today's society, relationships are a key to bringing people to Christ. People come to church for a thousand different reasons, but they stay because of one: friends."

SBC president hits the road

Welch launches bus tour to promote 'Everyone Can' evangelism campaign

Daytona Beach, Fla. (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch launched his nationwide bus tour last week, comparing his efforts to a "Lewis & Clark expedition" to try to win souls.

Welch conceived of a national bus tour rally to generate a sense of urgency about evangelism among Southern Baptists. The bus tour is a kickoff for Welch's "Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge for Evangelism" campaign, which has the lofty goal of baptizing 1 million converts next year. Last year's baptism total in the SBC was 377,357.

Welch is scheduled to travel to all 50 states and Canada to visit with pastors and denominational workers and join them in neighborhood evangelistic visits. (He was scheduled to lead a rally Sept. 7 at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. See next week's Western Recorder for a report of his visit to Kentucky.)

On Aug. 29, the first night of the tour, Welch led by example as he shared the gospel at two homes in Richmond Hills, Ga.

A call for outreach

Welch, the co-creator of the FAITH Sunday school evangelism strategy widely used in SBC churches, said he hopes the "Everyone Can" emphasis will motivate the 16-million-member denomination to expand its outreach. Although membership in the Southern Baptist Convention continues to grow, there has been a decline in baptisms for four consecutive years, and Welch is praying for God to reverse that trend.

"Amazing is a good word to describe it," John Sullivan, Florida Baptist Convention executive director, said of the national tour. "Bobby Welch has never done anything ordinary."

Maudellen Welch said she is proud of her husband's initiative.

"I feel honored and blessed to be his wife, and I just pray for him and this trip," she said. "I know that he can't begin to touch the surface of what needs to be done, but hopefully he can touch some other people's lives who can in turn touch some other people's lives."

Members of Welch's congregation, First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, Fla., are supporting him in prayer as he begins his effort to identify what he described as "that first-wave force to come with us" to the SBC annual meeting in Nashville in June 2005 to kick off a campaign to baptize 1 million people in 12 months.

Al Waters, 80, a 56-year member of the church, placed the first Bible he ever owned on the bus with its pages open to Psalm 91. Waters is praying those promises of protection over his pastor as he begins his 25-day, 70-stop, 20,000-mile expedition.

The bus drew national media attention as it was escorted up Interstate 95 by 22 motorcyclists from the FAITH riders ministry group. A three-person crew from CNN, filming a documentary on evangelicals, came on board just south of Jacksonville.

During an interview with CNN reporter Carol Marin, Welch quoted John 14:6, which identifies Jesus as the way, the truth and the life. Marin asked him if he took that literally.

"Yes," he said.

Some Christians don't see it that way, she responded.

"For me, it's easy," Welch said. "I open the Bible and I read it. I'm a satisfied customer with what has happened in my life."

During an Aug. 31 rally in Richmond, Va., Welch joined hands in



SATISFIED CUSTOMER In a CNN interview at the outset of his national bus tour to promote evangelism, Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch told the TV crew, "I open the Bible and I read it. I'm a satisfied customer with what has happened in my life." (BP photo by Skip Crowell)

prayer with the executive director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and the president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Although the conservative convention broke away from the BGAV a few years ago over political and philosophical differences, the leaders expressed unity in their commitment to reach Virginia for Christ.

Grassroots emphasis

Doyle Chauncey, executive director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, said after the gathering at Staples Mill Road Baptist Church that he appreciates the way Welch is "directing his attention toward the grassroots, realizing that the church is really the headquarters for the Southern Baptist Convention."

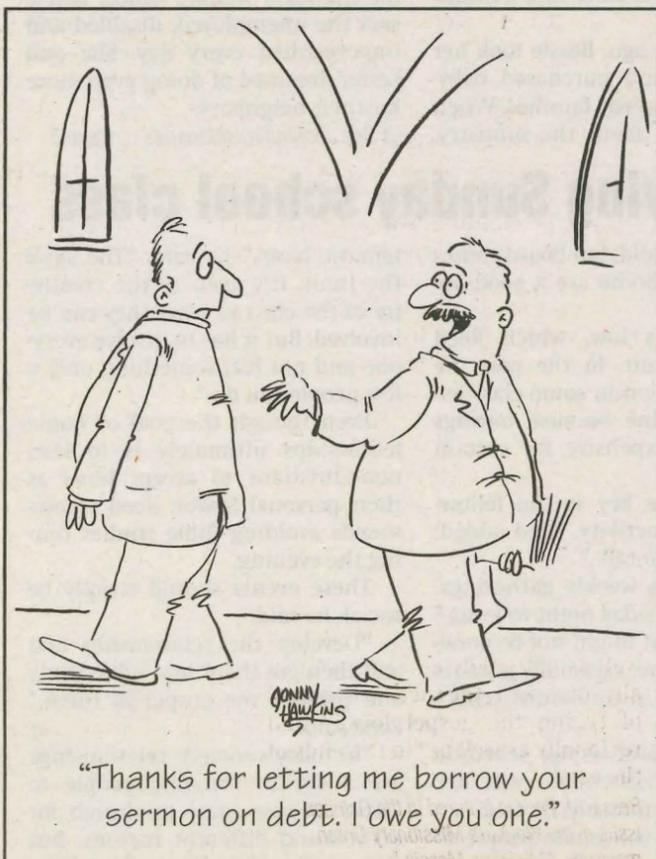
Chauncey said the experience gave him a strengthened focus on the fact "that if we're ever going to make a difference in terms of increasing the number of baptisms, setting goals at the denominational level will not get the job done unless we go to the local church, the

grassroots, because therein lies the source of increased baptisms."

Don Davidson, president of the Baptist General Association of Virginia and pastor of Mount Hermon Baptist Church in Danville, Va., said Baptists are "a diverse group of people, but there are some things that are non-debatable."

"Those things are the Lordship of Christ, the power of His Word and our mission, our purpose for being, which is evangelism," Davidson said. "I appreciate President Welch really drawing attention to that. That will be, I think, what will keep us focused for the future."

"It was a wonderful experience, not only to be praying with the president of the Southern Baptist Convention but also to be praying with the director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia," Davidson reflected. "It shows me that in Virginia, even though we have two state conventions, we are on the same page when it comes to wanting to reach people for Christ. We do agree on that. We're brothers, and it was a beautiful experience to pray together."



BAPTIST DIGEST

Clinton criticizes 'iVoteValues.'

Former President Bill Clinton criticized the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's iVoteValues.com voter-awareness initiative Aug. 29, saying the values debate should not be framed around the issues of abortion and same-sex marriage. "Politics and political involvement dictated by faith is not the exclusive province of the right wing in America," he said to applause at New York City's Riverside Church. ERLC President Richard Land said he is glad Clinton has noticed the iVoteValues campaign. "I assume that Bill Clinton will vote his values," Land said, "and we're encouraging every American to vote their values."

LifeWay to publish judge's book.

Former Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore's upcoming book, "So Help Me God!" will be released next March by LifeWay Christian Resources' Broadman &

Holman Publishers. Kenneth Stephens, president of B&H, said it is an honor to be associated with the publication of Moore's book. "As a brilliant jurist, Moore takes on some of the most controversial issues of our day and forces the question, 'Can the state acknowledge God?'" Stephens noted. He said Moore's arguments "will inform both those who agree and those who do not share his views."

Olford, 86, leaves preaching legacy.

Stephen Olford, a noted expository preacher, died Aug. 29 after suffering a stroke. He was 86. Olford founded the Stephen Olford Institute for Biblical Preaching in 1980 to promote biblical preaching and practical training for pastors, evangelists and lay leaders. In 1988, he established the Stephen Olford Center for Biblical Preaching in Memphis, Tenn., to house the institute. A frequent speaker at Southern Baptist pas-

tors' conferences, Olford's ministry recently formed partnerships with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Born in Zambia as a son of missionaries, he hosted the weekly radio show, "Encounter." His memorial service will be Sept. 8 at Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis.

Mohler named to Dobson's board.

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, has been elected to the 13-member board of directors of Focus on the Family. "The addition of Dr. Mohler to our board will bring a wealth of leadership experience, theological insight and intellectual acumen to Focus on the Family," said James Dobson, who founded Focus on the Family in 1977. The evangelical organization, based in Colorado Springs, Colo., has offices in 20 countries.

Brazil trip has church ready for more international work

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Jeffersontown—After seeing 50 Brazilians accept Jesus as their personal Savior this summer, members of Hopewell Baptist Church say they are eager to organize another international mission trip.

"One of the main things I learned was the power of prayer," Pastor Don James said of the July 22 through Aug. 2 trip.

"There was an incredible sense of God's presence and power there; a sense that He was breaking the power of darkness."

This marked the first international mission trip for eight of the nine team members.

The project was coordinated with the help of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions department.

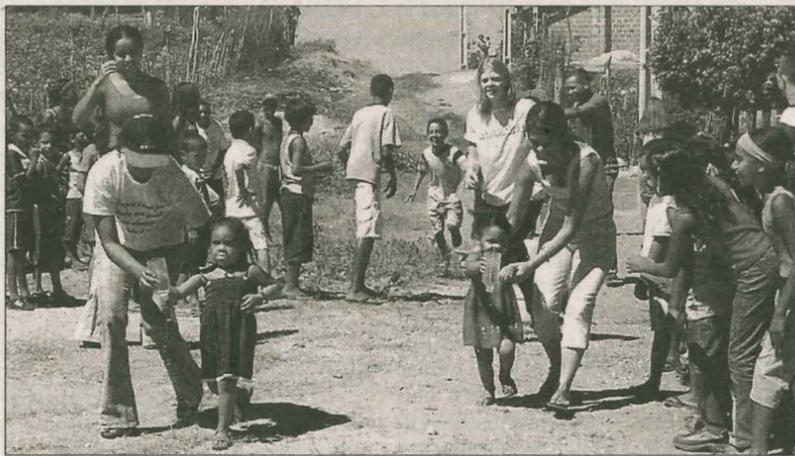
The sole purpose of the trip was evangelism, the pastor said, and they immediately began working when they arrived on a Saturday.

James said Ben Tu, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in the village of Firmino Filho, told them, "Let's get to work."

Poor but eager to hear

Tu sent volunteer teams with interpreters to take an evangelistic message to homes in the village of Fermina Filho.

Located in the state of Piaui, the village is composed of squatters, poor people who are pressing the government for reforms that will grant them property, James said.



WATER RELAY Members of Hopewell Baptist Church in Jeffersontown led a vacation Bible school in the Brazilian village of Firmino Filho earlier this summer. The project was coordinated by the KBC partnership missions department.

James said Piaui reportedly is the poorest state in Brazil. Tu's salary equals less than \$70 a month, and at least half the homes lack indoor plumbing.

Despite their poverty, Brazilians were eager to hear the gospel, team members said.

"A lot of us were in awe of the types of people we were able to evangelize and share with," said deacon Sean Kyser, a mechanical engineer. "People said they could tell God had a plan for our group and it was a big plan."

The team presented the gospel during a rally attended by more than 1,000 squatters in Teresina, a large city about 20 minutes from the village.

Michael O'Neal, minister of

education and a full-time student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, delivered the 10-minute message.

Tu told the group he had prayed for two years for this kind of opportunity, James said. He called the experience the highlight of the trip.

"When he shared over the loudspeaker, people got closer and huddled together, like they were listening to every word Michael said," James recalled. "We were blown away at how we felt the Holy Spirit was screaming the gospel."

While excited about the chance to preach, O'Neal said he was most gratified by the opportunity to lead several young people to Christ.

For the rest of the week, those teens accompanied them on door-

to-door visits, which resulted in others deciding to follow Jesus, O'Neal said.

Spiritual warfare: "It's real."

"I learned the harvest is plentiful," O'Neal said. "The trip also reminded me of the joy of obedience (to God) and evangelism ... and the power of being of one accord. If our churches could get focused on that, it's amazing what God can do."

Kyser said he learned about the seriousness of spiritual warfare.

At one home, Kyser said he felt extremely hot and had a dry mouth as he was speaking to the woman who lived there.

Afterward, his interpreter told him two other mission volunteers had fallen down during visits to the same area.

"It's real," Kyser said. "It's nothing to be taken lightly."

This was the first time team leader Daniel Snow was in charge of a mission trip, and his last at Hopewell.

Snow, who has only a few classes to complete his seminary degree, departed Aug. 30 for Arkansas to become a youth pastor at First Baptist Church of Fort Smith.

He said the mission trip reminded him that the greatest joy comes from serving in God's Kingdom.

"There were so many people praying before we left. And while we were there, you could see the Lord opening doors," Snow said. "It's among all men."

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

Campbellsville University, Cumberland College and Mid-Continent College were listed in the latest rankings of schools by U.S. News and World Report. Georgetown was listed as a third-tier school for national liberal arts colleges. Cumberland ranked 60th among Southern schools focusing on bachelor's and master's programs. Campbellsville ranked 64th in the same category. Mid-Continent ranked as a fourth-tier school among Southern colleges focusing on bachelor's programs.

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College will hold a campus revival Sept. 21-23 at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. in the school's chapel. Phil Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church of Powell, Tenn., will be the evangelist. The services are open to the public.

Jenkins missionaries: God regularly supplying ministry's needs

Continued from page 1

Often, they would pass the empty NAPA building, and Lester would say, "One day, God's going to give us that building."

Six months ago, Lester decided it was time to talk to the building's owner. "Twenty minutes after I started talking, he was convinced," he recalled.

The McPeeks "just stepped out on faith and things started happening," said Jean Hall, a volunteer who helped turn the old store into a place of ministry. Hall also tutors adults in reading and writing.

One of the first things the McPeeks wanted to do was add a large bathroom and laundry area onto the building so out-of-town volunteers would have a place to stay while serving.

"The miracle for today"

This summer, Coy Webb, pastor of First Baptist Church of Monticello, brought 31 adults and youth to Jenkins to work on the addition. When they arrived, there were no materials to start the job.

Lester told the group it would cost approximately \$2,000 to get them started, adding "I don't know where the money's coming from."

Webb said after a moment of panic, wondering if his team had come 150 miles only to have nothing to do, he realized that the need already had been met by one of his own church members.

"He had given us \$2,000 and, at that time, we really didn't have a need for it," Webb said. The plan



was to put the money aside for a future project. "The Lord already knew it was needed."

Webb informed the McPeeks about the available money. "After they got through weeping," Webb recalled, "Lester said, 'This is the miracle for today.'"

Another unexpected blessing came when the McPeeks were traveling to Knoxville, Tenn., to pick up donations. They were discussing the need for insulating the building's new addition. Bessie said she had been praying for a gift of money or the insulation itself.

The McPeeks were driving behind a large truck that was moving well over the speed limit. Its load shifted and they saw something fall out of the truck, heading straight for them.

It was a bundle of insulation.

They piled the insulation into their own truck and tried to catch up to the other vehicle to return the material. But the first truck was moving so fast, they never caught up.

Later that day, Lester said they were driving behind another truck—this one loaded with uncut timber. "I told Bessie, please don't pray for lumber right now."

Larry Martin, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions growth team, said the McPeeks are "perfect examples of Christian servants and servant leaders."

"Theirs is a ministry that is growing dramatically and it is multi-faceted," he said.

Home to many ministries

The McPeeks plan to offer many services through My Father's House. "God's Love from a Diaper Bag" now has a home; literacy tutoring for adults and children has begun; substance abuse recovery support groups and parenting classes are planned; and the center has 15 working computers and a tutor available for people who want to learn basic computer skills.

The gospel is lived out and discussed through the activities and services of My Father's House.

"While we were there, some of our youth and adults led backyard Bible clubs," Webb said. "Four children came to know Jesus."

The Monticello group also led an outdoor worship service at a park in nearby Whitesburg.

Approximately 150 people at-



SHOWING "GDS LVE" Lester McPeek shows off the license plate for the ministry's truck.

tended, Webb said. "There was a lot of planting of seeds among the adults."

The work the Monticello team did on the building "was on lasting things to leave for (the McPeeks) to do ministry," Webb said.

What the McPeeks gave to the volunteers was equally precious. "It really energized some of our members seeing people who are just walking day to day by faith."

The excitement to serve in Appalachia has spilled over from the Monticello team to the entire congregation, Webb said. "There are needs in Eastern Kentucky as great as I've seen in Brazil, Russia, Poland and Tanzania," he said.

Webb said working locally as well as nationally and internationally lives out the Acts 1:8 model of taking the gospel locally and regionally as well as "to the ends of the earth."

Bessie McPeek is featured in the October issue of the *Woman's Missionary Union* magazine, "Missions Mosaic."

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

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God forgives divorce

I would like to respond to the Aug. 10 letter concerning divorced people living in adultery.

I am a divorced Christian woman who is happily married to a divorced Christian man and we are actively serving the Lord in our church. We already were divorced when we met at our church in a Christian-led divorce support group.

The Bible does not say that divorce is the unpardonable sin. Divorce is a sin, but God forgives and gives us another chance if we are repentant and ask for forgiveness.

Isn't it a shame that people, single, married, divorced, widowed, etc., are dying and going to hell all around us and we are so busy judging their lives that we can't take the time to lead them to Jesus? Wouldn't the writer gain more from God in her life if she spent as much energy and time praying for divorced people and loving us in spite of our warts and faults rather than judging us so harshly?

I have found that when we judge we are also sinning—since judging is God's job. He knew we would sin, divorce and commit all kinds of other sins, and so He sent Jesus to die on the cross so that we could be forgiven (John 3:16). Are we divorcees any worse than Saul was on his trip to Damascus? He was forgiven. This is not a perfect world, and none of us are perfect.

As a child of the King, I know that I am forgiven because of God's unconditional love. What a wonderful world this would be if we were more loving! We do not live under the law, but at the foot of the cross.

Libby Arnold
Louisville

Keep ministering

I have been a pastor for more than 40 years and the need for ministry to ministers has not been very high on my list of concerns. There

Historic covenant signed

Aug. 29, 2004, was an historic day in Kentucky Baptist Convention history as the covenant agreement was signed for the launching of the first of what will be at least 25 "high impact" churches.

The signing ceremony for The Master's Church Mission in Lexington took place in a warehouse that is being converted into classroom and worship space. The new mission (which already is meeting) is planning its official public launch on Oct. 3.

Victory Baptist Church of Lexington, in partnership with Elkhorn Baptist Association and the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is sponsoring the mission. The signed covenant listed responsibilities for each of the four partners.

Mike James, pastor of Victory Baptist Church, signed the covenant as sponsoring church pastor. He will serve as supervisor for the new work. The sponsoring church will provide accounting support along with prayer and personnel for special projects, as well as significant

is a question, however, about who is the minister's minister.

On May 2, my wife succumbed to a two-year struggle with colon cancer. I want to say thank you to those who ministered to me and at the same time note how important it is that we minister to each other.

First, the local church is the most important minister in the community. While we spent so much time talking about Sunday school attendance, budgets and what the church fails to do, I thank God for the churches that I have served as pastor (past and present) who ministered to me. They also do it for others. Praise God for the local church.

Second, other ministers step up and minister. Thanks to the many who called me, prayed for me, loved me and showed kindness. We don't do this just for pay. It's love.

Third, prayer ministries are so important. I want to say thanks to the thousands of Christians who prayed for Reba in the past two years. Don't quit praying. I have had so many people come up to me and say, "I've prayed for you." Thanks, and don't stop. The power of your prayers is sustaining power. Pray for others. Keep praying. Thank you for praying.

Individuals who love in Jesus' name by hugging you, carrying the casket and coming to be with you are wonderful ministers. Thanks be to God for this gift of loving. It lasts.

I thank all who ministered to me. Keep ministering to others.

Floyd Price
Prestonsburg

Focus on Jesus

Your front-page story in the Aug. 31 issue really touched a nerve in me. It was titled "KBC pastors: Leadership is key to having more baptisms."

As pastor of a small, rural church in Hardin County, I have seen many young people as well as adults come forward during the

invitation to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. In many of these cases, I have asked the person coming to state to me his or her reason for coming forward. I wince every time I hear someone say, "Because I want to be baptized."

I usually want to talk with that person further before just putting another "notch" in our baptistry.

I want people to come forward to join Jesus, not just to get baptized or just to join our church.

If that means our church is in "crisis" as Kentucky Baptist evangelism leader Dan Garland states, then so be it. I want dedicated Christians who love the Lord, not just someone who wants to get baptized.

Don Daniel
Elizabethtown

Walk the walk

God is not a political football to be kicked around by Democrats and Republicans. Neither political party is more godlike than the other, and God does not favor one party over the other.

God is not pulling for either George W. Bush or John Kerry to be America's next president. Our Creator gives us the freedom to make right and wrong choices, even the freedom to be an atheist or agnostic. We reap the consequences, good or bad, for our choices.

But what God does require of us is that we do justice, love kindness and walk humbly, not arrogantly, with our God. We must love God with all our heart, soul and mind and love our neighbors as well as we love ourselves.

God wants all of us to walk the walk, not just talk the religious talk. If we do what God requires of us, it will help us make the right choices in the voting booth.

We dishonor and displease God when we deliberately use God for political gain. I am a person of faith who doesn't need Jerry Falwell to tell me who to vote for.

Paul L. Whiteley Sr.
Louisville

am., church development strategist and high impact church consultant for the KBC, signed on behalf of Kentucky Baptists.

The KBC is responsible for providing \$100,000 over three years for each new high impact church as called for in the Kentucky Baptists Connect plan developed by a special Mission Board study committee. One of the goals calls for the launch of 75 new churches and 50 language churches over the next five years. Twenty-five of these new churches will be "high impact" churches with the goal of reaching at least 250 in attendance within five years.

In addition to starting new churches, the Kentucky Baptists Connect plan also seeks to strengthen existing churches. Consequently, there are goals related to starting new Sunday school units and small groups; and on placing KBC staff in the field to be readily available to help churches experience growth and development.

I pray that God will help all churches be faithful in ministering and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Ready to save for college? Explore numerous options

By Don Spencer

Parents generally want to save money for their children's education. Often, the parents have a concern for eliminating taxes on those savings. Sometimes there is a concern for maintaining control of the money if the child decides not to go to college. There are several good options for college savings:

■ State-sponsored 529 plans have received most of the publicity lately. These plans allow larger contributions. They grow tax deferred. The money can be withdrawn with no federal taxes due as long as used for qualified college expense. If your child opts for the "school of hard knocks" instead of college, you'll then pay taxes and penalties. However, this sometimes can be avoided by transferring the money for educational expense for another qualified family member. If your child receives a scholarship, you can withdraw an amount equal to the scholarship and pay only regular income taxes but no penalty tax. One disadvantage of some 529 plans is a limited choice of investment options.

529 plans are a great option for grandparents to use in funding educational expense. If one grandchild does not attend college, the money can be transferred to a first cousin (another grandchild) and withdrawn tax-free if used for their education.

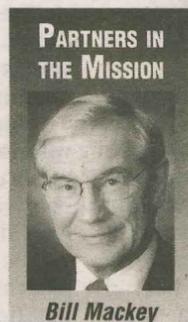
Kentucky has an excellent 529 plan. The Kentucky plan has a good mix of investment options through TIAA-CREF mutual funds. You can get more information at www.kentuckytrust.org.

■ Roth IRAs are more flexible than 529 plans. You have more investment options. If the child does not go to college, you'll just have more for retirement. After five years and age 59 and a half, you can withdraw the funds tax- and penalty-free.

■ Coverdell Education Savings Accounts let you invest us to \$2,000 for a beneficiary each year. Money can be withdrawn tax-free if spent on qualified education expenses. If the child does not go to college, the parent can keep control if the account is set up that way.

■ The most flexible option involves regular taxable investments through mutual funds. With the tax on capital gains and dividends both capped at 15 percent, the tax hits are less painful than in the past.

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



How can couples strengthen daily prayer times together?

Q: I feel like a spiritual failure rather than a spiritual leader when I hear marriage enrichment leaders talk about the importance of praying daily with one's spouse. Do you have any tips on how I might be more successful in encouraging my wife to pray with me?

You are not alone. Even couples that do pray together often struggle. They will tell you they struggle with fears of becoming vulnerable and intimate with each other.

MARRIAGE

Also, since prayer is spiritual warfare, Satan will use everything at his disposal to undermine the couple. This might include physical factors such as illness, fatigue or hunger. It might include psychological factors such as discouragement, fear or distraction.

If you want to pray and your spouse does not, remember that the Bible says more about "praying for" than it does about "praying with." Pray for your spouse. Invite her to sit with you as you each pray silently. Keep in mind that what scares many people about "praying with" is the discomfort of long, conversational prayers. Remember that Jesus cautioned His disciples "not to keep on babbling like pagans" (Matthew 6:7). Lead your wife in short prayers at mealtimes. Suggest that you say the Lord's Prayer together either at the beginning or end of the day. Invite her over time to pray briefly as she feels comfortable.

Perhaps the best way to influence your wife is to allow her to see you regularly practicing the spiritual discipline of prayer. I'm reminded of the words of a poem I heard almost 20 years ago from John Wooden, legendary coach of the UCLA basketball team:

No printed page, nor oral plea,

Can teach our students what they should be,

Nor all the books on all the shelves,

It's what the teachers are themselves.—Scott Wigginton

Q: My husband's work requires him to be gone from home often. I am left alone with the kids a lot of the time. I love my children but I am having a hard time with this. I feel lonely and frustrated. When my husband is home, he feels guilty about being away from the kids so we mainly spend time doing family things. What do I do with these feelings? They are starting to affect how I feel toward my husband.

Remember that your marriage is the foundation of your family life. Your best gift to your children is building the strong, loving marriage God wants for the two of you. You cannot build that kind of marriage without spending time together and being intentional about doing so. Neglecting your marriage in order to attend to your children will hurt them in the end. Look for balance between time spent together and time spent as a family. Both are important.

MARRIAGE

Invite your husband on a date. Share with him how you are feeling. Let him know what you need. He cannot read your mind or guess what you need from him. It is your job to let him know.

Your husband is not able to meet all your needs. That is not God's intention. God will meet all your needs, and many of those through other people. You and your husband have the privilege of serving God by meeting one another's needs and sometimes even wants.

Christ modeled for us how to build a strong, intimate relationship through His relationship with His Father and His friends. Spend time together and talk to one another regularly. Plan for it. Imagine occasionally traveling together, sending or leaving love notes for each other, calling, sending postcards or packages in the mail, planning homecoming dates and send-off dates, reading to one another over the phone, sharing a special memory through e-mail, packing or leaving an item with your scent on it. Create new opportunities to connect with your husband.—Valerie Vincent

Family Forum writers are:

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



State missions: Sharing Jesus with friends

Jesus instructed His followers on more than one occasion to "love your neighbor as yourself." The obvious question in Luke 10:29 from one of His listeners was: "And who is my neighbor?"

Christ's response to the man was the first telling of the parable of the good Samaritan, which has become one of the most widely known and loved parables of the New Testament.

After recounting the actions of an unnamed priest, Levite and Samaritan, Jesus asked, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?"

Christ's pupil answered, "The one who showed mercy toward him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

How can Kentucky Baptists today show love to our neighbors? One way is to become personally involved in supporting state mission efforts throughout the Bluegrass State. This year's state missions theme, "Friend to Friend: Friendships with a Missions Twist," highlights the importance of making mission efforts personal.

As significant as Kentucky Baptists' support of North American and international mission endeavors is, state missions adds the personal "twist" of involvement in a variety of ministry projects that can directly impact our friends and neighbors.

Kentucky Baptists' 2004 season of prayer for state missions is set for Sept. 19-26. The Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions features an ambitious \$1 million goal, including a base goal of \$925,000.

Major allocations include \$615,000 for state missions and evangelism efforts, \$260,000 for Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union missions education and ministries to missionaries and \$50,000 for Kentucky special ministries. Funds received beyond the base goal will be divided be-

tween church starting efforts across the state and renovation efforts at WMU's Cedar Crest camp facilities.

When you and other members of your congregation give to the Eliza Broadus Offering, specific projects funded by the offering include:

State missions, \$307,000. Includes funding for a mountain missionary in Eastern Kentucky, funds to assist 37 Kentucky Baptist associations and assistance for 12 churches and four regional state missionary workers.

Church and community missions, \$113,000. Includes funds for missionaries serving poor communities of Kentucky, Baptist Fellowship Center personnel and training for literacy volunteers.

Student work, \$90,000. Includes funds to support international student ministry, Reach Out Campus Revivals, student mission action projects and Kentucky student summer missions.

Language missions, \$77,000. Includes support for Eastern Kentucky Regional Deaf Ministry, Hispanic ministry and ministries to other language/ethnic groups across the state.

Missions education camping, \$71,250. Includes funding for staff, missionaries and materials for Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, camp scholarships for needy children, Mother/Daughter, GA and Acteens camps.

In each of these ministry efforts and more, state missions gifts support Kentucky Baptists reaching out to friends and neighbors in the name of Christ.

In addition to financial support, state missions provides opportunities for individual Kentucky Baptists to take part through prayer and personal involvement.

Who is your neighbor? Supporting state missions is one way to help reach them with the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Local network strengthens youth ministries

No one understands youth ministry like another youth minister. That is one of the guiding principles that undergirds the group of friends that make up the Hopkinsville youth ministry network.

That's also one of the main reasons for this column. My hope and prayer is that this new monthly spot in the Western Recorder can become a resource for encouragement, telling our stories to all Kentucky Baptists and sharing ideas (because we all know that we youth leaders always are looking to borrow anything successful that someone else is doing).

Since September 1992 I've been minister of education and youth at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville. Twelve years in ministry at one location makes me an atypical youth minister. The average tenure for a youth minister now is under 18 months. Gina and I have two wonderful children: a daughter, Karen, and a son, Jordan. I could brag on all of them forever, but this isn't necessarily the place for that.

It has been my pleasure to be involved in both the Kentucky Baptist Youth Ministry Association and the Hopkinsville youth ministry network. Both of them are places where "everybody knows your

name" and peers "have your back." If I've learned anything in youth ministry, it is that I don't know it all and that ministry never happens in a vacuum.

This week, I want to describe the Hopkinsville network and, in the process, share the types of ideas and resources I hope this column will promote and encourage.

The Hopkinsville group is not just a network of ministers but a body of friends. I honestly can say that some of the guys in this area are the best friends I have on earth. We laugh, cry, pray and minister together. We challenge each other and serve as accountability partners (Proverbs 27:17). We take our wives out to eat together. We plan events with our students together. It is a rare place indeed, and we all know that. The beauty is that we also present a unified front to the local churches, local schools and community organizations.

We each have a middle or high school campus where we are the "campus minister." Our respective churches also have adopted those schools as a mission point. I don't have to be everywhere all the time because I know one of these guys is watching out for my students and I am doing the same for his at the

school where I am.

During a monthly lunch with these friends, we talk about the students who are "visiting" our ministry but members at another's church. We constantly want to be faithful to winning the lost and reclaiming the inactive; not stealing the sheep.

How did this all come about? The first thing that makes this possible is tenure. The first one of us began ministering here in 1990 and the last in the summer of 2004. Friendships this deep and unwavering trust levels are not built overnight.

The second thing that makes this work is an unquestionable belief that we can more effectively reach this community together than we can as separate entities (Ecclesiastes 4:12). We each have our own independent youth groups and that is more than enough to keep any of us busy, but we have committed to doing this together. We don't always agree, and sometimes we have to think about things longer to make sure we all can stay on the same page. But as long as we are about reaching students and making disciples, we can agree on about anything.

That is who I am and where I am at. I want to tell your story, our story and the story of youth ministry in Kentucky.

Joe Ball is minister of education and youth at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville. His column appears the first issue of each month. Contact him at balliv@yahoo.com.

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

Pastor: Boxing, respect attracted men to church

Luter outlines tips for men's ministry

Ridgecrest, N.C. (BP)—Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, outlined seven basics for an effective men's ministry:

■ **Stay biblically based.** Luter cited Genesis 2, Exodus 18: 13-27 and Acts 6:1-7 to describe God's desire and design for men.

■ **Have the pastor's support.**

■ **Choose effective leaders.** This leader must be a Christian, role model and good listener. He also must be compassionate, have biblical knowledge and exhibit leadership skills.

■ **Publicize.** Inside the church, use the pulpit, the church bulletin, Sunday school classes, posters and flyers. Outside, use word of mouth.

■ **Have a good kick-off.** Keep it informal, non-threatening and, if possible, away from the church. Ideas include holding the kick-off at a picnic, bowling alley or ballgame.

■ **Have consistent meeting times.** Decide when and where to meet, and then do it. If you say you'll meet on the second Tuesday at 7 p.m., Luter said, meet even if only two men show up.

■ **Establish ground rules.** Meetings are not men or women bashing sessions. Keep what's said confidential. Minister to the spiritual and emotional needs of the men. Hold each other accountable.

While these are basics, Luter said, "every ministry must be lifted up every day with prayer to accomplish its objectives."

By Polly House
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

Ridgecrest, N.C. (BP)—Men didn't want to go to Fred Luter's church, so he invited them to watch a boxing match instead.

Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, said he knew it would be difficult to get men involved in the African-American congregation when he became pastor in 1987.

"We had very few men active in the church, and most of them were old," Luter recalled. "More than 95 percent of the membership was women and children."

Luter recounted his story while leading a conference on building successful men's ministries. He was speaking last month at Black Church Leadership Week at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.

For two years, Luter tried different methods to reach out to the husbands, fathers and sons of the women in the church, hoping to get them to come. Nothing worked.

Turning to Leonard vs. Hearn

"Finally, I started looking at what the men liked to do," he said. "I saw that sports was a big attraction. I talked to my wife and decided to order a pay-per-view boxing match, then invite the men to come to our home to watch the fight on television."

He invited the men and they came. "My wife had made a lot of food so we were ready. Then, here the men came, carrying their six-packs and wine coolers."

Luter said he placed a trashcan outside his front door and asked the men to deposit all their alcohol there before entering his home. They left the booze outside and came in anyway, he said.

That night, Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns were bigger draws than God. "I had 35 men in my home that night," Luter said, "when I couldn't get five to come to the church. But what else could I expect? These guys were sinners ... and they were good at it."

Out of that group, five men attended church the next Sunday. When Luter introduced them, the women applauded. They were excited and the men were proud. The next week, the men came back and brought friends with them.

Today, Luter said, about 30 percent of Franklin Avenue Church is men.

"We started out with a wish and a prayer," Luter said. "But while it is a struggle to get men, it's even a bigger struggle to keep them committed."

Luter's commitment to men's ministry isn't just so he'll have male company in the church.

"I'm convinced that God's design and desire from the very beginning was for men to lead," he said. "In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam work—a job and responsibility—before He ever gave

him a wife."

Luter said he experiences joy in discipling and developing men.

"To see men literally go through a spiritual transformation from lost sinners to dedicated, committed singles, husbands, fathers and church leaders is something that every pastor and congregation should experience."

Training to become leaders

The struggle at Franklin Avenue Church now, Luter said, is how to encourage the men who have come to church to go back and be leaders of their homes and families.



Fred Luter

He told the story of a man who, for years, had sent his family to church while he stayed home. "He'd stay home, watch the game and drink his beer," he said.

"One day, the man's 12-year-old son announced he wasn't going to church anymore. When his dad told him that, yes, he was too going with his mother, the son told him, 'No, I'm going to go to hell with you.'"

Luter said the man got up, got dressed and went to church with his family and has been a faithful member ever since.

"Your sons and daughters will never be what they haven't seen," Luter said.

Luter said it's crucial for pastors and other church leaders to show men respect. "They have to see that before they will listen to you."

Robert Coverson, pastor of Second Chapel Hill Baptist Church in Detroit, who attended the conference, agreed: "Women follow us because they like us. Men follow us because they respect us."

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Para más información, llame al 800-626-5525, ext. 4090 o mande email a hispanos@sbs.edu.



The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



Celebrate Oneness

An event for couples to celebrate & strengthen their marriages.

September 25, 2004

First Baptist Church • Richmond • 859.623.4028

Keynoters: **Wayne & Cindi Spivey**

Worship Leaders: **Jim & Linda Krutza**

October 23, 2004

Bellevue Baptist Church • Owensboro • 270.685.5103

Keynoters: **Skip & Leigh Anne Alexander**

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Couples will enjoy:

- Biblical encouragement and insights for nurturing healthy marriages.
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Church and association leaders will experience:

- a marriage celebration model that can be applied in local churches and associations.

\$20 registration fee per couple (includes lunch).

Call churches directly to register for **FREE** childcare.

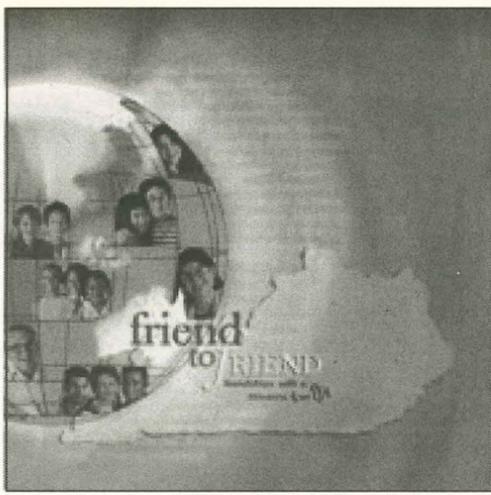
This conference is organized to help churches reach the leader training and networking goals of the Kentucky Baptists Connect emphasis.

KENTUCKY BAPTISTS
Connect



To register or obtain more information, call 502-254-4733 or 888-254-5702, or visit us on the Web at www.kybaptist.org/marriagecelebration

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



2004 Season of Prayer for State Missions and

Eliza Broadus Offering September 2004

**Offering Goal:
\$925,000**

**Challenge Goal for New
Work & Cedar Crest:
\$75,000**

**TOTAL GOAL:
\$1,000,000**

Friend to Friend Friendships with a Missions Twist

by Lorie Looney

They are framed throughout our homes. Their smiling faces greet us when we open our wallets. A conversation with them can brighten even our darkest days. They are our friends.

Friends are an important aspect to our lives. Their absence creates pain while their presence causes joy. Most friendships form as a result of a shared purpose. We enjoy being around people who share common interests. God, however, calls us to be intentional in the building of our friendships. Yes, we may still enjoy those "best friends" who bring us delight, those special few who know our favorite coffee drinks and television programs. Yet, we are also to build friendships with a different purpose: sharing our faith in Jesus Christ.

In John 15:9-17 Christ calls those who are believers "My friends." As a result, we are to lay down our lives for others. Part of "laying down our lives" begins when we seek to step

out of our comfort zones in order to pursue friendships with those God has placed around us. Fortunately, God does not give us a command and leave. Scripture gives us different accounts of faithful believers who built friendships for the purpose of evangelism. One such example is found in the life of Paul.

The books of First and Second Timothy give us a glimpse into how Paul used a variety of styles of friendships to share the Gospel. We find in him a lifestyle of creative witnessing, love for internationals and intentional mentorship. Although you will not see Paul walking down the streets of Kentucky, you will find Kentucky Baptists modeling these skills in a variety of ministries! Through which of these ministries can you begin to build new friendships with a "missions twist"?

Man-to-Man and Christian Women's Job Corps build friendships and change lives

The concept of mentoring strikes fear in the heart of most who hear the word. Our minds begin to race: "What do I have to share?" "I can't mentor someone, I don't have any special gifts." Yet mentors are at the heart of two ministries designed to help people in need. Man-to-Man Ministries is a new ministry founded by the North American Mission Board that equips men to teach a trade and share their faith through lifestyle evangelism. Christian Women's Job Corps, a ministry of WMU, provides a Christian context in which women in need are equipped for life and employment; and a missions context in which women help women.

Man-to-Man has gotten its start in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky. There you may discover David Aker encouraging a literacy class teacher or out in someone's pasture exploring new crops. As the Kentucky Mountain Missionary, David has experienced how God can use any trade to open doors to the Gospel. Aker defines male mentorship as "mentoring men through work skills." The job you may deem "mundane" could be the very skill God desires for you to share.

Over 192 people are currently enrolled in the Man-to-Man ministries. Many have benefited from the Wendell Belew Appalachian Center. Classes offered create new and strengthen old skills. One of the more popular classes is the job recovery program. Men learn how to prepare resumes, enhance interview skills and discover employment opportunities.

The ministry of Man-to-Man goes beyond the individual. Often, the entire family benefits. The effects of job loss do not discriminate within a family. Families who have never witnessed the power of Christ in the home are seeking examples. You may be thinking, "My family is not perfect." If so, you are exactly who they need!

Perfection is not a requirement to be used by God. He only wants our willingness to be used. According to Aker, "Man-to-Man meets people at their point of need. We want to catch them in a teachable moment so we can teach them about Christ." The benefits of Man-to-Man are tri-fold. They are social, psychological and spiritual. The desire is that a holistic friendship will occur. One that will pass along needed job skills, a spiritual witness and ultimately a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Christian Women's Job Corps is a ministry created by Woman's Missionary Union in the mid 1990's in order to provide women the opportunity to be paired with a women mentor. Kentucky Baptists currently have two active program sites: Cadiz (Little River Baptist Association) and Campbellsville (Campbellsville University).

See *Mentoring Ministries...* Page 2



David Aker



A packet of materials has been sent to the WMU director or contact person in every KBC church. It includes a DVD ROM with video, Powerpoint, and logos. The packet also includes plans for all ages and suggestions for churchwide promotion of the Season of Prayer for State Missions and the Eliza Broadus Offering. Contact Kentucky WMU to order posters, prayer guides, and offering envelopes. You may request a state missions packet by calling Kentucky WMU at 502-244-6485 or toll free, 1-888-254-5726; or by email: kywmu@kybaptist.org. These materials are provided by the gifts of your church to the Eliza Broadus Offering and the Cooperative Program.

Contributions to the Eliza Broadus Offering should be mailed to: Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions, Kentucky Baptist Convention, PO Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433. Checks should be made payable to Kentucky Baptist Convention and designated "EBO." Church Treasurers may also include EBO contributions with other contributions through the Kentucky Baptist Convention using the KBC church contribution form and designating the amount for the Eliza Broadus Offering as "EBO."

Contributions for the 2004-05 Eliza Broadus Offering will be received from September 1, 2004 through August 31, 2005.

Building friendships, changing lives through mentoring ministries

Continued from Page 1

Man-to-man meets people at their point of need. We want to catch them in a teachable moment so we can teach them about Christ.

Christian Women's Job Corps, a ministry of WMU, provides a Christian context in which women in need are equipped for life and employment; and a missions context in which women help women.



Site coordinators, Sue Rich (Little River) and Debbie Carter (Campbellsville) are quick to express how richly their lives have been blessed because of the Christian Women's Job Corps ministry. They believe that CWJC stands out from other "mentoring" programs because it is Christ-centered. Women involved in the program not only gain necessary skills for life, but an opportunity to know the One who gives life.

Christian Women's Job Corps mentors are women who express a desire to be used by the Lord to help encourage other women along life's path. They are then trained as CWJC mentors and given support through the program as they begin the adventure of building a friendship with a purpose. The results are life changing.

The Campbellsville CWJC site saw transformation in the life of a thirty-year-old woman. Due to a devastating car wreck at the age of seventeen, she was left with many disabilities, one affecting her speech. Her speech impediment left her unemployed despite a college degree. One day changed her life.

This disabled woman was paired with a mentor from Christian Women's Job Corps. Together, they not only began to research job opportunities, they studied the Bible. As a result of hearing the Gospel, the young lady accepted Christ as her Savior. Although she continues to search for employment, she now shares a new understanding and "peace" that God is in control.

The Little River CWJC site is also experiencing how God can use His Word and our willingness to be a friend to change lives. Participants meet weekly on Monday evenings for fellowship and classes. Classes are offered in areas such as job skills, resume preparation and crafts. One class that is never empty is the Bible study taught by LaDonna Diggs.

Sue Rich states the "secret" of the Little River CWJC success is having a teacher who is excited about God's Word. Mrs. Diggs models a life in love with scripture. She teaches a weekly class while always presenting the way to her joy, through an explanation of the gospel. Friendships are formed and lives are changed forever.

Both Man-to-Man and Christian Women's Job Corps need

the support of Kentucky Baptists. The primary request is for prayer. David Aker says, "The persons who are standing in the positions of the Man-to-Man program are standing in the need of prayer." You can also be personally involved in these ministries by beginning a Man-to-Man or CWJC program in your own area.

Male and female role models are needed, as well as childcare. In family mentorship, parents benefit from occasional meetings apart from their children. Also, there is a need for people who can work with Hispanics. If God has gifted you in Spanish, there is a place for you. You will find it difficult to think of a skill that God cannot use to change a life.

You can be involved with Man-to-Man and CWJC as you pray, give, and participate. Pray that God will continue to bless these ministries to help people in need.

Give to the Eliza Broadus Offering. Your gifts support the work of David Aker and other missionaries in Eastern Kentucky. Your gifts help Kentucky WMU to provide training and encouragement to CWJC sites.

You can also participate in one of these ministries. Is God calling you to be involved as a site coordinator, mentor, Bible study teacher, childcare worker, or simply a friend. Kentucky Baptists have an amazing opportunity to see lives transformed through friendships, mentoring, and teaching job skills.



LaDonna Diggs (standing) teaches Bible study at the Little River CWJC site. Sue Rich (far left) looks

Collegiate ministries to internationals are building friendships, changing our world

Kentucky Baptists have discovered a secret we want to share. Friendships with internationals of all ages can bring richness to our lives and build friendships around the world. Many of these friendships are being formed right here on our college campuses. Tommy Johnson, campus minister, has seen how God's work on our campuses extends beyond our state line.

"God is bringing the world to Kentucky" shares Tommy Johnson. Over 7,000 international students currently call Kentucky "home." The majority of these students are from India and China, where the Gospel is not prevalent. Their time in Kentucky may be their only opportunity to hear the truth of Jesus Christ.

Kentucky Baptists have an opportunity to influence the world for Christ in lands where we may never step. Often countries send their future world leaders to the United States to receive education. Many of these future leaders walk our campuses today. According to Keith Inman, director of college ministry/young adults for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, "The Baptist Student Union is a stable presence of the gospel year around." Students come to the BSU for times of fellowship,

activities and Bible study. As a result, friendships are formed. These friendships provide opportunities to change our world.

Ministries to international students include helping them with the language barrier. They may need help understanding their classes, Americans with accents or slang. Closely related is the need for cultural adjustment. Students need to be introduced to the American ways of doing things. For example, when do we really mean "How are you?" and when are we just saying hello to each other? Students also have many practical needs such as how to call home, do laundry, shop for groceries, order at a restaurant, and use public transportation.

The Eliza Broadus Offering provides resources to help with ministries to international students and ensure that these students do not leave without a chance to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Providing students with Bibles in their native languages is important. Although most students speak English, campus ministers have seen the difference it makes when they read the Gospel in their original language. Your offering makes this possible.

The Eliza Broadus Offering

helps to provide a retreat each November for international students. This retreat, started more than 30 years ago, involves 100-150 international students from campuses across Kentucky. The retreat includes worship, Bible study, "family groups," seminars, and a banquet. This annual retreat is co-sponsored by Kentucky WMU and offers students from all over the world a hearty "Welcome to Kentucky!" The weekend retreat offers international students an introduction to American culture and an opportunity to explore - perhaps for the first time - the Christian faith.

You can be involved in the work God is doing among international college students by praying, giving to the Eliza Broadus Offering and participating in student ministries. Kentucky Baptists have an opportunity to reach out, build friendships and share the love of Christ by getting involved with local campus activities which pair students with host families. There are many ways to show God's love through friendship with an international. How is God leading you to be involved?



Above: Scenes from the International Student Retreat

Left: Patrick Whyte, a native of Nigeria, now serves as Campus Minister at Kentucky State University.

Friendship International helps newcomers adjust



Through the ministry of Friendship International, Kentucky Baptists share the love of Christ with people from around the world.

We pass internationals on the streets with a friendly "hello" and maybe notice them in the stores, but are they our friends? Kentucky Baptists in four associations are discovering the joy of building friendships with those from other countries. Elkhorn, Long Run, Blood River and West Union all have established ministries called Friendship International. This ministry calls us to become more than

a mere acquaintance with those God has brought to Kentucky from around the world.

Internationals of all ages come to Kentucky in search of higher education, employment, political rest and freedom. Many arrive alone. Others have family yet they are unaware of how to reach out to build friendships in their new community. If we are to reach them for Christ, we must go beyond a

simple wave and move towards building friendships with a purpose.

Internationals often find themselves relating to other internationals only, yet they need and want friendships with Americans. They did not travel half way around the world just to spend time with someone from their own country! As Christians, we need to be sure that internationals have the opportunity to form friendships with Christians so that we can introduce them to the One who will meet their deepest need, God.

The Eliza Broadus Offering helps support the ministries of Friendship International (FI). FI focuses on reaching internationals for Christ through the use of conversational English classes, friendship, family support and the meeting of basic physical needs. Volunteers provide childcare, transportation, and teach a variety of classes. Time spent with newcomers to America through Friendship International provides a natural opportunity to build friendships and share Christ.

At a 2004 spring program to recognize Friendship International students with special achievements,

many students thanked the volunteers and expressed their appreciation. A young lady from Germany said that she came to Louisville in October 2003 to get married. After she was married her husband spent the day at work and she was very lonely at home alone. Someone told her about Friendship International. She said, "I thank the Lord for Friendship International." Another lady at the program said, "I am very thankful to Friendship International for making me happy and helping me feel at home in America."

Your participation in ministry to internationals, along with giving to the Eliza Broadus Offering, can open friendships to persons from around the world. Internationals have gifts they want to share with Kentucky Baptists, while we have an opportunity to share the greatest gift of all, a relationship with Jesus Christ. How does God want to use you to change our world through your involvement with Friendship International?



If we are to reach internationals for Christ, we must go beyond a simple wave and move towards building friendships with a purpose.

Building friendships, creatively sharing Christ

Have you ever been told to stop clowning around? Do you enjoy sharing God's love through song, drama, mime, puppets, or in other creative ways? The Creative Ministries Festival is just the place for you! God is using Kentucky Baptists of all ages to share His truth. Over the past several years, Tom Smoot, director of Creative Ministries for the Kentucky Baptist Convention and LaRaine Dail, youth/college consultant for the Kentucky WMU have been helping to teach people how to creatively share their faith.



Kentucky Baptist Convention's Creative Ministries and Kentucky WMU's Youth Missions Workshop joined forces several years ago to offer a comprehensive event that provides both training in creative ministries and missions outreach. Originally, the seats were filled with youth groups wanting to express their creative side. Recently, however, they have had to slide over and make room for the adults! Kentucky Baptists of all ages are discovering the joy of creative evangelism.

Workshops at the Creative Ministries Festival explore areas of interpretive movement, clowning, drama, mime, script writing, balloon twisting, missions and much more. Classes such as "Using Object Lessons to Reach and Teach" or "Pocket Magic with Gospel

Applications" underscore the overall purpose of sharing the gospel.

Youth missions workshops planned by WMU have included topics such as "Sharing Your Faith," "How to Plan a Mission Trip," "Games, Games, Games," and "Creative Crafts on a Budget." New workshops are offered each year.

"The shows stop the crowd, but the performers must befriend the people in order to share Christ" says Tom Smoot.

Beyond the performance students are trained in the essentials of evangelism. Several churches have left the festival excited about their new skills and have gone out to impact Kentucky with the gospel. One such church is Southern Heights in Danville, Kentucky.

James Kelly, pastor of Southern Heights shares his excitement about how evangelism training has ignited a passion of evangelism within his youth group. Kelly describes Kentucky's youth as an "untapped resource." He has seen first hand how God can work through the lives of young people.

After training his children's and youth group in the basics of evangelism last year, he saw them lead sixteen children to faith in Christ! At the Creative Ministries Festival the youth group learned new games and other creative ways

to share Christ. Through the Creative Ministries Festival, their confidence and skills have grown.

Kelly shared the story of an eight-year-old boy named Davie. Davie's class was positioned in the hallway due to a tornado warning. Beside him a friend began to cry, verbalizing his fear of the storm. Because of the training he received, Davie was able to share the gospel and lead his friend to faith in Christ right there in the hallway.

Although we will not all have the chance to be in the hallways of Kentucky's schools, we serve daily in workplaces throughout the state. God has purposefully placed each of us in the "mission field" of our jobs, neighborhoods and community. If someone voiced, "fear of a storm" today, would you be prepared to share your hope in Christ? Your gifts to the Eliza Broadus Offering provide training and opportunities so that more Kentucky Baptists can say "yes."



Making balloon hats and learning to use puppets are among the many workshops offered at the Creative Ministries Festival.



The shows stop the crowd, but the performers must befriend the people in order to share Christ.

The Eliza Broadus Offering

The work we now know as Kentucky WMU began in 1878 when the Foreign Mission Board asked each state to form a Central Committee to give direction to the work of emerging missionary societies. The Kentucky Central Committee was formed in 1878. From the early days, the women collected money for missions, overseas as well as in our state. In 1887, Miss Eliza Broadus, daughter of John A. Broadus, a professor and later president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was elected President of the Central Committee. She served as committee president from 1887-1919 and gave leadership to the work of WMU for a total of 50 years. Miss Broadus was a contemporary of Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong. She served Kentucky Baptists and WMU with distinction. An Eliza Broadus monologue and biographical sketch are available from Kentucky WMU or download from our website (www.kywmu.org/statemissions.htm).

The Eliza Broadus Offering is sponsored each year by Kentucky WMU. The offering has been received on a regular basis since 1913 when Miss Broadus led Kentucky WMU to promote taking an annual state missions offering. The offering was named in her honor in 1976.

As a part of the offering promotion, Kentucky WMU prepares state missions materials each year, including teaching materials, prayer guides, posters, envelopes, and a video. The allocations of the offering are set by the Kentucky WMU Executive Board with input from Dr. Mackey and the KBC staff.

Thank you for your gifts to the Eliza Broadus Offering. The Kentucky state missions offering supplements the Cooperative Program in providing funds for missions work in our state.

A recent example of putting Eliza Broadus Offering dollars to work, drove across the parking lot of the Kentucky Baptist Convention building before its trip to Lookout, Kentucky. A brand new mini-bus for the Freeda Harris Center was purchased with EBO funds that had been saved for several years for just this purpose. A transportation fund has been established to eventually replace other vans with mini-buses. These vehicles travel many miles each year picking up children for the activities of our Baptist Centers.

Building Friendships, A Personal Mission

Do you have a personal mission to share Christ with others? If so, with whom are you sharing your faith? Friendships are a natural way that each of us can impact lives with the Gospel. Whether it is deepening an existing friendship by sharing prayer requests or building a new friendship by inviting someone to church, we each must make evangelism a personal mission.

Kentucky Baptists are actively engaging their world by building friendships for the purpose of evangelism. There is a place for everyone. Opportunities exist for all personality types. Regardless of whether you enjoy being in front of a crowd, or would rather be behind the scenes, your witness is invaluable to God's Kingdom. Through your prayers, gifts to the Eliza Broadus Offering and personal involvement in Kentucky missions, you can encourage friendships with a "missions twist."

ELIZA BROADUS OFFERING

for Kentucky State Missions, Special Ministries, and Missions Education
2004-05 OFFERING ALLOCATIONS

Kentucky Baptist Convention State Missions & Evangelism	\$615,000
State Missions	307,000
Includes funding for a mountain missionary in Eastern Kentucky; funds to assist 37 Kentucky Baptist associations in providing salary and insurance benefits for their associational missionary; assistance to 12 churches and four regional state missionary workers; transportation fund assistance for Freeda Harris & Wheelwright Baptist Centers; retreat for Mission Service Corps missionaries serving in Kentucky.	
Language Missions	77,000
Eastern Kentucky Regional Deaf Ministry; Hispanic ministry; ministries to other language/ethnic groups in Kentucky.	
Church & Community Missions	113,000
Includes funds for appointed missionary personnel serving poor communities of Kentucky; Church and Community ministry supplies and materials; Baptist Fellowship Center personnel and office expense; conference for literacy volunteers.	
Evangelism	6,000
Understanding Other Beliefs Conferences; Creative Ministries Festival/Youth Missions Workshop.	
Student Work	90,000
Includes International Student Ministry; Reach Out Campus Revivals; Student Mission Action Projects; Kentucky Student Summer Missions.	
Baptist Men on Mission Special Projects	22,000
Includes Disaster Relief; Kentucky Changers; Missions Education; and Eastern Sunrise (ministries to the poor in Eastern Kentucky).	

Kentucky Special Ministries..... **\$50,000**

Requests for Special Ministries Funds are made through an application process.
The deadline for submitting an EBO allocation request for the 2004-05 offering is December 31, 2004.
Contact the state WMU office for an allocation request form.

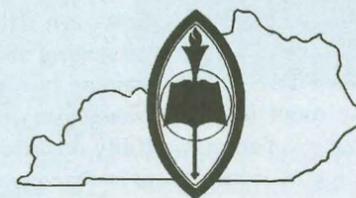
Kentucky WMU: Missions Education & Ministries to Missionaries **\$260,000**

Missions Education Leadership Development	18,210
Includes training events for church & associational missions leaders, Resource Team training, leadership materials for new missions organizations, associational leadership materials.	
Missions Education Events and Materials	39,045
Includes State Acteens Conference; Youth on Mission Night; Women on Mission Retreats; Baptist Nursing Fellowship; Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting and Children's missions event; Collegiate missions education; Associational, age-level, language and general missions education development.	
Missions Education Camping	71,250
Includes staff, missionaries, adventure recreation expenses, and materials for Mission Adventure Camp for Girls at Cedar Crest (weeklong camps and overnights); camp scholarships for needy children; Mother/Daughter Overnight, GA Overnight, and Acteens Splash at Jonathan Creek.	
Missions Education Promotion	49,600
Includes State Missions Season of Prayer Materials and Video, <i>Kentucky Notes</i> , <i>Associational Newsletter</i> , Yearbook Supplement, Joint promotion with other KBC agencies.	
Missions Education Administration	75,595
Includes postage, telephone, printing, staff development, equipment, computer services, internet, office operation, Kentucky WMU Executive Board.	
Missions Education Scholarships	2,300
Seminary Field Education, Simmons Bible College, Campus Women on Mission Facilitator Scholarships.	
Ministries to Kentucky Missionaries	4,000
Includes missionary event during the KBC, MK Re-entry Retreat travel for Kentucky MKs; subscriptions to the <i>Western Recorder</i> for international missionaries (level 1 security); Missionary Parents Fellowship.	

ELIZA BROADUS OFFERING GOAL **\$925,000**

CHALLENGE GOAL: To be divided between New Work/Cedar Crest..... **\$75,000**

TOTAL ELIZA BROADUS OFFERING GOAL **\$1,000,000**



The Writer: Lorie Looney is a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. She served as a Journeyman in Poland with the International Mission Board.

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Against all odds

Kentucky Baptist camps not deterred by underdog role

Have you ever been amazed by an event in history that beat all odds and surprised the world?

Recently, I watched the movie "Miracle," about the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team winning the gold medal. The events unfolding in world affairs drew greater significance to the games. The Soviet Union was in military conflict with neighboring countries. As our teams met, we were pitted against them as the two world superpowers. The mystery of the Soviet machine of conquest was intimidating, and these emotions were transferred to the stage of the Olympics.

"Miracle" chronicles the selection, training and ultimate success of a group of young hockey players who, by all logical standards, had no chance against the time-tested superiority of the Soviet players. The young players were college age and the Soviet hockey stars had played together for 15 years.

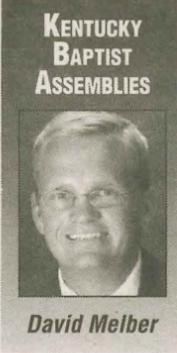
I, like many others, enjoy seeing the underdog succeed against all odds. The Bible is filled with stories of the most unlikely candidates

who, by God's empowerment, beat the odds. Gideon, David and Peter, just to name a few, lived out many miracles that exceeded their physical and natural ability. In fact, God says that in our weakness His strength becomes perfect.

I must admit that some people said our camps and programs are viewed as the underdog, with little or no chance of success. While this perception is challenging at times, I am convinced we are in the perfect scenario for God to empower a ministry for His glory. For years, some people have said Cedarmore will never make it, the property is too large, it costs too much to operate, and it is located too far from

convenient access. One could believe these perceptions, or one could pray for God to bring about a miracle over the next years to see Cedarmore become a tool for God's greater purpose and exceed all expectations. As always, we covet your prayers. Pray that we would be people of faith; faith in the God who chooses to make foolish the wisdom of the world.

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



KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES

David Melber

Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Michael J. Landi

Across

- 2 Metamorphosed
- 10 "He took ___ of his ribs" (Genesis 2:21)
- 11 Crasher or keeper
- 12 Partake
- 13 Missing ingredient in manna
- 14 Form of "drachma"
- 16 ___ Aviv
- 18 "But glory, honour, and ___ to every man that worketh good" (Romans 2:10)
- 20 Pal, to Philippe
- 21 ___ in (first point scored after deuce?)
- 22 Loan
- 24 "Burning ___ and a wicked heart" (Proverbs 26:23)
- 26 "He revealeth the ___ and secret things" (Daniel 2:22)
- 28 Conjunction
- 30 What April brings
- 32 "The ___ of all Israel are upon thee" (1 Kings 1:20)
- 34 One of David's men (1 Kings 1:8)
- 36 "Sow ... in righteousness, ___ in mercy" (Hosea 10:12)
- 37 "Enter into the rock ... for the glory of his ___" (Isaiah 2:10)
- 39 "But ___ wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord" (1 Kings 16:25)
- 40 What Isaac named the well at Gerar (Genesis 26:20)
- 42 Roman emperor with whom Paul had an audience
- 43 Not A.D.

1		2		3	4	5	6		7	8	9	
10				11					12			
			13						14			15
16	17			18				19		20		
21						22			23			
24				25		26				27		
				28		29		30			31	
32			33		34		35		36			
					37			38				
39					40							41
				42							43	
	44					45			46	47		
					48				49			

- 44 Zaftig, but more bluntly perhaps?
- 45 "Call me not ___, call me Mara" (Ruth 1:20)
- 48 "Ye have made the heart of the righteous ___" (Ezekiel 13:22)
- 49 Aeries

Down

- 1 "Let not sin therefore reign in your ___ body" (Romans 6:12)
- 2 Do ___!
- 3 Meal shared by early Christians
- 4 Hub of a wheel
- 5 "We pray you in Christ's ___, be ye reconciled" (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- 6 "___ cities, with walls, gates, and bars" (2 Chronicles 8:5)
- 7 ___ Sea
- 8 Feminine name that means "bitter"
- 9 Rock where Samson lived after slaughter of Philistines (Judges 15)
- 15 "Come, buy wine and ___ without money" (Isaiah 55:1)

- 17 Enlighten
- 19 Head of a family of Gad (var., 1 Chronicles 5:13)
- 23 Runs swiftly
- 25 "For the ___ things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4)
- 27 "Learn first to show ___ at home" (1 Timothy 5:4)
- 29 "To every man that asketh you a ___ of the hope" (1 Peter 3:15)
- 31 "___, in all these things we are more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37)
- 32 Town of the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:43)
- 33 Apostles and others
- 35 At ___-abarim, in the wilderness before Moab, Israelites pitched tents (Numbers 21:11)
- 38 Chief Philistine city (1 Samuel 6:17)
- 41 New Testament book
- 46 Its capital is Augusta (abbr.)
- 47 "For God ___ my witness" (Romans 1:9)

Last week's solution

1	D	E	F	I	L	E	A	B	S	E	N	T
2	A	N					L	O	V	E	X	A
3	S	T	A	F			N	E	R		A	R
4	H	E	N	I	C	O	N	I	U	M		E
5	R	O	S	E			G					
6	H	I	R	A	C	E		K	N	E	E	
7	E	N	A	Y			I					
8	A	C	T	S			E	L	A	Y		
9	V	L									A	S
10	E	N	T	E	R		C	H	A	R	I	T
11	N						I				A	A
12	C	O	P	Y			A	D			S	H
13	T						E	R			H	S

NATIONAL NOTES

Focus on the Family seeks to register constituents. Focus on the Family recently mailed voter registration forms to 1.3 million of its constituents. The registration packet includes everything needed to register, except a stamp. Two registration applications are included—one for the recipient and one for a spouse or friend. A letter from Focus on the Family founder James Dobson accompanies the applications. Names of candidates are not mentioned in the packet. Dobson quotes data estimating that 40 percent of Focus on the Family's constituents are not registered.

Group of Christians denounce Falwell. Declaring "God is not a Republican. Or a Democrat," a broad group of evangelical, mainline and Catholic leaders has issued a high-profile response to comments by Religious Right leaders appearing to endorse President Bush's re-election. The signers took out a full-page ad in the Aug. 30 New York Times denouncing recent statements by Virginia pastor Jerry Falwell and Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson. Signatories included evangelical theologians Stanley Hauerwas and Glen Stassen. Baptist signers included Wake Forest Divinity School professor James Dunn and evangelist Tony Campolo.

Past Christian Coalition chief paid by casino lobbyists. Ralph Reed, the former head of the Christian Coalition, admitted he took \$1.23 million in consulting fees tied to Indian-run gambling casinos, The Washington Post reported. Reed received the fees from two lobbyists who are the subject of a federal investigation. Sources said Reed's consulting firm was paid by representatives of a Louisiana Indian tribe trying to prevent other tribes from opening competitive casinos. Part of Reed's job was to mobilize Christian ministers and activists against new casinos. Reed said he never advocated in favor of gambling.

Baptist congressman drops re-election bid after 'outing.' Rep. Ed Schrock (R-Va.), one of Congress' staunchest opponents of gay rights, has declined to seek re-election to a third term in the House after a Washington activist's website claimed the congressman solicited sex with men on a gay telephone-rendezvous service. Schrock, a Baptist layman, announced via a press release last week that he would not seek re-election, referring to unspecified "allegations" that "will not allow my campaign to focus on the real issues facing our nation and region."

Frances forces Kentucky volunteers to evacuate

Fort Myers, Fla. (BP)—Kentucky Baptists joined the rest of the out-of-state disaster relief teams serving in southwest Florida in an evacuation Sept. 1 as the Sunshine State prepared to be struck by its second hurricane in less than three weeks.

Florida emergency officials were predicting that Hurricane Frances could make landfall early Saturday in southeastern or central Florida.

Kentucky Baptists packed up their mobile kitchen in the parking lot of First Baptist Church of Fort Myers and drove 510 miles to Perry, Ga., according to Larry Koch, director of disaster relief for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's men on mission department.

The team had to endure bumper-to-bumper traffic for the whole trip, he added. "What ordinarily would have been an 8-hour trip turned into a 14-hour trip."

Before they evacuated, 106 Kentucky Baptist volunteers prepared 55,000 meals and completed 45 clean-up jobs.

They were part of more than 3,600 Baptist volunteers from 24 states who prepared nearly 1 million meals and completed more than 3,400 cleanup and recovery projects since Hurricane Charley pummeled southwest Florida on Aug. 13.

Southern Baptist disaster relief coordinators estimate as many as 4,000 recovery jobs remain in the wake of Hurricane Charley.

Officials with the Florida Baptist Convention tallied more than 40 Baptist churches damaged by the

storm, including four that were destroyed.

Koch said the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's operations center near Atlanta will redistribute the teams after Frances blows through.

"We don't know where we will be yet," he said. "It just depends where it (Frances) comes ashore."

Needed: Volunteers, ham radios

NAMB coordinators already are preparing to need more teams than were working after Charley, Koch added.

"If it is as bad as they predict, they are looking at (needing) a million meals per week," he said. "They've asked 30 kitchens to be ready to go in with 20,000 meals each."

Southern Baptists are the third-largest disaster relief agency in the country behind the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, with more than 28,000 trained volunteers on call for local, state and national emergencies.

"We need lots of prayer for the victims, for the volunteers," he added.

Baptists also were asked to provide people to staff some of the work of the Red Cross and Salvation Army, Koch said. Ham radio operators also likely are needed, Koch said, "because they may be the only communications available."

For more information about disaster relief work, call the KBC men on mission department toll-free at (888) 254-5720.

PK's founder starts project for Messianic Jews

Denver (RNS)—Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney has announced a new effort to reach out to Messianic Jews.

McCartney, who resigned in 2003 as president of the Denver-based evangelical men's ministry, said "The Road to Jerusalem" movement aims to link evangelical Christians with Jews who believe Jesus is the Messiah.

The former University of Colorado football coach hopes to change the approach of Christians who support the "unbelieving Jews" of Israel while avoiding "believing Jews" in the Messianic Jewish movement, The Denver Post reported.

"This is a minefield," he said. "This is paved in terror and triumph. It ends in triumph."

While Jews view the Messianic Jewish movement as a way to lure them into Christianity, evangelical Christians who strongly back Israel tend not to associate with Messianic Jews.

McCartney plans to hold a Dec. 3 gathering for the group near Palm Springs, Calif.

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80 new opportunities and counting

New students at Oneida coming with a variety of goals and challenges

The 2004-2005 school year is now under way. Weeks and months of preparation this summer were rewarded when our students returned for the fall term.

We never know for sure how many students will return each fall. We always are saddened to know that some choose not to return, even though that decision often is the result of the progress the student made while here. We prefer for them to continue here in the environment where they found success, but we understand the desire of parents to have their child back home.

In addition to the normal number of students who return each fall, there are always the students who are enrolling for the first time. We were pleased to enroll about 80 new students during the first full week of school. As I have written before, some of these students will require little from us other than the opportunity to live in a stable and peaceful environment. Given that opportunity, they will do well and excel academically and in many of our co-curricular programs. These students will provide us with only modest challenges, but many rewarding experiences.

Others in the group of new students will require a little more time, patience and energy. These students are not as well focused and will require much more direction and attention. The importance of a good education is not as obvious to them, and they will challenge us to prove that they are capable of doing the required work assignments. We will have to challenge them

to understand there is a realistic need for such classroom work assignments.

This lack of attention and cooperation is typical of students who have become discouraged during their educational journey. Often family conflict, drugs, negative peer groups and little or no attention given to a good education have left these students drifting aimlessly. Historically, we have had success with this group of students.

The last of those in that group of 80 new students will be our most challenging. These students have been left behind either because they simply shut down academically or they are slower students who need a great deal more attention than is typically found in the average classroom. These students normally will spend a good portion of their day in our tutoring lab where we average one teacher for every two students. With that type of individual attention most students, given time and patience,

gradually can regain their confidence and be encouraged to put forth much more effort.

It is not an easy task. Those who work in our tutoring lab are special people. They have to be called to that type of ministry in order to help these students. One common need among our tutoring lab students is a healthy portion of patience. They require more time to process the information and must gain confidence in themselves. These are not learning disabled students, but students who have become overly discouraged with themselves. Given time, attention and a second chance, they can succeed.

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

Partnership with Russian Baptists renewed

Saved during communism, pastor leads growing church

Clear Creek's partnership with Russian Baptists in the Novgorod region was renewed by a campus visit from Pastor Anatoli Korabel.

His congregation, Central Christian Baptist Church, is one of 1,600 churches affiliated with the Russian Baptist Union; it was organized before World War II by about 25 people.

Anatoli described his baptism. "We were under communism, so we went secretly to the beach when only some cows and sheep were present." He credits two women with major influence on his conversion.

"It happened in 1979; my grandmother prayed about me all the time," Anatoli said. "Her only sermon was 'Repent Anatoli, or you will be in hell.' She also prayed that the Lord would send me out from that area and give me a believer wife."

He moved to Novgorod and met his wife. Her mother was praying for a bass to join the church choir. "I started singing with them. The prayers and witness of those women helped me find the Lord," Anatoli testifies.

In 1983 he became a deacon, and after three years an ordinate

for ministry. In 1991, after 20 years singing in the choir, Anatoli became pastor of the Novgorod church.

The "Gold Church," named because the yellow brick resembles gold in the full sun, now has 500 people in attendance; 50 were baptized last year. Twelve years ago, Anatoli had a vision for the region. "Lord, bless us to organize 20 churches," I prayed," he said. "Today we have 30, and it is not enough." The region is approximately 350 miles across.

The 30 missions have Sunday services; many of the church leaders trained under Clear Creek teachers at the pastor's school in Novgorod. Pastors have apartments

attached to the churches. Last year Anatoli used 200 days visiting the missions. Four church buildings were burned, many think because of opposition groups. "We want churches made out of brick," Anatoli said. A brick building will be more substantial and lasting."

This semester, Clear Creek professors James Ditty, Roy Lucas and Bill Pfoff will teach in the Novgorod school.

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



CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE

Bill Whittaker

Lives 'Touched'

Creator: 'Angel' had positive impact on Hollywood

By Phil Boatwright
Baptist Press

Los Angeles (BP)—A certain woman in Colorado Springs, like many a critic, thought of television as a vast wasteland—except for one show, one night a week, for nine years.

Friends knew not to call her during that hour, for she was an unabashed fan of "Touched by an Angel."

Upon hearing this endorsement, the show's creator and producer, Martha Williamson, laughed and said, "I hear that same story time and time again.

"So many people had given up on television," she said. "Suddenly, here was a show that depicted people of faith. They were good people, not hypocritical nutcases as so often portrayed in the media. They were simply people seeking truth."

Despite the fact that a great portion of society believed in God, network programmers steadfastly steered clear of the Almighty. But in 1994 a prime-time weekly drama debuted declaring to viewers that God exists and that He loves those He created. The program starred Della Reese and Roma Downey as a team of angels dispatched from heaven to inspire people who were at a crossroads in their lives.

DVD released

The series' first season was released last week on DVD. The four-disc set also includes the two-part series finale, commentaries and featurettes.

While the series was not meant as a proselytizing tool to convert viewers to Christianity, the series was an effective instrument for conveying the message that humans are more than physical beings. It always drove home the edict that



CAST Roma Downey (left), John Dye and Della Reese "always proclaimed their faith," according to Martha Williamson, creator of "Touched by an Angel."

each person is important to the Heavenly Father.

Williamson, a Christian, was afforded the weekly opportunity of presenting the viewing public with a spiritually themed drama. Just as importantly, she said she and her dedicated crew were able to witness to the Hollywood community.

"God always brought right person"

"We always cast the show just looking for the right actor to play the part. But I found that God always brought the right person to the show. And not only for us, but many times the actor was in the place he needed to be," she said.

"I can tell you of many instances when an actor would come to the show during a difficult time in his or her life—immediately after the loss of a loved one, in the middle of a divorce, or during a time when they were dealing with an addiction—and they would find themselves completely embraced by a remarkable group of people, a crew that just loved them. I have letters and letters from actors who said this is the best experience they ever had. One actor who came as an atheist left a believer."

Which leads to the question devo-

tees of the inspiring show want answered: Were the stars Christians?

"All three (Downey, Reese and John Dye as Andrew) always proclaimed their faith and always acknowledged God as the source of their strength," the producer said.

"The very last scene we shot on the final episode took place in a church. At the end of the day, I walked out of there with John Dye. He and I stopped at the altar and got on our knees. We each thanked God for the privilege of doing that show."

Favorite episode

Does the producer have a favorite episode?

"The Christmas show with Randy Travis is my favorite," she said. "It may be the first time the 'Hallelujah Chorus' was ever performed in its entirety on a network drama. It was voted best episode by Touched by an Angel fans. I think it's a very moving show, and one that clearly presents the gospel message."

Asked if there was something she would like people to know about herself, Williamson, a 25-year TV veteran whose producing credits include "The Facts of Life" and other family-oriented shows, gleefully responded, "I can tell you this, there wouldn't have been a Touched by an Angel if there hadn't been Baptists named Williamson.

"My father was a Baptist. He was born in 1901 and attended the First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Ill. His father and mother were both dedicated Baptist Sunday school teachers back in the 1800s."

Williamson now is taking time off from producing to raise two adopted Chinese daughters. But she has several developing projects, including a book, a film script and a concept for a television series.

Bringing it home



"PASSION" Observers watched last week to see how strong sales were for Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ."

'Passion' film fans flock to buy millions of DVDs on release day

Los Angeles (RNS)—Compared to the film's release this past spring, the DVD release of "The Passion" was a subdued event.

There have been few of the sizzling interfaith debates, frenzied news reports and talk radio discussion fests that surrounded the film's Ash Wednesday arrival earlier this year.

Back then, midnight screenings of "The Passion" found Christians leaving movie theaters in tears, while longtime Jewish-Christian alliances were strained. On Oscar night, Academy Awards host Billy Crystal joked that the awards were being simulcast in Aramaic.

Gibson, nearly omnipresent back then, is not doing interviews. The \$29.98 DVD is just a bare bones copy of the film—with no director's commentary, behind-the-scenes features, CD-ROM treats or other add-ons that typically would accompany a DVD of a film that enjoyed a \$375 million U.S. box office.

Fox's press release covers under two pages and contains no quotes from critics or executives.

Nonetheless, the "Passion" DVD sold 4.1 million copies on its first day. It is expected to sell well, especially among devout Christians who are hungry for serious spiritual themes as an alternative to Hollywood's typical R-rated fare. (The animated film "Finding Nemo" holds the one-day DVD sales record, with about 8 million copies.)

The Family Christian Stores chain, with 300 outlets, is discounting the DVD to \$19.95 while offering the free DVD documentary "Jesus: Fact or Fiction."

In Hollywood, films are being repackaged as DVDs to jump on "The Passion's" spiritual bandwagon.

They include "Jesus Christ Superstar," "The Greatest Story Ever Told" and ABC, NBC, BBC and PBS documentaries on Pope John Paul II, Christ and early Christians.

Worship in Kentucky

Another market for the DVD likely will be churches that incorporate video as a creative element of their worship services.

Lawrenceburg Pastor Jeff Eaton predicts pastors are going to use portions of the movie to augment their sermons.

"I think people will start working (with the movie) on sermon series now for next Easter," said Eaton, pastor of Hope Community Church.

He said he's already planning a sermon series that will feature Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane being tempted by Satan.

"It's just going to be about how the enemy lies to us," he said.

Eaton added that he thinks worship leaders should chose age-appropriate scenes from the R-rated movie, depending on who is in the audience.

"I would just be sensitive to children with it, picking which parts I would use," he said.

"The Passion" earned more than \$370 million at the North American box office, according to Associated Press, making it the second-most popular movie of the year, behind "Shrek 2."

Observers told AP "The Passion" is on track to sell as well as other Hollywood blockbusters, such as "Spider Man" and "The Lord of the Rings" which sold between 15 million and 18 million DVDs.

With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey



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HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Mike Harmon

Smoke from burning leaves wafting up to the sky and the chill of the evening air penetrating our skin stimulate our senses each autumn. Students anticipating a better year and teachers creatively planning lessons bring a greater vision of the future for both. Each situation points to a new beginning filled with hope.

In our spiritual life, we also look for hope. If you feel hopeless, Jesus Christ can change your despair into hope. How?

■ First, admit you are a sinner; one who has disobeyed God's commandments. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

■ Next, believe that Jesus is God's Son and that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and re-establish your relationship with God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23).

■ Finally, confess to others that Jesus is the Lord of your life, the One who has ultimate control. "For with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

If you are ready to do these things, you can pray to Jesus Christ, confessing your sin and asking Him to take control of your life.

With Jesus in your life, you will receive hope and purpose both now and for eternity.

Mike Harmon is associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Princeton

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BENTON**—Sharpe Missionary Church recently called **Kevin Royalty** as minister of music and senior adults. **Jeremy Short** is pastor.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Jackson Grove Church will celebrate its 120-year homecoming Sept. 12. Former pastor **Bill Whittaker**, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, will be the guest speaker in the morning worship service. Other activities include a potluck dinner at 12:30 p.m. and a 2 p.m. gospel music concert by the **Legend Quartet**. The church also will hold fall revival services Sept. 12-15, 7 p.m.

■ **CADIZ**—East Cadiz Church will hold revival services Sept. 12-15 with **Don Moore** as evangelist.

Hurricane Church will hold revival services Sept. 19-22 with **Anthony Carson** as evangelist.

Liberty Point Church will hold revival services Sept. 19-22 with **Ronnie Sivells** as evangelist.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Thornhill Church will host a "See You at the Pole Celebration" Sept. 18, 7 p.m., featuring the **Cole NeSmith Band** and **Brent Crowe**. The event is being coordinated by the Frankfort Youth Ministers Association. For information, call **Ned Nugent** at (502) 223-7302.

■ **GLEN DEAN**—Goshen Church will hold renewal services Sept. 22-26 with **Darrell Rooks** of the Master's Mission as evangelist. The church also will hold homecoming activities Sept. 26, celebrating the 100th anniversary of its current facility. **Daniel Wightman** is pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Community Church recently honored **John and Jayne Dunaway** on their 50th wedding anniversary.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Chevy Chase Church will resume Sunday evening services beginning Sept. 12, 6 p.m. **Jim McKenzie** is pastor.

■ **LONDON**—New Salem Church recently called **Dennis Hammons** as senior pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Beechmont Church's children's choir will present the musical drama, "Sermon on the Mount," Sept. 12, 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (502) 368-5806.

Buechel Park Church recently called **Virginia Copley** as minister of music. The church also is hosting an adult Bible study series, "Salvation: Past, Present and Forever," led by **Wayne Ward**, retired professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The studies are at 6 p.m. the first four Wednesdays in September.

Cloverleaf Church will host **Tony Gore** in concert Sept. 19, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Fern Creek Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary Oct. 24.

Valley View Church will host Dave Ramsey's 13-week **Financial Peace University** program each Sunday at 5 p.m. beginning Sept. 12. For information, call (502) 366-7435.

■ **MAYFIELD**—High Point Church recently called **Rich Gray** as interim minister of music. He previously was minister of music and education at Olivet Church in Paducah. High Point Church also recently licensed **Seth Hawkins** to the gospel ministry.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Hall Street Church recently called **Becky Martin** as director of children's ministries. The church will host **The Gospel Envoys** in concert Sept. 19, 6 p.m.

■ **PADUCAH**—Bellview Church will hold revival services Sept. 19-22 with **C.C. Brasher** as evangelist. **E. Lee James** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—New Enterprise Church will celebrate homecoming Sept. 12.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

- 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.

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

October

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

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

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

8-9 Women on Mission Fall Retreat, Cedarmore.

15-16 Women on Mission Fall Retreat, Cedarmore.

16 Creative Ministries Workshop 101, Lexington Avenue Baptist Church, Danville.

18 Senior Adult Choir Festival-West, First Baptist Church, Madisonville.

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



CHURCH COVENANT Kentucky Baptist leaders signed the first "high impact" church covenant Aug. 29 at The Master's Church in Lexington. Participants (from left) are Alan Witham, Kentucky Baptist Convention regional church development strategist; Scott Wilkins, pastor of The Master's Church; Ray Van Camp, church development strategist for Elkhorn Baptist Association; and Mike James, pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Lexington, the new congregation's sponsoring church.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Bestselling books by Christian author, Glenn Mollette. Silent Struggler: A Caregiver's Personal Story; Spiritual Chocolate: Inspirational Delights for the Heart. All books available at Barnes and Noble.com.

FOR SALE: Religious books (thousands). Send e-mail for list: dudley@dam.net. Evangelist Bill Dudley, 1116 Lacy Drive, Lebanon, MO 65536. (417) 532-2665.

NEEDED: 1975 edition of Baptist Hymnal. Jim Wilcox, (270) 525-3407. South Carrollton Missionary Baptist Church, PO Box 106, South Carrollton, KY 42374.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music/youth or two part-time positions. Send resumé: Dr. Tom Stokes, First Baptist Church, 302 Magnolia, Tompkinsville, KY 42167; or call (270) 487-6538.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister (grades 6-12) for Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church (approx. attendance: 550). Resumé accepted by mail or e-mail by Sept. 30 deadline. Mailing address: Youth Minister Search Committee, Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church, 495 Duckers Road, Midway, KY 40347. Or e-mail to: Forks.Baptist@verison.net.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: First Missionary Baptist Church, PO Box 368, Benton, KY 42025, Attn: Donnie Harris.

SEEKING: Lynn Association of Baptist Churches is now accepting resúmes for the position of director of missions. Please submit resúmes or inquiries to Rev. Kelvin Edwards, 2368 Aetna Grove Church Road, Summersville, KY 42782. (270) 324-2920.

SEEKING: Full-time youth/associate pastor in dynamic, growing Southern Baptist church. Must be willing to become a full-time member of the community. Bachelor's degree and youth experience required; salary and benefit package commensurate with education and experience. Send resumé to: Cynthiana Baptist Church, PO Box 355, Cynthiana, KY 41031, Attn: Maribeth Thomas; or e-mail: waynespivey@bellsouth.net.

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

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister for Highland Park First Baptist. Call (502) 231-3917.

SEEKING: Full-time minister to students for Southern Baptist church. Experience and/or seminary degree a plus. Send to MSSC, 814 Dotson Memorial Baptist Church, Maryville, TN 37801. Target date for receiving resúmes is Sept. 30, 2004.

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, and leading adult choir practices on Wednesday evenings. Please send resúmes: EFBC Personnel Committee, 457 Versailles Road, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Minister of music to bring liveliness, passion and blended/convergent elements to worship in a traditional Northern Kentucky church. Part-time position planning morning worship, leading 35- to 40-voice choir, overseeing accompanists, handbells and children's music. Staff of five minister includes two women (CBF, SBC). E-mail steve@latoniabaptist.org, or mail to PO Box 15103, Covington, KY 41015; www.latoniabaptist.org.

SEEKING: Pastor for Eastern Kentucky Southern Baptist church. Call (606) 349-7185, or e-mail: svhoward@foothills.net.

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

SEEKING: Church secretary. Must have proficient computer skills, people skills, perform administrative tasks and maintain the confidentiality of the position. Office hours: 8:30-4:30, Monday-Friday. Send resúmes to: Kendall Shuler, Broadway Baptist Church, 4000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207.

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Evangelist mixes preaching with NASCAR & Harley

By Sherri Brown
Baptist Press

Bristol, Tenn. (BP)—In the shadow of Bristol Motor Speedway, just across from a booth selling Dale Jr. T-shirts, Ronnie Hill was making his pitch.

"Get your free chance to win a Harley! All you gotta do is listen to me for 10 minutes."

Like a carnival caller, Hill beckoned, "Bring your beer, I don't care. Get your hairy belly in here. It's a Harley!"

Hill, a Texas-based evangelist, came to the races not to cheer on his favorite driver but to tell about Jesus to anyone who would listen among the 200,000 race fans.

"I'm an evangelist. I want to preach to lost people," he said. "I get so frustrated preaching in churches to five or ten lost people."

At Bristol, Hill found more than a handful of lost people. During the three-day event, standing in front of a black and leather Harley-Davidson Sportster 883, he preached a 10-minute salvation message 21 times to about 1,800 people. More than 750 of them indicated they had prayed for salvation for the first time. Most of those were middle-aged adults. Hill will send a letter to everyone who made a profession of faith, encouraging them to find a church home in their communities.

At the conclusion of his short sermon, Hill asked everyone to fill out the ticket with a name, address and phone number.

If they prayed the prayer of salvation for the first time, they were to check the box at the bottom. He assured them that checking the box would not give them a better chance of winning the motorcycle.

The rest of the weekend, Hill partnered with Raceway Ministries, a group that sets up at all of the NASCAR races. Situated at one of the main entrances to the speedway, volunteers handed out 40,000 tickets for a chance to win the Harley.

Janis Horn, a 56-year-old Christian from Monee, Ill., won the motorcycle and rode it home from Tennessee.

Hill, from Fort Worth, Texas, originally had scheduled a revival for the weekend of the races, but the pastor who had invited him canceled.

"I was telling a friend of mine from Bristol about it and he said to come on up and he'd get tickets to the races. I told him if I came to the races, I was coming to witness."

Working with the Sherman, Texas-based Plyler Family Evangelism Foundation, Hill bought the \$12,000 Harley and arranged to have it shipped to Bristol.

Gospel Grille

Cincinnati dining spot seeks to offer good food and good music with Good News

By Dennis O'Connor
Religion News Service

Cincinnati—Kevin Ellerbe sees an important synergy between good gospel music and good food.

For more than a year now, he's seen the fulfillment of a dream to blend the two in a unique venue called the Gospel Grille.

Here, patrons can feast on enticing buffet treats such as barbecue ribs and home-fried chicken while enjoying Nashville-quality gospel music, comedy and other kinds of diversions all in a family setting.

"My dream for a long time was to put this kind of entertainment and dining experience together," said Ellerbe, a Youngstown, Ohio, native.

Earlier this summer he and his wife, Sonya, celebrated the first anniversary of the Gospel Grille. "God gave the vision a couple years ago, and with His help, we're still at it now."

The fact that the gospel entertainment and dining concept—one of a few such venues—has survived this long is testament to the positive atmosphere and pleasant experience patrons enjoy at the Grille.

Music & ministry

"Our customers tell us how much they enjoy coming here, and they thank us for creating a place where they can bring their families and have a really good time," he said.

"People are touched by the music and the fact that this is truly a ministry to young people. Our

customers come from all over to see what it is that we're doing."

Ellerbe, who also works full time as a teacher at a school in Cincinnati's poor East End neighborhood and as a youth minister at the University of Cincinnati and Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, said that he thought of the idea for the Gospel Grille during his Nashville days when he managed a gospel band.

"I was impressed with the venues available for gospel music in the South, especially around Nashville, and I wondered what kinds of gospel entertainment venues there were in the Cincinnati area," he said.

Finding the right location

After finding none in the city, Ellerbe began his search.

Armed with an idea of what he wanted to do, Ellerbe and his wife set out searching for the perfect setting for the Gospel Grille.

After a few days of looking, he said the hand of God guided him into the parking lot of a music venue called The Music Palace, a restaurant and entertainment complex that highlights a giant Wurlitzer organ center stage, surrounded by table seating on two floors.

"I walked in the door and introduced myself to the owners, Barb and Tony Marty, and I began telling them about the concept I had."

The Martyrs liked the concept and set the stage for the Gospel Grille. Ellerbe said The Music Palace is open for lunch business 11 a.m.



to 2 p.m. Monday through Saturday, while the Gospel Grille operates in the evenings Thursdays through Saturdays and Sunday afternoons.

Patrons gather for buffet-style dinners at the Grille, and then they settle back for a variety of entertainment that has included traditional gospel tunes, gospel rap and performances from the likes of Clay Cross and Christian jazz artists Allen and Allen, among others.

Ellerbe said that the variety of musical styles offered at the Grille reflects his goal to provide a setting where Christians—and like-minded non-Christians—can gather together, enjoy the music and each other's company.

"Cincinnati has had its obvious problems in the past," Ellerbe said, referring to the race riots of a couple years ago that has pitted the city's African-American community against the police city leadership. "We're trying to bring a little light to a city plagued with darkness. This venue exists so people of all backgrounds can come together in harmony."

CHRISTIAN NIGHT SPOT
Sonya and Kevin Ellerbe opened the Gospel Grille in Cincinnati about a year ago to offer a setting where Christians—and like-minded non-Christians—can gather together, enjoy the music and each other's company. (RNS photo by Tony Tribble)

Groups make amends for Anabaptist persecution

By Rich Preheim
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—In the early 16th century, groups of European Christians started splitting from the Roman Catholic Church in what is now known as the Protestant Reformation.

But while Protestants and Catholics were at odds, they had one thing in common: Anabaptism had to be eliminated.

The Reformed Christians drowned Felix Manz, the first of thousands of Anabaptist martyrs over the next two centuries. The Catholics burned at the stake Michael Sattler, author of the first Anabaptist confession of faith.

Even Martin Luther, who is credited with ushering in the Reformation, urged the execution of all Anabaptists as heretics.

Such persecution helped drive the early Anabaptists—the spiritual ancestors of today's Mennonites, Amish and Hutterites—into isolation, suspicious of the rest of the world.

But now nearly 500 years later, the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches—the primary antagonists of Anabaptists in the 16th and 17th centuries—are seeking to make amends.

"We all have black sheep in the family. We all have ancestors that we aren't proud of," said Joseph

Martino, head of the Vatican-appointed delegation that last fall concluded five years of meetings with a group from Mennonite World Conference, the global Mennonite fellowship.

In addition to the Catholics, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Mennonite Church USA this spring finished a two-year series of meetings.

This summer, the Reformed Church in Zurich, Switzerland, held a reconciliation ceremony with participation by Anabaptist descendants from around the world.

As Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed re-examine their history, so Mennonites are prompted to introspection.

"It's always healthy if we should engage another tradition," said Mennonite historian John Sharp. "That strengthens our own faith."

Division over infant baptism

The Protestant Reformation was born in 1517 when Catholic monk Martin Luther challenged the church by posting his 95 theses in Wittenberg in what is now Germany. He went on to found the Lutheran church.

Another pivotal development came in the early 1520s, when priest Ulrich Zwingli renounced Catholicism but remained in the

pulpit of Zurich's main church, leading to the start of the Reformed movement.

But some Christians thought Luther, Zwingli and other reformers did not go far enough. Particularly at issue was infant baptism.

For generations, newborns had been baptized, but some believers argued that only adults can make a decision to follow Jesus Christ and join the church.

Anabaptists insisted on believers' baptism—first conducted in Zurich in 1525—and refused to have their children baptized as babies.

But the Anabaptist position, while religious, was also viewed as political.

Baptism was not only into the church but also into citizenship in the state, since state and church were one, be they Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed. So rejecting infant baptism was seen as threatening the civic order.

As a result, Anabaptists were severely persecuted, forcing them to frequently flee across Europe and eventually to the Americas in search of security to practice their faith.

While Lutheran and Catholic repentance for the persecution of Anabaptists is new, it is not new for the Reformed. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches apologized more than 20 years ago.

"We all have black sheep in the family. We all have ancestors that we aren't proud of."

Catholic leader Joseph Martino



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