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## Kentucky's Ten Commandments case goes to U.S. Supreme Court

Washington—The U.S. Supreme Court has decided to hear a Kentucky case involving the public display of the Ten Commandments.

The case of McCreary County, Ky., vs. ACLU is among two such cases the court has agreed to hear on the subject.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in late 2003 that it was unconstitutional to display Commandments with other historical documents in courthouses in McCreary and Pulaski counties.

In the second case, Van Orden vs. Perry, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a granite Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the Texas Capitol in Austin did not violate the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion.

The U.S. Supreme Court often takes cases to resolve conflicting decisions between different appeals-court circuits. However, these cases mark the first time since 1980 that the high court has dealt with the issue of Ten Commandments displays on government property.

That year, the court decided *Stone vs. Graham*, in which they found unconstitutional a Kentucky law requiring public schools to post the commandments in each classroom.

Dates for oral arguments have not been set, but the high court will render a decision by June.

*Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Religion News Service*

## Seeing prayers answered



**PRAYER MEETING** Jewel Hansel of Mt. Vernon (center) prays during a quarterly prayer meeting for spiritual awakening in Inez this past summer. Sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the meetings include times for people to share what God is doing in their lives and communities. (Photo by Ken Walker)

## Kentucky Baptists say God working in state

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**Mount Vernon (BP)**—Soon after Jewel Hansel and Shirley Cox started a community prayer meeting four years ago, they say they saw a visible demonstration of what God was about to do in their town.

One night as they returned home from a dinner with their husbands, they saw two preachers—one Baptist, the other Pentecostal—warning people of the need to repent.

After stopping their car, they saw two teenage boys who were carrying a large cross through the main park in the town of 2,600 in south-central Kentucky.

Talking to their mother, they

learned the boys were from Ohio. God had awakened them one night, the mother said, and told them to carry the cross around the nation while preaching the gospel.

"We haven't heard any more about them, but we felt God was telling us what He was getting ready to do," Hansel recalled.

Such stories are becoming commonplace during the quarterly prayer meetings being held throughout the commonwealth.

Sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the meetings are designed to encourage people to pray for spiritual awakening.

But they also include times for people to share how God is at work

in their ministries, according to Eric Allen, who helps coordinate the meetings.

"It's important that, as we pray for God to work, we give testimony to the way He has been working," Allen said.

"If we come together and share what God has been doing as a result of previous prayers, then we're encouraged and in a better attitude to pray," he added.

Allen, who also helps train church prayer coordinators, said he always encourages prayer meeting leaders to include time for people to acknowledge how God has been working in the lives of people.

□ See *Kentuckians talk of ...* Page 6

## Faith-based groups working toward civility during election



**RED GOD, BLUE GOD** Ken Warren (right), professor of political science at St. Louis University, speaks at a panel discussion featuring politically liberal and conservative speakers. The event was one of several being hosted at campuses to showcase people of faith with different political perspectives. (The [St. Louis] University News photo by Jared Vandergriff)

By Ann Rodgers  
Religion News Service

**Washington**—Jay Geisler invited Call to Renewal to his church because he's weary of Christians arguing over ideology, and desperate to address the poverty and hopelessness in the neighborhoods around St. Stephen Episcopal Church in McKeesport, Pa.

Call to Renewal is one of several faith-related groups touring the country this election year to draw Americans together from both sides of the ideological divide for polite conversation, social cooperation or both.

Geisler, pastor in a once-prosperous steel town that has rusted alongside its shuttered mills, appreciates Democratic attention to health care and other safety net issues. But he also finds merit in Re-

publican efforts to encourage marriage and discourage abortion. He hasn't decided which presidential candidate to vote for. And he rejects both election year stereotypes of "godless liberals out to destroy the family" and "quasi-fascists dropping bombs for Jesus."

"Theologically, I'm in that broad, silent majority that at some point is being forced to speak up," he said. "This polarization is tearing churches apart, tearing our country apart. Each side wants winner-take-all. We don't seem to want to see win-win anymore."

Three faith-based groups have been traveling the country to act as peacemakers of sorts in the ongoing culture wars. Each group has its niche, but they share a common goal of increasing civility:

□ See *Faith groups work ...* Page 8

**New Orleans Seminary President Chuck Kelley voiced regret that SBC messengers largely received only one side of the story at the 2004 convention.**

## Trustees tentatively OK 'sole member' plan

By Lacy Thompson  
*Louisiana Baptist Message*

**New Orleans (ABP)**—After months of sometimes pointed discussion, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary trustees agreed Oct. 13 to adopt proposed charter amendments to tie the school securely to the Southern Baptist Convention—but with some reservations.

Spending 90 minutes in a closed-door session, seminary trustees essentially acceded to the request of messengers to the 2004 national convention to adopt a "sole membership" model of corporate organization proposed by the SBC Executive Committee.

At the same time, however, trustees asked seminary President Chuck Kelley to report concerns regarding the sole membership model to convention messengers who must give final approval to the changes at the 2005 annual meeting next June in Nashville.

### Proposal details rights

The model makes the convention the "sole member"—or single controlling member—of the seminary corporation and outlines the specific rights entitled. It is intended to prevent the seminary—and other convention entities—from arbitrarily acting to distance itself from the denomination, as some state convention entities have done in recent years.

Since 1997, Southern Baptist leaders have sought to secure its entities by having them adopt sole membership charters. In so doing, they grant the convention ultimate authority. As designed, a "sole member" cannot leave the denominational fold without the approval of convention messengers.

Prior to last week, all convention entities had agreed to the sole membership structure except New Orleans Seminary.

Last fall, after extensive study of the matter, trustees at the New Orleans school declined to adopt the sole membership model, citing legal and Baptist polity concerns. They argued sole membership eventually could be used by the Executive Committee to exert undue authority over the school; would be a problem because of the unique nature of Louisiana law; would increase legal liability for the convention; and violates historic Baptist polity.

Executive Committee leaders insisted the concerns are unfounded. They asserted the sole membership model can work in Louisiana, that it actually strengthens the convention's liability protection and simply represents a legal solution to a legal problem.

Seminary leaders have not been convinced. But even in rejecting the sole membership model, they committed to finding an alternative that would secure its ties to the convention. Last spring, leaders agreed to bring a pair of options, including a sole membership proposal, to the 2005 convention for messengers to decide the issue.

But Executive Committee members wanted to bring the issue to SBC messengers this year, and at the annual meeting in June messengers voted 63.5 percent to 36.5 percent to ask the seminary to adopt the sole membership model as proposed by the Executive Committee.

Under the sole membership model, the SBC holds the right to:

- Elect and remove the seminary's trustees.

- Approve any amendment of the charter adopted by the board of trustees.

- Approve any merger, consolidation or dissolution or any change in the corporation's charter.

- Approve the sale or lease of all, or substantially all, of the corporation's assets.

After the meeting, Kelley emphasized the trustee action is exactly what the convention messengers asked them to do. He said trustees empowered convention leaders to work out possible minor word changes in the charter document. He also emphasized that nothing of substance is involved in the possible changes and that trustees made it clear their approval of the sole membership model stands even if those minor changes are not made.

### Concerns "won't be hostile"

"We're going to express our concerns with our report" to the 2005 convention, Kelley said. "It won't be lengthy. It won't be controversial. It won't be hostile. We're just going to say, 'If this is what you want, it's all ready for you to do and will be filed immediately with the state. But before you take your final vote, please be aware we have these concerns.'"

Kelley voiced regret that SBC messengers largely received only one side of the story at the 2004 convention. "I believe completely that the messengers make the final decision," he said. "But I do not think the messengers were well served at the 2004 convention because they were only told one side of the story. ... We just wish they had been better informed."

Executive Committee President Morris Chapman disagreed with Kelley's assessment of events, indicating New Orleans Seminary had been given opportunity to make its case both to the Executive Committee and to messengers at the annual meeting.

"Dr. Kelley publicly has given his opinions multiple times," Chapman said. "I'm thankful his trustees have indicated they will adopt sole membership and I look forward to moving ahead on this matter."

*With additional reporting by Baptist Press*

## Iorg inaugurated as Golden Gate's 7th president

**Mill Valley, Calif. (BP)**—Jeff Iorg was inaugurated Oct. 11 as president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.



Jeff Iorg

Iorg, who previously was executive director of the Northwest Baptist Convention, was elected Golden Gate's seventh president in April and began his new position Aug. 1. He succeeded William Crews who retired after leading the seminary from 1986-2003.

Casting his vision for the future of Golden Gate, Iorg shared his passions of fulfilling the Great Commission through strengthening churches.

"God did not call me because of my Christian heritage, my denominational loyalty, my political connections, my academic credentials or my leadership abilities," Iorg said. "God called me because of the person I am, with the passions that drive me in this position."

"Passion for non-Christians demands we plunge in among them," Iorg said. "If your anemic, undisciplined faith can't handle the pressure, that is your problem—not the problem of the world we are living in. Grow up! The culture is not our problem—failure to boldly live and declare the gospel is our problem."

Iorg said his passion for the Great Commission will be expressed at Golden Gate through a renewed emphasis on missions, evangelism, church starting and church building.

The multi-cultural aspect of Golden Gate's programs will continue as students prepare to live and work cross-culturally, Iorg said. Fulfilling the Great Commission begins with sound theology rooted in an unapologetic, uncompromising commitment to the Bible as the Word of God and an affirmation of the historical core doctrines of the Christian faith, he added.

"We will stand for the absolute truth, despite the cultural opposition to that idea."

Fermin Whittaker, executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, gave the charge from the churches. With millions of unchurched people looking for a place where they can connect to God, Whittaker said the church is a crucial element to fulfill the Great Commission.

"Churches are in need of visionary and dedicated leaders to move us forward," he said. "There are days when the harvest is ready, but the laborers are few. As you prepare leaders, ... may God guide you along the way."



"Preach on love ... preach on hope ...  
preach on love ... preach on hope ..."

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## BAPTIST DIGEST

### Robertson to lead N.Y. convention.

Terry Robertson has been named executive director of the Baptist Convention of New York. He will succeed J.B. Graham who will retire Nov. 5. Robertson, 50, is senior pastor of Madison (N.J.) Baptist Church. A former pastor in New York, he also has served as associational missionary for Frontier Association in western New York. A member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee since 1995, he also has served on the SBC Committee on Nominations and is a former member of the Baptist Convention of New York's Executive Board.

### Alaska, N.C. conclude partnership.

Alaska Baptists completed a five-year missions partnership with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina during their annual meeting Oct. 5-6 in Anchorage. North Carolina Executive Director Jim Royston reported that the state convention has sent more than 5,600 volunteers to Alaska during the past five years. Alaska Baptist Convention Executive Director David Baldwin

said churches reported increases in baptisms and Bible study attendance as part of a three-year "Light Up Alaska" emphasis.

### Southwestern highlights missions.

Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, announced the school will focus its international evangelistic efforts over the next five years in Cuba and Siberia and among the Nyika people of Zambia. He said he expects all students to be involved in the emphasis.

### Baldrige resigns CBF position.

Gary Baldrige, who with his wife has led the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's global missions effort for five years, will leave CBF at the end of the year to return to a career in writing. Barbara Baldrige will become interim coordinator Jan. 1, assuming the duties she shared with her husband. Gary Baldrige, 53, who was a newspaper reporter before becoming a missionary 25 years ago, said he plans to do free-lance magazine journalism.

## KBC business: 5 leaders to retire, BWA study proposed

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

Louisville—In a series of major personnel changes on the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff, one team leader and three department directors have announced their retirements effective Dec. 31. A fourth department director will retire next spring.

The staff changes, announced during the Oct. 12 meeting of the Mission Board's administrative committee, come in response to changes in retirement benefits which will take effect Jan. 1. Several of the retiring staff members will continue to serve the KBC in part-time contract positions. Those who are retiring include:

**Larry Martin, 59, leader of the KBC missions growth team.** Martin, who was elected director of the convention's evangelism and missions division effective Jan. 1, 1995, will have served on the KBC staff 10 years at the time of his early retirement. He previously was vice president of the ministry section of the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as well as executive director of Greater Boston Baptist Association in New England and director of missions for Greater Detroit Baptist Association. He also was pastor of several Kentucky Baptist churches.

**Jim Cordell, 60, director of the worship/music department.** Cordell, who joined the KBC staff in 1987, previously was associate director of the KBC church music department. He also served 15 years as minister of music at First Baptist Church of Somerset as well as music director



Cordell



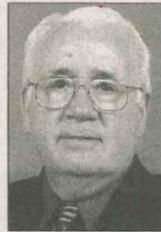
Hough



Martin



Smoot



Watts

of other Kentucky Baptist churches and part-time music instructor at Cumberland College in Williamsburg and Somerset Community College.

**Tom Smoot, 60, director of the creative ministries department.** Smoot, who has served 30 years on the KBC staff, previously was director of the KBC youth department and associate director of the collegiate department as well as campus minister at the University of Louisville and six schools in western Kentucky. He also served as youth and education minister at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

**B.J. Watts, 65, director of the support services department since 1994.** He previously was director of the KBC's administrative services department. Prior to joining the KBC staff in 1989, Watts was associate to the executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

**Tony Hough, 54, director of the extension-ministries department.** Hough, who has served on the KBC staff since 1992, previously was director of missions and ministries for Long Run Baptist Association. He also has been pastor of churches in Kentucky and Wisconsin as well as a home missionary in Tennessee

and Vermont. Hough will retire at the end of March after reaching age 55, the earliest age KBC staff qualify for early retirement.

The plan under which the five men are retiring provides full medical insurance for employees who are at least age 55 and have been employed at least 10 years. Oct. 1 was the deadline for applying for retirement under that plan. Effective Jan. 1, 2005, retirement benefits will be reduced for employees under age 65 with less than 15 years of KBC employment.

Cordell, Martin, Smoot and Watts will serve in temporary contract positions with the KBC. Cordell and Smoot will continue to fulfill the majority of their current responsibilities as part-time department directors. Martin will serve as a missions growth consultant and Watts will serve as a support associate.

The support services department, which Watts led, will be eliminated effective Jan. 1 and support responsibilities will be assigned to other departments in the business services team.

"Any time you have transition in personnel, there is a sense of loss that I feel and persons in the organization feel," noted KBC Executive

Director Bill Mackey. With several staff members continuing to serve in contract positions, he added, "This allows us to take advantage of their experience, expertise and relationships during this time of transition to new leadership."

Among leadership changes approved by the administrative committee are for state missions department director Randy Jones to succeed Martin as missions growth team leader and for Eric Allen, prayer and Mission Service Corps consultant, to succeed Jones as department director. The committee will recommend those two changes to the KBC Mission Board in November for final action.

In other action, administrative committee members recommended that the full board propose a study committee to examine "how the Kentucky Baptist Convention may relate to the Baptist World Alliance." If approved by the Mission Board in November, the proposal will be presented to messengers during the Nov. 16-17 KBC annual meeting in Louisville.

The KBC previously helped fund BWA through the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program. Southern Baptist Convention messengers voted in June, however, to end the SBC's 99-year affiliation with the international Baptist body effective Oct. 1.

The KBC proposal calls for a nine-to-12-member study committee to be appointed by the incoming KBC president. The committee would then report its findings and recommendations to next year's KBC annual meeting.

**Administrative committee members recommended establishing a committee to examine "how the Kentucky Baptist Convention may relate to the Baptist World Alliance."**

## College presidents affirm proposal to allow non-Baptist trustees

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

Louisville—A proposed change in trustee qualifications for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's four-year schools will be among major items of business at next month's KBC annual meeting in Louisville.

The proposed constitutional amendment provides for the four KBC-related colleges to have up to one-fourth of their trustees who are not members of Kentucky Baptist churches. It specifies, however, that all trustees must be "Christians who are in harmony with historic Baptist beliefs" and must have an "intentional commitment ... for the college to remain affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention."

The recommendation was first presented as part of last year's KBC Mission Study Committee report. It was introduced by the KBC Committee on Constitution and Bylaws at last year's KBC annual meeting in preparation for action by messengers this year.

The current constitutional provision allows the four schools to have up to eight out-of-state trustees who are members of Baptist churches. The proposed wording permits non-Baptist trustees both from Kentucky and elsewhere.

Truett Cocanougher, chairman of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, said the proposal "gives options to the college presidents in order to reach into a broader base of resources and support

through their trustees."

Noting that "trustees are very important in institutional life because they help promote and support through their influence," he added, "I'm not sure we're losing anything in the process. I think we're broadening our reach. I don't think that's to our detriment."

Leslie Hollon, who chaired the study committee's higher education subcommittee, said presidents of the four KBC-related schools have agreed to verify in writing that non-Baptist trustees meet four basic commitments before being nominated.

Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, said those commitments include individuals "who are passionately committed to Christ, active in the local church, in harmony with historic Baptist beliefs and are intentionally committed for the colleges to remain in a covenant relationship with the convention."

Noting that "nearly half of the students at Cumberland, Campbellsville and Georgetown are non-Baptist," Hollon said the proposal "helps us as Kentucky Baptists and colleges to accomplish our purpose of connecting people to Christ by having a larger representation of Christians to partner with us in this common mission."

### "Defining moment"

Bill Crouch, president of Georgetown College, said he believes passage of the

amendment "will be one of the defining moments in our institutions because it's going to allow each of us to be able to give a role to a disenfranchised part of our institutions, in terms of governance; that is the 50 percent of all of our institutions who are non-Kentucky Baptists who have never been permitted to serve."

Little concern has been expressed publicly about the proposal. One exception was an Aug. 10 letter to the editor by Chuck Luke, pastor of Durbin Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington.

Describing the proposal as "a tremendous leap in the wrong direction," Luke wrote that "sacrificing our Baptist identity on the altar of more money is not the right direction for the KBC."

"Our mission is not going to change," responded Michael Carter, president of Campbellsville University. "We're all committed to our Baptist heritage and to who we are as Baptist institutions. ... There's got to be a level of trust."

According to KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey, "The statement regarding non-Baptist trustees has several strong stipulations that, in my opinion, greatly strengthen the ties between our institutions and the Kentucky Baptist Convention. ... There is an expectation that all of our agencies and institutions would support the mission and objectives of the KBC and report how they're doing in this process."

"I support this recommendation," Mackey added, "because I believe the

context of the report greatly strengthens the relationship and the opportunities for partnership in fulfilling the mission of the KBC which is, I believe, the basic mission the Lord has given His church."

Bill Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, said his institution may or may not choose to seek non-Baptist trustees since the vast majority of the school's students are Baptist.

### "Plenty of safeguards"

Even if Clear Creek does nominate non-Baptists, he added, "It seems like the guideline has plenty of safeguards to maintain the college affiliation with the convention. The buck stops with each president to ensure recommending trustees who are truly sympathetic with our historic commitments and the uniqueness of our colleges."

Jim Taylor, president of Cumberland College in Williamsburg, said he believes the proposal will pave the way for "a lot of good Christian people who are locked out as second-class citizens" to become involved in the school's work and support.

"I really don't know what there is to fear," Taylor said. "I don't know why any institution would want to withdraw from the Kentucky Baptist Convention. That's who we are."

"We all want the same thing," he added. "We want to be better institutions; we want to promote the Baptist cause."

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Non-Christians: Friends or foes?

By Ginger Plowman

**Opelika, Ala. (BP)**—I recently heard a young man preach a sermon about the importance of sharing the gospel. His philosophy was that as long as Christians are obeying God by witnessing to the lost, they should not care whether the lost accept Christ.

He proposed that this attitude takes the pressure off the person sharing the gospel. After all, if we only care about obeying God and not the results of sharing our faith, what do we have to lose? While I agree that the decision of another person to accept or reject the call of Jesus is certainly not the responsibility of the one who shares the gospel, I disagree that the Christian's attitude be one of not caring.

The young man's charge for Christians to not concern themselves with non-Christians who reject Jesus bothered me for two reasons: God commands Christians to care, and God has convicted me many times for not caring.

Christians are charged in Colossians 3:12 to be compassionate: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." We are to care, just as Christ cares, for the lost souls of men.

## Gospel "to-do list"

I used to view non-Christians as outsiders. I looked at them as mere projects that I needed to check off my "I shared Christ with them" to-do list. I embraced sharing the gospel of Jesus as my job, and I faithfully did it out of obedience. This "just do it" attitude is definitely in line with my personality. Spiritual gifts tests have confirmed that I am a prophet/teacher.

The downfall to a person with these gifts is that he or she usually is lacking in the compassion and mercy department. For example, when a turtle makes the dangerous decision

to cross a busy road, many people think, "Poor thing." I think, "Stupid turtle." When someone comes to me with a problem, I'm not the huggy, let-me-cry-with-you type. I'm more the factual "Here's what you need to do so dry your eyes and get on with it" type.

Unfortunately, I must admit that while I had a heart for obeying God in sharing the gospel with the lost, I did not have a heart for the lost. I can recall telling several people about Jesus and not grieving over their negative response to His plan of salvation. God convicted me that I was viewing non-Christians as a type of enemy—an enemy I needed to conquer in the spiritual war of evangelism.

I would faithfully put on my armor, swing the sword of truth at whomever came my way, and walk off the battlefield without giving a second thought to where the wounded fell. I simply counted my efforts as medals toward spiritual heroism.

Jesus doesn't view non-Christians as the enemy but as victims of the enemy. According to Philippians 2:5, Christians are to have the same attitude as Christ. It took me a while to realize that not having a heart for the lost is just as disobedient as not sharing the gospel. Christ longs to gather His lost sheep. It is impossible to have the attitude of Christ while not caring for the lost.

Befriending a non-believer for the purpose of sharing the gospel is very different than becoming their companion. Companions are companionable, meaning they are suited for one another socially in their likes and dislikes. Therefore, we are not to be "companions" with a non-believer, but we are to befriend them in order to share the good news of Jesus with them.

Jesus befriended non-believers. He befriended and protected a prostitute when no one else would. He went into the house of Matthew, a

lying and cheating tax collector, and ate dinner with a gang of sinners in order to subject them to His holiness. "When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy that need a doctor, but the sick" (Matthew 8:11-12). Jesus came to set the sinners free.

As we befriend non-believers for the sake of sharing the love of Christ, it is wise to establish some boundaries. First and foremost, we never should indulge in sinful activities in the name of witnessing. The gospel should be shown with our actions as much as it is spoken with our words.

## Ambassadors, not secret agents

It also is a good idea to let the non-believer know up front that you are devoted to Jesus. After all, we are not secret agents, but ambassadors for Christ. "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:20a).

Although we should establish who we are in Christ, it is helpful to develop a relationship before bombarding people with Scripture. By showing interest in their lives and getting to know them, we develop trust in the friendship.

In realizing these truths, I began to pray for a heart like His. As a result, He enables me to see the lost through His eyes and care for them through His love. I am becoming more and more aware of how precious they are to Jesus. My heart hurts for those who don't know my sweet Jesus. I long to see them embrace their Maker, the giver of hope and joy. God is still working on me, but I am thankful He is making my heart a little more like His each day.

Oh, and I simply must tell you, I recently pulled my car over to help a turtle cross the road. God is definitely working on me.

*Ginger Plowman, of Opelika, Ala., is an assistant director for Proverbs 31 Ministries*

Board's administrative committee, every member shared recent experiences of how God has been at work in their lives. Ministry experiences covered work with Hispanic children; leading a friend to Christ; witnessing miraculous physical healing; medical missions in Russia, Poland and Brazil; church growth in remote places; meals for Kentucky Changers, and more.

Dr. M.A. Winchester of Sterns has participated in numerous medical mission projects, which have resulted in healing and salvation for thousands. Dr. Sam Ballou, a dentist from Corbin, has conducted dental clinics in all kinds of settings including open air with no electricity. Retirement has provided both men opportunities for numerous mission trips.

Please pray for Kentucky Baptists who are responding to mission opportunities in Kentucky and beyond. If you have interest, please contact the KBC missions growth team office or the partnership missions department by calling us at (502) 245-4101 or (800) 266-6477.

*Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*

## FIRST PERSON

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## Kentucky Baptists giving &amp; serving

Kentucky Baptists have proven to be generous in financial support and gracious in their involvement in missions in Kentucky and around the world. I am so grateful to be closely associated with such a mission-oriented convention of Baptists.

As I reflect on the Cooperative Program unified budget receipts, I am impressed with the commitment of Kentucky Baptists to cooperate in the mission of connecting all people to Jesus Christ.

As reported earlier, the 2003-2004 fiscal year closed on a high note on Aug. 31 with missions giving up 5.7 percent over the previous year. And the 2004-2005 budget year has begun with record receipts for September, which usually are below budget.

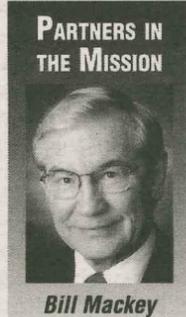
On behalf of all Kentucky Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention ministries, I express heartfelt gratitude. I am grateful for each minister and layperson who has provided leadership on behalf of the Cooperative Program and other budget gifts.

**Disaster relief.** Kentucky Baptists are known for their service and ministry in the name of Jesus Christ. When the hurricanes crisscrossed Florida and impacted Alabama, more than 260 Kentucky Baptists were mobilized to serve.

We are grateful for the staff leadership that is provided by Larry Koch (with help from his wife, Elaine) in the arena of disaster relief. I have received numerous letters requesting that I express appreciation to Kentucky Baptists for their outstanding ministry.

Ian Sterling, the Red Cross kitchen manager for Kentucky workers at Bay Minette, Ala., may be the most grateful person to receive ministry. Ian stated, "My acceptance of Jesus Christ and the eternal life I'm now blessed with is completely due to the indescribable joy of being in the presence of all of you (Kentucky disaster relief volunteers). The power of God is so awesome and resides so strongly in Kentucky disaster relief."

**God at work.** During a recent dinner gathering of the KBC Mission



Bill Mackey

## CHURCH

## God still works in mysterious ways among His people

By Doug Strader

There is an old saying that declares, "God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform."

After several years of serving the Lord through the church, I can testify that the saying is

true. I recently had a conversation with one of our church members that drove home that point again.

I was attending a Sunday school class meeting when a woman came to me and asked if she could come to my office and talk with me. I assured her that all she needed to do was call the church office and talk with the secretary and she would be happy to schedule her visit. She followed up on our conversation and the visit was scheduled.

At the appointed time she arrived for our visit. After exchanging pleasantries, we began to talk about her family. She is a senior adult and I did not know anything about her or her family. She had been a widow for 40 years, and for most of her adult life she had been a faithful Christian and church member, but for the past several years she had not been coming to Sunday school or the worship services.

I told her I noticed her in the worship service one day and wondered who she was and why she was there. I asked a long-time member and learned that she was indeed a member but had not been active for several years. So I asked her what prompted her return.

She informed me that earlier in the year when our church had a capital campaign to raise funds to refurbish our buildings, she had received a letter asking for her participation. Just receiving the letter was enough to prompt her to begin attending worship service. When she came, she liked what she saw and what she experienced. Now she was asking if there was anything she needed to do for the Lord and the church.

Who would have thought that a financial stewardship campaign letter would have had such an influence? I am convinced that we need to be faithful to God by teaching and preaching about the need to be faithful to God with our resources and God will bless His people.

*Doug Strader, retired director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department, is pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville*



## Setting positive priorities can add balance to life & family

**Q: My spouse and I both work full-time jobs and we have two teenagers. With all of our church, school and work activities, it seems that we never get any time together as a family. How can we balance all of our responsibilities and commitments?**

What are the secrets to living a balanced life in a culture of imbalance? Your situation epitomizes the plight of 21st century American families. How will Christian families respond when life captures us in a speed trap and we find ourselves overscheduled and underconnected?

### PARENTING

**First, be clear about your top two priorities.** God first. Family second. Notice all the things that should be pushed to third place. These will include, though not necessarily in this order: church, jobs, friends, school activities, club activities, hobbies, music and sports.

**Second, talk with your spouse and as a family about your priorities.** Dialogue as a family about what would make each person's life a bit simpler and allow more "down time" at home. Resist the urge to make unilateral decisions for your teens about what they should cut out. Invite feedback about what they see in your life that might be simplified or pruned. Interestingly, national polls have shown that one of the top concerns of teens is "not enough time spent with parents."

**Finally, practice saying "no."** Model to your family that you will seldom agree immediately to any external or internal request. When the phone rings and a request for yet another commitment is made, let the person on the other end know that you first need to talk with your spouse and family before giving an answer. You will be surprised how this straightforward filtering process will help simplify your life.—Scott Wigginton

**Q: I am depressed because I don't have a good job, I don't have much money and I don't have any romantic relationships. Any suggestions?**

Consider the following biblical principles:

**The law of attraction.** Proverbs says "as a man thinks in his heart," so he becomes. If you constantly focus on the negative, you will continue to attract negative results.

### SINGLES

Don't focus on what you don't want; focus on what you do want.

**The law of encouragement.** The New Testament apostle Barnabas is instructive in both his name and his actions. His name means "son of encouragement." His encouragement was critical to Paul becoming the most influential missionary in Christian history.

**The law of balance.** Are you feeding each area of your life toward growth? Jesus "grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). He grew mentally, physically, spiritually and socially. Intentionally do something positive in each of these areas of your life each week.

**The law of friendship.** Proverbs also teaches that "he who has friends must show himself friendly." Again, it's the law of attraction. Someone in your circle of acquaintances is just waiting for you to reach out to them. As you take the first step, others will respond.

**The law of accountability.** One reason Hebrews encourages readers not to "neglect the assembling of yourselves together" is because we need feedback from others to see how we're progressing in our life of faith. Feedback is the breakfast of champions. Do you have anyone you can count on to give you honest feedback about how you're living your life?

If you will take just one step in any of the areas listed above, you will have an improvement in some aspect of your life. Take that step! God will be with you as you enter the exciting journey of personal growth.—James Stillwell

Family Forum writers are:

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

**James Stillwell**, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. E-mail: james@lbs-lex.org.

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**Scott Wigginton**, associate professor of pastoral ministries and counseling at Campbellsville University. E-mail: sewigginton@campbellsville.edu.

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



## New Testament churches deserve trust

Here we go again. Trustees of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board recently adopted detailed guidelines concerning what constitutes a New Testament/Baptist church.

While that sounds like a good idea on the surface, a close examination of the 34-page document reveals that the trustees adopted guidelines even more restrictive than the much-debated 2000 Baptist Faith and Message revisions.

Among key restrictions listed in the NAMB document are that "the covenant of a Baptist church must minimally affirm ... the divine inspiration, inerrancy and authority of the Bible" and that "if a local church ordains its deacons, then women cannot serve in this capacity."

According to Richard Harris, NAMB's vice president of church planting, the new guidelines will be used to review and guide NAMB's church planting strategies, processes and materials.

Keep in mind that even amid the political and theological wrangling in the Southern Baptist Convention the past 25 years, the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message neither uses the word "inerrancy" nor addresses the issue of ordaining women as deacons. And those are significant points as Southern Baptists seek to find common ground for ongoing cooperation.

While some Southern Baptists interpret the Baptist Faith and Message as affirming inerrancy, others do not. Regardless of one's views about the issue, the fact is that inerrancy has become more of a political term than a theological one in SBC life in recent years.

Those who revised the SBC faith statement at the turn of the century were wise to leave intact the eloquent declaration that the Bible "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Rather than inserting a clearly politicized word, the committee left open how Baptists would choose to describe their belief in the full authority of God's Holy Word.

As for ordained women, the 2000 faith statement specifies that "the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture." Committee members again chose not to address the issue of ordaining women deacons, perhaps deferring at that point to an earlier statement in the same section that declares: "A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an auto-

nous local congregation of baptized believers."

Among positive notes in the NAMB document is a strong affirmation of local church autonomy. "The Bible makes no reference to any entity exerting authority above or beyond the local church," the guidelines state. "Autonomy means that each local church is self-governing. Each congregation makes its own decisions regarding all facets of church life."

Ideally, autonomy should allow each congregation to decide who is ordained to which church offices as well as what terms the congregation uses to describe the authority of Scripture. In their effort to define the New Testament church, however, NAMB officials took it upon themselves to establish guidelines best left to the local church.

This is the same North American Mission Board that voted two years ago to stop endorsing women chaplains. NAMB officials expanded that ban earlier this year to all female military chaplains, whether ordained or not.

NAMB also cut ties last year with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, which serves one of the nation's major urban mission fields. D.C. Baptist Convention Executive Director Jeffrey Haggray described NAMB's call for greater accountability to the national agency as an "ultimatum" that violated the autonomy of the convention.

Tragically, these changes come at the same time that the SBC is launching "Empowering Kingdom Growth," NAMB and International Mission Board officials are partnering to promote the "Acts 1:8 Challenge" and SBC President Bobby Welch is challenging Southern Baptists to unite around the "Everyone Can't Kingdom Challenge for Evangelism."

All three of those efforts are designed to spread the gospel of Christ here at home and around the world. But such worthy goals are doomed to failure if convention leaders keep drawing the circle so tightly that more and more brothers and sisters in Christ are excluded. Remember "Bold Mission Thrust" and its limited impact amid years of denominational fighting?

NAMB is right to affirm local church autonomy. The next step is to trust today's New Testament congregations to faithfully follow the Holy Spirit's leadership without attempting to impose more denominational restrictions.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## The spirituality of work

By Don Whitney

**Kansas City, Mo. (BP)**—Bill often wonders whether he is a second-class Christian because of the less-than-Christian atmosphere where he works. His occupation is good and necessary for society, but it's also one in which liars, cheats and thieves seem to flourish. Vulgar and blasphemous language typically fills the air of Bill's workplace.

For other believers, the problem at work is not a godless environment; it's the gnawing lack of meaning to their labor. They trudge through tedious days on a job that often feels intolerably unimportant.

Can followers of Jesus work in these conditions and still maintain a close relationship with Him? Or is God somewhat disappointed in them because of where they work or what they do?

God ordained work. Before sin entered the world, "the Lord God took the man (Adam) and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). All kinds of work—paid and unpaid—are necessary in the world for us "to subdue it" according to God's will (Genesis

1:28). People must grow food, care for children, make clothes, tend the sick, construct buildings and roads, transport goods, govern the cities and so forth.

Obviously, therefore, God intends for most people to devote themselves

to what's often called "secular" employment.

Only a small percentage should be vocational pastors, church-planting missionaries and the like (even though more are needed). Otherwise, who'd work the fields, deliver the mail, build ships and cars, develop water systems and make medicines?

Because God has ordained it, work has a spiritual dimension. The Bible repeatedly commends useful, honest labor (see Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10), which shows God's intense interest in it. When we actively recognize His presence in our workplace, we acknowledge His sovereignty over all of life. And that's basic to true spirituality.

Even if your daily responsibilities seem dull and unimportant or cause you to associate with worldly, God-hating people, remember that "the

Lord takes pleasure in His people" (Psalm 149:4). And He takes pleasure in us not just at church, but at work as well. He's as active in our work routines as He was to Joseph in his service as Potiphar's slave, to Jesus in the carpentry shop and to the Apostle Paul when he was making tents.

Work is not a hindrance to spirituality; it is a part of it. Even slaves were instructed by Paul not to fear that their awful condition in any way diminished their spiritual standing with God (see 1 Corinthians 7:22). Our spirituality depends upon who we are in Christ, not the circumstances of our workplace. God's presence and favor are not limited by co-workers or job descriptions.

Enlarge your vision of your spiritual life to include your daily work. "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24). Present your work to God. You are working for Him.

Don Whitney, author of "Simplify Your Spiritual Life," is associate professor of spiritual formation at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

## Kentuckians talk of answered prayers

### Next meeting

The next quarterly prayer meeting for spiritual awakening will be held Oct. 28-29 at First Baptist Church of Murray. It begins at 1:30 pm CDT on the 28th.

For more information, call the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions growth team office at (800) 266-6477, ext. 256.

*Continued from page 1*

"If we don't do that, people become discouraged rather quickly."

During the quarterly prayer meeting in Inez this past summer, several participants described how they have seen God work in their lives, ministries and communities:

### Seeing God work in Mt. Vernon

Hansel and Cox say they learned to watch for God at work in an "Experiencing God" Bible study at First Baptist Church of Mount Vernon.

Right after the course concluded, several members began meeting at a gazebo in the park each Thursday morning to pray about the drug problems wracking their town.

But as they continued, Hansel said, God led them to expand their prayers to their state, nation and world. They asked God to reveal Himself so that everyone would recognize His power.

Interest in prayer spread. Eventually, the group moved to a community center. Then a second group formed in the evenings so more people could participate.

Although each prayer group averages only 10 to 20 participants, Hansel said missionaries have visited from Guatemala, Israel, Honduras and other places to learn more about what God is doing there.

In late July, a group of 30 seminary students from Indiana visited Northside Baptist Church in Mount Vernon during a tour of Kentucky churches.

Northside's pastor, Chad Burdette, is a reformed drug addict. Since he took over as pastor in 2001, the church has grown from about 30 people to 400.

In addition, about 10 former drug addicts who accepted Christ as Savior under Burdette's pastorate now attend the community prayer meetings, Hansel said.

While methamphetamine labs, heroin and other drugs are still in the community, Hansel said the situation is much better than it was four years ago.

Hansel is so convinced that God will do even more that she took early retirement to devote more time to Bible study, prayer, counseling and public speaking.

"My personal passion has always been for prayer, for almost 29 years, so prayer is not new to me," Hansel said.

"But I've seen more the past four-and-a-half years of how God is working through united prayer than I've ever seen before. I've experienced a new realm of what God can do when the body of Christ unites in prayer."

### Personal mission to tell stories

Cox, a Mission Service Corps volunteer specializing in photojournalism, also has experienced times of powerful leading in prayer.

Two years ago, after meeting an MSC volunteer who started a ministry to needy mothers, Cox felt prompted to call and ask if she needed more diapers.

As Cox drove to deliver them the next day, she sensed God telling her the trip wasn't about diapers, but about writing Bessie McPeck's story.



**PRAYER MEETING** Participants pray at a quarterly prayer meeting for spiritual awakening, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The meetings include times for people to share what God is doing in their lives and communities. (Photo by Ken Walker)

Stopping to buy pens and paper, Cox interviewed her. The resulting story is featured on the cover of this month's issue of Missions Mosaic, published by Woman's Missionary Union.

"When I prayed in that group for God to touch the state, nation and world, I had no idea He was going to use me," Cox said. "Prayer is my life, my breath, and it's increased my faith tremendously."

Cox, who attends Northside Baptist Church, said the growth of the church—which recently moved to a building more than twice the size of its old sanctuary—is one of the most amazing stories in Mount Vernon.

Another she named is Christ's Outreach for the Blind, a 900-acre camp three miles south of town scheduled to open next summer.

Located on land formerly used to grow marijuana, Cox said founder Mike Gates (himself blind) has had his life threatened since he reclaimed the property for God's purposes.

The hearts of volunteers helping develop the camp have been touched, Cox said, with nine people accepting Christ as their personal Savior this year.

### A retirement in Crestwood

Frank Plewinski, a member of Crestwood Baptist Church in Crestwood, took early retirement last year to devote more time to the Dodi Foundation. Named for his wife's mother, it supplies Scripture-based greeting cards, hand-crafted dolls and other items to cancer victims.

A resident of LaGrange, Plewinski felt God calling him to devote

more time to the ministry three years ago. But as the manager of a manufacturing plant, he said he didn't have the time or energy after working long hours.

He and his wife, Cindy, began praying about his retirement. They also prayed periodically with Larry Martin, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions growth team.

Two years ago the plant offered early retirements, but Plewinski wasn't old enough. Last year the company made him an offer, even though he was two months shy of his 55th birthday.

After he accepted the offer as of June 30, the company asked him to work one week each month for the rest of the year. That gave him extra income and made a smoother transition away from his longtime occupation.

In addition, he saw how his experience in learning about plant finances and managing employees helped prepare him for his role as the foundation's chairman.

"I tell people, 'If you want something done, go to the (Kentucky) Baptist Convention and have them pray for you,'" Plewinski said. "Churches are missing out on opportunities in the Baptist family."

### Sponsoring spiritual retreats

Linda and Larry Otterback of Woodland Baptist Church in Middletown say they also have seen God work in many ways since starting monthly mission trips to Eastern Kentucky.

After helping distribute goods at a ministry center for two years, in 2002 they formed Eastern Kentucky Sunrise to sponsor spiritual retreats for men and women. Mrs. Otterback said at a session last October, all but two of the 135 women attending answered an altar call to commit their lives to Christ.

Her husband has been so touched by what he has seen that he has closed his business to apply for work as a chaplain.

"We've heard story after story about people who went home and no longer live in bondage," Mrs. Otterback said. "So many have come to the Lord, I didn't keep track. I couldn't."

Their latest answer to prayer involves a retreat tentatively planned for late October at Fort Campbell.

For five months they tried unsuccessfully to arrange a meeting with the base chaplains. After numerous prayers, Larry Otterback reached the head chaplain in early July and discovered he was receptive.

"My husband and my lives have changed so much," Mrs. Otterback said of the difference prayer has made.

"We were Christians and churchgoers all our lives, but we didn't follow the Lord. We are so on fire for God that's all we care about. We pray about everything."

## Noe and McGrew named to full-time KBC staff positions

Louisville—Bill Noe and Brandon McGrew have been elected to full-time positions with the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board. The positions



Noe



McGrew

were approved Oct. 12 by the board's administrative committee.

Noe, who has served as associate campus minister at the University of Louisville since August 2003, was named campus minister effective Nov. 1. He succeeds Angela Girdley who resigned to accept a teaching position at Sullivan University.

McGrew has served as a part-time help desk assistant in the KBC's information services department. His position was upgraded to a full-time assistant local area network administrator.

Keith Inman, director of the KBC's collegiate ministry group, described Noe as "a man of tremendous character."

Noting that Noe "has been on the U of L campus four years as a volunteer, an intern and interim campus minister," Inman added, "He's a great candidate."

"I've been blessed to be a part of Kentucky Baptists my whole life," Noe said. "God got a hold of my life and gave me a passion for the campus."

Noe is a graduate of the University of Kentucky in Lexington and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. In addition to his work at U of L, he has served four summers as camp director of the KBC's Discovery Youth Weeks and three summers as director of the KBC's SonReach missions team.

McGrew, a graduate of Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, has served since June 2003 as a help desk technician intern and support specialist.

Troy Fulkerson, director of the information services department, said McGrew "definitely brings the skill that is required for this position; even more so is his servant attitude which is so needed in what we do."

In other action, committee members approved two part-time music consultants. Gregory Ross, a student at Southern Seminary, was named instrumental/handbell consultant, and Nevalyn Moore, assistant professor of music at Campbellsville University, was named interim keyboard music consultant. Both contract positions are for 10 hours per week.



# Casting Crowns: Youth ministers team up for ministry

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

Frankfort—Two youth ministers who live two states away from each other recently teamed up for a memorable ministry experience at Frankfort Civic Center.

Mark Hall, student pastor at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga., is best known as the lead singer of Casting Crowns, a contemporary Christian band with two chart-topping songs from their first CD.

Ned Nugent, youth pastor for

just over a year at Thornhill Baptist Church in Frankfort, heard Casting Crowns' song, "If We Are the Body," before it gained national attention.

"It was awesome," Nugent recalled. "The song, the lyrics were solid."

Despite being a new staff member at a church that averages 200 in attendance on Sunday mornings, Nugent set out to book the band for a concert in Frankfort. The results of his efforts included a sell-out crowd Oct. 8 in the 5,000-seat Civic Center and a concert that resulted in more than 170 public decisions, including 62 professions of faith in Christ.

### "People are so hungry"

"People came together and put their hearts into it and here we are," Nugent said the night of the concert. "God's fingerprints are all over it."

"People are so hungry for the truth, they'll eat anything," he added. "I feel like there are people here who will get the truth of Christ in their life and get filled up. ... It's an incredible work of God."

Hall, who has been a youth minister for 14 years, never really intended to be the lead singer for a nationally recognized Christian band.

Before signing their first recording contract last year, Hall said, "When we would write songs, we would record them and use them as outreach," giving copies to church visitors.



**CONCERT** Lead singer Mark Hall (left) and other members of Casting Crowns perform before a sell-out crowd Oct. 8 at Frankfort Civic Center.



**BAND FANS** Members of Casting Crowns greet fans and sign autographs after the band's Oct. 8 concert in Frankfort.

Even with their newfound success, the band performs primarily on Thursday, Friday or Saturday so band members can be back in their church for Sunday and Wednesday services.

"I don't think we could ever not be involved in our church," noted Melodee Deveve, who plays violin and sings. "Otherwise, we wouldn't really have a right to say anything. It all has to do with the church."

### "If We Are the Body"

Introducing the group's first No. 1 hit, "If We Are the Body," Hall told the crowd, "Maybe we've all been in church for so long, we've almost forgotten what church even looks like to those who don't know God."

"To the world outside, they're very familiar by now with what we're against," he added. "But they're just not real sure what we're for."

"There are no audiences in the body of Christ," Hall noted. "God has given you gifts that He did not give me. The gifts He gave you are for the ministry He has for you in the body. You and I are the hands and the feet of Jesus."

The song highlights the ministry role of the body of Christ by asking:

*"But if we are the body  
Why aren't His arms reaching?"*

*Why aren't His hands healing?  
Why aren't His words teaching?  
And if we are the body  
Why aren't His feet going?  
Why is His love not showing them  
there is a way?"*

Hall, who writes most of the group's lyrics, said he seeks to help people confront their spiritual and emotional needs.

"Church should be the place where you can come and say, 'Here's what I'm struggling with. Please pray for me,'" he noted. "You've got hurting people sitting next to hurting people. My goal is to get in here and shake it up a little bit and get people to see things from a different pew."

Kentucky native Chris Huffman, the band's bass player, grew up in Glasgow.

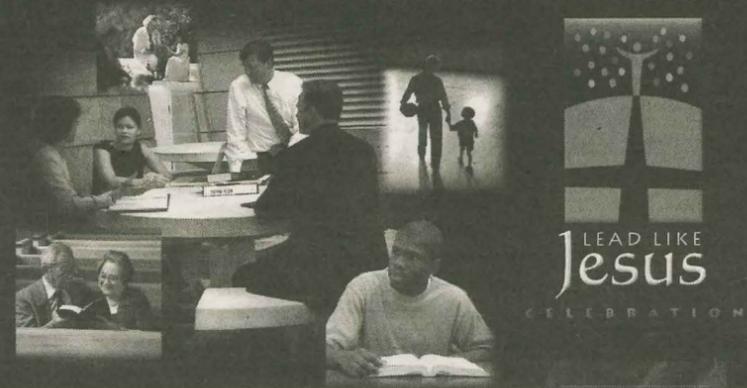
Affirming the opportunity to perform before an enthusiastic home state crowd, Huffman said, "One thing that's great from the stage is getting people excited not just about the music but the spirit behind it."

"It's a tremendous blessing to be in this group," he added. "This is what we're called to do. We're a Christian band and the most important thing to every one of us is our faith in Christ."

Reflecting on the evening's ministry impact, Nugent said he and other members of Thornhill Church "have a heart to step again."

"You have to show on faith and people have to own the vision with you to draw the lost to Christ," he added. "When you turn the spotlight on God, anything's possible."

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**Deadline: November 3, 2004**

## Faith groups work toward civility during election

**"The Democrats have a long way to go before they will be seen as champions of the poor. And we are challenging the Republicans to make good on the promise of compassionate conservatism."**

Jim Wallis, founder of the evangelical group Call to Renewal

Continued from page 1

■ Call to Renewal's "Rolling to Overcome Poverty" bus tour holds rallies and prayer meetings to encourage Christians with clashing worldviews to work together to help the poor.

■ "Red God, Blue God" forums bring a religious liberal and a religious conservative together for civil debate about the role of faith in politics and public policy.

■ The Gamaliel Foundation trains local religious activists to identify and address pressing community issues that might otherwise be neglected by both sides of the aisle.

Jim Wallis, an evangelical, founded Call to Renewal in 1995. It includes mainline Protestants, conservative evangelicals, Catholics, leaders of historically black churches and peace churches. One of its greatest achievements may have been getting representatives of the conservative National Association of Evangelicals and the liberal National Council of Churches to sit at the same table.

"I often joke that it's like working with the Crips and the Bloods. I like to have a Mennonite sit between them to make sure nothing happens," Wallis said.

### Advocating for the poor

But they have worked together and lobbied Washington together on behalf of social welfare policies.

"The cry of the poor rings from cover to cover in the Bible. It's clear that God hears the cry of the poor and wants us to as well," Wallis said.

The group has backed some Republican initiatives, such as President Bush's proposal to expand funding to faith-based social services. At other times it has taken the Democrats' side, backing expansion of the child tax credit to the poorest working families. It promotes a petition headlined "God is not a Republican or a Democrat."

"The Democrats have a long way to go before they will be seen as champions of the poor," Wallis said. "And we are challenging the Republicans to make good on the promise of compassionate conservatism. That was strong language, but it hasn't produced many results this first four years. There are things Republicans can and should do on the issue of poverty."

Wallis traces religious polariza-



**ROLLING THUNDER** Participants pray at the founding meeting for the Gamaliel Foundation's "Rolling Thunder" tour to train local residents to identify community problems and work to address them. (Photo courtesy of Gamaliel Foundation)

tion over the candidates to what he sees as inflexible Democratic Party support for abortion rights. When he was invited to address the Democratic platform-writing committee about economic and foreign policy issues, he also challenged them privately to appeal to Democrats who oppose abortion.

### "Red God, Blue God"

Finding that middle ground is one task of the "Red God, Blue God" forums, which have been touring through several presidential swing states in advance of the election.

The forum takes its name from colored maps in the 2000 presidential election, and from polling data showing that white churchgoing Christians are one of Bush's most reliable constituencies. The Red God, Blue God Forum was founded by Democrats to overcome the poll-driven perception that religious people vote Republican.

But the panels, which include a religious liberal, a religious conservative and someone adept at interpreting polling data on faith and politics, aim to puncture stereotypes on all sides.

Shaun Casey, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, co-founded the forum with former Clinton press secretary and Kerry adviser Mike McCurry, an active United Methodist.

They said they wanted to show journalists that people of strong faith would vote for John Kerry. But Casey, who belongs to the theologically conservative Churches

of Christ, also wanted to counter media stereotypes of evangelicals as uneducated and unconcerned about social welfare issues.

Representation on "Red God, Blue God" panels tilts left, but always include an influential conservative, such as Richard Land, head of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, or Michael Cromartie, vice president and director of the Evangelicals and Civil Life project of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington.

"The reality is that evangelicalism is irreducibly plural and com-

plex in America," Casey said. "To say that (Jerry) Falwell and (Pat) Robertson speak for all evangelicals is just laughable."

Casey argues that the so-called "God gap" between those who vote for Republican presidents and those who vote for Democrats is a myth, because the overwhelming majority of voters for Al Gore in 2000 professed a religious faith. Most black Christians, for instance, are doctrinally indistinguishable from white evangelicals but vote overwhelmingly Democratic.

"I think the real God gap between the two parties is institutional in the sense that in the last 30 years the Democratic Party has walked away from explicit (religious) constituencies, and the Republicans have been building relationships," he said.

### Gamaliel Foundation

Building relationships between people of both parties in order to address social issues is a goal of the Chicago-based Gamaliel Foundation. Its "Rolling Thunder" tour is going cross-country to train local people to identify community problems and work to address them.

"Our mission is to bridge the gaps where people differ," said Evans Moore Jr., executive director of the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network, a Gamaliel partner. "We all realize that social injustice is not something our faith embraces."

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# Weak voice, strong message

7,600 respond to Graham's invitations during four nights in Kansas City, Mo.

Kansas City, Mo. (BP)—Billy Graham's voice was sometimes weak at the Heart of America Billy Graham Crusade in Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium, but that didn't stop the 85-year-old Southern Baptist evangelist from preaching powerful messages.

Graham, weakened by age and a pelvic fracture sustained last May, preached to nearly 155,000 people during the four-day crusade, Oct. 7-10.

An average of more than 1,900 people made a commitment to Christ each night.

Graham last preached a sermon

at his June 2003 Oklahoma City Crusade, and while claiming he felt rusty, showed no signs of it.

"This is the first time I've preached in more than a year," he said. "I feel like I did when I was a teenager starting to preach. I feel like I'm starting over again."

Upon arrival in Kansas City, longtime program director Cliff Barrows told crusade leaders, "Billy Graham will come a little weak—not with words of men's wisdom, but in the strength and power of God. I believe the church in the heart of America is ready."

On the first night of the crusade, Graham began slumping 15 minutes into his message and finished the sermon seated. Graham's son Franklin helped his father get seated when he began to tire.

A specially built podium had been prepared that enabled him to preach while seated.

Referring to the physical ailments now buffeting his life, Graham observed, "I've never preached a sermon sitting down."

The crowd responded with applause.

Graham seemed to regain some strength and continued his appeal for people to commit their lives to Christ. "Jesus died on the cross for you," he said. "He shed His blood for you."

## Spiritual battle, not debate

On the first night of the crusade, Franklin Graham, who now is president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, challenged the crowd before introducing his father.



Billy Graham



**HELPING HANDS** Billy Graham walks to the pulpit with some help from his son Franklin. The elder Graham, 85, has been forced to use a walker while recovering from surgeries to repair a fractured hip and pelvis. (Apex Media photo by Billy Suratt, © 2004)



**CROWDS COME** Listeners respond to Billy Graham's invitation to make a spiritual decision during the crusade in Kansas City, Oct. 7-10. (Billy Graham Evangelistic Association photo by Greg Schneider, © 2004)

"Tonight there is a debate a few miles from here in St. Louis," he said, referring to the presidential debate. "But in Kansas City it is not a debate, it is a battle for your soul. It is not a debate, but a fact that Jesus Christ is God's Son, and He died on the cross and shed His blood. Tonight, you'll have to make a choice."

Graham explained the sequence that leads to death—being born in sin, choosing to sin and being sinners by practice.

"We die," the beloved evangelist said, "and at my age, I know the time is near."

At a media meeting the day before the crusade, Graham said he had spent most of the year in bed resting, continuing his recuperation from surgeries to repair fractures suffered in two falls.

The last fall forced a postponement of the Kansas City crusade,

which originally was scheduled for June 17-20.

Crusade musical guests represented a broad range of musical styles and genres, from Charlie Daniels' country sound and the Latino influence of Salvador to contemporary Christian artists MercyMe and Michael W. Smith, as well as the more classical style of Lynda Randle and the southern gospel Gaither Vocal Band.

Those sharing testimonies included former Kansas City Chiefs player Gary Spani, NASCAR driver Michael Waltrip, and Peter Herschend, founder of the Silver Dollar City family entertainment complex in Branson, Mo.

## Shea absent from crusade

Noticeably absent from the platform was "America's Beloved Gospel Singer," George Beverly Shea, whose doctors recommended he stay home to continue his recovery from a recent heart attack. This was the first domestic crusade he has missed in more than 60 years of evangelistic ministry with Billy Graham.

More than 1,200 churches representing 84 denominations came together during the crusade preparations.

"When we invited Mr. Graham to come to Kansas City, he told us Kansas City had been on his mind for five years," said Richard Hastings, president and CEO of St. Luke's Health System and crusade chair. "Miraculously, our local vision has partnered with his vision for this area and this crusade."

In addition to the stadium meetings, evangelistic events were held in 11 area prisons in late September and early October, attended by 1,241 inmates, including 188 who made commitments to Christ.

Graham plans to hold his next crusade Nov. 18-21 at the Rose Bowl in Los Angeles. He also has scheduled a crusade in New York City's Madison Square Garden in June 2005.

Compiled from reports by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and by Bob Baysinger and Allen Palmeri for the Missouri Baptist Convention.

## Extended Teaching Care

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## NATIONAL NOTES

**Study: Giving beyond local congregations drops.** Church members are giving less of their income to churches today than 35 years ago, and even less of those contributions are put to work outside the local congregation, according to a new study. Giving as a percentage of per capita after-tax income dropped 16 percent—from 3.11 percent to 2.62 percent—among Protestant church members between 1968 and 2002, said Empty Tomb Inc., an Illinois organization that studies congregational giving patterns. But church-based giving to ministries beyond the local congregation dropped even more—41 percent—from 0.66 percent to 0.38 percent during the same period.

**President Carter's pastor to retire.** After 22 years as pastor of a small Baptist congregation that includes former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn, Dan Ariail plans to retire next year. The 135-member Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., is known for attracting thousands of visitors each year to hear Carter teach weekly Sunday school lessons. "Both Jimmy and I are in good health, but I feel that if I waited until he is no longer able to teach the class, that our church might not survive such a double whammy," said Ariail, 66. Carter, 80, who teaches Bible lessons most Sundays to a full sanctuary, has not indicated any plans to quit soon.

**Michael W. Smith takes on acting.** Contemporary Christian musician Michael W. Smith is starring in a feature film called "The Second Chance" about two passionate pastors who are completely different. Smith plays a white and well-to-do pastor who is comfortable in his music ministry at a suburban mega-church. Actor Jeff Carr plays a street-smart African-American who ministers to gang members, teen mothers and drug addicts. The film follows the two pastors as they are forced to minister together in a tough neighborhood. Filming began last month in Nashville. The film is set to be released in fall 2005.

**Fox gets record FCC indecency fine.** The Federal Communications Commission has proposed a record total of \$1.2 million in fines against 169 Fox Television Network affiliates for airing indecent material during an episode of the reality program "Married by America." The FCC announced Oct. 12 that it would fine each affiliate \$7,000. The FCC distinguished between the taped episode of Married by America, which could have been preempted, and the live Janet Jackson incident at the Super Bowl in February. The episode in question focused on Las Vegas bachelor and bachelorette parties, according to the FCC report.

**IRS asked to investigate church.** A church-state group has asked the Internal Revenue Service to investigate another church for appearing to endorse a presidential candidate this election season. Americans United for Separation of Church and State has asked the IRS to investigate Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Miami for hosting a rally with Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic presidential nominee, in a worship service Oct. 10. Tax-exempt non-profit groups, such as churches, organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax codes are not allowed to endorse political candidates or parties.

**Student links apartment ministry, crime reports.** An apartment ministry can have the same impact as a community watch for reporting crime, according to a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Tomi Lee Grover recently received the award for best research project by the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship. Concerned that crimes in low-income neighborhoods may often go unreported, Grover set out to determine whether the presence of an apartment ministry had any effect on the number of calls placed to law enforcement agencies. Her conclusion was that apartment ministries have a measurable effect on increasing the rate at which crimes are called in to law enforcement agencies.

**Poll finds Americans' perceptions of Muslims mixed.** One in four Americans agrees with at least one anti-Muslim statement like "Muslims teach their children to hate unbelievers," a new survey found. But the poll also reported that 64 percent of respondents agreed with the statement, "The people who use Islam to justify violence are misinterpreting its teachings." "There's a pretty consistent 25 (percent)-to-30 percent of people who have negative attitudes," said Jeni Sall, president of Genesis Research, which conducted the survey for the Council on American-Islamic Relations. "About half of the people have generally neutral or positive attitudes"

## Thousands rally for traditional marriage

Washington (RNS)—Thousands of evangelical Christians gathered at the National Mall Oct. 15 for "Mayday for Marriage," a rally supporting heterosexual marriage and condemning same-sex marriage.

They traveled by car, bus and plane to spend three hours on the grassy expanse in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol to hear Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson, Focus on the Family Chairman James Dobson and other evangelical leaders decry a court decision in Massachusetts legalizing same-sex marriage and promote a federal constitutional amendment that would ban such marriages in any state.

"Are you tired of the courts making all the decisions about the great moral issues of our time?" Dobson asked the crowd, receiving a resounding "yes" in response.

"Do you realize that everything we care about is on the line? It's now or never."

The gathering was just one of a series that have taken place across the country—three of which were linked to televised simulcasts—in which evangelicals raised awareness about proposed constitutional amendments not only on the national level, but on 11 state ballots Nov. 2.

Tony Perkins, president of the Washington-based Family Research Council and master of ceremonies for the rally, made the connection



RALLY Samara Mendoza of Germantown, Md., holds a sign during the "Mayday for Marriage" rally Oct. 15 in Washington. (RNS photo by Tyrone Turner)

to Election Day explicit.

"There's an election coming up and you need to vote your values," he said, drawing cheers. "You need to vote for candidates who stand on the side of marriage, just like you do."

Colson, who called gay marriage an "oxymoron," explained his opposition to same-sex marriage as a stance for children rather than against gays.

"It separates parenthood from marriage," he said. "Those children need a male and female, a mother and a father role model, and you can't have that without a mother and a father."

Exact crowd figures were hard

to come by. Asked at a press conference about attendance, organizers declined to give a figure beyond "it was a lot." The U.S. Park Service no longer gives crowd estimates.

Spectators and speakers alike worried whether God's blessings would continue if same-sex marriages became the norm.

"Make no mistake about it: If we allow same-sex marriage to be foisted upon us by an imperial judiciary in the United States, God will not bless this nation," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

People in the crowd greeted his comment with "Amen."

## Habitat leaders compromise on leadership transition

Americus, Ga. (ABP)—Millard Fuller, who founded Habitat for Humanity International with his wife, Linda, in 1976, will relinquish the title of chief executive officer but continue as "founding president" of the worldwide housing ministry.

Fuller has been in dispute for several months with Habitat's board of directors, which appointed a new managing director in June and called for Fuller to retire as president on his 70th birthday in January 2005.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Habitat's best-known volunteer, has intervened on two occa-

sions to seek a compromise.

According to a press release from Habitat's headquarters in Americus, Ga., the Fullers will serve as ambassadors for Habitat, which will dedicate its 200,000th house this year. Fuller had stated earlier that he wanted to be in a leadership role when that milestone is reached.

"Now, as I approach my 70th birthday, it is time for a change," Fuller stated in the release. "I will remain very engaged in the ministry as a spokesperson and strategist, and will help in every other way I can to strengthen and expand

the work of Habitat for Humanity throughout the United States and around the world."

Board chairman Rey Ramsey announced that Paul Leonard, managing director since June, will serve as Habitat's CEO until a permanent replacement is named. David Williams will remain in charge of day-to-day management as chief operating officer, a job he has held for several years.

Ramsey, a Baltimore attorney said: "With today's actions, everyone involved in the organization can keep their focus firmly on the future."

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### The principle of the tithe

**When it comes to life, are you giving back or taking?**

The principle of the tithe was born in an agricultural setting. The people of God soon realized if there was going to be another crop, some of the current year's harvest had to be saved for seed.

If everything was eaten, that is, if all was taken out and nothing put back into the cycle, the entire process would collapse. So, the tithe was the seed fund, and it is a principle that applies to all of life. If you are not putting back into the process of life, you are a taker, a freeloader, a burden on the process. Many people ought to put back more than a tithe. What Zaccheus did—in giving half of what he had to those who did not yet have enough—is not out of the question for some people.

Malachi 3:10 is the most familiar passage on tithing: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough to receive it."

The message of the prophet Malachi to the Jerusalem Jews was a reminder of God's love and faithfulness, and a rebuke to them for their willful disobedience and contempt for His holy name. Malachi's words reveal a nation unfaithful and guilty of false worship; they kept God's tithes and offerings for themselves. In so doing, they broke their relationship with God; the results were judgment and punishment. Fortunately, a few were faithful. They loved and honored God, and in turn, He showered His blessings upon them.

The principle of the tithe is relevant today. However, many Christians make excuses for not returning that portion to God. They are concerned about the economy, job loss, fear of increased taxes or medical bills, or their credit card payments are so high. They allow their circumstances to prevent them from giving, and then they wonder why their situation is not any better. They are just like the unfaithful people of Malachi's day. Are you?

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

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Barry Allen



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### Kudzu



Doug Marlette

### For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

### Bible Crosswords

Evelyn M. Boyington

#### Across

- 1 Western state (abbr.)
- 3 "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and \_\_\_ for thee" (Isaiah 43:3)
- 7 To do much better than another
- 12 \_\_\_ of the Chaldees
- 13 From \_\_\_ to stern
- 14 Fabric used to make an ephod
- 15 In law, an object
- 17 Preposition
- 18 "In the beginning was the \_\_\_" (John 1:1)
- 19 "The horse is prepared against the day of \_\_\_" (Proverbs 21:31)
- 21 "Stand in \_\_\_, and sin not" (Psalm 4:4)
- 22 "They fled before the men of \_\_\_" (Joshua 7:4)
- 24 Pres. Clinton's home state (abbr.)
- 25 Simile syntax
- 26 "The children of Israel be as the \_\_\_ of the sea" (Romans 9:27)
- 28 Administer the SAT again
- 31 Quaker pronoun
- 32 You, in the Yucatan
- 34 Start
- 36 Provincetown province (abbr.)
- 37 Grandfather of David, and son of Ruth
- 40 Means of communication
- 43 First word written on the wall (Daniel 5)
- 44 Linking verb
- 45 "Two of every \_\_\_ shalt thou bring into the ark" (Genesis 6:19)
- 48 Masculine nickname
- 49 Took a break
- 51 "It is as high as heaven ... \_\_\_ than hell" (Job 11:8)
- 53 Minuscule

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56	57					58			59		60	
61						62					63	

- 54 Naval officer (abbr.)
- 55 Where one can perspire or be pampered
- 56 Portion
- 58. Used by the high priest to hold oil
- 60 Classified, for one
- 61 Spread around
- 62 Altar end of the church
- 63 Biblical pronoun

- 23 Notion
- 25 "The \_\_\_ of Kish Saul's father were lost" (1 Samuel 9:3)
- 27 Sighing sound
- 29 Preposition
- 30 "The friendship of the world is \_\_\_ with God" (James 4:4)
- 32 Volume
- 33 Father of Gaal (Judges 9:30)
- 35 Note on diatonic scale
- 38 \_\_\_ passant (chess term)
- 39 "If any man \_\_\_ to be first, the same shall be last" (Mark 9:35)
- 41 "Pray for them which despitefully \_\_\_ you" (Luke 6:28)
- 42 Swabs
- 46 To reward
- 47 Barter
- 50 Once more
- 51 "Behold, the nations are as a \_\_\_ of a bucket" (Isaiah 40:15)
- 52 All \_\_\_ (attentive)
- 53 Pitch
- 56 Baseball player (abbr.)
- 57 Like alt.
- 58 Laughing sound
- 59 Quadrant in D.C.

#### Down

- 1 Checks
- 2 \_\_\_ code
- 3 Christian ed. concern (abbr.)
- 4 Common abbr.
- 5 \_\_\_ noire
- 6 "I \_\_\_ God, even thy God" (Psalm 50:7)
- 7 "\_\_\_ of speech" (how Moses described himself)
- 8 Employed, in Bible times
- 9 Conjunction
- 10 "This I know; for God is for \_\_\_" (Psalm 56:9)
- 11 Printer's measure
- 16 Day
- 18 "The field is \_\_\_, the land mourneth" (Joel 1:10)
- 20 Three, in Turin
- 22 "Ramoth with her suburbs, and \_\_\_ with her suburbs" (1 Chronicles 6:73)

### Last week's solution

1	S	O	B	4	P	I	P	6	E	8	S	W	A	T
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## SBC World Hunger Fund helps missionaries meet needs

**One hundred percent of contributions to the hunger fund are used for food assistance.**

**LIFE SAVERS** Southern Baptist workers share enough flour, corn meal, sugar and other necessities to last each Maasai a couple of weeks. More than 600 families received the aid. (SBC International Mission Board photo by Jon Jamar)

By Sue Sprengle  
SBC International Mission Board

**Suswa, Kenya (BP)**—Maasai women walk down the dusty path, lugging babies on their back. Following close behind, men push old, rusty bicycles to the meeting place.

A large truck picks its way down the cattle path to the small Baptist church located in the proverbial middle of nowhere.

A small cheer erupts from the waiting crowd. For these people, the sacks of flour, corn meal and milk on the truck are a welcome sight.

Famine has struck Kenya in a big way, with more than 2.3 million people requiring emergency assistance.

For these subsistence farmers, the shortage of rain over the past three years has left them with no food. Kenyan President Kibaki declared the famine a national disaster and asked the international

community for assistance.

Members of Tigoni Baptist Fellowship, along with faculty, students and staff from the Kenya Baptist Theological College and Brackenhurst Baptist International Conference Center, responded to Kibaki's call for assistance.

### Help from Kenya, Mississippi

The Kenyans raised money from donations within the church and two institutions. When volunteer missionaries working at Brackenhurst wrote home telling what students were doing to help famine victims, a group of Mississippi Baptists decided to get involved too.

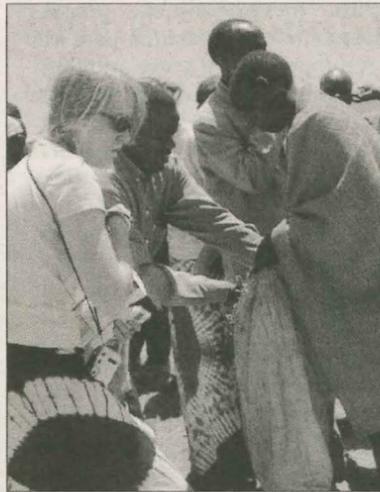
Kellie Burnham and Erin Schmidt, both one-year volunteer missionaries, were overwhelmed with the response from friends and family back home.

"I can't believe that people we know would be so faithful—even though they are halfway around the world," said Burnham, who is from Kosciusko, Miss. "They made a difference in the life of a village."

When all efforts were combined, there was enough money to buy two weeks' worth of food for more than 600 families. The food was delivered to a Baptist church where the crowd sat waiting. Before handing out the aid, seminary students preached and led a worship service.

"This food may fill your stomach, but it will not fill that hunger you have for Jesus," one seminary student told the crowd. Four women responded to the invitation to open their hearts to Christ.

After a prayer of thanksgiving, the people lined up to receive the



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE** Erin Schmidt of Hattiesburg, Miss., delivers an armful of corn meal and salt to a waiting sack. The Mississippi Baptist woman is serving as a one-year volunteer missionary in Kenya.

gifts of food.

Schmidt of Hattiesburg, Miss., said she didn't know what she would find in this area. The volunteer missionaries described the area as dry and barren. Skin-and-bones cattle roam the land, searching for grass to eat on the brown, brittle landscape.

"I've seen hungry people in America but not starving people," she said. "It wasn't like what you see on television about starving Africans. These people were definitely hungry and didn't have anything to eat. They were so thankful and happy."

Aid organizations and local Kenyan churches and charities are trying to meet demands of the

famine. The Kenyan Red Cross Society said more than 60 percent of Kenya's territory has been affected by the drought.

Seminary students and staff at Brackenhurst are in the midst of planning another relief trip. This time, they will head to northern Kenya—an area even more desolate and dry.

### Hunger fund history

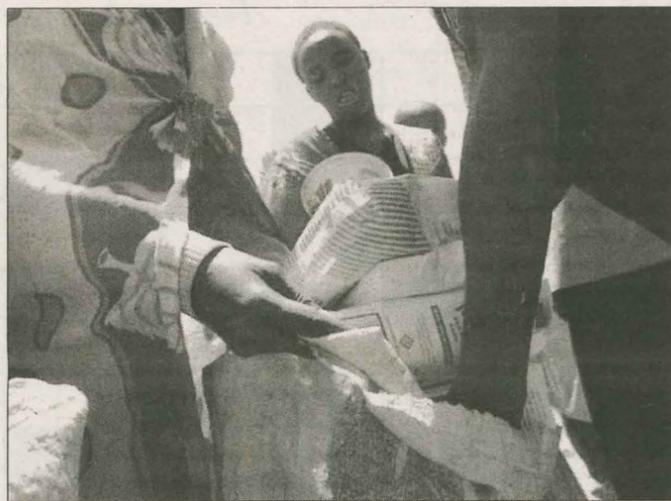
Southern Baptists support responses to hunger relief causes such as this through the World Hunger Fund, a unified method for Southern Baptists to give money specifically for meeting hunger needs.

One hundred percent of contributions to the hunger fund are used to pay for food assistance, with 80 percent of the funds going to the International Mission Board for international hunger needs and 20 percent going to the North American Mission Board for domestic hunger needs in North America.

NAMB reported that from January to September 2004, domestic hunger funds have been used to provide 1.5 million meals, and 11,500 professions of faith have been attributed to hunger fund ministries.

In 2003, IMB field personnel conducted a total of 269 hunger fund projects in 52 countries, with expenditures exceeding \$6.1 million.

Contributions to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund can be made through most Kentucky Baptist churches, the Kentucky Baptist Convention or the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and North American Mission Board.



## 'I know that I really messed up!' Part 1

### Sometimes students just refuse to let faculty help them, have to be sent home

I wish all the stories I write in these articles were happy ones, but the reality of life is that sad and disappointing things do happen.

When new students enroll in our school, our spirits often are lifted as we consider the possibilities each student provides. Seeing a young person make a fresh start to solving problems at home, putting forth more effort with school work or untangling a tangled web of problems is rewarding and challenging.

In spite of our best efforts and intentions, sometimes a student is not willing to let us help or refuses to put forth the personal effort needed to make meaningful change possible.

Of all of the teachings Christ gave us to live by, forgiving "seventy times seven" has been one of the most challenging for me personally. Knowing with complete certainty that one has forgiven in the way Christ intends for us to forgive is just plain hard! Through the years, some students have used up their "seventy times seven" during their first weeks or months at Oneida!

"Marge" (not her real name) was just such a student. Within days of enrolling, she had her first suspension. One week later she had her second and third suspensions. Within the next 30 days, she had her fourth, fifth and sixth suspensions. During her third month with us she had her seventh, eighth and ninth suspensions. I could say more, but you get the idea. If I had been the one making the decisions about Marge, she would have been sent home long before she was. Finally, we had enough. We knew she needed to be here and we knew there had been a number of

tragedies in her life already. She really needed us, but she refused to follow the rules. She was hateful, mean, defiant and disrespectful. We finally had to send her home.

We had told Marge several times that if she did not get her life together and allow us to help her, we would have no other option but to expel her. Time and time again she assured us that she actually did want to be here, but she just honestly did not feel that the rules applied to her. The rules were OK for everyone else, but she didn't need rules or limitations in her life. At work, in school or in the dorm, her attitude was, "Just leave me alone!"

Needless to say, we could not allow this behavior to continue because of the negative influence she was having on the other girls. She was not only burning the wick at both ends, she was fanning the flame.

Now, you might think that when she was told she was being expelled she would have been happy, but—like most students being expelled—it was not what she really wanted. Even though she didn't want to go home, at that point there was no turning back. As she packed her things the next morning, she told one of the house parents, "I know that I have really messed up!"

With saddened hearts we took her to the airport and said our last good-byes. We had tried—we had tried very hard—to help her, but with the attitude she had there was nothing else we could do. A few days after being home, Marge decided she really needed to come back to Oneida. Could we or should we let her return?

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



W.F. Underwood

## Foster children at Clear Creek

### Faculty couple recognized as outstanding foster parents

Chief switchboard operator Roberta Lucas now has even more voices vying for attention.

Roberta and her husband, Roy, (Clear Creek's H.C. Chiles professor of New Testament) are foster parents to four siblings, ages 2, 4, 6 and 7. They've cared for 17 other children during the past three and a half years.

The state recognized Roberta and Roy as outstanding foster parents in the eight-county southeastern region of the state. Observing them with the four children at a campus event gave abundant evidence for the award. The well-behaved children easily smiled, reached out to others and exhibited the joy of life in a safe environment of loving care.

Roberta described a foster parent's biggest challenge: "Trying to get the children ready to go back home or to an adoptive home. We also want to teach them about Jesus." The siblings had no church background before coming to the Lucas home; now they freely talk about Jesus. They attend Loyall Baptist Church, where Roy is pastor.

"Foster parenting involves the entire family," Roberta said. "Our

two older children accept them as part of the family. I take care of them much of the time; Roy is so busy with class work. Clear Creek is our first love and No. 1 calling."

The Clear Creek family helps nurture the Lucases' foster children. When Jonathon, the Lucases' son at the University of Kentucky, had an auto accident, a campus couple came to keep the children while Roberta and Roy rushed to Lexington in the night. "Roy didn't want to wake the children and upset them," Roberta said. "Other students and faculty also have helped. It takes all of Clear Creek to care for the children."

The involvement has had an impact. About 10 campus couples are enrolled in a foster parenting class. Some are senior students and hope to include foster parenting as part of their future ministry.

"Every day I pray: How can I make them better today to go home to Mom? How can I make a difference in their life today?" Roberta said. "We never know how long they will be with us, so we do what we can while there is an opportunity."

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Conservatives fear stem cells politicized after Reeve's death

Washington (RNS)—Conservative Christian groups said they fear the issue of embryonic stem-cell research will be further politicized after the death of actor Christopher Reeve, an outspoken advocate of the research.



Reeve

Reeve, 52, died of heart failure Oct. 10 as a result of an infection. The actor who played "Superman" became a vocal supporter of stem-cell research after he was paralyzed in a 1995 horse-riding accident.

Tony Perkins, president of the Washington-based Family Research Council, said Reeve embraced research that "not only destroys human life but has yet to provide any medical benefit."

"We owe it to the millions of others who suffer serious illnesses to pursue cures where they can be found, not what benefits an ideology that destroys human life for political gain," Perkins said.

Supporters say stem cells from human embryos that otherwise would be destroyed could hold cures for a host of illnesses, including paralysis and Parkinson's disease. Opponents say the procedure is immoral because the embryos must be destroyed in order to harvest the stem cells.

In 2001, President Bush banned federal money from being spent on expanding the research, while his opponent, Sen. John Kerry, said he will lift those restrictions. Kerry called Reeve a friend and "an inspiration to us all."

The death of former President Ronald Reagan, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease, also spurred a surge in support for embryonic stem-cell research when his widow, Nancy, voiced support.

"Embryo-destructive research was nowhere close to helping Mr. Reeve walk again," said Austin Ruse, president of the Culture of Life Foundation. "To suggest otherwise does a disservice to those who suffer by raising profoundly false expectations that will not be realized."

But June Walker, president of Hadassah, a national Jewish women's organization, said Reeve's death is reason No. 1 to ramp up efforts to expand stem-cell research.

"There is no more fitting tribute to his memory than for Hadassah's 300,000 members to redouble their efforts to advocate for unfettered research on stem cells, both at the federal and state level," she said.

## Life and death decisions

### Families struggle over controversial treatment to fight Gehrig's disease

By Karen Tolkinen  
Religion News Service

Grove Hill, Ala. (RNS)—Wilbur Newton has traveled to a fearsome destination.

The once-healthy hunter and family man, provider and prankster can no longer move, or talk, or feed himself.

At his early 56th birthday party this month, Newton couldn't unwrap gifts or say thank you. He only could smile when his family and friends told stories, and look at them with love.

Five years ago, his leg dragged unexpectedly as he tried to run across a road. It took months and several doctors to find out why:

His motor neurons, cells that transmit signals from his central nervous system to his muscles, were dying. He had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, better known as Lou Gehrig's disease, or ALS. Incurable, its cause unknown, it generally kills within five years.

At his party, his eyes were so bright and happy that visitors commented on it.

The reason seemed clear: He was about to strike out on a journey full of hope—a 20-hour flight to China.

#### Like being in prison

Kevin Lyles, 44, knows that unless there's a miracle, he too will live like Newton, his former co-worker.

At 6-foot-1, Lyles looks healthy. He ambles over to greet a visitor with a friendly grin. Until August, he still was working as an electrician.

But Lyles, a father of four, can no longer speak or chew. Lyles has a particularly lethal form of the disease that first attacked muscles needed to breathe and eat. He scribbles thoughts on a small pad of paper.

ALS, he writes, is like being in prison.

In 2001, he was directing music at church when he noticed he couldn't catch his breath, says his wife, Nikol Lyles. That fall he was diagnosed with ALS.

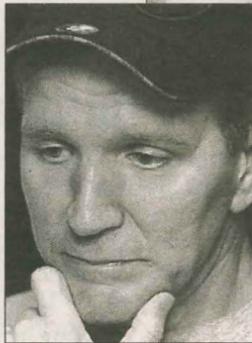
He and his wife say they accept that he has the disease. But they haven't accepted that he will die.

That's why he, too, decided to journey to China.

This year, Lyles and Newton learned about a new treatment for



**SEEKING TREATMENT** Wilbur Newton (above), pictured with his wife, Edith, and Kevin Lyles (inset) both have been diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. Both are Baptists and both are traveling to China to receive an experimental treatment using tissue from aborted fetuses. Mrs. Newton says she prayed about the decision. "God just gave me that peace that it was OK," she says. (RNS photos by Dan Anderson)



ALS patients in Beijing, one so abhorrent to Lyles that he kept it from his wife for

months. A neurosurgeon, Dr. Hongyun Huang, had implanted tissue from aborted fetuses into the brains and spinal cords of paralyzed patients with reports of some success. He started to work on ALS patients. According to Internet chat and a TV news report, it has reversed or slowed the disease's progression in some cases.

It was a discovery that plunged Lyles, Newton and their families, all Southern Baptists, deeply into prayer. All are steadfastly against abortion. And in China, they knew, abortions sometimes are coerced. The nation encourages a one-child-per-family policy to control population growth.

#### SBC statements

The Southern Baptist Convention has opposed use of fetal tissue and stem cells in research or treatment.

Using such tissue would allow "electively aborted babies to be exploited for scientific and commercial purposes," according to a 1992 resolution. A 2000 resolution opposed the sale of fetal tissue, arguing that "Sale of their tissues is an assault on the biblical truth that all human beings are created in the image of God."

But Baptists are not bound by the convention actions.

Ultimately, "It's between you and God," said Kevin Lyles' father-in-law, Benny Harrison, pastor of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in Thomsville, Ala.

One night, torn between his son-in-law's terrible future and the dilemma over the aborted babies in China, Harrison was lying in bed, awake. "Seeking the Lord," he said.

The Old Testament passage came to him in which Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery in Egypt. But Joseph rises to a position of power in Pharaoh's palace and saves his family from famine.

"They meant for bad," Harrison said. "God meant for good."

It's like that with the babies, he said. Abortions are wrong. But

maybe the babies can help his son-in-law and others. He believes God reminded him of that passage.

Nikol Lyles also found comfort in those words. "Something good can come out of something bad," she said. "They will continue the abortions anyway. They're throwing these cells away every day."

Edith Newton, Wilbur's wife, said they, too, prayed about it.

"God just gave me that peace that it was OK," she said. "Those babies were going to be aborted regardless of what my beliefs are."

It would be no different if a murder victim's family donated his organs, she said. "Are you going to say, 'No, I don't need his heart because somebody killed him?'" she asked. "I don't think so."

Many in this conservative, church-going county have agreed, judging from the amount of money each family has raised—\$20,000 by the Newtons, \$35,000 by the Lyleses. Each treatment costs \$25,000, including travel expenses for two.

#### Trying to buy time

Not much is known in the United States about Huang's treatment, say researchers and ALS advocates.

Huang has treated hundreds of spinal cord injuries and about 60 ALS patients, said his go-between in the United States, Stephen Byer of Wisconsin, who said his ALS-stricken son has improved after undergoing the therapy.

U.S. doctors don't know how safe the procedure is. Huang trained in the United States and worked with laboratory animals, but it is unclear whether the procedure was first tested on animals.

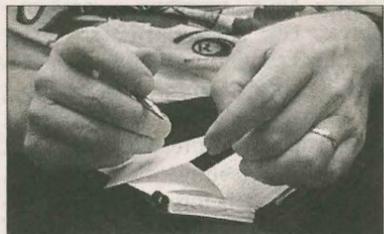
Newton and Lyles are willing to become guinea pigs. At the very least, they will have done what they could to find help. At the most—well, who can say?

Lyles scratches his hopes in ink: "Cure or a little time, good time with family. Maybe it will open doors for a cure."

Newton raises his eyebrows high to indicate his excitement. He shakes his head to indicate he is not afraid.

They left for China on Oct. 1.

**A 2000 Southern Baptist Convention resolution opposed the sale of fetal tissue, arguing that "Sale of their tissues is an assault on the biblical truth that all human beings are created in the image of God."**



**COMMUNICATION** Because Lou Gehrig's disease has left him unable to speak, Kevin Lyles writes his responses during an interview with a reporter.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following missionaries, ministries and workers in Brazil, the International Baptist Convention and Poland, where Kentucky Baptists have partnerships:

■ The family of Gersio de Oliveira, who died Oct. 3 from complications with cancer. De Oliveira was a travel specialist in Sao Paulo, Brazil, who worked with the Kentucky Partnership Missions office. Survivors include his wife, Elizabeth, and two children, Thiago and Camila.

■ A man who has been a regular driver for volunteer teams in Bulgaria. His mother is dying of cancer, and neither of them are believers.

■ Thirteen partnership projects scheduled with the International Baptist Convention from March through August 2005. Pray especially for the emphasis in Malta next year. For more information, call (888) 254-5724.

■ Three construction projects in Poland next year. Pray that volunteers respond and that preparation and materials purchasing go smoothly.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **ARLINGTON**—First Church recently called **Ken Jewell** as interim pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—Rocky Ridge Church recently called Doyle Thresher as interim pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host the **Campbellsville University Creative Ministries Team** Oct. 31, 11 a.m. The team will present drama, interpretive movement and puppets.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will hold its annual Fall Festival Oct. 31, 5:30-8 p.m. For more information, call (270) 769-5738.

■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church will hold a Fall Festival Oct. 22, 6-8:30 p.m.

■ **HENDERSON**—Airline Church will host the **Haire Family** in concert Oct. 31, 6 p.m.

**Shannon Long** recently resigned as pastor of Watson Lane Church.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—First Church recently called **Greg Harry** as minister of youth. **George Smith** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Carlisle Avenue Church will hold high attendance day Oct. 31.

Cloverleaf Church recently called **Theresa Wyatt** as minister of education. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

East Audubon Church recently called **Jeremy Jessen** as pastor.

Fern Creek Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary of ministry Oct. 24. **Linda Barnes Popham** is pastor.

Grace United Community Church recently called **Eugene Peete** as interim pastor.

Midlane Park Church recently called **Chris and Abby Huff** as youth ministers. The church will host the Southern gospel men's quartet **The Standifers** in concert Oct. 24. **Gary**

**Bozarth** is pastor.

Vine Street Church, recently called **Mike Snearly** as pastor.

■ **LOYALL**—First Church recently honored **Ruth Lowry Howard** for more than 70 years of church membership. She teaches a women's Sunday school class, is assistant treasurer and works in Christ's Hands kitchen.

■ **MAYFIELD**—Trace Creek Church recently called **Ronnie Stinson Jr.** as assistant pastor.

■ **MOUNT WASHINGTON**—Kings Church recently called **Corey Abney** as pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Crosspointe Church ordained **Kenny Rager** to the gospel ministry Oct. 17. **Farrell Isenberg** is pastor.

Lewis Lane Church recently ordained **Bob Christie** and **Bill Oiler** as deacons.

■ **ROBARDS**—Cherry Hill Church recently called **Jonathan Durbin** as youth minister.

■ **SHELBYVILLE**—Salem Church recently called **James Hill** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Sonora Church.

■ **TAYLORSVILLE**—Plum Creek Church recently called **Jon Rohr** as pastor.

■ **WESTPORT**—Covington Church will host a "Hallelujah Harvest Festival" Oct. 31, 4-7 p.m.

### What's going on?

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



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### October

**22-23** Youth on Mission Night, BSU building, Western Kentucky University.

**25** Senior Adult Choir Festival-East, Porter Memorial, Lexington.

**28-29** Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, First Baptist Church, Murray.

**30** Pass, Punt, Kick, Campbellsville University.

### November

**5-7** International Student Conference, Cave City Convention Center.

**8-9** Daycare Orientation, Baptist Building, Middletown.

**12-14** All State Junior High Choir, Campbellsville University.

**12-14** Crossover Kentucky, Louisville.

**15** Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, First Baptist Church, Middletown.

**16-17** KBC Annual Meeting, Louisville, St. Matthews Baptist Church.

**20** Creative Ministries Workshop 101, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

For more information, call (888) 266-6477 or visit [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org)

## Campbellsville University officials present racial reconciliation awards

**Campbellsville**—Leslie Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, and Matthew Smyzer, pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Park City, received Campbellsville University's annual Racial Reconciliation Award Oct. 6.

Yvette Haskins of Campbellsville received Campbellsville's African American Leadership Award.

John Chowning, Campbellsville's vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president, said the awards honor the recipients' work toward racial harmony. The awards were presented as part of the school's recent Dialogue on Race activities.

Citing the recipients of the Racial Reconciliation Award, Chowning said, "Both men have excelled

in this area."

Hollon is a member of Campbellsville's board of trustees. His congregation recently joined the predominantly African-American General Association of Baptists in Kentucky as part of their commitment to racial reconciliation.

Smyzer, vice chairman of the State Mission Board of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, helped lead his church's involvement in the \$600,000 Community Housing Project that resulted in seven homes being built.

Haskins is co-chair of Greater Campbellsville United and a member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. She chairs the African American Heritage Trail, which highlights the history of African Americans in the region.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** 1998 Dodge Ram Van. Great church vehicle; 8-passenger; a/c; hitch; white; good condition; 172,000 miles. \$4,500 OBO. (502) 897-4344.

**FOR SALE:** 1927 Krakauer grand piano. Plays well; recently rebuilt; very nice cabinet. \$4,500; consider payment plan. Contact Glenn: (859) 635-7227 or [strausbaugh@nku.edu](mailto:strausbaugh@nku.edu).

**SEEKING:** Full-time youth minister. College degree required; previous experience in youth ministry preferred. Salary negotiable. Responsible for leading youth in Bible study, teaching on relevant topics during youth meetings and planning youth activities and events. Submit resumé to: First Baptist Church, c/o Shane Fogle, 108 Cardinal Drive, Central City, KY 42330. E-mail: [fogleshane@bellsouth.net](mailto:fogleshane@bellsouth.net).

**SEEKING:** Outstanding opportunity to join a vibrant ministry team as a full-time minister to students at Walnut Street Baptist Church, a large, growing multi-cultural church located in the heart of Louisville, Ky. Ministry includes outreach and evangelism to middle and high school students and their families, with a strong emphasis on discipleship. Reply to Minister to Students Search Committee, Walnut Street Baptist Church, 1143 S Third St., Suite A, Louisville, KY 40203. E-mail: [kwilson@walnutstreet.org](mailto:kwilson@walnutstreet.org).

**SEEKING:** Applicants for position of preschool director. Preschool is licensed for 55 children and employs 11 to 13 staff; Christian curriculum is employed for classroom training. Successful applicant must be devoted Christian with Baptist convictions, meet at least minimum requirements of the state for licensure and have ample experience in early childhood education. Send resumé to Pastor Brandon Cox, Scottsville Road Baptist Church, 6330 Scottsville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42104, or call (270) 843-6645. All resúmes/applications must be received by Friday, Oct. 29.

**SEEKING:** Full-time associate pastor/worship and music for FBC Cabot, Ark. Seminary; contemporary/traditional; technology; people-skills; plus experience. Music Search Committee, PO Box 1023, Cabot, AR 72023. Visit [www.fbccabot.org](http://www.fbccabot.org).

**SEEKING:** An experienced reporter (full-time position) for The Southeast Outlook to write news/feature articles and assist with editing duties. Successful candidate must embrace doctrine of the Independent Christian Church. Send resumé and three writing clips to: Ninie Hammon, The Southeast Outlook, 200 Envoy Circle, #200, Louisville, KY 40299. No phone calls.

**SEEKING:** The 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:** Part-time youth director. The position involves developing, implementing and promoting a balanced program of fellowship, worship, service and spiritual development. Submit resumé to: Dr. Ricky Ray, FBC, 560 Main St., Hazard, KY 41701. For salary information and a job description, visit our Web site at [hazardfbc.org](http://hazardfbc.org).

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for a Southern Missionary Baptist church in Mt. Vernon, Ky. The service area is mainly rural with diverse backgrounds. Enrollment: 183; average attendance in Sunday school: 107; morning worship: approx. 115; several mission and children's programs. We strive to be God's lighthouse in the community and to be Spirit-led in accomplishing our tasks. It is preferable for the candidate to have prior experience and formal training (Bible college or seminary). Please send resumé to: Fairview Baptist Church, Route 3, Box 347, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456. If possible, please include video or DVD of yourself leading worship.

**SEEKING:** Greenwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green, Ky., is searching for a young man to serve as part-time youth minister. Must be Christian, Baptist, mature, have impeccable morals. Interested individuals: send resumé to: Greenwood Baptist Church, 5165 Scottsville Road, Bowling Green, KY 42104, Attn: Personnel Committee.

**SEEKING:** Youth-recreation minister. Experience and training are preferred. Please send resumé and references to: David Campbell, Buck Grove Baptist Church, 255 Buck Grove Road, Ekron, KY 40117.

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

**TOUR:** Hawaii next February. Adults from your church are invited to join Christian Life Tours on an 11-day tour of Hawaii. Cost of only \$2,624 each includes round-trip air, sightseeing on each island, several meals, shows, a luau and an unforgetably fun time with a group of Christian friends. The price is based on double occupancy. For a free brochure or to make a reservation, call (877) 557-0073 (toll-free); if necessary, please leave message.

## Israeli leaders urging Jews to stop spitting on Christians

Jerusalem (RNS)—The Israeli government has vowed to crack down on religious Jews who insult and spit at Christians.

In a stern statement issued last week, Interior Minister Avraham Poraz condemned recent incidents in which Jewish seminary students, many of them Americans studying in Israel, spat at Christian clergy during processions through the Old City of Jerusalem.

Poraz expressed "revulsion" and called the situation intolerable, vowing to take action to prevent future incidents.

The latest incident occurred when an ultra-Orthodox yeshiva student studying in the Old City spat at a cross being carried by Armenian Archbishop Nourhan Manougian as he led a procession near the community's church. Jerusalem police said a scuffle ensued between the student and Manougian, who slapped the student after the latter damaged the medallion the archbishop wore around his neck. The student was arrested and subsequently barred from entering the Old City for 75 days. The archbishop was questioned by the police.

Manougian said in an interview that there have been several such incidents between Jews and Christians since 1967, when Israel took control of the eastern part of Jerusalem, where the walled Old City is located. "It happens whenever they see a Christian procession or a Christian clergyman," Manougian said, referring to the small minority of fervently religious Jews who continue the age-old custom of spitting at the sight of Christian symbols. The exact origins of this practice are unknown.

The archbishop said "sometimes they spit, sometimes they cut through the procession. They have thrown garbage in front of the churches and broken the crosses on tombstones."

Manougian charged that police "do nothing" to the Jews accused of these offenses.

While the archbishop expressed his appreciation for Poraz's statement, he insisted that "the Israeli government must do more to stop these actions."

While the practice of spitting is reportedly encouraged—or at least tolerated—at certain ultra-Orthodox seminaries, mainstream religious leaders abhor the practice. Such conduct is "a desecration of the Divine Name" and also liable to "contribute to anti-Semitism in the Diaspora," Rabbi Yisrael Lau, former chief rabbi of Israel, said in a statement.

## Other hurricane victims



**WELCOME HELP** Jasper Evans, coordinator of Baptist disaster relief workers in Clyde, N.C., talks with Ruth Sass at her flood-damaged house as volunteers from a church in Raleigh, N.C., clear mud from her basement. (ABP photos by Mike Creswell)

*People who never have visited a flood site might think the residents just need to shovel out the mud, clean things off and bring in new furniture. People here wish it were that simple.*

## Baptist mud-out teams in N.C. after floods

By Mike Creswell  
North Carolina Baptist Convention

Clyde, N.C. (ABP)—A map on a wall at First Baptist Church of Clyde, N.C., said it all.

Thin lines on the map representing the Pigeon River were marked on either side with sprawling black areas—the parts of the town where a fierce wall of water invaded like a giant angry snake.

Floods shoved houses off foundations, broke bridges and floated mobile homes and cars away to ruin.

By early October the river was back to flowing in its normal, civilized way. But it remains doubtful that local residents will ever see the river in the same way.

It was a double weather whammy. First, around Sept. 7, Hurricane Frances dumped rains so abundantly that the river flooded. That had hardly drained when remnants of Hurricane Ivan dumped still more water onto the soaked ground and another flood swept through in mid-September.

A foot of rain fell in less than three days, locals said.

TV news crews have left; the flood is not news anymore. But try telling that to local residents who live near the Pigeon River. On one street along the river, big piles of debris sat outside every house.

### Mud ruins everything

People who never have visited a flood site might think the residents just need to shovel out the mud, clean things off and bring in new furniture. People here wish it were that simple.

First, the water typically ruins more of the house than its contents. Wet floorboards, wall panels and sheetrock all must be removed. Left wet, the wood quickly attracts mold and mildew and will begin rotting. Electrical wiring must be replaced.

Second, the flood left a coating of mud. This is not simple mud that sits on a river's banks. It is mud that



**DIRTY WORK** Volunteers from Riley's Creek Baptist Church in Rocky Point, near Wilmington, N.C., haul mud and other material from under a flood-damaged house.

stinks because it has been contaminated from a sewage treatment center upstream—and nobody knows what else. Workers in the muddiest sites wear biohazard suits and masks to protect themselves.

After a house is stripped down to its basic frame and supports, the whole must be pressure-washed and treated with disinfectant. Then it must dry out before rebuilding can start.

Multiply that process by every flooded building, and one begins to see why the flood is not gone for people here. It hits them in the face every time they open their eyes—and it will do so for months to come.

When rain started falling again a few days ago, many people here became fearful: Was another flood going to come?

In Clyde, relief workers said clearing basements was especially hard. Many of the houses were built 40 or 50 years ago and basement access is only from inside the house. In some houses, workers resorted to bucket brigades to bring out ruined boards,

### Help still needed

Volunteers are still needed to help hurricane victims, but "Lone Rangers" should team up before traveling, according to Kentucky Baptists' coordinator for disaster relief.

"It is still not a good idea for 'Lone Rangers' to take off and expect to be useful just by going to Florida and asking if you can help," Larry Koch told prospective volunteers in a recent e-mail.

Much work remains to be done, from mud-out work in North Carolina to rebuilding efforts in Florida and Alabama.

Both the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and state conventions prefer that workers call the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Men on Mission department, which can help form teams that can be dispatched to a specific work site, Koch said.

"If you are interested in going, please let us know of your interest and a time frame that you can respond," he wrote. "We will try to organize groups to help with clean up and also with the rebuilding aspect."

For more information, call the Men on Mission department at (888) 254-5920.

panels and household effects.

It is back-breaking work. And it is heart-breaking work. Family members sift through lifetimes of possessions, reduced to piles of smelly, muddy waste.

On Oct. 2, volunteers started to materialize out of the early morning fog. They came from across North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. By the day's end, 229 workers had come to help with flood relief.

First Baptist Church in Clyde is set up as flood-relief coordination center for Baptist Men's groups. Volunteers are being housed at the church and also at a nearby Baptist camp. The church is providing food for as many as 500 people a day, including flood victims and volunteers.

During a Saturday evening devotional for volunteers, layman Charlie Stroud from Parkview Baptist Church in Morehead City, N.C., urged the workers to have a vision for the way the houses are going to look once rebuilt.

"The people here need a vision," he said.

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