

DURING THE KBC ANNUAL MEETING



Colleges Messengers overwhelmingly voted down a proposal to let Kentucky Baptist colleges elect up to one quarter non-Kentucky Baptist trustees. *Page 3.*

Baptist World Alliance Spirited debate preceded the defeat of a motion to appoint a study committee on how the Kentucky Baptist Convention might relate to Baptist World Alliance. *Page 3.*

Editorial Don't let division limit KBC "Connect." *Page 5.*

Reaching youth Citing declining baptism statistics, Thom Rainer told messengers that Kentucky Baptists must get intentional about reaching youth to reverse the trend. *Page 6.*



Convention sermon Noting the emphasis on "Kentucky Baptists Connect," Ric Frazier, pastor of First Baptist Church of Louisa, said Christians must connect with God before they can connect with the world. *Page 7.*

President's address Kentucky Baptists should welcome diverse people into "God's big tent," Judge Eugene Siler said. *Page 7.*



KBC Mission Board staff report Kentucky Baptists have their work cut out for them if they are going to strive for the goals of "Kentucky Baptists Connect," said Bill Mackey. *Page 8.*

Nothing resolved A lack of a quorum on the convention's second day prevented messengers from considering resolutions on marriage and other matters. *Page 8.*

Charles Lowery Psychologist and former pastor blended humor and poignancy to tell Kentucky Baptists they should spell "connect" L-O-V-E. *Page 9.*



Resources Pastor Gene Wilkes offered messengers lessons on servant leadership during one of six workshops on the second day of the annual meeting. *Page 12.*

Also inside

Family Forum How can couples get on the same page when it comes to spending money? *Page 5.*

Lead Like Jesus Ken Blanchard and others offer leadership resources to church leaders at a Louisville conference. *Page 13.*

Connecting with Christ



CONNECTIONS A praise team from Severns Vallen Baptist Church in Elizabethtown led worship during the Nov. 16 launch of the KBC's "Kentucky Baptist Connect" ministry emphasis.

But meeting shows division among messengers

Louisville—"Kentucky Baptists Connect," an ambitious five-year ministry emphasis, was the primary focus of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annual meeting Nov. 16-17 at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.

The business sessions, however, featured more division than connection as messengers split their votes on such major issues as officers, a proposed constitutional amendment and a Baptist World Alliance study committee.

Hershael York, a professor and associate dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was elected KBC president over Rusty Ellison, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

Conservative candidates also were elected to the KBC's two vice presidential posts. Adam Dooley, pastor of Red House Baptist Church in Richmond, was elected first vice president, and Todd Linn, pastor of First Baptist Church of Henderson, was elected second vice president.

"Kentucky Baptists Connect," a five-year focus on evangelism, discipleship and leader training, calls on Kentucky Baptists by more than 40 percent by 2010.

Barna Research Group vice president David Kinnaman reported that most Kentuckians who don't attend church aren't just unchurched but "de-churched." (See story below.)

During a Kentucky Baptists Convention commitment service, 290 participants filled out pledge cards, committing to "pray for this effort and encourage my church to actively participate."

During business sessions, messengers rejected a proposal to allow the KBC's four colleges to have non-Baptists serve in up to one-fourth of their trustee positions.

The proposal was intended to permit the colleges to recruit non-Baptist alumni and donors as board members.

A proposal from the KBC Mission Board to establish a study committee to examine "how the Kentucky Baptist Convention may relate to the Baptist World Alliance" also was rejected on a 510-444 vote.

For expanded coverage, see pages 3, 6-10 and 12.



Hershael York

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Nov. 24.

Research shows Kentucky's unchurched mostly 'de-churched'

By David Winfrey
News Director

Louisville—Most Kentuckians who don't attend church aren't just unchurched but "de-churched," according to a statistician who shared research about the commonwealth's unchurched population.

David Kinnaman, vice president of the Barna Research Group, shared insights about the state's unchurched residents as part of the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, Nov. 16-17 in Louisville.

The research was conducted as a resource for the KBC's five-year "Kentucky Baptists Connect" ministry emphasis.



BY THE NUMBERS David Kinnaman

For this survey, "unchurched" refers to people who have not attended a non-holiday church service in the past six months.

But the study found most unchurched Kentuckians previously

were involved in a congregation but had left.

"We've had our chance with the vast majority of these people, said Kinnaman, who directed the survey of 1,204 unchurched Kentuckians. "It's not a failure of evangelism; it's a failure of discipleship."

Among the highlights of Kinnaman's report:

■ 32 percent of Kentucky's adult population is unchurched, representing nearly 1 million Kentuckians.

■ 81 percent of Kentucky's unchurched previously attended a church (many within the past five years), and 42 percent of unchurched Kentucky adults previ-

ously attended a Baptist church.

■ Two-thirds of Kentucky's unchurched adults say they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important to their life. By asking a set of questions about their beliefs, Barna estimates that 30 percent of Kentucky's unchurched adults are "born again" Christians.

Such statistics bear important implications for Kentucky Baptists and their efforts to help connect Kentuckians to Christ.

While Kentucky Baptist churches will reach out to a more "Christianized" population, that brings its own challenges, Kinnaman said.

□ See Research shows ... Page 6

Baptists tackle issues ranging from marriage to BWA

Marriage amendments, Christian schools and involvement in Baptist World Alliance were among issues messengers addressed in recent state Baptist convention annual meetings across the nation. Those actions include:

Alabama Baptist State Convention. Alabama Baptists passed resolutions against same-sex marriage and in favor of education and military chaplains. But they turned down an attempt to divert \$30,000 from the Southern Baptist Convention to the Baptist World Alliance.

Last June the SBC withdrew its membership and \$300,000 in funding from the Baptist World Alliance, an international umbrella organization representing 211 Baptist bodies. Southern Baptist leaders said BWA harbored theological liberalism, a charge denied by BWA and many of its member groups worldwide.

Alabama Baptist messengers defeated an amendment to their \$41.5 million budget to earmark \$30,000 designated for the SBC Executive Committee and send it to BWA.

The marriage resolution affirmed that "biblical and legal marriage is between one man and one woman," which is "the only marriage ordained of God."

The education resolution affirmed Alabama Baptists' support of education, including public schools, and affirmed actions by local churches, associations and individual Christians to partner with schools.

Arkansas Baptist State Convention. Messengers adopted a resolution expressing gratitude for adoption of the Arkansas marriage amendment and supporting a similar amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Other resolutions opposed expansion of gambling in Arkansas, supported sanctity of life and expressed gratitude for the 25th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention's "conservative resurgence."

The resolution on the conservative resurgence drew an amendment attempt by Ron West, a messenger from First Baptist Church of Booneville. He offered an amendment that would "acknowledge many God-called theologically conservative missionaries and seminary professors have been falsely accused of liberalism and that we ask God's forgiveness for this sin." After some discussion, the amendment overwhelmingly failed.

Messengers also approved a motion asking the convention president to appoint a seven-member task force to conduct a one-year comprehensive study of Baptist life and bring recommendations for ways to improve ABSC work.

Missouri Baptist Convention. Messengers took the first step toward limiting state convention membership to Southern Baptist churches affiliated solely with the Missouri Baptist Convention. The action would exclude churches that support moderate organizations, including the state and national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist General Convention of Missouri. The MBC also would claim the right to examine churches' contributions to determine whether those congregations support other conventions.

In other action, messengers defeated a motion that called for an end to legal action against five convention-related entities—Missouri Baptist University, the Missouri Baptist Foundation, Windermere Baptist Conference Center, the Baptist Home and Word & Way newspaper.

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. North Carolina Baptist messengers voted Nov. 16 to keep the convention's four giving plans. One day later, a move to eliminate the plan favored by moderates was ruled out of order.

Ted Stone, an anti-drug and anti-alcohol activist from Durham, N.C.,

made a motion to abolish the alternate plans, which let churches pick which organizations to support. His motion called for the state convention to go back to a single plan, with money being divided between North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention, deleting money for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and other moderate causes.

Stone's motion, which would have gone into effect with the 2006-07 budget, failed by at least a two-to-one margin on a show of ballots, according to convention officials. Currently churches giving to the state convention can choose one of four giving plans.

During debate, J.D. Greear, pastor of Summit Church in Durham, said that if Stone's motion failed he would like messengers to consider doing away with only Plan C, eliminating funding for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. A motion to that effect was ruled out of order.

Tennessee Baptist Convention. Tennessee Baptists turned back an attack on "anti-Christian" teaching in public schools but agreed to investigate the biblical views taught in their three affiliated Baptist colleges.

Messengers to the Tennessee Baptist Convention asked the education committee of their Executive Board to investigate what is taught at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Belmont University in Nashville and Union University in Jackson.

The action came in response to an allegation from Brady Tarr, a current Carson-Newman student, who told messengers some of the college's professors—particularly in the religion and science departments—teach that the Bible has errors and contradictions.

During an hour-and-a-half discussion, messengers debated whether Carson-Newman teaches that the Bible is inspired and authoritative and that the Christian message of

salvation is unique and exclusive.

Carson-Newman President James Netherton noted, "Carson-Newman doesn't teach the Bible has errors. I believe every single member of the religion department is called by God and they all believe the Bible."

"If you treat the Bible with great honesty, a number of things must be read and placed in a proper perspective," he added. "The Bible is what we believe. It is at the center of our faith."

A motion to investigate the teachings at Carson-Newman was expanded to include the other two convention-supported schools. Another amendment stipulated that the investigation should be done in conjunction with the schools' trustee boards.

Baptist General Association of Virginia. BGAV messengers elected the convention's first African-American officer, agreed to apply for membership in the Baptist World Alliance and engaged in unexpected debate over the sale of a handful of properties.

A proposal to sell the convention-owned Baptist Student Union building at Virginia Commonwealth University to the school prompted the most debate. A group of former VCU students who were active in the BSU urged fellow messengers to vote against the proposal. The motion to sell the BSU building ultimately passed.

Another motion recommending the sale of the BSU center at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, as well as a camp property near Lynchburg owned by Virginia Baptists, also passed with some opposition.

Richard Smith, an attorney from Vienna, Va., was elected president. Second vice president Mark Croston, the BGAV's first African-American officer, is pastor of East End Baptist Church in Suffolk.

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

National WMU, NAMB respond to Virginia WMU declaration

Birmingham, Ala.—Responding to a recent "Declaration of the Dignity of Women" adopted by Virginia Woman's Missionary Union, national WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee noted that "we respect the autonomy" of state WMU organizations "and their right to speak for themselves."

Lee, in a statement issued Nov. 16 to Baptist Press, said, "Just as every state Baptist convention is an autonomous body, so is each state WMU organization, particularly as they deal with issues in their state."

Citing "humiliating affronts to the dignity of Christian women," the Virginia WMU declaration states, "We draw the strength to declare, with prophetic conviction:

■ "That we reject all blanket discrimination against women in the work of Christian ministry, in particular, as elaborated in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

■ "That we reject the findings and policy of the North American Mission Board with regard to the non-endorsement of women to chaplaincy positions.

■ "That we reject any devaluation of women worldwide."

NAMB, in a statement to Baptist Press, said it "still strongly affirms women in a myriad of roles in the church and denomination. ... However, NAMB no longer endorses women to chaplaincy roles that call for a 'fully qualified member of the clergy or that have a role or function similar to that of a pastor.'"

Based on reporting by Baptist Press

IMB, three other groups launch 'Epic Partners'

Richmond, Va. (BP)—A "new wave" of missions outreach has been launched by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and three other evangelical organizations.

The groups have commissioned the first overseas workers in a partnership focused on billions of people who cannot be reached with traditional methods.

Epic Partners—a global missions partnership founded by the IMB, Campus Crusade for Christ, Wycliffe and Youth With A Mission—uses chronological Bible storytelling to communicate God's Word and plant churches among unreached people groups that are "oral learners."

An estimated 4 billion people—about two-thirds of the world's population—learn through the spoken word rather than the written word. Mission efforts focused on increasing literacy rates and providing written materials simply do not work in any significant way, said Avery Willis, recently retired IMB senior vice president of overseas operations.

Willis, who spoke during an Epic Partners commissioning service in Asia in mid-October, said rethinking

the concept is simple.

"We must meet people on their own terms," Willis said. "Where is the barrier? Is it in them or in us? The difficulty lies with us, the literates. We've been handicapped by literacy."

"We've got to lay that aside and communicate in a manner that connects with the people we are trying to reach—and that is through orality."

Crusade President Steve Douglass noted that "we've spent millions of budget dollars on unreached people groups. Why can't we reach them? If Coca Cola can do it, why can't Jesus Christ?"

Because Epic Partners personnel will be working in locations that are often dangerous and resistant to the gospel, the ministry destinations of the new workers could not be discussed at the commissioning service. Participants ended the service by encircling each person, family and team to pray for guidance and protection.

Each organization participating in the Epic partnership brings its own unique ministry tools to the

table:

■ In the past few years, Wycliffe Bible Translators has found ways to accelerate the process of putting Bible stories into the language of an unreached people group.

■ YWAM excels in training young people and nationals to be enthusiastic soul-winners.

■ Campus Crusade is known for its longstanding commitment to evangelistic audio-visual products, such as the "Jesus" film, and facilitating local peoples and partnerships.

■ The IMB specializes in church-planting strategies and has conducted nearly two decades of research on orality and chronological Bible storytelling.

"We're seeing that we can get the job done," Douglass said, adding that the four groups believe others will catch the vision and join the effort.

"A new wave in missions is coming," he added. "It can crush, or it can be ridden. If the wave is ridden, there is no limit to what we can see. We will not see increases of 10 percent, but a 10-time increase."

KBC rejects non-Baptist trustee proposal

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—A proposal to allow Kentucky Baptist colleges to recruit non-Baptist trustees was rejected last week by more than 60 percent of messengers.

The measure, approved last year by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board as part of the KBC's "Kentucky Baptists Connect" emphasis, would have allowed college trustee boards to include up to 25 percent of members who are not affiliated with KBC churches. A proposed constitutional amendment introduced last year required messenger approval this year for the change to take effect.

Rather than gaining the two-thirds majority needed for passage, however, the proposed amendment gained less than 40 percent support, failing on a vote of 595 to 383.

Supporters of the measure contended the plan would strengthen the colleges but opponents insisted that non-Baptists should not help set policy for KBC schools.

"Historic Baptist beliefs"

The amendment specified that all trustees be "Christians who are in harmony with historic Baptist beliefs." But those who opposed the proposal voiced concern that those beliefs were not defined.

"I believe that trustees need to be loyal not only to the institution, but to the mission of the KBC," said David McCall, pastor of Lovelaceville Baptist Church.

Former KBC President Harold Greenfield of Princeton said he believes "our colleges want a closer connection with our state convention."

Noting that "they are our colleges, they are good colleges, we have great presidents and we are to support them," Greenfield added, "This is an effort to strengthen our colleges."

Chuck Luke, pastor of Durbin Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, helped lead efforts to defeat the

proposal. Just a few days before the convention, he mailed a three-page letter to pastors across the state urging Kentucky Baptists to "realize the dangers in this amendment and to vote 'no' on this amendment."

In an interview after the vote was announced, Jim Taylor, president of Cumberland College in Williamsburg, expressed concerns about Luke's letter.

"One of the real problems was there was a last-minute letter sent out that we were not able to respond to" because of the timing, Taylor said. "I have a problem with that from a moral, ethical perspective."

Bill Crouch, president of Georgetown College, added, "There were assumptions that were made that were perpetuated by the letter that went out."

During debate on the convention floor, Luke said the measure's "primary purpose it seems is to allow certain very wealthy non-Baptists onto trustee boards so that they would in turn contribute to our Baptist colleges."

Citing the amendment's call for trustees to be in harmony with historic Baptist beliefs, Luke said, "It seems that if they would be in harmony with historic Baptist beliefs that they would be members of Baptist churches."

As his comment prompted applause from much of the crowd, Luke added, "The amendment also does not define what historic Baptist beliefs are. ... Without any definition of historic Baptist beliefs, we are left in the dark."

Kevin McCallon, pastor of First Baptist Church of Paducah, was among members of the KBC Mission Study Committee who developed the proposal.

Encouraging messengers to "not vote out of fear, but to vote out of the exact reading that is there," he added, "This is not a weakening, but a strengthening of our position."

Brent Thomas of Hill Grove Church in Guston took issue with the amendment's percentage for-

mula. "The percentage approach is not the correct approach," he said.

Noting that it would allow "non-Baptists to have a say over our institutions," Thomas added, "Our Baptist ideals, heritage and theology need to be the center of this decision, not percentages."

Leslie Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, chaired the subcommittee that proposed the trustee change.

Reiterating the call to "work out of trust and not out of fear," he said the college presidents had agreed to ensure that each trustee had "a passionate faith in Jesus Christ," was active in a local church, committed to historic Baptist beliefs and committed to maintaining strong ties to the KBC.

"What more could we ask for in an atmosphere of trust?" he asked.

Presidents evaluate vote

After messengers defeated the proposed constitutional amendment, the four college presidents gathered for a brief press conference.

"I personally think we missed a tremendous opportunity to strengthen the institutions," said Michael Carter, president of Campbellsville University. He added, however, that "we'll live within the will of the convention. ... Our spirit is one of service."

"We'll make the best of it and go on," Taylor agreed. "It's not the end of the world. ... While there are ups and downs, relationships are harmonious overall."

Bill Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, said the proposal did not affect his school as much as the other three.

"It's a more crucial need for them than for us," he said. "But I felt like the recommendation covered the bases."

Despite the presidents' disappointment with the vote, Taylor said, "Like any family, we have our differences, but we're still family."



KBC OFFICERS Convention officers for 2004-05 are (from left) Mike Melloan, assistant secretary; Wanda Simmons, secretary; Hershael York, president; Adam Dooley, first vice president; and Todd Linn, second vice president.

York elected KBC president; Dooley and Linn named VPs

Louisville—Conservative candidates with close ties to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary were elected to the Kentucky Baptist Convention's top three posts last week.

Hershael York, a professor and associate dean at Southern, was elected president; Adam Dooley, a PhD student at the Louisville seminary, was elected first vice president; and Todd Linn, a former adjunct professor at Southern's Boyce College, was elected second vice president.

York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, was elected by a vote of 686-627 over Rusty Ellison, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

Dooley, pastor of Red House Baptist Church in Richmond, was elected first vice president 443-282 over Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville. Dooley is a member of the KBC Mission Board.

Linn, pastor of First Baptist Church of Henderson, was elected second vice president 215-200 over Don Reed, pastor of First Baptist Church of Paris. Linn, former pastor of Brookview Baptist Church in Louisville, served on the Southern Baptist Convention's 2003 Committee on Committees.

The KBC's secretary and assistant secretary were re-elected by acclamation. Wanda Simmons, a member of Rock Haven Baptist Church in Brandenburg, is secretary and Mike Melloan, a member of Yellow Creek Baptist Church in Owensboro, is assistant secretary.

Prior to his election, York said one his goals is for state convention entities to "enjoy greater camaraderie and partnership with Southern."

Acknowledging "hurts or grievances" among some Kentucky Baptists in the wake of Southern's conservative shift since Al Mohler's election as seminary president in 1993, York added, "It's time to heal old wounds."

Noting that "Kentucky Baptists want someone who is going to represent them all," York said, "I think this convention is overwhelmingly committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what has to be preeminent in our minds and in our efforts and in what unites us."

Messengers defeat call to establish BWA study committee

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers defeated a plan last week to study how the state convention "may relate to the Baptist World Alliance."

The proposal, approved last month by the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee, also was approved by the full board the day before the annual meeting.

The recommendation, presented in response to the Southern Baptist Convention's decision in June to withdraw from BWA, called for the new KBC president to appoint a study committee to evaluate the issue.

Describing the proposal as "a very straightforward motion," administrative committee chairman Charles Barnes said, "We have dealt with subjects like this very effectively in the past by referring them to a study group."

Tom James, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green,

recounted claims by Southern Baptist Convention leaders of liberalism in the BWA—charges that BWA leaders repeatedly have denied.

"Given the track record of the Baptist World Alliance, I don't know that a study is even needed," James said. "I think that's an alliance we cannot afford to make."

Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Joy Bolton, a messenger from First Baptist Church of Shelbyville, urged messengers to support the study committee proposal.

"Our convention has, by the grace of God, avoided the divisiveness found in many other state conventions," she said.

Noting that Kentucky Baptists historically "have chosen the way of very careful, measured steps," Bolton added, "It is my fervent desire that Kentucky Baptists find a peaceful and unifying way to relate to the Baptist World Alliance."

Leslie Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville,

said a study process would allow Kentucky Baptists "to make the most clear, most intelligent and educated decision."

Emphasizing that such a process would allow "representative Kentucky Baptists to look at all the issues," Hollon said, "We have absolutely nothing to fear from a study committee."

Joe Samples, pastor of Greenland Baptist Church in Corbin, said he saw no need for a yearlong study on the issue. "The work of a study committee really has already been done," he said. "Our Southern Baptist Convention as a whole already has made the decision to pull their collective funding from the Baptist World Alliance."

Citing the convention theme of "connecting all people to Jesus Christ," Bill Ellis, minister of education at Crestwood Baptist Church, voiced concern that rejecting the study would, in effect, exclude working with millions of fellow Baptists around the world through

BWA.

After more debate, messengers voted 510 to 444 against authorizing a study committee.

In other action, messengers approved Cooperative Program goals for 2005-06 with no opposition.

The proposed \$23.1 million operating budget goal is a 2.6 percent increase over the current goal of \$22,504,000. It comes after record CP gifts of \$23,070,734 in the 2003-04 fiscal year.

The past year's record CP income topped a revised goal of \$22,181,335 after two years of reduced giving. Even with the recent increase, however, the 2005-06 goal still is slightly below the original 2003-04 budget goal of \$23.2 million.

The CP goals approved last week include 64 percent for KBC causes and 36 percent for SBC ministries, percentages that have remained unchanged in recent years.

Messengers approved a \$1.3 million challenge goal that also is unchanged from the past two years.

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

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Hear others' views

I regret being too dumbfounded to speak at Tuesday's Kentucky Baptist Convention meeting when the move was made to cut off discussion on forming a committee to study our relationship to the Baptist World Alliance.

A few minutes earlier we had heard a convention sermon about love, unity and guarding against prejudice. Does refusing to take a few minutes to hear the views of other Christians sound like something Jesus would do?

Why were some messengers so unwilling to hear the passionate concerns of former missionaries, mission volunteers, fellow pastors, longtime KBC laypeople, as well as responses to the erroneous claims about the BWA being rehashed by someone who had been in Kentucky for only four weeks? Please don't claim it was because they were anxious to get back to the agenda of singing more songs and hearing more institutional ads.

The answer is that this was part of an orchestrated plan set by those who have takeover in mind. In their closed world, dialogue and respect for differences are signs of weakness.

The KBC has now elected a president who has vowed to appoint people from only one sector of the convention. The rest of us will no longer be represented, or welcomed, except for our money.

I'm not hurt because "my side" lost. I'm hurt because the convention that my church has faithfully supported for 111 years feels more and more like a stranger to us.

Joe Phelps
Louisville

Politicizing KBC work

The new president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention wasted no time in politicizing Baptist work in

our commonwealth.

Now we will have to use the right words or we will not be able to be involved in Kingdom business. Hershael York quickly made it clear that using the "I" word is the magic word to use in order to be included with the "real" Baptists in Kentucky.

What part of the Southern Baptist Convention agenda will we need to bow down to next?

Phil Stromowsky
Louisville

'Disconnect' at KBC

I was in Louisville for the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting and I would like to address a problem that I detected.

I think the KBC should get tough on the use of cell phones at the convention, especially in the auditorium while the convention is in session. Sometimes it is hard enough to hear every speaker without the annoyance of a cell phone ringing.

Shouldn't we be more considerate of others while attending the convention? If calls are that important, shouldn't you remove yourself from the session to make the call?

One person persistently made call after call while sitting a couple of rows behind me. I finally asked her to leave the auditorium for the sake of those who were interested in hearing.

So let's think about "disconnect" at the next convention. Can you hear me now?

Curtis Brock
Middleburg

OBI offers 'right fork'

That great "theologian" Yogi Berra said, "I came to a fork in the road, and I took it."

Over in Clay County, Kentucky Baptists have a small, Christian boarding high school. It is located where a three-pronged fork is formed by two rivers and a creek.

'Connect' launch exceeds expectations

The launch of Kentucky Baptists Connect at the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting exceeded my expectations.

The theme videos, prayer times, reports, commitment time, worship, Barna report, workshops and closing message by Charles Lowery were excellent.

Many thanks go to the KBC communications department for its outstanding work. Communications Specialist Denise Withers and Media Production Associate Larry Brannin had important lead roles. Communications Director Robert Reeves worked closely with the Committee on Order of Business and the Committee on Resolutions.

The business services team provided excellent support for convention tellers and met the Pastors' Conference accounting needs. Steve Thompson, assistant executive director, provided support for the Committee on Credentials, along with his assistant, Debbie Bannon. It was a privilege to welcome 14 new churches into the KBC family.

Space does not permit me to mention each staff person who assisted with the exhibits and workshops, but I am grateful for each one and for the convention committee members who served faithfully throughout the annual meeting.

President Judge Eugene Siler presided with confidence and delivered his message with the skill of an experienced speaker. The convention sermon by Ric Frazier, pastor of First Baptist Church of Louisa, was visionary, inspirational and delivered with conviction and passion.

The "Kentucky Baptists Connect" launch emphasis on Tuesday evening, led by Skip Alexander, KBC second vice president and pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church, and Paul Chitwood, first vice president and pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, was filled with spiritual energy and the joy of the Lord. Outstanding music was provided by the Severns Valley Baptist Church choir, praise team and band, led by Minister of Music Allen Case.



GIVING

An endowment can make your tithe last forever

By Laurie Valentine

Tithing is part of our Christian stewardship responsibilities. It is a discipline practiced by many people all of their lives. It also is vital to the programs and ministries of our churches.

When you die, will there be someone to "step into your shoes" to provide the funds your tithe was providing to the church?

If you would like to assure your church will have the financial resources it needs until the Lord returns, consider including in your estate plan a provision for the creation, at your death, of an endowment fund for the benefit of your church. Or establish an endowment fund during your life to which you make modest gifts at regular intervals with provision at your death for a final gift to the fund.

An endowment fund is a permanent, perpetual fund that distributes only the earnings to the church; the original gift amount is never spent. It can be established through a bequest in your will or trust, or through a life insurance or IRA beneficiary designation. The bequest or beneficiary designation can be directly to the church or to a third-party fiduciary.

To create an endowment fund large enough to have sufficient earnings to fund your tithe in perpetuity requires a gift at death (or a combination of gifts during life and at your death) equal to approximately 20 times your current annual tithe. This assumes a modest annual return of 5 percent.

For example, if the current amount you tithe each year is \$5,000, the endowment fund would need to have approximately \$100,000 in it. Assuming the fund is invested to grow its value over time, the amount it will distribute should grow also, thereby maintaining the "buying power" of the distributions to the church.

In the future, our churches will require increased financial support to minister to needs in the community previously met by other sources. Help assure your church will have the financial resources to meet those challenges by setting up a plan to make your tithe last forever.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

The Barna Research Group report on the unreached Kentuckian will prove instructive and challenging for all who will take the time to pray over the implications for their church and community.

The two candidates for president are friends and both are committed to support "Kentucky Baptists Connect." We look forward to a great year as Hershael York leads us forward in the KBC mission of "connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

Although the convention voted against the colleges having some non-Baptist trustees, I think it was out of concern that the colleges remain Christ-centered in values and connected to the Kentucky Baptist Convention. I hope that this was a vote by Kentucky Baptists to support the KBC colleges with their prayers, students and financial gifts. Kay and I consider it a privilege to encourage the schools with a financial gift each year.

At this Thanksgiving season, I am so grateful to God that Kentucky Baptists continue to strongly support missions and evangelism here and around the world through the Cooperative Program.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

How can couples get on same page about spending money?

Q: My wife spends money like there is no tomorrow. It is causing major problems in our marriage. With the holidays coming up, I am really worried. What can I do before it is too late?

Your concerns are important and must be addressed. Consider inviting your wife to a meeting about your household finances. Present your concerns without blaming or attacking her. Pointing fingers might temporarily make you feel better, but it won't move the two of you toward a solution.

MARRIAGE

Often there are potential solutions that have not been considered. At the meeting bring paper to brainstorm options for controlling spending and staying within a budget. Do not critique or rule out any of the options while brainstorming. In fact, you both might want to practice saying, "OK, let's write that one down." Any other comments can sidetrack the process.

When each of you have contributed ideas, make a copy and set another time to meet. It is important for each spouse to have time to review these ideas. Other ideas might come to mind to add to the list. When you meet again, set clear goals for the meeting. Take each idea on the list and evaluate its potential for improving your financial situation. Once each idea has been evaluated, begin sorting and ranking. Take the top five and make plans for putting those ideas into action. As you focus your planning, one or two ideas might surface as a better solution.

Passionate feelings are involved with finances: anger, fear, resentment and worry. Approach your wife as if you both are on the same team and want the marriage and the finances to be a success. Some couples set up an allowance account where money is set aside for personal spending. A main account is set up for household expenses.

Be honest and open with your wife about the kind of financial life you want to have with her. Enlist her help and input.—Valerie Vincent

Q: What advice do you have for a parent whose teenage son constantly listens to music and will not talk with either of his parents?

Assuming there are no major divisive issues in your family, such as neglect, abandonment or abuse, let me encourage you to think about how to use your teen's music as a potential conversation starter. While it is part of your role to set limits on the use of media, you also might want to initiate dialogue with him about the music.

Too many parents reject a teen's musical style before ever paying attention to the lyrics of the songs. Invite your teenager to educate you about what it is that draws him to this particular group or artist. Then work with your teen around the following questions on any song he chooses. To make it easy to remember, think about your conversation revolving around message, meeting, master and motivation.

■ What does your teen think is the central message in the song?

■ With what did he most identify in the song? Where did his life meet the song?

■ How does your teen's faith inform his hearing of the song? How might Christ respond if He heard this song?

■ How might God motivate or teach your son through this song?

Keep in mind that while you have both the God-given right and responsibility to set clear and healthy limits for your children, parents also are scripturally charged not to "exasperate them" (Ephesians 6:4).

Listen thoughtfully and prayerfully as you engage your teen in conversation. You might find that his music will serve as a common ground for the birth of many a spiritual conversation.—Scott Wigginton

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



Don't let division limit KBC 'connection'

The top story was supposed to be the launch of "Kentucky Baptists Connect." And there was lots of focus on that topic during sermons, agency reports, videos, workshops and a "Connect" commitment service at last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting.

But the real drama at Kentucky Baptists' Nov. 16-17 gathering was played out through a number of divided votes on such issues as officer elections, a proposed constitutional amendment and consideration of a Baptist World Alliance study committee. And much of the crowd apparently was more interested in convention politics than ministry challenges.

While more than 1,300 messengers cast ballots in the presidential election on Tuesday afternoon, only about one-third of the crowd returned Tuesday evening for the official launch of Kentucky Baptists Connect. Fewer than 300 participants turned in Connect commitment cards at the end of the service.

Reflecting messengers' disparate views, the presidential election was the KBC's closest presidential race since 1998.

Hershael York, who described himself as "conservative theologically, aggressive evangelistically and progressive methodologically," was elected KBC president by a 59-vote margin over Rusty Ellison, who identified himself as "a political centrist."

Some Kentucky Baptists have expressed concern over York's pledge to appoint to the KBC Committee on Committees only individuals "who affirm the inerrancy of Scripture"—a guideline narrower than the convention's governing documents specify.

In a post-election interview, York responded, "That's who I am and I was honest about that up front. That's my value. I can only lead by what I believe. ... I think my appointments should reflect that."

Messengers also were divided on establishing a BWA study committee and allowing non-Baptists to serve as trustees of Kentucky Baptist colleges.

The BWA proposal, which KBC Administrative Committee Chairman Charles Barnes described as "a very straightforward motion," prompted extended debate

before being voted down 510-444. While the majority of messengers clearly have the right to determine what to study, fund or endorse, it was unfortunate that the debate included accusations against BWA that highlighted only one side of a complex issue.

Among the charges leveled at BWA was that it failed to affirm the exclusivity of Jesus Christ for salvation. What was not mentioned in last week's debate, however, is that the BWA Executive Committee adopted a statement early this year that reiterated BWA's long-standing "joyful affirmation of faith in the mediation of Jesus Christ as solely and entirely sufficient for salvation, 'for there is salvation in no one else' (Acts 4:14)."

Whether or not Kentucky Baptists ever chose to partner with our Baptist brothers and sisters in BWA, we should be thankful for their strong commitment to Christ and the spread of the gospel around the world.

As for the decision to continue to limit the KBC's college trustees only to Baptists, the college presidents clearly were disappointed. They chose, however, not to dwell on the setback.

"We'll live within the will of the convention," noted Michael Carter, president of Campbellsville University. "Our spirit is one of service."

Jim Taylor, president of Cumberland College, agreed. "Like any family, we have our differences," he reflected, "but we're still family."

Being family and finding common ground are essential as Kentucky Baptists pursue the challenging ministry goals of Kentucky Baptists Connect. The Barna Research Group findings that nearly one-third of adults in Kentucky are unchurched and many of them are former Baptists means Kentucky Baptists have much work to do in both evangelism and discipleship.

Despite the division during last week's votes, York emphasized that "nobody is divided over Kentucky Baptists Connect. ... It's about reaching people for the gospel."

Whatever differences remain, hopefully all Kentucky Baptists can unite for the sake of God's Kingdom as we diligently seek to "connect all people to Jesus Christ."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

10 reasons to be thankful

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Lists are big around our house: to-do lists, wish lists, resolutions, action plans.

How much of this stuff actually gets accomplished is another matter. But it's fun to make the lists.

Thanksgiving is a great time to make a list of what you're thankful for.

Not being a turkey, for instance. Another plus about a thankful list is that you don't have to do anything about the items on the list except be thankful—unless your gratitude leads you to action.

Here's my thankful list:

1. The presidential campaign is over (at least until candidates for 2008 start popping up in Iowa and New Hampshire in a few months). This is one thing every American (lawyers and campaign consultants aside) can rejoice about—whether your candidate won or not.

2. Apparently the republic will survive, despite grumbling in some quarters about secession.

3. Fall has truly begun. Perhaps the crispness of the air and the aching clarity of afternoon light will wash the confusion from our minds after a difficult and contentious year.

4. God is still pouring His grace and mercy upon those who believe, though we deserve neither. What a Savior.

5. Freedom is spreading around the world. Not democracy—though that is spreading in some places, too—but spiritual freedom. The gospel of Jesus Christ is on the move throughout Asia, Africa, the Muslim world. When it takes hold, it flourishes under any form of government.

6. Young people with a passion for God seem a lot more interested these days in obeying and spreading His Word than in debating it—or leaving it inside churches.

7. Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas partners began reaching out to 163 mostly unreached people groups (with a combined population of 158 million) last year. The first Baptist churches were begun among 12 people groups where no evangelical congregations existed before.

8. Four Southern Baptist workers gave their lives in 2004 as they sought to serve hurting people in the Middle East. We miss them and mourn them. But we know their sacrifice is precious in the sight of

God—and that it will inspire believers to follow in their footsteps.

9. More than ever before in church history, local churches of all shapes and sizes have the means to partner strategically with missionaries in world evangelization. We now can go virtually anywhere on earth, contact virtually anyone and deliver the good news—if we seize the opportunities.

10. The spirit of Lottie Moon is very much alive and well in the hearts of Southern Baptists who will give to missions in her memory during the Christmas season.

Consumerism, media overload, the pace of modern life and boredom—not to mention sin—all foment restlessness in our souls. That's nothing new. In the fifth century, St. Augustine prayed, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

Thankfulness, on the other hand, calms the mind, quiets the heart and directs the spirit toward God. Meister Eckhart, a medieval Christian mystic, asserted: "If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, 'Thank You,' that would suffice." It might not suffice, but it's a good place to start.

Erich Bridges is a senior writer for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

Rainer: Churches must get intentional about youth

By David Winfrey
News Director

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists must be intentional about evangelism—especially youth evangelism—if they are to reverse a declining trend in baptisms, a researcher and seminary professor told messengers during a workshop at the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Knowing one's culture and audience are important lessons for churches, but ultimately they must assess whether they are seriously working to obey Jesus' "Great Commission" to go make disciples, said Thom Rainer, president of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

"Sometimes it gets very simple and basic," said Rainer, who also is CEO of the Rainer Group, a church and denominational consulting group. "It comes down to this: Are we obedient?"

God speaks in superlatives on matters of importance, Rainer added.

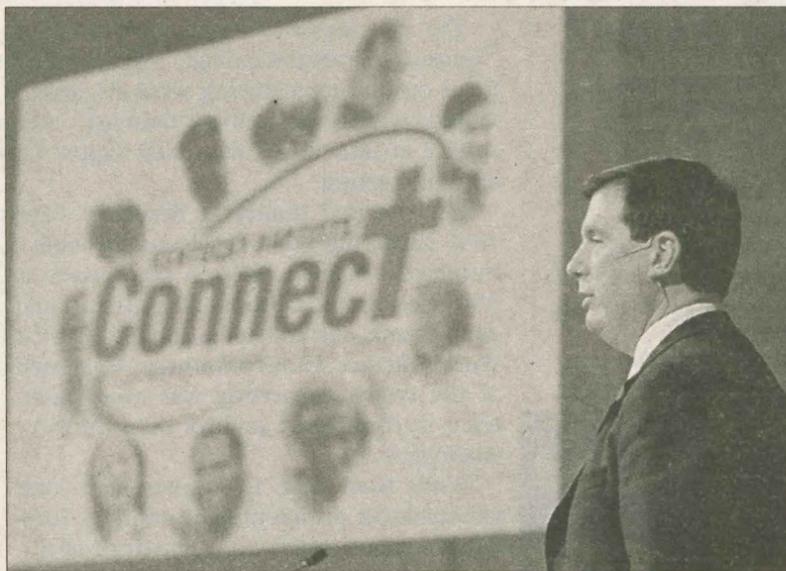
"Have you ever heard of the 'good commission' ... or the 'good commandment?'" Rainer asked. "It's a sin to be good when God has called us to be great."

Declining baptisms

Rainer's son Sam, a senior consultant for the Rainer Group, outlined statistics showing that Kentucky Baptists reached a peak in baptisms in 1980 with 20,460. It reached a low point of 13,395 baptisms in 1994 before rising again to 15,718 in 1995.

"Baptisms have plateaued over the last decade, if not begun to decline," Sam Rainer said.

Charting baptisms from 1980 to 2003, Sam Rainer noted two other trends: Baptisms of adults age 29 and older increased 6 percent while



CRITICAL COMMISSION Citing declining conversion rates for each successive generation in America, Thom Rainer said churches must be intentional about their strategies to reach youth for Christ. "If we don't start reaching young people while they're young, we might not reach most of them."

baptisms among youth ages 9 to 17 decreased 38 percent.

"We must reach young people," he added.

Thom Rainer agreed, citing statistics from several generations to highlight his point.

Among the generation known as "builders" who were born before 1946, an estimated 65 percent are Christian, he said.

That number dropped to 35 percent for "baby boomers," those born between 1946 and 1964, Rainer said.

"This is probably the largest one-generation drop off in the history of our nation," he said, adding that it doesn't stop there.

Among "busters," those born between 1965 and 1976, only 15 percent have become Christian, he said. And among "bridgers," those born from 1977 to 1994, that number drops to just 4 percent, he said.

Noting that research has found that 75 percent of all Americans who become Christian do so before

age 15, Rainer urged church leaders to focus on youth evangelism.

"I am not suggesting stopping adult evangelism," he said. "I am suggesting that if we don't start reaching young people while they're young, we might not reach most of them."

Suggestions

Rainer said his latest book, "Breakout Churches," studies congregations that were plateaued for several years before experiencing significant growth. Based on that research of "transition" churches and research of Kentucky Baptist baptism rates, he offered several suggestions:

■ Recognize the power of evangelistic prayer. "In transition churches, members pray for non-Christians by name," Rainer said. Such activity opens people's eyes "to the reality of lost people," he added.

■ Develop an intentionality to

reach young people. "Think about the harvest field that is out there if we start reaching these young people," he said.

■ Accept the cost of reaching youth. Walls will get marked and carpets will get stained in churches that seek to attract youth, he said.

"We've got to accept that the church won't look the same if we reach young people," Rainer said. "Youth and young people usually don't pay their way."

Most youth activities can effectively reach youth, he said, if they have evangelistic intentionality.

"You love young persons and you're going to reach young persons," he said. "Are you ready to make the sacrifices necessary to reach young people?"

■ Recognize the value of vacation Bible school. If it has an evangelistic thrust, vacation Bible school is among the most effective outreaches, Rainer said.

■ Teach parents to evangelize their children. Too many parents rely on church staff to teach their children how to become a Christian, he said. "In the Southern Baptist Convention, if we were reaching deacons' kids, pastors' and staff kids, we would have at least 150,000 more baptisms."

■ Develop "high-expectation" children and youth ministries. Youth are more attracted to mission trips and responsibility than entertainment, Rainer said.

Youth "are not drawn to dumbed-down ministries," he said. "They are drawn to where there is much expected of them."

As part of the workshop, the Kentucky Baptist Convention assembled a list of churches with strong youth and children's programs whose leaders are willing to help other churches. For more information, contact the KBC church development and evangelism team office at (888) 254-5722.

Research shows Kentucky's unchurched mostly 'de-churched'

Report highlights

■ 32 percent of Kentucky's adult population is unchurched, meaning they have not attended a non-holiday worship service in a church for at least six months. This represents nearly 1 million Kentuckians.

■ Most of Kentucky's unchurched (81 percent) are de-churched. They used to attend a church, but no longer do so. More than two-fifths used to attend a Baptist church.

■ The unchurched retain much of their spiritual commitment to Christ. In all, 30 percent of the unchurched are born again Christians.

■ The unchurched in Kentucky tended to be younger, more educated, and politically moderate compared to churchgoers. Most are married (56 percent); one-third (35 percent) are parents of young kids. More than one in three (37 percent) have ever been divorced, which is higher than is true among Kentucky's churchgoing adults (27 percent).

■ While Christians are generally thought of as "nice people" (85 percent), the unchurched also say Christians are judgmental (61 percent), hypocritical (57 percent), and intolerant of other's beliefs (52 percent).

■ The unchurched reject being described as non-Christian (20 percent), lost (20 percent), prodigal (18 percent), and non-believer (11 percent), feeling that these terms are denigrating. Instead they say they would prefer if churchgoers referred to them as inquirers (56 percent), explorers (54 percent), or seekers (53 percent).

A copy of the written report is available online at www.kybaptist.org/barna.

Continued from page 1

Ask someone to make a commitment to Christ, he noted, and most unchurched Kentuckians will say "Been there; done that."

"The deeper message is, 'We don't want you to just be a cultural Christian, we want you to be fully devoted,'" he noted. "We have to think about how to communicate that to the unchurched."

Dan Garland, leader of the KBC's church development and evangelism team, said the study highlighted the challenge Kentucky Baptists face to disciple new Christians and keep current members growing in their faith.

He noted there were encouraging signs, including that many unchurched are interested in spiritual matters.

The survey found that 56 percent of unchurched residents have a favorable view of Christianity.

"It shows people are receptive to spiritual things and we have a great opportunity," Garland said. "The challenge is to present the gospel in some ways that are understandable and relevant, ... engaging people at the point of their

needs and interests."

The report included a series of videotaped "man on the street" interviews with unchurched Kentuckians. Many repeated statements were that they didn't have time to attend church, they found church services boring and they didn't believe churches wanted to understand people like them.

Missed opportunity

Kinnaman noted that many people probably were simply making excuses, but he noted that some indicated they had experienced times when they were open to spiritual matters.

"We missed that window."

The written report itself concludes with several implications for Kentucky Baptist churches:

■ Effective ministry to the unchurched starts with a clear and compelling vision. Limited resources must be used in a focused, vision-driven fashion, the report states, asking "Is your church's vision the sparkplug for its efforts to reach the unchurched?"

■ Churches should re-evaluate the effectiveness of their disciple-

ship efforts to sharpen the effectiveness of their evangelism. "If your church's discipleship efforts are sub-par, your efforts to reach the unchurched—no matter how well conceived or executed—will simply 'recycle' lukewarm Christians," the report states.

■ Re-evaluate what it means to show "genuine interest" in the unchurched. Churches should honestly evaluate how welcoming and genuine they are with visitors and non-Christians, Kinnaman said.

"Although churchgoers and pastors generally have the very best of intentions, the unchurched often perceive Christians to possess ulterior motives," the report states.

■ Embrace a variety of evangelism approaches. Prayer evangelism, service evangelism and child evangelism are among the methods the report recommends.

"You'll find every make and model when it comes to the unchurched," Kinnaman said.

"The bottom line is that the unchurched is an incredibly diverse audience that requires an incredibly diverse approach to connect with."

Unity, not uniformity

Connect to God, then others, Frazier tells messengers

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Louisville—Churches that are not connected to God cannot be connected to people, Ric Frazier told messengers to the 167th annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Preaching the convention sermon, the pastor of First Baptist Church of Louisa told messengers that unity in Christ is needed before the church can become truly effective in its mission.

"A church that is not connected to God cannot be connected to people," Frazier said.

That unity surfaces only when believers expose ugly prejudices at work among Christians. "We are so much better at building barriers than building bridges," he noted.

Pastor of his hometown church in Eastern Kentucky for the past 10 years, Frazier spoke at the afternoon session Nov. 16 at St. Matthews Baptist Church.

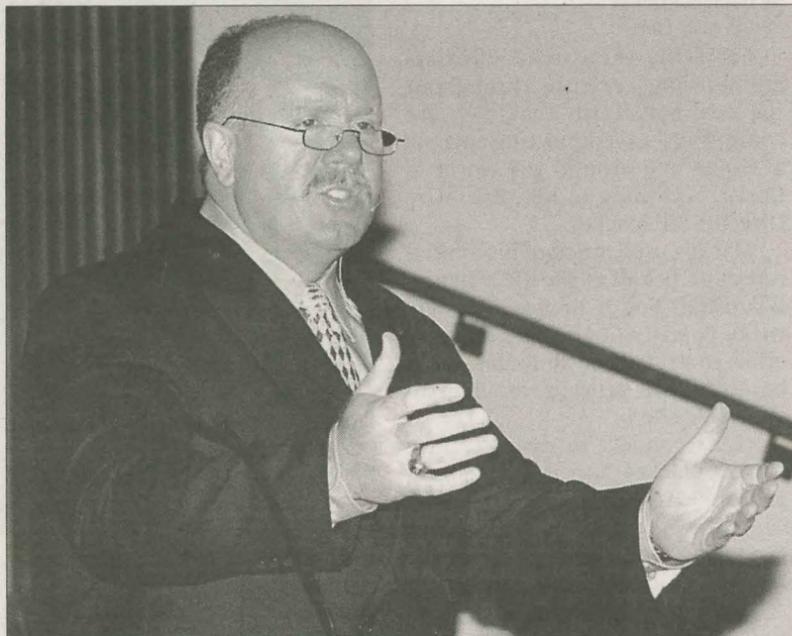
Preaching from John 17, in which Jesus prays for unity among His followers, Frazier said Jesus "prays for the future church, you and I, right here."

"Disconnection between us"

Referring to divisions among Kentucky Baptists, Frazier said, "We don't realize how deep the wounds are among our people. There are competing ideas, disconnection between us. ... Much of it still fills this room."

Kentucky Baptists should strive for "unity, not uniformity" as they work to share the gospel, he said.

"We're not speaking of universality, communism or socialism," Frazier said. "It's much simpler



CONVENTION SERMON "A church that is not connected to God cannot be connected to people," said Ric Frazier, pastor of First Baptist Church of Louisa.

than that. It's a right relationship with God, the oneness Jesus had with the Father, the oneness He wants united in us."

Before Southern Baptists in Kentucky can become more effective in ministry, they must evaluate longstanding, and often prejudicial, attitudes, Frazier said.

"We are sometimes denominational bigots," he said, explaining that Baptists "look down on those who are different," as if "it would take more of the blood of Christ to cleanse their sins."

The audience laughed when Frazier said, "The problem that we have is that we don't mind being together, so long as we don't have to go on vacation together."

Speaking strongly about racial, social, economic and even spiritual prejudices that exist in Kentucky Baptist churches, Frazier said, "The God I serve doesn't have any stepchildren."

The recent United States general election indicates unity is possible, Frazier said. "We found out this year that we're not nearly as divided on issues that count as we have been accused of."

"Kentucky Baptists need revival"

Kentucky Baptists need a Pentecost-type renewal, "as if the gospel just happened," Frazier said, adding that "why we've been left here (on earth) is to connect all peoples to Jesus Christ."

Many Kentucky Baptist churches fail to welcome people from different socio/economic, educational or racial backgrounds, he added.

Kentucky Baptists should "individually and corporately repent for hindering them from coming to the throne of grace."

Tearfully, Frazier admitted he nearly had asked one of his own church members to leave the congregation. The woman was becoming a difficult person in the church because she lacked social skills and perhaps had mental or behavioral challenges.

Frazier said church members complained about her "pilfering" and disruptions during worship services.

Pondering what he would say to her, Frazier said a spirit of conviction came upon him. He said he asked himself, "Who are you to say she is unwelcome? This is not an exclusive club, this is a haven of rest."

"I began to repent before God," Frazier said. Not long after his experience, the woman became ill and was hospitalized. Frazier said when she saw him enter her room, "she glowed" with pleasure, saying, "I knew you'd come."

"She still has her problems," Frazier told the audience, "but beloved, not with me and not with God."

Frazier said if Kentucky Baptists embrace a spirit of repentance and renewal, then the initiatives of "Kentucky Baptists Connect" will be realized.

"Without a doubt, if we will follow God, we will be in harmony with each other," Frazier said. "For if God be for us, who can be against us?"

Siler's challenge: Bring people into 'God's big tent'

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists should reach out and welcome diverse people groups into "God's big tent," state convention President Eugene Siler declared last week.

Siler, a federal appeals court judge from Williamsburg, delivered his presidential address during the opening session of the Nov. 16-17 Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.

As a Baptist layman, "I wasn't elected because I can speak better or preach better," he acknowledged. However, "I think I was elected because I represent the great body of laity within the Kentucky Baptist Convention."

"Although I'm not a preacher, I'm a sinner saved by grace just like all of you, and we all come to the throne of God equally," he noted.

Affirming that "the greatest call is the ministry," Siler added, "You can't do it without the laity. ... You fill up the pews on Sunday, you fill the offering plates and you go on missions throughout the world."

Recalling Franklin Roosevelt's unprecedented four terms as president, Siler said Roosevelt's success was fueled by his ability "to keep the Democratic Party under one big tent" despite its diversity.

Comparing that to God's big tent, Siler said Kentucky Baptists "can work together no matter how diverse we may think we are."

Speaking from Acts 10 about the Apostle Peter's vision from God to reach out to Gentiles and his visit to share the gospel with Cornelius, Siler said Peter's decision to visit the home of a Roman centurion "was very radical."

"We can thank God for Simon Peter who had this vision," Siler said. "But Cornelius had to have a vision also and he had to have great faith."

"Where does this fit with us today?" he asked. "It fits right in with Kentucky Connect."

"Connecting all people"

Noting that the KBC's "Kentucky Baptists Connect" emphasis focuses on "connecting all people," he added, "It doesn't say you're connecting the people that have the same education as you, the same background as you or live in the same neighborhood as you. It says connecting all people."

During Jesus' earthly ministry, "He was criticized because He went out with tax collectors, Samaritans, Gentiles, prostitutes," Siler recounted. "We have those same kind of people here today."

"We've been programmed from the time we grew up to like people who look like us, have the same education, have the same resources," he said.

"But God loves all these other people too. He loves the handicapped, He loves those who don't have money, those on food stamps, those who don't have much education," he added.

"We're missing some of those people," Siler warned. "We've got to reach out and realize it."

Siler also urged Kentucky Baptists to reach out to African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics and other ethnic groups.

Noting that "some of Kentucky's counties are the most unchurched counties in the nation," he declared, "It's a disgrace."

Citing his Eastern Kentucky roots, Siler added, "They're my people and I want to see them on the other side. We need to reach out to those people and show them love."

Expressing appreciation for the opportunity to serve as KBC president, Siler told messengers, "I do appreciate the confidence you have shown in me as president and I've tried my best to carry out those duties. ... It's been my privilege to be here."



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS Eugene Siler warned Kentucky Baptists they are not reaching all people. "We've got to reach out and realize it."

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Mission Board elects youth strategist, OKs promotions

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Meeting the day before last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, members of the KBC Mission Board approved a new staff member and promoted two other staff members to key positions.

Joe Ball, minister of education and youth at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, was named youth strategist in the KBC's church development and evangelism team. He succeeds Randy Record, who resigned to become minister to young adults/evangelism at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville.



Allen

Randy Jones, associate leader for the KBC missions growth team and state missions department director since 1996, was elected missions growth team leader. He succeeds Larry Martin, who will retire Jan. 1. Martin will continue to serve in a part-time contract position.

Eric Allen, the KBC's director of Mission Service Corps and prayer strategies coordinator, was named to succeed Jones as state missions department director.



Ball

Ball has served at Edgewood Church since 1992. He also has served since 1999 at part-time campus minister for Hopkinsville Community College. Ball's previous ministry includes serving as program director for several Kentucky Changers summer projects; associate pastor of Chevy Chase Baptist Church in Lexington; and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Bloomington, Ind.

A graduate of Campbellsville University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ball is former president of the Kentucky Baptist Youth Ministries Association.



Jones

Dan Garland, leader of the church development and evangelism team, said he believes Ball "has the right gift mix and experience to lead our student ministry in the direction needed."

In his written testimony distributed to Mission Board members, Ball said, "Let's raise the bar by challenging students to grow deeper in their faith. ... I think it is time we as Kentucky Baptists became preparers of students instead of repairers of adults."

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey presented Jones' nomination as missions growth team leader. Describing Jones as "an excellent administrator," Mackey said he "has great relational skills and has a passion for teamwork."

Jones, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Paraguay, is a graduate of Kentucky Wesleyan College in Owensboro and Southern Seminary. He also holds a diploma from the Spanish Language Institute in Costa Rica.

Prior to joining the KBC staff, Jones was director of missions for Northern Kentucky, Boone's Creek and Northwest Indiana Baptist associations. He was named Director of Missions of the Year in 1991 by Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and in 1992 by the Kentucky Baptist Director of Missions Fellowship.

Jones also served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Sonora, Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church of Utica and Maceo Baptist Church as well as associate pastor of education and administration at Central Baptist Church in Winchester.

Jones introduced Allen, who he recommended as his successor to lead the state missions department.

Citing the increase of MSC missionaries from 30 to more than 140 during Allen's supervision of the program, Jones noted that he "has provided great leadership in this area."

Describing Allen as "a very capable young man" and "an excellent administrator," Jones added, "He will bring the kind of leadership we need to this department."

Allen has served on the KBC staff since 2000. He previously was associate pastor for music and students at Hyland Baptist Church in Henderson; minister of music and youth at Lynn Acres Baptist Church in Louisville and Central Baptist Church in Lebanon; and minister of music at Salem Baptist Church in Campbellsville.

A graduate of Campbellsville University and Southern Seminary, Allen has served on the KBC Mission Board and been a member of the KBC Committee on Nominations.

'We've got our work cut out for us'

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists are showing evidence throughout the commonwealth that they are committed to connecting people at home and around the world to Christ, according to KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey.

Mackey used much of his annual report on behalf of the KBC Mission Board staff Nov. 16 to promote "Kentucky Baptists Connect" a five-year effort to strengthen churches, boost baptisms and provide resources to church leaders.

"Let's connect in dynamic new ways," Mackey urged messengers gathered at St. Matthews Baptist Church.

During the past 12 months, the KBC staff has been focused on research and other preparations to launch the five-year effort, "Kentucky Baptists Connect: Connecting All People to Jesus Christ."

Among its goals are for KBC churches to record 125,000 baptisms and to start 125 churches and missions by 2010.

"We've got our work cut out for us," Mackey said. "It's going to take every Kentucky Baptist and every entity cooperating at new levels of trust and commitment. The greatest days are ahead of us as we build upon the faithfulness and commitment of those who have gone before us to reach our state in new and creative ways."

Urging involvement

Mackey encouraged messengers to learn more about Kentucky Baptists Connect and to support it individually and through their local churches.



KBC STAFF Bill Mackey encouraged messengers to take part in "Kentucky Baptists Connect" while praising other ministry work. "The greatest days are ahead of us as we build upon the faithfulness and commitment of those who have gone before us," said.

"I believe there will be a harvest that is unprecedented as we cooperate together to carry out the mission we have been given—the mission and dream He has for us," he said.

Serving as KBC executive director since 1998, Mackey told more than 900 messengers attending the Monday morning session that there were many other positive things to report in addition to the Kentucky Baptists Connect launch.

"This year Kentucky Baptists gave in new record amounts to missions in Kentucky and around the world," he said, noting that receipts for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions were up 14

percent compared to the previous year. Gifts to the 2004 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions increased 10 percent from 2003.

"We are committed to world evangelism and missions," Mackey said, noting that 49.6 percent of KBC's gift income was earmarked for missions.

Training, students & Appalachia

In the past year, 26,000 Kentucky Baptists took advantage of training events, conferences and other special events provided by the KBC, Mackey said.

Through ministries on Kentucky's college and university campuses, he said, "There are 5,000 collegiate students involved in Bible study and worship."

Ministering to Kentucky's growing population of residents from other countries is an ongoing effort, Mackey said. "Language work continues to expand, bringing the mission field to our doorstep and we're grateful for the opportunity," he said.

Kentucky Baptists will continue to direct special attention to Eastern Kentucky, Mackey said, noting that some counties in Appalachia are considered by researchers to be among the least-churched in the nation.

"There is a wonderful mission field right here in Kentucky," he said.

As an example, Mackey praised the partnership of Little Bethel, Christian County and Red River Baptist associations completing its first year of evangelism and discipleship projects in six Eastern Kentucky counties.

Lack of quorum prevents votes on resolutions

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Louisville—A lack of a quorum prevented messengers from considering resolutions on the second day of the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, Nov. 17.

Many messengers reported that a multi-vehicle accident near Interstate 64 and the Watterson Expressway caused them to arrive late to the morning session.

When the order of business called for the reading of resolutions, a quorum—25 percent of the 1,521 registered messengers—was not present in the sanctuary of St. Matthews Baptist Church.

Tellers reported that in order for business to be conducted, an additional 50 messengers were needed.

Tim Harris, pastor of Woodburn Baptist Church and chairman of the resolutions committee, made a report, entering the proposed resolutions into the record as information rather than formal convention action.

School resolution

Perhaps the most controversial proposal came from two Lexington couples whose resolution advocated that Christian parents remove their children from public schools.

Harris said the committee was

not recommending the resolution to messengers.

Noting that the resolution was "almost identical" to one proposed at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June, Harris said the national proposal "was rejected by a rather overwhelming vote," and he predicted that Kentucky Baptists would likely do the same.

In committee discussions, "One of the rationales was that in the last 19 years, 11 resolutions have been passed by the SBC supporting public schools, Christian schools and home schooling," he said.

Committee members were concerned "that this sort of resolution has a tendency to undermine authority that God gives Christian parents," he said.

"We don't feel that this action would reflect what most Kentucky Baptist churches and parents believe."

Volunteers, thanks & "Connect"

Other resolutions entered into the record as information included calls to:

■ Commend Kentucky voters for passing a constitutional amendment during the recent general election that defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

■ Commend the work of a

six-year partnership between Kentucky and Polish Baptists.

The partnership, which ended in October, involved 812 volunteers from 48 Kentucky associations, 214 Kentucky churches and 13 other states. There were a total of 113 partnership projects in Poland.

■ Commend Kentucky Baptist volunteers. Disaster relief workers were singled out for their efforts following this year's series of hurricanes.

Other recognized ministries included Baptist Builders, Book Link, Campers on Mission, Disaster Relief, East Kentucky Sunrise, Kentucky Changers, Kentucky Health Care Provider and Kentucky Restorative Ministries.

"These volunteers have sacrificed their lives to respond to the needs of others, therefore putting their faith in Jesus Christ into action," the resolution stated.

■ Encourage Kentucky Baptists to commit to pray for and become involved in "Kentucky Baptists Connect," the five-year evangelism and discipleship effort that was launched during this year's annual meeting.

■ Thank St. Matthews Baptist Church, Long Run Baptist Association, the city of Louisville and KBC leadership and staff for their work and support for this year's annual meeting and Cross Over Louisville.

Lowery: Try to spell 'connect' L-O-V-E

By David Winfrey
News Director

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists should spell “connect” L-O-V-E, according to psychiatrist, author and speaker Charles Lowery.

In a humor-filled closing address for the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, Lowery noted that the world has a narrow and often wrong strategy for dealing with people.

But Christians, Lowery said, should follow Jesus' command, “Love others the way I loved you.”

“It's powerful when we put it into practice,” Lowery said.

Too many churches and Christians don't take the time to truly love the unchurched, so non-Christians are not interested in what Christians have to offer, he added.

Bumper sticker mentality

“Many times we want to convict before we connect,” Lowery said, calling it a bumper sticker mentality.

Bumper stickers contain well-packaged bits of truth but don't have the same impact as a relationship, he said.

“Bumper stickers never changed anybody's life because it's truth without love.”

Lowery used the acrostic LOVE to explain how Jesus modeled love to the unchurched:

Leaving comfort. “God left His



CLOSING MESSAGE Charles Lowery, a psychologist, former pastor and pastor's son, filled his message with humor. “My dad would have lived 11 more years if he had had caller ID.”

world and came into our world,” Lowery noted. “You can't love other people until you've been in their world.”

But many Christians simply don't know how to love non-Christians, he added.

“So many times, we're trying to love others the way we think they want to be loved. You're just loving yourself and trying to take a lot of other people along with you.”

Lowery encouraged Christians to spend time with non-Christians with no agenda other than to get to know them and have fun.

“When was the last time your church just had a lot of fun?” he asked. “We sing ‘The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength.’ If that's true then a lot of our churches couldn't whip a sick rabbit.”

Jesus had fun with sinners, Lowery said, adding that Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana didn't include a spiritual message.

Overlooking faults and errors. “I don't know what you fight about in the church house, but I want to tell you it's probably not worth it,” he said.

“God's going to overlook everything you've ever done because of Jesus,” he added. “Can't you just forget all that other (divisive) stuff?”

Valuing people instead of programs. “Jesus was a people person,” Lowery said, noting the stories in the Gospels that show Jesus' concern for people more than religious laws. “He cultivated before He harvested.”

Reaching people in America might take time, he added.

“The language of this world is love,” he said. “Most people who came to Jesus in our church, it took two years.”

Encouraging others. “Decide you're going to be an encouragement. Why? It's a discouraging world,” he said. “The bottom line is, even today, if we're honest, we're discouraged.”

Reaching people remains a one-on-one happening, he said in closing.

“The church will never grow by promotion. It grows by attraction,” he said. “Each one reach one.”

CONVENTION NOTES

Attendance up. A total of 1,521 messengers registered for this year's meeting, up from last year's 1,231 in Lexington. The highest messenger total in recent history was 1,732 for the 2001 meeting in Murray.

Crossover report. Nearly 400 volunteers from 100 churches took part in Cross Over Louisville evangelism projects before the meeting, according to Dan Garland, leader of the KBC's church development and evangelism team. Next year, Cross Over will be held in Eastern Kentucky from June through October.

Public Affairs Committee. Although Kentuckians have voted to amend their constitution to define marriage as the union of one man and one woman, the work has just begun, according to Floyd Paris, chairman of the KBC's Public Affairs Committee. “We as Christians have the responsibility to model for (Kentuckians) what a godly marriage is all about,” said Paris, pastor of Unity Baptist Church in Ashland.

Next year, Frankfort. Next year's meeting will be at Frankfort's Farnham-Dudgeon Civic Center, Nov. 15-16. In 2006, the meeting will be at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. Messengers approved a recommendation from the Committee on Arrangements to meet in 2007 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

AGENCY REPORTS

Baptist Healthcare System. In the past year, the system cared for 80,500 acute-care patients, provided 407 days of care, delivered 10,500 babies, treated 214,900 emergency room patients, performed 2,200 open-heart surgeries, performed 6,800 surgeries and provided 652,800 outpatient visits. The system's charitable care exceeded \$27 million.

Campbellsville University. “Campbellsville University is busy preparing the next generation of servant leaders,” President Michael Carter told messengers. Several buildings recently were renovated, including the gymnasium and men's housing. Campbellsville has \$2.1 million in gifts and pledges toward the approximately \$3.6 million to build a new 800-seat chapel.

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Students led 455 people to professions of faith during the past year, according to President Bill Whittaker. This past May, 33 students received a bachelor of arts degree and four others receive associate of arts degrees. The graduating class included the first graduate to receive a bachelor of arts in Christian service, a degree designed for non-ordained individuals.

Cumberland College. “Our students continue to enter to learn and exit to serve,” President James Taylor said. The school's service/work leadership program involves students in campus or community service roles prior to graduation. Cumberland's Mountain Outreach ministry completed its 22nd year, and workers recently built the ministry's 116th home for area residents.

Georgetown College. The school recently received a \$2 million grant from the Lilly Foundation for a new center for calling and career, designed to help “freshman to understand God's call for their life,” said President Bill Crouch. The school recently initiated a new “Equine Scholars” program that will offer 40 scholarships each year to students who will work with the nearby Kentucky Horse Park.

Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. The ministry of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies has expanded beyond the two campgrounds near Bagdad and Hardin. The summer camp at Jonathan Creek, “Crossings at the Creek,” set new records for attendance, missions giving and spiritual decisions. This summer, KBA started a partnership with Christians in Moldova. Campers at Jonathan Creek, Cedarmore and in Moldova registered 2,394 professions of faith during the summer.

Kentucky Baptist Foundation. The market value of funds under management by the foundation grew during the past year from \$194 million to \$196 million. During the foundation's report, messengers approved a motion to allow the foundation to serve non-Kentucky Baptist agencies that are not in conflict with convention causes.

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children served more than 3,300 children and families in the past year. More than 100 children made professions of faith or rededicated their lives to Jesus. Providing care for victims of child abuse and neglect cost KBHC more than \$19 million, according to President Bill Smithwick. “We are reimbursed for some of that cost by the state, but there is a \$7 million gap that must be filled with private donations from churches, church groups, individuals, businesses and foundations.”

Oneida Baptist Institute. “Without Kentucky Baptists, for the 105 years that we've been around, we wouldn't be able to connect young people to Jesus,” President Bud Underwood told messengers. Approximately 25 percent of students are not Christians when they enroll in the boarding school for grades 6-12. “We see our ministry as an opportunity to be involved in local, state, North American and international missions, all at the same time.”

Western Recorder. The weekly paper for Kentucky Baptists have been connecting Baptists throughout the Bluegrass State for more than 175 years, said Editor Trennis Henderson. The paper recently strengthened its commitment to pastors by making sure every KBC church pastor receives the paper free of cost. The Western Recorder also helps five state Baptist conventions produce their newspapers.

Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union. Kentucky WMU is committed to serving churches and associations as they explore and respond to mission opportunities in Kentucky and beyond, according to Executive Director Joy Bolton. She thanked Kentucky Baptists for the record Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions: \$897,648. Annual Church Profile reports showed that Kentucky WMU enrollment increased 12.5 percent in 2003 to 42,227 members.

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Pastors' Conference participants urged to evangelize

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Louisville—On the eve of Kentucky Baptists Connect's launch, Bill Mackey encouraged congregational leaders from across the commonwealth to reach one convert annually by 2010.

Speaking at the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference Nov. 15, the executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention said if that happens, more than 123,000 people will come to know Christ.

"I pray every church will see increasing effectiveness," Mackey said. "It's amazing to see what God can do when we walk with Him."

Spiritual stirring already is taking place throughout the commonwealth, Mackey added. He pointed to nearly 200 conversions this year at a pair of Job Corps centers where Kentucky Baptists minister.

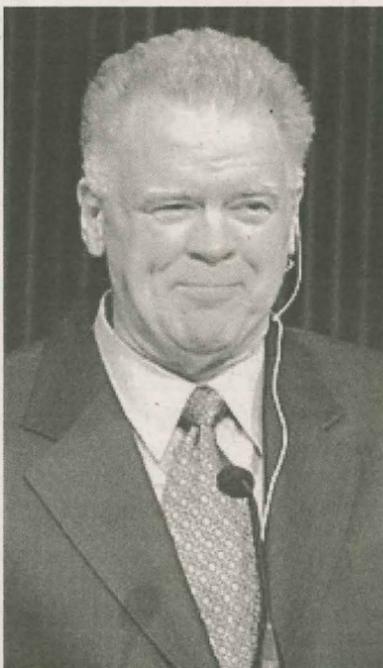
Yet, it will take more to reach larger numbers of non-churched people, Mackey said: "Unless we are willing to engage the world we cannot expect a harvest."

Former Southern Baptist Convention President **Paige Patterson** echoed that call in his sermon.

The president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary pointed to Southern Baptists' long-standing frustration over their inability to baptize more than 450,000 people annually.

"We talk about it so much. Why on earth don't we do anything about it?" Patterson asked. "We're going to have to get at the root of the problem, which is why don't we do what we're committed to do?"

Patterson offered three reasons: fearing human rejection more than



THREE REASONS Paige Patterson said Christians don't share their faith because they fear rejection, lack motivation and lose sight of their true vocation.

God, lacking proper motivation and losing sight of one's vocation.

On that last point, Patterson said every Christian's job is to be an ambassador for Christ, regardless of his or her profession.

If Southern Baptists take that task seriously, he said, they can reach the goal of 1 million baptisms set by SBC President Bobby Welch.

But pastors who expect to lead people in soul winning and spiritual growth must embrace integrity, warned the pastor of one of the convention's largest congregations.

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., said the mandate of Titus 2:6-8 is for pastors to serve as role models.

Sadly, while the Apostle Paul wrote that a Christian's actions should put his critics to shame, today many pastors face disgrace because their opponents are telling the truth, Hunt said.

"Never in my life have I seen so many men falling in the area of moral integrity," Hunt said. "The purpose of godly living is to glorify God and silence the opponents of Christianity and the gospel."

"What you want your people to be, be," Hunt added. "God have mercy on the preacher that asks people to sacrifice in their giving and he's stingy."

The two sessions included the air of an old-fashioned revival, as several speakers delivered calls to preach the gospel regardless of societal trends.

Geoffrey Lacefield, pastor of Cloverleaf Baptist Church in Louisville, said pastors should be clear about Christ's virgin birth, virtuous life, vicarious death, victorious resurrection and visible return.

"I've learned the ministry is not that difficult," Lacefield said. "Just tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love. No matter how politically incorrect it is, Jesus is still the only way to heaven."

Billy Carpenter, pastor of Mount Ash Baptist Church in Williams-

burg, said Baptists should aggressively reach out to the world.

"We're the ones who ought to be going after lost souls, but it seems instead of going after 'em, we shun 'em," he said. "I don't care if they come from across the street or across the tracks, God loves 'em."

Hershael York told pastors that believers connect people to Christ by the way they suffer reproach, shift priorities, search for the lost and successfully reach out.

"God will give us those divine appointments," said York, a professor and associate dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. "If we are just faithful to share, God will drop success on us. We need to succeed because the cost of failure is too great."

Kevin Millburn encouraged pastors to press through obstacles.

Millburn, minister of education at Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, said God's favor isn't found in the absence of suffering but in persevering despite opposition.

"God's hand is on you," Millburn said. "It's on you when you can't see it, when you can't sense it."

The conference drew approximately 250 participants for the evening session. President Mark Payton said turnout might have been higher if author Ergun Caner had not cancelled because of a family illness.

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Baptism growth demands 'fresh vision'

A sermon by the Rev. Dr. Paige Patterson, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, was the featured message at the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention in Louisville on Nov. 15. Patterson urged church leaders to reach one convert annually by 2010.

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Wilkes to church leaders: Impact changing culture

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Challenging Christian leaders to impact today's changing culture, Gene Wilkes said biblical servant leadership remains a relevant model of effective ministry.

Wilkes, pastor of Legacy Church in Plano, Texas, led one of six workshops held during the Wednesday morning session of last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.

He shared an overview of his book, "Paul on Leadership: Servant Leadership in a Ministry of Transition." The book is designed for use as a six-week study.

Church leaders need to evaluate their ministry efforts by determining whether those efforts are reaching people or helping them grow in Christ, Wilkes said.

"Is the way you're doing church connecting with them?" he asked.

Noting that many churches "miss the opportunity that God brings us," he added, "Too many of us say, 'This is the way we've always done it and we're going to stick to it.'"

Effective church leadership

Citing Kennon Callahan's book, "Effective Church Leadership," Wilkes affirmed Callahan's observations that:

■ "The day of the professional minister is over. The day of the missionary pastor has come."

■ "The day of the church culture is over. The day of the mission field has come."

■ "The day of the local church is over. The day of the mission outpost has come."

While "there still is a church culture" in today's world, Wilkes asked, "How do I move beyond that culture to those who do not know? There's a difference in swimming in the aquarium of religion and swimming in the ocean."

Wilkes urged leaders to examine their mission fields by asking: "Who is here that needs to know the Word of the Lord and growth in Christ? What does God want us to do as missionaries in this mission field that is changing?"

Describing a mission outpost as "a church with a mission-field focus that equips and sends its members as missionaries into the world around them," he said, "I believe we are back to Acts as far as culture; we live in a pagan culture."

"Every time God has said to the church, 'I want you to be engaged in your culture, to be the living body of Christ,' He's called us to change," Wilkes pointed out.

Noting that many churches today "do most of our evangelism on Sunday morning," he added, "The original strategy was to be in the marketplace."

Key questions for leaders

The foundation for effective change includes a call, preparation and vision, Wilkes noted.

He said that leads to sending out workers, addressing conflict, sharing leadership and reflecting character.

He said key questions churches need to address include:

■ Why has God placed us in this mission field?

■ What are we doing now and is it still serving that mission?

■ Is this the best way to make disciples in our mission field?

■ What essential changes do we need to make to become what God has called us to be?

"Once you've been called, once you've incubated this with God and have a clear picture of where you're going, then the public leadership begins," Wilkes said.

"I'm not talking about arrogant, authoritarian leadership," he added. "The whole model is humble servant leadership. If it's God's call, other leaders will hear it. ... You can't lead by consensus, but you must have consensus to lead."

Even in the midst of change, "the traditionalists in any transition are helpful because they help keep you from jumping off the cliff," he said. "You have to honor your past. You have to honor what got you there."

Emphasizing that "servant leaders finish well," Wilkes said, "God did not call us to do this and set us up to fail. If He called you to engage your mission field, you will not fail."

"Listen for His voice," Wilkes urged. "Chase after Him with your heart and be diligent to lead those who are around you and in your care to do the same thing."

MARKETPLACE MINISTRY

Gene Wilkes (left), pastor of Legacy Church in Plano, Texas, challenged Kentucky Baptist leaders to impact today's culture with the gospel. "The original strategy was to be in the marketplace," he noted.



Seventh grade, seventh grade, seventh grade, honor roll

Achievement shows payoff for Oneida's efforts to help struggling students

Just a little over a year ago, Sept. 9, 2003, I wrote an article in this column titled, "A Work in Progress." The article was about "Mickey" (not his real name). Mickey came to us from a single-parent family and was having problems typical of boys and girls who are not being raised in a complete family. Mickey was nearly 15 when he enrolled and not having a father in the household to set and enforce boundaries had created a challenging environment for Mickey and three younger siblings. He was not yet a man, but in many ways he was the "man" of the house. Being left in charge at home of three younger siblings while Mom held down a part-time job only added to his frustrations. At school, things were equally stressful.

Mickey enrolled in our 2003 summer school tutoring lab program as a seventh grader. Actually, this was his third year in the seventh grade, as he had failed the seventh grade twice before coming to Oneida. All of the information we had gathered about Mickey indicated he was capable of doing the work, but his grades had been all F's. Our summer school tutoring lab program gave us an opportunity to observe Mickey and his needs. We were pleased with his desire to learn, and he did not resist correction or instruction as we feared he would. He was attentive in class and eager to improve his grades.

We often use the summer school program, especially the tutoring lab, to give us insight about boys and girls who are struggling academically. Is there the ability to do grade-level work? Or, does

the child honestly have a learning disability? Happily, all the indications were that Mickey could do the work and, given the right classroom environment, he would. At the end of summer school he was placed in the eighth grade. He would continue to spend two or three periods a day in the tutoring lab, but the rest of his day would be in regular eighth grade classes. During that time, his grades were not outstanding, but by the Christmas break we had decided to put him in regular classes all day for the second semester. When school was out this past May, his grades were acceptable but not outstanding. We required him to attend the 2004 summer school program in preparation for entering high school in August.

Recently the honor roll was called for the first quarter of the 2004-2005 academic year. I hope you will be as happy as I was to learn that Mickey had made the B honor roll! With a lot of work and effort, a young man who had to repeat the seventh grade three times has moved from failing grades to the honor roll. What an affirmation of the program we offer to struggling boys and girls.

The day Mickey enrolled, he told me, "I want to learn how to get my school work completed so I can go to college." How proud we are of Mickey. In addition to excelling in his academic work, he is in the school choir for the second year. What a wonderful "work in progress." Thanks to a host of wonderful, generous friends, Mickey, his three siblings and many other deserving students were provided full scholarships.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Cutting the post office shrubs

An opportunity to practice 'Kentucky Baptists Connect'

"Why doesn't someone cut the hedge around the post office?" That was my thought several times during the past few weeks. Once or twice I thought, "Why don't I cut it?"

On the Wednesday afternoon I returned from the state convention, my wife and I stopped at the post office to check for mail in a lobby box. The shrubs remained uncut. Inside I asked a postal worker if the employee who usually cut the shrubs was ill. "No, he retired," she said, "The contract for his replacement doesn't include yard work."

I asked, "Do you mind if a volunteer cuts it?" She turned and asked the postmaster, working on the other side of the large room. I heard his agreeable response.

At home we unloaded the car; I changed clothes and loaded the electric trimmer, extension cords, a rake and garbage bags for the trimmings. It was a mild fall day; the office was no place to unwind from a convention. I think the 50 e-mail messages awaiting me was a primary motivation.

Two women postal carriers talked with me briefly as I cut the

front hedge. My presence seemed an unusual thing to them. One of them commented, "You're a good man." I responded, "Only the Lord is good," and told her the Bible says we ought to help if we can. Later, a car stopped alongside the curb and a woman went inside. "I'd like to cut those shrubs," a young teenager in the front seat said. "Would you like to be paid what I'm getting?" I inquired. To his eager response I formed a zero with my fingers. "You're doing this for nothing? I wouldn't do that."

Nearing five o'clock, the postmaster came out and raked trimmings, telling me about recent difficulties in finding a new employee. Our conversation provided an opportunity to recommend a church in his town where one of our professors is pastor. He asked, "Is Clear Creek where you work?" I only answered, "Yes." He said, "I think that must be a good place." I agreed and pray my choice to help meet his need will encourage him to develop a connection with God's people.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

'Lead like Jesus'

Seminar offers ideas from Blanchard & other Christian leadership authorities

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Louisville—Christians who want to lead like Jesus must follow His mandate to be a servant, according to a leading management consultant and best-selling author.

"The secret of great leaders is they serve," Ken Blanchard said at a "Lead Like Jesus" conference last Thursday in Louisville.

The seminar at Southeast Christian Church drew a crowd of 4,200 (with thousands more viewing a satellite broadcast), making it the largest of three sponsored during the past year by the Atlanta-based Center for FaithWalk Leadership.

Blanchard, coauthor of several popular business books, has also written "The Servant Leader."

Speakers included a pair of well-known Southern Baptists: Henry Blackaby, author of "Experiencing God," and Bob Reccord, president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

During a presentation titled "What Do Leaders Who Lead Like Jesus Do?" Blanchard outlined five traits they exhibit, using the acronym SERVE.

See and shape the future. Many people think servant and leadership don't go together, Blanchard said, but that's because they don't understand leadership.

A leader must also be able to explain where an organization or church is going and how the people will reach their destination, he said.

"It's important you have clear values and that people understand them," Blanchard said. "You don't want too many, just a few. Even the 10 Commandments were too many. Jesus gave (His disciples) the first two."

Engage and develop people. Every leader needs people to get the job done, so a servant leader will develop those under his or her authority. Blanchard exhorted those in business to put those closest to the customer at the top while sup-



LEADERSHIP GURU "The secret of great leaders is they serve," said Ken Blanchard, author of several books on leadership.

porting and encouraging them.

Noting the controversy about who killed Jesus when "The Passion of the Christ" was released, Blanchard said the real culprits were a bunch of ducks. When Jesus healed people on the Sabbath, they quacked, "You can't do that," he said.

"(Jesus) brought a vision of love and you've got a bunch of bureaucrats crying about the rules," Blanchard said. "Servant leaders think the only big rule is, 'How do we serve the customer?'"

Reinvent continuously. Jesus wants His followers to reinvent their organizations to be life giving, Blanchard said. That is done by making a difference and treating others like they have brains, he said.

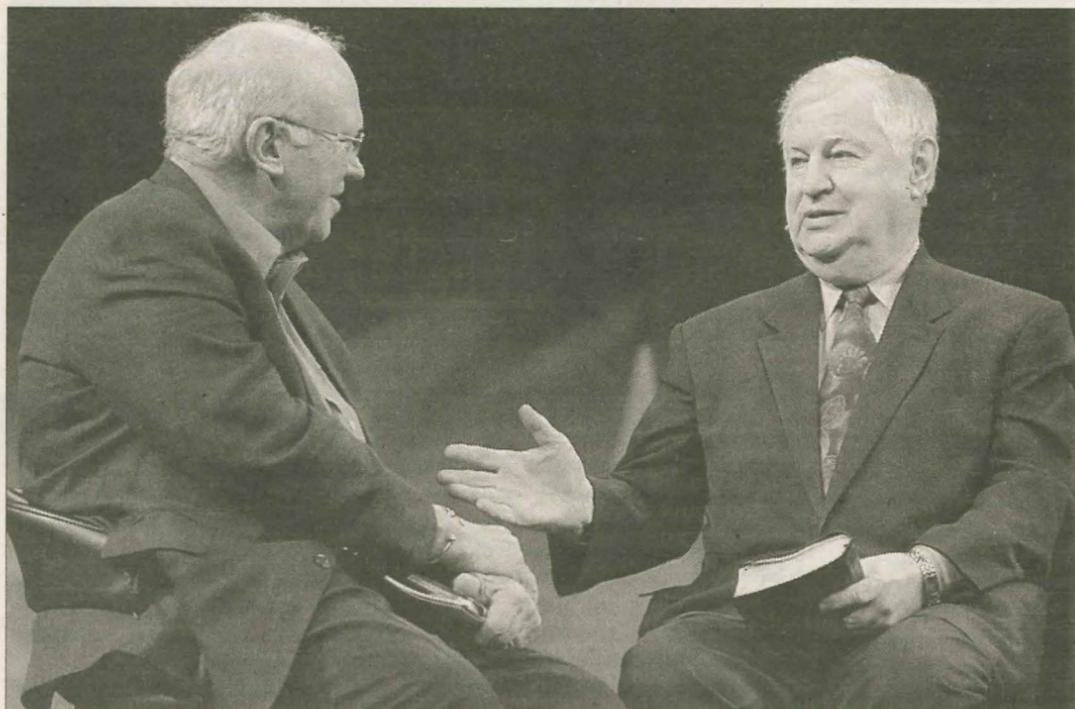
Value people and results. When his consulting organization lost \$1.5 million after the 9-11 terrorist attacks, they had to cut the budget. Instead of laying people off, Blanchard said they asked everyone for suggestions on trimming expenses.

Not only did they survive, but by mid-October they had achieved their 2004 goals, Blanchard said.

Embody the values. The speaker said the No. 1 thing people want from leaders is integrity.

"It's about walking your talk," Blanchard said. "That's what Jesus did."

Author John Ortberg, teaching pastor at Menlo Park (Calif.) Pres-



byterian Church, followed with a discussion of three principles Christ mastered:

■ **The art of problem distribution.** Leaders recognize the need for balance between a person's skills and the challenges they face, Ortberg said, noting a mismatch will lead to either anxiety or boredom.

Ortberg called a balance between the two "the flow," commenting that people live to experience that.

"If people aren't experiencing this enough, you can't pay them enough money," Ortberg said. "If they're in a church, you can't throw them enough spaghetti dinners to say thank you."

■ **Mission focus.** In a church, those most likely to voice complaints are those in the core group, Ortberg said. But if members get distracted by what they don't like, they lose sight of those who don't know Christ, he added.

"Once a church drifts into complaint management, it's dead," Ortberg said.

■ **Hope development.** To illustrate, Ortberg told a story about a woman with a terminal illness who wanted a fork placed in her hand at the funeral home.

She told her pastor that remind-

ed her of church suppers; if someone said to keep your fork during a meal, it meant something better was coming. "You are the keeper of the fork, the guardian of the human spirit," Ortberg said. "You can keep hope alive."

A number of Kentucky Baptists attended, including Dan Garland, team leader for church development and evangelism with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Garland said the conference gave him some ideas for next year's Super Saturday training workshops.

He also appreciated a statement by Reccord that Christians often treat the Bible like a car manual, only referring to it in case of trouble. "But (the Bible) has principles for leadership that Jesus embodied," Garland said.

Rusty Ellison, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, said he planned to use a number of speakers' illustrations in future sermons.

"One of the things that Blanchard and (others) have done is take the model right out of the Bible ... and put it in a language that the people can understand," Ellison said. "If we're going to lead like Jesus, we've got to look like Jesus."

EXPERIENCING HENRY
Henry Blackaby, author of the Bible study "Experiencing God," talks with Ken Blanchard. Approximately 4,200 people attended the "Lead Like Jesus" conference last week in Louisville. (Photos by John Congleton)

Ministers list divorce, materialism, media as threats to families

Nashville (BP)—Divorce, negative influences from the media and materialism are among the most common threats to the family cited by Protestant ministers in a recent study.

Ellison Research, a marketing research firm in Phoenix that conducted the research for the November/December issue of LifeWay's Facts & Trends magazine, reported that divorce was listed as one of the top three concerns by 43 percent of all ministers surveyed while 38 percent cited the media as a key issue they need to guard families in their communities against and 36 percent said materialism.

Other matters of concern included absentee fathers, cited by 24 percent of respondents, and families that lack a stay-at-home parent, noted by 22 percent of ministers.

Among Southern Baptists, the

top five issues of concern were divorce (53 percent), negative influences from the media (38 percent), materialism (36 percent), absentee fathers (29 percent) and latch-key kids (23 percent), the study found.

Methodists gave high rankings to parental alcohol and drug use as well as economic issues. Lutherans were more concerned with the impact of materialism and alcohol use by parents and children.

Pentecostals, the study said, were more concerned that morality is not being taught in schools. Southern Baptists, meanwhile, were more concerned about divorce.

"The level of threat each issue represented often differed from region to region, and no threat was named among the top three by even half of all pastors," Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, said.

"Obviously the threats to fami-

lies differ considerably from one community to the next. An upscale suburban community may be threatened most by materialism or latch-key kids, while a rural area may have real problems with poverty or alcoholism," he said. "This could make any nationwide or large-scale initiatives to deal with these problems a challenge, or at least lead to very spotty success."

Views about families

The study also asked ministers to agree or disagree with three statements about family. A majority (60 percent) agreed with the statement, "Churches tend to focus so much on 'traditional' families that they do not serve important groups such as singles, childless couples or single parents appropriately."

About half agreed with the statement, "Like it or not, the tradi-

tional view of family (husband, wife and children) no longer really exists in American society."

And when asked about the statement, "No matter how society defines family, churches need to promote a traditional view of family (husband, wife and children)," 71 percent agreed strongly.

Ellison Research said its sample of 695 Protestant ministers included only those who are actively leading churches. The study's total sample is accurate to within plus or minus 3.6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level with a 50 percent response distribution.

The study was conducted in all 50 states, using a representative sample of pastors from all Protestant denominations. Respondents' geography, church size and denomination were tracked for appropriate representation and accuracy.

Most ministers agreed with the statement, "Churches tend to focus so much on 'traditional' families that they do not serve important groups such as singles, childless couples or single parents appropriately."

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist missionaries and ministries:

Mission Service Corps missionaries Frank and Cindy Plewinski of LaGrange. The Plewinskis serve as cancer ministry specialists, providing care, encouragement and inspiration to cancer patients and their families through the Dodi Foundation. They have ministered through their greeting cards, chemo-coats and words of personal testimony to many individuals hurting from cancer. Pray that God will bring healing and hope to cancer patients and families dealing with this horrible disease. Pray that God will lead researchers to discover a cure for cancer.

Bicyclists ministry at First Baptist Church of Sebree. The church has a unique ministry with cross-country bicyclists traveling through the area. Bicyclists have learned through printed media and word of mouth that they can stop at the Sebree church to spend the night, take a shower, fix a meal, do laundry and share fellowship with Christian believers. Pastor Bob Hardison is a strong supporter and active participant in this ministry that has shared Christ with people from many walks of life and several countries. Pray that God will give safety and boldness to the volunteers as they minister to those He sends their way. Pray also that the bicyclists will be receptive to the gospel as it is shared with them.

If you would like Kentucky Baptists to join in praying for a ministry of your church or association, please send the information to Eric Allen at Eric.Allen@kybaptist.org or call (888) 263-5080.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CADIZ**—Locust Grove Church recently called **John Hagan** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Calvary Church in Kuttawa.

■ **GREENSBURG**—Bethlehem Church recently held a two-week "Fall Round-Up" revival with **Billy Curel** as evangelist. Responses included seven professions of faith and four other decisions. **Gary Ervin** is pastor.

■ **KEVIL**—Kevil Church recently collected its third mile of pennies

for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Church members now are collecting pennies for the fourth mile. **Stewart Strickland** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—First Church recently called **Jason Munday** as orchestra director. **Kevin McCallon** is pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—Calvary Church recently voted to purchase six lots of property next to the church for future expansion. **Rodney Wallace** is pastor.

Fourteen congregations approved for KBC membership

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist messengers accepted 14 churches for state convention membership during the opening session of last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting.

T.A. Prickett, chairman of the KBC Committee on Credentials, presented the following churches for membership:

- Aurora Baptist Church, Hardin.
- Brushy Creek Baptist Church, Pikeville.
- Christ Baptist Church, Cold Spring.
- Consolidated Baptist Church, Lexington.
- Dixie Park Cornerstone Baptist Church, Berea.
- Evangelical Church Winning All, Louisville.
- Faith Baptist Church, Scottsville.
- Four Rivers Church, Paducah.
- His House Ministries, Mayfield.
- Highland Avenue Baptist Tabernacle, Ft. Thomas.

■ Kingdom Land Baptist Church, Louisville.

■ Pathway Baptist Church, Beaver Dam.

■ Shepherds Way Community Church, Rineyville.

■ Watson Memorial Baptist Church, Louisville.

Three churches also were placed under watchcare. According to KBC guidelines, churches seeking state convention membership can be placed under watchcare for up to one year. At that time, each church's participation with and support of the KBC is reviewed by the Committee on Credentials and recommendations are made concerning full membership.

Churches under watch care for the next year are:

- First Baptist Church, Falmouth.
- Freedom Baptist Church, Brownsville.
- Radcliff Baptist Church, Rineyville.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December

13-14 KBC Mission Board meeting, Baptist Building, Middletown.

24-31 KBC Christmas Holidays, Baptist Building closed.

January

13-15 Shepherding the Shepherd Conference, Lexington.

25 Pastors' Forum, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

27-28 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Maple Grove Baptist Church, Louisville.

28-29 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Trinity Baptist Church, Lexington.

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



NEW ADDITIONS Kentucky Baptist messengers welcomed the pastors and their spouses of churches accepted for membership into the state convention last week. Fourteen churches were added to the KBC and three others were accepted for watchcare.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Church pews. Beautiful, high-quality hardwood pews (one 14-foot; one 20-foot; some 9-foot). Excellent condition. For more information, please call (859) 635-5725.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music for Baptist church with combined traditional and contemporary services. Job description available upon request; salary and benefits package negotiable. Submit resumé to: Personnel Committee, Cecilia Baptist Church, 416 East Main, Cecilia, KY 42724.

SEEKING: Part-time secretary (MWT). Microsoft Office experience required. Mail resumé to Deer Park Baptist, c/o Personnel Committee, 1733 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40205; or e-mail resumé: secretary@deerparkbaptist.org.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Grayson, Ky., is seeking a senior pastor. Main duties would be to preach/teach the Word, disciple others and build relationships. Must desire a praise and worship that blends traditional and contemporary. Church is located in the heart of Grayson in a growing rural community in northeastern Kentucky. Sunday morning attendance: 200, with more than 50 youth. New pastor will lead in a search for associate/youth pastor. Education needs to be Bible degree (minimal), with senior pastor experience. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 577, Grayson, KY 41143; or e-mail to fbccgray@utionline.net.

SEEKING: The Cabbage Patch, a non-profit Christian organization, seeks to fill two positions: Part-time database/office assistant for Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Raiser's Edge experience preferred. Social worker, Monday-Friday, 12 noon to 8 p.m.; MSSW, five years experience preferred. Resumé/salary requirements: Lisa Griffin, Cabbage Patch, 1413 S 6th St., Louisville, KY 40208. lgriffin@cabbagepatch.org. Fax: (502) 637-9943.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor who loves pastoring, does scriptural-based expository preaching applicable to life, connects with all age groups, can lead in growth. Send resumé to: Bethany Baptist Church, 2319 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40205.

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.

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

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music/education for Sharon BC, Wichita, Kan. (MSA 500,000+). Blended worship. Experience/seminary preferred. Resumés to: bhartmann@sharonsbc.org.

SEEKING: Individual with administrative and child care skills for part-time contract position of child care coordinator for Crestwood Baptist Church. Must be willing to work some nights and weekends. Applications must be received no later than 4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 29. Interested individuals may obtain an application by contacting Julia Yuen, childhood education minister, Crestwood Baptist Church, PO Box 70, Crestwood, KY 40014. (502) 241-8534.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor for First Baptist Church, Mt. Sterling, Ky. Responsibilities will be day-to-day management and administrative leadership; developing and directing educational programs; some pastoral duties. Experience required. Please send resumé by Dec. 31, 2004, to: Search Committee, FBC Mt. Sterling, PO Box 324, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353.

SEEKING: God's called man for full-time pastor of Temple Hill Baptist Church, 8427 Tompkinsville Road, Glasgow, KY 42141. Church resident membership: 395; worship attendance: 135; Sunday school attendance: 105. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 124 Siloam Road, Glasgow, KY 42141, or fax to (270) 651-6087.

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister for Stanford Baptist Church. Call (606) 365-2178.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister. Send resumé to: Palestine Baptist Church, 80 Church Lane, Campbellsville, KY 42718, or e-mail resumé to pbc@kyol.net.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor with ministry focus on students and recreation for a vibrant First Baptist church in Southeastern Kentucky. Seminary training and youth ministry experience preferred. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, 201 North Main St., Barbourville, KY 40906, or e-mail to chsec@barbourville.com.

SEEKING: Assist the elderly. Provide non-medical companionship and home-care services for the elderly. No certificate required. Home Instead Senior Care, East Louisville. (502) 515-9522.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music (20 hours/week) who can bring energy, passion and blended/convergent elements to a traditional church with choir, organist, pianist. Latonia Baptist draws from metro Cincinnati area but is working to reach its neighborhood and younger people. We are CBF/SBC with ordained women. E-mail: Steve@latoniabaptist.org.

TOUR: Dr. Anis Shorrosh welcomes you on his 39th Holy Land & Greece tour, Dec. 27, 2004-Jan. 5, 2005. \$1,999 from N.Y. to N.Y. Receive a free brochure by writing PO Box 949, Fairhope, AL 36533, or phone (251) 680-7770.

Sisters who care

African-American women get call to missions action

By Andrea Higgins
Woman's Missionary Union

Ridgecrest, N.C. (BP)—When she was a missionary in Nairobi, Chifon Chambers cringed every time an African would ask—all too frequently—why most missionaries are white. Chambers is black.

The perception is one that Chambers and a growing number of mission-minded women across the United States hope to change.

At this fall's second annual "Sisters Who Care" conference at LifeWay's Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina, nearly 300 African-American women from 21 states celebrated their "sisterhood"—both in Christ and in their ethnic heritage.

Sister to sister, they could joke and speak frankly about the challenges of being black women—and the strengths they have gained by enduring such challenges.

Conference attendees learned of a forgotten missionary tradition that is theirs to reclaim. Chambers, who worked in Africa three years as a videographer, informed the vocally responsive crowd they are suffering from a mistakenly whitewashed impression.

Not just "white man's ministry"

The very first American missionary, she pointed out, was a black man in 1782.

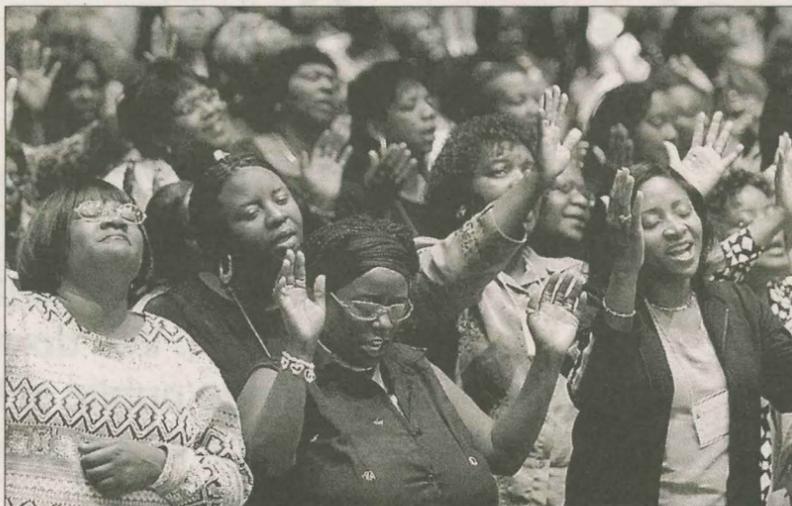
"My point is that Satan is trying to convince us it is a white man's ministry, and we buy into that," Chambers said.

The Great Commission is a call to all people, not just those of European descent, she contended to roaring applause.

"There is a long list of African Americans—freed slaves, as if they didn't have enough on their plate—who still felt the need to tell others," Chambers said.

Seminary professor Carolyn Gordon addressed the conference with a challenging message, repeating several times slowly, "We have spent our resources on things in our lives that do not satisfy us."

Gordon paused, shook her head and, with her trademark wit, cracked, "I'm amazed at the number of Coach-carrying, Prada-wearing, weave-wearing sisters who are just broke."



VIBRANT WORSHIP Nearly 300 African-American women attended the Sisters Who Care conference at LifeWay's Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. In addition to celebrating their sisterhood in Christ, the event, sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union, urged women to consider what Jesus' Great Commission means for their lives. (BP photos by Kent Harville)



LENDING A VOICE Ingrid Brown, director of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church's Progressive Choir in Birmingham, Ala., leads praise and worship.

Then, in a serious moment, she passionately whispered to a hushed auditorium, "We waste our resources because we do not yet understand who we are in God."

"Sisters Who Care: Women on Mission" was the brainchild of Debra Berry, a national ministry consultant for Woman's Missionary Union who was perplexed at the limited involvement of blacks in WMU's Women on Mission programs. She coined the phrase four years ago, hoping to make a culturally relevant connection with fellow African American women.

Historical research showed Berry that many black Baptist churches have the word "missionary" in their names because they were in the forefront of post-Civil War missions until the 1930s.

What brought blacks back from the mission field and shifted their attention inward to the local church was a simultaneous loss of backing from predominantly white supporting agencies and the colonial governments of Africa.

The "Sisters Who Care" conference paid tribute to historical black role models of bygone eras such as Nannie Helen Burroughs, who organized her fellow black women into missions at the turn of the 20th century.

"People of color aren't really exposed to that (example)," said Kenyatta Garner, who came with a group of 55 women from Spring Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit. She said her church only recently started participating in international missions.

"God is doing something"

The most empowering message she took from the conference, Garner said, was learning that other people share similar struggles, such as being unsure of God's plan.

"God is doing something amongst the African American women in this country!" exclaimed Trenise Lowe, associate WMU director in the Detroit area, to which the crowd responded with a resounding, "Amen!"

One obstacle to motivated women is a cultural pressure to keep secrets, said Gordon, associate professor for church and community at Central Baptist Seminary in Kansas City, Kan.

"We have a lot of secrets in our lives, sisters," Gordon told a group gathered for Bible study. "Too many of us sisters are still sabotaging our lives because we haven't reconciled what has happened to us in our past. Christ is our heritage and has canceled out the past. We need to start telling our story."

Sisters Who Care participants were encouraged to take their stories of faith and life in Jesus Christ to non-Christians who need the Savior.

"Billions of people have never heard of Jesus Christ," Chambers said. "In the (African) bush, they are worshiping rocks or doing bull sacrifice. My heart just grieves for them because God put in them a nature to worship Him, and they don't know it."

Christian hunting fellowships foster discipleship, ministry

By Cheryl Sloan Wray
Alabama Baptist

Helena, Ala. (ABP)—In Alabama, where devotion to hunting can approach a religion, several organizations are trying to match the passion hunters and fishermen feel for the outdoors with a passion for Christ.

Wayne Vining, a member of the Alabama chapter of Christian Bowhunters of America, says the group teaches a balanced view of creation and outdoor enjoyment.

"Christian hunters should always let it be known that they are not just out there to 'kill something,' but that they are there to enjoy God's blessings and enjoy time in the outdoors," said Vining, a member of Riverside Baptist Church in Helena, Ala.

The organization also provides Christian hunters and their families with a healthy source of fellowship, members say.

"This group gives people a place where they can enjoy fellowship with Christians who share their love of archery and know they can be around one another with their families and not worry about the language being used or being offended by things that go on in secular activities," said Darrin Jarvis, president of the Christian Bowhunters of Alabama, which began in 1997 with four hunters.

"We encourage people to bring their children to our shoots and welcome new people," he said. "We want to be a loving and caring group that enjoys archery and God."

Tools for healthier families

A number of national organizations cater to the Christian outdoorsman, such as Christian Hunters and Anglers, a fellowship and ministry group.

Designed to give support to men in their roles as family leaders, the organization teaches "healthy principles of Christian living." Activities include workshops, Bible studies and accountability groups that focus on communication skills, conflict resolution, financial management and other family-related skills.

Vining said Christian hunting groups also promote conservation.

"Hunting has been part of man's existence since that fall and God gave us dominion over the animals, even telling us to 'kill and eat,'" Vining said. "But as Christians we should be good stewards of the land and all that's on it. And it says in Proverbs that a godly man should never kill a game animal that he, or someone else, is not going to eat."

Christian hunting organizations also teach the importance of being a Christian witness to fellow hunters, Jarvis and Vining said.

"There are a lot of young people today who live in single-parent homes where the father isn't there a lot," Vining said. "Introducing these folks to hunting also allows a chance to introduce them to Jesus. A Christian man introducing a young person to the outdoors is a witness that will last a lifetime."

Jarvis agreed "deer hunting can be an excellent opportunity for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with other hunters" and said one of the purposes behind the Christian Bowhunters of Alabama is to provide members with tools to share their faith in the field.

Some Baptist churches have already caught on to the effectiveness of hunting-inspired activities and ministries. First Baptist Church in Gardendale, Ala., hosts an annual wild game dinner that attracts hundreds of fathers and sons.

A similar event at First Baptist Church of North Mobile, Ala., resulted in 127 professions of faith.

Another prominent Christian hunting organization takes its passion for the sport even further, using hunting as a way to reach out to the poor.

Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry is a national outreach ministry that provides venison and other game to soup kitchens and food pantries throughout the country. Since its inception in 1997, the organization has been responsible for the processing of 1,400 tons of meat for donation.

Rick Wilson, the founder and president of Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry, said he began the ministry after an experience in helping a woman load a deer into the trunk of her car. The woman was transporting the deer, which had been run over, to her home so that she and her children could eat.

"Standing there as she drove away, I knew I had just looked into the eyes of Jesus," Wilson said.



LEADING IN PRAYER Debra Berry, national Woman's Missionary Union team leader for adult ministries and a leader in establishing the "Sisters Who Care" conference, leads several hundred women in prayer during the event.

Some things are the same. Just not everything.



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