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## FOR THE RECORD

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## Distribution effort puts New King James Bible atop best-selling list

Nashville (RNS)—For the first time since its original imprint in 1982, the New King James Version of the Bible is in the top spot of a publishing best-seller list thanks to an initiative called the Million Bible Challenge.

The challenge paired Thomas Nelson Inc., one of the country's largest Bible publishers, with CBA—the former Christian Booksellers Association—to exclusively sell the New King James Version for \$1 per copy at all CBA stores.

The campaign's goal was to get the NKJV to more than 1 million people by the end of 2005. Two weeks after its March launch, Nelson sold more than 500,000 units.

"From day one, our objective was to make it affordable and easy for people to spread the Word of God to as many people as possible," said Wayne Hastings, senior vice president and publisher of Nelson Bibles.

According to the CBA best-seller list for May, the New King James Version trumped the former top spot holder, the New International Version, which is now No. 2. The King James Version—written in 1611—is third.

The New King James Version attempts to make the language of the King James Version more common, with fewer "thees" and "thous," Georgetown University theology professor Anthony Tambasco said.

## Teen explosion

*Author, prof urges churches to take youth seriously*

By Tracy Barrett  
Southern Baptist Texan

Houston (BP)—The United States will have more teenagers in 2006 than any time in its history—a fact Alvin Reid says presents new challenges for today's youth pastors and parents.

"The Bible is amazingly positive toward youth. Why can't the church be?" asked Reid, author of several books, including most recently "Raising the Bar: Ministry to Youth in the New Millennium."

Speaking to a conference in Houston, Reid cited Isaac, Joshua, Samuel, Esther, David, Josiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Timothy and Mary as examples from which youth today should realize that God can use them mightily for His purposes.

Jesus was just 12 when He said, "Do you not know that I am to be about my Father's business?" Reid noted.

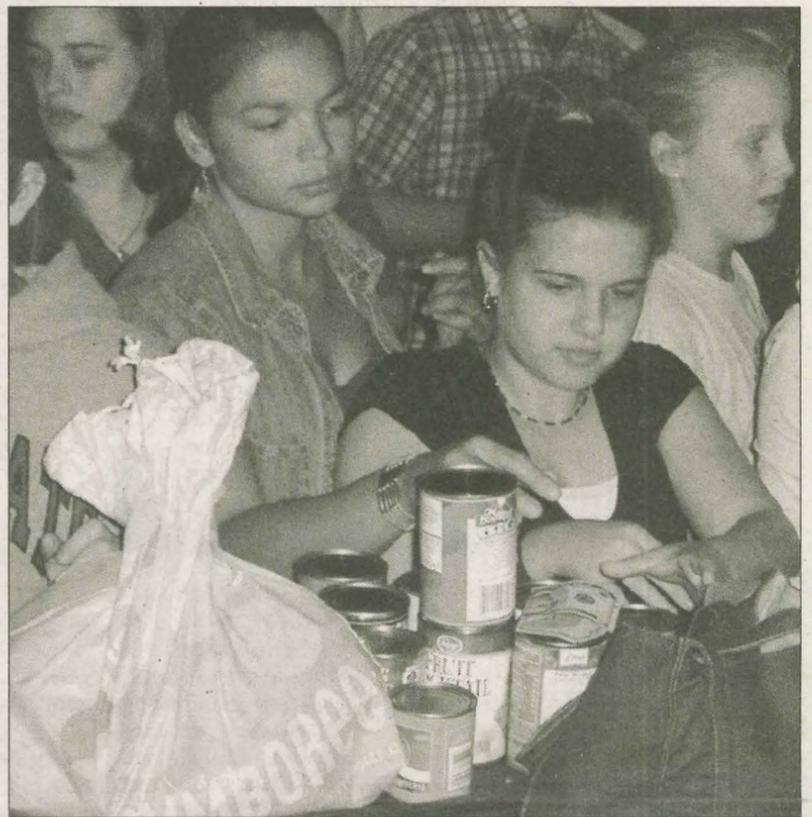
"The most underreported aspect of great revivals in modern history is the role of young people," said Reid, professor of evangelism at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"Youth today are not irreligious. They seek genuine spirituality."

Listing various ways youth pastors and parents can reach teenagers effectively for Christ, Reid said they first must teach God's Word.

Churches should not pick the funniest or goofiest people in the congregation to teach youth, he said, but the best teachers of the Bible.

Reid quoted one teenager as say-



**MINISTRY PARTICIPATION** Teens drop off food and money to fight world hunger before a benefit concert in Nashville. Alvin Reid encourages churches and parents to get more involved in the spiritual development of teenagers. "Young people today are activists. They want to be part of something." (BP file photo)

ing, "We know how to be teenagers; we want to know how to be adults."

Parents should take spiritual leadership in their children's lives, Reid continued.

"Today we live in a culture where our youth pastors are the main spiritual guides in our teenagers' lives, not the parents. I am my son's youth pastor. Every parent should take that role."

Churches also should teach students how to share their faith, Reid said, citing several stories of how

students who had done door-to-door witnessing with him returned later to thank him because they could lead others to Christ based on what they had learned.

"Young people today are activists. They want to be a part of something," Reid said.

He told a story of one group who attended an evangelism conference during which some of them raised their hands at the end and said, "When are we going to do this?"

□ See Author, prof urges ... Page 6

## Lotz notes BWA's Kentucky roots, cites global Baptist challenges

By David Winfrey and Trennis Henderson  
News Director and Editor

Louisville—Celebrating Kentucky Baptists' historic ties to the Baptist World Alliance, St. Matthews Baptist Church hosted a May 9 luncheon marking BWA's 100th anniversary as a global Baptist fellowship.

Denton Lotz, BWA's general secretary, preached at St. Matthews May 8 and spoke at the centennial luncheon.

"One hundred years ago in London, England, Baptists came together and formed the Baptist World Alliance," Lotz noted. "They said we belong together because we belong to Christ."

"The Baptist World Alliance exists to show the essential oneness of Baptist people in the Lord Jesus Christ," he added. "Christ is the center. Christ is who brings us together."

That sense of global Baptist unity

was challenged last year when the Southern Baptist Convention—a founding member of BWA—withdraw from the organization. SBC leaders claimed the international alliance includes theologically liberal member bodies, a charge BWA leaders adamantly deny.

"Baptists of the world don't want to get involved in all of our national conflicts," Lotz declared. "They want to concentrate on missions; they want to concentrate on Jesus Christ."

Citing BWA's Bible distribution efforts in Cuba and other ministry projects around the globe, Lotz added, "It's a lot better to hand out Bibles than to fight about the Bible."

Here in Kentucky, state convention messengers rejected a proposal last November by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board

□ See Lotz notes BWA's ... Page 3

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, May 18



**BAPTIST TALK** Denton Lotz (left), general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance listens to Donald Hustad after Lotz spoke to more than 250 people at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville last week.

## Kentuckians tapped for SBC committees

**Nashville**—Several Kentucky Baptists are among people appointed or nominated to serve on Southern Baptist Convention-related boards and committees.

Kentucky Baptists serving on the 2005 SBC Committee on Nominations are **Tom Butler**, a member of East Baptist Church in Paducah, and **Randy McPheron**, pastor of West Corbin Baptist Church in Corbin. Kentuckians nominated by the committee for a first term on the boards of SBC-related entities are:

**Stephen Wilson**, a member of Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah, to serve on the SBC Executive Committee. He succeeds James Hales of Cold Spring.

**Darren Gaddis**, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, to serve on the board of GuideStone Financial Resources. He succeeds Willis Henson of Paducah.

**James Cecil**, a member of Trace Creek Baptist Church in Mayfield, serving on the North American Mission Board. He succeeds David

Butler of Louisville.

**Bill Haynes**, pastor of First Baptist Church of Somerset, serving on the board of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He succeeds Ronald Felleme of Lexington.

**Frank Broadus Jr.**, a member of Ninth and O Baptist Church in Louisville, serving on the board of Southern Seminary. He succeeds Charles Barnes of Louisville.

Kentucky Baptists serving on a second term of service are:

**Bill Henard**, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, LifeWay Christian Resources board.

**Steven Colyer**, a member of Shively Baptist Church in Louisville, Southern Seminary board.

SBC President Bobby Welch appointed four Kentucky Baptists to serve on standing committee during the SBC annual meeting in Nashville June 21-22. They include:

**Scott Kilgore**, executive pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green, SBC Committee on Committees.

**Terry Williams**, pastor of Im-

manuel Baptist Church in Corbin, SBC Committee on Committees.

**Dan Russell**, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Paris, Tellers Committee.

**Michael Stacey**, pastor of Buena Vista Baptist Church in Somerset, Tellers Committee.

The Committee on Committees is responsible for nominating members of the 2006 Committee on Nominations. The Tellers Committee is responsible for collecting and tabulating ballots cast by messengers during SBC business sessions.

### Fish is nominee for second VP

In other SBC-related news, seminary professor Roy Fish will be nominated next month for SBC second vice president.

Fish, an evangelism professor for 40 years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, will be nominated by Southwestern Seminary trustee Ted Stone. A graduate of Southwestern, Fish is a former president of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

## IMB, Nazareth Baptists differ on selling building

**Nazareth, Israel (ABP)**—Baptists in Nazareth, Israel, are upset with plans of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board to sell a 50-year-old stone building that a local Baptist church uses for worship and other churches use for various ministries.

The 400,000 building, valued at \$400,000 by the IMB, was built in the 1950s for use as a residence for IMB missionaries. Now that IMB missionaries are no longer assigned to Nazareth, the building will be sold and the profits used for missionary residences elsewhere in the world, IMB officials told Associated Baptist Press.

Bader Mansour, a lay leader and treasurer of the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel, said the top floor served as a missionary residence until several years ago. The first floor has long been used as meeting space for local churches and for ministries to residents of Nazareth and nearby Galilee, he said.

"The Baptists in Israel maintain that Southern Baptists through the decades have given their tithes and offerings for purchasing property in Israel," Mansour wrote in an article on the Web site comeandsee.com, published by a group of Arab Christians in Israel. "In their view, selling this property is not only not ethical but poor stewardship as well. They say the IMB should be protecting their investment in the land, not selling off properties in order to raise money for projects elsewhere."

The IMB gave local Baptists until mid-May to purchase the building before placing it on the market, Mansour said.

Anita Bowden, an IMB spokesperson, said the proposed sale is consistent with IMB policy for use of buildings originally built as missionary residences. Proceeds go into a global capital fund for missionary housing. "This is simply a normal procedure for us when a building is not needed for a residence anymore," she said.

In this case, however, the local Baptists "don't want us to sell; they want us to give it to them," she added.

On the other hand, IMB-owned properties that were "purchased for ministry" routinely are "turned over to responsible Baptist entities overseas," IMB President Jerry Rankin said in a recent statement to employees.

"We could never provide enough capital funds for housing the growing numbers of new missionaries going to new frontier assignments if we didn't utilize resources from missionary housing that is no longer needed," Rankin added. "It's a matter of stewardship."

According to Mansour, "Odd as this may sound, when it comes to Christian-owned property, the phrase 'property for sale' is simply unheard of in the Jewish state of Israel. Once property is sold, it is lost to the Christian community and can no longer be used for (God's) purposes."



**DIFFERENCE OF OPINION**  
This building in Nazareth, Israel, was purchased by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in the 1950s. IMB officials plan to sell the facility, but Baptists in Nazareth want it to remain available for Baptist ministry.

### BAPTIST DIGEST

**Bonner to head Gardner-Webb.** Frank Bonner, provost of Gardner-Webb University, was elected president of the North Carolina Baptist-affiliated school May 1. Bonner, 57, provost and senior vice president of Gardner-Webb since 1992, succeeds Frank Campbell, who served as interim president since 2002. Former president Christopher White resigned in 2002 after admitting he changed the failing grade of a student athlete to keep him academically eligible. Bonner, who will become president July 1, is a graduate of Furman University, the University of Georgia and the University of North Carolina.

**White named Virginia Baptist editor.** James White, former editor of LifeWay Christian Resources' Deacon magazine, has been named editor of the Virginia Baptist Religious Herald. He succeeds Michael Clingnepeel, who resigned last year to become pastor of River Road Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. White, 54, has served since

2003 as head of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board's empowering leaders team. He previously was pastor of First Baptist Church of Newport News, Va.

**Vines to retire as Florida pastor.** Former Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines announced this month that he will retire next February as senior pastor of the 22,000-member First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla. Vines, 67, was elected SBC president in 1988 and 1989 and served as a member of the SBC's 2000 Baptist Faith and Message Study Committee. He also was president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in 1976-77. He joined Homer Lindsay Jr. in 1982 as co-pastor of the Jacksonville church. They served together until Lindsay's death in 2000.

**Baptist groups' tsunami aid tops \$12 million.** Baptist groups with Baptist World Alliance have donated between \$12 million and \$15 mil-

lion to tsunami relief efforts, according to Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid. Approximately \$2 million of the relief funds have been disbursed through BWAid, he added. "It was impressive to see how Baptists from the affected areas have been doing so much in providing relief and making plans for the long-term future," Montacute said. "The focus now is clearly on rebuilding people's lives and homes, the community infrastructure and sustainable livelihoods."

**Whitney to lead Southern's spirituality focus.** Donald Whitney, associate professor of spiritual formation since 1995 at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., has been named Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's associate professor of biblical spirituality and director of supervised ministry experience. Whitney is the author of several books on Christian spirituality, including "Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life" and "Simplify Your Spiritual Life."

## Rainer: Baptist evangelism in midst of 'crisis'

**Louisville (RNS)**—The Southern Baptist Convention is "on the path of slow but discernible deterioration" in its evangelism efforts, according to Thom Rainer, dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

The Florida Baptist Witness reported May 5 on a study released this month by the Southern Baptist Journal of Theology. In the report, Rainer says the SBC is in an "evangelistic crisis" despite the convention's conservative shift that began in 1979.

"An honest evaluation of the data leads us to but one conclusion," Rainer writes in "A Resurgence Not Yet Realized: Evangelistic Effectiveness in the Southern Baptist Convention since 1979."

"The conservative resurgence has not resulted in a more evangelistic denomination. Indeed, the Southern Baptist Convention is less evangelistic today than it was in the years preceding the conservative resurgence," he notes.

By his count, one person was baptized for every 19 members of SBC churches in 1950. In 1978, that ratio increased to 36 to 1 and by 2003 the number reached 43 to 1.

Rainer says the denomination is "evangelistically anemic" because most baptisms take place in relatively few of its congregations. He recommended that pastors repent "for their lack of evangelistic zeal" and suggested increased research and training to improve evangelism efforts.

He also expressed concern that "the churches of the SBC are not evangelistic because they have many unregenerate members." Noting his research suggests "nearly one-half of church members may not be Christians," he said that "may very well be a major factor in the evangelistic apathy in many churches."

Rainer said he believes the baptism statistics would have dropped even further if there had not been a major shift in the 16.2 million-member denomination.

Citing statistics of some churches affiliated with the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Rainer claimed that group's baptismal ratio in 2003 was 92 to 1.

Responding to Rainer's study, CBF spokesman Ben McDade said many of the churches affiliated with the fellowship are dually aligned with denominations other than Southern Baptists, so it is "not statistically possible" to link baptisms to a particular Baptist organization.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

## KBC board approves relocation funds, CP study group

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

**Cedarmore**—Members of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board ratified relocation-related expenses for the KBC's new office facilities and approved a \$23.1 million Cooperative Program budget for 2005-06 during their May 9-10 meeting at Cedarmore Conference Center.

KBC officials announced last month that the convention's current offices sold for \$4.2 million and a new facility with an unfinished interior was purchased for \$4.475 million. Interior construction costs were estimated at \$2.1 million for a net facility cost of \$2.375 million.

Board members approved a total project budget of up to \$4.59 million. KBC business manager Lowell Ashby said the additional \$2.2 million will include office furniture, cubicles, phone system, computer network, audio-visual equipment, security system and moving expenses as well as architect, realtor and attorney fees and lease payments until the August move.

The bulk of the relocation funds will come from the KBC's \$9.5 million State Mission Reserve fund. The board also authorized Ashby and KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey to secure a loan "to take advantage of interest rates or terms on borrowing funds to replenish" the reserve fund if that option proves financially beneficial.



**CP EMPHASIS** Kentucky Baptist Convention President Hershael York chairs last week's KBC Mission Board meeting. Members approved a 20-member study committee to address Cooperative Program giving needs.

Even with overall relocation costs expected to top \$4.5 million, Ashby said the move still is more economical than a projected \$6.5 million cost to rebuild on the current site.

He said the new facility also will provide "a huge leap forward technology-wise and communications-wise."

The \$23.1 million CP goal for 2005-06 was approved last November by KBC messengers. It includes 64 percent for KBC causes and 36 percent for Southern Baptist Convention ministries.

The budget approved last week by Mission Board members details how

the \$23.1 million will be allocated. In addition to 36 percent for SBC causes, the budget includes:

- KBC Mission Board and general expenses, 35.53 percent.
- Christian education (Campbellsville University, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Georgetown College, Oneida Baptist Institute and University of the Cumberlands), 20.78 percent.
- Woman's Missionary Union, 2.04 percent.
- Western Recorder, 1.55 percent
- Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, 1.54 percent.
- Kentucky Baptist Homes for

Children, 1.42 percent.

■ Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 1.12 percent.

■ Baptist Healthcare System, 0.02 percent.

In other action, board members approved establishing a 20-member Cooperative Program study committee to propose "ways to increase CP giving in the future that would result in increased financial support for KBC and SBC causes."

Mackey presented the proposal from the board's business and finance committee which authorized him to name the committee. Dan Ferguson, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, was named chairman. The committee will report to the full board in December.

Mark Galloway, chairman of the board's business and finance committee, also reported that the committee had authorized him to appoint a subcommittee "to study what is considered a CP gift and the issue of negative designations."

In an interview after the board meeting, Mackey said the subcommittee will seek to clarify what qualifies as CP contributions on the state level. "The whole point of a unified budget is giving in a unified way," he added.

Board members also approved a proposal to extend the KBC's mission partnership with the International Baptist Convention through 2006 with an option of extending it through 2007.

## Lotz notes BWA's Kentucky roots, cites global Baptist challenges

Continued from page 1

to study ways the KBC might relate to the BWA. Despite the SBC and KBC actions, St. Matthews is among Kentucky Baptist churches that continue to support BWA.

Noting that his congregation researched SBC charges against BWA, St. Matthews Pastor Leslie Hollon explained, "Because we came to very different conclusions, we chose to stay true to a century-long relationship. In the process, we have not been critical of individuals within the SBC leadership, but instead are emphasizing our own right and responsibility to give ongoing leadership through BWA for a unity of Baptists around the world in sharing the gospel of Christ."

Hollon said his congregation's two-day event honoring BWA "builds upon a vision that Kentucky Baptist leaders cast more than a century ago for a global and unified organization of Baptists."

According to "Baptists in Kentucky: 1776-1976" edited by Leo Crismon, the Baptist Argus, a forerunner of the Western Recorder, "was the first paper in the world to advocate the gathering of the world's Baptists."

During the May 9 luncheon that attracted more than 250 participants from across the state, Lotz emphasized that world cultural clashes, AIDS and diversity are among the challenges facing Baptists and Christians in general.

"One of the great things about being a Baptists is that we have ... 211 Baptist conventions around the world," Lotz said. But amid such diversity, unity can be a challenge,

he conceded.

Swedish, Russian and Indian Baptists "all have different views and must operate in different contexts," he noted.

"You meet other cultures who have different understandings and have different methodologies," he said. "The Baptist World Alliance is not an American organization. It's a world organization."

Unity was one of several challenges Lotz discussed during the dialogue luncheon, sponsored by Campbellsville University, University of the Cumberlands, Georgetown College and Dehoney Travel.

Lotz noted that many Baptists in America are not familiar with the work of Baptist World Alliance.

"There's so many Baptists in America that we don't think we need one another," Lotz said. "For many American Baptists, BWA sounds like a new airline. It doesn't mean anything to them."

But BWA is an advocate and source of encouragement to many Baptists suffering in countries where totalitarian governments or other religious majorities repress their freedom to worship, Lotz added. "This is the reality of our minority brothers and sisters around the world."

Other challenges Lotz cited facing Baptists and other Christians include:

**The charismatic movement.** Christians must not let the fringe leaders of the charismatic movement keep them from embracing the Holy Spirit, he said. "We as Baptists are going to hurt ourselves if we become Binitarian" rather than

Trinitarian.

**AIDS/HIV.** The disease has killed 40 million people in Africa and left 6 million children orphaned, Lotz noted. "Who's going to take care of their children?"

**Laity involvement.** Many churches have become too pastor focused, Lotz said. "We don't want bishops or cardinals, but we've got 100,000 little popes we call pastors."

**Biblical/moral standards of behavior.** Baptists in Eastern Europe and other countries are distressed with the morality being taught by American media, he noted. "Maybe they can teach us a little about morality and behavior."

**Cultural clashes.** Because most cultural clashes involve religion, Lotz said, Baptists must petition governments to recognize the Baptist-distinctive tenet of separation of church and state.

"Religion always wants to use the sword," Lotz said. "Jesus tells Peter and all Christians, 'Put away the sword' and 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.'"

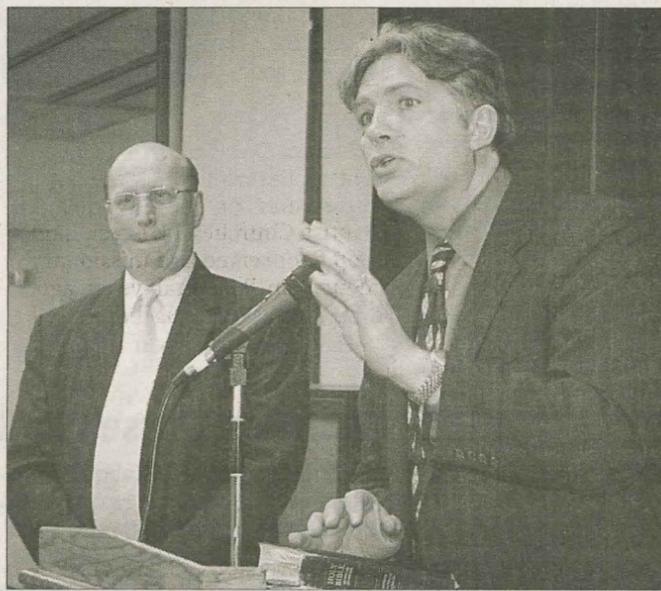
At the same time Baptists and other Christians face such challenges, Lotz added that there is much good news to be excited about.

The number of Baptist churches in Moscow has grown from one in 1990 to 52 today, he said, and congregations continue to be started throughout Eastern Europe.

"People are hungry for the Word of God," he said. "The Holy Spirit is moving in Eastern Europe."

Earlier during the luncheon, several representatives praised BWA's work.

Russell Awkard, moderator of the



**BWA CENTENNIAL** Leslie Hollon (right), pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, introduces Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz during a May 9 luncheon honoring BWA's centennial.

predominantly African-American General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, noted that the association will send a delegation to BWA's 100th anniversary congress in Birmingham, England, this July.

"The Baptist World Alliance affords us an opportunity to connect and partner with Baptists around the world," he said.

Frank Chetham, Campbellsville University's vice president for academic affairs, agreed. "BWA has been a constant partner in forging historic relationships all over the world."

And Dwight Moody, dean of the chapel at Georgetown College, lauded BWA's ability to broaden the worldview of Georgetown students. "We look forward to a broad and wide-ranging partnership for the good of the world and our students."

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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**'Arbitrary assumptions'**

In response to the "concerns" regarding the teachings of Georgetown College and other Kentucky Baptist institutions in a May 10 letter in the Western Recorder, it's unfortunate that a letter writer arbitrarily can claim "many (Kentucky Baptists) have concerns ... with teaching in the religion department" and make the dubious assertion that "a sizeable portion of Kentucky Baptists hold this view" of Scripture the writer espouses.

These assumptions are arbitrary and dubious by the admission he has only "heard anecdotally" about teachings he finds questionable. He then goes on to suggest an inquiry of "our Kentucky Baptist institutions" is in order.

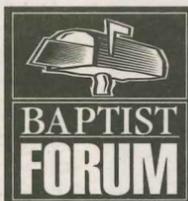
Engaging in such "guilt by suspicion" antics seems to be a popular tactic nowadays, but is more unbiblical than the alleged teachings the letter cannot give substance to.

If the writer were as deeply concerned about the Bible as he claims, why doesn't he follow its teachings by doesn't he follow its teachings with whom he has a question or concern (Matthew 5:23-24) and, if there is a legitimate issue to address, work with the person one-on-one as Paul did with Peter (Galatians 2:11-14)? He asserts "Kentucky Baptists deserve

to know what is being taught" but makes no mention himself of having taken such biblical responses in his letter, choosing instead to claim what he isn't sure of.

When the writer interviews students and meets face-to-face with professors rather than cast aspersions, and takes care to speak only for himself without presuming to be a voice for "a sizeable portion of Kentucky Baptists," then I gladly will give more thought to what he has to say. His letter is a reminder it is sometimes easier to quote the Bible rather than live the Bible.

Lynn Traylor  
Westport

**Division 'work of Satan'**

I wanted to respond to Tracy Powell-McCoy's April 26 letter about Christians being Democrats and asking the question, "Must we all think the same?" According to Jesus and the Apostle Paul, the world's two greatest sources, we must.

Paul said, "Be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God ... attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). Jesus said, "I pray ... that all of them may be one. ... May they be brought to complete unity" (John 17:20-21, 23).

**Have you lost your joy?**

By Henry Blackaby

Atlanta (BP)—David, in his great act of repentance, cried out to God: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation" (Psalm 51:12).

You see, David had sinned and the joy God had given him was gone. In the past God's joy had come to David when God was free to express Himself to David. Suddenly, David's unconfessed sin had caused God to no longer do in David what He had purposed for him. But God did hear David's cry, and He restored His salvation in David.

Have you lost your joy? More

importantly, have you lost the joy of God's salvation? Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).

Jesus knew there was great joy in the salvation that He and the Father would provide for His disciples. At the Last Supper He explained to them that the peace and joy He and the Father gave them far surpassed anything the world had to offer: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give it. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let

I used to wonder if Christians being Democrats was akin to drunkenness until God showed me that Jesus was Arimathea, a righteous man, was a member of the liberal Jewish Sanhedrin. However, he had to be sanhed to most of what they did. His loyalty wasn't to government but to God. I say this though I believe God's spirit of favor, anointing and increase are more on the Republican Party now, though that can change if they do.

I can say with precision that division and derision is the work of Satan, and America is full of it! A house divided against itself cannot stand. (Luke 11:17).

Also, the adjacent letter by Mary Graves about the rally held opposing judicial filibusters states her horror that it was "held at a Baptist church."

During our rally for independence, our Founding Fathers held a worship service lasting several hours at a church not far from the meeting site. Also, every Sunday for years, worship services were held in the office of the Treasury, the Supreme Court building and the Capitol Rotunda.

As for her statement about the separation of church and state in the Constitution, the only constitution you actually find that in is the one of the former Soviet Union.

Rob Cornett  
Clearfield

it be afraid" (John 14:27). Later that night He added, "I will see you again and your heart will rejoice and your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:22). What a promise! No circumstance can affect the joy He gives.

Thus, the salvation God grants is the only source of true joy. Such joy only comes from a daily intimate relationship with God. If our lives, marriages and families have an absence of His joy, then we have lost that kind of relationship. But when we love Him with all our heart, and fellowship with Him daily, we experience Him and His joy as He has purposed it for our lives.

Henry Blackaby is president of Blackaby Ministries International in Atlanta

**Churches blessed by God**

I'd like to tell you about some churches that are being blessed by God in pretty special ways.

First, God has blessed New Horizon Baptist Church in Glendale, where Steve Hill is pastor, with the gift of a spacious building. The former congregation could not meet the mortgage payments so it offered to join with New Horizon which needed a facility.

In addition to a 400-seat sanctuary, there is a full basement, a two-story educational wing and eight acres of land. It is located in an area where 450 homes will be built.

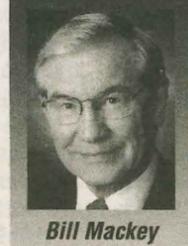
New Horizon has remodeled the educational space and developed a youth room in a section of the basement. New Horizon has about 250 people in attendance, with a significant number of youth.

Pastor Hill agrees that God has blessed the congregation with a great place to worship, grow and

reach people. The pastor's family provides inspirational music, along with other musicians.

Another church that has been blessed is New Friendship Baptist Church in Auburn. During the recent Welcome to Kentucky event for new pastors and staff with Kentucky Baptist churches, I met John Birchett, who is the pastor of New Friendship Church. John said he had been blessed to be pastor of a church that has almost doubled in attendance. The church currently needs to rebuild or offer multiple services.

Pastor Birchett had been youth minister at the church several years ago. After seminary, he had been called as pastor of a traditional congregation. Then the former pastor of New Friendship invited him to conduct revival services. During the week the pastor asked John to preach his funeral, which he did

**PARTNERS IN THE MISSION**

Bill Mackey

**CHURCH****Incapacity plans  
are essential part  
of estate planning**

By Laurie Valentine

In addition to planning for the distribution of assets at your death, you need to make financial and health plans in case you became incapacitated as a result of a stroke, accident or illness during your lifetime.

Key issues include how your assets would be managed as well decisions about your health and personal care.

Neglecting this aspect of your plan can be costly. Court-supervised guardianship, which might be the only choice if you have done no advanced planning, can be a substantial, ongoing financial drain on your resources. Asking that a court determine if you are mentally incompetent so that a guardian can take control of your assets can place a tremendous emotional strain on your family.

Incapacity planning allows you to plan now for the possibility that some future physical or mental incapacity might render you unable to manage your own affairs. It permits you to decide who will manage your finances and make decisions for you and determine how that person will be empowered to act for you. It also states what kinds of decisions should be made for you if you cannot speak for yourself.

Usually more than one "incapacity planning" document is necessary to accomplish one's incapacity planning objectives.

Empowering someone to manage your assets and deal with financial matters can be accomplished through the use of durable powers of attorney and revocable living trusts. A power of attorney could include authority to deal with your assets, including real estate, manage your investments, sign tax returns and deal with tax matters, file benefit claims and make gifts.

Memorializing your healthcare wishes and declaring the types of healthcare decisions that should be made for you if you cannot speak for yourself can be achieved by making both a living will directive and a healthcare power of attorney. The healthcare power of attorney allows you to empower someone to speak for you to see that your wishes regarding your healthcare, including those expressed in your living will, are carried out.

As people live longer, the possibility that they will experience a period of incapacity during their lifetime becomes greater. This makes the need to do this type of planning vital.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



## Son's 'freeloading' friends provide ministry opportunity

**Q: When my son returns home from college this summer, I am afraid he will spend most of his time with old friends who irritate me when they come and freeload at our home. How can I keep this from happening?**

While it would be unwise to try to legislate who your son chooses as friends, you can concentrate your efforts in several areas to maximize your influence.

### PARENTING

First, imagine that your home is a mission field in which you are willing to make significant investments. Rather than resenting the fact that your son's friends come over, eat your food and mess up your house, remind yourself that there is a greater good that trumps your need for order and control. If these kids are breathing, they need Jesus. Your son might have the opportunity to reach out and bring his friends into a place where they can be influenced.

Clearly communicate to your son and his friends at the beginning of the summer what expectations you have. Meet privately with your son—before there is a problem—to clarify such things as curfew, use of family vehicles, acceptable hours for entertaining visitors, employment issues and the protocols for cleanup. Let your son know you are glad to have him home, but that living at home comes with responsibilities.

Consider expanding your home by maximizing outdoor space. Make the patio or deck an inviting place by sprucing it up, adding lighting and comfortable furniture. Repair the basketball goal or set up a volleyball net or Frisbee golf course.

Interact with your son in as many activities as you can. Remember that males connect through activity, and that this offers opportunities for communication. Finally, remember the words of Charles Spurgeon, "Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter."—*Scott Wigginton*

**Q: For some time I have been troubled by my wife's actions of drawing back when I am affectionate with her. She denies being upset. We love each other and get along well. She usually explains away her reaction and moves on to something else. At other times she is affectionate with me. I wish she would not pull away from me. How should I respond?**

The book "Jesus in Blue Jeans" has a chapter titled, "He Leaned into the Kisses." Author Laurie Beth Jones describes the manner in which Jesus received gifts of love offered to Him from others, such as Mary anointing Him with expensive oil or the children coming to be with Him.

### MARRIAGE

We often fail to receive with the proper heart the loving attention given to us. Many of us could have benefited from a course in school that taught lessons on how to receive. According to Jones, "I've learned to accept compliments as evidences of God's kisses, as well as the many demonstrations of love and delight I am blessed to receive from others."

It might be your wife is focused on other things as I have been before, such as worrying about getting makeup on my husband's shirt or turning away from his late-in-the-day scratchy stubble. If there is no history of sexual abuse with your wife, which can result in withdrawal as an instinctual reaction, and no current abuse in your marriage that could prompt such a reaction, she might not realize how her actions are affecting you.

Because many of us are poorly trained in receiving good gifts from others in the form of words or physical touch, our actions can, over time, cause harm to a relationship. Consider sharing with your wife what you have observed in her behavior and how you feel in response to it. Invite her into a dialogue about the gifts you want to give to each other and how the two of you can best receive those gifts. With some awareness and openness, perhaps you both can learn to lean into the kisses as Jesus did.—*Valerie Vincent*

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## CP study group tackles funding concerns

The Cooperative Program got lots of attention during last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board meeting.

In addition to approving allocations for the \$23.1 million Cooperative Program budget for 2005-06, board members approved a 20-member Cooperative Program Study Committee to address "ways to increase CP giving in the future that would result in increased financial support for KBC and SBC causes." Board members also were told the board's business and finance committee is establishing a subcommittee "to study what is considered a CP gift and the issue of negative designations."

Why all the focus on Kentucky Baptists' and Southern Baptists' 80-year-old unified giving plan?

One major concern has been a gradual decline in the percentage of undesignated receipts local churches are channeling through the Cooperative Program. Since peaking at more than 10 percent in 1997, Kentucky Baptist churches' undesignated giving percentages to CP hit a low of 7.87 percent in 2003.

Rebounding slightly to 7.96 percent last year, the giving rate still is far below historic highs. The 2004 increase of less than 0.1 percent compares to a 4.7 percent jump in Kentucky Baptist churches' overall undesignated receipts, according to Annual Church Profile statistics.

During a recent business and finance committee meeting, KBC President Hershael York asked why the CP giving percentage has been declining. During ensuing discussion, committee members agreed that reversing the trend and strengthening CP promotion are pressing needs. As a result, the proposal to establish a CP study committee emerged.

According to KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey, giving trends indicate that "a lot of churches are doing their own mission projects which is commendable." But he cautioned that "the danger is churches forget about the basic giving process that supports missionar-

ies on the field."

Noting that CP giving helps fund "strategic coordination of our approach to missions," Mackey said, "Otherwise, you've just got individuals going out and doing work for a short period of time that may not be sustained."

Last year's record Cooperative Program receipts of more than \$23 million marked an increase of 5.8 percent over the previous year. Thankfully, that total halted a two-year decline in Kentucky Baptist CP gifts.

But even with that positive step, CP gifts have failed to keep pace with inflation since 1990. As of last year, CP receipts were 10 percent below the national inflation rate compared to 20 years ago.

In practical terms, churches' decreased giving percentages through the Cooperative Program and inflation's ongoing impact mean CP-supported ministries have fewer real dollars with which to accomplish vital strategies such as "Kentucky Baptists Connect," "Empowering Kingdom Growth" and mission efforts on the state, national and international levels.

What is the solution? That is among the issues the KBC Mission Board's Cooperative Program Study Committee will seek to address. Pray for committee chairman Dan Ferguson, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, and other members as they begin their work.

In the meantime, one obvious step is for individual churches to consider increasing their financial support through the Cooperative Program. Whether that involves increasing the annual percentage of giving or simply increasing the dollar amount regardless of overall budget income, the net result will be more ministry funds available to help strengthen God's Kingdom in Kentucky and around the world.

"When there's a decline," Mackey warned, "ministries begin to suffer." Hopefully, the study committee and local Baptist churches can help ensure such suffering doesn't occur in the years ahead.

## Spiritual economics: What's your grade?

By James Draper

**Nashville (BP)**—Find a successful business and you've probably discovered a company that understands supply and demand. Supply and demand is the economic principle that certain businesses supply or provide the goods and services that consumers demand or want.

For example, take Apple's iPod. This pocket-sized jukebox has exploded in popularity in the past six months with several million units sold. Its popularity has influenced our culture. Owners are never separated from their music collection.

Ford's new Mustang falls into the same popularity category. Dealers can't get them on the lots fast enough before consumers buy them. Both Ford and Apple understand supply and demand. Each has given consumers what they want and have realized exponential revenues.

Evangelicals need a basic business lesson. Research shows that evangelicals are not supplying the gospel in a manner that matches the public's demand. As a result, we are missing the opportunity to realize exponential growth in our churches and the Kingdom of God.

A recent MSNBC/Newsweek online survey asked readers: "Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead after the crucifixion?" Eighty-one percent responded "yes," while 13 percent responded "no" and another 6 percent responded "I don't know."

Eighty-one percent is a significant number. It reflects other research showing that the population at large is searching for meaning in life. Ironically, Jesus' resurrection often is the event that traditionally causes a rub. The resurrection validates everything God

### COMMENTARY

said about Jesus in the Old Testament and fulfills all that Christ said about Himself. This includes the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in salvation. He said: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

So, applying economic principles, one would think that churches would supply a great deal of evangelism that would satisfy people's desire to know. However, there is an imbalance. Demand is not being met and we—the church—are not receiving a passing grade. We haven't for a long time. Remember, Jesus said 2,000 years ago: "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37).

One out of every three adults in America is unchurched, according to a recent study by the Barna Group. The report indicates that the number has held consistent over the past five years but because of population growth, the number of unchurched adults continues to grow annually by nearly a million people.

Sadly, according to an earlier Barna Group study, fewer than half (46 percent) of the Protestant senior

pastors surveyed listed evangelism and outreach as a ministry priority. Spiritual development finished No. 1 at 47 percent. (Sixty percent of Southern Baptist pastors place evangelism as their top priority).

Spiritual development is important, but it is not the primary purpose of the church. Spiritual development often becomes egocentric and many churches focus growth inward. We thought that if believers were discipled they automatically would be strong witnesses and become more evangelistic. But this has not proven to be the case. We've turned churches into comfortable country clubs for members when, in fact, the purpose of the church is to reach those who are not members.

The evangelical church in America is losing ground when it comes to effecting change in our culture. Instead of a trend in our nation toward godliness, the trend is toward secularism devoid of anything godly. We have missed the boat because we think Christianity is about getting our needs met. It is not. It's about God and His Kingdom coming on earth as it is in heaven.

Supply and demand isn't just an economic principle; it's a biblical principle as well. Jesus identified the disparity between the demand and the supply in Matthew 9:37, but we've been slow to respond. There's still time, but we have to wonder: What's our final grade going to be in spiritual economics?

*James Draper is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention*

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## NATIONAL NOTES

**Justice Department** officials announced recently the establishment of a special task force that will try to curb the distribution of obscene images. The Obscenity Prosecution Task Force will coordinate efforts across different parts of the vast law-enforcement agency, with emphasis on the "special challenges that obscenity cases pose in the computer age," according to a statement.

**Protestant megachurches**—those with weekly attendance exceeding 2,000—might be more prevalent than originally thought. Researchers at Leadership Network and Hartford Institute for Religion Research say they have discovered at least 1,200 Protestant megachurches rather than the figure of about 850 they have previously cited. Scott Thumma, a Hartford Seminary professor, said critics who thought megachurches were a baby-boom phenomenon that would wane seem to be incorrect.

**Stem cell research** might be acceptable to a majority of Americans, according to a recent survey. Three out of four respondents said they support or might support embryonic stem cell research, according to a survey by Opinion Research Corporation.

# Group revises religious persecution list

Washington (RNS)—An independent federal watchdog group announced last week that Uzbekistan has been added to and India dropped from its annual list of countries that have "engaged in or tolerated systematic and egregious violations" of religious freedom.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom presented its recommendations regarding "countries of particular concern" during a news conference at the National Press Club.

By law, the U.S. secretary of state must consider the written report and take appropriate action within 180 days.

The commission reaffirmed its 2004 recommendations that the State Department designate Burma, the People's Republic of China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam as countries of particular concern.

### Economic sanctions possible

According to the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton, the secretary of state may designate countries that violate the individual pursuit of religious freedom as "countries of particular concern."

Once that happens, those countries might be subject to economic sanctions.

Uzbekistan made the list because since it gained independence in 1992, the Uzbek government has not upheld fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, said Preeti Bansal, chairwoman of the commission.

India was removed from the list of violators following "significant" improvements in religious freedom, said Michael Cromartie, USCIRF commissioner. In May 2004, the Bharatiya Janata Party, which had been implicated in violence against religious minorities, was defeated. India is now on the commission's watch list.

Bansal emphasized that the group's designation "is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a focused, diplomatic effort to

## Countries to be considered

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, the following countries should be listed as "countries of particular concern," a designation that can lead to economic sanctions:

**Burma.** In some areas, children of Christians and Muslims are taken from parents and forcibly converted to Buddhism.

**China.** Every religious community in China is subject to restrictions, discrimination and state control.

**Iran.** The government engages in "detention, torture and execution ... based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused."

**North Korea.** "Freedom of religion or belief is essentially nonexistent."

**Sudan.** The government violates freedom of religion or belief against those who do not follow the government's extremist interpretation of Islam.

**Saudi Arabia.** The government continues to be involved in financing activities throughout the world that support extreme religious intolerance.

**Vietnam.** The government harasses, detains, imprisons and discriminates against practitioners of all religious communities.

**Eritrea.** The government bans activities for all unregistered religious groups and has closed their places of worship.

**Pakistan.** The government does not provide an adequate response to vigilante violence perpetrated by Sunni Muslim militants.

**Turkmenistan.** "President Saparmurat Niyazov's monopoly of power ... over Turkmen society renders independent religious activity impossible."

**Uzbekistan.** The government exercises "a high degree of control over the manner in which the Islamic faith is practiced."

Source: [www.uscirf.gov](http://www.uscirf.gov)

promote freedom of religion in the countries recommended for designation."

In its report, the commission urged Rice to take action against CPC designees—action that so far has been ignored by the Clinton and Bush administrations.

In the case of Burma, China, Iran, North Korea and Sudan, all long-time CPC designees, the U.S. government has enforced only sanctions already in existence against those countries for other reasons.

"The U.S. government's reliance on pre-existing sanctions has provided little incentive for those CPC governments to reduce or end egregious violations of religious freedom," the USCIRF said in its new report. "(That) is unacceptable

as a matter of policy. The failure to take additional action under IREFA suggests that nothing further can, or will, be done by the U.S. government with respect to (CPC designees)."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

## Author, prof urges churches to take youth seriously

Continued from page 1

Youth pastors who don't feel competent to share their faith should be honest about it, Reid said, and learn the process alongside the teenagers.

And churches should teach youth how to worship, Reid said.

Churches should find ways to involve teens more in their services, he said, so they take ownership and become motivated to worship early in their lives.

Finally, Reid said, churches should teach young people to pray.

"Many Christian families do not pray together," he said. "We have no business talking about prayer in schools when we don't pray at home."

The rebirth of prayer among today's youth, he said, must start with their parents.

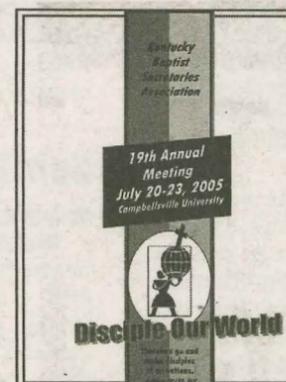
Reid said he's hopeful about changing the outlook for today's youth and their future.

"Three things every young person needs are a model to follow, an encourager to believe in them and permission to live for Jesus."

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You might desire to make your gift in the convenient form of a check. Such gifts are generally tax deductible in amounts up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. Gifts of appreciated assets, like securities or real estate, generally are tax deductible in amounts up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income. When you give securities and real estate that you have owned for more than a year, you are entitled to a deduction for the full market value, not just the original cost amount. As a result, you receive a tax deduction on the unrealized gain without having to pay a capital gains tax.

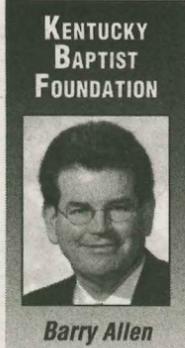
You might have a cash value life insurance policy, the original purpose of which no longer exists. Gifts of life insurance also can be an excellent way to make a memorial or tribute gift with excellent tax benefits. Retirement funds might allow you to give more while eliminating taxes.

Perhaps you desire to make a tribute gift but you are not ready to part with that much money or property. You will be pleased to know there are ways to make such a gift without jeopardizing either your income or your security. These involve giving from what remains after you no longer need the asset.

Finally, a bequest in your will or trust is another way to specify a tribute gift. After distributing property to family members, you can name the Kentucky Baptist Foundation to receive the remainder of your estate as a living memorial or tribute gift.

Please call toll-free Laurie Valentine or me for assistance in honoring someone this Memorial Day.

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



KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Barry Allen

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 Collected prose or poetry of a particular time period (abbr.)
- 4 TV newsmen Severeid
- 8 Egg \_\_\_\_ soup, Chinese classic
- 12 Epoch
- 13 Beginning of refreshing brand name that "spells" summer to kids
- 14 Land measure
- 15 Ancient musical instrument, mentioned in Isaiah 5:12
- 17 "The Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his \_\_\_\_ shall rule" (Isaiah 40:10)
- 19 Where Sherman marched (abbr.)
- 20 "There is a \_\_\_\_ here, which hath five barley loaves" (John 6:9)
- 21 El \_\_\_\_
- 22 Deface
- 23 "Children, \_\_\_\_ your parents in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1)
- 25 Sports venue
- 26 Prohibits
- 27 "Cast the \_\_\_\_ on the right side of the ship" (John 21:6)
- 28 Total
- 29 \_\_\_\_ Auerbach, famed NBA coach
- 30 Masculine nickname
- 31 "Praise him with the \_\_\_\_ and dance" (Psalm 150:4)
- 33 Continent (abbr.)
- 35 "Take, \_\_\_\_: this is my body" (1 Corinthians 11:24)
- 36 Fare poorly
- 37 Possessed
- 38 "I will sing a new \_\_\_\_ unto thee, O God" (Psalm 144:9)
- 40 Popular street name
- 41 "All things were \_\_\_\_ by him" (John 1:3)
- 42 "I am too \_\_\_\_ to have an husband" (Ruth 1:12)
- 43 "The word \_\_\_\_ God" (John 1:1)
- 44 Chum

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Evelyn Boyington

- 45 Atlantic state (abbr.)
- 46 Broadcast
- 47 "One jot or one \_\_\_\_ shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18)
- 50 At any time
- 52 "For \_\_\_\_ Christ pleased not himself" (Romans 15:3)
- 54 Corn serving
- 55 "We shall all stand before the judgment \_\_\_\_ of Christ" (Romans 14:10)
- 56 Feast fashionably
- 57 Hair to \_\_\_\_ for (salon slogan)

- 24 "Rise, take up thy \_\_\_\_, and walk" (John 5:8)
- 25 Adhesive
- 26 \_\_\_\_ canto, singing style
- 28 Make a lap
- 29 Kin (abbr.)
- 31 Game where someone is "it"
- 32 "Over the \_\_\_\_" (goal of hoopsters)
- 33 "When ye fast, be not ... of a \_\_\_\_ countenance" (Matthew 6:16)
- 34 Fruit drink
- 35 "The \_\_\_\_ of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7)
- 37 Brought to a stop
- 38 "There was a certain beggar named Lazarus ... full of \_\_\_\_" (Luke 16:20)
- 39 Item found in groves
- 40 Dog-\_\_\_\_ (like the pages of a book)
- 41 Tatami, commonly
- 43 Midwest state (abbr.)
- 44 Yearn for
- 46 "\_\_\_\_ thou the Christ?" (Luke 22:67)
- 47 Perfect score, to some
- 48 "I will both \_\_\_\_ me down in peace, and sleep" (Psalm 4:8)
- 49 Poetic contraction
- 51 Apiece (abbr.)
- 53 Caribbean island group (abbr.)

Down

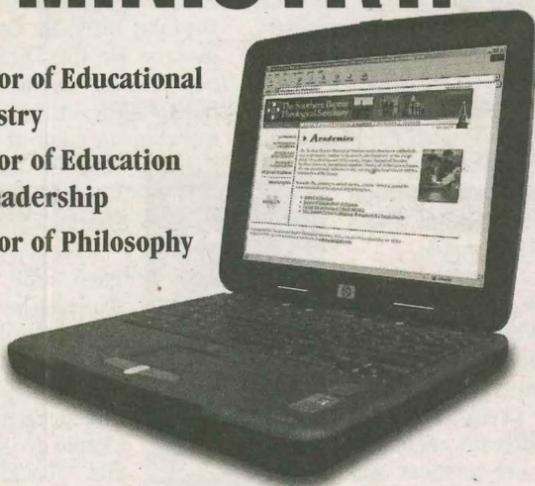
- 1 Tennis call
- 2 Gershwin
- 3 Pill, perhaps
- 4 Got by, barely, with "out"
- 5 Go bad
- 6 Vowel duo
- 7 \_\_\_\_ check
- 8 Hoover, for one
- 9 Cola brand name
- 10 Liver or lung, for example
- 11 Bosc and Anjou
- 16 Oz scarecrow Bolger
- 18 Byway (abbr.)
- 21 "They lifted up their voice with the trumpets and \_\_\_\_" (2 Chronicles 5:13)
- 22 Insane
- 23 United

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11				
S	U	P		H	O	L	E	S		S	O	N		
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26	H	E	N	S		H	O	O	E	Y		R	E	
29	E	A	T		C	O	I	N	S		E	R	A	
32	M	R		V	A	I	N		S	A	V	E	R	
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### Commitment week

#### Refashioned revival leads Oneida students to make professions of faith

By Michael Spencer  
Assistant to the President

For many years, Oneida's school calendar has featured two week-long revivals. Traditionally, these spiritual emphases are a time of harvest for the seeds of the gospel that have been planted in the regular course of the school year. Oneida has been blessed with some wonderful revival meetings in the past. Working in cooperation with Oneida Baptist Church, we have enjoyed the ministry of pastors, ministers from around the state, KBC staff, evangelists and special musicians. Hundreds of students have made public professions of faith.

Of course, the format of "revivals" is changing. Fewer churches use the term "revival," and congregations are using different ways to present evangelistic ministries. This year, Oneida Baptist Institute's campus ministry sponsored the spring revival, and called the meeting "Commitment Week" as a way to re-vision and redefine what the emphasis of these weeks should be.

Commitment Week was our chosen format, and the entire event was focused on evangelism. We talked to our students before the meeting about the importance of confessing their faith in Christ openly, and following the Lord in baptism. While many of our students come from backgrounds that emphasize personal faith in Christ, many others do not, and many never hear a gospel invitation except while here at Oneida. Personal commitment events like this are important in their spiritual journeys.

#### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Looking for a Commitment Week speaker, we wanted someone who would take the call to be highly evangelistic seriously without being manipulative. I am sensitive about public invitations, and want our students to be certain about what they are doing when they respond to one. For that reason, we chose Bill Whittaker from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. It was an excellent choice, as Dr. Whittaker used a Christ-centered, discipleship-themed series of messages to explain thoroughly what it means to be committed to Jesus Christ for life. Kevin Rice, a musician from Manchester, led our music. Both were outstanding.

Each night, OBI staff served as counselors. At the end of the week, 19 students made first-time professions of faith, and most of those students chose to be baptized at Oneida Baptist Church. Many other decisions and needs were shared as well.

Events like Commitment Week remind us that Oneida's greatest mission is to present Christ and to call our students to believe in Him for life. The gospel is preached, shared and lived out on our campus every day. Being open and honest with our students about our prayers for their spiritual commitments is part of who we are. As Paul said, we renounce any kind of manipulation and openly present Christ as Savior and Lord to every student's conscience. Some make a profession of faith during Commitment Week, while others will not come to Christ for many years. In whatever way God chooses to work, we rejoice that Christ is preached.

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

### Fellowship closer than family

#### Graduates share lessons learned & blessings received

"I've learned how to be a better student and how to use what the Lord has taught me in ministry. I met my wife, Amanda, while at Clear Creek. A treasured memory is singing 'Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It' with Dr. Pfoff in biology class, knowing that I am redeemed through Jesus Christ. Amen!" Travis Dunn, South Carolina.

"My experience as chaplain of the Bell County Volunteer Fire Department was a major accomplishment. Preaching in Clear Creek Days took me to different areas and enabled me to meet and spend time with many people and their families." Richard Fain, Nebraska.

"I learned to depend on God for all things. My wife, Gayle, and I were blessed to share our home with other students." Jeff Griggs, pastor of Fonde Baptist Church, Bell County.

"It was difficult to leave our three oldest children and a grandson to attend Clear Creek. My fondest memory is leading my future son-in-law to the Lord and baptizing him." Jimmy Harper, Florida. (His father, Ennis, graduated in 1971; his brother, Doyle, is a 1996 alumnus and

pastor in Jacksonville, Fla.)

"God has providentially blessed and provided for our family. I'm thankful for sitting under the leadership of professors like Dr. Pfoff, Dr. John Ditty, Dr. Castlen and my mentor, Dr. Jim Ditty. I'll remember Tuesday night meals at our house with other students, and working on campus with Brother Charles, Ronnie, Marcelus and Charlotte." Paul Harris, Georgia.

"Clear Creek broadened my educational experience in areas of Bible, theology and philosophy. Serving as class president for three years and preaching in senior chapel are special memories." Tom Keim, Georgia.

"Our daughter, Madison, was born while on campus. I'll remember working at the physical plant with Ronnie, Marcelus, Duke and Charlotte." Mark King, pastor of Double Springs Baptist Church, Waynesburg.

"I commuted to campus two days a week; it was difficult leaving my family. God blessed me with fellowship shared with brothers in the Lord who have become closer than family." Randall Johnson, pastor of Beattyville Baptist Church.

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

#### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Author Lucado's beliefs transcend his denomination

By Michael Foust  
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—When Max Lucado became pastor of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio in the late 1980s, he had one unusual request. He wanted no paycheck.

Already an established author, Lucado asked that his church salary go toward other church expenses, such as hiring another employee.

Ever since then, his living expenses have come from book sales.

"I haven't received a salary since 1990," he said during a visit to Nashville last month.

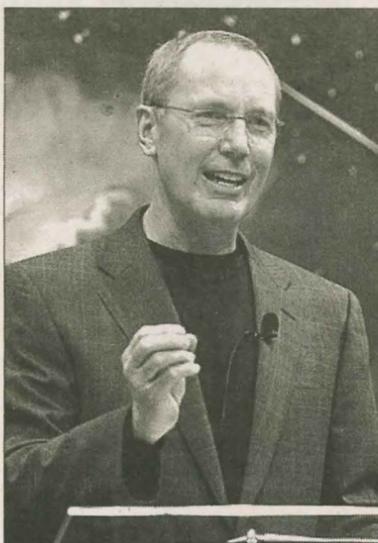
Lucado's church is Church of Christ—but not a typical Church of Christ. For starters, musical instruments are used (although there is still one a cappella service). Also, the church has a baptistic view of baptism—that is, that baptism isn't required for salvation.

Recently, his church, which has approximately 5,000 members, even changed its name from "Oak Hills Church of Christ" to simply "Oak Hills Church."

"We've received criticism, of course," he said. "But our thinking is that we're not here to please other churches or other church leaders in other cities. As a church in San Antonio, our goal is to reach San Antonio."

Christians of all denominations have embraced Lucado's work. He has written more than 50 books—with more than 39 million in print—including his latest, "Come Thirsty," which came out last year.

"(The book has) a pretty simple premise, and that is what we feel in



Max Lucado

the body for water, the soul feels for Christ," he said. "Jesus said, 'If any man is thirsty let him come to Me and drink.' And so, this book basically gives the reader a prescription and permission—a prescription on what to drink and permission to drink."

Using the acronym WELL, Lucado calls on Christians to drink from God's Work on the cross, Energy (the Holy Spirit), Lordship and Love.

Lucado writes two books a year, including a children's book. In addition, a gift book bearing his name—many times a devotional—also is published.

"It's usually a repackaging of our prior works," he said.

Following is a partial transcript of Baptist Press's interview with Lucado:

**What transpired for Oak Hills Church of Christ to rename itself Oak Hills Church?**

"I was really struck that many people would not visit our church because of the name. They had a bad experience somewhere with the Church of Christ. I've never had an allegiance to the name. Oak Hills has never fit into that mold of a Church of Christ. ... There are people in the Church of Christ who believe that they're the only ones going to heaven. We never believed that. I never believed that. We were never exclusively a cappella in our music, but a lot of Churches of Christ are. We always had instrumentation.

"We never taught—the buzzphrase is baptismal regeneration—where you go into the baptistry lost and come out saved. We never taught that. Now, I'm not saying there were not people in our church who believed that. ...

"So we didn't quite fit the mold of the Church of Christ, so it didn't make sense to us that people should not come and visit the church because of the name."

**Does the name "Church of Christ" sometimes cause controversy and criticism for you as a prominent writer and speaker?**

"I've always had plenty of ministry opportunities, but I have suspected a disconnect when people say, 'I don't understand your understanding of grace when you come out of a Church of Christ background.'

"I've tried to help them see, first of all, that not all Churches of Christ are alike—just like not all Baptists or Methodists or Lutheran churches

are alike—and then also, that there is a great movement of grace, discovery going on among Churches of Christ right now. And it's exciting to watch."

**Does your church hold to a Church of Christ view of eternal security?**

"I don't. Now, this is an ongoing conversation in our church. I believe that if a person is genuinely saved they're eternally saved, and that the work of the Holy Spirit—Ephesians 1:13, 'When you believed you were sealed with the Spirit'—that sealing is effective and eternal. If a person is genuinely saved, then nobody can snatch them out of the Father's hands.

"That's a discovery that I have made in the last decade or so that I don't think I embraced early on. But when you discover that salvation belongs to the Lord and doesn't belong to you, that is good news."

**How do you find time to write so much?**

"I don't play much golf. All of my sermons become books. That helps. I have a great ministerial team. And the elders at the church, all they want me to do is preach. That's been our arrangement.

"I preach about 40 Sundays a year. I'm gradually working toward maybe 35, because we're wanting to train some other young ministers.

"About four weeks out of the year I just write, and that's in January and February. What I do is I take the sermon series from the year before, and I turn that into a book. If the church needs to hear it, then maybe it will speak to the broader market."

**"We're not here to please other churches or other church leaders in other cities. ... Our goal is to reach San Antonio."**

Author Max Lucado

## Grammy winner sings of redemption, preaches of second chances

By Kim Lawton  
Religion & Ethics Newsweekly

Freeport, N.Y.—Donnie McClurkin is a gospel music superstar whose voice is recognized around the world.

But on Sunday mornings, as Pastor McClurkin, he has more local concerns—like the parking problems in his church's neighborhood.

"You wanna' be mindful of Zack's Delicatessen across the street also," he told his congregation during a recent service. "They have a problem with the clientele getting in. Amen?"

McClurkin, a Grammy Award-winning artist, has sung for presidents, but he's better known for being real. And whether in his local church pulpit or on a stage before thousands, he preaches a forthright, often provocative message—about his troubled past, his struggle with homosexuality and his faith in God.

Music, he says, is his sermon.

"You won't find a major religion in this world that doesn't use music, because the truth of the matter is that music comes from God," he told the PBS television program "Religion & Ethics Newsweekly."

"I don't understand it to this day, but music goes past the soul, goes past the emotions and gets into the spirit of a man and can bring him to his knees. If you ever want to get anybody in touch with God, sing to them."

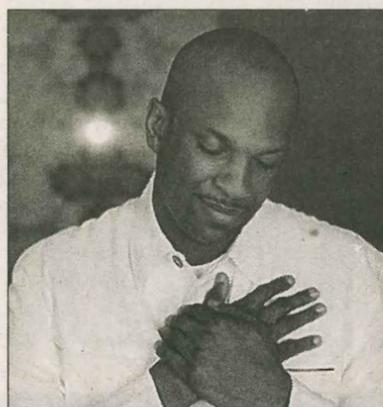
McClurkin, 45, has sung for millions. His three solo albums have topped the Billboard charts and Gospel and secular R&B playlists. In 2003 he won a Grammy for his CD "Again."

"Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs," released in April, debuted at No. 1 on the Gospel charts and No. 5 on the secular R&B/Hip-Hop charts.

### Music from personal pain

Much of McClurkin's music comes out of his personal experience, especially his pain. His happy early childhood ended abruptly in 1968, when he was 8 years old. His 2-year-old brother was hit by a car and killed. The night of the funeral, he said, his uncle raped him. In addition, his family was torn apart by drugs, alcohol and violence.

McClurkin found solace in the church. He was particularly drawn to the music of the church.



Donnie McClurkin

"I was always introverted. ... I had such an inferiority complex, and the only way that I could really depict any feelings or any emotions was through music."

When he was 13, McClurkin said, he was raped again—by his cousin. That led to a 20-year battle over his sexual identity.

"My desires were toward men and I had to fight those things because I knew that it wasn't what we were taught in church."

He said that through Bible study and intense prayer, he has overcome his homosexuality.

"God gave me the wherewithal to get out of that. And to find out who I really am. And consequently, that's how the change took place. The different Scriptures in the Bible, His (God's) will being shown through the Scriptures. ... God walked me through it."

His comments have provoked a firestorm of controversy, particularly from gay rights groups offended by his belief that homosexuality is something that can be chosen—or "overcome." McClurkin insists he's not condemning anyone, but he makes no apologies for his beliefs.

### No saint

He's also open about his continuing sexual struggles.

He fathered a child out of wedlock five years ago. His hit song "We Fall Down" talks about the frailties of saints and sinners alike.

"You know, I don't understand where the hypocrisy comes in heavily in Christianity. And it angers me in a way, because the bottom line is, if you mess up, just say, 'I messed up,'" he said.

McClurkin is head pastor at Perfecting Faith Church, a non-denominational Pentecostal church in Freeport.

Services there are exuberant and interactive. Church members are likely to be dancing in the aisles, speaking in tongues or lying on the floor, overcome, they say, by the Holy Spirit.

Asked how he handles fame, McClurkin acknowledged celebrity has its pros and cons.

"But what celebrity has afforded me is a greater platform to declare the very message that has changed my life. ... I don't want to be larger than life. God's chosen that I am for His purposes."

**"Music goes past the soul, goes past the emotions and gets into the spirit of a man and can bring him to his knees."**

Donnie McClurkin



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## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following missions, mission teams and projects connected with Baptists in Brazil and the International Baptist Convention in Europe, where Kentucky Baptists have partnerships:

**A house group in Gyor, Hungary**, where the sister of a member has been visiting. Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to her heart during the Bible studies.

**Bulgaria**, where less than 1 percent of the country's 7.5 million citizens are believers.

**A volunteer project in Dresden, Germany**, including street witnessing, tract distribution and prayer-walking by a team of 14 university students from the United States and their chaperones.

**Two food projects in the northeastern Brazil state of Ceara**, where missionaries and Brazilians will reach out to destitute children with the help of Southern Baptist hunger relief funds.

**A conversational English camp** that will be offered to students this summer. Pray for 28 Czech students to sign up for the camp and for the group from Virginia preparing to take a team to lead the camp. Pray also that through their efforts the Baptist name will become more credible in the North Central Czech Region—specifically in the city of Hradec Kralove.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **ASHLAND**—Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director **Bill Mackey** will preach May 22, 10:45 a.m., at Rose Hill Church. He also will be the commencement speaker for Rose Hill Christian School at 3 p.m.

■ **BEREA**—**Gary Bonnell**, pastor of Wallacetown Church, will retire May 31 due to health-related concerns.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host the **Heritage Quartet** in concert May 29, 6 p.m. Potluck meal. For more information, call (270) 789-0082.

■ **CENTRAL CITY**—Ebenezer Church recently honored **Otis Cunningham** on his 20th anniversary as pastor.

■ **COVINGTON**—**Arnold Rider**, former pastor of Decoursey Church, died March 29. He was 67. He is survived by his wife, Joyce, two children and six grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be made to the American Cancer Society.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—**Tom Collier**, pastor of Centralfield Church, resigned April 23.

■ **DRY RIDGE**—**Willie Ailstock**, pastor of Dry Ridge Church for almost 18 years, resigned April 3. A Lieutenant Colonel and a battalion chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserves, he has been called to a second year of active duty.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—New Hope Community Church will host its third annual "More of Jesus" women's conference May 21, 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. To register, call (270) 737-6645 or e-mail [dottiegebhart@comcast.net](mailto:dottiegebhart@comcast.net).

■ **EUBANK**—Eubank Church recently called **Ryan Coffey** as youth minister.

Oak Grove #1 Church recently called **Donovan Smith** as pastor.

■ **FERGUSON**—Ferguson Church recently called **Jason Moore** as pastor.

■ **FLORENCE**—Greenview Church will host the gospel group **Forgiven** in concert May 29, 6 p.m. **Steve Turner** is pastor.

■ **LEITCHFIELD**—First Church recently called **Priscilla Allen** as minister of children and **Casey Jones** as minister of music. **Tim Menser** is pastor.

■ **LONDON**—Hawk Creek Church re-

cently called **Trevor Barton** as pastor. ■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthew Church will host the **Cornerstone Men's Chorus** in concert May 22, 6:30 p.m.

■ **MADISONVILLE**—**Roy Finley** recently resigned as pastor of Second Church.

**Bill McCann**, chaplain for Regional Medical Center, recently was endorsed as a chaplain by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

■ **MONTICELLO**—Green Hill Church recently called **Jimmy Decker** as pastor.

■ **MOUNT WASHINGTON**—First Church ordained **Craig Gibson** to the gospel ministry April 24. **Paul Chitwood** is pastor.

■ **NORTONVILLE**—Nortonville Church ordained **Diamond Bond** to the gospel ministry May 1. He has been called as pastor of West Grove Church in Crofton. **Bobby Reno** is pastor of Nortonville Church.

■ **PADUCAH**—Immanuel Church recently honored **Ida Mae Dennis** on her 100th birthday.

■ **PENDLETON**—Covington Church ordained **Donnie Callis**, **Bob Elmore** and **Breck Morgan** as deacons April 10. **Tommy Rucker** is pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—Gilead Church recently called **Larry David Freeman** as pastor.

■ **SACRAMENTO**—Pond River Church recently called **Don Piper** as pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—High Street Church recently called **Stacey Burton** as children's minister. The church also honored **Steve Hall** for 40 years in ministry, including 13 years as minister of music/education at High Street Church. **Jammie Vance** is pastor.

■ **WALTON**—First Church honored **Wayne Rice** May 7 with a 59-year Sunday school perfect attendance pin presented by **Jim Burden**, retiring Sunday school director. **Sheldon Hale** is pastor.

### What's going on?

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



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### May

- 21 Associational WMU Leadership Training, First Baptist Church, Princeton; First Baptist Church, Hazard; Graefenburg Baptist Church, Waddy.
- 21 Regional Keyboard Festival, Calvary Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 23-24 Day Care Orientation, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 28-30 Wrangler Trail Ride, Land Between the Lakes.

### June

- 4 Church Weekday Education, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 4 Son Team Dinner Theatre, Cedarmore Baptist Conference Center.
- 6-10 Discovery Youth Camps, Cedarmore Baptist Conference Center.

- 11 Adults on Mission Rally, First Baptist Church, Sonora.
- 11 Church Library Ministry Workshop, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 11 Church Weekday Education Workshop, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 11 Technical Ministries Conference, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.
- 11-18 Kentucky Changers, Benton.
- 13-17 Discovery Youth Camps, Cedarmore Baptist Conference Center.
- 13-17 Mission Adventure Camp for Boys, Campbellsville University.
- 13-17 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.
- 17-18 Mission Adventure Camp for Boys, Father/Son Overnight, Campbellsville University.
- 17-18 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.

For more information, call (800) 266-6477 or visit [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org)

## Associational leader Hunter dies at 59, remembered as 'visionary'

**Stanford**—Harry Hunter, director of missions for Casey County and Lincoln County Baptist associations since 1999, died May 5 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 59.

Hunter, a member of Stanford Baptist Church, was a former pastor of several Kentucky Baptist churches including Advance Baptist Church in Baskett and Immanuel Baptist and Zion Baptist, both in Henderson.

A U.S. Marine Corps veteran and a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, he also was a part-time corporate chaplain for Tyson Foods and had served as the Mission Service Corps missionary.

Johnny Adamson, pastor of Calvary Hill Baptist Church in Stanford, noted that Hunter "had done a wonderful job among us" as director of missions.

Adamson, former moderator of Lincoln County Association, said area leaders "had a vision of need-

ing a new work" at Cedar Creek. He said Hunter "was very instrumental in purchasing the property and getting the church started. ... He was a good man to work with."

Randy Jones, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention missions growth team, officiated at Hunter's funeral service May 7 at Stanford Baptist Church.

Describing Hunter as a "visionary," Jones said, "He had the ability to see what could be when other people could only see what is."

Hunter "was a constant learner (and) a deeply spiritual man," Jones added. "He really had a strong commitment to take the church out of the four walls and into the community; he modeled that. ... He will be missed by a lot of people."

Survivors include his wife, Charlotte, two children, one grandchild and one great-grandchild.

Memorial gifts may be made to Lincoln County Baptist Association or the Church at Cedar Creek Building Fund.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR RENT:** Christian-owned condo on the beach just west of Panama City, Fla. Available for rent this summer; sleeps four; new appliances; current games and videos available. Currently running special: \$100 off the regular weekly price. Go to [www.pinnacleportrentals.com](http://www.pinnacleportrentals.com), or call (800) 874-8823 and rent unit B2308.

**FOR RENT:** Sanibel Island, Fla. Two-bedroom, two-bath condo. Screened porch, large pool, tennis courts, canoe, kayaks, lovely secluded beach. [www.sanibelcondo.net](http://www.sanibelcondo.net).

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor of education. Williamstown Baptist Church is a Southern Baptist purpose-driven church with a weekly attendance of 300+ located in a growing Northern Kentucky town near Lexington and Cincinnati. Candidate should be age 25-45, energetic, self-motivated, well-organized and a creative team player

who has an ability to relate to people of all ages on a personal and spiritual level. A bachelor's degree is required and a master's degree with related experience is a plus. Check us out at [www.williamstownbaptist.com](http://www.williamstownbaptist.com). Send or e-mail resumé by May 22 to: Stephen C. Rice, 214 North Main St., Williamstown, KY 41097. E-mail: [srice@fuse.net](mailto:srice@fuse.net). Telephone: (859) 824-4102.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Ky. Beautiful small town setting near Cumberland College. Diverse membership with an average Sunday attendance of 140 and an active youth group. Must be able to work with both SBC and CBF. Parsonage optional. SEEKING and pastoral experience. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 230 S 5th St., Williamsburg, KY 40769.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. New church in rapidly growing area. Send resumé to: DeHaven Baptist Church, PO Box 349, LaGrange, KY 40031.

**SEEKING:** Full-time associate pastor. Ministry with emphasis on children, youth and young adults. Salary will be based on qualifications and experience. Interested candidates may e-mail resumé to [fbcmorehead@hotmail.com](mailto:fbcmorehead@hotmail.com), or mail them to: First Baptist Church of Morehead, 123 East Main St., Morehead, KY 40351, Attn: Chair, Personnel Committee.

**SEEKING:** Part-time director of adult education and discipleship with emphasis on small group ministry. Please send resumé to: Broadway Baptist Church, 4000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207; or e-mail to: [office@broadwaybaptist.org](mailto:office@broadwaybaptist.org).

**SEEKING:** Bivocational Southern Baptist pastor for rural church in Boone County, Ky. Send resumé to 10060 Beil Road, Union, KY 41091.

**SEEKING:** Part-time secretary (MWF, 25 hours/week). Microsoft Office experience required. Mail resumé to: Personnel Committee, Deer Park Baptist Church, 1733 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40205; or e-mail to: [secretary@deerparkbaptist.org](mailto:secretary@deerparkbaptist.org).

**SEEKING:** Director of missions for Seeking District Association. Resumes are being accepted; send to: DOM Search Committee, Rev. Dennis Hisle, 6610 Alum Springs Road, Danville, KY 40422, or e-mail to: [pkp2astor@praisinghim.com](mailto:pkp2astor@praisinghim.com). (859) 238-2249.

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# Politics and the pulpit

*Pastor resigns after controversy about political sermons and expelled members*

By Tony Cartledge

North Carolina Biblical Recorder

Waynesville, N.C. (RNS)—The pastor of a North Carolina Baptist church has resigned after days of controversy over allegations that members were expelled for disagreeing with the pastor's political views.

Embattled pastor Chan Chandler announced his resignation to East Waynesville Baptist Church during a business meeting May 10, surprising both supporters and detractors in this western North Carolina town.

"For me to remain now would only cause more hurt for me and my family," said the 33-year-old minister, who led the church for three years.

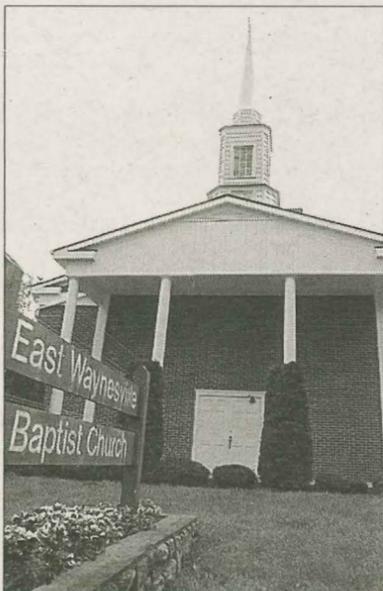
Chandler and the church became the focus of national media attention after a heated church conference May 2, in which nine long-standing members said they were voted out by a group of newcomers because they refused to endorse the pastor's political views.

## Audiotaped sermon

In an audiotape of a sermon preached by Chandler one month before the November 2004 presidential election, the pastor said: "If you vote for John Kerry this year, you need to repent or resign. You have been holding back God's church way too long. And I know I may get in trouble for saying that, but just pour it on."

Legal experts said the pastor's apparent endorsement of a candidate prior to a presidential election could violate federal laws that prevent churches and other charities organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code from officially endorsing political candidates or parties.

Long-term members said they grew tired of politically flavored sermons that condemned those who did not agree with the pastor. Several said they agreed with the pastor's stand on issues such as



abortion, but didn't want to be told how to vote.

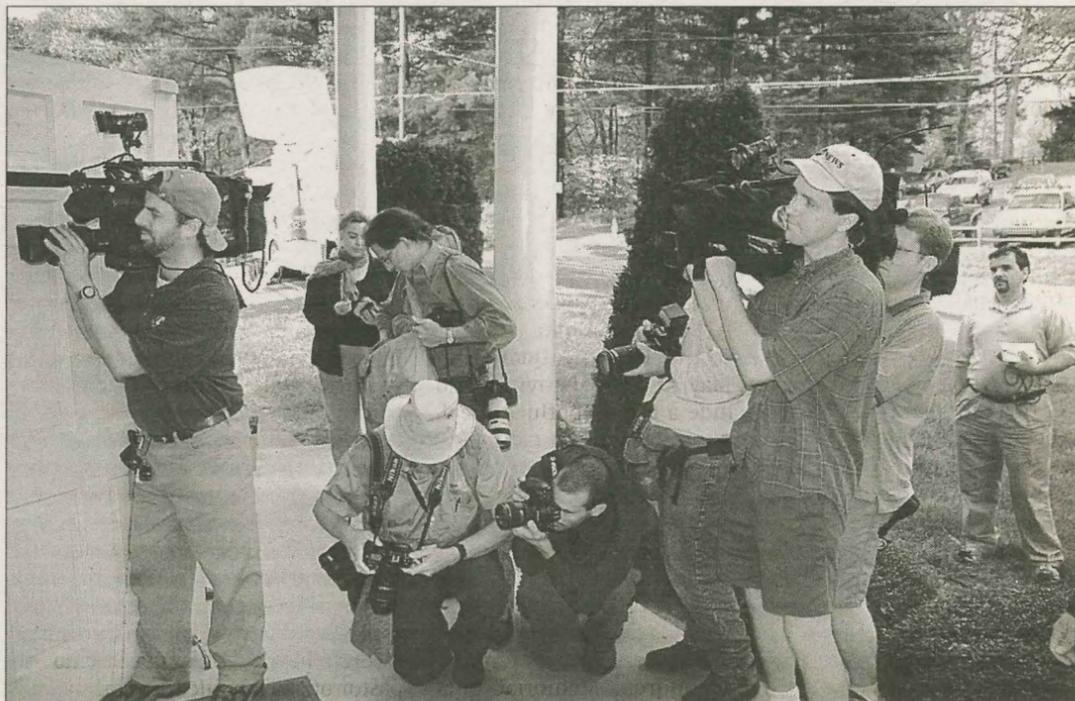
The nine ousted members said they walked out of the May 2 meeting after the pastor said he had decided to make East Waynesville Baptist a politically active church, and if they didn't like it, they should leave. As they left, some other members cheered, they said. The nine were then voted out of membership, witnesses added.

Saying the action violated church bylaws, the nine retained a lawyer. But David Wijewickrama, who represented the nine ousted members, said he had no knowledge of any negotiations for the pastor to resign.

## Political activities denounced

Religious-liberty experts—both conservative and liberal—denounced the church's action and warned the congregation could lose its tax-exemption because of the pastor's political statements.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, defended the church's right to determine its membership, but added "it would never—never—be appropriate or acceptable for a local Baptist church



to decide membership based upon how a person votes."

Barry Lynn, executive director for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, called for the IRS to investigate the church.

Meanwhile, a North Carolina congressman has introduced legislation that would lift restrictions on political speech in churches. The Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act, introduced by Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.), is supported by many conservative Christian groups but opposed by supporters of church-state separation.

Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, said the Waynesville church controversy "is why so many organizations are opposed to the Jones bill, because it would be so divisive."

## "Misunderstood," pastor insists

But in an interview with Baptist Press, Chandler insisted he was misunderstood, claiming he cited unbiblical values of some political candidates on abortion and homosexuality but did not go as far as some claim with comments related to the election.

Speaking to the congregational gathering May 10, Chandler said he had to live under the dictates of Scripture, "especially 1 Corinthians 6:1-8." That passage warns ministers against causing dissension within the church. "I am resigning with gratitude in my heart for all of you," Chandler said.

He left the church without speaking to the media. As Chandler left, his supporters stood and followed him out. One shouted, "I resign all my positions!" Two others accused the remaining members of lying, calling out biblical verses against false witness. Outside, supporters accused the media of blowing the conflict out of proportion.

The church has about 100 active members. One reporter estimated the gathering involved 35 Chandler supporters and 45 opponents.

Chandler's attorney said Chandler planned to complete his master's degree at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

With additional reporting by Steve DeVane of the Biblical Recorder, Greg Warner of Associated Baptist Press, Norm Miller of Baptist Press and Adelle Banks of Religion News Service

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT**  
Cameramen from a variety of media outlets stand outside East Waynesville Baptist Church during the church's May 10 Business meeting. (Biblical Recorder photos by Tony Cartledge)

# Texas church baptizes 515 during 'right here, right now' invitation

Grapevine, Texas (BP)—Taking a cue from the first-century church, a Texas megachurch recently baptized 515 people in one weekend.

Ed Young, pastor of Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas, is known for creative outreach and sermon illustrations.

During the April 30 and May 1 services, he walked on stage soaked head to toe and read Acts 2:41.

"The New Testament tells us that on the Day of Pentecost 3,000 people were baptized 'that day,'" he said. "I challenged the congregation to step up and be baptized 'that day' if they were already Christ-followers."

Young extended the invitation to be baptized during the four weekend worship services at the main Grapevine campus and six services at satellite locations.

"It was an incredible experience standing on the stage soaking wet talking about baptism by immer-



**ALL WET** Pastor Ed Young Jr., wrapped in a towel, exhorted attendees "to step up and be baptized." (BP photos)

sion," he recalled. "The only problem I had was that I was freezing. I had to wear a towel around my body to keep me warm while I talked."

Doris Scoggins, director of baptism for the church, organized a massive staging area where people could change into shorts, T-shirts and robes.

"We had 150 volunteers between

the four campuses who helped sign in, organize and lead people from the changing area to our baptismal fountain next to the lake," Scoggins recounted. "We told each person they could keep the shorts and T-shirts as a souvenir of their baptism."

On the Grapevine campus, four pastors baptized people simultaneously as their names were read aloud. Hundreds of people cheered during the baptismal celebration as their friends, family and small group members were immersed.

At each service, Young explained the basics of believers baptism by immersion, answered some of the most common questions people have about baptism and talked about its significance to the Christian life.

"I told the crowd that when someone balks at this first step of obedience in the Christian life, I

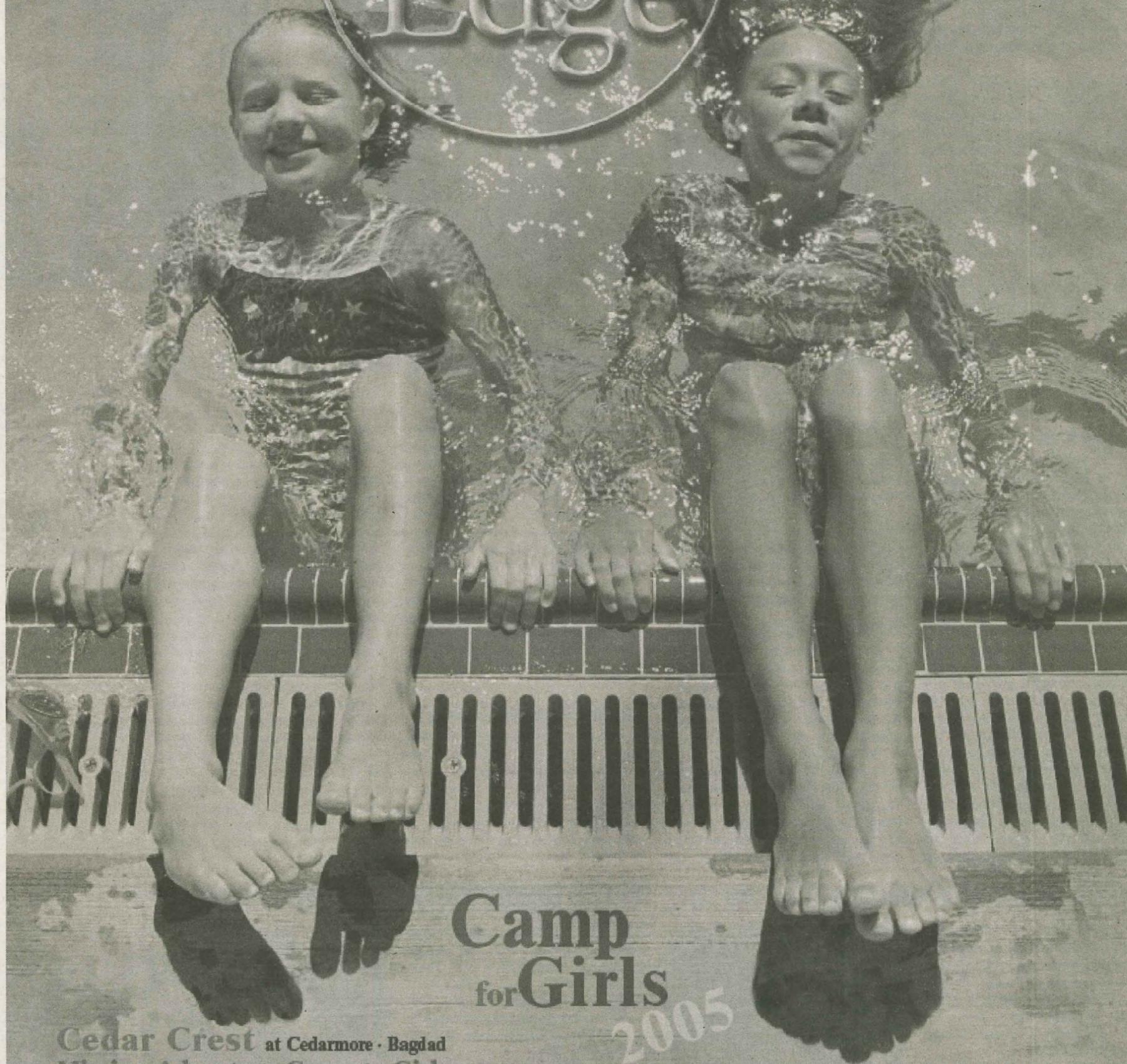


have to wonder if they are really a Christian," Young said.

"It's funny how people will become a Christian and then make all kinds of excuses why they can't be baptized," he added. "We decided that if we provided them with an opportunity to respond immediately, they wouldn't have time to make up excuses."

**FIRST STEP** Onlookers gather for the baptismal services held April 30 and May 1 at Fellowship Church in Grapevine, Texas. A total of 515 people responded to Ed Young Jr.'s call to take "the first step of obedience in the Christian life."

# Life on the Edge



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*Attendees do not have to be Girls in Action or Acteens.*