



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## FOR THE RECORD

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## Report: U.S teen attitudes toward marriage mixed

By David Winfrey  
News Director

Piscataway, N.J.—High school seniors might be developing more pro-marriage attitudes for themselves, but they are more accepting of different lifestyles for others, according to a recent report.

"The State of Our Unions 2005" is the seventh in a series of annual reports from Rutgers University.

The report cites a variety of other surveys and studies to describe Americans' attitudes and trends for marriage, divorce, cohabitation and other family issues.

Citing a survey from Michigan, the report found an increase in the percentage of high school seniors who said they expect to stay married to the same person for life.

But the poll also found a greater acceptance of people having children out of wedlock.

The "Monitoring the Future" poll found 68 percent of girls and 65 percent of boys expecting to get married said they "very likely" will stay married to the same person for life. That was up from 63 percent among girls and 54 percent among boys in 1990.

But the same survey found 56 percent of girls and 55 percent of boys agreed with the statements: "Having a child without being married is experimenting with a worthwhile lifestyle" or "not affecting anyone else." That was up significantly from 1980, when 41 percent of girls and 33 percent of boys agreed with the statement.

Other report findings included:

■ Americans are less likely to marry. In 1970, there were 76 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women, according to U.S. Census data. By 2004, that had dropped to 40 marriages per 1,000 unmarried women.

■ Cohabitation has increased "dramatically" in the past 40 years. From 1960 to 2004, the number of unmarried couples has grown nearly 1,200 percent, from 439,000 couples to slightly more than 5 million, according to the U.S. Census.

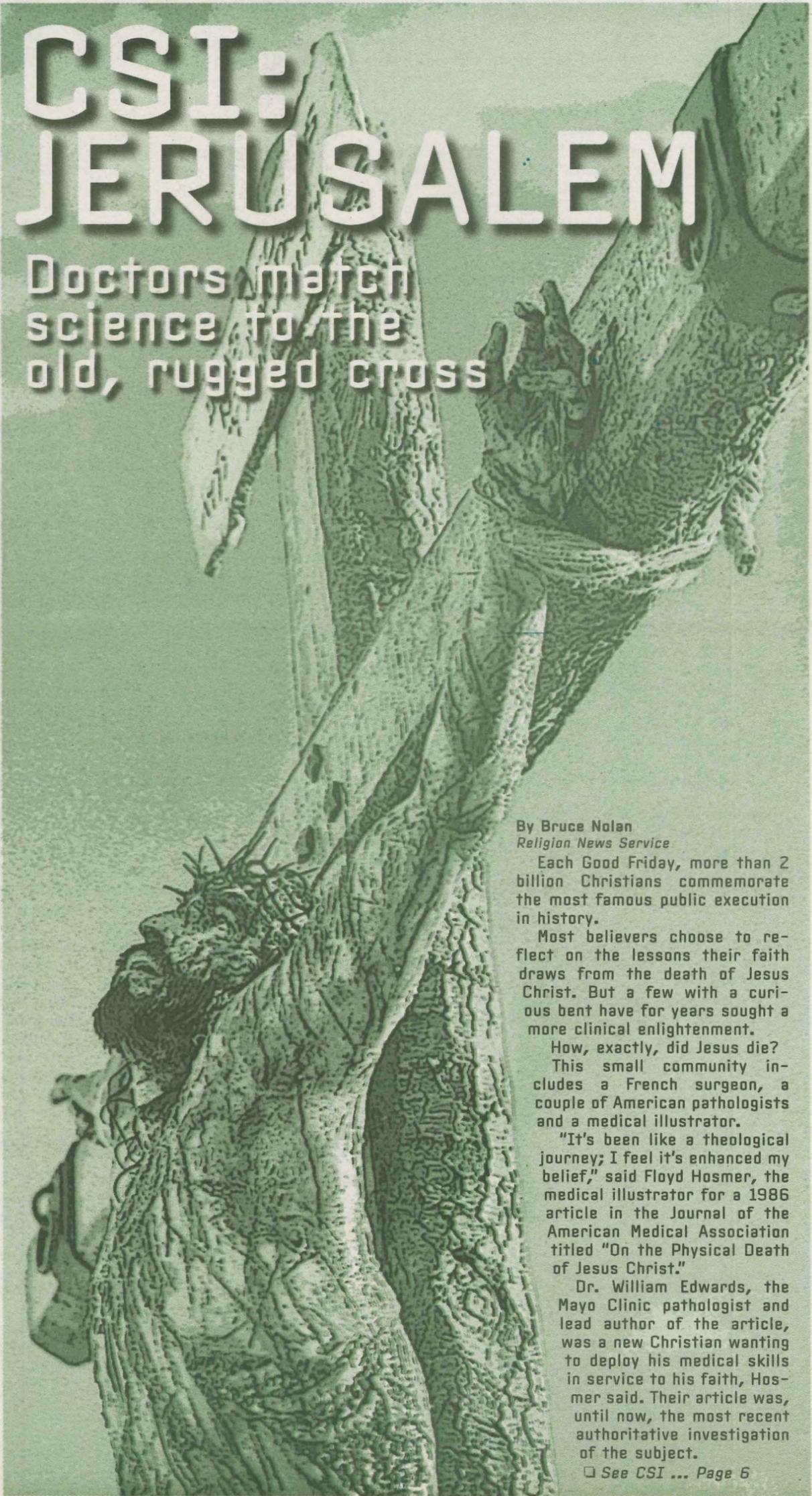
■ The presence of children in America has declined since 1960, as measured by fertility rates and the percentage of households with children. The number of births per 1,000 women age 15-44 has dropped from 118 births in 1960 to 66 in 2003, according to the National Vital Statistics Report.

The percentage of households with children has dropped from 49 percent in 1960 to 32 percent in 2000, according to the census.

"Other indicators suggest that this decline has reduced the child centeredness of our nation and contributed to the weakening of the institution of marriage," the authors wrote.

## CSI: JERUSALEM

### Doctors match science to the old, rugged cross



By Bruce Nolan  
Religion News Service

Each Good Friday, more than 2 billion Christians commemorate the most famous public execution in history.

Most believers choose to reflect on the lessons their faith draws from the death of Jesus Christ. But a few with a curious bent have for years sought a more clinical enlightenment.

How, exactly, did Jesus die?

This small community includes a French surgeon, a couple of American pathologists and a medical illustrator.

"It's been like a theological journey; I feel it's enhanced my belief," said Floyd Hosmer, the medical illustrator for a 1986 article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* titled "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ."

Dr. William Edwards, the Mayo Clinic pathologist and lead author of the article, was a new Christian wanting to deploy his medical skills in service to his faith, Hosmer said. Their article was, until now, the most recent authoritative investigation of the subject.

□ See CSI ... *Page 6*

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, August 10

## Southern's Rainer named LifeWay president nominee

Nashville—Thom Rainer, founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, Missions and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, has been nominated to become president of LifeWay Christian Resources when Jimmy Draper retires in February.



Thom Rainer

LifeWay's presidential search committee has named Rainer as their candidate. LifeWay's board of trustees will vote on the recommendation during its Sept. 12-13 meeting in Nashville.

If approved, Rainer would become LifeWay's president-elect and begin Oct. 17 to work alongside Draper to ensure a smooth transition, according to search committee chairman Rick Evans.

"Dr. Rainer has proven himself to be a successful leader of the local church and at the seminary," Evans said. "He is a gifted man of authority in the areas of trends within the Christian church and in church growth. He is a prolific writer and a respected educator whose works are widely read among Christian leaders. Dr. Rainer will provide the kind of leadership LifeWay needs for the years ahead."

Rainer, 50, is a 1977 graduate of the University of Alabama who has earned a master of divinity degree and Ph.D. at Southern Seminary. He served as pastor of churches in Alabama, Florida, Kentucky and Indiana prior to becoming the founding dean of the seminary's Billy Graham School in 1994.

### Researcher, author, consultant

He has served as a church consultant and church growth conference speaker for several years and is in frequent demand as a speaker in Southern Baptist churches.

Rainer is the author of 16 books. His recent "Breakout Churches" examines the characteristics of growing congregations.

His research indicates that baptisms in Southern Baptist churches are declining, even after conservatives took control of the denomination beginning in 1979. Rainer said, however, the statistics would be even worse if moderates had remained in leadership.

Rainer is founder, president and CEO of the Rainer Group, a church and denominational consulting organization. He and his wife, Nellie Jo, have three sons, Sam, Art and Jess.

Rainer declined to speculate on how he might lead the agency.

"I am not going to be presumptuous until the full board meets," he said. "Right now I'm just enjoying the great, great honor of the nomination. Jimmy Draper is some pretty big shoes to fill. He's a legend, not only in the Southern Baptist Convention and LifeWay, but in the evangelical world."

LifeWay, with 124 retail stores, recorded total revenue of more than \$428 million in fiscal 2004.

Before pursuing full-time vocational ministry, Rainer studied corporate finance and worked in corporate banking in Atlanta and Anniston, Ala.

Still, he said, "I anticipate that my learning curve's going to be very steep."

At least three of Rainer's books, including "Breakout Churches" were published by Zondervan.

He said that while he might bring an outsider's perspective to the post, "There's so much good going on at LifeWay right now that I don't even know how my outside perspective is going to compare to what I see on the inside."

Draper praised Rainer's selection. "I am incredibly excited to have a man of Thom Rainer's gifts and vision to work alongside in the months ahead. He is a proven leader, a brilliant statesman and a gifted visionary. That's why I believe LifeWay's best days are still ahead."

Lawrence Smith, vice president of communications for Southern Seminary, said Rainer will continue to teach and lead Southern's school of evangelism, missions and church growth through the end of the semester in December.

Rainer was not as specific with his plans, though he said Southern President Al Mohler was one of the first people he called when nominated. "I have to discuss time-tables with the seminary leadership."

Compiled from reporting by News Director David Winfrey, Greg Warner for Associated Baptist Press and Rob Phillips for LifeWay Christian Resources

## Missionary kids

WMU President Kaye Miller wants to help MKs adjust

By Charlie Warren  
Arkansas Baptist News

Little Rock, Ark. (BP)—Kaye Miller is American by birth, but she was more Thai than American while growing up.

While she has adapted well to American culture, it wasn't always easy. That's why the new president of national Woman's Missionary Union has a passion for helping missionaries help their kids adjust to life in the United States.

"The No. 1 question missionaries ask me when they find out I'm a missionary kid is how can they help their children adjust better," Miller said recently. "I really hope I can help our missionaries help their children adjust."

Many missionary kids, also referred to as MKs, adjust well and live productive, effective Christian lives. Others rebel or never get a handle on adjusting to life in America.

"MKs have a hard time," Miller said. "I want to figure out what we can do to prevent that."

A major problem most MKs face is feeling rootless in America.

"Where do you get married? ... Where do you settle down? Where do you go when it's parents' day at college when your parents can't come or when everyone else on campus is gone and you are there?" Miller asked. "You just have no roots. That contributes a lot to why MKs just kind of float."

### Learning from a life in Thailand

Miller was 6 when her parents, Harlan and Jo Willis, went to Thailand as missionaries in a remote village. "Thai kids were my playmates. We were the only American family," Miller recalled.

The family followed Thai customs, such as taking off their shoes before entering their home.

Furloughs to the U.S. were difficult. "We didn't really want to come," she said.

As a child, Miller didn't know her grandparents or aunts and uncles. "We only saw them a couple of times when we were on furlough" every four years.

Attending school in America for the furlough year was tough because she didn't fit in. "When



YOUTH MOVEMENT Kaye Miller, president of national Woman's Missionary Union, works on a mission project with two girls in Little Rock, Ark. Miller, herself a former missionary kid, said she wants to find ways to help other MKs adjust and involve them in future mission efforts. (Photo courtesy of Arkansas Baptist News)

you come home and are put into a high school setting with kids you don't know, it's really hard. We just wanted to get back home."

In eighth grade, Miller attended the international school in Bangkok, living in the Baptist hostel away from her parents. She saw her parents only once every three or four months because the trip included a train ride and a long car journey over poor roads.

Miller was less than excited about attending Baylor University.

"I wanted to stay and go to the University of Thailand," she recounted. "School at Baylor was not hard, but being away from Thailand and adjusting to American customs was hard."

A WMU member in Waco, Texas, took Miller under her wing, helping her get a car, start a bank account, buy stylish American clothes and get acclimated to America and a local church.

"She was a key in helping me adjust," Miller said, and it gave her a strong appreciation for WMU.

Still, she often felt lonely and homesick for Thailand. A letter home took two weeks to arrive and two weeks more to get a response. Today, e-mail helps MKs stay in touch daily.

Miller said WMU was exactly what she needed to keep her involved in church life.

"It gave me the opportunity to teach and to do a variety of things,"

she said. "I'm hoping that's something WMU can pick up on is how can we use this group of people. It's an untapped resource we have for winning the world for the Lord."

### Disillusioned MKs

Miller said she fears many missionary kids are disillusioned with Baptist life.

"A lot of MKs don't even go to Baptist churches. They go to other denominations or they don't go at all."

Part of that stems from seeing a different attitude in American churches from what they experienced overseas, she said. When MKs have worshiped God with other believers under a palm tree, she said, they get frustrated when they sense American Christians care more about the building than about true worship.

"That just turns them off basically, so they head a different direction. It's sort of a rebellion thing. I'd really like to help MKs through this."

Miller said MKs are an untapped market for long- and short-term missionaries.

"That is one group of kids that everyone has overlooked. They have such potential for winning the world for the Lord," she said. "They've been on the field. They sense that urgency and that passion, I know they do in their hearts."

## Guidestone Financial Services adopts long-range plan

Orlando, Fla. (BP)—Trustees for GuideStone Financial Services of the Southern Baptist Convention last week adopted a long-range plan to guide the agency to its centennial year in 2018.

"Recent Southern Baptist Convention approvals have given us unprecedented opportunities to re-brand our products and services within our Southern Baptist constituency, as well as reach out to additional markets through other evangelical churches and ministry organizations," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins told trustees.

The plan for GuideStone, previ-

ously known as the Annuity Board, has three phases.

In the first phase, GuideStone will focus until 2008 on "strengthening GuideStone's lifelong partnership with its participants and establish GuideStone as a known provider of employee benefit products among Southern Baptist and evangelical ministry organizations," according to Chief Operating Officer John Jones.

In the second phase, from 2009-2013, GuideStone will work to become a leading provider of employee benefit products among Southern Baptist and evangelical

ministry organizations. And in the third phase, 2014-2018, GuideStone will work to become the premier provider of financial services for Southern Baptist and other evangelical ministry organizations.

"The increasingly competitive financial services industry demands that we think strategically," Hawkins told trustees. He said the long-range plan "will further enable us to fulfill the mandate of our vision statement," which states that the SBC entity exists "to honor the Lord by being a life partner with our participants in enhancing their financial security."

## Extension class takes learning to Frankfort inmates

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**Frankfort**—While students in the first seminary extension course held in Frankfort's state prison don't have the typical seminarian's background, their instructor said he finds them more appreciative of their learning opportunities.

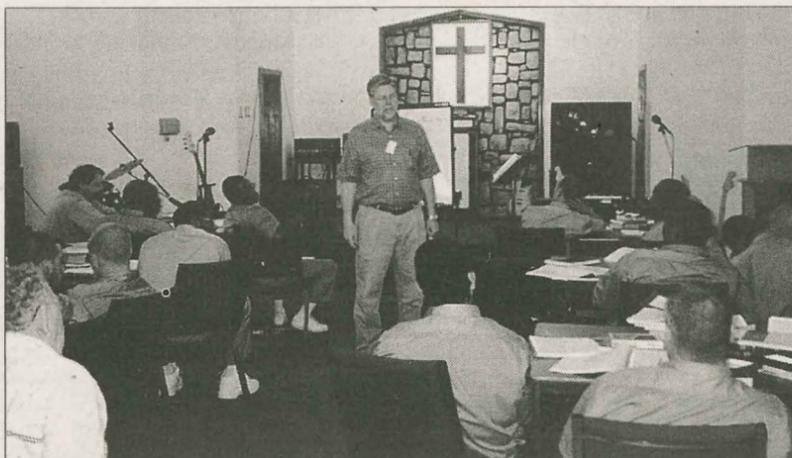
"They are asking questions and seem eager to learn," said Hershael York, associate dean in the theology school at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. "I'm elated."

The pilot project is being sponsored by the Franklin Baptist Association, with 24 of its 33 churches donating about \$3,600 to help pay the \$130 cost per student for books and paperwork.

Classes meet each Thursday night at the Franklin Career Development Center, a minimum-security work camp adjacent to the county jail. Twenty-eight students showed up for the first session Apr. 28, but three have since transferred to other facilities.

John Heskett, associational director of missions, said the 16-week course in the book of John continues through late this month. Organizers are still making plans for the fall semester, he added.

"People are very excited about it," Heskett said. "Some are Christians already and the Lord may call some to preach and Bible college some day, but our goal is to teach



**PRISON CLASSES** Hershael York teaches a seminary extension course to inmates at the Franklin Career Development Center, a minimum-security work camp in Frankfort. Two-thirds of the local Franklin Baptist Association churches helped pay for students' tuition and books. (Photo by Earl Bell)

them the Word."

Pete Wright, who oversees the association's seminary extension program, said the prison enrollment is nearly three times the number of those who recently completed a course in Christian history that met at East Frankfort Baptist Church.

Wright said the effort to start a prison course goes back about three years and finally got started after a new warden was receptive to the idea.

"I think it will strike up interest in the churches," said Wright, a member of Bethel Baptist Church.

Many students also are involved in the prison's chapel program,

which is led by retired pastor Earl Bell, a member of First Baptist Church of Frankfort.

### Students eager to learn

The part-time chaplain, who has been working at the facility for eight years, said the significant elements of the course are students' eagerness to learn and their perfect attendance.

"It's amazing how the men have caught on," Bell said. "I'm pleased that they've responded so well. It's a good situation."

Since inmates are at the center for brief stays, no one is likely to complete the 16 courses needed

for a certificate. But the credits can transfer to a Bible college.

"This isn't lightweight stuff," York said, noting the class uses a seminary-level textbook. "What's neat is questions coming out of their studies are about where they live, (such as) speaking in tongues and sexual issues."

When Heskett first called asking for a referral for an instructor, York said he thought of recommending a church deacon and college professor. Instead, he said, he felt God leading him to volunteer.

York said he is so busy with his work as pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, seminary classes and duties as state convention president that he has to make an effort to rub elbows with people in the world.

"I'm so glad I did it," York said. "The Lord has blessed me tremendously."

He said his immediate goal is to see each student pass the class and develop a deeper appreciation of Jesus Christ as revealed in the book of John.

But in the future, York said, he wouldn't mind if a current student is seated in his classroom on the Louisville campus.

"I would love to see the Lord work in their lives so upon their release some would go into fulltime ministry," York said. "Some have the capability. I would be thrilled to see that take place."

*The pilot project is sponsored by the Franklin Baptist Association, with 24 of its 33 churches donating money for books and other expenses.*

## KBC leaders planning week-long 'Pray the Perimeter' this fall

By Brenda Smith  
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Kentucky Baptist leaders will hit the road this fall on a week-long tour that will take them around the perimeter of the commonwealth, praying with and encouraging Kentucky Baptists along the way.

The tour, dubbed "Pray the Perimeter," is scheduled for Sept. 11-16.

Bill Mackey, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and Dan Garland, KBC church development/evangelism team leader, along with several other KBC leaders, will begin their tour in Eastern Kentucky, traveling the perimeter of the state on a tour that will include stops for worship services, meetings with pastors and associational leaders, and prayer.

"At gatherings in each perimeter association, we will pray for believers to experience renewal, for churches to experience revival and for God to use revived churches to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with every person in their community," Mackey said.

### Part of Connect

The tour will support Kentucky Baptists Connect, a new five-year emphasis of the convention to reach people for Christ, strengthen churches and develop leaders.

Mackey said that as he circles the state, he will encourage church and associational leaders to encircle their own local areas with prayer.

"Our prayer is that every KBC

church and association will catch the vision and join in the effort to pray the perimeter of their church, community and/or association," Garland said.

"We hope they will pray for spiritual awakening, for protection and anointing of our pastors, staff and lay leaders, for a new vision from the Lord of what He wants to do in their church, community and association."

Leaders also hope the focus on prayer will re-energize Kentucky Baptists' efforts to reach out to the unchurched in their communities.

"Around 85 percent of the unchurched in Kentucky state that they pray," said Mackey, citing a Barna Research Group study last year of unchurched Kentuckians. "So, prayer is a great way that church members can connect with the unchurched in their communities."

Mackey said he also hopes the tour will bring the KBC to churches and associations that do not regularly participate in KBC events and services.

"I am looking forward to praying with hundreds of pastors and church leaders during the week," Mackey said. "Everyone is invited."

Garland said the tour was inspired by the work of two Kentucky Baptists serving as missionaries in Africa. The missionaries are coordinating efforts to pray around the perimeter of Sudan.

"The Holy Spirit spoke to me and said 'Pray the perimeter of Kentucky and pray for spiritual awakening to come to our church leaders,'" he said.

### 'Pray the Perimeter' schedule

Note: Locations and times subject to change.

#### Saturday, Sept. 10

Hazard: Prayer service at Three Forks Baptist Association, 7 p.m.

#### Sunday, Sept. 11

Whitesburg: Worship service at Colson Baptist Church, 11 a.m.

Pikeville: First Baptist Church of Pikeville, 3 p.m.

Prestonsburg: Site to be determined, 4:15 p.m.

Rush: Garner Baptist Church, 7 p.m.

#### Monday, Sept. 12

Mays Lick: Prayer breakfast at Frisch's, 8:30 a.m.

Erlanger: Northern Kentucky Baptist Association office, 11:45 a.m.

Glencoe: Glencoe Baptist Church, 2:20 p.m.

Carrollton: First Baptist Church of Carrollton, 3:30 p.m.

LaGrange: LaGrange Baptist Church, 7 p.m.

#### Tuesday, Sept. 13

Louisville: Long Run Association office, 8:30 a.m.

Hardinsburg: Hardinsburg Baptist Church, 10 a.m.

Owensboro: Daviess-McLean Association office, noon.

Henderson: Green Valley Association office, 2:30 p.m.

Sturgis: First Baptist Church, 4:30 p.m.

Smithland: Potters House, 7:30 p.m.

#### Wednesday, Sept. 14

Paducah: Bellview Baptist Church, 7:30 a.m.

Wickliffe: Prayer at the river, 10 a.m.

Fulton: B. Marcum's Restaurant (with West Kentucky Association), 11:30 a.m.

Mayfield: Graves County Association office, 2 p.m.

Murray: Murray State Baptist Student Union, 3:20 p.m.

Murray: Memorial Baptist Church, 7 p.m.

#### Thursday, Sept. 15

Oak Grove: Oak Grove Baptist Church, 8 a.m.

Russellville: Wal-Mart parking lot, 10:30 a.m.

Scottsville: First Baptist Church of Scottsville, 12:30 p.m.

Tompkinsville: First Baptist Church of Tompkinsville, 3:15 p.m.

Monticello: New Charity Baptist Church, 7 p.m.

#### Friday, Sept. 16

Williamsburg: South Union-Mount Zion Association office, 10 a.m.

Pineville: Moss Chapel, noon.

Loyall: First Baptist Church, 3 p.m.

*"I am looking forward to praying with hundreds of pastors and church leaders during the week."*

Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Bill Mackey.

## WESTERNRECORDER

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

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## Are we ready for 'Da Vinci Code' questions?

By Phil Boatwright

Kansas City, Kan. (BP)—Dan Brown's staggering bestseller "The Da Vinci Code" comes to the screen in May 2006. The downside: Many nonbelievers will take the fictitious story to be truth. The upside: Some will ask Christians questions.

But, are we ready for those questions?

Directed by Ron Howard (Apollo 13, Cinderella Man), the movie version starring Tom Hanks, Audrey Tautou and Ian McKellen began filming June 30 in Paris and is set to wrap on Oct. 19 in England.

It concerns a covert religious organization that will stop at nothing to protect a secret that threatens to overturn 2,000 years of accepted dogma. The book and now the film claim Jesus married Mary Magdalene, had a child in that union, and a clandestine society once headed by Leonardo Da Vinci has protected this information for centuries against a threatened Catholic hierarchy.

According to "Cracking Da Vinci's Code" by James Garlow and Peter Jones, many of the assertions about Jesus in the book come from a fictional character named Leigh Teabing.

"Leigh Teabing is an expert in the ancient trail leading to the Holy Grail," Garlow and Jones write. "A

former British Royal Historian, Teabing moved to France to personally search through churches for clues leading to the Grail."

The Da Vinci Code narrative reads as if it were, well, gospel. At one point in the book, Teabing says, "Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false."

## COMMENTARY

## Threat or opportunity?

So, is this film a threat to the Christian community?

"The real threat of this heresy is not so much on the Christian community as it is on the lost world," said Jim Melrose, pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Tonganoxie, Kan. "Those who reject the truth seek out a lie to cling to. ... Sadly, it will impact many carnal and immature Christians who are not grounded in their faith."

Patrick Moody, pastor of Northwood Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., concurred. "It will confuse those who are ignorant of the facts," Moody said.

But are the disputable topics dangerous to the faith?

"In Romans 14, Paul talks about those who are 'weak in the faith,'" Melrose said. "(In Ephesians 4: 14) Paul also mentions those who are 'tossed about by every wind of doctrine' and he mentions that this

is caused by the craftiness of those whose intentions are to lead astray. There is no danger to him who has built his house upon the rock."

Said Moody: "Actually, Christianity's legacy is persecution. But this too shall pass. History is the great teacher of misinterpretations."

Well then, how can Christians prepare themselves for the onslaught of theological queries?

In light of the "Da Vinci Code," Christian shepherds are warning the flock to know God's Word and to study the history of the Christian faith.

Billy Graham reported in his syndicated newspaper column, "I know of no reputable Bible scholar or historian (Christian or non-Christian) who would agree with its claims about Jesus or take it seriously. There simply is no historical evidence to support its alleged 'discoveries' about Jesus: nor is there any evidence at all that Christians have 'covered up' the truth about Jesus."

Graham added, "In the last days before Christ's return, according to Paul, people 'will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths'" (2 Timothy 4:4).

Several books deal with the specifics of Dan Brown's controversial book while pointing out factual Christian heritage. Ask your pastor for recommendations.

Phil Boatwright is editor and vice-president of Central Christian Publications, publishers of "The Movie Reporter," a family film guide

Keep up the good work of reporting news of all Baptists.

William Humphrey  
Alexandria

## What are you thinking?

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

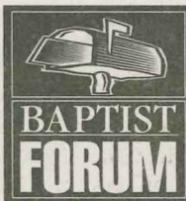
## BWA coverage

Thank you for the report and editorial on the Baptist World Congress meeting in Birmingham, England.

I had the privilege of going on a tour visiting our missions throughout South America and attending the Baptist World Alliance congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1960.

I also attended the Congress in Miami Beach in 1965 and the Congress in Toronto in 1980.

The experience of fellowship with Baptists from throughout the world each time was great, as well as hearing some great preaching.



I agree with your editorial and the views of Rick Warren. I too believe that the SBC pulling out of the BWA was a "silly" mistake.

As a lifelong Southern Baptist and pastor, the elitist attitude of the present Southern Baptist leaders grieves me greatly.

## Kentucky Baptist Building's new location

We are excited about the upcoming move of the Kentucky Baptist building to new facilities at 13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive in Louisville. The finishing of the interior of the new building is on schedule at this point, and plans call for the move to take place Aug. 12-15.

Our offices, along with those of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and Western Recorder, will be closed Friday, Aug. 12, and we hope to begin unpacking in the new building on Monday, Aug. 15.

Please ask your church to pray for the success of this move. Especially remember in prayer a number of staff members who will be working around the clock to get all systems going.

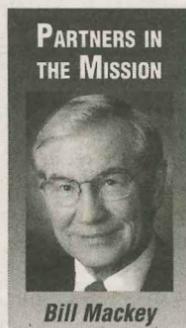
Please be patient with us for a couple of weeks while "bugs" are worked out. It will be a busy time due to registrations for Super Saturdays and conducting the confer-

ences at different locations. We will do our best not to interrupt any ministries or services, but it will be a miracle if we do not have some adjustments.

I would like to share some of my impressions of the new Baptist building. It is going to be functional for the teamwork of the KBC staff and a great place for Kentucky Baptists to come for training, events, meetings and tours.

Team members will be located near each other, facilitating communication and teamwork. Other teams will be close by, enhancing cross-team communication. The team areas will reflect an open office configuration.

It will take time and training before everything is up and running smoothly, but we anticipate great things through the use of a new video production studio and other technological advances in the building that are designed to help us improve the delivery of



Bill Mackey

customized services to Kentucky Baptists.

Visually, the building will be both educational and inspirational. A wall mural that will introduce the mission statement will greet guests as they enter the lobby. A large plasma screen monitor will provide a continuous loop of video showing Kentucky Baptists at work.

Throughout the building, wall murals and photographs will communicate about the ministries of the Cooperative Program, Mission Board, associations, Southern Baptist Convention entities and our KBC agencies and institutions. Our goal is to have all of these pieces in place no later than December.

There also are other great features such as the green area and walking track out back, flexible conference space, large gathering areas and a staging room for disaster relief and partnership missions.

It will be our joy to introduce you to your new ministry center. Please pray for us during the transitions and plan to come to see us.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## STEWARDSHIP

## Do you control your debt or does it control you?

By Don Spencer

One of the major financial problems many people have today is out-of-control debt. Credit card companies and many businesses push the buy now/pay later concept.

You can finance a car for five years, which means for a period of time you likely owe more on the car than it is worth. Pre-approved credit cards are easy to get. It's no wonder so many of us gradually accumulate too much debt and then it takes control.

You never will have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt. Here are some tips for dealing with and reducing your debt:

**Stop buying anything on credit.** This is the critical first step. None of the other tips will help unless you do this first. You cannot reduce debt if you are still adding to it. Put the credit cards away for use only in an emergency. Studies have proven that when people are shopping, they spend about 26 percent more if they use credit cards than if they use cash.

Evaluate your current debts. Write them all down and be sure to write down what amount of interest you are being charged.

**Evaluate your spending and develop a repayment plan.** This is part of budgeting—or developing a spending plan. List your fixed expenses, your flexible expenses and your income. Determine how much debt you can pay off each month. Set a goal for when certain debts are to be paid off. Attack those with highest interest rates first. (The exception might be a debt that could be paid off quickly and eliminated.) Once you have set a monthly amount to go for debt repayment, continue to pay that amount until all consumer debts are eliminated.

**Look for ways to earn extra money and cut expenses.** This money then can be used to reduce debt even further or for disaster relief.

Once you eliminate the debt it is important to stay debt free. Remember: You never will have financial freedom as long as you are a slave to debt.

If you cannot control the debt, credit counseling might be appropriate. For help and referrals, contact the National Foundation for Credit Counseling at (800) 388-2227 or visit [www.nfcc.org](http://www.nfcc.org).

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

## Negative thinking can be sign of deeper issue of depression

**Q: My wife is extremely pessimistic about life and our children. I try to reason with her but she won't listen. I am weary of this battle. What can I do to convince her life is not so bad and our kids are not so terrible?**

Many people engage in negative thinking. This can create stress and tension in a marriage. Many individuals grow tired of the cycle of trying to convince their partner to have a more positive outlook.

### MARRIAGE

For some individuals, negative thinking or distorted thinking can be a sign of depression. According to Dr. Aaron Beck, a depressed person focuses on the negative, remembers negative events, talks to themselves in a negative or critical manner and interprets situations incorrectly.

Some of what Beck suggests for an individual engaging in such behavior is to review your thoughts and try to correct them. Becoming aware of one's negative thinking and negative self-talk is a step toward changing the way one thinks and feels.

Once negative thoughts and beliefs are identified, they must be replaced with more accurate and positive ones. The Apostle Paul gave specific instructions on how to think in his letter to the church at Philippi: "Fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely and honorable."

Scripture gives clear guidelines for our thinking. It is not easy or possible for some people simply to decide today to think differently. If childhood messages and life experiences have helped shape and contribute to negative thinking, it will take time and work to make changes.

Let your wife know how her pessimism affects you. Encourage her to seek help so she can better enjoy life, her marriage and children.—Valerie Vincent

**Q: My friend has asked me to help her break a bad habit. I'm not sure if I want to sign up for this. Do you have any helpful hints?**

Congratulations. You have been chosen to help your friend be one step closer to all that God designed her to be.

When Proverbs speaks of a "friend that sticks closer than a brother," you have the opportunity to discover what that kind of closeness means. Here are a few suggestions:

■ If you accept the challenge, know that you have not been enlisted to nag. Webster defines "nag" as "to find fault incessantly." No one enjoys being reminded of their deficiencies all the time. You have been asked to take some aspect of the role of a good coach, not that of a tiresome and useless faultfinder.

■ It is more effective to give "I" messages than "you" messages as you address problems. Let her know how the habit affects you and how it makes you feel. Use the formula, "When you ... I feel ..." This enables her to find her own strength within. You are a reminder that she "can do all things through Christ who gives (her) strength."

■ Lend a listening ear. As she walks through the process of change, she will need to "unload" her struggles. She may often need to check in to let you know how she's doing.

■ Offer your unconditional encouragement and support. You have been enlisted as a cheerleader. Jonathan provided the extra ounce of perseverance for David when friendship was needed to get him through a tough time. As David believed in Jonathan, believe in the potential of your friend. It will be your gift to point her to the potential and possibilities of a future hope.

Just like the "great cloud of witnesses" in the book of Hebrews, you get to cheer your friend on to victory. What a gift. As you share in the agonies of the little defeats that come with the daily marathon of moving toward her goals, you also share the thrill of victory to come as well as the little victories along the way.—James Stillwell

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## Take 'ONE' major step to end world hunger

Here's a sobering test of faith: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:17)

Severe hunger plagues at least 800 million people. They don't just "go to bed hungry"; they live hungry. They don't just miss a meal; they don't receive enough nutrients to sustain their organs. They don't just look skinny; they die.

When I was a kid, we referred to these people as the "starving children in China." But that's just a metaphor for a horrible reality. Children have it the worst, but they're joined closely by the elderly and nursing mothers, as well as adults with mental and physical illnesses. China is far from the most treacherous place for hunger. Hunger spans the globe, but it's most acute in Africa.

Drought and poor farming methods contribute, but global hunger would be far less serious if those were the primary causes. War is the worst culprit. It disrupts planting and harvesting cycles. It diverts resources, including farmers, to other endeavors. It cuts supply lines. And food becomes the spoil of war—doled to the winners, denied to the losers.

Poverty contributes to hunger. But don't think only of poor people. Think of poor governments. Around the globe, entire nations are "upside down," owing more than their assets can cover. So, not only are their people unable to afford food, but the governments themselves cannot afford to make it available.

Small wonder 800 million people eke out an existence in the oppressive grip of deep hunger.

For years, world hunger funds have chipped away at the wall of hunger. This direct aid is wonderful, and it's worthy of our support. But we can't raise enough money fast enough to change the structures that produce and perpetuate hunger.

That's why increasing numbers of people of faith, including conservative evangelical Christians, have embraced more encompassing measures. They've asked the governments of the United States and other industrialized nations to take steps to turn the tide against hunger, poverty and disease.

Hundreds of thousands of them have joined "ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History." The ONE Campaign Web site notes 1 billion people live on less than

\$1 per day. The campaign asks the U.S. government to allocate an additional 1 percent of its budget (it currently provides less than 1 percent) toward providing basic healthcare, education, clean water and food, which "would transform the futures and hopes of an entire generation of the poorest countries." It urges the

Group of 8 nations, the wealthiest countries in the world, to forgive the debt of the poorest nations, a \$40 billion step promised recently by the G-8 finance ministers.

Similarly, many ONE Campaign supporters are urging Congress to pass the Hunger-Free Communities Act of 2005. Its goal is to end hunger in the United States by 2015.

These anti-hunger efforts are transcending the theological-political spectrum. A bipartisan group of sponsors is backing the Hunger-Free Communities Act, as are—and this is almost unheard of—representatives of

the Southern Baptist Convention, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Alliance of Baptists.

Although the ONE Campaign has received notoriety because of its support from rock star Bono and movie star Brad Pitt, its base is solidly evangelical, in such organizations as Bread for the World, World Vision and Save the Children, among others.

Rick Warren, author of "The Purpose-Driven Life," recently e-mailed tens of thousands of pastors and other religious leaders in support of the ONE Campaign. "I've never been involved in partisan politics ... and don't intend to now," he said. "But global poverty is an issue that rises far above mere politics. It is a moral issue ... a compassion issue, and because Jesus commanded us to help the poor, it is an obedience issue."

The confluence of these efforts is a divine initiative, Bread for the World President David Beckmann told a gathering of Baptist editors: "God has made it possible to see deep reductions in hunger, poverty around the world and disease." Christians' involvement in hunger reduction enables them to "talk about evangelism in a new way," because their demonstration of concern for the world's poorest people validates their claims of Christ's love, he explained.

For details about the ONE Campaign, see [www.one.org](http://www.one.org) or [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org). Sign up. Each one counts.

Marv Knox, former editor of the Western Recorder, is editor of the Texas Baptist Standard



Marv Knox

## Where are all the church members?

By Jim Elliff

**Parkville, Mo. (BP)**—Out of Southern Baptists' 16,287,494 members, only 6,024,289, or 37 percent, on average, show up for their church's primary meeting each week, according to statistics from LifeWay Christian Resources.

If your church is normal, and not brand new, your statistics probably are similar. In other words, if you have 200 in attendance on Sunday morning, you likely have 500 to 600 people or even more on your roll.

It gets worse when counting non-Sunday morning meetings. In 1996, the last time the Southern Baptist Convention collected these statistics, the number of Sunday evening attendees was equal to only 12.3 percent of the membership in churches that had evening meetings.

The number of those attending includes many non-member children and guests, often making up a third of the attendance.

In one church, with 7,000 on the roll, there are only 2,000 in attendance on Sunday mornings, and 600 to 700 on Sunday evenings. When you account for the guests and non-member children, you have about 1,500 actual members coming in the morning and 500 or so

in the evening. Where are the 5,500 members who are missing on Sunday mornings? Where are the 6,500 who are missing in the evening?

Another church has 2,100 on the roll, with 725 coming on Sunday morning. Remove

guests and non-member children and the figure drops to 600 or fewer. Only about a third of that number come out on Sunday evening, representing less than 10 percent of the membership. Another church has 310 on the roll with only 100 who attend on Sunday morning. Only 30 to 35, or approximately 10 percent, come to the evening worship service.

Shut-ins and those who are sick, out of town or in the military, certainly affect the figures a little. But those who are justifiably absent are not enough to alter the bleakness of the picture. Even if you generously grant that all 37 percent are true believers—an estimate that most pastors would say is way off the mark—one still has a church membership that is more dead than alive.

If we are honest, we have to ask ourselves, "Do Southern Baptists believe in a regenerate membership?"

No church, and no denomination, should call itself healthy unless more people attend than are

on the roll. This is a standard kept by much of the world and our great-grandparents as well. We would be closer to the revival we desire if we would admit our failure, humbly hang our heads and seek to rectify this awful hindrance to God's blessing.

In the Philadelphia Baptist Association minutes of the 18th century, our first American statistical records show that five times as many people attended the association's churches as were on their rolls. In his book "Democratic Religion," Gregory Wills reports that three times the number that were on the rolls attended Baptist churches in 1791, then located mostly along the eastern seaboard.

Today, in rough numbers, it takes close to 300 people on our rolls to have 100 attendees. In the 1790s, it took only 33. Or, to put it in larger figures, it now takes nearly 3,000 people, supposedly won to Christ and baptized, to result in a church attendance of 1,000. Back then, it took only 333. Our potency has diminished to such an extent that we must "win" and "baptize" nearly 2,000 more people to get the same 1,000 to attend.

Most Southern Baptists need raising from the dead.

Jim Elliff is president of Christian Communicators Worldwide

# CSI JERUSALEM: Doctors study how Jesus died

Continued from page 1

Dr. Frederick Zugibe, a retired forensic pathologist from New York state, spent 52 years of research monitoring the hearts and respirations of hundreds of heavily instrumented volunteers he attached with belts to a special cross. In scores of papers, Zugibe developed his own take on crucifixion, which he lays out in the book "The Crucifixion of Jesus: A Forensic Inquiry."

The object of their attention is widely known but little understood.

Crucifixion—public, degrading and exquisitely cruel—is solidly documented in ancient literature. In the hands of Rome, it was an instrument of state terror.

Roman authorities deployed it against revolutionaries, prisoners and slaves, once crucifying 6,000 followers of the rebel slave Spartacus for the edification of passers-by along the Appian Way.

But firsthand investigation of the brutal practice is difficult; few remains of crucified victims have ever been found. The Gospels' accounts of Jesus' burial appear to document the slightest softening in the usual Roman malice: As the final humiliation, executioners usually left the corpse to rot on the cross, then disposed of it beyond the family's recovery.

## Seeking evidence in Gospels

That usually leaves clinical investigators to fall back almost exclusively on the Gospels' four accounts of Christ's Passion, supplemented by other ancient references to crucifixion and, before Zugibe, only the most limited experimentation.

In more recent years, some also have looked to the Shroud of Turin. That cloth bears the faint imprint of a man who appears to have crucifixion wounds. Though no Christian church officially asserts the image is that of Jesus, its custodian, the Roman Catholic Church, treats it with great reverence. Millions of believers contend it is the burial shroud of Jesus Himself.

In time, the shroud has worked its way into some crucifixion research as extra-Scriptural evidence. In his medical journal article, Edwards cited it as a source of information about the crucifixion of Jesus.

Zugibe says he believes the

Shroud is authentic. But "when I do my experiments, I close everything; I close the Bible and look at things from a totally scientific point of view," he said.

Modern theories of the physiology of Jesus' death seem to have been born in 1937 when French surgeon Dr. Pierre Barbet published "The Five Wounds of Christ."

Later, using World War II accounts of German executions of concentration camp prisoners suspended by their hands, Barbet proposed that as a crucifixion victim sagged from the crossbar, his rib cage expanded, leaving him unable to exhale properly.

He suggested that Jesus pushed Himself up with His feet until the pain required Him to slump again. Hours of agonized migration left Jesus exhausted until He finally asphyxiated.

## A trio offers answers

In 1986, Hosmer, Edwards and Wesley Gabel, a Methodist minister, collaborated in the medical journal to propose a list of factors causing death, preceded by medical explanations for all the landmarks of the Passion accounts found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Luke's assertion that as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane "His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground" seemed to be an example of hematomidrosis, or stress-induced hemorrhage into the sweat glands, the JAMA authors wrote.

Working their way through Scripture, the writers sketched out the accumulating clinical effects of the Passion. From the scourging; blood loss and pleural effusion, or the collection of fluid in the chest cavity; from the crucifixion: Barbet's lethal respiratory crisis; and throughout

the ordeal, mounting exhaustion, falling blood pressure and deepening shock from fluid loss.

To all of that, they added the possibility of cardiac rupture at the moment of death—a nod to a popular devotional notion that Jesus died of a broken heart.

The JAMA article caused a storm in the medical community. A follow-up issue contained 17 letters on the subject, more than had ever been published on a single topic.

Most were critical. Most thought it a work of pseudo-science—"forensic mythology," one writer called it—and questioned its appropriateness in a prestigious scientific journal.

Critics, Christian and otherwise, focused on the authors' use of Scripture—not to mention the Shroud of Turin—as a literal record from which reliable clinical observations could be deduced.

Conservative Christians had no difficulty in merging the four Gospels as historically accurate accounts. But liberal Protestants and many Catholic scholars saw the Gospels differently—not as ancient videotape, but as theological writings meant to present differently nuanced accounts of the life of Jesus to different audiences.

In "The Death of the Messiah," Raymond Brown, a leading Catholic Scripture scholar, chided the JAMA authors for speculating far from their field of expertise "without realizing that any or all of these (narrative) features might embody theological symbolism rather than historical description."

Zugibe takes a different approach.

During a 34-year career as the chief medical examiner for Rockland County, N.Y., Zugibe probed the cause of death of thousands of victims of accident, crime and disease.

Zugibe began investigating crucifixion as a young man. With a professor's permission, he said, he

once drove a nail through the wrist of a cadaver in gross anatomy lab. He later did elaborate bloodless experiments with volunteers.

"What I found was that Barbet was totally incorrect on 98 percent of everything he said," Zugibe said.

## New tests offer new insights

Zugibe commissioned a special cross fitted with belts and movable gloves so at least some effects of crucifixion could be observed for various body positions.

He fitted volunteers with strain gauges to record the pull from the arms. He wired them to electrocardiographs, took blood oxygen readings, collected their exhalations for analysis and drew blood for blood chemistries, he said.

One of his major findings: A crucifixion victim with arms outstretched can breathe fine, he said. Indeed, many volunteers tended to hyperventilate, at least at first.

Moreover, even muscular young men could not collect Zugibe's incentive of \$100 to push themselves up on his cross. With legs bent, they can't develop the necessary leverage, he said.

Although a foot rest often appears low on the cross's upright in Western art, old crucifixion literature doesn't mention it, Zugibe said. Zugibe believes, on the evidence of the Shroud of Turin, that Jesus' feet were nailed.

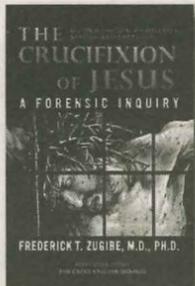
On the cross, dehydration, blood loss and internal injuries from beatings would have converged, Zugibe said.

"You slowly get to the point where the heart loses efficiency," he said. "Blood pressure is dropping. He dies of shock—hypovolemic shock due to blood loss and loss of fluid—and traumatic shock. That leads to heart failure—cardiogenic shock."

"If I wrote the death certificate today, I'd say He died of profound shock."



Frederick Zugibe began investigating crucifixion as a young man. With a professor's permission, he said, he once drove a nail through the wrist of a cadaver.



## The Kentucky Baptist Convention offices are

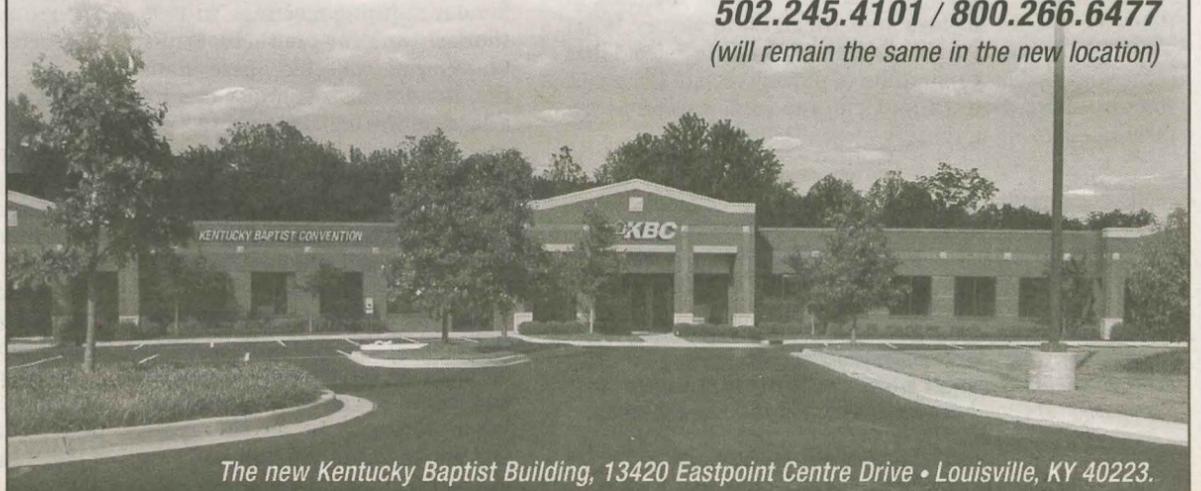
# moving!

The Shelbyville Road campus offices of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and the Western Recorder, will be closed August 12-15 for the move. The Kentucky Baptist Building will reopen in its new location-- 13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive on August 16.



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## New Habitat chief sees 'God-size' task

Americus, Ga. (RNS)—Habitat for Humanity International, the global house-building ministry, has named an executive pastor from Minnesota as its new chief executive officer.

Jonathan T.M. Reckford, 42, has served as executive pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church, a 4,300-member congregation in Edina, Minn., for two years and previously worked in the business world.

"While sad about the prospect of leaving my church community in Minnesota, I feel as if God has been preparing me for the last 20 years for a time such as this," Reckford said in a statement Aug. 4 during the announcement by the ministry, based in Americus, Ga. "I believe passionately in Habitat's mission and can't think of a movement I would rather join."

Reckford, who previously worked in executive positions with Best Buy and Circuit City, succeeds Paul Leonard, who served as interim CEO.

He quoted Southern Baptist author and speaker Henry Blackaby as he characterized the job ahead for Habitat.

"Henry Blackaby suggests we should take on God-sized tasks because then it is clear to everyone who deserves the credit," he said. "It is humbling to get to serve alongside the thousands of committed Habitat associates and volunteers to bring hope and dignity, build communities and strive toward our mission to eradicate poverty housing."

Millard Fuller, the founder of Habitat for Humanity, was fired in January after a conflict with the board of directors.

Some of the conflict stemmed from an allegation by a female employee of sexual harassment by Fuller, who denied any wrongdoing. The board ultimately found "insufficient proof of inappropriate conduct."

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who

served as honorary chair of the succession planning task force that chose Reckford, called the new CEO "a wonderful choice" for the organization.

"His background in business will help Habitat navigate the economy and business climate, and his pastoral experiences will help him shepherd Habitat's ministry and assure it continues to share and demonstrate Jesus' teachings worldwide," Carter said in a statement.

### Ministry goes on without Fullers

Fuller has started his own organization, the Fuller Center for Housing. He changed the name from Building Habitat, which had prompted legal action from the ministry he

founded.

According to an article last week in The New York Times, several of Habitat's largest donors have supported Fuller in his new charity.

John Wieland, founder and chairman of a John Wieland Homes and Neighborhoods in Atlanta, suggested that Fuller and Habitat's board grew out of sync as the ministry became more institutionalized.

"I think Millard and Linda Fuller, the entrepreneurs didn't feel warm and fuzzy about the move to a corporate approach for a not-for-profit entity."

Habitat began construction on its 200,000th house last weekend in Knoxville, according to the group's Web site. As a reflection of the ministry's international scope, volunteers are scheduled to begin construction on Habitat's 200,001st house in Kanyakumari, India.

According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Reckford will begin work Sept. 12 as the organization begins a one-year study of whether to relocate its offices and personnel from Americus, Ga.



Jonathan Reckford

## All in a day's work

### Students brave heat and hard work to get Oneida ready for start of school year

As soon as summer school was over, we began a lot of work and general cleaning that had to be done before our students return for the 2005-2006 term in mid-August.

While most of our summer school students went home, some stayed and others returned to our readers knowledge requirements. As most of our readers know, we provide scholarships to virtually every student. A full-paying student pays less than one-half of the actual cost to attend Oneida. While many of our students can afford our modest fees, many cannot. Those students receive additional scholarship funds and many get full scholarships.

Those who cannot pay the normal fees are asked to work a little extra each summer, normally three weeks. When I first came to Oneida in early 1984, students were asked to work nine weeks each summer. Admittedly, many of those students who have been asked to work do not always understand why they are asked to work for three weeks. We try to explain to them that their parents needed some extra financial help and in turn we need those students to help with the daily chores while our other students are gone.

After all, we still have buildings to clean, lawns to mow and livestock and crops to tend to. Our 40 or so students have been working hard, especially considering the heat, to get everything ready for the first day of school.

Each morning several boys do a quick cleanup in all the buildings that are used on a daily basis. Other boys clean other buildings in preparation for the start of school. The boys who did the quick

cleanup then take the kitchen trash to the trash compound before they get ready to start mowing. By mid-morning, mowers and weed eaters are going full-blast in order to keep our campus looking its best. If you have been in Kentucky the past few weeks, you know how hot it has been. To my knowledge, not a single student has asked to be excused from his or her responsibilities because of the heat. We give them lots of breaks and all the water they can drink.

During this time, many of our girls are busy cleaning and painting their dorm and helping with a variety of chores in the dining room. After all, staff, students, visitors and lots of volunteers have to be fed three times a day. That's washing and glasses. There are tables to clean and floors to mop.

A third group of students have been diligently doing farm chores. Like students on this side of the campus, they have been doing a huge amount of mowing and hours and hours of cutting weeds. In all my years at Oneida, I have never seen the farm look as nice as it does at this time. In spite of the heat, our farm students have been faithful in doing their daily chores.

The heat is hard on our livestock, especially the hogs. Special time and attention must be given to their needs during unusually hot weather. Thanks to getting enough rain during the past two months, our pastures are full of grass for our cows. Hopefully, all this effort has helped our students take a giant step toward being responsible adults.

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



W.F. Underwood

## Bush standing firm on threat to veto stem cell research changes

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—While empathizing with Americans who hope embryonic stem cells will lead to cures for their diseases, President Bush refused last week to back away from a threat to veto increased funding for stem-cell research.

"I fully understand there are a lot of folks out there desperate for a cure," Bush said during a discussion with a small group of reporters at the White House.

Faced with what he characterized as a dilemma over whether to "allow the destruction of life in order to advance science," Bush said he achieved the right balance between science and ethics.

Prodded in part by the personal health experiences of lawmakers and lobbying by advocates such as former first lady Nancy Reagan and the late actor Christopher Reeve, bipartisan support has grown for legislation easing the restrictions that Bush put in place in 2001 to allow federally funded research on existing stem-cell lines.

A bill that passed the House in May was supported by 50 Republicans.

The Senate has not voted on legislation sponsored by Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., who recently completed treatment for Hodgkin's disease. But Specter estimates at least 62 senators support the measure to ease restrictions, including Majority Leader Bill Frist, who changed his position last week.

About 15 other senators are

"thinking it over," Specter said on "CBS News' Face the Nation."

"I believe by the time the vote comes up," Specter said, "we'll have 67," the two-thirds majority required to override a veto. He acknowledged, however, gaining the same percentage of votes in the House of Representatives would be a problem.

The problem is expected to take up the legislation after it returns Sept. 6 from a recess.

Bush noted that congress has the prerogative to pass laws. "I have the prerogative to set limits in what I think is right," he said.

Bush described embryonic stem cell research as relatively new and only one of several potential avenues to curing diseases. He noted that research using adult stem cells may yield results and researchers are working on methods to extract stem cells without destroying embryos.

He said the federal limits do not restrict privately funded research, and noted that some states have provided their own funding—a philosophy with which he disagrees.

"My hope is that stem cell lines we have available will help advance science," Bush said, adding, "I fully understand the anguish people have."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

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## Walking where Jesus walked

### Clear Creek New Testament professor leads trip to Israel

In May, three students gained an advantage for the required course in biblical geography. They traveled with the professor to Israel. Two students were able to take their wives.

Roy Lucas, the H.C. Chiles professor of New Testament, led a group of 14 people on an 11-day tour of Israel, his fourth trip to the Holy Land. "I wish every student could go," Lucas said. "The greatest impact on them is the realization of how small the country is. They can see from the Jordan Valley to the Mediterranean Sea. The trip really makes Bible study come alive."

One of the greatest experiences of the trip was a walk through Hezekiah's tunnel. "Inside we turned out the flashlights and had prayer," Lucas said. "It was a bonding experience that cemented a relationship between professor and student." The 1,700-foot-long tunnel between Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam was dug to secure water when the Assyrians were about to attack Jerusalem.

The group also visited Tel Bet Shean, the location where Saul and his sons were nailed to the

city walls. From the mound, the New Testament city excavation can be viewed. "This is one of the best first-century excavation sites in the world," Lucas said.

Security and safety concerns make many people hesitant about travel to Israel. "We didn't have any problems," Lucas said. "They were very glad we came, in both the Jewish and Palestinian sections. Travelers there, like here, have to be selective about where they go."

Another special experience overnight lodging at a kibbutz, a community on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. "It is a unique setting, where people have united to make their living together," Lucas said.

Lucas and his wife are planning for a May 2006 trip. The expected cost of \$2,400 includes travel from Cincinnati, lodging, a tour bus with guide and two meals each day in Israel. Also included in this price is an additional overnight stay in Jordan to visit Petra and Mount Nebo, where Moses viewed the Holy Land. For additional information or to reserve a seat, contact Lucas at rlucaas@cbbc.edu.

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



Bill Whittaker

## Court nominee Roberts worked for landmark gay-rights case

By Robert Marus  
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—John Roberts, President Bush's nominee to the Supreme Court, donated legal work on behalf of gay-rights groups that helped them win a landmark 1996 case before that panel, according to the Los Angeles Times.



John Roberts

While he was a private attorney, Roberts did several different kinds of legal work to help prepare the attorneys arguing on the side of gay-rights groups in *Romer vs. Evans*. That Supreme Court decision overturned a Colorado law that struck down all local gay-rights provisions. Justices in the 6-3 majority said the law violated gay and lesbian Coloradoans' constitutional right to equal protection.

*Romer vs. Evans* was widely considered the most important legal victory for the gay-rights movement up to that point. It provided some of the legal basis for the Supreme Court's landmark 2003 *Lawrence vs. Texas* decision, which invalidated laws that banned gay sex nationwide.

According to the Times, Roberts helped prepare the attorneys who argued for the gay Coloradoans who protested the law. He contributed help on legal briefs and held moot-court sessions to ready the attorneys for oral arguments before the high court.

At the time, Roberts was an attorney with the Washington, firm Hogan & Hartson. He had argued successfully several cases before the justices, and the firm expected its lawyers to perform pro bono, or charity, work for various causes.

The lawyer who headed the firm's pro bono department at the time said Roberts did not hesitate when asked to help on the case. "He said, 'Let's do it.' And it's illustrative of his open-mindedness, his fair-mindedness," Walter Smith told the newspaper. "He did a brilliant job."

The lead attorney for the case, who worked with Roberts, told the paper that people directed her toward the nominee on the case. "Everybody said Roberts was one of the people I should talk to," said Jean Dubofsky, who was a former Colorado Supreme Court justice. "He has a better idea on how to make an effective argument to a court that is pretty conservative and hasn't been very receptive to gay rights."

## Worldwide encourager

David Coffey said he hopes to strengthen and motivate Baptists as BWA president

By Alan O'Sullivan  
(England) Baptists Times

Didcot, England (ABP)—He's affectionately known as "DC" around the office at the Baptist Union of Great Britain, but David Coffey has several other cities on his travel itinerary before he travels to Washington D.C.

As the newly elected president of the Baptist World Alliance, Coffey already has plans to travel to Australia this month, then Prague in September and Russia in October with "one or two other things" in between.

It's not as if Coffey, who also is general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, is new to the role of international delegate. He first went abroad in an official capacity to Russia as president of Baptist Union of Great Britain in 1986, a month after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

"That was an eye-opening experience, what you call a baptism of fire, in terms of experiencing the fast track," he says.

Since then, he has visited more than 40 countries, including his travels as president of the European Baptist Federation from 1997-99.

"So travel doesn't hold any romance for me," he admits. "When you've gone via Geneva to Helsinki and your luggage is still in Stockholm, it's not much fun."

What he does enjoy, he says, is "the joy and the privilege of bringing encouragement to the Baptist family in all parts of the globe. That's a huge privilege."

In addition to encouraging Baptists and Christians worldwide during the next five years he is BWA president, Coffey also talks of motivating Baptists to be truly evangelical.

In an interview, for example, while he'll address the issue of Britain being post-denominational, he prefers to focus on how churches

can reach out to those Christians who are unsure about their faith.

"The key, I think, is to say that, however ancient the institution, is it flexible enough to be open to the winds of the Holy Spirit?"

Similarly, when talking about whether the flow of mission workers from the developing world to traditional centers of Christianity will continue, he focuses on migration in general and the challenges of an increasingly multifaith society.

Coffey prefers to see issues from the perspective of opportunities for the local church, the British Union and the global Baptist family.

### "Legacy of leadership"

He said he hopes to find ways of making sure the "legacy of leadership" is passed on to the next generation.

"We've been led for a number of decades by gifted leaders ... but we need to nurture a newer leadership, quite young like that in Eastern Europe. I think to empower them and in many other parts of the world, to empower the new leadership generation, that would be one of my visions of the BWA for the 21st century."

In order to make this vision a reality, Coffey currently is working on a global academy for emerging leaders within the Baptist family.

He said he also wants BWA to continue being a voice for the voiceless and powerless.

As an example, he cites the ONE campaign to "Make Poverty History."

"That technically comes to an end on Dec. 31, but the long walk to justice for the world's poor will go on."

Coffey steps into this new leadership role on the heels of the Southern Baptist Convention's departure from BWA.

Reflecting on this, Coffey says, "There is a key need for unity in the family. ... I think that in a fractured



**SPEAKING OUT** David Coffey said he expects the Baptist World Alliance to continue speaking on behalf of those who are voiceless and powerless. "The long walk to justice for the world's poor will go on."

world you need a united Baptist family.

"Jesus expects us to be united in order to bear a good witness," he adds. "We're a very diverse family. And unless we ground our unity in Jesus Christ, we can't ground it anywhere else, because there is no other safe place."

Coffey said he thinks of the saying: "In essentials unity. In non-essentials liberty. In all things charity." I think we need to be able to distinguish between essential gospel truths and non-essentials which belong to being part of the Baptist family."

Coffey defines essential gospel truths as those concerning the Trinity and the cardinal doctrines concerning the incarnation, the life, death, resurrection and coming again of Jesus Christ. Non-essentials are "areas of discipleship where we have to exercise liberty."

"In terms of church order, there will be differences of opinion, (such as) how we worship the Lord, who has the authority to minister—male and female or just male. I particularly affirm the ministry of male and female, but I have to recognize that not everyone shares that opinion."

## Switching to Christianity, Jewish hip-hopper shocks followers

By Alana Kornfeld  
Beliefnet

New York (RNS)—Jewish parody rap star 50 Shekel, who was once billed as "The World's Most Kosher MC," has shocked the Jewish world with two announcements on his Web site: He's accepted Jesus as his Messiah and wishes to be called by his birth name: Aviad Cohen.

Cohen, 30, gained popularity with his hit "In da Shul," a spoof on rapper 50 Cent's single "In da Club." Cohen did gigs around New York in 2003. At the time, he said he wanted to rap about Judaism.

Raised an observant Jew in Israel and Brooklyn, Cohen told Beliefnet in 2003 that he was in the process of becoming closer to the Torah and orthodoxy.

But he said in June he now has chosen to lead a Messianic Jewish lifestyle. In July, Cohen announced on his Web site that he has given up the name 50 Shekel and will now go by his given name.

Messianic Jews, like Christians,

believe that Jesus (or as they refer to him, Y'Shua) was the expected Messiah. Though they claim to be following the true Judaism, mainstream Jews are nearly unanimous in rejecting the idea that Messianic Jews are Jewish, and many believe them to be intentionally targeting Jews for conversion.

### Conversion after seeing "Passion"

Cohen says his change of heart was divinely inspired. He traces his conversion, in part, to seeing Mel Gibson's movie, "The Passion of the Christ," and immediately becoming fascinated with Jesus. It was then, he says, that he "came to faith."

Cohen, who has been practicing Messianic Judaism for about 10 months but just let fans know about his new faith several weeks ago, wrote that accepting "Jesus into his heart" makes him a "true Jew."

But David Klinghoffer, author of "Why the Jews Rejected Jesus: The Turning Point in Western History," says embracing Jesus is not Jewish.

"Jews don't believe in Jesus because he inspired a religion that seeks to cut us loose from the covenant God made with us at Mount Sinai," he says. "The New Testament rejects the Torah as 'obsolete,' a 'curse,' a 'captor.' That covenant is the grammar of our relationship with God. Without it, we lack the language to relate to Him as Jews. So a Jew who believes in Jesus has given up his relationship with God."

Cohen maintains he is still Jewish. He says Jews tend to be more biased against Jews becoming Christians than against Jews who explore other religions.

"If I became a Buddhist, Jews wouldn't care. They would probably think I'm spiritual and edgy," he says. "If I became a palm-reading-astrologer-Kabbalist, they would cheer and think I'm hip. But now that I have come into the arms of God, they are freaking like crazy, 'cause they know I'm sold out to God and His Anointed Son and no longer sold on 'Judaism.'"

"Jesus expects us to be united in order to bear a good witness."

New Baptist World Alliance President David Coffey

"If I became a Buddhist, Jews wouldn't care."

Aviad Cohen

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for the following mission teams and ministries in the International Baptist Convention and Brazil, where Kentucky Baptists have partnerships:

■ Follow-up work after volunteers from Georgetown Baptist Church held a children's festival last week in the Maltese village of Sengles.

■ Follow-up work after a volunteer team from First Baptist Church of Richmond served in Malta. "They did everything from martial arts seminars to Women's Health seminars to children's fun-fests to Scripture distribution to over 3,000 homes to painting the nursery at our church," missionary Robin Pinkston writes. "Six young people prayed to receive Christ at the fun-fests."

■ English and chronological Bible storying groups through the city of Hradec Kralove in the Czech Republic. "Pray that we will be able to find one person receptive to the gospel in each section of the city and that those people would be willing to help promote the work of the gospel in Hradec Kralove," a missionary writes.

■ The health and safety of Brazilians working with missionaries. Several have needed surgeries or other medical care recently, and many team members have had to wait for public health care or go to another location to get treated.

■ A volunteer team working in Uberaba, Brazil, in a new church plant. This city has been difficult for evangelicals to penetrate because of the strength of spiritists there. Uberaba has the lowest percentage of evangelicals among cities of its size (more than 250,000 people) in southeastern Brazil. Pray also for missionaries Monty and Janis Thompson, as they work with volunteers and lead in follow-up and discipleship of those who make decisions.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CLAY CITY**—Clay City Church will host revival services Aug. 14-17 with guest speaker, **Dale Rose**.

■ **CORBIN**—Central Church will host revival services Aug. 30 at 7:00 with evangelist **Claude Thomas**, former pastor of Main Street Church in Williamsburg.

■ **DANVILLE**—SOUTH DISTRICT ASSOCIATION—**Jim Clontz** was director of missions. He succeeds **Charles Hedrick**, who retired in May.

■ **GREENSBURG**—Bethlehem Church recorded 18 professions of faith during vacation Bible school in July. **Kathy Murray** directed the event. **Gary Ervin** is pastor.

■ **ELSMERE**—Elsmere Church will celebrate its 100th anniversary Aug. 13, 1 p.m. **Johnnie Holloway** is pastor.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church honored **Elizabeth Cunningham** on her 90th birthday Aug. 5. **Rodney Travis** is pastor.

■ **LEBANON**—The Hispanic/Latino mission of Woodlawn Church will host a festival at Graham Memorial Park, Aug. 20, 12:30-3 p.m.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host **Sons of Liberty** from Stanton on **Concert Aug. 20, 7 p.m.** **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

**Carl Coleman Ellis**, a member of Deer Park Church since 1939, died July 23 at age 92. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Coleman Ellis.

Greater Good Hope Church will host a scholastic chess tournament Sept. 10. For more information, contact **Corbin Seavers** at (502) 776-5272 or **Steven Dillard** at stevedillard@hotmail.com.

mail.com. **C.L. Jordan** is pastor

Rockford Lane Church honored **Arthur and Bernadette Nash** on their 50th wedding anniversary July 30.

■ **MAYSVILLE**—**Carl Robbins**, director of missions for the Bracken Baptist Association from 1964-1976, died May 9. He was 93. Robbins, a native of Louisville, was a former pastor of Parkwood Baptist Church in Louisville and a former district missionary in Corbin from 1952-1964. He is survived by his wife, Mary. Memorials may be made to Bracken Association Building Fund.

■ **MORTON'S GAP**—Salem Church recently called **Jerry Brewer** as pastor.

■ **MURRAY**—First Church ordained **Joe Rowland** and **Lance Allison** as deacons July 24.

■ **PADUCAH**—First Church will celebrate the 100th anniversary of an area revival Sept. 25-28 at the Four Rivers Center.

■ **PRESTONBURG**—First Church recently called **Beecher Joshua McCarty** as minister to students.

■ **RAVENNA**—Cow Creek Church will host revival services Aug. 21-26 with guest speaker **Terry Rye**.

■ **SOMERSET**—First Church called **Ryan West** as associate pastor of discipleship and assimilation.

■ **WADDY**—Mt. Vernon Church recently called **Sean Post** as pastor. **Fred Moffatt** had been interim since February. Revival services will be August 12-14 with **Harold Temple** as guest preacher. Homecoming is August 14.

■ **WICKLIFFE**—Faith Church will observe homecoming Aug. 29. Former Pastor **Jack Studie** will preach.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### August

13 Super Saturday, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

20 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg; Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

27 Super Saturday, Central Baptist Church, Corbin; First Baptist Church, Paducah.

### September

2-5 Wrangler Trail Ride, Land Between the Lakes.

9 Super Saturday, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

16-17 Keyboard Retreat, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.

16-17 Women on Mission Fall Retreat, Jonathan Creek.

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



**VOLUNTEER MISSIONS** Lisa DeHaven (right), a member of Corinth Baptist Church in McQuady, plays with two visitors to the Hope Migrant Mission Center in Hope, Ark. DeHaven worked 10 weeks this summer at the center, which gives refreshments, personal hygiene items and Christian materials to migrant workers. Many migrant workers from Mexico travel Hope on their way to work at farms in the Great Lakes region. DeHaven "is a perfect example of volunteer missions among Southern Baptists," said Bob Williford, director of the center. Her work included helping church volunteer teams, packing hygiene kits and interacting with migrants, he said. "Lisa has been a vibrant witness for our Lord and His Kingdom." (Photo by Bob Williford)

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**AVAILABLE:** Magnify Quartet—men's 4-part harmony gospel music—live musicians seek to magnify Jesus. Love offerings requested—never a fee. Call toll-free: (877) 409-3764 or (859) 393-4517. [www.magnifyquartet.com](http://www.magnifyquartet.com).

**AVAILABLE:** Personal care for the disabled and ill. Thirty years experience. Call for more information: (502) 552-1748.

**FOR SALE:** 1993 Ford 15-passenger van, 88,619 miles. For more information, please call (270) 765-2545 or 765-4373.

**FOR SALE:** 1989 International Bluebird Bus. 70 seats, good condition. \$4,000. Clarkson Baptist Church, (270) 242-4567.

**SEEKING:** Part-time children's ministry coordinator to work under the supervision of the children's ministry director for Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, Ky. send resumé by Aug. 24 to: Personnel Committee, Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 W Byers Ave., Owensboro, KY 42303.

**SEEKING:** Accounting supervisor. Requires bachelor's degree in accounting with at least two years supervisory experience, preferably for a non-profit organization. Strong communication and computer skills also required. General ledger and payroll experience preferred. Send resumé with salary history and requirements to: Personnel Services, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville KY 40280; or [personnel@sbts.edu](mailto:personnel@sbts.edu).

**SEEKING:** Bivocational Southern Baptist pastor. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Mill Creek Baptist, 117 N Main, Tompkinsville, KY 42167. Phone: (270) 487-5588.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Buck Creek Baptist Church, Calhoun, Ky. Resumés may be submitted to: Search Committee, Buck Creek Baptist Church, 3788 Highway 431N, Calhoun, KY 42327.

**SEEKING:** Children's minister. Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., is seeking an experienced individual with strong leadership gift and a passion for reaching children and their families to be on the cutting edge of children's ministry. Creativity, strong organizational, relational and communication skills consistent with a large church and ministry team needed. Respond to: IBC Personnel Committee, 3100 Bates Creek Road, Lexington, KY 40502.

**SEEKING:** Insurance inspector. We are looking for independent contractors to perform exterior residential property insurance inspections in a local territory. We need someone to start immediately. Earnings based on number of inspections completed. Commitment to a local territory is required. Direct or related experience required. You will need the following items to begin: Dependable vehicle, digital camera, measuring wheel and PC with high-speed Internet access. E-mail resumé to: [jhugle@millinfo.com](mailto:jhugle@millinfo.com). EOE.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of music for Calvary Baptist Church. Send resumé to Search Committee, 121 Kentucky Ave., Princeton, KY 42445.

**SEEKING:** Pastor for newly formed DeHaven Baptist Church in LaGrange, Ky. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, DeHaven Baptist Church, c/o Daniel Fendley, PO Box 135, LaGrange, KY 40031.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music for blended worship service for church in central Kentucky. Please contact the Music Committee at Springfield Baptist Church, PO Box 286, Springfield, KY 40069. Phone: (859) 336-3544.

**SEEKING:** Full-time youth minister/education director. Bachelor's degree required; seminary training preferred. First Baptist Church, Kennett, Mo. Send resumé to Janet Scherer, 1621 South Lincoln, Kennett, MO 63857, or e-mail [jscherer@we.rr.com](mailto:jscherer@we.rr.com).

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

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to: Furdale Baptist Church, 1238 Durrett Lane, Louisville, KY 40213. E-mail: [fbclou@bellsouth.net](mailto:fbclou@bellsouth.net).

**SEEKING:** Pastor for rural Southern Baptist church. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 529 Ada Drive, Harrodsburg, KY 40330-1011.

**SEEKING:** Senior pastor for Centerfield Church, a contemporary Baptist church in fast-growing Oldham County, Ky. Please reply to: Centerfield Church, 4200 S Highway 393, Crestwood, KY 40014.

**SEEKING:** Pastor for Brooksville Baptist Church (Bracken County). Send resumé to BBC, PO Box 126, Brooksville, KY 41004. Phone: (606) 735-2455.

**SEEKING:** Full-time senior pastor—Rosemont Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky. Job requirements at [www.lifewaylink.com/8592776147](http://www.lifewaylink.com/8592776147). Send resumé: Search Committee, Rosemont Baptist Church, 556 Rosemont Garden, Lexington, KY 40503.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister with youth for Broadway Baptist Church, an established, forward-looking congregation in Louisville, Ky., affiliated with CBF. A job description and other information are available at [www.broadwaybaptist.org/position-MinisterWithYouth.html](http://www.broadwaybaptist.org/position-MinisterWithYouth.html).

**SERVICES:** Christian long distance at 3.9¢/minute (24/7); no monthly service charge. Toll-free: (866) 587-8346 or [www.covenantphoneservice.com](http://www.covenantphoneservice.com).

**TOUR:** Come with us to the Holy Land and Petra, May 30-June 9, 2006. \$2,478 from Cincinnati. Tour host: Dr. Roy and Roberta Lucas. For brochure: (866) 340-3196.

# God's plan or man's?

*Both settlers and Zionists question reasons behind Gaza Strip pullout*

By Jeffrey MacDonald  
Religion News Service

**Gaza (RNS)**—For the past 30 years, Bob Lang says he has believed God to be close at hand as Lang worked alongside other Jewish settlers in claiming the land of the Bible.

But now, he's pleading with God to not be so distant.

That's because Israel's planned removal of as many as 9,000 settlers from Gaza in mid-August seems irreconcilable with Lang's belief that God ordained these Jewish settlements to prosper.

It's raising a vexing question for people everywhere who regard the state of Israel as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. If God ordained these settlements, then why would God allow them now to be uprooted?

"When it's our own government saying, 'Let's just take the Jews out,' it's very hard for us to see that as God's will," says Lang, a New York native who now lives in the West Bank settlement of Efrat, near Bethlehem. He says he will protest the Gaza pullout publicly until "God stops it from happening" and the government aborts the plan. But if disengagement does indeed occur, he says, turmoil for believers may be just beginning.

"There's no question that if this happens ... then it will cause on an individual level, if not a group level, a difficult problem to put together our theological beliefs with our reality on the ground ... There would be a crisis of faith."

Jewish settlers aren't the only ones struggling to reconcile this historic episode with their worldviews.

From factions of religious Jews in Israel and the Diaspora to Christian Zionists who believe the gathering

of Jews in the Holy Land is helping prepare the way for the Messiah's return, the Gaza pullout represents a problematic detour from what they thought was God's plan.

As the day of reckoning for Gaza settlements approaches, these believers are debating whether the pullout derives from human sin or divine mandate from a God Whose ways can be mysterious.

Theories are flying as to why God would let it happen. Christian Zionists, for instance, have urged Israel to retain Gaza settlements as a divine gift to be defended, but they are now theorizing that God might have reasons for allowing the withdrawal to occur.

"A holy God also placed conditions on the Jewish people's right to actually reside in all the land," writes David Parsons, spokesman for the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, the world's largest Christian Zionist organization, in a May essay titled "Patience is a (Zionist) Virtue." "Obedience would always mean enlargement of Israel's borders within the land entrusted to her, while disobedience meant 'trouble in her borders' (Ezekiel 11) and ultimately exile."

For prophecy believers, Scripture sanctions Israel's claim to Gaza as well as the West Bank, which many in this camp discuss in biblical parlance as Judea and Samaria. They point for instance to Genesis 15:18: "The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.'"

Other critics of the withdrawal, however, posit that God indeed is behind the withdrawal, albeit for



**ZIONIST HQ** The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, whose headquarters are pictured here, is the world's largest Christian Zionist group. Leaders at the embassy have urged "patience" from Jews and Zionists who are upset with the Israeli government's removal of settlers from the Gaza Strip.

reasons largely incomprehensible. One possibility: God might want Israel to focus on more strategically and religiously significant territory, according to Rabbi Gerald Meister, adviser on Israeli-Christian affairs for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"I see the hand of God in all of this, even though there is a glove on the hand at times," Meister says. "We know from Scripture ... God tells us, 'I will veil My face.' He doesn't hide. He doesn't disappear. But sometimes we don't see Him in the midst."

### Shifting worldview

In reconciling theology with reality, believers in biblical prophecy have an "ingenious" knack for adapting to current events while keeping their worldview intact, according to Paul Boyer, professor emeritus of history at University of Wisconsin, Madison, and an expert on contemporary prophecy belief.

For instance, when the Cold War

ended, prophecy believers who had wrongly predicted an apocalyptic showdown with the Soviet Union simply shifted their sights to other apparent enemies of God, Boyer said.

Still, if developments in the Middle East continue to create cognitive dissonance by diverging from the historical narrative that believers are expecting, the consequences could be expressed politically.

"They're speaking now of leaders being deluded, not sinful," Boyer says. "But if the (Bush) administration (begins) to push for withdrawal from the West Bank, we'll see tension. It could lead to a fracturing of the religious right's support for Bush."

For now, Christian Zionists are invoking another passage in Scripture. Joel 3:2 reads, "I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I will enter into judgment with them there. ... They have divided my land."

## 'Jesus' film workers killed in Bangladesh

**Faridpur, Bangladesh (BP)**—Two men employed with Christian Life Bangladesh, a partner agency of Campus Crusade for Christ, were killed July 29 in Faridpur, Bangladesh.

Lipial Marandi, 21, and Tapan Kumar Roy, 27, had spent the last eight months providing health awareness programs to locals and showing the "Jesus" film. The men had received threats that they would be killed if they continued their work.

Local police say the men were sleeping when intruders entered their rented house at 2 a.m. and stabbed them to death, according to a report from Campus Crusade. So far, police have arrested two men in connection with the killings.

This is the second murder of Christian Life Bangladesh workers. In April 2003, Hridoy Roy was killed in a similar incident. The perpetrators of Hridoy's murder never were convicted.

# Tsunami relief workers say residents' hearts more open to gospel

By Sue Sprenkle  
SBC International Mission Board

**Southeast Asia (BP)**—Tuslam stares blankly off into the distance. His gaze passes over the miles of rubble that was once his village. Out of habit, he looks for his wife and son, even though he knows he will not find them. They died Dec. 26, when an earthquake sent walls of water crashing through their home.

As the 30-something man picks his way through broken blocks of concrete, balled up motorcycles and household debris, three boys run past, chasing a soccer ball. The corners of Tuslam's mouth form a smile, but his eyes do not follow suit. They remain lifeless as he explains that most of the children died in his village.

Only 700 people survived where 7,500 lived just six months ago. Only 20 of these survivors are between the ages of 1 and 20.

Life after the tsunami goes on amid destruction and despair.

Initial needs of food, water and temporary shelter were met soon after the disaster. Now people settle in for the long haul—something that could take years. Months of tireless work clearing debris have made only

a small dent in the vast destruction.

Christian workers and volunteers from the United States work side by side to clear wreckage, rebuild homes and offer medical care. They work in areas where people historically have been resistant to Christians. Like never before, hearts in these normally closed places are opening as the workers help pick up the pieces—physically as well as emotionally.

Even after months of mourning, tsunami victims have not released all of their pent-up tears and emotions.

"This is the most depressing place I've ever been," Southern Baptist missionary Beverly Collins says, wiping away tears. "I haven't stopped crying since I arrived."

### Victims tell their stories

During the past 38 years, Beverly and her husband, Chuck, have worked with people in Southeast Asia through wars and disasters. She knows part of the healing process is listening to people tell their stories about losses and how they survived. Being a confidant and friend are the most important roles Christian workers and volunteers carry out for

tsunami victims.

At first, victims never reveal that the tsunami hit them. But as workers build trust, the stories begin to flow. Medical workers treat a young, pregnant woman in a clinic. Arkansas volunteer Anna Redman sits, listening to her story.

Mariana says she lost more than 30 family members. When the wall of water came, she grabbed her son and ran to higher ground. The water swirled around her and, finally, the surge sucked the toddler from her arms. The last thing she saw of her son was his arms reaching out to her as he screamed, "Mommy! Mommy!"

"I can't even imagine the guilt of this young mother," Redman says. "It's not her fault the water sucked up her child, but she can't get that image out of her mind."

She wipes tears as the young mother watches stone-faced.

"I have no words for her; all I can do is cry and pray. I told her we are here because we love her and want to share her pain."

The culture of this place restricts victims from crying on the outside, but on the inside, victims wail. Someone has scrawled on a nearby

wall: "God, we repent." A popular Asian musician has penned a song asking God what His people have done to anger Him. The words go on to ask for forgiveness.

Many survivors not only question God and their beliefs but also ask: "Why was I chosen to survive?"

Christian workers tell how they have more opportunities now to talk about God and His love than ever before as people seek to understand.

"There's an overwhelming feeling of hopelessness," Collins says. "And then out of nowhere, God puts a symbol of hope right in our arms."

At one of the medical clinics, a baby named Tsunami lets out a squeal of delight and giggles. All the volunteers look up to see a healthy child with smiling parents and dotting neighbors surrounding them. All are enthralled with this new life that began Dec. 26 at 10 a.m.—just minutes after the giant waves hit. Tsunami's parents scurried to higher ground just in time for his birth.

"Through this healthy baby—born in the midst of the tsunami—there's a glimmer of hope, a glimmer of new life," Collins says. "Villages will be rebuilt and lives will be rebuilt."

# Oneida Baptist Institute

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