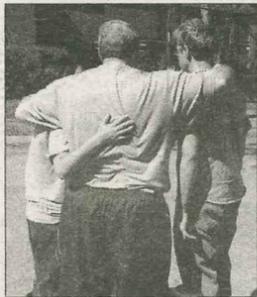


October 25, 2005  
Vol. 179, No. 42

**FOR THE RECORD**



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## Report details drop in overseas missions giving

Champaign, Ill. (RNS)—Giving to overseas missions by Protestants has dropped significantly during the last 80 years, according to a new report by empty tomb, a Christian research organization.

A survey of 28 Protestant denominations found that for each dollar donated to a congregation, denominations spent two cents on overseas missions in 2003, a decrease from seven cents in the 1920s.

"The prayer before the congregational offering will often refer to the importance of giving in order to share the good news throughout the world," said Sylvia Ronsvalle, a co-author of the study with her husband, John. "On a practical level, less than two cents of the dollars is going to be directed to that."

Total contributions to congregations decreased from 3.11 percent of members' income in 1968 to 2.59 percent in 2003, an overall decline of 17 percent.

Kentucky Baptist congregations fund overseas missions at a variety of levels, based on what percentage of their budget they give to the Cooperative Program, the Southern Baptist Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions or other mission agencies.

From church contributions given to the Cooperative Program—a unified giving plan to support ministries of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention—64 percent goes to the KBC, and 36 percent goes to the SBC. Of the money sent to the SBC, half goes to the International Mission Board for overseas missions.

As a result, if a church gave 10 percent of its budget through the Cooperative Program, 1.8 percent ultimately would be forwarded to overseas missions.

The authors found that denominations that grew in membership had a higher level of overseas missions support, while those that decreased had a lower level of missions giving.

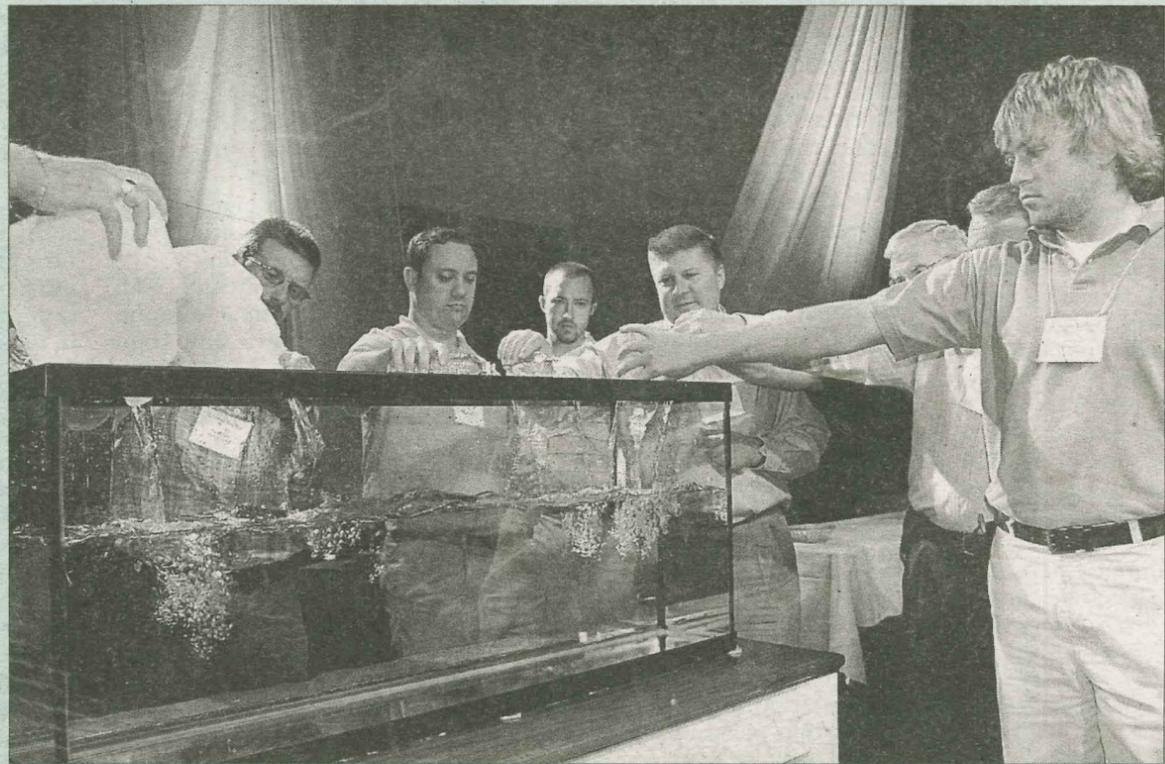
The 14 that had membership growth gave almost three cents on the dollar to overseas missions, while the 14 with membership declines gave less than one cent on the dollar.

"Perhaps the key is that a sense of larger purpose, consistent with professed beliefs, is attractive to people," the Ronsvalles observed in a statement.

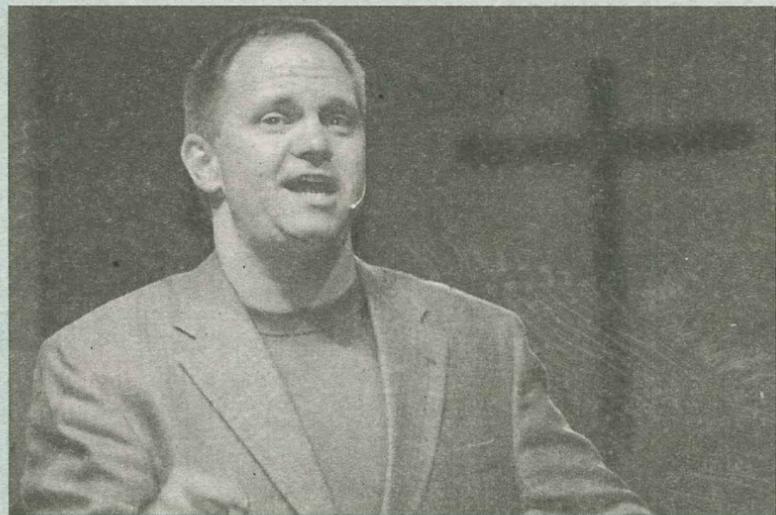
"Previously, people have just sort of assumed overseas missions was the priority of congregations and denominations," Mrs. Ronsvalle said. "These numbers suggest that's not the case."

The results of the report are featured in a new book, "The State of Church Giving through 2003."

## Wet work



"Celebrate Baptism," held Oct. 18 at Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green, honored leading Kentucky Baptist churches in baptisms and encouraged congregations to increase their efforts to bring people to faith in Christ. ■ Above: Ministers from across the state poured water into a tank to symbolize the impact of working together to increase baptisms. ■ Right: John Avant, vice president of evangelization for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, challenged participants to "make evangelism good news again and watch it spread like wildfire all over this country." See story on page 3. (Photos by Trennis Henderson)



## Georgetown plan: What's long-term impact?

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

**Georgetown**—What long-term impact will a revised partnership between Georgetown College and the Kentucky Baptist Convention have in practical terms?

For starters, the proposal acknowledges that Georgetown's board of trustees already had decided to revert to a self-perpetuating board.

According to KBC President Hershael York, Georgetown's decision to terminate the current covenant agreement with the KBC "is their right according to the covenant agreement."

"The Kentucky Baptist Convention does not get to vote on that," York emphasized. "The KBC cannot decide whether or not Georgetown will remain a part of the KBC. ... The only thing we're deciding is what is

the process for that termination in four years.

"We've come up with a process that is congenial and Christ-honoring and, I think, generous," he added.

Former KBC President Charles Barnes, who chaired the joint workgroup that proposed the new relationship, echoed York's view.

"It's important for all Kentucky Baptists to understand that there is a binding covenant agreement between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Georgetown which gives either Georgetown College or the KBC the right to terminate the covenant agreement by giving notice at an annual meeting of the KBC," Barnes explained. "Each party has that right and they can unilaterally exercise that right."

Noting that Georgetown was founded before the KBC existed,

Barnes added, "It was not until 1942 that the convention entered into an agreement with Georgetown whereby in return for Cooperative Program support, the convention would then begin electing the trustees of Georgetown."

"The Kentucky Baptist Convention has never owned Georgetown College and neither do we own the other institutions and agencies of the convention," Barnes said. "There's a covenant agreement with each of them."

Georgetown President Bill Crouch said trustees voted Sept. 26 to revert to a self-perpetuating board and informed the KBC workgroup of that decision during the two groups' joint meeting Sept. 29.

Citing Georgetown officials' "strong desire to continue a good working relationship" with the state □ See Georgetown/KBC ... Page 3

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, October 26

## New Orleans Seminary seeks volunteers

New Orleans (BP)—New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary will launch a major volunteer cleanup initiative Oct. 31, giving Southern Baptists an opportunity to assist with the restoration and renewal of on-campus housing.

Bob and Linda Jackson, directors of the seminary's MissionLab program, will coordinate the initiative, which will involve scheduling 50 volunteers per week from Oct. 31 until the job is finished.

"God has put before us a task too big for us, but not too big for Him," Bob Jackson said. "Southern Baptists have an opportunity to come bring the message of love to the city of New Orleans."

Volunteers will assist in a comprehensive cleanup and restoration of all second- and third-floor apartments on campus. The seminary's insurance will only reimburse the school for restoration work on

the contaminated first floors of campus residences. The first-floor apartments, contaminated with mold and mildew, currently are being professionally sanitized and restored.

### Three-phase cleanup plan

The volunteer plan includes three phases: cleanup of remaining items in apartments; cleaning and repainting; and restoring apartment flooring.

During phase one, items discarded by students that may be salvageable will be gathered and stored for distribution to other residents in the New Orleans area as repopulation begins.

Phase two will include a thorough cleaning and painting of all upper-floor apartment units.

Phase three will include refinishing floors and final cleanup, with the goal of each unit being

ready for use when the fall 2006 semester begins.

Volunteers must be age 18 or older. Limited space is available each week so groups must schedule their trip in advance. To contact the Jacksons at MissionLab, call (404) 226-9367 or e-mail bob@missionlab.com.

Jay Adkins, pastor of the New Orleans-area First Baptist Church of Westwego, is assisting in the cleanup initiative.

"One of the greatest blessings of being Southern Baptists is the cooperative spirit that has been planted and nurtured in each of our local congregations," he noted.

"Now is the time to put that spirit into action to help our future pastors, student ministers, missionaries, worship leaders, counselors and education directors in their greatest time of need."

## Southern announces \$1 million endowed chair

Louisville (BP)—A \$1 million endowed professorship at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been named in memory of former U.S. Congressman Albert Lee Smith Jr.

Seminary President Al Mohler announced the creation of the Albert Lee Smith Jr. Chair of Christian Leadership during an Oct. 12 chapel service that was part of Southern's annual Heritage Week.

"The proceeds will help to fund the salary of a professor and the cost of providing instruction," Mohler noted. He said Smith "left a lifetime legacy of Christian commitment as a husband and father, churchman, friend and national leader."

Smith, who died in 1997, served

for many years as a deacon at First Baptist Church of Birmingham, Ala., and also as chairman of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. His wife, Eunie, who was present during the announcement, serves on the board of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Smith served in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1981-1982. As a congressman, he sponsored the Family Protection Act. In 1985, President Reagan appointed Smith to the National Council on Aging.

The Albert Lee Smith Chair is Southern's 18th endowed chair.

Mohler told trustees during their annual fall meeting Oct. 11 that Southern might offer more early morning and evening classes

to meet the demands of growing student enrollment.

Southern enrolled 679 new students for the fall semester—an 8.8 percent increase in enrollment—bringing the seminary's on-campus student body to 2,314.

Instead of investing large amounts of capital in buildings and parking decks, Mohler said the seminary's growth will be handled through more efficient use of its current campus.

In other business, trustees elected two professors to endowed chairs: Thomas Schreiner to the James Buchanan Harrison Chair of New Testament Interpretation and Mark Seifrid to the Mildred and Ernest Hogan Chair of New Testament Interpretation.

## Southern Baptist relief teams gear up for Hurricane Wilma response

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—First, there was Katrina. Then Rita. Now, Southern Baptist disaster relief workers are gearing up to respond to yet another major hurricane, Wilma, which hit Florida's southwest coast early Oct. 24.

The Category 3 storm made landfall between Naples and Everglades City with 100-mph winds.

Mickey Caison, manager of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's disaster operations center, said the center has been operating around the clock since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in late August.

In addition to the new damage inflicted by Wilma, Caison said many South Florida residents still have not finished repairs caused by the hurricanes that hit last year.

Caison and his staff are working this week with leaders of the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army and the Florida Baptist Convention to determine where to stage Southern Baptist disaster relief units responding to Wilma.

"The staging area will probably be up the Jacksonville or north-west Florida panhandle areas," he said. "We'll probably redeploy 20 or so of the relief units now in Louisi-

ana, Mississippi and Texas. We'll put other states on alert that we may need their units as well."

Since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast eight weeks ago, NAMB's disaster operations center has directed the work of more than 7,000 volunteers from 41 state Baptist conventions.

According to NAMB estimates, the work of these 7,000 volunteers in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita translates into 104,000 "volunteer work days" valued at more than \$14 million.

Through the deployment of 360 disaster relief units, volunteers have prepared 8.6 million meals for hurricane victims and workers, completed more than 12,000 cleanup jobs and cared for 7,300 children along the hard-hit Gulf Coast.

Southern Baptists run the third-largest disaster relief operation in the nation, behind the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army, with more than 30,000 trained volunteers on stand-by for local, state and national emergencies.

A Webcast briefing about Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts is available at [www.namb.net](http://www.namb.net). Disaster relief information also is posted at [www.NAMB.net/dr](http://www.NAMB.net/dr).

## CBF leaders restore 'Jesus' to constitution

By Greg Warner  
Associated Baptist Press

Atlanta (ABP)—National leaders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship voted Oct. 14 to restore explicit references to Jesus deleted from the group's constitution in July.

A preamble to the constitution was approved by the CBF Coordinating Council with little discussion and no disagreement. It now will go to the annual CBF general assembly in June for action.

The proposed preamble states: "As a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches, we celebrate our faith in the One Triune God. We gladly declare our allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and to His gospel as we seek to be the continuing presence of Christ in this world. Our passion is to obey the Great Commission (Matthew 22:34-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) of our Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to uphold Baptist principles of faith and practice as we partner with one another and other Christians."

North Carolina pastor Jack Glasgow, who proposed the new language, said he hopes the move will quiet critics both within the Fellowship and beyond who complained when references to Jesus and the Great Commission were deleted from the earlier document.

For the Fellowship's "relentless critics," Glasgow said, "there is nothing we can do in this Coordinating Council to appease them." But the preamble could reassure two other audiences, he said—those in the Fellowship who want the group to be up-front about their allegiance to Jesus and the Great Commission and those on the outside of the Fellowship who sincerely want to know what the group believes.

At its June 30-July 1 general assembly in Grapevine, Texas, the Fellowship voted to approve revisions to its governing documents, but not before several participants objected that the revised constitution and bylaws omitted explicit references to Jesus and His Great Commission—the command to share the gospel and make disciples.

During debate at the general assembly, participants defeated two motions to send the proposed revisions back to the Coordinating Council so members could consider restoring references to Jesus and the Great Commission.

After the council adopted the preamble, Daniel Vestal, CBF national coordinator, said everything in it is implied or stated in the earlier documents. Nonetheless, he said, the revision "is an opportunity to reaffirm who we are."

### BAPTIST DIGEST

**Relief teams aid New England.** Southern Baptists in New England are assisting at least two towns hit hard by recent heavy and strong winds in the region. Crews are being assembled and assessment teams have been deployed for flood cleanup to communities surrounding Keene and Alstead in the southwest corner of New Hampshire. Disaster relief teams were on standby last week as residents of Taunton, Mass., waited to see whether a wooden dam would give way, possibly flooding the town with several feet of water.

**Missouri case back where it started.** Cole County Circuit Judge Richard Callahan has decided that the Missouri Baptist Convention legal action against five former convention entities should proceed where it started, in the court of fellow Cole County Circuit Judge Thomas Brown. After an Oct. 11 hearing in which MBC attorney asked Callahan to consolidate two similar convention-initiated cases, Callahan instead dismissed the case in his division so that the petition before Brown could proceed. The legal action, which began in 2002, is expected to go to trial sometime next year.

**Seminary facility honors Pattersons.** Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees approved plans Oct. 11 for a new faculty office building to anchor the future "western quad" of Southeastern's Wake Forest, N.C., campus. The building will be named Paige and Dorothy Patterson Hall in honor of former Southeastern President Paige Patterson and his wife, Dorothy. Patterson is now president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Trustees approved hiring an architectural firm to design a 20,000-square-foot, \$3 million building to house faculty offices and classrooms.

## 'Celebrate Baptism' event urges focus on evangelism

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

**Bowling Green**—Churches that don't share Jesus have stopped being churches, according to the pastor of the Kentucky Baptist church with the most baptisms in 2003-2004.

"I don't think there's such a thing as a church that is not evangelistic," Steve Ayres told pastors and other leaders gathered for last week's "Celebrate Baptism" event in Bowling Green. "A church that is not evangelistic is not a church."

Ayres, pastor of Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green, was among the speakers for the meeting, designed to bolster the Kentucky Baptist Convention's "Our Best for God's Best" baptism emphasis.

The Oct. 18 meeting, which attracted participants from more than 80 churches, honored congregations that lead the KBC in annual baptisms.

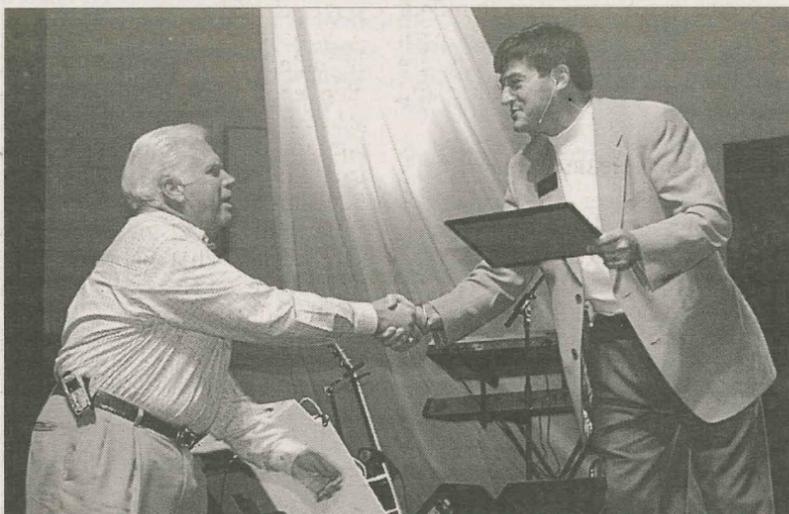
Ayres, whose congregation baptized 301 people during the KBC's 2003-2004 church year, insisted that church growth involves more than just inviting people to attend a worship service.

"Our job is not to invite people to come to church," Ayres said. "Our job is to invite people to life."

"It's not about the church wooing people," he insisted. "Your worship has to be life-giving. ... I've found evangelistic churches do a lot more celebrating than they do criticizing."

Urging pastors and churches to embody the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23, Ayres said, "Churches, quit fighting; you're sending people to hell. ... They want to hear about a Jesus Who can bring them to life."

"Evangelism is not only important, it's essential," he noted.



**CELEBRATION** Dan Garland (right), leader of the KBC's church development/evangelism team, presents a baptism certificate to Jack Howard, chairman of deacons at Zion Baptist Church in Henderson. Zion was among dozens of churches recognized during last week's "Celebrate Baptism" event.

"There's no such thing as a church that disciples and has no evangelism. If you're teaching and discipling, you're raising up evangelists."

The "Our Best for God's Best" baptism emphasis is a response to the KBC's "Kentucky Baptists Connect" goal of baptizing an average of 25,000 people a year over the next five years, according to KBC evangelism leader Dan Garland.

Achieving that goal will require an average increase of more than 7,000 baptisms per year over the previous five years.

Last week's event was designed "to celebrate what God is doing across Kentucky," Garland said.

If each Kentucky Baptist church would match its best annual baptism total of the past 10 years, he added, total baptisms would top 40,000.

"We're asking you to do the best you've ever done and a little bit

more," Garland urged. "As we do that, God will bless it."

"There are over 2.5 million unsaved people in Kentucky," he added. "It's not about numbers; it's about people."

### "Let's get in the battle"

John Avant, vice president for evangelization at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, told the baptism leaders they "represent the hope of all of us."

"What we've got to be about is a movement of God with churches that are flat out getting it done," he said. "Let's get in the battle for the souls of people."

Citing the Southern Baptist Convention's flat trend in baptisms over the past 30 years, Avant added, "Really it's a downward trend because we're losing the culture. The only thing that's going to change that is a movement of God."

Challenging churches to "do the obvious," Avant said, "Don't look at today as a reward but as a launching pad for where God wants you to go. ... Find what God is doing—the obvious things He drops right in your lap right where you are."

"Another thing Scripture tells us is to tell our stories," he noted. "Model relational evangelism and model divine encounters. Teach your people evangelism in your sermons on Sunday mornings so they know it is a lifestyle."

Avant also encouraged pastors to "make baptism a celebration. Celebrate what God does in your churches," he urged. "Let's make evangelism good news again and watch it spread like wildfire all over this country."

Garland concluded the celebration by inviting ministers to take bottles of water they had received earlier and pour them into a glass tank on the stage.

"We want to do a visual reminder of what it takes" to work together to lead people to faith in Christ and increase baptisms, Garland explained.

"Pour your bottle in," he told participants. "Show what God can do through us."

Chad Burdette, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, was among pastors whose congregations were honored for more than 100 baptisms in 2003-04.

Reflecting on the baptism celebration, Burdette said the event reminded participants about the importance of "getting busy about what really matters and that's Jesus Christ. It's as simple as that. That's what people need."

"I'm excited about getting back and reaching more people," he added. "I'm refreshed—I needed to be ministered to."

## Disaster relief work continues

Kentucky Baptist disaster relief officials were on standby Monday to see if volunteers would be needed in Florida to serve after Hurricane Wilma.

The latest storm was being watched as volunteers continued to be dispatched to Louisiana and Mississippi to minister to Hurricane Katrina victims.

This week, 25 Kentucky Baptist volunteers were cooking at a mobile kitchen in Slidell, La.; 30 volunteers were conducting chainsaw and "mud-out" cleanup work in Biloxi, Miss.; and 27 volunteers were working in Bay Vista, Miss., assisting a distribution center and working on cleanup teams.

The KBC continues to hold volunteer training sessions throughout the commonwealth. Upcoming sessions include:

■ Oct. 27 in Bowling Green at Hillvue Heights Church. For information, call (270) 779-7459.

■ Nov. 1 in Campbellsville at Campbellsville Baptist Church. For information, call (270) 465-8115.

■ Nov. 3 in Lexington at Immanuel Baptist Church. For information, call (859) 685-3337.

■ Nov. 3 in Louisville at Highview Baptist Church's Fegenbush campus. For information, call (502) 254-7967.

■ Nov. 3 in Deer Creek at the Ohio River Baptist Association. For information, call (270) 988-2204.

For more information about Kentucky Baptist disaster relief, visit [www.kybaptist.org/dr](http://www.kybaptist.org/dr).

## Georgetown/KBC proposal: What's long-term impact?

Continued from page 1

convention, the KBC workgroup's written report notes that Georgetown representatives asked the KBC group "to propose how the termination of the covenant agreement would be implemented and how a new working relationship between the KBC and Georgetown College could be structured."

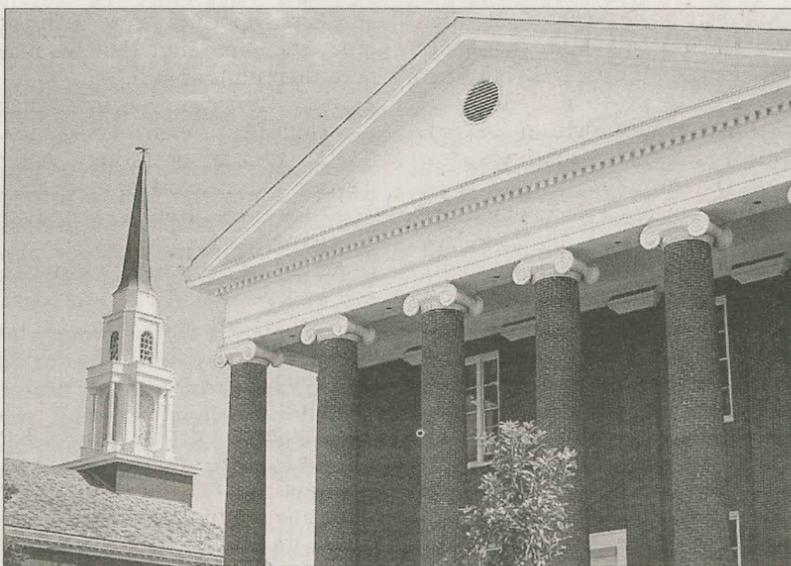
The report states that both groups "expressed a strong desire for a continued relationship and that there be no litigation, which has created problems for the work of Christ's Kingdom in other states."

"I think Kentucky can be a city on a hill," York said. "Kentucky Baptists can make a statement that we're not going to end up as other states have, costing millions of dollars of the Lord's money in rancorous activity."

Describing the joint workgroup's proposal as "the absolute best-case scenario for all parties involved based on where we are right now," York said, "This is the best way to a peaceful solution."

Citing Georgetown's desire to maintain Baptist ties, the proposal specifies that 75 percent of the school's trustees will be Kentucky Baptists.

In addition to a self-perpetuating board, the proposed partnership



specifies that the KBC will phase out Georgetown's Cooperative Program financial support over four years.

The plan calls for the KBC to fully fund Georgetown's current \$1.3 million allocation in 2005-06 and then reduce it 25 percent per year until the funding is eliminated in 2009.

Ministry projects the KBC will continue to help fund include a campus minister position for Georgetown and Baptist scholarship funds for qualified students.

The plan also stipulates that

Georgetown will be "solely responsible for its own acts, debts and obligations."

James Moak, Georgetown's chief financial officer, said the school currently has \$52.4 million in net assets and \$28 million in endowment compared to \$44.5 million in net assets and \$24.5 million in endowment a year ago. He said the school also has long-term debt totaling approximately \$45.4 million.

Mike Carter, president of Campbellsville University, and Jim Tay-

lor, president of University of the Cumberlands, indicated they have no plans to pursue action similar to Georgetown.

Carter said Campbellsville officials "are supportive of both Georgetown College and the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and we affirm the missions of both." He added, however, that "we're faithfully committed to the mission of Kentucky Baptists and the convention. We remain committed to the terms of the covenant agreement."

"We have no ill will toward Georgetown College," Taylor agreed, "and if this is an option they wish to exercise, we wish them well."

As for Cumberland, he said, Kentucky Baptists are "our definable constituency. We get students because we're Baptist; we're accepted because we're Baptist."

On a practical level, Crouch said the administrative changes will not directly affect campus life.

"We're going to keep being the school we've always been," he pledged. "I do not think our students or the public at large is going to see anything different about Georgetown College. ... We're going to be a Baptist institution. That's what we've always been; that's what we're always going to be."

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Interceding for Muslims during Ramadan

By Jesse Lyautey  
SBC International Mission Board

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Ramadan is a holy month for Muslims all around the world. This year from Oct. 5 to Nov. 3, many Muslims are fasting from sunrise to sunset and gathering in the evenings to eat and celebrate the holiday with family.

Ramadan is a time of spirituality for Muslims; they discuss religion and believe fasting will bring them closer to Allah.

Muslims also give to the poor during Ramadan. Fasting and giving alms are two of the five "pillars" of Islam, which Muslims believe they must follow to go to heaven.

In some Muslim countries, no food is sold during the day, and restaurants are not open until night, said Gerry Volkart, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's associate for the Northern Africa and Middle East region.

Typically, Muslim women spend their days cooking during Ramadan. Around 5 p.m. the streets are clogged with Muslims headed home

from work to be ready to eat as soon as the sun sets. After the meal, they go shopping or spend time with their families. Midnight is the usual bedtime, and they get up about 4 a.m. to eat again before the sun rises.

## COMMENTARY

According to Islamic tradition, on one night during the last 10 days of Ramadan, the prophet Muhammad received the Koran from Allah. Muslims celebrate this night, called the "Night of Power." They believe heaven will open up that night for God to hear their prayers and grant their requests.

IMB workers in Muslim areas intercede for those seeking God during Ramadan, and Southern Baptists can join them.

Many Muslims have told believers that during the night they have seen visions of a man and believe this man to be Jesus. Muslims with these visions or dreams often seek someone, usually a Christian believer, to explain the vision.

"Year in and year out I see a heightened increase in God speaking to the hearts and lives of Mus-

lims through dreams and visions during this focused time of prayer for Muslims," said IMB international prayer strategy director Ed Cox. "Believers must be ready to respond and answer questions people come to them with."

Volkart said Southern Baptists who are interceding on behalf of Muslims are expecting to hear from God. Believers can pray for them to ask questions about Jesus. Workers from around the world invite Southern Baptists to pray for Muslims as they seek God and for believers whose faith will be challenged during Ramadan.

"There are eager and expecting hearts waiting for someone to bring them good news," said a worker for Northern Africa and the Middle East.

During Ramadan, Southern Baptist women can focus on interceding for Muslim women, the worker said. Southern Baptist women can meet during Ramadan and have tea together, praying for these women who often are isolated from others.

For more information and resources, visit <http://btw.imb.org/> or <http://imb.org/compassionnet/>

## Archaeology insights

The other day I heard a new commentator on a worldwide cable network say that with all the major catastrophes occurring on our planet (earthquakes, floods, droughts, fires, etc.), "someone is trying to get our attention." That is unusual for the so-called liberal media to make such an observation that obviously is referring to a "higher power."

I have been reflecting on what the 18th century English historian Edward Gibbon wrote in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" in explaining why the Roman Empire declined and fell. Here, loosely quotes, are the five reasons

he gave:

1. The breakdown of the family, and the rapid increase in divorce.
  2. The continuing rise of taxes and extravagant spending.
  3. The mounting craze for pleasure, and the brutalization of sports.
  4. The increase of armaments to fight threats of enemy attacks from without when the real enemy was the decay from within.
  5. The decay and decline of religion into myriad and confusing forms, leaving the people without a uniform moral guide.
- Today if you travel the geographical spread of the former Roman Empire, you can see roads, aqueducts, coliseums, etc., still there. I



## Georgetown College recommendation

As executive director, I am grateful for the Christian spirit of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Georgetown College committees in reviewing the working relationship between the KBC and Georgetown College. It is my conviction that the combined committees have developed an excellent process for phasing out the covenant agreement and proposing a new ministry partnership.

Prior to the meeting of the two committees, Charles Barnes, general chairman, worked closely with KBC President Hershael York, Georgetown College President Bill Crouch and the KBC executive office in developing the agenda for the joint meeting of the committees.

Each member of the committee expressed a desire to maintain a strong relationship even though the Georgetown College trustees determined that the college needed a self-perpetuating board. It is the conviction of the Georgetown trustees that they must broaden the base of their trustees to non-Baptists

(Georgetown alumni) in order to reach future goals.

The KBC group expressed regrets that the covenant agreement was being terminated, but also expressed understanding and appreciation for the need to take such action.

The KBC group is to be commended for the generous financial phase-out of funding for Georgetown College. The KBC group was very concerned that the loss of \$1.3 million by Georgetown could have an adverse affect on funds available for student aid. There are about 800 sons and daughters of Kentucky Baptist families who could be impacted as well as other students.

I am grateful to the KBC group for their love for students and desire to support them and their families. That translates into concern for the Georgetown College faculty and staff and their support during this transition as well.

I also am grateful that Georgetown College desires to maintain its Baptist character. This has been

maintain that when archaeologists are pouring through the remains of our civilization sometime in the future, the landscape will be covered by rusting steel buildings and garbage dumps filled with little tubes and keyboards. The Romans had many things of beauty they left us. But isn't it interesting that the New Testament was not written in Latin—but Greek.

"For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. ... And many shall be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another" (Matthew 24:7-8, 10).

Oscar Davidson  
Somerset

demonstrated in the college's willingness to include in its articles of incorporation that 75 percent of the members of its board will be Kentucky Baptists.

The KBC and Georgetown College will continue the jointly funded partnership related to the campus minister. Georgetown College also will report annually to the KBC Mission Board.

The proposal will be brought to the Mission Board during its Nov. 14 meeting and to the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting the next morning. The new relationship will require only a majority vote for approval.

This is a meaningful way to preserve the best from a long historical relationship and to forge a future relationship that can carry out the Great Commission of our Lord.

The recommendation has been made available at the earliest possible date so that Kentucky Baptists will have time between now and the convention to consider the recommendation and ask questions of committee members, Georgetown College, the KBC executive office or KBC President Hershael York.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## STEWARDSHIP

## Careful spending plan can enhance family budget

By Doug Strader

Many families are scrambling to make their money last until the month has ended and all the bills have been paid.

Most of us have good intentions about our spending habits, but we often fail to get around to taking a step in the right direction. I would like to suggest several things we can do to help us be better stewards of all God has given us:

■ Plan a family budget and live on that budget.

■ Make sure that you give a tithe of your income to the Lord's work.

■ Do not buy things that you don't need.

■ Become serious about clipping and using coupons, especially on double coupon days.

■ Shop on days when stores give special discounts.

■ Do not buy name-brand products all the time; instead buy generic products that usually are on the lower shelves.

■ Plan your meals at least a week ahead. When you go shopping, buy products that can be cooked and put in the freezer until you are ready to serve them.

■ When shopping for clothes, purchase clothes for the next season that are on sale. However, do not buy unneeded items just because they are on sale.

■ If you are financing your home or a car and you have several years or months left before the payoff, shop for a lower interest loan.

■ Instead of buying books, magazines or movies, check them out of your local library.

■ Shop around for the best gasoline prices instead of paying the higher price just because you have always bought a certain brand of gasoline.

■ If you have credit card debt or consumer loans, pay them off as quickly as possible. Do not use credit cards unless you can pay the entire balance at the end of each month.

■ If you work outside your home, take your lunch each day instead of buying lunch at a restaurant.

■ If you eat snacks at work, take them with you because you can purchase them cheaper in bulk instead of buying from a vending machine.

These suggestions can help you get started on the path to being a better steward of your resources. Take time to think of other ways to improve your stewardship.

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



## College freshmen & parents should balance expectations

**Q: Our daughter, a freshman at college, is returning home every two or three weeks. She always brings her dirty laundry, which is fine, as well as a lot of excitement to see us. After the initial greeting, however, she disappears with old friends from high school and we scarcely see her until she leaves on Sunday. By the time she departs, we feel hurt and disappointed, and wonder if she sees us as no more than a bank and laundry service. How should we handle this?**

Talk with your daughter about your feelings of hurt and disappointment. She needs to understand that you look forward to seeing her and desire to spend time with her on those weekends she returns home.

### PARENTING

You must understand it is natural for a freshman to struggle initially in managing a new routine. In her exuberance to catch up with friends, perhaps she has not paused to think about how her behavior affects her family. While you look forward to visiting with her on the weekends she returns, she might feel compelled to catch up with everyone. Let her know that you support her visiting with friends and can appreciate her need to do so.

Work with your daughter to establish priority time for the family. Perhaps one of the two evenings can be spent at home with family.

Talk with her about your expectations and listen to hers. You are reminding her once again of the importance of carving time out for family in an era that generally is known for excessive activity and lack of meaningful family connections.—Scott Wigginton

### Q: Is childhood obesity really a crisis?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention began calling obesity an epidemic about five years ago. Children were a special concern.

### CHILDREN

At one point, as many as 25 percent of American children were said to be overweight, with 15 percent considered obese. Research showed that overweight children tended to become overweight adults. They also were at greater risk for cardiovascular disease and other health problems.

The September/October 2005 issue of *The Skeptical Inquirer*, a magazine that, despite its name, is devoted to science, reports that new research calls into question previous findings and pronouncements regarding obesity and the health risks associated with being overweight.

The new research indicates that much of the potential health risk that comes with being overweight can be eliminated by exercising. The Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research in Dallas showed that much of the risk associated with obesity disappeared when physical activity was at a high level.

The new research should not completely discount concerns about weight problems in children. Many boys and girls really do weigh too much.

Because there are health risks associated with being overweight, parents should pay attention and help children make good choices. Use moderation in high fat/high calorie food selections. Control portions and snacking.

Above all, help your children maintain an active lifestyle. Limit the amount of time they spend sitting in front of the television and the computer, or playing hand-held video games. Get them outside and get them moving.

—David Garrard

Family Forum writers are:

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

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



## Georgetown & KBC seek win-win solution

The proposed relationship change between Georgetown College and the Kentucky Baptist Convention is a complex issue that is generating mixed emotions for many Georgetown alumni, convention leaders and grassroots Baptists.

Some observers view the loosened ties between the two entities as a lose-lose situation: Georgetown will lose \$1.3 million per year in Cooperative Program funding and the state convention will lose the right to elect Georgetown's trustees.

But leaders most closely associated with the proposal insist it is a potential win-win scenario: Georgetown trustees, who voted last month to establish a self-perpetuating board, have indicated the change will help school officials "achieve the financial needs and long-range mission and objectives of the college."

Noting that the KBC and Georgetown "greatly value their long historical relationship," the proposal pledges that the two groups will "covenant together in a new ministry partnership in order to mutually advance Kingdom work and the ministry of each entity, in keeping with the Great Commission of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ." That commitment is a definite plus from the KBC perspective.

That's not to say, however, that reaching that point was an easy process. During the recent press conference announcing the recommendation, Georgetown President Bill Crouch, KBC President Hershael York and dialogue workgroup chairman Charles Barnes each expressed regret about the decision to alter Georgetown's historic connection to the KBC. Yet all three men also affirmed the proposal as a best-case scenario for future ministry efforts together.

"We sat down as brothers," York noted. "Like all negotiations, nobody comes away with everything they want, but you try to come away with what is reasonable for all parties involved. We really feel that this is the best way for us to glorify the Lord Jesus

Christ in our respective missions."

The details of the plan are significant: Georgetown naming its own trustees beginning in 2006, the KBC phasing out the school's Cooperative Program funding over the next four years, both entities continuing to partner together to fund a campus minister position and scholarships for Baptist students, Georgetown maintaining a trustee mix that includes 75 percent of board members who are Kentucky Baptist.

Perhaps even more significant is the spirit in which the joint workgroup negotiated. Representing Kentucky Baptists' diverse political and philosophical perspectives, the 14-member group agreed to maintain a spirit of Christian respect and cooperation—a process that has worked well for Kentucky Baptists facing other weighty issues in recent years.

That spirit also stands in sharp contrast to several other state conventions that have filed suit against entities seeking greater independence, including an unresolved case against five Baptist institutions in Missouri that has dragged on for three years and cost Missouri Baptists hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees.

"For me, it was never ever about litigation," York insisted. "It simply wasn't even on the table. Furthermore, I believe 1 Corinthians 6 that forbids us to take matters between brothers to a civil law court."

As state convention messengers consider the Georgetown/KBC proposal next month, hopefully the results will produce a positive, healthy ministry partnership while also serving as a biblical model for other Christian organizations grappling with difficult decisions.

"I think it's the right thing to do, the Christian thing to do," Barnes told reporters, "and that the manner in which we plan to do it will be in the best interest of all Kentucky Baptists." That's a vital step in producing a long-term win-win situation.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## The New Testament church in action

By John Avant

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—I always have loved the early chapters of the book of Acts. The picture we see there of the newborn church is so powerful.

In spite of persecution, scattering and deep loss, the church thrived. They lived in authentic community.

They shared their possessions. They suffered together, prayed together, ate together and loved together. They shared the good news with great joy in the midst of impossible odds. And the power of God moved among them. The world around them saw all this and was drawn to them like a magnet.

The Bible says the early Christ-followers were "praising God and had favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Isn't that what we need again? I wonder if most Christians really long for that anymore. It often seems very distant from the way the church functions today. But it is worth longing for. And since God is still God, there is hope for the church to become this good news movement again.

In fact, I recently saw a taste of the New Testament church in action. Some friends, Preston and Diane Nix, their daughters, Rachel and Rebecca, and Oscar the dog all moved in with us. Preston had just

left the pastorate after many years of faithful ministry and had moved to his new position as a seminary professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Two weeks after uprooting their family and moving to a new home, Hurricane Katrina hit and the Nixes lost virtually everything they owned. Since the seminary's offices are relocated to Atlanta for now, we invited the Nixes to live with us until we could help them find a place of their own.

When they arrived, the New Testament church went into action. Friends from New Hope Baptist Church in Georgia where I served as pastor for eight years prepared welcome gifts for the family. Dogwood Church, our new church home, jumped at the opportunity to help financially. First Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., provided furniture and even a car. Arlington Christian School opened their arms to Rachel and Rebecca. At every turn, God's people poured out love.

Our two families became one for our time together. We shared meals together, laughed together, shopped together, got kids ready for school together and prayed together. Their children became like our own. When I came home at the end of the day, Rachel and Rebecca ran to give me a hug. Oscar sat in my lap. And Preston and I had long talks and precious moments of seeking God

together. Their grief was real. Their loss was beyond imagination. But their faith is amazing.

Our short time living together came to an end when the wonderful people of Rhema Baptist Church in Palmetto, Ga., provided a house free of charge for the Nixes.

During our time together I noticed that everyone who heard about all this was drawn to it, even those who did not know Christ. They wanted to help. They were attracted to the love they saw from so many of God's people. Maybe we could be closer to the New Testament church than we have thought.

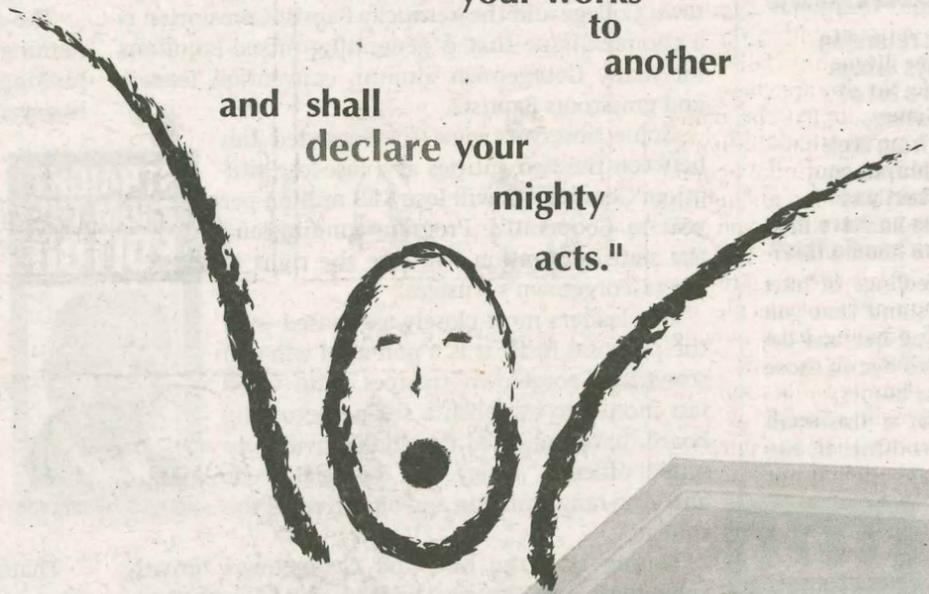
One day, as I came home from my office, I turned into my driveway and saw Preston talking to two young men on the street. They were selling newspaper subscriptions and Preston took the time to get to know them—and to tell them about Jesus. How does someone who has lost everything take the time to share Christ with strangers? Because the good news of the gospel is still good news when everything else is bad news!

Thanks, Preston, Diane, Rachel and Rebecca, and all those who are being the body of Christ to them and to so many others who are suffering. You are making evangelism good news again.

John Avant, vice president for evangelization at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, spoke last week at the Kentucky Baptist Convention's "Celebrate Baptism" event. (See story on page 3.)

### FIRST PERSON

"One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts."



# Ministry Reunion 2006 GEORGETOWN

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## These Ministry Alumni are coming. You're Invited!

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Campbellsville, KY



Maria Lester '89  
Versailles, KY



Ross Bauscher '82  
Louisville, KY



Rodney Travis '67  
Hopkinsville, KY



Truett  
Cocanougher '62  
Maysville, KY



Daven Watkins '96  
Owenton, KY



LaRaine Dail '89  
Louisville, KY



Allison Young '96  
Louisville, KY

### Why do we use the name "Crossings?"

#### Word communicates God's work in our campers' lives

Kentucky Baptist Assemblies has experienced many changes lately. We just completed a new dining hall at Jonathan Creek. It looks great and will be a welcome and much-needed improvement especially for campers in the summer. Many more improvements are coming. The best way to see the happenings with the camps is to visit our Web site at [www.crossingsministries.org](http://www.crossingsministries.org).

You might be thinking, "Why that name and not Kentucky Baptist Assemblies?" Since 2000, the name "Crossings" has been of great significance to our ministry. It is the theme that we as a staff want to continually focus upon. Our focal verse is John 5:24 which says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

The reality of "crossing" from death unto life is of unquestionable significance. It must become an underlying characteristic that drives our discussions with our neighbors, our relationship with our family, the measure of our pas-

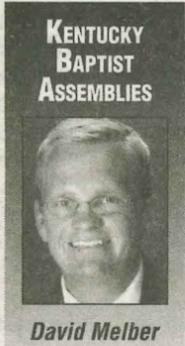
sions, and our vocational objective. To me this verse simplifies the two states we as humanity fall into—death or life. No gray area here.

As we have adopted the name "Crossings," notice that the name denotes a plural, continual action. While I certainly am not an English scholar, I think you see the incredible hope. Our ministry focus is to see thousands of people on an ongoing basis moving from death unto life.

This connotation of "Crossings" serves as a reminder that our purpose is simple and that this purpose is accomplished only by God's power. While improvements in our facilities are necessary to accommodate guests and campers, we recognize that only through Christ Jesus is our work relevant. Without His work and power, we would only be a nice place to visit.

Amid all the happenings, please pray fervently that guests and campers experience the spiritual change that gives us eternal hope. We eagerly pray for people to experience the "crossing" from death unto life. Praise be to the Father for His magnificent grace!

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



KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES

David Melber

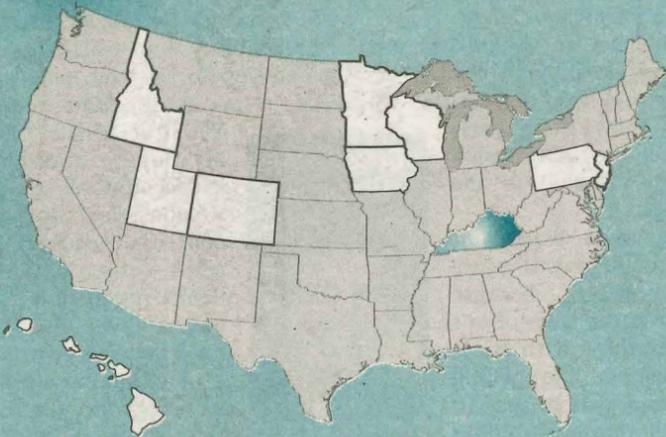


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## Our mission doesn't end at the state line



For more than 10 years, the Western Recorder has helped state conventions in newer work areas with their newspapers.

We work with local convention leaders, combining their local news with other resources, the stories we generate and news from wire services. As a result, the Western Recorder's ministry extends from the Bluegrass to the Colorado, Hawaii-Pacific, Iowa, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, Minnesota-Wisconsin and Utah-Idaho conventions.

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING  
**WESTERNRECORDER**

### Kudzu



Doug Marlette

### For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

### Bible Crosswords

Evelyn Boyington

#### Across

- 1 Holiday symbol
- 4 "The \_\_\_\_ of the wicked shall be put out" (Proverbs 13:9)
- 8 Not as much
- 12 \_\_\_\_ reliever
- 13 Object of worship
- 14 Press
- 15 "\_\_\_\_ far from me vanity and lies" (Proverbs 30:8)
- 17 Linking verb
- 19 KJV exclamation
- 20 Reverence
- 21 Pantry pest
- 22 What Nebuchadnezzar was washed with, in the wilderness
- 23 As thin as a \_\_\_\_
- 25 Fitting
- 26 "For my yoke is \_\_\_\_, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30)
- 27 Vase
- 28 Take in a little at a time, literally
- 29 Low island
- 30 State of the Southwest (abbr.)
- 31 "Thou \_\_\_\_ my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle" (Psalm 56:8)
- 33 "Look!" to King James
- 35 Cow sound
- 36 Gershwin
- 37 "Man that is born of a woman is of \_\_\_\_ days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1)
- 38 Pump
- 40 Understand
- 41 "Then shall the \_\_\_\_ man leap as an hart" (Isaiah 35:6)
- 42 SRO show
- 43 Like a bassett hound's expression
- 44 \_\_\_\_ hen
- 45 Of Middle Eastern ancestry (abbr.)
- 46 "Make thee an \_\_\_\_ of gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14)
- 47 "Such \_\_\_\_ works are wrought by his hands" (Mark 6:2)
- 50 Very special

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- 52 "Thou hast been in \_\_\_\_ the garden of God" (Ezekiel 28:13)
- 54 Kind of lamb in Nathan's symbolic story to David
- 55 Redact
- 56 "The Lord is my strength and \_\_\_\_" (Psalm 118:14)
- 57 Become soft

- 24 Get equipped
- 25 Be in distress
- 26 Take a nibble
- 28 Baste
- 29 Jeff Davis's org.
- 31 Digit
- 32 Before
- 33 Haw's partner
- 34 Be in debt
- 35 "The \_\_\_\_ fell on Matthias; and he was numbered" (Acts 1:26)
- 37 God is our \_\_\_\_
- 38 "The Lord is thy \_\_\_\_ upon thy right hand" (Psalm 121:5)
- 39 "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own \_\_\_\_ house" (Acts 28:30)
- 40 "All things are for your \_\_\_\_" (2 Corinthians 4:15)
- 41 Journey jaunt
- 43 Dad might be one (abbr.)
- 44 Annex
- 46 "\_\_\_\_ thou he that should come?" (Luke 7:19)
- 47 Fathers and uncles, for example
- 48 "\_\_\_\_ of every sort shalt thou bring" (Genesis 6:19)
- 49 "Though he slay me, \_\_\_\_ will I trust in him" (Job 13:15)
- 51 "Gibeon ... was greater than \_\_\_\_ and all the men ... were mighty" (Joshua 10:2)
- 53 Act

#### Last week's solution

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## NATIONAL NOTES

**Gallup: Most Americans reject secular evolution.** A majority of adults support the biblical account of creation according to a new CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll. In the poll, 53 percent of adults say "God created human beings in their present form exactly the way the Bible describes it." Another 31 percent said humans "evolved over millions of years from other forms of life and God guided" the process. Twelve percent say humans "have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life, but God has no part."

**Bush administration: Religious schools can get FEMA aid.** Religious schools and faith-based community service organizations that suffered damage during the recent hurricanes are eligible to receive federal disaster grants, the Bush administration said last week. Despite concerns from groups saying the government shouldn't finance religiously affiliated groups, an official with the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives said money will be available through FEMA for rebuilding facilities damaged in hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Officials added that houses of worship will not be eligible for assistance.

**Survey: Black students most religious on campus.** African-American college students show greater religiosity and spiritual commitment than their peers, a new study has found. Black students scored highest on seven of 12 categories measuring religious and spiritual commitment in a study conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles. White students scored lowest among six ethnic groups in five of the 12 scales, including an ethic of caring, charitable involvement and spiritual quest. African-Americans are also more likely than Anglos to believe in God, pray and attend religious services frequently.

**Mayor says gambling key to reviving New Orleans.** New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin is proposing the implementation of Las Vegas-style gambling in order to jumpstart his city's economy after Hurricane Katrina. "I know of no other way," he said at a news conference earlier this month. He said gambling is "an incredible opportunity to accelerate growth." Nagin's plan would call for a large-scale gambling area in the city's central business district. Louisiana Senate President Don Hines, a Democrat, said Nagin's plan isn't likely to pass in the state legislature.

## Many religious Americans tolerant of divorce

Washington (RNS)—Most Americans continue to believe that "God's plan for marriage is one man, one woman, for life," but they are still tolerant of those who divorce, a new survey on family and faith shows.

A poll conducted for the PBS program "Religion & Ethics News-Weekly" found that 71 percent of Americans said they believe in the ideal of lifelong traditional marriage. But just 22 percent of those surveyed agreed that "divorce is a sin."

Religious conservatives were most likely to agree that divorce is sinful. But they were still a minority within their own ranks, with 34 percent of evangelical Christians and 30 percent of traditional Catholics saying divorce is sinful.

The survey also looked at the re-

ligious practices of traditional and nontraditional families and how people prioritize moral values.

More than half of those polled—52 percent—said divorce can be the best solution when a couple can't work out their marital problems.

This sentiment about divorce mostly held across the religious spectrum, with 63 percent of those who described themselves as liberal Catholics agreeing, along with 61 percent of mainline Protestants, 50 percent of people with no religious preference, 48 percent of evangelical Christians and 46 percent of traditional Catholics.

John Green, professor of political science and director of the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron in Ohio, said the tension between the ideal im-

age and real stresses of marriage and family life reflects the success of churches and other religious institutions in upholding a high standard for marriage.

"On the one hand, it may be that the ideal has persisted precisely because the reality has changed," said Green, who helped analyze the survey results. "On the other hand, Americans have become much, much more tolerant of deviations from that ideal."

Researchers found stark differences, along with some similarities, in the religious practices and beliefs of traditional and nontraditional families. For example, half the traditional parents said they attend religious services at least once a week, compared with only a third of nontraditional parents.

## New stem cell research could decrease ethical concerns

Cambridge, Mass. (RNS)—Two new research techniques unveiled in a prestigious scientific journal last week are stirring hopes that embryonic stem cell research might be done in a way that avoids sticky ethical and religious objections.

Teams from Advanced Cell Technology in Worcester, Mass., and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge reported their experiments online in the journal "Nature."

At stake: billions in federal funding for regenerative therapies if researchers ultimately can convince elected officials that embryonic stem cell research can be performed in an ethical manner.

Working independently, the two teams said they have obtained

embryonic stem cells from mice without destroying any embryos to get them. The MIT method keeps an embryo intact but renders it unable to grow inside a uterus.

The Advanced Cell method goes one step further by delicately removing one cell from an eight-celled embryo while allowing the remainder to grow to term inside a female mouse.

Critics of embryonic stem cell research have to-date built their opposition primarily on the grounds that it unethically destroys one life—an embryo's—in order to get the cells that could save another life, one that may be suffering from Parkinson's or other degenerative diseases.

But last week's announcement

is triggering a new message from certain critics.

"I am very encouraged," said Tadeusz Pacholczyk, a high-profile critic of embryonic stem cell research, in comments to the Boston Globe. He is director of education for the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. "We may be able to work around this with some creativity and good will."

Not everyone, however, was so enthusiastic.

Richard Doerflinger, an influential bioethics analyst for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, denounced the method used by Advanced Cell as an inherently dangerous one with potential long-term consequences for an embryo that is brought to term.

## On the road again

## Oneida's choir travels most Sundays to perform in Kentucky Baptist churches

For the next eight months our school choir, choir director, pianist, Mrs. Underwood and I will spend most of our Sundays traveling across Kentucky. Our choir begins its traveling circuit the second Sunday in October each year. They have been working hard since the first week of school to memorize their music and learn to sing as a choir. Many of our choir members never have sung in a choir before. Others might have had some experience prior to coming to OBI.

Fortunately, we have several choir members who sing in the choir year after year and add a lot of experience to our choral performances. There are no auditions to be in our choir, and we admit that a few of our choir members would not be welcome in some choirs because they might not sing too well. Historically, all Oneida students who are interested in being a member of our choir are encouraged to join. We do expect them to do their best and be willing to travel every Sunday.

This year our choir is much larger than it usually is. We normally have about 35 students in our choir with about eight boys, more or less. This year we have about 55 choir members, including more than a dozen boys. Without a strong male section, it is difficult to have a quality choir. I don't think that will be a problem this year.

Even though our choir students must give up their Sundays to travel and they often have to get up before 6 a.m., there are some rewards. The biggest reward is getting to eat at the host church. Even with high fuel costs to operate our 30-year-old, semi-traveling Greyhound bus, we never ask

the church to take an offering or help pay for any expenses.

The one thing we do ask is that the host church provide the noon meal. That courtesy saves the school the expense of feeding the students on the road, and the students enjoy the home-cooked meals. While pizza is always appreciated by our teenagers, they really enjoy the potluck meals many churches provide. And then there are the desserts. Boy, do our kids like desserts!

We appreciate the invitation to visit various churches across the commonwealth and always consider it a privilege when we are invited to perform. However, pastors and music ministers often are disappointed when they call to schedule the choir and find out that normally it takes several months or even a year or more to schedule the visit. We wish we could perform within a month or two of the invitation, but that usually is not possible.

This year, the choir will be traveling out of state twice. We rarely accept invitations outside Kentucky because so many churches in Kentucky request our choir. However, this year we are making an exception, not once but twice.

The choir will travel to Alabama next spring to sing for a church that has sent volunteers to our campus several times. Likewise, we will travel to Ohio in November to sing for a congregation that also has sent many volunteers to our campus. The next several months will be both demanding and rewarding for our choir. We are grateful for the many friends who invite us to share in their worship services.

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

## THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Why our children should pray in church

## Youth are churches' future, Clear Creek student writes

Editor's note: The following is condensed from an English composition assignment by Eric Bauer, a junior student from Union County.

I believe we should ask our children to pray in church because they are the future. We must show them early on that they have worth or are valuable to the church.

We must teach our children to pray as young as possible because prayer is the basis of our relationship with God. By asking the young boys and girls to pray in church, they are building confidence. I never allowed anyone to be critical of the prayers of children so they would never feel inept. By asking the children to pray in church, they gained the skills needed to speak in public or to start to disciple their friends.

I hear senior adults complain that no one wants to take over. I believe we need to train the children to take over as they are the future of God's Word and the future of our churches. When we teach them young to pray, we are developing the skills to be able to take over. We are most impor-

tantly teaching them how to talk to their Lord and Savior. It just does not get any better than that.

I want the children to learn about responsibility. We cannot be responsible to God if we do not know how to talk to Him. Our responsibility is to teach the next generation to ask and hear when God responds to their request.

We have to pray about all things in order to be accountable to God. Responsible pastors, deacons and teachers will teach responsibility by being responsible. This means above all prayer, prayer and more prayer.

If we put our children to work for the Lord early, they will be the deacons, teachers and pastors of tomorrow. More importantly I want the children to be of God, not of the world. Salvation only comes through asking Christ into our lives; this is called prayer. Are you willing to help them or not? I will not be accountable for not teaching one of His children to pray. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) does not apply just to adults.

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

## CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## 'Queen of Darkness' shines Light with book about Jesus

By **Benedicta Cipolla**  
Religion News Service

**San Diego (RNS)**—The queen of darkness has seen the light.

In her latest book, "Christ the Lord," novelist Anne Rice turns away from the doomed souls of her best-selling tales about vampires and witches in favor of a first-person account of the 7-year-old Jesus.

"I was sitting in church talking to (God) about it and I finally realized there was no holding back anymore," said Rice, 64, who returned to the Catholic Church in 1998 after a 30-year absence.

"I just said, 'From now on it's all going to be for You.' And the book I felt I had to write was the life of Christ. ... When my faith was given back to me by God, redemption became a part of the world in which I lived. And I wasn't going to write any more books where that wasn't the case. You do not have to be transgressive in order to achieve great art."

With a distinct emphasis on the devout Jewishness of Jesus and His extended family, the novel—due out Nov. 1 with a first print run of 500,000 copies—depicts their first year in Nazareth after leaving Egypt following the death of King Herod.

### Jesus under Roman rule

Rice meticulously recounts the daily life of Jews in Galilee against the backdrop of Roman occupation, detailing purification rites, Sabbath study, construction work in the nearby city of Sepphoris, and trips to the Temple in Jerusalem for feasts and animal sacrifices.

"The pious picture of the holy family in a little carpentry shop on a hill, that's not accurate," Rice said in her first interview about the book, speaking from her new home in San Diego, where she moved five months before Hurricane Katrina devastated her hometown of New Orleans. "The challenge was to get some fictional verisimilitude there, to really present this as a vibrant society in which people are working and living together."

Rice devoted much of the two and a half years she spent on the novel delving into research, from ancient Jewish philosophers and historians like Philo and Josephus, to contemporary historical Jesus studies. At times, what she found disturbed her, as she explains in an author's note following the novel.

"Some of the people in New Testament scholarship don't hide their bias at all. They're just out to prove Jesus wasn't God, but of course that's impossible to prove," she said, taking issue as well with what she called "fads," such as theories that Jesus was a political

revolutionary, or married.

Rice also critiques the widespread dating of the Gospels to between about 60 and 90 AD, and the theory that they appeared decades apart. Instead, she believes they were produced around the same time, and all before Romans destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. She declined to name any scholars she found fault with, either in an interview or in her afterword.

Some biblical experts aren't sure why Rice is taking issue with conventional scholarship.

"She seems to be attacking some kind of liberal, PC bogeyman," said Adam Becker, assistant professor of classics and religious studies at New York University. "But the majority of historical Jesus scholars are Christian and affiliated with the church in some way. She criticizes fashionable notions, yet she's basically saying it's fashionable to be a Christian."

Rice chooses 11 B.C. as the date of Jesus' birth. While she said she found one scholarly precedent for doing so, she uses the earlier date mainly to allow the 7-year-old Jesus to arrive from Egypt in time to witness the well-documented violence that erupted in Judea and Galilee after Herod's death in 4 B.C.

### Grappling with divinity

Beyond reconstructing the daily life of the times, Rice focuses on the young Jesus discovering—and grappling with—His divinity. Her questions are less about what would Jesus do, and more about how He would think.

Rice's Jesus is conflicted and confused, a dutiful son who comes to terms with what He first only senses and then fully grasps—that He is the Son of God, yet fully human.

"You can't write a book, or at least I couldn't, from the viewpoint of someone who knew He was God at every moment," Rice said. "But I could write a book from the viewpoint of somebody who deliberately separated Himself from that knowledge so He could experience things as a human being."

The Gospels are almost silent on Jesus' childhood, giving Rice a wide berth to take certain liberties with her story.

Rice said her greatest hope for people reading "Christ the Lord" is that they will at least begin to think about Jesus, if not come to believe in Him.

Her ultimate goal, she said, is for readers "to think, 'Wow, maybe He did exist.' That was the challenge, to make it real. The greatest compliment people pay me when they read this book is when they say, 'I was there.'"



Anne Rice



**The Barbarian Way: Unleash the Untamed Faith Within.** Erwin McManus. Nelson Books, 2005. 148 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦ (Out of five)

Erwin McManus is no stranger to those who follow what has been called the "emerging church." He is pastor of Mosaic in California, a congregation "doing church" outside the box of traditional norms.

"The Barbarian Way" is designed to cause readers to behave outside the norm in their Christian lives. His suggestions are not unbiblical, but do require looking anew at the life Christ has called His believers to live.

The early church lived a life of adventure in their faith. Yes, the church was new and so was their faith, but Jesus is timeless and calls believers to a battle of the culture. McManus uses stories of his own life and the lives of his family members to describe the barbarian way in the Christian walk.

McManus develops this "barbarian way" from Judges 11 where a group of Israelites reject the leader Jephthah, only to ask him later to lead them because he has become, in fact, a barbarian.

McManus challenges readers to live in the excitement of the Christian walk and not to move from the shrill thrill of being a follower of Christ. "If Jesus is not the One, we should not follow Him. But if He is the One, we should follow Him at all costs," McManus writes.

When one follows Jesus, it is a life "called to a path filled with uncertainty, mystery and risk," he adds.

He closes with a thought from the animal kingdom, noting the names given to groups of animals. A group of bees is a swarm. Fish swim in schools. Tigers prowl in an ambush.

"I was surprised to learn that a group of buzzards waiting around together to feast on the leftover carnage is called a committee," he writes. "This explains so much of what's going on in churches." *Steve Coleman*

**Our Baptist Tradition.** William Tuck. Smyth and Helwys, 2005. 115 pages. \$12. ♦♦♦♦

In the preface, Bill Tuck states what is painfully obvious for many of us who are Baptist pastors: Many people in the pews of Baptist churches have little if any knowledge of the Baptist legacy.

While that might be obvious, most pastors simply bemoan the idea and go on with business as usual. Part of the reason for this is the lack of material to put in the hands of church members that is manageable in length and comprehensive in content. With "Our Baptist Tradition," Tuck has provided us a solution.

Tuck shares the story of Baptists in an engaging narrative interspersed with poignant illustrations. The focus is not so much on events in the Baptist tradition, but how and why those events have

shaped distinctives of Baptist life.

Tuck unfolds the Baptist tradition by considering the place of religious experience, the non-creedal nature of Baptist life, the autonomy and vitality of the local church, the priesthood of believers, and religious liberty. Tuck uses each of his ministerial hats (pastor, theologian, professor, preacher) well in relating the content of the Baptist tradition. But in addition, you get a sense of the important place this tradition has played in Tuck's own walk of faith.

The book ends with a study guide that provides a quick summary of the chapters and questions for discussion. The guide is useful for either individual or group study. *Wayne Hager*

**Worship at the Next Level: Insight from Contemporary Voices.** Edited by Tim Dearborn and Scott Coil. Baker Books, 2004. 207 pages. \$16.99. ♦♦

The cover notes describe "Worship at the Next Level" as an attempt to "offer an interdisciplinary approach for worship leaders ... and those involved in contemporary worship planning."

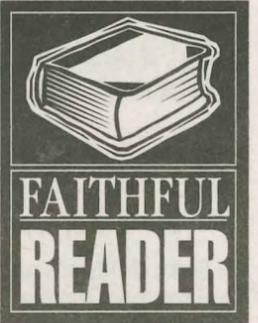
The desired outcome is to "provide a well-rounded approach for anyone with a passion for worship." While the contributors have explored the issues surrounding much of the discussion about worship these days, the book is more a collection of essays from diverse voices on diverse subjects than a true interdisciplinary approach to worship planning.

Several of these essays offer significant insights about worship practice and planning. Robert Webber's commentary on "The Crisis of Evangelical Worship" strikes a balance between the necessity of paying attention to both content and experience, as well as culture and revelation. Of all the pieces, his points us toward a new level or direction in worship planning and practice.

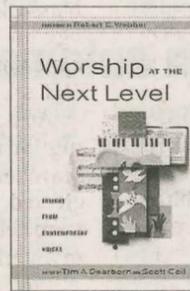
Frank Brown's concluding essay, "A Matter of Taste," clearly identifies the problem most worship planners have trying to move the worship of God to a level that does more than parrot the audio/visual stimuli of contemporary culture.

Other essays suffer from merely restating many of the biases of the contemporary worship movement: amplifiers good, organs bad; feeling and experience beneficial, theological reflection boring. Most of the essays reveal the tendency of American evangelicalism to buy into the consumer model of church and accept divisions as natural (even normal) rather than as a sign of brokenness.

A true interdisciplinary work would, while bringing different voices to the table, work to integrate those voices into a workable model. "Worship at the Next Level" merely offers those voices, with no attempt to reconcile sometimes polar opposite viewpoints. Overall this book fails to point us in any new directions. *Jim Holladay*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; and Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: whager@trifluent.net; lyndonpastor@aol.com; risen4me@hotmail.com.



## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist missionaries and ministries:

**G-Force children's night at Livermore Baptist Church.** Attendance by children and youth has tripled on Wednesday evenings in September as a result of the church's new ministry format. The ministry involves an average of 85 children and teens each week in Bible study, Scripture memorization, physical activity and monthly hands-on mission experiences. Pastor Gary Shockley has requested prayer for the youngsters' continued enthusiastic involvement and faithful adult workers. Pray also that children and youth will come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and that through the children, families will come to know the love of Christ.

**Mission Service Corps missionary Linda Otterback of Louisville.** Otterback serves through Eastern Kentucky Sunrise Ministries and is active in the spiritual development of women. She involves local churches and volunteers to provide growth opportunities for women through retreats, Bible studies and ministry projects, such as the upcoming women's retreat Nov. 4-5 in Inez. Pray that women will come to understand the reality of a living and personal God who cares for and loves them. Pray also that mothers and wives will be spiritually renewed and find strength in Christ.

If you would like Kentucky Baptists to join in praying for a ministry of your church or association, please send the information to Eric Allen at [Eric.Allen@kybaptist.org](mailto:Eric.Allen@kybaptist.org) or call (866) 489-3530.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Jackson Grove Church will host a potluck supper Oct. 29, 5:30 p.m., and gospel singing at 7 p.m. featuring **Still Water Quartet** from Hopkinsville. For more information, call (270) 843-1556.

■ **EDDYVILLE**—New Bethel Church recently called **John Baker** as pastor.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Calvary Church recently called **Jacob Reaume** as pastor.

■ **FREDONIA**—Creswell Church recently called **Bobby Jackson** as pastor.

■ **HICKMAN**—East Hickman Church will hold revival services Nov. 6, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., and Nov. 7-9, 7 p.m., with **Ronnie Sivells** as evangelist. **Ben Stratton** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthew Church will host **Alabaster Box** in concert Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m. For more information, call **Cinda King** at (502) 896-8882.

■ **OWENSBORO**—**Missy McKinley**, a member of Bellevue Church, died Oct. 15 at age 42. Her husband, Angus, is minister of discipleship at Bellevue Church. Mrs. McKinley was a graduate of Iowa State University in Ames and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She was director of children's

Sunday school at Bellevue as well as a vacation Bible school director and an Upward basketball coach. In addition to her husband, she is survived by four children.

■ **PRESTONSBURG**—**Floyd Price**, pastor of First Church, has announced his retirement effective Nov. 1.

■ **PRINCETON**—Southside Church recently called **Delton Beall** as pastor. He previously was involved in church planting with the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia convention.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Central Church will celebrate its 95th anniversary and harvest day Oct. 30 with **Tony Cecil** as guest speaker.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—**Wes Roy**, associate pastor/minister of education at Main Street Church, has announced his retirement from full-time ministry effective Dec. 31. Roy and his wife, Lou, plan to move to Northern Kentucky.

### What's going on?

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

## Popham dies in automobile accident

**Elizabethtown**—Harmon Popham, pastor of Blue River Island Baptist Church in Battletown, died Sept. 30 from injuries suffered in an automobile accident. He was 76.

Popham, pastor of Blue River Island Church since 2000, previously served 33 years as pastor of Tunnel Hill Baptist Church. He also had served as a home missionary in Utah.

Popham "was always centered on trying to find out what the needs of a particular person were and then trying to meet those needs," said Allen Cole, a deacon at Blue River

Island. "We're feeling the void left by his death.

"Harmon left us with a lot of sense of direction," Cole added. "I think God used him very effectively to plan for the future of the church."

Popham, a native of Meade County, was a 1957 graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

He is survived by his wife, Geraldine, two sons, two daughters and eight grandchildren. His funeral service was held Oct. 5 at Tunnel Hill Church with Rick Clark officiating.

## KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### October

27-28 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Big Creek Baptist Church, Hazard.

### November

4-6 International Student Weekend, Cave City Convention Center.

11-13 All-State Jr. High Choir, Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville.

11-13 Crossover, Frankfort.

14 Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, First Baptist Church, Frankfort.

14 Secretaries Meeting, Frankfort.

15-16 Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center, Frankfort.

19 Christian Women in Ministry State Leadership Forum, Baptist Building, Louisville.

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

## GuideStone Web site introduces online retirement planning options

Dallas (BP)—GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention began offering free online retirement planning services to its retirement participants this month.

GuideStone announced in June that it had teamed with Morningstar Associates to offer the Morningstar Retirement Manager via GuideStone's Web site, [www.GuideStone.org](http://www.GuideStone.org). The Morningstar service offers personalized retirement strategies and resources to help GuideStone's 150,000-plus pre-retirement participants evaluate their retirement plan investment options.

GuideStone participants also will have access to Morningstar's educational articles and interactive tools.

According to John Jones, GuideStone's chief operating officer, "With this new tool, we can provide an easy-to-use set of solutions to help our participants make more informed decisions about their retirement planning."

The Morningstar Retirement Manager services are designed to help participants answer two primary questions about retirement

planning: How much should participants be saving? Which funds should they choose?

For more information, retirement participants can call GuideStone Financial Resources at (800) 262-0511.

### Expanded dental plan options

GuideStone officials also have announced they will offer participants a choice of three dental plans through CIGNA Dental beginning Jan. 1.

Southern Baptist ministers, denominational employees and seminary students are eligible to participate in the dental plans available through GuideStone.

Dental plans for 2006 will include two PPO plans available in all states and a dental HMO plan available in 35 states.

In addition to coverage for dental care services, GuideStone participants who enroll in a dental plan gain access to discounts on a range of health and wellness products and programs through CIGNA's Healthy Rewards.

For more information, visit [www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com) or [www.GuideStone.org](http://www.GuideStone.org).

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**AVAILABLE:** Licensed Southern Baptist minister. I am available to serve as minister of music/senior adults/single adults. Resumé on request. Mark C. Fields, 105 North Sun-swept Drive, Union City, TN 38261-4312. [mark121053@yahoo.com](mailto:mark121053@yahoo.com).

**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).

**FOR SALE:** 23-passenger Freightliner Diesel with wheelchair lift. Runs and drives good. Lexington Avenue Baptist Church, (866) 235-4186.

**SEEKING:** Full-time youth minister at First Baptist Mayfield. Send resumé to: Pastor Bob Swift, 118 West South Street, Mayfield, KY 42066.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of education/administration for a growing church. Candidate must have a calling to the ministry, be able to multi-task and exhibit strong leadership skills. Send resumé to Woodburn Baptist Church, PO Box 38, Woodburn, KY 42170, Attn: Personnel Committee.

**SEEKING:** Youth leader for Missionary Baptist Church. Fifteen to 20 hours a week. Education or prior experience required. Send resumé to: Youth Committee, 714 Marshall Drive, Grand Rivers, KY 42045.

**SEEKING:** Covenant Baptist Church in Collierville, Tenn., is now accepting resúmes for a full-time senior pastor. For more information, see [www.covenantontheweb.org/CBC\\_Search.html](http://www.covenantontheweb.org/CBC_Search.html). E-mail resumé to: [general@covenantontheweb.org](mailto:general@covenantontheweb.org) or mail to: Pastor Search Committee, Covenant Baptist Church, PO Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027 by Dec. 15, 2005.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to students for Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga., a congregation of 2,600 members. This minister will be responsible for ministry to students, grades 7 through college. A college degree is required, with a degree from an accredited seminary preferred. Visit our Web site: [www.tabernacle.org](http://www.tabernacle.org). Resúmes may be sent to: Minister to Students Search Committee, Tabernacle Baptist Church, 150 Tabernacle Drive, Carrollton, GA 30117; or e-mail to [bruce.minett@tabernacle.org](mailto:bruce.minett@tabernacle.org).

**SEEKING:** Full-time children's minister at First Baptist Mayfield. Send resumé to: Pastor Bob Swift, 118 West South Street, Mayfield, KY 42066.

**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:** Bivocational pastor for East Bend Baptist Church, a rural Southern Baptist church in Boone County. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, 10060 Bell Road, Union, KY 41091. Praise God!

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of music and education (associate pastor) for Fern Creek Baptist Church (SBC/CBF affiliations). Applicant must be an excellent, experienced musician, worship leader and educator and must exemplify strong spiritual maturity. Send resúmes to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Personnel Committee; or e-mail to [ferncreekbaptist@bellsouth.net](mailto:ferncreekbaptist@bellsouth.net). Resúmes will be received through Oct. 31. Questions: call (502) 239-0316. Linda Barnes Popham, pastor.

**SEEKING:** Part-time senior adult minister. Resúmes should be sent by Oct. 31 to Vinton Baptist Church, PO Box 306, Vinton, VA 24179-0306.

**SEEKING:** Part-time children's ministry coordinator to work with elementary students, grades 1-5, under the supervision of the children's ministry director of Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, Ky. Send resumé by Oct. 28 to: Personnel Committee, Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 W Byers Ave., Owensboro, KY 42303.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of music for SBC church for choral and instrumental programs for all ages. Required: College degree in music plus five years experience. Send resumé postmarked by Oct. 31 to: Unity Baptist Church, 2320 29th St., Ashland, KY 41101, Attn: Music Search Committee.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister for children through youth for McDowell First Baptist Church—an exciting, growing, loving fellowship in Eastern Kentucky. Mail resúmes and/or sermon tapes to: McDowell First Baptist Church, PO Box 241, McDowell, KY 41647, Attn: Search Committee.

## Amish take rare political stance to try to protect home businesses

Huntsburg Township, Ohio (RNS)

—An uncomfortable look crosses the Amish man's face as he explains that he didn't desire a public policy battle, or an us-against-them dispute.

Challenging authority is simply not part of the Amish culture.

But sometimes, conflict cannot be avoided. Action must be taken. This is one of those times.

Flexing rarely used political muscle, members of the Amish community are campaigning to eliminate the township's zoning laws. Petitions circulated primarily in the Amish community—roughly one-quarter of the township's 3,300 residents—have pushed the issue onto the November ballot.

The campaign is rooted in an Amish desire to work from home, which some say is difficult under current regulations that limit a home-based business to 1,000 square feet, equivalent to a 40-by-25-foot building.

Those rules don't meet the needs of an increasing number of Amish farmers-turned-craftsmen, who want to open cabinet or woodworking shops in eastern Geauga County.

The township discussed increasing the limit, which the Amish say they'd like to see set at between 3,000 and 4,000 square feet. Several years of talks yielded no change.

"How long does it take?" asked an Amish man who, citing religious principles, asked that his name not be used. "We tried working with them, and we told them we'd go to the ballot if we had to. That's what it eventually came to."

The Amish rarely go to such extremes, says Paul Miller, executive director of the Amish and Mennonite Heritage Center in Holmes County. Most are reluctant to become involved in any political matters, even shying from casting a ballot.

But the community will act in unison if it's deemed absolutely necessary. "This sort of decision is not entered into lightly," Miller said.

Huntsburg officials expressed surprise at the scope of the Amish request. Dismantling the township's entire zoning code would, in essence, allow a building "free-for-all" in the rural township.

Clark Adams, a longtime township trustee, said it's clear the current regulations and the unwieldy legal process to appeal them aren't satisfactory.

"It's time to go back to the drawing board and see if we can find an effective solution that's quicker and better," Adams said. "We can find a mechanism to work things out."

# America's 'sacred' space

Washington's National Mall has become where religion goes to flex its muscle

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—Decades ago, praying civil rights activists gathered there. This month, it hosted an evangelist-led festival and an interfaith gathering of African-Americans one weekend apart.

And on Veterans Day, "atheists in foxholes" will take their turn.

Where do people of faith, and no faith, gather to make a national statement about religion?

The National Mall.

"It is the national green," said Steve Chavis, director of communications for Promise Keepers, an evangelical Christian ministry that gathered hundreds of thousands of men on the Mall for its "Stand in the Gap" rally in 1997.

"It is the front lawn. ... The media's there. ... Congress is looking one way and the White House is the other way."

Whether for sacred or merely political purposes—or a bit of both—the grassy expanse highlighted by the U.S. Capitol, the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, has drawn a wide spectrum of religious crowds. Scholars and religious officials differ on what's behind that attraction, but all agree it is as meaningful for the faithful as it is for those who gather there for other reasons.

"There's just something very exciting about being on the Mall," said Andrew Palau, national festival director of the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, which hosted its "DC Festival" on the Mall Oct. 8-9.

### From Christians to Hare Krishnas

From a variety of perspectives, this stretch of land takes on a kind of sacredness, many say.

"It is a sacred place in that it is extraordinary," said Edward Linenthal, editor of the *Journal of American History* and a history professor at Indiana University in Bloomington. "It is ... symbolic space unlike the ordinary space that surrounds it."

Promise Keepers' "Stand in the Gap" rally was billed as a "sacred assembly."



**EVANGELIST'S HOPE** Luis Palau told attendees at his DC Festival earlier this month that he hoped participants would be able to say, "I met God on the National Mall!" (BP photo by Shannon Baker)

"I think its transformational power is in the intent and the action of the people there," said Promise Keepers' Chavis. "It was made holy by prayer and humility and a holy intent, holy practice."

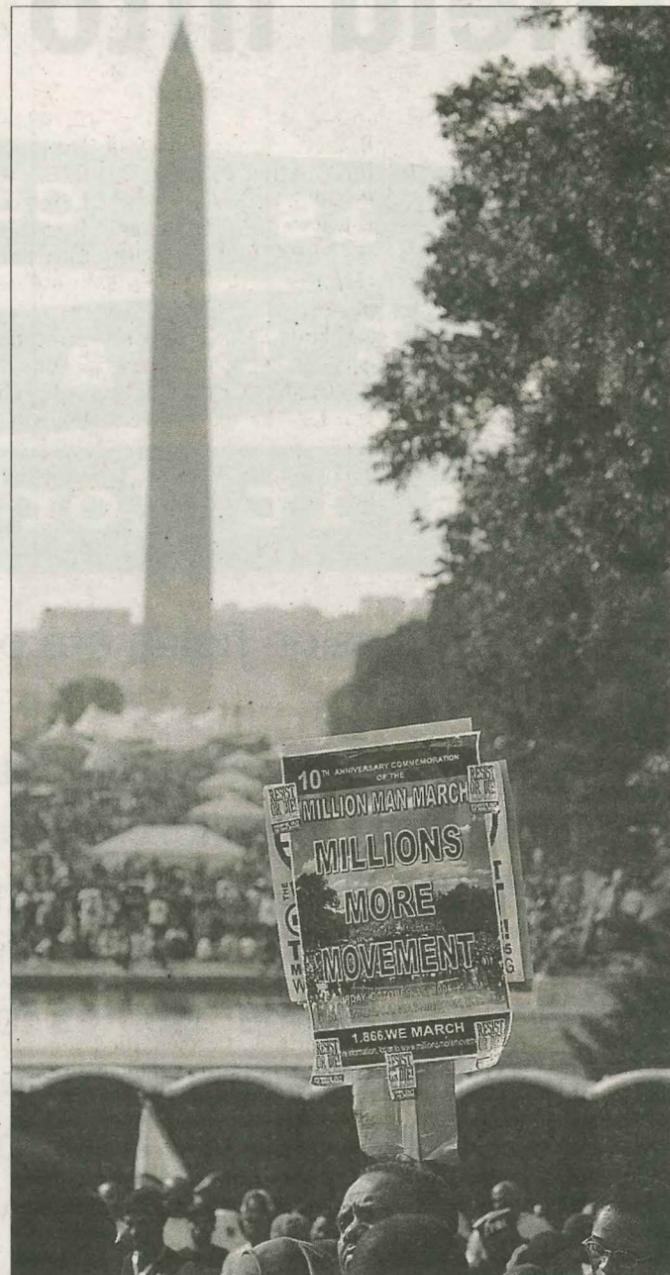
Anuttama Dasa, spokesman for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, joins fellow Hare Krishnas on the Mall each Fourth of July, when they offer passersby free vegetarian food and displays on reincarnation.

"In an environment like that, when we are really uplifting those finer sentiments of the human spirit, it brings us to that mode of goodness," he said. "It's open. It's grassy. It's kind of a pure environment that in a sense is a stepping stone toward God, toward the divine."

Linda Wharton-Boyd, a spokeswoman for the Millions More Movement, the 10th-anniversary commemoration of the Million Man March held Oct. 15, said the Mall has an attraction for religious people that is more appealing than gathering in a stadium. The 1995 march drew hundreds of thousands. Both events were spearheaded by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to bring together African-Americans representing an array of religions.

"On the Mall, you're standing next to people," she said. "You touch, you feel the energy of people around you."

American Atheists President Ellen Johnson gathered nonbelievers on the Mall for the Godless



Americans March on Washington in 2002 and is making plans for the "Atheists in Foxholes for Honor and Recognition" rally on Nov. 11, Veterans Day.

### Religious and political influence

"The National Mall is a draw for all groups that are entering the political sphere, and religious groups are clearly no different," she said. "When they go to Washington, D.C., they're making a political statement with a capital P ... and they're flexing their political muscles. They're saying, 'Look at our numbers.'"

It's that focus on numbers that turns off Washington-based publicist Bill Carpenter.

"They know that Washington is a media mecca," he said of religious organizations. "It's all a show. It's a PR campaign."

Whether they focus on publicity, prayer or political power, religious groups are bound to continue taking orchestrated pilgrimages to the Mall, one expert predicts.

"It seems like the growth of the larger churches and attempts to build broad coalitions across the different churches and the role of charismatic leaders means there's just a pull to have a national forum," said Lucy Barber, author of "Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition," a 2003 book.

"And that's what the National Mall gives you."

**MILLIONS MORE** A marcher holds up a sign in front of the U.S. Capitol during the Millions More Movement rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., earlier this month. The mall has become a rallying site for groups of diverse faith and even no faith. (RNS/Reuters photo by Joshua Roberts)



**STAND IN THE GAP** Christian men raise their hands in prayer and worship at the Promise Keepers rally Oct. 4, 1997. The rally was billed as a "sacred assembly." (RNS photo by Mark Abraham)

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