



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## Study: Reflecting on values helps minimize stress

Los Angeles (RNS)—Religious leaders have long encouraged their flocks to take time for reflection on important values, but now researchers at UCLA have another reason to encourage such a discipline: It apparently reduces stress.

In a study published in the November issue of the journal *Psychological Science*, researchers divided 80 undergraduates into two groups before asking each to perform a task under stressful conditions. Members of one group prepared by reflecting for a few minutes on cherished personal values. Members of the other group reflected on values they had said were unimportant to them.

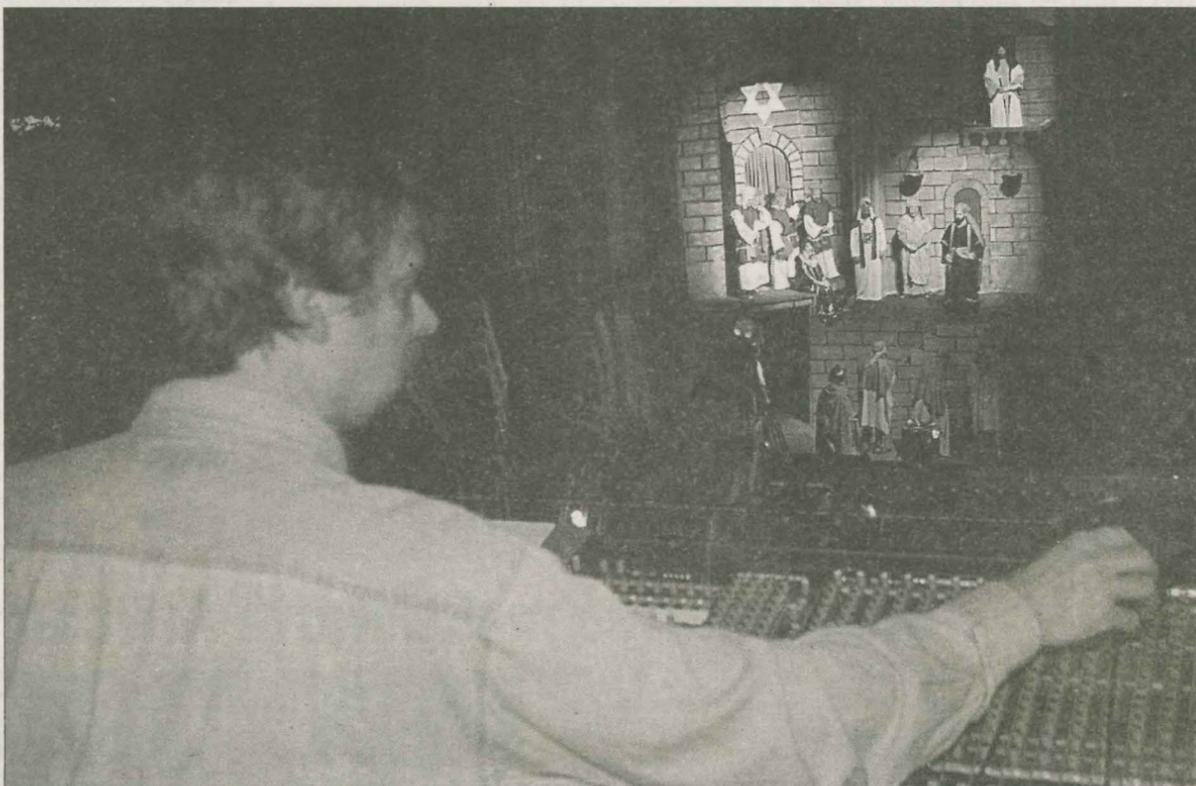
Outcome: Only 51 percent of those who reflected on important values saw increases in their levels of cortisol, a hormone associated with stress. In the control group, 82 percent saw their cortisol levels rise.

"Our study shows that reflection on personal values can buffer people from the effects of stress," said Shelley Taylor, a UCLA psychologist with a specialty in stress and health.

Researchers suggested the study might point the way to further stress reduction techniques that don't require the use of drugs.

*Psychological Science* is published by the American Psychological Society. The UCLA team plans a follow-up study to explore whether reflecting on personal values improves the health of people with chronic illness.

## Christmas pageants



**ACTION** Dave Cox operates the sound controls for "Behold the King," the Christmas pageant at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. The church just wrapped up its 23rd consecutive pageant. (Photo by David Winfrey)

## Music minister offers 5 tips for any size production

By David Winfrey  
News Director

Elizabethtown—The live camel, flying angel and quadraphonic sound are nice, but that's not what Music Minister Allen Case hopes visitors remember from Severns Valley Baptist Church's Christmas pageant.

"We have the opportunity to present something that the world does not have the ability to present," said Case, who wrapped up his 23rd consecutive Christmas pageant Sunday night. "And that is the love of Jesus Christ coming to the earth

in human form.

"That is our one golden opportunity."

Regardless of size or budget, any church can decide to make sure that visitors hear the message of Jesus Christ, Case said.

"We present an invitation in the program toward the end to accept Christ as their Savior.

Rather than asking guests to walk the aisle, they are instructed to fill out a card if they want to share their decision and receive a follow-up visit, Case said.

### Inside

Kentucky churches making adjustments for Christmas Sunday. *Page 8.*

"Our original intention was to make this an evangelistic thrust, and that is the primary focus that we've had with it down through the years."

Tim Peace, a member of the choir at Severns Valley, agreed.

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Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, December 14

## Missionaries make North African work a family affair



**FAMILY AFFAIR** As the Turners (not their real name), a missionary family in North Africa, go about their daily ministry, they often take one or both of their children with them. They all enjoy the family time, and Mike and Molly believe their sons enhance their work, allowing doors to open to share the gospel. (IMB photo)

By Manda Gibson  
International Mission Board

(Editor's note: Due to security concerns, this story does not include the true names of missionaries, family members or native believers or their exact location.)

North Africa—Burning incense makes the air sweet and hazy. Four American women—a missionary named Molly, a journeyman named Susan and two volunteers—sit among a dozen or so African prostitutes in a circle of mismatched chairs and a couch.

They all listen intently as the Old Testament story of Joseph and Potiphar plays from a cassette. From the hall outside comes the sound of Molly's toddler playing with African friends.

In a home across town, Molly's

husband, Mike, pulls dishes from the cabinet and sets out two pans of lasagna to thaw, getting ready for the evening's house church. The couple's 3-year-old throws a ball outside with a neighbor.

Mike and Molly Turner serve as strategy coordinators for a capital city in Northern Africa. They are among the missionaries whose work is highlighted for this year's Week of Prayer for International Missions.

The week of prayer coincides with the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, which supports the work of Southern Baptist missionaries. This year's offering goal is \$150 million.

The Turners are still working to determine the religious make-up

□ See Missionaries make ... *Page 2*



That all peoples may know Him

## Banquet buoys New Orleans pastors

Covington, La. (BP)—Lots of food and plenty of hugs among fellow ministers and wives—some seeing each other for the first time since Hurricane Katrina—created an atmosphere of hope and renewal during a Christmas party for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans hosted by First Baptist Church of Covington.

Waylon Bailey, the Covington church's pastor, who experienced some of the same horrors in his community as did the New Orleans pastors, told them, "We are touched to have you here. You are our heroes."

Noting how Baptists from around the nation responded to the crisis, Bailey said, "I have never been more proud to be a Southern Baptist."

Recounting how his neighbors have responded to him since receiving help from Southern Baptist disaster relief teams, Bailey added, "God is making a difference in all of this. ... There is now an openness to the gospel like we have never seen before."

First Baptist, Covington, and several partnering churches provided gift bags for the pastors' wives and a monetary gift to the families as an expression of support.

Bailey's wife, Martha, who worked for weeks to coordinate the banquet, told of her experience of inviting the district manager of a local

supermarket to contribute to the gift bags.

Donating 75 one-pound bags of shelled pecans, the district manager said, "Let me tell you why I want to do this." Noting that his home, just across the state line in Mississippi, had been flooded and the local Baptist church took his family in, fed them and looked after them, he added, "My church was locked up and my priest was nowhere to be found."

When the crisis eased and his family was returning home, he pointed out the Baptist church to his wife and said, "Honey, there is our new church home."

The district manager told Mrs. Bailey, "I've been looking for a way to say thanks to the Baptists."

Also during the banquet, the group heard from several pastors who described their experiences during and after the hurricane.

Jay Adkins, pastor of the New Orleans-area First Baptist Church in Westwego, told of a family who had not attended church in the past 30 years. They evacuated to central Louisiana, met some Baptist disaster relief workers and committed their lives to Christ.

Recounting the family members' experience, Adkins said the father told him, "Baptist people fed us, they loved us, they took care of us and they watched out for us. And if that's what Jesus is about, I want to know Him."

## Land: Abortion, Schaeffer pushed evangelicals to political action

Princeton, N.J. (BP)—Abortion, as well as the influence of theologian and author Francis Schaeffer, helped push evangelicals and other conservatives into the political process, Southern Baptist ethics specialist Richard Land said at a recent conference at Princeton University.

Speaking at a three-day conference on the history and future of the American conservative movement, Land said the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision and the massive number of abortions that followed, combined with Schaeffer's arguments for Christian participation in public life, provided the impetus that changed the political landscape.

"Abortion is the issue that was the driving force for the vast numbers of cultural conservatives coming into the political process and doing so mainly through the Republican Party," said Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "Roe v. Wade changed everything."

Schaeffer's influence from 1973 to 1980 was "enormous," Land added. He said Schaeffer "had an enor-

mous impact on a whole generation of those of us who became leaders of the social conservative movement, and he was enormously responsible for shaping many of our seminary presidents and many of our seminary professors in Southern Baptist life and in evangelical life across the board."

Panelist David Kirkpatrick, a reporter for The New York Times, acknowledged many evangelicals thought abortion was a "Catholic issue" in the 1960s and '70s, but he questioned Land's emphasis on the influence of abortion's legalization.

Another panelist, talk radio host and former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett, said it had to do "with scale," the huge number of abortions performed in the post-Roe years.

The scale after Roe "just horrified and caused extreme angst among traditional Catholics and evangelicals," Land agreed.

"What happened would not have happened without Roe v. Wade and 1.5 million abortions a year," Land added.

## Missionaries make North African work a family affair

Continued from page 1

of the city where they now live, but they know the overwhelming majority either follow Islam or are cultural Christians; people who follow a kind of Christianity but don't have a personal relationship with Jesus. Evangelical Christians comprise a much smaller segment of people.

Though they've been missionaries for more than five years, the Turners adopted the strategy-coordinator role about a year ago. As strategy coordinators, they do ministry much like a healthy church would, Molly says. They look at the community, assess its needs, look for ways to meet the lost and then do those things. But they don't do it alone. They're building a team of other missionaries, African believers, volunteers and even a Baptist church in America that works with them in the coordinator role.

Unlike many couples where just the husband or wife is the strategy coordinator, Mike and Molly share the role.

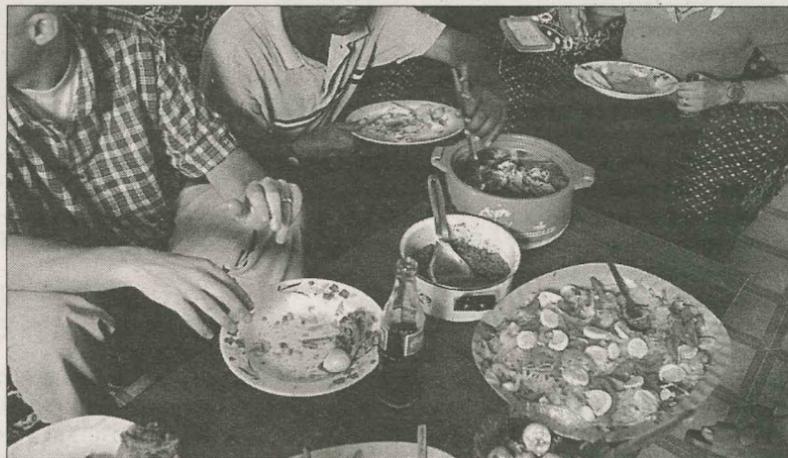
"We didn't choose to work this way; it's just who we are," Mike says. "God has created us to be a team. It's as natural as it can be."

Their family team includes their sons, too, who go with their parents as they minister. In a country where family is highly esteemed, the children often open doors for new relationships.

But raising children in this country has its challenges, too. On visits to the market or countryside, their 3-year-old often is spit upon—a blessing to keep evil spirits away from beautiful children. And the toddler has fought off three stomach amoebas, likely received from swallowing bath water.

But Mike and Molly don't fear for their children.

"They're a gift from God," Molly says. "They're His. It's just part of our obedience to bring them here."



**FOOD & FELLOWSHIP** Hospitality is central to the country Mike and Molly Turner call home. During one volunteer team's visit, a local believing family insists on hosting the Turners and all the volunteers for lunch. "The essence of this culture is relationship," Molly says. "There is no 'to-do list' or a mindset of 'How much can I get done today?'" (IMB photo)

The Turners spend much of their time pouring their lives into others. They have an "open-door policy" at their home. Both Africans and American teammates are welcomed at all times, whether they need prayer, advice or just a home-cooked meal.

### Home groups for food, worship

They meet weekly for house church with their teammates—a few journeymen, another career missionary couple and their supervisor and his wife—along with others who happen to be passing through. On this particular night, they have a full house with their team, volunteers from the United States and a few missionary families on their way to other places.

After dinner, Molly takes the children to another room to learn how Jesus called His disciples. In the living room, the adults sing along to CDs of Christian choruses and hymns. They share what's on their hearts and pray together.

"These are my brothers and my sisters and my mothers and my fa-

thers—a rich family," their supervisor prays.

Then the journeyman shares the story of God commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Susan doesn't read the story, though; she tells it from memory. Sharing stories orally helps the missionaries practice for their own ministry, which often involves people who are more comfortable exchanging information orally rather than through the written word.

Occasionally they invite African friends, such as Matthew, to join them. Mike and Molly have been discipling Matthew and his wife, Ruth (not their real names). Now Matthew leads a new house church twice weekly. Many of the believers in the group are those who have been led to Christ, baptized and discipled. Matthew has started seven other house churches outside the city, with Mike giving him guidance along the way. Though he has asked Mike to visit these groups, Mike refuses.

"I don't want the white face to be there," Mike says. "The move-

ment must be self-sustaining. When my family has to go to the next place, the movement needs to be indigenous."

### Relationships through education

When Mike and Molly began looking for ways to meet needs and build relationships in the city, education was an obvious answer. With close to 70 percent unemployment, people are desperate for better education.

So the Turners and their team started an education center. For a small fee, members study, use the library and computers, and take classes in reading and writing the local language or learning English. Staff includes missionaries, African believers, cultural Christians and Muslims.

Several individuals have come to Christ through the center, many guided by the gentle honesty of the center's director, Daniel, an African believer.

"I show Jesus Christ to students here," he says. "That's my main job."

His wife, Elizabeth, teaches reading and writing in the local language to some of the same prostitutes who meet weekly with Molly and Susan. The young women hope their learning will allow them to find other jobs. Elizabeth hopes they will find more than new jobs; she hopes to help them find a new life in Jesus.

Mike and Molly's dream is that in five to 10 years, they will move to another missionary assignment, leaving the work of church planting in their city to local Christians.

But for now, they're still sharing the vision and pouring their lives into their teammates and African partners.

"There's no doubt we're right where God wants us to be," Mike says. "That's a good feeling when you wake up every morning."

## Church finds '40 Days' plus revival equals growth

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**Hopkinsville**—When leaders at Hillcrest Baptist Church learned a previously scheduled revival would interrupt their "40 Days of Purpose" campaign this past fall, they were less than enthused.

With all the work required to sponsor the church-wide "40-Days" program—including small-group Bible studies and campaign-related Sunday worship services—organizers feared another event might confuse members or slow momentum.

But leaders now say the revival helped spark a greater impact within the church, according to Pastor Greg Giltner.

"We're still seeing people saved every week," said Giltner, who has been pastor of Hillcrest for nearly 15 years. "I think the revival was another exclamation point of the 40 days."

Not only was participation strong for the "40 Days" emphasis, but church attendance has grown, the revival saw stronger results and members have become open to trying new things, leaders say.

When the Hopkinsville church launched "40 Days" on Sept. 10, 550 people enrolled in small-group Bible studies, based on Rick Warren's best-selling book, "The Purpose-Driven Life."

Since then, Sunday school attendance has grown from 480 to 600, baptisms are a regular occurrence and more than 50 people have made professions of faith in Jesus as their personal Savior, Giltner said.

"There was a lot of intense



**MINISTRY FAIR** Participants in the "40 Days of Purpose" campaign at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Hopkinsville visit booths to learn about mission and ministry opportunities. Organizers said they feared a previously scheduled revival would slow momentum, but instead found it contributed to it.

prayer," Giltner added. "I don't think we had ever prayed and expected God to do things He did like we did this year. It taught us all a lesson."

Despite misgivings, the tie-in to the Oct. 9-12 revival proved successful. Many attendees were visitors to the home groups, which visited to church the first night of the revival.

That week, Hillcrest recorded 29 conversions, compared to about 20 at last year's revival.

Dottie Faulkner, co-lay director of "40 Days" with her husband, Phil, said the revival's timing seemed awkward at first, but it proved beneficial.

"It was huge," she said. "People's hearts were soft and they were

ready. We invited people who were unchurched to the revival and a lot came forward, even people we thought were saved."

"You're hearing that, 'So-and-so was here this week and I've been praying for that family for years,'" said Charlie Henderson, co-coordinator of 40-day small groups. "That creates a tremendous amount of excitement."

### Growing leaders

In addition to the excitement created by conversions, other leaders were encouraged by the member development the campaign stimulated.

Henderson, who helped coordinate home groups along with his

wife, Robin, was encouraged by young members agreeing to host or facilitate the groups.

"We had a big influx in the 25 to 40 age group," Henderson said. "We're starting to see leadership emerge."

Church leaders currently are considering whether to forego Sunday evening services for a home-group ministry, Mrs. Henderson said.

"We need to look at that and see if we want to make that a continual ministry of the church," she said. "It was a positive thing."

Mrs. Henderson said one major accomplishment of "40 Days" was showing people that they can do evangelism.

Members have commented on how easy it is to share with others what Jesus has done in their lives, she noted.

"So many times we build up a wall with evangelism and say, 'I can't do that,'" Mrs. Henderson said. "I heard a lot of people open up and say, 'I've got a story to tell.'"

Faulkner said the emphasis also showed the congregation the wisdom of changing traditional programs in order to reach non-members.

When the pastor first announced they would cancel Sunday evening services during the campaign, several people were apprehensive.

After seeing the results, that reluctance has ended, Faulkner said.

"I don't think they'll ever question it again if we need to take the church outside to the people instead of expecting them to come to us," Faulkner said.

## Music minister has five tips for church Christmas pageants

Continued from page 1

"This thing has evolved over the years, but the one thing it has not gotten away from is evangelism, the cross," he said.

Maintaining an evangelistic message is one of five suggestions that Case has for churches of any size seeking to host a Christmas pageant.

The long-time music minister has had several years to develop a list of suggestions. Case had been leading the church's "Singing Christmas Tree" pageant for eight years when he decided they should add another component.

He recruited his neighbor and friend Don Phillips, a local community theater producer, to write and direct a drama about the life of Christ.

Today, the program, titled "Behold the King" draws hundreds of visitors. "A lot of families consider this part of their Christmas and it's been a great ministry through the years," Case noted.

About eight years ago, the church set aside the first night's presentation for Fort Knox soldiers.

"Every now and then I will get a letter from a soldier who will be in a foreign country somewhere, and they will write how much it blessed them," Case said.

Case offers four other issues for churches considering hosting a

pageant:

**Know your budget.** "What is the financial dollar that the church would be willing to invest in a program of that nature?" Case asked.

"It's not cheap."

Churches might consider starting small and building more into the set, costumes and extras each year, he added.

Case estimates that Severns Valley Baptist Church has spent \$15,000 during the past 23 years.

The church doesn't charge admission but accepts a love offering at most performances to offset some costs. Free tickets are distributed solely as a crowd control measure.

**Safety.** The addition of animals, large backdrops and suspended angels has caused the church to pay close attention to safety, Case noted.

"When you start flying people up 35 feet in the air, there's a big emphasis there," he said.

What some viewers might find humorous are actually heart-pounding moments for Case and Phillips.

"We've had times when one of our chariots hit a front pew and the soldier inside went flying over the front of it," Case recalled.

"We consider it life-threatening when something doesn't go right with a lift."

Animals are another safety concern, he added.

"When you have animals come through your building, your church has to have liability insurance enough if a camel should step on somebody," he added.

**Know the volunteer base.** "Will your people respond and be there for the long haul?" asked Case, who begins his "six-month adventure" in July. "Are they committed to it?"

While Christmas pageants offer the church an opportunity to connect with guests and the community, church members must be willing to make the sacrifices for the event to be successful, Case said.

"The church for a month and a half does have to make a sacrifice in that our stage and auditorium for regular worship services is interrupted," he noted.

"We consider it a thing of beauty when we get it (the stage) up, but while we're building, the church does have to put up with some inconveniences that are not there throughout the year.

"I can say they have more than graciously committed themselves to this program through the years."

**Have the pastor's backing.** "I had to have the support of my pastor and staff thoroughly when we went into this," Case said. "You could not do it without that."

Former Pastor Howard Cobble had seen the impact of pageants in other parts of the country, so he was able to lend his support as Case and others first introduced the idea to



Allen Case



the congregation and such groups as the budget committee, Case said.

Current pastor "Billy (Compton) came in after him and has more than generously supported what we've been doing and been part of the programs," Case added.

Next year when the church relocates to a new facility, Severns Valley will take a year off to evaluate what type of program it wants to host.

But Case anticipates organizers will survey the landscape of programs and come up with a new pageant in the new building.

"I feel we've barely scratched the surface of reaching people," he said, noting that each year approximately 75 percent of guests are first-time attendees. "These types of programs offer the ability to reach people if churches will make an investment in them."

**SAFETY FIRST** Hannah Cox hovers over the stage as a flying angel for Severns Valley Baptist Church's Christmas pageant. Music Minister Allen Case said such measures require a focus on safety for all participants. (Photo by David Winfrey)

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TRENNIS HENDERSON  
Editor

DAVID WINFREY  
News Director

JANET McINTOSH  
Marketing & Business  
Manager

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

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## 'Narnia' holds message for those who seek it

By Ted Parks

Nashville (ABP)—Lights! Camera! Allegory?

Whether viewers find a distinctly Christian message in the new movie "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" depends on whether they found one in the C.S. Lewis fantasy novel it's based on, the movie's creators insist.

"The film is the book," said Micheal Flaherty, president of Walden Media, the company that partnered with Walt Disney to make the movie. "We wanted to make sure that we successfully captured everything that was there in the book.

"(For) all the reasons Christians love the book, they're going to love the film as well," Flaherty said. "This is something that's going to be universally adored."

The new movie is the first of the seven novels in Lewis' Narnia series for Walden to translate to the big screen.

## Eloquent defender of faith

A professor of literature at Oxford and Cambridge, Lewis came to faith as an adult, then became one of the 20th century's most eloquent defenders of Christianity. In addition to the Narnia series and a trilogy of science-fiction novels, Lewis authored "Mere Christianity" and other books and essays arguing for the reasonableness of believing.

Walden's mission is to encourage young people to read by making quality adaptations of widely acknowledged master works of children's literature. The latest film comes on the heels of Walden's "Because of Winn Dixie" last winter and the 2003 "Holes." Next up for Walden is "Charlotte's Web," anticipated for release in 2006.

Scholars debate the overtness of Christian themes in "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," as well as the other Narnia books.

"Lewis was a Christian, and his story treats events that are central to

Christianity," said Alan Jacobs, professor of English at Illinois' Wheaton College. "But you do not have to see and understand the Christian message to enjoy the story," added Jacobs, author of "The Narnian: The Life and Imagination of C.S. Lewis."

Like its textual source, the movie tells the story of the Pevensie children—two boys, two girls—sent to live in the English countryside during World War II to escape the London Blitz. Bored guests in the home of an old professor, the children accidentally discover that, brushing aside the clothes in a wooden wardrobe, they can magically enter a mythical world called Narnia.

As war rages in the nation they leave on the other side of the wardrobe, the Pevensie kids find themselves swept into yet another epic struggle inside Narnia, whose creatures groan and shiver under the domination of a witch who has usurped the throne and frozen the land in an unending winter. Their participation in Narnia's drama will test the family of four children as they battle foes from without and betrayal from within.

And "epic" is the operative word for the new screen version of Lewis' beloved novel.

Even before opening credits, the film visually wafts the audience inside the menacing German bombers over London that release their deadly payloads on the civilians below. To escape the nightly attacks, the Pevensie children, like hundreds of their young countrymen, must board crowded trains to flee the savage raids on the British capital.

The dramatic scenes in London yield to panoramas of Narnia as the children traverse frozen landscapes to escape the forces of the false queen. The sweeping views of the icy countryside, followed later in the story with dazzling battle scenes between the forces of good and the army of the usurper, help explain the frequent comparisons between

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" and "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy. New Zealand provided locations for both productions.

The movie's director, Andrew Adamson, underscored the large-scale perspective he attempted to give the film version of Lewis' novel.

"This is the story about four kids, disempowered by the war in their own world, World War II, who enter this land where they're not only empowered but they're ultimately the only solution to war in that land," Adamson writes in a Walden Media educator's guide to the movie. "We're taking the story of a family, and exaggerating it to the level of the battle between good and evil."

## Redemptive sacrifice

Accompanying the heroic fight for justice on the battlefield in the Lewis tale is another key theme, experts say—the power of redemptive sacrifice.

"It's really a twofold story: the rightful king of Narnia returns to re-establish his kingdom and bring peace; and that same king sacrifices himself to save a traitor," said Jacobs. "So kingdom and salvation are what the story is all about."

In the movie, the good laws of Narnia cannot ignore wrongdoing. Betrayal demands justice, and justice a penalty. But the price can be paid by someone willing to die in a wrongdoer's stead.

And in the magical world of Narnia, death itself is powerless against unselfish love. "The deeper magic is all about redemption, it's all about reconciliation, it's all about healing, and it's all about ... death being swallowed up in victory," said Stanley Mattson, president of the Redlands, Calif.-based C.S. Lewis Foundation.

Mattson added, "The film just has an extraordinary range of messages that deal with ... how we are to engage evil in ways that really are redemptive and ultimately promise victory in the best sense of that word."

Ted Parks, a freelance writer based in Nashville, writes about film and faith

## COMMENTARY

## Building strong congregations

A church does not have to be large in numbers in order to be strong. Kennon Callahan has written a book titled "Small, Strong Congregations" that I recommend. The book has been a great encouragement to thousands of pastors and churches.

Recently, I had the privilege of worshipping with a small, strong congregation. Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Covington averages about 65 in Sunday school and 90 in worship.

It is very strong in ministries and support of missions. With total receipts of \$134,000, the church last year gave more than \$1,500 to international missions, more than \$1,200 to North American missions, about \$700 to state missions, more than \$11,000 to the Cooperative Program, and about \$6,700 to associational missions.

The church has a full missions program and outreach to the race-track. Pastor Bill Class has served on the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board and serves the church effectively although he has medical

challenges. Please pray for Bill and his family, and the church, as they serve.

One of the ways the Kentucky Baptist Convention seeks to strengthen churches of all sizes is by providing the Shepherding the Shepherd Conference for all pastors and spouses. As the KBC helps strengthen the primary care givers in the church, the entire community is strengthened.

The 2006 conference will be held Jan. 12-14 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Lexington. It is a grand opportunity for the ministering couple to share quality time and worship time together. It is rewarding to observe the couples worshipping God together, and connecting with each other and with God in fresh ways.

Shepherding the Shepherd is a wonderful way for the KBC to say thank you to pastors and their spouses for their sacrificial commitment to Jesus Christ and His church. We are all grateful for the partnership with Baptist Healthcare System

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

## FAMILY

## Use Scripture, not clichés, to teach financial truths

By Jeremy White

Many parents and grandparents speak in aphorisms or clichés to children when talking about money. Adults say such things as "Don't spend it all in one place" or talk about "not having two nickels to rub together."

Young people today often don't understand these sayings. Some of these clichés or quotes no longer have meaning or provide only a partial truth. Some reinforce the generation gap—making kids believe you don't understand their world.

"Save for a rainy day" meant something when, in the olden days, most of kids' activities were outside. Going inside was akin to punishment. A rainy day meant nothing to do. Some savings might have brightened a day with some ice cream or a movie.

Today, most kids seldom play outside. Perhaps because of our busy schedules, security concerns about potential kidnappings, video games or the Internet, kids spend more time indoors. Kids think, "If it rains, so what? I get to spend more time on the computer or watching videos or TV or going to the mall, just like I do on sunny days."

The No. 1 useless thing adults say to kids about finances is "Money doesn't grow on trees." Kids are befuddled by this because they never said it did. They never saw money on a tree.

To older kids, this obvious fact sounds condescending. It builds up resistance to what you are trying to teach. While kids try to picture this strange idea, they miss the point about how money should be spent wisely because it's not so readily available.

Rather than repeating the clichés passed down from generation to generation, speak biblical truths. Change your language to speak Bible verses or memorable portions of Bible verses. When the life context is appropriate, share these phrases:

- Be a cheerful giver.
- Don't bury your treasure.
- The borrower is slave to the lender.
- Consider the ant and be wise.
- Don't rob God.
- Count the cost.

If your kids ask what these phrases mean, you have an opportunity to point them to the Bible.

Jeremy White, a certified public accountant, is a partner with Blythe, White & Associates in Paducah



## Christmas after divorce: What is best scenario for children?

**Q: This is the first Christmas since my husband and I got divorced. He and I have remarried; I have not. Can my ex-husband and I create the best possible situation for our teenage son and daughter? We share joint custody.**

The best possible scenario would be for you, your ex-husband and your children to sit down together to discuss what each of you would like and then come to a mutual agreement. His new wife may or may not be included in the discussion depending on your relationship with her. She should be consulted before any agreement is finalized.

Older teenagers certainly are capable and deserving of more input, but younger teens need to know that their concerns are taken into account as well. Among issues family members should discuss are:

- Any changes they would like from the custodial scheduling agreements reached during the divorce.
- School, church and personal commitments that need to be considered during the holiday season.

Keep in mind that the focus of this joint meeting should be the holiday schedule. Each parent should make sure that several concerns are addressed privately. These include hopes and desires about Christmas and holiday traditions as well as concerns about blended family issues.

In some cases a family meeting will be a difficult if not impossible task due to high levels of conflict between former spouses. Telephone calls and notes might be a better option.

Remember that parental flexibility in working out holiday schedules will help the children adjust and work through their losses. Parents do well to raise their Christmas vision from the cradle of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary as they recall the importance of dying to self.—*Scott Wigginton*

### Q: How can I help shift my child's focus from getting to giving this Christmas?

Jesus said giving brings more happiness than receiving. Christmas provides an excellent opportunity to teach this truth to children.

For starters, couple the question, "What do you want for Christmas?" with a second question: "What do you want to give this Christmas?" Encourage your child to make a list of gift ideas and of folks he or she wants to remember during the holiday season.

As you share together, remind your child that Christmas celebrates God's gift of love to us, and that we give and receive gifts in honor of Him. Help your child discover the joy of finding or making the ideal gift for someone special. Let your child do the wrapping. Decide together when and how to deliver the gifts.

Additional ideas include:

**Give some stuff away.** Most of our children will receive plenty of presents for Christmas. The Bible says that if we have two coats, we should give one away (Luke 3:11). Go through closets and toy chests and find some clothes and toys that can be given away. Make sure the items are gently used and still able to be enjoyed. Don't give away your junk.

**Give some time.** Find a way to serve together during the Christmas season. Volunteer to ring a Salvation Army bell. Help with a Toys for Tots project. Take cookies to the firehouse. Go to Carols with your church.

**Give a gift to missions.** Christmas brings special awareness of mission work and mission needs. Encourage your child to give a special offering to help spread the good news of Jesus around the world.—*David Garrard*

Family Forum writers are:

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

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

**Valerie Vincent**, Christian counselor with Hardy Associates in Louisville. E-mail: dr.vincent@insightbb.com.

**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.



## Don't fall into trap of skipping Christmas

John Grisham's 2001 novel, "Skipping Christmas," is the humorous tale of a middle-aged, suburban couple who decide to do away with all the traditional trappings and festivities of the Christmas season.

According to the publisher's synopsis, Luther and Nora Krank "decide that, just this once, they'll skip the holiday altogether. Theirs will be the only house on Hemlock Street without a rooftop Frosty; they won't be hosting their annual Christmas Eve bash; they aren't even going to have a tree. ... But, as this weary couple is about to discover, skipping Christmas brings enormous consequences—and isn't half as easy as they'd imagined."

The concept of skipping Christmas—not the book, but the mere mention of the word "Christmas"—has become a huge focus in recent weeks. Article after article points out that many retailers are replacing "Merry Christmas" with the generic, politically correct "Happy Holidays" in their ad campaigns and in-store greetings.

Even some Jewish and Muslim leaders have come to the defense of traditional Christmas greetings. In a Religion News Service article published in last week's Western Recorder, Don Feder, president of Jews Against Anti-Christian Defamation, declared, "It's a matter of simple courtesy to acknowledge a holiday celebrated by 96 percent of the American people."

In addition to the typical clashes over "Christmas tree" vs. "Holiday tree" and displaying Nativity scenes on public property, Baptist Press noted last week that officials at an elementary school in Wisconsin reportedly wrote new lyrics to "Silent Night" for the school's winter program, "stripping away all references to Christ and replacing them with winter weather themes." The revamped carol begins, "Cold in the night, no one in sight. Winter winds whirl and bite."

As troubling as such scenarios are to many Chris-

tians, an even more disappointing nod to skipping Christmas is the report of churches canceling morning worship services since Jesus' birthday celebration lands on a Sunday this year.

While some church leaders explain that their time and resources will be focused on hosting traditional Christmas Eve services, it just doesn't seem right to mark Christ's birth by closing church doors. Granted, a case can be made for providing Christmas Eve worship services and protecting Christmas morning as cherished family time for church staff and members, but surely there is room to strike a creative balance.

Even for congregations with a primary emphasis on Christmas Eve services, per-

haps there are a few staff or lay leaders who gladly would volunteer to lead a simple Christmas morning service featuring a few carols, reading the Christmas story from Luke 2 and sharing a brief Christmas meditation and prayer time.

Consider the stark contrast between families in your community seeing a gathering of faithful believers celebrating Jesus' birth and the prospects of a dark, shuttered church building greeting any unsuspecting guests on Christmas morning.

It's a bit of a challenge for Christians to bemoan the "skipping Christmas syndrome" in secular society and then fail to open the church's doors on Christmas morning.

In addition to concerns over skipping Christmas, many Christians note the risk of simply missing Christmas. Don't get so caught up in griping about the commercialism and the frantic pace of the season that you forget to pause long enough to truly worship the Christ Child and celebrate His miraculous birth.

Just as the Kranks discovered that "skipping Christmas brings enormous consequences," the same is true for the rest of us. No matter how full your calendar is this month, don't fall into the trap of skipping—or missing—Christmas.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## A new breed of international missionaries

By Jerry Rankin

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Historians identify William Carey's departure for India in 1793 as launching the modern missionary movement. But most would acknowledge that more has been accomplished in

global missions since World War II than in the previous 150 years. However, with the disintegration of the communist power bloc in the last decade of the 20th century—along with advances in communication, travel and technology—progress toward fulfillment of the Great Commission has accelerated more in the first five years of the 21st century than the previous 200-plus years combined.

Chaos, conflicts and political upheaval have combined to create an openness to spiritual answers that only the gospel can provide. A focus beyond nations to evangelize every people group has made the good news accessible to masses hearing it for the first time.

The growing numbers of believers and expanding networks of churches around the world have changed the roles of missionary partners from the West.

Yes, missionaries primarily still go to witness to the lost, but the imperatives of discipleship and training have become more prominent

Yes, they still engage in the diverse ministries and tasks of teaching, media, health care and development work, but the role is much more complex as they train and equip national Baptist partners to assume leadership and responsibility for these tasks.

Most would see their role as "catalytic"—their presence producing a reaction and movement to Christ rather than working for whatever may result from their own efforts. More countries are closed to a missionary presence than ever before, but that doesn't inhibit today's missionaries from finding legal ways of creative access through a business, humanitarian or educational platform through which they can be an incarnational witness and share the gospel.

Strategy coordinators are especially critical to reaching all peoples. A strategy coordinator is an innovative missionary who has been trained in strategic thinking to devise multiple ways of communicating the gospel through cultural filters and religious barriers. The overarching objective of the strategy coordinator missionary is to see that all people in the population segment become evangelized and have reproducing churches planted among them.

To accomplish this, strategy coordinators are not bound by residential restrictions—in fact, they often use computers to facilitate their teams' work, mobilize resources and stay connected with a network of prayer intercessors. Strategy coordinators collaborate with all Great Commission Christians, enlisting other missionaries, volunteers and local Christians to reach their objectives.

After 150 years of missions work, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board was working in 184 countries but had evangelized only 338 distinct ethnic-language groups. In the past eight years, more than a thousand new people groups, most of them previously unreached, have been engaged with the gospel.

One of the deterrents to reaching all peoples with the gospel of Jesus Christ is the need for more strategy coordinators—those willing to step into that servant role of ministry and assume responsibility for whatever it takes to get the gospel to another people group.

As Southern Baptists highlight international missions this Christmas season, would you allow God to speak to your heart and say, "You could do that. Will you be the one to reach another people group that is still waiting?"

Jerry Rankin is president of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board based in Richmond, Va.

## NATIONAL NOTES

**Religious leaders press Bush, Rice on foreign aid.** Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders have urged President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to increase U.S. aid to developing nations and remove agricultural subsidies that they say hurt poor countries. The religious leaders backed a U.S. move to cut "trade-distorting" farm subsidies at an upcoming World Trade Organization conference. Critics of subsidies say they bloat global markets and prevent developing countries from equal competition, keeping those countries mired in a cycle of poverty. Religious leaders also asked Rice for a \$5 billion increase in poverty-focused development aid, and urged the White House to convince Republicans on Capitol Hill to fully fund foreign development programs.

**Judge: Indiana legislature's prayers must delete "Christ."** A federal judge in Indiana has said that state's practice of allowing explicitly Christian prayers to open legislative sessions violates the Constitution. In a Nov. 30 ruling, Federal District Judge David Hamilton ordered a halt to official sectarian invocations in the Indiana House of Representatives. The decision came in a lawsuit filed against Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma (R), who coordinates the prayers by picking Indiana clergy and laypeople who are recommended by legislators. The Indiana Civil Liberties Union filed the suit on behalf of four Indianans—a Quaker, a Methodist minister and two Catholics—who were offended by the practice of government-sponsored sectarian prayer, even if they were prayers of their own Christian faith.

**Court nominee linked to defense of religious Christmas.** Conservative backers of Judge Samuel Alito's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court have rolled out new advertisements that present Alito as a defender of religious Christmas displays. The twin ads, by the Committee for Justice and a Catholic group, Fidelis, point to Alito's ruling as a federal appeals judge that allowed a nativity and menorah display at City Hall in Jersey City, N.J. Joe Cella, president of the Michigan-based Fidelis, said the Alito fight is a proxy for the annual holiday skirmishes over how much space religion—or religious expression—should be granted in the public arena.

**Eldest Graham daughter could get charges dismissed.** Evangelist Billy Graham's eldest daughter may be able to get misdemeanor battery charges filed against her dismissed, a Florida paper has reported. Virginia "Gigi" Graham Foreman, 59, has to complete a domestic violence evaluation and stick to any treatment a doctor recommends, the Daytona Beach News-Journal reported. The steps were outlined in a deferred prosecution agreement she signed with the State Attorney's Office. Foreman was charged in early July after an incident in which police said she choked her husband, Chad Foreman, during an argument alongside a New Smyrna Beach, Fla., roadway.

**Universalist pastor sees membership plummet.** A high-profile evangelical pastor has lost 90 percent of his 5,000 members after adopting a universalist theology. Bishop Carlton Pearson's "gospel of inclusion" theology—that Christ died for the sins of the world, and therefore the whole world will be saved—went against evangelical orthodoxy that salvation requires a personal response to the message of Christ. Higher Dimensions, founded by Pearson in 1981, once was one of Tulsa's largest and most prosperous churches. After teaching universalism, his alma mater, Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, banned his church buses from the campus. National church leaders and publications condemned him, including Charisma, a leading charismatic magazine.

**In Alabama, creation beats evolution.** Roughly seven out of 10 respondents to a Mobile Register-University of South Alabama survey said creationism and intelligent design should be taught in public school science classes. Fewer than half think evolution warrants the same treatment. Backing for creationism is far higher in the state than the country as a whole. In a recent national survey by the Pew Research Center, a Washington, D.C., polling organization, only 42 percent of respondents signaled support for creationism, compared with 48 percent who accept evolution.

**Update: RA-led dorm Bible studies OK'd in Wisconsin.** The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has suspended its ban on resident assistants leading Bible studies in their dorms, a university spokesman said. But the students who challenged the ban vowed to continue their legal fight until a final decision is made and they are assured that "the constitutional rights of students will be respected." The school reviewed the policy after a resident assistant challenged the ban.

## AIDS Awareness

*Saddleback event features statistics and exhortations to show compassion*

By Phillip Jordan  
Associated Baptist Press

Lake Forest, Calif. (ABP)—The pastor of the Southern Baptist Convention's largest church used a conference here to conclude on World AIDS Day to announce a new commitment to caring for the millions of people infected with HIV and AIDS.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church and best-selling author of "The Purpose-Driven Life," hosted nearly 1,700 senior pastors from evangelical churches nationwide on Nov. 21-Dec. 1 for a conference on AIDS called "Disturbing Voices."

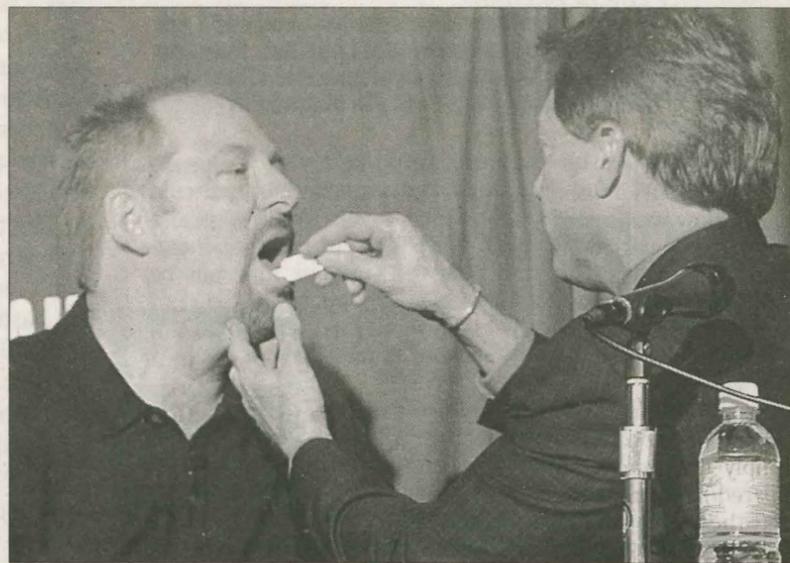
Warren, who admitted most evangelicals have been on the wrong side of the AIDS issue, said ministering to those suffering with AIDS is another responsibility Christians must take seriously.

"The church has the moral authority to say, 'Hey, it's not a sin to be sick,'" Warren said. "The Gospels repeatedly show that Jesus loved, touched and cared for lepers—the diseased outcasts of His day. Today's 'lepers' are those who have HIV/AIDS."

Warren earlier this year announced his "PEACE Plan" for changing the focus and structure of international Christian involvement (PEACE stands for Planting churches, Equipping leaders, Assisting the poor, Caring for the sick and Educating the next generation).

Throughout the conference, Warren encouraged attending pastors to establish volunteer groups to help care for those suffering with HIV and to offer free counseling and HIV testing at their churches. Warren said his wife, Kay, helped focus his attention on the plight of those living with AIDS. She delivered a keynote address at the meeting.

Mrs. Warren said her own journey into AIDS awareness began



**AIDS TEST** During Saddleback Church's "Disturbing Voices" HIV/AIDS conference, Rick Warren undergoes testing for the HIV virus. Though Warren said he had never engaged in at-risk behavior, such as marital infidelity or drug use, he noted the 20-minute wait for the results was somewhat awkward. The negative results prompted his wife to celebrate, "That deserves a kiss." (BP photo by Shannon Baker)

three years ago with a magazine article that shocked her with statistics and photographs.

"The evangelical church has pretty much had fingers in our ears, hands over our eyes and mouths shut completely," Mrs. Warren said. "We're not comfortable talking about sex in general and certainly not comfortable about talking about homosexuality—and you can't talk about HIV without talking about both of those things."

#### First time Christians have listened

Worldwide, a reported 40 million people have HIV/AIDS, but David Miller disputes this number.

"We believe that there are 75-80 million people infected with the disease," said Miller, a member of the radical homosexual activist group ACT-UP in New York.

Since learning in 1988 that he was HIV-positive, Miller has been a caustic protester for AIDS causes, including the storming of New York City's St. Patrick's Cathedral in December 1989.

The Warrens befriended Miller in their attempts to understand the enormity of the disease. Miller said it's the first time Christians have

listened to him.

"I have never been to a conference with so many HIV-negative people," Miller said. And when Saddleback members welcomed—and hugged—more than 20 people with HIV/AIDS on stage during the conference's closing session, he couldn't believe that nobody ran away.

"I am not a Christian," Miller said. "But I am thinking about it."

Other speakers at the conference included Bill Hybels, senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago. Medical experts and other leaders in the AIDS community also spoke.

This year's World AIDS Day theme was "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise." World AIDS Day began in 1988 after the first international health summit that met in London to address the issue from a global viewpoint. According to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS UNAIDS, 38 million adults and 2.3 million children worldwide are living with HIV. Approximately 4.9 million people are expected to become infected with the virus in 2005.

With additional reporting by Shannon Baker for Baptist Press

## Volunteers swarm on Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans

New Orleans (RNS)—Hundreds of volunteers swarmed over a wrecked Baptist church deep in New Orleans' flood zone earlier this month, hoping to start its healing and that of the desolate neighborhood beyond with a furious outpouring of free labor.

By some counts, nearly 1,000 crisply organized volunteers from LaPlace, La., to Los Angeles laid gloved, healing hands on Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, which drowned under nine feet of water from Hurricane Katrina. They went after the church's ruined sanctuary and first floor with crowbars and power tools.

In a ritual familiar to thousands of New Orleans homeowners, they tossed furniture and carpet, muscled kitchen equipment out the door and gutted walls to the studs.

Donated heavy equipment bulldozed the rubble into growing piles

curbside.

The workers were assembled by PRC Compassion, a network of evangelical churches and nonprofits based in Baton Rouge that sprang into existence after Katrina to funnel aid into the storm zone.

PRC Compassion's roots are thickest in Louisiana, which is covered with independent Christian churches. But aid has flowed to the agency from groups far away, including Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Colo. Help has also come from the St. Louis-based Living in the Word Ministry of evangelist Joyce Meyer, said Gene Mills, one of the founders of PRC Compassion.

#### Spontaneous compassion

Born spontaneously in response to sheer need, PRC Compassion is driven by relationships—by pastors networking rapidly with other pastors, then hurrying help to target

areas, Mills said.

Its congregations are both black and white. At Franklin Avenue Baptist, volunteers reached out to help Pastor Fred Luter, a popular minister who turned around a dying church in the mid-1980s and who works easily across racial and denominational lines.

Now revitalized into a powerhouse congregation, Luter's predominantly African-American church had begun to stabilize and reclaim its neighborhood. Before Katrina, nearly 7,000 people worshipped there every weekend, Luter said.

PRC Compassion's strategy recognized that Luter's was a key church to target. Helping Luter now would permit his church to help others later, Mills said.

"He wants to be here," he said. "Once he gets back on line, he's going to be a machine. He'll turn around all kinds of lives."

Basketball & summer camps

Teamwork is key to making any major effort successful

I am writing this shortly after what you could call a disappointing day. My oldest son had two basketball games today, and his team lost both games. While I know we are not to become engrossed in seeing sixth graders win, it still does not sit well with me to lose, whether I am actually playing in the game or simply a spectator in the stands.

Young or old, losing is simply not much fun compared to winning. As we left the last game, our discussion in the car was an assessment of the day's events on the court. While various "reasons" arose, my view was that they did not operate as a team.

Teamwork is perhaps understood by all, but I would propose that teams that work to their full potential are few and far between. At the core of sinful humanity, the phrase goes that it is always the fault of another, the serpent, the woman, actually the woman you put here. You get the picture. There is always someone else to blame.

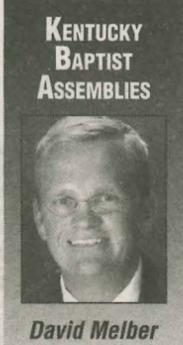
Our camp ministry must function as one team, but one group

is at Jonathan Creek and another is at Cedarmore. Sometimes staff is working at other locations. Our team swells to more than 150 people during the peak summer camp season, so how do we function as one? The process is not much different than what a basketball team must follow.

One, we identify the goal, and help each member understand that goal. Our goal is simple, to see people encounter Jesus Christ. All things we do must support and contribute to this sole purpose. Two, we identify practices that each of us must carry out to move us toward our goal. And, finally, three, we must celebrate when the goal is met.

Certain attitudes always provide successful environments for teams to function effectively. Philippians 2:2-5, in my view, is the core critical attitude that effective team members must possess to get beyond the nasty and tempting attitude of passing blame to another. As you are on some team today, whether it is at church, your work or your family, consider the attitude of Christ.

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 White, for one
- 5 "For I have no man ... who will naturally \_\_\_ for your state" (Philippians 2:20)
- 9 Kind of truck
- 12 Minor prophet
- 13 So be it
- 14 Female lea dweller
- 15 3.1416
- 16 Sixties-style dress
- 18 "They compassed me about like \_\_\_" (Psalm 118:12)
- 19 "She shall shave her head and \_\_\_ her nails" (Deuteronomy 21:12)
- 20 Greek letter
- 22 NY or CA
- 23 Greek isle
- 25 "Do ye think that the scripture \_\_\_ in vain" (James 4:5)
- 27 Definitely pink
- 28 Nick Charles, aka The \_\_\_ Man
- 29 Exclamation of discovery
- 32 \_\_\_ on parle francais
- 33 "For if ye love them which love you, what \_\_\_ have ye?" (Luke 6:32)
- 34 \_\_\_ fried
- 35 Barbara \_\_\_ Geddes
- 36 Baby and bath, to name two
- 37 "And he \_\_\_ and touched his tongue" (Mark 7:33)
- 38 "Is the Lord's hand waxed \_\_\_?" (Numbers 11:23)
- 40 Prophets
- 41 Athens is here (abbr.)
- 43 "Joseph ... was the son of his \_\_\_ age" (Genesis 37:3)
- 44 \_\_\_ there, done that
- 45 "The workman is worthy of his \_\_\_" (Matthew 10:10)
- 47 Come together; touch
- 48 "Arise, go up to \_\_\_" (Joshua 8:1)
- 50 Mess up
- 51 Shut's partner
- 53 Apparent one
- 55 Asiatic deer
- 56 Accustomed
- 57 "I'm all \_\_\_"

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- 2 French friend
- 3 Biblical exclamation
- 4 "He hath regarded the low \_\_\_ of his handmaiden" (Luke 1:48)
- 5 Hawaiian product, for short
- 6 Quantity (abbr.)
- 7 Concerning
- 8 \_\_\_-gedi (where David dwelt for a time)
- 9 To a \_\_\_
- 10 Is beholden to
- 11 Author Nathanael
- 17 Before
- 18 Bridle part
- 19 Pauline's adventures of filmdom
- 20 "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the \_\_\_ of death" (Acts 2:24)
- 21 Kind of hole
- 23 "Where no oxen are, the \_\_\_ is clean" (Proverbs 14:4)
- 24 3 K or 5 K, for example
- 25 "Thou \_\_\_ love thy neighbor" (Romans 13:9)
- 26 "He ... began to tell them what things should \_\_\_ unto him" (Mark 10:32)
- 28 "The Lord called Samuel again the \_\_\_ time" (1 Samuel 3:8)
- 30 Absalom's stunning feature
- 31 "The \_\_\_ are a people not strong" (Proverbs 30:25)
- 33 Hand or power
- 37 Rage inside
- 39 Salsa choice
- 40 Jurisdiction of a bishop
- 41 Ancient Hebrew dry measure
- 42 Deli order
- 44 "He hath \_\_\_ his bow, and made it ready" (Psalm 7:12)
- 46 Linking verb
- 47 "I will ... that \_\_\_ pray everywhere" (1 Timothy 2:8)
- 48 Broadcast
- 49 Government agency (abbr.)
- 51 Ouch!
- 52 River in Italy
- 54 Per person (abbr.)

Last week's solution

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PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

# Kentucky churches adjusting for Christmas Sunday

**"The priority is to exalt Jesus Christ in an act of worship on the day of worship."**

Skip Alexander, pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church

By Dannah Prather  
Partnerships Editor

Louisville—Kentuckians who want to attend church on Dec. 25 will find most Kentucky Baptist churches open, although services might look a bit different compared to most Sundays.

Nationally, some megachurches have announced they're taking Sunday, Dec. 25, off so staff can be with family after a busy season of activities leading up to the big day.

But Kentucky Baptist congregations contacted said their doors will be open, though with some adjustments.

Campbellsville Baptist Church, First Baptist Church of Mount Washington and other Kentucky Baptist churches are reducing the number of worship services offered Dec. 25.

Some will suspend Sunday school, close the nursery and encourage members to dress casually in order to make Christmas morning worship relaxed, celebratory and contemplative.

Paul Chitwood, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, said Dec. 25 "is not a day to burden volunteers" with teaching and child care responsibilities.

## Calendar, culture & calling

Planning Sunday worship for Christmas morning means wrestling with the questions of calendar, culture and calling, but according to a recent Kentucky Baptist Convention Web site poll, it doesn't mean canceling Sunday services.

The poll asked: "This year, Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. Does your church plan to hold Sunday morn-

ing services?"

KBC News and Web Specialist Brenda Smith said only four of the 146 respondents indicated their church would not have morning worship. Of 134 respondents who said their churches were having Dec. 25 services, only 10 indicated they did not plan to attend.

Skip Alexander, pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church, said pastors and church staff "in the trenches" know Dec. 25 is "all about family." Answering: "What do you change?" and "How far do you change?" is not always easy, he said. "We want to be sensitive to the family, but that is not the primary drive.

"The priority is to exalt Jesus Christ in an act of worship on the day of worship," he said.

Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green is reducing its number of worship services on Dec. 25 from three to two, according to Pastor Jason Pettus. "We anticipate having 2,000 attend our Christmas Eve service and between 1,200 and 1,500 on Christmas Day," he said.

Pettus said there is a sense of anticipation at Living Hope for the holiday services. "There are people looking for meaning on Christmas Day and New Year's Day who will be more inclined to hear the gospel on those two days," he said.

At Four Rivers Church in Paducah, Pastor Brad Henson took the guesswork out of planning for Dec. 25 by polling the congregation.

"We have a lot of 20- and 30-somethings in our church," said Henson, whose church usually offers three weekend worship services. "A lot of them will be traveling to see family."

Based on feedback, Henson expects approximately 200 people to attend an 11 a.m. service on Dec. 25.

Four Rivers decided to forego its traditional Christmas Eve service. The usual elements of the Dec. 24 event—Christmas carols, reading the Christmas story from Scripture and observing the Lord's Supper—will be part of the Christmas morning service instead.

"A lot of our people are very excited about this service," Henson said. "They consider it a real addition to the Christmas season."

At Mount Washington, "we are planning an upbeat celebration of Christmas with congregational singing and a message," Chitwood said.

"I think it's special (when Dec. 25 falls on Sunday)," he said, "and a lot of our people feel the same way. It's a time to really focus on the reason for the season and worship the King."

## Christmas Day culmination

It was 1994 when Dec. 25 last fell on Sunday, although Jim Cordell, director of music/worship for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, pointed out that "more liturgical" churches open their doors on Christmas Day no matter the day of the week.

"Christmas Day services have always been part of their tradition," said Cordell, interim music minister at Fern Creek Baptist Church in Louisville. "Unfortunately that is not normally a part of our (Baptist) tradition."

Christmas Eve services are common among many Baptist churches, but Cordell said Christmas Day services "would establish Dec. 25 as an

important event during the church year."

If more churches observed Advent, corporate worship on Dec. 25 would be better attended "as the observation culminates," Cordell said.

Advent begins four Sundays prior to Christmas and focuses on preparing for the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Cordell said he believes songs of anticipation, such as "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" and "O Come Immanuel" feel more significant sung during an Advent observance. Furthermore, he said singing "Joy to the World" on Dec. 25 is a powerful testimony to the Savior's arrival.

Adopting Advent's clearly defined timeline of anticipation with the culmination on Dec. 25 is difficult "when you see Christmas trees in the stores in August," Cordell said. "We've let the secular world influence our celebration of Christmas. ... We tend to go more with convenience. ... The holidays are such a busy time anyway, by the time you get to Christmas morning, everybody's just worn out."

That reality and other considerations have led some of the nation's megachurches to cancel Sunday worship services on Dec. 25, according to an article recently published by Associated Press.

Pettus said there was never the option at Living Hope of canceling services, "not only because I think it's right, but it's a practical reason to do so." He said he hopes people who rarely attend church any other time will come to services on Dec. 25, hear the gospel and respond to its message.

## The currency of willing hearts

**Christmastime 'kid mart' allows students to bless others with gifts**

By Missy Nichols.

Oneida Baptist Institute Donation Coordinator

Oneida Baptist Institute receives a wide variety of donations nearly every weekday of the year. Some of these items primarily are for staff and faculty use, while others are designated for a variety of areas on our campus or are given specifically for our students. We choose to keep most of the items given for the students for a major Christmas giveaway. In most cases, it requires the accumulation of the entire year to have enough for all of the children.

For the last several years, Oneida has collected items throughout the year to give to our students at a "kid mart." "What is a 'kid mart?'" you might ask. It is when we set up the donation building (the Campbell Building) as if it were a store; a store that accepts no money from customers, but rather willing hearts.

The students file in to shop for various items. The donations change from year to year, depending on what we have received. Some of the items we had this year were Avon cosmetics, perfume kits, hooded sweatshirts, hand-made blankets, knick-knacks and school supplies, just to name a few. Every item has a limit posted on it so children know exactly what they may have.

It takes 12 to 15 staff members to pull the whole thing off. Staff help keep items stocked on the tables. They also encourage students to take the items, as well as helping them learn how to be creative with them. For our students, the thought of getting something for nothing is a hard concept to get used to in this day and age.

As the children go through and shop, we not only encourage them to take the various items, but we also give them suggestions as to how to use or spruce up what they have gotten. For example, some of the perfume kits we gave out were for Mother's Day, according to the labeling on the boxes. But take the items out of the box, put them in a gift bag or basket and you have a gift not only for your mom but for any lady in your life, any time of the year.

Many of our children would not have the means or the time when they arrived home for the holidays to do any shopping. So to see the excitement on a young man's face when he gets something for his sister or mother is exhilarating.

When I talk to the staff before the "kid mart" begins, I tell them to get ready to bless the children and also to be blessed by the children. What an awesome opportunity it is to be able to share what Christmas is all about. What a joy it is to physically experience something great for nothing in return. This parallels God's love for us, and also the salvation He has to offer for us, free with no strings attached.

Thank you, Jesus, for Christmas. And thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your support that makes our "kid marts" possible.



W.F. Underwood

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

## Love and grace

**1989 grad finds meaningful ministry in West Virginia**

This season of giving has more meaning for West Virginia pastor Jody Pistore, a 1989 alumnus. While in seminary, his wife left him and their young daughters, ages 2 and 4. "We never heard from her again," Jody said. Future ministry seemed doubtful.

In 1994 he received a master of divinity from Southeastern Seminary, but seminary leaders told him they would not recommend him to a church. "I headed back home. People told me I would never be in ministry again." His father, a bivocational Baptist pastor, provided a job in the family grocery store.

Jody worked with several other men as a chaplain in the Union 76 Truck Stop at Teays Valley, W. Va., seeing 110 people saved in one year. "The experience offered some hope that ministry might still be possible," Jody stated. He joined the West Virginia National Guard and was a chaplain to the Special Forces Group of Green Berets. He served in Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 1092nd Combat Engineers and baptized 16 men one day in front of a large mosque. A stroke and three months in a

German hospital eventually led to a medical discharge.

Jody served seven years as pastor of Tyler Mountain Baptist Church in Cross Lanes, W. Va. Eight years ago, he married his oldest daughter's Sunday school teacher. In September he became pastor of First Baptist Church of South Charleston, W. Va. The church had 650 attending in the 1950s, but last year averaged 66.

The downtown American Baptist congregation has room to grow and "Pastor Jody," as the members call him, already has seen the average attendance reach 100. Member Bill Campbell said, "I like the way he brings out the Word." His message on the Lord's Supper was

well developed, delivered with spiritual passion, and a compliment to his Clear Creek teachers. American Baptists now face division over the homosexuality issue; Jody intends to be a voice for biblical teaching.

After visiting, I left the church with thanksgiving and sadness. Sad that Southern Baptists sometimes shoot their wounded and lose effective leaders; thankful God's love and grace overcomes.

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



Bill Whittaker

# Oh, Christmas truce

*School district agreement might serve as model for 'December dilemma'*

By Bobby Ross Jr.  
Religion News Service

Mustang, Okla. (RNS)—When the superintendent in this Bible Belt town yanked baby Jesus from a fifth-grade school play—but left in symbols of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, along with Santa Claus—a small army of parents erupted in protest.

Some even blamed the defeat of a \$12.9 million school bond election on voters irked by Superintendent Karl Springer's exclusion of the Nativity scene.

But in the months after last year's controversy, school officials, religious leaders and parents came together to develop a religious liberties policy that has helped mend, if not heal completely, the strained relations.

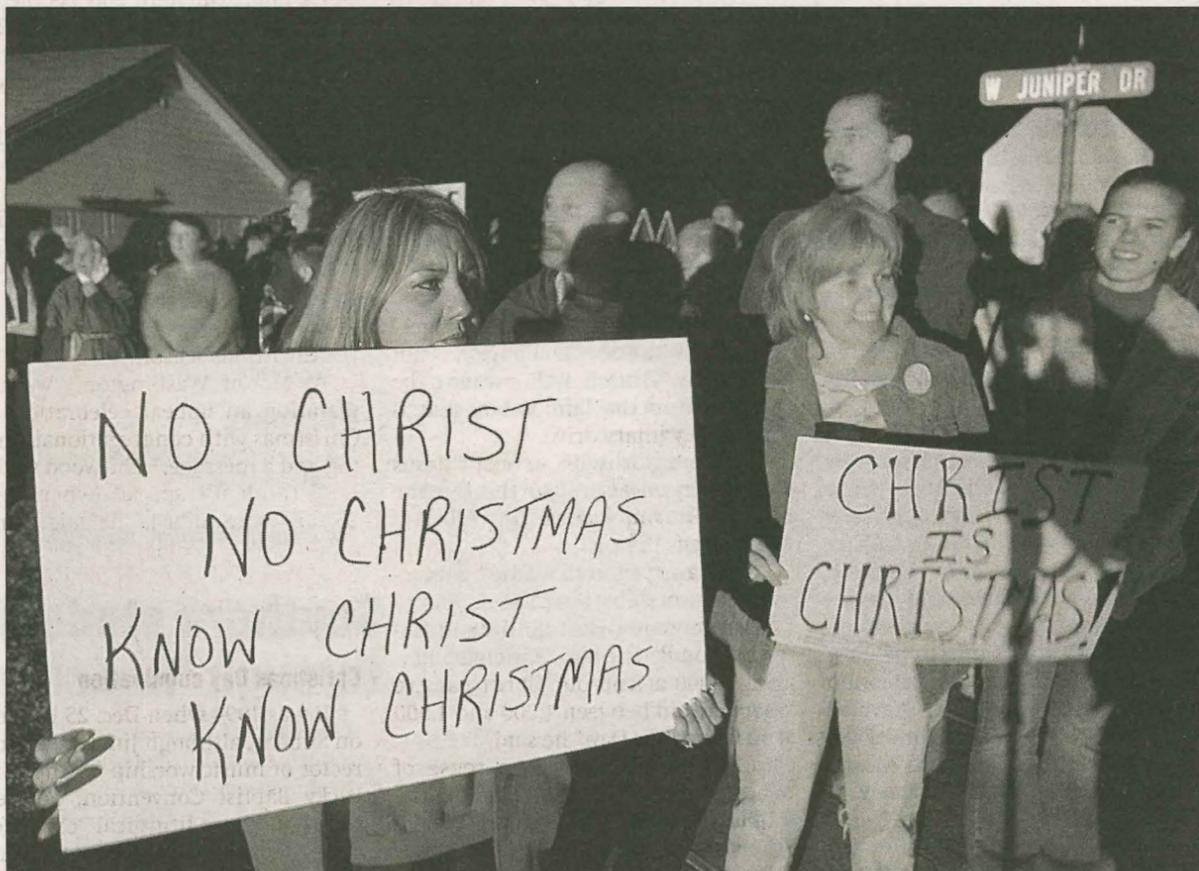
"I can pretty much guarantee that Mustang is not going to have a fight this year," said Charles Haynes, co-author of "Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools" and a senior scholar at the Freedom Forum's First Amendment Center in Arlington, Va.

As school districts nationwide grapple with the "December Dilemma" of how to mark the holidays, Haynes suggests that this Oklahoma City suburb's experience offers a case study in what can go wrong—and right.

## Annual battle

From coast to coast, battles over Christmas carols in school concerts, religious-themed holiday cards at class parties and Christmas trees in school hallways seem to rage every year, pitting groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State against Christian activists such as the Alliance Defense Fund and the Liberty Counsel.

Just last year, lawsuits were filed



**PROTEST** Debra Miller, left, and Judy Smith hold posters last year to protest the elimination of a Nativity scene from Lakehoma Elementary School in Mustang. (RNS/The Oklahoman photos by Bill Waugh, © 2004)

in Plano, Texas, over a school's refusal to let a fourth-grader hand out candy canes to classmates, and in Maplewood, N.J., over a district's policy of allowing secular songs, such as "Jingle Bell Rock," but not hymns, such as "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."

In Hampton, N.H., a seventh-grader dressed as Santa Claus was asked to leave a holiday dance last year by a principal citing a desire to be sensitive to other religious beliefs.

In Mustang, the manger scene in the Lakehoma Elementary fifth-grade play had been a tradition for years.

That is, until the superintendent axed it on the advice of the district's legal counsel, who voiced concerns about violating the separation of church and state.

But the district allowed a Christmas tree and Santa Claus to remain

in the production, as well as symbols of the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah and the African-American harvest celebration of Kwanzaa.

Outraged, Kim Selvey and a dozen other parents hired an attorney to take their concerns to the school board.

The night of the program, protesters organized a live Nativity scene across the street from the school auditorium. Organizers carried signs such as, "No Christ. No Christmas. Know Christ. Know Christmas."

"There were other quote 'religions' in the play. There were witches in the play," said Selvey, a mother of two who attends an Assemblies of God church. "I felt pretty strongly about the fact that they chose the Christian religion to exclude."

What started as a small dispute "got huge really, really quickly," said Dave Bryan, pastor of Chisholm Heights Baptist Church, one of more than 30 churches in this part-urban, part-rural bedroom community of 14,000.

"Looking back on it, I think it's because as a Christian, it seems like so many things in the United States are changing. So many things are being taken away," Bryan said. "So when this happened, it was so easy for it to become explosive. It sort of hit us where we lived and breathed. Things like this weren't supposed to happen in Mustang."

The furor was all-too-familiar to Haynes, who was called to help mediate.

## Start developing policies early

All too often, Haynes said, schools wait until December to decide their approach to religious issues when they should be developing clear policies in January.

At one extreme, many school Christmas assemblies seem "more

like the local church than the local school," he said. At the other extreme, districts strip any reference to the religious aspect of Christmas, in effect making the school hostile toward it.

"The reason people fight over these symbols is because they think that's all there is," Haynes said. "In other words, if we lose our tree in the lobby or if we can't have our Nativity pageant, that's the last vestige of our religion in the schools."

But there's a way to recognize the importance and history of religion in American society in a way that's educational, not devotional, he said.

That could mean, for example, a holiday program noting that Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas. A Nativity scene with a candlelight ceremony would be too much, he said.

In Mustang, Bryan served as co-chairman of a 30-member task force formed early this year to develop a religious liberties policy for the school district. Members included Christian and Jewish religious leaders, teachers, school administrators and parents.

The policy approved by the school board in May states: "Public schools may neither instill nor inhibit religion." It went on to say "Mustang Public Schools uphold the First Amendment by protecting the religious liberty rights of students of all faiths or no faith."

Springer, the school superintendent, said "great progress" has been made.

This year's Lakehoma Elementary program will feature a brief Nativity scene, he said.

But it also will include this clear attribution: "Some Christians believe."

"It's a small change that makes a big difference," Springer said.

*The manger scene in the Lakehoma Elementary fifth-grade play had been a tradition for years until the superintendent axed it on the advice of the district's legal counsel.*



**NATIVITY SCENE** Scott Gibson plays a wise man for a live Nativity scene in Mustang, Okla., last year, across the street from Lakehoma Elementary School, where on the advice of an attorney the traditional Nativity scene was banned. The alternative Nativity scene was held in protest across the street from the school auditorium. This year a new policy brought the scene back and lowered conflict in the community.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist missionaries and ministries.

**Missionary Garnett Jones of Georgetown.** Jones ministers to internationals in Scott County by teaching English as a Second Language classes and coordinating other activities that benefit those who are new to the United States. She also is assisting with the start of a Hispanic congregation. Jones shares the witness of Christ while helping internationals with daily needs most people take for granted (such as grocery shopping, getting a drivers license, learning English, finding a job or an apartment, taking children to school). Pray that God will provide good health and strength as she ministers in His name. Pray also that internationals will come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, not simply as a foreign god Americans serve.

**Missionary Marie Wing of Berea.** Wing serves as director of a food warehouse and distribution center. She coordinates shipments of food and resources to local ministry centers throughout eastern Kentucky. Pray that God will meet the tremendous need for a regular source of food. Pray also that He will provide additional volunteers to assist with loading and unloading trucks.

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

■ **BROOKSVILLE**—Brooksville Church recently called **Daryl Jessi** as pastor. **Calvin Perry** served six months as interim pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host a Christmas candlelight Communion service Dec. 21, 7 p.m.

■ **FORT MITCHELL**—Fort Mitchell Church ordained **Tom Madison** as a deacon Dec. 4. The church also recently called **Matt Holleran** as minister of students.

■ **GREENSBURG**—New Salem Church ordained **James Bonta**, **Mark Bonta** and **Ronald Bonta** as deacons Nov. 13.

■ **HENDERSON**—Zion Church recently coordinated a community-wide "Christmas After Katrina" toy drive. Members of Zion and other churches in the area donated more than 3,500 toys and games for distribution in cooperation with Celebration Church in New Orleans. A 16-member mission team from Zion Church traveled to New Orleans this week to deliver the toys and help with other mission needs. **Mark Galloway** is senior pastor of Zion Church.

■ **LANGLEY**—Maytown First Church recently ordained **Hearl Dudley** as a deacon.

■ **LXINGTON**—Boone's Creek Church recently ordained **Ron Thomas** as a deacon.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthews

Church's sanctuary choir will present "Agnus Dei: Lamb of God Born to Us," Dec. 18, 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (502) 896-8882.

■ **LOVELY**—Mount Beulah Church recently called **Paul Grainger** as pastor. He succeeds **Nimrod Molleet**.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—Brindle Ridge Church will present a Christmas play, "Angel on a Step Ladder," Dec. 18, 7 p.m. **Ron Roberts** is pastor.

Conway Church will present a live nativity scene Dec. 16-17, 6 p.m. **Jim Ritchey** is pastor.

Freedom Church's adult choir will present "A Carol to the King" Sunday morning, Dec. 18. **Albert McKinney** is pastor.

Maretburg Church's adult choir will present "His Very Own Star" Sunday morning, Dec. 18. The youth will present a play, "Celebrating Our Savior's Birth" that evening. **Wayne Harding** is pastor.

■ **VANCEBURG**—Southern Manor Church will host a Christmas concert Dec. 21, 7 p.m., featuring **Nathan Kamer**, the **Southern Manor Singers** and others. For more information, call (606) 796-0175. **Al Owens** is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church recently honored **Caroline Ransdell** on her 95th birthday. **Steve Rice** is pastor.

## KBC-related groups elect officers

**Frankfort**—Several Kentucky Baptist-related organizations held meetings in conjunction with last month's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in Frankfort. Major business items included:

**Kentucky Baptist Director of Missions Fellowship.** Officers elected for the coming year are Bob Morrison, president, director of missions for Little Bethel Baptist Association; Malcolm Cheek, president-elect, DOM for Pulaski Baptist Association; Hamp Valentine, secretary/treasurer, DOM for Tates Creek Baptist Association; and Rick Robbins, newsletter editor, DOM for Northern Kentucky Baptist Association.

Robbins also was honored as Director of Missions of the Year for his

leadership and service in missions and evangelism in his association.

**Kentucky Baptist Music Conference.** Officers for the coming year include Tim Galyon, president, minister of music at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; and Steve Hall, secretary/treasurer, minister of music at High Street Baptist Church in Somerset.

**Kentucky Baptist Religious Education Association.** New officers are Belinda Berry, president, minister of education and family at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown; Don Blackmore, vice president, ministries pastor at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green; and Bill Ellis, secretary/treasurer, minister of education/discipleship at Crestwood Baptist Church.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January

- 12-14 Shepherding the Shepherd, Radisson Hotel, Lexington.
- 19 Pastor/Staff Forum, Southside Baptist Church, Princeton.
- 24 Pastor/Staff Forum, Victory Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 27-28 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Lakeside Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 27-28 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Severns Valley Association Office, Elizabethtown.

### February

- 3-4 Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Bowling Green.

- 20 Retirement Choices Workshop, First Baptist Church, Princeton.
- 21 Retirement Choices Workshop, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 22 Retirement Choices Workshop, First Baptist Church, London.
- 23 Retirement Choices Workshop, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 25 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions and State Youth Choir Festival—East, Central Baptist Church, Winchester.
- 25 Hispanic Evangelism Conference & Hispanic Women's Meeting, Horse Cave Baptist Church.
- 27-28 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

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

## Southern students serve Louisville through 'Reaching Out' initiative

**Louisville (BP)**—A total of 100 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary students teamed with six local churches and the Baptist Campus Ministry international group at the University of Louisville to share the gospel during a recent "Reaching Out" initiative.

Tom Bohnert, assistant to the director of Southern's Great Commission Center, said four people made professions of faith in Christ during the evangelistic event and another 40 showed interest in local churches.

"Cold turkey evangelism is difficult, and our students stepped up to the plate and did it," Bohnert said.

"The students on our team were polite but firm in asking people about their spiritual condition," he added. "When they had opportunities they engaged people with questions, and that was exciting to see. If students will engage in this type of ministry on a regular basis, then evangelism will become a lifestyle and not just a program—and that is our goal."

Students and members of five of the churches witnessed door-to-door and did survey work, also distributing the "Jesus" film and church literature.

Mark McClellan, professor of theology and missions at Boyce College

and pastor of Jesus Is Lord Hispanic Baptist mission, said the students were a great help to the church plant's outreach efforts.

"The students witnessed door-to-door and in the streets of a Hispanic neighborhood and distributed tracts and flyers in apartment complexes and places of business," McClellan said. "They exhibited a wonderful evangelistic spirit."

Crossroads to the Nations Baptist Church combined with the BCM international group from the University of Louisville to host a soccer tournament and a lunch fellowship.

In addition to providing ministry to the community, Bohnert cited two main benefits of the Reaching Out initiative.

"First, it provides our students with a practical, hands-on evangelistic opportunity," he said. "Reaching Out allows students to get out and put to practice the skills that they have learned here at the seminary. The secondary benefit is that it is a blessing to the local churches."

Bohnert said each participating church determines what the students will do. "I want us to go and provide physical resources for what the church needs at that time," he noted, "and I leave what we are going to do in their hands."

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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

**FOR SALE:** Christian and patriotic neckties; retail value: \$12-\$15; your cost: \$6; great fundraiser; postage paid. Humor book: "500 Laughter Doeth Good Like a Medicine" \$8. Men's suits: \$58.75 (must purchase necktie to qualify for suit). (606) 285-3051.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational pastor for Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, a rural Southern Baptist church in Russell County. Mail resumé to the church at 4555 S Highway 619, Jamestown, KY 42629-6709.

**SEEKING:** Associate pastor/worship leader. Theologically conservative Southern Baptist church seeks man to lead blended worship. Must exude love for Jesus and have a servant's heart. Reply to: FBC, 106 West Oak St., West Frankfort, IL 62896. (618) 932-2105. Fax: (618) 932-2106. [rkarrroll@verizon.net](mailto:rkarrroll@verizon.net).

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister to students (25 hours weekly). Submit resumé to: Personnel Committee, Lakewood Baptist Church, 13803 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40245.

**SEEKING:** Church secretary (20-plus hours per week). Call or submit resumé to Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40214; or call (502) 638-2521.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of education/youth for First Baptist Church of Walton. Resumés may be mailed to 47 South Main St., Walton, KY 41094; or e-mail to [pastorfbcw@fuse.net](mailto:pastorfbcw@fuse.net).

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister for Flint Baptist Church in Murray, Ky. For more information, contact Rev. DeWayne Chadwick at [donaldchadwick@bellsouth.net](mailto:donaldchadwick@bellsouth.net); or by phone: (270) 753-7978.

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

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister. We need a mature, evangelistic, creative youth minister to grow a devoted youth ministry. Discipleship commitment is preferred. Some youth ministry experience is required. Please send resumés to: Personnel Committee, Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40214.

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

## Christmas music you hear often depends on location

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—It's that time of year again, when "Silent Night" or "Jingle Bells" greets you as you turn on the radio, walk into a shopping mall or head down a city street.

What you hear—whether traditional and religious or secular and contemporary—depends on where you are and on careful planning by the programmers, retailers and musicians who bring it to your ears.

There's even an organization that studies these musical matters.

Last year, Media Monitors began tracking the songs played by the 50 all-Christmas stations in the top 50 markets between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

And though no religious tunes were part of its top 10 list of songs played on the mostly secular stations, a spokesman estimates that as much as 25 percent of the radio stations' Christmas library "may be religious in nature."

He noted, however, that this could mean 10 different versions of "Away in a Manger."

According to Media Monitors, the religious song heard most on the stations was "Do You Hear What I Hear?" performed by Whitney Houston, said Tom Zarecki, spokesman for the broadcast monitoring service based in White Plains, N.Y. It was followed by Josh Groban's rendition of "O Holy Night" and Bob Seger's version of "Little Drummer Boy."

While largely secular radio stations aren't likely to play back-to-back religious songs, he said, there's likely to be one or two an hour.

"All programmers want to do is reach as many people as possible," Zarecki said. "I bet there's no pro-



**HOLIDAY MUSIC** The Salvation Army Greater New York Brass Band performs at the 2003 Greater New York Kettle Kickoff in front of Macy's in Manhattan. The Salvation Army's brass ensembles play from a standardized collection of Christmas carols that includes religious and secular songs. (RNS/Salvation Army photo)

grammer that would ever want to be accused of removing all religious songs from a holiday format, because somebody would notice that ... and that would be just an example of bad programming."

### More retailers seek religious songs

Dana McKelvey, an "audio architect" with the Muzak music delivery company, said more mainstream retailers and restaurants are asking for holiday songs with religious references.

"Past years, they were very conscious of the uses of 'Jesus,' 'Jesus Christ,' 'O Holy Night,' anything that was directly related to religion," said McKelvey, whose company is based in Fort Mill, S.C. "And this year, they're becoming more open to allowing that to play in mainstream stores."

Religious retailers are even more particular, she notes: "They don't want just instrumental Christmas songs. They want songs performed by Christian artists."

While a Baptist bookstore might play more religious music, it's understandable that large stores frequented by people of many faiths will play fewer sacred tunes for their customers, said Daniel Butler of the Washington-based National Retail Federation.

"You want them all to enjoy being in the store, but you don't want anybody feeling alienated," said Butler, the federation's vice president of merchandising and retail operations. "So you tend to go with music choices ... that will have a broader appeal with the customer base."

Richard Holz, music director

### Top of the charts

Media Monitors, the broadcast monitoring service, has ranked the most popular Christmas songs broadcast last year, both overall and those exclusively religious.

#### Most-played overall Christmas Songs:

1. "The Christmas Song," Nat King Cole.
2. "Holly Jolly Christmas," Burl Ives.
3. "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," Brenda Lee.
4. "White Christmas," Bing Crosby.
5. "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year," Andy Williams.
6. "Jingle Bell Rock," Bobby Helms.
7. "Merry Christmas Darling," The Carpenters.
8. "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas," Johnny Mathis.
9. "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer," Gene Autry.
10. "Happy Xmas," John Lennon & Yoko Ono.

#### Most-played Christian Christmas Songs:

1. "Do You Hear What I Hear?" Whitney Houston.
2. "O Holy Night," Josh Groban.
3. "Little Drummer Boy," Bob Seger.
4. "The First Noel," Karla Bonoff.
5. "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," Garth Brooks.
6. "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!" Mannheim Steamroller.
7. "Joy to the World," Mannheim Steamroller.
8. "O Come All Ye Faithful," Nat King Cole.
9. "Angels We Have Heard on High," The Commodores.
10. "Away in a Manger," Nat King Cole.

for the Salvation Army's Southern Territory, said about 5,000 brass ensembles play from a standardized collection of Christmas carols, performing at kettles and other locations between Thanksgiving and Christmas. In the last decade, when the "The Salvation Army Carolers Favorites" was updated, it included more secular songs.

"People enjoy hearing 'Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer' or 'Santa Claus Is Coming to Town,'" said Holz, who plays tuba outside an Atlanta-area Sam's Club as well as at nursing homes. "You have these standards that you play that you mix in with the sacred carols."

## Steven Curtis Chapman's Christmas tour supporting adoption foundation

By Doug Pullen  
Religion News Service

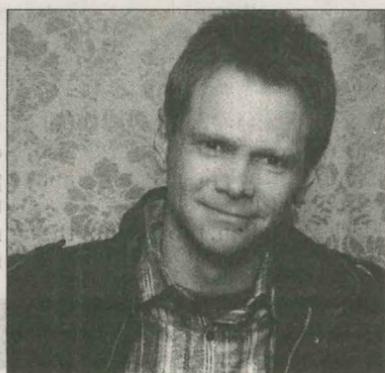
Flint, Mich. (RNS)—Some Christian musicians don't practice what they preach. Steven Curtis Chapman does.

One of the most successful artists of his genre has become a leading spokesman for adoption. With his new Christmas album and 21-city tour with MercyMe, he's using his celebrity to further the cause.

The CD, "All I Really Want for Christmas," and the tour, which will stop off in Lexington Sunday, will raise money for Shaohannah's Hope, the nonprofit adoption support group he started with wife Mary Beth.

It's named for his 6-year-old daughter, one of three Chinese children the Chapmans have adopted over the last five years.

"I kind of feel like everything we do now moves in that direction," Chapman, a five-time Grammy winner, said by phone recently. "We're at an amazing, wonderful place in life where we can say, man, we're blessed beyond whatever we imagined or hoped for—the success we've had, the career, the album sales and all that. Now we're just trying to ... be good stewards of everything God blesses us with."



The Chapmans have three other children—Emily, 19; Caleb, 15; and Will, 14.

Emily first suggested they adopt a Chinese infant nearly six years ago. It changed their lives forever and influenced others in the Christian music community—including Chapman's buddy, Geoff Moore—to follow suit.

While he admits that raising a second family in his 40s can be trying—Shaohanna is 6, Stevey Joy is 3 and Maria Sue is 2—the rewards are far greater than the tribulations, he said.

"We live the reality of three children that weren't biologically ours. We made the choice to bring them into our family. It's anything but easy," he said. "It's messy, tir-

ing. I'm 42. I'm still carrying babies down from bed who want to be carried, 2-year-olds whose legs don't work well for 'em yet."

The other "A" word—abortion—never comes up in the conversation. The Chapmans see adoption as a way to provide homes for the millions of orphans in the world, whose numbers climb with every natural disaster.

"A lot of the focus publicly now, particularly with this album and tour, is to continue to tell the story of adoption, to really give a voice to the orphans. There are more than 50 million of them in the world who, for the most part, never get to tell their story," he said. "I've got this incredible platform where I can tell their story and keep bringing them, so to speak, in front of people to remind them they're there."

Chapman set up Shaohannah's Hope to help families that want to adopt. More than 500 have been helped so far.

"We get about 100 (applications) a month from people asking for help, who want to adopt, have done the paperwork, have been approved, but at this point in the deal they're looking at anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000 in financial need," he said.

That's where the foundation can come in.

"There's no way we can (help fund everybody), but we can say we can potentially help you in this way, or we can also direct them to places where they can get help, or did you know you can qualify for a \$10,000 tax credit?" Chapman added.

### Fun with MercyMe

The tour with MercyMe, with whom he shared stage time, is a chance to do something fun and different.

"The thing I love about this tour is I get to do songs I never play," Chapman said, including some from "All I Really Want for Christmas," which features appearances by daughter Shaohannah; a new song about adoption; and some standards from a 2003 Christmas album he recorded for Hallmark.

MercyMe guitarist Barry Graul said the rock band, which nearly has completed a new album for next year, meshes well with Chapman's pop-rock style.

"When you think about it, putting our styles of music together makes sense," said Graul, whose band released its first Christmas album, "The Christmas Sessions," this year.

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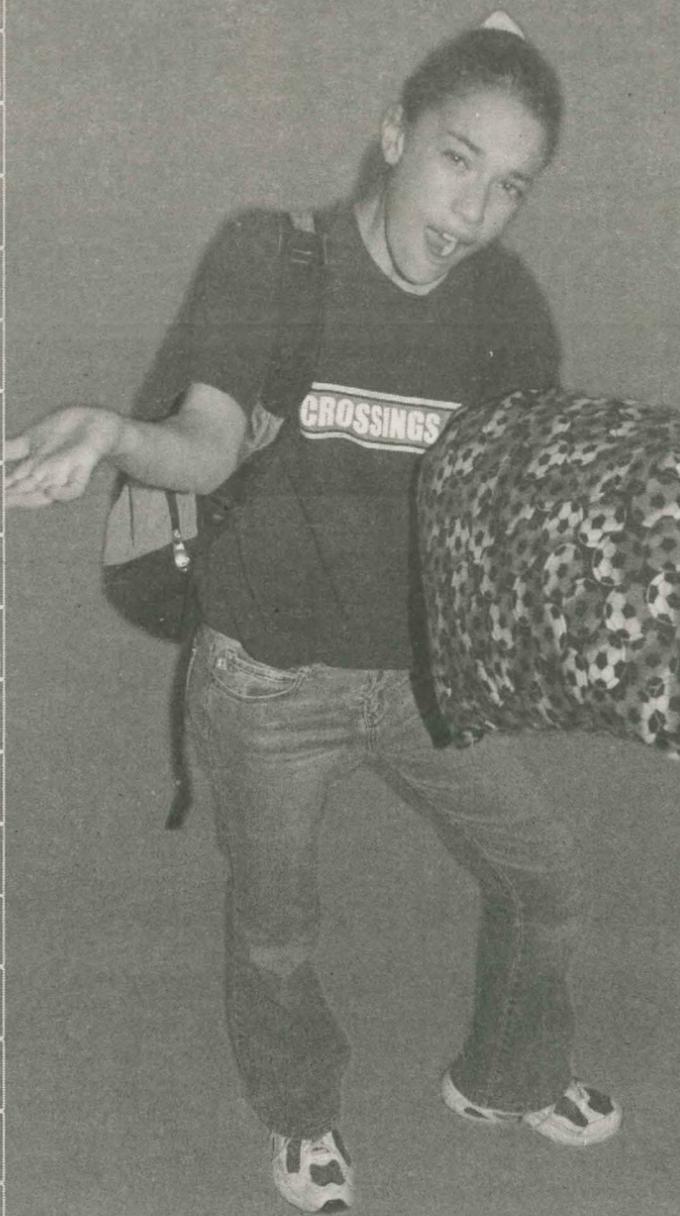
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