



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## FOR THE RECORD

**Baptists**  
State conventions' top issues of 2005: Relief efforts and colleges. Page 2.



**Kentucky**  
Organizers hope the Hispanic Bible Baptist Institute will help develop needed leaders for Kentucky's fastest-growing ethnic group. Page 3.

**Editorial**  
Everybody has a valuable story to share. Page 5.

**Evangelism**  
Pro kicker aims to lead others to Christ. Page 6.

**Mercer County**  
Federal court rules this Ten Commandments display is OK. Page 8.

**Missions**  
One year later, ministry needs remain for tsunami victims. Page 9.

## Long-distance missions



**STORY TIME** Using a chronological Bible storying cloth, Southern Baptist missionary Tammy Cortimilla teaches Sierra Leonean home missionaries how to evangelize the Banta Themne people group. Guided by missionary Lori Funderburk, a team of women in America adopted the people group, providing research assistance and prayer support. (IMB photo)

### 'Virtual' team researched, prayed for people group

By Sue Sprengle  
SBC International Mission Board

Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire—The sound of a computer booting up echoes throughout the house.

Lori Funderburk hardly notices the familiar noise as she settles in to work.

Funderburk, a Southern Baptist missionary, lives in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, but works with the Banta Themne people group of Sierra Leone. She is the strategy coordinator for a unique team—a "virtual missions" team—whose members live around the world.

The computer and Internet make this type of team a reality as Funderburk uses e-mail to keep in touch. Today's message to team members is a little different than usual. The ministry is coming to a close.

So, Funderburk writes, "We have certainly had a purpose over these last six years, haven't we?"

Funderburk recruited American housewives to be members of this virtual missions team. All five women once were members of the same church in New Orleans. Funderburk wrote letters asking them to join God in bringing the

Banta Themne of Sierra Leone to faith in Jesus Christ.

The Banta Themne, who live in northern Sierra Leone had no known Christians among them, she wrote.

The women already were familiar with Sierra Leone because Funderburk had been a missionary there. Her family was forced to leave when a 10-year civil war broke out.

As strategy coordinator, Funderburk explained this team was experimental. Missionaries cannot go to many places because of war and rebel activity, but Christians still have a responsibility to find a way □ See 'Virtual missions' team ... Page 6



**That all peoples may know Him**

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, January 4

## Family advocates pushing for 'a la carte' television choices

By Mike Brantley  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—Family advocacy groups say plans of cable television companies to offer family-friendly programming packages are flawed and designed to thwart consumers from getting what they really want: a la carte sales, in which subscribers pick and choose their channels.

The marketing model traditionally used by most cable companies and the two leading satellite TV services requires consumers to subscribe to channels in various pre-packaged "tiers."

For most consumers, it is impossible, for example, to subscribe to Nickelodeon without also subscrib-

ing to MTV or to get Discovery Channel without also getting FX.

That means to get Nickelodeon's "SpongeBob SquarePants" and his hijinks in Bikini Bottom, you also might have to take the bikinied bottoms running wild on MTV's "Spring Break."

"Right now, to get the good channels, you have to buy the raunchy channels," complained Jim Metrock, head of the child advocacy organization Obligation Inc.

Portions of the cable industry—under pressure from the federal government—have come forward with a new willingness to package family-friendly channels into a special programming tier to help parents keep at bay programming with sex,

violence and rough language.

Time Warner Cable, the nation's second-largest operator, announced in mid-December the specifics of its family tier package. On Dec. 23, Comcast Cable, the country's top cable company, announced its plan to offer such a package early in 2006.

A Comcast news release indicates that, on average nationally, Comcast customers can expect to pay \$31.20 monthly for the Family Tier.

Proponents of a la carte multi-channel pay TV programming—encompassing both cable and satellite TV—insist that talk of family tiers is merely an effort to derail their drive to force providers to sell programming by the individual channel. "They are throwing a bone out there

### Rumor has it: Web site disputes story about '12 Days of Christmas' song

For years we've urged you to check out suspicious stories before passing them along in e-mails or church newsletters.

Seems a reporter for one of our news services should have followed that advice.

As it turns out, those eight maids a-milking are just that, not some coded doctrine lesson for 16th century Catholics, as our front-page feature story claimed Dec. 20.

Alerted by reader John Carter from Prospect, we discovered that the story, from Religion News Service, is false.

Researchers for the Web site truthorfiction.com state they have not found "any Catholic or non-Catholic historical or scholarly reference that supports this allegation."

But they did find several sources linking "The Twelve Days of Christmas" to a French carol based on a game children would play on the Twelfth Night, the eve of Epiphany.

The Web site Snopes.com adds that the story might have developed from confusion between the "Twelve Days" and "a song called 'A New Dial,' which dates to at least 1625 and assigns religious meanings to each of the twelve days of Christmas (but not for the purposes of teaching a catechism)."

Both songs have 12 stanzas. Both songs also involve memory skills.

One stanza of the question-and-answer format song goes,

"What are they which are by two?"

Two testaments, the old and new,

We do acknowledge to be true."

□ See Family advocates ... Page 8

## State convention's top issues: relief efforts, colleges

**Nashville (BP)**—In addition to year-end surveys about top national and international news, Baptist Press compiled the top state convention news of 2005 submitted by more than 20 state Baptist paper editors across the nation. Major stories by state include:

### Alabama

■ Alabama Baptists' unity seen in record giving and cooperation in ministry.

■ Samford University President Tom Cortis retires; Andrew Westmoreland, president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, nominated as his successor.

### Arkansas

■ Arkansas Baptists overwhelmingly respond to human needs caused by hurricanes: 4,500 volunteers serve on disaster relief teams, preparing 1 million meals; 10 Arkansas Baptist camps open to house temporarily the displaced.

■ Kaye Miller, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, is elected national Woman's Missionary Union president.

■ Messengers to the Arkansas Baptist State Convention's annual meeting take first step in granting agency status to the Baptist Assembly at Siloam Springs.

### Florida

■ Florida Baptists respond generously to relief efforts in the wake of second consecutive active hurricane season.

■ Effort to amend state constitution to protect marriage struggles to gather enough petitions to be put on 2006 ballot.

■ Florida Baptist State Board of Missions approves new strategy to reach South Florida.

### Georgia

■ Georgia Baptists vote to sever ties with Mercer University; convention and school officials agree to terms for peacefully dissolving the relationship.

■ Georgia Baptist Convention sets ambitious goal of 50,000 baptisms for 2006.

■ Georgia Baptists welcome record 104 new churches in 2005.

### Illinois

■ Wendell Lang resigns as executive director to accept Tennessee pastorate. Executive team charged to

serve collectively as interim executive director.

■ North American Mission Board's Nate Adams nominated as new Illinois Baptist State Association executive director.

■ IBSA deploys record number of disaster relief volunteers.

### Iowa

■ Baptist Convention of Iowa celebrates 50 years of Southern Baptist ministry in Iowa, 10 years as a convention.

■ Jenifer Barrentine, the state executive's daughter, coordinates mission projects in Iowa despite debilitating Lou Gehrig's disease and confinement to wheelchair.

■ Iowa Baptists send record number of disaster relief volunteers.

### Kentucky

■ Georgetown College officials and Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers adopt new relationship, with Georgetown electing its own trustees beginning in 2006 and the KBC phasing out Georgetown's \$1.3 million annual Cooperative Program allocation over the next four years.

■ Kentucky Baptist disaster relief leaders train more than 2,800 volunteers in response to hurricane relief needs.

■ KBC launches first year of five-year "Kentucky Baptists Connect" initiative focusing on evangelism, church growth and leader training.

### Louisiana

■ Louisiana Baptists suffer hurricanes that cause immense damage to churches and families.

■ Trustees name Joe Aguillard eighth president of Louisiana College.

■ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools ends probation of Louisiana College; school remains fully accredited.

### Maryland/Delaware

■ NAMB invites Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware to partner in strategic cities initiative for Baltimore.

■ Maryland/Delaware Baptists move forward with "Embrace Baltimore" initiative to evangelize city for Christ.

■ States' Baptists respond over-

whelmingly to tsunami and hurricane relief efforts.

### Minnesota-Wisconsin

■ Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists embrace Katrina evacuees relocated to Minneapolis and Milwaukee.

■ Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists train record numbers of disaster volunteers, deploy to assist in ministries related to Asian tsunami and Gulf Coast hurricanes.

■ At MWBC annual Empower Conference, 21 youth accept God's call to serve as church planters, pastors or missionaries.

### Missouri

■ Legal battle continues between Missouri Baptist Convention and five former MBC agencies; assets of more than \$240 million at stake.

■ Stem cell battle heats up as proposed 2006 ballot initiative would amend state constitution to protect destruction of embryos for stem cell research.

■ Southern Baptist Matt Blunt inaugurated as Missouri's governor.

### New Mexico

■ New Mexico Baptist disaster relief volunteers multiply 10-fold over 2004 numbers.

■ Baptist Convention of New Mexico leader Claude Cone retires after 20 years.

■ Joseph Bunce nominated for BCNM executive director's post.

### North Carolina

■ Committee on nominations shows growing conservative influence, rejects candidates from churches with controversial ties.

■ Messengers defeat motion to reduce giving plan options, decide contributions to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship no longer count as Cooperative Program giving.

■ Executive director resigns; conservatives move to replace interim initially hired by Baptist State Convention of North Carolina board of directors.

### Northwest

■ Northwest Baptists elect Gustavo Suárez as executive director.

■ Northwest Baptist Convention disaster relief ministries operate on six fronts at height of natural disasters.

■ Northwest associations launch

aggressive church planting effort.

### Oklahoma

■ Oklahoma Baptists respond immediately, comprehensively to Katrina disaster.

■ Capital campaign for Falls Creek Conference Center tops \$20 million.

■ Baptist General Convention Oklahoma breaks ground for new tabernacle at Falls Creek.

### Pennsylvania/South Jersey

■ Intelligent Design debate waxes in Dover, Pa.; federal judge rules public school science classes may not be taught in Pennsylvania.

■ Baptist Convention Pennsylvania/South Jersey emphasizes evangelism during 35th annual meeting; local churches baptize Christians at convention.

■ At annual meeting, missiologists feature food prep by convention's ethnic churches and interactive games representing various ministries within the convention.

### Tennessee

■ Belmont University's move away from Tennessee Baptists raises controversy over ownership of campus.

■ Southern Baptists mourn death of Tennessee Baptist pastor and three-time SBC President Adrian Rogers.

■ Tennessee Baptist Convention celebrates 25th anniversary of its partnership missions.

### Texas

■ Southern Baptists of Texas Convention plays large role in Katrina disaster relief operations; coordinates feeding operations for hundreds of thousands of hurricane evacuees sent to Texas.

■ Hurricane Rita shifts disaster relief focus to East Texas.

■ Texas becomes 19th state to adopt a constitutional marriage amendment; measure passes overwhelmingly in off-election year.

### Virginia

■ Baptist General Association of Virginia disaster relief teams respond to Katrina and Rita disasters.

■ Virginia Baptists respond to international disasters: Pakistan earthquake and earthquake in India.

■ BGAV admitted as full member into Baptist World Alliance during Baptist World Congress in Birmingham, England.

2005  
Looking  
Backwards

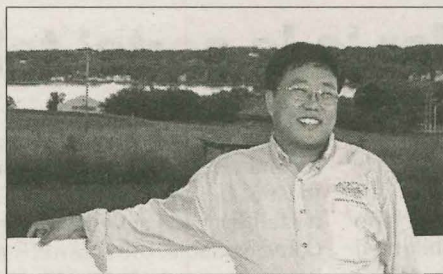
## IMB enlists church starter to mobilize Korean Baptist congregations

By Karen Willoughby  
Baptist Press

**Seattle (BP)**—Gihwang Shin, a church-starting missionary to the 177 language groups in metropolitan Seattle, has been called by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board—and funded in partnership with Korean Southern Baptist churches—to enlist Korean Southern Baptists to get involved in going, giving and praying for international missions.

During the five years Shin has been ethnic church-starting strategist in Puget Sound Baptist Association, at least 30 churches have been started in a variety of settings—including a Cantonese-speaking church that called a Korean to start a Mandarin-speaking church.

Shin's responsibilities recently have become more global in scope. The title of his new job at the IMB is mobilization strategist for Korean-American churches.



**MOBILIZER** Gihwang Shin, a church-starting missionary in Seattle, has been called by the International Mission Board to enlist Korean Southern Baptists to get involved in international missions. (BP photo)

"We're very excited to have an experienced church strategist assisting us with the mobilization of our Korean Southern Baptist churches," said Jerry Daniel, leader of the IMB church and partner services group. "We've been experiencing an

increased involvement of these churches in global missions over the last three years and have been looking for someone to nurture those relationships."

Korean churches across the Southern Baptist Convention have become increasingly strategic in their global focus, said David Gill, pastor of Concord Korean Baptist Church in Martinez, Calif. Where Koreans once focused primarily on the needs of Koreans in the United States and abroad, today they're reaching out globally to many people groups.

"We have 6.5 million Koreans in 172 countries," Gill noted. "It is God's providential will to spread so many Koreans in so many countries for world mission."

"This is a kind of giant step—for Korean Baptist churches to work with the IMB with the same goal and same vision," Shin said. "In the past, Korean churches had a focus on missions, and especially

overseas, but they didn't know how to do it in a cooperative way.

"In the past two years they have seen more power and more fruit with the IMB and Cooperative Program. Many laymen are ready to go out and serve—both in career and long-term (volunteer) missions."

IMB President Jerry Rankin cited growing interest on the part of Southern Baptist Korean churches to partner with the mission board.

SBC Korean churches "are catching the vision of cross-cultural witness to unreached people groups, and hundreds of their members are surrendering to missionary service," Rankin said. "Gihwang Shin has been a key influence in helping to nurture our relationship with these churches."

Shin, his wife, Hyesun Kim, and their three children moved in December to Richmond, Va., where the IMB is based.

## Hispanic school a ministry milestone, leaders say

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

Louisville—The Hispanic Bible Baptist Institute recently completed its first year, a feat that organizers call a major step forward in meeting the spiritual needs of Kentucky's fastest-growing ethnic group.

Twenty-two students received certificates for completing their first year of studies during a late November ceremony at Cooper Chapel Road Baptist Church in Louisville.

The institute's second year begins this week, with classes offered in Louisville, at Campbellsville University's extension center; and in Russell Springs, at First Baptist Church.

"At the beginning nobody believed this was possible," said instructor Carlos De la Barra, a missionary in central Kentucky. "Most of our pastors have no formal education, so we needed to do something.

"For some of these pastors now, they see, 'Oh, this is possible. We need to do it.' We hope (Hispanic) pastors who have no theological instruction will at least try it the second year."

"I think it's given our pastors a feeling they're prepared," added Grundy Janes, ethnic language missions consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Now they feel more like a pastor, and people see them as that. It gives more stability to the work."

Graduates of the first certificate courses completed nine subjects, including theology, Christian education, evangelism, preaching and pastoral development.

Sessions were held on Saturdays,



**CONGRATULATIONS** Twenty-two students completed their first year of studies from the Hispanic Bible Institute, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "At the beginning, nobody believed this was possible," teacher and missionary Carlos De la Barra said. (Photo by Larry Brannin)

for five hours each day. Each course included 20 hours of classroom instruction.

In addition to the certificate course in 2006, second-year studies leading to a diploma from the institute will be offered.

Eighteen of the 22 members of the first class have signed up for diploma studies. In addition, 32 first-year students are expected for this term.

Janes said these courses should help fill a void in many pulpits. Of the five Hispanic churches and 65 missions affiliated with the state convention, fewer than 30 have pastors.

"We have a tremendous need to train a lot of these new Christians

who have accepted Christ since they got here and feel the Lord calling them to be pastors," Janes said.

He noted that although many of these new bivocational pastors work as laborers and lack a high school education, the institute will help them prepare for the task.

### "Completely different way"

The institute also symbolizes a transition from migrant-oriented ministries to stable churches designed to serve long-term residents, De la Barra said.

"We are here to stay for the rest of our lives," De la Barra said. "We are not doing missions, we are doing church. It's a completely different way to see."

Despite this growth, none of these churches are larger than 100 members, and most are smaller, the missionary said.

Figures regarding membership, attendance and conversions are not available, although a statewide survey of Hispanic churches is under way, with results expected in February.

In addition to providing Bible training, De la Barra said the institute is significant for teaching current and prospective pastors about Kentucky Baptist life.

"We are trying to teach them to become Baptist pastors," said De la Barra, ticking off such traditions as associations, baptism and the Cooperative Program. "In this way, we are gaining the most. These guys will be working in a different way now; they are Baptist preachers."

For the veteran Kentucky missionary, the highlight of this past year was seeing the dedication of students, some who drove two hours each direction to attend classes.

"These people are working really hard, all day Saturday and several hours each day to prepare themselves," De la Barra said. "This was important for me to see, people willing to spend time in a way that not everyone is willing to do."

Noting that one first-year site, at the Pulaski Baptist Association in Somerset, has moved to Russell Springs, Janes said future sessions are likely to maintain this mobile flavor.

"We'll move classes around the state, in churches or association buildings," Janes said, "trying to meet needs as they exist."

## Alexandria congregation bucking some church traditions

By Karen Vance  
Cincinnati Enquirer

Alexandria—Main Street Baptist Church Pastor Robert Franklin won't tell you if his church is traditional.

That's because he doesn't believe that's the right reason to pick a church. He says the determining factor should be whether it is Bible-based.

"Any tradition that brings life to the participant is worth holding on to. If it doesn't, then it needs to go," he says.

"We look at everything we do and ask if it brings us life."

That's why this growing Southern Baptist church in Alexandria has done away with Sunday evening services, a staple of Baptist churches, but continues Sunday morning Bible classes.

Franklin's philosophy is apparent in worship services, with music written anywhere from one to 100 years ago and sermons loaded with Scripture delivered in sometimes unconventional ways.

For example, Franklin, the church's pastor for five years, has given his message:

Dressed in swimming trunks, a T-shirt and a straw hat (illustrating modesty in the summer).

Costumed as the Bible's Samson.

Dressed in overalls (illustrating the benefit of hard work).

"We're content driven, not style driven, so we do what we need to connect people to God," he says.

The sermons are meant to connect the Bible to everyday life.

"If you come on Sunday and there's no Monday morning impact, then you've wasted your time," says Franklin, 36.

While worship services at many churches with innovative atmospheres resemble PTO meetings with their abundance of young families, Main Street also has steadfast seniors.

"We have a lot of new people, and bringing them in is what it's all about," says Mary Lee Jolly, 74, of Alexandria, who along with her husband Jerry, 75, has been a member for 47 years.

Main Street ministers to all ages. It offers:

- Theme-decorated nursery and preschool rooms.

- Bible-centered school-age classes.

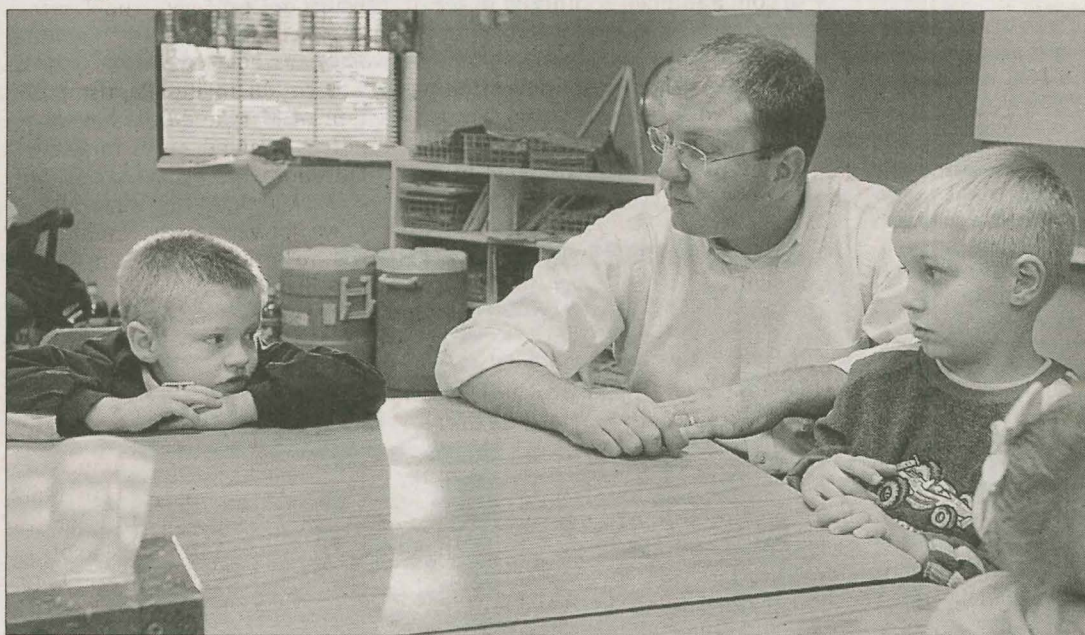
- A loft youth area open after school.

- Vintage, a ministry aimed at college-age singles and 20-somethings.

- Senior citizen activities.

"God created us to live in a family environment. If one piece of the family is missing, it's not complete, so we encourage all ages," Franklin says.

That encouragement has helped the congregation swell from 100 to 600 members in the last six years. A year ago, Main Street moved into a new \$4.5 million building.



Many of them know what it's like to be a visitor. Guests receive warm welcomes.

Jim Hales remembers his first experience five years ago.

"We had planned to visit a lot of churches to find the right one, but it took only one visit to Main Street to decide it was the one," he says. "I feel like I've died and gone to heaven."

Franklin stresses the increased numbers aren't used to grow the church but to do more in the community as a "sieve church"—one that takes in and redistributes resources where they're needed.

The church operates the CARE Ministry, providing food, clothing, emergency financial support and other services to 2,000 poor families, primarily in Northern Kentucky.

The church also operates the largest, non-school-sponsored sports leagues for adults and children in Campbell County.

"Ninety-five percent of everything we do is community-centered. We have this facility, and it would be a misuse of God's resources if it was only open on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights," he says.

"We don't do everything, but we do what God's asked us to do."

### ASKING QUESTIONS

Pastor Robert Franklin said Main Street Baptist Church in Alexandria examines "everything we do and ask if it brings us life." (Cincinnati Enquirer photo by Tony Jones)

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

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## Tsunami, one year later: Why are we helping?

By Philip Monroe

Richmond, Va. (BP)—The response of Southern Baptists in the face of the heartrending tsunami has been unprecedented. Never have so many churches, state conventions and missionaries joined forces to address a tragic situation that touched two continents and numerous countries simultaneously.

But the newness of the disaster has begun to wane. Media reports mention it less. Few governments continue to publicize their pledges. Many already have forgotten the multiple millions who survived the initial tragedy only to face a new one: survival in a different world.

As Southern Baptists, we should now ask ourselves, "Why are we helping?"

As I have worked throughout the various affected areas, I have heard from volunteers, numerous Southern Baptist churches and full-time personnel who ask, "Why are we helping?"

## Sharing Christ's compassion

First, I think that as Christians we share the characteristic of compassion. A survey of the New Testament shows many people came to

Jesus because He was able to meet a physical need they had. Most who came to Him did not come to hear His message. However, He used the opportunity to minister to the physical need and often told about Himself at the same time.

So how does the ministry of Jesus inform our work today and answer the question, "Why are we helping?"

We are helping because we share His compassion and because we want to tell others about Him. Colossians 3:12 says, "Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." We are to be clothed with compassion.

Next, I see in the Scriptures a very clear command to prove the soundness of our faith. In James 2:15-18, James exhorts believers to show their faith is not dead faith, because dead faith is not saving faith. James specifically mentions a situation where a person is in need of food and clothing and is given the spiritual advice to be warm and filled. However, the advisor does nothing to meet that need.

As followers of Jesus, this is an opportunity for us to demonstrate

## Love God &amp; neighbor

According to James Draper's article in the Dec. 20 issue of the Western Recorder, a believer has "two purposes in this life: to worship God and to make His name known among the nations."

A better source for making this determination, however, is Christ, Who pointed out the two purposes in life in the serious form of commandments as found in Matthew 22:37-39, namely, love God and love neighbor as self. In Christ's directive, nothing is said about worship or witness.

In His discussion of worship (John 4:24), Christ simply said it

must be done in spirit and truth—that is as an exercise of the mind and in Jesus Christ, Who defined Himself as Truth. This rules out a lot of the hullabaloo that passes as

"worship" in many church services, since not even a building is needed to exercise worship, much less a lot of histrionics or even a sermon. Worshipping in Truth—Christ—merely points to the believer's acceptance of Christ as the only channel to God.

Christ addressed the so-called worshipers of God in His day as whitewashed tombs (Matthew 23:27), but in the last third of Matthew 25 He indicated what mattered, namely, a life of service—loving

our faith is not dead. It is a chance to skip "God talk," put feet to our faith and prove to the lost world that we are helping because Jesus is real—and we are, too.

## Bringing all nations to faith

Finally, I find that God has given His people an interpretation of this event that extends past the tragedy itself. Some have felt that this tragedy was judgment from God upon the lost.

Others have felt the tsunami may have been a wake-up call and judgment upon the church for ignoring such a large portion of the lost world, many who have never seen a Christian or heard about Christ.

But it seems that most people have seen this as a part of God's plan to involve the church in a relevant way where He is working. We are helping because we are a part of His plan to bring all nations to Himself.

Why are we helping tsunami survivors?

Southern Baptists are on mission with God to exhibit His compassion, to convey the life of our faith and to join God in bringing all nations to saving faith in Him.

*Philip Monroe (not his real name) is a Southern Baptist disaster relief specialist serving in Asia. Name changed for security reasons.*

the neighbor as self. Making God's name known among the nations seemed to Christ to be a result of loving, not a programmed methodology mapped out in some office as a one-size-fits-all business.

In loving God, the believer will fashion his life according to the desires and commands of God, therefore making God the object of worship, without even trying. In loving neighbor, the believer will fashion his life according to the example of Christ, therefore living the gospel and showing God to the world, without even trying. It's all about loving God and neighbor, not worship and witness, which happen automatically.

*Jim Clark  
Lexington*

## 2006: A year of opportunity

The new year provides an incredible opportunity for Kentucky Baptists to focus on connecting all people to Jesus Christ, continue the emphasis on prayer for revival and build on the Christian spirit as the way to conduct ministry and business.

One of the carryover principles from 2005 is the truth that the Christian spirit is the best way to conduct ministry and business. Open dialogue based on the truth and what is best for the Kingdom of God prevailed in the process of developing and adopting a transition in the relationship between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Georgetown College. It seems obvious to me that this approach should prevail in all relationships where there is the potential for serious conflict.

It is my dream that this kind of open dialogue can exist among leaders in the local church so that strengths and talents are recognized

as gifts to the church and weaknesses are managed by the complementary strengths and talents of others. No one person or even a few individuals have all the strengths and talents that are needed in a local body of believers.

This new year is an opportunity to build on the strengths and talents God has provided at this time for the mission of the church. Every member should work to fulfill that mission in his or her local church and beyond.

Every church has a wonderful opportunity to become involved in connecting all people to Jesus Christ. With the emphasis by Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch on "Everyone Can" and the KBC's "Our Best for God's Best" baptism emphasis, there is an unprecedented opportunity to focus on connecting people to Jesus Christ and to the local church.

Through plans suggested by

the KBC Assimilation Work Group, churches can focus on developing new believers in spiritual growth and ministry. New members need to know what is expected, experience growth and encouragement in a small group, develop relationships, discover their gifts and become involved in ministry. I pray that every church will discover renewed passion and develop new ways to connect the unreached in their communities to Jesus Christ.

It was inspiring to hear that Valley View Baptist Church conducted two services on Christmas Day including baptism for 25 new believers. Those individuals will never forget the occasion of their baptism. What a great time to celebrate birth into the Kingdom of God!

The new year provides an opportunity for Kentucky Baptists to continue to seek the Lord for personal and church revival and continued obedience to the Great Commission. May God bless you and me to seek Him and His Kingdom with growing passion and commitment.

*Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*

## STEWARDSHIP

## Investing funds in financial market isn't competition

By Don Spencer

Whether contributing to a retirement plan or another investment plan designed to meet other financial goals in life, one concern many people have is the fear of losing money they already have accumulated. Too many investors, seeking to protect what they've got, fail to understand how the market really works.

The media and financial services industry bombard us with information that causes us to see the market as made up of winners and losers with the winners constantly taking from the losers. News reports highlight these winners and losers followed by extensive analysis about future winners and losers.

We're told we should move money to the "sidelines" or we should "get back in the game." Thus, we often feel like we are in a competition where there will be a winner who comes out on top and a loser who walks away with nothing.

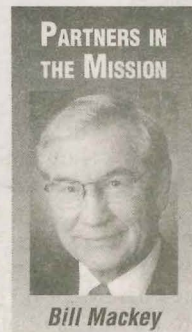
This message causes many investors to feel they must work hard to avoid becoming one of the losers. It's no surprise that some people then see stocks as a speculative investment that could lead to ruin, thus avoiding them all together. Instead, they put their money in safer "investments" and often leave a lot of money on the table.

Investing is not a competition. To be successful and reach your financial goals does not mean winning at the expense of someone else. You will not lose a penny just because your neighbor earned a positive return on his or her investments.

In a short time period, fear and greed can cause the market to be extremely volatile, creating a roller coaster ride of gains and losses for investors. The long-term investor knows that capitalism would not work (and we know that it does) if there wasn't a positive return on one's investments.

Achieving success in investing does not have to be difficult. It is there for the taking. It is human behavior that is the true challenge for anyone investing in stocks, whether for retirement or otherwise. When you invest in stocks, always remember it is a long-term investment (at least five years or more). Avoid making short-term decisions based on long-term investments.

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



## Self-acceptance makes bigger impact than failed resolutions

**Q: I keep trying to achieve the same New Year's resolution year after year and nothing ever changes. Do I need to simply assert more will power?**

It is possible that you are trying to change the way God has "wired" you and the way you most naturally could function for His glory. For example, if you are a morning person, you likely will always want to get up early and go to be early. The opposite would be true if you are an evening person.

### GOALS

Life Coach Cheryl Richardson suggests three steps to self-acceptance as an alternative to New Year's resolutions:

**Identify the habit you keep trying to change.** What is the critical voice in your conscience constantly saying to you? It might be that the critical voice comes from society and its commercialism that is constantly trying to sell you something. Remember that Satan is identified in Scripture as "the accuser of the brethren." You might need to say "get behind me, Satan" to this critical voice.

**Identify the benefits of acceptance.** Enumerate how your life would be better if you accepted yourself as you are and quit trying to be like someone else, or like the critical voice says you should be. We seldom question our inner critic. Often questioning is all we need to do to see the truth of the other side.

**Identify the actions that would be suggested by self-acceptance.** For example, you might need to go to your boss and share with him or her what you know to be your strengths, and ask for your job to reflect more of that. If you are a parent, you might need to accept less than a "perfect" house in order to spend more time with your children.

Even if there are things you do want to change, you will have a better foundation for changing them if you start with self-acceptance. That way you won't sabotage yourself with a constant roller coaster of feast and famine behaviors.

Read Psalm 139 and see what God says about you. Treat yourself like someone God absolutely loves—because He does.—James Stillwell

**Q: As a new year begins, how can I teach my child the importance of saving money?**

The magazine ad presents the problem clearly and succinctly. The copy reads, "I want him to learn the importance of saving. He wants whatever he sees on television. Any ideas?"

### PARENTING

Television commercials, friends with new stuff, banks willing to loan money and stores that are willing to let us buy now and pay later work against parents trying to teach children to save. Intentional marketing makes boys and girls want even more than they already have. To make things worse, many children have access to lots of disposable income, meaning they can buy pretty much whatever they want.

Start teaching saving early. Whenever your child receives money, whether earned or as a gift, insist that they set some aside as savings. Go to the bank and open a savings account, or simply use a jar or special envelope. Show your child how compounding works. They might be amazed to discover how saved money can grow.

Offer incentives for saving. Help your child set a goal to save for something special. Consider matching their savings contributions. Resist the temptation to buy your children everything they ask for. Delayed gratification and learning to save go hand in hand, so don't give in at the checkout line. Look for opportunities such as an emergency or unexpected car trouble to show your child how saving pays off.

Proverbs 6:6-8 emphasizes the wisdom of the ant that stores provisions in the summer when food is plentiful. Make sure children are familiar with the story.—David Garrard

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## Everybody has a valuable story to share

**Editor's Note:** To start the year off right, I invited Emily to write an installment of our every-couple-of-years "From the Editor's Daughter" column. Emily, 19, is a sophomore at Taylor University in Indiana, studying psychology and Christian education. She recently joined more than 30 other college students, young adults and sponsors from Crestwood Baptist Church on a mission trip to the Gulf Coast. Here are her reflections.

Everybody has a story. This truth was made especially evident to me during my recent Christmas break as I traveled to the Mississippi Gulf Coast with my Sunday school class to help with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

As I look back on my experience, it is not the devastation that stands out in my mind, as shocked as I was to see how horrific the region still looked even four months after the storm. It is the faces. It is the stories.

There was the legally blind father, struggling to repair his daughter's home so that she could move back in with her infant son, born five weeks prematurely just after the hurricane hit. There was the mother who had evacuated her young son to Louisiana so that he could attend classes while his school in Mississippi was closed, but then two weeks later Hurricane Rita hit the area where they had relocated. After being taken out of school again, he now was living in a trailer in his family's front yard.

But the stories didn't stop with the physical destruction or the emotional devastation. Each person I met is looking forward, and in the midst of each story is a journey filled with blessings and hope.

My experience on this trip was different from most of the mission trips I have gone on in the past, where I have helped build houses for Habitat for Humanity. In those settings, we were constructing homes for families who previously had few physical possessions. The families I met in Mississippi had comfortable lives just like me and most of my friends—and then suddenly they

had lost almost everything. In this situation, I was seeking to share hope and encouragement that one day their lives would look better again.

Yet, as I heard story after story, I realized that they already were so full of hope.

The woman who was living in a trailer with her son talked about how fortunate she and her husband were to be healthy and able to work on their house, unlike several elderly people living in their neighborhood. Another family I met was going to have their home bulldozed. As we worked with the owner to salvage the remains of his house, he talked about a family friend who recently had lost his son in a car accident. He told us that even though he and his family no longer had a house and had lost all of their physical possessions, they were blessed to still have each other.

The reason everyone seemed willing to share their stories was because their experiences had radically changed their lives. They wanted everyone they met to know exactly what had happened.

I was reminded of when I first became a Christian because that was such a radical change in my life. As Christians, we have been blessed beyond measure no matter how difficult our lives may seem at times. We need to be ready to share our hope in Christ with everyone we meet, because as Christians, we have been called to give an account to anyone who asks (1 Peter 3:15).

I hope that as time passes, the people I met in Mississippi will not lose their passion for sharing their stories and the new hope they are finding. But even more than that, I hope that as time goes by, my personal faith will remain fresh and vibrant. I need to continue to share my own story, because stories are universal and I can use my experiences to impact someone else's life.

Everyone who has accepted Christ has a story to tell about what God has done through his or her life.

Everybody has a story. Are you ready to share yours?

### FROM THE EDITOR'S DAUGHTER



Emily Henderson

## Living in a 'special event' society

By Henry Blackaby

Atlanta (BP)—We tend to "set a time" for many things. We've been through Halloween in October and Thanksgiving in November as well as Christmas in December and New Year's Day in January.

February will bring Valentine's Day and April, Easter. We'll celebrate Mother's Day in early May, followed by Memorial Day weekend later that month. In June it's Father's Day. You get the picture—"To everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

For the commercial side of our society, special events mean sales and profits. But too often for widows, orphans and those who live in broken homes, these "special days and seasons" bring pain, sadness and even anger. Some might feel they have been robbed or violated.

And many of us who might claim to have "normal" experiences of these events will, nevertheless, experience awkward moments with family members, friends or co-workers. So, what can we do to experience these special events "successfully"?

First, we should be prepared.

These events do not sneak up on us—they come every year. Therefore, we can deliberately choose to face these times with God's help. We can choose to prepare our minds and hearts for each season as it comes upon us.

Second, we can choose to experience each season intentionally with courage and control. We needn't be afraid; God is always with us (Joshua 1:9).

Third, we should process these special times and discern what God desires for us to learn. This helps us to mature mentally and spiritually.

Most importantly, we should look outside ourselves. God calls us to be alert to the needs of others around us. And don't limit your thoughtfulness and good deeds to the recent Christmas season.

As a new year begins, take time for those who have lost loved ones. For those who are weak and weary, help them discover the strength that only God can provide. Help them through these times with true friendship and prayer. Choose to become personally involved with people, young and old alike. Invite

them to your home and into your life.

As a family, you might want to choose to visit those places where people often suffer most—hospitals, homeless shelters, rest homes. Individually, you might think of those in your immediate circles who need a special touch from God as 2006 gets under way. It might be a neighbor, someone at school or someone at work.

Go out of your way to show God's love to others. Then, continue to do so throughout the year. Follow up with further contact and interest. Take the time for coffee or lunch. Send a letter or call just to give a word of encouragement. Take time to consciously care for others throughout the year.

It is true in many ways that our society lives through special events and seasons. Let it be found in each of us that we love each one with unconditional love, prayer and true friendship. And to each of you, may you and your loved ones truly experience the fullness of God's great salvation and love today and throughout 2006.

Henry Blackaby is president of Blackaby Ministries International in Atlanta

## Pro football kicker aims to put spotlight on Christ

**"God showed me in high school that an unstable foundation gets washed away in the storm."**

Atlanta Falcons kicker  
Todd Peterson

By Luanne Byrd  
Baptist Press

Atlanta (BP)—Pro football kicker Todd Peterson says he doesn't have a game plan when it comes to sharing his faith.

"If I act like Jesus, if I'm controlled by the Holy Spirit, and if God is the One who is empowering me, I don't really have to have a game plan or a strategy for sharing," said Peterson, who plays for the Atlanta Falcons.

"God will give me that opportunity."

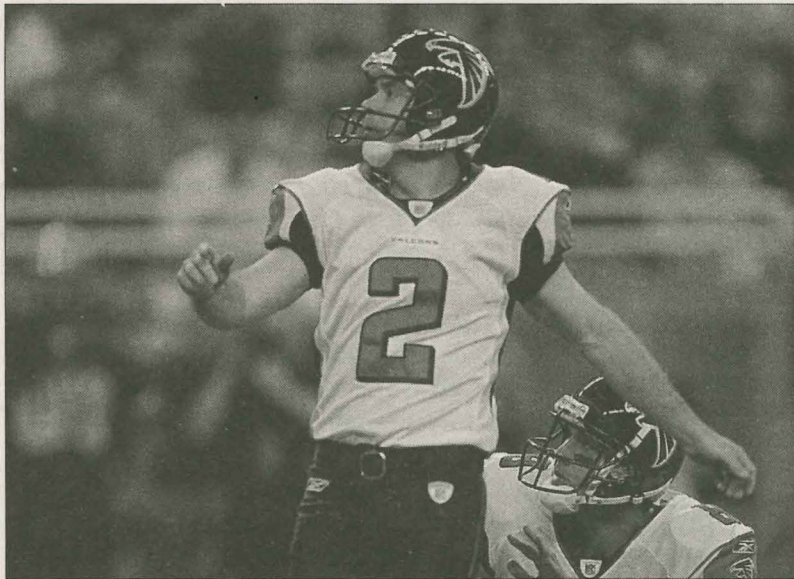
Team evangelism is familiar to this 12-year NFL veteran who has played for the Seattle Seahawks, Kansas City Chiefs, Pittsburgh Steelers and San Francisco 49ers.

Step aside from his field goal career stats that include an impressive number of long kicks and you'll catch a glimpse of his much larger career focus—sharing Christ with his teammates.

"It's more than leading, it's a serving capacity. My job on the team is to make sure that the guys are equipped, feel connected and are aware of what's going on from a ministry standpoint," said Peterson, who played college football at the University of Georgia.

"My wife and I have always felt that this is something we should spearhead because there are not many athletes in the NFL doing it. This is a role I have played for the bulk of my career."

Peterson actively promotes thegoal.com, a Web site created by more than 1,000 pro athletes who want to share their faith with people around the world.



**EYE ON THE PRIZE** Atlanta Falcons kicker Todd Peterson has been a pro football player for 12 years, and he has kept his focus on his Christian faith. "If we keep our eyes on the Author and the Perfector of our faith, we'll be OK," he says. "It's not about me, it's all about Him." (Atlanta Falcons photo)

Peterson calls the environment of the National Football League "daunting," but he and his wife try to make players and their families feel welcome to the team. As he builds relationships and shares his life with them, he knows opportunities will arise to present the gospel.

### Connecting with teammates

In the absence of the chaplain, Peterson often leads the team Bible study during training camp and on road games during the season. He also encourages his fellow teammates to lead. When he allows Christ to inspire him, he said there's never a struggle to find a message that relates to hardcore athletes.

"God makes it pretty clear what He wants me to talk about. The circumstances are evident," Peterson said, citing the physical and mental intensity of training camp.

"If I know guys are struggling, I go to James 1 and talk about trials—how we walk through trials and endure trials in a God-honoring way. I teach practical stuff that guys can walk away with and change their lives."

The fame and economic power of pro athletes can lead to tragic situations, Peterson noted. Some athletes, he said, suffer from an identity crisis because they base their identity on self rather than on Christ.

But the 35-year-old Peterson said he strives to ensure his walk remains rock solid.

Peterson said his life wasn't always focused on Christ. He was driven to reach the top in athletics and academics at a young age.

"My identity was built on school, sports and relationships. I realized over time that anything and everything in the world would fail me if my identity was built on just those things. God showed me in high school that an unstable foundation gets washed away in the storm."

So how does Peterson re-group after a tough game?

"I have the professional goal to see my team win the Super Bowl. The spiritual component of that (is that) if I honor God in all that I do and give Him everything I've got every time I go out there, my hope is that people will see the excellence that attracts them to the One who is excellent. That's the natural by-product of a tough game. If we keep our eyes on the Author and the Perfector of our faith, we'll be OK. It's not about me, it's all about Him."

Whether he's kicking field goals, being a dad or a husband or simply sharing his faith, it's all for God's glory and purpose, he said. With a defined amount of influence, time and resources, Peterson is determined to use his position as a professional athlete for something good beyond himself.

"That's what life is all about if you're a Christian—to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ," he said. "The longer I am around, the more I really see that this is my life purpose."

## 'Virtual missions' team helps missionary reach people group

**Lori Funderburk is among the missionaries profiled for the Week of Prayer for International Missions. The goal for the corresponding Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions is \$150 million.**

Continued from page 1

to minister to those people. From the beginning, prayer was the main means of ministry for Funderburk's team. Members communicated through constant letters and e-mail.

"It isn't a great sacrifice to pray from the comfort of my home," Mary Sanders says from her home in Kingwood, Texas. "But, the fruit of concerted prayers is amazing. We are all missionaries."

### 3,000 prayer warriors

The team gathered information about the Banta Themne from Internet searches and interviews with people from Sierra Leone. Eighty-year-old Earline Ellis bought a computer so she could do research from her Louisiana home. The first two years of the ministry was totally based on prayer and research.

Then the team enlisted nearly 3,000 prayer warriors.

"All I knew about the Banta Themne in the beginning was that they were completely unchurched," team member Donisa Page says. "It's hard to believe that through prayer I ended up loving and caring for a group of people that I would most likely have never met."

While the stateside team focused on prayer support, Funderburk encouraged a church in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to help reach the Banta Themne with the gospel. The Funderburk family had been members of Hope Baptist Church there



**COMPUTER LINK** Before the war in Sierra Leone, International Mission Board missionary Lori Funderburk worked as strategy coordinator for the Banta Themne people group. Since evacuating, she now works through e-mail to encourage a church in Sierra Leone to adopt a people group within its own country. (IMB photo)

before the war.

"We cannot reach West Africans like West Africans can," Funderburk says. "I knew there were people in Sierra Leone who could do this ministry with a little bit of encouragement and a lot of prayer support. They needed to learn they were the missionaries."

Hope Baptist responded to the challenge. Church member Donald Conteh discovered most of the Banta Themne had been driven off their land by rebels and lived in a refugee camp for displaced peoples. Conteh became fast friends with a Banta Themne chief, and that opened the door for sharing the gospel.

After the Banta Themne returned

to their homeland, volunteers from Hope Baptist teamed up with Americans to prayerwalk through Banta Themne villages. They met Muslim village elders there who encouraged them to come back.

"Many people want Jesus here," one Muslim elder told the team. "But they don't know the way."

Soon, Hope Baptist sent a missionary to the area. As he traveled sharing the gospel, he heard many people say: "We have heard of Christianity, but we didn't think it was important because no one had come to tell us."

### 300 new Christians

In less than two years, more than 300 Banta Themne have left Islam and become followers of Jesus.

"The home missionary found an open door everywhere he went, even preaches inside of mosques," Funderburk says. "That's only possible because of the years of prayer that prepared for this harvest."

Now, six years after that first handwritten letter, Funderburk writes the final e-mail to her team and thousands of prayer partners. Hope Baptist Church has asked to

totally take over the Banta Themne ministry. Such a request is the dream of every missionary—handing over the work to national brothers and sisters in Christ.

"I have been totally amazed at your faithfulness to pray for the Banta Themne," she writes her team. "It has been an adventure that I will never forget and am glad God led you to this journey. I hope you realize what a part you played in the Banta Themne hearing the gospel."

"How does it feel to know that you 'prayed' these unreached ones into the Kingdom?"

For more information on this Banta Themne ministry, visit [www.peopletams.org/banta/](http://www.peopletams.org/banta/)



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\$2,000,000 and 46 percent

U.S. tax changes could have serious impact on estate

Effective Jan. 1, 2006, the federal estate tax exemption equivalent increases from \$1.5 million to \$2 million, and the maximum estate tax rate decreases from 47 percent to 46 percent. As a result, if the combined market value of everything you own at the moment of your death is \$2 million or less, you have no federal estate tax concerns.

This exemption equivalent has been increasing and will increase to \$3.5 million Jan. 1, 2009. The maximum estate tax rate has been declining and will decline to 45 percent Jan. 1, 2007. On Jan. 1, 2010, and for that year only under the current tax law, the exemption equivalent is unlimited, and the estate tax rate is 0 percent, which means no federal estate tax liability regardless of the size of your estate. However, Jan. 1, 2011, the exemption equivalent returns to its 2002 level of only \$1 million, and the maximum tax rate returns to its 2001 level of 55 percent. Wow!

For those estates the value of which exceed the exemption equivalent in effect in the year

of the person's death, don't forget there are two very important deductions: (1) the unlimited marital deduction and (2) the unlimited charitable deduction. Of course, if one spouse dies and passes assets to the surviving spouse with a combined value in excess of the exemption equivalent, then the surviving spouse will have to deal with the estate tax challenge.

Given these changing factors, let me encourage you to do two things. First, contact us for the "determining your net worth" form, which will help you in calculating the current value of your estate. I encourage you to request the form even if you do not think you have a taxable estate. You should know your net worth regardless of the amount. Second, encourage your pastor to invite Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, and me to conduct our "Christian Estate Planning Basics" seminar in your church as early in 2006 as possible. The content of the seminar will answer many of your questions.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; (866) 489-3533; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

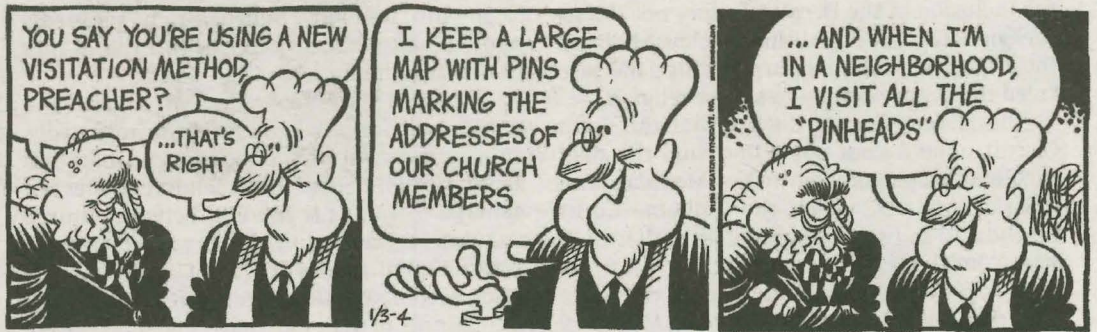
Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 "Call me not Naomi, call me \_\_\_\_" (Ruth 1:20)
- 5 Bunch of bubbles
- 9 Paramedic's report (abbr.)
- 12 "The slaughter of Midian at the rock of \_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 10:26)
- 13 "Every \_\_\_\_ word that men shall speak, they shall give account" (Matthew 12:36)
- 14 There's the \_\_\_\_
- 15 "She ... began to \_\_\_\_ his feet with tears" (Luke 7:38)
- 16 Burden
- 17 Compass dir.
- 18 "Let us build us a city and \_\_\_\_, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Genesis 11:4)
- 20 Lets off fumes
- 22 Ship to \_\_\_\_
- 24 Team \_\_\_\_, Olympics competitor
- 25 Attitude
- 26 Has \_\_\_\_
- 29 "It shall be even given thee to the \_\_\_\_ of the kingdom" (Esther 5:3)
- 33 Creative concept
- 35 "I will send a \_\_\_\_, saying, Go, find the arrows" (1 Samuel 20:21)
- 36 Golden calf, for one
- 37 More is \_\_\_\_
- 38 Telegram word
- 40 United
- 41 Ram's mate
- 43 Captured, in a way
- 45 Lion's portion
- 48 "What is the chaff to the \_\_\_\_?" (Jeremiah 23:28)
- 50 Require effort

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56					57				58			
59					60					61		

- 51 "He himself stayed in \_\_\_\_ for a season" (Acts 19:22)
- 53 Become bored
- 56 Linking verb
- 57 \_\_\_\_ stop
- 58 "Whatsoever shall be given you in that \_\_\_\_, that speak ye" (Mark 13:11)
- 59 Affirmative
- 60 Overeat, almost
- 61 Dagger

- 22 "Strengthen their mast, they could not spread the \_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 33:23)
- 23 "\_\_\_\_ us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne" (Revelation 6:16)
- 24 Cancel; annul
- 27 In addition
- 28 Partake
- 30 "Ye have received the Spirit of \_\_\_\_, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15)
- 31 Single
- 32 "Then all the disciples forsook him, and \_\_\_\_" (Matthew 26:56)
- 34 Tribe of Israel (var.)
- 39 \_\_\_\_millennialism
- 42 Becomes useless, with "out"
- 44 Vows
- 45 "None can \_\_\_\_ his hand" (Daniel 4:35)
- 46 Unclean animal (Leviticus 11:6)
- 47 Cutting tools
- 48 Knew; learned (arch.)
- 49 "\_\_\_\_ the evil" (Amos 5:15)
- 52 Aegean, for one
- 54 Regret
- 55 Poetic contraction

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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## Mercer County Commandments display upheld

By Tom Strode  
Baptist Press

Cincinnati (BP)—A federal appeals court has upheld a Ten Commandments display identical to one ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court earlier this year, rebuking the American Civil Liberties Union in the process.

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Cincinnati, affirmed Dec. 20 a federal judge's decision that a Mercer County courthouse display of nine documents, including the Ten Commandments, is constitutional.

In a unanimous opinion by a three-judge panel, the court sided with the lower court that the inclusion of the Decalogue does not violate the Constitution's establishment clause because the display has a secular purpose. The panel also ruled the display does not endorse religion.

The Mercer County display that the Sixth Circuit upheld does not differ from the final version of displays in Kentucky's McCreary and Pulaski counties, which the Supreme Court invalidated in June, upholding an earlier decision from the Sixth Circuit.

In a 5-4 decision, the high court ruled the history of the courthouse displays in McCreary and Pulaski counties should be weighed. In both cases, the Ten Commandments stood alone before other documents were twice added. The final version still had a "predominantly religious purpose," Associate Justice David Souter wrote.

But in Mercer County, the Ten Commandments and the other documents were displayed together in frames of equal size from the start.

In contrast to the exhibits in McCreary and Pulaski counties, the Mercer County display "lacks a similar sectarian pedigree," Judge Richard Suhrheinrich wrote for the Sixth Circuit panel in *ACLU v. Mercer County*. "A reasonable observer would not view this display as an attempt by Mercer County to establish religion. Instead, he would view it for what it is: an acknowledgment of history."

Not only is the Mercer County display different from the ones previously rejected by the Supreme Court, but it also survives the Lemon test, the panel said.

That test has largely guided the justices' decision-making in such cases since it was outlined in the 1971 *Lemon v. Kurtzman* opinion.

According to the Lemon standard, government does not establish religion if its action has a secular purpose, does not promote or inhibit religion and does not create an excessive entanglement with religion.

### ACLU not "reasonable"

In his opinion, Suhrheinrich pointedly wrote about what he described as the ACLU's flawed arguments.

He called "the separation of church and state," which the ACLU referred to repeatedly, an "extra-constitutional construct (that) has grown tiresome. The First Amendment does not demand a wall of separation between church and state. ... Our nation's history is replete with governmental acknowledgment and(.) in some cases, accommodation of religion. ... Thus, state recognition of religion that falls short of endorsement is constitutionally permissible.

"If the reasonable observer perceived all government references to the Deity as endorsements, then many of our nation's cherished traditions would be unconstitutional, including the Declaration of Independence and the national motto ('In God we trust')," Suhrheinrich wrote.

The ACLU "does not embody the reasonable person," he wrote.

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, which assisted Mercer County, called the decision a "big victory for the people of Mercer County and Kentucky generally. For too long they have been lectured like children by those in the ACLU and elsewhere who claim to know what the people's Constitution really means."

## Family advocates want a la carte sales for TV channels

Continued from page 1

"The current method used by cable and satellite providers to deliver program packages does allow niche channels to survive along with what is considered some of the more popular networks," Dietz said.

Of late, the industry has come under increased scrutiny for programming that some call indecent. Broadcasters, whose television stations and networks use the public airwaves for their over-the-air telecasts, have felt the greatest pressure from existing federal regulations that allow the government to levy large fines or other measures for content infractions.

But the cable industry heretofore has escaped such content controls because it does not deliver its programming via the public airwaves.

The Parents Television Council says only a la carte channel availability and pricing can be a fair and effective solution.

"What we have always advocated is an opt-out approach," said Dan Isett, director of corporate and government affairs for the Los Angeles-based TV watchdog organization, "where a consumer can take X number of channels and opt out of Y and then pay a reduced rate. That way, they would not financially subsidize the channels that they don't watch and find offensive."

The cable industry insists such an approach would not be viable, Isett acknowledged, but, he said, that's what the industry was saying about family-friendly tiers "up until a couple of weeks ago."

"Now all the sudden, they have the technological know-how and the desire to do a family tier," Isett said. "But parents and families still are not given the opportunity to decide for themselves what they bring into their homes and are not given the option to opt out of what they don't want or find offensive."

Time Warner's "Family Choice" tier of 15 largely sex-and-violence-free channels will include Disney Channel, C-SPAN2, HGTV, CNN Headline News and The Weather Channel. The package will be offered as an alternative to the expanded basic package that includes channels such as Comedy Central, FX and MTV, all of which offer mature fare.

Those critical of the lineup have argued that the programming package sounds like an experiment intended to fail.

Brent Bozell, president of the Parents Television Council, noted the lineup's many notable omissions, including ESPN, History Channel, Turner Classic Movies, TVLand, Animal Planet, Travel Channel and Fox News.

"The average family would find most programming on these networks to be appropriate for family viewing," Bozell said.

"But not Time Warner. According to Time Warner, no family should want to watch sports," he said. "According to Time Warner, no family should want to receive any news channel other than Time Warner's CNN. According to Time Warner, classic movies are not appropriate for families."

## Size isn't everything

### Oneida Beta Club members prove one should never overlook the underdogs

By Laura Stockton

Oneida Baptist Institute Beta Club Sponsor

Because of our size, Oneida Baptist Institute usually is considered the underdog when competing with other schools in athletics or co-curricular activities. So, any time we can put up a good fight or defeat the larger schools, we are very proud. Our Beta Club attends the state convention each year to compete with some of the largest schools in Kentucky. This year we took 16 of our top high school students to face this challenge.

For some of our students, the "big city" experience alone was thrilling. As we approached the exit and the Galt House came into view, one comment from the back of the bus was, "Is that where we're staying?" The Louisville Galt House always has been an impressive establishment, but with its recent \$60 million renovation, wow.

When we arrived Friday afternoon, we hit the pavement running. One of our members was swept off immediately to the preliminary round of the talent competition, while the others unpacked their arts and crafts projects to enter before the registration desk closed. Another student took part in the creative writing contest. We attended the first general session that evening with more than 2,400 other Kentucky Betas to hear the campaign speeches and skits of students running for state offices. Before the session closed, the finalists for the talent competition were announced. With nervous anticipation, we waited to hear our school announced. The explosion of emotion that came from our little group of 16

was comparable to any cheer made by the others. Oneida Senior Jun Sang Yoo was selected as one of the six finalists. He would play before judges and the entire convention Saturday evening. He had worked most of the school year on his piece, and piano teacher Paul Davidson's coaching also was influential in his success.

On Saturday, eight of our members participated in academic competitions, and the arts and crafts were put on display with any ribbons they had won. Juniors Jesse Godbold and Dee Dee Torbert received second place ribbons for their entries: Jesse in commercial art design and Dee Dee in clothing. The other students were naturally disappointed, but they were amazed and encouraged by some of the other entries. The underclassmen now have a better understanding of what is expected for next year's convention.

The time finally came for Jun Sang to perform. We had confidence that he was prepared, but we also knew he was nervous. His rendition of Beethoven's "Sonata Pathetique" was up against some of the most talented students in the state. Trophies are awarded for first, second and third places; first and second place winners are eligible to compete at the national convention this summer in Greensboro, N.C. His near-perfect performance was followed by a standing ovation. When the scores were tallied, he received the third place honor. Even though it was not enough to go to nationals, it was more than enough to confirm that one never should count out the underdog, especially one from Oneida Baptist Institute.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org); e-mail: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)



W.F. Underwood

## The stereotypical church

### The church must change, a Clear Creek student writes

Editor's note: The following is condensed from an English composition assignment by G.P. Simmons, a second-year student from West Virginia.

Ask anyone on the street to describe the local church, and the response is almost guaranteed to be negative. The shortcomings common among churches that have led to the stereotype can be categorized into three areas: integrity, accountability and attitude.

Look up integrity in the dictionary and one word stands out among the rest, incorruptibility. The church has lost integrity because it has allowed the world to come in and corrupt that which God sanctified. The church operates more as a business than as a house of God by putting more faith in the bank account and less and less on God. In many cases, this has led to a house divided, rendering the church unable to function as God intended.

Today's church has lost all accountability in the eyes of the public. No longer is the word from the pulpit considered to be the moral absolute God intended. With church members adopting the parent's creed, "Do as I say, not as I

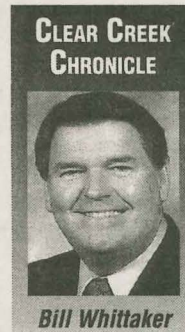
do," the church is disqualified as a faithful witness for God. The public can see no difference between the church and the world on the issue of morals.

In spite of the loss of integrity and accountability, the attitude of the church has remained consistently arrogant. Members continually place themselves above the rest

of the community socially, often shunning those they deem "unworthy." This attitude has driven people away rather than drawing them in. Most members are quite happy with this arrangement, preferring to cultivate this attitude in order to keep the church "socially pure."

The church of the 21st century is a far cry from the church found in the Book of Acts. The modern church model seems to be a closed system instead of the outgoing, living being Christ intended. Unfortunately, this condition has taken years to build, and will take at least that long to undo. Regretfully, until the church is willing to deal with these problems this stereotype of the modern church will remain a foreseeable reality.

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



Bill Whittaker

# One year later

## Baptist tsunami relief ministry totals \$17 million, but more work remains

**Editor's note:** On Dec. 26, 2004, a massive earthquake in the Indian Ocean spawned one of the most destructive tsunamis in recorded history. It swept away thousands of lives and left millions of people homeless. One year later, Southern Baptists continue to aid and share God's love with survivors in South Asia.

Due to security concerns, pseudonyms are used instead of the actual names of Southern Baptist workers in India.

**Chennai, India (BP)**—When Cole Elbridge stood to accept the village leader's appreciation, he did so on behalf of Southern Baptists who have given nearly \$17 million to help tsunami survivors.

Elbridge, a Southern Baptist worker, explained how supporters in America had been deeply troubled by the images and were moved to help.

Their love for God had moved Southern Baptists to love the tsunami victims, he said, and he shared with the villagers about the love of God for them in the gospel message.

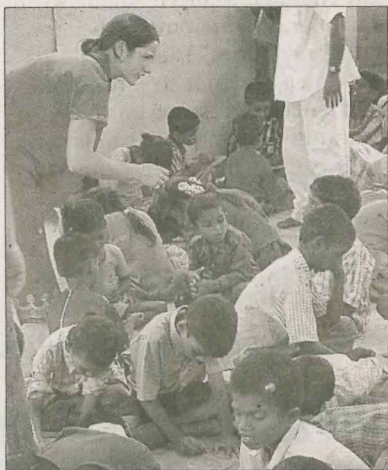
Jana Eddleman, another Southern Baptist worker at the village, recalled that the village leader told workers during last month's presentation that no one else had helped this particular village since the tsunami.

"They seemed anxious to get a look at these people who had come from afar and had been willing to help them," Eddleman recalled.

A massive earthquake on Dec. 26, 2004—centered in the Indian Ocean west of the Indonesian island of Sumatra—set in motion the tsunami that sent deadly waves across low-lying areas in South and Southeast Asia and as far away as Africa. The tsunami left a quarter of a million people dead and millions homeless.

### Ministry in unreached areas

David Garrison, the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's regional leader for South Asia, said the coastal areas most impacted by the tsunami are home to millions of people who have little access to the message of God's love through Jesus Christ.



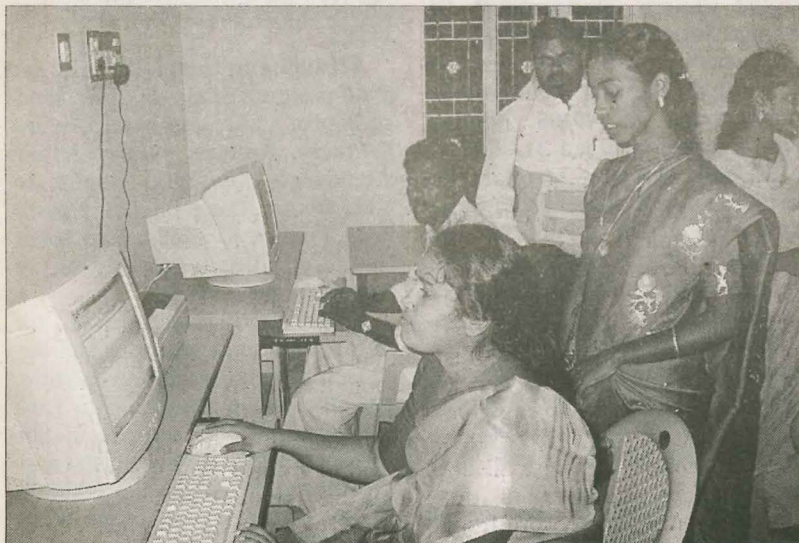
**CHILDREN'S CAMPS** Southern Baptist volunteers conducted nine children's camps in tsunami-stricken villages in India last summer. Many never before had heard the message of Jesus.

"Over the past months, these people have seen the love of Christ as never before," Garrison said. "Southern Baptist workers have provided emergency food and water, rebuilt homes, purchased fishing nets, helped re-establish businesses and, most importantly, offered good news of eternal hope in Jesus Christ."

In South Asia, the tsunami battered coastal areas in Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives, taking a huge toll physically and emotionally on the people. Yet, Southern Baptist personnel report that in the past year God's presence has been evident in each affected region.

In India alone, Elbridge said, about 1,900 people—mostly Hindus and some Muslims—have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior since the tsunami. As a result, about 150 house churches have been started. Some of these new congregations have birthed second-generation churches.

"Already (the advance of the gospel) is growing and reproducing so quickly that it's becoming hard for us to keep up with all that God is doing here," Eddleman said. "But to me, that's the exciting part. The potential here for the work to keep growing is almost limitless."



**PRACTICAL HELP** Throughout tsunami-stricken areas in South Asia, Southern Baptist relief efforts have focused on providing practical relief to tsunami survivors. Volunteers have worked to put people back to work and offered vocational training for those without jobs.



Throughout tsunami-stricken areas in South Asia, Southern Baptists focused first on providing practical relief to survivors.

### Helping people get back to work

"Our primary guideline was to put people back to work by doing boat repairs, engine repairs, providing nets, purchasing boats and catamarans lost in the tsunami, and later vocational training for those without jobs," Elbridge said.

Workers also distributed food, sleeping mats and other supplies and later helped organizations focusing on children affected by the tsunami.

Relief workers have faced unique challenges.

With nearly \$17 million raised by the generosity of Southern Baptists for the tsunami efforts, Elbridge said, the workers "were limited not by funds but by stewardship, accountability, personnel on the field and ensuring we were meeting real needs of the people."

As in Sri Lanka, the relationships Southern Baptist volunteers developed during their initial short stints of service in India helped spark spiritual interest among people they were helping in practical ways.

"Last summer we were able to conduct at least nine children's camps, thanks to two American teams that came," Southern Baptist worker Tanya Chisolm said. "Many of these villages had never before had a gospel presentation there."

Volunteers served primarily in areas with no Christian believers or evangelical churches. Teams conducted children's camps, sports camps and relief work. They integrated personal testimonies, tract distribution, open-air revivals, chronological Bible storying, the "Jesus" film and another Hindi-language evangelistic film to share the gospel through their outreach.

"We recorded over 60 decisions for Christ through the volunteer teams who came to assist us," Elbridge said. "Since these were pioneer areas for evangelism, the volunteers were not always well-

received when they shared the gospel, but we were able to determine open and closed areas to the gospel through their efforts."

The number of decisions to follow Jesus climbed as Elbridge and a team of Indian pastors with whom he partners began training laypeople and new believers to share the gospel with others.

Of about 500 villages affected by the tsunami in India, Southern Baptist workers have focused on several strategic areas, working in 85 villages across 620 miles of coastline.

Elbridge said many of the pastors helping tsunami-battered villages had once been beaten and thrown out of the same villages that welcomed them after the tsunami.

### More work to be done

Yet, the work of meeting both physical and spiritual needs is far from finished.

"The majority of aid donors who poured into India (soon after the tsunami) left just as quickly, within three to five months," Elbridge said. "So while many tsunami victims admit they had plenty of food, clothing and assistance in the beginning, a year later—when they are still facing shortages of food, water and basic facilities—there are few or no organizations they can turn to for help."

"Those affected by the tsunami are still struggling, wondering if they will be able to have homes again or earn a living to support their families. It is clear that recovery from the tsunami will be measured in years, not months."

The spiritual urgency also has not dissipated.

"During a tent revival, we saw 40 people come forward to pray to receive Christ," Elbridge said. "I heard a couple of weeks later that one of these people who accepted Christ was killed when a bus struck his automobile, killing five people—another reminder of the urgent need to share the gospel."

For more information about volunteering to do relief work in South Asia, e-mail [southasia.vim@wigtake.org](mailto:southasia.vim@wigtake.org).

**LONG RECOVERY** The tsunami that ripped through South Asia in December 2004 killed a quarter of a million people and left millions of others homeless. Southern Baptist workers say recovery from the tragedy will be measured in years, not months. During the past year, however, many survivors have experienced the love of Christ through the ministry of Southern Baptists, who contributed \$17 million to relief efforts. (Baptist Press photos)

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Tom Smoot

Fine, I'll admit it. I am a television junkie! I figure if the television industry wants to spend millions of dollars a year to entertain the world, I'll watch it. I enjoy being entertained.

Take last week for example. A new TV game show premiered called "Deal or No Deal." The contestant had to choose a briefcase numbered from 1 to 26. The case contains an unknown amount of money, ranging from one cent to \$1 million. Each contestant gets chances to either keep the chosen case or deal with an unseen banker who makes monetary offers for the case. I got caught up in yelling, "Take the deal, take the deal!"

The next day I watched the Barbara Walters' special on "Heaven." Walters interviewed several world religious leaders about their belief or their religion's belief about heaven.

As I listened to the many ideas about heaven, I really got in touch with my personal feelings about why I am so glad I'm an evangelical Christian. It seems it simply comes down to "deal or no deal."

You see, if heaven is my goal and if I desire to experience eternal life with God, then I need to have a fundamental belief in and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

God sent His Son into the world in order for the world to be saved and for us to have eternal life with Him. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

For us to have eternal life, to live in heaven with God, is to believe Christ's words found in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

It looks like it all boils down to "deal or no deal."

Tom Smoot is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's creative ministries group

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **FLORENCE**—Greenview Church will host **Brian Free and Assurance** in concert Jan. 29, 6 p.m.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Swallowfield Church recently called **Daniel Broadstone** as pastor.

■ **HICKORY**—Hickory Church recently called **C.W. Barnhill** as pastor.

■ **HIGHLAND HEIGHTS**—Highland Heights First Church recently called **Ron Chastain** as interim pastor.

■ **HORSE CAVE**—Horse Cave Church recently called **John Richards** as part-time youth minister. **Kevin Denton** is pastor.

■ **MOREHEAD**—First Church recently called **Dusty Coyle** as youth minister. **Don Mantoath** is pastor.

■ **LA GRANGE**—DeHaven Church recently called **Tommy Purvis** as pastor. He previously was director of missions for Severns Valley Association.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Rosemont Church recently called **Blake Shipp** as pastor.

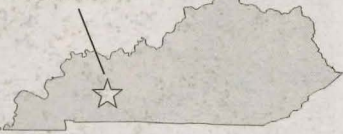
■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host **The Anchormen** of Goldsboro, N.C., in concert Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m.

Grace United Church recently called **Eugene Peete** as pastor.

Hazelwood Church recently called **Jamie Knels** as children's

### Spotlight on ...

#### Browder



Browder Church will hold a Bible conference Jan. 13-14, 6:30 p.m., and Jan. 15 during morning worship service. Speakers include **Shane Garrett, Curtis McGhee, Ron Noffsinger, Larry Vincent** and **Steve Weatherford**.

ministry coordinator.

Meadow Hill Church recently called **Bud Purnell** as minister of music.

■ **POWDERLY**—Woodson Church recently called **Kenneth Johnson** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Northside Church in Science Hill.

■ **WINGO**—Higher Ground Church called **Aubert Rose** as interim pastor. Rose retired Dec. 31 as pastor of New Liberty Church in Mayfield, Higher Ground's sponsoring church. **Matthew Wright**, Higher Ground's former pastor, accepted a pastorate in Alabama.

## Nate Adams, NAMB vice president, nominated to lead Illinois Baptists

Springfield, Ill. (ABP)—Nate Adams, vice president of mission mobilization for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, has been recommended as the next executive director of the Illinois Baptist State Association.

Adams, 47, has strong roots in Illinois. Prior to joining NAMB in 1997, he worked for Christianity Today in Carol Stream, Ill., for 17 years, concluding his tenure as vice-president of corporate publishing operations.

Adams' father, Tom, is a retired pastor and former director of missions for Fox Valley Baptist Association in Elgin, Ill. His father also has been a columnist for the Illinois Baptist newspaper for more than three decades.

The Illinois search committee unanimously selected Adams from a field of 30 candidates, said committee chairman Jim Rahtjen. The committee's recommendation goes

to the full board, which could vote on Adams as early as this month.

If approved, Adams will succeed Wendell Lang, who resigned in May to become senior pastor of West Jackson Baptist Church of Jackson, Tenn.

Adams is a graduate of Judson College, an American Baptist college in Elgin, Ill., and National-Louis University in Evanston, Ill. He has served on Judson's board of trustees since 1995.

Adams has been interim pastor of Bridgeway Church in Alpharetta, Ga., since January 2005. While at Christianity Today, he was a founding pastor of a Southern Baptist church in St. Charles, Ill. He also served at First Baptist Church of St. Charles in several roles from 1978 to 1984.

Adams is the author of four books. He and his wife, Beth, have three sons.

## Bunce nominated as N.M. executive

Albuquerque, N.M. (ABP)—Joseph Bunce, 50, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Bloomfield, N.M., is the unanimous choice of a search committee to become the next executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico.

A special meeting of the convention will convene at Hoffmantown Church in Albuquerque Jan. 31, during the Statewide Evangelism Conference, to act on the recommendation. If elected, Bunce would succeed Claude Cone, who will retire March 1 after 20 years in the convention's top post.

The New Mexico convention has 343 churches and missions. Bunce was elected state convention president in 1998 and 1999.

Bunce, a native of New Mexico,

has spent all but four of his 50 years in the state. He began his ministry as pastor of Floyd Baptist Church in 1976. He also was pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Bunice and Bel Aire Baptist Church in Hobbs.

He graduated from Eastern New Mexico University in Portales in 1981 with a degree in religion. He and his wife, Sharon, left New Mexico in 1983 to attend Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

After graduating from Midwestern in 1987, Bunce returned to New Mexico to serve as pastor of First Baptist Church of Melrose and First Baptist Church of Bloomfield. He also is a 2000 graduate of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January

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)

## Westmoreland, Ouachita president, nominee to lead Samford University

Birmingham, Ala. (ABP)—Andrew Westmoreland, president of Arkansas Baptists' Ouachita Baptist University, has been nominated to become president of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

The Samford search committee is scheduled to recommend Westmoreland during a special meeting of trustees Jan. 10.

Westmoreland was chosen from among 140 nominees, the search team said. He visited the Samford campus last month to meet with three constituent panels—faculty/staff, students and alumni/donors—as well as university leaders.

In an e-mail to Ouachita faculty, staff and students, Westmoreland said he became "open to the possibility" of the Samford presidency in late October, after several conversations with the committee. After prayer, he said, he realized "this move might be best for all concerned."

If elected, Westmoreland would complete the presidential carousel

at three of the largest Baptist universities. On Dec. 2, Mercer University in Macon, Ga., elected as president Bill Underwood, interim president of Baylor University. Underwood was a leading candidate for the Baylor presidency before removing his name from consideration. Trustees of the Texas Baptist school in Waco elected Nevada educator John Lilley as president Nov. 3.

Samford's next president will succeed Tom Corts, who is retiring after 23 years.

Westmoreland, 48, has served his entire career at Ouachita, in Arkadelphia, Ark. President since 1998, he has been an administrator at the school for more than 19 years. He served as vice president for development until 1995, when he became executive vice-president.

A native of Arkansas, he holds degrees from Ouachita, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**BOOKS:** We buy quality used Christian books. Christian Book Nook, 2116 South Preston St., Louisville, Ky. (502) 637-8881.

**FOR SALE:** 1982 15-passenger van. Has 100,849 miles; engine needs repairs. Asking \$800. Call (502) 368-5806.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Brandenburg, Ky. Average Sunday school attendance: 170; worship: 275. Mail resumé to: Marilyn Craycroft, 333 Atwill St. Brandenburg, KY 40108. Applications accepted until Jan. 31, 2006.

**SEEKING:** Part-time secretary for East End church, three days a week. Must be proficient in Publisher and Word. Fax resumé and handwritten cover letter to Administrator at (502) 893-9386.

**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:** Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church of Highland Heights, located in Northern Kentucky. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 2315 Alexandria Pike, Highland Heights, KY 41076.

**SEEKING:** Receiving resumé for associate pastor of youth and worship. Send to: Pastor, First Baptist Church, PO Box 577, Grayson, KY 41143.

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

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

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

# Faith-based rocker

*Focus on Africa, poor earn U2's Bono Person of the Year honor*

By John Soeder  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—When Elvis Presley shook hands with Richard Nixon in 1970, it wasn't much more than a fleeting photo op.

When Bono had lunch with President Bush at the White House in October, however, they spoke for nearly two hours about debt relief, AIDS and other issues.

Bono fronts the mega-popular Irish rock band U2. But these days the singer is just as famous for his spiritual declarations and extracurricular activism. He's the unshaven diplomat in the designer sunglasses who has been chewing the ears off presidents, prime ministers and other world leaders about humanitarian causes.

Most recently, his faith-based humanitarian efforts earned him, along with Bill and Melinda Gates, Time's Person of the Year Award for 2005.

"I try to live it rather than talk about it because there are enough secondhand-car salesmen for God," Bono told Time. "But I cannot escape my conviction that God is interested in the progress of mankind, individually and collectively."

## Rock & Roll lobbyist

That message has connected far beyond fans of Bono's music.

"People look at him as more than a rock star," says former Ohio Congressman John Kasich. "For a lot of people, he represents hope."

Kasich was chairman of the House Budget Committee when his pal Arnold Schwarzenegger asked him to discuss foreign aid with Bono in 1999.

"I've never been keen on celebrities in politics," Kasich says. "But Arnold told me Bono knew what he was talking about. As it turned out, Bono really did know what he was talking about."

## Christian activists lose budget vote but emerge with clearer voice

By Kevin Eckstrom  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—When Christian leaders came to Washington last March to denounce President Bush's proposed budget as "unjust," they were received much like the Old Testament prophets they look to for inspiration.

Another lonely voice, crying out in the wilderness.

By year's end, the budget they rejected as immoral had passed through Congress, although only by the narrowest of margins. Vice President Dick Cheney was called in to break a 50-50 tie in the Senate.

And even though they lost the budget battle, religious activists say they have succeeded at something more important and long-lasting. They finally have been heard, they say, and have discovered a way to portray arcane budget debates into stark moral choices that test the nation's commitment to the poor.

The new budget trims nearly \$40

Three years ago Bono co-founded DATA, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group whose name stands for Debt AIDS Trade Africa. The organization is dedicated to fighting extreme poverty and AIDS in Africa.

Bono's group was a driving force behind the Bush administration's Millennium Challenge Account, which earmarked \$1.5 billion in assistance for developing nations this year.

DATA also helped to lay the groundwork for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, launched with a \$200 million pledge from the United States in 2002.

Kasich, a prominent Republican who now hosts a Fox News Channel talk show, became Bono's liaison on Capitol Hill, introducing the well-read rocker to key politicians from both parties. Bono even hit it off with Jesse Helms, the ultra-conservative Republican former senator from North Carolina.

"Jesse told Bono he wished he'd accomplished as much in his life as Bono has accomplished," Kasich says.

### "Making a difference"

British Prime Minister Tony Blair, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac all have met with Bono through the years.

"He's making a difference in the world," says Bono's friend Neil McCormick, a London journalist and author of the tongue-in-cheekily titled memoir "Killing Bono." They met in high school.

"He always had that almost messianic glint about him," McCormick says, laughing.

"When you're kids in a rock 'n' roll band, you feel you can change the world. Most people lose that naive idealism. Bono lost the naivete, but not the idealism."

billion from such programs as Medicaid and student loans during the next five years. But that represents less than half of 1 percent of the estimated trillion-plus dollars in federal spending in the same period.

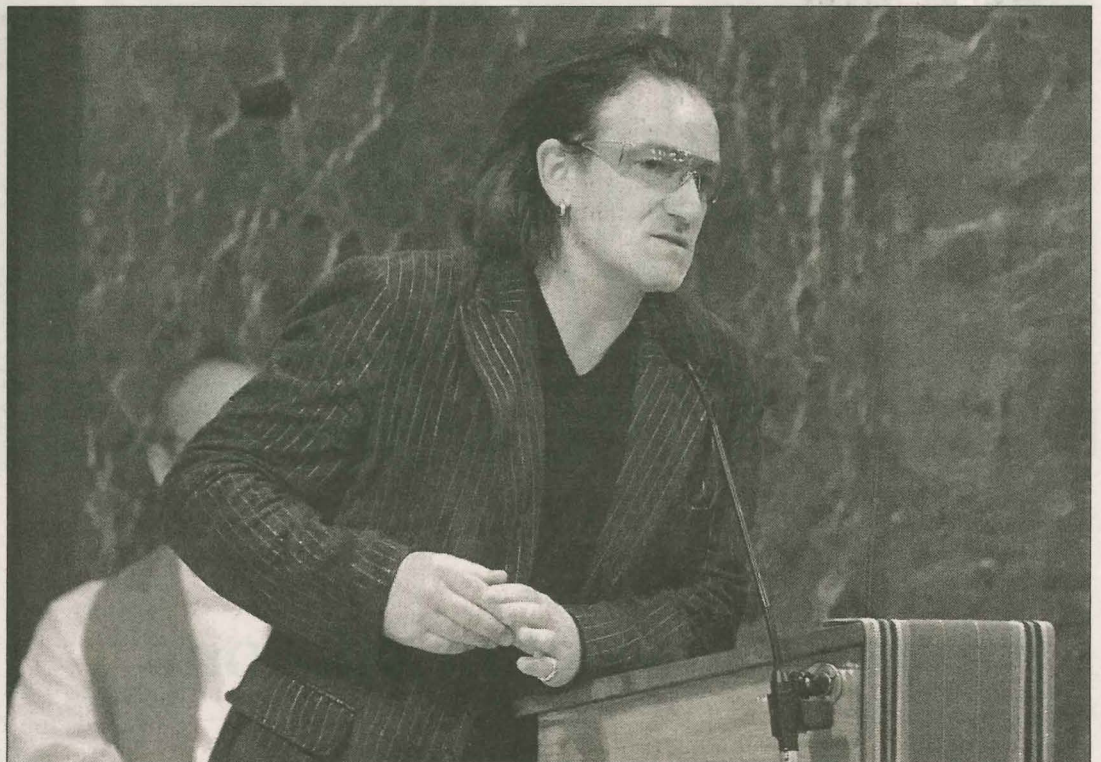
Critics say the budget would harm the poor, and noted that the same legislators who are pushing for the cuts also are pushing many billions more in tax cuts.

Still, activists were quick to claim credit where they could.

"Our voices of opposition were heard, and have provided a tangible sign that the church is living out the gospel of Jesus Christ ... in our own day," said Mark Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

### Budget a "moral document?"

For years, Catholic and mainline Protestant churches have lobbied for social service programs to aid the poor. In the 1980s, it was the Catholic bishops who said the U.S. budget



DATA's latest push is the One Campaign, a broad initiative to rally Americans in favor of allocating an additional 1 percent of the U.S. budget for aid to the world's poorest countries.

During U2's concerts, Bono has been making a pitch on behalf of One, which claims 1.5 million supporters to date.

Bono "is a very effective ally," says DATA Executive Director Jamie Drummond. "He's an inspirational character. He's very good at seeing both sides of an argument and talking to both sides to strike a deal."

Bono, 45, was born Paul Hewson in Dublin, where he and guitarist Dave "The Edge" Evans, bass player Adam Clayton and drummer Larry Mullen Jr. formed U2 in the 1970s, when they were in their teens.

Bono's activism is a natural extension of the band's socially conscious brand of anthemic rock, says Jim Henke, chief curator at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland and a former Rolling Stone editor who championed U2 early in

its career.

"Their songs always have dealt with issues bigger than boy meets girl," Henke says.

The group has sold 120 million albums worldwide. Its latest release, "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb," brought five Grammy Award nominations for U2, including a nod for album of the year.

Numerous rockers have dabbled in do-goodism, although none as successfully as Bono, Henke says.

Earlier this year, Bono was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. He surfaced as a candidate to head the World Bank, too.

To hear him tell it, he isn't ready to give up his day job or his rock 'n' roll lifestyle. Basking in the flashbulb-popping afterglow of a news conference immediately after U2's induction into the Rock Hall in March, Bono was asked if he would run for president.

He's not eligible, but he had another reason to reject the idea.

With a grin, he replied, "I wouldn't move to a smaller house."

to Renewal founder Jim Wallis, included young and old, black and white, evangelical and liberal. Wallis said his young activists took the debate beyond traditional "liberal-conservative" lines.

But a major challenge that remains is broadening that message to other faith groups that are more galvanized by hot-button social issues.

Indeed, the influential Family Research Council urged a vote in support of the budget bill, and Tim Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, called the budget boring and dismissed the debate as more "liberal social gospel."

Green, an expert on religion and politics, said church groups have succeeded in "laying down a marker" in future budget debates and even the 2006 elections, but must find a way to widen their appeal.

With additional reporting by Rob Marus for Associated Baptist Press

### REBEL WITH A CAUSE

Rock star Bono has used his influence to urge people to get involved in issues such as AIDS in Africa. "I cannot escape my conviction that God is interested in the progress of mankind." (RNS file photo)

Religious activists say they have discovered a way to portray arcane budget debates into stark moral choices that test the nation's commitment to the poor.

