

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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Too many church leaders ignoring liability risks, specialist says

By Ken Camp
Texas Baptist Standard

San Angelo, Texas (ABP)—Too few pastors understand the need for churches to identify and limit their legal liabilities, according to a risk-management specialist who often works with congregations.

Dick Baggett contends that church leaders are neglecting an important aspect of biblical stewardship when they ignore such issues as legal liability, health and safety standards, and compliance with civil-rights laws.

"I have not yet come across a church who understands that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration has 100 percent jurisdiction over the church," he noted as an example.

Many church leaders—both ministers and laity—mistakenly assume that because churches are nonprofit religious organizations, laws regarding safety, health, civil rights, accessibility, labor and transportation do not apply to them, he said.

God calls church leaders to be good stewards, and those stewardship obligations extend beyond issues of giving and money management, said Baggett, who owns a human resources consulting firm in San Angelo, Texas.

"These obligations call for protecting (God's) assets and people entrusted to us," he said.

But few churches understand that it's possible to analyze and identify risks, respond professionally to those risks, and then manage them in a way that eliminates or at least seriously reduces liability.

"I have never understood how successful, informed people who are leaders in their industry, the business world and their local business communities can become totally ignorant when they link up to work with a nonprofit organization," he observed. "It is a truly sad phenomenon to witness. But I have seen it repeatedly occur."

That attitude represents not only ignorance of the law and good business principles, but also a flawed theological understanding of Christians' relationship with government, he said.

"The churches and their leaders are supposed to be exemplary citizens," Baggett said, pointing to the Apostle Paul's teachings in Romans 13 and Old Testament writings about justice and righteousness.

Christian leaders need the discipline and intelligence to see threats their congregations face, to find a way to deal with those threats and to resolve confrontations, he added.

"As part of their job, they must be church risk managers."

'We can't quit'



REPAIRING HURRICANE DAMAGE Volunteers from Hazard (from left) Glenn Shields and Carl Collier of Upper Second Creek Baptist Church, Winston Fields of Big Creek Baptist Church and Steve Howard of Upper Second Creek Baptist Church remove damaged shingles from the roof of the Jackson Baptist Association building in Pascagoula, Miss. Three teams from Three Forks Baptist Association in Hazard have traveled to the Gulf Coast this winter. (Photo by Cordis Bishop)

More Gulf Coast volunteers needed, coordinators say

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Pascagoula, Miss.—The most powerful medicine John Edwards has seen delivered to residents of this storm-ravaged Gulf Coast community is hope.

The coordinator of Baptist Builders for Kentucky's Baptist Men on Mission, Edwards made his sixth trip to the region last week to serve as a volunteer coordinator for the convention's year-long partnership with Jackson County Baptist Association.

Edwards has seen the impact this help is making. On a previous trip he worked with 10 students from University of the Cumberland who spent a week of Christmas break repairing homes.

When they started fixing a retired naval veteran's house, the

man was so depressed he rarely emerged from his temporary quarters in a mobile home.

After being invited to join the group for prayer on Monday, by the middle of the week the elderly man was cooking lunch for the volunteers.

"He wept when we left," said Edwards, a resident of Horse Cave. "He said, 'I didn't know how I was going to get back in my home.' All his clothing, furniture and personal possessions were destroyed. He estimated (a value of) \$116,000 and the insurance company gave him \$1,900."

Those kinds of stories are legion, according to Randy Foster, director of Baptist Men and coordinator of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnerships with



ON SITE Lew Cook, a member of Central Baptist Church in Maysville, is helping coordinate the work of volunteers in Pascagoula, Miss., where Kentucky Baptists have formed a partnership. (Photo by Vicki Edwards)

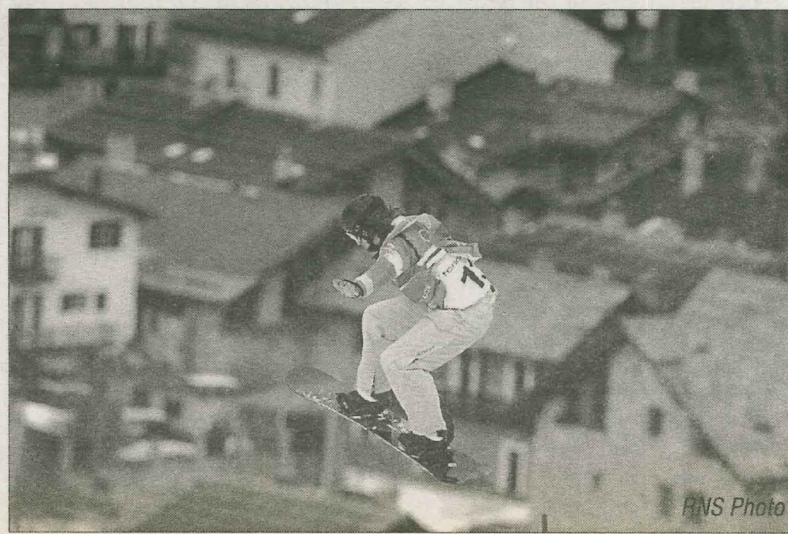
Some Olympic fans, athletes seeking 'More than Gold'

This week's Western Recorder features a page full of stories about Christians involved in Olympic ministry or competition in Turin, Italy.

Among them is an article about Brock Kreitzburg, a former chaplain who has endeared himself to the media and praises God for the athletic gifts he's using in Turin.

In another, a Canadian pastor is serving both as the coach of the only cross-country skier from Costa Rica and as a chaplain in the Olympic Village.

And a team of Baptists from South Carolina are in Turin to help local Christians share the gospel with fans from around the world. **Stories on page 10.**



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IMB trustees to reconsider dropping blogging member

"We have never reached this stage of conflict before and did not know of all our options until recently."

IMB Chairman
Tom Hatley

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Richmond, Va. (RNS)—Trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board might drop a plan seeking the oust a fellow board member who criticized a policy prohibiting a private prayer language.

Board Chairman Tom Hatley announced last week that he intends to ask trustees at their March meeting to reverse their motion seeking the removal of Wade Burleson, an Oklahoma pastor who differed with recent policies the board enacted.

The move comes after executive committee members of the board met on Feb. 10 in Atlanta to review their planned action against Burleson.

"We have determined that we have the ability to seek management of these issues through internal processes that were not known during our January meeting," Hatley said in a statement. "We have never reached this stage of conflict before and did not know of all our options until recently."

If trustees agree at their March

20-22 meeting in Tampa, Fla., Burleson's ouster would no longer be requested at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June in Greensboro, N.C. Such decisions must be made by messengers, not by the mission board.

Burleson, who has criticized the board through his Web log, or "blog," questioned policies enacted in November that forbid missionary candidates from speaking in a "private prayer language," or tongues, and require them to be baptized by immersion.

When trustees originally announced plans to seek Burleson's ouster, they said the decision was based on "broken trust and resistance to accountability, not Burleson's opposition to policies enacted by the board."

A Baptist Press report last week suggested that the move was made because Burleson was posting updates to his blog during the IMB trustee's Jan. 9-11 meeting and refused other trustees' request that he stop.

Burleson repeatedly has stated

that nothing in IMB policy prevents him from operating such a blog.

In an interview, Burleson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., said of the turn of events: "I'm very grateful and I believe that it's the wise course of action."

He said his concern was not so much with specific policies but rather that the board was demanding acceptance of "uniform interpretation of nonessential doctrines" of the Bible.

"On the missionary field, these are nonessential doctrines," he said. "Evangelicals disagree."

Blog will continue

Burleson said he intends to continue his blog, possibly including future criticism of Baptist policy.

"Criticism of policies or actions is not a criticism of people and so I'll continue," he said. "If the board passes a policy that a trustee cannot publicly criticize a majority action of the board, I will abide by the policy or resign."

Hatley, pastor of Immanuel Bap-

tist Church in Rogers, Ark., told Religion News Service that the "internal processes" are just being put into place but permit the board to take a different course of action than originally planned.

"We're glad to proceed to try to make this an in-house matter rather than something that we have to turn to the SBC for," he said.

Hatley said in his written statement that he hopes to explain the debated doctrinal matters.

"Please note that in the near future I also intend to clarify the recently adopted guideline on baptism and the policy concerning tongues and private prayer language for missionary candidates by addressing the historical and theological framework in which those decisions were made," he said in the statement.

Burleson welcomed the plans for additional discussion.

"Frankly, if the policies are good they will stand," he predicted. "If for some reason there's a problem with them, I think the trustees should and will rescind them."

With additional information from Baptist Press

Charismatic Southern Baptists feeling betrayed, pastor says

"We're shocked and betrayed by what has happened at the International Mission Board."

Ron Phillips, pastor
of Abba House in
Chattanooga, Tenn.

By John Pierce
Baptists Today

Chattanooga, Tenn. (ABP)—When Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson launched a revolution within the Southern Baptist Convention, they found an eager soldier in Ron Phillips.

Phillips, 58, has been pastor of Central Baptist Church of Hixson, near Chattanooga, Tenn., since 1979—the year the so-called "conservative resurgence" began within the SBC.

In the early 1990s, he served as chair of the Home Mission Board, which later was merged with two other agencies to become the North American Mission Board. But in 1989 he had "an experience with

the Holy Spirit" that changed his life and ministry significantly.

Though once an insider in the conservative movement, Phillips now sees himself as excluded from SBC life.



Ron Phillips

"I do believe Paige (Patterson) and others have betrayed every one of us," said Phillips, whose church is now known as Abba's House and draws about 3,000 worshippers each Sunday.

The congregation identifies itself as "a Spirit-filled Southern Baptist church" that "operates in the gifts of the Spirit while holding to the Word of God." Phillips said his congregation affirms biblical authority—what he thought was the sole issue in the SBC controversy.

"We thought it was a commitment to a higher view of Scripture, rather than a narrowing view of fundamentalism," said Phillips, who helped carry out the convention's shift as HMB chair.

The suggestion that he is now on the receiving end of what he helped create is certainly "fair," Phillips confessed. He said he has apologized to many who were excluded from SBC life in past years. "I was much younger," he said. "But I was very serious and sincere."

In his book, "Awakened by the Spirit," Phillips shares his emerging theological and historical perspectives as a "Spirit-filled" Baptist. He said his passion for evangelism and missions remains high, but he is finding it harder to support the work of Southern Baptists.

He said convention policies—including the one recently adopted by the International Mission Board that excludes missionary candidates who use a "private prayer language"—are pushing more good Baptists away.

"We're shocked and betrayed by what has happened at the International Mission Board," said Phillips. "I feel like it is a precursor to a total booting out of Baptists with charismatic leanings."

"Nobody's business"

Like others, such as Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson, whose removal as an IMB trustee was being sought by the agency's board, Phillips sees the new restrictions on overseas missionaries as an assault on IMB President Jerry Rankin, who acknowledged having a private prayer language.

Phillips called the latest restrictions on missionaries "horrible." Private prayer practices "should be nobody's business," he said.

Phillips said he doesn't know Rankin personally but has heard wonderful reports about his leadership from missionaries he has encountered around the world. He

predicted the new restrictions on missionaries will hurt Southern Baptist efforts to become more ethnically diverse also. "Many African-American congregations that are Southern Baptist operate with the leadership of the Holy Spirit," said Phillips. "That's got to be an issue."

Phillips also claimed that members of his congregation are no longer able to serve as missionaries—even as volunteers—of NAMB, the SBC agency he once led.

Marty King, NAMB spokesman, said the agency does not screen volunteers for charismatic leanings. The board does have a policy, King said, that prohibits appointed missionaries and endorsed chaplains from practicing glossalalia (speaking in tongues), including a private prayer language.

So does Phillips still consider himself a Southern Baptist? "I do," he said. "I think I'm the real deal."

"McCarthyism"

Phillips said he is not mad at those he helped to gain power in the SBC, just concerned that they have "embraced what I call McCarthyism." Their philosophy, he said, seems to be "us four and no more."

Phillips said he and his congregation are relating to a wider group of Christians than before. Independent Baptists, and even moderate Baptists within and outside the SBC, are more open to him than current Southern Baptist leaders, he said.

"I have spoken in some moderate churches and have had some great revivals," said Phillips. "I think there is a greater hunger in moderate churches for the Holy Spirit."

Just admitting that, said Phillips, would probably cause some Southern Baptist leaders to call him a liberal.

Phillips said he and his congregation are partnering for missions and evangelism wherever they find acceptance and support. "We want to go where we are celebrated, not just tolerated."

Patterson's response & Pressler's book

By John Pierce
Baptists Today

Fort Worth, Texas (ABP)—In a response to Ron Phillips' claims, Paige Patterson said neither he nor anyone else to his knowledge ever made a promise to include charismatic people in all aspects of SBC life.

Patterson, a key leader of the conservative shift among Southern Baptists, added that his position on gifts of the Spirit has been known publicly for years and is documented in a commentary he wrote on 1 Corinthians.

"The Bible says not to forbid speaking in tongues, since the miracle of Acts 2, for example, was a miracle of God," Patterson said. "However, Paul builds in so many restrictions in 1 Corinthians 14 as to make the practice of mere utterance, what is practiced mostly today, virtually of little value."

Patterson said, as a Baptist, he would not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues, but would not call such a person to be his pastor or appoint someone with such leanings as a seminary professor.

"I cannot imagine why anyone could feel betrayed," said Patterson, now president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "Most of us don't make

deals; we try to understand Scripture and faithfully preach it."

But Phillips points to such a promise from page 158 of Paul Pressler's book, "A Hill on Which to Die," released in 1999.

In his personal recounting of the rightward shift in the SBC, Pressler writes: "The liberals had said that after the conservatives finished with those who held different views of the nature of the Bible, they would begin attacking the charismatics (neo-Pentecostals). ... They said conservatives wanted to make everybody think just as they do. Such a charge is ludicrous, but it did worry some people such as my friend Wally Henley (pastor of Encourager Church in Houston), who had charismatic leanings. ... I assured him that Paige, our friends, and I would not turn on charismatics after the battle over biblical authority was won. He trusted us, and he and others have now seen that this issue will not be a test of fellowship."

That assurance, however, is not being kept by SBC leaders, Phillips said. And the growing restrictions within SBC agencies make it harder for him and others to stay connected.

"I think this is an effort to exclude 'Word and Spirit' people" from the SBC, he said.

Many Gulf Coast pastors need prayer, parsonage work

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Pascagoula, Miss.—With his house still unlivable, Pastor Rex Yancey knows firsthand that recovery from hurricanes Rita and Katrina is taking a long time.

But Yancy, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pascagoula, Miss., can see a blessing in the midst of turmoil—the help that Pascagoula has received from Baptists nationwide.

“We could not have done it without them,” Yancey said. “They’re a godsend. Let everyone know we appreciate all Baptists, but especially Kentucky Baptists, for helping us.”

But much remains to be done. Skilled workers with drywall, plumbers, carpenters and electricians are the leading needs in Jackson County, Miss.

One of the people who need help is the pastor, who was featured recently in national media for preaching funerals for two hurricane victims who never were identified.

“Once I get carpenters in, I’m going to move back in to my house without any cabinets,” Yancey said. “And, there are still a lot of people who haven’t gotten settled with their insurance company.”

In addition to skilled personnel, materials are in short supply, according to John Edwards, one of two on-site coordinators in Pascagoula.



DRYWALL Don Preuit, a member of Main Street Baptist Church in Williamsburg, puts mud on the drywall of a home in Pascagoula, Miss. Baptist volunteers have mudded out more than 3,700 homes and repaired more than 1,200 in Jackson County, Miss. (Photo by Vicky Edwards)

On a recent visit to a building supply store, Edwards found they were out of drywall. Jackson County Baptist Association had stored shingles for use in rebuilding, but that supply has been exhausted, he said.

“If a group could take materials down, they’ll get them cheaper in Kentucky,” Edwards noted. “A door that costs \$130 here will cost \$230 there.”

The Kentucky Baptist Convention has published a booklet listing the needs of churches in the three Gulf Coast Baptist associations where the KBC has established a year-long partnerships.

Prayer for the weary

In addition to the various construction needs, many congregations also lack financial support because members have relocated.

One church needs to relocate. Three others were destroyed.

Lew Cook, an on-site coordinator for the Pascagoula-area partnership, advised Kentucky Baptists to pray for people in Mississippi, many who are weary.

“Mental outlook is a real concern,” Cook said. “And they need perseverance and patience to go along with it. There are lines most everywhere and after a while that gets old. You need inner strength.”

In Grand Isle, La., on-site coordinator Charlie Simmons said the greatest need is for more volunteers who can install drywall, roofing, and help finish the inside of damaged houses.

“They’re in pretty good shape on food and clothing,” Simmons said. “Most got electricity back where they can use their stoves again, and grocery stores are open.”

But many pastors and church leaders need prayer, he added. Many church buildings have been restored, but many parsonages are in bad shape and still need cleaned out.

Many pastors not only are living in substandard conditions, they also are working hard to help other people get their homes cleaned up, Simmons said. “Pray for the people and the pastors, that they’ll be able to hold up under the load.”

KBC leader says Gulf rebuilding needs ‘100 volunteers a week’

Continued from page 1
three associations in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Many pastors in the region believe their greatest harvest is ahead of them, Foster said.

Numerous churches have seen half to three-fourths of their members displaced by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, yet are seeing an equivalent number of newcomers filling the gap, he added.

“They’ve seen Baptists working in their neighborhoods and are coming to church saying, ‘Tell us more about what this is all about,’” Foster said. “The churches have been able to reach people they didn’t know about previous to the storms.”

“My heart breaks for these people”

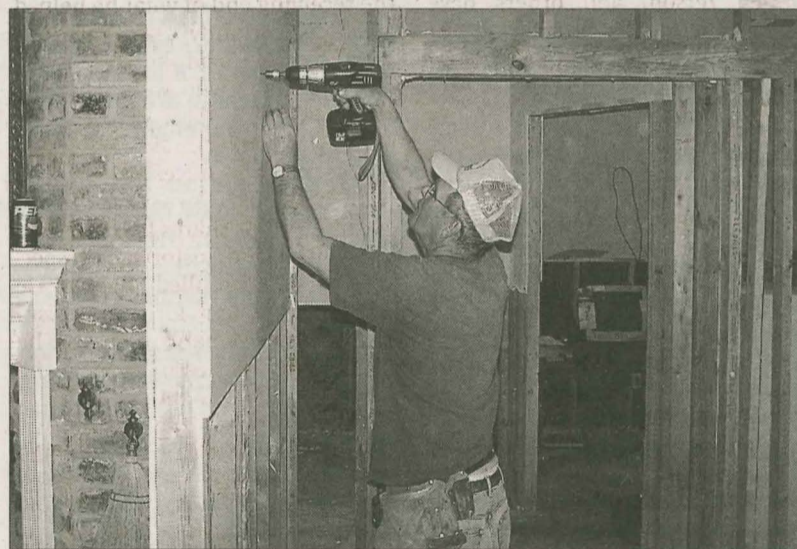
Despite the excitement surrounding the multiple repair projects, Foster and on-site coordinators say more Kentucky Baptists are vital to completing the work.

“We need 100 volunteers a week,” Foster said. “We’re six months into this and it’s amazing the interest has lingered this long. We’re got to keep it in front of people in order to sustain the volunteer growth.”

“These folks need help and they’re not going to get it unless people with skills go,” Edwards said. “My heart breaks for these people, especially the elderly. They have no skills, knowledge or ability to do it.”

“In disaster relief it’s traditionally been three or four weeks and we think it’s over. This is going to be a year or more. We don’t need people to think things are put back normal. We can’t quit.”

Foster said skilled laborers are particularly needed, such as carpenters, electricians, plumbers, drywallers and cabinetmakers.



PLENTY OF WORK Winston Fields of Big Creek Baptist Church in Hazard secures drywall in a home in Pascagoula, Miss. (Photo by Cordis Bishop)

In a situation where various volunteers are serving as on-site coordinators and numerous churches have arranged their own partnerships, officials say it is impossible to know exactly how many Kentuckians have traveled to the Gulf Coast.

Edwards estimated more than 1,000 have responded to the need for clean-up and rebuilding. In addition, Kentucky Baptists have sent more than \$1 million to the two states for food, supplies and church aid.

“We’ve received about \$2 million and will use all of it in this effort,” Foster said. “Some of it will go into additional cooking equipment, which we needed because of being at six different locations (last fall). We’re also trying to upgrade our communications equipment.”

Jackson County co-coordinator Lew Cook of Central Baptist Church in Maysville said by early February

volunteers had mudded out more than 3,700 homes and repaired more than 1,200.

Fourteen churches in the 43-member Jackson Association sustained damage, 11 of them significant, Cook said.

Although many congregations have been able to resume normal worship and educational activities, Cook said it is a different story in residential neighborhoods.

“Everyone has a trailer,” said the retired teacher. “Most folks aren’t back in their house. It’s not over here. It will be years before everything gets done and is back to any kind of normalcy.”

“I’ve seen God work”

In Grand Isle, La., Charlie Simmons, former director of missions for Graves County Baptist Association, is finishing up two weeks as on-site coordinator for Kentucky’s

partnership with Adolphe Stagg Baptist Association.

Simmons said recent groups who have helped have included people from Graves County, Frankfort and Radcliff Baptist Church.

“I’ve seen God work in marvelous ways,” Simmons said. “I’ve seen people who are living in homes that haven’t been cleaned out yet. They’re looking forward to getting some help. The conditions are pretty bad most of the time.”

Simmons said 560 homes were destroyed by the hurricanes and another 500 received damage of up to 50 percent.

However, numerous parsonages remain in unlivable condition, Simmons said.

“We could use as many volunteers as we could get for the next two months,” he added.

The state’s third partnership, with Carey Baptist Association in the Lake Charles area, has been fairly low key.

Foster said the primary request from churches in that association has been for financial assistance.

In addition, Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association has formed a partnership with Carey Association’s most severely damaged church, Choupique Baptist Church in Sulphur.

Besides the hope given to people living along the Gulf Coast, Foster said these partnerships are helping awaken Kentucky Baptists’ faith.

“There’s one fellow who had never shared his faith because he didn’t know he could,” Foster said. “In one day he had been able to lead six people to the Lord just by people asking him questions on the job site. People are excited about how God is using them.”

Volunteer info

Disaster relief teams are being sent to the Gulf Coast region on a weekly basis.

For information about a one-time volunteer trip, contact the KBC’s Baptist men on mission department at (502) 489-3527 or toll-free in Kentucky (866) 489-3527.

For information about ongoing partnership opportunities with a church on the Gulf Coast, call the KBC’s new work/associational missions department at (502) 489-3418 or toll-free in Kentucky (866) 489-3418.

“We could use as many volunteers as we could get for the next two months.”

Charlie Simmons, volunteer coordinator in Grand Isle, La.

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

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Proclaiming truth versus 'truthiness'

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Jesus wasn't afraid to show His emotions. He wept when Lazarus died. He shed tears over Jerusalem. He raged against hypocrites and moneychangers defiling His Father's house.

But Jesus based His life and teaching on something firmer than feeling: the truth as revealed by the Word of God. And He didn't hesitate to make this absolute declaration of truth: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

You will know the truth, Jesus also said, and it will make you free (John 8:32). But what is truth? Pontius Pilate's famous question seems to have as many answers as there are people nowadays.

If you watch "Oprah" and follow bestseller lists, you've probably heard all about the uproar over "A Million Little Pieces." That's the title of a "memoir" by writer James Frey about his alleged criminal career and bizarre misadventures. With a push from Oprah Winfrey, the book has sold more than 3.5 million copies, and was second only to the latest "Harry Potter" book among 2005 bestsellers.

The trouble started when "Smoking Gun," an investigative Web site, reported about a million little fabrications in "A Million Little Pieces." The site exposed whole sections of the book as wildly exaggerated or outright fiction. At first Oprah defended Frey. Later, to her credit, she apologized to her millions of fans for presenting the book as factual—and lambasted Frey on her show.

Sad state of "truth"

"A Million Little Pieces" is far from the first autobiography to play fast and loose with facts. The whole episode would be a minor literary sideshow if not for the huge public visibility Oprah gives everything she touches.

But this incident also illustrates the sad state of "truth" in America.

Pursuing the priority of evangelism

Recently, there have been several experiences that have reminded me of the priority of evangelism.

Thom Rainer recently was inaugurated as the ninth president of LifeWay Christian Resources. In his inaugural message, he said his passion is evangelism and helping local churches experience health and growth. He was emphatic in stating that LifeWay will be anchored to the truth of God's Word and relevant to the culture.

I was delighted to hear Rainer say he would lead LifeWay to work closely with state conventions. His study of baptisms in Kentucky focused on the need for a renewed emphasis on evangelism by Kentucky Baptist Convention churches.

Reaching people also is the passion of Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch. It is obvious to everyone that evangelism is his priority.

His theme is that "Everyone Can!" and it has been gratifying to see his

Everything is now open to acceptance or dispute. Almost everybody, it seems, feels qualified to declare what is true, regardless of the facts. If it feels right, if it's declared loudly or entertainingly enough, then hey, it's the truth—even if it's only my truth. Your truth is your business.

Politicians, phony academics, purveyors of "reality television" and other masters of distortion contribute to the confusion. Much of TV news has morphed into entertainment. Many news "consumers" access only Web sites or e-news services that tell them exactly what they want to hear. Several million young adults claim their primary news source is Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," a program that reports "phony news" for satirical purposes. It's entertainment, but an amazing number of people believe it.

Washington Times columnist Suzanne Fields calls this phenomenon the triumph of "truthiness"—a word coined, appropriately, by mock pundit Stephen Colbert of "The Daily Show."

"Truthiness" is what sincere people "conclude with their hearts, not their heads," Fields explains. "Much that passes for fact in textbooks and in the media is really about truthiness, not truth."

Basically, "truthiness" is emotional relativism. Among its most gullible victims are young people. Numerous studies show that many students, even at the college level, lack critical thinking skills, cannot identify the most basic events of recent history and cannot distinguish between fact and fiction.

But "truthiness" often afflicts another target: the church. Yes, the gospel of truth must be embraced by faith. But it's built upon a rock-solid biblical foundation that has withstood the storms of ages. Too often, we undermine that foundation through neglect and mushy theology.

"Modern evangelicalism puts

bold leadership challenging Southern Baptists to reach and baptize one million people in 2005-2006. He

has done everything possible to encourage Southern Baptists to renew their passion for evangelism.

Unfortunately, the upcoming Annual Church Profile report is expected to show a decline in baptisms through Kentucky Baptist churches. The reports that have come in to date have shown that baptisms are up among adults but down among youth and children.

This might be because the children are not in church, as their numbers certainly have not declined in the general population. Every day hundreds of children move into teen years and teens into adulthood without Jesus Christ.

Some of our greatest leaders for the future might be in the unreached neighborhoods, streets, cluster of homes or up a hollow in Eastern Kentucky. Churches must take initiatives to reach out beyond

undue weight on experience," Christian commentator Chuck Colson recently observed. "This heavy reliance on feelings carries over (to) discipleship and worship.... Doctrine may be seen as abstract and inaccessible because it seems unrelated to personal experience."

Yet the church stands or falls on the great doctrines of the Bible: God's supremacy and love. His righteousness and man's utter lostness in sin. His exclusive offer of salvation by faith through Jesus Christ alone. His command to make disciples among all nations.

If some of those doctrines sound too stern, too "judgmental" to touchy-feely believers, what then?

Church "losing its voice"

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, warns that the American evangelical church "seems to be losing its voice" just as the opportunity to declare the gospel worldwide is greater than ever.

"At base, the issue is a failure of theological nerve—a devastating loss of biblical and doctrinal conviction," Mohler says. "Put bluntly, many who claim to be Christians simply do not believe that anyone is actually lost."

This view, which is being quietly, often unconsciously adopted by more and more churchgoers, is anything but compassionate, Mohler adds. These believers sleep soundly only "because their conscience is uncluttered by concern for the lost."

If no one is lost, we have no business preaching the gospel. If no one is lost, we have no business asking our best and brightest to leave their homes and sacrifice their comforts to be missionaries. If no one is lost, we have no right to ask someone to follow Christ who might lose his or her life as a result.

But people are lost. They do need a Savior. God loves them. And He tells us to declare His name and make disciples to the ends of the earth. That's not "truthiness." That's the truth.

Erich Bridges is senior writer with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

church families. Vacation Bible school will be an excellent time to share Jesus with children and families.

Recently, Northside Baptist Church in Elizabethtown and First Baptist Church of Jamestown entered a partnering relationship to assist each other in fulfilling the Great Commission. We hope they are just the first of many churches who commit to work together in specific ways to strengthen their ministries.

The Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference has been planned to help pastors and church staff renew their passion for sharing Jesus Christ. Please make your plans to be present Feb. 27-28 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington to hear Bobby Welch and to help honor Lincoln Bingham on Monday night, and for a wonderful patriotic service Tuesday evening.

There is much more we can do as Kentucky Baptists, and what we can do we must do now. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

Tithing is step of obedience toward sacrificial living

By Doug Strader

Romans 12:1 says, "I appeal to you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

This has been one of my favorite verses for several years. In the first 11 chapters of Romans, Paul has been talking about all the things God has made possible through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the final five chapters of the book he talks about what we, as Christians, should be doing as a result of what Christ has done.

According to Webster's Dictionary, a sacrifice is "surrender of some desirable thing in behalf of something else higher." Paul states that we should offer our daily life as a sacrifice to God, and that our daily sacrifice is our spiritual worship. We should live each day as a sacrifice to Him Who has made our Christian life possible.

When Christians think of all that Jesus has made possible for our lives, how is it possible not to offer our best to Him each day? In the same way, how is it that Christians find it difficult to give to the Lord a tithe (10 percent) of our income? Having served as a pastor and a denominational worker for several years, I have heard most of the excuses used for not tithing. Some of the most common excuses are:

- I cannot afford to tithe.
- I do not make enough money to tithe.
- I make too much money to tithe.
- Tithing is taught in the Old Testament, not in the New Testament. Since the Old Testament is law and the New Testament is grace, therefore I am under grace and not the law.
- The church has more money now than it needs.
- I do not approve of the way the church handles its money.
- I do not like the way the church spends its money.

You will note that all these excuses deal with giving a tithe. But Paul admonishes Christians to give their bodies as living sacrifices. Tithing has nothing to do with sacrificing.

How can we justify living according to Romans 12:1 when tithing is not a part of our daily life? Giving a tithe does not fulfill Romans 12:1; however not tithing will stand in the way of our sacrificial living.

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



Take steps to help intervene when friend appears suicidal

Q: I have a friend who I fear might be suicidal. Will my friend be more likely to commit suicide if I bring up the subject?

By bringing up the subject, you can be a part of the "wall of resistance" that will offer your friend a real sense of hope. In a time of suicidal crisis, the risk typically is imminent for only a matter of hours. By recognizing the signs and intervening, you can help alleviate risk factors and get the person help.

SUICIDE

■ Verbal clues indicating risk of suicide might include such statements as "I wish I were dead."

■ Behavioral clues might include actions such as stockpiling weapons or pills.

■ Situational clues include events such as embarrassment or loss of a major relationship.

Just as CPR saves lives during cardiac arrest, helping save someone's life during a suicidal crisis is done through a method known as QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer.

Question. Asking someone directly about his or her intent lowers anxiety, opening up communication and lowering the risk of following through with an impulsive act.

Persuade. Giving the person your full attention, offering hope in any form, and asking for a promise not to follow through with the act without first getting in touch with you could provide another intervention opportunity when the crisis is at its worst.

Refer. Take the person directly to a counselor. If that is not possible, see if the person will promise to talk with a counselor. Make sure the at-risk person is safe. Find others who can help. You are not disloyal when you share someone's suicidal tendency with a caring professional.

Assure your friend you want him or her to live, that you are on his or her side, and that you will get through this crisis together. Gather as much support as possible around the suicidal person.

We serve the God of all hope Who said, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to give you a future and a hope." You can be the link that offers hope, enabling someone to live another day. If you do not know of sources of help in your immediate area, an available national phone number is (800) SUICIDE.—James Stillwell

Q: How can I help my child be an effective witness for Christ?

To help our children be witnesses for Christ, we as Christian parents must first let our children see in us a concern for people who do not know and follow Jesus. They have to see and hear us praying for others and talking to them, not just about our church, but about what God has done for us.

PARENTING

Several other specific things children (and adults) can do to be effective witnesses for Christ include:

Pray. Make a list of several friends who do not attend church. (Church attendance typically is a good indicator of one's spiritual life.) Ask God for opportunities and courage to talk to them about Jesus.

Invite. Look for non-church friends to invite to special programs that are not only fun, but where Jesus is talked about. Afterwards your children can ask their friends, "What did you think about what was said? Do you know that story? What do you think about Jesus?"

Give. When gifts are appropriate, look for gifts that are inspirational—music, books, etc. Always do this gently, and with respect for the traditions and beliefs of others.

Celebrate. When your child makes a profession of faith in Christ and gets baptized, throw a party! Invite unchurched and non-Christian friends. Help your child prepare and present a simple testimony about his or her Christian faith.—David Garrard

Family Forum writers are:

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Margins of life promote healthy balance

Do you ever feel that your frantic schedule dictates your daily priorities in life? Ever come to the end of the day, week or month both fatigued and frustrated about the hectic pace and lack of fulfillment? What about that nagging sense that your social, emotional and spiritual needs frequently go unmet?

Exploring the theme, "Juggling Your Priorities: Don't Drop the Ball," Baptist editors from across the nation gathered last week in Banff, Alberta, Canada, for our 2006 Association of State Baptist Papers annual meeting.

Keynote speaker Barney Self led a pair of workshops on "Balancing Your Personal and Professional Lives." While the sessions were geared toward editors, Self's focus on the importance of self-care applies to ministers and laypeople in all walks of life.

Self, a licensed marital and family therapist, also provides therapeutic services and referrals for ministers through LifeWay Christian Resources. He is a clinical member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy as well as a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors.

Basing part of his presentation on Richard Swenson's book, "Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives," Self defined margin as the amount of such resources individuals have "beyond what is needed." By contrast, a marginless life is so hectic and busy that there is no time or energy available for self-care.

"The disease of the 21st century is the marginless life," Self warned. "Margin allows us a lot of freedom for living in a different way.

"Our marginless life is a product of progress," he pointed out. "But our progress has been based on faulty premises: that increased income plus technology plus education equals a better life."

Self said that equation ignores people's transcendent social, emotional and spiritual needs. Citing many people's sense of fear, insecurity and isolation, he said understanding the nature of God and one's

position in Christ can help alleviate those struggles.

"Living happens in the margin; existence happens in the marginless," he declared. "Everything that has value in life in terms of relationships and the eternal takes place in the margins.

"Emotional margin is probably the most critical," he added. "We've got to ration our emotional energy. We've been avalanched by emotional trauma since 9/11." He said keys to healthy emotional response include cultivating social support, creating appropriate boundaries, granting grace, nurturing faith and holding fast to our hope in Christ.

Self said building physical margin includes addressing such factors as lack of sleep, exercise and obesity. "Eighty percent of us don't get enough exercise," he noted. "To restore physical margin, we take responsibility for our own health."

Time margin requires balancing work and leisure, Self explained. "Leisure time has decreased 37 percent since 1973," he added. "We get places faster, but we've got more places to go." Keys include building more personal time, couple time, family time and time with God into one's daily routine.

On the financial front, Self said margin requires decreased spending, increased savings, maintaining a budget and putting God's Kingdom first.

"The debt trap is deadly on our margin," he warned. "Settle the issue of the lordship of God over your finances. ... Contentment lies not in what's yours, but in Whose you are."

Encouraging balance in all areas of life, Self noted, "Everything in nature works best when it is in balance." He urged balance among such priorities as work and leisure, action and meditation, leading and following, speaking and listening, and giving and receiving.

"Our priorities have got to be established in a God-honoring way," he emphasized. "Cooperate with God in following Him and seeking His balance for your life."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Making healthy choices

By Joe Phelps

"Religion no longer works for me," he lamented. "I've gotten cynical and weary of the formulas and clichés that make up most of the Christian message."

He's not alone. A great many people, including many churchgoers and most thinking clergy I know, have the haunting suspicion that formulaic religion no longer rings true in this scientific, pluralistic, skeptical culture.

Reports of the mass exodus from churches, particularly in urban areas, are well-documented. Far too many churches, whose buildings are located at the intersection of Hopeless and Pain streets, are sounding the death rattle at a time when our culture seems profoundly in need of a bigger vision and a healing word.

What happened? Is this an expression of our culture's reluctance to join organizations, whether its Shriners or bowling leagues or churches? Perhaps.

Is it a matter of demographics? Bright, new suburban churches are thriving. Are urban churches in decline because of poor parking and peeling paint? Maybe so.

Or is it a matter of urban communities containing a high percentage of nonconformists? Are thinking people today tired of the packaged and the processed? Does religion no longer have anything of relevance and rigor to offer the world around us?

And what about those thriving suburban churches where people flock as if going to the mall? Are they maturing their people, or simply treating them as consumers, like the malls they impersonate, filling them with more comforts of life?

FIRST PERSON

Here's my latest theory: During the Industrial Era there was a call to standardize, simplify, economize, and package everything we love. About this same time, the message of religion also began to appear in a packaged, processed form.

And why not a packaged religion? After all, religion had brought perspective, purpose and peace to people, so why not find a way to mass market it? Say it in a way that everyone can understand. Put it in a package that is easily transported from one person to another.

But along the way, something vital was lost, at least for thinking people. What happened to religion is like what happened to vegetables.

People loved vegetables, and knew them to be good for us. So wouldn't it be great if we could have vegetables year-round, and ship our bumper crops across the land in an economical package without fear of spoiling? Welcome, canned vegetables, allowing us to have handy vegetables whenever we choose.

But after a while people realized that something vital was lost in the process. Canned vegetables are usually blah, flat, uninteresting

and have the vitamins boiled out of them. Canned goods don't taste good, and have created a generation of anti-vegetarians.

Canned religion, like canned vegetables is also mostly blah, flat, uninteresting, and only minimally nutritious. Partaking of canned religion is like eating canned carrots—mushy and tasteless.

What we need is an introduction to fresh vegetables—and fresh religion.

Fresh religion—a dynamic relationship with the Mystery of Life—is hearty and healing. Like fresh vegetables, it takes humus—earth, humanity, the stuff of life—to be born. It requires work, effort, patience, timing and tending.

It doesn't package nicely. It's not uniform and peeled. It is more complex than sound bytes or bumper stickers.

But nurture it, and you'll have something that sticks to your ribs. Something you can sink your teeth into. Something of substance. You'll find a bit of dirt in its creases, for it has been where you are. And yet it has something you need, for it has distilled the light and water and minerals of this beautiful world, and offers itself to you as a kind of sacrifice.

We encourage our kids to occasionally try a vegetable previously rejected. I would invite those who have been served a bad plate of religion in the past to take a similar taste test.

Joe Phelps is pastor of Highland Baptist Church in Louisville

Baptist newspaper questions NAMB's effectiveness

About these stories

Both stories on these two pages are based on articles by Joe Westbury, with additional reporting by Gerald Harris, the managing editor and editor, respectively, of the Christian Index, the newspaper of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Before joining the Index, Westbury was a missions education materials writer for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, a precursor agency to the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Harris, who became editor of the Index in 2003, was a former pastor in metro-Atlanta as well as a past member of the SBC Executive Committee, SBC Resolutions Committee and a past trustee of Criswell College in Dallas.

In a note to readers, Harris states that the Index always has been a supporter of NAMB. "This special report, written at the request of many pastors over a several month period, seeks to address some concerns of how the agency is working to reach the lost for Christ."

In a rebuttal, which can be found on NAMB's Web site (namb.net), officials charge that the analysis' release was timed for "maximum damage to North American missions" as it comes just weeks before the North American missions emphasis and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

"We pray that it will not have a detrimental effect on Southern Baptists' prayer and financial support of the missionaries," NAMB officials state.

Editor Harris urges continued support for NAMB in his note to readers: "We want to affirm our commitment to NAMB and especially to our missionaries. We encourage all Georgia Baptists to sacrificially give to this year's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering so NAMB can be more effective than ever in taking the gospel to a hurting world."

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

Atlanta (ABP)—A Georgia Baptist newspaper claims that the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board has failed to live up to expectations in its key responsibilities of church starting, evangelism strategies and developing career missionaries.

In an extensive analysis of the agency, the Christian Index newspaper cites a variety of concerns, including:

- The number of career missionaries funded by the North American Mission Board has dropped 10 percent since 1997, despite promises the restructured Southern Baptist agency would expand mission work in America.

- A lack of a consistent evangelism strategy, illustrated by the failure of two national evangelistic campaigns.

- A loss of momentum in church-planting efforts.

- The outsourcing of jobs to a secular company started by a friend of Reccord's, while NAMB employees were laid off.

- Potential conflicts of interest between Reccord's role as head of NAMB and his moonlighting ministry as a speaker and author.

- A \$31 million drop in NAMB cash reserves from \$55 million in 1997 to \$23 million in 2004.

In an extensive rebuttal, NAMB officials said the Index story contains inaccuracies and innuendoes, overlooks successes, cites anonymous "observers" for some criticism and fails to include NAMB responses from interviews with the writer.

"Labeling the story as 'an analysis' does not exempt its author from the standards of fairness and disclosure Baptists expect from their reporters," the response states.

NAMB President Bob Reccord directed the massive Southern Baptist Convention restructuring effort in the mid-1990s and later was tapped to lead NAMB, the centerpiece of the new denominational structure.

NAMB resulted from the 1997 combination of three agencies: the Home Mission Board, the Radio and Television Commission and the Brotherhood Commission. At the time, proponents of the merger predicted efficiencies would result in more money going directly to missions efforts.



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The report concludes that, while NAMB has accomplished much, it has failed to produce the anticipated results in a variety of areas:

Missionary count

NAMB announced in January 2000 that it had reached the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust goal of 5,000 missionaries in North America. But the actual number of missionaries on the field depends on how they are counted.

The number of long-term, NAMB-funded missionaries actually has dropped since 1997, the paper states, while self-funded volunteers now make almost half of the missionary total.

NAMB regularly claims that more than 5,300 North American missionaries are funded through the SBC's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. A closer look shows only 2,942 are long-term missionaries funded by the offering. The remaining 2,422—or 45 percent—are self-funded volunteers who serve through NAMB's Mission Service Corps.

When the Mission Service Corps was founded in 1977, its workers were categorized as volunteers. To avoid any confusion, the Home Mission Board (NAMB's predecessor) included them in the total missionary count but kept the volunteer designation. Volunteers had to serve a minimum of two years before they were listed in the missionary personnel count.

NAMB, on the other hand, removed the volunteer status, lowered the service requirement to only four months and commissioned them as full-fledged missionaries.

The number of NAMB-funded career missionaries has declined by 329 since NAMB's first year—a drop of 10 percent—while the MSC volunteers have jumped by 827, or 34 percent.

NAMB acknowledged the number of non-volunteer mission workers—what NAMB calls "career" and "limited-term" missionaries—has declined since 1997. In a statement released to Associated Baptist Press Feb. 16, NAMB said the drop is explained by the rising cost of health benefits, a rash of recent early re-

tirements, and the inability of state conventions to fund many jointly appointed missionaries.

But NAMB said the agency's classification of missionaries has been handled consistently and openly. "There is absolutely no deception in the way these missionaries are categorized or reported," the statement said. As for Mission Service Corps volunteers, "we are proud of the fact that we recognize these dedicated servants' commitment and calling by referring to them as 'missionaries,'" NAMB said.

Evangelism campaigns

In January 2003 NAMB announced the launch of the most extensive evangelistic campaign in SBC history. It was billed as the denomination's response to the widespread soul searching which the nation was experiencing following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The "What Now?" campaign, tailored for both the United States and Canada, was built on a three-year strategy for personal revival and spiritual awakening. Tens of thousands of dollars were spent on the publication of leadership materials by NAMB and state conventions that were gearing up to prepare their laity for the campaign.

But the campaign failed to coalesce. Halfway into the effort, funding was pulled. But that important decision was not uniformly communicated to state conventions. Some state papers, including the Index, continued to publicize the national campaign for nearly a year after its demise.

In response, NAMB officials said the agency's representatives apologized for any confusing communications and explained NAMB discontinued the campaign, at the behest of state conventions, in order to avoid confusion for the local church caused by a number of SBC national initiatives.

The biggest holdover from the campaign—a one-year goal of a million baptisms—was resurrected last summer when SBC President Bobby Welch, who sensed a lack of emphasis on evangelism, launched his "Everyone Can' Kingdom Challenge."

But in the June 2005—during the same SBC annual meeting when Welch was launching his million-baptism theme—NAMB unveiled a new evangelism initiative. Reccord announced the new "Who Cares?" campaign would begin in the fall of 2005 with a variety of television commercials dealing with life issues.

Thus far, eight months after it was announced, there is still no sign of a campaign. No billboards. No newspaper ads. No radio or television spots.

NAMB said Feb. 16 "Who Cares?" was not another campaign but simply media support for the SBC-wide effort. Chuck Allen, NAMB chief operating officer, said the rollout had been delayed due to the Gulf Coast hurricanes, which overloaded NAMB staff with other responsibilities.

But the campaign was not being produced by NAMB staff but outsourced to InovaOne, a contractor with ties to Reccord. The Index stated that arrangement would not have affected NAMB's personnel responding to the hurricanes.

But in response, NAMB said its staff would have been involved in every step of "Who Cares?" implementation.

InovaOne, which already was producing NAMB's video coverage of disaster relief, did not have adequate staff to operate on both fronts. Something had to give, and it was the evangelism launch, Allen said.

\$31 million drop in reserve funds

At the June 2002 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, Reccord gave a progress report on the first five years of the agency's existence. The committee leading the SBC restructure anticipated \$34 million in savings during those early years.

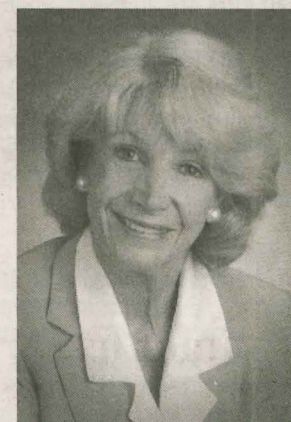
"I'm here to tell you we didn't make it; we surpassed it, ... redirecting to front-line ministries a total of \$40,387,000," he said.

The redirected funds, he said, made possible Strategic Focus Cities church-planting and evangelism efforts (\$14.1 million), the Nehemiah Project (\$7.3 million) to train church planters, and other ministries. But

Continued on page 7

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NAMB consultant profits from recommended downsizing

Atlanta (ABP)—A paid consultant who advised the North American Mission Board to outsource most of its media operations has been hired to provide many of those outsourced services, by his longtime friend, NAMB President Robert Reccord.

In early 2003, NAMB hired Steve Sanford, a personal friend of Reccord's from their days in Virginia, to conduct an audit of NAMB's media strategy.

Sanford presented the audit to Reccord in the fall of 2003 with its recommendation to outsource many jobs in its communications unit. Forty positions were eliminated and 31 employees were terminated, according to a report by the Christian Index, a newspaper of Georgia Baptists.

Much of the work was handed off to InovaOne, a company founded by Sanford, and other companies.

But Sanford told Associated Baptist Press there was no connection between the audit and the work his company, InovaOne, now is performing for NAMB.

NAMB chief operating officer Chuck Allen defended InovaOne as simply a transition company helping NAMB outsource the workload.

The audit has not been made public, but NAMB officials said they do not dispute the connection between the audit and the layoffs.

The fall 2003 terminations removed many long-term employees from NAMB's ranks, including editors, writers, graphic designers and a video production team.

Throughout 2005, InovaOne took on more of NAMB's workload. Sanford's company received the contract to produce the "Who Cares?" evangelistic media strategy and the

new "316 Network."

"We deeply regret the necessity of eliminating any positions that affect NAMB staff members," NAMB said in a statement last week.

But the statement added there was nothing "underhanded" involved. "We believe our constituents want us to operate with the mindset of efficiency and effectiveness that characterizes the best-run companies but with a heart for ministry."

Reccord's speaking schedule

The Christian Index article also questioned Reccord's extensive schedule of speaking and writing that is unrelated to NAMB's work.

Reccord and his wife, Cheryl, operate a ministry called Total Life Impact, which lists Cheryl Reccord as a motivational speaker and promotes books by both.

"It's Cheryl's ministry," NAMB spokesman Martin King said. "He supports her. Sometimes he joins

her. But it's her ministry."

NAMB officials say Reccord keeps a clear separation between NAMB-related speaking engagements and his personal ministry.

Reccord plans to speak at all 19 Promise Keepers rallies nationwide this year. He told the NAMB staff he has reworked his schedule to accommodate the requests and might be unavailable for any additional NAMB speaking engagements for that time frame—nearly half of the year's Friday evenings.

NAMB officials said only "two or three media appearances" out of Reccord's thousands of speeches and interviews were not related to NAMB, and even those "were focused on helping laity be on-mission Christians."

This article is based on a story first published in the Christian Index, and is supplemented with new information from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and Associated Baptist Press.



Robert Reccord

NAMB officials dispute newspaper's claims, fairness & timing

Continued from page 6

the efficiencies in those early years have not carried over to future years, the Index stated.

Meanwhile, NAMB has drawn down the cash reserves it inherited from the former Home Mission Board in 1997, despite lower overhead, the HMB. At its founding, NAMB had a \$55 million cash cushion for emergency operating costs. The balance is now \$23 million, a decrease of \$32 million in seven years.

NAMB apparently has swung between periods of belt tightening and loosening, the Index reported. For example, in August 2003 it announced it was trimming its 2004 budget by 6 percent, eliminating 31 positions and reducing program support due to a softening economy.

But the following year, when staff was being asked to work with

less, NAMB launched the first of five college leadership conferences called Elevate.

NAMB confirmed to the Index that the 2004 conferences lost more than \$600,000. But rather than canceling the two conferences scheduled for 2005, the first conference was held at a loss and the second was cancelled. A fifth conference in the series, set for next month in Atlanta, already has been cancelled.

Another expenditure was the creation of a high-tech walk-through exhibit called the Vision Center, which was constructed in NAMB's lobby. Modeled after a similar interactive information center at Focus on the Family, the three-dimensional, interactive experience of sight, sound, and touch using ultra-realistic professionally designed sets was built, sources say, at a cost in excess of \$1.2 million.

The exhibit debuted in 1999 as the crown jewel of NAMB's early years. But the repeat crowds failed to materialize and the center was shut down four years later.

Church planting

A look at church planting numbers shows a period of less than stellar growth for NAMB, given the efficiencies that were expected, the Index reported.

SBC church planting increased slowly yet consistently for the eight years prior to NAMB's launch. Under NAMB, congregational starts have been on a roller coaster ride. Its most recent year shows an increase of 132 church plants from the Home Mission Board's final year of 1996.

The most significant increase was for the years of 1999 and 2000 following Reccord's announcement of providing an additional \$2 million

for church planting and evangelism. When those one-time funds were put on the field, results were almost immediate—church plants jumped 258 to a record 1,747 in the first year and baptisms jumped 12,078.

But when the funds were depleted, the momentum ceased and growth came to a standstill, the Index reported.

The agency disputed that assessment. NAMB officials said the last eight years included five of the highest years of church planting in SBC history. In its eight years of existence, NAMB has averaged 277 more church plants per year than in the last eight years of the HMB, the statement said.

NAMB officials said they were "extremely disappointed" with the Index's article, which they said was timed to cause "maximum damage to North American missions," coming just before the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

"The article clearly was not intended to be an objective review of NAMB and its accomplishments and disappointments, but a highlighting of a few programs where we failed," officials said.

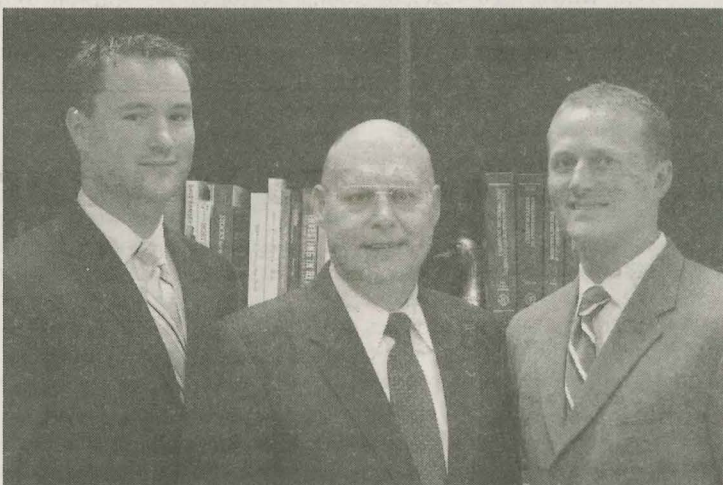
This article is based on a story by Joe Westbury, first published in the Christian Index, and is supplemented with new information from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and Associated Baptist Press.

The fall 2003 terminations removed many long-term employees from NAMB's ranks.

Full texts available

Visit our Web site, westernrecorder.org, to find links to the full transcripts of the Christian Index articles and the North American Mission Board's response.

What is your greatest financial risk?

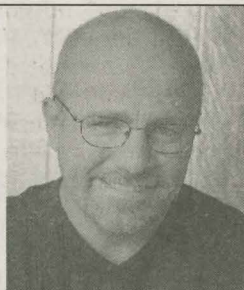


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Segregation hurts Christians' ability to spread gospel, sociologist says

"Do you think God would want only 8 percent of all churches to be multiracial in a multiracial society like the United States?"

Sociologist
George Yancey

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

Waco, Texas (ABP)—Christians undermine their ability to reach society with the gospel because they segregate their churches by race, a sociologist and author told participants in a workshop aimed at racial reconciliation.

Only 8 percent of American churches are multiracial, lamented George Yancey, assistant professor of sociology at the University of North Texas and author of several books, including "Beyond Racial Gridlock: Embracing Mutual Responsibility."

Yancey defines a "multiracial church" as one in which no single racial group comprises more than 80 percent of the participants.

This contrasts with society as a whole, which is far more integrated, he said.

Catholic churches are most likely to be multiracial, with 12 percent of congregations meeting that standard, Yancey reported. Evangelical Protestants are next, with 5 percent of churches qualifying as multiracial, followed by 2.5 percent of mainline Protestant churches.

Several challenges

Churches face several challenges in becoming multiracial, he noted.

First is differing racial ideas, he said. While whites tend to see racism as "something that is overt and only done from one individual to another individual," people of color tend to see racism as "structural as well as individual, and social institutions perpetuate racism even when individuals do not tend to be racist."

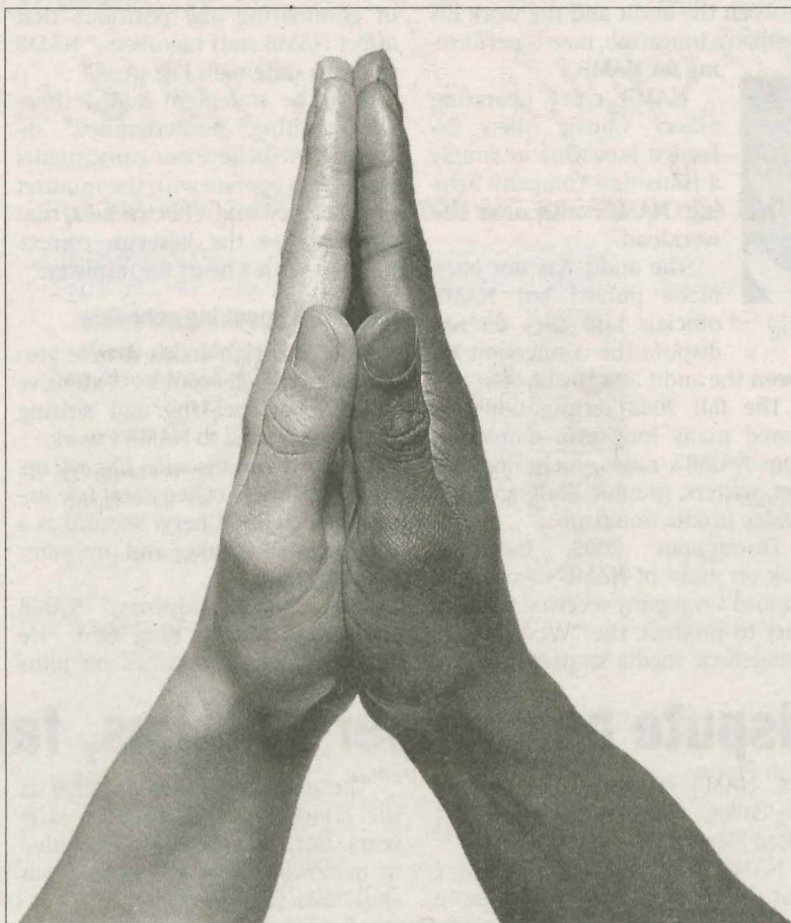
Views of education illustrate the differences, Yancey said: Whites tend to see educational failure as an individual problem, but people of color see the structural problems inherent in the fact "predominantly black or Hispanic schools, as a rule, do not prepare students for college as well as predominantly white schools."

A second challenge to multiracial churches is "our different cultural ideas," Yancey added.

People tend to think cultural ideas that differ from their own are wrong when, in fact, they simply are different, he noted. In church, differing cultural ideas range from communication styles to customs to time-orientation. Those differences aren't right or wrong, just matters of taste and expectation, he said.

To illustrate how cultural ideas can divide church people, Yancey pointed to politics.

"Some white Christians wonder, 'Can you be a Democrat and Christian at the same time?' (but some blacks wonder, 'Can you be a Republican and a Christian?'" he observed. "I'm distressed by the po-



litical polarization in our society. We have to learn to quit judging people based on their political ideas. We're just different."

The third multiracial challenge churches face is the reality that some people will resist a mixed-race congregation, he said.

"Even when change is good, some people will resist it because they're comfortable where they are," he said. "Not everyone will support a multiracial church."

Facing resistance, prejudice

Some of this resistance comes from within the church-growth movement, he said, citing church-growth advocates who say homogenous churches grow fastest.

But that contrasts with the reality of society, he countered. "In the U.S. today, we are very much a multicultural society. And churches are not homogenous; they vary by age, income and gender. ... Since churches rarely are organized by a single culture other than by race, why can't we have multiracial churches?"

Other resistance comes from the "cultural-pluralist argument," which maintains racial minorities must be protected from the corrupting influence of the majority.

This idea does not square with the facts, he said, noting surveys show whites in multiracial churches change their attitudes and habits more than racial minorities.

The fourth and final challenge to multiracial churches is prejudice, Yancey said, stressing this problem originates from both sides of the racial divide.

"Whites are most likely to leave a church that is becoming racially diverse when they have children of dating age," he reported, adding that this denotes racism. But from the other perspective, "many people of color look at church as a place of refuge so that they can es-

cape from whites," he added, labeling this also as prejudice.

4 reasons for multiracial churches

Despite the challenges, multiracial churches are more than worth the effort, Yancey contended. He cited four reasons why Christians need multiracial churches:

- Multiracial churches are effective in presenting the gospel in multiracial communities. Such communities—ranging from athletes to homeless—are composed of groups that naturally embrace racial diversity, he said. They also include interracial families and multiracial people, who do not feel comfortable in single-race churches.

- Racial reconciliation requires the kind of Christian model presented by multiracial churches. "Christians have been the followers, not leaders" in racial reconciliation, Yancey maintained. "We have failed to look at race as a moral issue, (but) multiracial churches will be an important part of solving racism."

- Multiracial congregations can repair "our damaged Christian witness." "If schools can integrate, why can't churches?" he asked. "If we can't integrate our churches, we show that society is stronger than (anything) our faith can produce. If Christians can't deal with racism, ... we present a small God to our non-believing world."

- Multiracial churches reflect obedience to God. Yancey cited multiple examples of Jesus and the early church reaching across racial lines to show love and acceptance. "God is trying to reach people of different groups, but we get in the way," he said.

"Do you think God would want only 8 percent of all churches to be multiracial in a multiracial society like the United States? Not all churches should be multiracial, but 8 percent is too small."

7 Characteristics

Waco, Texas (ABP)—Sociologist and author George Yancey has identified seven principles of multiracial congregations:

Inclusive worship. Racially distinctive elements of worship transcend music to include preaching style, the way the worship service is organized and interior décor of church buildings.

Successful multiracial churches typically adopt one of three worship practices—a "totally new worship style," alternating styles from Sunday to Sunday, and "blend it all together," with multiple racial elements in each service.

Diverse leadership. These churches have "clergy and/or laity leadership who reflect the makeup or desired makeup of the congregation," he said.

An overarching goal. This is "a nonracial goal, which is easier to meet if the congregation becomes multiracial," Yancey explained. Potential goals include desired results in evangelism, community service and translating the gospel into meeting societal needs, he said, noting multiracial churches can meet these goals in many communities far better than single-race congregations.

Intentionality. Churches that are expressly intentional about racial diversity communicate their willingness to go out of their way to become multiracial, think about what will be necessary to achieve that goal and find the motivation to reach out to various races.

Personal skills. These include sensitivity to different needs of different races, patience to deal with transitions, willingness to empower people of other races, and the ability to relate well to people of different races.

Location. "The vast majority of multiracial churches are located in the inner city or in racially diverse areas," he said. "Suburban churches (often) are seen as rejection of minorities" since many suburbs developed because of "white flight" from racially diverse urban neighborhoods.

"Suburban multiracial churches are almost all led by nonwhite pastors," he added.

Adaptability. Successful multiracial churches can "anticipate new challenges and/or adapt to unanticipated issues as they come up," he said. These include difficulties in assimilating people who speak different languages; dealing with "interracial romance," especially among the church's teenagers; and processing secular political and social issues without splintering the congregation.

Congratulations Scholarship Recipients
















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Morning View
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Karr**
First Baptist Church
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Church
London

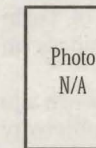












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McKinney**
Freedom Baptist
Church, Mt. Vernon
-  **J.C. Mullins III**
Calvary Baptist
Church
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-  **Sarah Pryor**
Yocum Creek Baptist
Church
Evarts
-  **Timothy Riley**
White Sulphur
Baptist
Georgetown
-  **Erica L.
Satterfield**
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First Baptist Church
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-  **Amy Shemwell**
Trenton Baptist
Church
Trenton
-  **Jessica Shout**
Central Baptist
Church
Paris
-  **Brittany
Thomas**
Boone's Creek Baptist
Church
Lexington
-  **Joshua Watkins**
First Baptist Church
Artemus
-  **Sarah Whitaker**
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Severns Valley Baptist
Church
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Woods**
First Baptist Church
Middlesboro



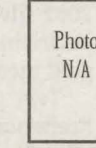











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River of Life Church
Springfield
-  **Robert Chappell**
First Baptist Church
Dawson Springs
-  **Demarcus
Compton**
Mount Union
Baptist Church
Summersville
-  **David Dickens**
Campbellsville
Baptist Church
Campbellsville
-  **Corey Evancho**
Lakewood Baptist
Church
Louisville
-  **Donovan
Hatfield**
Central Grove
Baptist Church
Albany
-  **Kyle Hester**
Stanford Baptist
Church
Stanford
-  **Lindsey Huff**
Windsor Baptist
Church
Windsor
-  **Rachel Johnson**
Clear Spring Baptist
Church
Columbia
-  **Ashley
McQuilliam**
Kirkwood Baptist
Church
Harrodsburg

-  **Pam
McCardwell**
Lighthouse Baptist
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Mt. Washington
-  **James Murphy**
Bloomfield Baptist
Church
Bloomfield
-  **Joshua Myers**
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-  **Amy
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Valleyview Baptist
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Woodburn Baptist
Church
Franklin
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Trammell Creek
Baptist Church
Greensburg
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Weatherford**
Green River
Memorial Bapt. Ch.
Campbellsville
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Stithon Baptist
Church
Vine Grove
-  **Julia Wilson**
Versailles Baptist
Church
Versailles
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Williams**
Pleasant Hill
Baptist Church
Campbellsville
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Woods**
Crestwood Baptist
Church
Crestwood

Georgetown College

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Calvary Baptist
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Independence
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First Baptist
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-  **Christopher
Cherry**
St. Matthews Baptist
Louisville
-  **Paige Cunnagin**
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Fort Thomas
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Church
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One fast chap

Ex-chaplain shines for media during Olympics

"God has given me some pretty good athletic talent and I want to use it to the fullest."

Brock Kreitzburg, on his Olympic Web page

By Tim Warsinsky
Religion News Service

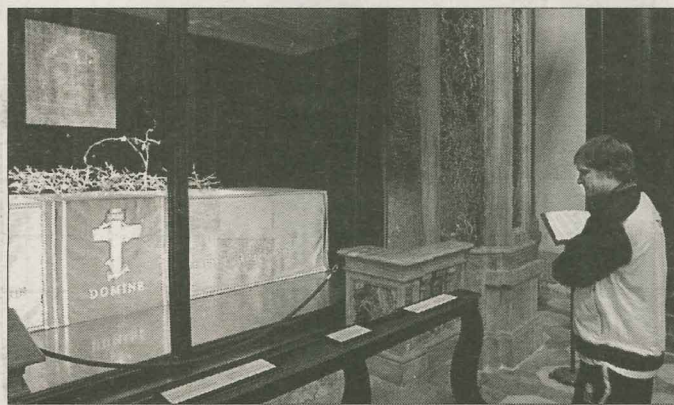
Turin, Italy (RNS)—Even before the Olympics started, the Brock Kreitzburg show was well under way.

Kreitzburg, a former retirement-home chaplain in Akron, Ohio, turned bobsled pusher, already has held court at the Shroud of Turin and lined up three appearances on national television.

This from a guy who a month ago was pushing and riding in obscurity on the United States' second-string team in a sport almost no one back home gives any notice.

Watching in bemusement at times was Kreitzburg's driver on the four-man bobsled, Todd Hays, a 2002 silver medalist who has a shot at driving the U.S. to a historic two gold medals.

Two things conspired to thrust Kreitzburg, who turned 30 last week, headlong into the pre-Olympic hype machine. He was promoted to Hays' USA-1 sled as a brakeman



SHROUD VISIT U.S. Olympian Brock Kreitzburg takes a moment to read about the Shroud of Turin. Kreitzburg is a Christian and a former hospital chaplain. (RNS photo by Joshua Gunter)

Former speed skating medalist holds to faith amid personal trials

Turin, Italy (BP)—Four years ago at the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, U.S. speed skater Derek Parra seemed to be on top of the world.

In his personal life, Parra and his wife, Tiffany, had just celebrated the birth of their first child, Mia Elizabeth.

In his professional life, Parra won a silver medal in the 5,000 meters, then set a world record and captured the gold in the 1,500 meters—becoming the first Mexican-American to win a gold medal in the Winter Olympics.

How things change in four years.

The Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, don't hold the same meaning for Parra as they did the last time. For one thing, he struggled just to make the Olympic team. Now, at age 35, most experts consider him a long shot to defend his title in the 1,500 meters race.

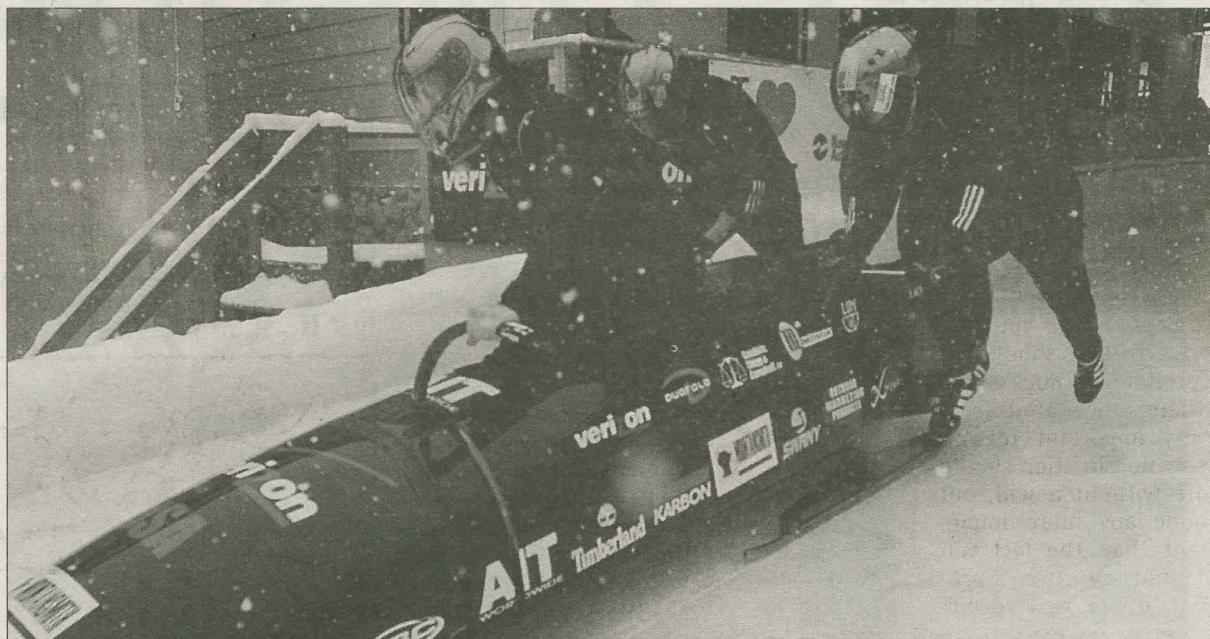
More importantly, he and his wife endured a painful divorce that shook Parra's faith and left his world in shambles.

Through it all, Parra still clings to his faith in God as he struggles through the darkest chapter of his life.

Parra says he has been encouraged by the number of e-mails he's received from fans expressing their support in recent days and offering words of encouragement. He especially appreciated the wisdom of a friend who reminded him that God ultimately will bring good out of the situation.

"My family, my friends and my faith is what's gotten me through it," Parra said.

"This is the hardest thing I've ever been through in my life, but I've had my friends and my family around me to help me through this. It keeps coming back to my faith as well."



TRIAL RUN Brock Kreitzburg (back left), shown here in a trial run in Lake Placid, was on the USA's second team until last month when he was promoted to the first team. (Akron Beacon Journal photo by Karen Schiely)

last month.

And then, as Kreitzburg's teammates like to say, he was Brock being Brock.

The excitable Kreitzburg has glowed in several national media interview sessions. He's fun and funny, but also modest and thoughtful.

Don't forget handsome. He caught the eyes and ears of NBC producers, who taped him Wednesday with women's bobsled driver Jean Prahm in an Olympic fashion show segment that aired on the "Today" show.

Kreitzburg, who sends out extensive e-mails to friends and family about his Olympic journey and writes a journal for The Plain Dealer of Cleveland, has hooked up with several elementary-school classes, including one in Minnesota

that is the subject of an upcoming NBC piece, producer Colin Macaulay said.

So what if Kreitzburg doesn't compete until Feb. 24, in an event where he works for five seconds?

"He was great. We hope to have him on again," Macaulay said.

Visiting the Shroud

After learning Kreitzburg has a master's degree in divinity, NBC decided to tape Kreitzburg at the church that houses the Shroud of Turin, which many believe to be Jesus' burial cloth bearing His image.

"It's pretty special to share this with my teammates," Kreitzburg said. "As a Christian, being a Westerner, you don't really see the roots of your faith."

"Some people say this (the

shroud) is real, and some people say it's not. But this just kind of makes it more real and it strengthens my faith. It's pretty awesome, actually."

Kreitzburg, a born-again Christian who graduated from a Jesuit high school, helped turn the trip into a team outing, then explained to his fellow bobsledders the shroud's rich history and significance.

"We tried to stump him, and we got him on a couple things," bobsled coach Tuffy Latour said.

"God has given me some pretty good athletic talent and I want to use it to the fullest," Kreitzburg said on his biographical Web page.

"As I do well, I want to thank Him, because without God, I would not be in the situation I am now. I feel He has called me to serve others in a way of ministry."

Baptist chaplain coaching Costa Rican skier

By Tim Ellsworth
Baptist Press

Turin, Italy (BP)—It might not be as widely known as the Jamaican bobsled team, but the Costa Rican cross-country skiing team has been a fixture at the Winter Olympics for more than two decades.

Steve Sellers, a Southern Baptist pastor in Canada, serves as the coach for the lone member of the ski team, Arturo Kinch.

"We came before the Jamaican bobsled team," Sellers said. "It goes all the way back to 1980 in the Olympics in Lake Placid. So (Kinch) was two Olympics before the Jamaican bobsled team."

In addition to his role as Kinch's coach, Sellers is serving as a chaplain during the Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

Sellers hopes some of the athletes will encounter God amid their quest for Olympic glory.

He recalls his experience as Olympic chaplain in 1998, when numerous athletes from Eastern European countries stopped by the chapel center every night for a Bible discussion group.

"All these different athletes were there for the Olympics, but a lot of them were really investigating the Lord," Sellers said. "It was

an exciting time. We're hoping things like that will materialize again, but only God can make that happen."

Sellers began serving as a chaplain during the Olympics in 1998 in Nagano, Italy. This year he's one of 10 chaplains who will staff the chapel center, which serves the two Olympic villages.

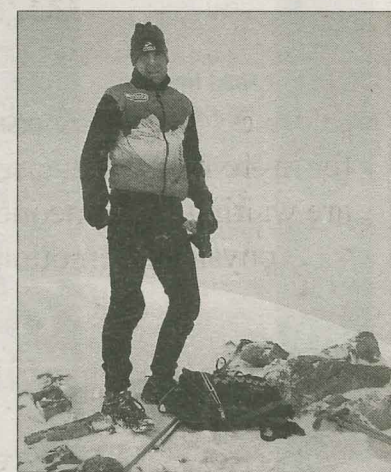
As chaplain, he'll lead Bible studies for those who want to attend, listen to those who want to talk and pray with those who have needs.

"You've got to watch your evangelistic practices," Sellers said. "For me, that's the idea, but you have to be careful in that setting. The organizers don't want you out there proselytizing."

Sellers is pastor of Alpine Christian Ministries church in Canmore, Alberta, Canada. For the past 12 years he's also served as chaplain for the National Sports Center in Calgary, where athletes from around the world come to train and compete.

That included Kinch, who came to Calgary in 2002 for a competition. A mutual friend put Kinch in touch with Sellers, and the two became friends. Kinch asked Sellers to serve as his coach.

The son of a missionary couple



OLYMPIC COACH Steve Sellers, a Baptist pastor in Alberta, Canada, is in Turin, Italy, both as a ski coach and chaplain in the Olympic village. (BP photo)

in Costa Rica, Kinch moved to Colorado in 1974 to attend Rockmont College, now Colorado Christian University. His main sport was soccer, but he went out for the ski team to get in shape.

"He really took to it," Sellers said. "He loved it and was really good at it, so he kept it going."

This year in Turin marks the fifth Winter Olympics in which Kinch has competed as a cross-country skier.

Just misunderstood?

Publishing 'Gospel of Judas' revives debate about Jesus' least-liked disciple

The manuscript could bring momentum to a broader academic movement that argues Judas has gotten a bum rap.

By Stacy Meichtry
Religion News Service

Geneva (RNS)—The first translation of an ancient, self-proclaimed "Gospel of Judas" will be published in late April, bringing to light what some scholars believe are the writings of an early Christian sect suppressed for supporting Jesus Christ's infamous betrayer.

If authentic, the manuscript could add to the understanding of Gnosticism, an unorthodox Christian theology denounced by the early church.

According to scholars who have seen photographs of the brittle manuscript, it argues that Judas Iscariot was carrying out God's will when he handed Christ over to His executioners.

The manuscript could bring momentum to a broader academic movement that argues Judas has gotten a bum rap among both historians and theologians, as well as in popular culture.

The manuscript's owner says he has cut a deal with the National Geographic Society to release the English translation with a multimedia splash after Easter.

Monsignor Walter Brandmuller, president of the Vatican's Committee for Historical Science, called it "a product of religious fantasy."

In an interview, he said the manuscript would not have any impact on church teaching.

"We welcome the (manuscript) like we welcome the critical study

of any text of ancient literature," Brandmuller said.

Brushed onto 31 pages of papyrus in Coptic, an Egyptian script, the manuscript has become tattered after spending centuries buried beneath the sands of middle Egypt and decades on the gray market.

Document "in bad shape"

According to Mario Roberty, a Swiss lawyer who currently owns the manuscript, the document, known as a "codex," has undergone restoration and translation by a team of researchers headed by the Swiss Coptic scholar Rodolphe Kasser.

"They've put each page under glass. It's incredibly brittle and in bad shape," Roberty said in a phone interview from Geneva.

Results of the research, Roberty said, will be released after Easter.

Roberty would not discuss the contents of the codex and a National Geographic spokeswoman in Washington, Mary Jeanne Jacobsen, would not comment.

But scholars independently following the project already have begun to anticipate some of its findings.

Working from photographs of the codex, Charles Hedrick, a retired professor of Coptic studies at Missouri State University, has translated six pages of the manuscript into English, including the codex's title "The Gospel of Judas." Roberty



VILLAN OR BAD RAP? This artwork shows Judas betraying Jesus with a kiss. Some scholars are looking forward to the publishing of an ancient document that suggests Judas does not deserve to be viewed as the bad guy.

confirmed that Hedrick's photos were genuine reproductions of the codex.

Some of the manuscript's passages echo descriptions in the New Testament of Christ's arrest, recalling how Roman authorities aimed to "seize (Christ) in the act of prayer" and how Judas "took some money and he delivered (Christ) over to them," Hedrick said, quoting from his translation.

"He is serving God"

Although Judas cooperates in the arrest of Christ, Hedrick said, the codex does not depict him as

a villain.

"Judas is not a bad guy in this text," Hedrick said in an interview. "He is the good guy and he is serving God."

William Klassen, author of "Judas: Betrayer or Friend of Jesus?" considers the forthcoming manuscript an asset to ongoing scholarly efforts to rehabilitate Judas' historical image.

Some scholars contend Judas—whose name literally means "Jewish man"—was a victim of anti-Jewish slander that pervaded early Christianity in its struggle to break away from Judaism.

One of the 'best singers in the state'

Oneida student practices hard to earn selection for All-State Choir honors

By Denise Spencer
Oneida Baptist Institute Publications Director

On Feb. 8-11, Oneida Baptist Institute junior Andrew Davidson participated in the Kentucky All-State Choir in Louisville. It was the first time since 1998 that an Oneida student had been selected for this honor. All-State Choir is sponsored by the Kentucky Music Educators Association and takes place as part of the KMEA annual conference.

Andrew was one of eight OBI choir students who tried out for the All-State Choir in October. Two of our other boys came close to making the cut, one missing it by only a fraction of a point.

This was Andrew's second time to be chosen for an honors choir this school year. He and four other Oneida students sang in the All-Festival Choir in November. Oneida choral director Tim Cochran said, "Based on Andrew's All-Festival scores, I thought he had a pretty good chance of making All-State."

Cochran noted that when Andrew first came to Oneida last fall, he sang so low that he couldn't hit middle C. Cochran worked with the choir students to help them improve their ranges. "Andrew sang so softly that I wasn't aware of how much he'd improved till he auditioned with me to try out for the All-Festival Choir."

To audition for All-State Choir, Andrew had to memorize a piece of music and sing it for four judges. He first sang bass in a quartet, then performed a portion of the piece solo, both times singing a cappella. These performances comprised 80 percent of his total score. He also

had to sight-sing for a fifth judge after being given only a starting note. The sight-singing was judged on a 10-point scale.

Cochran worked with Andrew and the other students who were going to audition for the All-State Choir. "We put in eight to 10 hours of practice time outside of class," Cochran estimated. "Andrew probably did more rehearsing on his own than the other kids did." After making the cut, Andrew continued to practice the All-State music at home. His father, Oneida piano teacher Paul Davidson, tutored him. Andrew also attended a mandatory regional rehearsal for the All-State Choir in January.

At All-State, Andrew was one of 800 best vocal students from throughout the commonwealth. The state choral chair takes the top 200 students in each of the four parts: soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Singers then are put in one of three groups at All-State: a boys' choir, a girls' choir or a mixed voice choir. Andrew was chosen for the boys' chorale. The students took part in three days of intensive rehearsals that culminated in a Friday evening concert.

"All-State Choir is an opportunity to sing in a huge choir with the best singers in the state," Cochran explained. "They get to work with a guest conductor who's highly skilled and experienced. The literature could be the kinds of things they might see at university."

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

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

A heart for Pineville

Duo balances responsibility to family, church and school

A typical Clear Creek student constantly balances responsibilities to family, church and school. David and Donna Peters, pastor and wife at West Pineville Baptist Church, can give you plenty of examples.

While a student, David assisted the pastor of West Pineville and felt he would return one day. In 1998, while serving as pastor in Clay County, David completed the associate degree; he became pastor of Elkhorn City Baptist Church in Pike County in 2000. The chairman of the West Pineville pulpit committee asked

him to consider coming as pastor, but they had to say no. "That was tough, because David had a heart for Pineville," Donna said. "But the Lord worked it out."

Donna and David were married at West Pineville in 1990; her parents live next door to the parsonage. "Our children (Mary, 12; Daniel, 8; Noah, 6) really enjoy being near grandparents."

Donna and David are both enrolled as students; Donna for 14 hours and David is taking 6 hours. She also works as admissions secretary, appreciating the opportunity

to help show prospective students the uniqueness of Clear Creek.

"God makes time for us to get it all done," Donna said. "I've been a pastor's wife for 10 years. I needed more depth in God's Word and preparation for the ministry God has in store for us. We are here for a purpose that includes our family, the church and school."

West Pineville has responded to their leadership. David's spirited preaching and music solos bless the congregation. Attendance has grown from 40 to more than 100. "God has given us great responsibility by sending Clear Creek students and faculty to join our church," David said. A highlight is the

Wednesday night community dinner, served free of charge. About 100 people stay for the worship service. "The church has graciously met challenges and shows much love and compassion," David said. "We will soon begin the AWANA children's program, and are expecting God to do great things with our leaders and the children they will teach."

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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Author learns to trust God again to overcome dry faith and 'Faking It'

Cochrane, Alberta, Canada (BP)— Connie Cavanaugh just pretended all was well.

She taught Sunday school, performed in the church's worship team and hosted Bible studies. But even as a conference speaker and author, she avoided situations where she might be asked, "What's God doing in your life?"

She didn't want to lie, but didn't want to tell the truth: "Nothing."

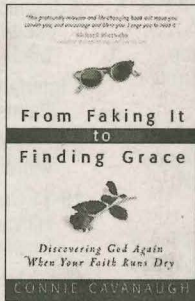
In "From Faking It to Finding Grace," Cavanaugh recounts her experiences with dry faith to help other Christians who find themselves in a spiritual desert.

"Basically I went through the motions," Cavanaugh lamented. "When someone got saved, I acted happy. When someone sinned, I acted sad. But I wasn't happy or sad. I was numb."

Few people could have been more surprised than she over her struggle with dry faith, Cavanaugh said. She became a Christian in college. Her husband, Gerry Taillon, was a pastor before becoming executive director of the Canadian Convention of

Southern Baptists.

Cavanaugh said her wake-up call came when she realized how un-Christian she had been toward a neighbor whose dog continually used her front yard.



"But there is no quick fix. There's no 'Jesus pill' that will solve the wilderness experience," she said. The road out of a spiritual desert is built one "Yes, Lord" brick at a time, Cavanaugh said.

As Henry Blackaby, author of the "Experiencing God" Bible study, told her: "If you haven't heard from God for awhile, think back to the last thing He said. What did God ask you to do then? Have you done it?"

Pain often propels people toward dry faith, Cavanaugh noted.

"Life's pain makes you afraid," she said. "Because God's not protecting you from the hard stuff of life, you think, 'I can do better on my own.' You begin walking by your own decisions, not by faith."

"Recovery includes choosing to trust God again, saying 'Yes,' even though you are afraid. That's where you learn what mature faith is."

If Grace Is so Amazing, Why Don't We Like It? Donald McCullough. Jossey-Bass, 2005. 245 pages. \$22.95 ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Like Philip Yancey before him ("What's So Amazing About Grace?"), Donald McCullough is convinced that we pay lip service to the concept

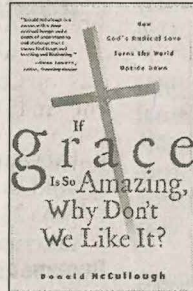
of grace; that grace is a sentimental notion rather than a lived reality in most Christians' lives. Because grace is the center of the gospel, McCullough reflects on why that is and what can be done about it.

McCullough observes that we are so steeped in the belief that we live in a universe that is dictated by cause and effect or rewards and punishment that, if we are able to hear the message of grace, it first strikes us as a scandal. In a world where we believe that we earn what get, grace seems entirely out of place.

And that is just the point. McCullough contends that the Christian gospel of grace turns our perceived world upside down. The first thing to be upended is our understanding of God. He points out that grace reminds us that, while God is for us, God is still mystery and absolutely free. This absolutely free God uses His freedom to love us.

The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ shows how far God will go to love us out of our destructive self-centeredness. In Jesus, not only is our understanding of God upended, but our perceptions of what it means to be human are overturned. The picture is so different than what we are used to, we can speak only in terms of a "new humanity." These new human beings are called to live in an upside down world, where all our assumptions about human community are redefined.

In the first section, McCullough writes: "If we are not offended by the teaching of Jesus, we haven't really heard it." Jim Holladay



"Searching for God Knows What." Donald Miller. Nelson Books, 2004. 246 pages. \$13.99. ♦♦♦♦

Donald Miller has become a rising author during the last two years with the success of "Blue Like Jazz" and this book, "Searching for God Knows What."

In "Searching," Miller takes everyday items and stories from life and his own experiences to talk about subjects that interest Christians.

Miller challenges the reader to avoid a formulaic approach to the Christian life that involves some checklist of activities, such as going to church or reading the Bible. He explains that the Christian faith is more of a relationship with Jesus Christ than some list of do's and don'ts.

"It seems if there were a formula to fix life, Jesus would have told us what it was," he writes. "The idea that you can break it down (the Christian life) or fix it in a few steps is rather silly."

"Searching" is a fun read. The author's humor and personal stories entice readers to continue reading to find out what happens next.

Miller reminds readers that Jesus Christ doesn't follow the same rules that the world lives by. Instead He lives by a standard of love and caring.

This book will challenge Christians to develop a lifestyle built upon a relationship with Christ, not just a set of rules.

This book is a great introduction to Donald Miller. Pastors will love the illustrations, which can be used in sermons. Sunday school teachers, youth pastors and youth workers will love the stories that make this book relevant to the culture. Steve Coleman

Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul. John & Stasi Eldridge. Nelson Books, 2005. 243 pages. \$22.99. ♦♦♦♦

When my brother read John Eldridge's "Wild at Heart," he found the book life-changing and sent copies to several friends. When my husband read his copy, he found it mildly informative and challenging, but not the life-changing experience my brother had found.

Since "Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul" is the female counterpart to "Wild at Heart," a reviewer should note that some readers will totally identify with authors John and Stasi Eldridge, while others might be left wondering what all the fuss is about.

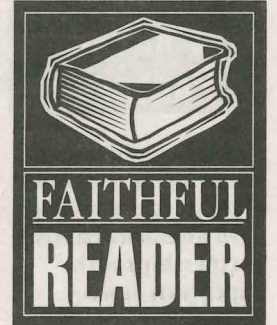
"Captivating" follows the formula of "Wild at Heart" completely, even regularly quoting passages from its predecessor. Where men are warriors in "Wild at Heart," women are relational in "Captivating." In "Wild," men ask, "Do I have what it takes?" In "Captivating," women ask "Am I lovely?"

According to the Eldridges, the false messages from the fallen world around us and wounds received during upbringing hinder us from embracing our true gender roles as God created them. If we look to the gender roles God originally set up for us and embrace them, they write, we will find fulfillment as men and women.

"Captivating" is formulaic, but engaging. The Eldridges especially should get credit for thoroughly examining and debunking—in a creative, fresh, compelling way—gender stereotypes that exist in both the world and the church. And for readers who embrace the Eldridges' message, the book can and will be life-changing.

My problem with any book of this sort is it generalizes gender roles. In their world, all women are relational. All women crave the same certain things. But when generalizations hit the real world, they often do not speak for all women. There is no room in this book for women who do not fit the standard that the Eldridges establish.

While the one-size-fits-all perspective of "Captivating" will leave some readers out in the cold, those who identify with its message will find it a literate, impassioned, biblical call to embrace one's femininity and live fully the life to which God has called them. Victoria Moon



Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville; and Victoria Moon, a state correspondent for the Western Recorder. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: lyndonpastor@aol.com; risen4me@hotmail.com; and victorimoon@earthlink.net.

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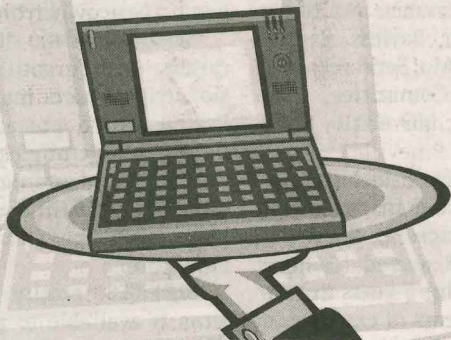


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PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following missionaries and projects associated with Kentucky Baptists' partnerships with Baptists in Brazil, Poland and with the International Baptist Convention:

■ A Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union prayer walking team traveling to Teresina, Brazil, March 6-17.

■ Volunteer teams to perform mission projects in Poland this year.

■ Missionaries to Brazil Scott and Joyce Pittman as they complete a week of strategy planning in Sao Paulo.

■ A team from First Baptist Church of Richmond that is preparing to lead revival meetings in Malta in March.

■ Former partnership missions leader Calvin Wilkins as he adjusts to full-time retirement.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **ALBANY**—Terry Settles recently resigned as pastor of Stony Point Church.

■ **BELTON**—Gene McGehee recently resigned as pastor of Forest Oak Church.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Burton Memorial Church will host its second annual Bible conference Feb. 26 with Michael Durham, pastor of Oak Grove Church in Paducah, as featured speaker. For more information, visit www.burtonmemorial.org.

First Church recently honored Olive Weaver on her 100th birthday.

■ **BREMEN**—New Harmony Church will hold revival services Feb. 26-March 1 with Dale Rose as evangelist.

■ **DANVILLE**—South District Association has named W.O. Willham director of missions emeritus. He served as director of missions from 1982-2001.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church will host flugelhorn artist David Wells in concert Feb. 26, 6 p.m. For more information, call (502) 695-2088. Wallace Kent is pastor.

■ **GHEENT**—Ghent Church ordained Graham Reynolds to the gospel ministry Feb. 19.

■ **HENDERSON**—Audubon Church recently called Andy Weaver as pastor. He previously was pastor of Lucas Grove Church in Upton.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Neil Nelson, associate pastor at Jeffersontown Church,

Spotlight on ...

Olmstead



Dripping Spring Church will hold a groundbreaking service Feb. 26, 1 p.m., for a 440-seat sanctuary. Events also will include an 11 a.m. worship service and noon fellowship meal. Jeff Noffsinger is pastor.

recently resigned to accept a call as youth minister at a church in Illinois.

Walnut Street Church will host a Sunday school and children's ministry conference featuring Josh and Missy Hunt, March 3-4. Sessions cost \$5 each and are open to the public. For more information, call (502) 589-5290. Rusty Ellison is pastor.

■ **STAMPING GROUND**—Stamping Ground Church recently called Kenny Hogsten as youth minister. Steve Bruce is pastor.

■ **VERSAILLES**—Versailles Church will host Grace Defined, a group of Butler County girls ages 16-22, in concert Feb. 26, 6 p.m. For more information, call (859) 873-7338. John Brandon is pastor.

Texas Christian Life Commission head remembered as moral voice

Dallas (ABP)—Phil Strickland, who served nearly a quarter century as director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas' Christian Life Commission, died Feb. 11 after a lengthy battle with cancer. He was 64.

According to his colleagues, Strickland believed his mission was to provide a voice for the powerless in the halls of government and speak prophetically to Texas Baptists on moral and ethical issues. He worked 38 years with the public policy and moral concerns agency.

"Phil Strickland helped Texas Baptists to remember and be faithful to their heritage, and he consistently declared the high ethical calling of the Christian life," said BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade.

Strickland was known as an outspoken advocate for children and a staunch defender of individual religious freedom and other historic Baptist principles.

Strickland became the first—and for many years the only—registered

lobbyist in Austin serving a religious denominational body. He lobbied lawmakers to oppose the spread of gambling, resist attempts to chip away at the wall of separation between church and state, and remember the needs of children—particularly the poor, abused or neglected.

To advance those causes, he built coalitions that spanned the political and religious spectrum. Strickland became founding chairman of Texans Care for Children, the state's first multi-issue child-advocacy group, which brought together more than 50 organizations that address the needs of children.

Nationally, he served on the Inter-religious Task Force on U.S. Food Policy, the Bread for the World board of directors, the Americans United for Separation of Church and State board of trustees and the National Child Abuse Coalition.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn, two daughters and two grandchildren.

LifeWay expands online VBS resources

Nashville (BP)—VBS Tools Online, launched in 2005, is being expanded to provide added help for vacation Bible school leaders in 2006.

LifeWay Christian Resources is offering two curriculum options for VBS 2006: "The Arctic Edge: Where Adventure Meets Courage" and "Club VBS: Space Quest—Exploring My Mission with Jesus."

Last year, more than 800 VBS coordinators used VBS Tools Online to register students and volunteers online; coordinate classes and

rotations; and communicate with volunteers and families through the website and e-mail center.

For 2006, LifeWay's e-business department has released an updated version of VBS Tools Online with new features that include an enhanced version of class rolls.

Those who used VBS Tools Online last year also can transfer the 2005 enrollment information into the 2006 version.

For more information, visit www.lifeway.com/vbstools.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

- 22 Retirement Choices Workshop, First Baptist Church, London.
- 23 Connecting with Guests and New Members, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 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.
- 25 Love 101, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 25 RA Congress Region 1, First Baptist Church, Mayfield.
- 27-28 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

March

- 3-4 Creative Ministries Festival, Southern Seminary, Louisville.
- 3-4 Handbell Festival, Cave City Convention Center.
- 4 RA Congress Region 3, South Fork Baptist Church, Hodgenville; RA Congress Region 5, Central Baptist Church, Maysville; RA Congress Region 8A, First Baptist Church, Russell.
- 4 Regional Keyboard Festival, First Baptist Church, Murray.
- 4 Vacation Bible School Clinic, Victory Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 6 Connecting with Guests and New Members, Hickory Baptist Church, Mayfield.
- 6 Interfaith Witness Training, Northside Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 7 Connecting with Guests and New Members, First Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 7 Interfaith Witness Training, Paintsville.
- 8-22 Kentucky Changers College Blitz, Morehead.
- 10-11 Creative Ministries Festival, Hillvue Heights Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 10-11 MSC Basic Training, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 11 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 11 Vacation Bible School Clinic, First Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 13 Connecting with Guests and New Members, Greenwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 14 Connecting with Guests and New Members, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 18 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, Beaver Dam Baptist Church.
- 18 RA Congress Region 2, First Baptist Church, Madisonville; RA Congress Region 3&7 Combo, Hillvue Heights Church, Bowling Green; RA Congress Region 6, Red House Baptist Church, Richmond; RA Congress Region 7, Campbellsville University.
- 18 State Youth Choir Festival, West, Beaver Dam Baptist Church.

For more information, call (800) 266-6477 or visit www.kybaptist.org

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for Worthington Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Worthington Baptist Church, PO Box 368, Worthington, KY 41183.

SEEKING: Part-time administrative assistant/circulation clerk for the Western Recorder. Mail resumé to Janet McIntosh, PO Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. For more information, call (502) 489-3428.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth (grades 7 to 12) to continue God-given growth through current AWANA program. Send resumé to Elkhorn City Baptist Church, PO Box 448, Elkhorn City, KY 41522, or call Pastor Shawn at (606) 754-4781.

SEEKING: Conservative Southern Baptist pastor for Bayless Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 4045 Toenges, St. Louis, MO 63116, Attn: Pat Cheney.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music for choral and instrumental programs for all ages in Southern Baptist church. Required: College degree in music plus 5 years experience (additional years of experience may be substituted for college degree). Send resumé postmarked by March 3 to: Music Search Committee, Unity Baptist Church, 2320 29th St., Ashland, KY 41101.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Silver Creek Baptist Church of Berea, Ky. Resumé may be mailed to PO Box 97, Berea, KY 40403, or e-mail silvercreekbaptist@alltel.net.

SEEKING: Part-time/bivocational pastor for Harvestland Community Church, a young and growing congregation in Hodgenville, Ky. Mail resumé to Steve Wright, 239 Jewell Lane, Magnolia, KY 42757; or e-mail to wswcsa@aol.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children for First Baptist Church, Franklin, Ky. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 303 East Cedar St., Franklin, KY 42134.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of students (youth-college) for First Baptist Church, Pikeville, Ky. Resumé may be mailed to: Pastor Paul Badgett, 126 4th St., Pikeville, KY 41501; or e-mail: pastorbadgett@yahoo.com.

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Broken windows

Louisiana stained glass shop busy with post-Katrina repairs

By Douglas MacCash
Religion News Service

Metairie, La. (RNS)—The Attenhofer Stained Glass Restoration and Design Studio, housed in an unremarkable brick storefront, would seem an unlikely place for the spheres of heaven and earth to intersect.

Yet in the post-Katrina cosmos, that appears to be the situation.

Hurricane Katrina devastated sacred as well as secular structures. Some of the stained-glass windows of local churches—sparkling images that have inspired the devout for generations—were torn from their casements or smashed by flying debris, reduced to shards of colored glass and tangles of spidery lead framework.

Inside the studio, the rescued remnants of many such windows lay like patients in an intensive care unit on workbenches. Hovering over them were master stained-glass repairer Cindy Courage-Knezeak and her assistant, Jackie Borrouso, laboring intently to restore all that the storm had put asunder.

Metaphysically speaking, they weren't alone in their work.

The disembodied faces of Jesus and a few Catholic saints lay nearby, glowing from within, due to the ethereal radiance of a workshop light table.

A glass image of Christ's bleeding heart shared shop space with a blue bottle of Gatorade, a pack of stale Marlboros and a dry plastic fish bowl. At Attenhofer, the spiritual and corporeal had blurred to a point of indistinctness.

Courage-Knezeak, 48, with shoulder-length blond hair that she tossed from her face as she stooped to her work, admitted to being occasionally discouraged by the post-Katrina bounty of stained-glass repair jobs. A call from a member of

a stricken church earlier that morning had sent her into a momentary tailspin.

"I was overwhelmed. It's too much. I can't take it anymore," she yelped, comically reliving the trauma.

With a well-worn clipper, Courage-Knezeak spliced together lengths of lead rail as she reassembled one of the sacred jigsaw puzzles of colored glass. Most of the fragments were decades-old antiques, but some were newly painted impostors that, Courage-Knezeak proudly pointed out, were practically indistinguishable from the originals.

Odd path to stained-glass artistry

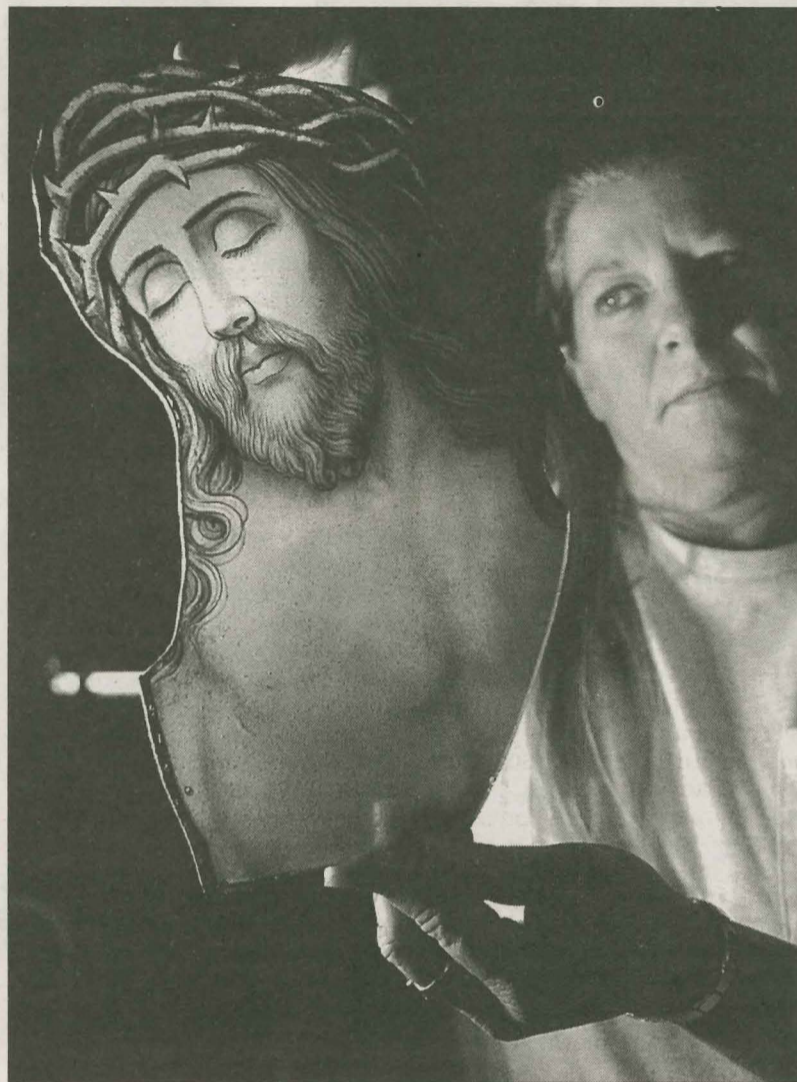
Much of the work is far from refined: spot soldering, pounding horseshoe nails into a wooden table top to hold the glass segments together, toting heavy boxes of lead rail, placing long-distance phone pleas for "glass that's no longer produced," climbing treacherous scaffolding and trekking into flood-ravaged neighborhoods to retrieve damaged stained glass.

It's not at all what Courage-Knezeak might have expected while growing up in Potomac, Md., where her father was a high-powered public relations executive and Washington insider.

A natural artist, she dabbled with stained glass in high school. But after her parents admonished her that there's no money in art, she studied marketing in college. She soon married and began a family.

In 1986, when her husband's job brought them to New Orleans, her time was mostly spent raising two sons. She squeezed in stained-glass classes at Attenhofer when she could.

When the couple divorced 15



SACRED IMAGE At the Attenhofer Stained Glass Restoration and Design Studio in Metairie, La., Jackie Borrouso holds a stained-glass image of Jesus recovered at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Bywater, La. (RNS photos by Michael DeMocker)

years ago, Courage-Knezeak stayed in New Orleans and was hired as an assistant at the Attenhofer studio. Suddenly, her hobby became a means of support for her sons. "I got up to speed fast," she said.

After a few years learning the trade, Courage-Knezeak began managing the business. When owner Ken Attenhofer was ready to retire, she bought him out.

Life became a pleasant blur of colorful glass sun catchers, complex pool-table lamps and occasional church commissions, all completed with the help of a handful of part-time employees. As a licensed stained-glass contractor, Courage-Knezeak was soon regionally renowned for her meticulous restoration work.

Then came Katrina.

Courage-Knezeak fled the oncoming storm with her boyfriend and landed at her father's house in Tallahassee, Fla. There, she admitted, she dealt with her anxiety by "drinking a lot." In mid-September, her assistant Borrouso caught up to her by phone.

As Borrouso, also 48, watched the city begin to stabilize, she felt it was time for Courage-Knezeak to come home, to begin the stained-glass part of the rebuilding.

Since then, Courage-Knezeak and Borrouso have had little time to spare. Each week seems to bring new post-hurricane glass disasters that require their attention. There are wind-torn church windows, beveled vestibule windows broken by zealous animal rescuers, and a flood-stained jewelry box that Courage-

Knezeak said may have little monetary value but means a lot to the family that owned it.

"It's been a difficult ride," Courage-Knezeak said. "I was already set up and running, doing restoration before the storm, but who was prepared for this? ... There are plenty of days I ask what's keeping me here. But I want to see the city come back. ... If you're an artist, you're meant to be here."

Small-scale miracles

"I'm not a real religious person," said Courage-Knezeak, a onetime Catholic, now an Episcopalian, "but I think God's got a definite plan for me."

Borrouso, a lifelong Catholic, agreed. "I feel we're helping get the houses of the Lord ready for the people to come back. I feel honored."

Courage-Knezeak doesn't claim to be especially spiritual, but she and Borrouso have witnessed what they consider small-scale miracles amid the destruction: the stained-glass face of Christ that survived shattering falls; the fact that the National Guard occupied Notre Dame Seminary for exactly 40 days and 40 nights; the discovery that the vexing Latin word they labored to re-create in one window meant sincerity.

In the shop window, backlit by sunlight, was their prized cosmic coincidence: an antique stained-glass window from St. Theresa of Avila Church. The inscription: "In Memory of the Storm of September 29th 1915."

Owner Cindy Courage-Knezeak admitted to being occasionally discouraged by the post-Katrina bounty of stained-glass repair jobs.



WORKSHOP Borrouso said she feels honored to be helping churches repair. "I feel we're helping get the houses of the Lord ready for the people to come back."

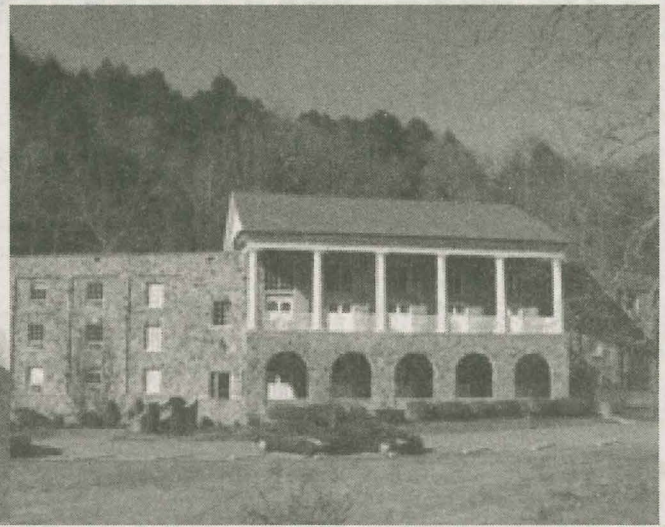
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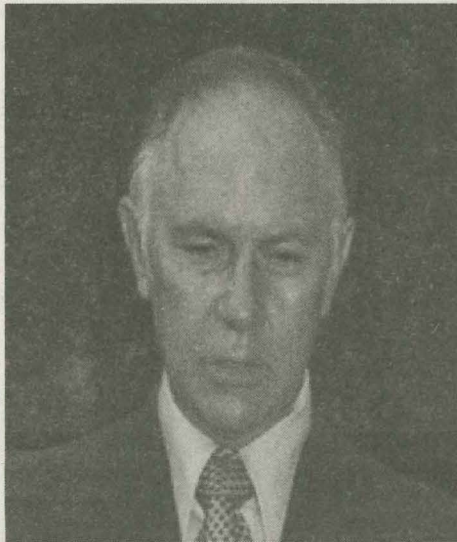
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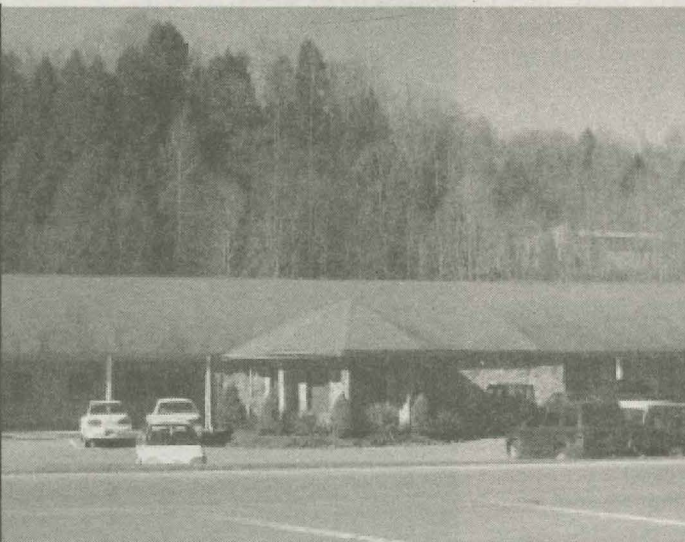
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Kelly Hall, built 1943



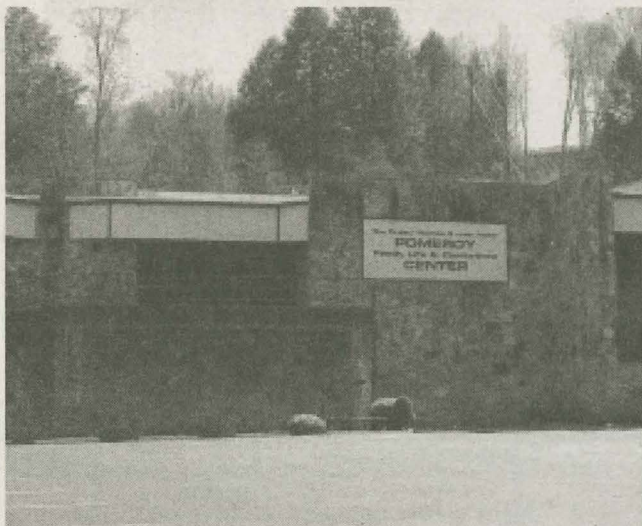
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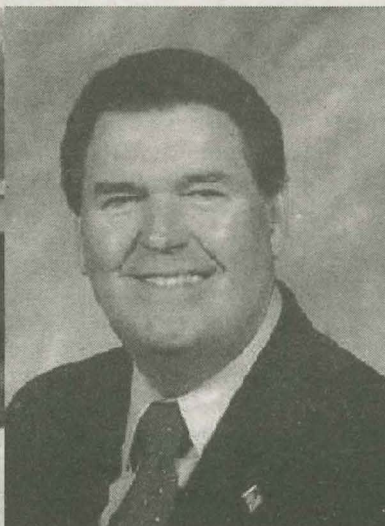
Aldridge Building, built 1960's



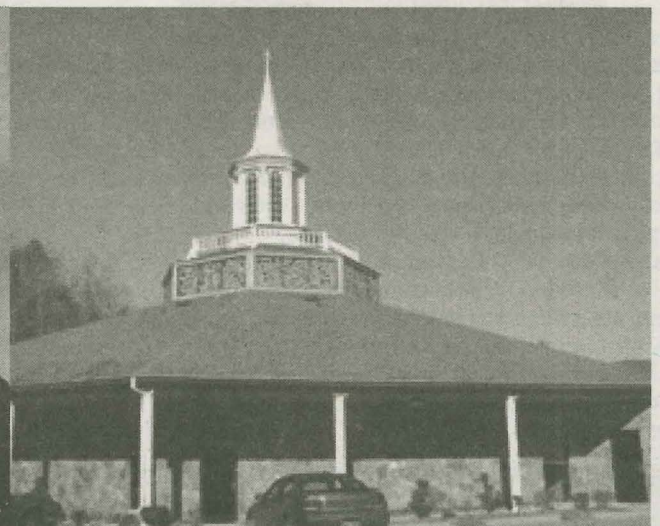
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