



WESTERN RECORDER

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Surveys: Half of Americans view Islam negatively

Washington (RNS)—A study released last week found that 43 percent of Americans believe Islam teaches hatred, and that 24 percent believe Muslims value life less than other people.

The survey of 1,001 people, conducted by the Council on American Islamic Relations in November, showed that a third of Americans believe Muslims want to impose their faith on others while 17 percent thought it was OK to put Muslims in jail.

Those most likely to have negative views of Muslims were older, politically conservative and less educated.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll also released last week found that 46 percent of Americans have a negative view of Islam, up 7 percent from the months immediately after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

A third of the 1,000 people polled said they believe Islam encourages violence against non-Muslims.

The Washington Post-ABC poll was done March 2-5, on the heels of the cartoon protests.

Sam Aboelela, who organized a "Progressive Muslim" meet-up group in New York, said perceptions would have been negative even if the protest didn't happen.

"There's something negative in the news every night about Muslims. If it weren't the cartoon controversy, it would have been something else," he said.

Expanded gambling's cost



Pikeville woman shares personal heartache

By Erin Curry Roach
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Pikeville—Suzi Flanagan Wright's husband liked to gamble every now and then. Early on, she'd gamble with him and use the winnings to help pay off her student loan.

It was no big deal, she thought. They were just two of the millions of Americans who gamble as a hobby.

But things changed, leaving Mrs. Wright to raise a child alone while

her husband went to prison for embezzlement.

Added to that were large gambling debts and the ongoing issues of loving an addicted gambler.

Wright, who shared her story at last year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, cringes at current efforts to expand gambling throughout the commonwealth.

"It will absolutely ruin more lives than it will help," she said recently. "I'm here to tell you that."

Her husband's struggle began innocently enough. But eventually he began gambling money earmarked for other uses.

"One time ... I had only left him with enough money to buy stuff for Thanksgiving dinner," recalled Mrs. Wright, a member of First Baptist Church of Pikeville. "I told him, 'I'm just leaving you with enough money. Don't you dare buy any lottery tickets.'"

□ See Pikeville woman says ... *Page 3*

Montana missionary hits road to encourage far-flung churches



ANNIE ARMSTRONG-SUPPORTED Southern Baptist missionary Dave Howeth prays with teenagers during a Bible study. Howeth is among the missionaries supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. This year's national goal is \$56 million. (Photo by John Swain)

By Mickey Noah
SBC North American Mission Board

Helena, Montana—Dave Howeth rolls on down the two-lane highway in his blue Buick. While the terrain in front of him is flat for miles and miles, always off in the distance are the snow-covered mountains of southwest Montana.

Howeth is director of missions and church planter strategist for the Treasure State Baptist Association, based in Helena.

The association consists of 28 churches in 11 counties covering almost 40,000 square miles of Montana, including Yellowstone National Park. The ministry includes three collegiate ministries and several resort ministries.

On this gray, overcast day, he's

out probing for "soil samples"—Howeth's terminology for surveying the land, looking for sites for new churches.

"As a church planter strategist for the North American Mission Board, I'm a catalyst in getting new churches started. We build the strategy from the ground up—including the need for the new church, what kind of church, etc.

"In the last 16 months, we've started five churches," Howeth said, "one on the campus of Montana State University." The campus church had 50 students at its first Sunday service. Howeth estimates 95 percent of the 12,000 college students at Montana State are without Christ.

□ See Montana missionary ... *Page 8*

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, March 22



Welch upbeat at 'Everyone Can' midpoint

"I've never heard so much positive talk about witnessing, winning and baptizing as I'm hearing now."

SBC President
Bobby Welch

Nashville (BP)—The push for Southern Baptist churches to baptize 1 million people in a year will reach the halfway point at the end of March.

"I'm extraordinarily encouraged by what I'm hearing from all across the country," Bobby Welch told Baptist Press, "because I've never heard so much positive talk about witnessing, winning and baptizing as I'm hearing now."

Welch, with his election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2004, initiated the "Everyone Can" Kingdom Challenge to call Southern Baptist churches to "Witness, Win and Baptize One Million" during the 2005-06 church year.

The Baptist Press update was released one day after Religion News Service published an article noting that the campaign's Web site reported just 1,555 baptisms—less than 1 percent of the 1 million goal—from a

total of 141 churches by mid-March. The RNS article noted, however, that SBC officials said many churches report baptisms at the end of the year.



Bobby Welch

"There's no way to even remotely quantify how things are going numerically," Welch said. "However, several churches have told me they have baptized more than 100 people in a single baptismal service. Just about every day I'm hearing from small churches that they are breaking records in baptisms. Sometimes it's only three baptisms and sometimes it's only eight. But that's more than they've ever done before and that's a great thing."

"What we're hearing from our Baptist associations across the country is overwhelmingly positive," Welch added. "We've got associations in the mix like we've never had before."

"My disappointments so far," Welch said, "are that we don't have

enough time and enough resources to accomplish everything I'd like to in this evangelistic and baptismal effort.

"Some people ask me if I'll be disappointed if we fail," Welch continued, "and I say, 'There's no way we can fail.' Ask just one person who came to Christ as a result of Everyone Can, who had their guilty, stained heart cleansed from sin, who enjoys a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and who has access to our Creator God. (Ask that person) if Everyone Can. (Ask, and that person will vehemently disagree. In fact, they'll tell you it was a smashing success."

Welch encouraged pastors to schedule baptisms as part of their Easter Sunday services, April 16, the second of three special days when Welch has asked Southern Baptist churches to highlight the Everyone Can emphasis. He also has asked churches to highlight baptism on Sept. 30, the final day of the SBC's church year.

ERLC officials outline national legislative agenda

Washington (BP)—Efforts to advance the sanctity of human life, human rights and protection for traditional marriage top this year's legislative agenda of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, according to ERLC officials.

In a statement released March 14, ERLC President Richard Land and Barrett Duke, the commission's vice president for public policy, said the Southern Baptist will promote the following measures in the second half of the 109th Congress:

- The Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act, S. 51/H.R. 356, which would require abortion doctors both to inform mothers of the pain an unborn child of 20 weeks or older experiences during an abortion and to offer anesthesia for the baby.

- The Child Custody Protection Act, S. 8, which would outlaw the transportation of a minor by a non-parental adult to another state for an abortion when the girl's home state requires parental notification or consent.

- A ban on human cloning for research or reproductive purposes.

- The Marriage Protection Amendment, S.J.Res. 1, a constitutional amendment to protect marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

- The ADVANCE Democracy Act, a bill designed to help bring an end to dictatorships and to promote democracy in other countries without military intervention.

- The Workplace Religious Freedom Act, S. 677/H.R. 1445, which would restore some protections to people of faith at work.

Land and Duke said the ERLC also intends to:

- Work for the nomination and confirmation of "conservative, strict-constructionist judges at every level" of the federal judiciary.

- Oppose legislative attempts to circumvent President Bush's prohibition on federal funds for stem cell research that destroys human embryos.

- Try to correct the Bush administration's failure to fund the North

Korean Human Rights Act, which seeks to promote human rights and democracy under what some consider the world's most repressive regime.

- Back expected legislation to penalize China for returning North Korean refugees to their home country, where they can expect "certain inhumane imprisonment, torture and even murder."

- Seek free-speech protection for religious organizations and people of faith.

- Promote limitations on gambling.

- Support legislation to give the Food and Drug Administration regulation of tobacco products.

ERLC-backed measures that became law last year in the first half of the 109th Congress, Land and Duke said, included the provision of federal funds for the collection, testing and storage of stem cells from umbilical cord blood and the End Demand for Sex Trafficking Act, which targets the demand side of domestic sex trafficking.

Want to contact an IMB trustee? Call SBC office

By Jennifer Rash
Alabama Baptist

Richmond, Va.—If you want the names of trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, you can't get them by calling the IMB office in Richmond, Va. That decision came after the January board meeting of IMB trustees.

When the trustees wrapped up their Jan. 9-11 meeting in Richmond, they immediately made headlines across the nation.

An internal squabble between Oklahoma trustee Wade Bursleson and a group of other trustees resulted in a recommendation for Bursleson's removal. Trustees who are meeting this week are expected to reconsider the proposed action against Bursleson.

He came under fire after his outspoken criticism about new IMB policies dealing with believer's baptism and private prayer language.

In the wake of widespread media coverage of the conflict, callers to the IMB seeking trustee information are being directed to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee maintains the official trustee list that is recorded in the SBC Annual, a public document available at many churches and Baptist organization offices. Copies of the SBC Annual can be ordered by calling (615) 244-2355.

The president's office of the Executive Committee is now providing the list of IMB trustees when requested, said Kenyon Cureton, vice president for convention relations.

IMB trustee chairman Tom Hatley "requested that the Executive Committee provide the trustee name and contact information," Cureton said.

The IMB is the only SBC entity that has requested the Executive Committee to distribute trustee-related information, he added.

Becky Chandler, executive assistant to the president, said that if a call comes in for any of the other entities, the caller is directed to the specific entity for that information.

Wendy Norvelle, IMB spokeswoman, confirmed that after the January board meeting, she, Hatley and a few others discussed how to handle calls that were coming in to the IMB office requesting trustee contact information.

"This was just a quick conversation about what we are supposed to do and how to handle it," Norvelle said.

"We want to be accessible," Hatley noted, "but we don't want to put private information out for people who will harass them and not be sincere."

BAPTIST DIGEST

Nash remembered as noted apologist.

Theologian, philosopher and apologist Ronald Nash died March 10 at his home in Orlando, Fla., after a long illness. He was 69. Nash taught theology and philosophy for four decades at three schools. He was chairman of the department of philosophy and religion and director of graduate studies in humanities at Western Kentucky University, where he was on faculty from 1964-91. He was a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary from 1991-2002 and at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1998-2005. Southern Seminary President Al Mohler said Nash "was a brilliant and bold defender of Christian truth, he was a great apologist, a wonderful intellect devoted to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ." Nash wrote more than 35 books on philosophy, theology and apologetics, including "Faith & Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith," "Life's Ultimate Questions" and "Is Jesus the Only Savior?" He is survived by his wife and two children.

Taylor joins NAMB staff.

Bill Taylor has been named executive assistant to the president and director of Christian Educators on Mission at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. He retired last year after 11 years at LifeWay Christian Resources as director of the Sunday school division and director of network partnerships. NAMB President Robert Reccord said Taylor "will help us enlist and involve Christian educators in diverse ministries such as disaster relief, Strategic Focus Cities and the rebuilding of ministries in churches devastated by the recent storms such as Katrina."

City seeks to condemn church facility.

Deconstruction of a Southern Baptist church facility in Long Beach, Calif., moved one step closer to reality March 13 when the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency Board voted 6-0 to condemn the church in order to build condominiums. The action against the Filipino Baptist Fellowship came despite testimonies from community members about

the public good the congregation provides. During the hearing, the redevelopment agency voted to authorize the city attorney to begin condemnation proceedings, said John Eastman, director of the Claremont Institute's Center for Constitutional Jurisprudence, which is defending the church. The next step will be for the city attorney to file a complaint to condemn the property.

Church donates \$200,000 to seminaries.

Berkland Baptist Church in Boston celebrated its 25th anniversary March 5, but instead of receiving gifts from well-wishers, the church gave a total of \$200,000 to two Southern Baptist seminaries. Paul Kim, the church's founding pastor, is an alumnus of both Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. The church sent \$100,000 each to the two seminaries. The congregation also established a church goal of \$500,000 for overseas missions.

'05 KBC stats: Baptisms down, worship attendance up

By Treannis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist Convention's ambitious "Kentucky Baptists Connect" baptism goals are off to a slow start, but KBC leaders are optimistic the five-year strategy will reap long-term benefits.

The Connect emphasis, officially launched in November 2004, calls for Kentucky Baptist congregations to baptize 125,000 people before 2010. Although the Connect proposal does not list annual goals, convention officials have cited the need for 25,000 baptisms per church year (which runs from Sept. 1 to the following Aug. 31) to reach the five-year goal of 125,000 baptisms.

The KBC's 2005 Annual Church Profile report, which tracks major statistics for the 2004-2005 church year, includes 17,395 baptisms—a drop of 397 (2.2 percent) from the previous year and 7,605 below the 25,000 target.

Overall ACP statistics show gains in seven of 12 categories, a slight improvement from the previous year's report that included gains in only five of 12 areas. But baptisms remains one of the crucial categories for Connect's ultimate success.

Citing the KBC's current "Our Best for God's Best" effort urging congregations to match their best annual baptism total of the past decade, KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey said, "In relationship to baptisms, it took us a little while to get our strategies in place. I'm really encouraged by the 'Our Best for God's Best' baptism emphasis that I believe is going to have a positive impact on baptisms for the current year."

The "Our Best" emphasis, co-

ordinated by Dan Garland, leader of the KBC's church development and evangelism team, notes that if churches match their best year in baptisms, the KBC's annual baptism total could top 40,000.

In the past five years, however, baptisms have averaged 17,160. This past year's baptism total is 235 (1.4 percent) higher than the five-year average.

"I think the thing for us to keep in mind related to the baptism goal is to focus on making progress," Mackey said. "The baptism goal is certainly worthy and worth every effort Kentucky Baptists can make."

Garland said he also is hopeful that "Our Best for God's Best" will make a positive impact on baptisms in the current church year.

Citing a 2004 Barna study that found 81 percent of unchurched people in Kentucky previously were involved in church, Garland said, "We're disconnected culturally. They're looking for hope, help and healing. I think today churches need to focus on the good news—not what we're against but what we're for. We've got to reintroduce ourselves to a dechurched culture."

Emphasis that evangelism and discipleship need to go hand-in-hand, Garland said, "Effective discipleship has been our Achilles' heel."

"We've got to be more intentional in evangelism and effective discipleship," he added. "If we disciple people, we will make a bigger impact in evangelism."

Among the high points of the 2005 ACP report, church membership, worship attendance, Sunday school enrollment, Woman's Missionary Union involvement and

Kentucky Annual Church Profile statistics

Category	2005	2004	+/-	% +/-
Total membership	790,030	781,386	8,644	1.1%
Resident membership	562,846	561,150	1,696	0.3%
Total baptisms	17,395	17,792	-397	-2.2%
Other additions	16,062	17,055	-993	-5.8%
Worship attendance	263,434	260,163	3,271	1.3%
Sunday school enrollment	334,292	324,434	9,858	3.0%
Sunday school attendance	176,514	175,772	742	0.4%
Discipleship training	69,224	79,086	-9,862	-12.5%
Music enrollment	67,526	68,756	-1,230	-1.8%
Woman's Missionary Union	41,370	38,713	2,657	6.9%
Baptist Men on Mission	14,314	15,920	-1,606	-10.1%
Undesignated receipts	\$297,940,006	\$284,714,208	\$13,225,798	4.6%

financial contributions increased over the previous year.

In addition to baptisms, decreases were recorded in discipleship training, music enrollment and Baptist Men on Mission.

Among ACP categories that recorded gains:

■ Total membership increased 8,644 (1.1 percent) to a total of 790,030.

■ Resident membership increased 1,696 (0.3 percent) to a total of 562,846.

■ Average weekly worship attendance was up 3,271 (1.3 percent) to 263,434.

■ Sunday school enrollment increased 9,858 (3 percent) to 334,292 and Sunday school attendance increased 742 (0.4 percent) to 176,514.

■ Churches' undesignated re-

ceipts increased by more than \$13 million (4.6 percent) to a total of almost \$298 million.

Woman's Missionary Union recorded the largest percentage increase (6.9 percent) with a gain of 2,657 participants to 41,370. The increase, more than 1,500 above WMU's five-year average, came one year after an 8.3 percent decline.

Noting that "our enrollment figures have gone up and down over the past several years," Kentucky WMU Executive Director Joy Bolton said WMU leaders are working with ACP researchers to improve reporting methods. She said some churches report enrollment only for women's WMU organizations when totals should include youth and children's programs sponsored by WMU.

Pikeville woman says gambling continues to hurt her family

Continued from page 1

But when she returned, her husband revealed that he had won \$10,000 on a \$2 lottery ticket.

"That got him hooked," she said.

The momentum of those earnings propelled him to more frequent gambling at higher stakes, including trips to off-track betting parlors as far away as Charleston, W.Va.

The temptation grew worse when an off-track betting parlor, where numerous television screens allow gamblers to bet on various horse races from a central location, opened in Prestonsburg. When the closest gambling site was Charleston, her husband didn't gamble as often. But when one opened 25 miles from home, Mrs. Wright's husband found it easier to gamble more regularly.

Now, with bills before the Kentucky Legislature related to the expansion of gambling, Mrs. Wright fears the temptation to gamble will hit a little too close to home for more Kentucky families-like hers.

Anything to get money

"It's very, very hard when you have a gambling addiction to not go. It's like if you were a diabetic and you couldn't have ice cream and you moved right beside Baskin-Robbins," Mrs. Wright said.



Mrs. Wright said her husband realized he needed to stop gambling and visited a psychiatrist who prescribed a heavy dose of Prozac. But for him, the drug only made the gambling worse.

"It went to the point where he started taking money at work," she said. "He opened credit cards in my name and ran up balances. He would write checks on me. He would do anything he could to get his money, and then he embezzled money from work and that would him up in jail."

Mrs. Wright's husband spent 20 months in prison when their son was just over two years old. She said her husband missed many crucial moments in their child's early life.

During her husband's incarceration, Mrs. Wright and her son became involved in First Baptist

Church of Pikeville. She said the church has provided comfort and support that they continue to draw on.

Temptation closer to home

Although the prison sentence got Mrs. Wright's husband's attention, it wasn't enough to stop the gambling.

"It's a hard habit to break. He would be the first to tell you. Even coming out of jail, it was hard not to gamble," she said.

To make matters worse during her husband's recovery, another off-track betting parlor opened in Pikeville. That means the temptation to gamble now is nearly at his doorstep, Mrs. Wright said.

Mrs. Wright blames gambling for damage to her family that might never be repaired. Sometimes she lives moment to moment, trying to trust her husband not to bring on more debt.

"It's just been a big mess. It's been seven years, and I really don't think I'm any better off," she said. "I'm still paying on everything because I had to mortgage my home, I had to pay off all of those credit cards, I've got five and six and seven years left on bills."

"What makes me so mad is it takes away from my child," she said. "I make really good money, but you'd never know I had a dime

because I have to pay it all out. (My husband) isn't working. Nobody will hire him, and it's just a mess. And (my son) doesn't understand. How do you explain it to a child?"

Mrs. Wright said she remains with her husband because she realizes gambling has had control of him rather than him controlling it.

"Gambling is an illness. It's a sickness. It's no different than cancer," she said. "(My husband) and I both have diabetes, which is an illness. All of these things happen. How would you like to go through something like that, being that sick, and your spouse walk off just because they don't want to deal with it?"

Despite claims by gambling supporters, Wright said she has seen firsthand that expanded gambling doesn't benefit schools.

In addition to working fulltime, she volunteers often at her son's elementary school because the school system can't afford to hire people to help them, she said.

"I don't see expanded gambling helping anything at all. I think all it can do is hurt people," Mrs. Wright said.

For more facts related to the impact of gambling on families, and for tips on how to oppose efforts to expand gambling, go to www.kybaptist.org/publicaffairs.

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

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Casinos? 'Just say no'

Ten years ago, legislation began to be introduced to expand gambling (with casinos) even though Kentucky families already have many opportunities to gamble.

Casinos in our state can create harmful financial shifts from many local businesses to a few gambling institutions. Even casino owner Donald Trump recognized the economic damage of casinos when he said in a Miami Herald interview, "People will spend a tremendous amount of money in casinos, money that they would normally spend on buying a refrigerator or a new car. Local businesses will suffer because they lose customer dollars to the casinos."

Dave Stone, pastor of Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, said, "I am against the expansion of gambling in Kentucky because it has been my observation that any form of gambling tends to make the poor poorer. It's bad stewardship and bad for Kentucky."

To provide insight into the amount of dollars we are talking

about, just use the figures provided by casino supporters. In order to generate the projected state tax revenue of almost \$440 million from the \$1.2 billion in losses, more than \$12 billion must be gambled. Expanded gambling supporters only seem to provide figures about the losses, not the total amount of money gambled.

Plans for future expanded gambling legislation already are being discussed should this year's legislation fail. If the legislation ever progresses to a constitutional amendment vote, millions upon millions of dollars will be spent in support of casinos. Those of us against expanded gambling will be unable to match this multi-million dollar media blitz to present the negative effects of casinos upon families and communities.

Please call (800) 372-7181 and leave this message for your legislators: "Just Say No!" to casinos. In order to continue the fight, elect legislators this year who are against any legislation supporting Kentucky casinos.

Don Helton
Pewee Valley



Accused arsonist isn't so funny now

By John Archibald

Birmingham, Ala. (RNS)—Ben Moseley is a funny guy. Ask just about anyone.

Students at Clay-Chalkville High School voted him "funniest" in his class in 2004, and picked him as the kid who contributed most to the class.

Those taken with him didn't just say it, they gushed it, as Whit Smith did in an October review in the Birmingham-Southern College paper, the Hilltop News.

"Ben Moseley is from Grayson Valley," Smith wrote. "It is a place where his off-beat sense of humor matured from class prankster to budding theatrical genius. He is in the business of bringing a laugh to any situation on or off the stage."

I've seen Moseley only once, and

I didn't laugh. It was March 8, and the BSC theater student wasn't on stage, exactly. He was sitting in a federal magistrate's courtroom.

Not one funny thing about it. Of course, handcuffs aren't hilarious props. And conspiring to burn down nine churches, as prosecutors claim he and two pals did, is no joke.

Moseley was poised but emotionless as he sat next to co-defendant and fellow BSC student Russ DeBusk. A third suspect, Matthew Cloyd from the University of Alabama-Birmingham, was brought to court later in the day.

Court papers say one of the men claimed the fires started as a prank and went too far, that other fires were set to confuse authorities.

COMMENTARY

Outstanding ministries making impact

I want to share with you about three outstanding ministries where God is at work. Each one ministers to a different group of people and all are evidence of God's desire to draw all people to Himself.

First, you'll be encouraged to know that Campbellsville University and Simmons College of Kentucky recently announced a partnership in higher education. The partnership includes student and faculty exchanges and sharing library resources. Simmons is located in Louisville where Campbellsville University also has a branch.

Kevin Cosby, president of Simmons College of Kentucky, invited me to speak at two chapel services at the college recently. I was impressed with the students, faculty, and the vision of President Cosby.

He also is pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church, which has a long history with the college. Cosby has a passion to fulfill the vision of the founding fathers and to make a posi-

tive impact for the Kingdom of God in the inner city of Louisville.

He is making a huge personal sacrifice in order to fulfill this vision. I hope the community and Kentucky Baptists will help.

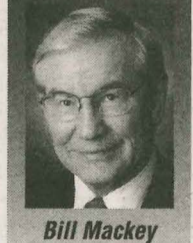
On another front, Crusades for Christ recently celebrated 30 years of ministry focused primarily on mission work in Haiti and Africa. The founder and president is evangelist Joe Mobley of London, Ky.

During the past 30 years, the ministry has distributed more than 1.5 million copies of the Scriptures, started churches and helped sponsor 54 schools. Mobley and all the volunteers are to be commended for their service in the harvest.

About 150 people were present for a recent dinner and celebration held at Corinth Baptist Church where Mobley is a member. In addition to mission work, he preaches about 35 church revivals each year.

Finally, you'll be encouraged to hear that the annual Hispanic Evan-

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

Don't 'tickle ears'

It is sad to say, but it seems that a lot of the opinions in the Western Recorder are anything but Christian.

I believe a lot of Baptist churches are falling for secular preaching and music. Whatever happened to hell fire and damnation preaching? I believe people will die and go to hell because of preachers who preach to tickle the ears of the congregation.

It seems most are so hung up on gambling, alcohol and adultery that we don't hear much else. Could it be because the leaders of the church aren't guilty of those three? Well, it seems they have forgotten that God hates lying, stealing, backbiting.

I am really concerned about the teaching of intelligent design. I do not believe we should teach that; it is not much different than evolution. Why try to fool us?

Why do they say there must be a higher power? Of course there is, but just say it like it is: God created as only God can. Creation is something made from nothing. No man or woman has or ever will create anything.

Shirley O. Smith
Cadiz

Not funny.

Especially when you consider the resentment—racial, theological and otherwise—that lingers from the string of arsons at black churches 10 years ago. Not funny. Especially when you realize a conspiracy conviction could put these guys in federal prison for years. Federal sentencing, you know, allows no parole.

It only makes matters worse that students at a Methodist college are charged with burning down Baptist churches. There's tension enough between the denominations.

But no, there is really nothing funny about this story. It is only sad. Sad for the young men and their families. Sad for those who put them on a pedestal. And sad, most of all, for the nine churches that must rebuild because of a prank.

John Archibald is a columnist for the Birmingham (Ala.) News

gelism Conference, held recently at First Baptist Church of Horse Cave, had more than 400 people in attendance this year. Herman Rios, a personal friend, was present to speak as part of the partnership between Hispanic works in the Florida and Kentucky Baptist conventions.

Joy Bolton and other Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union representatives also were present to provide a model of missions education for the women and children.

Hispanic work is the fastest growing ministry among Kentucky Baptists. The fifth high-impact church start launched as part of Kentucky Baptists Connect is a Hispanic congregation in Lexington.

With these and other opportunities before us as Kentucky Baptists, it is important that church members support their churches and that churches support the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program provides funds for Campbellsville University, for Hispanic work, and enables partnership with associations and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

What if Baptists' CP giving plan ceased to exist?

By Doug Strader

The Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, has been around longer than most Southern Baptists. Most of us cannot remember what it was like before

the Cooperative Program was birthed in 1925.

Maybe you have heard stories about the way Baptist agencies and institutions once competed for funds from the churches. Often the representative who was the most effective speaker was able to raise the most money. That meant many churches left other worthy causes underfunded. Something needed to be done to make sure that all Baptist agencies and institutions received a fair share from all the churches, thus the Cooperative Program was born.

Consider what would happen if the Cooperative Program suddenly ceased to exist:

■ The Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee would lose all of its funding.

■ Southern Baptist seminaries would have to seek financial resources from other sources to help educate ministers.

■ The Southern Baptist International Mission Board would lose more than half of its income. It would need to make up that money some other way or the IMB could not fund more than half of its 5,000-plus missionaries.

■ The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board also would lose more than half its income that now supports missionaries throughout the U.S. and Canada.

■ The Kentucky Baptist Convention would lose almost all of its income for operations.

■ The ministries of our Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children ministry would suffer.

■ Baptist campus ministers throughout the state would be left without financial resources.

■ The Western Recorder would lose approximately one-third of its annual funding.

The above list is not comprehensive, but one can get a picture of what life for Kentucky Baptists and Southern Baptists might look like if the Cooperative Program ceased to exist.

The picture without the Cooperative Program is not pretty. Therefore, it is imperative that Baptists keep the Cooperative Program alive and well to help fulfill the Great Commission.

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

Teens' spring break trips need careful planning & clear rules

Q: What do you think about teenagers going to Florida on spring break?

In my opinion, the best-case scenario for teenagers visiting Florida is when they go with their family, a friend's family, a group of families or a Christian youth group.

Having led at least 20 years of spring break camps, I can tell you from personal experience and observation that turning most teens loose in such an environment is placing them at potentially great risk.

It's hard to know how many students' lives are damaged, even ruined, because of their own or someone else's abuse of alcohol and drugs. Substance abuse leads to drunk driving, violence and fighting, and increased sexual promiscuity. Unfortunately, too many of the souvenirs that students bring home from such a vacation include unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and minds filled with the debauchery of the week.

Before expecting our teens to "flee all youthful temptations" (2 Timothy 2:22), parents should be careful not to prematurely expose them to situations where the packaging of evil is unusually attractive and seductive.

Would I ever allow my son or daughter to go with a group of friends to the beach on spring break? If so, it would only be if the following factors were in play:

- An older teenager who has demonstrated unusual maturity and no recent history of trust violations.
- My comfort level with the maturity of the accompanying friends.
- Accommodations reasonably removed from the hub of most partying.
- A clear agreement about appropriate behavior and other expectations.—*Scott Wigginton*

Q: My spouse is overly dependent on me. It has become a burden, and I cannot keep living like this. What can I do?

Sometimes there is confusion about the concept of two becoming one in marriage. Instead of two whole, fully functioning people choosing to intertwine their unique lives as created by God, one spouse seems to do all the functioning while the other might act as if he or she has no free will and little ability.

Marriage should not be the end of God's work through the Holy Spirit in each man or woman. There are some dangers to consider when one spouse is overly dependent on the other:

- One spouse might expect the other spouse to meet all of their needs (financial, emotional, directional, spiritual, social, etc.). This is dangerous. God is the source of meeting our needs. Certainly God uses our mate to meet some of our needs. But this can become overwhelming to one spouse to experience the pressure of trying to meet all of someone else's needs. Such expectations can set one's spouse up for disappointment.
- Priorities are off base when there is too much dependence. Jesus helps us order our priorities. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself," He counsels in Matthew 22:37-39.
- Being overly dependent on one's spouse can promote failure to seek God's will for one's own life to grow spiritually. Scripture guides us in how we can develop more fully and grow toward wholeness. As we are created in God's image of wholeness, perfection and unity, we should make strides in this direction as God's image bearers.

Consider talking with your spouse about the concerns you have and any pressures you feel about this overdependence. Look for ways you can encourage your spouse to grow toward wholeness in Christ. Enlist outside help so each of you has sufficient support, encouragement and accountability.—*Valerie Vincent*

Family Forum writers are:

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

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

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

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



Editors weigh in on IMB, NAMB struggles

I've shared my views in recent weeks about the challenging issues facing Southern Baptists' two mission boards. As trustees of the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board hold respective meetings this week, I thought it would be worthwhile for Kentucky Baptists to read the perspectives of other state Baptist paper editors on these pivotal issues:

Charlie Warren, Arkansas Baptist News:

In this issue (of the Arkansas Baptist News) are somewhat controversial stories about both Southern Baptist mission boards: the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board. Many of you have been following a controversial decision by the IMB trustees to ask messengers to remove one of its trustees, Wade Burleson, from the board. Burleson, an Oklahoma pastor, has a Weblog on which he has discussed recent decisions by IMB trustees, including a tightening of restrictions on missionaries using a private prayer language. ...

The Christian Index, our sister state paper in Georgia, wrote a 4,500-word "analysis" of NAMB, which was largely critical of the agency's effectiveness. NAMB, in response, disputed the charges. ...

Our motivation in reporting these stories is not to stir up controversy. Our motivation is to keep Baptists informed. ... When Baptists are fully informed, they make wise decisions. IMB and NAMB trustees, elected each year by convention messengers, are responsible to monitor the work of agency heads and staff. But you and I are responsible to monitor decisions made by trustees.

Mission work—local, state, national and international—represents the heart of who Baptists are. Baptists love missions. Baptists support missions. Baptists love, support and revere both mission boards.

I encourage Arkansas Baptists to continue supporting both agencies with your prayers, your financial support and your volunteer participation. Yet I also encourage you to stay informed about the work of both boards and the decisions being made by trustees and agency employees. Let your voice be heard when things appear awry.

Don Kirkland, South Carolina Baptist Courier: An Oklahoma pastor with solid conservative credentials and a trustee of the International Mission Board is at the center of a controversy over IMB's new policy adopted in November that missionary appointment will be denied to those who practice a "private prayer language"—in other words, speaking in tongues—in personal devotions. ...

Out of this internal conflict arise the obvious questions of whether the trustees of the IMB acted wisely in adopting a policy that places such a restriction on the language used in private prayer and devotions and whether Burleson acted appropriately in going online to voice his own objections to the new stance by the IMB.

Making this whole matter even more interesting is the fact that Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board, has acknowledged using what now is the prohibited type of private prayer language. ...

James Guenther, a Nashville attorney who counsels both the Southern Baptist and North Carolina Baptist conventions, ... has offered his opinion that what he termed "minority reports" are inappropriate once trustees have made their decisions concerning institutional business. It certainly can be argued that (IMB trustee Wade) Burleson is properly faulted for taking his opposition to a policy established by the trustees out of the boardroom and into a public forum.

As for whether the board's action in setting the tongues policy was appropriate, that is another question altogether which surely is open to debate. The International Mission Board already had in place a policy disallowing public speaking in tongues by its missionaries, and for good reason. Such ecstatic utterances, which many no doubt would declare are personally edifying, are more likely to be disruptive of, rather than contributing to, the building of the Kingdom of God.

Language practiced in prayer—and the Holy Spirit understands us even when all we can do is groan—ap-

pears to be something entirely different. Whatever language, or even the lack of words at all, is practiced in a person's prayer and devotional life should remain the business of God and the believer alone. ...

Our Southern Baptist Convention already has endured more than enough division, more than enough fracture in our fellowship for the good of our denomination and the cause of Christ. Conservatives holding the positions of leadership in the SBC and the rest of us as well must find ways to nurture unity in Jesus Christ without pushing for a forced conformity in the practice of our faith in every facet of Baptist life. The International Mission Board, in its all-important work of carrying out the Great Commission, must not become shackled with overly restrictive policies that hamper rather than enhance its far-reaching ministry and seek to limit the ways missionaries can relate privately to their God.

Lonnie Wilkey, Tennessee Baptist and Reflector: Many Southern Baptists are aware of the controversy surrounding an article about the North American Mission Board which first appeared in the Christian Index, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The article criticized NAMB's evangelism and church planting strategies, its method in counting missionaries, NAMB's relationship with a private media firm, and NAMB President Bob Reccord's speaking engagements.

NAMB has taken steps to respond to the concerns, including asking a committee to be formed of NAMB trustees "who will thoroughly review all the issues raised in the article."

If any or all of the charges in the Index article are true, then NAMB trustees should be investigating the matters and take corrective measures if any are needed.

My hope is that the internal matters at NAMB do not take away the focus from the external—the North American missionaries who are giving their lives to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the estimated 244 million lost people in the United States and Canada. ...

We need to keep our focus on our missionaries and provide them with the prayer and financial support they need to make a difference for Christ in North America. ...

We need to pray for what is happening at NAMB headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga., but don't let the controversy there take away from the support of our missionaries. They are real-life heroes working at times under extreme obstacles and tough circumstances to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our missionaries deserve our prayers and support.

Jim White, Virginia Religious Herald: NAMB and its people have done many wonderful things. They are faithful and devoted. But even such people as we Baptists are capable of sin. Just as individuals, institutions are capable of attempting to make themselves look good by putting a spin on the truth. Because of this, state Baptist papers must continue to ask questions—not as adversaries, but as brothers.

Let's face it. Few people like having their work scrutinized. We shouldn't expect NAMB to be different. But accountability should characterize Christian institutions.

No one I know is suggesting that anything immoral or illegal has been done or is accusing anyone of wrongdoing. But in raising the questions it has, the Christian Index has become the enemy in the minds of some.

There was a time, during the Vietnam era of our history, when people said, "My country right or wrong." As a Marine at the time, I said it. But the sentiment "My convention right or wrong," which seems to have developed among some ardent convention supporters, is troubling.

Jeremiah, the prophet, said it: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). As long as churches, agencies, institutions, conventions and, yes, even state Baptist papers are staffed by human beings, we must continue to expect and require openness.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Specialist offers tips for church hospitality, events

For special events

■ To find out more about Upward sports ministries, call (800) 585-4721 or visit upward.org

■ To learn how to host a blood donation drive, check with a local chapter of the American Red Cross or visit redcross.org.

■ To host a marriage enrichment event, contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention's leadership development team at (866) 489-3381 or on the Web at kybaptist.org.

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Lexington—Whether a congregation is planning an unprecedented celebration or overhauling its weekly routine, leaders should step back and look at their church through the eyes of first-time visitors.

"The goal is to make folks feel they're not guests at all," said Denise Withers, communications specialist with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Withers told women attending the recent KBC Evangelism Conference in Lexington that smiling faces, helping hands and good old-fashioned cleanliness are as important as inspired preaching and Spirit-filled singing when it comes to creating a welcoming atmosphere.

"First impressions make all the difference," said Withers, who coordinates such large-scale events for the convention as the KBC annual meeting.

Helping park cars on Sunday morning or escorting guests to Bible study might seem mundane tasks, but Withers reminded women that hospitality is a task mentioned more than once in Scripture.

In 1 Peter 4:9, the apostle instructs believers to "offer hospitality without grumbling." Peter encourages Christians to serve others in proportion to the greatness of the gift of salvation provided by Christ.

"Hospitality is central to Christ-like living," Withers said.

Focusing first on a church's weekly routines and then on special events, Withers offered several tips for congregations both large and small.

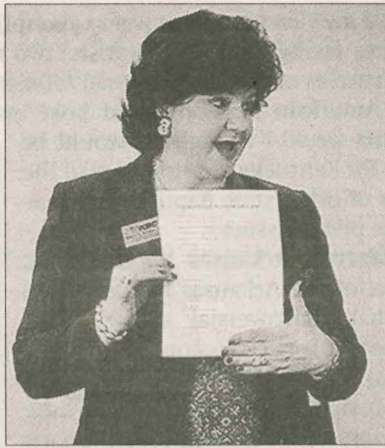
Parking. "Even small churches could benefit from parking lot attendants," she said. These volunteers literally provide the first impression of a church. Reserved parking spaces for first-time visitors are suggested.

Greeters and escorts. A church should have greeters posted at each entrance, she said. These volunteers should know how to direct people to the sanctuary or to an area where they can be escorted to Bible study. Escorts should be ready to lead guests to Bible study and then arrange for the guest to be escorted from Bible study to worship.

Signs. Many guests won't ask for directions, so churches need signs to help people find the sanctuary, visitors' center, fellowship hall and other key areas.

Cleanliness. Assess the cleanliness of the church facility with a critical eye, Withers said. Look for and eliminate clutter in public areas.

Follow-up. Establish a system for contacting guests after their initial visit. Withers recommended a "very low-impact, same-day" contact such as placing a "goodie bag" with information about the church on



GETTING ORGANIZED Denise Withers, communications specialist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, discusses a special events checklist with women attending the recent KBC Evangelism Conference in Lexington. The list helps church members organize all types of events. A sample is available on the KBC Web site at kybaptist.org/eventform

the guest's doorknob before they return home from the service. A "thank-you for coming" phone call the same day and a note from the pastor or a member the next day are other ideas.

Pointers for special events

Current and former church members and frequent attendees are the primary "audience" for regular church events, including homecomings, anniversaries and fellowship suppers. But Withers said congregations should schedule some special events specifically to attract the general public.

A member of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, Withers said hosting sports leagues, blood drives, marriage enrichment workshops, craft bazaars and "parking lot" parties are just a few ideas.

Some events are not overtly evangelistic and participants might be members of other churches or be people who do not attend

Details, details

Lexington—A successful special event requires good planning with attention to details, Denise Withers said.

"Good planning decreases chaos," said Withers, who plans special events for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Plan early and start by identifying the purpose of the event."

Having a detail-oriented person involved in special events is a must, Withers said.

The type of event will influence the number of people serving on a planning committee, but she cautioned against having too many people participate in the planning process.

Special committees, mission groups, Sunday school classes and other church ministries should consider the following when planning a special event:

Church resources. Work with church staff to inventory space,

equipment and other resources of the facility. Then compile a list of items that will be needed from outside the church such as extra chairs or audio/visual equipment.

Personnel needs. What members of the church staff will be involved in the event? Will you need assistance from maintenance staff or audio/visual operators? How many volunteers from the congregation will be needed?

Schedules. Set deadlines for certain components of the project to be completed such as invitations, publicity and decorating.

To help organize an event and to promote good communication between specific church ministries and church staff, Withers recommends using a special events check list.

An example is available through the Kentucky Baptist Convention Web site at kybaptist.org/eventform. Dannah Prather

church regularly, she said. These activities give church members the opportunity to build positive relationships with their neighbors that eventually might result in salvation decisions.

Such events also demonstrate that the church wants to be part of its larger community, she added.

The Upward ministry, established in 1986, helps churches host basketball, soccer, flag football and cheerleading leagues with the intent of sharing the gospel. Today, approximately 1,500 churches throughout America host Upward leagues.

Withers said her home church hosts Upward basketball "and half of the kids aren't members of St. Matthews Baptist Church."

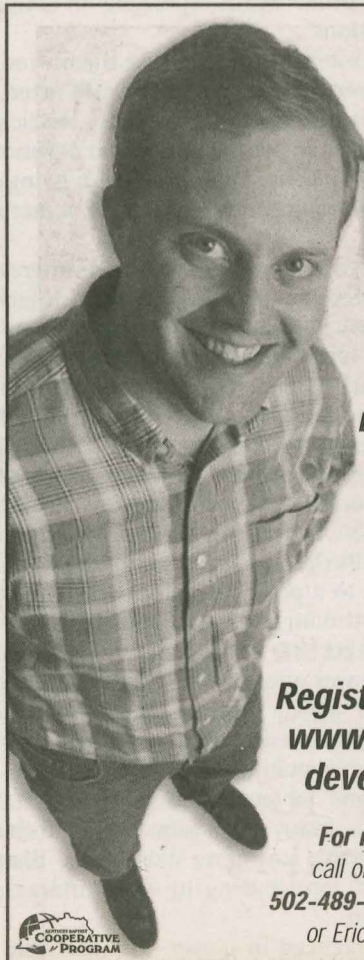
Hosting a marriage enrichment workshop is another way a church

can provide a public service.

With good promotion, craft bazaars can attract hundreds of people. One woman attending Withers' session said her church offers a four-hour craft clinic, providing several 20-minute workshops on various simple crafts.

St. Matthews' Great Parking Lot Party includes a 5-K run, inflatable children's play equipment, carnival-type food and other activities. The church also uses the event to sign up children for its vacation Bible school.

Withers said the party is scheduled two Sundays before the start of vacation Bible school. Because it draws non-church members, it gives the congregation an opportunity to minister to families who might not usually enroll their children in vacation Bible school.



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and Hwy. 44, on the left. Signs will be present at the road.

National WMU president to headline Kentucky meeting

Harrodsburg—Kaye Miller, national Woman's Missionary Union president, will be the keynote speaker at Kentucky WMU's 103rd annual meeting April 21-22 at Harrodsburg Baptist Church.

Highlighting the theme, "Keep the Message Alive," Kentucky WMU Executive Director Joy Bolton said the program will focus on ways WMU members keep the message of Christ alive locally and around the world. "From start to finish, WMU leaders, members and anyone who cares about missions will want to be at our meeting in Harrodsburg," she added.

Miller, elected national WMU president in 2005, is a nurse and former missionary kid from Little Rock, Ark. She will deliver the meeting's closing challenge on Saturday morning and also will speak at the Baptist Nursing Fellowship luncheon after the meeting.

Carmela Bartels, a Southern Baptist international missionary to Central and Eastern Europe, will share about her work during the meeting's Friday morning session. Her daughter, Chandra, will provide special music in the session.

The annual business session will be during the Friday afternoon session. It will include the election of WMU officers and board members, and a special recognition of Cathy Chinn who will complete her term as president.

The Friday evening session will be a "fiesta" celebrating Hispanic ministries in Kentucky. Bolton invited participants to take part in a missions project by bringing a Spanish Bible to be given to a Kentucky Hispanic ministry. Churches and associational WMU groups also are invited to bring displays that show how they are involved in "Keeping the Message Alive."



FEATURED SPEAKERS Kaye Miller and Ross Bauscher are scheduled to speak at the Kentucky WMU annual meeting April 21-22.

On Saturday morning, Kentucky WMU will launch a partnership with Korea WMU. Sook Jae Lee, executive director of Korea WMU, will speak during the session. The Korea partnership will include a prayer emphasis for both North and South Korea. Lee also will lead prayer times at 8:30 a.m. on Friday and 8 a.m. on Saturday.

Ross Bauscher, Kentucky Baptist Convention partnership missions director, will speak on Friday and Saturday mornings. Annual meeting participants will have the opportunity to participate in a virtual prayerwalk for Kentucky partnership missions, and also prayerwalk in downtown Harrodsburg.

All participants can pre-register for a box lunch on Friday at noon. An Executive Board reunion dinner will be held Friday at 5 p.m. for all current and former Kentucky WMU Executive Board members and staff.

Acteens and Youth on Mission members and leaders are invited to participate in the Saturday morning session and stay for a youth pizza party at noon. The Saturday program also will include a missions event for children, grades 1-6, and their leaders. There is a \$2 per person fee payable at the door for the children's event.

Nurses are encouraged to attend the WMU annual meeting and the Baptist Nursing Fellowship luncheon on Saturday. WMU is the sponsor of BNF, a national organization for Christian nurses.

Pre-registration is required for preschool child care, interpretation for the deaf, Friday box lunch and dinners for the Executive Board, Acteens/Youth on Mission and Baptist Nursing Fellowship. For registration information, contact Kentucky WMU at (502) 489-3534 or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3534.

Exalt, 4:GO to offer simultaneous events for girls and boys

For years, Kentucky WMU has hosted the annual Exalt conference for teenage girls. Now teenage boys will have a similar event.

The Exalt missions and worship conference will be held March 31-April 1 at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

The event, for teen girls in grades 7-12, features worship, workshops on such topics as dating and interaction with missionaries and others involved in missions work.

This year, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's youth ministry department will host 4:GO, a similar event for boys at Greenwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

The separate conferences are scheduled so that churches can use one van or bus to take boys and girls to Bowling Green. Events are staggered so that adults can pick up or drop off the teens at each site on time.

Although the event locations and accommodations are separate, the two will join for worship on Saturday.

For more information about Exalt, call Kentucky WMU at (866) 489-3534. For more information about 4:GO, visit kybaptist.org or call (866) 489-3574.



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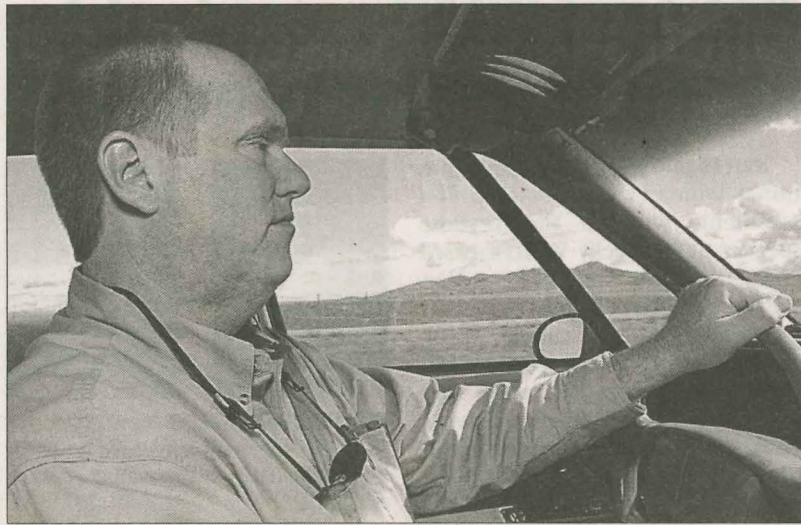


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MILES FOR MISSIONS Dave Howeth, director of missions and church planter strategist for the Treasure State Baptist Association in Helena, Mont., supports 28 Southern Baptist churches in 11 counties. The area covers almost 40,000 square miles, and he regularly drives to visit and encourage pastors. (Photo by John Swain)

Montana missionary hits road to encourage far-flung churches

Continued from page 1

Dave and Debbie Howeth are among the more than 5,200 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories whose work is supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

Howeth was among the missionaries highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer for North American Missions. The 2006 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering's goal is \$56 million.

"Without the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, my role in our association would not be possible," Howeth said.

The "metro area" of Helena has more than 50,000 people, while Helena proper has a population of about 30,000. In Helena, Howeth recently started Capital Baptist Fellowship Church. Capital and existing Calvary Baptist are the only two Southern Baptist churches in Helena.

According to Howeth, 80 percent of the 240,000 people living in southwest Montana don't know Jesus as their personal Savior. There are only 1,500 Southern Baptist church members in this entire area of the state. Major revival has never come to the state, he says.

"If you study the history of revival, you know it's been all around the country. It's been in the Northeast. It's obviously been in the South. Revival even came as far as the Mississippi River and Missouri. But it jumped across the Great Plains, over the Rocky Mountains, into California," Howeth said.

The people of Montana are tough, independent, self-sufficient folk, he said, who put their trust mainly in themselves. "Trying to get them to place their faith and trust in the one true Savior, the one true God, is a huge issue of surrender for them."

A native of Missoula, Mont., Howeth became a Christian at the age of 22. He and wife, Debbie, are what he calls "first-generation Christians." Dave shared the gospel with her on their honeymoon.

Many miles to drive

In Montana, Southern Baptist pastors are spread out, and can be 60 or 70 miles away from each other.

To combat the isolation, Howeth created "pastor networks" across his association. The pastors meet monthly to fellowship, compare notes and learn from each other.

He spends much of his time mentoring and coaching pastors and church planters. Sometimes that's over the phone. More often, he's steering his blue Buick down a lonely stretch of Montana road to personally meet with the pastor networks.

What does Howeth love most about his job?

"What I really love to watch is a church that's really humming for the Lord," he said.

"When they're doing servant evangelism, and stepping outside their church walls, and leading people to Christ, and discipling people, and assimilating them into the life of the church, and the church is growing and reproducing ... boy, what synergy, what energy!"



"Without the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, my role in our association would not be possible."

Dave Howeth

GEORGETOWN

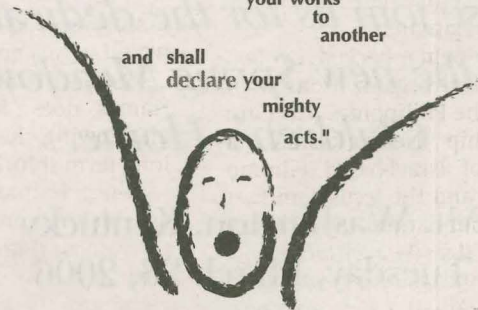
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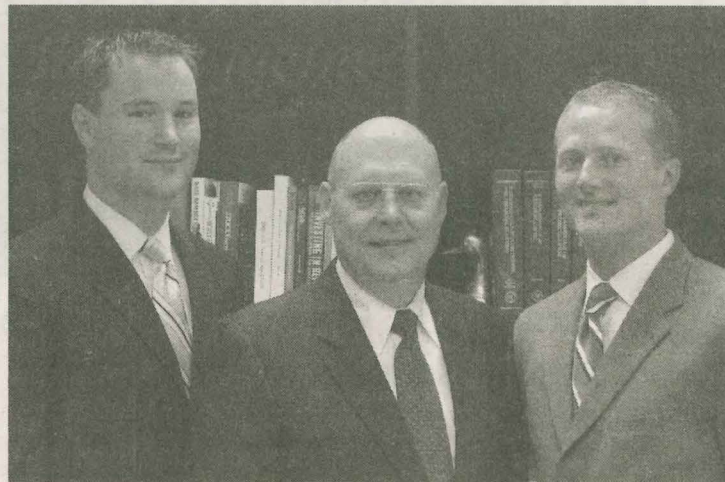
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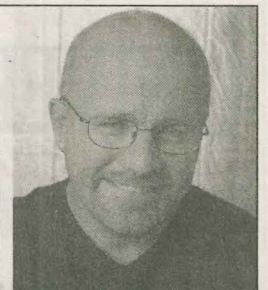


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DAVE RAMSEY



Christians' prayer tent to open on Mount of Olives

Jerusalem (RNS)—Beginning March 25, Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land can worship at a new prayer tent on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem.

The center will, at least initially, be housed in a large tent that will face the Old City of Jerusalem, where the Temple Mount is situated.

It is being backed by two evangelical organizations with ties to the Philippines: His Care Leadership Network/Israel, a group of Israel-based Filipino pastors; and the Jerusalem East Gate Foundation, a ministry "that bridges Asia with the Holy Land ministries," according to Marisa Albert, the organization's president.

"Christians believe the Messiah will return to the Mount of Olives," she said. "We want to have a place to worship there."

The prayer tent is the latest initiative by evangelical Christians, many of them staunch supporters of Israel, to establish a presence in the Holy Land. Last year several evangelical leaders pledged a total of \$50 million to build a Christian heritage center near the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel.

Faith groups divided over U.S. and Hamas

By Kevin Eckstrom & Rachel Pomerance
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—If you asked many Jewish and evangelical leaders how the United States should respond to the Jan. 25 Palestinian elections that ushered Hamas into power, the reaction would be fairly swift and severe:

No aid. No relations. No questions asked.

But if you asked Catholic and mainline Protestant leaders, most would urge a go-slow approach:

Support Israel. Wait to see what Hamas does. Keep humanitarian aid flowing. Keep the focus on a long-term solution.

Since Hamas is officially listed as a terrorist organization, and one that is committed to Israel's destruction, Washington is carefully weighing its response—diplomatically, monetarily and politically.

Religious groups, who frequently have a limited but respected voice on foreign policy, say the emergence of Hamas moves the issue beyond pure politics. Jews say their spiritual homeland is in peril, churches worry about the future of the dwindling Christian presence in the Holy Land, and nearly everyone is concerned about Hamas' embrace of militant Islam.

"Overall, religious leaders seem to be as perplexed and dumbfounded by the Hamas victory as the policymakers," said Timothy Shah,

a senior fellow at the Washington-based Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Slow go or get tough?

So far, religious groups are rallying around either a go-slow policy proposal or a get-tough bill in Congress.

The go-slow approach—backed by most mainline Protestant churches, Catholic bishops and some Jewish and Muslim groups—was expressed in a recent statement by the loose-knit National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East, which urged an "active, fair and firm" U.S. role in the region.

"We support the U.S. not acting precipitously to cut off aid to the Palestinian people," the group said in a recent letter to President Bush, stressing that humanitarian aid must not be curtailed.

The get-tough bill is the proposed Palestinian Accountability Act. It would prevent U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority as long as it is controlled by a terrorist organization and refuses to acknowledge Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. It also would stop U.S. aid to United Nations agencies that directly fund Palestinians.

Ron Young, co-coordinator of the interfaith group, called the Ros-Lehtinen bill a "rush to judgment" and urged that the "president's

hands not be tied ... by what we consider to be premature actions in the Congress."

Evangelicals are a key voice on the Middle East because of their outsized support of Israel and their close ties to the Bush White House. Their views on the Middle East have been reliably pro-Israel, but there has been no collective statement on Hamas.

An April 2005 poll by the Pew Forum found that 52 percent of evangelicals (compared to 35 percent of the U.S. public) said U.S. policy should favor Israel over the Palestinians. The same survey found the most ardent evangelicals favored Israel at a rate of 64 percent.

Some evangelical leaders—Richard Stearns, president of World Vision, and Richard Mouw of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif.—signed the go-slow statement, but other key evangelical leaders have remained mostly silent.

Richard Land, who directs the Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, suggested the U.S. would be violating its own policies if aid—humanitarian or otherwise—continued to flow to the Palestinians.

"We have laws in place that forbid us from giving money to terrorist groups," Land said in an interview, "and I don't think there's any question that Hamas is a terrorist organization."

So far, religious groups are rallying around either a go-slow policy proposal or a get-tough bill in Congress.

Bush adds center to involve help from faith-based charities during disasters

Washington (RNS)—President Bush has called for a center on faith-based and community initiatives to be opened within the Department of Homeland Security to help government and religious groups better coordinate after hurricanes and other disasters.

Bush's executive order says the action was taken to "better meet America's social and community needs."

A report issued in February by a homeland security staff person found that while faith-based and other nongovernmental organizations provided "essential support" to hurricane victims, they "were not adequately integrated into the response effort."

The report, titled "The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned," recommended that the Department of Homeland Security create an office to better connect nongovernmental organizations with federal, state and local responders during emergencies.

The president had ordered the review within weeks after the hurricane devastated the Gulf Coast region. His executive order calls for the office to be created within 45 days.

Jim Towey, director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives, said the new office will improve relations between the public and religious participants in disaster relief.

"They've been treated like candy strippers when they're really foot soldiers," he said of faith-based groups.

The new office will be the 11th

Church help sought if bird flu spreads

Washington (RNS)—As troubling reports continue to surface of the possibility of the avian flu virus jumping to humans, the federal government has released a list of ways religious groups can prepare to help in the event of a widespread outbreak of the lethal virus.

"The collaboration of faith-based and community organizations with public health agencies will be important in protecting the public if and when a pandemic occurs," Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt said in a statement.

The avian flu virus has so far spread to humans primarily through contact with infected birds, but scientists fear that the virus will mutate into a form that could spread easily from human to human, potentially killing millions of people.

"(Faith-based) organizations provide vital support services and can help build awareness of the pandemic influenza threat," Leavitt said. "By working together now, we'll be better equipped to serve communities in the future."

The two-page checklist for faith-based groups, developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, includes suggestions such as obtaining regular flu shots, identifying religious rites and practices that could facilitate the spread of the virus, and addressing the "rumors, misinformation, fear and anxiety" that a widespread outbreak could produce.

An outbreak of the H5N1 avian flu virus in Turkey—the first case of the disease spreading outside East Asia—has concerned health officials worldwide. More than 100 people have died of bird flu since late 2003, most of whom lived in China and Southeast Asia.

agency center Bush has created to emphasize faith-based and community organizations. Following through on a campaign theme, Bush initiated his focus on religious charities shortly after his 2001 inauguration and called for sweeping congressional action.

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on parenting, seniors, singles, teenagers and relationships can help equip your congregation to live out their Christianity where it matters most. Shouldn't your members be getting Family Forum?

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
WESTERNRECORDER

Court not ready to overturn Roe v. Wade, Scalia says

By Tom Strode

SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

Washington (BP)—South Dakota's enactment of a ban on abortion has boosted hopes that Roe v. Wade might be overturned, but one Supreme Court justice doesn't think so.

Associate Justice Antonin Scalia said recently that he doubts the 1973 opinion that legalized abortion will be overturned and he doesn't know if it ever will.

Speaking to a gathering of Swiss professors and students March 8, Scalia, whose opposition to Roe is well known, said when asked if the highly criticized ruling would be reversed by the high court, "I have no idea. I have no idea whether it will be."

"There are still five justices on our court who voted in favor of Roe vs. Wade," Scalia told a group

at the University of Freiburg. "So, if I had to guess, I would say, 'Not yet—maybe not (ever)—but certainly not yet.'"

Though Scalia said he did not have an official opinion on abortion, he said a right to the procedure "is not contained in the Constitution of the United States."

Scalia's remarks were reported by LifeNews.com, which based its article on a French Audio-Visual Bureau news report.

Scalia's remarks underscored concerns some pro-life advocates have voiced about South Dakota's frontal challenge to Roe.

Can S.D. law accomplish goals?

In a March 8 online editorial, National Review, a conservative magazine, said it had "mixed feelings."

The editors said they "share the

pro-life objectives that animate" the South Dakota law, "but we doubt that they actually advance those objectives."

If the measures are challenged and reach the high court, "they will elicit another reaffirmation of that decision," the editorial said. "They could thus strengthen the felt force of the argument that Roe is a super-duper-precedent."

Some supporters of the South Dakota law have argued not only that states should do what is right rather than look to the Supreme Court for guidance on legislation, but also that the make-up of the court might change before the case reaches the justices.

That scenario might pose another problem, National Review contended.

"If another vacancy arises while these laws are working their way

through the courts, their effect will be to make it harder to confirm a justice who might be inclined to be the decisive vote against Roe," the editors wrote.

Only two sitting justices—Scalia and Clarence Thomas—have expressed opposition to Roe since joining the high court. Two new members—Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Samuel Alito—have yet to rule on Roe's constitutionality.

Associate Justices John Paul Stevens, Anthony Kennedy, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer have demonstrated support for Roe while on the court.

If Roe is overturned, abortion would not be outlawed in the country. Such a ruling would return the issue to the states, which could enact bans on the procedure.

NATIONAL NOTES

Iowa to remove gambling machines. The Iowa legislature has called for the removal of 6,000 slot machine-like lottery devices installed at more than 2,800 retail locations, and the state's governor has said he will sign the bill. Legislators argued that gambling had spread beyond what they had intended when the go-ahead was given for the lottery expansion in 2001. The measure gives businesses 45 days from the ban's enactment to remove them.

FCC announces fines. The Federal Communications Commission announced new fines against television broadcasters totaling \$3.9 million. The largest fine issued was for a record \$3.6 million against dozens of CBS stations and affiliates for airing an episode of "Without a Trace" with the graphic depiction of teenagers "participating in a sexual orgy." Commissioners also rejected an appeal by CBS that said Janet Jackson's exposure during the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show was not indecent.

Same-sex adoptions create dilemma in Boston. After a three-month study, Catholic Charities of Boston concluded March 10 that a Massachusetts antidiscrimination law makes it impossible for the agency to adhere to Catholic teachings that prohibit the placement of children with same-sex couples. Rather than challenge the law in court, the agency opted to end its 103-year-old tradition of facilitating adoptions.

Cincinnati council bars gay bias for housing, jobs. Thirteen years after Cincinnati passed the nation's only law banning protection of sexual minorities, its City Council voted 8-1 March 15 to reverse the law's effect. The council voted to amend the city's human-rights law to add sexual orientation and gender identity among the classes protected from discrimination in housing and employment. In 2004, Cincinnati repealed Article XII, which had stood since 1993. It was unique nationwide in that it specifically banned gay-rights ordinances.

Homosexual activists arrested at Liberty University. On the first stop of their bus tour of 19 Christian colleges and military academies, 24 members of the homosexual activist group Soulforce were arrested for trespassing on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. Soulforce members stood in single file as they were restrained in plastic handcuffs and taken to a local magistrate. All were released without bail later in the day. They face a maximum penalty of a year in jail or a \$2,500 fine.

Presbyterians might cut national staff again. The Presbyterian Church (USA) must cut \$9.15 million from its budget and might be forced to lay off as much as a quarter of its 600-person national staff, most of whom work at denominational offices in Louisville. The denomination has approximately 2.4 million members. The cuts would follow \$7 million in cuts that were made in 1993 during a major restructuring. Denominational officials say the cuts stem from reduced amounts of giving to national programs by local congregations and presbyteries because Presbyterians are giving more to their local churches.

Applications increase at evangelical colleges

Washington (RNS)—Evangelical Christian colleges are attracting record numbers of applications this year in a trend that bodes well for an educational niche that was struggling to survive just a generation ago.

Applications have jumped between 8 percent and 10 percent at the 238 colleges that belong to the North American Association of Christian Admissions Professionals, according to Executive Director Chant Thompson.

More applications mean more students on campuses next fall, he says, and that's good news because 25 percent of those schools are barely breaking even financially.

Excitement is running high among administrators at Christian campuses that have strived for a long time to grow their enroll-

ments and fill classrooms with high-achieving students.

On the other hand, keener competition means disappointment for some anxious seniors in high school who thought their credentials were good enough to get in.

"On Jan. 15, we had thousands and thousands of applications from students who in prior years would have been admissible, but we had to wait-list them," says James Steen, assistant vice president of admission and enrollment services at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

For other schools, more applications mean more students and more revenue. At Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn., officials say enrollment has grown 10 percent per year since 2000. At the same time, tuition grew by less than 6 percent a year.

Observers of the trend cite multiple reasons, including relative value in an era when tuitions have outpaced inflation. Religious denominations help contain tuition increases through subsidies often ranging from \$1 million to \$3 million a year, CCCU President Bob Andringa says.

But money isn't the only factor. Students who practice a faith often want to study where their beliefs are respected, and that can be hard to find on secular campuses, says Naomi Schaefer Riley, author of "God on the Quad: How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America."

"It's nice for (students) to go to a place where they don't have to always be defending their beliefs," says Riley, deputy editor at The Wall Street Journal.

Religious liberty panel criticizes U.S. report on Saudi Arabia

Washington (BP)—A bipartisan federal panel on religious liberty overseas has criticized a recent State Department report on Saudi Arabia, expressing concern it is an exoneration of that Islamic-dominated country's human rights abuses.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom acknowledged that the annual report highlighted human rights problems in Saudi Arabia, noting the State Department's reiteration there is "no religious freedom in the Middle East country."

But the USCIRF described the report as containing "an inordinate emphasis on optimistic statements by Saudi leaders, statements that have yet to be followed by action." The commission said the State Department report "even appears to justify serious abuses" by the Saudi regime.

The USCIRF's criticism is the latest in a series of disagreements between the panel and the State Department over Saudi Arabia.

The USCIRF repeatedly urged the State Department to designate Saudi Arabia as one of its "countries of particular concern" before its advice was finally followed in 2004. CPCs are governments deter-

mined by the State Department to be the world's most severe violators of religious freedom.

The State Department declined to apply any sanctions to Saudi Arabia, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice approved a 180-day waiver in September "in order to allow additional time for the continuation of discussions leading to progress on important religious freedom issues." That waiver will expire March 24.

The USCIRF said in its March 10 statement that it "has not yet seen genuine progress" regarding religious liberty in Saudi Arabia.

The USCIRF urged the State Department to "vigorously press for concrete commitments that would result in measurable, demonstrated improvements" on religious liberty in Saudi Arabia. Without such improvements, the United States "should not hesitate in taking strong action," the USCIRF said.

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You also might have been thinking about how to provide some kind of financial benefit to your church and/or other charitable causes, but do not feel you can give up that income-producing CD.

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A CGA is an agreement between you and the foundation under which, in exchange for your gift to the foundation of cash or appreciated assets with a value of at least \$5,000, the foundation agrees to pay you a fixed amount each year for the rest of your life. The payout rate depends upon your age. The older you are, the higher the rate. Also, a CGA can be on one or two lives. It can be on the lives of a husband and wife, or

a parent and a child.

Not only is the payout partially tax-free, but also the gift is tax deductible. If you give appreciated assets, instead of cash, there likely will be capital gains tax savings.

The portion of your gift not needed to make the lifetime annuity payments to you will be available for the benefit of the cause(s) you designate in advance. You can specify for that remaining portion to be available to the charitable cause(s) outright or to be held by the foundation in a permanent endowment fund with only the earnings, not the principal, being paid to the cause(s) in perpetuity. Anyone age 50 or older is eligible.

The one-life rates range from 5.3 percent at age 50 to 11.3 percent at age 90 and above. Other rates are: 6 percent at 65; 7.1 percent at 75; 9.5 percent at 85.

As you anticipate the maturity of your CD, consider using it for a CGA. Laurie Valentine and I are awaiting your toll-free call for assistance.

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

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 Horned mammal, often mentioned in the Bible
- 4 Son of (Hebrew)
- 7 ___ of Man
- 10 Tizzy
- 11 Compass pt.
- 12 One from Tarsus
- 14 "The younger son ... ___ his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:13)
- 16 "Aaron and ___ stayed up his hands" (Exodus 17:12)
- 17 Exclamation of relief
- 19 Many moons
- 20 Mother ___
- 21 Jeanne d'Arc, for one (abbr.)
- 22 Hive dweller
- 24 "Exalt him that is ___" (Ezekiel 21:26)
- 25 To dam up
- 26 Simile syntax
- 27 "___ thou on my right hand" (Mark 12:36)
- 28 Legume
- 29 ___ eagle (skating stunt)
- 32 Almost
- 35 Cereal grain
- 36 Baseball great Drysdale
- 37 That is (abbr.)
- 38 "What do ye, loosing the ___" (Mark 11:5)
- 40 "Ye are grown ___ as the heifer at grass" (Jeremiah 50:11)
- 41 Appeal
- 43 Hole-making device
- 44 Put down
- 45 Nemesis, certainly
- 46 Exist
- 47 Outward appearance
- 48 "Do I seek to ___ men?" (Galatians 1:10)
- 51 "___ thyself now with majesty and excellency" (Job 40:10)
- 53 ___ Dolorosa
- 54 "All the rivers ___ unto the sea" (Ecclesiastes 1:7)
- 55 Consumed
- 56 "Go to the ___, thou sluggard" (Proverbs 6:6)
- 57 Mamie Eisenhower, ___ Dowd

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57
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- 5 Kind of game
- 6 Quadrant in D.C.
- 7 "All the women ... in wisdom ___ goats' hair" (Exodus 35:26)
- 8 Paddle
- 9 Greek letter
- 13 Better than never
- 15 Big ___: circus site
- 16 "___ thee two tables of stone" (Exodus 34:1)
- 18 It gets let down
- 20 Kind of plate
- 21 "We have seen his ___ in the east" (Matthew 2:2)
- 22 "And there ___ light" (Genesis 1:3)
- 23 Slithering one
- 24 Put a ___ on it
- 25 Galilee, for one
- 27 Made a lap
- 28 Do a scribe's work
- 30 Bagel's basic kin
- 31 "And he said unto me, Take it, and ___ it up" (Revelation 10:9)
- 32 Slangy negative
- 33 "I speak the truth in Christ and ___ not" (1 Timothy 2:7)
- 34 Yes, to King James
- 36 "The ___ of the Lord is at hand" (Joel 1:15)
- 38 NYC sight
- 39 "One ___ five hundred pence, and the other fifty" (Luke 7:41)
- 40 ___ East
- 41 "Annabel Lee" poet
- 42 "Go ye and ___ what that meaneth" (Matthew 9:13)
- 44 Word in Valley Girl's vocabulary
- 45 Slipper, for example
- 47 Form of legislation
- 48 Bobby, for one
- 49 Feminine nickname
- 50 Compass pt.
- 52 Apiece (abbr.)
- 53 One of the thirteen colonies (abbr.)

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
B	A	D	B	R	I	D	E	B	A	R
E	P	I	R	E	M	I	T	A	I	C
D	E	F	I	E	D	M	E	N	D	E
F	R	E	D	S	R	O	D			
T	R	E	A	D	T	E	N	D	E	T
H	U	R	T	R	I	T	A	N	O	E
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M	E	T	E	A	R	S	R	A	I	L
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N	U	T	M	E	G	O	R	N	E	R
O	R	E	T	E	M	P	T	N	Y	E
B	E	D	H	O	L	E	S	T	E	A

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Professor of 'busyness' urges leaders to slow down

Zigarelli found that 60 percent of Christians say that the busyness of their lives often gets in the way of developing their relationship with God.

Nashville (BP)—“Professor of Busyness” Michael Zigarelli speaks from firsthand experience when he says that overload and burnout are at near epidemic levels in the Christian community, and that leaders are the most dramatically affected.

This epidemic of activity came to Zigarelli's attention in an unusual way when a typo in a publication several years ago revised his title from associate professor of business to associate professor of “busyness.”

“I got a kick out of the typo—for about 10 seconds. Then it hit me. Most weeks, that typo would be more accurate than my actual business card,” said Zigarelli, dean of Regent University's school of business.

The revelation sent Zigarelli on a quest to examine the extent of the busyness problem, not only in his own life but in the Christian community as well.

He collected data from a sample of more than 11,000 Christians worldwide. Among his findings: 43 percent of Christians say they often rush from task to task; 51 percent say they're often exhausted at the end of the day; and 60 percent say that the busyness of their lives often gets in the way of developing their relationship with God.

The problem is especially pronounced for Christians in leadership positions, three out of four of whom admitted that their overloaded lives often crowd out God.

“I saw myself in those statistics,” Zigarelli said. “As a husband and father of four grade-school kids, a professor and business school dean,

a magazine editor and owner of a small business, I simply had taken on too much and trapped myself in an escalating cycle of activity.”

Zigarelli began to search the Scriptures for guidance “beyond the comfortable, well-worn passages that caution us not to hurry through life” and began writing about practical solutions to the problem.

Zigarelli has chronicled what he has learned from the Scriptures in a new book titled, “Freedom from Busyness: Biblical Help for Overloaded People.”

“This is not a book about managing your time better so you can get everything done,” Zigarelli said. “There are plenty of good ‘busyness management’ resources on the market. Instead, this book is about busyness reduction, permanent escape from the days of too much activity, too many responsibilities, too much hurry and too little God.

“People will find a message that needs to be preached pervasively in our culture. Frankly, it's a message I needed to hear for years,” he added.

The book is designed for individual or small group use and is organized as a 20-day study. It includes practical advice on “Freedom through Saying No,” “Freedom through Slowing Down” and “Freedom through Simple Living.”

“Freedom from Busyness” is supplemented by a DVD that contains five 10-15 minute video segments to accompany the weekly sessions.

An audio version on CD comes with the book, Zigarelli said with a smile, “for those who may not have time to read it.”

Excerpt of 'Freedom from Busyness'

There I was, driving down the road, prudence personified behind the wheel. All of a sudden, some product of the me-first culture comes flying out of a gas station and cuts me off, barely missing my bumper.

I hit the brakes, but not the horn. Honking displeases God, you know. But then I notice something else displeasing: On the back of the minivan that just cut me off was a little fish: This driver's a Christian and is boldly proclaiming that to the world—or at least the world behind his four-wheeled weapon.

Normally, it's a great thing to profess fearlessly what we believe. We need much more of that among believers. But when we're marring the cause of Christ because of our hurry, some things are better left unprofessed.

We see similar speed-induced setbacks around the neighborhood when, for the sake of time, we avoid those who live next door. Who has time for small talk these days, much less a barbecue?

We see the problem in our homes, as we trade efficiency for quality time with our kids. “Pick a shorter book for daddy to read,” we say at bedtime, keeping one eye on the clock so we don't miss some TV show.

In the workplace, it's arguably even worse. How many times do

we rush past others' needs, offering no more than a quick, indifferent “hello” to them because we're so focused on getting the next thing done?

When our interaction with others says, “I have something more important to do,” they feel the same way that I felt when I was cut off by that little fish.

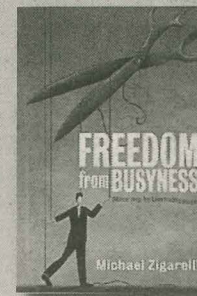
The time may be right for you to turn a corner on this issue. To find out, take inventory of yourself during the next two or three days. Look for signs that your hurry is compromising your witness. Consider

this at the most telling moments, like immediately after conversations or at the end of your commute or in a time of sincere reflection at the end of the day. Examine yourself through the eyes of those around you. Do you need to alter your pace of life?

Fast is the enemy of love. We can't love people in a hurry. We can't serve them in a hurry, or listen to them in a hurry, or empathize with them or comfort them in a hurry. They'll see that we're just going through the motions of our faith, and it may in fact drive them further from God.

So slow down. A lot more than your bumper is at stake.

Adapted from “Freedom from Busyness: Biblical Help for Overloaded People,” by Michael Zigarelli



Meet some of the class of 2006, part 1

Senior says Oneida led to better grades, Bible education and maturity

Each year as we near graduation, I like to share the experiences of some of our seniors who will graduate in May. In February, I asked each senior to write an essay titled, “My Oneida Experience.”

In their essays—which are for my reading only and no grades are given—I ask the seniors to tell me why they came to Oneida Baptist Institute in the first place. Additionally, I ask them to tell me what they have enjoyed most about being at Oneida, which faculty and staff have been the most helpful, where they are in their spiritual journeys and what their plans are after graduation. Some of the information is quite personal, so I typically do not use their real names. I hope you will enjoy these excerpts from their essays. We do not claim that these young people are now mature young adults ready to face the world. Some have made more improvements than others, in part because some had many more obstacles to overcome. These students certainly are still growing. Some have exceeded our expectations; others have done less than their best. But we are proud to have had the opportunity to work with them. Here is the first of several senior stories.

“Judy” (not her real name) came to us from Kentucky. She had been having problems at home with poor grades, family conflicts, wrong peers and even trying to run away. In her essay she wrote, “Before I came to Oneida, I did not care what I did or how I acted. I hated going to school and paying attention in class, so I started to skip school and slept during class. I was hanging out with the ‘wrong crowd’ at school. I did not care if

I got into trouble at school or with my parents.

“Being at Oneida I went from making horrible grades to being on the honor roll. I got on the B honor roll and recently I got on the A honor roll. I have gone from not studying at all to studying at least one to two hours a day. I remember my algebra class at my old school, which had 32 students in the class, and I never had a chance to ask a question. Then I came to Oneida and there were only six in my algebra class. I love having the smaller classes so I can ask questions and get answers without being interrupted. Being at Oneida has been great for me education-wise. ... I will be receiving an advanced diploma at graduation.

“When I first came to Oneida, I didn't like the idea of having to go to chapel every day. I come from a Catholic background, so it was different for me to go to a Baptist worship service ... but going to church has been exciting for me because I came closer to God now. I did not take Bible classes until I came to Oneida and I wasn't going to, but it is a required class. Since I have been in the Bible class I have learned so much more about the Bible. Coming to Oneida has changed my religious life a lot.

“I have changed greatly while at Oneida. I have matured a lot, and I have more respect for myself, and I am more responsible. I have finally learned how to clean up after myself. ... The most important thing I have learned at Oneida is to be more responsible, to get up on time and to get to my job on time. Oneida has been great for me and leaving is going to be sad.”

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



W.F. Underwood

What do these stones mean?

Clearview Baptist Church recalls with thanksgiving

Joshua 4 is a favorite Scripture I sometimes use to speak about Clear Creek. That was my text for a recent message at Clearview Baptist Church in Leitchfield.

I emphasized the need for individual response to God's calling, the life-changing work of God that we are privileged to participate in and God's purpose to use us in reaching the world for Christ. The 12 stones stacked at Gilgal formed a memorial to God's work and Israel's response. Several of our buildings at Clear Creek use creek stone, and the structures powerfully demonstrate our faith heritage.

At the conclusion of the message, Pastor Chessie Shartzter told of the people walking across town from their temporary meeting place to the new sanctuary. A few members carried stones on that day; the stones now lay near an entrance, a weekly reminder of God's working and their faith response.

Pastor Shartzter resigned a long pastorate with the Lord's calling to start a new work. Seven people met in his home; the group soon moved to a funeral home, on to a carpet store and then into a new build-

ing on Highway 62 at the edge of Leitchfield. After three years, they have 100 members. The church ministers in the nursing home and the federal prison. A “Kids for Christ” group meets weekly. On the Sunday of my visit, a table was filled with items donated to a family whose home was destroyed by fire. The grateful couple was introduced and joined the congregation in a time of prayer.

The morning also included the recognition of 1962 graduate Ray Carter; the church elected him Pastor Emeritus. Members recalled him “knocking on every door in Leitchfield, seeking people for the Lord and the church.” The Grayson County native was a farmer when the call to preach came at age 36.

After Clear Creek, Carter served as pastor in Virginia, Ohio and Michigan. After seven years at Sharp Church in Benton he retired. “I was never without a church until I retired,” he said. “I owe so much to Clear Creek.”

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



Bill Whittaker

Song of Solomon CD explores sex and seduction God's way

By Hannah Elliott
Associated Baptist Press

Tampa, Fla. (ABP)—Guy Bickel says romance and passion come before sex, not the other way around. And he's using the Bible as proof.

Bickel, a Tampa, Fla., resident, spent months studying six Bible translations, developing music in a specific frequency, and working with various recording artists to create "The Original Love Songs: Guidelines for Passion from the Song of Solomon."

The CD, which features the biblical book Song of Solomon read over a score of ambient music and nature sounds, comes as Bickel's answer to the dearth of "godly" aids for enhancing emotional and sexual intimacy in a married relationship, he said.

"It's not about sex, it's about romance, passion, love and communication," Bickel said. "It's about when you catch your partner's eye across the room and you just know..."

A successful sound engineer who has worked with the likes of Diana Ross and Frank Zappa, Bickel created "The Original Love Song" when he failed to find any similar product as a wedding anniversary present to his wife.

"I went looking for it and found nothing," Bickel said. "Everything I found was either on the other side (non-biblical, adult material) or nothing. I couldn't find anything else."

Inspired, Bickel took matters into his own hands. He called longtime friend and award-winning composer Alan Howarth for musical support. Bickel then connected with musical artists he knew from church and his days in the music industry.

Goats, sheep and tambourines

"I told Al, 'I need goats, sheep, tambourines and natural sound effects,'" Bickel said. "A month later, he sent me a CD for the project."

Psychologist, marriage counselor and author David Clarke also contributed to the project his "Rules for Men and Suggestions for Women," a 12-page booklet listing suggestions for fostering intimacy between spouses.

"It is ... to help a married couple revive and keep their romantic/physical passion going strong," Clarke said. "We stand on our purpose of using the Word of God to enhance and even change the romantic and sexual part of any marriage."

The book tells men to "tell the woman often and to her face" that she's physically, emotionally and spiritually beautiful. Clark reminds women that thanking the man for helping provide for the family, or complementing him on completed household chores, goes a long way in fostering intimacy.

Seemingly simple overtures benefit both parties, said Bickel, a former agnostic turned Christian.

"It's a wonderful way to open your eyes and see your spouse in a new way," he said. "And a happy spouse is good for everybody."

After the soundtrack development and final production, Bickel and his financial partner distributed the CDs to anyone who would take them. Of course, with a subject matter like sex, people tended to have strong responses.

Most guest callers on the Detroit-based "Bob Dutko Show" supported the new product, which was recently featured in an on-air radio discussion. But Clarke addressed even the one caller who objected to the use of a Bible book for sex.

"Even though we expected these types of responses, it still genuinely saddens us," Clarke said. "These critical type responses could cause many to miss out on the message portrayed in the Song of Solomon. We believe that listening to 'The Original Love Song' will help married couples rekindle their real passion for each other, on all levels."

Concept isn't new

While Bickel's product is new, using the Bible as a way to address romance and sex in a biblical way is not. Tommy Nelson, the pastor of Denton Bible Church in Denton, Texas, has used the Song of Solomon to help kindle passion at the Song of Solomon conferences he has led for nearly 10 years.

And Christian psychologist Kevin Lehman, who recently discussed sex in a "For Faith and Family" radio broadcast, wrote in his book "Sheet Music" that once people get "permission to talk about sex in a non-threatening environment, you can't shut them up."

"We joke about sex, degrading it through filthy stories, movies, and magazines, but we never talk about marital sex in the way the Creator designed it," Lehman said. "Martial sex ... gets ignored, and couples pay a fearful price when this sad reality happens."

Of course, a product this powerful comes with a warning. And Bickel gives it with a twinkle in his eye.

"The Original Love Song' is deeply personal, and we found out that doing it (listening) in a room with too many people gets strange," Bickel said. "We highly recommend that you not listen to it while driving in traffic, with a group of co-workers, or in any large group of people."

Bickel serves as vice president of Book 22 Inc., the independent record label that publishes "The Original Love Songs." The CD is also bundled with Clarke's new book, "A Marriage After God's Own Heart."



Madman. Tracy Groot. Moody Publishers, 2006. 350 pages (paperback). \$12.99 ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

"My name is Legion, because we are many."

These words, recorded in the Gospels of Mark and Luke have sent shivers down many a spine. The disciples put great detail in their description of the demon-possessed man living among the tombs of the Geresenes on the Galilean shore.

He was strong enough to break chains. He was naked and everyone could hear him "crying out" in the hills. He cut himself with sharp rocks.

This vivid snapshot of misery compelled novelist Tracy Groot to write "Madman," a gritty, unsentimental tale of evil's subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—attacks on the human heart and mind.

Tallis, servant to the Greek scholar, Callimachus, is sent far from his beloved Athens to learn what happened to his master's satellite school, the Academy of Socrates in Palestine. Tallis discovers the school is closed and no locals will tell him why. The academy's teachers have left the city. One of them, Kardus, is the Geresene demoniac.

As Tallis discovers the horrifying truth about the academy's demise, the book becomes darker and places in danger several of Groot's interesting, complex and often funny characters.

Periodically, Groot takes readers into Kardus' diseased mind—a glimpse into his hellish existence where a chorus of evil voices drowns out his own thoughts. The passages are painful to read but make Kardus' restoration even more powerful.

All roads in the story converge at the shores of the Galilee. If "Madman" was a movie, Jesus would seem to be playing a cameo performance, appearing only in the final pages of the book. But it is a triumphant appearance, well worth the wait.

Groot's novel reminds us that the heart where evil finds a home had an open door somewhere. She also reminds us that all evil flees in the perfect, loving presence of Christ. *Dannah Prather*

This Little Church Went to Market: Is the Modern Church Reaching Out or Selling Out? Gary Gilley. Evangelical Press, 2005 (re-release). 142 pages. \$13.99 ♦♦♦♦

To say that Gary Gilley is not impressed with most of what he sees in the evangelical world would be an understatement. He is convinced modern evangelical churches have sold out to a market-driven philosophy that destroys the essential nature of the church and its proclamation.

He believes consumer-driven ministry has replaced the essential message of the gospel that humanity's first and basic need is the truth about God. Gilley is convinced that desire to be entertained, has distort-

ed the churches' worship, mission and teaching.

The evangelical church, despite protests to the contrary, has made the church about "me" and "my needs" rather than about God and God's will.

No current sacred cow in modern evangelical circles escapes his concise, yet incisive critique. Gilley points to Christian Schwarz and his "Natural Church Development" program as an example of a market-driven approach to being and doing church. He makes this observation about such approaches: "And the good news (it seems) is that it does not matter what a given church believes, for anyone can learn these marketing and outreach techniques."

Not even Rick Warren escapes his ire. Gilley argues that despite Warren's disclaimer at the beginning of "The Purpose Driven Life," he has indeed developed a view of the gospel and the church that is all about me/you.

So what does Gilley suggest we do? Ah, for that you will have to wait until the next installment titled, "This Little Church Stayed at Home." *Jim Holladay*

"The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham." Harold Myra & Marshall Shelley. Zondervan, 2005. 352 pages. \$24.99. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, have done a wonderful job of showing readers a different side of Billy Graham and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

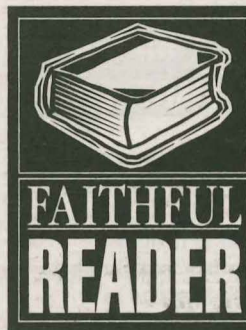
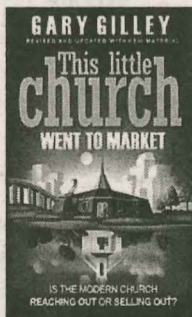
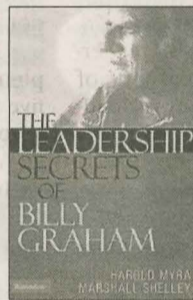
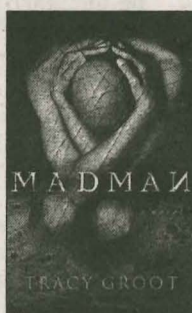
"The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham" takes readers inside the organization, chronicling various decisions made by Graham and the organization. Unlike some ministries, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has a long track record by which readers can measure the effectiveness of its leaders' decisions.

Among the decision "case studies" in the book, Myra and Shelley outline how the "Modesto Manifesto" illustrates integrity.

In the early days of their evangelistic ministry, Graham along with Cliff Barrows, George Beverly Shea, and Grady Wilson discussed why other ministries had fallen by the wayside. Seeking to find a common thread, the team members prayed and organized their thoughts separately before coming together in Modesto, Calif., to list common pitfalls. They focused on four specific temptations: shady money handling, sexual immorality, criticizing other ministries and exaggerated accomplishments.

Myra and Shelley have a strong pedigree from which to critique the leadership techniques of Graham and his teammates. Myra is CEO of Christianity Today Inc., and Shelley is editor of CTT's Leadership Journal

Though it reads like a textbook, "Leadership Secrets" is great for any church leader or for a student planning to lead a ministry or church. *Steve Coleman*



By Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; Dannah Prather, Western Recorder partnership editor; and Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: lyndonpastor@aol.com; dannah.prather@kybaptist.org; and risen4me@hotmail.com.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

Missionaries and Kentucky natives Missy and Dwayne Doyle as they organize Kentucky volunteer projects to reach people for Christ.

A medical team from several parts of Kentucky traveling to Brasilia, Brazil, April 3-13 to work with the Federal District of Baptists.

A team from Kentucky in Greece this week to work with Ignatius and Nena Meimaris.

Keith Lawrence, the new director of missions in Maine, as he waits for teams to assist with work in his area.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BAGDAD**—Indian Fork Church will hold revival services April 2-5 with **Jason Meyer** as evangelist. **Micah Childs** is pastor.

■ **BEREA**—Red Lick Church will hold revival services April 9-12 with **Charlie Goodman** as evangelist. **Johnny Baker** is pastor.

Roundstone Church ordained **David Thacker** as a deacon March 19. **Rick Reynolds** is pastor.

■ **BURLINGTON**—**Steve Alford** recently resigned as pastor of Belleview Church.

■ **CAMPBELLSBURG**—Pleasant View Church recently called **Gary Schultz** as pastor.

■ **CHAPLIN**—Chaplin Church will hold revival services April 2-5 with pastor **Chad Fugitt** preaching.

■ **CORBIN**—Lynn Camp Church is holding revival services through March 29, 6:30 p.m., led by **Life Action Ministries**. **Carl McCray** is pastor.

■ **CORYDON**—Corydon Church recently called **Rick Gannon** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Sidney Church.

■ **COXS CREEK**—New Salem Church will hold revival services April 23-26 with **Corey Abney**, pastor of Kings Church in Mount Washington, as evangelist.

River View Church ordained **Steve Chesser** to the gospel ministry March 5.

■ **DAWSON SPRINGS**—Mount Pisgah Church will hold revival services March 26-29 with **Rodney Wallace**

Spotlight on ...

Hickman



East Hickman Church will host a Bible conference March 26 and 29. Speakers include **Brad Hall**, March 26, 11 a.m.; **Ron Cruse**, March 26, 6 p.m.; and **Mark Burnett**, March 29, 6:30 p.m. **Ben Stratton** is pastor.

as evangelist.

■ **JAMESTOWN**—First Church recently called **Lindsey Harris** as minister to students. **Phil Ellis** is pastor.

■ **LEBANON JUNCTION**—Mount Carmel Church will host a community youth rally April 1 featuring former University of Kentucky basketball player **Cameron Mills** and Christian rock band **One Way**. For more information, call (502) 833-0845.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Grace Church recently honored **Pat and Gayle Rooney** on their 50th wedding anniversary. **Terrence Freeman** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—New Beginning Church will celebrate its 10th anniversary April 23, 10:45 a.m., with **Jim Carpenter** as guest speaker. **Mike Baker** is pastor.

■ **MAYFIELD**—Emmanuel Church recently called **Dwain Fields** as pastor.

■ **PARIS**—Spears Mill Church hon-



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

24-25 Great Commission Prayer Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

24-25 Youth Bible Drill & Speakers Tournament, Immanuel Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

25 RA Congress Region 4, Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville; RA Congress Region 7, Elk Spring Valley Baptist Church, Monticello; RA Congress Region 8B, Camp Howard.

31-April 1 Exalt, Bowling Green.

April

7-8 Collegiate Leadership Training, Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville.

7-8 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Northside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.

10 Connecting with Guests and New Members, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

13 Connecting with Guests and New Members, First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg.

21-23 All-State Children's Choir, Cedarmore.

21-22 Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting, Harrodsburg Baptist Church.

22 Girls in Action/Children in Action Missions Event, Harrodsburg Baptist Church.

24-25 Developing & Managing People Workshop, Baptist Building, Louisville.

28 Children's Bible Drill, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

28-29 Literacy Conference, First Baptist Church, Somerset.

29 Children's Bible Drill, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.

29 Children's Bible Drill, Rose Hill Baptist Church, Ashland.

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

ored **Sarah Myers** March 5. Myers recently retired after 33 years as church treasurer. **J.T. Rafferty** is pastor.

■ **PIKEVILLE**—Mayflower Unity Church will hold revival services April 23-26 with **Joe Mobley** as evangelist.

■ **WADDY**—Waddy Church recently called **Shane Watts** as youth director. **Bill George** is interim pastor.

■ **WALTON**—**Kay Livingood**, a member of Trinity Church in Newport, died Feb. 1. She was 68. She is survived

by her husband, Gene, a longtime pastor in Northern Kentucky, three sons, 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Her funeral service was held Feb. 6 at First Church of Walton.

What's going on?

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

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Part-time database coordinator (M-F, 25-30 hours) for Cabbage Patch, a non-profit Christian organization. Administrative support, experience in database and Microsoft software, bulk mailings. Must be analytical, multi-tasker. Resumé, salary requirements to: Lisa Griffin, Cabbage Patch, 1413 S 6th St., Louisville, KY 40208; lgriffin@cabbagepatch.org. Fax: (502) 637-9943.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Palestine Baptist Church, 80 Church Lane, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Oakhill Baptist Church (due to retirement of former pastor after 21 years of service). This Southern Baptist church is located in Evansville, Ind., and has average worship attendance of 250. Resumés and inquiries should be sent to: Pastor Search Committee (confidential), Oakhill Baptist Church, 4615 Oak Hill Road, Evansville, IN 47711. Sermons on tape with resumés will be appreciated. For more information, call Kathleen at (812) 476-3450; or fax: (812) 477-8113.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Jeffersontown Baptist Church. Our Uptown program offers a tremendous opportunity to build relationships with unchurched youth in hopes of sharing the gospel. Strong discipleship skills needed. Contact Pastor Sanford Hill at (502) 905-3779 or mail resumé to Jeffersontown Baptist Church, 10011 Taylorsville Road, Jeffersontown, KY 40299.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for growing country church averaging 160 in SS and 263 in worship. We're an extremely loving and caring body of Christ focused on reaching the lost for our Savior. Mail resumé to: Belleview Baptist Church, 6658 Fifth St., Burlington, KY 41005, Attn: Carol Rudicill.

SEEKING: Individual or couple for part-time youth director position. Send letter of application and resumé to: Alton Baptist Church, 1321 Bypass North, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor of youth for Piner Baptist Church of Morningview, Ky. Mail resumé to 15044 Madison Pike, Morningview, KY 41063, Attn: Personnel Committee. Web site: www.Pinerbaptist.org (for job description).

SEEKING: Lincoln County Baptist Association and Casey County Baptist Association are accepting resumés through the end of March for a part-time director of missions. Resumés may be sent to: Lincoln County Baptist Association, 4160 US Highway 27 S, Stanford, KY 40484. Call (606) 365-7123 for details.

SEEKING: Petrey Memorial Baptist Church in Hazard, Ky., is accepting resumés for the position of pastor. Please send resumés and videotape to: Pastor Search Team, 141 Alto St., Hazard, KY 41701. Visit our Web site at petreymemorial.org.

SEEKING: Lead guitarist and bass guitarist for established, progressive Southern Gospel group. Call Karen Pannell, The Gospel Envoys, (270) 929-9527.

SEEKING: Minister to families, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Nicholasville, Ky. Please respond to cbjcc@Alltel.net or (859) 312-7638.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music: Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga. Seminary graduate; experience required. Send resumé to: Minister of Music Search Committee, 150 Tabernacle Drive, Carrollton, GA 30117; or e-mail: mmsc@tabernacle.org.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth in a growing central Kentucky community. Send resumé and personal ministry statement to Youth Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 111 North Main St., Lawrenceburg, KY 40342, Attn: Kevin Payton; or e-mail to trn@adelphia.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister for youth, children and their families for First Baptist Church, Elkin, N.C. Seminary or divinity school degree required; ministerial experience preferred. The minister will coordinate and lead age-appropriate programs for children, K-12, directing attention to spiritual, biblical, theological, missional and recreational areas. The minister will assist other ministerial staff in giving pastoral care to the children and their families. First Baptist Church, Elkin, is affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the North Carolina CBF and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Send inquiries to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, Elkin, PO Box 618, Elkin, NC 28621. E-mail: 1stbaptistelkin@earthlink.net; Website: elkinfbc.org.

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: Full-time youth minister. Send resumé to: Calvary Baptist Church, 21 Glory St., Irvine, KY 40336.

SEEKING: Full-time youth director for First Baptist Church, Hayti, Mo. \$28,000 plus insurance. Send resumés to: Youth Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 201 East Lincoln, Hayti, MO 63851.

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

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.

SERVICES: Trinity Janitorial Services is available to provide janitorial services to churches. Licensed/insured, praiseworthy references with 20 years of experience. If you need cleaning done, please call: (502) 227-4795, 229-3883; or e-mail: chrljtr@aol.com.

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

'Straight' & narrow



CHRISTIAN CONCERT Jeremy Folsie, guitarist for the band Fixed til Tuesday, rocks out during a CD release party. Folsie said the band's music is "about God and our inspiration to live for Him." (Photo by Grace Thornton)

'Straight edge' movement attracts some Christian teens

By Grace Thornton
Alabama Baptist

Birmingham, Ala. (ABP)—Sixteen-year-old Seth Landerfelt remembers the time he went to court for being caught out past the 11 p.m. curfew in Moody, Ala.

"They told me to take out my piercings and cut my hair," he recalled with a smile.

His response: "I went then and got my first tattoo."

After several more tattoos, a few more piercings and some colored dyes mixed into his long hair, Landerfelt fit right into "the scene," the crew of teens and young adults who sport similar styles and follow punk-rock and hardcore bands. "They let me be myself," Landerfelt said.

The scene was a good place for him, he said. And it was where he met Christ.

Churches didn't accept him, he said. But the Birmingham-based band Fixed til Tuesday did. And Landerfelt is not alone.

Throughout the nation, a growing number of hardcore teens and young adults have gravitated to the neopunk-rock scene.

Recently, at a church in Pelham, Ala., more than 400 scene kids listened and cheered as Paddy Schefano, the lead singer of the group Fixed til Tuesday, said, "If you haven't met Jesus Christ, He loves you more than anyone on this planet ever will, I swear to you."

Jeremy Folsie, guitarist for the group, said the band opens a window to relate to marginalized kids through a type of music that is stereotyped as the music of non-Christians.

"It is a type of music that the younger generation is wanting to listen to," he said. "So I believe if they or we want to listen to that type of music, it should be about God and our inspiration to live for

him." Many of the band's lyrics talk about victory over Satan, Folsie said. Before falling in with the band, Landerfelt dabbled in drugs and was "just trying to please everyone else." Now he freely says, "Christ is my Lord and Savior now. And it's a much greater life.

"It was just about me before. It was bad," he said. "Now it's about God—my friends, my band and God. These guys (in Fixed til Tuesday) grew me up, and Paddy taught me how to scream and sing, too."

The "scene kids" who know the band's music scream along and mosh—dance while slamming against each other—in front of the stage, in an area known as the pit.

The lyrics would surprise anyone not in the scene, if they could understand them.

"We gather today, in the name of Jesus. We'll throw him (Satan) into the abyss and lock hell shut," Schefano sang at a recent CD-release party.

Relational evangelism

Graham Kelly, a member of the Nashville band Muzzle Mouth, said evangelism among scene kids is all relational.

"They are strong-willed, stubborn kids just like me," said Kelly, who attends College Heights Baptist Church in Gallatin, Tenn. "If, say, my parents hated my music, hated the way I live, hated it that I went to shows, when (they) tell me I need Christ, that's going to roll off my back and not even faze me."

Scene kids have a distinctive look, Kelly said. "Black band T-shirts, camo shorts, tattooed sleeves (arms). ... Boys wear girls' pants and girls have shotgun-blast haircuts," Kelly said. "A lot of them have tattoos and piercings."

Kelly himself has 13 tattoos, including an eagle that covers the entire top of his head and the

words "amazing" and "grace" inked on each of his hands. The phrase "straight edge" is emblazoned across his shoulders, which Kelly said is particularly meaningful.

What is "straight edge?"

Straight edge is a counter-cultural lifestyle closely associated with the scene. It has existed since the hardcore band Minor Threat spearheaded it in the early '80s. Kids who adhere to the straight edge abstain from alcohol, tobacco, drugs and, in many cases, promiscuity. Although not all straight-edgers are Christians, the idea meshes well with Christianity, Kelly said.

"In the sixth grade, when I had just started checking out the punk-rock scene, my friend Luke explained straight edge to me, and it sounded completely retarded," Kelly said with a laugh. "But I thought about it, and it actually made a lot of sense. Those things were never going to be a part of my life anyway, so why not have a conviction and a commitment about it?"

Straight-edgers sometimes use "X" as their symbol, which comes from the "X" drawn on the hands of underage people at concerts to show that they can't have alcohol. Some, like Kelly, have "XXX" tattoos.

The neopunk tattoos and clothing didn't help Kelly win many friends at his local church, he said. These days, though, some churches have begun attracting a different crowd.

"Some of them support the heavier music scene, hold shows and build skate parks," Kelly said. "This shows kids that not all Christians are the same. Some Christians send the wrong message, but we should want (scene kids) to realize that there are Christians who do care, and we're trying to save your soul here."

British astronomer awarded \$1.4 million Templeton Prize

By Chris Herlinger
Religion News Service

New York (RNS)—John Barrow, a British cosmologist and astronomer whose work has helped scientists and theologians find common understanding about the nature of life and the universe, was named the winner of the 2006 Templeton Prize.



John Barrow

The prize—officially called the Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries About Spiritual Realities—was founded in 1972 by philanthropist and global financier Sir John Templeton and is perhaps the most prestigious award in the field of religion.

At 795,000 pounds sterling—approximately \$1.4 million—the award is the largest annual monetary prize given to an individual.

Barrow, 53, a professor at the University of Cambridge, has been acclaimed for reaching a wide audience not only through books and lectures but also through the theater.

"The hallmark of his work is a deep engagement with those aspects of the structure of the universe and its laws that make life possible and which shape the views that we take of that universe when we examine it," Thomas Torrance, the 1978 Templeton laureate, said in nominating Barrow for the prize. "The vast elaboration of that simple idea has led to a huge expansion of the breadth and depth of the dialogue between science and religion."

In a prepared written statement, Barrow said astronomy "has transformed the simple-minded, life-averse, meaningless universe of the skeptical philosophers. It breathes new life into so many religious questions of ultimate concern and never-ending fascination."

He added: "Many of the deepest and most engaging questions that we grapple with still about the nature of the universe have their origins in our purely religious quest for meaning. The concept of a lawful universe with order that can be understood and relied upon emerged largely out of religious beliefs about the nature of God."

Efforts to bridge science & faith

Barrow's winning the award continues a trend of recent years. Early Templeton winners were such well-known figures as Mother Teresa and evangelist Billy Graham, but in recent years the prize has become more focused on honoring people advancing the work of the burgeoning field of religion, spirituality and science.

While there has been at least one younger Templeton laureate—Paul Davies was 49 when he won in 1995—in recent years the award generally has been given to elder statesmen in the field of religion and science. Last year's winner, American physicist Charles Townes, was 89.

Barrow, a member of the United Reformed Church in Great Britain, said that given the profile of recent Templeton winners, he was surprised as well as delighted about winning the prize. "People tend to win these things long after they retire," he said.

A quiet and soft-spoken man, Barrow became almost instantly animated when asked a question relating to science, taking out a pen and drawing a diagram. Out of such love of explanation and learning have come not only 17 books but a five-part play, "Infinities," that ran two seasons in Milan, Italy, and explores the nature of the infinite universe.

One of the cornerstones of Barrow's thinking is that science has proven time and again that humanity always possesses "an interim picture of the universe" and that, as he said in his prepared remarks, "how parochial (are) our attempts to find or deny the links between scientific and religious approaches to the nature of the universe."

A sense of perspective about the limits of human understanding is needed in evaluating how much or little humanity understands about the universe, he said.

That was a theme when Barrow delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures at Glasgow University in 1989 during the series' centennial year. At 36, he was the youngest lecturer in the history of the famed series.

Barrow said religion's concern with questions of infinity and ethics have much to inform scientists. By the same token, he praised science's insights and methods that allow one idea to lay the foundation for another.

Albert Einstein's theories, he said in the interview, "superseded Sir Isaac Newton's theories but did not eliminate them. The old theory is contained within the new theory." He said this insight would help religion realize that "pictures of reality are always approximations."

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