



# WESTERN RECORDER

April 11, 2006  
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## FOR THE RECORD



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## Study: One-third of U.S. rarely attends church

Ventura, Calif. (RNS)—Americans are among the world's most religious people, but a new study indicates more than a third of all U.S. adults rarely attends a religious service.

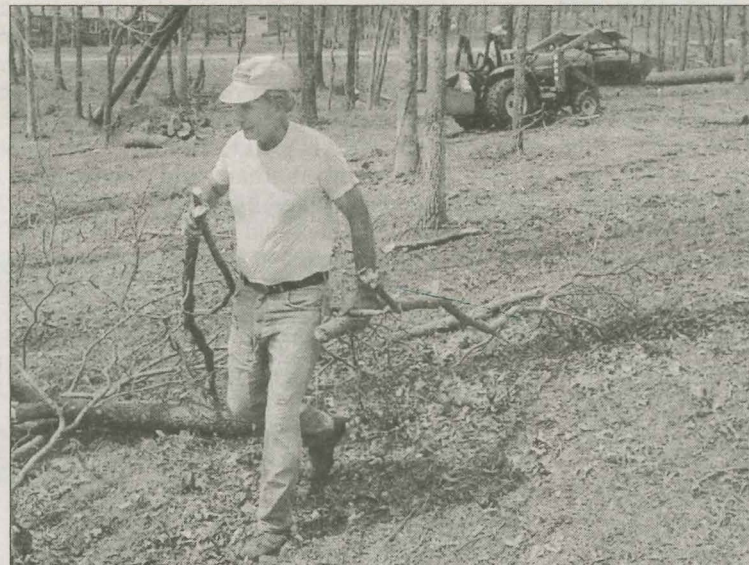
The annual tracking survey conducted by the Barna Group found that 34 percent of American adults—about 76 million people—have not attended any type of church service or activity in the past six months, excluding such special events as weddings and funerals.

Sixty-two percent of the unchurched described themselves as Christian, 4 percent said they are Jewish, 4 percent said they follow an Eastern religion and 24 percent said they are atheist.

George Barna, who directed the study, also pointed out that a minority of unchurched adults has a biblical view of God. Also, less than one out of five say that involvement in a community of faith is necessary to become a mature and complete person. Interestingly, nearly one-quarter of the unchurched (23 percent) say a person's faith in God is meant to be developed mainly through involvement in a local church.

Surveys show Americans attend church more frequently than citizens of at least two U.S. allies. An October 2005 Gallup poll found that 66 percent of Canadians rarely attend religious services and 80 percent of Britons go unchurched.

## Wind, rain & relief

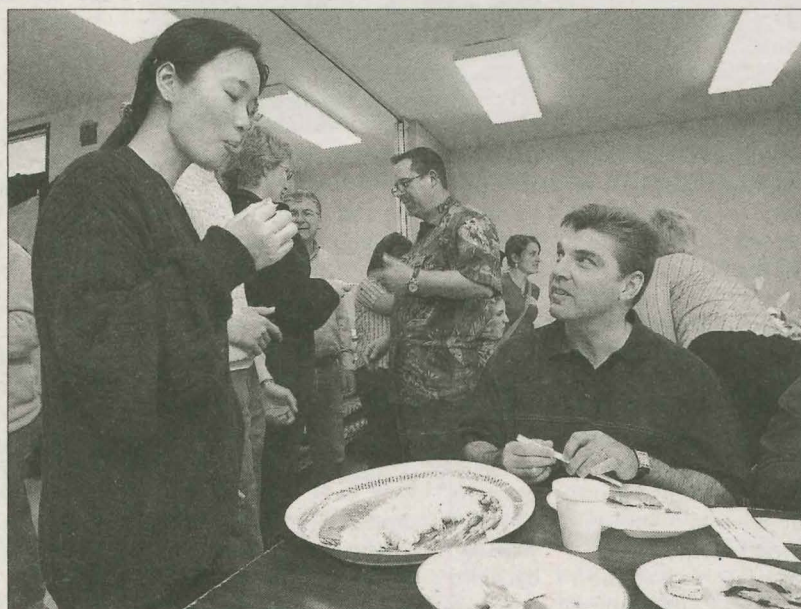


**HELP IN HOPKINSVILLE** More than 85 Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers worked in Christian and Todd counties this past week after a tornado cut a swath through the area. The storm damaged at least two Kentucky Baptist churches' buildings in addition to numerous houses. Volunteers cleared limbs and other debris from homes and yards while seeking to share an encouraging word with storm victims. **Story on page 3.**

■ **Above:** An aerial view shows the extent of damage to the campus of Sinking Fork Baptist Church in Christian County. The F-3 tornado destroyed the sanctuary, parsonage and activities center.

■ **Left:** Earl Thomas, a member of West Union Baptist Church in Gracey, helps clear wood from a fallen tree in a resident's yard. (Photo by Tom Westerfield)

## Cleveland missionary helps outreach to multiple cultures



**"HARD-WIRED" FOR MISSIONS** Randy Chestnut, director of missions for the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association, shares a taste of Asian food with a woman. He said the Asian population is the fastest-growing segment in the city. (NAMB photo by James DeCamp)

**By Mickey Noah**  
SBC North American Mission Board

Cleveland, Ohio—Showing pretty fair pitching form, Randy Chestnut winds up and fires the baseball.

With a clang, his fastball nails the metal target and his first victim plops into the dunking pool to gales of laughter in the crowd of several hundred.

On one level, this block party on a church lawn in Cleveland is fun and games, with gospel music, children's activities and food.

But on another level, it's serious work for Chestnut and his wife, Denise. They're doing the King's business.

For two years now, Chestnut has served as director of missions and a Southern Baptist missionary for the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association. Chestnut wasn't always a Baptist. He was raised in a Roman

Catholic home in Dayton, Ohio.

When he married Denise, his high school sweetheart, 25 years ago, he first worked as an electrician. Today, he says God "hard-wired" him from birth for his current job as director of missions in Cleveland.

Chestnut is one of more than 5,200 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

He's one of eight Southern Baptist missionaries recently highlighted as part of the annual Week of Prayer for North American Missions. The corresponding Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions has a national goal of \$56 million, 100 percent of which is used to support missionaries such as the Chestnuts.

□ See Cleveland missionary ... Page 8



Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, April 12.

## Tenn. Baptists challenge Belmont action

**Nashville (ABP)**—The Tennessee Baptist Convention will hold a rare special convention May 9 to deal with a growing rift with Baptist-affiliated Belmont University.

Belmont wants to elect its own trustees, who have been appointed by the convention for more than 50 years. But convention leaders warned March 28 they might seek the dismissal of the university's current trustees—presumably to elect a slate that will keep the Nashville school under convention control.

In a closed-door, special meeting March 28, the convention's Executive Board voted to call a special session of the convention for May 9 at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville.

The recommendation regarding Belmont could begin a move toward the "possible declaring of each trustee position of Belmont University vacant," according to a statement by the convention's Belmont study committee. With two trustee boards claiming authority over the 4,300-student school, the dispute could end up in court.

### 1951 agreement debated

At issue is a 1951 agreement, signed by Belmont and the convention's Executive Board, that says should Belmont "for any reason pass from Baptist control, or the control, ownership, supervision or right to elect the trustees of (Belmont University) be lost to the Tennessee Baptist Convention," then the state convention can recoup all property and "be repaid or restored" for all the funds given to the school.

Since 1951, Belmont has received more than \$50 million from the convention, according to an article in the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector.

Historically, all Belmont trustees are elected by a vote of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and must belong to churches affiliated with the convention.

Last Nov. 9, however, Belmont officials told the convention that Belmont intends to elect its own trustees. Belmont's announcement came after the convention's Executive Board voted in September not to accept a new covenant agreement that would have allowed the college to elect up to 40 percent non-Baptist trustees.

Messengers to the Nov. 15-16 annual convention were expected to ratify Belmont's new plan for electing its own trustees. But convention officials suspended that vote when they learned about the 1951 agreement with its "reverter clause."

At the time, Belmont President Robert Fisher called the agreement "an irrelevant contract superseded by about five different actions."

Only later did convention officials discover Belmont already had filed a revised charter with the Tennessee Secretary of State—one day after the school's Nov. 9 announcement.

"This action has not been approved by the Tennessee Baptist Convention," convention officials said after the March 28 Executive Board meeting. The Executive Board "was left with no alternative" but to call a special meeting and consider vacating the trustee board, the statement said.

Convention leaders say Belmont will no longer be under Baptist control if the university is allowed to go through with its plan to elect its own board members. That could trigger the reverter clause, and Belmont almost certainly could not pay back the convention's \$50 million-

plus investment.

But Belmont contends it will remain Baptist, since under the new plan only 40 percent of trustees can be non-Baptist.

"We look forward to continuing our relationship with Tennessee Baptists," Marty Dickens, chairman of the Belmont board of trustees, told the Baptist and Reflector. Dickens invited Tennessee Baptists to help continue the university's mission of giving an "academically challenging education" to people of diverse backgrounds.

At the November convention, messengers adopted a new budget that reallocated the \$2.3 million planned for Belmont to the Southern Baptist Convention, two other convention-related schools—Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City and Union University in Jackson—and other TBC entities.

### Exec urges "honorable" resolution

Despite the recent tension, leaders at Belmont and the convention say they remain open to discussion.

James Porch, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, said he hopes to reach a resolution in an "honorable" manner.

"The Belmont study committee and Executive Board members encourage the trustees of Belmont University and its representatives to support and encourage continued discussion and dialogue," he said.

In accordance with convention rules, Tennessee Baptist churches will elect messengers to attend the called meeting in May.

The special session also will be authorized to deal with the Baptist Health System of East Tennessee, a convention-affiliated hospital experiencing financial difficulties.

## Second nominee announced for SBC second VP

**Wake Forest, N.C.**—In a year when the Southern Baptist Convention's Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee will recommend the election of future convention officers "whose churches give at least 10 percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program," the first two announced candidates are pastors of churches that give approximately 1 percent through the Cooperative Program.

North Carolina pastor J.D. Greear will be nominated in June for SBC second vice president, according to Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Greear, a graduate of Southeastern Seminary, has been senior pastor of the Summit Church in Durham, N.C., since 2001. He previously served two years as a missionary in Southeast Asia.

Since Greear has become senior pastor, the church has relocated and grown in its Sunday morning worship attendance from 400 to 1,700.

Information from Southern Baptists' 2005 Annual Church Profile survey shows the Summit Church lists 109 baptisms and \$16,500 in gifts through the SBC Cooperative Program, slightly less than 1 percent of the church's total undesignated receipts of \$1.7 million. The church also listed more than \$478,000 in mission expenditures, including \$87,591 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

Greear is the second announced nominee for SBC second vice president.

Kentucky Baptist pastor Bill Dodson of Bell City Baptist Church near Farmington announced earlier that he will nominate Wiley Drake, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif.

Drake's church reported 67 baptisms and \$1,000 given through the SBC Cooperative Program last year, just over 1 percent of the church's reported receipts of \$96,450.

The report of the Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee, commended in February by the SBC Executive Committee, calls for the election of future convention officers on both the state and national levels from churches that give at least 10 percent through the Cooperative Program.

In announcing Greear's nomination, Akin said he "represents the best of the growing number of young leaders in the SBC. He believes in both the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. His is also on the cutting edge in terms of creative and dynamic ministry. ... I will be delighted to place him in nomination before our convention."

## BAPTIST DIGEST

**Midwestern pursues Ph.D. program.** Trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City voted during their March 27-28 meeting to approve a 60-hour Ph.D. program. Midwestern currently offers doctor of ministry and doctor of educational ministry degrees. The action will allow seminary administrators to petition the Association of Theological Schools for accreditation. The proposed program will include concentrations in both New Testament and Old Testament. If accreditation is approved, the program is slated to begin in fall 2007.

**Corts named council president.** Former Baptist college president Paul Corts has been named president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The selection of Corts, who has served as assistant attorney general for administration for the U.S. Department of Justice since 2002, was announced March 31. Corts previously served nearly 12 years as president of Palm Beach Atlantic University, a Florida Baptist school. He also was president of Wingate University in North Carolina and held administrative and teaching positions at Oklahoma Baptist University and Western Kentucky University. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities works to advance Christian higher education through institutions that relate "scholarship and service to biblical truth."

**Tom Adams, longtime Baptist columnist, dies.** Kentucky native Tom Adams, who penned one of the longest-running columns for a state Baptist newspaper, died April 1 after suffering a heart attack. He was 75. Adams published his first column for the Illinois Baptist in 1972 while he was pastor of First Baptist Church of Johnston City, Ill. Adams, who later was director of missions for Fox Valley Baptist Association, continued the column after he retired in 1997. A native of Murray, Adams was a former pastor of churches in Charleston and Henderson.

## Horne, Little Rock pastor, elected president of Ouachita University

**Arkadelphia, Ark. (BP)**—Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock since 1990, has been elected president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia. He will begin his duties May 1.

Horne will succeed Andy Westmoreland, who begins June 1 as president of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Horne, a member of the board of trustees for the 1,500-student Baptist university, was elected unanimously during a special trustee meeting April 6 in Little Rock.

Before becoming pastor of Immanuel, Horne was pastor of churches in Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma. He was president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention from 1995-97 and chairman of the 1994 Southern Baptist Convention Tellers Committee.

In 2003, he led Immanuel, one of the Arkansas convention's largest churches with a membership of more than 4,500, in its move from downtown Little Rock to a \$40 million facility in west Little Rock.

Search committee chairman Ken Shaddox, pastor of First Baptist Church in Searcy, described Horne as "a man of integrity and a great communicator. He has a stature that makes people want to listen when



New Ouachita President Rex Horne

he speaks. His role as a leader has extended throughout Arkansas and the region."

Emil Turner, executive director of the Arkansas convention, affirmed Horne as "a proven leader who is widely respected across the Southern Baptist Convention. He'll be an asset to the school and serve all Baptist churches well in that position."

Horne completed his freshman year at Ouachita and earned his bachelor's degree at Arkansas College (now Lyon College) in Batesville. He also is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

# Battered, not beaten

*Pastor says church will rebuild; disaster relief workers help area tornado victims*

By David Winfrey  
News Director

Hopkinsville—Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers responded last week to tornado damage in Christian County and the surrounding areas, where at least two Baptist churches were struck.

"The devastation is as bad here as anything as I've ever been on," said Tom Westerfield, the local supervisor for Kentucky Baptist disaster relief work. "I know the families, and that makes it tougher."

An F-3 tornado packing 180 mph winds cut across Christian County, north of Hopkinsville, and part of Todd County, according to Jere McCuiston, area manager for Kentucky emergency management.

"One tornado made two and came back together for one," he said, noting that the damage area was 700 yards wide. "Most tornadoes are about 500 feet wide."

An early "windshield survey" found at least 88 houses were destroyed and another 166 were damaged, though officials suspect that number could rise, he said.

Twenty-nine people were injured in Kentucky by the tornado, McCuiston added, though none were thought to have life-threatening injuries.

The storm destroyed the sanctuary, parsonage and activities building of Sinking Fork Baptist Church, according to Pastor John Segree.

The church already has accepted an invitation to hold Sunday morning worship services in a nearby elementary school. The deacons will recommend that members hold Wednesday night Bible studies in members' homes, Segree added.

The damage forces the church to resemble a church start more than the 150-year-old congregation that it is, he said.

"I think certain traditions—that you've got to do some things certain ways—don't apply any more," said Segree, who has been pastor nearly five years. "I hope to see a whole new church, and I don't mean a building."

The church has insurance and expects to rebuild, he said, noting that the activities center could be first. The church recently completed its first season hosting "Upward Basketball" games.

"We're sure hoping to get the gym back so we can keep it going," Segree said. "It's a good opportunity to send kids for Christ."

The storm also damaged the roof and cemetery headstones of New Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Todd County, McCuiston said.

Throughout the region, at least 85 disaster relief volunteers helped clear downed trees, Westerfield said. The damage offered an opportunity for many first-time volunteers to take part in disaster relief work. The local Baptist association had conducted



**DESTROYED** The sanctuary of Sinking Fork Baptist Church in Christian County was hit by an F-3 tornado.

disaster relief training in March, Westerfield said, and approximately 30 local first-time workers were taking part in relief work.

Westerfield recalled a local reporter observing the work.

"She said, 'It looks like these people are having fun.' I said, 'They are. Serving the Lord is a good time.' And she sort of looked at me askew."

"There's a camaraderie that's so impressive," he added. "Everybody's a friend, even if you've never met them before in your life, and that impresses the first timers."



**WORKING TOGETHER** Volunteers from Somerset were among the more than 85 Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers helping storm victims. (Photos by Tom Westerfield)

## With vols heading to coast, Ky. Changers seeks more workers

By Erin Roach  
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—With many youth teams heading to the Gulf Coast this summer to help victims of Hurricane Katrina, a popular summer youth mission program in Kentucky is in need of more workers.

Usually, Kentucky Changers already would be nearly full for the three weeks of housing rehab work throughout the commonwealth, according to coordinator Peggy Murphy. The work is organized through the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Baptist men on mission department.

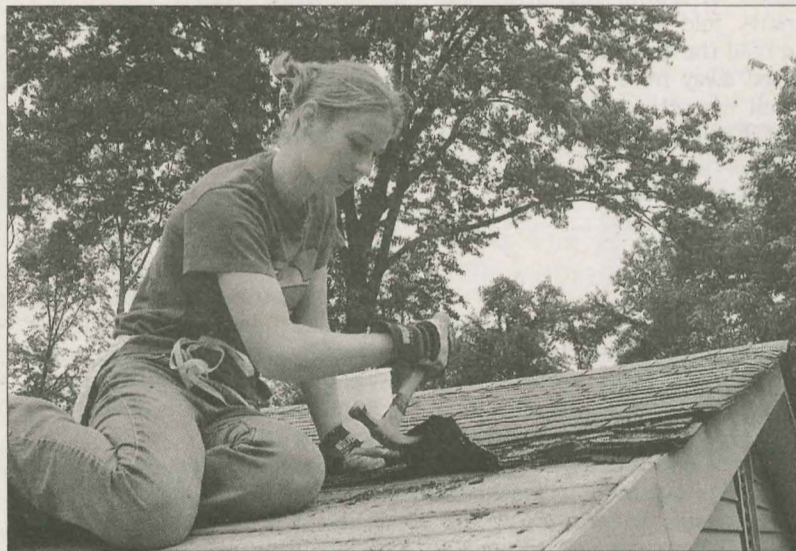
Murphy stressed that Kentucky Changers leaders support the many groups headed to the coast.

"We're trying to teach Kentucky youth that being an on-mission Christian is a lifestyle, not a location," Murphy said. "So if they're venturing out of the state of Kentucky in such a great time of need from the Gulf Coast, I think that is just awesome."

Still, she and other Kentucky Changers organizers are hoping to fill open slots so they can meet their commitment to help residents in Louisville, Russellville and Anderson County.

Murphy said organizers hope the vacancies will allow more first-time teams to get involved in missions work closer to home.

"We'd like to get as many people involved in Kentucky Changers as possible, and we'd like to get some



**HELP WANTED** Volunteers are being sought to help with Kentucky Changers projects this summer because many previous volunteers are planning to help Katrina victims. (KBC file photo)

churches that have never been on a mission trip with their youth to participate," Murphy said.

"It would be a good time and a good opportunity to take the first step and introduce their youth to missions."

### Growing from one project to 70

Kentucky Changers is modeled after the World Changers program of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

The weeklong missions experience challenges middle school, high school and college students to live out their faith while getting

their hands dirty doing challenging work.

"I can give you success story after success story," Murphy said. "There's something about being away from the worries of the world for a week and being with a bunch of other Christians their age and being able to give back to God."

Participants work alongside students from other churches on exterior home repairs for low-income families identified by the partnering local government housing authority. Some also work on community development projects in the participating Baptist associations.

Evenings are filled with fellowship, group sharing times and worship.

"Most of these kids grew up in church and they've been fed and everybody's been giving to them," Murphy added. "But just to see the smile on their face when they get to reach out to somebody else and show the love of Jesus, it's something they'll never forget."

The tradition began in 1994 with one rehab project in Hopkinsville. Last summer, more than 900 students participated in nearly 70 projects across the state.

Randy Foster, director of Baptist men on mission at the KBC, said Kentucky Changers presents incredible opportunities for youth to learn to use their skills for God's glory.

"Our goal is to help every single believer find their area of ministry that the Lord has gifted them to do," he said. "For high school and middle school students, it's a great opportunity for them to do something that they can learn from and they can benefit other people and do it as a group."

The most pressing need is for 100 workers for the projects in Louisville, July 8-15. Approximately 20-30 workers also are needed for work in Russellville, June 10-17, and Anderson County, June 24-July 1.

For more information about Kentucky Changers, call Peggy Murphy at (502) 489-3399 or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3399, or visit [www.kybaptist.org/kychangers](http://www.kybaptist.org/kychangers).

**Correction:** An article last week about the Infant Resource Center in Louisville contained the incorrect phone number. The correct phone number is (502) 584-2343.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## The case for dismissing a congregation

By Kevin Shrum

**Nashville (BP)**—It has been my privilege to serve as pastor of vibrant churches for 25 years. I currently am pastor of a loving and active church. Overall, my pastoral experience has been exciting and positive.

But this is not the case for some pastors. Statistics tell us an alarming number of ministers are "released" every year for a variety of reasons, some legitimate, some not so legitimate. It is time we rethink this process.

The main reason for dismissal (except for moral or theological reasons) is that the area of ministry for which the minister is responsible is perceived to be inactive and ineffective.

Leadership style and unmet expectations are to blame, or so it's said. This perception is believed by a few of the powerbrokers, propagated among a majority of uninformed church members and then actualized in the release of the minister.

While it might be true that some ministers are not competent ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ and need to be released from their duties (2 Corinthians 3:4-6), could it be that some churches are not

competent Christian communities? In other words, what would happen if we dismissed churches because of their lack of integrity, commitment or involvement?

The point is this: Churches easily blame their own apathy and indifference on a minister who did not cause the apathy and indifference.

Churches don't get the way they are overnight and they are not reformed or revived overnight. The difficulty is that many of these incompetent churches view the minister as a quick-fix answer for problems that have long persisted. No minister can single-handedly erase years of sinful sloth and indifference.

Is firing a congregation biblical? Yes. In Revelation 2:1-7 Jesus speaks to the church at Ephesus through the inspired pen of John. He describes this church as having lost its first love. He calls them to remember their first love, to repent of sin and to return to first things.

Then, in Revelation 2:5 the Lord says the most astonishing thing: "If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." What does this mean? Most scholars agree that the lampstands represented the church from which

threat against Christian faith.

McDowell recommends using the occasion to gain an opportunity for discussing spiritual matters. He suggests churches take young people to the movie with plans for a discussion time afterward. The discussion would note the difference between truth and fiction.

McDowell wrote his book, "The Da Vinci Code: A Quest for Truth," after distraught parents told him their children had read the novel and, as a result, walked away from their faith. McDowell notes that his book would assist the discussion and that he attacks neither "The Da Vinci Code" author nor the book.

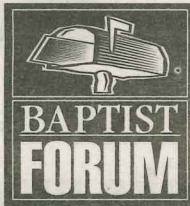
### COMMENTARY

## Surf culture's waves

Fight the waves or surf? We can see the difference at the beach.

One tries to stride against the waves and fails as the water's force pushes back. But look at the surfer who rides the waves (he's learned wave culture)—how gracefully he glides.

Author Josh McDowell demonstrates a desire to surf culturally when he advocates taking the church's young people to the upcoming movie, "The Da Vinci Code," due for release May 19. It promises to be a blockbuster. He suggests viewing the film as an alternative tactic to simply opposing it as a potential



## Reallocation of Georgetown funds

It was not a responsibility the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board would have chosen, but due to the new ministries partnership with Georgetown College, there is now a need to redistribute the funds that previously were allocated to the college. The current amount is \$1,342,337, which will be phased out over the next four years.

To accomplish the redistribution, the Mission Advisory Board (which was expanded to deal with this issue) is recommending to the Mission Board a formula that benefits every KBC entity and Mission Board ministry. Much prayer, input from KBC entities and the KBC's Cooperative Program Study Committee, and careful thought and anticipation of God's blessing, preceded the recommendation.

If the recommendation is approved, the largest percentage (41 percent) will go to the KBC's four educational institutions: Campbellsville University, Clear Creek Baptist

Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute and the University of the Cumberland. The other agencies and institutions will receive 9 percent.

In addition, 15 percent will be used for a new initiative to increase the level of stewardship development and CP giving among Kentucky Baptists. This is a follow-up on a recommendation by the Mission Study Committee approved by the Mission Board in 2003.

These funds will be used to provide a leadership person and staff support dedicated to Cooperative Program promotion and education, stewardship development and legacy giving. Some funds from this account, phased in at \$5,000 per year up to \$20,000 in 2009-2010, will go to the Kentucky Baptist Foundation to assist with legacy giving. It is the conviction of the committee that this emphasis will undergird all mission and ministry causes in the KBC budget.

Mission Board ministries will

the light of Jesus Christ could shine. In other words, the light of Christ never goes out, but the lampstand sometimes is removed.

Could this be why every year thousands of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention do not baptize a single person? Could it be that while God's gospel works even in the most difficult settings, the churches in those settings have lost their spiritual influence and power? Could it be that God has removed their place as a vibrant influence in a particular community? Maybe God fired the church.

What's the answer? Again, while there are valid reasons to dismiss incompetent ministers, maybe ministers should quit beating up on churches and maybe churches should stop beating up ministers. Maybe it's time for both ministers and churches to become competent, committed and passionate conduits through which God can work.

What would happen if we remembered our first love? What would happen if we returned to the first things that glorify the Lord? The church would have to fire a lot fewer ministers and God would have to fire a lot fewer churches.

*Kevin Shrum, former president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, is pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church in Nashville*

McDowell says, "Let's see where fact leaves off and imagination begins. ... The main purpose of my book is to reinforce their belief and placate their skepticism. If you look carefully, truth will always stand."

The second benefit gives young people (and adults) a great opportunity to discuss spiritual matters with their friends. A good open door can begin with the questions: "Did you see 'The Da Vinci Code'?" "What did you think about it?"

For his part, McDowell can't wait for May 19. "I look at the book and the movie as a platform for evangelism," he says. "A little controversy can be a marvelous tool."

*D. Leslie Hill  
Lexington*

receive 10.9 percent of the redistribution to assist with pressing programs and mission needs (such as the rapidly growing Hispanic ministry) and for more adequate support to implement the goals of Kentucky Baptists Connect.

In addition, based on the committee's discussion and input from the CP Study Committee, 24.1 percent will be distributed through the Cooperative Program for Southern Baptist Convention causes, including world missions. This change will encourage some KBC churches to make a greater commitment to CP and all Kentucky and SBC causes.

It is my prayer that Kentucky Baptists will continue to demonstrate the Christ-like spirit obvious during the convention last year at Frankfort and that churches and denominational leaders will move forward together in such a Christian spirit of unity and commitment that God's people will be inspired to participate and support the mission of our Lord in unprecedented and sacrificial ways.

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

### CHURCH

## Churches can help members discover joy of stewardship

By Doug Strader

Recent surveys have shown that church members are giving a smaller percentage of their income to God's work through their church.

The main culprits are higher energy costs, higher fuel pump costs, personal debt and a lack of commitment to giving a tithe.

What can churches do to help alleviate this trend? Does the church have any responsibility to help members who wrestle with such concerns? The short answer to that question is "yes."

There are no easy answers. However, there are some things churches can do to help ease the situation. The following list offers a few possible ways to help meet such challenges:

- The church can offer personal/family money management workshops for members and prospects.

- Tithing can be taught in the Bible study program and the pastor can preach in a non-judgmental way that the tithe is to be the first thing we give when we receive an income.

- The church can offer debt management classes to help members know how to get out of debt and stay out of debt.

- Church members can be taught that Christians are to be giving people. Christians are to follow the example of Jesus in giving. When there is a need, the first hand to reach out to meet the need should be that of a Christian.

- Churches can teach that a Christian's giving should be intentional. A Christian looks for ways to give and help meet the needs of others.

- The church can teach members that giving is a wonderful privilege. Christians can feel good about their giving and at the same time receive a blessing from God and others.

- Churches can teach members to become sacrificial givers. The tithe is the beginning point of giving, but giving beyond the tithe can become a sacrificial offering to God.

The Apostle Paul said God loves a cheerful giver. Some writers have said the word that is translated "cheerful" could in fact be translated "hilarious." God truly wants His children to be joyful as we return to Him what is His in the first place.

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



## Positive steps can help break habits that damage marriage

**Q: My wife and I currently are seeing a marriage counselor. We just don't seem to be able to talk without fighting. We are both sick and tired of trying. In the counselor's office we try to be on good behavior, but at home and in front of the kids we let it all go. I have said some really awful stuff. We both end up calling names and cussing at each other. How can we stop?**

It is extremely difficult to break bad habits. It sounds like you and your wife started a bad habit of interacting in negative and at times hostile ways.

### MARRIAGE

You can begin by breaking your own bad habit. You cannot do this for your wife, but you can do it for yourself.

Notice I said "for yourself," not "by yourself." Trust God—Who is committed to transforming lives—to help you. Allow Him to use family, friends and your counselor to support you in this endeavor.

Try these beginning steps to break your bad habit:

**Be aware.** First, you will need to break the cycle by consciously thinking about what you are doing and saying when you are upset. So pay attention, notice, watch, listen and observe yourself. Become aware of how you are interacting with your wife.

**Take notes.** Write down what you are saying to your wife. Write down that conversation (your spoken part) and all of the names, curse words and anything else you said when you and your spouse were fighting. Now tell a trusted friend, minister or counselor what you said. This begins the process of accountability.

**Ask yourself "Why?"** Why are you talking this way to your wife? What are you feeling when you become upset? Start exploring what is happening in your own heart, mind and spirit when you are fighting. Understanding your own vulnerabilities and defenses can help explain some of your strong reactions.

**Count the cost.** What is your bad habit costing you? What is it costing your marriage, your wife, your kids? Anxiety, fear, divorce, safety, broken spirit, hardened heart—these are real costs to you and your family.

**Now decide.** Instead of living out a pattern of reaction (your bad habit of fighting), make a decision about your future behavior. Decide now if you plan to continue in this bad habit or if you plan to break this bad habit.

**Go for the good.** Now it is time to go for the good habit. Talk with your counselor to help you replace your bad habit with a good habit. You will need to be fully aware of all the good, healthy ways to communicate and start practicing them. If you will spend one solid month with no exceptions breaking your bad habit and replacing it with a good habit of communication, transformation can happen.

These ideas are not meant to place full responsibility on you for the marriage relationship. Your wife also is responsible for her contributions to the bad habits in the marriage.

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

Family Forum writers are:

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

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

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

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

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



## An Easter acrostic for Sunday and beyond

What were the thoughts and feelings of Jesus' closest followers on that first Easter morning? What thoughts and feelings will you experience as you observe Easter this Sunday? Consider the acrostic EASTER:

**Exhaustion.** It would have been wonderful if Christ's followers had gathered on the first Easter with a sense of expectancy, recalling Jesus' words, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). But the reality is they likely were experiencing grief, shock, disbelief—and exhaustion.

Recall driving away from the cemetery after the funeral of a loved one and the sense of sheer exhaustion. Consider how such emotions were multiplied for those who witnessed Christ's unbearable execution.

Today, as we observe Easter, we have the benefit of being like Paul Harvey and knowing "the rest of the story." But Christ's disciples began the day in the throes of human despair.

**Acceptance.** It also would have been healing if Jesus' followers had reflected on His teaching in Mark 8:31, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." But in the midst of overwhelming grief, rather than looking toward Christ's resurrection, they gradually were moving toward some level of acceptance of His physical death.

The crowd gathered at the cross watched as Jesus "gave up His spirit." The women were on their way to anoint a dead body, not celebrate a risen Savior.

**Silence.** After an angel of the Lord rolled the stone away from the tomb entrance and the guards posted nearby "shook for fear ... and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:2-4), the setting of Christ's resurrection apparently grew eerily still. Imagine the women's shock when they arrived to find an angel quietly perched on the stone.

"Do not be afraid," the angel urged, "for I know that you are looking for Jesus Who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said." With those words, the incredible miracle of Easter began to sink in as the women "departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples" (Matthew 28:8).

**Tragedy or triumph?** One of my favorite moments of Holy Land travel is visiting the Garden Tomb and stepping into the cold, empty grave. But an empty tomb means different things to different people. It's reminiscent of the classic half-full/half-empty water glass test to evaluate a person's perspective on life. At the tomb, some people see the tragedy of a stolen body and a sinister plot. Others recognize the triumph of the greatest miracle of all time—Jesus' glorious resurrection. What will you see, feel and celebrate this Sunday?

**Euphoria.** We often talk about someone experiencing excitement or enthusiasm, but seldom do we observe or experience true euphoria. Consider Mary Magdalene's incredible announcement to the disciples: "I have seen the Lord." Her words and those of the angel should be shouted and celebrated: "I have seen the Lord!" "He is risen!"

Why express such euphoria? Because of the ...

**Resurrection.** In a word, that's truly what Easter is all about.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## After-school program: 'Any church can do it'

All across Kentucky, churches are doing amazing things to reach students.

As an example, Jeff and Denise Dean are coordinating an after-school program each Friday at Falmouth Baptist Church that God is using to reach students.

According to the Deans, the church "felt there was a real need for someone to minister to (students) beyond the normal church and Sunday school settings." The couple added that they "are firm believers that an hour on a Wednesday or Sunday night is not enough time to reach the youth."

"We decided to meet on Friday immediately after school until 8 p.m.," Jeff explained. "This works well because there is no pressure to get the youth home early to do homework."

"We pick the youth up at school every Friday," he noted. "I drive the church bus to the middle school and Denise drives the van to the high school. We then bring them to our meeting site, which is an empty building we were fortunate enough to get rent-free from a church member."

After they get to the center, "we give them a snack and a soft drink and let them unwind for a few minutes while we wait for late arrivals or kids who drive from a neighboring county to join us. At about 4 p.m. we gather all the youth together for prayer requests and announcements. We may also play a couple of games that tie in with the lesson.

We then split into high school and middle school groups and have a lesson which lasts about 45 minutes.

"Our youth have invited enough of their friends that the group has now more than tripled in size," Jeff said. "We have in excess of 30 members with an average attendance of about 25."

"After the lesson ends we let the youth hang out together until about 5:30 when we serve them a light supper. Meals are generally hot dogs, pizza, tacos, sandwiches, spaghetti and the like. ... After the meal the youth can just hang out until 8 p.m."

"Our group is open to all youth enrolled in sixth grade through high school," he noted. "We encourage the youth from our church to the unchurched. My guess is that only one-half of our group actually attends Falmouth Baptist. The other half attends other churches of various denominations."

"We live in a small, rural county, so many of the churches have limited or no youth programs," he pointed out. "We have Baptists, Methodists, Catholics and others among our membership. We do not try to 'steal' any youth from their home churches. We stress our goal is to help youth enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior, and to nurture that relationship once it is formed."

Jeff said results of the ministry effort include discovering "many families that had no church home or that were inactive in their

churches." Some of them "have come to Falmouth Baptist because their children have now decided to come with their friends."

"By the same token," he added, "we have also found that some families have once again become active in their home churches because they have come to recognize the need for the church in the lives of their children."

Acknowledging that financing often is a concern for churches, Jeff said, "It costs Falmouth Baptist virtually nothing to run this program. The money is budgeted but very little is spent. The church only pays for lesson materials, a few supplies we need and provides the vans for transportation. All drinks, snacks and foods are donated, simply because we put out a request for help. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles of youth from Falmouth Baptist and other churches volunteer to feed or drop off snacks. We have church members who regularly slip us \$10 or \$20 and tell us, 'Get something for the kids.'"

Emphasizing that "any size church can do the same things we are doing," Jeff said, "We tend to have about 100 in Sunday school and 150 in the morning service. The biggest commitment anyone needs to make to have a program like ours is time, being willing to spend time with young people."

"You do not need to be young to do this," he concluded. "We have one child who has graduated from college and the other is a senior in college. You just need a heart for youth; God will take care of the rest."

Joe Ball, a former youth minister at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, is youth strategist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention

### YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

## KBC unveils plan for distributing Georgetown dollars

### Mackey optimistic about impact of CP reallocations

Louisville—Bill Mackey, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is optimistic that the proposed reallocation of KBC Cooperative Program funds will help strengthen long-term CP support.

"I'm hopeful that Kentucky Baptists will feel this is an appropriate redistribution of the funds and it will encourage them to be more supportive of their local church contributions to state and world missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program," he said.

Mackey said channeling approximately half of the available funds to KBC-related schools and other institutions is an affirmation that "all of our Kentucky Baptist entities are helping us strengthen the local church."

When the proposal was presented to the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee and business & finance committee, "the most significant response was enthusiasm for the CP strategist proposal and the emphasis on stewardship development," Mackey noted.

He said committee members "felt that this has the potential to impact the support of all KBC and world missions and ministries through greater financial support, stewardship development in the local church and education about the ministries of the Cooperative Program."

Charles Barnes, chairman of the Mission Advisory Committee, said the overall proposal calls for "roughly three-fourths staying in Kentucky and one-fourth going to SBC causes. We felt like that was a pretty good balance if you weighed all of the various needs."

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

Louisville—A much-anticipated plan to reallocate Georgetown College's annual \$1.3 million Cooperative Program receipts to other ministries has been released by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Advisory Committee.

The advisory committee, expanded last year to address the issue, presented its proposal March 30 to the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee and March 31 to the board's business & finance committee.

The recommendation will be presented for action May 8 by the full Mission Board. A related report by the KBC Cooperative Program Study Committee also will be considered at next month's board meeting.

The action comes in response to a proposal adopted last fall by KBC messengers to revise its ministry partnership with Georgetown College. Georgetown trustees had voted earlier in the year to establish a self-perpetuating board.

Major provisions of the KBC/Georgetown agreement were that Georgetown would elect its own trustees beginning this year and that the KBC will phase out Georgetown's annual CP allocation over the next four years. The advisory committee proposal spells out how those funds will be redistributed.

The KBC's four other educational institutions—Campbellsville University, University of the Cumberland, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and Oneida Baptist Institute—will share 41 percent of the allocation. Other KBC-related institutions and agencies will divide an additional 9 percent, providing all KBC-related entities approximately half of the reallocated funds.

The other half of the available funds will be divided between KBC Mission Board ministries and Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The KBC portion will include 15 percent to fund Cooperative Program promotion and education, stewardship and legacy giving. The annual allocation of approximately \$200,000 will provide for a full-time CP strategist and ministry assistant as well as \$20,000 channeled to the Kentucky Baptist Foundation to assist in promoting legacy giving.

An additional 10.9 percent will fund priority Mission Board ministries such as Kentucky Baptists Connect goals, Hispanic ministries, partnership missions and maintaining campus ministry facilities.

### Plan aids national CP

The plan also calls for forwarding approximately 24.1 percent to SBC Cooperative Program causes, including international and North American missions.

Based on the four-year phase-in plan, ministries will receive 25 percent of the full allocation in the 2006-2007 budget year. The amount will increase 25 percent each year, with the full amount being distributed beginning in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

The KBC's CP allocations on the state and SBC levels will shift from a current distribution of 64 percent for KBC causes and 36 percent for

### Proposed reallocation of Georgetown College funds

Entity	2005-2006	\$ change	Entity's	% of
	Budget	2009-2010 <sup>3</sup>	% change	G-town \$
Georgetown College <sup>1,2</sup>	\$1,342,337	-\$1,342,337	-100.00%	100%
Campbellsville University	\$1,381,094	\$210,009	15.21%	15.65%
University of the Cumberlands	\$1,345,149	\$204,543	15.21%	15.24%
Clear Creek Baptist Bible College	\$535,862	\$81,483	15.21%	6.07%
Oneida Baptist Institute	\$357,241	\$54,322	15.21%	4.05%
Total Christian education (excluding G-town)		\$550,358		41.0%
Baptist Healthcare System	\$6,102	\$401	6.57%	0.03%
Ky. Baptist Homes for Children	\$338,561	\$22,257	6.57%	1.66%
Western Recorder	\$370,464	\$24,354	6.57%	1.81%
Ky. Baptist Foundation <sup>4</sup>	\$267,451	\$37,582	14.05%	2.80%
Ky. Baptist Assemblies	\$369,021	\$24,259	6.57%	1.81%
Ky. Woman's Missionary Union	\$486,112	\$31,957	6.57%	2.38%
Total other KBC agencies		\$140,810		10.5%
KBC Mission Board ministries	\$8,484,607	\$146,418	1.73%	10.9%
KBC CP/stewardship promotion	\$0	\$181,351	2.14%	13.5%
Total KBC Mission Board <sup>4</sup>	\$8,484,607	\$327,768	3.86%	24.4%
Southern Baptist Convention <sup>5</sup>	\$8,316,000	\$323,400	3.89%	24.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,600,000</b>			<b>100%</b>

**Notes:** 1—Starting with the 2006-2007 budget, funding to Georgetown College decreases by 25 percent per year until it reaches \$0 in 2009-2010.

2—Georgetown College's funding can vary, depending on levels for Cooperative Program, Restricted Kentucky Only contributions and a funding formula based on each Kentucky Baptist school's total student credit hours.

3—Dollar amounts based on 2005-2006 budget, though amounts likely will increase as CP budget grows.

4—KBC Mission Board transfers \$20,000 per year to Kentucky Baptist Foundation to support legacy giving.

5—By 2009-2010, the Cooperative Program split between funds going to the KBC Mission Board/agencies and to the Southern Baptist Convention will change from 64% KBC/36% SBC to approximately 62.6% KBC/37.4% SBC.

SBC causes to a 2009-2010 division of approximately 62.6 percent for KBC and 37.4 percent for SBC.

Input from the CP Study Committee that impacted the advisory committee's proposal included recommendations to employ a CP strategist and to move toward a 60/40 distribution of KBC and SBC allocations.

Charles Barnes, chairman of the Mission Advisory Committee, said the study process "worked very well." He noted that "allowing a broad-based committee to do a lot of preparatory work" helps Kentucky Baptists "work through some complicated and sometimes difficult issues."

Barnes, a former KBC president, also chaired the Georgetown/KBC workgroup that negotiated last year's revised ministry agreement.

In contrast, similar negotiations between the Tennessee Baptist Convention and Belmont University in Nashville have hit major snags. Tennessee convention officials announced plans last week for a special convention session May 9 to address the issue. (See article on page 2.)

Barnes said one major area of discussion among advisory committee members was: "Should all of the funds go to Christian education or should they be allocated based on the priorities and total needs of the convention?"

"There were strong feelings that Christian education should get the greater portion," Barnes said. Noting there "was nothing magical

about 41 percent," he added, "It ended up there after looking at the picture as a whole."

### School presidents affirm plan

The presidents of each of the KBC-related schools expressed appreciation for the committee's work and proposal.

"I think they've done the best they could in light of the pressing priorities," said Cumberland President Jim Taylor. "Every institution has needs and wants. If we had more, we could do more, but we're grateful for what we will receive."

Citing "various pressing needs facing Kentucky Baptists and the convention," Campbellsville President Mike Carter said, "I think this is a very thoughtful, carefully studied report and a recommendation that is fair."

"We've got tremendous needs to try to keep the cost of higher education down," Carter added, "but we're realistic and we want to be faithful partners with Kentucky Baptists."

Campbellsville and Cumberland will receive more than \$200,000 each per year from Georgetown's former allocation after the full redistribution takes effect in 2009.

According to Clear Creek President Bill Whittaker, "We're a big family and we have a lot of needs. Like any family, when you come into extra resources, you need to spread it around."

Noting that "a healthy share of it went to Christian education," Whittaker also affirmed that "the pro-

posal on stewardship promotion is a very positive thing ... that will be an investment in long-term strength and stability for all of us."

Bud Underwood, president of Oneida, noted that "everybody has legitimate needs and it appears the committee did the best they could to balance the needs of other organizations and groups as well as keeping the educational institutions in mind and taking care of their needs as well."

"We would have liked to have had more; anybody else would have also," Underwood acknowledged. He added, however, that "we're very pleased with what the committee has done. ... Everybody has to give and take a little bit."

Addressing the increased SBC allocation, CP Study Committee Chairman Billy Compton said his committee wanted to move toward greater support of national and international CP-funded ministries "without eroding any support for the ministries we already have" in Kentucky.

Noting that a 60/40 division between KBC and SBC allocations is "one of those big, audacious goals out there," Compton said future increases in the SBC percentage would be tied to a formula that includes Kentucky CP receipts growing at least 3 percent per year for three years.

"We've got to have a significant increase in funds coming in without hindering our own present ministries to make that happen," he explained.

# KBC Mission Advisory Committee Report

(Editor's note: Below is the entire text of the report from the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Mission Advisory Committee. The report will be presented to the KBC Mission Board for approval on May 8.)

At a meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Board on November 14, 2005, the following recommendation was approved from the Mission Board's Administrative Committee as follows:

*Recommendation: that the Mission Board ask the Mission Advisory Committee, along with the current KBC President, the new chair of the Business & Finance Committee, the new chair of the Agencies & Institutions Committee, and the new chair of the Administrative Committee to advise the Executive Director in developing ministries and missions priorities that may be appropriate following the new relationship with Georgetown College.*

Following approval by the Kentucky Baptist Convention on November 15, 2005, of a new Ministry Partnership between Kentucky Baptist Convention, Inc., and Georgetown College, Inc., the recommendation, Mission Advisory Committee—Expanded, was constituted with the following members: Advisory Committee members Steve Ayers, Paul Chitwood, Les Hollon, Kevin McCallon, Ava Bingham Reynolds, June Rice, Rick Robbins, Chris White, and Charles Barnes, chair; Joe Allen, Agencies & Institutions Committee Chair; Greg Faulls, Business

& Finance Committee Chair; Bill Henard, Administrative Committee Chair; and Hershael York, 2004-2005 KBC President.

The committee met on Jan. 20, 2006, with Dr. Bill Mackey, Dr. Steve Thompson, Lowell Ashby, Pat Beverly (Recording Secretary), and Dr. Billy Compton, guest of the committee for part of the meeting.

The meeting opened with prayer. The Chair then reviewed the committee's assignment and the committee discussed the importance of the assignment and its impact on all KBC ministries.

Dr. Billy Compton, Chair of the CP Study Committee, gave a report on the work of a CP Committee subcommittee on ways to increase CP support for KBC and SBC causes. Following a period of discussion, Chairman Barnes thanked Dr. Compton for input on CP and noted that the two committees will need to continue to coordinate their work as they report to the Mission Board on this vital subject.

The Chair then asked Dr. Bill Mackey to share his thoughts in regard to the redistribution of funds now going to Georgetown College. Following Dr. Mackey's presentation, the committee had a lengthy and thorough discussion with respect to various ministries, priorities and alternatives. The committee noted that all the requests from the heads of all Agencies, Institutions and the Mission Board were for very worthy causes

and needs, and that a case could be made for redistributing all or most funds to any one of them. The communications from the presidents and Mission Board leadership were very impressive.

Following the period of discussion and prayerfully considering all the alternatives, the committee and Dr. Mackey came to a consensus on the following points:

**1. For purposes of establishing redistribution guidelines, \$1,342,337 would be the amount used for the fourth year of the changes (fiscal year 2009-2010).** This number is based on the current year and will change somewhat by 2009-10. (Using the fourth year of the phase-out numbers gives a better perspective of the dollars being redistributed. It was also noted that the exact dollar amount will change depending on total CP giving and the portion of the distribution formula based on credit hours.)

**2. The largest percentage of the redistribution of CP funds, 41%, should go to the four KBC educational institutions: Campbellsville University, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute, and the University of the Cumberlands.** Kentucky Baptists value and appreciate the commitment of each school to Christian education. This would provide approximately \$140,000 of additional funds in the 2006-07 fiscal year and \$550,000 in 2009-2010, the fourth fiscal year.

**3. All other KBC Agencies and Institutions should receive 9% of the total funds.** This would provide an increase to each entity equal to the current percentage they receive in the KBC budget and would total approximately \$121,000 in fiscal year 2009-2010. Kentucky Baptists value their partnerships with and the leadership of these agencies and institutions.

**4. A new strong initiative must be implemented to increase the level of stewardship and CP giving among Kentucky Baptists.** The Mission Study Report approved by the convention in 2003 recommended new initiatives in CP promotion and education, and a new program to promote legacy giving for Mission Board causes and ministries. To implement these recommendations, 15% of the redistribution, approximately \$201,000 in fiscal year 2009-2010, should be used in this manner. This will provide one leadership person and staff support dedicated to these tasks and whose success is imperative in order to undergird in the future all Kentucky Baptist causes in the KBC budget. Also, it is recommended that additional funding for Kentucky Baptist Foundation from this account be phased in at the rate of \$5,000 per year resulting in an annual total of \$20,000 by budget year 2009-2010 to assist with legacy giving.

**5. Mission Ministries should receive 10.9% of the redistribution, approximately \$146,000 in fiscal year 2009-2010.** Dollars for program needs have been all but frozen in recent years due to other budget pressures. This will allow for more adequate support to implement the

goals of the Mission Study Report.

**6. Based on the committee's discussions and input from the CP Study Committee, 24.1% should be redistributed through the Cooperative Program for SBC causes including world missions.** This would be approximately a \$323,000 increase in fiscal year 2009-2010 and move the amount of CP going to the SBC to around 37.4%. This change will encourage some KBC churches to make a greater commitment to CP and all Kentucky and SBC causes.

After further discussion, and in response to Dr. Mackey's request that the committee unanimously approved and recommends that the Mission Board approve the following guidelines for redistribution of the Georgetown College funds with the understanding that some minor adjustment may need to be made in the budgeting process over the next four-year period:

Christian Education	41.0 %
Other Agencies & Institutions	9.0 %
CP Ministries & Education	15.0 %
Mission Board Ministries	10.9 %
SBC Missions & Other	24.1 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

In closing, Dr. Mackey thanked the committee for its work. He stated that he had "prayed over, and agonized over the big picture and what could result in more engagement and hopefully eliciting more funds for the whole mission. ... It's tough. This significant opportunity doesn't come often in Baptist life. ... Value the work of all the agencies and institutions and thinks it is an exciting time in the life of the KBC. It is a significant time of opportunity as we seek to move forward. I am passionate about seeing our churches move forward to reach people and disciple them. I value partnership with the agencies and institutions—tremendous leaders there."

Respectfully Submitted,  
Charles Barnes, chair, member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville  
Steve Ayers, pastor of Hillvue Heights Church, Bowling Green  
Paul Chitwood, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington  
Les Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church of Louisville  
Kevin McCallon, pastor of First Baptist Church of Paducah  
Joe Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church of Russell Springs  
Greg Faulls, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Owensboro  
Ava Bingham Reynolds, member of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church of Louisville  
June Rice, member of Liberty Baptist Church in Hager Hill  
Rick Robbins, director of missions for Northern Kentucky Baptist Association  
Chris White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Carrollton  
Bill Henard, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church of Lexington  
Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church of Frankfort

## Recommendations regarding CP

Below are key recommendations from the Southern Baptist Convention Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee that state convention executive directors adopted during their meeting in February.

If adopted by SBC messengers in June, the proposal will be presented to Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers in November as recommendation 4 of the KBC CP Study Committee report.

Recommendations include:

■ Encouraging every segment of the SBC to reaffirm their commitment to biblical stewardship and to cooperation in the Great Commission/Acts 1:8 mission.

■ Encouraging Baptists to tithe their income to their local church and encouraging all Southern Baptist churches to contribute at least 10 percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program.

■ Encouraging the election of state and national convention officers whose churches give at least 10 percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program.

■ Encouraging each state convention to have a plan for forwarding an increasing percentage of receipts to SBC mission causes through the Cooperative Program.

■ Endorsing the transfer of the stewardship ministry from LifeWay Christian Resources to the SBC Executive Committee and asking that quality stewardship training materials be produced.

■ That the SBC Executive Committee, in consultation with state convention executive directors, develop a definition of what is meant by Cooperative Program money.

## KBC Cooperative Program Study Committee report

The CP Study Committee approved the following report on March 23, 2006, to be presented to the Mission Board in May:

**1. Employ a CP Strategist and ministry assistant during the 2007-2008 fiscal year at a cost not to exceed \$200,000,** which does not include additional promotional expenses already in the KBC budget. It was noted that a stewardship emphasis and legacy giving would be included in the job description.

**2. Implement immediately a CP Communications/Marketing plan,** which is to be phased in as financial resources become available.

**3. Establish a goal of a 60/40 (KBC/SBC) distribution of CP receipts.** To reach this goal the following steps are recommended:

The Mission Advisory Committee is recommending to the Mission Board that 24.1% of the Georgetown funds redistribution be applied to an increase in the SBC portion of the Cooperative Program, which would move the KBC/SBC distribution from 64/36 to 62.6/37.4. This means that the SBC portion will be increased at a rate of approximately 0.35% each year for four years arriving at the new estimated percentage of 37.4% in 2009-2010.

A plan for increasing the SBC percentage of CP receipts that would move incrementally toward 60/40 distribution would be developed and implemented in 2009-2010 based on an increase in total CP receipts that exceeds the average CPI for three years and the realization of at least a 3% growth in CP receipts for the same three years; otherwise, the percentage distribution would remain the same.

**4. Endorse the recommendations of the SBC Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee.** (If approved recommendation #4 will be recommended to the 2006 KBC Annual Meeting.) (Editor's note: See sidebar for recommendations.)

Respectfully submitted,  
Billy Compton, Chair  
Skip Alexander  
Paul Baggett  
Charles Barnes  
Tom Biddle  
Cathy Chinn  
Paul Chitwood  
Ken Felty

Ric Frazier  
Darren Gaddis  
Bill Henard  
Scott Kilgore  
Gail Louis  
Chip Pendleton  
Tim Perdue

Ginger Sanders  
Tom Shelton  
Wayne Spivey  
Dan Summerlin  
Terry Wilder  
Hershael York

## Cleveland missionary hopes to see 37 new churches

**"Now, hip-hop may not be my favorite genre, but I do like to see people reached for Jesus, whatever it takes."**

Missionary Randy Chestnut

*Continued from page 1*

Chestnut likes to think of himself as a "bridge builder." That's a healthy self-image for a missionary serving in Cleveland, known as the "City of Bridges" because of the more than 300 bridges that criss-cross the city—many spanning the Cuyahoga River.

"God's the greatest bridge builder and Jesus is the greatest bridge," Chestnut said. "The word in Latin for priest is 'pontifex,' and that word means a bridge builder."

Cleveland often gets a bad rap. Chestnut said that's partly because of the city's perennially under-achieving major sports franchises—the Browns, the Indians and the Cavaliers. Cleveland has also seen better economic times. But he said Cleveland is undergoing a revitalization downtown. And Chestnut's working hard to bring a spiritual revitalization, too.

"The 2 million people of Cleveland are an interesting, diverse lot," he said. "We have people from 117 different nations. We have a lot of folks with eastern European roots. But the Asian population is the fastest-growing segment of the population. I'd describe Clevelanders as tough, hard-working people. The weather up here tends to make people tough, but they're also the friendliest I've ever met."

### Whatever it takes, even hip-hop

The Greater Cleveland Baptist Association consists of 37 churches—20 are Anglo while the rest represent different ethnic and language groups, including African-American, Spanish, Korean, Ukrainian, Russian and Slavic congregations, says Chestnut. There's also a church for the hearing-impaired.

But 24 of the 37 churches have fewer than 100 people in Sunday worship services. Some use traditional worship, some are contemporary and one group even employs "rap" and "hip-hop" to share the gospel message.

Chestnut says one of the churches' biggest challenges in Cleveland is to be culturally relevant.

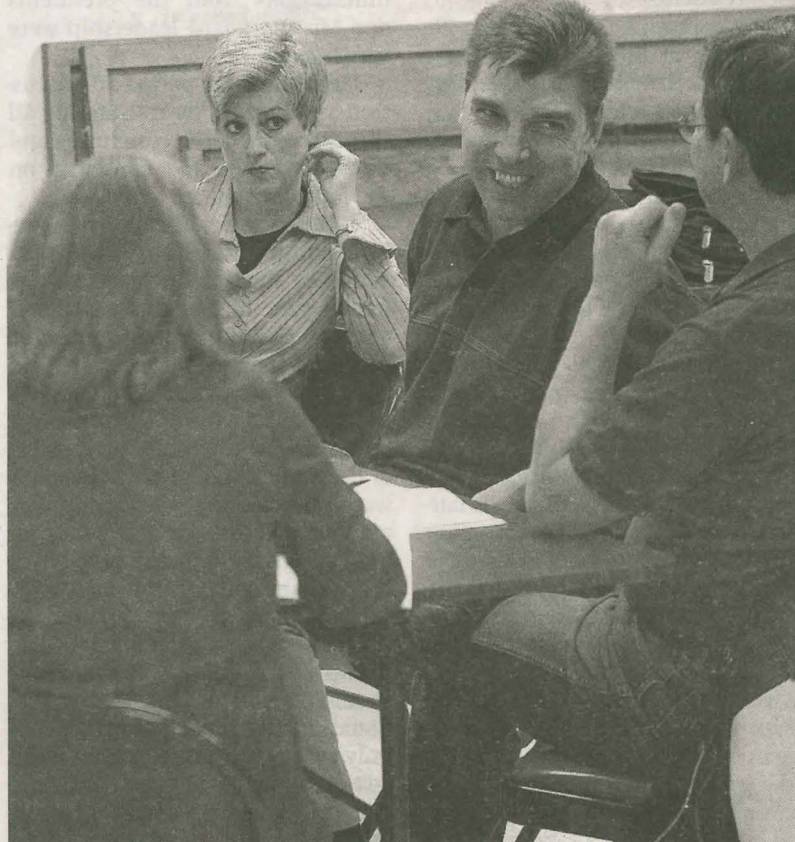
"Whether the worship service is traditional, contemporary for young people in the suburbs or in rap or hip-hop for the inner city, we have to do church in a way that will interest people. That's a real challenge. Now, hip-hop may not be my favorite genre, but I do like to see people reached for Jesus, whatever it takes."

Another challenge for the Chestnuts is to inspire and re-energize those 24 smaller Baptist churches with fewer than 100 people at Sunday services.

"Some—not all—of these smaller churches are discouraged and feel like they don't have anything to offer. Some of them feel like their day has come and gone. My job is to challenge them and to show them that God has a great future for them, too."

Help from other Baptists is on the way.

The North American Mission Board has selected Cleveland as a



**CLEVELAND MISSIONARIES** Randy and Denise Chestnut serve as Southern Baptist missionaries in Cleveland, where he is director of missions for the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association. Cleveland is a "Strategic Focus City," meaning volunteers will help Baptists in the area with evangelism and church planting projects. (NAMB photo by James DeCamp)

"Strategic Focus City." That means that during the next few years, evangelism and church planting efforts in Greater Cleveland will be intense and extensive.

The campaign's theme is "Cleveland Hope: Building Bridges of Love."

"By being a Strategic Focus City, we will partner with Southern Baptist churches who will offer us new resources—volunteers, money and prayers—to expand the Baptist pres-

ence and more importantly, the presence of Christ in the Greater Cleveland area. For example, members of the First Baptist Church of Canton, Ga., came up here to support us with the games and food for the successful block party, where we were able to share Christ and contact many prospects."

Chestnut's plans for missions in Cleveland go far beyond maintaining the status quo.

"We hope to start 37 new con-

gregations and baptize 3,000 by December 2007, which would effectively double the size of our association," Chestnut said. Nationally, he noted, there is an average of one Southern Baptist church for every 6,400 people, but in Cleveland there is only one Southern Baptist church for every 43,000 people.

### Many people, few Baptists

To reach the national ratio, Cleveland would have to plant 228 more churches. Stated another way, Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) has 38 different cities or towns in the metro area, and 30 of them do not have a Southern Baptist church.

"So there's plenty of room for our existing churches to reach outside of themselves and be involved in church planting right here in the greater Cleveland area," Chestnut said.

Chestnut said he's also focusing on the area's many colleges and universities. "We need to reach more of the university students in northeast Ohio," he said. "And many of these students come from not only outside the state but also outside the U.S."

In the next few years, Cleveland—as a Strategic Focus City—will experience a time of intense efforts in evangelism and church planting, he added.

"Sometimes I ask God, 'Why am I here for such a time as this?' Then I remember that my heart has always been for people in the city."

Chestnut said he's thankful for the money Southern Baptists give that make his work possible.

"Without the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Denise and I couldn't be serving as missionaries here in the Cleveland area," Chestnut said. "Fifty percent of my salary is supported by the Cooperative Program, so it means the difference between this association having or not having a director of missions."



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## 'Rejected' Chris Tomlin wins big at Dove Awards

Nashville (RNS)—Singer and worship leader Chris Tomlin was named artist of the year and won four other Dove awards at the 37th annual Gospel Music Association Music Awards.

Tomlin also was named male vocalist of the year. His "How Great Is Our God," a song he wrote, won in both the song of the year and worship song categories. Tomlin's fifth award was for his collaboration on the special event album of the year, "Music Inspired by 'The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.'"

"Worship is not a trend," said Tomlin. "It's for all of life. Trends come and go, but God is saying, 'Here are these songs I've trusted you with for the church.'"

In accepting his award for male vocalist, Tomlin said he "tried out for a singing group in college, and the leader told me 'You'll do anything in life but sing.' So this is pretty cool."

"American Idol" Carrie Underwood won for country song of the year for her hit "Jesus, Take the Wheel" and Backstreet Boy Brian Littrell won for inspirational song of the year for his cover of "In Christ Alone." Littrell said that though he had the option of making a mainstream solo record, his faith drew him to the Christian market.

Best female vocalist award went to Natalie Grant, who spoke about bringing attention to human trafficking.

Jeremy Camp, David Crowder of David Crowder Band, Casting Crowns' Mark Hall and Third Day's Mac Powell gave a special acoustic performance in honor of Steven Curtis Chapman.

Chapman took home a record-setting 50th Dove Award for his work on the Narnia album.

Last year's big winners, Casting Crowns, took home their second-in-a-row Group of the Year honor.

Lead singer Mark Hall told the audience, "A song may change your afternoon, but only God can change your life."

Winners among the major categories included:

**Song of the Year:** "How Great Is Our God" by Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves and Ed Cash.

**Songwriter of the Year:** Christa Wells.

**Male Vocalist of the Year:** Chris Tomlin.

**Female Vocalist of the Year:** Natalie Grant.

**Group of the Year:** Casting Crowns.

**Artist of the Year:** Chris Tomlin.

**New Artist of the Year:** The Afters.

**Producer of the Year:** Ed Cash.

**Rock Recorded Song of the Year:**

"The Slam" by tobyMac, featuring T-Bone.

**Rock/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year:** "Here Is Our King" by



**ARTIST OF THE YEAR** Chris Tomlin receives one of his five Dove Awards at the 37th GMA Music Awards April 6 at Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

David Crowder Band.

**Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year:** "Cry Out to Jesus" by Third Day.

**Inspirational Recorded Song of the Year:** "In Christ Alone" by Brian Littrell.

**Southern Gospel Recorded Song of the Year:** (tie) "Long as I Got King Jesus" by Brian Free & Assurance; and "Through the Fire" by the Crabb Family featuring Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

**Bluegrass Recorded Song of the Year:** "Living Prayer" by Alison Krauss & Union Station.

**Country Recorded Song of the Year:** "Jesus, Take the Wheel" by Carrie Underwood.

**Worship Song of the Year:** "How Great Is Our God" by Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves and Ed Cash.

**Rock Album of the Year:** "Mmhmm" by Relient K.

**Rock/Contemporary Album of the Year:** "A Collision" by David Crowder Band.

**Pop/Contemporary Album of the Year:** "Lifesong" by Casting Crowns.

**Inspirational Album of the Year:** (tie) "Hymned" by Bart Millard; and "Rock of Ages; Hymns & Faith" by Amy Grant.

**Southern Gospel Album of the Year:** "Live at Brooklyn Tabernacle" by the Crabb Family.

**Bluegrass Album of the Year:** "One Rose" by the Lewis Family.

**Country Album of the Year:** "Glory Train" by Randy Travis.

**Praise & Worship Album of the Year:** "Blessed Be Your Name; The Songs of Matt Redman Vol. 1" by Matt Redman and Nathan Nockels.

The Dove Awards will be televised nationally April 15 on the Guardian Television Network.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

# KBC Speakers Bureau



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**While some scholars said the discovery shows a wide range of opinions in the early church, others insist that this "gospel" should not be viewed as having the same authority as the four Gospels of the New Testament.**

## Scholars debate significance of 'Gospel of Judas'

By Stacy Meichtry  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—An ancient, self-proclaimed "Gospel of Judas" was presented to the public last week, casting Jesus Christ's infamous betrayer as a friend who acted out of loyalty, exceeding the other apostles in the eyes of God.

Since its release on April 6, scholars have offered a variety of opinions about the meaning and importance of the text.

Brushed onto tattered and fragmented sheets of papyrus in Coptic, an Egyptian script, the manuscript is contained in a 66-page, leather-bound "codex" that the National Geographic Society unveiled April 6 in Washington.

"This dramatic discovery of an ancient, non-biblical text ... enhances our knowledge of the history and theological viewpoints of the early Christian period," Terry Garcia, a National Geographic executive, said in a statement.

Garcia said a series of tests—including radiocarbon dating, ink analysis and multispectral imaging—had shown that the text was authentic.

The text was discovered in a cavern near El Minya, Egypt, in the 1970s, and spent decades on the gray market. A statement released by National Geographic did not say who found the manuscript.

In a Religion News Service report in February on the manuscript's discovery and National Geographic's plans to unveil it, the Swiss lawyer who purchased the manuscript in 2001 said documentation of the codex's discovery was unavailable because the manuscript was smuggled out of Egypt.

"The manuscript itself was illegally exported because it had been stolen in Egypt," said lawyer Mario Roberty, adding he planned to eventually return the manuscript to Egypt. National Geographic con-

firmed those plans last week.

Although scholars have known the contours of the gospel's narrative for years, National Geographic made passages of the text available in English.

A section that some scholars believe redeems Judas reads: "The secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot ... three days before he celebrated Passover."

**"You will exceed all of them"**

Those scholars believe that Christ made clear to Judas that he had been selected to betray his Master as part of a divine plan that would set him apart from the other apostles.

"You will exceed all of them. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me," reads the English version of the text.

Scholars and writers were quick to debate the meaning, not the authenticity, of the finding.

While some scholars state the discovery shows a wide range of opinions in the early church, others insist that this "gospel" should not be viewed as having the same authority as the four Gospels of the New Testament.

In the statement released by National Geographic, Elaine Pagels, a scholar of early Christianity at Princeton University, called the document an "astonishing discovery that is transforming our understanding of early Christianity."

"These discoveries are exploding the myth of a monolithic religion and demonstrating how diverse and fascinating the early Christian movement really was."

Scholars say the manuscript was produced around A.D. 300 and reflects the theological traditions of a second-century sect of Gnostics, a community that believed true spirituality derived from an inner knowledge, or "gnosis."

Figures depicted as sinful in the Old Testament, such as Cain and Esau, were typically extolled under Gnostic theology.

Around the year 180, St. Irenaeus of Lyons, a heresy watchdog of the early church, targeted the community for declaring that "Judas the traitor ... alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal."

"They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas," Irenaeus wrote in "Against Heresies." Scholars say it's possible Irenaeus was reading an earlier version of the soon-to-be-published transcript, but that point is speculation.

A top Vatican scholar dismissed the manuscript in February, calling it "a product of religious fantasy" that would have no impact on church teaching.

### Evangelicals respond

Collin Hansen, an associate editor of Christianity Today, noted that Gnostics believed only a select few would truly apprehend the knowledge of heaven. "The 'Gospel of Judas' teaches that only Judas, Jesus' favorite disciple, fully understood," he wrote.

That contrasts sharply with the message of Jesus recorded in Scripture, he noted.

"This message is not restricted to a few who will ascertain gnosis

(knowledge). The gospel 'is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile' (Romans 1:16)."

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, said the resurgence of Gnostic texts such as the "Gospel of Judas" are driven by those who would contend the early church had no theological core.

"Indeed, those Gnostic ideas did become popular later, and they are becoming increasingly popular now. The truth of the gospel stands," he wrote.

"Christians will retain firm confidence in the authenticity of the New Testament and, in particular, of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John," Mohler added.

With additional information compiled by News Director David Winfrey

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Does your staff get away from it all?

Staff retreats offer chances for ministry renewal

I would like to take this opportunity to invite our churches across the state to consider holding a staff retreat at Cedarmore or Jonathan Creek.

Maybe your church never has held a staff retreat and you are asking, "Why should I schedule such an event?"

There are several key reasons to "retreat" with your leadership team. I am sure that getting away from the many distractions that you face day in and day out would be enjoyed, and it would allow for a time of renewal for your spiritual and physical well being. Additionally, time away from normal routines offers an opportunity to really get to know your co-workers and/or volunteers. Finally, I enjoy such retreats simply for the change of setting and the freedom that comes with a group of people seeking to become more effective at their respective ministries.

At Jonathan Creek we are nearing completion of the Creek Café. This building, formerly the Stewart Dining Hall, is fully equipped for such meetings. Our single desire for the renovation was to

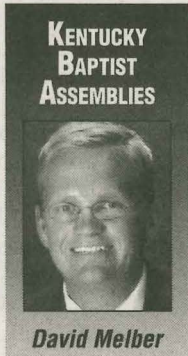
provide a setting unlike any other for such meetings. From built-in projection and sound capabilities to hardwood flooring and comfortable seating, this new facility will surprise you by the level of excellence in meeting space.

This summer the Café will be used by adults only. The focus will be to provide space where youth leaders can come and network with each other, pray with each other and share one another's burdens.

Our future development at Cedarmore will, no doubt, include such space. Our ministry focus is to create environments where relationships can be built and strengthened, so space such as our Creek Café is of utmost importance.

As you consider planning for the future, pray about meeting off site and away from the day-to-day distractions we all face. While I hope you will consider Cedarmore or Jonathan Creek, simply choosing to meet "away" is of great benefit, so schedule a retreat today. It might be just what you need to recharge and meet tomorrow's challenges.

David Melber is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. Contact him at Box 99918, Louisville, KY 42069-0918; phone (502) 491-7000.



David Melber

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 "And falling into a place where two \_\_\_ met, they ran the ship aground" (Acts 27:41)
- 5 Father of Adoniram (1 Kings 4:6)
- 9 Linking verb
- 12 Yen
- 13 "I will fasten him as a \_\_\_ in a sure place" (Isaiah 22:23)
- 14 "La \_\_\_" (Debussy composition)
- 15 Tear
- 16 "And David saith, Let their table be made a ... \_\_\_" (Romans 11:9)
- 17 Certain vegetable serving
- 18 Extraordinary, in a way
- 20 "She layeth her \_\_\_ to the spindle" (Proverbs 31:19)
- 22 "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, \_\_\_ are ye" (1 Peter 4:14)
- 24 Flap
- 25 Like a New York minute (abbr.)
- 26 At \_\_\_
- 29 Watch \_\_\_
- 33 Is supine
- 35 Cotton \_\_\_
- 36 Genus of the lily family
- 37 "My father did \_\_\_ you with a heavy yoke" (1 Kings 12:11)
- 38 Remove bobby pins
- 40 \_\_\_ the line
- 41 Poetic before
- 43 Rethink and revise
- 45 "He will not always \_\_\_: neither will he keep his anger" (Psalm 103:9)
- 48 It's sometimes glaring
- 50 "Thy word have I \_\_\_ in mine heart" (Psalm 119:11)

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50				51	52				53		54	55
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

Evelyn Boyington

- 51 Kind of light or line
- 53 Tribe of Israel
- 56 Natural combination of minerals
- 57 Kilmer subject
- 58 And others (abbr.)
- 59 Pod dweller
- 60 "O \_\_\_ out thy light and thy truth" (Psalm 43:3)
- 61 Synagogue

Down

- 1 Polite title
- 2 Greek letter
- 3 "Behold, now is the \_\_\_ time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2)
- 4 "We thy people and \_\_\_ of thy pasture" (Psalm 79:13)
- 5 Kind of hero
- 6 "John \_\_\_ witness of him" (John 1:15)
- 7 Circle part (abbr.)
- 8 Wave or ray
- 9 So be it
- 10 "They could not \_\_\_ the writing" (Daniel 5:8)
- 11 Solomon writes that whoever refuses reproof \_\_\_
- 19 Pastrami on \_\_\_ (deli order)
- 21 "\_\_\_ Father, all things are possible" (Mark 14:36)

- 22 "I ... have the keys of \_\_\_ and of death" (Revelation 1:18)
- 23 Continent
- 24 Mind the store
- 27 Marked by chills
- 28 "Where \_\_\_ abounded, grace did much more" (Romans 5:20)
- 30 "The law of the Medes and Persians, which \_\_\_ not" (Daniel 6:8)
- 31 High time
- 32 "A prophet mighty in \_\_\_ and word" (Luke 24:19)
- 34 Kind of money
- 39 Boathouse sight
- 42 Musical notations
- 44 Underground workers
- 45 Kind of house
- 46 "The labourer is worthy of his \_\_\_" (Luke 10:7)
- 47 Notion
- 48 "All the trees of \_\_\_, the choice and best of Lebanon" (Ezekiel 31:16)
- 49 "A bruised \_\_\_ shall he not break" (Matthew 12:20)
- 52 Wrath
- 54 Hebrew letter
- 55 Under the weather

Last week's solution

O	E	R	A	S	A	N	G	E	P	A	N
A	R	E	I	D	O	L	S	R	I	A	
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# GEORGETOWN

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## Ministry Reunion 2006

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

Alumni and friends of Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky, will gather on campus April 24-26, 2006, to celebrate the College's heritage of Christian ministry. This once-in-history event will unite one generation of students with another, drawn together by the common call to gospel ministry.

Reunion events include a *Worship Celebration* featuring Jim Henry and Karen Thomas Smith; a *Reception* for Campus Ministers Glenn Yarborough, Bob and Edie Fields, Jack Birdwhistell, and Sharon Felton; a *Scholars Forum* featuring GC alumni Jim Somerville, David Wheeler, Joe Price, Frank Birch Brown, Jason Springs, and Terry Clark; a *Reunion Choir* featuring the music of Mary Ellen Kerrick, and a *Reception for Missionaries*.

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# Legislation would ban protests at military funerals

## Independent Baptist church has picketed memorial services at Fort Campbell

**"Mourning the loss of a loved one in uniform should not be disrupted by the despicable acts of others."**

Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind

By Sarah Kellogg  
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—Legislation that would slap protesters at funerals of U.S. soldiers with hefty fines and federal jail time is on the fast track in Congress.

Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., the bill's main sponsor, said he hopes the House and Senate will approve the bill by May so President Bush can sign it into law before Memorial Day.

A House hearing on the bill is scheduled for Thursday.

"I heard them taunt and jeer and harass mourners and the family as they went in to pay their last respects to a fallen soldier," Rogers said of protesters at the funeral of Army Sgt. Joshua Youmans of Flushing, Mich. "It was vile and awful. It goes beyond the bounds of decency."

In the last month, a spate of protests at military funerals around the country and in Kentucky has angered state and federal officials.

The protests were led by Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., which argues that the war in Iraq is God's way of punishing the United States for tolerating homosexuality.

The church, which is not affiliated with any larger Baptist convention, is led by the controversial Fred Phelps, who is best known for his "God Hates Fags" campaigns and protests.

"When the death of a soldier is turned into a public platform to

lionize America, worship the dead and defy God, we will be there," the church said in a written statement on the proposed legislation. "We stand a respectful distance, on lawfully accessed public rights-of-way, and hold up some signs with words."

Some of those signs say: "God Blew Up the Soldier," "Thank God for Dead Soldiers" and "Too Late to Pray."

Members of Congress say there are other avenues for expressing opinions.

"Mourning the loss of a loved one in uniform should not be disrupted by the despicable acts of others," said Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind. "This legislation is a clear sign that there is no tolerance for those who choose to disrupt the sacred and sacrosanct burial of a loved one."

Known as the Respect for America's Fallen Heroes Act, the bill prohibits protests within 500 feet of military funerals on federal property, such as national cemeteries. It also bans them 60 minutes before and 60 minutes after a funeral. Violators would be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor and face a fine of up to \$100,000 and one year in prison.

The legislation includes language encouraging state officials to adopt similar restrictions on funeral protests, since the federal law applies only to protests on federal land.

Kentucky legislators adopted such a law this year that took immediate effect. It makes it illegal



**HOPKINSVILLE DEMONSTRATION** Victoria Phelps, a member of Westboro Baptist in Topeka, Kan., was among the church members gathered for a protest outside of Fort Campbell in February. The extremist group, not a part of any Baptist denomination, sets up protests at many military funerals and memorial services around the country. (Kentucky New Era photo by Danny Vowell)

for protestors to disrupt funerals, memorial services or burials.

More than a dozen other states, including Indiana, Maryland and Michigan, are considering similar bills. Violators would face heavy fines and multi-year jail terms, in some cases.

### Are restrictions legal?

State legislation may face court challenges, though. The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan says the 500-foot buffer zone in Michigan's bill is too wide, and most likely would be struck down.

"This is an egregious situation," said Shelli Weisberg, legislative director of Michigan's ACLU chapter.

"But if they want to accomplish their goal of trying to limit the exposure of families while they're mourning, this bill is not going to do it because it's unconstitutional."

The constitutionality of the restrictions has been a concern in the federal bill as well, although sponsors believe they've written it in a way that would not infringe on First Amendment rights, in part by limiting it to federal property.

"It is sad that such legislation is needed, as these families are bearing the brunt of this war," said Rep. Silvestre Reyes, R-Texas. "This bill is necessary to protect their peace and dignity during their time of great loss and personal tragedy."

## Meet some of the class of 2006, part 4

### Student thankful that Oneida taught her how to study, make God No. 1 in life

One of the greatest joys we experience is having a young person come to Oneida Baptist Institute who already is a Christian and who is not in any trouble, but simply desires the benefits of being in a Christian boarding school. My wife and I were like many other students who chose to attend OBI because of our desire to go to a Christian school. My situation was a little different in that my parents were not Christians and my home environment was not the best. How wonderful it is to provide students who need a different environment the opportunity to attend Oneida.

When "Jamie" (not her real name) came to Oneida, we knew she was having some minor conflicts with her parents, similar to any other family. But other than some questionable choices of a few of her friends, she was the ideal student for OBI. Her pastor took an active part in getting Jamie in touch with Oneida. Here is part of what she wrote in her senior essay:

"When I heard about the possibility of coming to Oneida, I thought it would be amazing. The summer before applying, my pastor brought me with his family to the Mountain Missions Conference, and I loved it. ... I prayed that my dad would allow me the decision of leaving home for more opportunities. As always, God proved greater than expected because my dad agreed that I was old enough to decide what to do. He still isn't happy that his only daughter is away from home, but he's coping.

"That first day at Oneida was very challenging for me. ... During my interview with Ms. Hoover,

she kept saying that life in a dorm with girls was not always fun. In my mind, I had it all figured out, until I was in the dorm with people I didn't know and my family was gone. I didn't think I would make it, and I cried a lot. I still remember the first few phone calls I made home, telling my family how great my life was going and how much fun everything was. In reality, I didn't know anyone and I wanted to go home so bad I couldn't bear it.

"When I came to Oneida I finally learned how to study. Study hall (required Monday through Thursday evenings for students who are not on the honor roll) was the worst time of day, but it was a time that was set aside so I could succeed in school. Now, I'm thankful for the opportunity that study hall provides because it disciplined me enough to get my work done on time.

"Daily chapel is something that I will greatly miss. I enjoy walking into the auditorium not knowing who or what to expect but always seeing God shine through whatever is taking place. Sunday school and discipleship training have also influenced my walk with God. ... I chose to stay and graduate at Oneida because I love the people here and I learn a lot about life every single day. ... The most important thing that I have learned at Oneida is to always keep God No. 1. Whenever God loses that No. 1 spot in your life, it's not good. Needless to say, I'm still learning to trust and lean on God every day."

In addition to being a wonderful young lady, Jamie is our 2006 valedictorian.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Glorifying God with a wrench

### Fredonia student also works as Clear Creek's mechanic

Our student "workshop" program is blessed to have employees with excellent skills. Third year student J.J. Sherrill from Fredonia demonstrates that blessing.

With 16 years experience as a John Deere mechanic, J.J. now uses those skills to maintain the college's 19 vehicles and three tractor/mowers. He also does mechanic work for students and faculty. "I want to use the gifts God has given me for His glory," J.J. said. "I remember what Jesus said in Matthew 25:40."

J.J. grew up in a Christian home and trusted Christ at age 12; he surrendered to the ministry in 2000. Former Princeton pastor and faculty member Bill Tichenor introduced him to Clear Creek. "We had a little adjustment to the mountains," J.J. said. "But it is beautiful here. Our kids love it."

He and Jennifer have been married 15 years; the family includes Jacob, 14, Kerry, 12, and Joshua, 5. In West Kentucky they didn't have any other children close by, and they really enjoy all the campus kids. J.J. wasn't a preacher when they married but Jennifer wasn't surprised. "She told me she was ex-

pecting the decision," he recalled. "She knew my involvement at Walnut Grove, my home church. I'm grateful for her support and encouragement."

The family attends Riverview Baptist Church at Calvin. During the winter, J.J. taught a Bible study on the work of angels in the Kingdom of God. "Last year I prayed for God's direction and made myself available as opportunities came," J.J. said. "I didn't send any resumes, just asked Him. I preached or had another ministry assignment almost every week through the year." In recent weeks, he's been preaching at Riverview each Sunday and Wednesday.

J.J. deliberately keeps his academic load low so he can balance commitments to family, school, church and work. "We only have so much time," he said. "We have to use it wisely."

He is praying and trusting God that a future ministry also will make use of his mechanic skills.

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

# Spring break missions

From Panama City and the Gulf Coast to Poland and Brazil, college students in Kentucky took part in a host of mission projects during their spring break.

Each year, more than 600 Kentucky college students take part in spring break ministries, according to Keith Inman, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's collegiate ministry group.

The bulk of students this spring

traveled to the Gulf Coast to help victims of Hurricane Katrina, Inman noted.

"In the past, we were spread out over all creation," he said.

In addition to building stronger relationships with other students and focusing on their relationship with God, spring break mission trips connect college students to the larger missions force, Inman said.



**UK IN PASCAGOULA** University of Kentucky student Carolyn Whaley disassembles a storm-damaged fence in Pascagoula, Miss. She was among 26 Baptist Collegiate Ministry students from UK who traveled during spring break to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina.



**KWC IN POLAND** Kentucky Wesleyan College students (from left) Scott Newman, Chris Barnes and Jeremy Vincent perform at a coffeehouse for students at the University of Wroclaw, Poland. Eight KWC students traveled to Poland to work with Second Baptist Church of Wroclaw and Southern Baptist missionaries to assist with outreach to college students. Their work included teaching English, conducting American culture workshops and performing at the coffee house. "During the concert, the coffee house was packed with non-believers and believers alike," campus minister Cindy Pelphrey said. "We were able to share our faith and the message of salvation while on stage while we sang contemporary Christian and popular music."

**U OF L IN PANAMA CITY** University of Louisville students Lauren Amburgey and Alyssa Whitener dispatched free van rides for college students attending spring break in Panama City as part of Beach Reach, a Christian outreach coordinated by LifeWay Christian Ministries. Approximately 370 students from throughout the country took part in Beach Reach, according to U of L campus minister Bill Noe. The week centers around four different ministries: a free pancake breakfast during the day, and street, van and prayer ministries at night, he said. "The students also return to campus more eager to share their faith with their friends." (Photo by Josh Yuen)

**Wouldn't it be great ...**

*... if churches had a resource to help families with the challenges they're facing?*

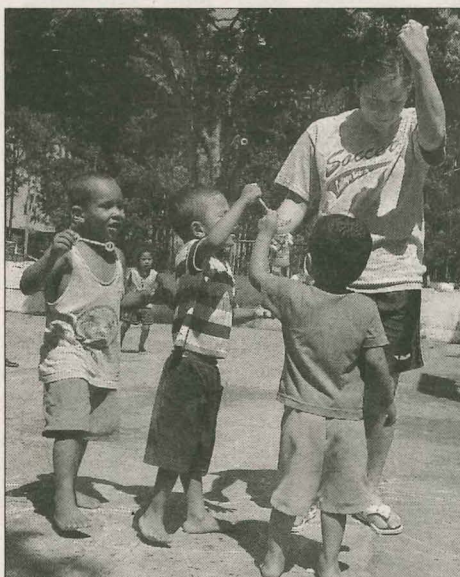
**You're holding it.**

Every week, the Western Recorder offers Family Forum, a faith-based column to help with the variety of issues families face today. Specialists



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**



**GEORGETOWN IN BRAZIL** A Georgetown College student plays with children at the Alpha and Omega Children's Home in Garca, Brazil. Twenty-one Georgetown students spent their spring break in Brazil, serving the 130 children living in the home. More than 80 Georgetown students and faculty spent their spring break serving on these mission trips.



**NKU AT BEACH REACH** Scott Treas, a student at Northern Kentucky University, writes an advertisement for free van rides during Beach Reach at Panama City, Fla.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist missionaries and ministries:

**St. Stephen Baptist Church of Louisville.** Associate Minister Ken Wright is directing "Hotel California," a 14-bed residential transitional facility for men recovering from drug addiction. The six-month program involves residents in a 12-step recovery process and local employment. The Christian staff is committed to helping men overcome their addictions through the power of Jesus Christ. Pray that God will be exalted through this ministry and that participants will experience freedom in Christ. Pray also that they will find strength in Christ to overcome the temptation and addiction of drugs.

**Mission Service Corps Missionary Morris Norfleet of Nancy.** Norfleet is president of Mountain Missions Development Corporation, an organization seeking to meet physical and spiritual needs of individuals and families in 47 counties in Eastern Kentucky. MMDC seeks to share Christ through educational opportunities, job training, social ministries and drug rehabilitation centers. Pray that God will provide financially for the MMDC and the ministries with which it partners. Pray that more churches will be mobilized and willing to address the drug problems in our state with the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

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

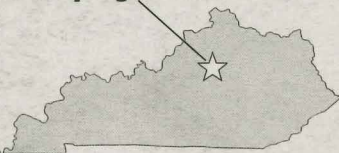
## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BUFFALO**—Buffalo Church recently called **Rodney Troutman** as pastor.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will hold spring revival services April 21-22, 7 p.m., and April 23, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., with **Kyle Franklin** and **Jeremiah Burdon** as evangelists. For more information, call (270) 789-0082.
- **FLORENCE**—Greenview Church will host Southern gospel quartet **Mercy's Mark** in concert April 30, 6 p.m.
- **HENDERSON**—Dupey Church recently called **D.T. Fulkerson Jr.** as pastor.
- **HODGENVILLE**—First Church will hold revival services April 23-26 with **Jerome Byrd** as evangelist. For more information, call (270) 358-3193. **Gerald Murphy** is pastor.
- **HOPKINSVILLE**—**Wilford and Betty Lancaster**, members of Second Church, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary April 8.
- **LONDON**—East Pittsburg Church will hold youth-led revival services April 21-22, 7 p.m., with **Greg Deaton** as evangelist. **Mark Whicker** is pastor.
- **MEANS**—Means Church will hold revival services April 23-28 with **Greg Waltermire** as evangelist. For more

### Spotlight on ...

#### Stamping Ground



Cedar Grove Church will celebrate its 129th anniversary April 23 and dedicate its family outreach center known as the ARK (Activities for Reaching Kids) during the morning worship service. Activities will begin with a Christian concert April 22, 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (502) 535-5147. **Darrell Taylor** is pastor.

information, call (606) 768-9168.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—Pleasant Grove Church's worship choir will present the Easter musical "Known by the Scars" April 13, 7 p.m. The church will hold a Good Friday service April 14, 7 p.m., and an Easter sunrise service April 16, 7:30 a.m. For more information, call (502) 543-7336.

## Bennett, longtime Campbellsville University professor, dies at 63

Campbellsville—William Bennett, a professor at Campbellsville University since 1970, died April 3 after a battle with lung cancer. He was 63.

Bennett, a professor of political science, was a 1958 graduate of Campbellsville. He also held degrees from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green and the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

Bennett "was one of the most skillful professors I've ever known," Campbellsville President Michael Carter said. "He was so gifted in his area of expertise, and the students loved him. He was always so eager to teach and have his students learn. ... He will be sorely missed at Campbellsville University."

"We are all saddened at the loss of Dr. Bill Bennett," former Campbellsville President Ken Winters said. "Bill was a great personal friend, a dedicated and talented teacher and a person who always went the extra mile for his students."

Frank Cheatham, Campbellsville's vice president for academic

affairs, described Bennett as "the true 'Christian professor' who put the needs of the university and his students above his own."

Bennett earned Campbellsville's 1996 Academic Excellence in Teaching Award. He also received the "Challenger Award" in 1986-87, given by the student body in recognition of a professor's "constant superior use of their teaching ability."

A native of Owensboro, Bennett had served on the Taylor County School Board, president of Taylor County Academic Boosters and was a lecturer with the Kentucky Endowment for the Humanities.

Bennett is survived by his wife, Carol, two sons and his mother. His funeral service was April 7 in Campbellsville with John Chowning, pastor of Saloma Baptist Church, officiating.

Memorial gifts may be made to the William E. Bennett Political Science Scholarship at Campbellsville University.



**MISSIONS FAIR** Happy Trails Ministry was among 55 exhibitors at an April 1-2 evangelism crusade and missions fair sponsored by Ohio River Baptist Association. Lonnie Riley, director of Meridzo Ministries in Lynch, was the keynote speaker for the event held at Potter's House Baptist Worship Center.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### April

- 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, Rose Hill Baptist Church, Ashland; and St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 29 Regional Keyboard Festival, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

### May

- 1 Adults 50+ Living Celebrations, Central Baptist Church, Corbin.
- 2 Adults 50+ Living Celebration, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.
- 4 Adults 50+ Living Celebration, First Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 4 "Next Level" Ministry Workshop, Broadway Baptist Church, Lexington.

- 5 Children's Bible Drill, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah; and First Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 5-7 Equestrian Trail Ride, Mammoth Cave.
- 6 Children's Bible Drill, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green; and First Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 6 Woman's Missionary Union Leadership Training for Associational Leaders, First Baptist Church, Central City.
- 13 Regional Keyboard Festival, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 15 "The Word Became Flesh" Workshop, Second Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 16 "The Word Became Flesh" Workshop, Long Run Baptist Association Office, Louisville.
- 17 "The Word Became Flesh" Workshop, Allen Baptist Church, Prestonsburg.
- 18 "The Word Became Flesh" Workshop, Trinity Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 22 Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 22-24 Kentucky Baptist Youth Ministry Association Spring Retreat, Bullittsburg Retreat Center, Petersburg.

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

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of education—degree and experience necessary. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, Yellow Creek Baptist, 5741 Highway 144, Owensboro, KY 42303. For info about our church, visit [www.yellowcreekbaptist.com/](http://www.yellowcreekbaptist.com/).

**SEEKING:** Part-time pianist for Fern Creek Baptist Church. Strong accompanying skills required. Send resumé to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291. Questions? Call (502) 239-0316. Linda Barnes Popham, pastor.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor to students for Ball Camp Baptist Church. Please send resumé to: Pastor to Students Search Committee, Ball Camp Baptist Church, 2412 Ball Camp-Byington Road, Knoxville, TN 37931.

**SEEKING:** Full-time youth pastor for Stanford Baptist Church. Interested candidates send resumé to: Search Committee, Stanford Baptist Church, 204 Church St., Stanford, KY 40484.

**SEEKING:** Full-time associate pastor with emphasis on youth for FBC of East Bernstadt, Ky. Send resumé to: FBC, PO Box 266, East Bernstadt, KY 40729, Attn: Search Committee.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Dry Ridge Baptist Church in Dry Ridge, Ky. Dry Ridge Baptist Church is a Southern Baptist church in a fast-growing community. Average weekly worship attendance is 200-plus. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 14, Dry Ridge, KY 41035; or e-mail to: [office@dryridgebaptist.com](mailto:office@dryridgebaptist.com).

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for wonderful rural community neighboring Owensboro (short drive to Louisville). Average attendance at blended worship: 300. Five staff members. Resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Lewisport Baptist Church, 1115 Pell St., Lewisport, KY 42351.

**SEEKING:** Full-time associate minister for youth for Thalia Lynn Baptist Church. Send resumé to: TLBC, 912 Ashbrook Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23462. E-mail: [Youth@ThaliaLynn.com](mailto:Youth@ThaliaLynn.com).

**SEEKING:** Part-time children's minister for Brookside Baptist Church. Primary duties would be to lead activities on Sundays and Wednesdays. Send resumé to: Pastor Jason Glenn, Brookside Baptist Church, 1351 Wilmore Road, Nicholasville, KY 40390; or e-mail to [Jason@brookside-baptist.org](mailto:Jason@brookside-baptist.org).

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

**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.

**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](mailto:chrljtr@aol.com).

# Seeing God's faithfulness

## Mississippi church's members stay after Katrina to rebuild town

By Norm Miller  
Baptist Press

Lakeshore, Miss. (BP)—Winds and waves, not a vote, relocated Lakeshore Baptist Church in Mississippi.

Katrina's fury smashed the wood-frame structure. What wasn't blown away floated away from the site about a mile from Mississippi's Gulf Coast. Members recovered the pulpit, a few lumber scraps and the steeple.

Working on his doctoral degree at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Lakeshore's pastor, Don Elbourne, relinquished his studies to coordinate disaster relief efforts in the predominantly Catholic neighborhood.

With help from countless Baptist volunteers from 38 states, as well as local, state and national Baptist agencies, members and co-laborers have turned the devastated area in Katrina's path into a crossroads of crisis and Christ-likeness.

The church site resembles a military supply depot. A Quonset hut structure serves as a church building. A tent village and small

bunkhouses host the volunteers. A screened-in kitchen and mess hall sit on a concrete slab foundation. Shower trailers help workers refresh.

Approximately 300 people each day visit a large tent for life's necessities, including canned goods, clothing and bottled water.

"I want to thank you for everything," said local resident Pam Ramage, who, with her cart of sundries in tow, stopped to talk with Elbourne. "We lost our home. Never found it. It's gone."

"You've fed me. You've clothed me. And you've lifted my spirits I don't know how many times," Ramage told Elbourne. "Everybody I see I want to hug their necks and say, 'Thank you, God.'"

In addition to hosting tents to distribute supplies, workers are going into the neighborhoods to help residents whose homes can be saved.

Volunteer teams are rehabbing local houses by gutting and disinfecting them. Then, they follow by roofing, plumbing, wiring, drywalling and painting the homes.



Elbourne said he expects this kind of work to continue for at least two years.

A sawmill donated by Sierra First Baptist Church in Alta, Calif., provides lumber to rebuild some houses from the ground up.

Concerning the sawmill, "the problem is not finding enough trees to mill," Elbourne said. "We've got enough trees to run that saw mill constantly. What we need are the volunteers to do it."

Scott Saunders, pastor of Sierra First Baptist, told Baptist Press his church's service to Lakeshore was a debt repayment, of sorts. More than 30 years ago, volunteers from Mississippi traveled to California to construct Sierra's building. In return, the church has committed to send a team of volunteers to Lakeshore once a month for a year. The church has also loaned Lakeshore the use of three vans.

Elbourne is quick to note not only the generosity of churches, but also how God uses it in astonishingly timely ways. Just after volunteers completed Lakeshore's makeshift sanctuary, Elbourne and a Lakeshore member were standing in the building, scratching their heads in

ignorance about how to install the electrical wiring.

As they were talking, a stranger walked in, introduced himself and apologized for interrupting, saying he was from another town and wanted to donate his time and professional expertise as an electrical engineer.

On another day, Elbourne said, a group of young adult volunteers who had been painting came to him needing more paint rollers. "Just then," said Elbourne, "a delivery truck pulls up, and the driver brings me a box. I sign for it and open it. It was a box of paint rollers."

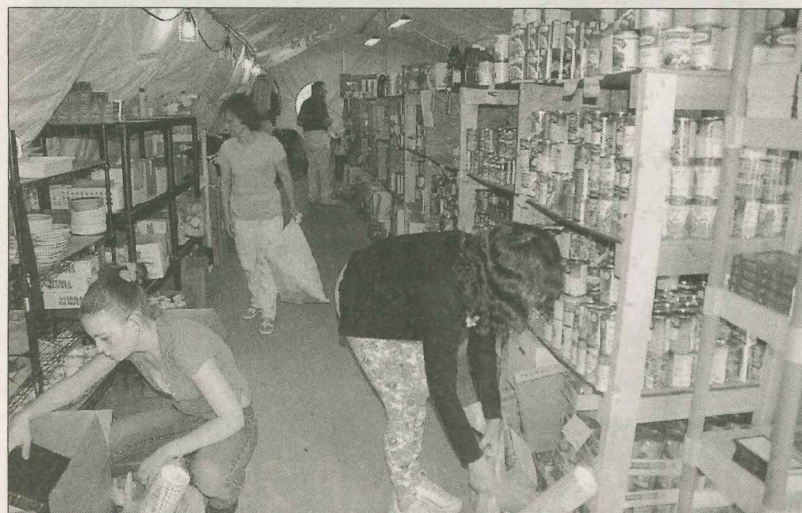
Elbourne is reflective on the ministry and his personal walk with God.

"Psalm 46, that the Lord is my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble—that's not just a metaphor anymore; it's a firm reality," he said. "Even the metaphors we sing: 'My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. All other ground is sinking sand'—(that's a) firm reality"

For more information about the church's ministry, visit [www.rebuildlakeshore.com](http://www.rebuildlakeshore.com).

### REBUILDING LAKESHORE

Volunteers from California staff a portable sawmill donated by their church. Lumber from the sawmill is used to rebuild houses damaged when Hurricane Katrina blew through Lakeshore, Miss. (BP photos by Norm Miller)



**SUPPLY CENTER** Local residents of Lakeshore, Miss., receive free food and other staples at Lakeshore Baptist Church's food supply tent. About 300 people visit the tent daily.

## Oceanside church to relocate inland after building buffeted by Katrina

Gulfport, Miss. (BP)—Members and friends of First Baptist Church in Gulfport bid farewell March 26 to their beloved beachfront facilities brought down by the wind and waves of Hurricane Katrina last year.

"The church of Jesus Christ is not at this location," said Ken Parvin, who was reared in the church and currently is pastor of Heucks Retreat Church in Brookhaven, Miss.

Gesturing to the hundreds of people gathered in and around the large tent pitched alongside the ruins of the church, Parvin said, "I am looking at First Baptist Church. Ladies and gentlemen, never forget that the church of Jesus Christ is in you."

Church members have decided to relocate and are searching for land north of Interstate 10, several miles inland from the present location.

First Baptist Pastor Chuck Regis-

ter spoke of the many special memories the church evokes—comical, sacrificial and eternal.

Delivering a message from Philippians 3, Register urged the congregation to "reflect, refocus and recommit" in order to be "people just like Jesus Christ."

After the final service, people lingered on the broken street in front of the city block where the church's rubble is fenced off. Cane-carrying older members were joined by young parents holding infants in taking one long, last look at the venerable church complex. The property soon will be listed for sale.

First Baptist, constituted in 1896, relocated to its current location in 1915.

Hurricane Camille pushed about four feet of water into the church in 1969, but Katrina gutted most of the buildings on the property and reduced the sanctuary to its steel superstructure.



**ONE LAST SERVICE** Hundreds of people gather for the final worship service at the beachfront location of First Baptist Church of Gulfport, Miss. Church members have voted to begin the search for suitable property farther inland from the danger of future hurricanes. (Mississippi Baptist Record photo by William Perkins Jr.)

The stark photographs of the ruined church quickly became an international symbol of the fury of Hurricane Katrina and the un-

precedented destruction wrought by the storm. The church body currently is meeting at Gulfport High School.

*It's a New Day at*

# CROSSINGS

MINISTRIES

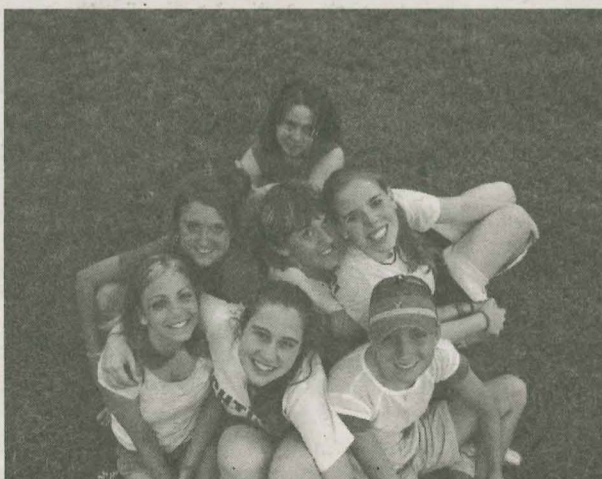
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