



WESTERN RECORDER

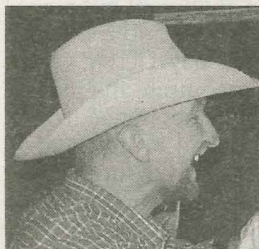
May 9, 2006
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FOR THE RECORD

Baptists
Tennessee Baptist Convention rejects Belmont settlement offer. *Page 2.*

Kentucky
KBC Mission Board affirms University of the Cumberlands. *Page 3.*

Editorial
Fletcher indictment: Pray for justice to prevail. *Page 5.*



Cowboy church
Murray State students giddyap to services. *Page 8.*

Music
Technology allows Christian musicians to connect with masses. *Page 9.*

Books
Reviews include a look at the founding fathers' faith and a book by Reggie McNeal. *Page 9.*

Most tell survey they trust Bible over 'Da Vinci'

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—While "The Da Vinci Code" has sold more than 40 million books and hits movie theaters worldwide May 19, most Americans are not buying its key theological premises, according to a poll commissioned by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

The complex plot of Dan Brown's fictional suspense-thriller revolves around a central theme alleging that Jesus Christ was not Magdalene, that He married Mary Magdalene and that they had a daughter.

NAMB commissioned research firm Zogby International to conduct the poll, which involved a sample of 1,200 adults surveyed by telephone in March.

Twenty-three percent of respondents have read the book while 43 percent said they had not read it but were familiar with the content.

Among those who had read it, more than 60 percent believed that the Bible is closer to the truth, while 10 percent believed "The Da Vinci Code" is more truthful. Thirty percent of those who had read the book believed neither was truthful or were not sure.

Among the entire sample, 72 percent believed the Bible was closer to the truth; six percent accepted the novel's account as the truth; and 22 percent were not sure or believed neither.

"The most striking result from the survey is that after either reading or hearing about 'The Da Vinci Code,' 44 percent of respondents were more likely to seek the truth by studying the Bible, while only 20 percent were less likely to study the Bible," said Ed Stetzer, missiologist and director of NAMB's Center for Missional Research near Atlanta.

Stetzer said Christians should view "The Da Vinci Code" as an opportunity for outreach.

"Perhaps an invitation to Bible study would be a more effective response to the hype and hoopla surrounding 'The Da Vinci Code' than protesting at the theater," Stetzer said. "Since there's not wide acceptance for the book's premise or since many are unsure of the truth, Southern Baptists' best response would be to bring them to the Word of God."

More information about the study is available online at www.namb.net/cmr.

Trackside life



FRIENDLY NIBBLE Rene Torres (left) finds it challenging to focus on a conversation with Pat Pope (right) as one of the thoroughbred horses he cares for at Turfway Park in Florence requests his attention. Torres helps care for seven horses in training at the Northern Kentucky track. Pope leads Bible studies, provides meals, coordinates recreation and finds many other ways to share God's love with the hundreds of people working and living on the "backside." (Photos by Dannah Prather)

No such thing as 'normal' day, chaplains say

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Florence—For Turfway Park Chaplain Tom Farley, a day of ministry typically starts in a barn.

At about 7 each morning, Farley begins his rounds at the Northern Kentucky racetrack, chatting with the men and women caring for thoroughbred horses.

"I just walk the barns, say 'Good morning' and see if I can engage someone in conversation," Farley said. "I try to do that with everybody on the backside."

The scene is similar at Churchill Downs in Louisville, where Ken Boehm is chaplain. During a racing meet, he said, as many 1,500 people can be living and working on the backside.

The chaplains' rounds begin early, but not as early as the grooms, exercise riders, hot walkers, blacksmiths and other horsemen and women. "A typical day for them is from 4 a.m. until noon," Boehm said.

At 7:45 a.m., Boehm makes his way to the security booth by one of the backside gates to share his "Minute With God" through the public address system. The devotional and prayer is heard by hundreds of people, even those not at the track.

"Once, I met a woman who thanked me for my 'Minute With



STROLLING, TURFWAY STYLE Prior to Monday evening worship, Chaplain Tom Farley (left) and Mission Service Corps Missionary Pat Pope (third from left) take a walk with track workers Steve Gore and Beth Murray. In front of them is Turfway's grandstand.

God' and I asked her where (on the track) she worked," Boehm recalled. "She said, 'Oh, I don't work at the track. I live across the street. I go out on the porch every morning to drink my coffee and listen to you.'"

At Turfway, by 8 a.m. missionary Pat Pope might be coffeeing the morning's third pot of coffee as she visits with backside workers dropping by the ministry's community center for a break.

Situated in the same long row of cinderblock rooms that serve as liv-

WesternRecorder.org: Trackside chaplains focus on people, not setting

ing quarters for backside workers, the community center is open most every day.

With assistance from the Kentucky Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association and contributions from local restaurants, other businesses and churches, Pope offers coffee, hot chocolate and light snacks to workers.

□ See Horse track chaplains ... *Page 6*

'Crossover Triad' to kick off SBC annual meeting

Greensboro, N.C. (BP)—Greensboro, Winston-Salem and High Point, N.C., will be blanketed by Southern Baptist volunteers June 10-11 when "Crossover Triad 2006" comes to the area the weekend before the June 13-14 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Greensboro.

Thousands of volunteers are expected to share the gospel in the three-city area. The campaign is jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and Baptist churches in area associations.

North Carolina's "Piedmont Triad" area includes about 1.5 million people in Greensboro, Winston-Salem, High Point and the surrounding areas.

Crossover is a comprehensive campaign to reach unchurched people in the region, said Don Smith, national coordinator for Crossover. Another Crossover goal, he said, is to plant 19 churches in the three-city area.

Smith said events will include witnessing by college students on area campuses; sports clinics; block parties; door-to-door witnessing; and "Kindness Explosion," an effort to present the gospel through random acts of kindness.

Other Crossover activities will include evangelism teams witnessing in high-crime areas where gangs, drugs and prostitution are common; an international festival sponsored by area ethnic churches; and a rodeo sponsored by a "cowboy church."

Since Crossover originated during the SBC annual meeting in Las Vegas in 1989, nearly 37,000 people have made professions of faith in Christ during the annual event.

For more information, visit www.crossovertriad.org.

Floyd to be nominated as SBC president

Greensboro, N.C.—Ronnie Floyd, pastor of the largest Southern Baptist church in Arkansas, will be nominated as president of the Southern Baptist Convention next month.

Georgia pastor Johnny Hunt, who until earlier this month was the nominee favored by the SBC's conservative leaders, will instead nominate Floyd.

No other candidates have announced for SBC president this year. But several names have been suggested by younger conservatives, especially bloggers who have voiced concern about recent Southern Baptist International Mission Board actions.

Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson, who has been at the center of the IMB controversy; David Dockery, president of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.; and Frank Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C.; are among names frequently mentioned.

Burleson has indicated he will not seek the presidency if one of the other candidates is nominated and Dockery announced last week that he will not be nominated. Page had not announced his decision as of press time.

This is the second time Hunt has stepped aside for another candidate. In 2004 he was in line to be nominated as president before current president Bobby Welch's nomination was announced. Hunt ultimately nominated Welch, the Florida pastor who concludes his second term this year. Again this year, he will nominate the candidate expected to have the backing of the SBC's conservative leaders.

Floyd "is matched for our times because of his leadership through the years in our denomination," Hunt said. "He has served on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention for 10 years, serving for two of those years as its chairman. ... He served also as a member of the selected seven-member committee that restructured the Southern Baptist Convention."



Ronnie Floyd

Hunt said Floyd served on the search committee that called Morris Chapman as SBC Executive Committee president and also served as president of the 1997 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

Noting that he could not gain "the real peace I needed in my heart" to be nominated as SBC president, Hunt said he contacted Floyd to say "that I believed he was the man God had raised up for such a time as this to lead Southern Baptists."

Hunt said Floyd "informed me that he will humbly accept this nomination due to God speaking to him dramatically through Acts 16:6-10. He never sought it one moment, but was drafted supernaturally to let me nominate him to be our next president."

Questions about CP support

During Floyd's nearly 20-year pastorate, First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., has grown from 3,700 members to more than 16,000 and baptized more than 11,700 people. The church also has planted 17 churches in the U.S. and overseas in the past seven years.

Despite Floyd's extensive denominational leadership and church

growth success, some conservative Southern Baptists have raised concerns about his church's limited financial support of the SBC.

An ad hoc SBC Cooperative Program study committee has urged the election of officers from churches that contribute at least 10 percent of their undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program.

The Springdale church and its satellite congregation, the Church at Pinnacle Hills, contributed a total of \$32,000 to the CP last year, according to the SBC and the Arkansas Baptist State Convention. That's about one-fourth of 1 percent of its undesignated receipts of \$11,952,137—or one-40th of the goal proposed by SBC leaders.

Another \$189,000 was designated for Southern Baptist causes through the SBC allocation budget, said Springdale administrative assistant Sharon Damron. But that bypassed the Cooperative Program budgets at the state and national levels.

The church reports total missions expenditures of \$1,637,503, Damron said, which includes \$63,777 for the SBC's special mission offerings. That total also includes funding for the church's extensive television ministry, she said.

In a May 9 interview with the Arkansas Baptist News, Floyd said, "If elected president, I desperately want to lead us to spiritual renewal—personally, one-on-one with Jesus and corporately within churches. We've got to come back to a mighty, fresh touch of God. Pastors need to proclaim it as never before."

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

Tennessee Baptists reject Belmont settlement

Nashville—Tennessee Baptists voted May 9 to reject an offer of \$5 million from Belmont University that would have given the school power to elect its own trustees. Instead, the Tennessee Baptist Convention likely will sue the university to try to retain control of the 4,600-student school.

In a rare special convention May 9, Tennessee Baptist messengers voted 923-791 to reject the settlement offer from Belmont. After defeating a series of proposed amendments, messengers eventually approved the Executive Board proposal by a vote of 1,383-103 to establish a special committee to explore "private negotiations/settlement, mediation, arbitration and/or litigation."

Belmont's \$5 million proposal would have ended the dispute triggered by Belmont's 2005 decision to amend its charter to allow the election of some non-Baptist trustees.

Instead, messengers voted to vacate Belmont's board of trustees, which historically has been elected by the convention. "From the convention's perspective, those trustees are no longer in office," convention attorney Randle Davis said.

Messengers authorized a committee to negotiate with the school or seek other remedies—including possible binding legal arbitration or

litigation. A similar lawsuit in Georgia recently ended with Georgia Baptists retaining control of Shorter College.

"We are family and our great desire has been for all these years that Belmont, especially, be a great part of the ongoing Tennessee Baptist Convention," said TBC Executive Director James Porch. "But we came to a crossroads in which Belmont by actions had chosen not to participate in the family, according to the way that the family is structured."

Many observers said the impasse means ties between the state convention and the 54-year-old university are effectively severed.

"The historic relationship with Belmont University has come to an end," said Clay Austin, president of the convention's Executive Board, according to the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector. "The only task remaining before us is to negotiate final issues."

Belmont's settlement offer, which was relayed through the Executive Board, would have released both sides from a 1952 agreement that said if Belmont should "for any reason pass from Baptist control, or the control, ownership, supervision or right to elect the trustees ... be lost to the Tennessee Baptist Convention, then any and all of said property and funds shall be repaid

or restored ... to the Executive Board of the convention."

Convention officials said the document, discovered on the eve of last year's Tennessee Baptist Convention, gives them the right to recoup the convention's \$50-plus million contributed to the university since 1951, when the convention took over the school.

Belmont officials insist the document is an "historical artifact" superseded by more recent contracts. But Davis, the convention's attorney, insists the agreement is still valid.

Discovery of the reverter clause derailed plans for messengers to the convention's Nov. 15-16 annual meeting to ratify a plan for Belmont to elect its own trustees.

The university amended its charter—and declined to accept further financial support from the convention—after the Executive Board rejected Belmont's request to give up to 40 percent of the seats on its board to non-Baptists. The majority of the Nashville school's student body is not Baptist.

In other action, messengers voted to look into selling or merging Baptist Health System of East Tennessee, hospitals which the convention owns. The health system is \$220 million in debt.

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

Missionaries claim IMB report is 'inaccurate'

Dallas (ABP)—Wyman and Michelle Dobbs, the Southern Baptist missionaries recently threatened with termination by the International Mission Board and then reinstated, say the IMB's description of their reinstatement is "inaccurate and inappropriate."

The Dobbses, missionaries for eight years to the Fulbe Fouta people in Guinea, West Africa, were cited for dismissal in mid-April because IMB leaders said the couple had failed adequately to follow guidelines for planting churches with non-Southern Baptist missionaries.

"If you read the IMB response to our reinstatement, you are led to believe that (we) were out of alignment but now agree to do better," the Dobbses wrote in a May 6 letter.

"This is inaccurate and inappropriate and does not address the real problem of not holding leaders and trustees accountable for misrepresenting policy," they wrote.

An IMB news release May 2 said: "West Africa mission leadership came to an impasse with the Dobbses in determining their commitment to the appropriate level of partnership and a clear commitment to planting indigenous Baptist churches. They recommended the couple resign or be terminated after the Dobbses refused to follow the guidelines."

The release said Gordon Fort, the IMB vice president for overseas operations, agreed to reinstate the Dobbses after meeting with the couple April 29.

The news release added: "The Dobbses told Fort they are committed to partnering appropriately within IMB guidelines for levels of mission partnership. In addition, they agreed to plant indigenous Baptist churches and said they would work under the authority of IMB leadership in West Africa and in harmony with leaders' policy decisions."

But the Dobbses, in their May 6 letter, said they believe their termination was rescinded not because they recanted their beliefs but because it was determined that they had followed IMB policy all along.

"What was not reported is that we have always been committed to following policy," the Dobbses' letter said.

Wendy Norvelle, an IMB spokesperson, said she could speak only to the fact that at the April 29 meeting, the Dobbses "did agree" with IMB leaders about the resolution of their conflict.

"Our understanding from our conversation with the Dobbses is that they understood the terms," Norvelle said. "We came to an agreement."

Berry named UK campus minister

Bagdad—Daniel Berry, associate Baptist campus minister at Auburn University in Alabama, has been named Baptist campus minister at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.



Daniel Berry

Berry, elected May 8 by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board's administrative committee, succeeds H.K. Kingkade who resigned in February to become director of church relations for Georgetown College.

Berry was recommended to the committee by Keith Inman, leader of the KBC's collegiate ministry group.

Describing Berry as "a great candidate for this position," Inman noted that "his heart is the campus."

Sharing his testimony with committee members, Berry said, "I've always felt a passion for loving God and wanting to serve Him."

Emphasizing his sense of call to campus ministry, he added, "I really feel like this is the ministry that can impact the world."

Berry, who has served at Auburn since 2002, previously was a campus ministry intern at the University of Georgia in Athens and a college of ministry intern at two churches in Texas. He is a graduate of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Emily, have one son, Brennan.

KBC board affirms Cumberlands, CP plan

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Bagdad—Members of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board voted last week to affirm the University of the Cumberlands' recent decision to dismiss an openly homosexual student.

Board members, meeting May 8-9 at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, also approved a detailed plan to reallocate convention funds previously earmarked for Georgetown College.

Citing "the recent public controversy surrounding the University of the Cumberlands' dismissal of a student for violating the school's code of conduct," the board action noted that "we commend the university's firm stand on its principles and appreciate the high standards to which it holds itself and its students to."

Board members pledged "to pray for the university's leadership, faculty and students" as well as "the young man who was affected by this decision."

The action also urged prayer "that God will use the public discussion of this decision for His glory in such a way that helps all people understand His great love for them and desire for a personal relationship with them."

"We felt it was important that the Mission Board affirm the University of the Cumberlands in this recent controversy," explained Joe Allen, chairman of the board's agencies and institutions committee. "I have been very proud of their conduct and decision in this process."

Rick Fleenor, the university's director of relations, told board members, "Please know that your prayers have been felt over the past several weeks."

The board action did not address a pair of lawsuits related to an \$11 million state budget allocation to the University of the Cumberlands to help establish a pharmacy school.

The reallocation of Cooperative Program funds was approved in March by the board's administrative committee and business & finance committee. The plan came in response to a proposal adopted last fall by KBC messengers to revise the convention's ministry partnership with Georgetown. College trustees had voted earlier in the year to establish a self-perpetuating board.

Detailing the redistribution plan, KBC President Paul Chitwood told board members, "I think Kentucky Baptists will have many reasons to be excited about it. ... It has enormous ramifications for the work of Kentucky Baptists."

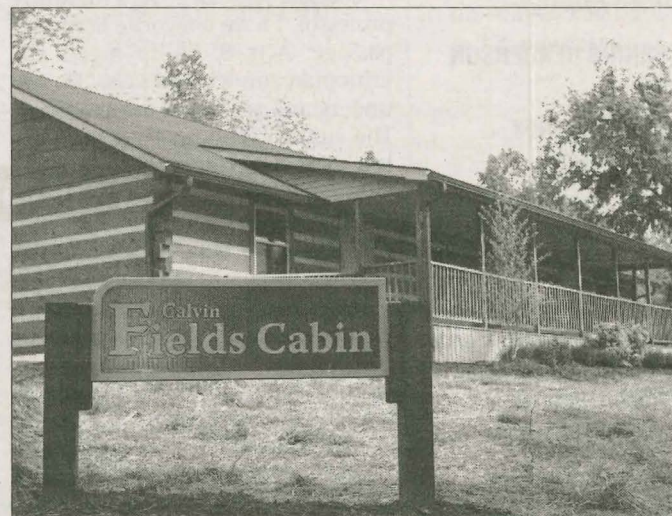
The redistribution of funds will take place over four years, beginning with the KBC's 2006-2007 budget. Georgetown's full \$1.3 million annual allocation eventually will be redistributed each year with 41 percent for KBC-related Christian education institutions, 24.1 percent for Southern Baptist Convention causes, 15 percent for Cooperative Program education and promotion, 10.9 percent for Mission Board ministries and 9 percent for the KBC's other institutions and agencies.

"I know this has been a tough task for these people," noted James Jones, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Campbellsville, "but I think they have been very fair in what they have been bringing to us and I support it."

Board members approved the reallocation plan with no amendments or opposition.

In other action, board members approved the special Cooperative Program Study Committee chaired by Billy Compton, pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

The four-point plan calls for employing a CP strategist, implementing a CP communications/marketing plan, establishing a long-term



goal of a 60/40 distribution of CP receipts between the KBC and SBC and endorsing an SBC Cooperative Program committee plan if it is adopted next month by SBC messengers.

The KBC currently receives 64 percent of CP receipts and 36 percent is channeled to SBC causes. The SBC's current will increase to approximately 37.4 percent by 2009 when the Georgetown reallocation is fully implemented.

Board members also:

- Approved a 2006-2007 KBC operating budget of \$26.1 million, a 2 percent increase over the current budget.

- Approved a request by Clear Creek Baptist Bible College to conduct a church-based fund-raising campaign as part of a three-year, \$1 million campaign to endow the school's student workshop program.

- Approved adding a marketing and media relations associate position to the convention's communications department.

- Dedicated Cedarmore's new Fields Cabin, a 2,700-square-foot, 36-bed facility built in memory of former KBC Brotherhood leader Calvin Fields.

FIELDS CABIN Kentucky Baptist Assembly officials, KBC Mission Board members and relatives of Calvin Fields dedicated the Fields Cabin May 9 at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly. Fields served more than 15 years with the KBC Brotherhood department. The 36-bed facility, built with volunteer labor and donated materials for \$160,000, was dedicated in Fields' memory.

Mexico Baptist makes big commitment to CP support

By Ken Walker
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Marion—Tucked in a western Kentucky community, a church in the small town of Marion (population 3,196) is demonstrating a big lesson about giving.

During the 2004-05 church year, Mexico Baptist Church contributed an average of \$182.41 per member to the Cooperative program.

That makes the Crittenden County congregation the highest per-capita contributor to CP, the unified method for supporting Kentucky Baptist and Southern Baptist missions and ministry efforts.

With 347 total members, the church gave \$63,297 last year to the Cooperative Program. Those gifts amounted to more than one-quarter of its undesignated receipts of \$246,460.

Former church treasurer Mary Sue Crider, who recently stepped down at the age of 83, said the church has had a long history of giving.

Long ago, members voted to set giving at 30 percent-25 percent to the Cooperative Program and 5 percent to associational missions, Crider says.

"The sad part is the ones who had that inspiration have all passed away," Crider said. "But we're still pushing missions as the main thing of the church."

Bob Hunter, who joined the church in 1941 after he became a Christian, credits several now-deceased deacons with the emphasis on tithing and giving that have characterized Mexico Baptist since his childhood.

"The Lord will bless you; He says He would," Hunter said of giving to the Cooperative Program. "God loves a cheerful giver. Why should we keep that money and put it in the bank? Would God bless you if you put it in the bank?"

Pastor Tim Burdon, who came to Mexico more than two years ago, said the congregation has the deepest commitment to missions of any church he has served.

In recent years, two members have volunteered at a hospital in Honduras. The youth group has taken part in a World Changers project, and church-wide mission trips have been sponsored at various sites around the nation.

"We emphasize Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong," Burdon

said. "It's just a missions-oriented church. We have a great deal of tithers who support the church. With a commitment to missions and giving, here we are today."

Construction doesn't slow giving

Even a recent \$500,000 building project for an educational wing, kitchen and multi-purpose room has not dampened the church's commitment to missions giving.

For the first six months of the current fiscal year, Cooperative Program receipts were running eight percent ahead of a year ago.

"The Lord has just blessed us, and opened the door in a wonderful way," Burdon said, noting that the church increased its 2006 budget by \$20,000 and is exceeding that goal. "I can't explain, other than the Lord is blessing us as we reach out and try to help the community."

Mexico Baptist's commitment to missions starts close to home, with active community outreach.

Playing off its name, Mexico Baptist sponsors an annual Cinco de Mayo celebration, featuring children's games, piñatas, fireworks and Mexican food, plus a gospel message from the pastor.

The church also hosts a wild game dinner each February.

Mexico Baptist also has started a new visitation program, with 65 members participating in the weekly program.

The pastor said these events attract visitors and new members, resulting in increased giving to the church and more gifts to the Cooperative Program.

"It's like a stair step; one step leads to another," Burdon said. "But it's all about people being saved."

Some people might suggest that money given to missions could do a lot of good at home, but most members realize that Cooperative Program gifts support many different ministries, Burdon said.

Mexico Baptist strives constantly to educate members about missions and periodically schedules guest speakers at a monthly, mid-week "Missions Night," he said.

Burdon said the church believes that by joining with other believers they can accomplish far more to spread the gospel than working individually.

"We need to work together and that will be the difference we make."

"One step leads to another, but it's all about people being saved."

Tim Burdon, pastor of Mexico Baptist Church

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

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Preparing for 'The Da Vinci Code'

By Gene Fant Jr.

Jackson, Tenn. (BP)—As a literature professor, I have a favorite Scripture passage: Acts 8. Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch and says, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch replies, "How can I unless someone explains it to me?"

The same opportunity looms for believers as "The Da Vinci Code" comes to theaters in our hometowns. We should not be afraid to ask our neighbors and co-workers, "Do you understand what you saw?" Most of them will reply, "What does it all mean?" We need to be sensitive to such a question.

Our culture is fascinated with spiritual and religious topics. From the gospel of Judas to the various spin-offs of "The Da Vinci Code," our culture is responding to the God-created void that each of us possesses which longs to find glimpses of the divine. Unfortunately, our culture is likewise afflicted with the fallen characteristic of settling for substitute half-truths over transcendent truth.

This characteristic of settling for half-truths is exactly why Christians must be prepared to turn a very anti-Christian story into an opportunity to yield some helpful conversations.

The first question we should ask is, "Does the novel match up with the facts of history?" The novel's first word is "Fact"; the text sets itself up to be a truth-based work of imaginative fiction. While Dan

Brown never claims that the novel's historical claims are accurate, he does claim absolute accuracy in the novel's "descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and ancient rituals." Most readers do not notice this authorial sleight-of-hand.

COMMENTARY

The book, however, does not square with many basic facts of history, as Darrell Bock (in "Breaking the Da Vinci Code") and many others have proven. Once the book begins to delve into the intricacies of church history, it veers into ignorance at best and falsehood at worst. These errors do not require the skills of a professional historian; they are simple errors that any person can identify. If, then, the book makes an initial claim to tell the truth but then misses that mark in its historical claims, how reliable can it be in its theological claims?

One of the most dangerous claims made in the book is that Jesus was a mere man. According to the text, the early church believed Jesus to be fully mortal, and it was only later, after Emperor Constantine's reign (A.D. 325), that Jesus was given divine status. One of the characters, Sir Leigh Teabing, actually claims that Christ's divinity resulted from a vote by fourth century church leaders.

Too many Scripture passages, John 1:1-3 for example, reveal Christ's eternal divinity for such a claim to be taken seriously. Likewise, even a cursory reading of history re-

veals that Christ's divine status was settled almost from the outset of organized Christian theology.

This sets up the second question we should ask; C. S. Lewis dealt with this same question in his masterwork "Mere Christianity": Should we call Jesus a liar, a lunatic or Lord? Jesus made many bold statements about Himself. If he made these claims but didn't really believe them, then He was a liar. If He believed Himself to be divine but was not, then He was a lunatic.

The third option is the claim made by the New Testament: His moral teachings radiate from the fact that Jesus is Lord.

If the film follows the novel, the Jesus of "The Da Vinci Code" will simply be a man whose story was compelling, but whose followers were cantankerous, lying, manipulative, women-hating brutes. Part of what church history tells us, however, is that the earliest followers of Christ were committed, self-sacrificing people, both men and women, who were willing to die because they believed in Christ's divinity and in His role as Savior.

2 Timothy 4:2 exhorts us to be ready to share our faith both in season and out. We also should be humble and gentle in our walk (Ephesians 4:1-3). People who are confused and a bit frightened by the implications of a work like "The Da Vinci Code" need to hear a comely defense of the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.

Gene Fant chairs the English department at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

CHURCH

Faithful stewards:
Heart & treasure
reveal priorities

By Doug Strader

It has been suggested that all of us can determine our true priorities by looking at our calendars and our checkbooks.



When we examine how we spend our time and money, we quickly discover our priorities. In Matthew, Jesus said, "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." I believe the reverse also is true: Where your heart is there will your treasure be also.

There are some basic biblical principles—when properly understood and practiced in everyday life—that can help Christians become good financial stewards of their possessions. Practicing these principles also demonstrates that one's heart and treasure are in the right place:

■ Everything belongs to God, including our time, talents, possessions, money, family, spiritual gifts and anything else we possess. When Christians understand that everything we have is a gift from God and we are responsible to God for the way we use those gifts, we will be more likely to demonstrate good stewardship.

■ God has entrusted us with His possessions and we are to be good stewards. The Apostle Paul said that as stewards of God's gifts we are to be found faithful. That includes every gift. It also includes being good stewards of all we receive; not just giving a tithe.

■ God will hold us accountable for how we use what He has given us. 1 Peter 4:10 states, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

■ Faithfulness is the measure of our stewardship. Stewardship is a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year responsibility.

■ Faithful stewards will discover life is fulfilling both now and in eternity. In Galatians 6:9, Paul wrote, "And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, for we do not give up."

Being good stewards of our time, talents, money and spiritual giftedness is of utmost importance since today is the only time we are assured to have in which to be faithful stewards. Good intentions go down the drain unless we take action.

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

Support God's work

I was taught that Christians in the church are to support the Lord's work.

When churches have yard sales, bake sales, etc., we're asking for people of the world to help us, thus leaving the impression we believe God is not able to provide our needs.

I agree with Hershael York's view that when government gets involved, government takes over. Look at our children's homes.



I realize Christians are failing in our support of God's work. Is that because we are selfish, putting our wants above God's?

Wilma Jean-Wise
Elizabethtown

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

Pikeville congregation focused on people

My wife, Kay, and I recently had the privilege of worshipping with First Baptist Church of Pikeville. Pastor Paul Badgett invited me to speak at both morning services and to conduct a joint Sunday school class for all senior adults focused on Cooperative Program ministries.

Under the pastor's outstanding leadership, FBC has doubled in average Sunday school attendance (400) and worship attendance (600) during the past seven years.

Paul is an outstanding preacher, and the church has inspirational music through the leadership of Greg Cagle. During worship, Greg sang, "I Bowed on My Knees and Cried Holy," backed up by the choir. The audience responded with a standing ovation in the spirit of worship to God.

The church has several ministries that are focused on special and generational needs. It seems to me that the church is comprehensive and effective in its ministries to every

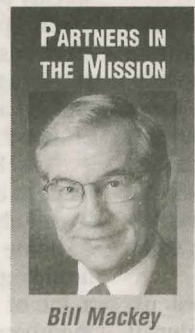
generational group.

The "Beautiful Offering—Women's Bible Study" is offered Tuesday mornings as well as on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Youth "Deep End" ministry is offered Wednesday evenings at separate locations for guys and girls.

There also are early morning prayers (at 6 a.m.) on Monday and Mother's Prayer Group on Wednesday evenings. AWANA meets on Sunday nights and children's choir meets on Wednesday evenings.

The church has a strong and effective emphasis on Sunday school. On the Sunday I was there, Sunday school Director Lynn Parrish conducted a Sunday school picnic for workers to recognize groups who had reached goals and encourage each group to keep its focus on reaching prospects. There are 250 preschoolers and children enrolled in Sunday school, with all age groups well represented.

A new preschool, children and youth building is under construc-



Bill Mackey

tion. There also will be ministry experiences for children and youth this summer and at least three mission trips.

Evening Sunday school is conducted on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. FAITH visitation is conducted each Tuesday night. The "Revolutionaries" college ministry is held each Thursday night.

The following comments were in the Sunday bulletin:

■ "I feel so blessed to be a part of such a caring church."

■ "As a parent of one of your students, my words cannot ... express my gratitude ... for this Bible study ('Wild About You'). It means so much to me as a mother to be reminded that other people are going to our Heavenly Father interceding on behalf of my child."

The church also is strong in its support of Cooperative Program Missions and the mission offerings, including the offering for the local association. I praise God for pastors who are leading their congregations to reach people and to support missions in Kentucky and around the world!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

How can parents help protect children from Internet risks?

Q: As a parent, what can I do to protect my children from Internet dangers?

At a recent Internet safety seminar, Southeast Christian Church counselor Tony Gore reported the following alarming statistics: 90 percent of all children will encounter pornography on the Internet; the average age of exposure to pornography for children is 9 years old; nine out of 10 kids ages 8-16 years have viewed pornography online, most often unintentionally, when using the Internet to do homework.

These are a few of the realities facing our children today—even boys and girls who are Christians, who go to church and who have Christian parents. What can parents do to protect their children from Internet dangers?

Gore suggests beginning with appropriate technology. Software programs such as "Be Safe" and "Integrity Online" allow parents to block certain kinds of content as well as monitor Internet sites that are visited. Next, make sure you establish rules for use of the computer. These rules might include time limits, restrictions regarding chat rooms and other reminders. The rules should be posted by the computer.

Make sure your computer is in an open location rather than tucked away in a bedroom. Children should be reminded not to share any personal information online and not to "talk" to strangers through e-mail or in chat rooms. Finally, parents should talk openly and honestly with their children about the dangers of Internet usage—particularly the addictive nature of pornography.

Gore recommends the following Web sites for additional help and resources: Citizens for Community Values (www.ccv.org) and Focus on the Family (www.family.org).—*David Garrard*

Q: My fiancée admitted to me a recent sexual "fling." She says she still wants to marry me and promises never to see the other man again. How should I respond?

Is sexual infidelity a pattern in her life? Is it a "deal breaker" for you? If the relationship is worth saving, it is not too early for both of you to work with a skilled marriage and family therapist.

A helpful book is "Surviving Infidelity: Making Decisions, Recovering from the Pain" by Subotnik and Harris, which describes the various issues out of which infidelity arises. Infidelity can mask a symptom of a deeper issue, such as an upcoming stressful life event (such as a marriage) that prompts a person to relieve his or her anxiety through a relationship with a third party. Another possibility is that your fiancée did something so outrageous to push you to break off the engagement so she would not have to.

Has your fiancée ended all ties to the other person? Ending all contact with the third party includes all phone calls, paper and electronic correspondence. Less than a total break in their relationship becomes an ongoing problem for her and you.

Working through this crisis includes but is not limited to the issue of forgiveness. Everette Worthington's books on forgiveness provide a clear guide to the steps needed to move from anger to forgiveness, no matter what the issue might be.

The hard questions must be asked and answered. Use the skills of a counselor whom you both trust to help you through the process. Your desire to build a marriage relationship certainly is being tested. As you seek discernment, you can choose to allow the light of truth and the skill of a counselor to help you move in the direction you should go.—*James Stillwell*

Family Forum writers are:

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

Fletcher case: Pray for justice to prevail

It's a sad day in Kentucky—regardless of one's political persuasion.

The indictment last week of Gov. Ernie Fletcher on three misdemeanor charges has produced predictable reactions. Supporters of the embattled governor are charging political persecution. Opponents view the charges as serious, legitimate allegations.

The sad fact is that the crisis already is a lose-lose situation. If Gov. Fletcher succeeds in having the charges dropped or cutting a cloud deal, opponents will cry foul and a cloud will continue to hang over the Fletcher administration. If the governor is convicted of the charges, it will heap shame and embarrassment on the governor's office and Kentucky's political system.

While charges and countercharges will continue to fly in the media and elsewhere, the reality is that it's far too early in the process for grassroots citizens to say with certainty whether the charges are warranted. In fact, we may never know.

One fact for both sides to keep in mind is that the charges are just that—allegations of wrongdoing that have not been proven in a court of law. While it will be easy for some people on both sides of the controversy to rush to judgment, one strength of the American legal system is that every defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Unfortunately, in our society's endless 24-hour news cycle, many people will be quick either to convict or exonerate the governor—with or without all the facts.

What we do know so far is that Fletcher has been indicted on misdemeanor charges of criminal conspiracy, first-degree official misconduct and violating the prohibition against political discrimination. According to media reports, Fletcher is the 14th person indicted by a grand jury that has been investigating

charges of political patronage in his administration. Fletcher issued a pardon last year that covered all those indicted except himself.

For his part, the Republican governor insists that the investigation has been conducted "in a very politically charged way."

"My conscience is clear," Fletcher told reporters. "I'm very disappointed, but we'll continue to move forward. I'm not going to let this distract from moving this state forward."

But the reality is that the indictment is a major distraction for the Fletcher administration, just as it would be for any other politician.

The fact that the indictments were handed down less than a week before statewide primary elections heightens the potential political fallout. And the governor's political opponents have been quick to share their perspectives.

House Speaker Jody Richards (D-Bowling Green) called the misdemeanor charges serious, adding that "most people are going to think it's time for a change."

So where does that leave grassroots Kentucky citizens, including thousands of Kentucky Baptists?

For starters, we know that Scripture instructs believers to pray for "all those in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). That includes elected and appointed officials on both sides of the current controversy.

The Bible also warns against gossip and idle chatter. Since the typical citizen doesn't have the full details about the allegations, we should carefully guard our words and allow the legal process to run its course.

Pray for Gov. Fletcher, court officials and other leaders involved in this crisis. Pray also for a fair, even-handed resolution that will bring a sense of honor and justice to the commonwealth and its people.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Take time to understand culture's questions

By Ed Stetzer

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—Scripture teaches us to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

We are to be ready to give an answer—and answers imply questions. A good way to do evangelism is to start by understanding the questions that people are asking in culture today.

The North American Mission Board's Center for Missional Research recently partnered with Zogby International to learn what questions Americans are asking about spiritual issues. Results are now available from the 1,200 telephone interviews conducted by Zogby in late March of this year.

The standard evangelistic approach for several decades has begun with the question, "If you were to die today, do you know for sure you would go to heaven?" I must confess, I typically do not use this approach because I have assumed that few people outside of hospital beds or foxholes actually ask that question. My assumption was that our survey would prove that to be the case. I was wrong.

Many people are wondering about their eternal destiny. One of every five respondents said they wonder daily about the certainty of going to heaven. Another 13 percent think about this weekly, 12 percent

monthly and 9 percent annually. Only 44 percent, four out of nine, said they never wonder about this.

In the interviews, we also asked, "How often do you wonder, 'How can I find more meaning and purpose in

my life?'" Remarkably, almost one of every three respondents wonders about this question daily. Another 17 percent contemplate this weekly, 13 percent monthly and 10 percent yearly. This means that half of those interviewed wonder about how to find more meaning in their life at least once a week. It seems that what we have here is a question very relevant to our culture. In fact, only 26 percent, about one in four, said they never wonder how to have more meaning or purpose.

Do subgroups of our American culture contemplate purpose of life and eternal security similarly? Groups that wonder more than the typical American does about making it to heaven include those age 65 and over, those with less than a high school education, Republicans, African Americans, Catholics and those with household income between \$25,000 to \$35,000. Conversely, Americans ages 30 to 49 wonder less often about their final destiny, as do college graduates, Democrats, Hispanics, Jews and those with no religious preference, those with income over \$75,000 and those who do not indicate that they are born again.

Do cultural subgroups also vary

as to how often they wonder how to add meaning and purpose to their life? Democrats are more concerned about finding purpose than Republicans, but less concerned about the security of their eternal destination. Nearly half of African Americans think daily about how to have purpose and meaning. Hispanics think about this much less; in fact, one in three said they never think about this.

Income has a large impact on how often Americans wonder about adding meaning and purpose. More than 40 percent of the poorer portion of our culture (income less than \$25,000) think about adding purpose to their life every day, compared to 32 percent of middle income persons (\$25,000 to \$75,000), and only 25 percent of the affluent culture (more than \$75,000). With affluence comes less worry about purpose and meaning.

Presenting the gospel is about telling good news, and that news includes that Christ gives both "meaning and purpose" to life now—and "heaven" for eternity. Both of these matter, but evangelism starts as we present the gospel at a person's point of need—and our efforts should reflect that.

It appears that people are asking different questions and we should love them enough to answer their questions and not just give our presentations.

Ed Stetzer is senior director of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's Center for Missional Research

Horse track chaplains say there's no 'normal' day

Continued from page 1

Farley said as many as 200 backside workers visit the center each day. Tables set up outside the center offer clothing, toiletries and other donated items. Two additional rooms beside the center serve as storage.

Through the small room, Pope coordinates English and Spanish Bible studies, a weekly meal—served in shifts—and recreational activities, including movie night.

"These are good people," said Pope, a Mission Service Corps missionary, who has generated her own support to serve at Turfway since 2003. "I think we are a real New Testament church. We are diverse, multicultural and bilingual."

There is no such thing as a "normal" day in racetrack ministry, according to Pope and Farley. "We're not on a schedule like a church," Pope said.

"You have to be there whenever they need you and make yourself available," Farley said.

"You go to the jail, the hospital, the tack room," Boehm added.

A daily task for chaplains and volunteers is transporting workers to medical appointments, shopping and other errands. Because of the high risk of injury among horsemen and women, Farley visits the hospital weekly.

Fighting depression, addictions

Counseling—formal and informal—is a key responsibility for chaplains. Although he makes scheduled appointments with some workers, Farley said most counseling happens spontaneously as he meets workers going about their daily tasks.

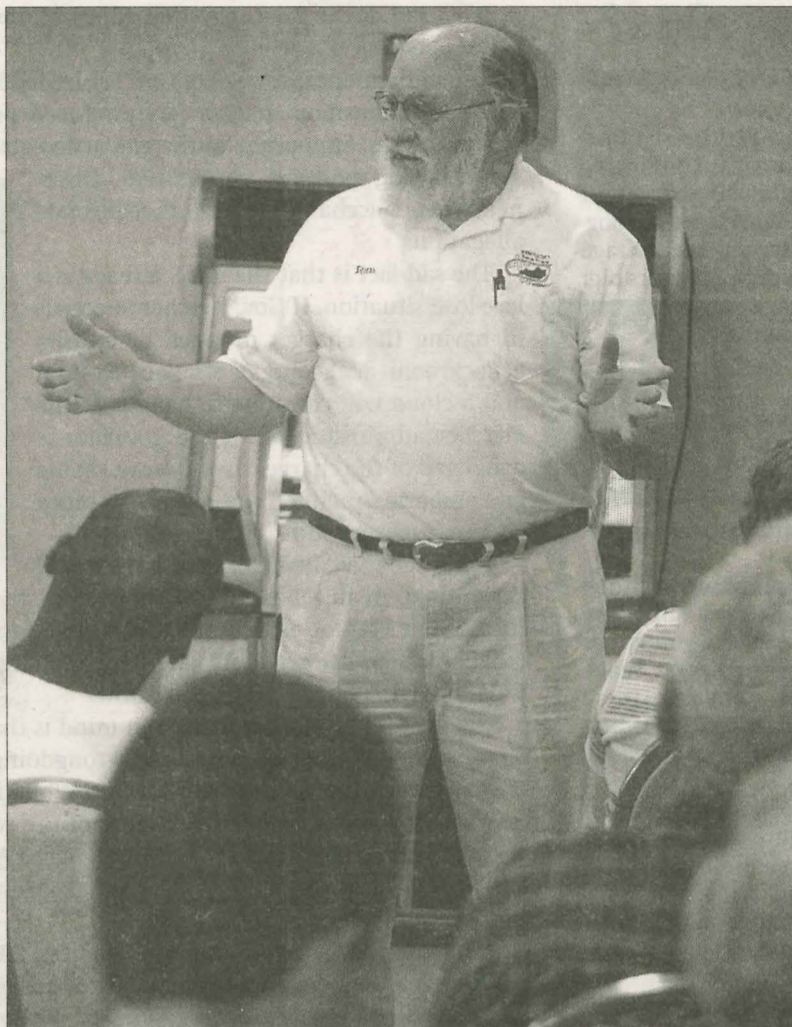
"There's a lot of sadness and depression," Boehm said. "Most of them are a long way from home."

Alcohol, gambling and drugs are major struggles among backside workers, Farley said. "Giving them a spiritual background, a spiritual atmosphere," is part of building positive, trusting relationships, he said.

"They need to be able to see there's something more than alcohol and drugs," he added. "We let them see that somebody cares."

The greatest needs among track workers are found on the backside, but Farley and Boehm are chaplains to "frontside" employees, too, and visit them daily.

"I've seen Ken go down an entire row of offices and poke his head in



TALKING ABOUT JONAH Chaplain Tom Farley shares the story of the rebellious prophet Jonah with his congregation during a recent Monday evening chapel service at Turfway Park. Farley has been a racetrack chaplain for 10 years. This year, he also serves at Riverdowns in nearby Cincinnati. (Photos by Dannah Prather)

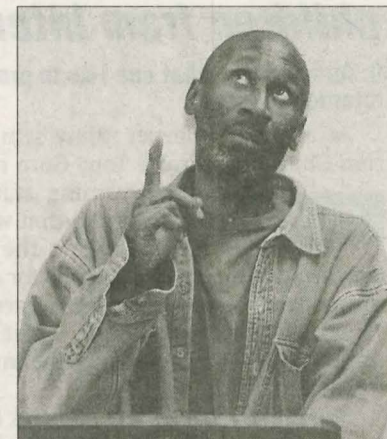
the door just to ask, 'Are you having a good day today?'" said Julie Koenig Loignon, director of communications for Churchill Downs Inc.

When the answer is, "No, not really," she said, Boehm takes time to listen.

Loignon recalled one day when Boehm responded to one of her concerns. "He said, 'Let's just take five minutes and pray for that.' ... I feel so blessed that he's here."



NEVERENDING JOB Mission Service Corps missionary Pat Pope spends hours sorting clothing donations for trackside workers. Horsemen and women live in cramped quarters and travel light. After wintering in Florida, many come to Kentucky without warm clothing or shoes. Pope said the ministry at Turfway always need blue jeans.



RHYTHMIC THOUGHTS Tyrone Miller performs a selection of his "def poetry" during the trackside chapel service. A lifelong horseman whose father was a trainer, Miller began his rhythmic Christian poetry about three years ago.

and prayer time. No matter what a jockey's religious background, Farley said, the riders appreciate prayers for their safety.

Like most pastors, chaplains spend part of their day preparing for the weekly worship service or for other services. In one year, Boehm officiated 12 weddings, 31 funerals and 17 baptisms.

Part of Farley's day is spent coordinating and encouraging a special team of 11 volunteer "counselors." These are volunteers who have spent hours at the track "shadowing" Farley as he works. "It's kind of a one-on-one thing to let them see if they want to do that," he said.

After a period of training and observation, he "certifies" them as volunteer counselors. This core team operates the community center, provides transportation services and responds to emergencies, such as accompanying a worker to the hospital.

"They are compassionate people showing the love of Christ," Farley said.

Some days end with a worship service and a fellowship meal, but the unpredictable nature of life on the track keeps chaplains and volunteers flexible.

"It's a city unto itself," Boehm said.

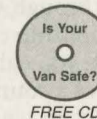
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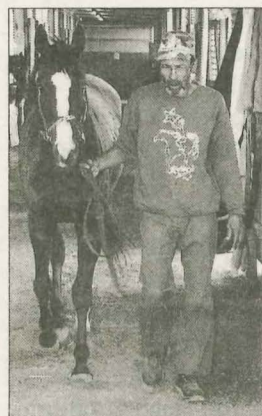
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Kentucky's thoroughbred track ministries

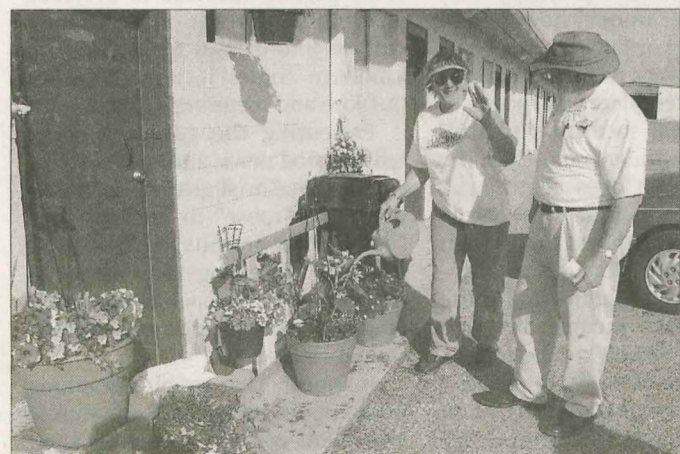
■ **Turfway, Northern Kentucky:** Tom Farley (859) 525-7533.

■ **Keeneland, Lexington:** Mike Powers (800) 456-3412.

■ **Churchill Downs, Louisville:** Ken Boehm (502) 636-4476.

■ **Ellis Park, Henderson:** Last week's story on Kentucky racetrack identified Steve Guarneros as volunteer chaplain at Ellis Park in Henderson. Guarneros now is full-time chaplain for Chicago's Arlington Park Racetrack.

Chaplains serving at other Kentucky tracks will rotate serving at Ellis Park until a new chaplain is appointed. For more information about the ministry, contact Kentucky Race Track Chaplaincy President Louis Rowe at (859) 727-1919.



SPRUCING UP THE BACKSIDE Janice Addy waters flowers outside her room at Turfway Park while visiting with Chaplain Tom Farley. Addy's love for gardening is rubbing off on some of her fellow workers. She plans to plant a vegetable garden beside the living quarters this summer.

A plan for generosity

Prayerful prioritizing can make giving more satisfying

Like most people, you are bombarded with solicitations by telemarketers calling at the dinner hour, fund-raisers surveying the neighborhood and organizations campaigning through the mail. With so many appeals, even the most generous among us get tired and confused. There is a way to revive the joy found in helping others.

Prayerfully consider your values. What are the principles in which you most strongly believe? Consider the experiences, people, causes and organizations that matter the most to you.

Prayerfully concentrate your efforts. From your list of values and the organizations and causes that mean the most to you, through which ones can you make the greatest difference?

Prayerfully prepare a personal plan. Decide how much money you can devote to charitable organizations. Do not let limited resources intimidate you. No one is excluded from making worthy gifts.

Prayerfully look before you leap. Be as prudent in your evaluation of a charitable organization as you would be with any other

investment decision. If necessary, visit the site. Do whatever it takes to understand and feel comfortable in which you plan to invest.

It would be my hope your church, association and one or more causes of our larger Baptist family would be among those charitable organizations you determined were making the greatest differences in the world. My wife and I have concentrated our giving among our church, association and the various missionary, educational and benevolent causes of our larger Baptist family. We followed the four-step plan outlined above and came to the conclusion we

could make the greatest impact by giving to and through these causes.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6 and Galatians 6:7-9 Paul reminds us of the law of sowing and reaping. In 2 Corinthians 9:7 he instructs us about giving not out of impulse, but after careful and prayerful reflection. Paul closes in 2 Corinthians 9:15 by exclaiming his gratitude to God for God's indescribable gift. Let us assist you in your plan for generosity.

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



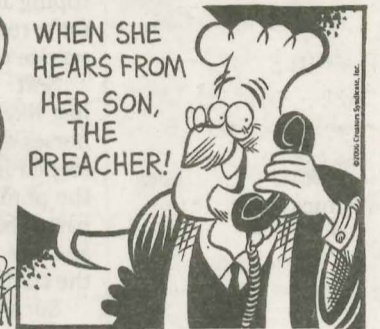
Barry Allen

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 Biblical river
- 6 Longest book in the Bible
- 11 Female friends, Fr.
- 12 "There is death in the ____" (2 Kings 4:40)
- 13 Where those who are alive will meet the Lord when He comes again (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
- 14 "He esteemeth ____ as straw" (Job 41:27)
- 15 "She ... hid them with the ____ of flax" (Joshua 2:6)
- 16 Ceremonial form of prayer
- 19 Asian tree
- 20 When you'll get there, more or less, abbr.
- 22 John the Baptist's was made of camel hair (Matthew 3:4)
- 25 What a baby needs changed
- 28 Hesitant syllable
- 29 Jonathan shot this to warn David not to return to Saul's house
- 32 Route, abbr.
- 33 Joseph's brothers had these searched to find his silver cup
- 36 The eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet
- 37 Exclamation of surprise and triumph
- 38 God sent Jonah to warn this city
- 40 The wise men
- 41 Put off till a later time
- 42 Exist
- 43 Article that precedes a vowel

1	2	3	4	5		6	7		8	9	10
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16				17	18		19		20	21	
			22			23		24			
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37				38				39			
40						41				42	
43						44				45	
			46	47					48		
49								50			

- 44 Firstborn son of Isaac and Rebecca
- 45 Chum
- 46 Severely
- 49 Bitter water was turned to this at Marah
- 50 Abraham's father

- 17 Told by Elisha to wash himself seven times in the River Jordan
- 18 Yelp
- 21 Albert's nickname
- 23 One of the Spirit's fruit, a lowly spirit
- 24 Modern-day country where Noah's Ark is rumored to be
- 26 Spinning toy
- 27 Son of Kishi (1 Chronicles 6:44)
- 30 Cheer
- 31 Ezekiel saw this in his visions
- 32 Sixth book of the New Testament
- 34 Apple drink
- 35 Psalm word
- 39 Burial chamber
- 42 "Valley of ____" (Psalms 84:6)
- 46 Masculine pronoun
- 47 Preposition indicating location
- 48 King James Version of you earth

Down

- 1 Man charged to keep Paul and Silas safe in prison (Acts 16:23)
- 2 Sixth king of Israel (1 Kings 16:16)
- 3 Violent public disturbance
- 4 Small silver coin of ancient Rome
- 5 Reposition used in a simile
- 6 "We are the clay, and thou our ____" (Isaiah 64:8)
- 7 "The Lord ... purposed it to ____ the pride" (Isaiah 23:9)
- 8 "Cast alive into a ____ of fire" (Revelation 19:20)
- 9 How God first watered the earth
- 10 Twelfth-grader, abbr.
- 12 Addendum at the end of the letter, abbr.

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10						
A	R	O	N		W	E	A	V	E	R	S				
B	D		O		D	D		T	A	R					
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May is National Foster Care Month

Become a foster parent and change the world...one kid at a time.



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- North and Metro 800-493-2303
- North Eastern 866-259-9883
- South Central 800-952-3724
- Southern 800-360-6604
- Western 877-992-5242



Murray State students giddyap to cowboy church

"If you hit them with a Bible, they're liable to hit you back."

Cowboy church pastor
Joe Ed Smith

By **Connie Davis Bushey**
Tennessee Baptist & Reflector

Puryear, Tenn.—The warm spring air at the ranch had a lazy feel.

Occasionally a pickup truck would drive up and people would disembark.

Young people wearing cowboy boots, jeans and green John Deere T-shirts milled around. Hounds barked and howled. A cat circled people's feet.

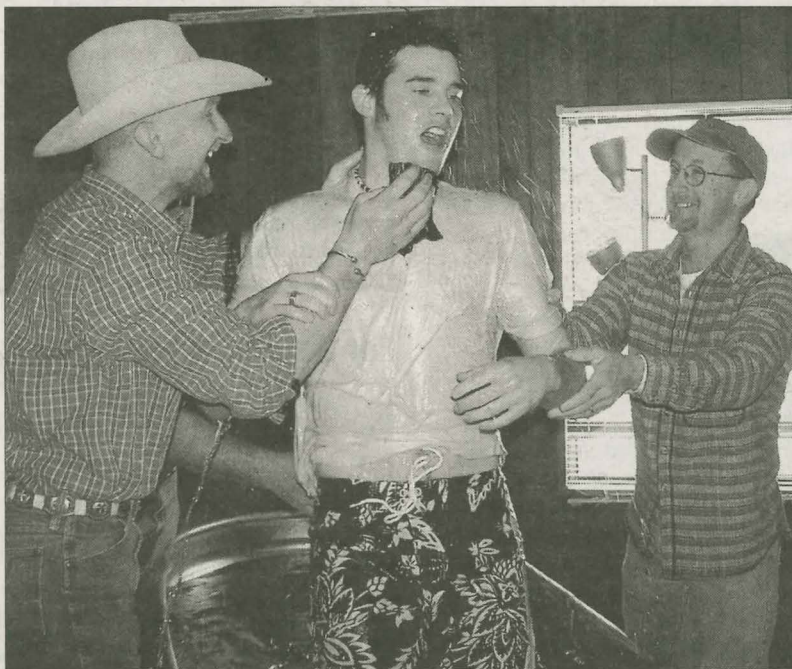
At 7 p.m. people moved into the roping arena, but they weren't there for a rodeo event. Instead a church service was about to begin.

Soft dirt cushioned footsteps just like it cushioned the hooves of horses during the day. Evening light seeped in the sides of the arena. As the praise music died away and the pastor began to speak, birds flew in and out. Horses banged the sides of the stalls as they moved around.

Such was the scene at the weekly Tuesday night service at Stateline Cowboy Church. Church planter Joe Ed Smith is pastor of the congregation in Puryear, Tenn., about five miles from the Kentucky-Tennessee state line, due south of Murray.

The 80 or so people who gather there are mostly students of Murray State University. The church draws agricultural students, equestrians and members of the rodeo team, which numbers about 50. Farmers and ranchers from the area also attend. Others who attend might appreciate the relaxed atmosphere. People come from work without changing out of their work clothes.

Most of the congregation can relate to Smith, who was a rodeo cowboy for 11 years. While on Mur-



HORSE TROUGH BAPTISM Trey Windhorst (center), a student at Murray State University, is baptized in a horse trough by Joe Ed Smith (left), pastor of Stateline Cowboy Church in Puryear, Tenn. Windhorst is a new Christian and a new member of the church. (Tennessee Baptist & Reflector photo by Jim Twilbeck)

ray State's rodeo team, he was the ninth best bull rider in national collegiate ranks.

Smith said God led him to start the church. He knows the "cowboy life," he explained. He previously served five years at a nearby church after someone heard him preach at a horse camp at the Land Between the Lakes State Park. He also breaks horses and has led tours on horseback on a hunting farm.

He had heard of cowboy churches in Oklahoma and Texas, but not in Tennessee. He contacted the Southern Baptist North American Mis-

sion Board and soon was starting Stateline.

Making cowboys comfortable

Cowboys are "self reliant" sorts who give all of themselves to whatever they do, Smith said. Many don't attend church because don't feel comfortable in traditional churches, he explained, adding that their culture is distinct.

Relationships are a prerequisite with cowboys before witnessing about God, he noted.

"If you hit them with a Bible, they're liable to hit you back."

They are wonderful people to pastor, he added.

Michael Dick, a student at Murray State, is responsible for much of the growth of the church, Smith said. Eleven people have made professions of faith since it started meeting in 2005.

Dick, a member of the rodeo team, met Smith because he is a volunteer coach. Smith and Coach J.D. Van Hooser were Murray State rodeo team members together.

Dick said all last year he "really felt called" to lead a Bible study on campus. He began last fall, getting the word out by hanging announcements in barns on campus. The weekly study usually draws about eight students, Dick said. They meet at the rodeo barn or his house.

Van Hooser said the cowboy church connects with several of the young men he coaches.

Stateline church meets Tuesday evenings because most rodeos and horse shows are held on weekends.

Trey Windhorst, a Murray State rodeo team member from Louisville, was baptized into the church as a new Christian a few months ago. He said he never attended church before attending the cowboy church.

"I've built up a relationship with Christ and it's really helped me a lot," Windhorst said. Being a part of the cowboy church is "kind of like home," he explained.

His parents attended the special baptism service, held on a Sunday morning. The church they borrowed didn't have a baptistry, so Windhorst was baptized in a horse trough.

Smith said it seemed the proper thing to do.

Meet some of the class of 2006, part 8

Oneida student learned to keep her head up regardless of circumstances

This is the last in a series of articles about the class of 2006. Much of the information you have read in the past two months has come from essays the seniors wrote. I hope you have enjoyed reading these stories and knowing that our friends have helped make a profound impact on many of our students. Some of the students I have written about have been here several years; others for one or two. Some students have made radical changes in their attitudes, grades, social skills and levels of maturity. Others could have used another year or two at Oneida.

By the time you read this, we already will have had graduation and the senior class will have gone their different ways. We will not soon forget them and the challenges and joys they brought into our lives.

You can understand that many times I cannot give a lot of personal details about the backgrounds of some of our students. I am going to say a little more about this young lady than I normally do, only to illustrate just how pitiful some of their life stories are. "Hazel" (not her real name) came to us two years ago as she was entering her junior year of high school. She was under the care of her grandparents, as are many of the young people who come to Oneida. Hazel appeared to be a sad young lady who I believe was thoroughly confused by many of the tragedies she had encountered in her young life. Her parents not only divorced, leaving a huge sense of emptiness in her life, but after the divorce, neither of her parents had a great deal of time for her. She was simply a sad and discouraged young lady. But

she has been a wonderful girl for us to work with. She is never disrespectful, always does what she is asked to do, is involved in athletics and has done well academically. Here is part of what she wrote in her essay:

"Before enrolling at Oneida, I had moved from Ohio to Florida and had just begun adjusting to my new school and new friends. That's what made it so difficult to leave home. ... My first impressions of Oneida were, 'What in the world is a boarding school doing out in the middle of nowhere?' and 'What am I supposed to do?' I've always lived in the city or at least right outside of the city, and being at Oneida was going to be very different for me.

"While at Oneida I made the A honor roll for the first time. I had never really put forth the effort to make the honor roll before. ... I believe the class size at Oneida made the difference. At my old school, we had 30-35 students in each class. So when I came to Oneida and had only half that number in my classes, it made it easier to ask questions when I didn't understand something.

"There have been a lot of changes in my life during the two years I've been at Oneida. My attitude has improved, and I believe I've grown socially, mentally, physically and spiritually. I've learned that there will always be people or things that you don't like. ... But you have to learn to make the best out of life. The most important thing I have learned at Oneida is to have a positive attitude about life and you always need to keep your head up, no matter what life throws at you."

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



W.F. Underwood

Graduation celebration

Four graduates receive highest student awards

The May 5 graduation at Binghamtown Baptist Church celebrated God's faithfulness and demonstrated the faithfulness of God's people. Two students received the highest awards presented to a graduating student while two others were recognized for academic achievement.

The Trustee's Award, recognizing outstanding leadership in a local church ministry, was presented to Steve Cable, pastor of Sand Run Baptist Church in Hebron. Steve has added up the miles commuting from this Northern Kentucky church. In a statement of his ministry philosophy, Steve wrote, "Leadership is given to faithful, available, teachable people." He's that kind of pastor. As he looks to the future, Steve is committed to lead the church "to be open to God's movement and adjust to whatever the situation demands as long as it is true to God's Word and honors the Lord."

The President's Award recognizes "outstanding leadership in all areas of campus life, 3.0 GPA, leader among the student body and active in church life." The faculty and staff chose student body

president Robert Sexton from Lincoln County. Robert was faithful to help new students move into campus housing. Robert and Sylvia were one of two husband and wife teams receiving bachelor of arts degrees. This couple worked in Kelly Hall and served at Trinity Baptist Church in Middlesboro. Robert will pursue a master's degree in counseling, and Sylvia will complete certification in teacher education, both at Campbellsville University.

Eleven students graduated with academic honors, achieving a 3.5 grade point average or above. The Richard Mitchell Moore Memorial Award for highest academic achievement went to Ohio student Jim Colley. The Joy S. Parker Memorial Award for highest academic achievement by a female went to Tracy Marcus from Las Vegas.

Trustees granted 10 associate of arts degrees, six of these to the wives of ministers and students. This might be a record and represents the results of the Christian service degree established in 2001 with an intentional focus on equipping spouses.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Technology allowing Christian musicians to connect with masses

By Beau Black
Religion News Service

Nashville (RNS)—Not long ago, illegal downloads flattened CD sales and sent the music industry into a panic. But that seems forgotten now, or nearly so, as Christian labels and artists and their mainstream counterparts are looking to technology to revolutionize how they reach listeners.

Technology, once decried as the music business's executioner, now is seen by many as its salvation.

This wave of "new media" technology, including Apple's iTunes Music Store and the Web site MySpace, enables artists to find fans and connect with them immediately.

It's also creating opportunities for Christian record companies—particularly battered by the downturn in the music industry—to target consumers.

And for Christians artists who make music for the masses and want to find a broader audience, the technological revolution is freeing their music from what some call the "Christian music ghetto."

Singer-songwriter Derek Webb, formerly with the band Caedmon's Call, has been a hit on iTunes. He said the new technology is "the shot in the arm that the flailing music industry needs right now."

"The industry is being crushed under the weight of the 'old law'—the old way of making and distributing music," he said. "But we know from sales of iPods and downloads that there are more people paying attention to music now than ever before."

Using iTunes, listeners can download individual songs for just 99 cents or buy entire albums without ever entering a music store. Those songs then can be transferred to iPods or burned onto a CD.

Virtual online community

MySpace is a virtual online "networking" community that allows users to set up a personal page, interact with other MySpace members and compile a list of online MySpace "friends." Bands set up their own MySpace pages and enlist their "friends" to promote album releases and concerts.

"A lot of what we're trying to do is build relationships with consumers," says Leisa Byars, a marketing expert at the EMI Christian Music Group. "Consumers in that 18-25 bracket are using technology to create relationships with people all over the world."

It's no secret that portable digital music players are flying off shelves: Apple sold 14 million iPods in the last quarter of 2005, and downloaded singles outsold CDs for the first time in December—most of them sold on iTunes.

Webb has become a favorite on iTunes, having contributed an "iTunes Exclusive" acoustic set of his songs, several podcasts (radio-style broadcasts of interviews or



TECH SAVY Singer-songwriter Derek Webb has helped push the popularity of Christian music on iTunes by recommending his favorites to users unfamiliar with the genre. (RNS photo courtesy of INO Records)

music made available online) and a celebrity playlist. Even the relatively low-tech podcasts can be effective marketing tools.

Celebrity playlists allow fans to see what their favorite artists listen to, Webb said, at no cost to the artist. "I can sit down with someone (virtually) and say, 'Here are 16 songs you have to get.' It was really fun."

The David Crowder Band, which is on the EMI label, has proven a master of connecting, allowing fans to watch the recording of its latest CD through a webcam setup.

Personalized music

Denise George, EMI-CMG's director of artist development, said technologies like satellite radio and iPods have allowed listeners to personalize their music experience, and labels are now learning to "meet consumers the way we want to experience music."

One way is to allow customers to hear music before they buy. "It used to be that if it was their favorite artist, they'd buy it," says Byars. Not anymore, particularly when listeners can sample songs on iTunes, MySpace or artists' Web sites.

Some Christian musicians are using new media to reach new audiences. On a recent Friday night in Dallas' Deep Ellum club district, the members of independent band Green River Ordinance leapt onto the stage at Club Clearview and ripped through their set to a room buzzing with fans. But the real story wasn't on the stage or in the audience—it's on the audience's home computers.

Like a growing number of independent acts, Green River Ordinance has taken full advantage of MySpace, building its list of "friends" to more than 18,000. That list allows the band to spread the word quickly about concerts and CD releases—or to mobilize fans as it did for a radio station's online contest to open for Bon Jovi. The winner, of course, was Green River Ordinance.

"I can imagine a time," Webb said, "when an artist will make a record and release it completely online—no packaging, manufacturing, distribution, storage—none of that."

The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church. Reggie McNeal. Jossey-Bass, 2003. 149 pages. \$23.95. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

"The current church culture in North America is on life support. It is living off the work, money and energy of previous generations from a previous world order. The plug will be pulled either when the money runs out ... or when the remaining three-fourths of a generation who are institutional loyalists die off or both."

With this stark and agonizingly true observation, Reggie McNeal challenges church folk to wake up and take a look at the world outside the church and the world inside the church. The gap will give any concerned, discerning person pause. Non-Christian people are not flocking to our buildings. They are not clamoring to participate in our special events. They are not hostile to the church; they just see it as irrelevant to their spiritual quest. So how do we reach them?

McNeal is convinced that most of us in the church have slept, or are sleeping, through a huge shift in the way people, in Western culture at least, view the world and what they value. If we are going to reach people with the good news made public in the person of Jesus Christ, we must face up to six new realities: the collapse of church culture, the shift from church growth to Kingdom growth, the new reformation in ministry where God's people are released to be the presence of Christ, a return to spiritual formation as the focus of Christian education, the shift from planning to preparation, and the rise of apostolic leadership.

McNeal writes with the same passion that is evident when he speaks. His observations are painful, but mostly on target. This book would be a great kick in the pants for church leaders who have the courage and openness to engage its challenge. Jim Holladay

American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation. Jon Meacham. Random House, 2006. 398 pages. \$23.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

Without question, this is the best book on religion in America I have read in years.

Jon Meacham is a first-class writer and historian and my favorite commentator on American politics and religion. As managing editor of Newsweek magazine, he repeatedly has directed his magazine to consider the place of religion in American life.

Meacham shows without question that religion, and in particular Christianity, always has been at the center of American life. He does, however, state clearly that America is not, and never was, a Christian nation, but rather a nation of Christians. His book is a testament to the importance of the difference between the two descriptions and the importance of maintaining the difference.

As you read his account of the early discussion of religion in politics and public life, you will think he is picking up the discussion from the front page of today's

newspapers.

Meacham shows that the genius of the American system is that we always have found a way to allow religion to play a part in our decisions. The American gospel is the story of how the American citizenry has rejected moving religion to the extremes of complete exclusion or total obedience. History teaches us that the center holds, and in that we have hope for the future. To be true to the founders' intentions, we always will be working out the place of religion in public life for a new generation.

Following the narrative text of the book are appendices of primary documents and more than 100 pages of source notes. I like the way Meacham's work serves both as a popular and scholarly treatment of the subject matter.

Do not miss reading this book. Wayne Hager

Bonhoeffer Speaks Today: Following Jesus at All Costs. Mark Devine. Broadman & Holman, 2005. 178 pages. \$19.99. ♦♦♦

As one whose life direction was changed by reading "The Cost of Discipleship," by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and whose view of the church and its role in the world has been shaped by other writings of Bonhoeffer, such as "The Communion of Saints," "Life Together" and "Christ the Center," I am interested in what others who have been influenced by him have to say. I am especially intrigued when I find a book written by a Southern Baptist professor, published by the Southern Baptist publishing house.

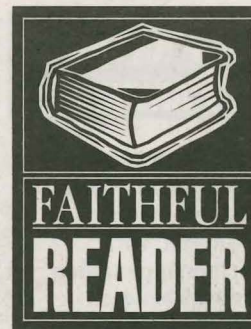
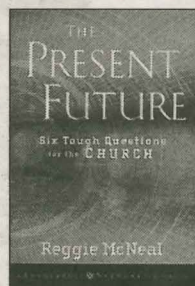
Mark Devine, who teaches Christian theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes a thoroughly readable introduction to the life and thought of Bonhoeffer that is geared toward those who may have heard of him, but have little, if any of his works. In five brief chapters, he introduces five key themes in Bonhoeffer's writings.

I applaud his effort to try to distill Bonhoeffer's life and thought into a succinct, readable format. Bonhoeffer was a complex individual, who held many influences in creative tension, and whose own theological exploration was cut short at age 39 by Hitler. Any attempt to extract the essence of his thinking will be fraught with difficulty. It is easy to succumb to the danger to finish Bonhoeffer's unfinished sentences.

Devine mostly gets it right. He is at his best when he is summarizing

Bonhoeffer's own words and writings. He is on shakier ground when he tries to show their relevance for today's evangelical community. At times it is hard to distinguish what Bonhoeffer said from what Devine wants him to say. He also misses the complexity of Bonhoeffer by trying to make him a doting disciple of Barth.

Despite its weaknesses, "Bonhoeffer Speaks Today" is a good introduction to Baptists of a man whose vision of the Christian life has much to offer the church in a postmodern world. Jim Holladay



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; and Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: whager@trifoliant.net; lyndonpastor@aol.com.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following missionaries and volunteers connected with partnership mission projects between Kentucky Baptists and Baptists in Brazil, Poland, New England and the International Baptist Convention in Europe:

■ A volunteer team is doing survey work and prayerwalking in Slovenia through May 21. They are working with Southern Baptist international missionaries Dwayne and Missy Doyle.

■ A Kentucky Baptist collegiate team is leading revival and evangelism projects in Berlin, Germany, through May 23.

■ A team from Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington is helping lead a ministry retreat in Dusseldorf, Germany, through May 23.

■ A team from Little River Baptist Association will lead an evangelism project in Teresina, Brazil, June 5-15.

■ Pray for more volunteers to serve on Brazil mission teams this summer. For more information, call the Kentucky Baptist Convention partnership missions office at (502) 489-3529 or toll-free at (866) 489-3529.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BENTON**—Sand Hill Church recently called **Max Anderson** as pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church ordained minister of recreation **Mark Brockman** to the gospel ministry April 30.

■ **DAWSON SPRINGS**—Dunn Church recently called **Ricky Winstead** as interim pastor.

■ **DRY RIDGE**—Dry Ridge Church recently called **Joe Kitchens** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Island Church.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Farndale Church will celebrate its 25th anniversary May 21 with a homecoming. **Malcolm Lunsford** will be the guest speaker. For more information, call (502) 875-7035.

■ **FRANKLIN**—**Bob Sutton**, pastor of First Church, recently announced his retirement.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—Nolynn Church will honor Pastor **George Smith** on the 50th anniversary of his ordination May 21. A drop-in reception will be held from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Jane Thomas Kent**, a longtime Kentucky Baptist missions leader, died April 30. She was 88. Kent, a graduate of Georgetown College, served 24 years as office manager and comptroller of the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville. She was a longtime member of Crescent Hill Church where she served as a deacon, Sunday school teacher and Woman's Missionary Union leader. She also served as Women on Mission director for Long Run Association. Her funeral service was held May 4 at Crescent Hill Church. Memorial gifts may be made to Georgetown College or Crescent Hill Church.

East Audubon Church recently called **Ron Hennig** as pastor.

Lyle Edwards recently resigned as associate pastor for students at Highland Church to attend Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. **Joe Phelps** is pastor.

Don Zuberer, a former Kentucky pastor, died May 9. He was 73. Zuberer, minister to senior adults at First Church of Clarksville, Tenn., previously was pastor of Parkland Church in Louisville, Yellow Creek Church in Owensboro, First Church of Russellville and Valley Station Church

Spotlight on ...

Bagdad



Indian Fork Church will celebrate its bicentennial June 10-11. Saturday activities will include a 4:30 p.m. picnic followed by a service that will include testimonies from former pastors and music and an ice cream social. A Sunday worship service at 10 a.m., will be followed by a catered lunch. For reservations, call **Lynette Allen** at (502) 747-5039. **Micah Childs** is pastor.

in Louisville. He was a graduate of Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Lexington Theological Seminary. Zuberer is survived by his wife, Carol, three adult children and nine grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held May 13 in Louisville.

■ **MORGANTOWN**—Twenty-one youth and adults from five churches in Gasper River Association spent spring break working with New Hope Church in McComb, Miss., in response to Hurricane Katrina-related needs. Volunteers helped repair the church building, repair and clean New Hope Care Center and repair two homes owned by the church.

■ **NICHOLASVILLE**—Crosswoods Church recently called **Steve Bruce** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Stamping Ground Church.

■ **PIKEVILLE**—Kimper Mission will hold revival services May 22-26 with **Bob Finch** as evangelist. **Shannon Bryant** is pastor.

■ **SEDALIA**—Lynnville Church will hold revival services May 22-25, 7 p.m., with **Chad Frizzell**, pastor of New Vision Church in Mayfield, as evangelist. **William Strong** is pastor.

■ **STEELE**—Feds Creek Church will hold revival services May 21-24 with **Harry Hargis** as evangelist. **Roy Thompson Jr.** is pastor.

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

May

- 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.

June

- 3 Church Weekday Education Seminar, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 10-17 Kentucky Changers, Russellville.

12-16 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.

16-17 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.

18-25 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Tour, University of the Cumberlands, Williamsburg.

19-23 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.

23-24 Acteens Splash, Jonathan Creek.

23-24 Girls in Action Overnight, Jonathan Creek.

23-24 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.

23-24 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creek.

24 Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Luncheon, Elizabethtown.

24-July 1 Kentucky Changers, Lawrenceburg.

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

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Cemetery lot (Resthaven, Louisville). Beautiful bronze section 8, lot 859, site 6. \$1,400. (859) 266-6830.

FOR SALE: "Liquid" brand ice cream/soda fountain. Manufactured around 1949; all stainless steel; all original parts. Needs new compressor, possibly other repairs. Sold "as is." Buyer responsible for all shipping costs and logistics. \$2,500 or best offer. Please call (502) 897-4397.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor. Conservative, traditional Southern Baptist church. Resumés: Hedgeville Baptist, PO Box 626, Danville, KY 40423.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader. Send resumé to: Highland Park First Baptist Church, 7321 Billtown Road, Louisville, KY 40299. Phone: (502) 231-3917.

SEEKING: Full-time organist/pianist with strong accompanying skills. Mail resumé to: Melbourne Heights Baptist Church, 3728 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40220. For more information, call the church: (502) 454-4681.

SEEKING: Full-time staff minister to work with children and recreation ministries for Second Baptist Church of Greenville. This position will require skills in recruiting, training and organizing volunteers. Send letter of interest and resumé to: Search Committee, Second Baptist Church, PO Box 390, Greenville, KY 42345.

SEEKING: Old Testament professor (adjunct). Newburgh Theological Seminary. Accredited doctorate required. Mail resumé to Dr. Glenn Mollette, president, Newburgh Theological Seminary, Newburgh College, PO Box 1238, 8988 Ruffian Lane, Newburgh, IN 47629.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth and recreation. Applicant must be spiritually mature, enthusiastic and creative. Send resumés to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Personnel Committee; or e-mail to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resumés will be received through June 5. Questions: call (502) 239-0316. Linda Barnes Popham, pastor.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister (20 hours per week). First Baptist Church (predominant affiliation: CBF). Mail resumé to church: 254 South Buckman St., Shepherdsville, KY 40165, Attn: David Wells; or call the church office, (502) 955-7372, for more information.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and education for Fern Creek Baptist Church. Applicant must be an excellent and experienced musician, worship leader and educator and must exemplify strong spiritual maturity. Send resumés to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Personnel Committee; or e-mail to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resumés will be received through June 5. Questions: call (502) 239-0316. Linda Barnes Popham, pastor.

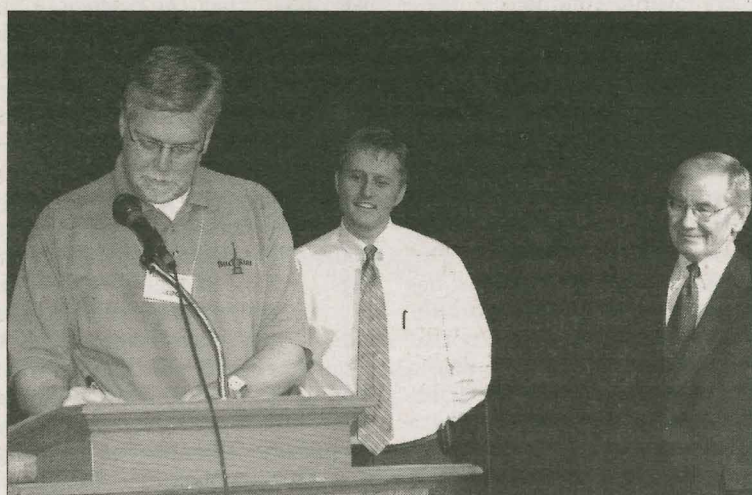
SEEKING: Severns Valley Association of Baptists is seeking God's man to serve as full-time director of missions for our 49 churches. We have two Korean churches and are involved with three other associations in starting a Hispanic ministry in this area. Please submit resumés and a cover letter by May 31 to: Director of Missions Search Committee, Severns Valley Association of Baptists, PO Box 541, Elizabethtown, KY 42702.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music in Stanford, Ky., area. For job description or more information, call (606) 365-2116.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director for Green Acres Baptist Church. Must be committed to Christ, energetic, willing to build group and have balanced approach to youth ministry. Call (502) 964-8165.

SEEKING: Church pianist for Hurstbourne Baptist Church. Skills required include accompanying, improvisation and sight reading for blended worship style. Contact: Chris Kihn, minister of worship and music, 8800 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40222; or (502) 426-2444.

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



MINISTRY PARTNERS Hershael York (left), pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, signs a partnering church covenant with Lancaster Baptist Church while Lancaster Pastor Zack Terry (center) and Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Bill Mackey observe. The covenant, signed May 9 during the KBC Mission Board meeting at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, is part of the KBC's five-year Kentucky Baptists Connect emphasis. (KBC photo)

Recycled cell phones connect kids to missions

Tupelo, Miss. (BP)—How do you get kids involved in missions? The answer came to Heywood Washburn in an unusual place: 35,000 feet above the Earth's surface.

"I was on an airplane flight thumbing through a magazine when I saw an ad for a company that pays cash to recycle old cell phones," the 75-year-old retiree recalled.

It was an idea that may help rank Washburn's church, Calvary Baptist, among 2005's top 100 givers to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, a designation they've held several years.

Washburn volunteers with the children's ministry at Calvary, located in Tupelo, Miss. As a Royal Ambassadors leader, he was hunting for a project to help teach Calvary's youth about missions and the importance of giving.

"If we don't keep missions on the forefront," Washburn said, "it's too easy to spend money on ourselves."

Washburn worked with AmericanCellPhoneDrive.org, the organization he had read about during his flight, to help the children set up a cell phone drive.

Two months and 75 phones later, the children packaged up their salvaged loot and sent it off.

When the check came back, Washburn wanted the church to know the kids had been successful and to inspire the adults to follow their lead. He arranged for two of the 100-plus children involved to present the money, a total of \$217.75, during Sunday services.

"The kids called it a challenge to the church," Washburn said—a way to kick off Calvary's giving to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. The church set a goal of \$75,000.

"To me, it's important that the children understand the world doesn't revolve around them," Vicki Currie, a mother of five and Girls in Action leader, said. "I try to teach from the perspective, 'What can you do to make a difference?'"

'... in Jesus' name'

Three little words generate debate on public prayer, religious diversity

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—Retired Army Chaplain David Peterson models how he thinks sensitive Christians should pray in public.

"I pray in Jesus' name but I always give a little introduction, just two or three seconds: 'I'm going to pray according to my tradition and I encourage you to pray according to your tradition,'" said Peterson, a retired colonel who coordinates chaplain ministries for the Presbyterian Church in America.

"I think it's important to show that not everybody is Christian and we want to show respect."

Peterson is responding to a growing conflict between principles of tolerance and free speech. The issue has figured most prominently in new guidelines directing U.S. military chaplains. But it's also playing out at city council meetings, civic group banquets and even Boy Scout gatherings.

The conflict has centered on evangelical Christians following their tradition of praying "in Jesus' name."

Nationwide legal disputes reveal that some are offended by prayers that refer to Christ at the expense of other—or no—religious beliefs.

Politeness or restricted speech?

In response, some Christians, like Peterson, try to explain themselves before praying. Others use more generic and inclusive names to avoid creating offense.

"I think everybody pre-censors today," said John Whitehead, president of the Rutherford Institute, a Virginia-based civil liberties organization. "We have a politically correct, obsessed society. The prevailing rule of the day is don't offend anybody."

He said instances in which people's prayers have been altered for the sake of tolerance have grown "worse and worse" in the last decade.

But Rabbi Steve Gutow, executive director of the New York-based Jewish Council for Public Affairs, welcomes the "general presumption"



he has noticed of people shaping their prayers.

"I think we should find a way to pray that allows most other people around us also to find God," said Gutow, who recently met with Air Force officials about their latest guidelines. "When somebody prays in Jesus' name, ... I wonder if they couldn't also find another way to bring God in the room."

Prayer skirmishes have become increasingly common. Recent cases include:

- Hashmel Turner, a pastor and Fredericksburg, Va., City Council member, wants to invoke the name of Jesus when his turn comes in the council's rotation for opening its meeting with prayer. In November, the council, under threat of a lawsuit from the American Civil Liberties Union, adopted a proposal to offer nondenominational prayers. With the Rutherford Institute's help, Turner sued the council in January. The case is pending.

- In November, a federal judge halted sectarian prayers at the start of meetings of the Indiana state legislature after four taxpayers sued, saying the prayers violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

- The American Center for Law and Justice has collected more than 200,000 names in a petition campaign that urged President Bush to sign an executive order that would permit chaplains to pray in public according to their beliefs.

The issue flared prominently at

Bush's 2001 inauguration, when evangelist Franklin Graham ended his invocation "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Some were offended, saying the prayer excluded non-Christians, but Graham defends his right to pray as he does.

"I'm not belittling a Jew or a Muslim or someone else because I ... pray in the name of the one who died for my sins," he said on ABC's "Nightline" in March.

Do words advance faith?

Guidelines from the U.S. Air Force, released in February, say chaplains "will not be required to participate in religious activities, including public prayer, inconsistent with their faiths" but also state that "nondenominational, inclusive prayer or a moment of silence may be appropriate for military ceremonies ... when its primary purpose is not the advancement of religious beliefs."

Billy Baugham, executive director of the International Conference of Evangelical Chaplain Endorsers in Greenville, S.C., questions the terminology, which is not yet finalized.

"It implies that when a chaplain prays in the name of Jesus Christ, that he is ... trying to advance his belief," Baugham said. "That is simply not the case."

Rather, he said, a chaplain is "simply stating the authority by which he makes the prayer."

INAUGURAL PRAYER

Evangelist Franklin Graham gives the invocation at the 2001 inauguration of President Bush. Some took offense at his closing the prayer "in the name of the Father and of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit." (RNS file photo courtesy of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)

Reform Judaism leader urges Liberty University students to engage in civil discourse

Lynchburg, Va. (RNS)—Relations between American Jews and evangelical Christians have warmed in recent years, with the two backing Israel amid the latest intifada.

But an address last month by the head of American Jewry's largest movement at Jerry Falwell's university has broken new ground.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism—which represents the most liberal stream of American Jewry and approximately 1.5 million American Reform Jews—pressed for the separation of church and state during a convocation at Liberty University

in Lynchburg, Va.

In response to an invitation from Falwell, Yoffie spoke about where each community intersects—support for Israel and disdain for America's deteriorating values—and where they diverge—issues of abortion and homosexuality.

He called for a civil discourse. "We need less anger and more thoughtful reflection, less shouting and more listening," Yoffie said. "Even when we disagree, let's do so without demonizing each other. I can discuss these issues and believe what I believe without

calling you a homophobic bigot, and you can do the same without calling me an uncaring baby killer. Let's promote respect for each other's religious tradition, and let's work for civility in public debate."

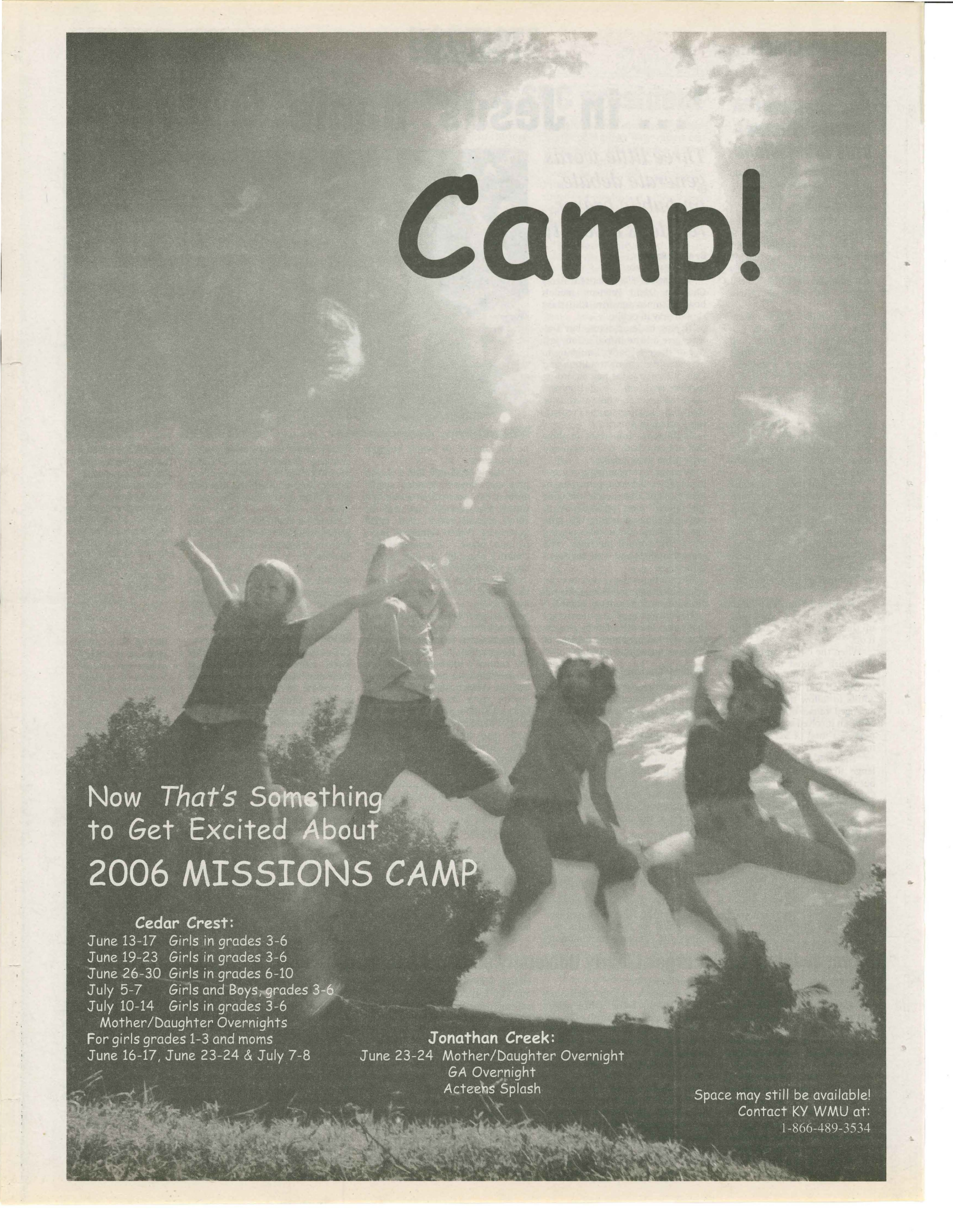
He warned against quick fixes to the country's problems by putting matters of religion into government hands, and referred to the legacy of the founding fathers, who created unity among citizens by separating the spheres.

Yoffie's speech comes after he voiced harsh words for the "religious right" in his biennial sermon before the Reform movement at a

Houston gathering in November 2005.

"In our diverse democracy," he said back then, "Americans need a common political discourse not dominated by exclusivist theology. They do not want to hear that unless you attend my church, accept my God and study my sacred text, you cannot be a moral person."

After his Liberty University address and a lunch with Falwell, whom he met for the first time, Yoffie said in an interview that he stood behind his earlier comments, but that he might soften his tone today.



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