



WESTERN RECORDER

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Poll: 40 percent of Americans admit Muslim prejudice

Princeton, N.J. (RNS)—Almost 40 percent of Americans acknowledge having some prejudice against Muslims, a new USA Today/Gallup Poll shows.

Thirty-nine percent of Americans asked to "honestly" assess themselves said they have "at least some feelings of prejudice against Muslims" while 59 percent said they did not.

Respondents were fairly evenly divided about whether Muslims are respectful of other religions, with 47 percent agreeing and 40 percent disagreeing. There was clear disagreement about whether Muslims are too extreme in their religious beliefs, with 44 percent saying yes and 46 percent saying no.

A substantial minority—39 percent—of Americans favor more strict security measures for Muslims than other U.S. citizens, such as requiring Muslims to carry a special ID; 59 percent said they would oppose such a requirement. Forty-one percent favored Muslims undergoing more intensive security checks at U.S. airports, while 57 percent opposed such action.

When comparing feelings based on whether respondents personally know a Muslim, pollsters found dramatic differences. Forty-one percent said they personally knew a Muslim.

Nearly a quarter of those who said they know a Muslim—24 percent—favored a special ID for Muslims; 50 percent who do not know someone of that faith favored the special ID. Ten percent of those who know a Muslim said they would not want a Muslim as a neighbor, compared to 31 percent of those who did not know one.

Sweet dreams



PILLOW PUSHERS Dennis Dow (left), a senior at Berea College, and sophomore Wesley Buntun attach notes of welcome and information to pillows that will be given to every incoming international student. Campus Minister Wyndee Holbrook said most international students appreciate the gesture because many of them arrive on campus without a pillow.

Collegiate ministries seek creative ways to connect

By Erin Roach
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—As college students head back to school for the fall semester, Baptist Campus Ministries are organizing a variety of activities and gestures to let them know they're welcome.

At Berea College, one of the highlights is a pillow distribution for international students—something that meets a need that otherwise is often overlooked.

"Berea has students who literally come from all over the world, and they have to come prepared to stay for at least four years basically. So

the last thing they have room for (in their luggage) is a bed pillow," said Wyndee Holbrook, Baptist campus minister at Berea.

"Often times they will arrive from international flights very late at night, and when they get to campus they're shown to their room but they don't have a pillow."

So the Berea Baptist campus ministry invites local churches to donate funds for pillows. BCM students then buy the pillows and attach a personalized note from the BCM president telling the international students that BCM members are glad to have them as a part of their

campus community.

"The note has words of welcome, it has a map on how to get to the BCM, it tells them when the first event is going to take place, and it names all the churches that helped provide the pillows along with contact information for each of the churches," she said.

Holbrook said it's particularly helpful to put the BCM logo on the note that goes with the pillow. Even if international students don't remember the words, they'll recognize the logo when they see it on campus.

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Sexually charged music impacts teens' behavior, study says

By Michael Foust
Baptist Press

Arlington, Va. (BP)—Teenagers who listen to sexually degrading music, including some forms of popular rap music, are more likely to be sexually active than are other teens, a new study says.

The study by RAND Corp. surveyed 1,461 adolescents ages 12-17 and followed them for three years, conducting interviews in 2001, 2002 and 2004. At each interval, they asked the teens about their music and sexual habits.

The teens who listened to sexually degrading music were "more likely ... to initiate intercourse and other sexual activities," a RAND news release said.

Although the study looked at all

types of music, it found that rap and rap-metal typically had the highest frequency of sexually degrading lyrics. The study found that the degrading lyrics negatively impacted both boys and girls, whites and non-whites.

Unlike music of decades past, the language in many of today's songs that is "used to describe sex has become increasingly direct," the study said.

"These portrayals objectify and degrade women in ways that are clear, but they do the same to men by depicting them as sex-driven studs," said Steven Martino, a RAND psychologist who led the study. "Musicians who use this type of sexual imagery are communicating something very specific about

what sexual roles are appropriate, and teen listeners may act on these messages."

Bob Waliszewski, media specialist with Focus on the Family, said the study confirms what his agency and other Christian conservatives have been saying "for years."

"I'm very, very happy that the RAND corporation did this study, because some people seem to just overlook the obvious," Waliszewski said. "Until there's a study out there, it just doesn't resonate."

The average teen listens to music 1.5 to 2.5 hours a day, the study said. One-fourth of teens listen to more than three hours of music a day, it said.

Listening to degrading music might cause girls to expect to be

treated with disrespect by boys.

"If so, these expectations may have lasting effects on their relationship choices, a possibility that warrants further investigation," the study said.

"Boys, on the other hand, may come to interpret reckless male sexual behavior as 'boys being boys' and dismiss girls' sexual preferences and desires as inconsequential."

The study suggested that parents "monitor the type of music to which their children are exposed."

Waliszewski agreed, saying too many parents believe they "don't have time to figure out what bands (their children) are into." Parents should have the "sex talk" but also should have the "entertainment talk," he added.

Lebanese Baptists unsure of school's future

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Beirut, Lebanon (ABP)—As a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah took effect this week, Lebanese Baptist leaders questioned whether two Baptist schools, still housing hundreds of refugees displaced by the conflict, can begin the academic year on time.

Meanwhile, Baptists around the world continue to solicit prayers for relief and rebuilding work in the ransacked region of southern Lebanon.

In an Aug. 8 e-mail update, two prominent Baptist leaders in Beirut thanked Baptists from around the world for their prayers and support in the month-old crisis.

"Heartfelt appreciation"

"We'd like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciation to all of you who continue to lift us in prayer and to those who send us beautiful encouraging e-mails," wrote Elie Haddad of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary and Nabil Costa of the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social

Development.

But the two leaders also lamented the widespread violence of the past month.

"We are optimistic as we hear of the ongoing political negotiations but not as we see the effects of the bombings," they wrote. "Yet, the reason of our hope is Him to Whom we pray in anticipation."

The seminary and nearby Beirut Baptist School have provided shelter and food to an estimated 1,000 people displaced by the conflict. Most of the refugees have come from hard-hit Shiite regions of Lebanon to the relative safety of the Christian parts of Beirut. International Baptist relief workers, including a medical team from Hungarian Baptist Aid and church groups from the United States, have provided other services to the refugees.

Costa and Haddad said the seminary has canceled the month-long courses it normally offers in September, but officials "are planning, in faith, a regular start of the semester in October."

They said the seminary should reopen for classes then, "even if most of the displaced people are still with us."

But the situation at Beirut Baptist School is different, Costa and Haddad added. "What will happen to the displaced families there? Will we be able to open our doors for a new academic year before the displaced people go back to their homes? We don't have all the answers, yet we live each day at a time trusting in the Lord, knowing that He is sovereign and in control."

International Baptists have

continued to promise prayer and support for their Lebanese brothers and sisters in the wake of the conflict—and in the future rebuilding of the nation. In response to pleas from Lebanese Baptists, Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz wrote a letter expressing the group's solidarity.

"We are in sorrow with you over this tragic war and attack upon Beirut and its infrastructures," he said. "With the psalmist we cry out, 'How long, O Lord? How long?' Please know that Baptists around the world are praying for you and the safety of the people of Lebanon."

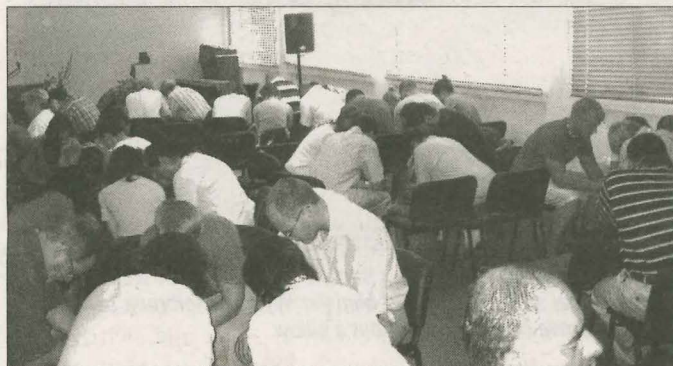
Seeking God's wisdom

Regina Claas, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Evangelical Free Churches of Germany, issued a similar statement of support. "In this time of need, we want to support our brothers and sisters and the civil population in the whole region with our prayers and beseech God for wisdom for the political decision-makers."

The European Baptist Federation, an umbrella group for 50 regional and national Baptist denominations in Europe and the Middle East, sent an Aug. 3 "emergency appeal" regarding the Lebanese situation to its participating organizations.

"The situation is changing daily," the appeal noted a few days before the cease-fire was announced. "But what is clear is that much of Lebanon's infrastructure has been destroyed and that there will be an urgent need for help with reconstructing and the rebuilding of lives when this terrible conflict is over."

PRAYERS FOR PEACE
Lebanese Christians and volunteers from several countries pray for peace in Beirut in the wake of fighting between Hezbollah guerrillas and Israeli forces. (BP photo)



GuideStone plans no personal medical rate increases for '07

Denver (BP)—GuideStone Financial Resources will not increase the cost of personal medical plans in 2007, marking the third year in a row that the Southern Baptist entity has held the line on rates.

GuideStone trustees approved the annual rate recommendation during their July 31-Aug. 1 meeting in Denver.

Other than regular age increases, personal medical plan participants will receive no rate increase and more than 40 percent will receive a rate decrease, GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins reported. Hawkins credited the decision to continued improvements in the administration and design of GuideStone's medical plans.

"During the past several years, we have provided a greater variety of choices in our medical plans with varying deductibles and rates," Hawkins noted. "We have also realized greater discounts by using a single network. We are beginning to see positive results from our wellness emphasis and more and more churches are taking responsibility in meeting their pastor's benefits needs."

No state Baptist conventions that have their medical coverage with GuideStone's group plans will have rate increase in 2007 and 46 percent of the conventions will receive a rate decrease, Hawkins reported. There also will be no increase in medical plan rates for GuideStone's senior plans.

In other business, Chief Operating Officer John Jones told trustees a project team has been organized to study the feasibility of allowing members of Southern Baptist churches to participate in the financial and insurance products of GuideStone. The study is in response to a motion by Gary Smith of Arlington, Texas, during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in June.

Jones also presented an update on GuideStone's long-range planning toward its 100th anniversary in 2018.

The trustees' relief committee reported it added or upgraded 89 recipients to the financial assistance roll during the first six months of 2006.

Alliance of Baptists fined \$34,000 for 'tourist' activities in Cuba

Washington (ABP)—The government agency charged with enforcing the United States' ban on travel to Cuba has notified the Alliance of Baptists that it will be fined \$34,000 for allegedly engaging in tourist activities while in Cuba for religious purposes—a charge the Alliance denies.

The action comes amid uncertainty about Cuba's leadership, as dictator Fidel Castro ceded leadership to his brother, Raul, July 31 while he recuperates from surgery.

Stan Hasteley, executive director of the moderate Alliance of Baptists, recently notified members of the organization's board that he had received the fine notice from the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. The notice informed Hasteley the organization would receive the fine for violating the terms of its license for religious travel to Cuba.

The Alliance, formed in response to the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative shift, has a longstanding missions partnership with the Fraternity of Baptist Churches in Cuba, which pairs local Alliance congregations with Cuban churches.

Due to the U.S. economic and travel embargo on the island nation's communist regime, religious groups must use renewable travel permits for religious activity to enable U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba.

Hasteley said he was not encour-

aged that the administration's Cuba policy would soften soon.

More than a year ago, OFAC officials informed the Alliance of Baptists that its license had been suspended pending the outcome of an investigation into allegations that a group from an Alliance church in Alabama had misused the license to visit Cuban tourist sites. Hasteley said OFAC did not inform him any further about the investigation's progress. In the meantime, the original license expired.

The recent fine notice was the next official communication from OFAC to the Alliance. It informed Hasteley the group would be fined not only for the alleged violations by the team from the Baptist Church of the Covenant in Birmingham but also for alleged violations by four other Alliance churches that traveled to Cuba under the license between 2003 and 2005.

Hasteley said many of the itinerary items Treasury officials apparently interpreted as tourist activities were actually religious work. For example, the team from Alabama stayed in Varadero, a beach town near Havana, one night. However, Hasteley said, that was because a Presbyterian guest house is located in Varadero and is near a Baptist church the team had visited.

Hasteley said Alliance leaders have until early September to respond to the fine notice.

Mo. convention, college ordered to pursue mediation

Jefferson City, Mo. (ABP)—The Missouri Baptist Convention and Missouri Baptist University must sit down and discuss possible solutions to their ongoing legal battle, a circuit court judge has ruled.

In 2002 the convention sued five of its agencies that decided to elect their own trustees—a right previously granted to the convention.

In the latest ruling, Cole County Circuit Court Judge Thomas Brown ordered mediation after listening to arguments at a hearing Aug. 7. Brown said he usually does not force litigants to try mediation, but he did so in spite of objections from convention attorney Stanton Masters.

Masters noted the state convention would not be interested in discussing issues if the university does not have a new proposal to offer. "We've been down that road with the college," he said, because the university's insurer had asked the convention to consider mediation last fall.

University attorney Clyde Farris argued for mediation as a means "to get the matter out of the lawyers' hands." A lot of time and too much money already have been spent on litigation, he added.

When the judge asked if any flexibility exists in the university's position, Farris responded that MBU is "interested in talking," but he added he is unaware of specific changes the university would consider.

In 2000, the Baptist Home, a Missouri Baptist agency, changed its charter to allow the institution to elect its own trustees. The following year, the university, Word & Way newspaper, Windermere Baptist Conference Center and the Missouri Baptist Foundation took similar actions.

The convention filed legal action against the five entities in August 2002 in an effort to force the institutions to rescind the charter changes in order to return control of trustee elections to the convention.

In 2002, the convention and the heads of the five entities briefly considered arbitration, rather than mediation, as an option to avoid taking the matter to court. But convention leaders and agency heads understood the term differently and failed to agree on what steps to pursue.

According to Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Director David Clippard, "We don't need a latter-day compromise that still leaves open the legal questions about the convention's rights in relation to the agencies."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

College ministries reach out creatively as school begins

Continued from page 1

"It really was kind of sweet when some students came up in the very first interaction they had with me. They pointed to the logo on my sleeve and said, 'Thank you for my pillow!'" Holbrook said.

The pillows distribution also gives BCM a "warm connection" with the international office on campus, Holbrook said, which gives them access to students in ways they didn't have before the ministry began.

Voting for pizza

At Murray State University, something new this year is a pizza- and cookie-tasting contest intended to attract students to the BCM building.

"Students are always drawn to free pizza," said Mark Whitt, Baptist campus minister at Murray State. "So we decided to go along with something the university does called 'A Taste of Murray,' which is part of freshman orientation."

Local pizza restaurants will take part in "A Taste of Murray Pizza" at the BCM, Whitt said, and students will be invited to sample the pizza and vote for their favorite. The most popular pizza shop wins all of BCM's business for the year.

On the same night, local church-

es are invited to set up tables featuring homemade cookies. Students can sample the cookies while talking with church representatives about how to get plugged in to local churches.

"That night is actually kind of a twofold night—it gets students to our building, where they can get involved with the ministry on campus, and it also gives our churches an opportunity to meet students so that students can get involved with local churches," Whitt said.

At Georgetown College, one of the favorite BCM activities is "Take a Student to Church Day." School faculty and staff are encouraged to take one or more students to church with them on Labor Day weekend, a time when many students leave campus for a long weekend and the ones remain can get lonely.

"We provide the entering freshmen with a list of churches and a faculty member that attends that church and a time and a place to meet that professor on campus that day so that they can ride to church with them," said Cynthia Insko, Baptist campus minister at Georgetown.

Last year about 15 faculty and 25 students took part. Insko said the event helped students find their place at a local church soon after

the school year started. Attending the church also helped students recognize more familiar faces on campus, she added.

"I think it gave them a certain comfort level with those professors and staff too, where they knew that they could talk to them about church or spiritual things as well as academic," Insko said.

Free pancakes

At the University of Louisville, a popular tradition is the free pancake brunch at the BCM building on the Saturday before classes start.

"We have hundreds of students pour into the building to attend this event," Bill Noe, U of L's Baptist campus minister, said.

Eastern Kentucky University's BCM will host a Fiesta game night, featuring outdoor recreation and a chapel full of televisions hooked up to PlayStations and Xboxes, according to Jon Barron, Eastern's Baptist campus minister.

The University of the Cumberlands is planning a Bonfire at the Bryants as part of its welcome activities. The BCM will visit a local family farm as a kickoff for their emphasis on Haystack Awakening, a nationwide call for college students to pray and fast with their hearts turned

toward missions.

BCM students on most Kentucky campuses will volunteer to help freshmen move into their dorms as a way to let new students know they're welcome and inform them of ministry opportunities. Many campus ministries will organize coffeehouses, scavenger hunts, cookouts and progressive dinners to provide a forum for new and returning students to get to know one another.

At the community colleges, BCM students are invited to set up displays and participate in activities fairs sponsored by the student government association in order to invite students to Baptist events.

"It's an exciting time of the year," Whitt said.

Ideas around the commonwealth

Here's an overview of what some Baptist Campus Ministries in Kentucky are doing as students head back to school:

Berea College. BCM students will provide bed pillows for each new international student who arrives on campus. The pillows come with welcome notes, letting the students know they can have a place to belong in the BCM.

Campbellsville University. The Sunday before students officially begin to move in, Campbellsville BCM hosts a watermelon festival for students who arrive early for sports, band and other activities. BCM also sponsors an ice cream social for new students and their families on the Sunday when most students move into dorms, as well as a picnic during the first week of classes.

Community colleges. BCM leadership on community college campuses will participate in events hosted by the student government associations by setting up displays advertising BCM activities.

Eastern Kentucky University. Eastern's BCM will help freshmen move into dorms and host a game night with outdoor recreation and a chapel full of televisions set up with PlayStations and Xbox games. They'll also host a midnight breakfast and a coffeehouse where students can showcase their talents.

Georgetown College. After helping students move into dorms, the BCM leadership will give a presentation on how students can get involved in campus ministry. Each new student is required by the school to rotate through the one-hour presentation. Then they'll have a chapel service for the whole campus, and on Labor Day weekend they'll have faculty take students to church with them.

Kentucky Wesleyan College. The BCM council will assist with freshman move-in by providing bottles of water and gift bags that include wall adhesive to hang pictures in their rooms. They will also host a coffeehouse with local Christian bands during freshman orientation.

Murray State University. BCM students will help people move into their dorms and provide a booth with bottled water. Then they'll have a free welcome back cookout as an opportunity for students to interact. The highlight events are a pizza-tasting contest and a cookie-tasting contest that incorporates local pizza places and local churches.

Northern Kentucky University. Students will help with freshmen move-in and then provide an orientation time for international students along with a movie night, a cookout and a ministry fair. During welcome week, BCM students participate in random acts of kindness.

University of the Cumberlands. BCM will host a bonfire at the farm of a local church family to kick off an emphasis on prayer and fasting as part of Haystack Awakening '06.

University of Kentucky. In addition to helping students move in, the BCM will host a progressive dinner at four area churches. BCM also will host an open house for students and a cookout.

University of Louisville. The Louisville BCM will sponsor a free pancake brunch on the Saturday before classes start. They'll also have a night of crazy games, a cookout and a scavenger hunt that leads students to local churches.

Western Kentucky University. Western's BCM will help students move into the dorms and then invite them to an ice cream social and later a freshman survival class with tips for succeeding in college. They'll also offer swing dance lessons, a progressive dinner and prayerwalking.

Kentucky Baptist campus ministers

Alice Lloyd College	Kenneth Johnson	(606) 477-1910
Ashland Community College	Jeremy Harris	actcbu@yahoo.com
Berea College	Wyndee Holbrook	wyndee.holbrook@kybaptist.org (859) 986-3886
Brescia College	Cindy Pelphrey	cpelphrey@kwc.edu (270) 852-3275
Campbellsville University	Ed Pavy	ed.pavy@kybaptist.org (270) 789-5227
Centre College	David Garrett	garrett@lexingtonavenue.org
Clear Creek Baptist Bible College	Sandy Rosenbaum	(606) 337-3196
University of the Cumberlands	Dean Whitaker	dean.whitaker@kybaptist.org (606) 539-4343
Eastern Kentucky University	Jon Barron	jonathan.barron@kybaptist.org (859) 623-3294
Elizabethtown Community College	Bruce Underhill	underhill@kvnnet.org (270) 369-6173
Georgetown College	Cynthia Insko	cynthia_inko@georgetowncollege.edu (502) 863-8154
Hazard Community College	Ashlee Bell	acombs0004@hotmail.com
Henderson Community College	Cindy Pelphrey	cpelphrey@kwc.edu
Hopkinsville Community College	Bill Houpt	billhoupt@charter.net (270) 886-6017
Kentucky State University	Curtis Woods	curtis.woods@kybaptist.org (502) 597-6480
Kentucky Wesleyan College	Cindy Pelphrey	cpelphrey@kwc.edu
Lindsey Wilson College	Brad Asbury	basbury612@aol.com (270) 405-1906
Madisonville Community College	Cindy Pelphrey	cpelphrey@kwc.edu
Mid-Continent College	Rusty Wirt	(270) 251-0250
Morehead State University	Gene Parr	gene.parr@kybaptist.org (606) 784-4490
Murray State University	Mark Whitt	mark.whitt@kybaptist.org (270) 753-5771
Northern Kentucky University	Brian Combs	brian.combs@kybaptist.org (859) 572-5955
Oneida Baptist Institute	Clark Bunch	jbunch@hotmail.com (606) 847-4111
Owensboro Community College	Cindy Pelphrey	cpelphrey@kwc.edu (270) 683-6466
Paducah Community College	Alecia Byassee	(270) 753-5771
Pikeville College	Anna Hammond	ahammond@pc.edu
Prestonsburg Community College	Tommy Reed	tdreed@chater.net (606) 886-6204
SE Community College/Middlesboro	Astor Simpson	(606) 242-2132
Somerset Community College	Ron Shaw	(606) 679-6406
University of Louisville	Bill Noe	bill.no@kybaptist.org (502) 852-6595
U of L, international students	Mark Stam	(502) 852-6595
University of Kentucky	Daniel Berry	(859) 257-3989
Western Kentucky University	Tommy Johnson	tommy.johnson@kybaptist.org

WESTERN RECORDER

Box 43969
Louisville, KY 40253
(USPS 679-380)

TRENNIS HENDERSON
Editor

DAVID WINFREY
News Director

JANET McINTOSH
Marketing & Business
Manager

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

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Don't use 'gimmicks' God knows our hearts

The Western Recorder's Aug. 1 front-page article that concerns ways to get men in church reflects, perhaps, how far removed the efforts expended are from logic. Men, as depicted in this article, are seen as prized additions to the church if only there is some way to market Jesus as a commodity that will appeal to their robust insistence on a fish and game club mentality.

After having substantiated the fact that without the involvement of women, and their willingness to do most of the work in church, we read that Judaism, Buddhism and Islam offer "uniquely masculine experiences" with no mention of the fact that in these spiritual purviews women have little importance and virtually no leadership.

If, after pandering to men who "don't want to sing in the choir," the church wants to sponsor a day where these robust "non-attendees" can blast helpless birds from the air, while singing the praises of the Muslim, Buddhism and Islam masculinity avenues of church identification, one is hard pressed to see how that relates to the body of Christ.

The church is a body of believers in Jesus Christ. If what Jesus did for mankind, and men in particular, is not enough to attract their interest and involvement, one must conclude that the "gimmicks" of marketing are not likely to succeed.

When Jesus was arrested, the men started hiding. When He was nailed to a cross, they were non-attendees. Men have tried Brotherhood, Promise Keepers, Royal Ambassadors, etc., and the result is always the same. The women have kept Woman's Missionary Union going for decades.

Today, the growing churches are entertainment centers and men attend in droves—but still less than women. The men didn't attend the masculine crucifixion either.

Edward Clark
Danville

I have been reading with interest the recent discussions in the Western Recorder about whether or not it is appropriate to applaud in worship services.

In my opinion, applause is inappropriate if it is used to praise a "performance" by a choir or individual. However, I believe that for many people, applause serves as their way of saying "Amen!" or as their expression of affirmation of what has been said or sung.

There always is the possibility that people will interpret applause as praising a person or choir rather than God. However, even a rousing chorus of "Amens" could have the same motivation, and could cause the same sense of pride in those who are the recipients of the "Amen."

The bottom line is that only God knows our hearts and the motivation for our responses in worship. Likewise, God knows the hearts of those who sing, play instruments or speak.

Unfortunately, there are too many people—both musicians and ministers—who are ego-driven and see worship services as opportunities to "perform." On the other hand, there are those who sincerely want to lead their congregation to encounter God, and trust that responses of any kind will be dictated by the Holy Spirit's prompting.

I pray that our churches always will be places where people feel free to respond in worship however they choose, and that we will not get sidetracked by an issue that, in the grand scheme of things, is really insignificant.

We are called to be salt and light in our communities and proclaim the good news about a God whose love is unconditional, Who offers us



grace and forgiveness, and Who invites us to experience the joy of the abundant life that only He can give.

Can I hear an "Amen" to that? Or would you prefer to applaud?

Don Phillips
Franklin

Watch and pray

Pat Robertson appeared with Wolfe Blitzer in the situation room of CNN. He spoke about Ezekiel's prophecies that he contends refer to contemporary Israel. He lets us in on what Ezekiel was saying in the 38th chapter about the present conflict. What he sees there is that when all the enemies are arrayed against Israel, God is not going to let anybody hurt her. Israel wins.

Surely in the Bible there are passages so explicit that there is no room for doubt or various interpretations. I believe that Ezekiel is not one of them, especially chapter 38. All are entitled to be wrong about the interpretation of the Bible. However, I believe it is "love that casts out fear" and not faith casting out all reason.

There is a growing body of literature that warns against religious illusions of invincibility, of being a "chosen" nation on divine mission to go forth to kill and destroy with some heavenly ordained guarantee of victory.

Our times are not the first when individuals have predicted the end of the world, and have calendarized the events of the last times that "no man knows," that are hidden in the bosom of the Almighty. I know He said, "In the hour that you think not, ..." but what of the disillusionment when human "smarts" don't pan out? In these desperate hours, let us preach the gospel, watch and pray!

John C. Huffman
Louisville

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; fax, (502) 489-3565; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

Church dedications in Corbin & Williamstown

It has been incredible to see two congregations with limited resources—Faith Baptist Church of Corbin and Mount Carmel Baptist Church of Williamstown—step out in faith and take on major construction projects. Each one has built to accommodate growth rather than in order to grow.

These churches have a number of things in common. Each pastor has served 12 or more years and has earned the respect of the church members and the community. Each pastor has a commitment to excellence.

Each church also has strong lay leaders who have been willing to adopt God's vision as shared by their pastors. Each pastor has a love for preaching God's Word. Each pastor started at their current church in a type of bivocational role due to church income and participation.

Pastor Bennie Bush has served Faith Baptist Church, located north of Corbin just off Highway 25, for

14 years. With attendance at about 75 in worship, it was a great step of faith to relocate to new facilities.

The new 98,000-square-foot facility has a beautiful, spacious sanctuary that will seat 250 people. The building also has a large fellowship hall with a kitchen, classrooms and offices. There also is second level space for a future youth room.

Because of the assistance of more than 200 volunteers, many from Alabama, the construction cost was about \$40 per

square foot. Church members gave sacrificially and invested a tremendous amount of time and energy in construction and meal preparation.

The dedication service was a wonderful time of celebration. There was recognition of volunteers, inspiring music, testimonies, a great meal, prayer and response of dedication by the congregation.

Swan Bush, the pastor's father, was present and smiling with approval as were members of other

churches and Janus Jones, the associational director of missions.

Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Williamstown had been planning for several years to expand its facilities due to rapid growth. When Ronnie Angel was called as pastor, attendance was about 35. It now exceeds 170 in Sunday school and 220 in worship.

Located on a ridge three miles from Highway 22, the \$1.1 million addition includes a sanctuary that seats 450 people. The fellowship hall, kitchen and some classrooms are located in a full basement. Although the church engaged a contractor, the church members helped with much of the construction.

Mount Carmel has a wonderful music ministry and a strong missions education emphasis. The church actively reaches out to people in need and is strongly committed to prayer.

Both of these churches are receiving many visitors. Pray for all leaders and churches that are venturing out in faith in order to connect all people to Jesus Christ.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

Few Protestants view tithing as biblical mandate

By Doug Strader

An article titled "Money, Meet Mouth" was published in the Summer 2006 issue of Leadership magazine.



The article notes that pastors and church members hold

widely different views on tithing. It is based on a study by Ellison Research and Gallup that shows a big gap in views about tithing 10 percent of one's income. According to the study's findings:

■ 56 percent of clergy said there is a biblical mandate for Christians to give 10 percent of their income to their church, but only 30 percent of Protestant church members believe the Bible requires tithing.

■ The two denominations that adhere most closely to the biblical tithing mandate are Pentecostals and Southern Baptists. The denomination whose members are least likely to advocate tithing is Lutheran.

■ Generosity also reportedly shows in more ways than money. For instance, regular churchgoers are more likely to volunteer their time for charitable organizations and 62 percent of respondents donate to both religious and non-religious groups.

Perhaps the most alarming finding is that only slightly more than half of the Protestant ministers surveyed believe the Bible mandates tithing to the local church. If pastors do not preach tithing to their church members, few of them are likely to become good stewards of their resources on their own.

Another disturbing fact is that only three out of 10 church members believe tithing is a biblical mandate. Recent surveys of Southern Baptists reveal that only a small percentage of church members tithe. Some studies show average Southern Baptists typically give only 3 or 4 percent of their income to the Lord through their church. That figure would tend to back up the research by the Ellison Research and Gallup groups.

Southern Baptists can find some consolation in the fact that we tended to score better in the research than most others. But we cannot boast because the percentage of tithers among Southern Baptists continues to decline. In the average Southern Baptist church, 15 to 20 percent of the members give 80 to 90 percent of the money the church receives.

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

Scripture reminds couples: Laughter is 'good medicine'

Q: One of the qualities that attracted me to my wife was her laugh. She recently started a demanding job that has caused a lot of stress. I hardly ever hear her laugh anymore. I want to find ways for us to laugh and have fun together. How can I let her know my concerns without her feeling more pressure from me?

Much research has been done on the physical benefits of laughter, showing how the muscles relax, circulation is improved, more oxygen is released into the blood and chemicals are released in the brain that help improve one's mood.

MARRIAGE

Daniel Eckstein, Enda Junkins and Robert McBrien wrote a 2003 article on the importance of humor in couple relationships. They warn against using toxic humor, such as put-downs. The article offers eight tips for couples to bring more laughter into their relationship:

- Laugh together for five minutes each morning.
- Do one loving and lighthearted thing for each other each day.
- Point out the day's absurdities to each other.
- Seek out the humor in serious situations and share it with each other.
- Put more fun into sex. Practice fun ideas together and see what works.
- Consciously smile at each other more.
- Stay playful in your interaction by keeping your voices and body language playful.
- The "laughter sanctuary" is a good place to go after a hectic week. (The laughter sanctuary is a place set aside in the home for laughter and is furnished with stories, cartoons, videos and CDs that promote positive humor.)

Proverbs 17:22 reminds us that "a cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

It can be a life-giving discipline to spend time laughing and playing, enjoying God's creation with your spouse. These activities bring energy and loving feelings into the relationship. Laughter keeps us healthy. It is part of God's good plan for us.—Valerie Vincent

Q: My children were sprinkled as infants. We now attend a Baptist church and they have questions about baptism. What should I tell them?

As denominational lines and loyalties continue to blur, more children who were born into non-Baptist families are finding themselves growing up in Baptist churches. Sooner or later, questions about baptism arise.

PARENTING

Many Baptist boys and girls look forward to being baptized. But children who were baptized as babies in other traditions often have a hard time understanding why they need to be baptized again if they wish to belong to a Baptist church.

Ministers, teachers and parents should remember first of all that baptism does not make someone a Christian. Children often become confused on this point. Don't add to the confusion by placing too much emphasis on baptism. Focus first on the decision to follow Christ. Then shift attention to the various ways people show they are Christ-followers—including baptism.

Encourage children to think of their baby baptism as an expression of their parents' hopes and desires for them. Most Baptist churches offer some type of baby or child dedication service to which infant baptism can be compared. As you talk, help the child understand the meaning and symbolism of baptism by immersion in ways that do not demean or belittle an earlier baptism.

Children enjoy making their own decisions. Help them see baptism by immersion as an expression of their decision to follow Jesus—a choice that they made, not someone else. Finally, study the baptism of Jesus and show your children how baptism offers believers a concrete way to be like Jesus.—David Garrard

Family Forum writers are:

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

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

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

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

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



Does your church need a way to connect?

Is your church still looking for a practical way to connect to "Kentucky Baptists Connect"?

If so, that option just got easier last week.

Kentucky Baptists Connect, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's five-year ministry emphasis that continues through 2009, is a statewide strategy to involve churches in meaningful ministry in such pivotal areas as evangelism, missions, leader training and strengthening churches.

Local congregations can get involved by pledging to be a connecting church and seeking to increase baptisms, start new Bible study units, help launch other churches and a variety of other hands-on ministry projects.

In an effort to highlight the biblical mandate for such action, KBC leaders recently released a Kentucky Baptists Connect Bible study titled "Reaching Kentucky."

The 48-page study is subtitled "A Bible study of the foundational principles that drive the mission of our convention, associations and churches." While that's definitely a mouthful, the basic focus is on "foundational principles" related to reaching Kentucky with the gospel of Christ.

The study guide, coordinated by KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey and the KBC communications office, was written by Todd Benkert who has served as a pastor and church planting strategist in Kentucky and Indiana. He currently is associate pastor of missions and evangelism at Sunnycrest Baptist Church in Marion, Ind.

Copies of the Bible study and accompanying CD were mailed last week to every Kentucky Baptist pastor and director of missions.

Mackey wrote in a cover letter that the resource is designed to help pastors "teach the people of your congregation to be dynamic, evangelistic Christians." He said the study was written "specifically with Kentucky churches in mind as we seek to reach out together to achieve the goals of Kentucky Baptists Connect and fulfill our mission to connect all people to Jesus Christ."

Encouraging pastors to "take a close look at this

study and consider leading your members through it on a series of Sunday or Wednesday nights," Mackey noted that reflection questions throughout the study guide "will help your members to envision possibilities for sharing the gospel in their communities."

The seven-part study focuses on such topics as "Introducing All People to God's Grace," "Equipping Church Leaders to Fulfill the Great Commission" and "Assisting Churches in Reaching Their God-Given Potential."

Emphasizing that "everything we do as Christians and as Kentucky Baptists must be grounded solidly in the Scriptures," the study's introduction notes that the resource is being provided to local churches throughout the commonwealth "in the hopes that it

will serve as a springboard for important discussions within each congregation about the best ways to reach local church fields with the gospel message."

Among thought-provoking reflection questions included in the study are:

- Is my motivation in ministry for God's glory or something else?
- What role does prayer play in the ministry of our church?
- What steps do we need to take to saturate our community with the gospel?
- Are we utilizing mature believers to help new believers grow in the faith?
- Should anything prohibit us from planting a church where one is needed?

Those likely are questions every Kentucky Baptist congregation needs to explore.

Granted, many church leaders feel inundated with resources and promotional materials that sometimes receive little attention or response. Don't let that be true in this case.

The customized, in-depth study is worth each church's careful and prayerful consideration. It's a valuable tool to help make sure your congregation is connected to the work of God's Kingdom in Kentucky and around the world.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

I'm not a bigot ... or am I?

By Dale Hanson Bourke

Washington (RNS)—Mel Gibson's assertion that he is not a bigot—despite his recent drunken tirade against Jews—made me wonder: Do we ever see bigotry in ourselves?

I'd like to believe I'm not a bigot. I don't make or repeat ethnic jokes. I have friends of different religions, races and political persuasions. I don't join groups that exclude others.

And yet ... I wonder if bigotry is a little like being tone deaf. Your own voice sounds right on key until your kids hold their ears and beg you to stop singing.

The more I listen to conversations lately, the more I understand that bigotry is hardly ever in the eye of the bigot.

We might all understand political correctness, but when we relax with friends—people like us—conversations can drift into some degree of us and them-ness. Not to mention what happens when liquor loosens the tongue.

Beware of stereotypes

At a recent party, a friend of mine made an observation about a religious group that was met with dropped jaws and averted eyes. "What?" he said later. "It's true. And it wasn't a negative thing."

While the point seemed obvious

to him, he had wandered over that delicate line that separates familiarity from stereotype and understanding from bigotry.

He wasn't a hateful person, and in my heart of hearts, I had to admit

I didn't completely disagree with him. Was I innocent because I had the discipline to not express such thoughts aloud? Is it OK to use stereotypes if they aren't negative?

As the popular song from the Broadway hit "Avenue Q" says, "Everyone's a Little Bit Racist." Pushing back at political correctness, it points out:

"If we all could just admit
That we are racist a little bit,
Even though we all know that it's
wrong,
Maybe it would help us
Get along."

Is getting such suppressed thoughts out in the open the answer? I'm not so sure. I think it's a good thing that we pause before characterizing a group of people, and don't think it's funny when others do. Shame isn't always a bad thing.

I do agree with Gibson when he says that bigotry is inconsistent with Christian beliefs. But I would never claim that being a Christian saves me from bigotry—I've personally seen how the twisted beliefs of some Christians have wreaked havoc

in the world.

It's because I read the Bible and I know that my own capacity for sin is deep and subject to many layers of denial. And Matthew 7:3 says, I know that it is easier to spot a speck in my brother's eye than it is to see the plank in my own.

When I am feeling very courageous, I pray to see myself more clearly. I ask God to expose the layers of my own self-righteousness and the places where I have a hard heart or a bad attitude; it's the one prayer it seems God is always too quick to answer.

Follow Jesus' example

Jesus set an example by associating with prostitutes and tax collectors and those who were the subject of prejudice in His day. He did not teach others to say nice things and have politically correct manners. He taught them to be with those people and to love them.

Truly rooting out bigotry will never come from disciplining ourselves into political correctness or even from admitting our own racist tendencies.

Stereotypes are not dissolved just by getting them out in the open. They only dissipate as we open up our hearts to those who are not so much like us—and find they are not so different after all.

Dale Hanson Bourke, a consultant to humanitarian organizations, is the author of "Second Calling"

Kentucky Acteens conduct prayer ministry in Slovenia

Ljubljana, Slovenia—Six Acteens and leaders traveled to Slovenia last month to meet with missionaries and conduct prayerwalking in the Southern European country.

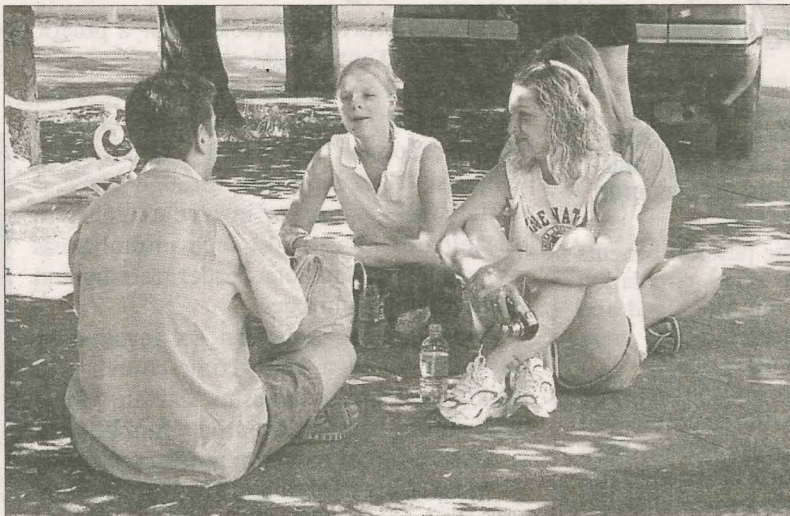
The team responded to the invitation of missionaries Dwayne and Missy Doyle to pray for the people of Domzale where they minister.

Referred to as the Bel-Air of Slovenia, there is only one Catholic church and no known evangelical Christians in the town.

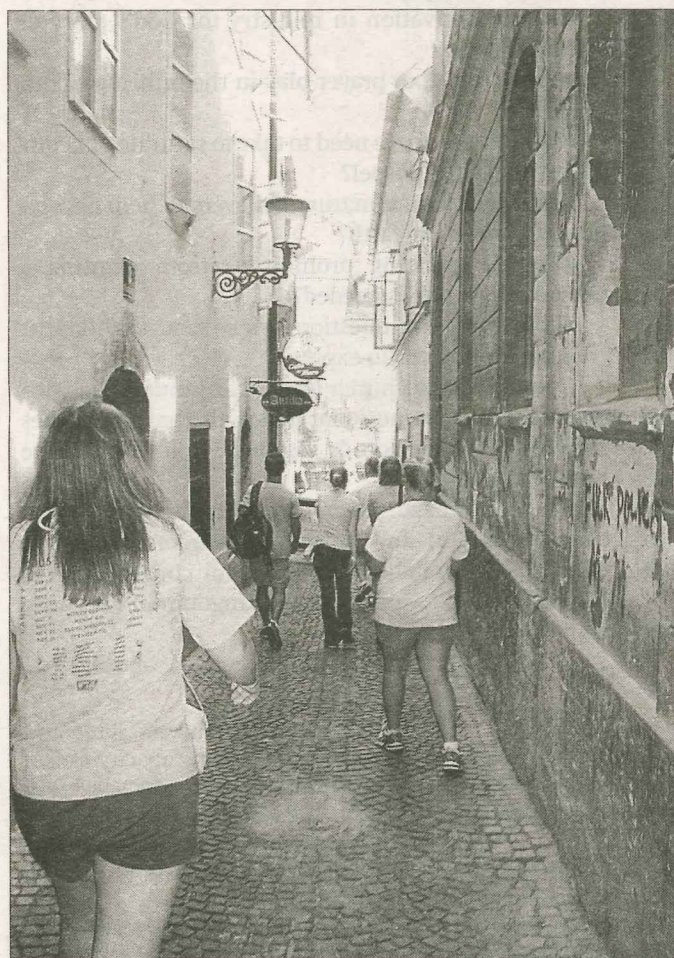
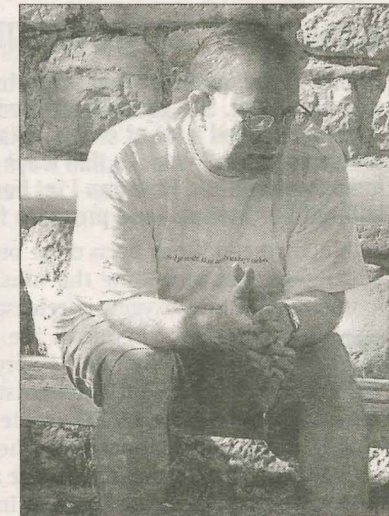
The team divided into three groups and hit the streets. The team used maps to count the number of families who live in each neighborhood. For three days, the team prayed that Slovenes would turn to God.

The team took hundreds of pictures and mapped where they prayed in order to assemble a virtual prayerwalk.

TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS Kentucky Acteens conduct a prayerwalk in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. The team also mapped several areas with photos to create a virtual prayerwalk for those who cannot get to the Southern European country.



PRAYING AND LEARNING Kentucky Acteens traveled to Slovenia at the invitation of missionaries Dwayne and Missy Doyle. Dwayne Doyle previously served on the Kentucky Baptist Convention's men on mission department. ■ **Left:** Christoph, a house church pastor in Kamnik, Slovenia, explains the needs of the city to Acteens Ashlea Duncan and Crystal Marksberry. ■ **Right:** Southern Baptist missionary J.P. Manley prays for the university students of Ljubljana. (Photos by LaRaine Dail)



The team also prayerwalked in the towns of Ljubljana, Maribor and Kamnik.

"Slovene Baptists covet our prayers," said LaRaine Dail, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union youth consultant. "In a country of 2 million, there are only 1,000 evangelical Christians and 150 Baptists."

Metka, a young believer who served as a translator for the team, expressed gratitude for the prayers. "When teams come and pray for us and for Slovenia, we know that we are not alone."

Slovenia house churches

Most Baptist churches in Slovenia meet in homes. Team members said a worship service at a house church in Kamnik was a moving experience.

After the service, the Americans circled the Slovene believers to pray for them.

Touched by the prayer, a Slovene man suggested that the Slovenes sing a song for the team. As they sang, the team recognized the tune, Dail said.

"Together in both Slovene and English, we sang, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us ... that we should be called the children of God,'" she recalled.

"Everyone in the room suddenly felt the Christian family bond."

Team members reported getting support from their churches and communities before the trip.

One teenage girl who works as a waitress received a \$100 tip. The churches in Owen County Baptist Association rallied behind Brianna Clark of Owenton, raising more money than she needed for her trip. The extra money was then used to buy Slovenian Bibles.

Paperback Bibles in Slovenia cost \$15 each, a relatively high cost due

to the smaller quantity of Bibles that are printed in Slovene. The country only has approximately 2 million citizens.

At least two team members, Brianna Clark and Ashlea Duncan of Utica, are considering returning to Slovenia next summer as summer missionaries.

In addition to Clark and Duncan, the team included: LaRaine Dail of Louisville, Tina Nicely of Whitesville, Crystal Marksberry of Utica and Ashley VanWinkle of Harrodsburg.

IN RECOGNITION of Deceased Kentucky Baptist Leaders

The 2006 KBC Obituaries Report will include information on deceased persons who have served our Lord and Kentucky Baptists in a noteworthy manner. We are including persons who died during the convention year, September 1, 2005 through August 31, 2006.

These persons would be Kentucky Baptist ministers, missionaries, educators, laypersons, institutional leaders and staff and others whose Christian service has significantly benefited our state convention fellowship and mission programs.



We Need Your Help To Gather the Following Information:

- Full name of deceased
- Date of birth
- Date of death
- Active or retired status in last position held in city, state where located
- Name of church where member, association, state where located
- Service or ministry worthy of recognition (briefly stated)

Please forward this information before August 31 to:



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College ministries look for revival in 'Haystack'

By Erin Roach
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Williamsburg—Two hundred years ago, on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., a group of five students was meeting outdoors for intense prayer when a sudden thunderstorm hit and sent them running for cover in a nearby haystack.

Those young men kept praying, and historians report that God responded in such a powerful way that the first six mission-sending organizations in North America were born out of what became known as the "Haystack Revival" movement.

Kentucky Baptist collegiate ministry leaders are hoping to draw from that historic event to propel their campuses to revival.

Southern Baptist agencies have launched Haystack Awakening '06 to encourage a mass committing to personal prayer, fasting and holiness on college campuses in the hope that students share their faith with tens of thousands of students.

"We need to capture and introduce the passion of the Haystack spirit," said Keith Inman, associate team leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's collegiate and young adult ministry group.

"The legacy that these five students brought us out of that haystack is something that this generation needs to know about."

Beginning with the fall semester, campus ministers in Kentucky will prepare students to share their faith and lead them in a study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Haystack Awakening also will be the theme for the KBC's annual collegiate "Focus" conference, to be held this year at Crestwood Baptist Church near Louisville Sept. 29-30.

That conference will serve as a rallying point for students across the state to direct their attention to the four purposes of the movement: a commitment to prayer, a commitment to purity, a commitment to the poor and a commitment to the proclamation of the gospel.

21 days of prayer, fasting

Campus ministries also will observe a 21-day prayer and fasting emphasis, Oct. 1-21.

Dean Whitaker, Baptist campus minister at University of the Cumberland, said his group will kick off the year by having an International Mission Board representative tell about Haystack Awakening, and they'll start learning the principles associated with it in their Bible studies and other activities.

"We're asking God to pour out His Spirit among students in a really powerful way so that we can really impact the nation and get more students mobilized to share

Christ on the mission field, particularly globally but also locally," Whitaker said.

Cumberlands will conclude the three-week prayer and fasting emphasis with at least three days of revival services.

Other campuses are planning similar follow-ups.

"Our theme verses are Mark 8: 34-35, and basically we're feeling the urgency to know what it means to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him," Whitaker said. "What does that really mean for us if we say we want to follow Him? For some people that may mean going to the mission field, for others it may mean letting Him use you here to impact the nations."

Whitaker said students are ready to go and share Christ with the world, but they need to be trained in the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting and worship in order to be most effective.

"With everything going on in our world right now, it's overwhelming," Whitaker said. "And yet, instead of worrying that the end of the world could come, we've got to begin saying, 'I'm ready to live today for Jesus and make my life count.' We've got to be alive in Him. We've got to take seriously that we say we're Christians."

Western Kentucky testimonies

At Western Kentucky University, students will conclude the 21-day prayer and fasting emphasis by visiting a farm and gathering around a haystack for prayer.

"Also, we're sending students out into local churches to share missions testimonies during the month of October," said Tommy Johnson, Western's Baptist campus minister.

Johnson said the Haystack emphasis is important because of how it relates to the larger picture of God's Kingdom work.

"It allows our students to tie in to a tremendous missions heritage and to realize that we're part of God's collective story of reaching the world and to draw inspiration from mission heroes of the past and to bring that passion into the present," he said.

Inman is encouraging pastors to join campus ministers in urging college students toward an awakening. Kentucky has a history of strong revivals, including the Cane Ridge Revival in 1801 and the Asbury Revival in 1970.

College campuses historically have been sites where worship gatherings were particularly strong, he said.

"I want Kentucky involved because I don't want our students to miss what God is doing in the world," Inman said. "I have a burden that in my position I have a responsibility to cast the vision and to help our students know the opportunity that is theirs. In some small, tangible way, we're trying to help give them an avenue of expression. We're just trying to help our students get a grasp around these things."

The Fifth Annual Pastors and Church Leaders Conference "Transforming A New Generation - A Journey of Faith"

September 28-29, 2006

Featured Preacher:

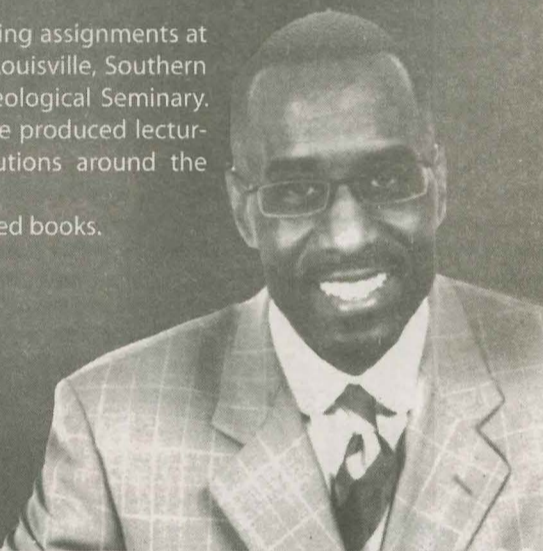
Dr. Kevin W. Cosby

• Since 1979, Rev. Dr. Kevin W. Cosby has served as Senior Pastor of St. Stephen Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Due greatly to his practical and dynamic Bible teachings, the church has grown from 500 to approximately 10,000 members.

• Dr. Cosby was named the 13th President of Simmons College of KY – an appointment befitting his credentials. Cosby earned a Bachelor's degree from Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, KY, a Master of Divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

• Dr. Cosby, assumed administrative and teaching assignments at Kentucky State University, the University of Louisville, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and United Theological Seminary. Additionally, his exceptional oratory skills have produced lecturing engagements at universities and institutions around the world including Harvard University.

• Dr. Cosby is the author of four highly-acclaimed books.



General Sessions:

Thursday 3:00 p.m. - First Session
"Transforming a New Generation Around the World"

Thursday 8:00 p.m. - Second Session
"Being Transformed by a New Generation from Around the World"

Friday 10:00 a.m. - Third Session
"Transforming A New Generation Here at Home Through Your Ministry"

Breakout Sessions:
September 28 at 5:00 p.m.
September 29 at 8:00 a.m.

Continuing Education Units Credit Hours: 1.5

Other Featured Participants:



Dr. Joseph Owens
Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky.;
Campbellsville University
Board of Trustees Member



Dr. Paul Chitwood
President, Kentucky Baptist Convention;
Pastor, First Baptist Church,
Mt. Washington, Ky.



Dr. Frieda Gebert
Associate Dean and Associate
Professor of Music, School of
Music, Campbellsville University



Dr. John Hurtgen
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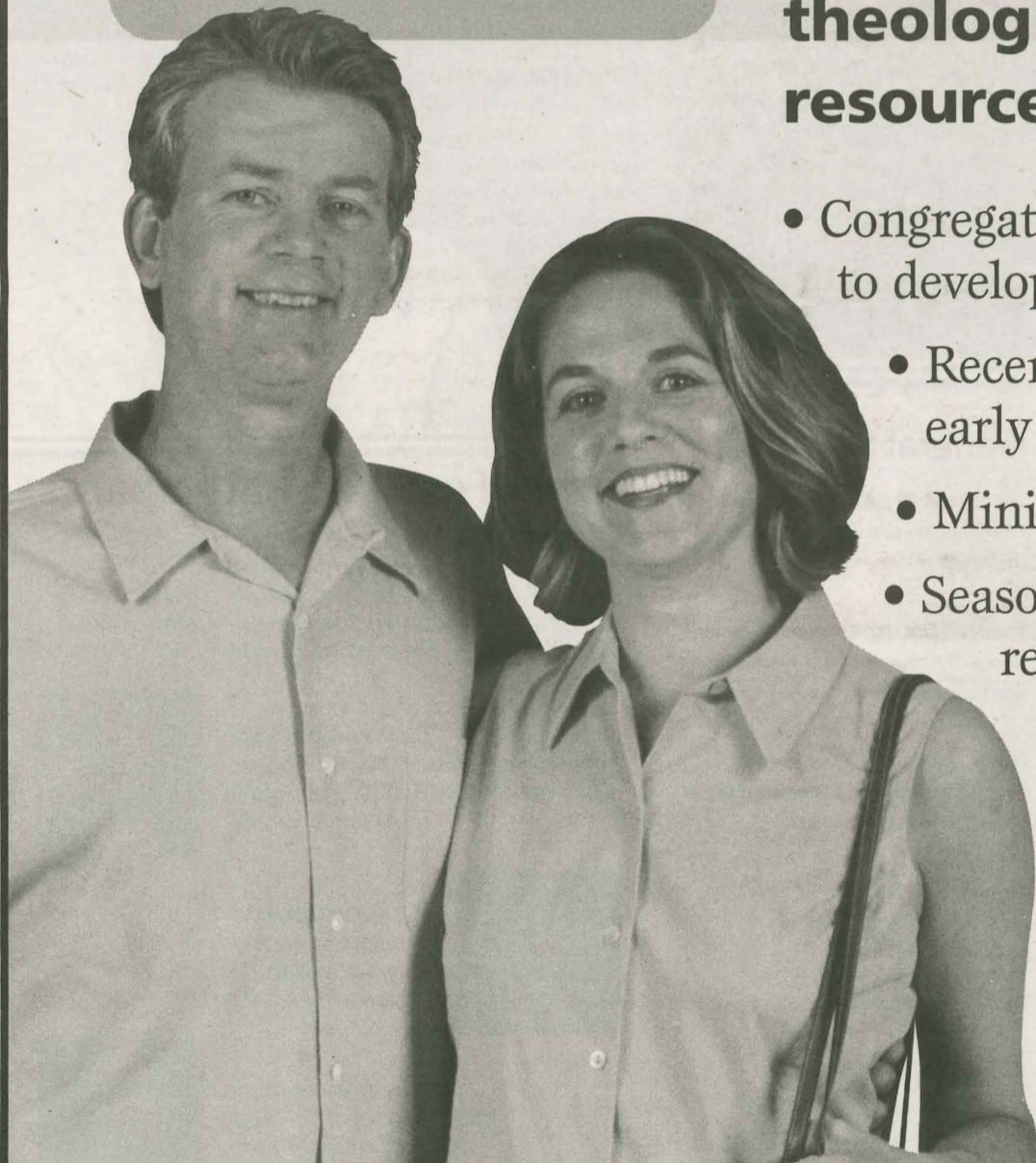
Our Purpose

"To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:12-13).

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Is America willing to elect a Mormon president?

By Hannah Elliott
Associated Baptist Press

Dallas (ABP)—With one Mormon looking like a serious contender for the Republican presidential nomination in 2008, it might be time to ask the same question Americans asked themselves about Catholic candidate John F. Kennedy in 1960: Is the country ready to elect a Mormon president?

If a Los Angeles Times poll is accurate, then the answer is: Maybe not.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-

ter-day Saints (also known simply as "LDS") is one of the fastest-growing religions in the world, with more than 5.5 million members in the United States alone. There currently are 16 Mormons in Congress.

Nonetheless, according to a July poll, 37 percent of American adults said they would not vote for a Mormon presidential candidate.

Among the survey's choices of Catholic, Jewish, Mormon and Muslim candidates, only the Muslim score came

in lower, with 54 percent of American adults saying they wouldn't vote for a Muslim candidate.

Some analysts have said the survey results show that Mormon politicians like Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, who might run for the Republican presidential candidacy in 2008, will face significant resistance in the race for the White House.

Other analysts, like Romney supporter Nancy French, said the poll is flat-out wrong.

"It comes down to a religious preference test," she said. "What the Los Angeles Times poll is missing is that you don't know Mitt Romney,

you just know his religion."

Romney is something of an oddity in Massachusetts' reliably Democratic politics. A Brigham Young University valedictorian and father of five, his background is as a Boston businessman.

In 1999, Romney helped the committee overseeing the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City restructure planning operations. After Romney's restructuring job, the games turned a profit of \$100 million.

After his Olympic stint, Romney easily won the 2002 gubernatorial election against Democrat Shannon O'Brien.

Romney has declined to run for a second term as governor, suggesting a possible run for the presidency. To that end, some experts think he should publicly address his religious beliefs before others have a chance to exploit them.

Romney might be forced to walk a tight-rope, maintaining close ties to his Mormon allies while convincing evangelical Christians he's not so different from them.

What is Mormonism?

If evangelicals look at the specifics of the Mormon tradition, that proposition likely will be difficult for them to accept.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is by far the largest of several church organizations that claim ties to the religion founded by Joseph Smith.

According to several reference sources, Mormons believe in "pre-mortality," which means the existence of people as spiritual beings before Earth's creation.

They also believe that humans are now what God once was, and that humans have the potential to become what God is now, according to whatismormonism.com, a Web site hostile to Mormonism.

Salvation for Mormons, according to the official LDS website (www.mormon.org), comes through righteous living via tests of faith. It culminates in the believer becoming a god and starting an eternal family.

And while Mormons believe and use the Bible as a text for their faith, they supplement it with the Book of Mormon, which they believe was revealed to Smith in the early 1800s.

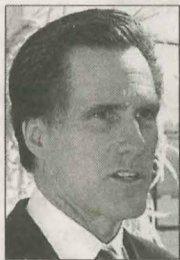
Francis Beckwith, who teaches a course on politics and religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, said that despite the likeness to Christianity displayed in some tenets of the Mormon faith, most evangelicals view it as theologically errant.

The fact that Mormonism denies the "great creeds of Christendom" and claims to have restored true Christianity through Smith, Beckwith said, would cause most evangelicals to count it as a cult.

But, Beckwith said, he's not convinced Romney will have to reconcile much of his faith to evangelicals if he runs for the position. A candidate's political philosophy and leadership qualities play a larger role in an election than his or her religion, he said.

"A candidate's faith in and of itself can't win an election," Beckwith said.

37 percent of American adults told a recent poll they would not vote for a Mormon presidential candidate.



Mitt Romney

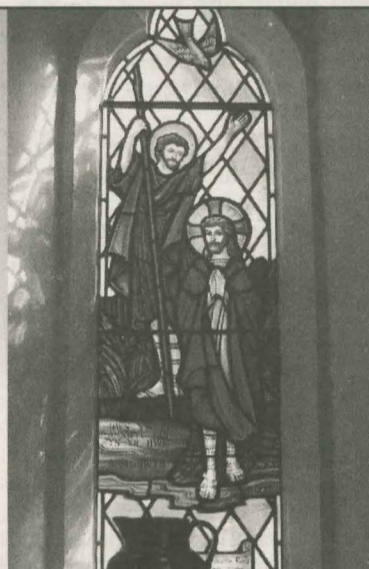
Who are Baptists? What does it mean to be a Baptist?

Would you like to know more about the origins of Baptists, Baptist developments, and its theological emphases? Do you wonder what relationship Baptist identity has to a church's theology, to your church's theology?

Register for a 4-week online study of Baptist Identity.

Each session is highly interactive and provides opportunities for online discussion with the facilitator and other study participants. The facilitator, Jon Messer, is the Education Coordinator for the Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

Registration is \$150 (Scholarships are available to cover 50% of registration fee). Study dates: September 11 - October 8, 2006.



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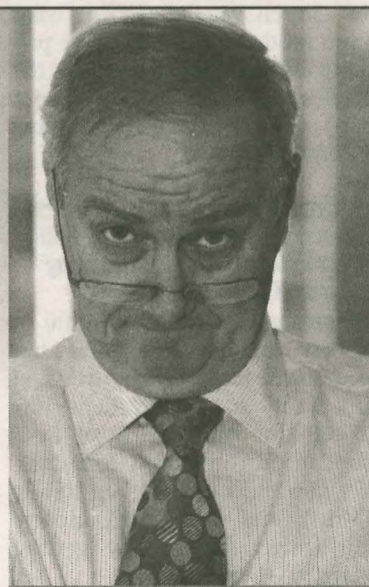
Me? Called to ministry? Are you serious? What does that mean?

Do you ever ask yourself, "What do I have to offer to the ministry of my church?" or "How does my specific ministry fit into the big picture of my church's mission?" Would you like to study and interact with others who are asking the same questions?

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Registration is \$150 (Scholarships are available to cover 50% of registration fee). Study dates: October 23 - November 19, 2006.



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Discipleship gurus offer personal & church ideas

"We've got to go back to the Bible and describe what a disciple is and not just ask folks to come make decisions."

Avery Willis, author of MasterLife Bible study

By Chris Turner
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

Ridgecrest, N.C.—In order to get more church members to be passionate disciples of Christ, church leaders must demonstrate that passion, according to Avery Willis.

"Motivation comes from passion," said Willis, the former adult discipleship manager for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention and the retired executive vice president of the SBC International Mission Board.

Unless leaders demonstrate passion, others won't be interested in what they are doing, he told a recent audience during a Discipleship Week conference at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.

"If you're passionate with Christ and modeling that, people are going to want to know why you do those things," he added. "If you get in a personal relationship with them, you're going to share your heart. I think it's an intrinsic relationship problem. Are you living it? Are you passionate about it? Are you sharing it?"

Willis and three other Southern Baptist discipleship legends led a daily panel discussion answering a variety of questions about personal spiritual development and church-wide discipleship programs. Other panelists were:

Roy Edgemon, retired director of LifeWay's discipleship area and author of "Transformational Discipleship: Your Church Helping People Be Like Jesus."

T.W. Hunt, retired prayer specialist for LifeWay's discipleship area and author of "The Mind of Christ."

Robert McQuilkin, former president of Columbia International University and author of "Life in the Spirit."

Among the questions tackled:

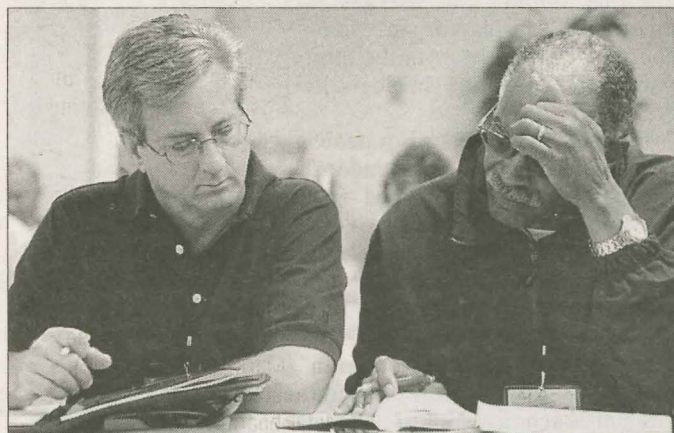
What would you describe as the heart of discipleship?



Willis

The heart of discipleship is a lifelong obedient relationship with Jesus Christ, abiding in Him, living in Him, following Him, obeying Him.

What must we do to make the matter of discipleship and the equipping ministry a priority in our churches?



DISCIPLESHIP WEEK Rodney Lynch (left), pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Danville, and Ted Johnson, director of church strengthening at the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, study material during a workshop at Discipleship Week at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina.



PANEL DISCUSSION Jay Johnston (left), a discipleship specialist at LifeWay Christian Resources, moderates a recent panel discussion with discipleship legends (from left) Roy Edgemon, Avery Willis, T.W. Hunt and Robert McQuilkin during Discipleship Week at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center.



Edgemon

Discipleship in the local church is really an important decision that the church has to make. Every time we do a survey, people will put discipleship first, but in reality, that's not what they do.

I am working with a church as a consultant and it thrilled my heart that every person that comes into that church must go through new member training and the second thing they must do is go through a doctrine study.

Willis: We've got to have a radical revolution. We've got to go back to the Bible and describe what a disciple is and not just ask folks to come make decisions or be baptized or become a member of a church, but to follow Christ. And then to say that means "deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Me."

It must become a priority of the leadership of the church. It must become a priority of the church. The church is to make disciples. If your church were a factory, what do you produce? You should be producing disciples. If you measure the disciples, you measure how good a factory you are. Or, are you going out of business?

As a woman I have a problem with being asked to disciple men, and I tend to say no, but the men say they are OK with it.

Edgemon: I think that some of our best disciplers are ladies that I've known through the years. I think they do an excellent job. I'm thinking particularly of Beth Moore in our Sunday school class. Right now, she's our teacher, by way of video, and those old ranchers and farmers—she's really getting through to them.

I think that God's gift of teaching and God's gift of sharing is not a gender-related thing. Thank God for the women. How grateful we are for the women. I think of all those great missionaries that were out there on the field that taught for so many years and the result of their work is still being felt in China and many other places.

Willis: I think it is important that you put it in the right context.

I don't see a problem with a woman leading a discipleship of mixed gender; I wouldn't do a one-on-one (discipling) relationship with a woman and a man.

How would you describe your personal quiet time and how you came to that discipline?



Hunt

I was taught that everything depended upon starting the day with God. A rather radical change came in 1959 reading Martin Luther's translation of the Bible. I began to see the "all-ness" that God required of every person. ... That changed my 30 minute prayer time into about three to four hours of quiet time. Martin Luther had more insights than any translator I've ever read.

I went to a conference something like this down the road when I was 12 years old and the preacher said, "Everybody who has read through the Bible stand up." I couldn't stand up and I was very embarrassed and I said this is not going to happen to me next year. On my dresser, I didn't even close the Bible, I just left it there—three chapters a day and four on Sunday. Of course that wore out pretty quick.

Then, after college, some Chinese brother had a motto: "No Bible, no breakfast." So I told the Lord, "That's



McQuilkin

what I'll do." But it was kind of like eating sawdust for breakfast. But I promised Him, right? Six months later I woke up to the fact that I didn't want breakfast until I had that. I felt that closeness and intimacy with Him.

Willis: I was in college and I was reading these biographies of folks who got up and spent an hour in the Word of God and an hour in prayer. I said, "Oh, that's wonderful, I'll do that." Of course I'd gone to bed at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. I'd do that one day and I wouldn't do it the next day and that was the pattern for a little while.

Then finally somebody gave me a little tract on how to spend seven minutes a day with God, and it kind of broke it down ... and I said, "Well, I can do that, even if I'm late." So when I started doing that consistently, seven minutes a day, obviously that wasn't enough so it expanded into more meaningful quiet time. Just the fact that you meet the Lord every morning is the whole difference in the life of that (discipline).

Edgemon: I was not raised as a Christian. ... I was already in the pastorate when I began to realize I needed that help and guidance. I think I read something about putting first things first. Give God the first hour of every day, the first day of every week, first fruit of the income and first place in our heart. That kind of imprinted in my life and I started at that time doing that.

How can we motivate people to want to be faithful disciples?

Hunt: Seems to me what we tried to do is we start with immediacy and we don't think about (the ultimate goal). The whole thing is, where is it going to lead to? What is this joy that is set before us? What is our hope? Our anchor?

McQuilkin: I once had quite a connection with a church. When a pastor I knew went there, there was not one church leader who could or would lead in public prayer. I mean dead. ... He got the leader in the church that seemed the most spiritually sensitive and began praying with him, just the two of them, and they began to reach out ... and little bit more; little bit more. By the time I got there, that was the most praying church you ever saw.

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Living trusts: beware!

Free seminars aside, not everyone needs living trust

One of our clients, a widow, whom we had assisted in her estate planning, called me at 10 a.m. in a panic.

She asked me if she needed a living trust? Since we knew her situation, I was able to respond, "no." She then proceeded to tell me a man was coming to her house at 1 p.m. to execute a living trust, and she did not know what to do. In a panic, she thought she would just not go to the door when he came.

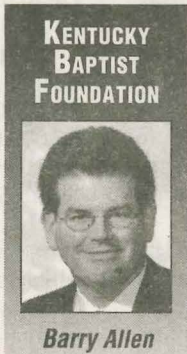
I asked her about the man and how this appointment came to be. She said she had returned a form she received in the mail about living trusts, then a woman called her and arranged the appointment.

I suggested she call the man, inform him she wanted to cancel, apologize for the inconvenience and thank him for his interest in helping her.

I share that incident to caution you about the various solicitations you will receive via the mail, newspaper, telephone and TV about living trusts. Oftentimes, the solicitation comes in the form of

a free meal at a nearby motel or restaurant to hear about how you can avoid probate and save taxes. This is not to say none of those are worthy of attending, but it is to say beware and be sure you know what you are doing, and that you are going for information only and not to make any decisions or appointments on the spot. We know people who have been poorly advised into executing revocable living trusts whose circumstances did not justify the cost of that planning technique.

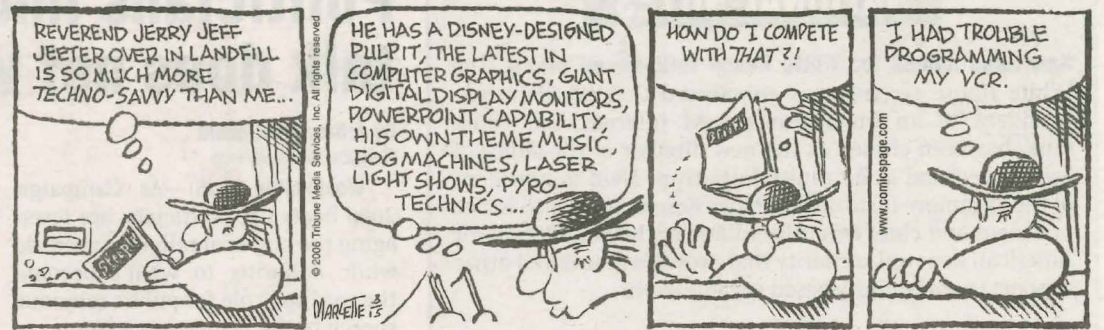
Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, has developed a seminar titled, "The Truth about Probate and Living Trusts," for the sole purpose of assisting you and your fellow church members in understanding what is involved and what circumstances justify consideration of a revocable living trust. Call her toll-free to arrange the seminar for your church or senior adult group, or for private consultation.



Barry Allen

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Elaine Okupski

Across

- 1 To damage
- 4 "And Saul ____ unto David" (1 Samuel 17:37)
- 8 Cushions
- 12 "Blessed ____ the meek" (Matthew 5:5)
- 13 Son of Helem (1 Chronicles 7:35)
- 14 Operatic solo
- 15 ____ Goliath (2 words)
- 17 Genuine
- 18 Genesis garden
- 19 ____ of Two Cities (2 words)
- 20 "The wine ____" (Psalms 75:8) (2 words)
- 22 Man of brave deeds
- 24 Female rabbits
- 25 Sealing wax
- 29 Epoch
- 30 Member of the nobility
- 31 Anger
- 32 "Making a noise with psalteries ____" (1 Chronicles 15:28) (2 words)
- 34 "They ____ not the bones till the morrow" (Ephesians 3:3)
- 35 "The ____ are a people not strong" (Proverbs 30:25)
- 36 "Yet offend in one ____" (James 2:10)
- 37 "The ____ of his fire shall not shine" (Job 18:5)
- 40 " ____! for that day is great" (Jeremiah 30:7)
- 41 "The ____ of the Lord was with him" (Luke 1:66)
- 42 David's friend
- 46 Father of Shammah (2 Samuel 23:11)
- 47 Son of Jerahmeel (1 Chronicles 2:25)

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46				47				48		
49				50				51		

- 48 Female sheep
- 49 "Thou shalt not build it of ____ stone" (Exodus 20:25)
- 50 Wagers
- 51 Fourth letter of the alphabet
- 22 "We hanged our ____ upon the willows" (Psalms 137:2)
- 23 Greek god of love
- 25 "For we know in ____" (1 Corinthians 13:9)
- 26 "He said, It is ____" (John 19:30)
- 27 Teheran's country
- 28 Salamander
- 30 "Behold, I stood upon the ____ of the river" (Genesis 41:17)
- 33 " ____ not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:8)
- 34 "He shall bring a she ____ of the first year for a sin offering" (Numbers 15:27)
- 36 Schemes
- 37 Middle eastern ruler
- 38 Book leaf
- 39 " ____ heart also will I give you" (Ezekiel 36:26) (2 words)
- 40 "Casting ____ into the sea" (Mark 1:16) (2 words)
- 42 Old Testament book
- 43 Metal-bearing rock
- 44 "Stand in ____, and sin not" (Psalms 4:4)
- 45 Born, Fr.
- 6 "There was no room for them in the ____" (Luke 2:7)
- 7 Father
- 8 "And he was in the hinder ____ the ship" (Mark 4:38) (2 words)
- 9 Length x width
- 10 Knob
- 11 Garage ____
- 16 The ____ of March
- 19 Son of Dishan (1 Chronicles 1:42)
- 20 Thought
- 21 "As ____ as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter" (Revelation 10:10)

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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TURNING HEARTS
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The Turning Hearts Tour is coming to Frankfort Ky., September 16th!

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NATIONAL NOTES

New head named for White House faith-based office. The White House recently has announced that Jay Hein, the president of an Indianapolis-based international think tank, has been chosen as the new director of the Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. Hein is president of the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research. He also is vice president and chief executive officer of the Foundation for American Renewal, a charity that provides grants and other support to community-based organizations.

Multnomah acquired by Random House. Multnomah Publishers, the Oregon-based company that published the best-selling "Prayer of Jabez" book five years ago, has been bought by Random House. The acquisition strengthens the New York-based book publisher's presence in the Christian book publishing industry. Multnomah has published writers ranging from Focus on the Family Chairman James Dobson to Georgia megachurch pastor Andy Stanley. But it gained prominence when it released "The Prayer of Jabez," a 92-page hardcover book by Bruce Wilkinson in 2001. The small volume was cited by Publishers Weekly as the top-selling nonfiction book that year.

Arizona judge keeps marriage amendment on ballot. Arizona's proposed constitutional marriage amendment does not violate state law and can be placed on the November ballot—assuming the required signatures are verified—a state judge ruled Aug. 10. Judge Douglas Rayes rejected the arguments of opponents, who said the amendment violates the Arizona constitution by covering more than one subject. The two-sentence amendment protects the natural definition of marriage by banning both "gay marriage" and Vermont-style civil unions.

ACLU objects to cross-shaped Katrina memorial. Alarmed by reports that a hurricane memorial will feature a cross bearing a likeness of the face of Jesus, the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana is citing concerns about violating the Constitution's separation of church and state. St. Bernard Parish President Junior Rodríguez said the monument—listing the names of parish residents who died in Hurricane Katrina—is earmarked for private land and is being financed with donations. But ACLU officials said the Parish Council was sanctioning a religious monument.

Politicians finding judgment talk does not work on stump

By Jeffrey MacDonald
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—As Campaign 2006 heats up, politicians are leveraging the power of religious rhetoric while adhering to what's become the cardinal rule for public religious speech in the 21st century: Never say God gets angry.

After the emergence of so-called "values voters" in 2004, political figures on both the left and right haven't been shy this year about invoking a Judeo-Christian deity.

Yet when describing their faiths and their view of God, politicians of all stripes apparently have learned to leave prevalent biblical ideas about divine punishment inside the church or temple.

The reason, according to journalism scholars, is simple: Journalists who used to ignore such remarks from public figures now deem them worthy of national coverage—and consequently, public shaming.

Reporters "are saying, 'I've got to warn the public that there are people out there like that,'" said Judith Buddenbaum, a retired journalism professor and author of "Reporting News about Religion: An Introduction for Journalists."

Stakes are high in elections, Buddenbaum said, in part because a theology of judgment "plays havoc on any kind of international relations, unless your goal is to get to Armageddon."

As proven in recent years, one reference to an angry God can make an otherwise humdrum local story go national overnight. New Orleans

Mayor Ray Nagin proved the point earlier this year, as he joined Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson as public figures who have apologized under pressure for linking natural disasters with divine displeasure.

Americans haven't always been so offended by the idea of divine judgment. The first colonial settlers fasted on "Days of Humiliation" to appease a punitive God Whom they thought sent drought in retribution for their sins.

Abraham Lincoln maintained the tradition with a proclamation on April 30, 1863, by asking, "May we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins?"

Market forces help explain the shift, according to Carol Pardun, a scholar of religion coverage and director of the journalism program at Middle Tennessee State University. She said reporters have increasingly seized on angry God references over the past 20 years, not because such remarks are more common, but because they trigger the strong emotions that sell news.

In Pardun's view, the "public conscience" expects a certain degree of safe, predictable and non-offensive values to be expressed in the public square. When it comes to politics and religion, that means a God of love and comfort, but never one of punishment.

People "think they can handle religious diversity in public discourse," Pardun said. "But they really can't."

Gospel music album sales grew in first half of '06

Nashville (RNS)—Sales of gospel music albums climbed 11.6 percent in the first half of 2006, compared to the same period in 2005.

In the six-month period, gospel music albums sold 17,952,000 compared to 16,085,000 for the same period in 2005, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

That's the first time album sales have increased since 2002, officials said.

Legal downloads made up a greater portion of the total music sales, according to Nielsen, with 502,000 albums downloaded in the first half of 2006, up from 191,000 albums downloaded in the first half of 2005.

The top-selling albums for the first half of 2006 were:

1. "Precious Memories" by Alan Jackson.
2. "Hero" by Kirk Franklin.
3. "Flyleaf" by Flyleaf.
4. "WoW Gospel 2006" by various artists.
5. "Lifesong" by Casting Crowns.
6. "Piece of My Passion" by Juanita Bynum.
7. "Testify" by P.O.D.
8. "WoW Hits 2006" by various artists.
9. "Coming Up to Breathe" by MercyMe.
10. "Wherever You Are" by Third Day.

'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us'

Bible story reminds us it's always nice when someone thinks to say 'Thanks'

Most of us are well acquainted with the story in Luke 17 about the 10 lepers. Their situation was dire and they were understandably desperate. When they met Jesus they asked Him to have mercy on them. They believed He could help. I don't think Luke told this story because Jesus healed 10 lepers; I believe this story was recorded to tell us about the nine lepers and the one leper. These two groups are part of the same story, but they are uniquely different. We know all 10 were healed that day of their leprosy and that nine apparently were too excited to say "thanks," but one was thoughtful enough to return to Jesus praising God.

In many ways, much of what Oneida does every day is similar to this story. All 10 benefited from Jesus' generous gift, and they likely could return to a normal life and become productive citizens. But all of us should have a special appreciation for the one who returned to express his gratitude. With this story in mind, you can understand how much we appreciate it when one of our students remembers what he or she received here and is thoughtful enough to say "thank you."

"Keith" (not his real name) was just such a student. Keith came to Oneida in 1987 as a junior in high school. He was a weak student academically. Math concepts and math skills were difficult for him. He could read reasonably well, but his comprehension was poor. Keith had spent nearly all of his life going to school, but gained little useful information for his efforts. Like most students, he had given up and felt school was a complete waste of time.

We found Keith to be a friendly boy who always was willing to do anything to please us. He was a hard worker and appreciated the tutorial help we provided. Academically he always struggled, and we knew his years after graduation were going to be challenging. He likely would have to accept lesser paying jobs and would discover that some people would not be willing to give him the opportunities and attention we gave him. Keith graduated in 1989. He has moved a lot since then and has had a difficult time finding his place in the work force.

But Keith remembers Oneida, our concern for him and our efforts to meet his needs. After he graduated, he often wrote to my predecessor, Dr. Moore, and he writes to me also. It is obvious that he still struggles with his writing skills. But he at least cares enough to write. He always mentions his days at Oneida and some special memory of working with me or helping me with a particular

project. In addition to the letters, there is nearly always a financial gift. It is not a big gift, mind you, normally just two, three or maybe even five dollars. The important thing is that he cares enough to write and tuck a little gift in with the letter. He nearly always asks me to pass the gift on to a student who does not have much.

It must have greatly pleased Jesus when the one leper cared enough to return and say, "Thank you." I wonder how much more pleased Jesus would have been if all 10 had done the same. I am thankful for Keith and his appreciation for what we did for him. I would like for our friends to know how much we appreciate you, too.

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

A picture does not do it justice

Clear Creek mission team serves in New Orleans

We've all heard the saying, "A picture paints a thousand words." When Dean of Institutional Advancement Donnie Fox recently viewed hurricane-damaged New Orleans, his first thoughts were, "A picture does not do it justice!" Fox led a college mission team to help with the disaster relief efforts May 27-June 2.

In addition to Fox, the team was composed of Bible professor Bill Helton, trustee Ellis Payne from White Plains, and seven students: Doug Bridges, Donna Good, Sean Lee, Jonathan Paugh, Kip Rager, Kelly Wilder and Jennifer York. The team was assigned to gut a storm-ravaged house in St. Bernard Parrish. Floodwaters reached 10 feet in the house, and it had not been touched since the water had receded. The team cleared out the interior down to the wood studs, pressure-washed it and got the house ready for another crew to rebuild the interior.

"It was overwhelming to look at all the debris piled on the roadsides and see the thousands of houses that remained untouched," Fox said. "The team initially questioned if they were

doing any good at all by working on one house; but after finishing the job each team member was grateful to help one family that would not have been helped if the team had not gone to New Orleans."

Oak Park Baptist Church provided team housing, and a Texas team cooked their meals and served them in the church fellowship hall.

Attendance at Oak Park has declined from about 800 members to less than 100; the pastor and some staff have resigned. The church sustained wind damage.

Each day the Clear Creek team traveled from Oak Park through the Ninth Ward to St. Bernard Parrish, the horrific sights underscoring the continuing need for volunteers.

After a Clear Creek team traveled to Pascagoula, Miss., last December, a friend donated a disaster relief trailer. Bill Helton built the inside equipment holders, and churches donated a generator, yard tools, electric hand tools, two chain saws and pressure washer. "We're set to respond to most disaster appeals," Fox said.



Bill Whittaker

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

Publisher raises eyebrows with book on terrorist attacks

Louisville (RNS)—A book published by the denominational press of the Presbyterian Church (USA) poses provocative questions about Sept. 11 and has raised the hackles of church conservatives.

Westminster John Knox Press, a division of Presbyterian Publishing Corp., is printing 7,500 copies of "Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11," according to Davis Perkins, the corporation's president and publisher. It was released during the second week of July, Perkins said.

The book is written by David Ray Griffin, a former professor of theology who has written two other books that posit a conspiratorial link between the U.S. government and the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

In the book Griffin argues that "the Bush administration planned the events of Sept. 11 so they could provide justification for going to war in Afghanistan and Iraq," according to an article on Christianity Today's Web site.

While the Louisville-based Presbyterian Publishing Corp. has strong ties to the Presbyterian Church (USA), it is separately incorporated and receives no funding from the church, Perkins said.

The publisher's nine-member board of directors is appointed by the church's General Assembly, but editors have wide lati-

tude in the books they choose, Perkins said.

Under the John Knox Press imprint, "we have historically published thousands of books on a variety of topics and on popular culture and no one ever identifies those books as the official position of PCUSA," Perkins said.

PPC said it would post a lengthy explanation titled "Why We Published This Book" on its Web site.

Still, negative reaction to the book among Presbyterians like Toby Brown, a pastor in Cuero, Texas, is heating up cyberspace.

"Why, out of all the things they could be publishing, would the church choose this?" Brown asked in an interview. "What business does the church have getting involved in theories about 9/11?"

Brown predicted "this is going to be a big deal" and said many Presbyterians gathered at blogs and chatrooms are planning a boycott of the publisher.

"It makes it look like our church might be endorsing the book's ideas, or at least close to that kind of notion, and that would be false," he said. Brown said he has not read the book.

Perkins said the book is a "serious-minded treatment of the issues," and of "how Christians may incorporate (the 9/11 attacks) into their faith lives."

'Adrianisms' captures Rogers' sayings

Nashville (BP)—Much of the wit and "sound-bite wisdom" of the late Adrian Rogers has been captured by a new book published by a ministry group he founded.

According to wife Joyce Rogers, her husband, the former pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church near Memphis, was "just programmed" to create or memorize phrases that helped drive home his message.

"They stuck to him, and he just remembered them," Mrs. Rogers wrote in the foreword of "Adrianisms: The Wit and Wisdom of Adrian Rogers."

"Some are original. Some he gleaned from reading or hearing others say—he may have even forgotten who said them originally."

The book, compiled by the Love Worth Finding staff, includes his spiritual insights on a number of topics:

- On the character of God, "God only wants for us what we would want for ourselves if we were smart enough to want it."

- On the lordship of Christ, "If I put things between me and Christ, it is idolatry. If I put Christ between me and things, it is victory!"

- On the Word of God, "If you have a Bible that's falling apart, you'll have a life that's not."

- On prayer, "Pray and doubt; you'll do without. Pray and believe; you will receive."

Rogers also used the gift of humor to engage his audiences and

impart biblical truths.

Friends said he loved to tell stories that brought laughs but also cut straight to the heart of Scripture, and the book captures his funny wit:

- On attending a large church, "Just sit somewhere in the first 10 rows and don't look back."

- On acting religious, "It's like a pig. You can scrub him clean, brush his teeth, and dress him in a pink ribbon; but he will go right back into the mire. A scrubbing on the outside doesn't change his inner nature."

- On grumpy folks, "Some people brighten up a room just by leaving it."

- On relationships, "If you marry a child of the devil, you'll get the devil for a daddy-in-law."

The Love Worth Finding staff "scoured through scribbled notes in flyleaves of Bibles, received lists containing collected sayings, read and listened to numerous messages, and perked up (their) ears as people have inevitably said, 'As Pastor would say ...,'" Bill Skelton, president of LWF, wrote in the preface to the book.

"He had a way of taking common things and saying them in such an uncommon way so as to make you think through them all over again," Skelton wrote. "And conversely, he could take uncommon things and put them in unusually common terms."

102 Fascinating Topics for Group Discussions: A Spiritual Dictionary. Preston A. Taylor. Xulon Press, 2006. 222 pages. \$13.99. ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Preston Taylor is a former missionary and currently the pastor of a bilingual church in South Texas. As most pastors have experienced, he probably has times when some group is expecting a Bible study at a set time (maybe Wednesday or Sunday evening) and the teaching well is dry.

Or printed material for a Bible study group is late and the leader comes to the minister for a suggestion of something to do.

Or a new Bible study group is forming and the search is on for material to use. This book by Taylor might be the solution for any of these situations and is a welcome addition to the Bible reference section of my library. It is also one of those books that will find popularity in a church media library.

Taylor's book approaches Bible study topically, and the topics range from angels to worship. Each topic begins with a brief introduction, which sometimes sets the contemporary setting of the topic, or an historical or personal example, or the biblical background. Taylor then launches into a list of 10 or more verses, or periscopes, that address the topic. Each biblical reference is accompanied by questions that serve as discussion starters for small group interaction. There is nothing fancy here. It is Bible study at its basics.

The pastor or group leader should spend time with commentaries or Bible dictionaries to be fully prepared for the discussion of the topics presented here.

Taylor's goal is to set up the discussion of the verses, which both the leader and the participants should already have studied to some extent. The verses for each topic take the student through the Old and New Testaments. The book will not find its best use if either the leader or the participant comes to the study without having already spent time with the Scriptures. The book also lends itself for an individual's study of the topics. *Wayne Hager*

Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders. Reggie McNeal. Jossey-Bass, 2006. 170 pages. \$23.95. ♦♦♦♦

Anyone who has heard Reggie McNeal or read anything he has written knows he is passionate in his conviction that the church cannot continue doing business as usual.

The present and the future, as he sees them, stand in significant discontinuity with the past. Responding to today's challenges with yesterday's programs and leadership are doomed to fail. The church must launch out into risky, uncharted waters.

Consistent with this view is his conviction that the church needs a new quality of leadership. We must move beyond good leadership

to great, or as the subtitle states, extraordinary spiritual leaders. Without this type of leader, the church is condemned to ineffective mediocrity.

Foundational to his seven disciplines, McNeal outlines three characteristics of greatness: humility, effectiveness and the willingness to serve. But possessing these characteristics alone will not assure greatness. The practice of seven spiritual disciplines—self-awareness, self-management, self-development, mission, decision-making, belonging and aloneness—is

crucial. I almost gave up on McNeal in his discussion of the first three practices. While arguing for a new, more powerful, committed leader, the chapters dealing with these practices were little more than a rehash of pop-psychology.

It was not until the last four that I felt he began to touch base with the concern for developing "extraordinary spiritual leaders." In some sense, one could put into practice each of these disciplines without a vibrant and growing relationship with God. Tying his discussion more closely to some of the classical spiritual disciplines—prayer, scripture reading, meditation, solitude, hospitality, etc., would have strengthened his presentation. *Jim Holladay*

A Place for Skeptics: A Spiritual Journey for Those Who May Have Given Up on Church But Not on God. Scott Larson and Chris Mitchell. Regal Books, 2005. 185 pages. \$14.99. ♦♦♦♦

Most devotional books are based on daily readings from the Bible. This book bases its 30 daily devotions on The Apostles' Creed as a way to move into the Word of God.

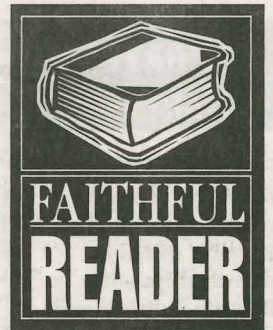
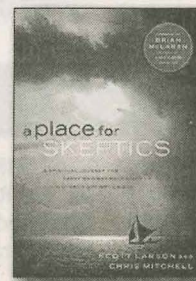
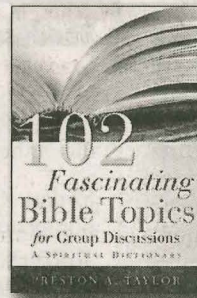
Scott Larson and Chris Mitchell use a conversational style to relay Christian truth in a relevant and non-con-

frontational style. Their chapters begin with a question that is answered by a portion of the Apostles' Creed.

On day 10, for example, the devotion asks: "What does God want from me?" They answer with the creed's statement: "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." A Scripture passage from The Message translation reinforces the day's reading. This chapter then explains how discipleship works. "It's about decisions made in light of the life, teachings, and even the death and resurrection of Jesus, which leads us into the life that God designed us for."

Each chapter ends with a recommended prayer and questions designed to provoke soul-searching honesty. Each day's devotion recommends another book to read to explore further that day's focus.

Readers will find each day's lesson reinforced by illustrations that they can relate to. "A Place for Skeptics" is a good devotional book for someone looking for a different angle to spiritual growth. *Steve Coleman*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; and Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: whager@adelphia.net; lyndonpastor@aol.com; risen4me@hotmail.com.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following projects related to Kentucky Baptists' mission partnerships with Baptists in Brazil and Europe:

■ Two Kentucky Baptist teams currently are serving in Teresina, Brazil. A team of seven volunteers from Christian County Baptist Association is involved in a church start/evangelism project. A six-member team from Three Forks Baptist Association is taking part in a church plant/discipleship project.

■ Two Kentucky Baptist teams that served earlier this summer in Brazil recorded 230 professions of faith in Christ, according to Southern Baptist missionary Scott Pittman. He requested prayer for effective follow-up ministry efforts by Brazilian Christians and that new believers will be discipled and integrated into the congregations.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BEDFORD**—**Scott Adams** recently resigned as music minister of Bedford Church.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will celebrate its 55th anniversary and homecoming Aug. 27. Events include worship at 11 a.m., a noon potluck meal and fellowship time and a 1:30 p.m. worship service featuring former minister of music **Jason Dunbar** in concert. For more information, call (270) 789-0082.
- **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Mount Zion Church recently called **Heath Lambert** as pastor.
- **FAIRDALE**—**Dallas Catron**, pastor of Oak Grove Church, recently resigned due to health concerns.
- **FALMOUTH**—Short Creek Church recently called **Brad Whiteford** as pastor.
- **FULTON**—Crutchfield Church recently called **Wallace Smith** as pastor.
- **HARDIN**—Aurora Church will celebrate homecoming Aug. 20 with **Dewey Dick** as guest speaker. **Richard Edmiston** is pastor.
- **HENDERSON**—**Jim Adams** recently resigned as pastor of New Hope Church.
- **LAGRANGE**—**Brian Shoemaker** recently resigned as pastor of Buckner Church.
- **LEXINGTON**—South Elkhorn Church recently called **Damon Jones** as pastor. He previously was a church planter and pastor in Greenfield, Ind.
- **LOUISVILLE**—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship recently endorsed **Richard Forest** and **Terry Tatro** as hospital chaplains for Norton Healthcare.

Fern Creek Church recently

Spotlight on ...

Sanders



Jordan Church will celebrate homecoming Aug. 20 with an 11 a.m. worship service followed by a fellowship meal. For more information, call (859) 428-9396. **John Collett** is pastor.

called **Derek Allen** as minister of youth and recreation.

■ **MAYFIELD**—Bethany Church will celebrate homecoming Aug. 27. **Cloys Bruce** is pastor.

■ **PENDLETON**—Sligo Church recently called **John Park** as associate pastor to students.

■ **PRINCETON**—Northside Church recently called **Trey Reid** as minister of students.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—First Church called **Andrew Prince** as pastor effective Sept. 10.

Pleasant Grove Church recently called **Von Smith** as pastor.

■ **STONE**—**Robert Stephens** recently resigned as pastor of Stone Church.

■ **WATER VALLEY**—Pilot Oak Church will hold revival services Aug. 20-23 with **Ronnie Sivells** as evangelist. **Kevin Keeling** is pastor.

What's going on?

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

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

August

19 Super Saturday, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.

26 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, and First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg.

September

9 Super Saturday, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset, and Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.

15-16 Women on Mission/Baptist Nursing Fellowship Fall Retreat, Jonathan Creek.

16 Super Saturday, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

18-21 FAITH Clinic, Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville.

18-19 Kentucky Baptist Ministers Golf Tournament, Cherry Blossom Golf Course, Georgetown.

23 Children in Action Day Camp, Cedar Crest.

25 Discipleship/Assimilation, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

29-30 FOCUS 2006, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

October

5-7 Ministers in Transition, Louisville.

6-7 Celebrate the Mission, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

9 Senior Adult Choir—West, First Baptist Church, Madisonville.

13-14 Women On Mission/Baptist Nursing Fellowship Fall Retreat, Cedarmore.

14 101 Workshop, Union Baptist Church, Union.

16 Senior Adult Choir—East, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

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

Hutchinson named church planter

Alpharetta, Ga.—Jason Hutchinson has been appointed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board as a church planting missionary pastor in Paintsville.

He will be planting churches in the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky.

"We will be planting new churches, developing a mission outpost in Paintsville in order to host Southern Baptist mission teams from throughout the U.S. who come and serve in our

area," Hutchinson explained.

A native of Ashland, Hutchinson is a graduate of Morehead State Uni-

versity. He also attended Ashland Community College, the University of Kentucky and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

His wife, Jennifer, attended Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond; Word of Life Bible Institute in Pottersville, N.Y.; and Baptist Bible College and Seminary in Clarks Summit, Pa. They have one son, Peyton, 2.



Jason Hutchinson

CLASSIFIED ADS

AVAILABLE: Conservative Southern Baptist minister for revivals and youth evangelism events; small or large churches; contemporary or traditional worship; just where God leads. Call (859) 272-7156 for more information.

FOR SALE: 1971 Moller organ with all pipes, bench, Harrisburg Maryland, opus 10769. Beautiful. Contact Richard Landers, (859) 623-4028, ext. 205, or (859) 200-7200.

SEEKING: Bivocational youth leader (grades 7-12), Liberty Baptist Church, Auburn, Ky. Send resumé: LBC Youth Committee, 6439 Middletown Road, Auburn, KY 42206, Attn: Allison Creek. E-mail: allison.chyle@wku.edu.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister. Send resumé to: Friendship Baptist, 5411 Bengal Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Ridgecrest Baptist Church. Membership: 406; SS: 84. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, PO Box 177, Beaver Dam, KY 42320.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director for First Baptist Church, Hazard, Ky. Visit our Web site at hazardfbc.org for salary information and job description. Applicants should send resumé to: Dr. Ricky Ray, First Baptist Church, 560 Main St., Hazard, KY 41701.

SEEKING: Interim youth minister for Red House Baptist Church. Qualified candidates who desire consideration are requested to forward a resumé and cover letter to: Red House Baptist Church, 2301 Red House Road, Richmond, KY 40475, Attn: Steve Scrivner.

SEEKING: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has an immediate need for a manager of compensation and employment services. This position is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of wage and salary policies and procedures, wage and salary surveys, performance-based merit increases, and management training on the new and/or revised procedures. This position also is responsible for the seminary's employment processes, including recruiting, screening, continuing education plans for selected positions, and employee records. B.S. in human resources, business administration or related, plus a minimum of five years applicable work experience is required. The seminary offers an excellent work environment, fast-paced and multi-tasking, plus a competitive salary and benefits package. Qualified candidates should e-mail their resumé with cover letters (reference this job title) and salary histories to: humanresources@sbs.edu.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor, Southern Baptist church. Resumé to: PSC, Gardenside Baptist, 1667 Alexandria Drive, Lexington, KY 40504; or submit electronically to gbcpastorsearch@gmail.com.

SEEKING: A dynamic leader at Missouri Baptist University to help launch the university's new worship arts major, a progressive program that transcends the lines of communication, music and religion to help prepare committed worship leaders for tomorrow. This full-time faculty appointment should have a storied past in church worship, understanding the vast array of corporate worship—from traditional to emergent. For more information, go to www.mobap.edu/jobs.

SEEKING: Part-time worship and music pastor for First Baptist Church, New Tazewell, Tenn. Related education and/or experience required. Resumé will be received until Sept. 14. Send resumé with cover letter to newtazewellfbc@centurytel.net or to Worship and Music Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 248, New Tazewell, TN 37824.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director (grades 6-12) for Highlands Baptist in Lexington. Mail resumé to Mary Dixon, Highlands Baptist Church, 2032 Parallel Road, Lexington, KY 40511.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister. Send resumé to: Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, 11212 Lees Road, Alexandria, KY 41001.

SEEKING: Part-time church pianist to accompany worship choir and join the praise band in worship. Send resumé and salary expectations to: Personnel Committee, Berea Baptist Church, 310 Chestnut St., Berea, KY 40403.

SEEKING: Part-time, permanent children's and youth minister. Seeking energetic individual with calling to lead young souls to Christ. Please submit resumé to: Personnel Committee, Evergreen Baptist Church, 2698 Evergreen Road, Frankfort, KY 40601; and/or call (859) 621-5582.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for FBC Olive Hill. Church averages 110 in SS, 155-170 in worship. Send resumé and a cassette/video/CD of sermon delivery to: FBC, Olive Hill, KY 41164, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister, Friendship Baptist of Campbellsville. Send resumé to: 5411 Bengal Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

SERVICES: Christian long distance: 3.9 interstate; 4.9 in state; no monthly service charge. Call: (866) 587-8346 or www.lowermyphonebill.com/harold/.

Having a ball with God

Agency coordinates 'Faith Nights' to help churches, fans and teams

By Tim Ellsworth
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—Joe and Lisa Cox had been attending First Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., but hadn't officially joined the church.

They had been talking to Jeff Lake, the church's children's minister, about starting a Sunday school class for special needs children. Lake called one day and invited the couple to a Faith Night for the Nashville Sounds, the Triple-A affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers.

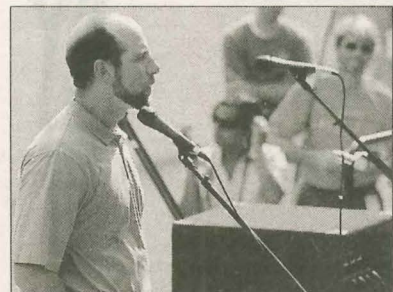
"It was just a great experience," Joe Cox said about the evening at the ballpark. "We were able to meet other teachers and other workers in Sunday school that we otherwise would never have run into. It was a great atmosphere for that, and for getting to meet and develop relationships with other children's teachers at the church."

The next Sunday, Joe and Lisa officially joined the church.

Stories like that are not uncommon around Third Coast Sports, the Nashville-based company that schedules and promotes Faith Night events at multiple sports venues across the country.

What started as a promotion for the Nashville Sounds has, in just a few years, turned into a national sports phenomenon. This year, Third Coast Sports will hold more than 75 Faith Night events across the nation.

Minor league baseball teams are still the primary focus, but last month the Atlanta Braves became the first major league team to partner with Third Coast Sports for



JOHN SMOLTZ The veteran Atlanta Braves pitcher gave his personal testimony at a recent Faith Day at Turner Field. It was the first such event to be held at a major league stadium.



VISUAL REMINDER Jeff Francoeur, right fielder for the Atlanta Braves, has "Joshua 1:9" written on the wrist strap of his batting gloves as a reminder to be strong and courageous.

Faith Day.

"The reason it's growing has nothing to do with us," said Brent High, president of Third Coast Sports. "It's God blessing us. We can't take the credit for all this. God is obviously orchestrating something much bigger than we are."

Going major league

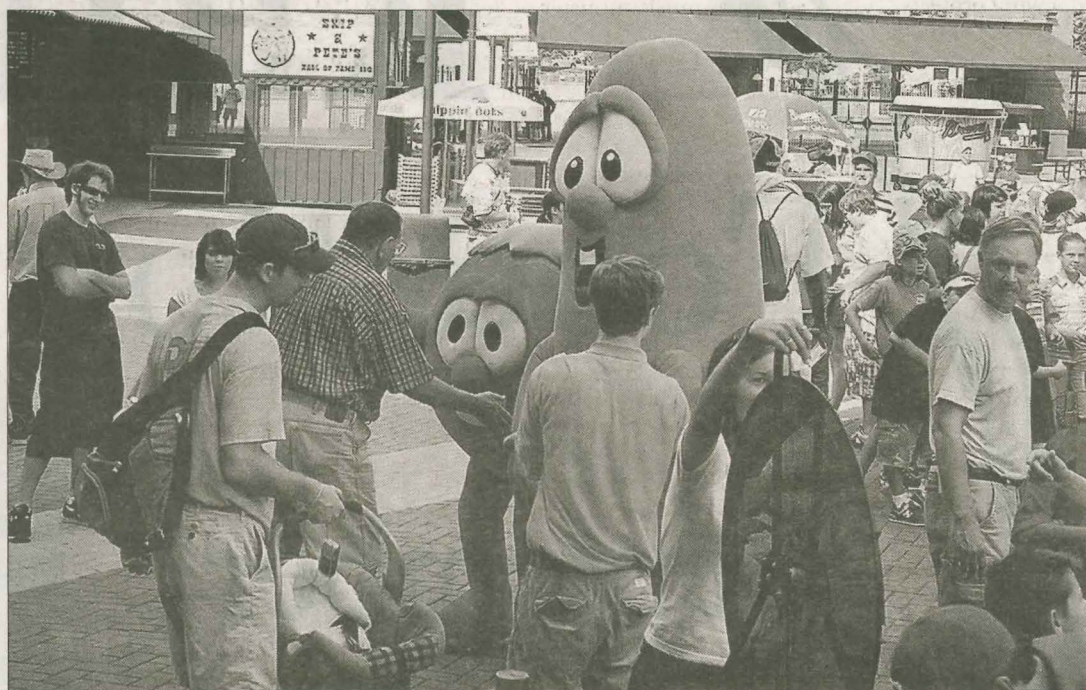
Braves pitcher John Smoltz shared his testimony July 27 as part of the first of three Faith Day/Faith Night events in Atlanta. Last weekend, Braves relief pitcher Chris Reitsma was scheduled to speak, and later this month, former Brave Sid Bream will speak.

The Arizona Diamondbacks are also on board for a Faith Night event Aug. 27.

High expects other major league teams to follow suit.

The company is also exploring possibilities with the NFL, NBA, NHL and NASCAR. Third Coast Sports has been featured in stories in USA Today, The New York Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer and other major publications. An entire ESPN "Outside the Lines" program also was dedicated to Faith Nights.

Fans who attend Faith Night at the ballpark will encounter a few things out of the norm. They might receive a bobblehead doll of a biblical character like Noah, Daniel or Elijah. They might see Bible giveaways. They might run into Veggie Tales characters Bob or Larry. They may hear a concert from a Christian group. They may hear testimonies from Christian players.



But ultimately, High said the success of Faith Nights isn't determined by what happens at the ballpark.

"There has to be that very intentional, unashamed ministry aspect to this effort, or it's just another event that a church can be involved with," High said. "As a former youth minister, I know how much church leaders get hit up with stuff to do. So we've found an event that is not only fun, but is also very much ministry and outreach and church-wide fellowship and involvement."

Serving fans & filling seats

High said Faith Nights accomplish the goals of several different groups simultaneously. For Christians and Christian business owners, the goal is to use these events as opportunities for outreach to people not involved in a local church.

"All of the ministry goals are easily and readily rolled into the goals of the teams as well, because they are looking for attendance, and they are looking to fill empty seats," High said.

Jeff Parker, general manager for the West Tennessee Diamond Jaxx in Jackson, Tenn., can attest to the ability of Faith Nights to help fill empty seats. Parker said Faith Nights are a natural fit for his team.

Attendance on Faith Nights is typically several hundred more than on an average night at the ballpark, he noted.

"It's a no-brainer for us," Parker said. "The entertainment's great. It

gives us something other than baseball. It gets some people in here who typically might not come to a game. It gets the whole family out."

High has a few stories to illustrate how Faith Nights are making an impact on people. At one event, a 10-year-old boy came to Faith Night at the invitation of a friend. He picked up a free "Heart of the Outdoors" camouflaged Bible because his dad liked to hunt and fish.

High said the dad started crying when his son handed him the Bible. The father hadn't read the Bible in 20 years, but recommitted his life to God and started attending church.

At another event in Las Vegas, a teenager had stopped attending church after impregnating his girlfriend and dropping out of high school. He returned to church when he was convicted by what Christian recording artist Matthew West had to say during his concert as part of Faith Night.

High stresses that Faith Nights are not "ambush evangelism," as he calls it. The event is separate from the game itself, and activities are held in an area of the stadium and at a time when fans have to make an intentional effort to be part of them.

So far, churches have responded with overwhelming support, and High said that's the key for the continued success of the promotion.

"We are just trying to set the table, and then the churches can take it from there," he said.

VEGGIE TALES Bob the Tomato and Larry the Cucumber, characters from the Veggie Tales cartoons, entertain the crowd before some Faith Night events, which have become popular with churchgoers across the country. (BP/Third Coast Sports photos by Emily High)

Some YMCA affiliates seeking to recapture identity for Christian outreach

Nashville (BP)—It was founded 150 years ago as the Young Men's Christian Association, but any mention of Christianity has been dropped from many of the 2,617 YMCA facilities throughout the nation.

"Unfortunately, people look at us and just see a swim and gym," John Alexander, executive director of a YMCA in Danville, Ill., told The Tennessean newspaper when 5,000 YMCA leaders convened in Nashville for their national convention in July.

"Many people are uncomfortable with religion, and I under-

stand. But it's a Christian organization. It's nothing to be ashamed of."

Many affiliates have renewed efforts to be seen as a Christian organization.

Alexander, seeking to put the C back in YMCA, has added a display of the Ten Commandments, banners with Bible verses and a Bible in the lobby of his facility.

But some YMCA staff members and patrons would rather their local affiliate be known more as a family fitness center than a Christian outreach program, the newspaper stated.

"I think there's a strong desire at our Y not to be Christian focused," said Amy Amich, membership and marketing director at the McGaw YMCA in Evanston, Ill.

"Our Y would never think of having biblical verses on the wall," she said. "The fear is that people will be put off if we identify as Christian."

The YMCA's national mission statement is "to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all," but during recent decades, many YMCAs have drafted their own mission

statements that don't mention "Christian" at all, The Tennessean reported, and Bible studies and Christian programs have given way to fitness classes, treadmills and recreational programs.

Concerned YMCA directors who want the association to return to its Christian roots have organized the "John 17:21 Project," based on the verse that was part of the original logo of the YMCA, the newspaper reported.

About 20.2 million people are members of YMCAs, and the association's yearly revenue is just over \$5 billion.

KBHC Food Round Up

September
is the time
to collect for
the children.



Your donation of money or grocery gift cards
will provide food for hundreds of abused
and neglected children in the coming year.

For more information,
please call 800-456-1386
or visit our website at
www.kbhc.org

