



WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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Democrats view faith groups less favorably, poll finds

Princeton, N.J. (RNS)—A recent survey showed that most Americans think Republicans are more friendly than Democrats to religion. Apparently, the feeling is mutual, a new, separate Gallup poll has found.

Approximately 50 percent of Democrats and "Democratic leaners" hold positive opinions of Jews, Methodists, Baptists and Catholics, according to the survey. Nearly 70 percent of Republicans said they felt sympathetic toward those groups.

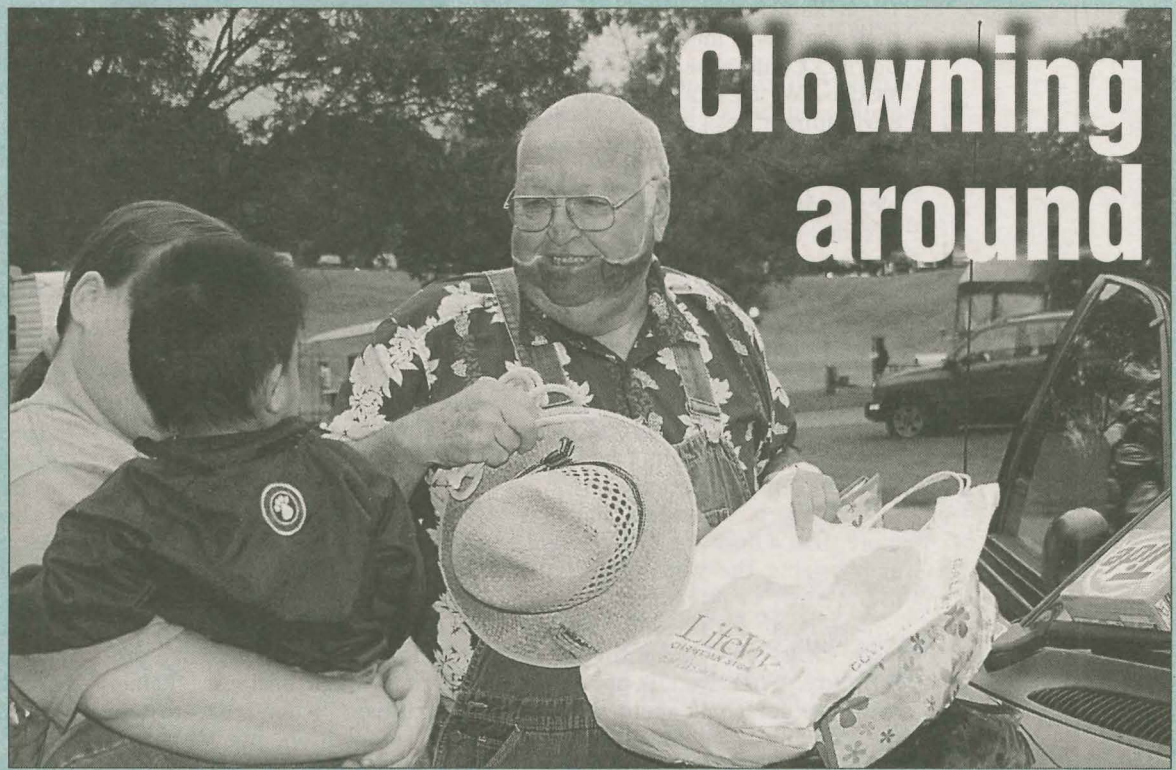
The divide between Republicans and Democrats was most striking in their evaluations of evangelical and "fundamentalist" Christians. While 63 percent of Republicans reported having positive opinions of evangelical Christians, just 31 percent of Democrats reported the same feelings.

A third of Democrats said they held negative views of "fundamentalist Christians," while 50 percent of Republicans reported holding positive opinions of the group.

Members of the two political parties were united in their feelings toward Muslims (27 percent of both groups reported positive opinions), and Scientologists (10 percent positive).

The survey, conducted last month by Gallup, asked 1,001 randomly selected American adults their views on 10 religious groups.

Those surveyed were asked whether they felt "very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or very negative," about Jews, Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, atheists, evangelical Christians, "fundamentalist" Christians and Scientologists.



Clowning around

ONE OF SEVERAL HATS Janus Jones, director of missions for South Union/Mount Zion Baptist Association, plays a role by his involvement in the association's clowning ministry. Jones is one of 20 directors of missions who is supported by the Missionary Assistance Program, which gets funding from the Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering. "Kentucky Baptists have made it possible for me to do the work the Lord has called me to do." (Photo by Dannah Prather)

Offering funds serious work for some associations

By Dannah Prather
Partnership Editions Editor

Louisville—Often described as a "pastor to pastors," directors of missions wear a variety of hats in the local Baptist associations where they serve.

But a lot of those hats would not have heads to hang on if it weren't for the Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering.

Without contributions to the

annual offering, the number of DOMs would drop significantly, according to Randy Jones, missions growth team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Eliza Broadus
State Missions Offering

The Missionary Assistance Program is one of several ministries funded by the offering. Through that program, 20 DOMs receive some or all of their salary. Missionary Assistance Program funds also purchase such benefits

as health insurance for many directors of missions.

Currently, the MAP program helps 11 full-time and nine part-time directors of missions, he said.

"Some associations probably couldn't have a director of missions without that assistance," Jones said.

From guest speaker on Sunday to organizer of local mission projects, directors of missions perform a multitude of duties.

□ See State offering helps ... Page 6

SonicFlood urges Kentucky youth to consider missions calling



MISSIONS MESSAGE SonicFlood, a Dove Award-winning Christian worship band, is teaming up with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board to challenge students to consider short-term volunteer mission projects. The 58-city "This Generation" tour stopped in Shepherdsville last week and will be in Bowling Green Oct. 19. (Photo by Trennis Henderson)

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Shepherdsville—Rick Heil suffered for years with Crohn's disease and harbored thoughts of suicide to escape the pain.

Heil, lead singer for SonicFlood, said he eventually reached a point in his life where he prayed, "I surrender, God. I don't have any options left. If You heal me, I'll worship You forever. If You don't heal me, I'll worship you forever. Let Your will be done in my life."

Heil, who also is an avid missions supporter, shared his testimony, musical talent and love for missions during a concert last week at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville.

The concert, part of a 58-city tour sponsored by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, challenged young people to "declare God's glory to every nation."

Heil told the concert crowd

that when he surrendered his life to Christ, "a miracle happened in me."

Emphasizing that "Jesus is the Great Physician," he added, "He has come to restore our hearts, minds, strength and souls.

"We believe in a God of hope, a God of love and a God of miracles who can change the world."

In addition to his spiritual healing, Heil said surgery two years ago found no trace of the intestinal disease that had plagued him since age 11.

"I grew up being taught that Jesus doesn't do miracles anymore, but that's a lie from hell," he declared. "Without miracles, what good is hope? Without being able to change the unchangeable, where is all his power? The greatest miracle of all is that God could love a guy like me so much that He would send His Son to die in my stead."

□ See SonicFlood urges ... Page 3

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, September 20.

"These are not times for the faint of heart."

LifeWay President Thom Rainer

Rainer urges LifeWay to gear up for future

Glorieta, N.M. (BP)—LifeWay Christian Resources expects to end its fiscal year Sept. 30 with record revenues of \$447.9 million, 1 percent below budget but 3.5 percent ahead of 2005.

"These are not times for the faint of heart," LifeWay President Thom Rainer told trustees during their Sept. 11-12 meeting at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico. "We are in a tough business environment, yet I believe that LifeWay's greatest days are yet to come.

"For 2007, we will invest in people, ministry initiatives, research, business development and technology infrastructure that lead us to blue oceans—those deep waters where significant new ministry and business opportunities lie," he said, referencing the book, "Blue Ocean Strategies: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant," by Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne.

"LifeWay is a business, but it is more than a business," Rainer said, emphasizing the word "Christian" in the entity's name.

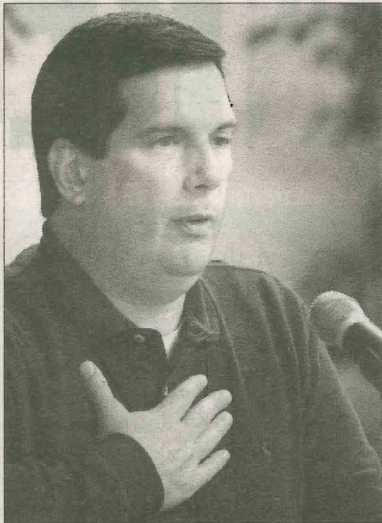
"We begin on the solid rock of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture. When we talk about our plans, we don't talk about them in the vacuum of the business world but with the presence of Christ," Rainer said. "If we hear His voice, we've got to get out of the context of the business model and walk in faith."

Rainer cited four realities LifeWay is facing that are keeping the organization in "red oceans" where competitors vie for the same customers, bloodying the waters:

- The continued decades-old decline in dated literature (primarily Sunday school material).

- The nearly 20 percent decline in religious trade book industry sales that are creating a challenging market for B&H Publishing Group.

- The highly competitive Christian retailing environment.



DEEP WATERS LifeWay President Thom Rainer challenged trustees to invest in ministry initiatives that lead to "deep waters where significant new ministry and business opportunities lie." (BP photo by Kent Harville)

- The fact that LifeWay's Glorieta Conference Center has lost money for eight consecutive years and Ridgecrest Conference Center has lost money five consecutive years.

"Being a Christian resource provider is a tough business," Rainer told trustees. "I don't like to talk about competition, but we've got to do something different if we are going to be an effective, viable ministry in the future."

Rainer said LifeWay will not abandon its core mission, but the Southern Baptist entity will begin to shift money in its 2007 budget—which begins Oct. 1—for new initiatives. That process already has begun, he said, with the reallocation of some resources over the last three months of the 2006 budget.

Among other reports:

- Church Resources Vice President John Kramp reported that a new Sunday school curriculum for all age groups will debut this fall. Bible Studies for Life will replace the Family Bible Study series.

- Mike Harland, director of LifeWay Worship Music Group, shared plans for a new online worship planning resource to help churches of any size put together complete worship services centered on their needs and preferences.

- LifeWay Christian Stores Vice President Mark Scott reported that the LifeWay Christian Store at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary reopened in May, the final location restored from the damage of Hurricane Katrina. New stores were opened in Hattiesburg, Miss., and Texarkana, Texas, and stores were relocated in Baltimore and in Augusta, Ga.

- Mike Arrington, vice president for corporate affairs, reported that 1,273 professions of faith and more than 5,200 spiritual decisions were made this year at Glorieta, Ridgecrest and LifeWay Camps.

In June, Glorieta completed the new Hall of States hotel, with 60 hotel-style rooms. Additional meeting space at Ridgecrest's new auditorium and recreation center facility, which also opened in June, allowed Centrifuge to increase by 800 participants over the previous year. Ridgecrest's expansion of the Mountain Laurel Inn—adding 108 rooms and additional meeting space—will be completed by the end of the year.

- LifeWay International Director Luis Aranguren reported that in six employee-led mission trips from October 2005 to June 2006, 107 LifeWay volunteers reported more than 16,000 professions of faith and 45 churches planted.

- Brad Waggoner, director of LifeWay Research, said results of the group's first study—a survey of Calvinist leanings among Southern Baptist pastors—will be released this week. He said LifeWay Research was established to assist and equip church leaders with information to strengthen church health and effectiveness.

IMB report affirms missionary learning center

Spartanburg, S.C. (BP)—Responding to concerns about the quality of new missionary work, Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees heard a report about the board's missionary learning center.

Meeting Sept. 11-13 in Spartanburg, S.C., trustees also appointed 87 missionaries. As one of the largest IMB missionary groups to be appointed, they will serve in 10 of the IMB's 11 administrative regions around the world.

The report about the IMB's missionary learning center concluded that the center provides:

- Programs that are sound theologically.

- Adherence to biblical parameters as expressed in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

- Healthy cooperative relationship between the IMB training programs and the larger Southern Baptist theological training system.

In response to a motion in March by trustee David Button of New York, the board heard a report addressing questions about trustees' rights to access non-public information from the IMB upon request.

Button expressed concern about IMB President Jerry Rankin declining to provide him a videotaped copy of an IMB chapel address in which Rankin said he "did not agree" with IMB policies prohibiting private prayer language by new missionaries and defining proper baptism.

The report concluded that adequate structures already exist regarding trustees' requests for information. The existing structure shows that a trustee can request information at any time, but is urged to follow established guidelines.

In an effort to organize a more effective approach to medical missions, the IMB plans to conduct its first medical mobilization event next summer for missionaries with healthcare assignments around the world and prospective missions volunteers. Rankin said the event will usher in a new effort, called the Global Medical Alliance, aimed to strengthen and help mobilize Southern Baptists to respond to medical needs.

Rankin acknowledged a misperception exists that the IMB has

diminished its emphasis on medical work. Many mission hospitals overseas no longer are dependent on missionary staff, he said, although IMB personnel continue to work in partnership with them. Currently, more than 200 IMB missionaries work in healthcare fields, many in Last Frontier assignments. And more are needed, Rankin added.

Rankin said another initiative in process focuses on finding new ways to respond more effectively to disaster relief efforts. Details of the effort will be presented with an official proposal at the next board meeting in November.

In other business, the IMB plans to decrease the number of missionary orientations from five to four next year. Rankin said the change will enhance the stewardship of Southern Baptist resources.

Rankin proposed three related suggestions for trustees to consider, including moving to four corresponding appointment services and quarterly board meetings and reducing the number of trustees on the board. No board action was taken on those suggestions.

SBC president urges students to glorify God

Louisville (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page, preaching Sept. 5 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said ministers of the gospel must have minds, motives and methodologies calibrated to glorify God even when God places them in circumstances they would not have chosen.

Preaching from Philippians 1:12-20, Page said ministers often wind up in circumstances that were not in their plans. Like the Apostle Paul, who preached the gospel while chained between two prison guards, ministers must seek to advance the gospel regardless of their personal situation, he added.

While many people spend their lives trying to reorient their circumstances so that life will be more comfortable, Page encouraged ministers to live in a way that demonstrates a mind focused on glorifying God in all circumstances.

Page, pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., said he never expected to be the president of the SBC, but he hopes to carry out God's agenda while serving in the convention's top elected post.

"It is my desire as president of the SBC that somehow, somehow, I would get to advance the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," Page said. "I have asked God to use this unworthy vessel for the furtherance of (His) gospel."

A minister of the gospel must promote God's agenda and not his own, Page said. The glory of God—and not self-exaltation or a private agenda—must be the driving motive of every gospel minister, he added.

In his role as SBC president, Page said he wants to help the convention resist the temptation to think that it belongs to a small group of people. In the same way, he encouraged ministers to fight the urge to think that they own the local church in which they serve.

"As the Southern Baptist Convention, we desperately need to check our motives," he declared. "We need to be careful never to think that we own this convention. When you begin to think that you own it, (you will also think) therefore you have the right to control it. I do not own it. I cannot control it."

"You also go to churches and there will be people in them that think they own those churches. And if you are not careful, you will get into the same mindset with a motive that says, 'I own it, therefore, I control it.' It does not belong to you nor does this convention belong to you or to me or to some group within the convention. It belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Kentucky Baptists set giving records for fiscal year

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists set a series of giving records during the state convention's 2005-06 fiscal year.

Total giving through the Kentucky Baptist Convention topped \$36.5 million, including \$1.6 million for disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The previous giving record of \$34.4 million was set two years earlier.

Cooperative Program gifts for 2005-06 also set a record, topping \$23.3 million—more than \$300,000 above the previous record.

The total of \$23,386,867 exceeded the \$23.1 million budget goal by more than \$286,000 or 1.2 percent and outpaced the previous year's giving by more than \$440,000 or 1.9 percent.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2005-06 fiscal year, which concluded Aug. 31, marks three consecutive years that CP gifts from local churches throughout the state have exceeded the KBC budget goal.

Sharing financial blessings

Expressing appreciation for Kentucky Baptists' "consistent financial support of missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program," KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey noted that the recent CP report indicates "those churches who give on a percentage basis show the greatest growth in their support of CP. When those churches are blessed, the blessing is shared with all mission

Kentucky CP giving



causes in Kentucky and around the world."

Churches that earmark a specific percentage of their budget for CP provide increased financial support as their church budgets grow. By contrast, churches that give a set dollar amount to CP sometimes fail to increase that amount each year.

Citing such needs as church starts in several largely unchurched

causes in Eastern Kentucky, ministering to the state's growing Hispanic population and statewide campus ministry efforts, Mackey said record CP giving reflects "the intense passion Kentucky Baptists have for missions and their willingness to give and participate sacrificially in order to express that passion in tangible ways."

Other Kentucky Baptists giving records in 2005-06 include contributions to Southern Baptists' international and North American mission offerings. Both offerings hit record levels after slight decreases the previous year.

Gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions of \$3,948,930 increased 3.3 percent over the 2004-05 fiscal year and outpaced the previous giving record by more than \$120,000.

Contributions to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions had the largest growth with a 9 percent gain to \$1,910,859. That topped Kentucky Baptists' previous giving record by more than \$147,000.

On the down side, Restricted Kentucky Only gifts earmarked specifically for Kentucky Baptist ministries declined for the third straight year to \$432,478. RKO giving has been decreasing since it topped \$500,000 in 2002-03.

Eliza Broadus giving declines

Gifts to the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions declined for the second year in a row, decreasing

2.7 percent to \$865,169. The offering was down 1 percent the previous year.

"I think the disaster relief giving last fall did impact the giving to Eliza Broadus," Mackey said. "I think it's important for Kentucky Baptists to recognize that every gift does count and does make a significant difference."

Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, said she anticipated a shortfall in state missions offering when Hurricane Katrina hit a few weeks before the annual missions emphasis.

Despite the decrease in Eliza Broadus contributions, Bolton said, "We're very grateful for the strong giving by Kentucky Baptists for disaster relief at a time of crucial need."

Mackey emphasized that both Eliza Broadus and RKO funds are crucial to the KBC's ongoing mission efforts since "ministries are budgeted in anticipation of those funds coming in."

The state convention's 2006-07 CP budget of \$23,562,000 is a 2 percent increase over the past year's budget goal, noted KBC Business Manager Lowell Ashby. Based on 2005-06 CP receipts, Kentucky Baptists' giving will need to increase less than \$200,000 to meet that goal.

"All our work is a faith ministry and our budget is a faith budget," Mackey pointed out. "We're trusting the Lord to touch the hearts of people with mission causes in Kentucky and around the world."

"All our work is a faith ministry and our budget is a faith budget."

Bill Mackey, Kentucky Baptist Convention executive director

SonicFlood urges Kentucky youth to consider missions calling

Continued from page 1

Showcasing many of SonicFlood's popular worship songs such as "Open the Eyes of My Heart" and "Here I Am to Worship," the group's "This Generation" concert also featured a live phone interview with a missionary in Russia, videos of student missionary testimonies and promotion of the book, "My Life, His Mission: True Stories from Students Living on the Edge."

Heil said the connection to the IMB surfaced the couple of years ago when the band was in India filming a mission-oriented video for their song "Cry Holy."

"I got to see the lost close up," Heil recalled. "There's so much pain out there. Yet we have the answer. We have the hope."

Heil began working with Mike Lopez, the IMB's director of student mobilization, on the idea of a nationwide concert tour to promote missions.

"SonicFlood said, 'How can we help you?'" Lopez noted. "We came up with this idea of a mobilization concert."

"The message is there in a student-friendly format in a way they can hear and understand it," Lopez explained. "We're saying, 'Let us take you on a tour around the world and show you how to get involved.' It's a matter of calling out the called."

Barry Kornegay, associate pastor at Little Flock, said church leaders agreed to host the concert because of the church's commitment "to both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment."



TESTIMONY Rick Heil, lead singer of SonicFlood, shared how God healed him both spiritually and physically after a lengthy battle with Crohn's disease.

"The next generation of leadership in our church is our young people," he said, "so investing in them is very important."

Noting that SonicFlood is "cutting edge culturally in this generation," Kornegay said, "To see them with a heart for missions—I think our young people can relate to SonicFlood as well as anybody."

Felicity Watson-Burrow, a member of the IMB's student mobilization team, served as emcee for the Sept. 14 concert.

"God has blessed us tonight," Watson-Burrow told the crowd. "With that blessing comes a wonderful privilege. Will you tell the Lord, 'Here am I. Send me?'"

Watson-Burrow also highlighted

the book, "My Life, His Mission," a six-week study by Kim Davis to help prepare students for short-term missions involvement.

Davis, a former missionary to Africa whose husband now serves on the IMB staff in Richmond, Va., said IMB leaders sensed a need to develop a resource "to speak directly to the student audience, especially the spiritual preparation for a student before considering a mission trip or the study on a mission trip."

The study addresses such issues as prayer, God's call, flexibility, ministering cross culturally and risking everything for Jesus. The book features brief testimonies from students across the country, including several Kentucky students, who have served in short-term international mission projects.

"I am seeing a generation of students who love the Lord and want to be involved in what He is doing in the world," Davis said in a recent phone interview. "If we get those students while they're young and influence them for missions, they are going to be mission-minded adults who will influence the next generation."

As SonicFlood issued a clear missions challenge through their music, videos and words of testimony, they invited young people to respond to God's call. Heil and other band members joined about 20 teens who knelt in prayer in response to the altar call.

"Music is a powerful tool God has given us to glorify Him," Heil said during an interview prior to the

Shepherdsville concert. "We want to use it to display our affection for the Lord."

"We're not going to sugarcoat anything," he declared. "We think that being as honest and open as possible about what the Lord has done in our lives is what is going to be an effective testimony to the world."

SonicFlood's "This Generation" tour, which will make stops in 23 states and Canada, will return to Kentucky next month. Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green will host SonicFlood Oct. 19. For more information about the concert tour and student mission projects, visit thetask.org.

"I am seeing a generation of students who love the Lord and want to be involved in what He is doing in the world."

Kim Davis, author of "My Life, His Mission"

Pray the Interior



LOCAL START Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders began their five-day "Pray the Interior" project Monday by praying at the KBC building in Louisville. Executive Director Bill Mackey and others will visit 30 cities this week. (Photo by David Winfrey)

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

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Fame and fortune are fleeting

By Phil Boatwright

Kansas City, Kan. (BP)—As a film critic, I read a lot of biographies of movie stars.

Like many other people, I'm fascinated by Hollywood's constellation. People like Bogey and Sinatra and John Wayne have captured the imagination of many a film watcher for many a decade.

These people seem bigger than life. Some, like Errol Flynn or Marilyn Monroe, were exquisite. Others were gifted with almost everything—from looks to talent to long-lasting fame.

Remember Dean Martin? At his height of coolness, the handsome crooner had conquered nightclubs, radio, TV and movies. And though much of his screen time was wasted on dreadful D-movies, he occasionally wowed critics with performances in films such as "The Young Lions," "Rio Bravo" and "Some Came Running." A great singer, considered the best straight man in the business, he also had a quick, hilarious wit. He even had great hair. Dean simply had it all.

Dean Martin's easygoing manner made it difficult to associate him with everyday problems the rest of us mere mortals must endure. The

truth, however, is that even Dean Martin had his trials and tribulations. And because his career always took precedence, his family (seven kids and three ex-wives) suffered added ordeals.

COMMENTARY

In latter years, poor health took its toll on the once great-looking guy. He became frail, emaciated, like a skeleton of his former self. He suffered from pain and also from heartbreak. His son Dino, a pilot for the California Air National Guard, died in a jet crash. Dean reportedly never recovered from that loss.

Countless movie stars lost fortunes through bad business ventures or crooked money managers. Dean lost tons of money. So did John Wayne. So did Errol Flynn. So did Jerry Lewis. These were lucky; their fame endured long enough for them to make new fortunes. Others weren't so lucky. Comedians Abbot and Costello and bandleader Woody Herman (showbiz giants in their day) got in trouble with the IRS and spent their remaining years struggling with finances.

I have yet to read a bio of an actor who didn't suffer from turmoil and mental distress at some point in his lifetime—usually at the end, finding

little if any satisfaction from worldly success.

Even the rich, good-looking and famous cannot escape problems. And no matter how much they obtain, there's just a little more outside their reach.

Life is about more than gaining the whole world—or even the little cottage with the white picket fence. Life is a fleeting moment in time, an obstacle course filled with mountains and valleys. And each obstacle we face has to do with character development and faith.

Colossians 3:2 says, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

James 1:2-4 says, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

There are those, even in the Christian community, who associate success with fame or financial abundance. The last line in the film "Patton" refutes that theory, "All glory is fleeting."

Just ask a 16-year-old, "Who is Dean Martin?"

Phil Boatwright is the editor and film reviewer for previewonline.org

Accolades for Owen

The well-deserved accolades that have flowed in the wake of Frank Owen's departure to that other side where he was welcomed by the sound of trumpets and the singing of the heavenly hosts make me glad that "the good men do is not interred with their bones."

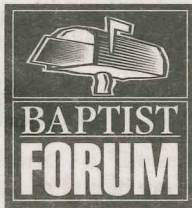
It was my good fortune to serve on the committee that searched for an executive secretary, and to be among those who suggested Frank's name.

If the truth be told, he appeared to the committee at the time his name first surfaced to be an improbable choice. And this was be-

cause of his outstanding admirable qualities.

One whose trumpet always gave a certain sound, he had posted some of his beliefs in conspicuous places. There was some reluctance to place him in a vulnerable position. Some of us, however, felt he was more than a match for any "slings and arrows!" For years, his firm vision and convictions walked on the feet of good humor and common sense to one of the best periods in our history.

He had a genius for stories that made him appear a little ridiculous, and he regaled various meetings with his outlandish humor. His jokes were legendary.



ACP stats are valuable 'Connect' resource

"Kentucky Baptists Connect: Connecting All People to Jesus Christ" is the theme used to express the missions initiative of Kentucky Baptist Convention churches. The plan includes six objectives and many challenging goals in the areas of evangelism, missions, church development, discipleship and leadership development.

The KBC Mission Board staff has the role of developing strategies to assist the churches in reaching these lofty goals, but one of the big challenges we experience in measuring progress is in collecting statistical information from all local churches.

The Annual Church Profile is a church questionnaire that provides much of the information needed. Each church clerk receives the ACP packet and has the responsibility of gathering the information from program leaders and sending it to the associational office or clerk.

The association in turn sends the information to the KBC where it is compiled in a computer format for use in providing reports on growth trends and for consultations with local churches. (Churches that are not members of an association should send their ACP reports directly to the KBC.)

The data collected is invaluable in helping us all see the big picture about what is happening in Kentucky. For example, the best way to know if evangelism strategies are effective is to look at the ACP baptism reports by age groups.

One of the trends we are seeing in this area is that KBC (and SBC) churches are baptizing fewer children and youth than five or 10 years ago, but baptizing more adults, although the actual numbers are not large. Another trend discovered from ACP reports is that Sunday school attendance seems to have pla-

teaued, while worship attendance is growing.

The ACP data is valuable not only to us here in the state office but it can help individual churches as well. Any church can call and get charts based on their church profile, which is invaluable in planning and projecting future trends.

If you are a church program leader, please do your best to get the requested information to your church clerk each year. Church clerks should then get this information to the associational office or clerk before the associational annual meeting, or as soon as possible.

If you are a church or associational clerk, please also note the importance of turning in your reports on time. It is important to make sure the information is accurate. However, instead of delaying the report excessively, provide the best information you have by the deadline so the rest of the information will not be outdated before it can be used.

Please send the ACP data to the KBC before Dec. 1.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Charitable IRA offers window of opportunity

By Laurie Valentine

The Pension Protection Act of 2006, which became law in August, includes a short-term opportunity to use potentially taxable Individual Retirement Account funds to make charitable gifts.



Generally, the owner of an IRA must report a distribution from the account as income. A donation of the distribution to charity entitles the IRA owner to a charitable income tax deduction (if deductions are itemized). However, the increase in income and restrictions on the amount of charitable gifts that can be deducted in a given year may result in the withdrawal followed by a charitable gift not being a "wash" for federal income tax purposes.

The PPA permits a person who is at least age 70 and a half to make tax-free gifts, in 2006 and 2007, up to a total of \$100,000 per year from a traditional or Roth IRA to qualified charities. The IRA owner is not entitled to a charitable income tax deduction for the qualified charitable distributions, but the distributions are not included in the IRA owner's income.

The distributions must be made directly from the IRA trustee to the qualified charitable organization. A distribution to the IRA owner/donor, followed by a gift to charity, does not receive the special treatment provided by the PPA.

Distributions from 401(k), 403(b) or other types of retirement accounts are not eligible. Additionally, private foundations and donor-advised funds are not "qualified charitable organizations."

The exclusion from income applies only if a charitable contribution deduction for the entire distribution would otherwise be allowable.

While qualified charitable distributions are excluded from income for income tax purposes, they are taken into account when determining a person's required mandatory withdrawal from their IRA. Therefore, those over age 70 and a half who are taking a required withdrawal from an IRA and also make contributions to charity should consider taking advantage of tax-free gifts from their IRAs this year and next.

Others who have funds in IRAs in excess of their anticipated needs might consider larger gifts than usual to reduce the size of their IRA and, therefore, their estates, on a tax-free basis.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

Develop intentional strategy to avoid hurtful relationship

Q: I am anxious about running into my ex-girlfriend at church. It was a toxic relationship, out of God's will and was leading me down a wrong road. But if I see her, and she talks about her how much she misses me, I'm afraid I'll fall back into a relationship with her that God won't bless. What should I do?

Approach the situation with an intentional strategy.

We often go through life assuming that whatever happens is what is supposed to happen, while setting ourselves up for disaster. We wouldn't leave our car unlocked full

SINGLES

of wrapped presents. We wouldn't leave our house wide open with expensive jewelry on the dining room table. Yet we often leave our hearts vulnerable, as if we're asking someone to take it and "stomp it flat."

You can have a strategy to protect your heart. Do you have to travel the same paths? Does your church have multiple worship services or a variety of Bible study classes where you wouldn't have to encounter her so often?

Also develop a strategy of what you will do when you eventually meet. Go ahead and rehearse what you will say. "Words of grace, seasoned with salt" still can protect your heart.

You don't have to keep your heart's door wide open to abuse. Jesus talked about not throwing your "pearls before swine." I'm not calling your ex-girlfriend a pig. I'm just saying: Don't hang out a sign with your behavior that says "keep abusing me; it's open season for your abuse and contempt." That is a sure sign of low self-esteem on your part.

Consider seeing a qualified counselor or friend who can give you feedback on other self-defeating behaviors you might have. Christ wants you to be victorious in this area of life so you can better serve Him with all the joy He has to offer.—James Stillwell

Q: Our 12-year-old son always has been quietly obedient and easy to raise. Recently he has begun questioning our decisions and always seems to want to debate. Is this normal?

Congratulations! You have just reached the "Let's Make a Deal" stage of parenting.

Particularly noticeable with boys, this pre-adolescent or early adolescent stage can feel like you are negotiating on everything. It is important to make sure your son understands the limits of his freedom to begin to question and negotiate.

PARENTING

Help him understand how to be respectful as he tests the boundaries. Your listening to his perspective and valuing his feedback will require that he not become argumentative, raise his voice, use rough language or put you on the spot in public places or in front of friends and peers. He will need to express his viewpoint and then accept your decisions, realizing that he is not and should not be in charge.

Parents must remember that it is natural to feel some anxiety as children begin to grow into young adults. Scripture reminds us in Luke 2:41-52 that even the parents of a 12-year-old Jesus felt some difficulty and anxiety in their parenting.

Parents must keep in mind that freedom is granted to the extent that responsibility is demonstrated. Our goal should be that our children grow up, as Jesus did, physically, spiritually, mentally and relationally. This growth always requires a balance between strong, safe fences and the parental wisdom of knowing when to open the gates.—Scott Wigginton

Family Forum writers are:

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



Christian mentoring: Go and do likewise

My mom celebrated her 82nd birthday a few weeks ago. I realize that age 82 isn't one of those milestone celebrations that occasionally trigger an editorial reflection, but a recent phone conversation with Mom reminded me of her quiet yet strong Christian witness over the years.

Mom is, in many ways, a typical grassroots Baptist of her generation. She has served in her local church as a Sunday school teacher, Woman's Missionary Union director, choir member, pastor search committee member and much more. She also has been involved in associational mission efforts as well as mission trips across the nation—including a recent visit to New Orleans to deliver supplies to Hurricane Katrina victims.

One of my earliest childhood memories is of Mom taking time to sit and visit with me on the edge of her bed while my older siblings were at school. She would put her busy schedule on hold to patiently answer my childish questions about God and Jesus and other mysteries of life. Those unhurried moments between mother and child marked the beginnings of my personal faith journey.

As a widow for more than 25 years, Mom consistently has relied on her unwavering faith in God to see her through life's daily challenges. And she hasn't allowed those challenges to sidetrack her Christian commitment.

Like many widows in rural and small-town churches throughout the nation, Mom and several of her friends have developed a strong network of fellowship and support. They are there for each other to share meals together, drive each other to doctors' appointments, travel together and encourage one another.

But Mom's ministry commitment isn't limited to her peers. In fact, it's her heart for children and families that sparked this week's editorial tribute.

During our recent phone visit, Mom casually

shared about a couple of youngsters she had been mentoring the past few years. She recalled that her pastor had invited several church members to "adopt" an unchurched child from the community for a few weeks prior to the church's scheduled revival services.

Mom took the name of a young girl, made contact with her family and invited her to an outing at the park. The little girl asked if she could bring her older sister with her the next week. Long story short, Mom began building a relationship with the two girls and their parents. The six-week commitment turned into three years, as Mom and the girls played games, worked puzzles and went on outings together. She even taught them how to sew.

The whole family eventually got involved in church. Even as the girls grew older, got more involved in school and sports activities and their weekly visits gradually faded, the family has remained active members of Mom's church.

And that's just one example of how Mom has reached out and mentored children in the community. She also has led backyard Bible clubs and had several other kids "adopt" her as their neighborhood grandmother.

Why take time to share that story? For one thing, I'm obviously thankful for Mom's ministry spirit and her lifelong example of Christian commitment.

Additionally, I am confident there are countless other faithful believers we encounter every day who continue to make a significant impact for the Kingdom of God in congregations in your community and elsewhere.

Take time to thank someone in your life who has been a positive Christian role model. And don't just stop with voicing appreciation. As you reflect on their faithful witness for Christ, go and do likewise.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Transforming the church for God's glory

By Frank Page

Taylors, S.C. (BP)—Since God called me to be a pastor, I have attempted to bring the churches He has allowed me to serve from a position of status quo to a place where our people are learning with ever-increasing passion to reach out to the lost, minister to the saved and make a difference in our culture.

Obviously, every church has areas where progress needs to be made. That certainly includes the church God has allowed me to serve for the past five-plus years. However, we have made some strides. Many people are asking, "What do we do to try to reach the lost, to minister to the saved and to make a difference in our culture?"

One of the things we are doing is starting a new church plant or mission work each year. Our church previously had not started a single church since its inception in 1864, and we have asked God to forgive us for that. While our church heavily invested in missions through the Co-operative Program and special missions offerings, it was not heavily involved in hands-on mission work.

God has been receiving great glory as we have begun to reach out in exciting new ways. Shortly after my arrival, we began an apartment ministry. Multi-family housing residents form the greatest unreached people group in the nation. I hope you seriously would consider start-

ing an apartment church or mission in multi-family housing units in your area.

We also constituted the first Korean Baptist church of Greenville, S.C. While this church already was in existence, we assisted it in reaching the point where the church could purchase its own facilities and become a constituted Southern Baptist church.

Next, we began a more traditional-type mission called Ridgeview Church. That wonderful body of believers meets in an area school and is approaching an average of 200 people each Sunday. In June, we constituted that new body of believers as an autonomous Southern Baptist church. We also planted Betania Iglesia Bautista, a church to reach out to our ever-growing Hispanic population. This wonderful church, which is averaging 50 people each service, just called Jose Delgado as pastor.

This year, we are starting a new congregation called Bridgepointe Church. We were approached by a church that was ready to close its doors. We have been able to use the facilities from that church to start a new work in an area in great need of a New Testament body of believers.

As you can tell, I believe in church planting. Our area, Taylors, S.C., is one of the most heavily churched areas in the United States. However, as I have said many times, we need

more healthy churches, and not just churches. New churches have a great record of winning more people to Christ than churches that are older and more established.

Ministry is also a part of our strategy. One of the great ministries we began more than five years ago is a single mom's oil change. It has grown into a massive outreach as these women bring their cars to be repaired. While they are here, our people share the love of Christ with them and their families. We now average more than 100 families each quarter.

Another evangelistic outreach is a free medical clinic. This ministry reaches out every week to a large number of uninsured and underinsured people in our area. It has become a way to show the love of God in a practical way. Christ is shared, prayer is offered and medical help is provided.

As we seek to transform our church into an outreach-oriented, ministry-focused, mission-minded congregation, please join me in praying that God will show us even more ways to reach our area for Christ.

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch did a wonderful job of pointing out the need to win the lost to Christ. We now are going to continue finding ways to accomplish this God-sized task.

Frank Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., is president of the Southern Baptist Convention

State offering helps fund some directors of missions

Offering allocations

The Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering funds three main categories of missions work and projects in Kentucky:

KBC missions & evangelism, \$650,000. This includes language missions, the Missionary Assistance Program, student work and disaster relief.

Special ministries, \$75,000. These are a variety of projects that get funds through an application process. This year's application deadline is Dec. 31.

Missions education, \$275,000. Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union uses these funds to provide missions education through training events, promotion and other efforts.

Continued from page 1

In Kentucky, 60 directors of missions are serving 70 active Baptist associations.

Each of those associations, like each Baptist congregation, is autonomous. Directors of missions have no fixed universal job description, Jones said, but two or three duties seem unanimous.

"A director of missions is a pastor to pastors and church staff, and a pastor to churches without pastors."

Wilburn Bonta, director of missions for Russell Creek and East Lynn Baptist associations, said he has heard more than one pastor say: "Me and my family are hurting. I've got to have someone to talk to.' ... That's how I see my job, as a pastor to pastors."

Of the 38 churches in Bonta's two central Kentucky associations, five currently have no pastors, he said. "I preach most Sundays." Encouraging church members as they seek a new pastor is another part of the DOM's ministry.

Darren Gaddis, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, said his director of missions, Janus Jones, has a strong bond with many pastors in the combined association of South Union/Mount Zion.

"Recently we had a bivocational minister who had a serious health problem that prevented him from being at work," Gaddis said. "Janus rallied the churches to respond to that need." Gaddis said many pastors in the 53-church association never would have known of their fellow pastor's need had it not been for the DOM.

Another role is that of "missionologist. ... He captures the vision for that group of churches to start missions and ministries," Randy Jones said. "He leads, equips and encourages churches to do missions in the Acts 1:8 sense."

In South Union/Mount Zion,



CLOWN MINISTRY Volunteers with Christians by Choice, a clown and drama ministry of South Union/Mount Zion Baptist Association, prepare to perform at a community "Singing by the Lake" at Dale Hollow. Fifteen Baptists from various churches take part in the ministry, which has been active for 18 years. It is among the many projects that Director of Missions Janus Jones helps lead. (Photo by Dannah Prather)

Janus Jones encourages congregations to serve beyond their local "Jerusalems" into the broader "Judea" of Southeastern Kentucky, Gaddis said. "He's not just a talking head, he's a servant's hands."

When Gaddis' congregation decided to organize a training event, he said Janus Jones encouraged them also to make the event available to members of other churches. "We were able to make this an associational event, a regional event," Gaddis said.

In 2005, the DOM coordinated more than 1,000 volunteers in dozens of hands-on mission projects in the region. "He's connecting people outside our area who have the desire to do missions to the needs in our area," Gaddis said.

The Whitley County farm where Janus Jones was born remains his

home. The land and its people are familiar, but he said the DOM ministry has changed dramatically in the nearly four decades he has served.

Changing times for DOMs

"Thirty-five years ago, my office was in the back seat of my car," he said. "We never thought of offices where people would come to us, or computers."

In the early days, Janus Jones said, he did more "direct mission work." Today he must administer a budget and coordinate a busy ministry calendar.

"My job is different every month," he said. "Sometimes I'm a teacher. Sometimes I'm a missions educator." South Union/Mount Zion partners with five other Kentucky Baptist associations to operate Laurel Lake Baptist Camp in Corbin. "Sometimes I'm the camp cook," he said.

Just before "cook" on his list of ministry hats is "clown." The association's clown ministry is in its 18th year. There also is an associational vacation Bible school ministry—including nursing home VBS. "This summer, an 83-year-old woman made a profession of faith during nursing home VBS," he said.

Like Janus Jones, Bonta serves in and around his childhood home in Green County. "Before I started in the ministry, I farmed full time," he said. Today the family farm is a ministry tool, making possible an associational equestrian ministry. Bonta also directs the Kentucky Baptist Men on Mission equestrian ministry.

In the heart of tobacco country, Russell Creek and East Lynn churches have an active ministry to migrant farm workers, he said. Fire and hospital chaplaincy and ministry to residents of low-income housing communities are among other efforts.

In an economically depressed region, nearly all Russell Creek/East Lynn pastors are bivocational, Bonta said. "The associations wouldn't be able to afford a full-time director of missions," he said. "Roughly half my salary is paid for by the Missionary Assistance Program."

Janus Jones said economic hardship is no stranger to Southeastern Kentucky either. When a ministry to homeless people first opened in Williamsburg, he said supporters expected most clients would be transients from nearby Interstate 75. Instead, the facility was filled with local people in crisis.

How would South Union/Mount Zion coordinate ministries without the Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering?

"Impossible would be the word," Janus Jones said. "Kentucky Baptists have made it possible for me to do the work the Lord has called me to do."

Eliza Broadus
State Missions Offering

Kentucky Baptist Convention

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Baptists hit airwaves

Amateur radio station to help Ky. disaster relief

By Robert Reeves
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—When the twin towers of the World Trade Center collapsed on Sept. 11, 2001, the loss of cell phone antennas on the top of the buildings caused sudden communications disruptions for millions of people.

Last year, similar phone outages occurred all along the Gulf Coast as both cell towers and landlines were impacted by the high winds and floodwaters of Hurricane Katrina.

Kentucky Baptists' disaster relief efforts now have taken a big step forward in being able to deal with such disruptions with the addition of a new amateur radio base station to help improve communications with volunteers working in devastated areas.

The new station—K4KBC—went online at the Kentucky Baptist Building last week after the erection of a 30-foot radio antenna that will allow for worldwide communications.

The new station, paid for with donations to Kentucky Baptist disaster relief, will be a tremendous help in coordinating disaster relief units that might be many miles from each other, as they were after the Gulf Coast hurricanes last year, according to Larry Koch, director of Kentucky Baptist disaster relief.

"This puts us in a whole new arena of communications capability," Koch said, adding that Kentucky Baptist disaster relief now also is recruiting licensed volunteers to serve as operators for additional mobile communications units.

In addition to the KBC-owned base station and mobile communications trailer, a number of individually owned stations can deploy to disaster locations, Koch added.

Kentucky Baptist disaster relief has long used amateur radio as one of its communications options. Kentucky's mobile communications unit served as the official amateur radio station for the North American Mission Board's disaster relief command center in Mississippi in the aftermath of Katrina.

The difference being made with the addition of the Louisville base station, however, is that Koch now has an additional way to communicate directly with the Baptist building in Louisville. That office handles the call out and assignment of volunteer units during a disaster response.

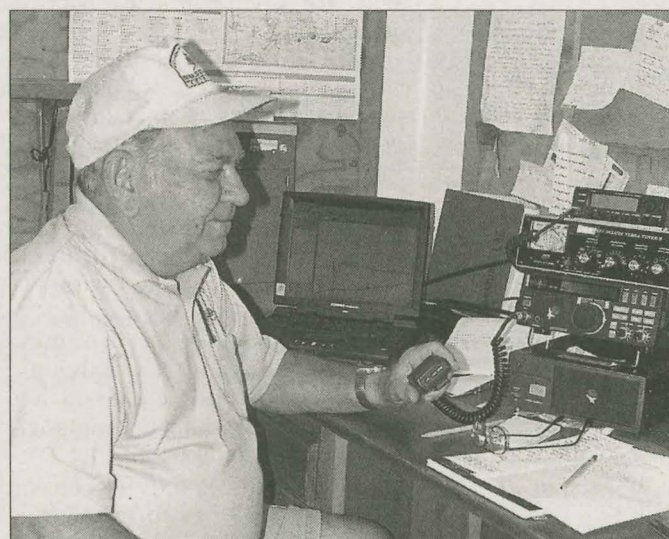
Coordination of teams and the



PLANTING ANTENNA Tom Westerfield (left), a disaster relief volunteer from First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, and Larry Koch, director of Kentucky Baptist disaster relief, install an antenna outside the Baptist building in Louisville. A new amateur radio station will help coordinate disaster relief work around the country where phone lines and cell towers have been disabled. (KBC photo by Robert Reeves)

arrival of volunteers were especially difficult after Katrina last year due to the massive scale of the disaster, the large volunteer response and the unreliability of telephone service.

"We needed to be able to pass on such information as where we were located, information about roads, gas availability, equipment needs, etc., and it was very difficult at times," Koch recalled.



Coupled with the creation of a new team of disaster relief volunteers who have been trained to staff a disaster relief command center at the Baptist building, Koch expects coordination of future large responses to be smoother because the base station will allow for direct communication to the Baptist building, regardless of the condition of other communications infrastructure.

More help needed

Tom Westerfield, a disaster relief volunteer who has been involved in amateur radio since 1964, said 35 Kentucky volunteers currently are licensed by the FCC and can staff the Baptist building station or a station in the field.

But many more are needed, he said, especially from the Louisville area.

"We'd like to have 150 (statewide)," in order to man the various stations and be able to rotate volunteers during long disaster responses such as that caused by last year's hurricanes, he said.

Westerfield said amateur radio has been an important lifeline during times of disaster through the years in relaying vital messages between individuals and groups.

"The priority of other communications systems has to be for government and public service agencies," Westerfield said. "But amateur radio is much more accessible because its priority is public service."

Westerfield said the technology of amateur radio has advanced in recent years to make it even more useful. In addition to being able to transmit a simple Morse code message at a time when bandwidth is so low that a voice can't be heard, amateur radio now can transmit e-mail and other documents to and from the Internet.

For more information about Kentucky Baptist disaster relief or the new amateur radio station, contact the KBC men on mission department at (866) 489-3527.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Leon Priest, a disaster relief volunteer from Stithton Baptist Church, works a radio last year in Jackson, Miss. Kentucky Baptist disaster relief's communications team served as the communications station for the North American Mission Board in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. (KBC file photo)

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PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
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Minister has 9 tips to help Sunday school retain people

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

"We also have people inside the church who are hurting."

Todd Beasley, minister of education at Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville

Lexington—Sunday school, not worship services, is the best route for attracting and keeping church members, an education minister told church leaders recently at Super Saturday.

Todd Beasley refuses to consider Sunday school a dinosaur.

The minister of education at Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville cited research by the Barna Research Group that shows 87 percent of members who join a class remain active in church.

By comparison, only 11 percent of people who just attended worship services stayed involved in the church for an extended period of time.

"We do have lost people out there who are hurting, but we also have people inside the church who are hurting," Beasley said. "There are members who may have been in the church for a long time but aren't connected to a Sunday school class."

Beasley said church leaders can take several steps to make their Sunday school classes more "user friendly."

Among them:

■ **Set up a welcome center and signs.** Signs make it easy for guests to locate classrooms, restrooms and the office, and friendly greeters can accompany visitors to classes, Beasley said.

■ **Arrive early.** Teachers should arrive ahead of time to make sure everything is set up and resolve unexpected problems.

Guests form a negative impression of a class if they are the first to arrive, Beasley added.

But the most important reason for arriving early, he said, is so teachers don't miss potential connections and ministry opportunities.

"God sent that person to your class early for a reason," he said. "All those other things will take care of themselves."

■ **Appoint class greeters.** Greeters help relax guests, most of whom are anxious about being in an unfamiliar group, he said. Among greeters' duties are introducing guests, accompanying them to worship and calling later to invite them to fellowships and ask for prayer requests.

Greeters are also good for younger classes, Beasley said. Adults can greet younger children while teens greet other students.

"How would asking teens to be greeters impact their attendance?" he asked.

■ **Wear nametags.** Many members consider them a bother, but nametags help people get to know each other and put guests at ease, Beasley said.

Permanent tags for members can help people quickly identify those who are absent for prayer and follow-up contacts that week, he said.

"What would happen if everyone in class wore nametags and a guest knew three people by name before they left?" Beasley asked. "We're

wanting to connect' with these people, so all we've got to do is wear a nametag."

■ **Use small group activities.** This means dividing into groups of four to six people to discuss a particular question or other activity during class.

As individuals take leadership in these groups, other potential teachers will emerge, Beasley said.

■ **Don't embarrass people.** Never call on guests or members to pray or read aloud without asking their permission ahead of time, Beasley said.

Visitors who are made to feel uncomfortable often won't return, he noted.

■ **Avoid church jargon.** Guests often aren't familiar with such church language terms as "walking the aisle," "the blood of Jesus" or "asking Jesus into your heart."

Teachers should be careful to avoid such phrases to avoid confusing visitors or making them uncomfortable, Beasley said.

■ **Pray for one another.** Not only does God bless the bonds people form through prayer, but newcomers feel that members care about them when they pray for needs, Beasley said.

He encouraged teachers to invite members to form prayer partnerships that continue outside of class.

■ **Establish care groups.** Such groups should include a maximum of three members and three guests, Beasley said.

These groups involve weekly contacts to ask for prayer requests, remind people of upcoming fellowships and to help teachers know about various needs, he said.

Care groups also can form the nucleus of a new class if an existing one outgrows its space, he said.

The Legacy of Dr. Franklin P. Owen, Sr.

Dr. Frank Owen frequently recited these lines from Byron:

"Life is like a piece of paper white, upon which each of us must write His line or two, and then comes night.
If thou has time to write but one line, be that sublime,
Not failure, but low aim is crime."

Dr. Owen wrote his line or two, often on 4x6 index cards. Like his handwriting and his life, Dr. Owen's legacy is clear and legible, even "sublime."

Nothing was more important than his relationship to Christ, his family, and the Baptist family. His humble Christian beginnings would provide the foundation of his beliefs, and at the center were his views about Christ and salvation.

Dr. Owen was a free and faithful Baptist, free to search for and speak the truth and faithful to our cherished Baptist principles. His legacy is characterized by integrity, depth of thought, and discernment in making wise decisions.

In 1978 Dr. Owen and I began a close relationship when he was Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the KBC and I was a young pastor in Louisville. We often enjoyed talking about Baptist life over Chinese food. I valued his great pastoral instincts. He offered guidance, yet always encouraged me to think through issues and make up my own mind as God's Spirit led me.

In the last five years Dr. Owen was a wonderful friend of Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, supporting the chair established in his honor - The Franklin Owen Chair of Pastoral Studies. We are pleased to have his name, reputation and ministry associated with our seminary.

We at Baptist Seminary of Kentucky thank God for Dr. Franklin Owen and pledge to keep his legacy alive.

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Study suggests many schools violate laws on teaching religion

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Austin, Texas (ABP)—The vast majority of Texas school districts offering courses on the Bible are doing so in an inadequate and unconstitutional manner, and districts in other states are probably no better, according to a study from a progressive watchdog group.

"Reading, Writing and Religion: Teaching the Bible in Texas Public Schools," released Sept. 13 by the Austin-based Texas Freedom Network, was the first study of its kind.

Researchers requested information, citing the Texas Public Information Act, on any Bible courses taught over the past few years from each of 1,031 Texas school districts. Its findings focused on the 25 districts that offered elective classes on the Bible in the 2005-2006 academic year.

The 92-page report detailed significant problems with the academic value and legality of the way the courses were taught in all but three of those districts.

"Most public-school Bible classes inappropriately and unconstitutionally present sectarian views as fact and adopt an overall approach that explicitly or implicitly encourages adoption of religious beliefs, typically those held within certain branches of Protestant Christianity," wrote Mark Chancey, who is the report's chief author and a religion professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

"Further, by explicitly or implicitly encouraging commitment to those particular beliefs, these classes can be construed as disparaging other religious views," Chancey continued.

The report found three main problems with the state's public-school Bible courses:

- Many of the courses "fail to meet even minimal standards for teacher qualifications and academic rigor" and many "have teachers with no academic training in biblical, religious or theological studies."

- Many of the courses "are taught as religious and devotional

classes that promote one faith perspective over all others" and that they "reflect an almost exclusively Christian perspective of the Bible" and "assume that students are Christians, that Christian theological claims are true, and that the Bible itself is divinely inspired."

- Most of the courses "advocate an ideological agenda that is hostile to religious freedom, science and public education itself." Chancey said the courses "often foster notions of American identity as distinctively Christian, sometimes introducing themes from the so-called 'culture wars'" and that they often use supplemental materials from groups like the Texas-based WallBuilders, which teaches that the separation of church and state is a myth.

Chancey noted that a similar 2000 study of Florida public-school Bible classes conducted by People For the American Way found similar difficulties in that state.

"It is quite possible that the situations in other states are similar, with relatively few courses offered but with a relatively high percentage of them inappropriately and unconstitutionally endorsing particular religious views," he said. "Should such courses become more common, it is likely that these problems will also become more widespread."

Praise for some schools

The report also commended three school districts—one in San Antonio, one near Austin and another in rural western Texas—for the quality of their Bible classes and showing "that it is possible to teach Bible courses in an objective and nonsectarian manner appropriate to public-school classrooms."

The Supreme Court's 1963 *Abington v. Schempp* decision said devotional Bible reading in public schools violates the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion. But the court never outlawed teaching about the Bible in a literary and historical context as an important part of Western civilization.

State Supreme Court rules atheists aren't harmed by Boy Scout recruiting on campus

Portland, Ore. (RNS)—The Oregon Supreme Court has ruled that Portland Public Schools didn't discriminate against atheist students by allowing the Boy Scouts to recruit during school hours.

Even though the Boy Scouts require a belief in God to become a member, the court ruled that no discrimination took place at school because neither the recruiter nor the Scout material distributed during lunchtime to elementary school boys mentioned religion.

"It is in the later enrollment in the organization that the Boy Scouts differentiate among those who do not profess a belief in a deity and those who do," Justice Michael Gillette wrote in an opinion issued Sept. 8. "That enrollment, however, is not done by the school district."

The 6-1 opinion reversed the Oregon Court of Appeals, which last year held that the school district had contributed to discrimination by allowing the Boy Scouts to recruit during school hours in 1996 at Harvey Scott Elementary School.

The mother of a first-grader, Remington Powell, sued because the Scouts don't allow atheists to join.

The high court, however, said the school district isn't responsible for that policy.

"By its conduct in this case, the school district has done nothing more than permit a community group to provide nondiscriminatory information to parents and students, who may then voluntarily decide the extent of their involvement, or noninvolvement, in such activities," Gillette wrote.

The Fifth Annual Pastors and Church Leaders Conference "Transforming A New Generation - A Journey of Faith" September 28-29, 2006

Featured Preacher:

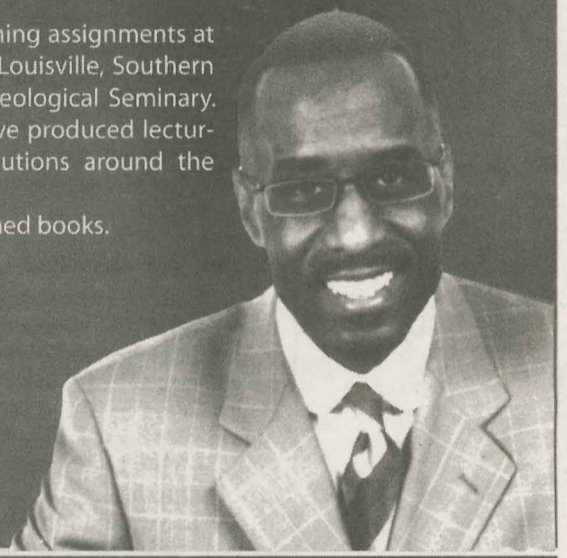
Dr. Kevin W. Cosby

- 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
Dean, School of Theology,
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Study: U.S. evangelicals undercounted, unaffiliated

Researchers also analyze religious views on war, perceptions about God

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—For years, researchers have thought the number of people unaffiliated with religion has been on the rise. But maybe that's not the case.

New research from Baylor University says some people who were thought to be disconnected actually are in the pews. They're just not linked to a particular denomination.

Rather than the previously reported 14 percent of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated, the Baylor findings state that a more accurate figure is 10.8 percent. That translates into about 10 million more people thought to be connected to some kind of faith.

"Widespread speculation of this increased percentage of our population that are outside of organized religion really isn't true," said Kevin Dougherty, a member of the team of researchers that released the first findings of the Baylor Religion Survey on Sept. 11.

"Nones" overestimated

He and other scholars have found that many of the people thought to be unaffiliated with religion—the so-called "nones"—can, in fact, name a congregation to which they belong. And in many cases, they're worshipping at nondenominational evangelical churches.

"By overestimating the nones," he said, "what we've done is underestimate the evangelicals."

The new statistics—covering topics ranging from religious views and the Iraq war to people's descriptions of God—provide a detailed glimpse of American faith. The findings are based on data collected by the Gallup Organization in late 2005 and analyzed by the Waco, Texas-based researchers.

One-third in U.S. are evangelicals

Researchers at the Baptist university found that evangelicals comprise 33.6 percent, or one third, of the nation's population. But only 15 percent identify themselves as "evangelical"; almost half of Americans—47 percent—prefer to call themselves "Bible believing."

The Baylor team found that denominational affiliation was not a major consideration for many of those who were asked about their faith.

"Two-thirds of Americans—68 percent—can give us the name of a congregation, whereas only about half of Americans can give you the name of a denomination," Dougherty said.

That finding highlights a diminished sense of denominational identity, reflected by many congregations that no longer include a denominational name in their title, even when they are affiliated with one.

"A classic example is Saddleback (Church) in Southern California," he said, referring to the megachurch headed by "Purpose-Driven Life" author Rick Warren. "How many people seated in the seats at Saddle-

Faith in America

Baylor scholars delved into how people identify themselves religiously, how faith relates to the kinds of books and movies people read and watch, and interest in the paranormal.

Among their findings:

■ U.S. religious affiliation breaks down as follows:

Evang. Protestant 33.6 percent.
Mainline Protestant.. 22.1 percent.
Catholic 21.2 percent.
Unaffiliated 10.8 percent.
Black Protestant 5.0 percent.
Jewish 2.5 percent.
Other 4.9 percent.

■ 28.5 percent of Americans have read "The Da Vinci Code."

■ 19 percent have read a book in the apocalyptic "Left Behind" series.

■ 19 percent have read "The Purpose Driven Life."

■ 1.2 percent who have read "God's Politics" by progressive activist Jim Wallis.

■ 43 percent said they'd had a dream that later came true.

■ 28 percent had consulted a horoscope.

■ 21.5 percent spent time in a place they believed to be haunted.

■ 12.5 percent had consulted a medium, psychic or fortune teller.

back know that they're Southern Baptist?"

On the matter of war, scholars found a dramatic reversal of opinion about the Iraq war compared to views of war in general. Respondents who had attended church weekly, interpreted the Bible literally and were evangelical Protestants were more likely than others to say "war is always wrong."

But people with those same characteristics also were more likely to say the Iraq war was justified, demonstrating a high level of trust in President Bush.

"You have a population who is really against war in the abstract, much more so than everyone else, but is more willing to justify the Iraq war because of this trust in a certain leader," said Paul Froese, another member of the research team.

"There could potentially be a reli-

gious backlash against a war under a different circumstance."

The scholars found that Americans are divided in their views of whether God is angry or engaged in world or personal affairs. However, they found that fear of an angry God is not what draws people into the pews each weekend.

"People aren't scared into church," said Christopher Bader. "They go to church because they believe there's a God waiting for them there Who is engaged with the world. But they don't go to church because they believe God's sitting outside looking through the windows and counting heads and getting ticked off at who's missing."

The results of the project are based on 1,721 surveys taken by telephone or returned in the mail and have a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Evangelical leader warns against decline in U.S. religious freedom

Salt Lake City (RNS)—National Association of Evangelicals President Ted Haggard warned Sept. 8 that religious freedom is in danger of being greatly reduced in this country.

"I think right now we're in the beginning stages of the erosion of freedom of religion in the United States," he told more than 200 people gathered for the annual conference of the Religion Newswriters Association. "The challenges are building for more and more limitation of religious speech."

Haggard, 50, the senior pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colo., cited personal examples in which he had spoken out on public issues and had been criticized for doing so as a member of the clergy. He also cited his organization's intervention in a lawsuit filed by Air Force veteran Mikey Weinstein, who wants to halt what he calls unconstitutional evangelistic practices within the Air Force.

"If this lawsuit prevails, we'll have increased government supervision of religious speech," Haggard said.

Weinstein said Haggard has mischaracterized his suit, which he says aims to protect men and women in uniform and on duty from being pressured to change their faith.

"I think Ted Haggard is the Prince of Darkness when it comes to religious freedom," said Weinstein, reached by phone in Albuquerque, N.M. "He's the one who's really trying to suppress religious freedom by ensuring that one particular biblical worldview becomes the official biblical worldview of the U.S. government, and particularly the Department of Defense."

Haggard warned that if Weinstein's suit prevails, government officials will have the power to censor or monitor religious speech by chaplains or between service members—a change that would result in America's first "established church."

Bankrupt debtors can't tithe, judge rules

By Jason Kane
Religion News Service

New York (RNS)—When the collection plate goes around at weekly services, America's charitable but bankrupt worshippers now must abstain. A federal judge reluctantly has ordered debtors to repay their credit card bills first.

Judge Robert Littlefield Jr. of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of New York has ruled that charitable or religious contributions are no longer considered a necessary living expense for those filing Chapter 13 bankruptcy.

"This change effectively closes the door for debtors who are above the median income from deducting charitable contributions as an expense," Littlefield wrote in his Aug. 28 opinion.

The judge was interpreting a law that went into effect in October which, in effect, deems tithing acceptable only in very limited circumstances, such as for ministers who must donate as part of their contract.

Littlefield said the 2005 law trumps the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act, signed in 1998 by President Clinton, which allowed tithing under the bankruptcy code.

More than 2 million Americans filed for bankruptcy protection in 2005 and hundreds of thousands

are expected to do the same by the end of 2006, according to the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys.

Henry Sommer, president of the group, said the legislation favors the credit industry at the expense of religious liberty.

Spiritual vs. physical priorities

"Some people who need bankruptcy protection may hesitate to file if they are not allowed to tithe and would then be denied the relief they might need," Sommer said. "It makes you choose between spiritual necessity and physical necessity."

The opinion was handed down in the case of Frank and Patricia Diagostino of Massena, N.Y., who filed chapter 13 bankruptcy last March. When reporting monthly expenses, they tacked on a \$100 allowance for "continued charitable contributions." The amount was flatly rejected by the bankruptcy trustee, who said the Diagostinos made more than the state's median income level, prohibiting them from making charitable contributions.

Mark Swan, a Salt Lake City attorney who represents creditors, said there is no "expectation in any religion that people pay the church and not their debts."

"I have a different opinion as a

religious person than as an attorney," Swan said. "As an attorney, I go by the law. As a religious person, I believe there isn't an expectation on God's part that people break contracts to contribute to the work of His church."

"What good is it for your spiritual life or for the church if it looks like we're ignoring our obligations to each other to give to the church?"

The New York decision might lead credit card companies to demand similar treatment in other states.

Judge Littlefield criticized the legislation, but said the "court's hands are tied" until Congress makes further revisions.

"The court does not agree with this awkward, bifurcated congressional framework which makes charitable giving easier for some debtors and not others. Whether tithing is or is not reasonable is for Washington to decide," he said. "However, consistency and logic would demand the same treatment of all debtors."

A hidden treasure

University of Cumberlands impacting state and world

A few years ago Newsweek magazine named the University of the Cumberlands "a hidden treasure." When President Jim Taylor was asked what that meant, he replied, "a school which has the quality of more well-known institutions but not the visibility."

We Kentucky Baptists can attest to the quality of this school, located in the beautiful Appalachia region at Williamsburg, Ky. which continues to positively impact not only the southeastern part of the U.S. but also the entire nation and world through the achievements of its graduates, who have assumed leadership roles in every aspect of life.

The university offers students of all backgrounds a broad-based liberal arts education enriched with Christian values. In the belief that freedom is the result of respect for truth and concern for humanity, the university attempts to foster in its students a heightened awareness and sensitivity to the search for truth and a deepened responsibility toward mankind. The university seeks to graduate men and women with Christian values derived from spiritual and intel-

lectual experience within the university community as well as the traditional academic disciplines.

The Foundation is honored to be the fiduciary of endowment funds for which the University of the Cumberlands is a partial or full beneficiary. Among those is the Franklin Owen Endowment for Home and Foreign Missions, given anonymously to the university two years ago by long-time friends of Dr. Owen in tribute to this genuine Baptist statesman, who died Aug. 30. The university allocates half the earnings of the endowment to its first endowed teaching chair in the religion and philosophy department,

the Franklin Owen Chair of Home and Foreign Missions. The other half supports student ministry, and home and international missions.

Call us toll-free to discover how you can make a lasting difference for the Lord's work through our "hidden treasure," the University of the Cumberlands. Perhaps there is someone who has impacted your life for whom a tribute gift would be appropriate and meaningful.

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

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Elaine Okupski

Across

- 1 Fiddling emperor
- 5 New Testament book
- 9 Noah's vessel
- 12 Dismounted
- 13 "For many ___ false witness against him" (Mark 14:56)
- 14 Gardening tool
- 15 "He shall not come ___ to offer the bread of his God" (Leviticus 21:21)
- 16 "Every beast, every ___ thing, and every fowl" (Genesis 8:19)
- 18 Leah's second son (Genesis 30:12-13)
- 20 Actor James ___ Jones
- 21 "Then he that had received the five talents went and ___ with the same" (Matthew 25:16)
- 23 "There met him ten men that were lepers, which stood ___ off" (Luke 17:12)
- 27 Get a perfect score on a test
- 29 Result of sunbathing
- 30 "And Jacob ___ away unawares to Laban" (Genesis 31:20)
- 31 ___-man, scary childhood character
- 33 Son of Dishon (Genesis 36:26)
- 34 Rhythm and ___
- 35 "T" in PTL
- 36 Newsmen Koppel
- 37 "My couch shall ___ my complaint" (Job 7:13)
- 38 Height of Noah's ark in cubits (Genesis 6:15)
- 40 Eastern garment
- 42 "And over the course of the second month was ___ an Ahohite" (1 Chronicles 27:4)

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- 45 "This is the token of the ___ which I have established" (Genesis 9:17)
- 49 Sudden attack
- 50 "And all went to be taxed, every ___ into his own city" (Luke 2:3)
- 51 Popular brand of sneakers
- 52 Biblical city
- 53 "But ___ unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:13)
- 54 "I am the Lord, and there is none ___" (Isaiah 45:5)
- 55 Being, Lat.
- 8 Prophet
- 9 Son of Abdiel (1 Chronicles 5:15)
- 10 Actor/director Howard
- 11 Small cask
- 17 "And thou shalt make a ___ of pure gold" (Exodus 28:36)
- 19 Gives a grade
- 22 "For this is the ___ of the Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 46:10)
- 24 "I will cause it to rain upon the earth ___" (Genesis 7:4) (2 words)
- 25 Wings
- 26 "A time to ___, and a time to sew" (Ecclesiastes 3:7)
- 27 Abbot, Fr.
- 28 Soft drink
- 30 Scrap of pottery
- 32 "Silly" birds
- 33 Greek letter
- 35 Calls to mind
- 38 Pathway
- 39 Rich cake
- 41 Actress Bancroft
- 43 Haughty conduct
- 44 Thought, Fr.
- 45 Milk provider
- 46 Biblical plain (Nehemiah 6:2)
- 47 Type of neckline
- 48 Golf peg

Last week's solution

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KBHC

Food Round Up

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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



KBC worship leader: Focus on spirituality, not music skills

By David Winfrey
News Director

Lexington—Too many church music ministries are void of spiritual meaning because they are too focused on musical skills and performance instead of spiritual development, according to the director of the KBC's worship and music department.

The way Tog Goodson sees it, music ministers often are too focused on how the music sounds on Sunday morning than they are with whether choir members are living out during the rest of the week what they sing about on Sunday.

"There are people who pass through our rehearsals each week whose lives are literally falling apart," Goodson told music ministry leaders during a recent Super Saturday workshop.

"Healthy ministries have a strong, strong basis in spiritual formation."

But Goodson admits that hasn't been the focus in every church's

music ministry.

Often, he said, churches hired music ministers based on their musical skills. Church leaders assumed the music minister was spiritually mature, Goodson noted. "Ministers of music were hired because they could sing a solo or play (an instrument)."

But Goodson urged music ministers to base their ministries on a foundation of spiritual formation, with an emphasis on such spiritual disciplines as prayer, Bible study, fasting, meditation, worship, silence and solitude.

To build the ministry, he said, staff and leaders should be focused on developing other leaders.

Musical skills and administrative abilities are still important, he said, but should not be the sole focus of the ministry.

To develop spiritual formation in leaders and other choir and worship team members, Goodson encourages ministry leaders to emphasize what he calls two equally important practices:

Spiritual disciplines. Baptists often practice worship, prayer and celebration, but he encourages people also to practice such disciplines as fasting, silence, solitude, meditation and simplicity. Such disciplines help Christians grow more spiritually mature so that they can "share from the overflow" of what God is doing in their lives, he said.

"Our 'friend,' Oswald Chambers, encourages us to 'be' and then 'do,'" Goodson explained.

"We must 'be' before we can 'do' to our full potential. Spiritual disciplines are the vehicle that God often uses for us to 'become' transformed

... 'by the renewing of our minds,'" he said, referring to Romans 12:2.

Shared community. "The entire concept, philosophy and theology of Christianity was not designed to be lived in a vacuum," Goodson said. "It really is a shared life."

That might sound a bit intimidating, but Goodson encouraged music leaders to be "cautiously, strategically, but openly vulnerable. We have to share, 'What has God done in my life?'"

Goodson offered several ideas for worship leaders to foster shared community among their worship teams and choirs. Among them:

Be transparent. Goodson said he doesn't advocate sharing "all of the skeletons," but he does encourage leaders to find a way to let people know they face the same challenges as everyone else.

The apostle Paul took himself off the pedestal by pointing out his own weaknesses, Goodson noted.

One way to do this, he added, is to share stories about oneself that have been resolved. That way, he said, others can identify with the problem but not be sidetracked by it.

Spend time with people. Worship leaders must find the time to get to know the people in their worship teams and choirs, Goodson said. He recalled hosting backyard potluck suppers at his home, where he could spend more personal time with people.

Another way to be accessible, he said, is to "walk slowly through the crowd."

"If you ask someone, 'How are you doing?' pause long enough to give them the time to respond honestly," he said.

"If they respond honestly, it gives you a great opportunity to stop and pray with them then. It has an incredible impact."

Be flexible. Goodson recalled that sometimes his prayer and devotion time at the beginning of Wednesday night choir practice would go longer when needs were being expressed and addressed.

As a result, he said, the choir would change the song it planned to sing Sunday, but it was worth it for the spiritual health of the group.

Develop administrative skills. By being a better administrator, leaders often can respond better to times when the needs of their group requires being flexible, he said.

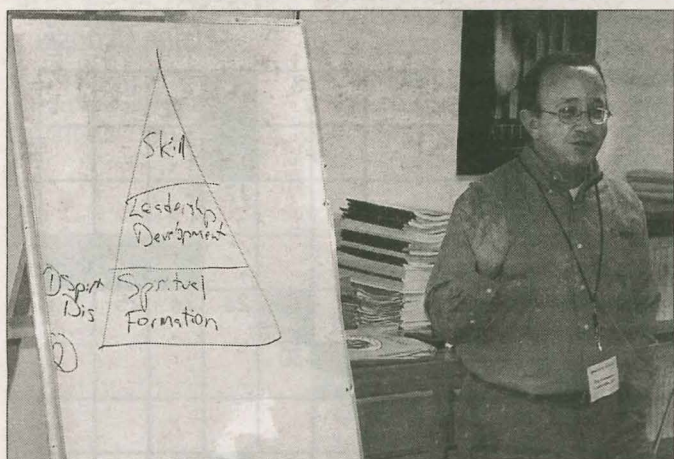
Goodson said he's finding this message of spiritual development resonates with many music ministry leaders throughout the commonwealth.

He said he has discovered many ministers face the same challenge. Sunday comes every seven days, he said, and the other demands of the job easily can distract people from the goal of spiritual development.

"It becomes very difficult to get out of the cycle of preparation and production for that next Sunday," he said. "We have more vision than we have people, money or time."

But many times of deep spiritual satisfaction come not on Sunday morning but in times of crisis, he said. "They're at the hospital or the funeral home or the police station," he noted.

"If we have not been intentional about building relationships before these moments, it is usually difficult to be invited to those family times of crisis."



STRONG FOUNDATION Tog Goodson encourages worship leaders to build their ministries on a foundation of spiritual formation.

Male role models

Many mothers tell us their children sorely need the influence of adult men

Oneida is blessed to have about 150 faculty and support staff. We need both men and women in order to meet the needs of our students. However, when I interview a prospective male staff member I often remind him of the advantage he has in influencing the lives of our students. Parents tell us time and again why they believe Oneida Baptist Institute would be a good environment for their son or daughter. Not least among the reasons is how desperately their child needs "male role modeling."

About 80 percent of our students come from broken homes, and a large percentage come from single-parent homes. The vast majority of those single parents are mothers. After 23 years of interviewing students, I am still overwhelmed by the number of both boys and girls who tell me they have little or no contact with their biological father. Where have all those fathers gone?

Since many of our students are growing up in an environment where male role modeling is sorely deficient, our male staff have wonderful opportunities to mold and influence the lives of our students. "Ward" (not his real name) came to Oneida from a broken home three years ago as a freshman. Ward did not have a stepfather, and when we asked how often he had contact with his father we were told, "None at all!" In Ward's case, he was not having a lot of authority or family problems; he actually was a responsible young man. Ward did show some anger at times with his mother, but that can happen in a two-parent home.

When Ward's mother called us, she told us, among other things, that he needed "male role models." What a blessed and wonderful opportunity our men have to be the role models many of our boys and girls need. Ward told us he wanted to improve his grades, which were not very good, and he said he wanted to make new friends. I am happy to say he has done well with both of his goals. He gets along well with his peers and has made new friends, especially with one very attractive young lady.

He has made substantial improvements with his grades, though he does struggle. Ward ended his sophomore year with a 2.83 GPA. Not as good as we would have liked, but a wonderful improvement over the C's, D's and F's he made before coming to Oneida.

Ward has the opportunity to work with several men on our campus and seemingly has appreciated the attention they give him. He is active in several school activities, which exempts him from having to have an after-school job. But he is such a good and responsible worker that he was asked to supervise one of the dormitory cleaning crews.

Ward is just one of many students who need the attention and support of our male staff. When I supervised our student work program, one of the greatest blessings I had was working alongside many of our boys. It was very easy to tell the boys wanted and appreciated my words of instruction about how to do a job. But absolutely nothing was appreciated more than words of praise for a job well done. In this one very special area, men on our campus do have a unique advantage!

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

'Be Utterly Amazed'

Clear Creek encourages state missions support

This academic year at Clear Creek, we are emphasizing one of our core values, "Evangelism and Missions: We are a community of individuals redeemed from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We affirm He died for the whole world and commissions each believer to take the gospel into the world. We commit ourselves to serve the needs of the churches."

Chapel sermons have emphasized the theme, and testimonies share witness encounters about changed lives. Student Body President Casey Hampton works with youth at Blackmont Baptist Church and also works with men at the Bell County Forestry Camp, a minimum-security prison. About 20 men attend an "Experiencing God" group; three men were baptized in July. Casey and his wife, Becky, are coordinating the Angel Tree project to secure Christmas gifts for inmates' children.

The campus Brotherhood group recently painted the interior of an elderly couple's residence near the campus. Through this car-

ing ministry, the men had the door open to witness for Christ; the couple later attended services where two of the students preached.

This month, we will collect the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions. The campus women, in cooperation with Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, encourage this effort. The 2006 theme is "Be Utterly Amazed," based on Habakkuk 1:5b.

With a state goal of \$1 million, the offering supports KBC state missionaries, language missions, church and community missions, evangelism, student work and Baptist Men on Mission special projects. About one-fourth of the goal will strengthen WMU missions education.

When KBC President Paul Chittwood presided at his first state Mission Board meeting last December, he pledged \$500 for the Eliza Broadus Offering and challenged everyone present to increase their support. I accepted his challenge and matched his pledge. It was an act of faith, and the Lord of all resources has supplied the need. Will you accept the challenge? Be utterly amazed—pray, give, go.

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



Bill Whittaker

Lights! Camera! Gospel!

Georgia church tries to compete with Hollywood

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

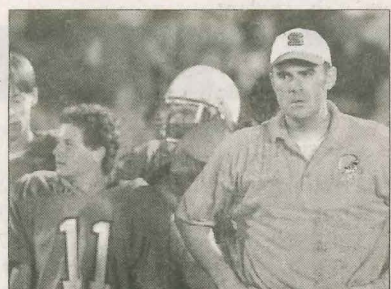
Albany, Ga. (RNS)—When Alex Kendrick thinks about sharing his faith, he thinks about movie screens, not evangelistic tracts.

Kendrick, the associate pastor of media ministries at Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Ga., has co-produced "Facing the Giants" with the help of hundreds of volunteers—on screen and behind the scenes—from his Baptist congregation and local community.

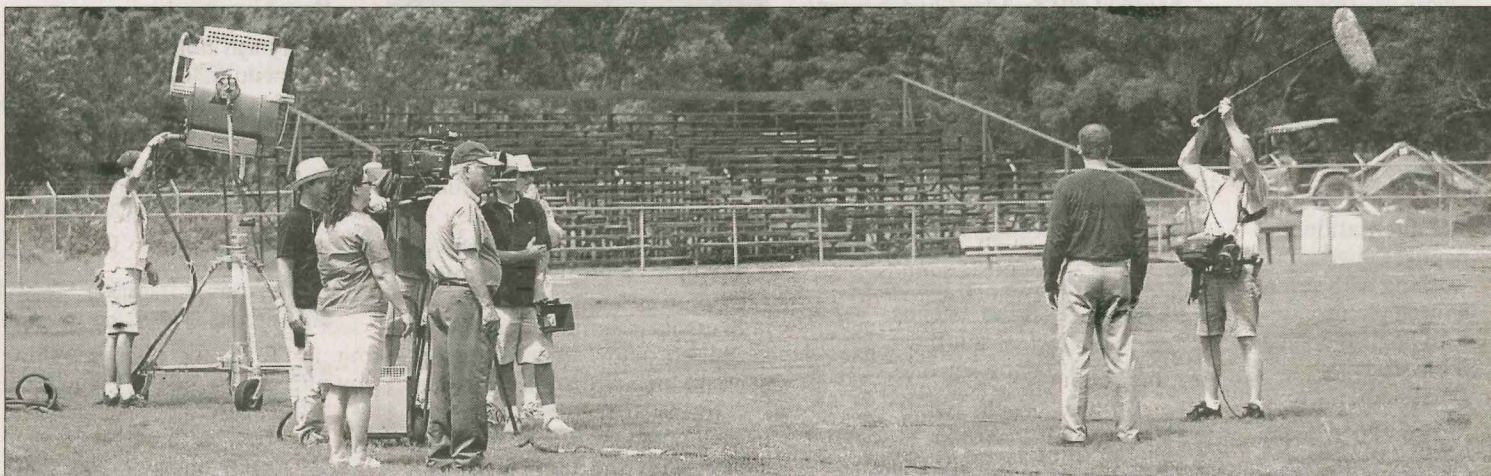
On Sept. 29, the movie about a Christian high school football team will premiere on 400 movie screens in 86 markets. In addition to co-writing the script with his brother Stephen, Kendrick plays the lead character of the movie, Coach Grant Taylor.

"This is a ministry tool," said Kendrick, who handles the television and video productions at the 3,000-member church. "I think churches are waking up to the fact that this is a valid avenue of ministry. ... People still love a good story."

Movies and ministry have been combined for decades, with organizations like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association producing films and pastors sprinkling their sermons with movie clips. Evangelical churches played a big role in getting audiences to "The Passion of the Christ" and Christian bookstores offer family-friendly film fare. Now, this congregation has decided to become involved in moviemaking itself with its own company, Sherwood Pictures.



GAME NIGHT Alex Kendrick, director of media for Sherwood Baptist, plays Coach Grant Taylor in "Facing the Giants." He co-wrote the screenplay with his brother, Stephen. "People still love a good story."



Research by the California-based Barna Group shows that 66 percent of adults say they talk with friends and associates about movies and TV shows they've seen recently. But, founder George Barna said, "The majority of people who have attended a church service cannot even remember the theme of the sermon within two hours of leaving the building."

Those types of figures fueled the church's interest in making movies as an expression of faith, said Michael Catt, senior pastor of Sherwood Baptist in southwestern Georgia. "Rather than waiting for people to come to us," he said, "let's go to them."

The Kendricks already had some experience in filmmaking. In 2003, they produced the film "Flywheel," a story about a car salesman who experiences an identity crisis. That film played in several local theaters, sold 24,000 DVDs and received International Christian Visual Media's Best Screenplay Award.

"Facing the Giants" is built around the struggling Eagles football team at the fictional Shiloh Christian Academy. A local layman walks down a hallway of lockers praying for the student body. The coach turns to the Bible as his wife falls to her knees in a battle against infertility.

Volunteers and grassroots

Unlike a typical Hollywood production, "Facing the Giants" employed hardly any paid professionals. More than 500 people helped in a variety of ways, from baby-sitting to donating meals and serving as extras. The credits give the sense of the grassroots effort—listing everyone from the "prayer coordinator" to the local restaurants and supermarkets that provided food.

movie's religious theme. But after receiving a record 15,000 e-mails, it backpedaled and said the rating was due to frank discussions of pregnancy and infertility.

A PG rating means parental guidance is suggested because the MPAA believes some material may not be suitable for children. A G rating means that the agency has found the movie acceptable for all audiences.

In recent months, the movie has gained national and international conversation, being prominently featured on Good Morning America,

"They taught home-schoolers how to hold a microphone," said Jim McBride, the church's executive pastor, who plays the coach of the opposing Giants team.

Church members donated \$100,000 for the film, and Provident Films and Sherwood Pictures worked together on enhancing the color of the low-budget movie. A soundtrack includes Provident Music Group artists such as Third Day and Casting Crowns. Sony Pictures is distributing it through Samuel Goldwyn Films.

On screen and off, Kendrick opts for a direct message about his beliefs. The coach sparks a turnaround on his team—which eventually faces the formidable Giants—when he urges players to not think of their own glory but glorifying God instead.

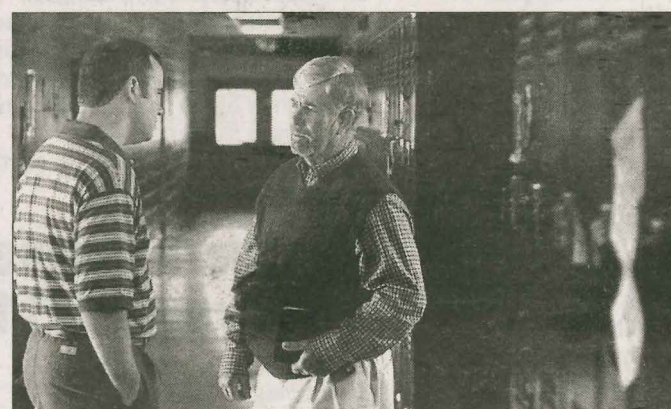
"I believe as long as we honor God, nothing is impossible," he told the team.

In real life, he hopes the movie will draw people closer to God, whether they're already believers or not.

"Everybody faces giants," said Kendrick. "It may be fear. It may be failure. It may be inferiority or something else. And one of the messages in this movie ... is that you can't always face your giants on your own. ... And that's where you have to rely on the Lord."

Barna's company has hosted screenings of "Facing the Giants" for secular and religious groups, and Barna himself has launched a new Christian entertainment company, Good News Holdings, to produce its own version of faith-related movies. Barna's first project is an adaptation of author Anne Rice's "Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt."

"We realize there are some



people who are open to and even appreciative of a very direct faith-oriented message," Barna said. "Some people who, because they're coming to be entertained, aren't looking for something that always leads back to faith. From my perspective, you've got to have different approaches, where sometimes it's direct, sometimes it's indirect but it's theologically correct."

Limited audience?

Stewart Hoover, professor of media and religion at the University of Colorado at Boulder, said any movie that has a blatant message about needing Jesus in your life—as "Facing the Giants" does—could end up with a narrower audience than its producers hope.

"There's a time and a market for kind of a strong Christian message and they may have seen that in the 'Passion,'" Hoover said. "But my feeling on it is that it's exceedingly difficult to cross over."

Catt and others involved in the movie say they hope it will present a picture of everyday lives of Christians and encourage others to start or renew a Christian commitment.

"We'd like to see people's lives changed," he said.

"FACING THE GIANTS"
More than 500 local volunteers in Albany, Ga., star in and helped with the production of a movie about a Christian high school football team and their coach who are facing challenges. The film will be released Sept. 29. (Sherwood Pictures photo)

PG-rating causes firestorm of publicity for brothers' small film

By Joe Westbury
Georgia Christian Index

Albany, Ga.—When Alex and Stephen Kendrick asked people to pray for a media breakthrough to draw attention to "Facing the Giants," they were not exactly prepared for the firestorm that would reverberate around the country.

But that's what happened in late June when the Motion Picture Association of America gave the family movie a PG rating based on "thematic elements."

The 10-member association first said the rating was based on the

FOX News, CNN, and in the Los Angeles Times and Variety, Hollywood's major trade publication. European newspapers also picked up the discussion and brought further exposure to the brothers and Albany's Sherwood Baptist Church, whose Sherwood Pictures produced the movie about football and faith.

The rating, which has brought stern criticism against the MPAA for giving the movie anything other than a G rating, has been a mixed blessing, the brothers say.

"I have to admit that we found it rather strange that "Facing the

Giants" would get a PG rating when other movies with a similar Christian message, such as "Ben Hur" or "The Ten Commandments," received only a G. But I think the rating is just a sign of the times, that society does not approve of a movie that affirms a Christian belief system," Alex Kendrick said.

"At first we were a little surprised at the ruling, but we believe that God is going to use this for His glory," he added. "We believe it (the PG rating) will attract an even larger audience who might not go to a G-rated movie."

"I think the rating is just a sign of the times, that society does not approve of a movie that affirms a Christian belief system."

Alex Kendrick

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

The International Baptist Convention is working with several church plants:

- An English-language Bible study in Darmstadt, Germany.
- Frontline Community Church in Germany.
- A church plant of Hannover International Baptist Church in Germany.
- Nuernberg International Baptist Church.
- A German-speaking church plant of the International Baptist Church of Stuttgart.
- A church plant in Oslo of North Sea Baptist Church in Stavanger, Norway.

Pray for international Baptist churches without a pastor in Austria, Germany, Italy, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Switzerland.

Praise God for 70 volunteers participating in 10 projects this year as part of the Kentucky/Piaui partnership in Brazil. Pray for follow-up ministry efforts by missionaries and Brazilian Baptists.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

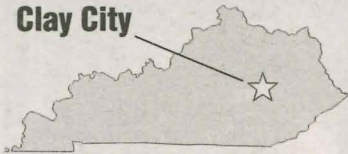
- **FOREST HILLS**—Aflex Church recently called **Gary May** as pastor.
- **JENKINS**—**E.J. Mullins** recently resigned as pastor of First Church.
- **LEXINGTON**—Boone's Creek Church will hold its third annual Fall Conference Sept. 23, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with the theme "Taking Acts 1:8 Seriously." Speakers will include Pastor **Matthew Perry, Randy Foster, J.D. Payne, David Sills** and **Jim Smith**.
- **LOUISVILLE**—**Brian Adams**, executive sous chef at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Sept. 2. He was 36. Adams, a native of Louisville, was a member of Ormsby Heights Church. He is survived by his wife, Starr, and two children.

St. Matthews Church will honor **David Garrard** with a service and fellowship Sept. 24, 6:30 p.m., in recognition of his 30 years of children's ministry at St. Matthews.

- **PIKEVILLE**—Grace Church recently called **Mark Swan** as pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Clay City



Two missions in Red River Association recently constituted as churches. Calvary Mission in Clay City constituted as Calvary Church with **Warren Rogers** as pastor and Wrigley Mission constituted as Wrigley Church with **Leon Claxon** as pastor. **Jack Fletcher** is director of missions.

- **SIDNEY**—Sidney Church recently called **Jamie Fugate** as pastor. He succeeds **Rick Gannon**.
- **VICTORY**—First Church recently called **Dale Tomlinson** as interim pastor.

Southern partnership in New York offers post-9/11 ministry options

By David Roach
Baptist Press

Louisville (BP)—Five years after 9/11, faculty at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary remain aware of the ongoing need for ministry and healing in the aftermath of the deadliest terrorist attack in American history.

Seeking to help respond to those needs, seminary officials have launched a partnership with The Leadership Journey, an organization in New York

Based at The Gallery Church, a Southern Baptist church plant, The Leadership Journey recruits college students from across the nation to spend a year in New York taking Christian leadership classes and doing ministry in churches across the metro New York area. The program originally was an initiative of the Southern Baptists North American Mission Board as part of its New Hope New York emphasis before moving to The Gallery Church.

Through the partnership, professors from Southern Seminary and Boyce College in Louisville travel to New York to teach classes to students in The Leadership Journey. Beginning in January, school administrators hope students will volunteer to spend a semester at The Leadership Journey. Up to nine credit hours—and experience in urban evangelism and ministry—can be earned through the New York outreach.

Evangelistic landscape

James Scroggins, dean of Boyce College, said Southern's desire to minister in New York is directly linked to the city's openness to evangelism after 9/11.

"New York City is the most important city in the world and yet one of the most unreached cities in the world," Scroggins said. "Misiologists have known that for a long time. But 9/11 has focused the attention of the world on New York City in a new way.

"9/11 didn't change the evan-

gelistic landscape of New York," he noted. "It just brought it to our minds perhaps more than it was before."

Aaron Coe, pastor of The Gallery Church and a Southern student, said the partnership offers students a valuable combination of practical experience, leadership training and theological education.

"Valuable leadership training"

"This partnership allows students to come to New York City, serve in a vital ministry capacity and gain college-level or master's-level experience while they do it," Coe said. "And they're going to gain valuable leadership training."

Scroggins, who has taught courses at The Leadership Journey, initiated the idea for the partnership during a brainstorming session with Coe, who also serves as executive director of The Leadership Journey.

To attract students from around the country, Scroggins encouraged Leadership Journey leaders to set up their program so that participants could receive college credit for their work.

The partnership officially began in August when Boyce youth ministry professor Dave Adams taught "Introduction to Christian Education" in New York.

Adams urged Southern and Boyce students and others from across the nation to consider spending a semester at The Leadership Journey because of its combination of practical ministry and classroom instruction.

"It's like surgeons training surgeons," Adams said. "It's one thing to be in the academic side, but to leave the classroom and then walk into the operating room—it's something that's not replicable. The students would come there, hear the classes, then spend time actually doing church planting."

Future courses to be taught at The Leadership Journey by Boyce faculty will include theology, hermeneutics and evangelism.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

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.
27-28 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Northside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.

November

3-4 International Student Conference, Cave City Convention Center.
4 101 Workshop, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro.

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

Barnes retires after 17 years with KBC

By Jonathan Johnston
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—Laverne Barnes retired Sept. 15 after serving 17 years on the Kentucky Baptist Convention staff.

Barnes, who served in recent years as the KBC Mission Board's fleet management clerk and hostess, began her KBC career in 1989 at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly.

Describing Barnes as "a true servant," Jim Donnell, director of the KBC's administrative services department, noted, "That is where her heart is—serving others.

"Laverne has made a significant impact," he added. "She is a very hard worker, very diligent and very conscientious in what she does."

A lifelong Kentucky Baptist, Barnes' state convention work was a natural expression of her ministry commitment.

Born in Cadiz, she grew up as a member of Oak Grove Baptist Church, where her father served as a deacon for 65 years. In addition to working in Sunday school and vacation Bible school, she served as a

volunteer at Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly.

In 1956, she married Alton Mitchell who was pastor of churches in Lyon, Trigg and Union counties. He also served 16 years as director of missions for Ohio Valley Baptist Association until his death in 1985.

In 1987, she married Harold Barnes, director of missions for Liberty Baptist Association. Two years later, he was named manager of Cedarmore Baptist Assemblies and she served in several part-time roles.

In 1997, she accepted a full-time position in the KBC's support services department. She also worked as an assistant receptionist and switchboard operator.

Bidding farewell to fellow KBC staff members during a recent reception in her honor, Barnes noted, "Thanks to a great group of people who work for a great group of people, Kentucky Baptists."

In retirement, Barnes said she plans to spend more time with her 11 grandchildren and one great grandchild.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Baptistry. Over 11 feet long (double stairs), six-plus feet wide (main circular) and 40 inches deep (very large). Must sell ASAP; asking \$2,000 (or less). Located in Mayfield, Ky.; please call Bro. Terry at (270) 247-4118.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for conservative Southern Baptist church (to replace pastor who is retiring). Please send resumé to Palomar Baptist Church, 2190 Fort Harrods Drive, Lexington, KY 40513, Attn: PSC.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of students to give direction and vision to student ministry and supervise middle school, high school and college ministers for Lakewood Baptist Church in Gainesville, Ga. Please send resumé to Don Ormsbee at dormsbee@lakewood-baptist.com.

SEEKING: Pastor for Meadow Land Baptist Church. Please submit resumé with references to 1188 Detour Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

SEEKING: Pianist/organist with strong skills in accompanying, improvisation and sight reading for blended worship. Contact Minister of Music Maria Lester, Versailles Baptist Church, 125 E Green St., Versailles, KY 40383; or call (859) 873-7338.

SEEKING: Part-time youth director for Southern Baptist church in Prestonsburg, Ky. Membership: 325. Contact Pastor Mark Tackett at (606) 285-0900; or George May at (606) 874-2464 or may_george@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Full-time student minister and church-wide outreach coordinator. Individual will work with students, their families and adult volunteers in the student ministry; individual will coordinate church-wide outreach. Individual will be responsible to plan, promote and implement an exciting and balanced ministry, leading students to worship, serve, grow and share. Bachelor's degree required—seminary preferred. Please send resumé to Crestwood Baptist Church, 1006 E Main St., Frankfort, KY 40601, Attn: Ms. Dottie O'Keefe.

SEEKING: God's man to pastor Bardwell Baptist Church, a member of West Kentucky Baptist Association. Please send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Bardwell Baptist Church, PO Box 147, Bardwell, KY 42023.

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

U.S. lawmakers propose bill to reduce abortions

Washington (RNS)—Led by two Catholic lawmakers, Democrats on opposing sides of the abortion debate came together to introduce legislation Sept. 14 aimed at reducing the number of abortions in the U.S.

The Reducing Abortion and Supporting Pregnant Women Act, which was introduced by Reps. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, and Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., would increase government funding for contraceptives and family planning, expand the adoption tax credit and restore Medicaid coverage to Family Planning Services.

Ryan and DeLauro are both Roman Catholics. Their church opposes both abortion and the use of contraceptives.

"Despite so much rancor and divisiveness in our society and in our politics ... surrounding abortion today, this bill reflects common ground on the goal of reducing the number of abortions in America while still protecting the privacy of women and families," DeLauro said.

Introduced eight weeks before the fall elections, the legislation was seen by some as a Democratic attempt to reach out to anti-abortion voters and people of faith.

Ryan, who is anti-abortion, said the Democrats conferred with anti-abortion groups but failed to gain their support because the bill would increase funding for contraceptives.

Because of the contraception funding, one such group, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, supported the bill's intentions but not all of its means, according to Executive Director Alexia Kelley.

Sister Sharon Dillon, executive director of the Franciscan Federation of the U.S., called the bill "an honest and promising attempt to reduce the actual occurrence of abortions." But, she added, "as Catholics we cannot support all of the provisions."

Widow wins fight to place Wiccan symbol on memorial plaque for fallen U.S. soldier

Fernley, Nevada (RNS)—A memorial plaque for an American soldier will be displayed with a symbol for his Wiccan faith, despite the federal government's refusal to display the marker.

Sgt. Patrick Stewart, the posthumous recipient of the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, was killed in Afghanistan in September 2005. Stewart's spot on the memorial wall at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Fernley, Nev., has stayed empty, because his widow, Roberta Stewart, was not allowed to include a Wiccan symbol on the plaque.

The Wiccan faith—which involves nature worship and belief in magical powers—is not on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' list

Visual witness

Texas artist puts new twist on fish & cross symbols

By George Henson
Texas Baptist Standard

Lewisville, Texas—A new twist on a couple of Christian symbols might be just the conversation-starter needed to turn an accidental meeting into a divine appointment, a trio of Texas brothers believe.

Seen from one perspective, a cross is visible. From another, twisted metal bears no identifiable shape. A little more twist, and the fish symbol of Christianity appears.

Scott Cavness said the desire to present the gospel to the world in a new and fresh way was what first led him to ask his brother Jac, an artist, to investigate the possibilities.

Jac Cavness has long held a fascination with turning three-dimensional objects into appearing to be two-dimensional. While many people tried to draw boxes on paper to appear to be cubes, no one was trying to do the opposite.

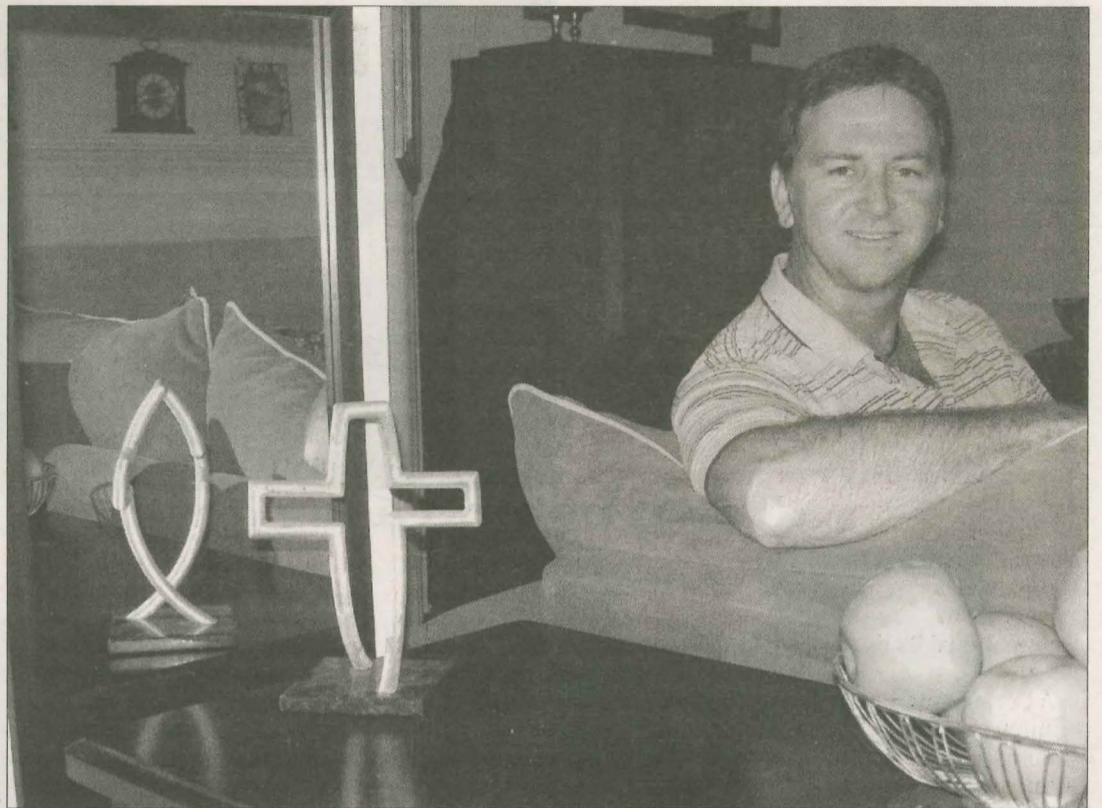
He developed the idea of contorting lines in such a way that they would depict one shape from one angle and something totally different from yet another. He terms his artwork perspective sculpture.

That transition from one shape to no shape and then to a second shape gave rise to the company name Eyevolver Sculpture Designs. Jac Cavness also designs larger metal sculptures, one of which sits outside the San Angelo, Texas, museum of art.

Large model available for church

A large model of the cross/fish also has been made, but as yet it sits in Cavness' backyard instead of in front of church, where Cavness hopes it will soon in order to catch the eyes of people who drive by. He wants it mounted on a pivoting base so the perspective will change each time a person passes.

"We want it to reach out and grab people as they drive by as a way for a church to say, 'We're trying to reach out to the world in a



contemporary way," he explained.

The business team involves Jac as designer, Scott as CEO and president, and brother Tom as project manager.

Scott Cavness said that what his brother Jac has done artistically with the cross and fish is unique.

"People have put them together in many beautiful ways, but never like this," he said.

The pieces, which now come in table models for home décor as well as necklaces, earrings and crystalline keychains, are far more than items that are pretty to look at, he insisted.

"This in a small way maybe illustrates how the secular world sees God," Scott Cavness said. "In the secular world, if you look at God from a weird angle, it doesn't make sense. But as you move to a perspective where you can see God for Who He really is, it all starts to make sense."

He hopes the artwork helps open conversations that, in time, might lead to conversions.

"The church is trying new and contemporary ways to reach the world for Christ, and this is an at-

tempt to be a small part of that," Cavness said. "Like God's design for salvation is simple, this is simple, once you see it from the right perspective."

Since the process is believed to be new, intellectual property rights already have been filed with the U.S. patent office. But Cavness said he is sure the concept really originated in the mind of God.

Referring to the earrings and necklace which hang from a free-spinning pivot, he said: "It's my prayer that we'll give people a new way to say, 'I'm reaching out to make a stand for Christ.' Because what I've seen in wearing the necklace is that people are drawn to it like nothing else I've seen."

"So many people have seen a cross hang from someone's neck that now they see a cross and just go on. Maybe this will help them see the cross and pause long enough to ponder its significance," he continued.

"Not all sermons are spoken, and I hope we'll be successful in using this to reach people for Christ."

For more information about the artwork, visit www.eyevolver.com

TWO PERSPECTIVES
Scott Cavness sits next to a tabletop piece of art designed by his brother, Jac. Scott said he hopes the unique angle will lead to conversations about the Christian faith. "Not all sermons are spoken." (Texas Baptist Standard photo)

Moody Bible student taking leap of faith on Internet

Chicago (RNS)—For struggling Moody Bible Institute sophomore Bill Van Kirk, starting his fundraising Web site was an act of faith—a last-ditch effort to find cash as he faced mounting college bills.

"Faith is about taking that step and actually creating something," said Van Kirk, 21. "My prayer is that God will honor that step of faith."

And it seems that his prayers have been answered, to the tune of \$1,027.

Van Kirk set up his site, www.GodsDollar.org, in mid-July after calculating that his jobs during the summer and school year wouldn't cover the \$20,000 needed for room and board for the remainder of college. The site asks donors to contribute \$1—or more.

The Moody Bible Institute, an evangelical school in Chicago, is tuition-free, but the estimate for room, board and books is \$4,800 per semester, said Marthe Campa, an application coordinator for Moody's undergraduate admis-

sions department.

The school does not accept federal financial aid, but students can apply for privately funded scholarships.

Van Kirk, who is studying to become a youth pastor, has corrected people who complimented him on his entrepreneurial site, crediting God instead with its success.

"I believe that God is sovereign over everything, so He owns everything," he said. "So the good gifts that we get are from God."

Van Kirk hopes donations through the site eventually will generate the \$20,000 necessary to stay in school. "We'll see where God takes it."

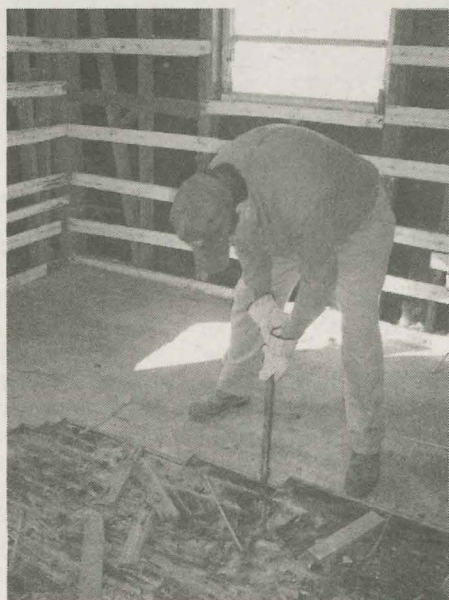
Though Van Kirk has drawn criticism, including e-mails accusing him of being a scam artist and a Web forum calling him a "crazy, bigoted, neo-con Christian," he remains upbeat.

"It kind of changes the thought of people helping each other out and how God provides," he said.

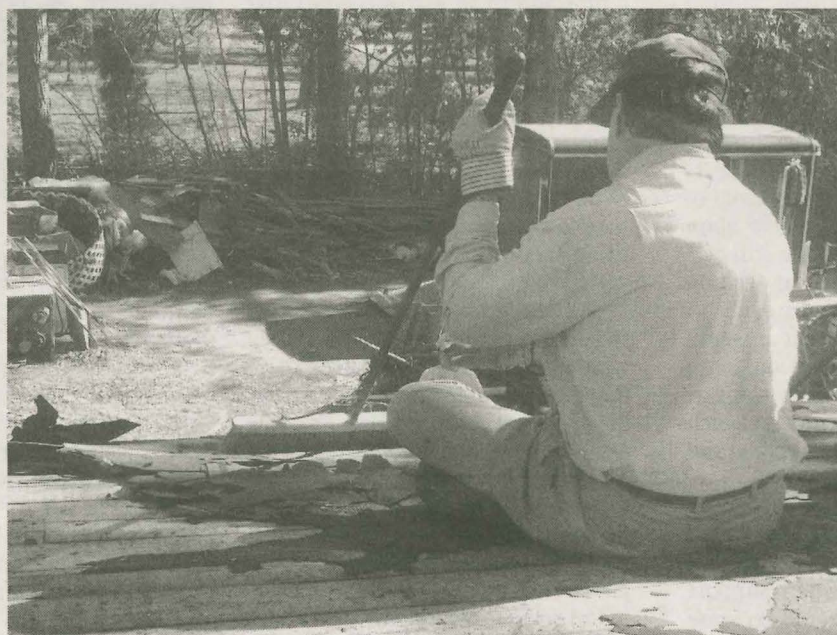
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Clear Creek is not just about books.
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