



WESTERN RECORDER

October 3, 2006
Vol. 180, No. 39

FOR THE RECORD

Baptists

Younger ministers detail differences of opinion about SBC leadership. *Page 2.*

Kentucky

New poll looks at attitudes toward Kentucky Baptist Convention, Cooperative Program. *Page 3.*

Western Recorder

News Director David Winfrey resigns after 10 years. *Page 3.*

Financial Forum

Does your pastor receive adequate compensation? *Page 4.*

Editorial

Population milestone signals ministry needs. *Page 5.*

Nation

Conservative Christians rally values voters. *Page 8.*

Ministry

Erasing the past, one tattoo at a time. *Page 9.*

Clergy abuse victims urging SBC to take action

By Hannah Elliott
Associated Baptist Press

Nashville (ABP)—Members of the coalition that fought the Roman Catholic Church's hierarchy over sexual abuse by priests are asking the Southern Baptist Convention to prevent similar clergy abuse in the denomination's churches.

Members of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, delivered a letter to the SBC Executive Committee at its Nashville headquarters Sept. 26. It asks convention leaders to form an independent review board to receive and investigate charges of clergy abuse in Southern Baptist congregations.

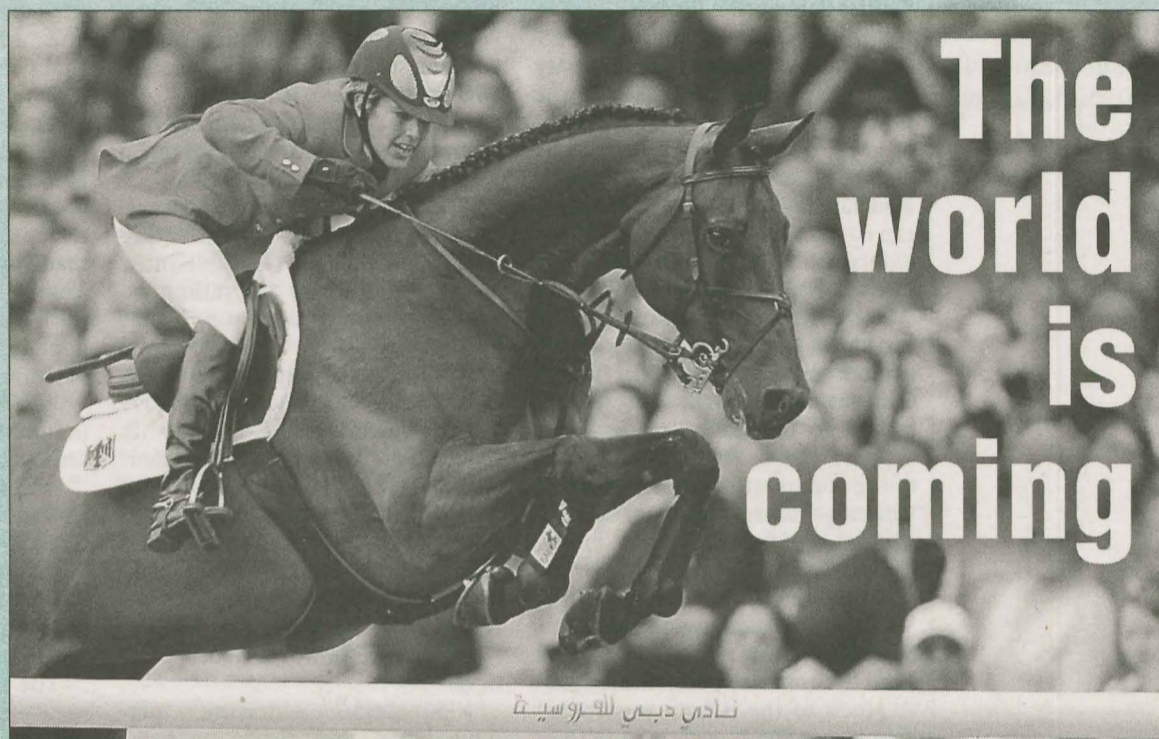
Abuse from clergy is a "systemic" problem, the letter said, and must be addressed by the denomination's main permanent governing body, the Executive Committee. SNAP members also mailed the missive to South Carolina pastor Frank Page, who was elected to the SBC presidency in June.

This is the second letter they have sent to Southern Baptist leaders.

"Just as (a) family member cannot properly investigate a molestation claim made against a close relative, local church leaders cannot properly investigate a report of clergy abuse made against a much-loved minister," SNAP members wrote. "The usual dynamics dictate that there cannot possibly be a proper inquiry without outside intervention."

Part of the difficulty the SBC faces in taking aggressive action involves the autonomous nature of local churches in Baptist polity.

□ See *Clergy abuse victims ... Page 8*



The world is coming

FLYING HIGH Meredith Michaels-Beerbaum of Germany competes on "Shutterfly" at the World Equestrian Games in Aachen, Germany, last month. The games, which featured 800 riders from 60 countries will bring approximately 500,000 fans to Kentucky in 2010. (© AFP/Getty Images photo by Jochen Luebke)

Baptists preparing for Lexington World Games

By Shirley Cox
State Correspondent

Aachen, Germany—Kentucky Baptists who just returned from the World Equestrian Games in Germany say the event offers a multitude of ministry opportunities when the games come to the Bluegrass State in four years.

More than 500,000 spectators, vendors and competitors recently traveled from around the world to Aachen, Germany, to celebrate their love for horses.

Initiated in England in 1990, the 14-day competition takes place every four years. In Aachen, 800 sportsmen and women from 61

nations competed in team and individual competitions in the disciplines of dressage, show jumping, eventing, endurance, vaulting, reining and driving.

In 2010, the games come to the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington. It is the first time the games will be held outside Europe.

In preparation for the 2010 WEG, Kentucky plans to construct hotel facilities and a \$33.4 million indoor arena. Officials predict the games will have a regional economic impact of \$100 million.

Larry Martin, missions growth team consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, led a team

of eight Kentucky Baptists to the event in Germany to explore what ministry opportunities exist.

"Our visit to Aachen deeply impressed us with the opportunity the WEG provides to meet with people from across the world in one setting," he said. "The experience gave us a wonderful foundation from which to invite others to serve when the world visits Kentucky."

Martin has long used his own love of horses in ministry. As a missionary in Boston, he trained a pony to perform tricks that he used to share the gospel.

□ See *KBC leaders preparing ... Page 6*

Shepherdsville church's loss is cautionary tale, specialists say

By David Winfrey
News Director

Shepherdsville—A Kentucky church's discovery that its pastor cost the congregation \$163,000 by day-trading stocks should serve as a warning for all churches to have basic internal controls for handling money, say two church finance specialists.

The financial oversight committee at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville recently reported the losses to members, according to church attorney Monica Henderson.

Former pastor Ron Shaver, who resigned Aug. 6, accumulated \$162,000 in fees and losses to the church through stock day trading, she said. The committee found that the losses date back to 2000, she said, adding that the committee reported finding no evidence of theft or fraud.

The church has since followed the recommendation of the committee

to eliminate an accountant position held by Shaver's daughter, Henderson added.

Meanwhile, Jim McAuliffe of the Bullitt County Sheriff's Office said his office has been asked by some members of Little Flock to investigate "possible wrongdoings within the church staff."

The investigation is in its infancy, McAuliffe said. "Our goal is to clear as much as it is to find guilt."

Henderson noted that church deacons are reviewing a policy manual for money handling procedures and that some recommendations from the financial oversight committee already are in place.

Asked how the losses could have occurred in the first place, Henderson, who also is a member at Little Flock, attributed some of what happened to the church's growth.

In recent years, when the church was moving into a new building and

baptizing new members, "policy and procedures and bylaw revisions are probably an afterthought at best," she said.

Don Spencer and Tom Adkinson say such incidents are a warning to every church that they should have basic internal controls regarding the handling of money.

"It's not rocket science," said Spencer, a financial support specialist with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Most any business is going to have similar controls."

Adkinson, a CPA in Middletown who often works with churches, agreed.

"If you have an active finance committee, an active treasure and they're communicating and looking out for each other, then you can take a reasonably comfortable position that the assets of the church are reasonably protected."

Spencer said he sees three to four

churches each year that have financial problems that could have been avoided if they had put safeguards in place.

While it doesn't happen often, he said that when it does it significantly harms the reputation and Christian witness of that church in its community.

"We all like to think it could never happen in our church, but it can, and the internal controls reduce the chances significantly."

But such controls don't just protect church bank accounts, Adkinson said.

"It protects those who are involved in the financial aspects of the church from unreasonable accusation," he noted. "We need to protect their credibility and their reputation."

Adkinson said he's learned it takes three ingredients for theft and fraud to occur:

□ See *Specialist: Internal ... Page 3*

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, October 4.

Younger SBC leaders detail differences

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Winter Park, Fla. (ABP)—A group of young Southern Baptist conservatives has issued a statement to counter the influence of a rival conservative group that has been critical of the use of power by recent Southern Baptist Convention leaders.

Meeting near Orlando Sept. 25-26, about 40 pastors and seminary professors calling themselves the Joshua Convergence presented a set of seven "Principles of Affirmation" and heard several speakers closely associated with prominent Southern Baptist leaders.

According to a "purpose statement" on the Joshua Convergence Web site, the event's organizers convened "to give a voice to younger leaders across the Southern Baptist Convention who are strongly committed to biblical inerrancy, who support the goals and leadership of the conservative resurgence, and who unashamedly embrace biblical standards of separation and morality."

In the months before the June SBC annual meeting, debate surfaced about how tightly SBC leaders need to control the denomination.

Much of the debate was fueled by younger SBC bloggers. More than 30 of them gathered in Memphis, Tenn., last May to issue an eight-point "Memphis Declaration" repenting for Southern Baptists' "triumphalism" and "narcissism" and promising to be more attentive to holding denominational leaders accountable. The Memphis statement expressed displeasure over a "narrowing of cooperation through ex-

clusionary theological and political agendas" in the SBC.

The Memphis group's support of South Carolina pastor Frank Page helped elect him as SBC president over two other candidates.

In the Florida meeting, the participants heard speakers who praised the small group of leaders who have controlled much of the denomination's direction since the SBC's conservative shift.

The principles affirmed by participants in the Joshua Convergence were:

■ **"Truth."** Affirming "the inerrancy of Scripture" and asserting that "the battle for the Bible must be renewed in every generation. We take our stand to continue in that battle."

■ **"Gratitude."** Expressing "deep thankfulness for those who have taken our convention back to its theological and spiritual moorings."

■ **"Service."** Noting that participants "are aware that—as with any human organization—the mechanisms of the Southern Baptist Convention can be manipulated. We commit to refrain from such practices."

■ **"Holiness."** Affirming "personal purity and separation from worldliness" and singling out "the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages." The affirmation said that the denomination "has stood against the evils of alcohol. The present generation can in good conscience do no other."

At least one key leader of the "Memphis Declaration," Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson, has been crit-

icized for not insisting on total abstinence in his teaching.

■ **"Unity."** Noting that within the group there are diverse positions on Calvinism, eschatology, worship and outreach, "we reject all attitudes of mean-spiritedness, personal attacks or intellectual and spiritual arrogance in these debates." The "unity" affirmation also noted that participants are "fully committed" to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

■ **"Identity."** Affirming Baptist ecclesiology and "the fundamental principles which constitute a Baptist church are the very ones which made up a New Testament church." Among those principles it listed were local church autonomy, priesthood of the believer and separation of church and state.

■ **"Mission."** Supporting the denomination's Cooperative Program unified budget.

Among the speakers at the conference, held at Aloma Baptist Church in Winter Park, Fla., were several with close ties to former SBC President Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

The conference's organizers and speakers included professors and other employees from the three educational institutions Patterson has led, including Emir Caner, a professor at Southwestern Seminary; Brad Reynolds, a professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.; and North Carolina pastor Stephen Rummage, who was a protégé of Patterson's at Southeastern Seminary.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

San Diego named NAMB's newest 'focus city'

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board has named San Diego as the next Strategic Focus City.

That initiative will bring additional Southern Baptist volunteers and resources in an effort to share the gospel with metro San Diego's 3 million residents.

NAMB's Strategic Focus Cities is a six-year-old strategy for leveraging the resources of the Southern Baptist Convention to focus ministry efforts on America's major metropolitan areas.

While preliminary work already has started, 2007 will be the planning year for the San Diego outreach, with full implementation in 2008-09.

Fermin Whittaker, executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention, said Baptists there are excited about partnering with NAMB to reach non-Christians and make disciples.

San Diego—the seventh largest city in the U.S.—was named as a Strategic Focus City because it is a largely unchurched mission field, said John Yarbrough, NAMB vice president for strategic initiatives.

"Only 15 percent of metro San Diego's 3 million people attend church regularly," Yarbrough said. "We also chose San Diego because of its existing strengths. The major advantage of metro San Diego is its being home to many strong and dynamic Southern Baptist churches."

As a result, San Diego's SFC emphasis will be "church-centric," relying heavily on Southern Baptist churches' current ministries, he added.

Bigger than some states

"Even with our 170 Baptist churches, San Diego's unchurched population is greater than 18 states and most Canadian provinces," Yarbrough said. "We have an enormous opportunity to share Christ's love in a tangible and compelling way."

With 50 miles bordering on Mexico, San Diego is a diverse city primarily of Caucasians, Hispanics, African Americans and Asians. More than 40 Southern Baptist ethnic churches are in the metro area.

San Diego also has a quarter-million college students. And for decades, it has had a military presence larger than the population of most U.S. cities, with 95,000 military personnel assigned to the home port of the largest naval fleet in the world, Marine Corps bases and Coast Guard stations.

Even with San Diego's existing SBC churches and missions, Yarbrough said church planting will be a high priority for NAMB's Strategic Focus City staff during the next two years.

BAPTIST DIGEST

Foster, founding professor at Truett, dies. Ruth Ann Foster, one of the two founding faculty members of Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, died Sept. 28 in Waco, Texas, after battling cancer. She was 59. Foster, a graduate of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, also held degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. She joined Truett Seminary in 1994, along with fellow founding professor, A.J. Conyers, who died of cancer in 2004. Foster, associate professor of Christian scriptures at Truett, wrote the commentary on 1 John for *The Woman's Study New Testament*.

Midwestern enrollment tops 1,000. Student enrollment at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., broke the 1,000 mark during the 2005-06 school year for the first time in school history, according to registrar David Richards. The headcount for the year was 1,096, an increase of 21.9 percent over the previous year's enrollment of 899 students. The Southern Baptist seminary was founded in 1957.

American Baptist collection moves to Atlanta. The American Baptist Historical Society, which claims the largest collection of Baptist resources in the world, is moving to Atlanta. The collection will be housed on the Atlanta campus of Mercer University, a former Georgia Baptist institution that is seeking to establish itself as a Baptist university with a national focus. The collection has been divided between sites in Valley Forge, Pa., and Rochester, N.Y.

CBF awarded \$1.5 million grant. The Christ Is Our Salvation foundation has awarded the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship a \$1.5 million grant to help transform CBF churches into "missional" congregations. A missional church is defined as a congregation whose entire ministry is focused on "God's mission in the world," rather than viewing missions as one among many church priorities. The grant will be distributed during the next three years.

Missouri exec avoids dismissal vote, gains board's affirmation

Jefferson City, Mo. (ABP)—David Clippard remains executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention, despite an apparent effort to oust him Sept. 22.

Following a six-hour, closed-door meeting at the Baptist Building in Jefferson City, Executive Board members attempted to quell infighting between the convention's conservative factions by affirming both Clippard and MBC nominating committee chairman Roger Moran, reportedly one of his primary detractors.

The board's statement described Clippard as "God's man to be our executive director" and noted that "we rejoice in all that unifies us to the glory of God." In addition to affirming Clippard and Moran, the statement commended the work of the nominating committee and the convention's other committees.

According to sources close to the board, Clippard spent about 30 minutes of the six-hour session accusing Moran and the nominating committee of trying to stack the Executive Board with members intent on removing or impeding him. Moran countered those allegations, reportedly saying he was only seeking accountability from the convention's staff, not Clippard's removal.

Clippard was elected by conservative leaders in 2002. He previously was associate executive director of

the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

Clippard got crossways with some Executive Board members when he opposed the board's decision to contribute \$100,000 to a political coalition against embryonic stem-cell research. He also opposed the board's allocation of \$200,000 for Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Two years ago, the convention signed a secret contract to sell its headquarters property to Cole County officials for \$2.75 million, but the deal fell through when voters blocked a sales-tax increase to fund the new county facilities to be built on the downtown site. Clippard fired the associate editor of the *Pathway*, the MBC's state Baptist paper, for revealing details of the contract.

In a move that reduced Clippard's authority, the Executive Board later removed *Pathway* editor Don Hinkle from under Clippard's supervision, making him accountable directly to a committee of the board.

Clippard also drew criticism for settling a harassment lawsuit filed against him by former convention controller Carol Kaylor.

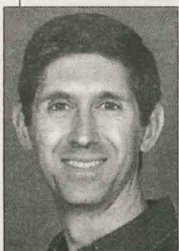
His supporters, however, credit him with building a strong convention staff and refocusing Missouri Baptists on outreach.

With additional reporting by Baptist Press

Winfrey resigns as Western Recorder news director

Louisville—David Winfrey, news director of the Western Recorder effective Oct. 6.

He has accepted a position as a marketing strategist for the Louisville office of Mercer Human Resources Consulting, an international firm serving clients in more than 40 countries.



David Winfrey

“David has made a significant contribution to Kentucky Baptist life and ministry for more than a decade,” noted Western Recorder Editor Trennis Henderson. “His expertise in writing, editing, photography and design has helped the Western Recorder maintain its role as a quality, award-winning publication.

“We will miss him both personally and professionally, but are pleased with his new opportunity.”

Before joining the Recorder staff, Winfrey was associate news director for the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

“The Western Recorder has allowed me to grow professionally and to serve God through two activities that I love, creativity and service,” he said.

Winfrey currently is president-elect of Baptist Communicators Association. He also is a Sunday school teacher at Deer Park Baptist Church in Louisville and a member of the board of directors at Habitat for Humanity of Metro Louisville.

He holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Georgia and a master of business administration degree from the University of Louisville. He and his wife, Mary Marcia, have one son, Jake.

Poll looks at attitudes toward KBC, CP

By David Winfrey
News Director

Leadership training, involving members in evangelism and reaching unchurched young adults are the most common areas where Kentucky Baptist pastors say they need help, according to a recent survey conducted for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The survey, designed to assess Kentucky Baptists' attitudes toward the state convention, asked a wide range of questions regarding the Cooperative Program, KBC ministries and church stewardship programs.

“We wanted to get a better picture of who Kentucky Baptists are in terms of demographics and what they felt about the convention and the service of the Kentucky Baptist Mission Board,” said Robert Reeves, director of communications for the KBC.

Among the questions asked of pastors was in what areas they needed resources, training or mentoring. Seventy-nine percent listed “raising up and reaching unchurched adults” and 71 percent listed “getting people involved in evangelism.”

The survey interviewed both Kentucky Baptist pastors and laity regarding a wide range of topics. Kentucky Baptist pastors reported:

■ **Satisfaction with the current status of the Cooperative Program.** The Cooperative Program is the joint funding plan for Kentucky Baptist and Southern Baptist ministries, agencies and institutions.

Currently, the KBC uses 64 percent of CP contributions for state missions and agencies and sends 36 percent to the Southern Baptist Convention for missionaries, seminaries and other SBC agencies.

Most pastors (62 percent) said they were either happy or neutral toward the current 64-36 split. And 84 percent of pastors said their church is committed to contributing toward the Cooperative Program as it currently is structured.

But the survey found 29 percent of responding pastors want a higher percentage of dollars going to Southern Baptist causes. Another 10 percent said they were dissatisfied with the way CP resources are used for

Southern Baptist ministries outside Kentucky.

■ **Turning to KBC for help more than any other entity, except LifeWay Christian Resources.** Eighty-three percent of Kentucky Baptist pastors reported turning to the KBC for some type of help in the past two years, more than the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (47 percent), other churches (47 percent), Saddleback (26 percent) or the Willow Creek Association (10 percent). Only LifeWay had a marginally larger rate (84 percent) of pastors turning to it for help.

More than three-quarters of responding pastors rated the KBC as “very good” or “excellent” for giving timely responses, having up-to-date solutions and giving a helpful and relevant response to the challenge being faced.

“The most important service or resources that churches need that is presently not available from the KBC are more resources and training that take into consideration the unique needs of small churches,” the study authors stated.

■ **Strongly desiring resources to teach whole-life stewardship principles.** Fewer than six out of 10 (58 percent) of pastors reported presenting a sermon or teaching series in the past year on giving or stewardship.

Meanwhile, less than one-fifth (15 percent) of the responding pastors said their church has offered workshops or seminars on personal money management.

Still pastors said they could use stewardship resources for such issues as encouraging “whole life stewardship” of one's time, talents and money (77 percent); encouraging people to tithe (56 percent); and helping people live within their means and get out of debt (56 percent).

The survey also questioned Kentucky Baptist about similar issues. Among the findings:

■ **Many laity have never heard of the Cooperative Program.** Twenty-three percent of laity claimed ignorance of the Cooperative Program, a number that rose to 45 percent for laity under age 40.

■ **Low rates of regular Bible reading by younger adults.** Overall, Kentucky Baptists reported similar rates

of daily Bible reading with the rest of the nation. But 57 percent of Kentucky Baptists age 39 and younger reported reading their Bibles two days per week or less.

At the same time, 21 percent of laity respondents under age 40 identified with the statement that they were a Christian, “but I am not at a good place in my walk with God.” This compared with 14 percent of laity respondents age 40-59 and five percent of respondents age 60 and older.

Twenty percent of respondents under age 40 reported not reading the Bible at all, the study notes.

■ **Generally positive feelings about the Kentucky Baptist Convention.** Seventy-one percent of surveyed laity reported having positive feelings toward the state convention. Only 4 percent reported negative feelings toward the KBC.

At the same time, however, many reported being not particularly familiar with KBC services and ministries. Twenty-seven percent of laity under age 40 reported being familiar, compared with 42 percent of those age 60 and older.

And the survey found that the younger the respondent, the less likely he or she felt it important to belong to a church related to the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Seventy-one percent of laity age 60 and older said they considered it important, compared to 52 percent of laity younger than 40.

“Local church loyalty seems to be rooted in a consumer model, not a denominational one,” the report states. “Keeping pastors mindful that people put relevance and life impact over the denominational brand in their decisions to attend church is useful in helping church leaders make program decisions.”

Reeves said he was surprised that recognition of the Cooperative Program was as low as it was among Kentucky Baptist laity.

“It is vital that Kentucky Baptists understand how when they give money ... they are not only supporting their local ministry and helping to reach people for Christ in their local area, but they are doing that in a powerful way on the state, national and international levels.”

Churches and individuals can get a summary of the research findings by calling the Kentucky Baptist Convention at (866) 489-3578, or by downloading it from kybaptist.org/kbc.

Specialists: Internal controls help prevent church finance fraud

Continued from page 1

■ **Financial pressure.** This can range from a sick family member to credit card debt or an addiction to drugs or gambling.

■ **Rationalization.** Individuals committing the fraud must be able to justify to themselves what they've decided to do.

“It could be that you say, ‘Nobody's paying attention, I'm just going to borrow it and then I'll put it back when the crisis is over.’ ... And then they typically don't.”

■ **Opportunity.** The person committing the fraud must be able to take the money and not get caught, at least immediately.

“If we take away opportunity, the other two things can exist and you're not going to have fraud because the opportunity's not there,” he said, adding that basic internal controls take away that opportunity.

While some controls are better suited for larger congregations, most can be instituted in even the smallest of churches, said Spencer, who recently conducted Super Saturday workshops on the topic.

Spencer listed 11 controls that churches should implement:

■ **Segregate money duties.** Spencer separates money handling duties into three categories: collecting, counting and depositing the money; making payments; and reconciling the bank statements. This provides checks and balances by preventing one person from having too much access to the money, he said.

■ **Two sets of eyes.** Have at least two (or three) unrelated people present when handling and counting church offerings until it has been safely deposited in the bank.

■ **Pay with checks.** All payments,

except for limited petty cash, should be made with checks. Don't issue blank checks.

■ **Purpose-driven checks.** Never write checks payable to cash, and always state the purpose for the funds.

■ **Document everything.** All checks should be based on original invoices or similar documentation.

■ **Two autographs are better than one.** Require all checks to have two signatures. The pastor should never be authorized to sign checks, Spencer added.

■ **Review bank statements.** Ideally the bank statement should be reconciled by someone other than the person who writes the checks. When this isn't possible, at least have the statement mailed to the chairman of deacons or some other church officer for review.

■ **Use a church budget effectively.**

Make sure expenditures are consistent with the budget. Unanticipated needs should be approved by a finance committee or other group. This prevents the church treasurer from becoming the gatekeeper of the church's money, Spencer said.

■ **Document procedures.** Put all cash handling procedures in writing.

■ **Have insurance.** Spencer recommends getting a fidelity bond to cover staff and volunteers who are responsible for handling money. This insurance would reimburse the church if it loses money as a result of theft or fraud.

■ **Conduct a regular audit.** This doesn't have to be a professional audit, Spencer said. It can be as simple as having church members who are not involved in the financial operation of the church taking a look at the church records.

Help available

Church finance is among the issues to be addressed at an upcoming KBC conference this month.

“The Nuts and Bolts of Church Management” conference will be held Oct. 26 at the Baptist Building in Louisville.

In addition to church finance, the event will feature workshops on office operations, administration and communication.

For more information, visit kybaptist.org/churchmanagement.

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Louisville, KY 40253
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*Earnestly contend for
the faith which was once
for all delivered to the
saints. —Jude 3*

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 489-3535. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

To subscribe: Send \$12.50 for a one-year, individual subscription. Group subscriptions on the church budget plan are \$10 per year. An additional church newsletter service is available for churches of all sizes. All subscriptions are payable in advance, except church accounts, which require a tax exemption number.

POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to: Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253.

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Slow-motion genocide in Sudan

By David Gushee

Jackson, Tenn. (ABP)—After the Holocaust, the world said, "Never again." Never again will we stand by and watch while millions of innocent people are slaughtered.

After the Cambodian genocide of the 1970s, the world said, "Never again." After the Rwandan genocide of 1994, the world said, "Never again." After the mass killings in Srebrenica (in Bosnia) in 1995, the world said, "Never again."

Probably in 2008 the world will say "never again" after the slow-motion genocide in Sudan is finally brought to its terrible completion.

Concerning the genocide in Sudan, no one will be able to say they didn't know. Each day the newspapers report on the ominous developments that threaten the lives of those who live in the western Sudanese region of Darfur. The people of this region, already victimized, murdered by the hundreds of thousands and displaced by the millions, now face the "final solution" of the political and ethnic problems that already have taken so many of their lives.

Complicated crisis

The situation is complicated but essentially goes like this: The Sudanese government and its Arab allies, notably the vicious janjaweed militias, attacked the non-Arab peoples of Darfur beginning in 2003 in response to rebel activity based in that westernmost region of Sudan. These attacks were particularly vicious and indiscriminate. The U.S. government declared them to be comprehensive enough to qualify as genocide.

Under international pressure, the Sudanese government entered peace talks with the main rebel group, the Sudanese Liberation Army. However, this rebel group split along tribal lines. One faction (associated with the Zaghawa people) signed a peace accord with the government. The other (associated with the Fur

people) did not. The agreement also was rejected by another rebel group. Now these various groups are fighting each other, while some continue to fight the government as well.

A weak African Union peacekeeping force has attempted, with limited success, to protect the innocents of Darfur. However, the mandate of this force expired at the end of September and it appears they will leave. The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution authorizing the insertion of 22,000 peacekeeping troops to replace the African Union forces. But the government of Sudan has refused to allow these troops to be deployed, instead saying they would be treated as a hostile force. The Muslim-led Sudanese government says that, instead, it will provide its own security for the Darfur region.

"We will all be slaughtered"

Scant comfort indeed, because it was this same brand of security that led to the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Sudanese civilians by janjaweed and allied Sudanese Army forces before it was stopped. Now everyone watching this situation seems to agree that once the peacekeepers are removed from the scene, it is likely that these same killers will descend on the region to finish the job they started. The unfortunate souls waiting in refugee camps and elsewhere in the region are convinced that their days are numbered.

One community leader told The New York Times, "If these (African Union) soldiers leave, we will all be slaughtered." He went on to say, "We beg the international community, somebody, come and save us. We

have no means to protect ourselves. ... We will all die."

At least in the early stages of the Holocaust, neither the Jews nor anyone else outside of Nazi circles knew what was coming. But in this case the targets know. The United Nations knows. The New York Times knows. The United States knows. NATO knows. The killers know. Everyone knows.

Who will intervene?

Will anyone act? The UN agreed to act, but Sudan says it won't welcome the troops. Is the UN prepared to shoot its way in? What about NATO or its member countries? Is anyone willing to step forward and fight their way into Sudan to save hundreds of thousands of lives? Well, NATO is tied down in Lebanon, Afghanistan and former Yugoslavia. Does that rule them out?

What about the United States? We already have declared the situation to be a genocide. We have a powerful Holocaust museum in Washington that has institutionalized the "never again" message. It is just around the corner from the Capitol. Can the witness of that place be heard a few blocks away? Are we also too tied down—in Afghanistan and Iraq—to do anything? Or are we perhaps too weakened politically, or too hated in the Muslim world, to dare intervene?

There always are reasons why genocide happens and no one does anything. But those reasons never look real good when the bodies begin to pile up and we prepare to say "never again" once again. It is time for the United States to lead the world in addressing the Darfur crisis before it is too late.

David Gushee is a professor of moral philosophy at Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Submit by mail to Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 489-3565; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

Pray the Interior's spiritual impact

I recently completed a 30-stop, 1,100-mile "Pray the Interior" tour to pray with Kentucky Baptists all across our great state. It was a follow-up to last year's "Pray the Perimeter" tour that focused on the associations along Kentucky's border.

This year's tour was similar to Pray the Perimeter, but also was different in several ways.

Both involved association and church leaders as hosts in each location. Both had participants who were pastors, church staff and laypeople. Both focused on praying for revival and spiritual awakening, the effective outreach of the churches to the unsaved, and prayer for pastors and their families.

During Pray the Interior, however, the focus seemed to be more on personal renewal, church revival and national spiritual awakening in preparation for authentic outreach.

In the small group prayer time, there was obvious brokenness, con-

fession and repentance. As I listened to the confessions in the many small groups, it seemed as though the Holy Spirit would reveal that I needed to repent of those sins as well.

Church staff members prayed with broken hearts over needs for authentic worship, greater commitment by members, for God to breathe new life into the congregations and for God to use them in greater service. Directors of missions and pastors prayed with compassion for churches and families to be united in Christ, for children and youth to be reached for Christ, and for personal renewal through more time with God and His Word.

I had the special privilege to pray with a college-age worship leader who writes Christian music. He will be involved with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's collegiate and young adult ministry group's participation in "Haystack Awakening

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

STEWARDSHIP

Does your pastor receive adequate compensation?

By Don Spencer

It's the time of year when many churches are dealing with



new budgets, including addressing compensation issues for the pastor and other employed church staff members. Below are some questions to help in this evaluation process:

■ Does your church pay your minister an amount comparable to other professionals with similar educational background and responsibility?

■ Is an adequate amount of housing allowance properly designated?

■ If a church-owned home (parsonage) is provided, has your church made some provision to offset the minister's inability to build equity in a home?

■ Have all elements of financial support for your minister kept pace with inflation?

■ Are ministry-related expenses paid on an accountable reimbursement basis?

■ Are amounts for expenses separated from compensation and protection benefits in the budget?

■ Are amounts provided for expenses adequate to cover the necessary expenses?

■ Is your minister treated as an employee for income tax purposes and self-employed for Social Security?

■ If your minister should die unexpectedly, is the amount of life insurance coverage adequate to meet the needs of the minister's family?

■ Does your minister's family have adequate medical insurance coverage?

■ If your minister should become disabled, has the church provided disability insurance that would replace a portion of the minister's current income?

■ Does your church contribute an adequate amount toward the minister's retirement?

■ Does your church pay the same percentage toward Social Security for the minister as it would for other employees by providing a Social Security equivalent?

■ Is your church committed to being biblical and fair with financial support so your minister can serve without undue worry about finances?

For more information about financial support for ministers, visit www.kybaptist.org/annuity.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department.

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Teens' activities: How much time & money is too much?

Q: With three teenagers in our home, we find ourselves are too many for cars, and on the go. How many activities are too many for teens, and what are some guidelines for making that decision?

Success and the pursuit of success is the "American Idol" to which many parents bow their knee and more than tithe their income.

PARENTING

What a temptation to want the best for our children and give our utmost to make sure that our young "highnesses" have every opportunity and advantage. Keeping the family calendar often becomes a full-time job, with many moms spending far more time in the mini-van than at the dinner table.

How much is enough when it comes to our children's activities and opportunities? Speaking of money, Nelson Rockefeller once replied, "Just a little bit more." Yet the truth is that a good thing can be a bad thing if it keeps us from the best thing. Pruning the schedule becomes necessary when we see the following warning signs:

- Family mealtimes, even at restaurants, are almost non-existent.
- Teens routinely have no unstructured time from before sunup until late at night.
- The home becomes a disaster area and the family is too tired and busy to do anything about it.
- Family members are unable to get a routine eight hours sleep.
- Family members have trouble remembering the last time they enjoyed being together and instead are aware only of how hard they must work and negotiate to balance the schedule.

It is important that parents remember that their children do not need to be successful at everything in order to be successful in life and in the eyes of God. Loving God, family and others; pursuing healthy relationships; and finding one's vocation might require us to do less, not more.—Scott Wigginton

Q: As a recent divorcee, I am struggling with discovering the steps I must go through for healing. In addition to the divorce recovery books well-meaning friends have given me, are there other practical illustrations of the challenges I am facing?

One creative source for a visual picture of the transition you are experiencing is in the storylines of well-known movies.

SINGLES

"The Wizard of Oz" is a reminder that your life recently has been tossed about in a cyclone of chaos. You have landed in a new place and likely have said to yourself the equivalent of "I've a feeling that we're not in Kansas anymore."

"The Lion King" is a compelling paradigm of the process you are going through. A tragedy has happened, and you should find community (hakuna matata) where you can heal and grow. You likely will be hit over the head with difficult, painful truth, but remember that God is your strength and move forward toward His Kingdom.

"Forrest Gump" shows that there is release in throwing rocks at the house where Jenny was abused, in Forrest's words, "Sometimes there just aren't enough rocks." When you are ready, dropping the "rocks" of unforgiveness will help lead to your eventual healing.

"The Breakfast Club," though set in a detention hall for high schoolers, really is about building a healing community. No matter what pain you've been through, we are all the same—sinners saved by grace. Find a support group in your church or community where you can gain the powerful experience of friends who understand.

For more information about divorce recovery and links to several helpful recovery Web sites, visit www.ibr-lex.org.—James Stillwell

Family Forum writers are:

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

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

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



Population milestone signals ministry needs

Sometime in the next few weeks, probably about Oct. 15, the estimated U.S. population will top 300 million.

While it primarily is a symbolic achievement projected by the U.S. Census Bureau, the population milestone also offers some clues about the challenges and opportunities Christians face in impacting an increasingly diverse nation with the gospel.

According to census statistics, it took the U.S. 139 years to hit the 100 million population level in 1915. The nation's population doubled to 200 million in a mere 52 years, reaching that mark in 1967. This month's 300 million mark took an additional 39 years.

While growth currently is only about 1 percent per year, that means we are adding about 3 million people per year to the nation's population.

"Immigration, longevity, a relatively high birth rate and economic stability all have propelled the phenomenal growth," according to USA Today. In the past 40 years, the U.S. has become the world's third-most populous country after China and India, the article adds, noting that the U.S. is "growing faster than any other industrialized nation."

The Census Bureau's current population estimates are based on one birth every seven seconds, one death every 13 seconds and one international migrant every 30 seconds for a net gain of one person every 10 seconds. That translates into a population increase of approximately 8,640 people per day.

But there's more. In recent years, Hispanics have become the nation's largest minority group, accounting for more than 14 percent of the U.S. population compared to an African-American population of 12.2 percent.

As the U.S. rapidly moves toward 300 million people, "it's a good bet the milestone baby—or immigrant—will be Hispanic," Associated Press reports. According to the

article, "Latinos—immigrants and those born in this country—are driving the population growth, accounting for almost half the increase last year, more than any other ethnic or racial group."

The percentage of Anglos in the U.S. has dropped from 83.5 percent in 1970 to approximately 67.4 percent today. During the same time, the Asian portion of the population has increased from less than 1 percent to more than 4 percent.

What does all that mean in practical terms? Both here in Kentucky and throughout the nation, churches and denominations must increase their efforts to minister among Hispanics, blacks, Asians and other minorities. It's a matter of sincerely communicating

the simple truth that "red, brown, yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight."

Fortunately, Kentucky Baptists already are gearing up to respond to Hispanic ministry needs with almost 70 Hispanic congregations, Bible studies and other ministry efforts throughout the commonwealth.

Yet the Hispanic population in Kentucky has exploded in recent years. Larry Baker, director of new work/associational missions for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, estimates the number of Hispanics in Kentucky could be as high as 350,000.

"The next five years are crucial," Baker warns. "If we don't get our foot in the front door, we're going to lose an opportunity to impact the Hispanic population. It's imperative that we increase our efforts."

In addition to reaching out to minority groups, the KBC is seeking to reach the traditional Anglo population through emphases on evangelism, discipleship, planting "high-impact" churches and other initiatives.

How will your church respond to the ministry challenges ahead? As the Census Bureau's population clock prepares to strike 300 million, now is the time to take action.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Teens dying to be loved, nurtured

I am concluding my second On Mission Celebration. Those are events where "real live missionaries" speak in several churches in an association and tell about what God is doing in their ministry.

It still is hard for me to picture myself as a "real" missionary. Gina and I have been appointed for only a year. It has been my pleasure to be speaking in northwest Missouri, in Harrison Baptist Association.

I have been telling them about how God is working in Kentucky. But I also have been speaking as a cultural strategist. After all, my title at the Kentucky Baptist Convention is youth strategist. I am challenging churches to get to know this culture we call teenagers. It is unlike any generational group that has come before them. Here are a couple of things I have learned about teens in Kentucky:

Technology. Today's teens are more technologically savvy than any previous generation. In fact, e-mail has become old-fashioned and is used primarily by teachers and other adults. Text messages and IM (instant messaging) are the main tools of youth communications.

In one of our recent Super Saturday conferences, Jason Cowan asked the adults in the room to text message him John 3:16. It took the fastest adult more than three minutes to text the entire verse to him. Sunday

night here in rural Missouri, a teenager texted it in 39 seconds.

PowerPoint presentations are being given as class assignments in elementary schools in Kentucky. Yet, we have many churches in Kentucky that still are struggling over whether to give PowerPoint and other computer programs in their ministries. I am telling people here, if it is taught in elementary schools in Kentucky, it is an educational staple (like reading, writing and arithmetic). We might not like it, but technology is essential to reach this generation.

Authenticity. This generation is searching for realness. Take this post from Karen's blog entry at mymission.com: "I've not been a friend of the modern church in a long time. It seems to be such a production, a place to go to do your duty as a Christian and go home. Then this summer going and worshiping with the Slovene believers was so amazing. Singing in Christoph's living room singing praise songs and listening to a sermon in a language I don't know, I've rarely felt God's presence more. They've really got it. They understand what it's all about. Understanding God and telling others. They didn't care where they were or that there weren't 10 of them; they only cared about worshiping and learning about a God who cares about them and wants a relationship with them. It feels like we've forgotten

that as we sit in the pews we inhabit every Sunday morning and sing the same hymns over and over. It's something I just can't get off my mind or my heart. We have so much more available spiritually to us here and we do nothing with it. I long to feel the presence of God as I did in Christoph's living room."

Or as Natalie said in her blog titled "take my hand": "I've always been frustrated with my youth group and youth groups in general. Am I completely knocking the youth group model of ministry? No. But, I do believe that it too often and too easily becomes a place to entertain. Youth group morphs into a social club disguised verbally as 'fellowship time,' exclusive cliques form, and God ceases to be the obvious focus."

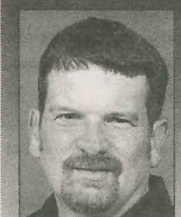
Ouch! Teens are searching for genuineness and realness.

Natalie continues, "We played games for a good while and prayed once. This isn't just a description of a one-time event at youth group either, it's pretty indicative of what goes on generally. Youth deserve more than that. Youth need more than that. And, I know for a fact that it's not just me who feels this way. And it's not just because I am an 'older' youth. We deserve more and we need more."

We as a church body not only must understand the culture, we must be willing to adapt to this new and vibrant generation. They are dying to be loved and nurtured.

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

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

KBC leaders preparing for equestrian games invasion

Continued from page 1

In 1995, he was one of eight principal founders of Equestrian Ministries International. He currently serves as vice president of that non-profit organization which has 500 members internationally.

Martin compares the ministry potential for the games to the work Southern Baptists have performed during the Olympics.

In Salt Lake City, Atlanta and other Olympic cities, volunteers have served in official capacities as event volunteers and as volunteers for spe-

cific Southern Baptist ministry projects performed for visitors to the host city.

Martin said the visit to Germany convinced him and others to pursue three ministry opportunities related to the World Equestrian Games:

Official volunteers. Working through the World Equestrian Games Foundation, Kentucky Baptist leaders expect to offer approximately 500 volunteers who would serve as official volunteers in and around the games, Martin said.

"We have a consortium of 22 organizations working together to help provide volunteers for the WEG," he said.

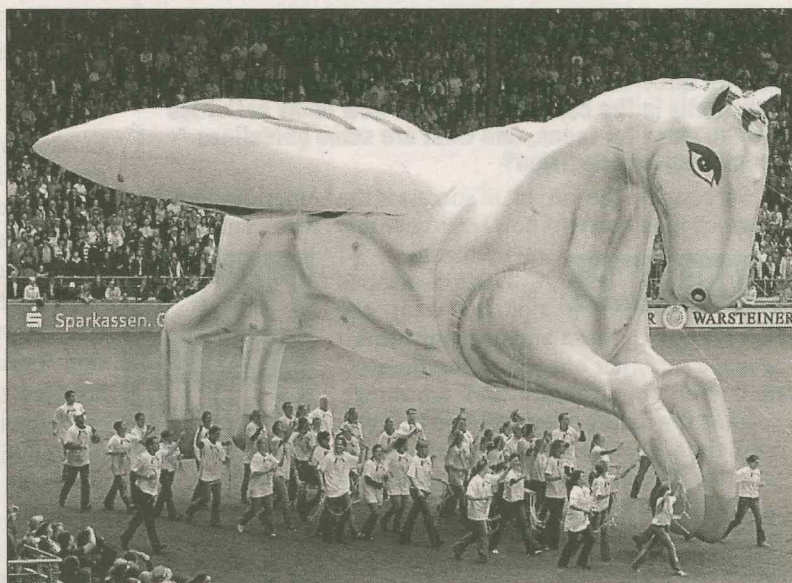
"Sixteen of these organizations are equine-related," he added. "We will have volunteers available from Georgetown and Asbury colleges."

Georgetown College has 40 students who are involved in an Equine Scholars Program.

Asbury College has more than 40 students in an Equestrian Ministries Program and 31 of those students are seeking an equine studies minor.

Preliminary events. Leading up to the games, several horse-related speakers are expected to visit Kentucky, Martin said.

For example, Alabama "horse whisperer" Paul Dailey will give several demonstrations throughout Kentucky Oct. 23-27. In a horse arena, Dailey trains a horse that has never been ridden. Throughout the dem-



CLOSING CEREMONY Youth run across the stadium with a balloon Pegasus at the closing ceremony of the World Equestrian Games in Aachen, Germany last month. Kentucky Baptists hope to minister to fans, staff and teams when the games come to Lexington in 2010. (© Corbis photo by Federico Gambarini)

onstration, he links horse taming principles to God's desire for man.

Former horse racing jockey Pat Day and others will share their faith and experiences in settings with both Christians and non-Christians, Martin said.

Team services. Ministry organizers will contact teams from several countries before the games to offer services before and during the event, Martin said.

"Many will be arriving months be-

fore the games with their horses to acclimate them," he noted.

"We will simply offer anything we can do to befriend them and serve them in their time of preparation for the games."

For more information about ministries related to the World Equestrian Games, contact Larry Martin toll-free at (866) 489-3400 or at larry.martin@kybaptist.org.

With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey

Horse shows coming

"Horse whisperer" Paul Daily will conduct five demonstrations in Kentucky later this month.

Daily uses the demonstrations to draw parallels between horse training and how God interacts in people's lives.

The events will be in:

Williamsburg, Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. at the 3-R Ranch. For information, contact Janus Jones at (606) 549-4497.

Williamstown, Oct. 24 at 7 p.m. at the Kentucky Cowtown Arena. For information, contact Greg Nimmo at (859) 824-7755.

Wilmore, Oct. 25 at 6 p.m. at the Asbury College equine center. For more information, contact Harold Rainwater at (859) 229-3423.

Shelbyville, Oct. 26 at 6:30 p.m. at the Shelby County Fairgrounds. For information, contact Larry Martin at (502) 292-9627.

Cadiz, Oct. 27 at 6 p.m. at the Trigg County recreational complex arena. For information, contact Sherry Littlejohn at (270) 522-7066.

169th KBC Annual Meeting

November 14-15, 2006

First Baptist Church • Bowling Green, Kentucky

Reserve your spot now! ▶

Listed hotels are on/near the Scottsville Road corridor (Exit 22 from I-65).

Make your hotel reservations now! Another convention is also being held in Bowling Green at the same time, and room availability at some hotels is limited.

Attendees must make and pay for their own reservations. To receive blocked room rates, call preferred hotel and request a room in the Kentucky Baptist Convention block. Most accommodations are non-smoking. The Bowling Green hotel tax is 11.25%.

Baymont Inn & Suites

165 Three Springs Road
800.642.4239 / 270.843.3200

\$79 flat rate (king and/or double beds)
Complimentary continental breakfast
Reservation deadline: October 13

Courtyard by Marriott

(Smaller block of rooms at this property)

1010 Wilkinson Trace
270.788.8569

\$90 flat rate (doubles and kings)
Breakfast buffet (at cost)
Reservation deadline: October 13

Drury Inn Bowling Green

3250 Scottsville Road

800.325.0720 (reservations) / 270.842.7100
\$85-\$94 (doubles and kings; 1-4 persons)
Complimentary hot breakfast
Reservation deadline: October 13

Fairfield Inn Marriott

1940 Mel Browning Street
270.782.6933

\$79 flat rate (singles and doubles)
Complimentary deluxe continental breakfast
Reservation deadline: October 13

Hampton Inn

233 Three Springs Road
270.842.4100

\$82 flat rate (doubles, kings and queens)
Complimentary breakfast
Reservation deadline: October 1

KENTUCKY BAPTISTS
Connect

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with Integrity and
Godly Vision

The Pastors' Conference
and other auxiliary
meetings will take place
on Monday, November 13.



For more information, visit

www.kybaptist.org/annualmeeting

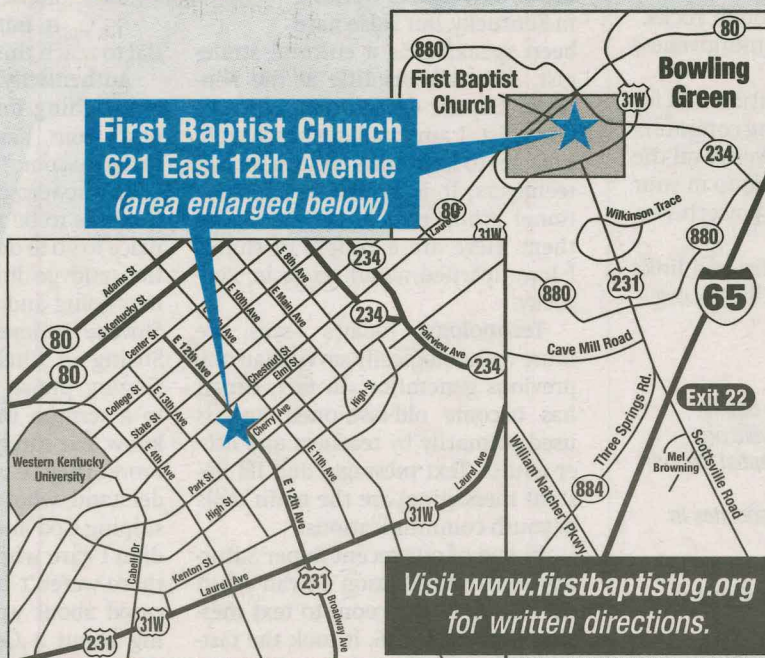
or contact Denise Withers at:

502.489.3578

Toll free in Kentucky 866.489.3578

Denise.Withers@kybaptist.org

First Baptist Church
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(area enlarged below)



Visit www.firstbaptistbg.org
for written directions.

It's harvest time

Is it time to evaluate where you are storing the harvest?

Harvest time is an agricultural concept with which many, but not all, are familiar. It refers to the season of gathering the crops, and the yield is the reward for your effort. It is a concept that can be applied to all of life.

This "harvest" time of the year is an excellent time prayerfully to evaluate your financial stewardship.

Perhaps you have a certificate of deposit maturing, or you are considering placing funds in a CD.

You may be evaluating your income tax situation for 2006 and 2007, and therefore interested in some tax-advantaged charitable giving ideas.

This may be one of those years in which you have experienced an above-normal portion of the Lord's blessing in your life, and you are intending to express your gratitude by some "over and above" gifts to one or a combination of charitable organizations to which you are connected. It may be to your church, a college, school, seminary, children's ministry, hospital ministry, Christian camp or conference center ministry, a mission

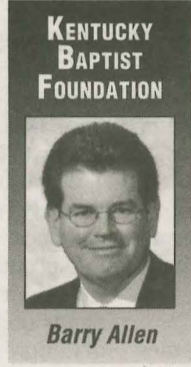
board, a missions support organization or a human needs ministry.

Or, you may be engaged in estate planning, and you are prayerfully pondering a legacy gift of cash, appreciated assets, life insurance, retirement assets or a bequest in your will or trust for the benefit of one or more cause for which you have the desire to help secure its financial future.

If you find yourself in any of these situations, let me suggest you contact Laurie Valentine or me for our assistance in helping you determine the most advantageous charitable gift option available to you. There is no cost or obligation for this consultation service.

Also, let me remind you there are options that provide you and your family with income before any distribution is made to your charitable beneficiaries. The simplest option is a charitable gift annuity. If you are 65, the payout rate is 6 percent; at age 75, it's 7.1 percent; at 80, it's 8 percent; and at 90 and above, it's 11.3 percent. Please call us toll-free.

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



KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION

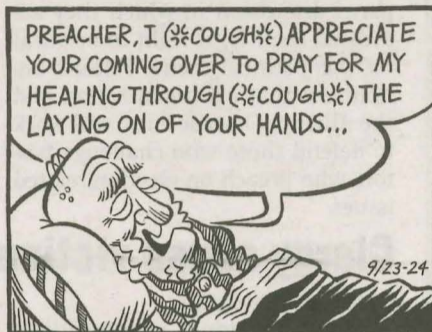
Barry Allen

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 "___ the lilies" (Matthew 6:28)
- 8 Woody Guthrie's son
- 11 Ann, Russ.
- 12 Moses' brother
- 13 Indianapolis' state, abbr.
- 14 Roman Catholic, abbr.
- 15 "They ___ unto them" (Exodus 12:36)
- 17 Bean curd
- 19 Apiece
- 21 Sews quickly
- 23 Turns away from sin
- 25 House of Lords, abbr.
- 26 The writings that contain the new covenant, abbr.
- 28 "Hole of the ___" (Isaiah 11:8)
- 29 Nickel, chem. symbol
- 30 High male voices
- 34 "Every ___ of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14)
- 36 "He took ... the ___ out of the house" (2 Chronicles 33:15)
- 37 Three, prefix
- 38 More, suffix
- 39 "Pure ___ of water of life" (Revelation 22:1)
- 41 Overeaters Anonymous, abbr.
- 42 New England state, Concord is the capital, abbr.
- 44 Evergreen

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				44				45	
46	47	48	49			50			51
52						53		54	
55						56			

Carole Stengel

- 45 Perform
- 46 Caleb's brother (Joshua 15:17)
- 50 "He riseth ... and took a ___" (John 13:4)
- 52 Grievance
- 54 Metal thread
- 55 "Get thee hence, ___" (Matthew 4:10)
- 56 The meal's last course
- 20 Rural route, abbr.
- 21 Noblemen, below a baron and above a knight, abbr.
- 22 Snake
- 24 Not applicable, abbr.
- 27 Tellurium, chem. symbol
- 31 Modern Bible translation, abbr.
- 32 Poem
- 33 Sea level, abbr.
- 34 "___ of heaven" (Malachi 3:10)
- 35 Small drip
- 37 Black sticky substance
- 40 Within, prefix
- 41 "Cake of ___ bread" (Exodus 29:23)
- 43 Howard, for short
- 44 Womanly, abbr.
- 46 Officers of the Guard, abbr.
- 47 Head covering
- 48 National Vision Associates, abbr.
- 49 Man's name
- 51 To make a mistake
- 53 Born, Fr.

Last week's solution

1	O	P	H	I	R	5	W	A	L	K	I	N	G
10	P	E	11	H	A	12	O	13	E	A	R	L	
14	P	A	15	S	I	O	N	A	16	E	R	A	
	R	L	17	O	D	18	N	19	S	P	Z	I	T
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	S	I	26	T	S	27	R	28	F	I	29	Z	I
31	S	A	32	N	C	33	I	34	S	E	36	G	O
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40	C	41	E	42	R	44	L	45	P	A	46		
47	O	R	48	H	A	N	49	S	T	P	I		
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59	S	S	60	E	S	T	A	B	L	I	S	H	

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NATIONAL NOTES

Conservative blocking FDA nominee. First it was liberals blocking President Bush's choice to head the Food and Drug Administration, demanding the agency end delays of the over-the-counter sale of an emergency contraceptive pill. Now that the "morning-after pill" has been approved and the Democratic objections have been dropped, a conservative has stepped forward to thwart the formal confirmation of acting FDA Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., has put a hold on the nomination, saying he will prevent a vote until the nominee takes action to remove the abortion drug RU-486 from the market.

Schools slate 'Gay History Month' for October. The Philadelphia School District has declared October "Gay and Lesbian History Month" on its 2006-07 school calendar, touching off a wave of protest from parents who say homosexuality conflicts with their religious beliefs. The Philadelphia Inquirer said the school district has received about 120 complaints. The school district is not preparing district-wide curriculum or holding special events for October, a school official said.

Poll: Most Americans say Pope's apology is sufficient. Two-thirds of Americans believe Pope Benedict XVI has apologized enough for his remarks about Islam's Prophet Muhammad that have angered many Muslims, according to a Gallup Poll. Just 22 percent say he should do more to apologize to Muslims. The pope's controversial speech in Germany quoted the 14th-century Byzantine Emperor Manuel Paleologos II, who said Muhammad's teachings were "only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." The pope later said he was "deeply sorry" that his use of the quote had provoked outrage and violence in the Muslim world, but never apologized for using the words themselves.

Schwarzenegger vetoes two pro-gay bills. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a pair of bills Sept. 28 that were opposed by pro-family groups. One bill would have required the state's department of education to adopt an anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy based on sexual orientation. The other would have established a "tolerance education pilot program," that addressed discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Conservative Christians hold rally to vote for values

Washington (RNS)—More than 1,000 conservative Christians gathered for a "Values Voter Summit" Sept. 22, hearing Republican members of Congress and evangelical leaders calling on pastors to preserve their traditional values without fear of criticism from church-state separationists or the Internal Revenue Service.

Focus on the Family Chairman James Dobson and Family Research Council President Tony Perkins rallied like-minded Christians in a panel discussion in which they addressed their legal right to be vocal on the political scene. Perkins announced that his organization and the Alliance Defense Fund will work to defend those who challenge pastors who preach on election-related issues.

Clergy abuse victims urging Southern Baptists to take action

Continued from page 1

Since individual congregations have full control over their decision-making and governing processes, the SBC can't dictate rules or punishment to them.

But abuse survivors complain that too often abusive ministers move on to other churches without being punished, only to repeat the abuse in another location.

The SNAP letter said that, given the frequently reported pattern of church officials failing to respond to clergy-abuse allegations, the SBC must provide national leadership to rid the ranks of repetitive predators.

"When kids are at stake, there is no place for passivity on the part of denominational leaders," it said, adding that the denomination's

structure is no excuse for Executive Committee inaction.

Southern Baptists have shown themselves capable of cooperative endeavors when they choose, the authors wrote.

"Given that congregational autonomy does not preclude a cooperative, denomination-wide effort for these other endeavors, why should it preclude a domination-wide effort at protecting kids from clergy predators?"

SBC president Page responded to SNAP's first letter. After stating how disturbed he was by the egregious abuse of power in some local churches, Page said he would meet with SBC officials to see whether they "might provide this kind of assistance without infringing upon the autonomy of these state-level or

local-level entities."

Requests in the latest letter call for a victim hotline, church-wide education about sexual abuse, and a "zero tolerance" policy for Southern Baptist churches that hire someone with any report of having sexually abused a minor.

The SNAP letter asks the SBC Executive Committee to recommend the establishment of a review board to messengers at the SBC's 2007 annual meeting in San Antonio.

down with two stone tablets from Brokeback Mountain saying we've changed the rules, let's keep it like it is," he said, gaining loud cheers from those in attendance.

Prior to the summit, several progressive groups held events to demonstrate that they, too, vote with their values.

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, issued a statement criticizing the "supposedly nonpartisan event" for featuring a lineup of Republicans.

"Dobson and his friends are desperately trying to lead the evangelical flock into the Republican fold in November," he said. "They know that their power in Washington depends on maintaining GOP control of Congress."



At a crossroad

Students must decide if they will take advantage of Oneida's opportunities

Hopefully, anyone who has been reading this column for the past several years has been blessed by the number of students who have had life-changing experiences while at Oneida Baptist Institute. I often write about the struggles we face in working with students. Fortunately, most of the students who enroll are eager and ready for a change. Often, the decision to come to Oneida has been made after months or years of frustration and conflicts at home. When those students come to Oneida, they usually are ready for a change. They are tired of making low or failing grades, weary of making wrong decisions and annoyed with rules at home that they deem totally unfair.

We let our students know we are excited about their being in an environment where they can make better choices and that we are going to try to help them see the value of success as opposed to failure. It would be wonderfully satisfying if we could report that all of our students respond in a positive way to the opportunities we offer. But I am sure it will come as no surprise that in spite of our best efforts, some seem to resist nearly everything we do. Normally, if a student is mostly creating problems for our staff we will be longsuffering and patient, but if he or she is creating problems that are detrimental to other students we cannot tolerate indifference as long.

Usually about twice a month we have a meeting called "Crossroads." The purpose of the meeting is to make one final attempt to reach a student who has had more than enough time to make better decisions but is not responding to our efforts

to help. Before the child might be sent home, this is an opportunity for the faculty and staff who work with that student to make one final attempt to help him or her take advantage of the opportunities here at Oneida.

We had a Crossroads meeting last week at 7 p.m. After a long, hard day for most of our staff, we gathered to discuss a student who was in his/her third year at Oneida. Among the staff present was a young mother of two small children, a man who has many after-school responsibilities, a father of two elementary-age children, the dean of students who had just worked a 12-hour shift and three other staff who knew this student very well. These folks were not compensated for the time spent in the meeting, and they were not required to attend. I am deeply grateful to work with faculty and staff who are willing to do much more than their job descriptions indicate.

Space does not permit me to go into detail about this young person's background. The story is typical for many of our students. After the staff discussed their concerns, the student was invited to join us. Usually students are surprised to learn we are having a meeting to discuss their conduct, and they are not quite sure about our motive. We try to make it clear that this is possibly our final attempt to help them because they have not been responding to our efforts. But if they insist on ignoring our attempts, we will have no recourse but to send them home. They are at a crossroad; they must decide which road they will travel in the future.

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



W.F. Underwood

A student's journey to Clear Creek

California student prepares for ministry in military

By Daniel Cheney

(Editor's note: The following was adapted from an English composition essay by Cheney, who is a first-year student.)

The journey that has led me to Clear Creek Baptist Bible College has been long and interesting.

After high school graduation in 1999, I attended a community college. I did so for only one reason—to live with my parents free of charge. After completing those two years, I realized I had no direction or motivation to continue college. It was then my journey began.

I joined the United States Army in hopes of going to combat and figuring out what I wanted to do with my life. While in Afghanistan, I first felt the call of God to serve as an Army chaplain. Realizing the need for more education, I believed I would return to California after leaving the Army. God had other arrangements.

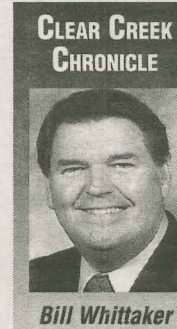
The second major juncture in my journey took place when I met and married my wife, Kimberly. As we grew as a couple, I learned she also felt a spiritual leading

to Christian ministry. We talked about school in California, but she responded with information about Clear Creek Bible College. One of her former pastors was a graduate. I applied to Clear Creek and soon opened an acceptance letter. It was an exciting moment; I realized I no longer had any desire to return to California.

The journey to continue my education was one of military combat, love and adventure. It started in California and took me to North Carolina, Texas, Georgia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Germany, England, France and Pakistan. God had a plan throughout the entire ordeal.

My wife and I are glad to be at Clear Creek and the beginning of a new adventure. After earning a bachelor's degree, I will be eligible for a commission as an officer. I plan to train as a chaplain candidate while completing a master's degree. Serving our great nation as an Army chaplain, I pray that Jesus Christ will use me as an agent of salvation among our nation's warriors.

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



Bill Whittaker

A clean slate

Christian surgeon helps people remove past, one scar at a time

By Sarah Price Brown
Religion News Service

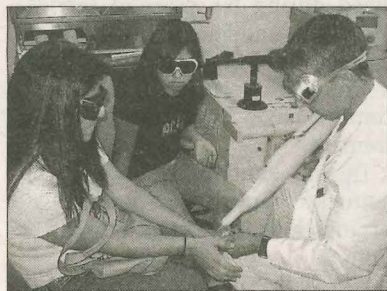
Los Angeles (RNS)—A tattoo of Korean characters spelling “trouble” snaked down Miles Carrington’s neck. The markings were remnants of a former life, of drugs and alcohol, gangs and jail.

They did not belong on the cleaned-up Carrington, a 36-year-old father of two with a respectable job selling stocks and bonds.

So, on a recent evening, Carrington walked into a run-down white building in Culver City, in west Los Angeles County. He signed in at the front desk and waited in a packed room to erase the physical scars of his past.

Carrington is one of more than 1,000 people who have had their tattoos removed for free by Steven Popkow, a laser surgeon who eliminates unwanted hair by day and performs ministry by night.

For eight years, Popkow has been giving those who need it most a clean slate. The catch? Before the procedure, patients are required to pray with a Christian pastor. Afterward, they must attend a service at the Culver City Seventh-day Ad-



FAMILY PROJECT Popkow removes tattoos from Claudia Salvador and her 14-year-old daughter, Rebecca. Removal typically takes six treatments.

ventist Church, where Popkow is a member.

“Without the prayer, without the focus on Christ, it’d just be a medical service,” Popkow said. While “the laser removes a physical stigma, to truly change—that comes from a higher Source.”

The American Society for Dermatologic Surgery said its doctors removed nearly 55,000 tattoos last year. Popkow is not alone in approaching the matter from a religious perspective. A number of spiritual people have taken to heart the biblical command of Leviticus 19:28: “You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you.” Similar free or low-cost tattoo removal programs in Los Angeles were started by a Jesuit priest and a nun.

The Culver City program has treated patients from as far away as Las Vegas and has fielded calls from people in 10 states.

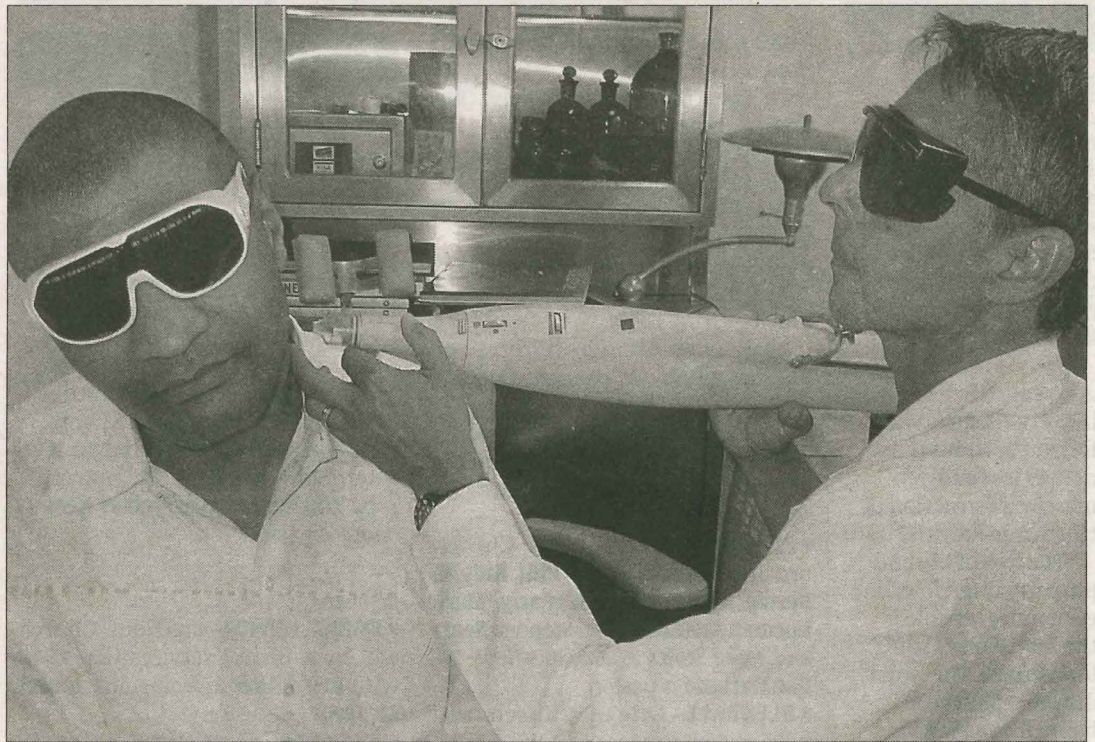
Prayer, sweat and lasers

On this evening, Carrington arrived in a crisp, white button-down shirt, olive dress pants and black patent-leather shoes. Jan Kaatz, senior pastor of the Culver City church, summoned him from the waiting area into a small examining room.

“I’m wearing thin,” Carrington said, shaking his head. He had taken a second job and was working 15 hours a day. “I’m feeling like I’m on a treadmill going nowhere.”

Kaatz, a pudgy 45-year-old with glasses and a reddish mustache, asked, “Anything other than strength and endurance we can pray about?”

“Just strength and endurance,” Carrington answered.



They closed their eyes, bowed their heads and prayed.

Then Popkow appeared in his white lab coat. “Ready?” he asked. He led Carrington into another room, where the doctor pulled out his laser gun, aimed it at Carrington’s neck and fired.

Sweat and drops of blood accumulated on Carrington’s skin. “It feels like hot grease,” he said.

The procedure involves an intense light hitting the skin, breaking the ink into tiny particles and causing first- or second-degree burns. The skin blisters and reddens, and an ashen-white film temporarily covers the area where the tattoo used to be. Removal typically takes six treatments. This was Carrington’s third.

The program runs on a small grant from the Pacific Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which pays for some paperwork and maintenance on the

\$80,000 laser. Each treatment costs about \$150, Popkow said.

“I definitely lose money in the whole deal, but it’s community service,” he said. Popkow performs the service every month or so in Culver City and Bakersfield, Calif.

Carrington found out about the program, called “Agape Light,” through Popkow’s Web site, www.TattooRemoval.org. To qualify for treatment, individuals must have a tattoo that is conspicuous—on the face, neck or hands, for example. When people sign up online, Kaatz adds them to his e-mail list. Kaatz invited all 350 people on the list to come for treatment this evening. About 25 of them showed.

Experiencing the gospel

Kaatz sees the program as an opportunity to evangelize. “Instead of inviting people to hear the gospel,” he said, “I invite them to experience the gospel.”

At a special church service for patients in the program, Kaatz asks those who are accepting Jesus for the first time to raise their hands or stand up. He hands out free Bibles in addition to vouchers for follow-up tattoo treatments.

Kaatz said no one ever refused to go to the service, although recently an atheist asked whether he could participate in the program. The pastor told him yes, as long as he went to church.

Before the service at Kaatz’s church, the patients gathered at the church for a \$2 dinner of Chinese food takeout. A handful of men from a local halfway house sat together at one table.

Salvador Hinostroza, 36, was among them. He had spent time on the streets and three years in prison. But tonight, he said, he felt “clean,” as if he had “a second chance for a new life.”

Gone were “the old scars, the old battle wounds,” he said, looking at the gauze on his hand where a gang tattoo used to be.

“I see all of us as diamonds in the rough,” he added, turning to his friends, all of whom had been homeless at one time or another. “We’re going to shine without ink.”

ONE BIG LASER ERASER
Miles Carrington (left) gets a gang tattoo removed by surgeon Steven Popkow as part of a ministry of Popkow’s church. (RNS photos by Sarah Price Brown)

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HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Larry Koch

Perhaps you have noticed that natural disasters are striking more frequently and with more destruction in the past few years than most of us can remember in our lifetime.

Four hurricanes in one year struck Florida in 2004. And who can forget the thousands of lives lost and massive destruction of Hurricane Katrina?

The loss of life and property is terrible, but even more terrible is the loss of one's soul for eternity. The worst disaster that could happen to anyone is to go out into eternity without Jesus. There is no need for anyone to face this greatest of all disasters. God has provided a way out for anyone willing to trust in Him.

Here is a simple explanation of our plight and God's provision:

The problem. We are all sinners. The Bible makes this clear. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The penalty. Without God, we are sentenced to an eternity in hell. God's holiness demands punishment for sin. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The provision. But it is not God's desire for us to suffer eternal death. He has made abundant provision for our salvation. "But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

The promise. Our heavenly Father promises salvation to everyone who confesses Jesus as Savior. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ... For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:9, 13).

Larry Koch is disaster relief associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Baptist Men on Mission department

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BRODHEAD**—Ottawa Church will hold revival services Oct. 8-11, 7 p.m., with **Greg Lakes** as evangelist. **Jim Craig** is pastor.

Poplar Grove Church will hold revival services Oct. 15-18. For more information, call (606) 678-4025. **Perry Dobbs** is pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—East Cadiz Church recently called **Mike Crocker** as minister of music.

Oak Grove Church will host the **Russian Choir** in concert Oct. 10, 7 p.m.

Trigg County Church recently called **Robert Papajeski** as minister of youth. **Billy Barnes** is interim pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church ordained **Donna Fonk, Phil Knight, Bernie Koontz, Steve McCarty, Mark Norman, Dennis Rieke, Stephen Sears** and **Mike Stoltz** as deacons Sept. 24. **Dan Garland** is pastor.

■ **GLENDALE**—Gilead Church will hold revival services Oct. 15, 6 p.m., and Oct. 16-18, 6:30 p.m., with **Paul Jackson** as evangelist. **Nathan Joyce**

Spotlight on ...

Aurora

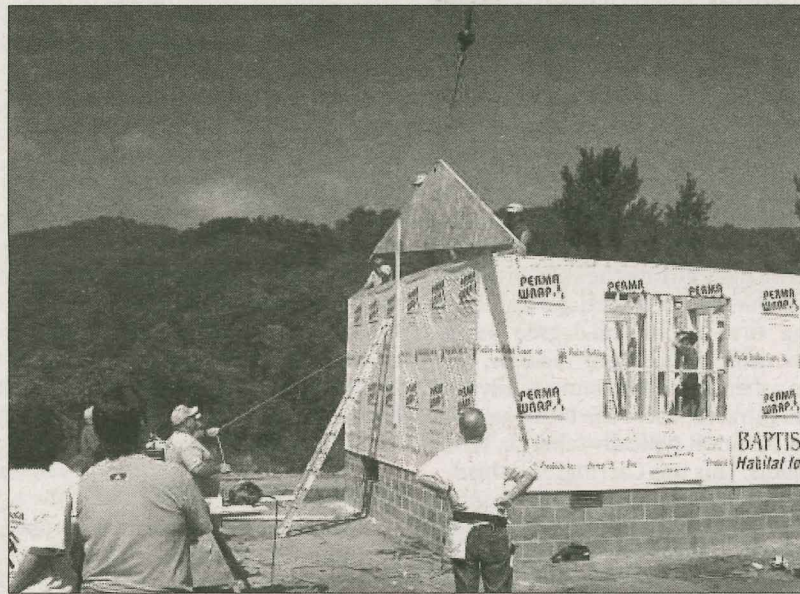


Ferguson Springs Church will host its annual Heritage Day Oct. 8 at the Land Between the Lakes near the church's original location. The celebration will include worship at 11 a.m., a noon potluck lunch and an afternoon gospel music concert by **The Messengers**. **James Keeling** is pastor.

is pastor.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—Freedom Church will hold revival services Oct. 15-18 with **David Aker** as evangelist. **Albert McKinney** is pastor.

■ **PURYEAR**—**Jerry Drye** recently resigned as pastor of Oak Grove Church.



BLITZ BUILD Members of churches in Pike Baptist Association took part last week in a Habitat for Humanity building blitz in Pikeville. In addition to area Baptist volunteers, workers from several other organizations, including Christian Appalachian Project, First Christian Church and the Pikeville Rotary Club, helped construct six houses. "We see this as a God thing," noted **Glema Thompson**, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Pikeville. "God has absolutely worked a miracle."

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

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.

10-12 All State Jr. High Choir, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

10-12 Crossover, Bowling Green.

13 Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

13 Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

13 Kentucky Baptist Youth Ministry Association Fall Meeting, Bowling Green.

14-15 KBC Annual Meeting, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

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

Randolph, former Kentucky Baptist Foundation executive, dies at 86

Nashville—Grady Randolph, former executive secretary of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, died Sept. 24. He was 86.

Randolph headed the foundation from 1969 to 1985. He previously was director of missions for Elkhorn Baptist Association and pastor of Shawnee Baptist Church and Beechland Baptist Church, both in Louisville, as well as pastor of churches in Tennessee and Illinois.

"I see the work of the foundation as a vital part of the total work of Kentucky Baptists," Randolph said after his election as foundation executive secretary.

Noting that Randolph "has proven his abilities as an effective administrator and communicator," Western Recorder Editor C.R. Daley wrote at the time that foundation directors "have found a man willing to learn, ready to listen and committed to God's leadership."

Barry Allen, current foundation executive director, emphasized that Randolph's leadership "brought a heightened level of confidence and

trust in the Kentucky Baptist Foundation."

Randolph "was able to move the foundation forward in a period during which the foundation had limited human and financial resources," he added.

"Grady recognized many of the fruits of his labor would not be realized during his years of service, but he was not deterred by that," Allen said, "and the mission of Christ in this world continues to benefit from his labor 20 years after his retirement."

During Randolph's tenure, the Kentucky Baptist institution's assets increased from \$4 million to \$13 million.

A World War II veteran in the Merchant Marines, Randolph was a graduate of Peabody College, Vanderbilt Divinity School and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Randolph is survived by his wife, June, three children, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. His funeral service was Sept. 26 in Nashville.

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SEEKING: Bivocational director of music ministries. Responsible for coordinating music for blended worship services, handbell and vocal choirs. Applicant must have good sight-reading ability. Twelve-hour average work week. Salaried position: \$10,400 annually in growing church. Relocation not required. Call (270) 726-3491 for job description, or send resumé to: Music Search Committee, Southern Heights Baptist Church, PO Box 896, Russellville, KY 42276. Deadline: Oct. 27.

SEEKING: Part-time interim student minister (20 hrs./wk). Please send resumé to: Immanuel Baptist Church, 800 Rhodes Drive, Elizabethtown, KY 42701, Attn: Student Minister Selection Committee.

SEEKING: Payroll accountant (immediate need) for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This position is responsible for the accurate and timely preparation of all seminary payrolls, resolution of payroll-related problems and questions, and the organization and maintenance of payroll records. This position requires an associate degree in accounting, at least two years of accounting experience and at least one year of payroll experience. The seminary offers a fast-paced, multi-tasking work environment, plus a competitive salary and benefits package. Qualified candidates should e-mail their resumé with cover letters and salary histories to: humanresources@sbts.edu.

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

SEEKING: Full-time administrative assistant—small church. MS Office required. \$12.50-\$14.50/hour; possible benefits. E-mail resumé to: hunsinger.office@hlbc.net; or fax: (502) 491-4948, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to: Audubon Baptist Church, 3440 Zion Road, Henderson, KY 42420, Attn: Youth Minister Search Committee.

SEEKING: Pastor of student ministries. Growing church (average: 2,000) seeks a leader/teacher passionate about reaching students to serve on a staff that has a clear vision and strategy. Resumé to: Danny Bennett, Calvary Baptist, 110 N McMullen Booth Road, Clearwater, FL 33759; or e-mail: dbennett@calvarybaptist.org.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for blended/traditional worship in Corbin area. Mail resumé to: Calvary Baptist Church, 96 Calvary Church Road, Corbin, KY 40701. Phone: (606) 523-0696.

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: Part-time youth minister (grades 6-12) for Mexico Baptist Church in rural western Kentucky. Average Sunday school attendance: 135. Send resumé to MBC Youth Council, 175 Mexico Road, Marion, KY 42064, Attn: Brent Highfil, or call (270) 965-2149. brent.highfil@gmail.com.

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Byron Nelson, 94, often invited other golfers to meet his Lord

By Art Stricklin
Baptist Press

Dallas (BP)—Byron Nelson, one of golf's greatest champions and a champion for his faith in Jesus Christ, died Sept. 26 at his ranch in Roanoke, Texas, near Dallas. He was 94.



Byron Nelson

"Byron was a great role model for all of us for his faith and the way he treated people," said CBS-TV executive producer for golf Lance Barrow, who attended Richland Hills Church of Christ with Nelson.

"We are all a little bit better because of Byron Nelson," Barrow said, "because we didn't ever want to disappoint him or let him down."

Nicknamed 'Lord Byron,' Nelson forever will be remembered for winning 11 straight PGA Tour events in 1945, a record which has never been approached, and 18 tournament victories in that one season.

Nelson, once asked how he would like to be remembered, had said, "I think the thing people will always talk about me is my degree of consistency on the golf course, winning money in 113 tournaments, but I want to be remembered as a good man and a Christian man. That's all that really matters."

He would tell anyone he was most proud of being a Christian, churchgoing man who "didn't smoke, drink or carouse or hang around girls who do."

Nelson's wife, Peggy, discovered him slumped over on a back porch chair at their home on Sept. 26 around 9:30 a.m. after returning from a weekly Bible study at their church.

"Byron was a great man and a great golfer, but most importantly he was a great follower of Jesus Christ," said PGA Tour chaplain Larry Moody.

"He wasn't pushy, but he would never hesitate to tell you if somebody said he was great that it was because of who Jesus Christ was in him."

Nelson often put his faith into action, frequently attending the weekly PGA Tour Bible study when the tournament named for him was held each May.

He sometimes hosted the Bible study at his ranch, 30 minutes from the tournament site, and invited players to go to church with him on Sunday.

"I think it's important to talk about your faith," Nelson said when asked about his public witness. "I have been a Christian and a churchgoer most of my life and that's very important to me. The Lord has also been good to me and I've been blessed."

High-speed witness

NASCAR veteran running on faith, seeking sponsors

By Lonnie Wilkey
Tennessee Baptist and Reflector

Conover, N.C. (ABP)—At 64 years old, and without a major sponsor, Morgan Shepherd is the oldest active driver on the NASCAR's Nextel circuit.

While most of his contemporaries have long since left the track, he recently qualified for the Sylvania 300 at New Hampshire International Speedway.

Shepherd pulled out of the Sept. 18 race for mechanical problems, but he has experienced many successes as a NASCAR driver, both winning races and finishing in the top 10 in several races.

It's not been easy for the North Carolina native to keep going all these years. He is his own driver and mechanic, and he relies on a volunteer pit crew to keep his No. 89 "Victory in Jesus" car on the NASCAR tracks.

He knows a major sponsor is unlikely to support him because of his age, but Shepherd, partner Dana Tomes and the Faith Motorsports team keep plugging away.

According to Shepherd, his love for Jesus keeps him going. He said he sees the race track as his mission field. His goal is to form a well-established team and then put a young driver in the seat so he can continue his ministry as a car owner.

"We have a great opportunity to reach people and be an influence on their lives," he said.

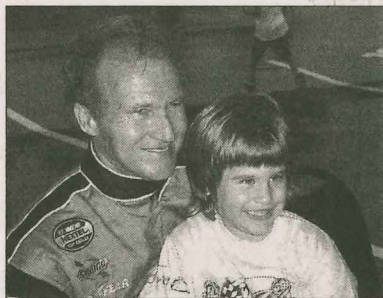
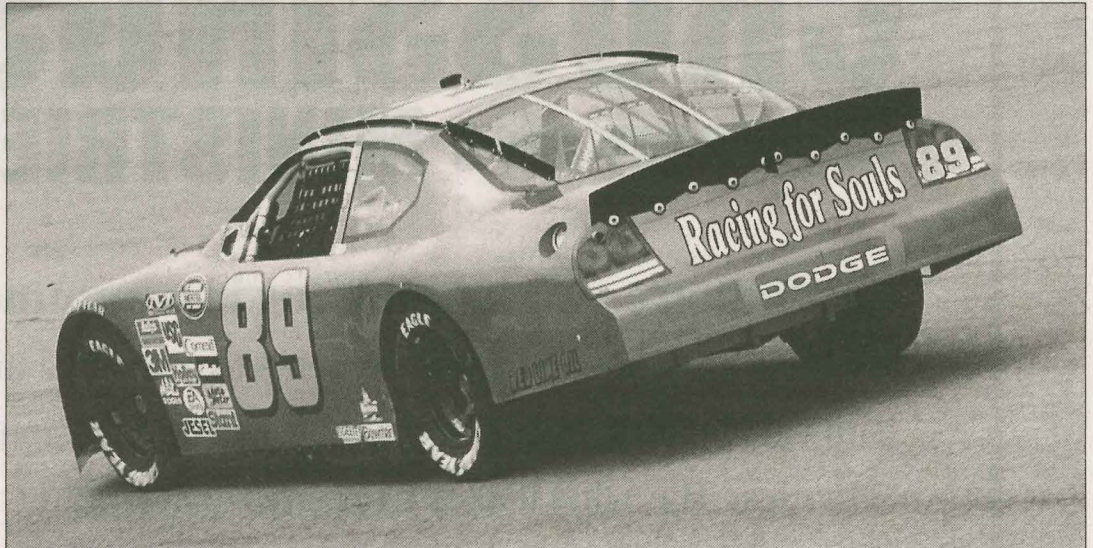
A change from wilder days

Shepherd has come a long way since his younger, wilder days in racing. After his wife left him and he had a particularly bad hangover one morning, Shepherd thought, "If all this is so great, how come I feel so bad in the mornings?"

Looking back, he said, God "let me get to the lowest point in my life, and I had to change one or another."

So in 1975, Shepherd started praying.

"My testimony is that if you just turn things over to Jesus, things will change," he said. "He made me hate everything that alcohol stands for.



ALL SMILES Racing veteran Morgan Shepherd poses with a fan. "We have an opportunity to reach people and be an influence in their lives," he said.

Alcohol was a problem in my life because whenever I drank, it always seemed like I ended up in trouble."

Now Shepherd tells fans that when they accept Jesus as Savior, "He'll carry you through" the inevitable problems in life.

That's also the message Shepherd conveys through the Victory in Jesus Racing Ministry and the Morgan Shepherd Charitable Fund, which helps people in the Appalachia region of Virginia.

"Our ministry is personified by the race team and Morgan Shepherd's witness," Cindy Caldwell, Shepherd's daughter, said. "Some racing fans would never step into a church. We take the ministry to them."

The outreach is not without its critics. Potential sponsors have eschewed the Shepherd team because Sunday races "might keep people from going to church." Caldwell, who leads the Victory in Jesus Racing Ministry, disagrees.

"Most races do not begin until

noon," she said. "If (churches) have an early service, (fans) can still attend church and then come to the race. Also, lots of area campgrounds have services. Many times, my dad shares his testimony there."

The racing team and volunteers give tracts to fans and e-mail others, tapping into the worldwide audience for NASCAR, Caldwell added.

"We have seen that people's lives are being changed and that people are being saved," Shepherd said. "It is a great opportunity to minister to millions and millions of people, and we want to take advantage of it."

A pricey outreach

Shepherd is the first to admit that it is not easy keeping a car on the NASCAR circuit without a major sponsor. It costs \$15,000 just to transport the car to a race. Car engines routinely cost \$70,000.

Nonetheless, Shepherd's racing team has some small sponsorships, and he relies on donations from Christian fans throughout the country. All help is appreciated, Caldwell said, but a large sponsorship is what the team really need.

"We need Christian business people to step up to the plate and realize this is a mission field that is untapped," Caldwell said. "What my dad does is a unique ministry opportunity."

Another challenge can be staying competitive in the NASCAR circuit. In Dover, Del., recently, he had the 42nd fastest qualifying time, but he failed to make the field when two other competitors used owners' points to get in the race. That bumped Shepherd from the 43-car field.

With the team back in North Carolina last week, Shepherd was trying to decide whether to spend team resources on an attempt to make the Charlotte, N.C., race next week. Team leaders said they might choose instead to focus on preparing for Martinsville and Phoenix, where the team already intends to race.

Even with the difficulties of being an older man in a sport dominated by younger drivers, Shepherd refuses to walk away from the sport he loves.

"Victory on the race track is nothing compared to the victory you have in Jesus," Shepherd affirmed. "We'll keep preaching that as long as I am able. Nothing is going to change that."



PRERACE PRAYER Volunteer pit crew members for the "Victory in Jesus" team line up for prayer before the recent NASCAR race in Richmond, Va.

"VICTORY IN JESUS"
After years of racing for other owners, Morgan Shepherd now runs his own team, which he uses to tell race fans about Jesus. (Photos by Ricky Adkins)

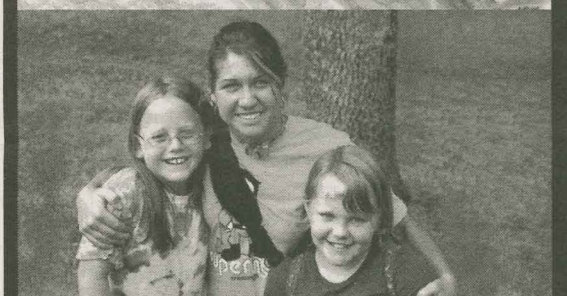
CEDARMORE ■ JONATHAN CREEK

CROSSINGS MINISTRIES



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summer staff Our summer staff to camper ratio is lower than you'll find at most camps our size. Add that to the fact that our staff are committed to connecting with your students and, in turn, connecting them with God, and you've got an incredible combination.

atmosphere While we have the activities and offerings of a larger camp, we still maintain an intimate camp setting, surrounded by nature away from the distractions of life. Your students can connect with others while still keeping a close connect with their own church group.

at any cost And most importantly, we'll go to great lengths and all costs to make sure that we provide an environment in which all our guests can come to know Christ or more fully experience Him - to know His story and liveLOUD to tell it.

■ **STUDENT CAMPS** GRADES 7-12

KIDS CAMPS GRADES 3-6

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FOR CAMP**

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