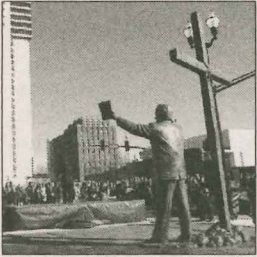




WESTERN RECORDER

December 19, 2006
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Secular songs top Christmas carols for radio airtime

New York (RNS)—“The Christmas Song”—with its “chestnuts roasting on an open fire”—was the most performed holiday song on the radio in the last five years. Only one song in the top 25 was a religious Christmas carol.

The list of “Top 25 most performed holiday songs” was compiled by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

But there was no “Silent Night” or “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” on the list. Only one explicitly religious song—“Little Drummer Boy”—made the list, coming in at No. 8.

Among the 25, the most recorded song is “White Christmas,” which has been performed in more than 500 versions and dozens of languages.

The top 10 songs on the list, including titles and performers, are:

1. “The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire),” Nat “King” Cole.
2. “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” The Pretenders.
3. “Winter Wonderland,” Eurythmics.
4. “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town,” Bruce Springsteen.
5. “White Christmas,” Bing Crosby.
6. “Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!”, Andy Williams.
7. “Jingle Bell Rock,” Bobby Helms.
8. “Little Drummer Boy,” the Harry Simeone Chorale & Orchestra.
9. “Sleigh Ride,” The Ronettes.
10. “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” Gene Autry.

Bethlehem 40007



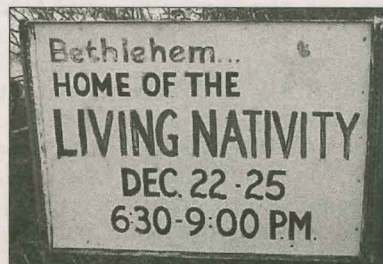
THE STAGE IS SET Bill Hackett (left) and Kevin Croxton chat in front of the stable that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people will visit Dec. 22-25 when the community of Bethlehem presents its annual living nativity. Hackett and his wife, Joyce, members of Bethlehem Baptist Church, were the first couple to portray Joseph and Mary when the nativity debuted in 1959. (Photo by Dannah Prather)

Kentucky community's living nativity nears golden anniversary

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Bethlehem—In 1959, the first color photo of Earth was transmitted from space. Dwight D. Eisenhower was president of the United States. Tom Landry was named the first head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. And three congregations in a small Henry County community began a Christmas tradition that has endured for nearly half a century.

Residents of the little town of Bethlehem built a crèche, brought some donkeys, sheep and a cow to town, and with bathrobes, towels and sheets, they dressed themselves as shepherds, wise men and angels coming to visit a couple with a newborn baby.



“That was the first year they had it,” said Kevin Croxton, who has been part of the live nativity for decades.

Members of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Point Pleasant Christian Church and Bethlehem United Methodist Church create the living tableau Dec. 22-25 nightly, from 6:30 to 9 p.m.

Croxton said approximately 2,000 people visit the nativity each year, traveling to the town situated about 20 miles northwest of Frankfort. Many visitors might never come to the village any other time, he said, but they make the holiday sojourn year after year to stand quietly beside the makeshift stable, watching the reverence of the scene, listening to music or a recitation of the Christmas story on tape.

“It’s just part of their Christmas,” Croxton said, referring to the visitors, but the same could be said of the townspeople, who always take notice when the crèche is being constructed a few weeks before Christmas.

□ See Henry County ... Page 3

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, December 20.

Smiths ‘living for that day’ when Futa Toro hear about Christ

Nigeria, West Africa—Tom Smith gets discouraged sometimes—and he’s not ashamed to admit it.

As a missionary strategy coordinator, Tom and his wife, Shirley, face the daily challenge of reaching the Futa Toro (FOO-tah TOR-oh), a Muslim people numbering more than 2 million.

It’s not just the people group’s size that gives Tom pause. It’s their far-flung locations and diversity.

The Futa Toro actually comprise two major subgroups of the Fulani peoples of West Africa: the semi-nomadic, cattle-herding Fulbe (FULL-bay) and the more settled Tukulor (TOO-kuh-lor). They live in many clans and castes scattered throughout northern Senegal and parts of

Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Mauritania.

“It’s easy to become discouraged when we see the immensity of the task and so few results, so few workers, so few believers,” Smith said, rubbing his weary eyes after a long day’s drive through the scorched back roads of northern Senegal. “Sometimes I wonder why God called me.”

At such moments, however, a divine voice speaks in silence to his heart: “You just do your part. Don’t worry about My part; I’ll take care of that.”

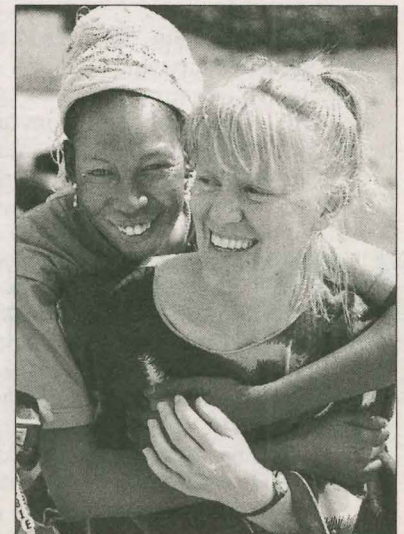
Other times, God sends encouragement and excitement through a changed—or changing—life:

■ Samba, an imposing young

Fulbe man who wears flashy designer shades and a long dagger strapped inside his colorful robe, doesn’t look at first glance like a seeker of truth. But he can quote long sections of dialogue from the “Jesus” film word for word—complete with dramatic expression. The Smiths think he already has become a believer in Christ, though he hasn’t yet declared it.

■ Hawa, a housekeeper, decided to follow Jesus after listening to cassette copies of all 100 lessons in the “Way of Righteousness” Bible-storying series as she cleaned the home of Debbie Hawkins, a missionary on the Smiths’ team. Hawkins now disciples her and several other women who are considering baptism. Hawa, a young widow, isn’t afraid to speak

□ See Smiths ‘living for ... Page 6



FRIENDS Missionary Debbie Hawkins smiles as she receives a hug from a Futa Toro woman. (IMB photo)

Billy Graham statue dedicated in Nashville

By Jenny Rice
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—A statue honoring evangelist Billy Graham was unveiled Dec. 13 in Nashville.

The statue—a representation of the evangelist standing in the shadow of a 17-foot cross, arms outstretched, his hand cradling a Bible—was unveiled during last June's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C. It is now permanently located at LifeWay Christian Resources' facilities at the corner of Eighth Avenue and Commerce Street in Nashville.

During the dedication ceremony, LifeWay President Emeritus James Draper recalled the initial discussion about creating a monument to honor the life and ministry of Billy Graham.

Bobby Welch, who was serving as SBC president at the time, "was on a bus trip when he called me saying he had a dream of building a statue of Billy Graham as a reminder to all Southern Baptists that we are soul-winners for Jesus Christ," Draper said. "Today, we are not only honoring a man, we are honoring Christ."

Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell spoke of the impact Graham's ministry has had on the city throughout the years.

Graham "made many visits to Nashville and each visit has had a lasting impact on this community," Purcell noted. "He brought in the millennium in Nashville at a stadium filled night after night with people needing that message."

"Now 10 million visitors through Nashville have the opportunity to see and understand what this messenger has meant to us."

Current SBC President Frank Page shared a personal testimony about the impact Graham has had on his life. Page, who was not raised in a Christian home, said he remembered as a child watching Graham



GRAND ENTRANCE A statue honoring evangelist Billy Graham is lowered into place at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

on television.

"Now we stand here recognizing the legacy of a saint of God," he added. "More than that, we are recognizing that Southern Baptists are Jesus people. We are here to honor a Jesus man."

Speaking on behalf of the family, Graham's grandson, Will Graham, expressed appreciation for the statue but was quick to express glory to God first and foremost.

"My friends, I know we are honoring Billy Graham, but statues will come and go, cities will come and go, but the Word of God is forever. This is about Jesus Christ," Graham said. "My grandfather is a man who did not compromise, who loved the Lord with all of his heart and was faithful to what God placed before him. He sets an example for us all, not to be great evangelists, but to preach the simple gospel."

Cliff Barrows, who has traveled and ministered with Graham for 60

years, shared at the dedication ceremony the five passions he saw displayed through the Graham statue: Graham's passion for the Word of God, exhibited by the Bible grasped in his hand; his passion for preaching, displayed by the figure's open mouth; Graham's passion for the message, with three nails and John 3:16 etched with the base of the sculpture; his passion for the invitation, evidenced by the statue's outstretched arms; and his passion for the cross.

Barrows issued a charge for those who would pass by the statue and see these passions. "May those passions captivate your hearts and souls, and as you dedicate your life to those, you will experience power in your life and ministry like you've never dreamed."

Atlanta businessman Chris Fryer, one of two private financiers of the statue, expressed delight in seeing the "fruit of the vision."

"The size of the statue and the message is compelling—this is a great man with a great message," Fryer said. "It will speak to those who pass it, telling them that there is 'room at the cross for you.'"

The statue's sculptor, Terrell O'Brien, spoke of the process he took to develop his vision for the figure.

"As I began to think of what this should look like, I wanted to go beyond the man. For me, it was about the heart of the gospel."

Closing the Dec. 13 dedication ceremony, Welch quoted a passage from Joshua 4, when the Israelites built a memorial as a testimony to future generations of what God had done for them.

"This stands here not only to celebrate the Lord's work through Billy Graham," he said, "but for all generations now and who come after us to know of our commitment to evangelism and discipleship as Southern Baptists."

Missouri Baptist board approves committee to investigate leaders

Jefferson City, Mo. (BP)—The Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Board adopted a motion Dec. 12 forming a committee to investigate the sources and veracity of allegations against state convention leaders.

Wesley Hammond, pastor of First Baptist Church of Paris, Mo., proposed that a five-member committee be established "to investigate rumors affecting the character of some of our members which, if true, would render them unworthy of leadership, and cast doubt on our credibility and our integrity as an executive board."

Hammond's motion added that the committee would not only investigate allegations against MBC Executive Director David Clippard, but also the entire Executive Board and anyone over whom the Executive Board has responsibility.

After several minutes of discussion, Hammond's motion was adopted by a vote of 29-19.

MBC President Mike Green, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Republic, responded with a competing motion.

Green's recommendation called for investigating allegations of micromanagement of the Executive Board staff or executive director by the Executive Board or any of its members as well as accusations related to Clippard's integrity, character, handling of personnel issues and overall effectiveness.

He said an investigative committee is needed "because of the ongoing unrest, dissension, distrust, disunity, questions and contentions existing within the Missouri Baptist Convention."

After several minutes of debate, board members voted 26-22 to approve Green's substitute motion.

Because the vote was so close, Green opted to withdraw his motion. "I have no desire to split anything," he added, choking back tears.

"Though I withdrew the motion I have a committee of my choice, I having the utmost confidence in the committee we now have," Green told Baptist Press. "I trust these matters will be settled once and for all, and Missouri Baptists can get back to Acts 1:8, and our command to fulfill the Great Commission."

Praying for fish: Ky. church aids IMB missionary

Middlesboro (BP)—Southside Baptist Church in Middlesboro always has been "missions-minded," according to associate pastor Jonathan Hendrickson. They pray for missionaries and give every year to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

But during the Christmas season last year, Hendrickson wanted to find a way for the congregation to connect with missionaries on the field.

"I got the material from the International Mission Board and ... saw that you could do a teleconference (with a missionary)," Hendrickson said.

He contacted Barbara Smith at the IMB to request a teleconference with a missionary who could speak to his congregation on a Sunday in December.

When Smith asked if there was a specific region his church was interested in, Hendrickson recalled a Web site he had come across two years earlier about missionaries ministering to people in fishing villages in West Africa, he asked if the church could speak to someone serving in West African fishing villages, and Smith set up a teleconference with Cal and Patty McIntire, Southern Baptist missionaries in Senegal serving among the Lebou people.

"The Web site I had run across (two years before) was Cal and Patty's ministry," Hendrickson noted. "So as the day drew near for us to conduct our call, I knew God was doing something special."

"The call went wonderfully," he added. "I asked Cal what we could pray for as far as his family and his work, and he said, 'I have a challenge for your church.'"

McIntire told how the livelihood of villages in Senegal is based on fish. He recently had been to witness in the village of Kayar, where the men had been going out day after day, only to find there were no fish.

"He told one of the leaders there he was going to ask his fellow Christians to pray God would send fish to Kayar, and Cal went on to say he looked forward to saying back and hearing them say, 'Your God sent us fish,'" Hendrickson recounted.

The Southside congregation agreed to the challenge and committed to pray for "fish for Kayar." After Christmas, Hendrickson e-mailed the McIntires to follow up.

"Cal sent me pictures that brought tears to my eyes. Boats were on the shore (with) enormous piles of fish, more than I had ever dreamed of seeing!" Hendrickson said. "He went on to tell us how God had opened hearts and how he had several opportunities to share with the people as a result. It was amazing."

BAPTIST DIGEST

Japanese university names former missionary as president.

A Japanese university founded by Southern Baptist missionaries has named one as its new president. Trustees of Seinan Gakuin University in Fukuoka, Japan, elected Gary Barkley as the school's ninth president. Barkley, a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, began serving as a Southern Baptist international missionary to Japan in 1984. He joined the school's faculty in 1987 and currently is dean of religious affairs. He will assume his new position Dec. 15.

Pybas helped frame 1963 BF&M statement. Garth Pybas, one of the last surviving members of the 1963 Baptist Faith & Message committee and a former president of what is now the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists, died Nov. 20 in Fort Smith, Ark. He was 91. Pybas was a chaplain in the South Pacific during World War II. He later served as pastor to churches in Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Illinois. Pybas was secretary of evangelism and Brotherhood for the Kansas-Nebraska convention from 1965-69.

Charles Kelley Sr., prominent layman, dies at 86. Charles Kelley Sr., a Baptist layman with ties to four Southern Baptist seminaries, died Dec. 9 in New Orleans. He was 86. Kelley, a retired mortician, served on the trustee board at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for 10 years. Kelley was the father of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President Chuck Kelley and Dorothy Kelley Patterson, wife of Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and former president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

KBC leaders promote Bauscher, elect Rice and Randolph

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Ross Bauscher and Steve Rice were elected to key Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff positions during last week's Mission Board meeting in Louisville.

Bauscher, who has served since 2001 as director of the KBC partnership missions department, was named leader of the KBC evangelism growth team. Rice, pastor of Williamstown Baptist Church since 2000, was elected discipleship and assimilation director.

Bauscher will be responsible for developing evangelism strategies for the KBC as well as supervising the leaders of the KBC's collegiate ministry and creative ministries areas.

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey noted that Bauscher "has a vision for evangelism with Kentucky Baptists, which, if supported by prayer, the cooperation of Kentucky Baptists and the blessing of God, I believe, will result in significant in-



Ross Bauscher



Steve Rice



Kristie Randolph

creases in our baptisms."

Bauscher told Mission Board administrative committee members that Kentucky Baptists "must have a passion for the Lord and we've got to get burdened once again for the lost."

"We ought to show increases in baptisms," he added. "I think we can do it, but we have to establish a mindset that it's important to us."

Prior to joining the KBC staff, Bauscher was pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Owensboro and Farmdale Baptist Church in Frankfort. He is a graduate of Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Lexington Theological Seminary.

Rice's role as discipleship and assimilation director is a new position related to the KBC's Kentucky Baptists Connect goals in those areas. He also will be responsible for developing deacon ministry strategies.

French Harmon, director of the KBC church development team, noted that Rice has "expertise and experience" as a deacon, bivocational pastor and full-time pastor. He described Rice as "a proven leader" and "a tireless worker."

Rice said he is "excited about this opportunity because it is such a vital area." He said he will seek to enlist pastors and churches that are effective in assimilation and evangelism as "connectors" and seek to "find out what folks need and develop usable materials."

Rice previously was pastor of First Baptist Church of Belfry and bivocational mission pastor of First Baptist Mission of Pikeville. He is a graduate of Morehead State University and Luther Rice Seminary and is scheduled to receive his doctor of

ministry degree this month from Mid-America Baptist Seminary.

In addition to the two board-approved positions, administrative committee members elected Kristie Randolph to a newly established position as marketing and media relations associate in the KBC communications department.

Randolph, who previously was a corporate communications officer in Pennsylvania, is a graduate of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

In other business, Mission Board members approved a three-year Hispanic missions partnership with the Florida Baptist Convention.

The Florida convention and the Hispanic Baptist Fellowship of Florida will coordinate volunteer teams and other resources to help strengthen the work of Kentucky Baptist Hispanic congregations and ministries, according to Larry Baker, leader of the KBC's new work/associational missions department.

Board members also approved establishing a fund for the KBC's ministry to the World Equestrian Games to be held in Lexington in 2010.

Six KBC churches form partnerships

Louisville—Leaders of six Kentucky Baptist churches signed partnering agreements during last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board meeting.

The church-to-church partnerships, part of the KBC's Kentucky Baptists Connect strategy, involve congregations working together to help encourage and equip one another in ministry.

Partnerships established during the Dec. 11-12 meeting are:

- Central Baptist Church in Corbin and Hart Missionary Baptist Church in London.
- First Baptist Church of Bellvue and Main Street Baptist Church of Alexandria.
- Caldwell Blue Spring Baptist Church in Cadiz and Southside Baptist Church in Princeton.

Special postmark popularizes Bethlehem's post office

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Bethlehem—What's in a name? If the name is "Bethlehem," it has the power to attract 10 times the community's population each year—just to mail Christmas cards.

"Normally we'll have a handful (of mail) each day," said Susan Leopold, Bethlehem's postmaster. Eleven months out of the year, one employee easily can handle the workload, but when December arrives, everything changes.

"On our busiest days in December, we might cancel between 5,000 and 8,000" pieces of mail, she said.

Just as the star drew shepherds and Magi to the Judean town of Bethlehem, a special stamp and a postmark with the name "Bethlehem" has a strong attraction for Christmas correspondents.

It was postmaster Anna Laura Peyton who, in 1947, decided to affix a Christmas-themed stamp on holiday mail. She operated the office from her home.

Peyton's son, Cecil, kept the tradition going when he was in charge

of ZIP code 40007. Peyton's daughter, Zelma Winchester, worked part time at the post office for 36 years. She is a retired 5th grade teacher, and she and her husband, Roy, are members of Bethlehem Baptist Church.

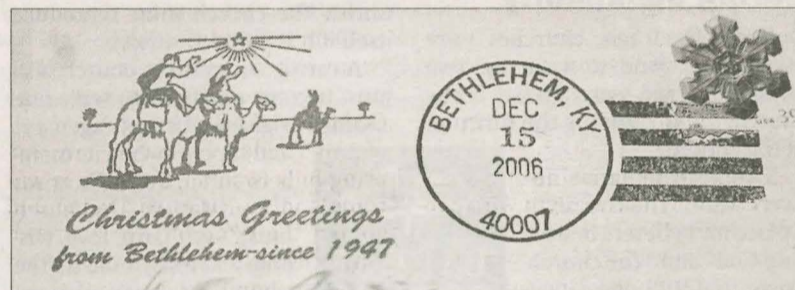
Winchester recalls her mother baking cookies for special customers who came to Bethlehem from other states to post their Christmas cards.

A couple from Ohio "made a little vacation out of it," Winchester said. The pair traveled first to Lexington for a few days, then made the trip to Bethlehem to mail that year's batch of cards.

"Two little old ladies," also from Ohio, "came every year. Sometimes they didn't bring over 20 cards," Winchester said. "They just loved to drive here and talk to mother."

Collectors mail cards to the Bethlehem post office, requesting that postal workers send their individual greetings out with the special postmark.

"We would get letters from other countries. ... We sent many cards out of the United States," Winchester



SPECIAL DELIVERY The design of the Bethlehem stamp has changed little since former postmaster Anna Laura Peyton got the idea for it in 1947.

said. "It really evolved."

In December, the post office's hours are extended by two hours, and Leopold's staff doubles—to two. "In December, there's one person canceling full time," she said, referring to the postmarking process.

Leopold said she doesn't mind the workload. If ZIP code 40007—which, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, boasts about 244 residents—didn't have its annual avalanche of mail, the popular post office might be closed.

With a positive attitude and smiling faces to welcome customers, it is likely that Anna Laura Peyton's heartfelt pride in her community's moniker will continue.



A TRADITION PASSED DOWN Zelma Winchester, (right) retired 5th grade teacher and former Bethlehem postal worker, hands a stack of Christmas cards to current postmaster Susan Leopold.

Henry County town's living nativity nearing its golden anniversary

Continued from page 1

"Once they see the wagon's been pulled up, it's like Christmas has started," he said.

Ronnie and Madolyn Golden are longtime participants in the live nativity. As teenagers, before they were married, they portrayed characters in the tableau. "I was an angel," Mrs. Golden said, noting that over the years, her husband portrayed shepherds and wise men. The couple also took a turn as Joseph and Mary.

Today, Mrs. Golden said their contributions are more behind-the-scenes. Her husband directs traffic. "I help with the dressing at the Methodist church," she said.

The tableau consists of 12 characters, Croxton said. After 50 minutes, the "second shift" of volunteers has a turn in front of the spotlights. Af-

ter another 50 minutes, a third and final group of characters appears.

As a retiree, Zelma Winchester hasn't participated in the live nativity for several years. But she is quick to praise members of the community for their faithfulness.

"There are ladies that stay in the church and work every night to dress each character," she noted, adding that the costumes "are authentic to the style."

With limited streetlights, a volunteer is assigned to guide the crews by flashlight from the Methodist church to the crèche and back again. The dressers serve doughnuts and hot chocolate when a shift returns to the church.

The characters in the tableau do not speak, which creates a reverent atmosphere that spills over to vis-

itors, according to Croxton. "This probably is the only place where you can minister to that many people without a word said."

Volunteers who pose in the tableau often say that participating in the event is a spiritual experience, Winchester said. "When they stand and listen to the message and see the people coming and going ... they say it's very peaceful and satisfying. It gives them more perspective of the reason for the season."

Sometimes the reverence is taxed—such as the year a sheep birthed a lamb during a performance.

"Sometimes the weather is really bad," Winchester added. In its nearly 50-year history, only twice has the living nativity cancelled its performances because of inclement weather, Croxton said.

The volunteers who pull the nativity together annually have changed over the years. The men and women who began the tradition have passed the ministry to their children and grandchildren.

Winchester noted that occasionally there is discussion from a few people in the community that perhaps the live nativity has run its course and should be retired.

But when December rolls around again, the people of Bethlehem gather to create a flesh-and-blood representation of the miraculous moment when God came to dwell among His creation.

For the people of Bethlehem, "it's not Christmas without the nativity," Croxton said, then laughed and added, "Actually it's not Christmas for any of us without it."

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

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Sharing gifts and fruit

By Frank Page

Taylors, S.C. (BP)—The above headline might lead one to believe I was talking about the traditions of giving and receiving gifts and filling stockings with fruit during the Christmas season. While those are wonderful parts of the Christmas season, that is not what I am referring. I'm referring to the scriptural description of spiritual gifts as well as the fruit of the Spirit.

I met recently with leaders of evangelism from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, most of our state conventions, officers of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists and our seminaries. It was one of the finest meetings I have attended since my election as Southern Baptist Convention president. Pray for this group as they work toward a national strategy for evangelism across this continent.

During one of the question and answer sessions, someone asked me: What seems to be a common theme among Southern Baptists? While there are many answers to that question, perhaps the most common theme of discussion I have heard is

the call for our convention to move forward in missions and evangelism and to be done with the fussing and fighting of days past.

Some might say this internal conflict is understandable and as long as it is within the family, then it is understandable, predictable and acceptable. But my contention is that this internal squabbling has indeed been destructive to the body. God's people across the convention want something better.

I am not naïve. I understand there always will be conflict, difficulty and differences of opinion. However, I am convinced there are better ways to deal with these differences.

There has been a great deal of discussion among Southern Baptists in recent months about spiritual gifts. There has been much healthy debate, along with some unhealthy dialogue, regarding the issues of speaking in tongues, private prayer language, etc. I encourage a healthy and positive discussion of these issues.

But I am convinced that the way to deal with conflict is to follow the admonition given by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23. In other

FIRST PERSON

Caring community

Some time ago, churches were asked to respond to a survey. Two questions asked were: "What is the church?" and "What is the function of the church?"

Two representative answers were: "The church is a place for believers to worship God" and "The church exists to fulfill the Great Commission."

While these may be oversimplifications, they are valid answers. They seem to capture the church as it reaches others with the gospel. But some important elements are missing. No one addressed the role of the church in caring for fellow believers. I believe that the main mission of the church is to

reach men, women and children for Christ. The church must reproduce itself if it is going to survive.

A caring community church also must become equipped to serve one another as givers of encouragement and support when its members suffer from the crises of everyday life. The church must, with faith, love, wisdom and unity, bind up the wounds of those who are hurting physically, spiritually and emotionally.

I have conducted workshops in many caring community churches, but most of the time they seemed to be the communities' best-kept secret. I believe if the people on the outside really knew what was available on the inside of caring community churches, there would not be

words, if we paid more attention to the fruit of the Spirit, then our discussions about the gifts of the Spirit and other issues would be done in a way that would build up the body rather than detract from the message and hinder the overall health of the body. The Bible says the fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law."

I call on all Southern Baptists to pray unto our Lord that the fruit of the Spirit will be evident as we relate, as we disagree, as we deal with the multitude of issues that are bound to come forth.

I am convinced that God's Kingdom would be furthered to a far greater extent if God's people would allow the fruit of the Spirit to come to a beautiful harvest in our lives. Then we will be able to discuss, debate and dialogue in a far more Christ-honoring way. Remember that the key to the fruit is the root. The root of this kind of Christ-honoring living is the fullness of the Holy Spirit of God. Ephesians 5:18 admonishes us to "be filled with the Spirit." Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C.

enough room to hold them on Sunday. As a behavioral therapist, I know that people are hungry for love, support, encouragement and direction.

One of the great benefits of the church being a caring community is that it gets to witness the transforming power of Christ in the lives of others. Also, a caring community church has a very small "backdoor."

Charles Cross
Fort Mitchell

Battle against AIDS

I appreciate Rick Warren's challenge to churches to battle AIDS. Maybe on Bro. Rick's next trip to Syria, he can challenge mosques in that nation to battle AIDS as well.

Mike Nichols
Munfordville

New ministry opportunities

The Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board approved several new staff members and ministry proposals last week that will provide great new opportunities for Kentucky Baptists.

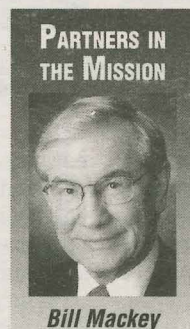
Ross Bauscher was approved as the evangelism growth team leader. He has extensive experience in evangelism as a pastor and as director of the KBC partnership missions department.

Ross has demonstrated a passion for evangelism and for involving other people in evangelism. He has been chairman of citywide crusades in Owensboro, has provided witness training for church members and is active in personally sharing his faith.

More than 5,000 professions of faith were recorded by KBC partnership missions participants during Ross's tenure. He also has developed a prayer network for partnership missions that includes more than 1,000 partners.

Please join me in praying for

Ross's wife, Virginia, who is receiving strong cancer treatments. During this time of transition, Randy Jones, missions growth team leader, will serve as interim director of partnership missions.



Bill Mackey

The Mission Board also approved Steve Rice, pastor of Williamstown Baptist Church, as our new discipleship and assimilation director. Steve has just completed his doctor of ministry degree at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a very resourceful and creative minister, and I look forward to his leadership in this very strategic position among Kentucky Baptists.

Pray for Steve and his family as they make this transition. It is not easy to leave people you love in order to respond to God's call.

In addition to filling these two positions, the Mission Board's administrative committee also approved Kristie Randolph for the position of marketing and media relations as-

GIVING

Evaluate options to help maximize charitable giving

By Laurie Valentine

There are a number of ways to maximize the impact of your charitable giving as well as maximizing your tax savings and income. Consider the following options.

Charitable giving

■ Determine if the causes you want to support are qualified charities. The IRS Web site (www.irs.gov/charities/index.html) can tell you if they are "qualified" 501(c)(3) organizations. (Churches are qualified charitable organizations but don't have to register with the IRS.)

■ Determine if the cause will be a good steward of your gift. Talk to the organization's leadership; check out Web site databases that report on the activities and finances of charities such as www.give.org, www.guidestar.org and www.charitynavigator.org.

Tax savings

■ Give appreciated assets (stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares or real estate) rather than cash. The after-tax cost of your gift will be lower than the same size cash gift when you consider both the income tax savings and the capital gains savings you can realize from using the appreciated asset to make your gift.

■ Sell depreciated long-term capital gain assets and give the cash sale proceeds. You will get a charitable income tax deduction if you itemize and a deduction for the capital loss.

■ Establish a Donor Advised Fund. Such funds allow you to make your gift in a year when the deduction can save taxes, but defer the decision about what causes will benefit from your gift until later years.

■ Increase your gifts to charity in years in which you will have the most income. The amount of income tax savings depends on your tax bracket; the higher your tax bracket, the more tax savings from charitable gifts if you can itemize deductions.

Income

■ Set up a "life income" gift such as a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust. Life income gifts provide an opportunity to set up a future, irrevocable gift for charity with the potential to increase current cash flow to you and/or others for life or a term of years. You will have tax savings from the deduction of the value of the charity's interest in the year you set up the life income gift, if you itemize deductions.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



Christian families can balance kids' focus on Jesus and Santa

Q: As a Christian family, is it appropriate for us to celebrate Santa Claus and Jesus at the same time?

Many Christian parents worry that perhaps they are compromising their faith and turning their back on the real meaning of Christmas by allowing Santa to be part of their child's celebration. These fears probably are unfounded. Developmentally, most children naturally will grow out of any belief in Santa Claus as the normal process of growing up teaches them to distinguish between fact and fantasy, illusion and reality.

PARENTING

Enjoy the magic of Santa, but be sure to make Christ the center of your Christmas celebration. Worship, give, volunteer. Be sure to include a nativity in your decorations.

Church experiences and environments should be "Santa free" zones. Tangling the two confuses children. Mention Santa, but don't have his picture on classroom walls or doors. Balance excitement and talk about what your child wants for Christmas with the fun of giving. Remind children that we give and receive gifts in honor of God's great gift of Jesus. Whether the gift comes from Santa or not becomes immaterial.

When your children reach the age where they begin to figure things out, teach them about the origins of the real St. Nicholas on whom the legend of Santa Claus is built and based. (Visit www.stnicholascenter.org for ideas and information.)

Relax, and allow your children to enjoy Christmas. As time passes, experiences of worship, celebration and thanksgiving to God for the gift of Jesus, coupled with teachings about the true meaning of Christmas, will find a permanent home in their hearts. Belief in Santa will find its rightful place alongside many other cherished childhood memories.—David Garrard

Q: With Christmas activities often focused on young children, what are some Christmas traditions our teenagers might enjoy?

Teenagers should have a voice in brainstorming family activities. Being told they will "enjoy" something often diminishes their openness to that activity and results in frustration for the parents. Here are some things that come recommended by our teenage daughters, Auburn and Hope, with an endorsement from their 11-year-old brother, Caleb.

- Watching "family movies," videos we have made from holidays, birthdays, vacations and family times past.
- Climbing into new pajamas every Christmas Eve after we've gone to worship and then eaten Christmas dinner—and then taking a ride to look at neighborhood lights.
- Putting their ornaments on the tree each year. My wife and I have bought them each a special ornament each year since they were born. They will take these with them when they establish their own home.
- Watching classic holiday television shows and movies together.
- Choosing a service project to do as a family. One of our favorites has been to ring bells for the Salvation Army while singing Christmas carols as we greet folks.
- Giving small gifts to people who do not expect gifts.
- Delivering boxes of food from our church to needy families.
- Taking a drive together one evening to the poorest neighborhoods to be reminded of our unmerited blessings and our responsibility to help others.
- Worship in our church as a family on Christmas Eve.

Each year presents new opportunities to unwrap God's greatest gift. Families who share holiday traditions can delight in never quite knowing from whence the next great idea or ritual will emerge.—Scott Wigginton

Family Forum writers are:

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



Keys to a headache-free Christmas season

In my role as editor, I receive lots of unsolicited press releases in the mail and e-mail each week. Many are from organizations that have no idea the Western Recorder is a Christian publication affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

As a result, I get a variety of releases on such topics as car maintenance, mortgage refinancing tips, seasonal recipes (some of which sound pretty yummy), poetry contests, etc. And that's in addition to the absolutely worthless spam e-mails that sometimes make their way through our e-mail filtering software.

One recent release was from the National Headache Foundation in Chicago. Before I tossed it in the trash, however, the headline caught my attention: "Planning for a headache-free holiday."

As a public service to headache sufferers, here are a few details from the release: Fifty-two percent of respondents to a recent online survey indicated that the frequency or severity of their headaches increased during the holiday season. An astounding 64 percent of respondents said they have changed their holiday plans due to headaches.

Among suggestions from the National Headache Foundation are: Don't disrupt your normal sleeping and waking patterns, be aware of smoke- and perfume-filled rooms and don't skip meals.

Noting that holiday schedules that involve "being with your family over several days, perhaps in close quarters, may be stressful," headache experts also suggest that individuals "take a day off from work either prior to or following celebrations in order to prepare for or to recover from your gatherings." Sounds reasonable to me.

But as you might have guessed, my primary focus is not to talk about how to reduce headaches during the Christmas season—at least not physical headaches.

Rather, I think all of us would affirm "planning for a headache-free holiday" as it relates to our emotional and spiritual well-being.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

The fact is that Christmas celebrations have become a major headache for many people—including believers. What a tragedy that a season we should spend celebrating the incredible miracle of Jesus' physical birth has turned into a series of headaches focused on buying just the right gifts, rushing from party to party and being bombarded with nonstop "it's all about you" commercialism.

How can followers of Christ regain a headache-free Christmas experience? Among the keys are to capture a biblical perspective of what Christmas truly means.

The Magi asked King Herod, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? We have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him." Worship should be the primary focus of a Christ-honoring Christmas celebration. Will you take time to soak in the timeless truths of classic Christmas carols, watch your church Christmas pageant with fresh wonder and build in some quiet time to reflect on the accounts of Jesus' birth recorded by Matthew and Luke?

The wise men also presented valuable gifts to the Christ Child. One of the most valuable gifts we can give to others this Christmas is our time. Consider volunteering in a soup kitchen, preparing a basket of food for a family in need or praying earnestly for international missionaries as part of your Christmas celebration.

Also take time to share the true meaning of Christmas with those around you. Luke 2:17 notes that the shepherds "spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child." What better way is there to spread the joy of Christmas?

As you celebrate the season, don't forget to worship, work and witness in the name of Jesus. That's a surefire recipe for a headache-free Christmas.

Room at the inn this Christmas

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Jesus seeks the forgotten, the downtrodden and the rejected people of this world.

Why? Because He embodies God's love. He also understands the plight of the rejected: He was born an outcast.

On the first Christmas Eve, the subjects of the Roman Empire were scrambling for shelter in their ancestral towns while obeying Caesar Augustus' order to register for the imperial census. Joseph, arriving late in Bethlehem with a very pregnant Mary, didn't scramble fast enough.

Even if he had, he probably lacked the money a decent room would have cost that night in the crowded town. Mary gave birth in a stable, wrapped the newborn Jesus in cloths and laid Him in a manger, "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

No room at the inn. So many people—and people groups—still live outside the realms of security, prosperity or influence. They have no room at the table of society. But there's something much worse: having no room in the house of God. Such is the reality for millions who don't know that Jesus Christ understands their loneliness and isolation, that He is seeking them for His own.

As Christmas approaches, join once again with Southern Baptist workers around the world in praying for people searching for the star of Bethlehem—beginning in Bethlehem itself. The town where Jesus

was born is now home to increasingly desperate Palestinians, caught in a violent struggle between factions competing for power.

"The Christmas season causes us to remember the birthplace of Jesus Christ," writes a worker in the Middle East. "Yet today, most Palestinians living in Bethlehem live in spiritual darkness, untouched by the Savior from their own hometown. Pray for Palestinian shepherds who still stand watch in the fields to behold the glory of God. Pray for Palestinians living in that little town of Bethlehem to open their hearts to the Savior."

Similar requests come from other places:

■ "Over the past few months," writes a mission worker in Nicaragua, "I have been very concerned about a gang that has appeared over and over in the newspapers. They have had violent confrontations with another gang, where deaths are involved on both sides. When I met one of the leaders of the gang, my heart went out to this young man. A few weeks ago, another gang member cut his head open on the side with a machete. Recently he was shot twice in the leg. He has slowly opened up his heart and is listening, along with the others in the gang, about Jesus. Please pray that this young man will give his heart to the Lord and that he will be healed from all his physical and spiritual wounds." Thousands of other young Latin Americans need the same kind of healing.

■ On the first day of the Hajj (Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca), which begins around Dec. 29, pilgrims travel to Mina, a small village east of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. They spend the day and night praying, meditating and reading the Quran. Pray that they earnestly will seek the true God and that Jesus will appear to them in visions and dreams. Pray that the pilgrims will see their need for a Savior who can truly rescue them from their sins.

■ Missionaries Eric and Ramona Reese serve among the poorest of society in a slum of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The people often lack running water, electricity and sewage systems; drugs and corruption plague the area. Pray that the Holy Spirit will change lives and communities. Pray for the Quintanilha Baptist Mission, a congregation of 60, as it lifts the light in this dark place.

■ Of the 1,600 different people groups in West Africa—the special focus of Southern Baptist missions throughout 2006—almost 25 percent have no Christian witness. During December, however, many people show an interest in learning more about Christmas. Pray that missionaries and local believers will have unprecedented opportunities to share their faith. One worker writes: "May we be faithful in this holiday season to give fully the most perfect gift of all: Jesus!"

There is room for everyone at God's inn this Christmas. Through prayer, go out into the highways and byways to invite them in.

Erich Bridges is senior writer with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

Smiths 'living for that day' when Futa Toro hear about Christ

Continued from page 1

publicly of her faith in Christ, even though she has drawn the ire of the uncle upon whom she depends for shelter and community acceptance.

■ Mamadou, a Fulbe elder, warmly welcomes the Smiths whenever they visit his family compound where he sits in the sandy courtyard surrounded by his wives, children, sisters, nieces and nephews. He's heard the gospel for years from his missionary friends and other Christian workers. He has no objection to his chil-

dren becoming disciples of Jesus. In fact, he's not far from the Kingdom of God himself. But he hesitates.

"I have too many people behind me," Mamadou explains—too many relatives and clan members who would be drastically affected by his decision. If and when Mamadou decides to follow Jesus, however, he predicts: "I will bring hundreds with me."

That's a day the Smiths are living for—and praying for. It's why they transferred to Senegal in the

1990s from Sierra Leone, where they served as Southern Baptist international missionaries for five years. Before Sierra Leone, they served 10 years in Liberia.

"We had a rewarding ministry in Sierra Leone, but because of the ongoing civil war there, we were confined with all the other missionaries to the capital," Smith said. "There was a church on every corner. We became more and more convinced that we needed to go to people who hadn't had a chance to hear the gospel. ... The needs are unmistakable all over West Africa, but this is the particular people God led us to."

The challenges in reaching the Futa Toro abound. They're staunchly Muslim, so persecution often follows Christian baptism. Many Fulbe follow their herds from one place to another in an endless search for water and grazing land in the parched region. The Fulbe gather in tight clans that have little interaction with each other.

The Tukolor, proud of their status as the first black Africans to convert to Islam, divide themselves into classes nearly as rigid as India's caste system.

With all these clan and class divisions, "we're really talking about two dozen or more unreached people groups," Smith said. "That's why it's so important we pray that members from each group accept Christ."

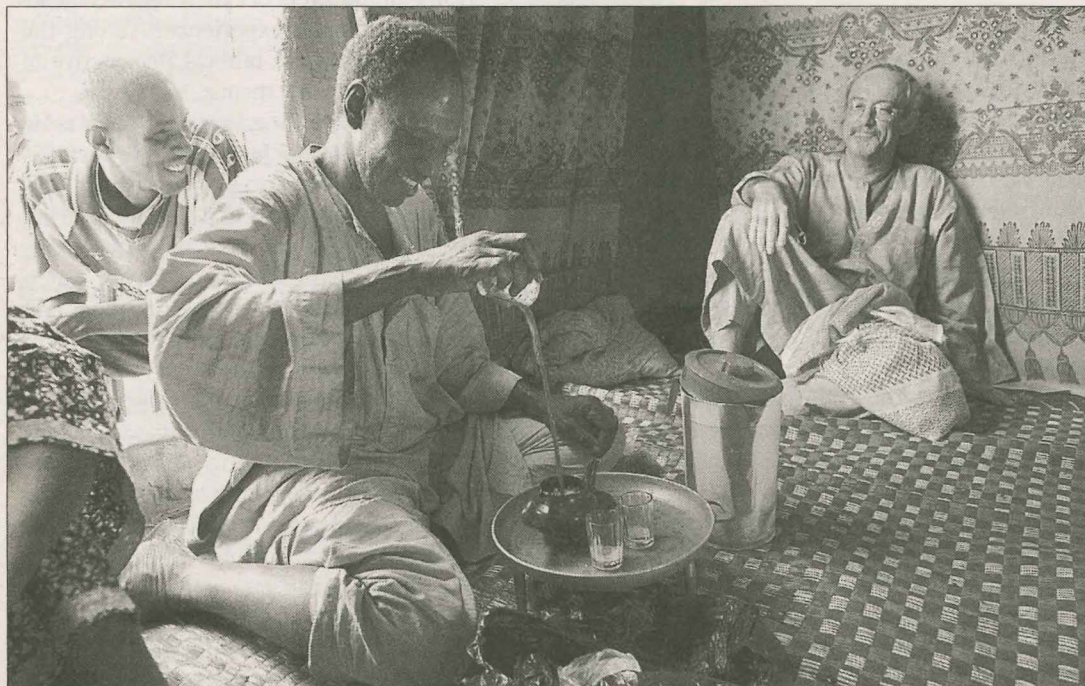
Individuals belonging to the Fulbe and Tukolor are coming to Christ. Perhaps 250 or more believers now live in the region and at least 100 have been baptized. Smith said the biggest challenge is gathering them into disciple groups and congregations that will multiply into a church-planting movement.

That's the Smiths' top priority. He networks with other missionaries and is on the lookout for ideas, connections and key partners—such as Korean and Brazilian Baptist missionaries coming to Senegal. "Word gets around that I'm the guy to talk to," Smith said. "We can't do it by ourselves. It's too big, too spread out, too complex for one group."

Brazilian Baptists' initiative, "Radical Africa," sends young missionaries to West Africa for two years. They study French in Dakar, Senegal's capital, then go out among the people where they learn the local language. In partnership with the Smiths, four Brazilian Baptists committed themselves to work with the Futa Toro. Earlier this year they moved to a Tukolor village.

Even with Christian partners, a church-planting movement among the Futa Toro won't happen without prayer—and lots of it. "This is a task only God can accomplish," Smith said, adding that God regularly reminds him of that—particularly on those discouraging days when it all seems overwhelming.

SWEET CEREMONY A Futa Toro man (center) prepares tea for missionary Tom Smith. Called "ataaya," the drink is served in three rounds, each sweeter than the previous one. The tradition is meant to symbolize the deepening of friendship. (IMB photo)



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The reason for the season

Celebrate Christ's birth by supporting Baptist ministries

As you travel back to Bethlehem again this year, down that time-worn path lined with wise men, shepherds and angels, may you ponder anew the birth of Jesus, God's Son, our Savior. May you discover for the first time, or re-discover, what His birth, life, teachings, miracles, death and resurrection mean to your life and to the future of the world.

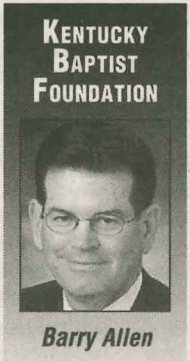
I stand far within the mark when I say, "All the armies that have ever marched, all the navies that have ever been built and sailed, all the parliaments that have ever sat and all the kings that have ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that one solitary life."

One special way to celebrate the "reason for the season" and to rejoice in this special season is to make a generous and lasting gift for the benefit of one or more of your favorite Baptist causes. Not only will you be making a lasting difference by extending Christ's mission in this world, but you also will be bearing a personal testimony that will extend perpetually beyond your lifetime.

Your church, association and these Kentucky Baptist Convention-related ministries are worthy of your support as they extend Christ's mission each and every day: Campbellsville University, University of the Cumberlands, Georgetown College, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, Kentucky Baptist Healthcare System and its hospitals, Kentucky Baptist Assemblies with Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek, Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Western Recorder, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, Kentucky Baptist Mission Board and Kentucky Ethics League.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation exists to assist you in your charitable gift planning. Perhaps during this special season of the year you are prayerfully pondering the establishment of an endowment fund that will generate support until Jesus comes again for those ministries, which are near and dear to your heart. Please give Laurie Valentine or me the privilege of assisting you in this special consideration.

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



Barry Allen

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Rebecca Souder

Across

- 1 "___ and see" (John 1:39)
- 5 Town near Bethel (Joshua 7:2)
- 6 "Them that ___ in riches" (Mark 10:24)
- 11 Valley near Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8)
- 13 "___ is he" (Romans 14:22)
- 14 Aluminum, chem. symbol
- 15 Nashville's state, abbr.
- 16 "I am the ___" (John 14:6)
- 18 "Trees of the Lord are full of ___" (Psalms 104:16)
- 19 Large stringed instruments
- 21 Do, ___, mi
- 22 "We beheld his ___" (John 1:14)
- 24 "Like a refiner's ___" (Malachi 3:2)
- 26 East Indies, abbr.
- 27 "Whoever ___ in him should not perish" (John 3:16)
- 31 "A great ___ dragon" (Revelation 12:3)
- 33 "Unto the ___ of the earth" (Acts 13:47)
- 34 Resound
- 35 "The ___ of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:56)
- 37 "To sit up ___" (Psalms 127:2)
- 38 "When ___ the king had heard these things, he was troubled" (Matthew 2:3)
- 40 "Naphtali is a ___ let loose" (Genesis 49:21)
- 43 Calendar numbers
- 46 Victory in Europe, abbr.
- 47 "He was ___ the world" (John 1:10)
- 49 Accomplish

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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42		43			44		45		46
47	48				49	50			51
52		53	54		55				56
57									58

- 52 "He ___, and denied not" (John 1:20)
- 56 "Made it a ___ of thieves" (Matthew 21:13)
- 57 "No man hath ___" (John 3:13)
- 58 Road, abbr.

- 19 Company, abbr.
- 20 "Go thy way; thy son ___" (John 4:50)
- 23 "As much as ___ in you" (Romans 12:18)
- 24 Iron, chem. symbol
- 25 "As many as ___ him, to them gave he power" (John 1:12)
- 28 Printer's measure
- 29 "I ... was in the ___ that is called Patmos" (Revelation 1:9)
- 30 "___ fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
- 32 "Jesus Christ, Who ___ for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)
- 36 Gun lobbyists, abbr.
- 39 Eastern seaboard state, abbr.
- 41 "___ man spake like this" (John 7:46)
- 42 Type style
- 44 Correspondence enclosure, abbr.
- 45 Doctorate degree, abbr.
- 48 Negative votes
- 50 Committee for Economic Development, abbr.
- 51 "To this ___ I was born" (John 18:37)
- 53 State where man first flew, abbr.
- 54 Far East, abbr.
- 55 Northwest state, abbr.

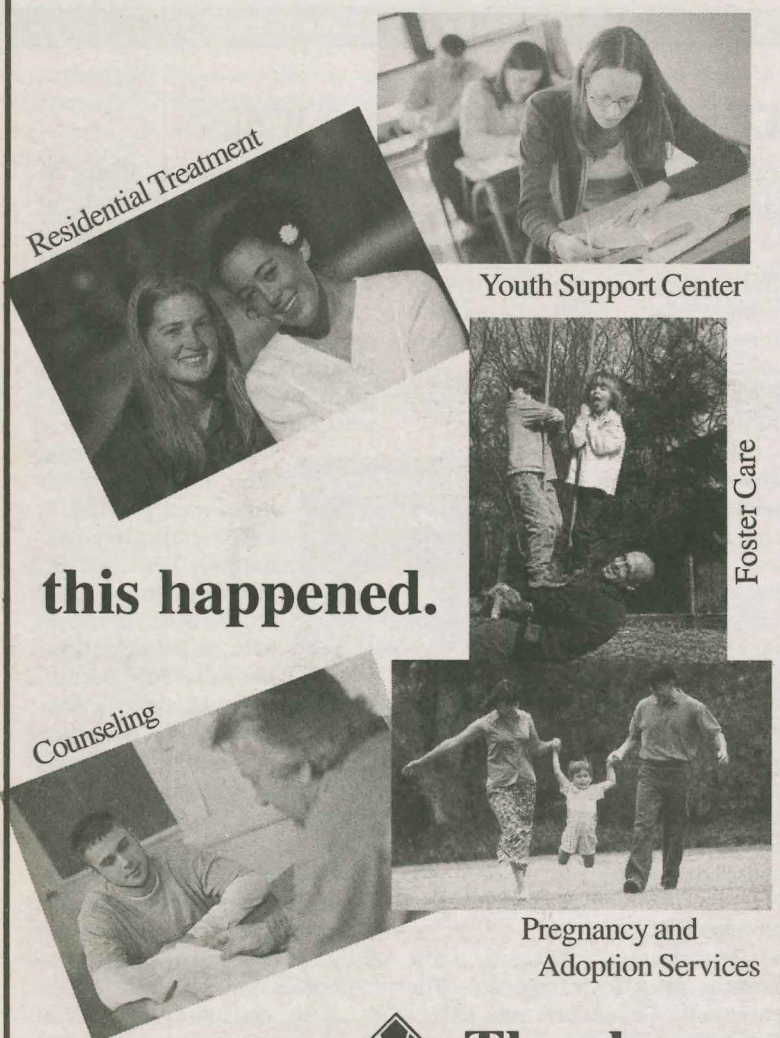
Down

- 1 "Poured out the ___ money" (John 2:15)
- 2 "Took no ___ with them" (Matthew 25:3)
- 3 St. Paul's state, abbr.
- 4 "He cannot ___ into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)
- 5 "I ___ the living bread" (John 6:51)
- 6 "Father, glorify ___ name" (John 12:28)
- 7 Egyptian sun god
- 8 ___ and downs
- 9 "He that ___ his rod" (Proverbs 13:24)
- 10 Kind, variety
- 12 "Glory as of the ___ of the Father" (John 1:14) (2 words)
- 16 "The ___ was made by him" (John 1:10)
- 17 "Love one another, ___ I have loved you" (John 15:12)

Last week's solution

1	S	C	H	I	3	S	M	5	C	O	M	6	7	I	T
2	O	H			9	I	O	T	A			10			
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NATIONAL NOTES

New Jersey approves gay civil unions. On Dec. 14, New Jersey became the third state to offer homosexual couples legal protections similar to marriage. The New Jersey Assembly passed a bill establishing civil unions 56-19. Earlier, state senators approved the bill by a similar margin. But legislators stopped short of using the term "marriage" to describe the unions. The bill came in response to an October ruling from the New Jersey Supreme Court that said the state's constitution required that gay couples be offered the same rights as married couples. New Jersey joins Connecticut and Vermont as the only states to offer civil unions to gay couples. Massachusetts remains the only state to offer full marriage to gay couples.

Law allows bankrupt to tithe. Congress approved a bill Dec. 6 that allows people who have filed for bankruptcy to continue to tithe and to make charitable contributions. Earlier this year, a New York court ruled that debtors above the median income must pay off their debts before giving to charity or tithing. The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Clarification Act of 2006 responds to that ruling by tweaking bankruptcy rules passed by Congress last year. More than 2 million Americans filed for bankruptcy protection in 2005 and hundreds of thousands are expected to do the same by the end of 2006, according to the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys.

Judge: Worship song OK at public school. A New Jersey elementary school student's First Amendment rights were violated when her school district barred her from singing a religious song at an after-school talent show, a federal judge ruled Dec. 11. The parents of Olivia Turton sued the Frenchtown Elementary School District Board of Education in May 2005. Administrators had denied the then-second-grader's request to perform "Awesome God," saying its lyrics amounted to the "musical equivalent of a spoken prayer." U.S. District Court Judge Freda Wolfson ruled that Olivia's song was one student's "private speech" and could not legitimately be perceived as a public school's endorsement of religion. Olivia, now a fourth-grader, will sing "Awesome God" at the next installment of the "Frenchtown Idol" talent show in May, according to attorney Demetrios Stratis. School officials said they do not plan to appeal the court ruling.

New U.S. Congress expands religious diversity

Washington (RNS)—The new U.S. Congress will, for the first time, include a Muslim, two Buddhists, more Jews than Episcopalians, and the highest-ranking Mormon in congressional history.

Roman Catholics remain the largest single faith group in Congress, accounting for 29 percent of all members of the House and Senate, followed by Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Jews and Episcopalians.

While Catholics in Congress are nearly 2-to-1 Democrats, the most lopsidedly Democratic groups are Jews and those not affiliated with any religion. Of the 43 Jewish members of Congress, there is only one Jewish Republican in the House and two in the Senate. The six members of the House with no religious affiliation are all Democrats.

The most Republican groups are Christian Scientists in the House (all five are Republican), and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (12 Republicans and three Democrats)—although the top-ranking Mormon in the history of Congress will be Nevada Sen. Harry Reid, the incoming Democratic majority leader.

Baptists divide along partisan lines defined by race. African-American Baptists, like all black members of Congress, are Democrats, while most white Baptists are Re-

publicans. Notable exceptions include incoming House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., who will serve as president pro tem in the new Senate.

As Democrats gained a majority in Congress, they also regained their commanding advantage among Catholics, which had slipped during an era of Republican dominance. In Pennsylvania alone, five new Democrats, all Catholics, were elected to Congress in November.

In the new Congress, two-thirds of all Catholic members will be Democrats. By contrast, after big Republican gains in 1994, 44 percent of Catholic members of Congress were Republican, according to Albert Menendez, a writer and researcher who has been counting the religious affiliation of members

of Congress since 1972.

Menendez noted that Lutherans were underrepresented relative to their population in 1972, with 16 members of Congress, and remain underrepresented today with 17.

Evangelical Christians—a category that cuts across denominational lines—also remain underrepresented, according to Furman University political scientist James Guth, particularly after this year's defeat of Republican incumbents such as Reps. John Hostettler of Indiana and Jim Ryun of Kansas.

Meanwhile, Jews have continued to gain representation in Congress (8 percent in the new Congress) even as their share of the national population has waned (1.3 percent in 2001).

For Buddhists and Muslims, the 110th Congress marks their first congressional representation.

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Oneida Christmas celebration features music, worship, 'Walk to Bethlehem'

By Michael Spencer, assistant to the president

The Christmas season at OBI is one of our favorite times of the school year. It's hard to describe the excitement that takes over our campus between Thanksgiving and Christmas. It's a challenge for every teacher and coach to keep students on track with their studies and exams. Of course, our faculty and staff are looking forward to the Christmas season as much as our students. Still, before break, there are many festive celebrations of Christmas on our campus.

Members of the campus choir decorated the chapel beautifully. The lovely Christmas tree and garlands that fill the worship space with greenery and light are a wonderful gift to our community of students and staff. This year, a new star topped our tree.

On Tuesdays in December, our students request their favorite Christmas carols during chapel service. They love to sing hymns as well as contemporary worship choruses. Worship leader Tim Cochran facilitates these times of worship, and often teaches our students new Christmas carols.

The Oneida Baptist Church adult and children's choirs visit our worship services to present Christmas musicals. This year, the Oneida Baptist Church adult choir presented the cantata, "Bethlehem's Child," at the Dec. 10 evening worship. Their children's choir presented "A King Is Coming to Town" at the Dec. 18 chapel service. Our students enjoyed these gifts of Christmas music.

On Dec. 13, our dorm students participated in a special "Free Mart" from our donations ministry. The boys and girls were given a variety of

items that they found useful for dorm life, and also enjoyable for Christmas.

On Dec. 15, our fine arts and creative ministries teams combined for a special musical/dramatic Christmas program. Our entire school—including primary and elementary students—and many staff and parents—joined us as the choir sang, students played musical instruments, and the drama ministry presented the Christmas message.

On Dec. 17, the dean of students sponsored an all-afternoon/evening Christmas festival for students. This day includes art, games, music, food and surprises. The event includes a devotional in the chapel, following the singing of carols and some traditional OBI-flavored Christmas songs such as "The Twelve Days of Oneida." The day ends with a "Walk to Bethlehem" sponsored by Oneida's FFA chapter. This visit to the fields and farm across Goose Creek is a favorite way of imagining the night of Jesus' birth, and

reflecting on the miracle of Christmas. We also welcome Sunday school classes, missions groups and Baptist Campus Ministries who come caroling or to host Christmas parties. Christmas is celebrated all over our campus during these days before break. Every day in chapel, the gospel is presented with the lost and unreached in mind. It's a special privilege to share the message of Jesus on behalf of Kentucky Baptists with students from all over the world.

I pray you will continue to support us, financially and in prayer, as we bring the reason for the season of Christmas to all of our students.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Changed on the Emmaus Walk

Clear Creek student leads prisoner to faith in Christ

"Two years ago my life changed," third semester student Shawn Allen acknowledges. "I had a destructive lifestyle, involved in drugs and alcohol and (was) in jail many times. At a retreat called Emmaus Walk, my life changed and I was delivered."

Shawn said he was abandoned by his mother when he was young, and that his father used drugs and alcohol. Shawn starting smoking marijuana himself when he was 13. A quarterback on the North Laurel High School football team, he was kicked off the squad his senior year.

"I wasted so much on the world and didn't even realize it," he said. "It's all because of Jesus. My marriage was restored. My life is better than good now; I have a purpose."

The call to ministry came a few months after his conversion. His passion for Christ continues to motivate him.

Shawn helps with the youth ministry at West Pineville Baptist Church where he sometimes is asked to preach when the pastor is away. "Christ is growing me," he said. "He's got something for me to do."

Twice each month, Shawn visits inmates of the Lee County Adjustment Center in Beattyville. The 500-inmate minimum-security facility recently sponsored "Residents Encounter Christ," an extension of Emmaus Walk ministries. Shawn was drawn to an inmate named Billy who is in prison for murder. Shawn shared

the gospel message with Billy. After learning about Jesus, Billy told the ministry facilitators, "I've seen His face through you," and accepted Christ as his Savior. Before asking Jesus into his life, Billy was a Muslim. To demonstrate his new commitment to Christianity, Billy gave his copy of

the Quran and his prayer cloth to Shawn. Two weeks later, Billy was baptized. There were 126 other inmates who witnessed the ordinance. Shawn prays that Billy's conversion will influence others for Christ.

As we celebrate the birth of King Jesus, a prisoner named Billy celebrates the beginning of a new life, thanks, in part, to Shawn Allen and the ministry of Emmaus Walk.

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

'Ho! Ho! Ho? No, No, No

Groups hope to turn public focus from North Pole back to Bethlehem

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—Standing next to plastic figures of Mary, baby Jesus and Joseph, two ministers and three members of Congress took turns at a microphone earlier this month to announce a new initiative called "Project Nativity."

"Our hope and prayer is that over the next three to four years, hundreds of nativity scenes will begin to dot the landscape of America once again," said Patrick Mahoney, director of the Christian Defense Coalition. He said he hopes the temporary nativity scene on a terrace of the U.S. Capitol will serve as a "template" for similar efforts.

His project, which encourages Christians to seek permits for nativity scenes in front of public buildings, is just one example of multiple efforts to "take Christmas back." In recent years, there have been rumors of a "War on Christmas" and actual skirmishes over the use of the word in the public square and at the retail counter.

"Reason for the season"

Now, some clergy and laypeople are shunning secularism and church-state concerns and taking a more proactive stand to remind people of the Christ in Christmas who they describe as "the reason for the season."

The initiatives stretch across the Atlantic to northern Ireland, where Catholic schoolteacher Kathleen Darragh wrote her own version of "12 Days of Christmas" that is being distributed by Illinois-based ACTA Publications.

Writing with her schoolchildren in mind, her poem begins: "On the first day of Christmas, our true God sent to us ... Our Saviour Baby Jesus."

"The most excited talk they have is about Santa and I sort of thought we have to get this idea across to them that Christmas is really about Christ and keeping the Christ in Christmas," she said in a phone interview.

"People here and people in England are saying, 'Let's not go down the American route of having a 'Happy Holiday.' Let's say ... this is 'Happy Christmas.' It's not 'Happy Holiday.'"

Stateside, some Santas even are focused on Jesus' birth.

Las Vegas hairdresser J.D. St. Ives plays the starring role in a new DVD called "Santa's Sing-A-Long!" that features carols as well as more secular Christmas songs. In the Magic Tree Inc. production, he asks his green-haired elves about the meaning of Christmas and they respond, "Toys! Games! Santa!"

"Ho! Ho! Ho! No. No. No," he responds before introducing "Silent Night."

"Although all of those things are a part of the way we celebrate Christmas, that's not why we celebrate Christmas," Santa explains.

Since the 1980s, the "Kneeling Santa," a figure bowing down at the side of the infant Jesus, has grown from books to a range of merchandise. In the past couple of years, that brand has extended to a \$200 outdoor figurine suitable for front lawns.

"People forget what the season is all about—and children especially—so it brings them back to what it's supposed to be and the true meaning of Christmas," said Velia Faso, director of special affairs for Addison, Ill.-based Roman Inc. Her company, which is the licensee for the "Kneeling Santa" line, plans to begin distributing a 4-foot silhouette image of the figure as "illuminated

yard art" in 2007.

This year, some Christians are celebrating the focus on Jesus' birth on the big screen with the recent premiere of the film, "The Nativity Story," just one way they hope to redirect Christmas away from the North Pole and back to Bethlehem.

"What I sense is it's raising the level of discussion about Christmas back to where it should be, instead of where it has been over the last two or three years, over whether we can say the word 'Christmas' in our greetings," said David Jeremiah, a pastor in El Cajon, Calif., who has written a companion book to the film.

Reality check

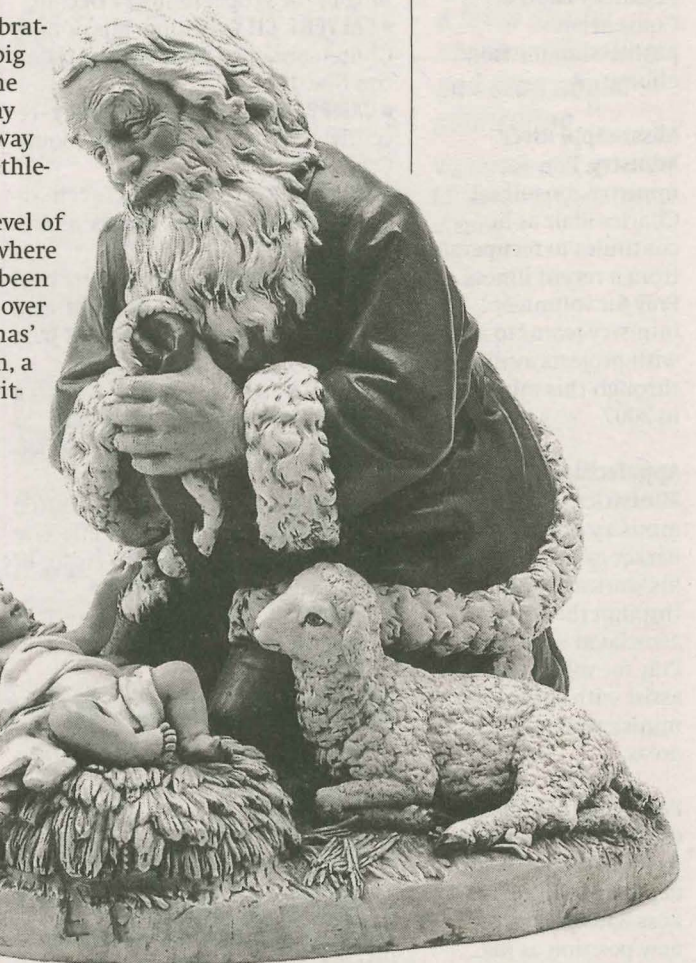
"Why would we want to deal with Christmas in a lesser way than the reality of the story itself?"

In a move to further the movie's message, the same ministers who encouraged permits for nativity scenes also supported plans to give each member of Congress a pair of free tickets to the film.

Rob Schenck, president of the National Clergy Council and the other minister at the Capitol press conference, said plans to verbally spread the message are under way as well.

"We just had a telephone conference call with religious leaders across the country who are encouraging their congregations to deliberately wish people a complete 'Merry Christmas,'" he said.

Their church members are encouraged to say: "Merry Christmas, the joyous celebration of the birth



of Christ."

That echoes the sentiment expressed by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., who proudly stood between the Capitol Christmas Tree and the U.S. Capitol, next to the plastic manger scene, on that recent December day.

"We need to have these expressions of religion," he said. "We need to celebrate these things. We don't need to remove them. It's OK to talk about the birth of Jesus on Christmas. It is the reason for the season."

Panel says Christmas season can be especially stressful for ministers' wives

By Chris Turner
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

Nashville (BP)—The last six weeks of the year are supposed to be the most festive of times, especially for Christians. Unfortunately, for some ministers' wives, the only good news they hear is that the holiday season is nearly over.

As a pastor's wife, Shirley Cross recalls specific stressors such as, "How do you handle prioritizing the church parties and the family time?"

"A lot of times, you not only had the concern about 'Is there time to go' but 'Is something going to happen with a church member'" while you're gone?

Cross shared some of her insights recently as part of a panel discussion recorded for "Inside LifeWay," the news podcast of LifeWay Christian Resources. It is available at www.lifeway.com/inside-lifeway.

Joining Cross were Barney Self, Chris Adams and Inside LifeWay host Brooklyn Noel.

Self is a licensed family counselor and a member of LifeWay's pastoral ministries team. Adams is a women's enrichment

and ministers' wives specialist in LifeWay's church resources division. She formerly served as special ministries coordinator for Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas.

"Patty Perfect" pressure

Ministers' wives often feel the pressure to be "Patty Perfect" during the holiday season, being the perfect hostess or guest or providing the perfect gift—for everybody.

Unfortunately, while ministers' wives may be smiling on the outside, the panel said, inside they are "probably screaming," hoping to survive until the new year.

"They cannot always afford to go and visit family, or because of church responsibilities, they're not able to leave and go be with family," Adams said. "So sometimes it can be really lonely for them."

"There is also the issue of finances," Adams added. "Who do you buy presents for? Do you try to have something at your home, a little gift of some sort to give to those who come by your home? Where do you stop the gifts? Is it with other

staff members? Is it with other congregation members?"

Adams also said the expectation to be at so many Sunday school parties or other gatherings can be a financial burden for ministers' families with smaller children, which translates into a considerable expense for babysitting.

The expectations "are ubiquitous," Self said. "There is a significant need for ministers' wives and ministers to show a graceful balance and say, 'Yes, we love you but no, we are not coming to your party,'" he noted. "That is a way to affirm those who are inviting, but it is also a way to draw the line as well."

"I think the ministers themselves can help their wives by defining for the church what's appropriate," Self added. "Very often the minister doesn't do that. He just sort of plays a passive role and takes it as it comes."

Balance needs, expectations

Cross said saying no is a learning process, and one that is a necessity if ministers' wives are going to enjoy the season and help create a meaningful time for

their own families.

"In order for balance to occur, there needs to be an awareness of both sets of needs and expectations," Self pointed out. "If you try to meet all of the needs, it will not work. Often ministers' wives ignore their own needs and focus on the needs of others. This is a set-up for trauma in the family of the minister."

Self added that, for many people in the church, this is a difficult time of the year emotionally which also adds stress on ministers and their families.

Adams said church members can look for ways to minister to their ministers' families by praying for them and doing something special for ministers' wives to acknowledge their contribution to the ministry.

"I think it's critical for the ministry body to be lifted up in prayer ... by the congregation and certainly by specific groups within the church that are really committed to the church life being the best it can be," Self said. "I think bathing ministers and their families in prayer, especially during this season, is vital because the pressures on them are greater."

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following ministries associated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions efforts:

Mississippi River Ministry. Pray for ministry consultant Charles Blair as he continues to recuperate from a recent illness. Pray for volunteer ministry teams to assist with projects available through this ministry in 2007.

Appalachian Regional Ministries. Pray for ministry director Bill Barker as he continues his work and travels through the 10 states associated with ARM. Pray for volunteers to assist with the many ministry needs in these areas.

Partnership missions office. Pray for mission partnership director Ross Bauscher in his new position as KBC evangelism growth team leader. Pray for KBC officials as they enlist a new partnership missions director.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BREMEN**—Pleasant Hill Church recently called **Todd King** as pastor. Graham Missionary Church ordained King to the gospel ministry Dec. 10.
- **CALVERT CITY**—Altona Missionary Church ordained **Mike Ward** as a deacon Nov. 19.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—**Tom Coffey** recently resigned as pastor of Mount Carmel Church.
- **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church recently called **Nathan Barnes** as student minister.
- **FORT MITCHELL**—Fort Mitchell Church ordained **Eric Redfield** as a deacon Dec. 17. **Joseph Tricquet Jr.** is pastor.
- **HARDINSBURG**—Hardinsburg Church called **Brad Krigbaum** as effective Dec. 1. **Doug Miller** is pastor.
- **HUSTONVILLE**—South Fork Church called **Curtis Brock** as pastor effective Jan. 1. Brock previously was pastor of South Fork Church in 1991-95.
- **LOUISVILLE**—**Allison Young** recently resigned as minister of childhood

Spotlight on ...

Burkesville



Burkesville Church ordained **Danny Allen, Todd Davidson** and **Johnnie Sells** as deacons Nov. 5. **Mark Shelton** is pastor.

education at Walnut Street Church. **Rusty Ellison** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—**Bonnie Brown**, chaplain coordinator at Owensboro Medical Health System since 2001, has earned certification in the Association of Professional Chaplains. A former missionary to Nigeria, she also is pianist for Bellevue Church.

■ **RICHMOND**—Red House Church recently called **Albert Griffin** as interim pastor.

Cumberland honors student leaders

Williamsburg—Matthew Ailstock and Kayla Minder recently received the 2006 Servant Leadership Award at University of the Cumberlands.

The Servant Leadership program recognizes students who are leaders in the areas of ministry and community service.

Ailstock is a senior with a double major in psychology and religion. He is the son of Willie and Rebecca Ailstock of Dry Ridge. He has served for the past year as worship leader at One Hope Community Church

in Burlington. Ailstock has chosen to donate a portion of his award to Emergency Christian Ministries of Williamsburg.

Minder, a senior from Lexington, is the daughter of Michael and Holly Minder. She has been involved in the Appalachian College Association Citizen Scholars Program and has volunteered at Emergency Christian Ministries. She has selected the International Justice Mission in Washington, D.C., to receive a portion of her award.

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 18-20 Shepherding the Shepherd Conference, Radisson Hotel, Lexington.
- 23 Pastor/Staff Forum, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 25-26 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Not Inside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.
- 26-27 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Lakeside Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 26-27 Woman's Missionary Union Regional Retreat, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.

February

- 1-3 Youth Leaders Conclave, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- 2-3 Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Holiday Inn University Plaza, Bowling Green.
- 17 Special Needs Ministry Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 19 Financial Support Issues for Ministers and Church Employees Conference, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 20 Financial Support Issues for Ministers and Church Employees Conference, Daviess-McLean Baptist Association, Owensboro.

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



TECH TALK The Kentucky Baptist Convention communications department recently hosted a two-day meeting of the Southern Baptist Audiovisual Technology Roundtable at the Baptist Building in Louisville. The professional development group gathers annually for training and dialogue. Participants included communications and media staff from several state Baptist conventions as well as the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and LifeWay Christian Resources.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor. Send resumé to Brooksville Baptist Church, Box 126, Brooksville, KY 41004.

SEEKING: Erlanger Baptist Church of Erlanger, Ky., seeks an interim pastor as we begin the pastor search process. This position is for an individual who can provide excellent Bible-based preaching, possess encouraging leadership style, ability to help us focus on our vision and provide competent pastoral care. In other words, someone who loves God and loves people. Hours and compensation are negotiable. Contact Harold Caddell, search committee chair, 2221 Beil Road, Burlington, KY 41005.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Valley View Baptist Church of Cleveland, Tenn. We offer a blended style of worship with 110-120 attending Sunday morning service. Send resumé with references to: Valley View Baptist Church, 4657 Spring Place Road, SE, Cleveland, TN 37323, Attn: Bill Morrison; or e-mail tballew61@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Director of development with minimum of two years experience to coordinate fund-raising for residential ministry to senior adults and developmentally disabled adults. Send resumé with references by Jan. 15, 2007, to: Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes, Inc., PO Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024; or e-mail to kcooper@tnbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister. Some experience required. Send resumé to: Victory Memorial Baptist Church, 3805 Southern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40214; or e-mail vmemori@aol.com.

SEEKING: Building maintenance worker. Familiarity with electrical wiring of machinery and control circuitry along with three-phase delta. Some repairs to plumbing, air compressors, hydraulic systems and general building maintenance. Minimum four years experience in industrial/heating. Must be certified HVAC AC/Heating Refrigerant Transition and Recovery (40 CFR). Starting: \$14; after 45 days: \$15.76. Apply at American Printing House for the Blind, M-F, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., 1839 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206; or call (502) 899-2238 to request an application. An offer of employment is conditioned on successfully passing a drug screening test. EEO/AA employer.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to children and youth. Children's ministry includes Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings plus other special activities. Youth ministry includes Sunday mornings and Sunday evenings with minimum of one other activity per month. Salary negotiable based on experience, and housing may be included. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Hillcrest Baptist Church, 684 Devils Hollow Road, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Clear Creek Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees seeks letters of interest and inquiry from individuals led and called to apply to serve as president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Please send letters of interest or resumé to: Timothy A. Langford, chairman of the board of trustees, PO Box 167, Hickman, KY 42050 prior to Jan. 4, 2007.

SEEKING: Full-time office manager to support five staff members and congregation for 700-member church in Lexington, Ky. Must possess a positive attitude, excellent phone personality, and a knowledge of Publisher, Excel and PowerPoint. Salary negotiable. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Victory Baptist Church, 2261 Armstrong Mill Road, Lexington, KY 40515; or e-mail to wddowns@insighbb.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister to children for First Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky., to lead our ministry to birth through 5th grade. Individual must have the gift of administration, enthusiasm to generate creative ideas, patience to be an educator and the dedication to oversee children's spiritual growth. Previous leadership experience in children's ministry and motivating teams preferred. Send resumé and references to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 904, Owensboro, KY 42302, Attn: Children's Search Committee; or pstrahan@fbcowb.org.

SEEKING: Full-time staff member with a focus on outreach and ministry to children, youth and families. We are a new church start that has an existing committed core group and adequate resources. The position occasionally will require filling in for the senior pastor. Required degree and experience required. If interested, please send resumé and cover letter to: Journey Search Committee, PO Box 22137, Lexington, KY 40522-2137.

SEEKING: Full-time minister to children, youth and families at Deer Park Baptist Church, Louisville, a moderate church with 100 years of service. Opportunity to guide children, families and volunteers toward a comprehensive children and youth ministry. Advanced degree and some previous experience required. Visit our Web site for job description and application details: www.deerparkbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Part-time (20 hours/week) college minister for St. Matthews Baptist Church. We are seeking an energetic individual who loves God and loves students. Responsibilities include teaching college students at St. Matthews and on various campuses in the metro area; and organizing small-group Bible studies, retreats, worship events and mission projects. Please send resumé to Tomara Brown at 3515 Grandview Ave., Louisville, KY 40207.

Porn's negative impact growing, activist warns

Kansas City, Mo. (BP)—“Society is staggering from the effects of over-promiscuity,” Philip Cosby of the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families told a recent chapel audience at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Cosby, who heads the coalition's work in the Kansas City, Mo., area, cited Promise Keepers surveys showing that pornography had invaded the lives and homes of more than half the men attending their rallies.

Since his retirement from a 22-year Army career, Cosby has been on the front lines of the war against pornography and sexually oriented businesses in three cities.

Cosby said he first moved to Abilene, Kan., completely unprepared for the presence of a pornography outlet. Determined that something had to be done, his efforts resulted in “Operation Daniel,” in which he and 140 other men stood 24 hours a day, seven days a week outside the outlet for 100 days.

“That truck traffic came to a screeching halt for 100 days at that place as we stood there,” Consy noted.

Since then, Cosby has continued to study the law concerning sexually oriented businesses, which he says is on the side of traditional Christian values.

On the federal level, an obscenity prosecution task force is becoming more active, Cosby noted. He added that law enforcement officials understand the dangers associated with sexually oriented businesses, having dealt with rapists and pedophiles.

But the general population remains desensitized and indifferent to problems associated with pornography and strip clubs, Cosby said, noting that “the Scripture calls it the deceitfulness of sin.”

After hearing of his efforts in Abilene, Cosby was invited to Wichita, Kan., where there were 18 porn shops within the city limits alone. Cosby said he worked with the mayor of Wichita to bring major reform.

Most recently, Cosby was invited to Kansas City, Mo., in an effort to help rid the metro area of sexually oriented businesses.

Cosby urged the seminary crowd to join the fight against the pornography industry by petitioning for grand jury action in framing charges against sexually oriented businesses.

Rick Schatz, president of the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, challenged seminary students to guard their households and their children. He said pornography problems often begin with early exposure among children who need to be protected and taught by their parents to avoid pornography.

Citizens challenged to battle pornography

By Samuel Smith
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—The influx of pornography and strip bars into American society can be stopped, a community values activist told a conference for state convention workers at the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville.

Hardcore pornography is not protected by the First Amendment, said Phil Burress of Citizens for Community Values. “In *Miller v. California* in 1973, the United States Supreme Court said that every community is allowed to apply their own community standards.”

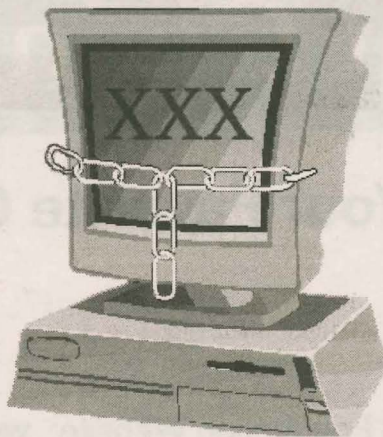
In 45 states, Burress said, strong laws are on the books that outlaw hardcore pornography, which involves actual or simulated sexual activity. The problem is that the laws are not being enforced, he noted.

“Hardcore pornography is what is being sold in the backroom of video stores and in hotel rooms today,” he said. “The question is, ‘Will the prosecutor prosecute?’”

Burress said the sale of hardcore pornography is a felony in five states and people in Ohio have gone to jail for selling it.

Soft-core pornography, which involves nudity without actual or simulated sexual activity, requires a little different approach, Burress said, but the battle over both soft-core and hardcore pornography must begin with citizen action rather than legal action.

“When we began the campaign in Cincinnati, 95 percent of 2,800 (convenience) stores in greater Cincinnati were selling some kind of pornography,” he said. “We started a campaign to tell our parishioners and everyone not to shop in stores that sell pornography.”



He said citizens began telling store operators that they would go elsewhere if they continued to sell pornography, and within 10 years only 5 percent of such businesses in greater Cincinnati sold pornography.

Burress' wife, Vickie, who also works with Citizens for Community Values, shared a heartrending assessment of the typical “exotic dancer” who works in a strip club: The vast majority were sexually abused as children and are seeking male affirmation, she said. “They are victims of a sex-saturated society.”

“A lot of them go into a club working as waitresses thinking, ‘These people love me—they wouldn't have me dance.’ They're seeking family, something they didn't have at home.” Mrs. Burress said. “Through drugs and alcohol, they lose their inhibitions and get up on the stage.”

Once they're in the business, she said, the dancers end up being trapped by club owners through shady financial arrangements and manipulation.

“According to the girls that we have worked with, there is not a strip bar in the country that operates legally,” she said. “They all have pros-

titution going on in the back room, there's drugs going on inside, big-time gambling.”

Mrs. Burress said women in ministries across the country have begun to befriend dancers and share the gospel with them by providing assistance to them and offering to help free them from their lifestyle.

“It's somebody's little girl on that stage,” she said. “They need a lot of help, a lot of sexual abuse counseling and drug abuse counseling.”

She said churches need to be sensitive when former dancers come to their church in “spike heels and a miniskirt.”

“That's the life that they know. Their big issue is shame,” she said. “If you shame them when they come into your church, they will not only reject your church. They will also reject Christ.”

Phil Burress said the U.S. Supreme Court, in its 1986 *Renton v. Playtime Theaters* ruling, depicted sexually oriented businesses as taking an economic toll on a community.

The court's ruling allows local authorities to regulate sexually oriented businesses such as strip bars, massage parlors and adult bookstores with zoning, licensing and other measures. Local governments can log on to adultbusinesslaw.com for help with drafting ordinances allowable under federal law, he added.

On the positive side, he said his organization has begun to find ways to enable people to make informed decisions about businesses that distribute pornography.

“I get pretty fed up with cursing the darkness all the time,” he said. His organization has surveyed hotels to determine which ones sell in-room hardcore pornography and has created a Web site called cleanhotels.com.

“It's somebody's little girl on that stage. They need a lot of help, a lot of sexual abuse counseling and drug abuse counseling.”

Vickie Burress of Citizens for Community Values

How should women confront husbands' porn use?

By Erin Roach
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—Resources to help men deal with pornography addictions are common, but how should a woman deal with the devastating pain of knowing her husband is viewing pornography?

Rebekah Land, a Southern Baptist psychotherapist in private practice in Nashville, said Internet pornography is considered the “crack cocaine” of pornography because it's so addicting and easily accessible. Pastors are not immune to its deceitful allure, tearing apart families every day, she added.

“It used to be that if a guy wanted to look at pornography, he'd have to go to some seedy, XXX theater and watch awful B-grade or C-grade films,” Land said.

But today, the most common pornography users don't go to an adult theater or bookstore; they simply log on to their computer.

In this kind of environment, it's even more necessary that wives become armed with the knowledge of how to react to such potential immorality, Land noted.

“A lot of times the first thing that happens when a wife finds out, they're just devastated,” she said. “Before they can even get to what they need to do as far as their hus-

band is concerned, they need to deal with it themselves. They have to deal with the hurt, the devastation, the embarrassment, the anger. It feels like a betrayal, it feels like he's had an affair. Probably the first thing they have to do is try to get their own head together and identify their feelings and what it means to them.”

Land said pornography use is not an instant justification for divorce because the Bible teaches to forgive no matter how hard it seems.

If the husband's sin is an indiscretion, Land said, that's different than if it's an indication of a pattern of addiction.

“If you uncovered what looked like maybe a lifelong pattern, it would be a little harder to accept that he's going to get over it because that's one of the issues,” Land said. “The behavior has to stop. So if you realize that he's got maybe multiple addictions and you didn't realize he did, if it looks like a pattern that's been there for years and years ... you may have a whole lot bigger mountain to climb than somebody else.”

Once a woman realizes her husband is using pornography and once she gets her own head together, Land said the next step is to confront him—something that will take different forms for different personalities. And if a husband wants to

stop his addiction, he must first tell his wife, she said.

Some steps toward healing that a couple can take include contacting their pastor and asking him to recommend a reliable Christian therapist. The couple doesn't even have to tell the pastor what the problem is, Land said, and the therapist can then refer the couple to someone who specializes in the field of pornography addiction if that therapist does not feel qualified to take them on as patients.

From there, a Christian therapist can help the couple walk down the road to recovery, Land said. She recommended two resources couples can consult: a book for women by Marsha Means titled “Living with Your Husband's Secret Wars,” and a workbook for men by Mark Laaser titled “Faithful and True: Sexual Integrity in a Fallen World.”

The bottom line in guarding a marriage against pornography is open and honest communication between a husband and wife, Land said.

“Very often it's the nature of this kind of thing to be secret,” she noted. “So if you had a marriage where it felt safe to be vulnerable or safe to acknowledge what was going on with you or struggles that you were having, that would be ideal.”

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- Online Giving via Kentucky Baptist Foundation Website: www.kybaptistfoundation.org
- Select from the list the cause(s) you want to support with an endowment gift

If you want to support a cause not listed, call or email President Barry Allen at barry.allen@kybaptist.org or Trust Counsel Laurie Valentine at laurie.valentine@kybaptist.org

- Enter the amount of your gift and the credit card (we accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and Diner's Club)

You can make either a one-time gift or a recurring gift

Why Make A Gift Online?

- Fast, Simple and Convenient
- Safe, Secure and Confidential
- \$25.00 Minimum
- Automatic, Recurring Gift Plan Available
- Immediate Acknowledgement of the Receipt of your Gift



What Is An Endowment Fund?

- A permanent, irrevocable fund established with a gift of cash or capital assets
- Only the earnings will be used to perpetuate and support the work of your favorite charitable cause(s)
- Endowment funds can provide long-term financial strength and stability to your favorite charitable cause(s)

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