



WESTERN RECORDER

January 9, 2007
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Study finds race, conflict impact church growth

Hartford, Conn. (RNS)—Congregations interested in growing weekly attendance would do well to make a plan for recruiting new members, become multi-racial and make sure serious conflict doesn't take root.

That's the message of a recent analysis released by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary. The "Facts on Growth" report, based on data collected in a survey of nearly 900 congregations, found that congregations reporting growth in worship attendance between 2000 and 2005 tended to exhibit certain common attributes.

Multi-racial congregations had a better chance of growing than those predominantly consisting of one racial group. Sixty-one percent of multi-racial congregations said they had experienced growth, while just 31 percent of predominantly Anglo congregations said the same.

But even more important may be whether people in the pews actually get along with one another.

"Whether or not a congregation finds itself in serious conflict is the number one predictor of congregational decline," writes Kirk Hadaway, author of the report.

Additionally, congregations were more likely to grow if they adopted a specific plan for recruiting new members and had changed worship format at one or more services in the past five years.

Campus security

Baptist schools explore ways to enhance safety

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Irvine—The Kentucky community of Irvine, with a population of fewer than 3,000 people, wouldn't appear to be a high security risk.

But after the nationwide wave of fatal school shootings during the past year, security is uppermost in Sherl Thomas' mind.

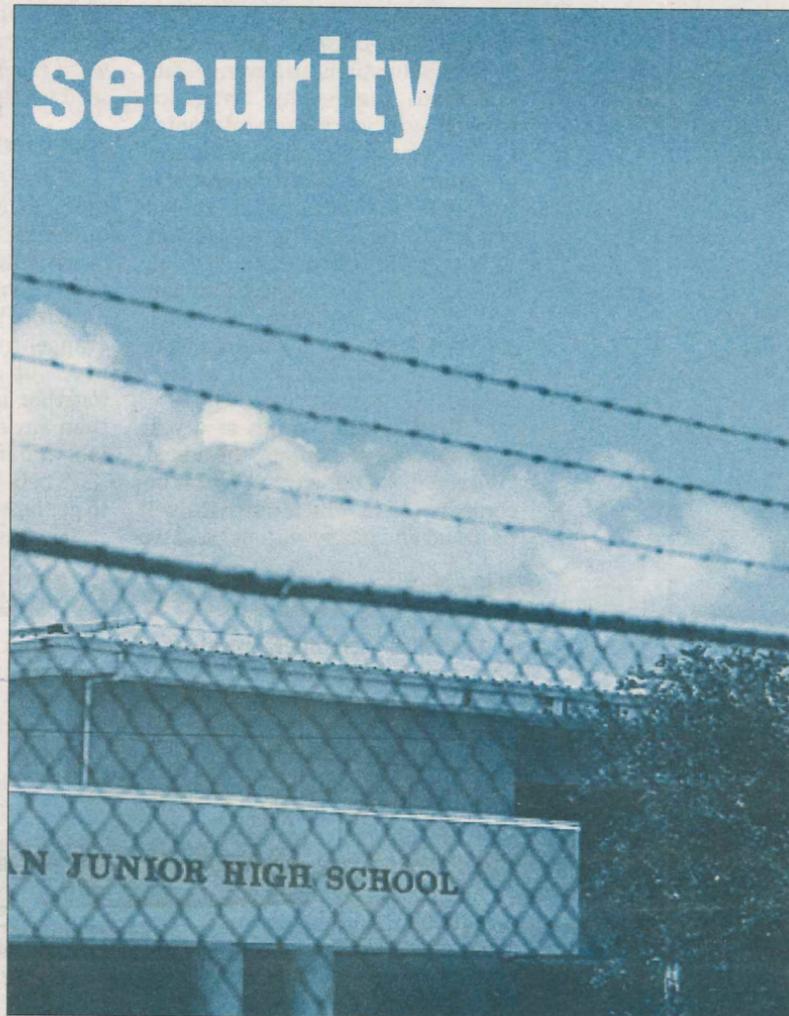
The principal of Emmanuel Baptist Church's elementary school is encouraging men from the church to stop by to lend a more obvious male presence among its 22 students and otherwise all-female staff.

Thomas recently started using a checklist to make sure someone confirms all the doors are locked after students enter the building for classes. The only entry is through a glass door where teachers can easily see visitors.

"We don't let anyone in the building who is unknown," said Thomas, also the pastor of Emmanuel Baptist. "If we have a fire drill and students have to get away from the building, we try to make sure there's nobody in the parking lot or cars that we don't know who they are."

Around the commonwealth, other Kentucky Baptist schools and colleges are taking similar steps to protect students.

In the small town of Louisa, Trinity Christian Academy has gone to a passkey-and-lockdown system to limit access to its building, just across the parking lot from First Baptist



Church of Louisa.

"It may seem to be a knee jerk reaction to the most recent attacks on schools ... but it highlights the obvious—we can and should do more to protect our kids," said Pastor Ric Frazier.

Administrator Denise Dillow said although the school's only security-related problems have stemmed from parental custody disputes, numerous parents have called recently, wanting reassurance their children are safe.

"Someone is always up front to

monitor who's coming in and out and making sure our students are supervised," Dillow noted.

Near Shepherdsville, the doors of Little Flock Christian Academy have been locked for many years, with visitors having to use an intercom to gain admittance.

In addition, any parents who want to transport children or accompany them on field trips must undergo criminal background checks, Principal Cathy Michaels said.

She noted that she also would like
□ See Baptist schools, ... Page 3

Survey details churches' evangelism, community outreach efforts

Phoenix—How involved are U.S. Protestant churches in evangelism and community outreach? What obstacles hold them back from being even more involved?

Those are among issues addressed in a study published in the January/February issue of LifeWay Christian Resources' Facts & Trends magazine. The study, conducted by Ellison Research of Phoenix, is a representative sample of more than 800 Protestant senior pastors nationwide.

Methods of evangelism vary

Ninety-seven percent of churches involved in the survey report doing something specifically for the purposes of evangelism over the last year, but the methods churches are using for evangelism are quite varied. The most common is vacation Bible school, used for evangelism by 70 percent of the churches in the last year.

At least half of the churches sur-

veyed used literature such as tracts or magazines (59 percent), events such as block parties or a Fall Festival (56 percent), musical events or concerts (51 percent), mailings or fliers (50 percent), and nursing home or retirement center visits (49 percent) specifically for the purposes of evangelism.

Other evangelistic efforts include "invite a friend to church" days (42 percent), revivals or crusades (40 percent), evangelism training classes or groups (38 percent), door-to-door visitation within the community (37 percent), community service such as cleanup days (31 percent), online efforts such as blogs or Web sites (27 percent), audiovisual products such as tapes or DVDs (26 percent), and booths at community events such as county fairs (20 percent).

The study found that what churches are doing to evangelize their communities differs by denominational group. Southern Bap-

tist churches are particularly big on using revivals or crusades, literature, evangelism training classes or groups, and door-to-door visitation, but are less likely than average to use any online evangelism.

Evangelicals use array of tools

In general, evangelical churches use a greater variety of evangelistic tools than do mainline Protestant churches. Evangelical churches are considerably more likely to attempt evangelism through literature, revivals or crusades, evangelism training classes or groups and door-to-door visitation, while mainline churches have a greater propensity for doing community service as a form of evangelism.

The survey also explored the kinds of community outreach or programs offered by churches. Only three types of outreach are offered by a majority of U.S. Protestant churches in a typical year: food pan-

try, food collection or other food-oriented donations (73 percent), VBS (68 percent), and holiday food programs such as Christmas or Thanksgiving baskets for underprivileged families (65 percent).

Other types of community outreach offered by churches in the last year include prison ministry (25 percent), homeless outreach (24 percent), Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts (20 percent), blood drives (17 percent), after-school programs for kids (14 percent), sports programs (11 percent) and outreach to specific ethnic groups (11 percent).

Fewer than one out of 10 Protestant churches in the study offer any kind of free or low-cost day care services, abortion or pregnancy counseling, domestic violence programs, English language classes, job skills or job training, or adult literacy or reading classes.

The study found that 46 percent
□ See Survey examines ... Page 10

SBC president urges prayer for revival in '07

Taylor, S.C. (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page is asking Southern Baptists to repent of their "self sufficiency" and plead with God for a spiritual revival during 2007.

He also is calling on the convention to seek reconciliation over divisive issues that distract from the objectives of missions and evangelism.

"Let us confess our arrogance, our self sufficiency, our sinfulness," Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., said in a statement to Baptist Press. "Let us follow the advice of 2 Chronicles 7:14, which says, 'If My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.'

"The year 2007 stands as a year of opportunity before us," he added. "What will we do with it? Will it become a year in which our Lord will be proud and happy with us? Will we

waste our opportunities? I pray that 2007 will be a year of unmissed opportunity, of unmatched passion for the Kingdom of God, and of an unparalleled commitment to missions and evangelism."

The SBC president expressed optimism for the future of the convention, urging Southern Baptists toward reconciliation over issues that tend to divide them.

"Get on with Kingdom work"

"I believe that God's people are more than tired of fighting among ourselves," Page said. "I sense an overwhelming uprising of God's people who say that it is time to get on with the issues of missions and evangelism. While we will not ignore our differences, we must pull together in a cause that is greater than any of our own agendas, opinions and interests.

"I believe that God's people want to get on with Kingdom work."

Page encouraged Southern Bap-

tists to pray earnestly for revival.

"As to a New Year's wish, I ask all Southern Baptists to join in a heartfelt prayer to our Lord for spiritual awakening," he said. "I call on all leaders to incorporate this prayer into their lives and areas of responsibility. I ask all state executives and evangelism directors to make the upcoming evangelism conferences meetings which focus upon prayer for revival."

Page also urged all Woman's Missionary Union leaders, music leaders, Sunday school teachers and discipleship leaders to "beg God for His reviving Holy Spirit" and for all Southern Baptists to seek the hand of God within their ministries, mission work and programs.

Page also expressed appreciation to all Southern Baptists for their prayers for him during the past six months. "I never take this for granted," he said. "I have come to count on the strength that comes from these prayers."

Mohler admitted to ICU to treat blood clots in lungs

Louisville—Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was admitted to the intensive care unit at Baptist Hospital East in Louisville Jan. 5, according to seminary officials.

Mohler, 47, was diagnosed with blood clots in both lungs and his condition was "quite serious," according to a statement posted on his Web site (AlbertMohler.com) the afternoon of Jan. 5. But an update the next day stated that his health "has made a marked improvement."

Mohler, president of Southern Seminary since 1993, was admitted to the hospital Dec. 27 experiencing abdominal pain. He underwent a three-hour surgery to remove scar tissue from a 1980s operation.

A statement on Mohler's Web site Jan. 4 said he "continues to recuper-

ate" from the surgery. But a statement posted on the seminary's Web site Jan. 5 said Mohler's health had "sustained a setback."

"Over the past 36 hours Dr. Mohler has suffered from unrelenting pain," the statement read. "This unusual degree of pain attended concern for the attending physicians and prompted additional tests this afternoon. In the past hour these tests have revealed that Dr. Mohler is suffering from pulmonary emboli in both lungs. His condition is quite serious and he has been moved to the intensive care unit ... for immediate treatment."

Russell Moore, dean of Southern's school of theology, posted a statement on Mohler's Web site the evening of Jan. 5, noting that "while

his situation is still very serious," Mohler was "recuperating well."

"The president is talking and in good spirits," Moore wrote. "Despite his incredible pain and having just lived through the scare of his life, he was actually able to discuss a book I brought to him the other day."

Mohler and his family "still need your prayers," Moore added, "so please don't stop them."

A Jan. 6 update cited "very encouraging news," noting that "over the past 24 hours the Lord has been pleased to answer the prayers of His people and Dr. Mohler's health has made a marked improvement."

While Mohler remains in intensive care, "the attending physicians are pleased with Dr. Mohler's progress and confident the situation is under control."

Compiled from reporting by Baptist Press and Editor Trennis Henderson



Al Mohler

BAPTIST DIGEST

McCalep was racial reconciliation leader.

George McCalep Jr., pastor of Greenforest Community Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., for 27 years and a leader in the Southern Baptist Convention's efforts toward racial reconciliation, died Dec. 23 after a year-long battle with cancer. He was 67. Some of McCalep's greatest achievements came during his tenure as president of the National African American Fellowship of the SBC in 2002 and 2003 when the young fellowship began to grow. "One of the hallmarks, I think, of his administration was the establishment of several more state fellowships, getting people in the grassroots of our convention involved in what's really happening and helping them to find a niche and a place where they could feel a part and feel the pulse of the fellowship and of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Mark Croston Sr., current fellowship president. "His presence will certainly be missed. His shoes will never be filled." McCalep is survived by his wife, Sadie, three sons and five grandchildren.

African Baptist leader Frank Adams dies.

Frank Adams, general secretary of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, died Dec. 27 in Kumasi, Ghana. He previously was the general secretary for the Baptist Convention of

Ghana. He died after several months of battling chronic illness. All Africa Baptist Fellowship, one of the six regional branches of the Baptist World Alliance, includes 53 Baptist bodies, representing 6.6 million Baptists in more than 27,000 churches. Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary, described Adams as "a person of peace" who pursued social justice. He said Adams also had "a vision for encouraging African Baptists to be empowered in leadership and in winning Africa for Christ." Adams is survived by his wife, Selina, two sons and one daughter.

Merritt, Baptist leader in Europe, dies.

John Merritt, general secretary emeritus of the International Baptist Convention, died of cancer Dec. 29. He was 76. Merritt served as a missionary with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board for 34 years. In 1972 he became the general secretary of the European Baptist Convention, an association of English-speaking congregations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It changed its name to the International Baptist Convention in 2003. Merritt, who retired in 1996, was the author of "The Betrayal," a book about the struggle between conservatives and moderates in the Southern Baptist Convention and its impact on Baptists in Eu-

rope. James and Wilma Heflin, who served with the European Baptist Convention from 1996 to 2001, called Merritt a "Christian statesman" who "loved God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength." Merritt is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, two sons and two grandchildren.

Ballard remembered for 'godly wisdom.'

Beverly Ballard, a Southern Baptist North American Mission Board worker who served with her husband, Jim, as a church planting strategist in Eastern Idaho Baptist Association, died Dec. 23 after an accident at her home in Blackfoot, Idaho. Timothy Clark, executive director of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, said Ballard was known for her hard-working commitment and sacrificial service "She was soft-spoken, but when she spoke there was a strong sense of the Lord and godly wisdom in what she had to say," Clark said. The Ballards began serving Eastern Idaho Association in March 2006. Prior to that they served in the same capacity for five years in Color Country and Rainbow Canyon Baptist associations, also affiliated with the Utah-Idaho convention. In addition to her husband, Ballard is survived by five daughters, two sons and seven grandchildren.

City officials hail Baptists' 'Fresh Coat Cleveland'

By Jim Burton
SBC North American Mission Board

Cleveland, Ohio (BP)—It's amazing what a new coat of paint can do for a house.

"A freshly painted house says, 'Look at me. Don't I look good?'" said Louise Jackson, Cleveland Community Development commissioner of Neighborhood Services. "I'm proud to be in this neighborhood."

Jackson joined Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson at a celebration held in the rotunda of City Hall to recognize "Fresh Coat Cleveland," a project of Cleveland Hope, a Southern Baptist partnership initiative of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, the Greater Cleveland Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. NAMB has named Cleveland as one of its 11 Strategic Focus Cities.

For Fresh Coat Cleveland, Cleveland Hope formed a partnership with city officials and corporate leaders to mobilize 665 volunteers to paint the homes of 22 senior citizens.

Noting that many senior adults cannot afford or physically perform the work of painting their homes, Jackson applauded the efforts of Fresh Coat Cleveland, calling it "a good program because it helps that population."

Lora Smith, Cleveland Hope's community impact director, began negotiating with Cleveland's Department of Aging Director Jane Fumich months ago on a plan to mobilize local churches and out-of-town volunteers. The city and vendor Sherwin Williams agreed to provide the paint that allowed volunteers to paint the houses.

Bob Mackey, Cleveland Hope's executive director, called the banquet a "celebration of cooperation" and announced that more than 7,000 volunteer hours were contributed via Fresh Coat Cleveland.

In 2007, Cleveland Hope leaders plan to double the number of families served with the assistance of World Changers, a NAMB student mobilization ministry. World Changers could potentially paint 20 to 25 homes in one week, Mackey said.

Working with volunteers on this level was new to the Cleveland city leaders, Smith said.

"Cleveland is a significant union town. It took a while to build trust," Smith noted. "We kept coming back to them, and met them on their turf."

Once union leaders understood Fresh Coat Cleveland was assisting residents who could not afford their services, they supported the project and even provided some volunteers.

For more information about NAMB's Strategic Focus Cities initiative, visit www.namb.net/sfc.

Baptist schools, colleges explore ways to enhance safety

Continued from page 1

to see a fence around the school's playground. "That's my main concern, because we're outside," Michaels said. "I find you're more open to danger when you are outside."

"Still, if someone wants to get into a building, they will find a way," she added. "There can always be improvements."

"Is there anything else we can do?"

Highview Baptist Church's Whitefield Academy in Louisville began examining security issues more closely after the tragic shootings at Heath High School in West Paducah nearly nine years ago.

Whitefield Academy Headmaster Rob Hensley said the doors have been locked for about six years. A magnetic keypad and card readers restrict access. Video surveillance equipment also is in place, with a secretary pressing a buzzer to admit visitors.

"Nothing changed," Hensley said of security measures after the recent shootings. "What it did do was cause us to pause and (ask), 'Is there anything else we can do? If this happened to us, would we be covered?'"

Officials lament security risks

Pineville—The fact that even schools in rural communities have to be extremely security-conscious troubles many Kentucky Baptist educators.

Sherl Thomas, principle of Emmanuel Baptist Church's elementary school, recalled that in his childhood days, Pineville's churches were always open to allow access for prayer or quiet Bible study.

"It's troubling it can't be that way today, but it can't," Thomas said.

Bill Whittaker, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, agrees the situation is unfortunate but calls it symptomatic of modern American culture.

He laments how entertain-

ment and the media often glorify violence or call so much attention to it that it encourages "copycats" to act.

"Still, we have to go on with our life," Whittaker said. "We live in a fallen world."

While joking that it would be great if everyone could live in Mayberry and never lock their doors, Rob Hensley, headmaster of Whitefield Academy in Louisville, said that mythical TV town doesn't match modern reality.

"Even locked doors are only good to a certain point," Hensley noted. "If a criminal has intent and the methods, your home is compromised. It's the same with any school in the nation." *Ken Walker*

Although it hosts thousands of volunteers annually, the Kentucky Baptist boarding school has a gate at one end and keeps a close watch on the road into campus from the other end.

"We're a close-knit community," Stockton said of the 500 students and staff members. "We are in the mindset that we would rather be proactive than reactive. We find the emergency management plans we have in place allow us to be prepared."

Security is more challenging on

college campuses with their multiple buildings and more open environment.

Still, officials at Kentucky Baptist colleges say they maintain security patrols and often lock dormitories and class buildings at night.

At Campbellsville University, a resident assistant is on duty in dorm lobbies from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m., when the doors are locked and only residents can enter.

Dave Walters, vice president for administration and student services, said most class buildings are locked at night.

Providing a safe environment

Security officers now patrol by zones to enable them to become familiar with the areas they cover.

"We do our best to try to protect our students and provide a safe environment for them," Walters said.

"We have a strict policy regarding weapons," he added. "I've had people tell me years ago students kept guns in residence halls because they might be interested in hunting. It's a different time now. We simply can't allow that."

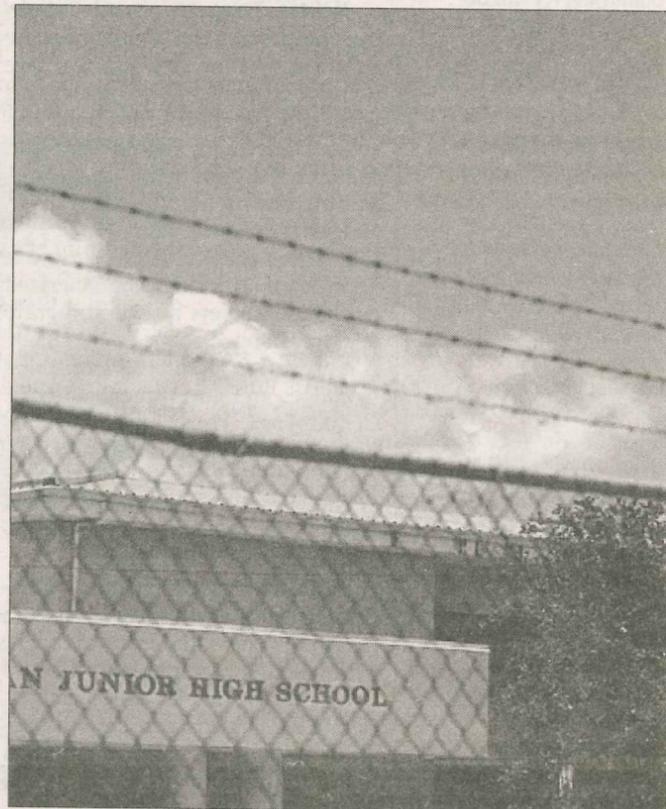
The University of the Cumberland in Williamsburg is even stricter, locking dormitories at 11 p.m. After that, students must be admitted by a member of the security office, according to Kyle Gilbert, vice president of support services.

The university recently added a second shift so it has security personnel patrolling the grounds from 4 p.m. to 7 a.m. as well as additional lighting.

"We have our campus lit up like a Christmas tree at night," Gilbert said. "If there were any trees or shrubs that were overgrown and hid doors, we removed them."

Although Georgetown College hasn't changed any security measures lately, its associate vice president for institutional advancement said it evaluates policies annually.

"By its nature, our campus is open to the extent that people come and go all the time," noted Jim Allison. "Our campus security staff



is diligent about keeping an eye on what's going on.

"We have tightly secured residence halls," Allison said, noting that keys are required for entrance. "And our security staff offers an escort service any time a student asks for it—if a student would be uneasy about walking the campus at night."

Although Clear Creek Baptist Bible College has only 205 students, President Bill Whittaker said it isn't immune from security concerns.

Alarms are turned on its classroom buildings at a certain hour each day and the college has improved lighting around buildings and its two residence dorms, he said.

Because the school is located in a rural area near Cumberland Mountain, students are permitted to keep rifles for hunting. However, Whittaker added, on-campus guns must be kept inside, locked up and not loaded.

Barkers among featured missionaries in '07 NAMB Week of Prayer

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—Bill Barker, director of Appalachian Regional Ministries, and his wife, Arlene, are among missionaries who will be featured in this year's Week of Prayer for North American Missions.

Eight missionaries or missionary couples who serve with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board are selected each year to represent the work of 5,300 missionaries across the United States and Canada. The work of the missionaries featured in 2007 includes starting new churches, leading community ministries, serving as associational missionaries, evangelizing cross-culturally and ministering in resort settings.

The 2007 Week of Prayer missionaries are:

Bill and Arlene Barker who coordinate mobilization of volunteers to the Appalachian region of the United States. Appalachian Regional Ministries is headquartered with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Thira and Montira Siengskun of

Missouri, who direct the Lao School of Ministry. Thira's ministry involves equipping Lao-culture pastors and church leaders, many of whom are first-generation Christians who lack biblical knowledge and background.

Gary and Joyce Irby of Washington, who supervise Anglo church planting for the Seattle area. Gary assists in identifying church planters and locations for new church starts and helps train and encourage church planters.

Diana and John Lewis of Arkansas, who serve in ministry evangelism. Diana assists churches in identifying and developing community ministries and also plans and implements statewide Mississippi River Ministry projects.

Ken and Cindy Wilson of Michigan, who serve in associational missions. As associational missionary for Northland Baptist Association, Ken's vision is to encourage and equip Baptists to make a Kingdom impact in Michigan.

Leroy and Carolyn Fountain, for-

merly of Texas, who served in church planting. Though the Week of Prayer emphasis focuses on Leroy's work in Texas, he recently has joined the staff of the North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga. In his previous role in Texas and now nationwide, Leroy helps identify, assess and train church planters and works to match them with sponsoring churches.

Anatoliy and Natasha Odnoralov of Colorado, who serve in church planting. Anatoliy plants churches among Russian-speaking people in the Denver area and also uses English as a Second Language classes as a method of evangelism.

Jeff and Thea Ford of Alabama, who direct resort ministries for Baldwin Baptist Association. Jeff's ministries include campground chaplaincy, worship services for RV parks, outreach to "snowbirds," disaster relief, beach evangelism and coordinating summer missionaries and mission team volunteers.

To assist Southern Baptist

churches, a free promotion packet highlighting this year's "Change Your World" theme will be mailed to every church by mid-January. Week of Prayer missionaries are featured throughout the packet, in video segments on a DVD (VHS available on request), in a daily prayer guide and on missionary prayer cards available for purchase.

The North American Missions Emphasis includes three aspects:

■ The annual Week of Prayer, March 4-11, when churches are asked to focus on praying for the eight missionaries and their areas of service.

■ The North American Mission Study, designed to involve all age groups in a study of the "Change Your World" theme and spark a desire to make a difference in North America.

■ The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, which supports more than 5,300 North American missionaries and their ministries. The 2007 goal is \$57 million, 100 percent of which is used for missionary support.



Bill and Arlene Barker

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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

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

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

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Two distinct lives, two different legacies

By Trey Graham

Melissa, Texas (BP)—While following the news, I could not miss the contrasts. Within a week, we have witnessed the deaths of two leaders with two completely different legacies. These men, Gerald Ford and Saddam Hussein, were as different as the languages they spoke and the nations they ruled.

Saddam Hussein, characterized by most observers as evil and ruthless, was hanged at age 69 in a Baghdad execution chamber surrounded by judges and government officials. Gerald Ford, considered by many Americans to be humble and gracious, died in his California home at the age of 93 surrounded by his loving wife, Betty, and other family members.

Saddam Hussein ruled a country with military might, having no regard for the value of human life, while living an extravagant lifestyle and believing he was above the law. Gerald Ford ruled a country with humility because his country called on him to help restore the dignity of the law and the office he occupied.

Ford humbly gained power in 1974 through an orderly, constitutional transition when his predecessor resigned in disgrace. Hussein brazenly gained power in 1979, years after participating in multiple coup attempts, and refused ever to relinquish that power.

Hussein was hanged because he broke the law, having been found guilty of crimes against humanity for ordering the killing of 148 innocent Shiite people in the city of Du-jail, Iraq. Ford, who studied, loved and followed the law, died of old age with the enduring legacy of having graciously pardoned his predecessor, Richard Nixon, for breaking the law.

Ford spent 29 months as the president of the United States; Hussein spent 24 years as the president of Iraq. In Ford's short time in office, he demonstrated forgiveness, determination and grace. In Hussein's decades in office, he demonstrated hatred, paranoia and complete disregard for human life.

The character of these two leaders can be contrasted by reading what other prominent American political leaders said about them. President Jimmy Carter called Ford, his one-time political opponent, "one of the most admirable public servants and human beings I have ever known." President George W. Bush described Ford as a man of "complete integrity."

Concerning Saddam Hussein's execution, Bush said Hussein received "the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime." Sen. Edward Kennedy, not exactly a political ally of Bush, called Hussein a "brutal tyrant."

COMMENTARY

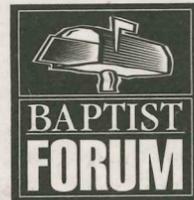
The Trinity matters

Recently I was appalled when a ministerial association, commenting on a draft of their statement of beliefs, quipped: "We have been careful to keep the 'T' word out, so as not to offend anyone."

When I asked what the "T" word was, I was informed that it was the Trinity!

At the National Quartet Convention last fall, I personally perused a book recently written. In it, one of

the chapters was titled, "101 Reasons Why Jesus Is Not God!" I feared the roof would cave in at any minute.



Let us reaffirm our Trinitarian belief—casual prayers and "old buddy" theology will not help in a world that already has a distorted view of Jesus.

"Jesus, we just want to love on You a little bit" may feel good and sound good, but is it biblically correct? What has happened to the model prayer: "Our Father, Who art in heaven. ...?"

Celebrating Christmas with family

Christmas was a very special time for my wife, Kay, and me as we enjoyed an extended visit with our family. Our daughters, Anonda and Beth, and their families joined us for five days at our home.

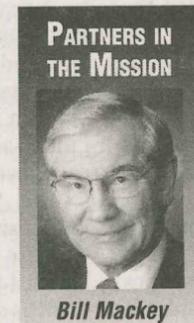
Beth and Bartley and their three children, Lilly, 6; Mack, 3; and Nate, 9 months, celebrated Christmas with Bartley's family Christmas morning in Charlotte and arrived in Louisville late that night. Anonda and A.J. Nepa had arrived with their sons, Will, 4; and Zack, 2, late Christmas Eve.

The Mackey celebration of Christmas was delayed one day but it was a wonderful day. The grandchildren resumed the tradition, started by our daughters when they were young, of the children leading a Christmas program.

Lilly took the lead role by quoting verses from Luke 2:9-12 and singing a song. Will provided a song and

Granddad led a prayer.

It took time to open the gifts. This was the first Christmas for Nate and he took it in stride.



Bill Mackey

Another meaningful tradition has been to share dinner with family friends. This year was no exception. Kay enlisted Will and Lilly to assist in making a birthday cake for Jesus.

We did not get a white Christmas. In fact, it was so warm that the fathers took the children to E.P. "Tom" Sawyer State Park on two days.

A memorable outing to visit a display of 15 electric trains was so captivating that the boys did not want to leave. Debbie Bannon, a ministry assistant in our office, arranged for the boys to experience the village display of electric trains owned by her husband, John.

Due to the small children and mothers expecting, Kay and I had traveled to their homes for the past two years. It was very special to us

The obituary of Ford contains comments about pardons and negotiations and athletic prowess and a 58-year marriage to his beloved wife. The obituary of Hussein contains comments about mass murders and death squads and profligate living while his people suffered terrible poverty.

The former Iraqi leader was buried in a plain grave in a rural location with a glaring absence of glory, befitting a common criminal. The former American leader was buried with honor at his presidential library in Michigan following a memorial service filled with pomp and circumstance.

How will Saddam Hussein be remembered? In short, most of his countrymen are happy that he is dead. Our world is a safer place because this tyrant received his proper punishment.

How will Gerald Ford be remembered? In short, most of his countrymen are sad that he is dead. This humble, unassuming statesman has left behind a legacy of grace and dignity.

What about you and me? Have our lives been used for personal gain or community blessing? Have we forgiven our enemies or lined our pockets? At our deaths, will our neighbors remember our sacrificial service or our arrogant extravagances?

Trey Graham, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Melissa, Texas, is the author of "Lessons for the Journey" and "Light for the Journey"

We must only assume a context of spiritual confusion in America today.

A proper view of the Trinity is not only historically correct, but also spiritually necessary—for salvation first and then, speaking the truth in love, to confront the false teachings of the day.

G. Campbell Morgan said, "We are not to capture the spirit of the age, but to correct it." May God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, enable us to do just that.

*Robert P. Tipton
Lebanon Junction*

for the grandchildren to experience Christmas at our home.

It also was meaningful for our daughters to have this opportunity to be daughters again as well as mothers. They enjoyed doing things with Kay while the guys kept the children.

Also, the couples had opportunities for evenings out which is rare for them. It was a time for the sons-in-law to relax and be with their children for five days.

As meaningful as Christmas was as a family time, however, its real meaning came in the fact that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. He wants everyone to know the life-transforming power of His gift.

And because of this gift from God of His Son, it also was special to be able to share God's love with all people through gifts to the Lotie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Cooperative Program, as well as through special gifts to Kentucky Baptist Convention causes.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

New year offers opportunity to be better stewards

By Doug Strader

We have just begun the new year of 2007. Many people make New Year's resolutions in an attempt to do some things better in the future than they did in the past.

The beginning of a new year also is a good time to make resolutions about one's relationship with God and His church. As I look back at the year just completed, I can find many areas of my Christian life that could be improved upon. The whole area of stewardship would be a good place for all of us to begin our quest for the new year.

In the book of Genesis, we read about the creation of everything including mankind. After God created Adam and Eve, He told them that they were to subdue the earth and to have dominion over everything that had been created. Along with that dominion, man was to be accountable to God for the way he used the creation. Therefore, we are accountable to God as stewards of all that He has made. As we begin 2007, let us stop and think about how well we are doing in being accountable to God for everything He has given us.

■ First of all, we should think about our life that God has given us. God has given each of us a physical body and we are accountable to Him for how we take care of our bodies. Among other things, that would include what we put into our bodies, how much rest we get each night, and how we keep our bodies physically fit through exercise and recreation.

■ We are accountable to God for the way we use the time He gives us. Each person has 24 hours a day to spend. We should ask ourselves how we are spending our time. Are we using our time in a way that shows we are good stewards of each day we are given?

■ We also are accountable to God for the way we use the resources He entrusts with us. Do we give at least a tithe (10 percent) of all of our income to God? If the answer is "no," this would be a great time to resolve to become a tither this year.

Of course, this is not a complete list, but it is a good place to begin to resolve to be more accountable as a steward of all that God has given us.

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



Colossians can help families pursue healthy, helpful roles

Q: Instead of focusing on problems with our teenagers, what can we do to create a healthier family in 2007?

Colossians 3:18-21 provides excellent guidance for husbands, wives, children and parents. Here is a brief outline with some practical application:

Wives will respect their husband's leadership (3:18).

MARRIAGE Teenagers need to see a woman who shows her husband respect and empowers him to be the leader that God desires him to be. Wives should endeavor to support their husbands and pay attention to meeting their needs. According to Willard Harley in "His Needs, Her Needs," a husband's greatest needs are sexual fulfillment, recreational companionship, an attractive spouse, domestic support and admiration.

Husbands will love their wives (3:19).

A strong, healthy relationship is created in a family where the husband takes on the role of lover, leader, provider and protector. This strong, yet gentle man seeks God daily and endeavors to meet his wife's needs which, according to Harley, are affection, conversation, trust, financial security and family commitment.

Children will honor their parents (3:20). Children honor their parents best when they are obedient. If obedience is truly God's love language, then perhaps teens express this obedience through various means that Gary Chapman describes in "The Five Love Languages" as quality time, gifts, acts of service, touch and words of affirmation.

Parents will encourage their children (3:21). Encouraging children involves carefully balancing rules and relationships. Parents should prioritize spending time with their children and being sure that they handle frustration and conflict with godly wisdom. Love and forgiveness should be the keynotes in the home.—*Scott Wigginton*

Q: As we seek to support our children's various extracurricular activities, what kind of fans do kids need their parents to be?

Chris Collinsworth played in two Super Bowls during his eight-year NFL career as a wide receiver for the Cincinnati Bengals. The father of four, Collinsworth now works as an award-winning commentator for NBC, HBO and the NFL network. He recently wrote a one-page article for Sports Illustrated about the support kids need from parents.

Collinsworth begins by remembering some advice given to him by his father-in-law. "Take your golf clubs and stick them in the closet. They'll still be good by the time your last kid goes off to college." The point of the story? As a parent, your children should be your No. 1 priority. You should give your wholehearted support to whatever they are doing or are interested in.

"That is why I try to be a professional fan," Collinsworth wrote. "I'll cheer for anything. I'll cheer for a dancer or a piano player. I even cheer for the cheerleaders!" Collinsworth said he tries hard not to push his children in any particular direction or force-feed them his agenda for their lives. Instead, he encourages them to find their passion and pursue it with all of their energy. Despite a heavy work travel schedule, Collinsworth noted that he tries to be home as much as possible to be with his kids and cheer them on in their various pursuits. He said he believes his children feel his joy and attention, and feed off it.

Children need this kind of fan and parent—someone who believes in them and encourages them in every way. Everything else, including golf, can wait.—*David Garrard*

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Good Samaritans 2007: Go and do likewise

From the national farewell to President Gerald Ford to the execution of Saddam Hussein, the final days of 2006 and the opening days of 2007 have been filled with major news about well-known public figures.

But common, everyday folks with virtually no previous name recognition—such as Wesley Autrey and Julio Gonzales—also have made news headlines in recent days.

Autrey is the New York construction worker who jumped onto a subway track in front of an oncoming train to rescue a young man who fell onto the tracks while suffering a seizure.

Autrey dived atop 18-year-old Cameron Hollopeter and pushed him into a shallow drainage gutter between the rails, according to news reports. The two men were unharmed as the train passed over them with a mere two inches to spare.

Hailed as a hero by spectators, Autrey told the New York Times, "I don't feel like I did something spectacular; I just saw someone who needed help. I did what I felt was right."

Fellow New Yorkers Julio Gonzales and Pedro Nevarez also were honored as heroes for rescuing 3-year-old Timothy Addo who fell from a fourth-story fire escape.

The youngster crawled out a window onto the fire escape while his babysitter wasn't looking, according to police. Hearing neighbors in the building scream for help, Nevarez and Gonzales said they rushed over to position themselves under the fire escape.

"He was hanging on for dear life," Gonzales told reporters.

When Addo fell, he hit Nevarez in the chest so hard that he knocked him off balance, but the boy bounced into Gonzalez' waiting arms.

Reflecting on their life-saving rescue, Nevarez said, "No one came. We knew it was up to us."

According to Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, "This is the week of heroes in New York."

The selfless actions of Autrey, Gonzales and Nevarez stand in sharp contrast to the stereotypical view of New Yorkers as disinterested or uninvolved bystanders. Their simple, straightforward responses—"I did what

I felt was right" and "We knew it was up to us"—add to the aura of their heroic efforts.

The three men's actions mirror the attitude reflected in Jesus' well-known parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. Just as the Samaritan put himself in harm's way to stop and aid a stranger along a dangerous stretch of road, the New York heroes risked their safety to help people in need.

Comparing the Samaritan's actions to those of the disinterested, uninvolved priest and Levite, Jesus asked His listeners, "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the rob-

bers' hands?"

The lawyer Jesus was addressing responded, "The one who showed mercy toward him."

But that wasn't the end of the lesson Jesus was teaching that day. The primary focus of the parable comes into play in verse 37 when Jesus replies, "Go and do likewise."

The spirit of Jesus' teaching is reiterated in Matthew 25:31-45, when He declares, "I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." When did such ministry occur? According to Christ, "To the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me."

The world tends to label people who respond in such ways as heroes; the church knows them as Good Samaritans. Whether New Yorkers or Kentuckians, the start of a new year is an ideal time to make a fresh commitment to "go and do likewise" among friends, neighbors and strangers throughout 2007.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Lessons learned for a new year

It continues to amaze me how much faster the years go by now compared to when I was a child. Then it seemed like an eternity between one year and the next. Now it seems as if they just zoom right past. 2007 is already here and I just got used to writing 2006 on my checks.

In the midst of the hectic pace of this time of year, I actually learned a couple of things. Go figure.

Friendships are to be celebrated. It is customary in the youth ministry network in Hopkinsville that

when one of the youth ministers moves to a different place of ministry, he and his wife are taken to dinner by the other network members and their spouses. Gina and I had the privilege of returning to Hopkinsville last month. We had dinner with old friends, swapped stories and celebrated times together in ministry and life.

Networking is not all about doing ministry on a grander scale but about impacting and being impacted by fellow ministers God puts around us. Ministry is hard. Let's embrace those around us so we can help each other on our journeys.

One of my favorite Scripture passages is in John 21. Jesus had just told the disciples to "cast their nets on the right side" and they caught more fish than their nets could hold. They rushed to shore with their nets

full of fish and there on the beach is Jesus. Breakfast was ready and Jesus invited them to breakfast around the campfire. Wow! I can just imagine these friends around the campfire and the stories they told.

Families are to be cherished. I love getting Christmas newsletters from family and friends. I love to know what happened to them in the past year, seeing pictures of the kids and pets and being regaled with stories of how great and smart and athletic their children are. Children

grow up way too fast, and as parents and youth workers we only get so long to impart the truths of Scripture and openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit in them.

A September 2005 article from ABC News confirmed what many of us already know: that families play a vital role in the development of teens, specially family dinnertime. "A regular family dinner may yield some surprising benefits for teens," the article said. "According to a new Columbia University survey, teenagers who eat with their families at least five times a week are more likely to get better grades in school and much less likely to have substance abuse problems." It also found that "teens having family dinners five or more times a week were 42 percent less likely to drink alcohol, 59 percent less likely to smoke cigarettes,

and 66 percent less likely to try marijuana."

I know that with the responsibilities of youth ministry that often take several nights a week and with one's own kids being in band and Scouts and baseball and gymnastics that this seems like a daunting task. But if this time together is vital, then let's make it work. Dinner might have to be at 4:30 one day and 8:30 the next, but it can work.

Finances are to be calculated. I know it seems easy to buy what you want now and make 1,000 payments to pay it off. But it behooves each of us to get and keep our finances in order. Mismanaging our finances could hamper us from following a call of God.

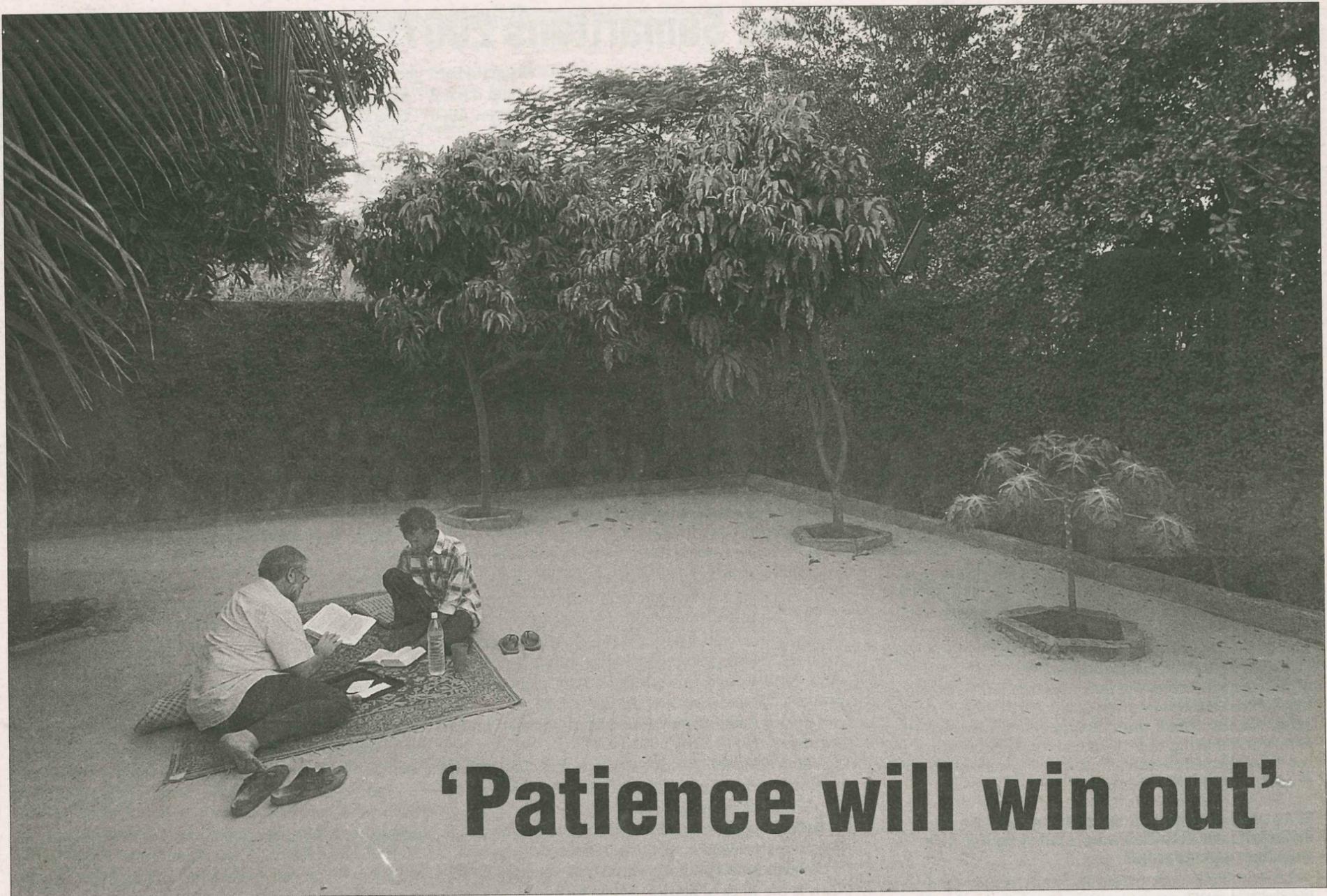
Mission boards cannot send missionaries who are over their heads in debt. Churches do not need staff members who cannot or will not pay their bills; it is a terrible reflection on the congregation and on ministry as a whole. The reality is that church budgets get cut, spouses lose jobs, kids need shoes for school and the transmission will go out in the car. It is easy to complain that we don't get paid enough money. But other than athletes and movie stars, who does? I listen to too many youth workers who are trying to scrape by and make it to pay day. Let us do a better job of tending to our finances so we have more resources with which to minister.

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

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball



'Patience will win out'

LEARNING A courtyard in Niamey, Niger, serves as a peaceful place for missionary Warren Hessling to lead a Bible study with a Tuareg man. (IMB photos)

As nomads' way of life changes, door opens to share gospel

By Lauri Arnold
SBC International Mission Board

Niger, West Africa—In Niger's desert sands, the Tuareg people still live in the nomadic lifestyle of their ancestors, still survive where water and food increasingly are scarce, and still practice the Islamic faith passed down to them. The Tuareg also search for hope, as their way of life is progressively threatened each day.

The Tuareg have long lived off land they don't own, possessing it only as long as they live on it. Years of drought have killed their animals and left them wondering how much longer they can survive without seeking jobs in the city.

"The way of life that is historically (Tuareg) doesn't look like it will exist another decade," said Warren Hessling, who, with his wife, Sharon, serves as the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's strategy coordinator for the Tuareg people.

Sharon recalls how a woman in a Tuareg village said she feared her family would "die out here like camels" if they didn't get more food. Many Tuareg already have journeyed to cities to find work, but their shepherding trade doesn't translate into city life. Their city people are as guardians for other people's homes.

Warren estimates roughly 10 percent of "city" Tuareg are employed, adding to their burden of taking care of the extended family. Even in the city, Tuareg remain nomadic—moving about every two years, but never owning the land. They remain large-

ly poor.

"They live in empty areas of the city, so as soon as a building moves into that area, they have to move out, because they don't own any property," Hessling said.

The Tuareg's pride of their nomadic heritage is not lost among those moving to the city, especially among older ones who hang tightly to the one thing they believe can last: their Islamic faith. However, younger city-dwelling Tuareg don't share the heritage of their ancestors, creating an open door for the gospel.

"The family themselves persecute that person," Hessling said of young Tuareg interested in other faiths. "They drive them off. They beat them. They won't give them food."

Tuareg rely heavily on their family to support them through tough times, especially in the city where loss of job could mean loss of life without family support.

Hessling notes one 50-year-old man in the city who demands great respect. "I've had a couple of young men who are interested (in the gospel)," Hessling said, "but they call him 'uncle' or 'great uncle' and cannot come here to study the Bible with me because they fear him."

Sharon notes that while some Tuareg men show interest in studying the Bible, most women do not.

"Women are fairly resistant. Also, they always have young children and they're cooking or taking care of the children," she said. "There are constant interruptions as far as getting

into deep, one-on-one discussions.

"A lot of the groundwork has to be laid," Sharon added. "An average Muslim believer takes five to eight years to become a Christian from when they first come in contact with a Christian, because it is so completely foreign to them."

The Hesslings hope a strategy called "Sahel Hope" will help Tuareg hear the true message of Jesus Christ. The plan pairs volunteer missionary skills with job training for Tuareg.

A consistent barrier to Tuareg coming to Christ has been fear of being separated from their fami-

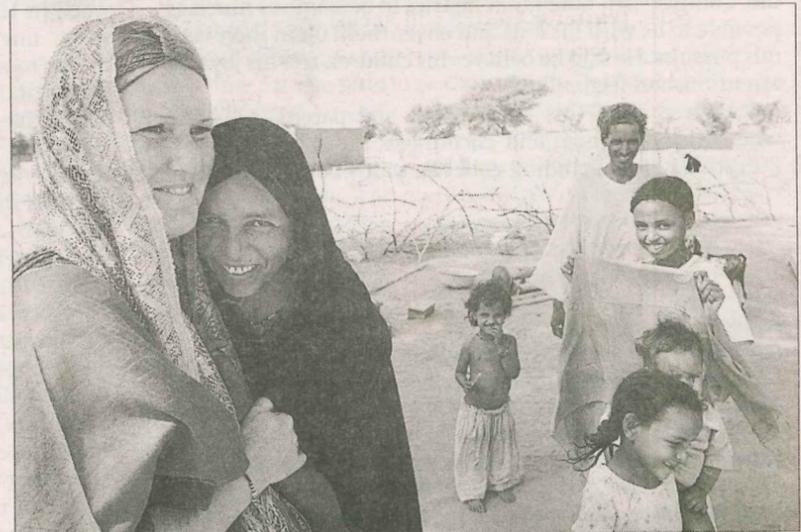
lies and their financial support. "We can't plant self-sustaining churches if 80 percent of the people in the church are going to be unemployed," Sharon said.

The Hesslings said they dream of a time when no outside help will be needed to take the gospel message to all Tuareg. Perhaps that dream is not so far off. In one village, a new believer is known by the name "Paul" for the boldness with which he shares his faith.

"His testimony is a tough one but he is trusting in God," Hessling said. "He says 'just patience, patience will win out.'"



EARNING A Tuareg woman uses a knife to create a pattern on a piece of leather. As part of the ministry, missionaries Warren and Sharon Hessling operate the program, Sahel Hope, designed to equip Tuareg with practical job skills.



CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS Sharon Hessling and her husband, Warren, are missionaries to the nomadic Tuareg people group of Niger. The name "Tuareg" means "the forsaken of God." According to the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, there are fewer than 200 known Christian believers among the 1.4 million Tuareg people.

Vatican officials unearth tomb; could contain Paul's remains

Rome (BP)—Archaeologists with the Vatican say they have unearthed a sarcophagus that may contain the remains of the Apostle Paul.

The eight-foot coffin was found buried under the main altar of St. Paul Outside the Walls basilica in Rome and dates to at least A.D. 390. It has not yet been opened, and may not be for some time. Tradition had long held that the coffin was somewhere on the site.

News of the sarcophagus' discovery was announced in 2005, although archaeologists had to do considerable work to unearth it. Vatican officials held a press conference in December to announce its excavation.

"For now we didn't open the sarcophagus to study the contents. Our aim was to unearth the coffin venerated as St. Paul's tomb, not to authenticate the remains," Giorgio Filippi, the archaeologist of the Vatican Museum, said, according to National Geographic News. "The sarcophagus was buried beneath the main altar, under a marble tombstone bearing the Latin words 'Paulo Apostolo Mart.', which means 'Apostle Paul, Martyr.'"

The basilica "rises on the place where, according to tradition, Paul of Tarsus was originally buried after his martyrdom," Filippi said.

X-rays likely won't penetrate the



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE Vatican archaeologists believe the remains of the Apostle Paul may be contained in this sarcophagus at the basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome. (Photo by Patrick Hertzog/Getty Images)

marble coffin, another Vatican official told the Associated Press.

Eusebius, a church historian who lived around A.D. 300, wrote that Paul was beheaded in Rome under Emperor Nero.

"While the possible discovery of the sarcophagus of the Apostle Paul is of great interest to the Christian world, it will be impossible to prove that the bones possibly contained in the box are his," Philip Roberts, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, told Baptist Press. "As Baptists we relish historical research related to Christianity. But we do not venerate relics. Therefore any interest we have in this possible discovery will be relegated to its historical but not its spiritual implications."

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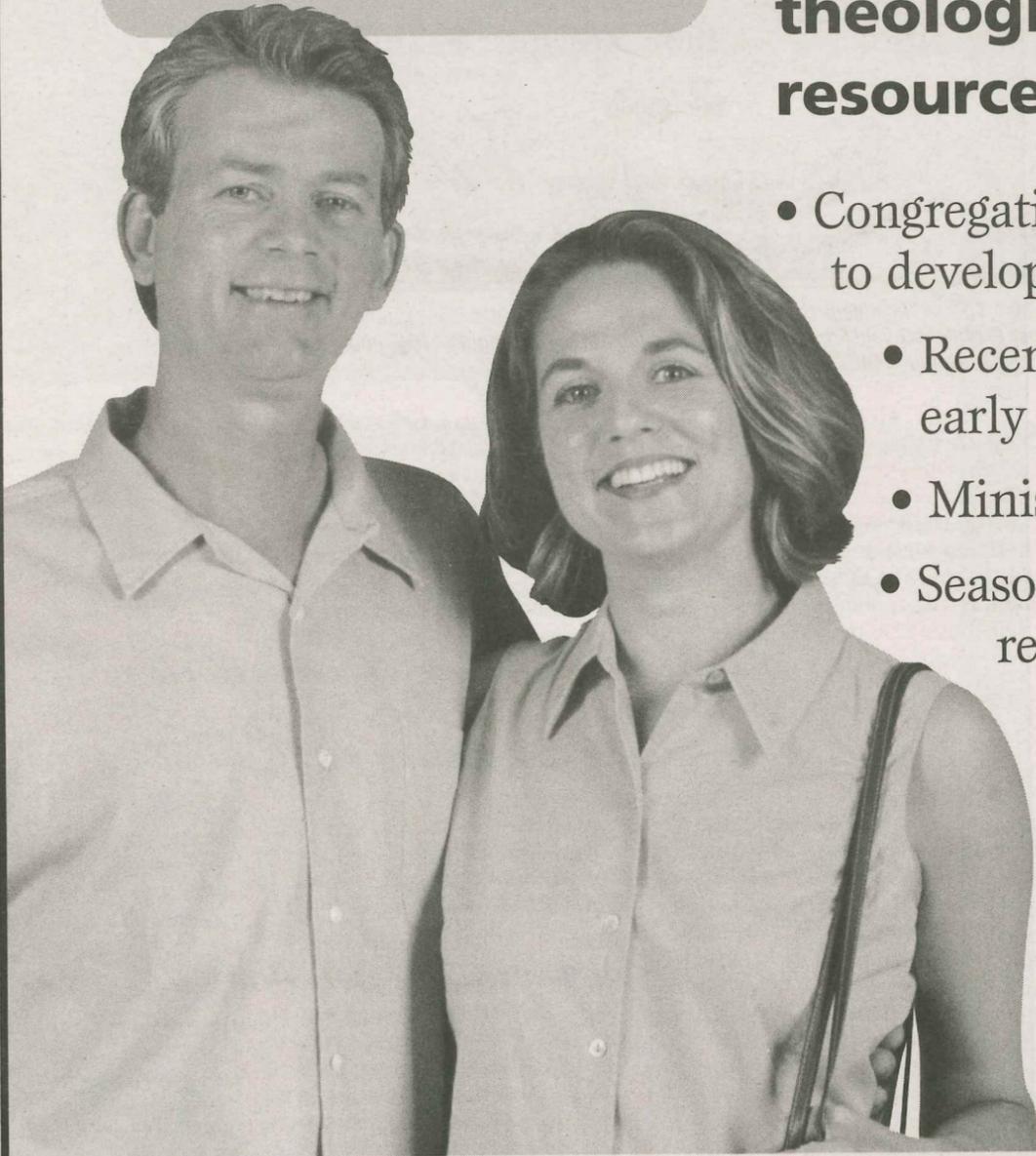
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National Cathedral hosts President Ford's state funeral

Washington—The Washington National Cathedral, which hosted a funeral service for former President Gerald Ford Jan. 2, was built as a “house of prayer for all people.”

With its mix of sacred and patriotic imagery, music and pageantry, the National Cathedral is the closest thing America has to a national church, scholars say.

During the state funeral, Ford was hailed for providing integrity and stability at a tumultuous time in American history.

The service at the National Cathedral came near the close of six days of mourning following Ford's death Dec. 26. Ford, 93, was best known for his effort to restore confidence in government and the presidency when he became president after the 1974 resignation of President Richard Nixon under the threat of impeachment. A month later, Ford pardoned Nixon for any crimes committed during the Watergate crisis.

President George W. Bush commended Ford's character and leadership, traits he said brought “calm and healing to one of the most divisive moments in our nation's history.”

“Gerald Ford was a rock of stability,” Bush added. “And when he put his hand on his family Bible to take the presidential oath of office, he brought grace to a moment of great doubt.”

Bush's father, former President George H.W. Bush, praised Ford's honesty.

“To political ally and adversary alike, Jerry Ford's word was always good,” the elder Bush said. “As Americans, we generally eschew notions of the indispensable man, and yet, during those traumatic times, few if any of our public leaders could have stepped into the breach and rekindled our national faith as did President Gerald R. Ford.”

State funerals for three presidents (Ford, Dwight Eisenhower

and Ronald Reagan) have been held at the National Cathedral. Memorial services for seven more presidents were held there, and Woodrow Wilson was buried there.

“Given the lack of any Westminster Abbey, the National Cathedral is by default serving in that role,” said Jo Bailey Wells, a professor and director of Anglican studies at Duke Divinity School.

Established by a congressional charter in 1893, the cathedral has hosted ceremonies marking America's highest achievements and most devastating losses—from Martin Luther King's final Sunday sermon to an interfaith memorial service following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

At the same time, the cathedral is distinctly Episcopal—its official name is the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, it is the seat of the Episcopal bishop of Washington and it holds daily Episcopal worship services.

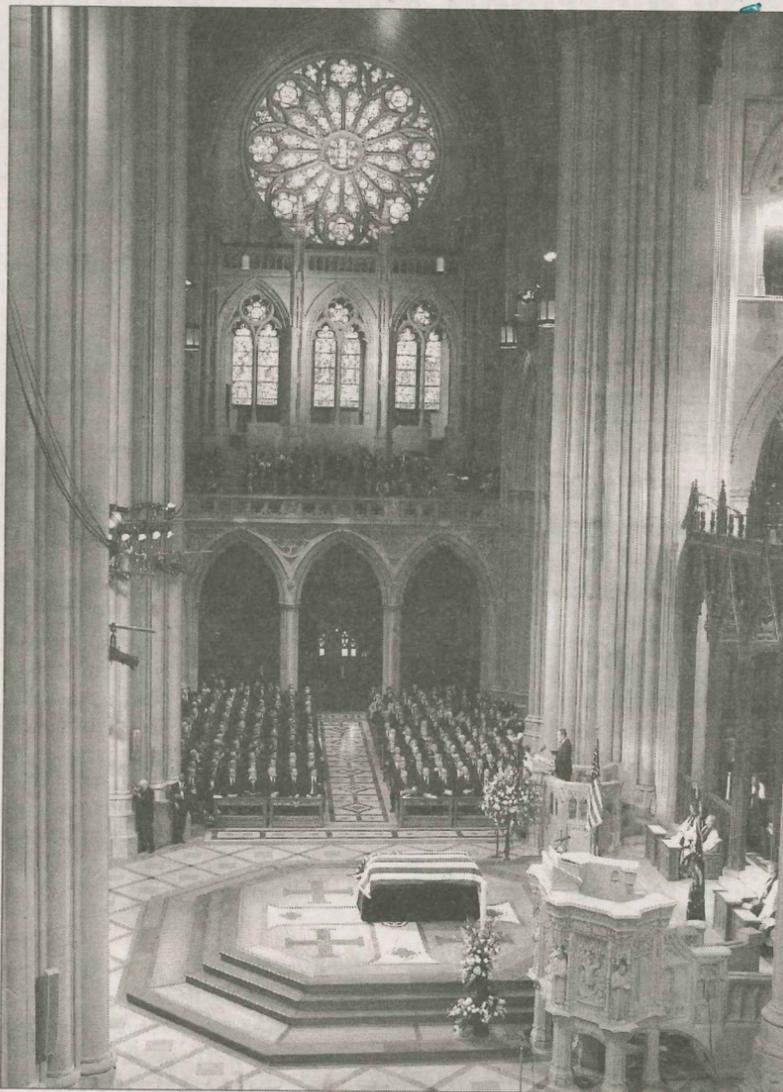
“It's a paradoxical thing,” said retired Washington Episcopal Bishop Jane Holmes Dixon. “It is an Episcopal church, the seat of the presiding bishop, but it's also understood to be a house of prayer for all people.”

By its charter, the National Cathedral is required to open its doors to any event the mayor of Washington or U.S. president may want to hold there, Dixon said.

“The bishops through these 100 years have been intent on seeing that it remained open to people of all faiths or to people of no faith,” Dixon said.

Flags of all 50 states hang in the nave of the Gothic cathedral, and images of sacred figures sit next to statues of secular heroes such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The sun shines through stained-glass renderings of solar systems and Old Testament patriarchs alike.

Some experts said the cathedral's use in significant public events such



EULOGY Former President George H.W. Bush speaks during the Jan. 2 funeral of former President Gerald Ford at the National Cathedral in Washington. (RNS photo by Rex Larsen/Grand Rapids Press)

as presidential memorial services recalls earlier times in U.S. history, when Episcopalians—now relatively small in number and torn by internal divisions—dominated politics, business and social life.

“I'd say that the Episcopal establishment is a mere shadow of its former self—but a shadow still reflect-

ed in the prominence of places like the Washington Cathedral,” said David Hein, a religion and philosophy professor at Hood College in Frederick, Md., who co-authored a book on the history of the Episcopal Church.

Compiled from reporting by Religion News Service and Baptist Press

Hussein's execution adds to ongoing debate over capital punishment

By Gregory Tomlin
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—The execution of Saddam Hussein was deserved, but handled improperly, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told Baptist Press Jan. 2.

“Simple justice demanded Saddam Hussein be found guilty by his countrymen and executed in the manner that befits such a war criminal, by hanging rather than a firing squad,” Land said. “The justice that demanded his execution, however, was cheapened by the less-than-dignified manner in which the execution was carried out.”

The former Iraqi dictator was executed in Baghdad Dec. 30, reportedly being taunted by those who carried out the sentence. Hussein exchanged insults with the men and quoted the Muslim confession of faith, “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger,” before being hanged.

Land noted that “despots around the world who are so dismissive of other human beings' lives will now have to take into account the fact that there is the very real possibility that they will be held accountable for their crimes against human-

ity and also will be dealt with justly and swiftly.”

European countries in large measure condemned the execution as “uncivilized,” with their leaders saying the act would lead to further violence. Officials in Britain, the United States' strongest ally in Iraq, said the execution showed that Iraq was moving toward democracy and the rule of law. They said they did not support the death penalty, however, under any circumstances.

That same sentiment was expressed by the Vatican and several other religious groups. Cardinal Renato Martino, Pope Benedict XVI's lead clergyman on justice-related issues, said Hussein's execution punished a “crime with another crime.”

“The death penalty is not a natural death,” Martino said. “And no one can give death, not even the state.”

Rule of law governs process

But a Southern Baptist ethicist said the Iraqi people had the right to execute Hussein with a process governed by the rule of law. “Romans 13, where the Apostle Paul wrote that God has instituted human government to restrain evil, allows for capital punishment. And Paul was

writing this about a government hostile to Christianity,” said Craig Mitchell, professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

“God has given the state the authority and power to carry out punishment,” Mitchell added. “He has given them the sword. You don't spread butter with the sword. The sword is used to kill. This execution was something that was long overdue. Saddam Hussein did deserve a trial. The rule of law did have to be carried out. And while we shouldn't rejoice that a man is dead, we should rejoice that justice was served for the Iraqi people who suffered under Saddam Hussein's boot for nearly three decades.”

Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, meanwhile, issued a statement encouraging Iraqi leaders to build a heritage of “reconciliation and mutual respect among all its communities” following the execution.

“At the death of Saddam Hussein, our thoughts and prayers go out to the people of Iraq. We pray to God to grant this suffering nation the mercy, justice and compassion that it has long deserved,” Kobia

said. “That a leader has been held responsible for his crimes is significant. However, the World Council of Churches is opposed to the death penalty. Each taking of a person's life is part of a larger tragedy and nowhere is this more apparent than in a land of daily killings.”

Carefully apply capital punishment

Leith Anderson, interim president of the National Association of Evangelicals, told Baptist Press the government that executed Hussein had acted within its rights, even though he personally opposes the practice.

“Governments and people need to make judgments; they need to make decisions,” he said. “I hope capital punishment is used only in the clearest cases and with the most careful of applications.”

Hussein was convicted in an Iraqi court of ordering the deaths of 148 Shiite villagers in Dujail in 1982 after a failed assassination attempt there. He also was on trial for other massacres that took place during his near-25-year rule.

President Bush said following the execution that Hussein had received a fair trial, “the kind of justice he denied the victims of his brutal regime.”

Poll: One in four say Jesus' return likely in 2007

New York (RNS)—Twenty-five percent of Americans believe it is at least somewhat likely that Jesus Christ will return to Earth in 2007, according to a poll from the Associated Press and AOL News shows.

The poll, conducted by the international polling firm Ipsos, looked at the public's predictions about what will occur in 2007.

Pollsters found that 11 percent of those surveyed said it is "very likely" that Jesus will return to Earth this year. An additional 14 percent said it is "somewhat likely."

Twenty-five percent of those polled said it was "not too likely," compared to 42 percent who said it was "not at all likely." Eight percent said they did not know or were not sure.

While a quarter of Americans polled said it is at least somewhat likely that Jesus will return to Earth this year, views about the topic varied depending on religious persuasion, the AP reported.

For example, 46 percent of white evangelical Christians believe it's at least somewhat likely that Jesus will return this year, while 17 percent of Catholics and 10 percent of those with no religion feel the same way.

The poll, conducted Dec. 12-14, was based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults from the continental U.S.

Mass. legislators vote to send gay marriage ban to '08 ballot

Boston (ABP)—A week after the state's highest court chided them for not acting sooner, Massachusetts legislators approved a proposed state constitutional amendment Jan. 2 that would ban same-sex marriage in the only state that currently allows it.

On the last day of their legislative session, 62 lawmakers voted in favor of advancing the amendment, while 134 ultimately voted against it. The procedural step required only 50 votes in the state's 200-member legislature to put the measure on the statewide ballot.

Action requires second vote

The legislators' vote must be repeated in the upcoming 2007-08 session, with newly elected lawmakers, in order for the ban to appear on the 2008 statewide ballot. The amendment would prohibit future same-sex marriages while upholding the 8,000 that already have taken place.

In 2004, Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ordered the change, ruling that the commonwealth's constitution requires that gay couples have the same right to marriage as heterosexual couples.

Gay-marriage opponents have been seeking to get a state constitutional amendment to overturn the ruling ever since. They collected approximately 170,000 signatures in a petition drive to get the current amendment on the ballot. But reluctant lawmakers repeatedly adjourned special legislative sessions without voting on the proposal. Had they done so again before adjourning for the final time Jan. 2, the amendment could not have made it onto the ballot in 2008.

Opponents of same-sex marriage, including outgoing Republican Gov. Mitt Romney, sued to force a vote on

the amendment. The same court that ordered gay marriage ruled Dec. 27 that lawmakers' responsibility to vote on the amendment was "beyond serious debate" but that the court had no power to force them to do so.

Most Massachusetts gay-rights supporters have defended legislative leaders' decisions to adjourn without voting on the amendment, claiming that civil rights protections for minorities should not be left up to a popular vote.

Conservative religious groups, meanwhile, have argued that voters and not the courts should determine if Massachusetts should have same-sex marriage.

Romney released a statement Jan. 2 calling the legislature's successful vote on the amendment "a huge victory for the people of Massachusetts."

But gay-rights advocates criticized the vote. Democrat Deval Patrick, Massachusetts' newly elected governor, is a supporter of gay marriage who lobbied legislators to vote against the amendment. He has promised to fight it in the next legislative session.

Hard-fought battle expected

Recent polls have found a majority of Massachusetts voters in favor of legal gay marriage. But both opponents and supporters of the practice anticipate a hard-fought battle over the amendment, should it make its way onto the 2008 ballot. It is likely to attract money and attention from across the country as a sort of national proxy referendum on gay marriage.

Voters in 26 states have passed state constitutional amendments banning gay marriage, most in the past six years. Only one state—Arizona—has seen its voters reject a similar amendment.

Survey examines congregations' evangelism and outreach efforts

Continued from page 1

of Methodist churches have some sort of homeless outreach, compared to just 10 percent of Southern Baptist churches.

While evangelical churches offer a greater variety of evangelism programs and efforts, mainline churches are offering a wider variety of community programs that don't necessarily involve evangelism. Mainline churches as a group are more likely than evangelical churches to have food donations, holiday food programs, VBS, homeless outreach, blood drives, Scouting and domestic violence programs. Evangelical churches are more likely to offer abortion or pregnancy counseling and sports programs, although still relatively few offer either of those.

The study also delved into pastors' reasons for their churches not being more involved in community outreach. Problems common to at least half of all churches in the survey include lacking sufficient volunteers (58 percent), staff (56 percent), lay leaders (52 percent) and funds (50 percent).

Other significant obstacles cited by ministers are that there is not enough time to do everything (41 percent), lack of sufficient facilities (31 percent), the congregation is mostly older adults (26 percent), and the church is located in a small town or rural area (25 percent).

Community efforts aren't priority

Additionally, 39 percent indicated they are not highly interested in offering more programs for the community, noting that:

- They would rather focus on spiritual needs than on physical needs.

- Community programs are not a major priority for their congregation.

- Their community has no major needs.

- Other organizations do these things better than they do.

- Their congregation or community really isn't interested in community outreach.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, said he found it ironic that so many churches and pastors put a low priority on doing more to reach out to their community.

"In an environment where communities and people have so many needs, and in which church growth is such a hot topic and a stated goal for so many pastors, it seems odd that so many churches really don't wish to do more," Sellers noted. "If churches are not consistently reaching outside their own walls, how are they to grow?"

Sellers added that while churches frequently cite a lack of staff, facilities, people and/or money as reasons for not being more involved in the community, increasing those resources doesn't necessarily lead to greater involvement.

"In smaller churches, you often hear about limitations, and how things can be 'once we grow,'" Sellers said. "But pastors in larger churches—which usually have more staff, more funds, larger facilities, and obviously more potential volunteers and lay leaders—still commonly name the lack of these resources as obstacles to being more involved in the community. ... Having more resources at your disposal apparently doesn't mean these obstacles are significantly reduced or removed."

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On September 14, 2007 join your Spiritual Director, Baptist Minister Dr. Clarence Freeman on this 15-day vacation including a 7-day deluxe Alaska Cruise with Holland America Line and a 7-day Pacific Northwest vacation with Your Man Tours. Daily Devotions will be made available for those in the group who wish to participate. Your group will fly into Seattle for a night before a scenic motor coach drive to Vancouver where you'll board the five-star ms Zuiderdam.

Next, travel through a wondrous maze of forested island and glacier carved fjords, past charming coastal villages, migrating whales and calving glaciers to Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and spectacular Glacier Bay.

After the cruise you'll start a six-night motor coach tour with daily sightseeing visiting British Columbia; the Cascade Mountains; Washington; the Grand Coulee Dam; Lake Coeur d'Alene; Montana; Yellowstone (Old Faithful) and Grand Teton National Parks; Jackson Hole, Wyoming; and in Utah: the Great Salt Lake, Mormon Tabernacle, and more. You'll fly home after a night in Salt Lake City. *Prices for this 15-day vacation start at only \$1399 (per person, double occupancy) plus \$349 port charges, taxes, services, government fees and the new Alaska state visitor's tax. Add \$550 airfare from Lexington or Louisville, KY; Nashville or Knoxville, TN.

\$100 deposits are now due. Friends and family are welcome.

For information, reservations, brochure, and Dr. Freeman's letter call:

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What does the Bible say about AIDS?
What is the role of the church in ministering to individuals with HIV/AIDS?

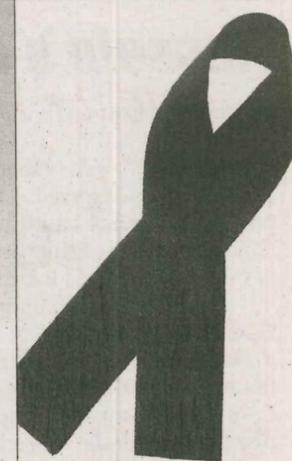
If these are your questions, join us for this 6-week interactive online study.

Ted Lewis, facilitator, is a pastor and HIV/AIDS counselor who has been involved in HIV ministry for over 20 years. Ted served as a workshop facilitator at the 2006 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship HIV/AIDS Summit in Atlanta, GA.

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Registration: \$100 per course (Scholarships are available to cover 50% of registration fees)

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Ministry highlights

Crossings at Cedarmore among 'firsts' during 2006

As a new year gets under way, people typically take time to reflect on some high points of the past year. I would like to share a few of my personal highs for 2006.

Most significantly for the Melber household was that Maritess and Jonathan, our 8- and 7-year-olds, both accepted Christ as Savior. These decisions made our family compete in the fact that all four of our children have personal relationships with Christ.

Tera and I celebrated our 15th year of marriage during 2006 and I am reminded and thankful for the great blessing of a godly and supportive wife. I simply could not imagine what life would be like without her.

Our ministry recorded many firsts this year, more than I could share in this article so I will touch on just two.

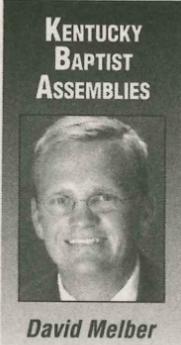
The first was the launch of Crossings at Cedarmore—a story that has been some eight years in the making since Kentucky Baptist Assemblies came into existence. I am thankful for so many people who have contributed to the reality of this and for the many spiritu-

al decisions that were made at Cedarmore this summer.

The second highlight for our ministry was simply the changes we are going through. While most changes are painful in one way or another, God has blessed us by bringing many new partners to serve alongside us for our future. As with most blessings, I am humbled by what God does. Quite honestly, why He does choose to bless our efforts in spite of many shortcomings is amazing.

In life, I am personally blessed by a great wife and kids and on top of that, I get to serve with what I consider to be some of the greatest staff and as a whole the best staff one could possibly hope for—a very rare blessing. Work is ministry, and it is fun and very rewarding—what a combination.

Take time to be thankful for what God has given. We will all realize that we have much more than we deserve.



David Melber

David Melber is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. Contact him at Box 99918, Louisville, KY 42069-0918; phone (502) 491-7000.

Kudzu

Doug Marlette



For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Cheryl Keiser

Across

- 1 Religious leaders of Jesus' day (Matthew 23:2)
- 7 Jesus is called the ____ of man
- 10 Philadelphia's state, abbr.
- 11 Barnabas was this (Acts 4:36)
- 13 Heavy work shoe
- 15 Abigail, for short, alt. spelling
- 16 Girl, Scot.
- 17 Eclipse, abbr.
- 19 Interior, abbr.
- 20 Nahor's concubine (Genesis 22:24)
- 22 Belonging to America's spy agency, abbr.
- 24 National Guard, abbr.
- 26 Do, ____, mi
- 27 Doctor who delivers babies, abbr.

1		2	3		4		5	6		7	8	9
			10					11		12		
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38	39	40		41								
42								43	44		45	46
47					48			49				
50										51		

- 42 Written composition
- 43 Put in writing, var. spelling
- 47 Jiphtah and ____ (Joshua 15:43)
- 49 Great arteries
- 50 "Which stilleth the noise of the ____" (Psalm 65:7)
- 51 Long, narrow fish
- 8 Off Track Betting, abbr.
- 9 "Love his ____ as himself" (Mark 12:33)
- 12 Regards as precious
- 14 Like a frog
- 18 Breakfast food
- 21 Account of, abbr.
- 23 Religious education, abbr.
- 25 Area of Israel that adjoins the Sinai Peninsula

Down

- 1 Matthew the ____ (Matthew 10:3)
- 2 One who renounces his faith
- 3 "All our righteousnesses are as filthy ____" (Isaiah 64:6)
- 4 "We had the ____ of death in ourselves" (2 Corinthians 1:9)
- 5 "Rebuke not an ____" (1 Timothy 5:1)
- 6 Compass point
- 7 A brother or sister, for short
- 32 And, Lat.
- 33 Pertaining to the mind
- 34 Extends across
- 36 Jesus is called the ____ of life (John 6:48)
- 37 French spelling of Andrew
- 38 Pod dwellers
- 39 To be, Lat.
- 40 Occupational Safety and Health Agency, abbr.
- 41 Linear Yard Area, abbr.
- 44 Negative
- 45 Resident or follower, suffix
- 46 Curved shape
- 48 Laughter sound

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55																																																																	
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Isn't there something ...

... that can help folks know what to do with those new 20-dollar bills they're getting?

You're holding it.

Every week, the Western Recorder's Financial Forum column provides practical ideas for applying biblical truths about personal and church finance. Whether the topic is tithing, church budgets or personal debt, our panel of experts has the experience and insights to help your members learn and apply sound financial concepts.



Diverse groups urge long-term relief for Iraqi Christians

By Ken Walker
Baptist Press

Washington (BP)—Several groups are calling for improved treatment of Christians in Iraq, whom they say are being martyred, persecuted or forced to flee the country in order to survive.

Julia Sorisho Rodgers of Christians for Assyrians of Iraq said among the atrocities are the bombing of more than 15 churches, the kidnapping and murder of 13 Assyrian women in Baghdad in August, and the beheading of a priest in Mosul in October.

"A lot of people in Washington don't know who the Assyrians are," said Rodgers, who organized a rally last month outside the White House to protest the treatment of Assyrians, who include Christians, Catholics and Orthodox Church members.

"It's highly personal for me because so many of my relatives (are) there," added Rodgers, a Chicago native whose parents emigrated from Iraq. "They're suffering from violence, lack of jobs and persecution. We're being isolated for our faith."

Refugee status sought

In addition to petitions circulating on the Internet, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has urged granting refugee status to persecuted believers in Iraq.

In November, the USCIRF wrote to Paula Dobriansky, under secretary of state for democracy and global affairs, urging her to expand refugee options for the ChaldoAssyrian and Sabeian Mandeian communities.

It also asked Dobriansky to urge the United Nations High Commis-

sioner for Refugees to resume full refugee status for Iraqi asylum seekers and speedily assess claims.

In a letter of response, Dobriansky said the government is concerned about Iraqi refugees' plight.

She pointed out the government has funded the International Catholic Migration Conference to provide emergency financial, material and social service assistance to refugees in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

In addition, Dobriansky said the U.S. has strongly urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to accelerate the pace of its refugee status determination screenings and to refer Iraqis who need resettlement.

"The U.S. will provide funding to key UNHCR offices in the region to enhance their capacity to process such referrals and has received assurances from these offices that they will begin immediately to make referrals," Dobriansky wrote.

However, the deputy director for policy at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom doesn't interpret the letter as offering any commitments to grant refugee status.

"While the letter suggests the agency has promised to start doing that, we haven't seen that happen yet," Tad Stahnke told Baptist Press.

It is fair to say the U.S. government has done something about the situation by providing funds to the UNHCR, Stahnke said, but other issues the agency raised have yet to be addressed.

But concern for Iraqi Christians extends beyond refugee status. At least two groups have started electronic petitions calling for special

protection of religious minorities.

Christians for Assyrians of Iraq started its petition in mid-November. The Canadian-based Council of Assyrian Research and Development has also posted a petition online.

Speaking up for innocent victims

USCIRF Commissioner Nina Shea said these Christians are caught between supporters of the war in Iraq who don't want to acknowledge there are problems and those against the war who shun discussions of human rights.

In the middle are numerous innocent victims, said Shea, who recently briefed the Iraq Study Group about human rights conditions there.

"They are being bludgeoned by the Islamic extremists," said Shea, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and director of the Center for Religious Freedom. "Their priests have

been beheaded, churches bombed and there's a recent report of a crucifixion of a teenage boy.

"The United Nations refugee report has determined they are being targeted for their faith. Although they represent about 4 percent of the population, they represent 40 percent of the refugee population from Iraq."

The author of a 2004 report on human rights abuses, Shea said Iraq is undergoing the kind of Islamization that has existed for years in Saudi Arabia.

Although historically Iraq has been a pluralistic society, she said extremists are pushing to enforce Islamic law.

While Rodgers supports granting refugee status to those who want it, she said CAI is more interested in a long-term solution that would enable Christians to stay in Iraq.

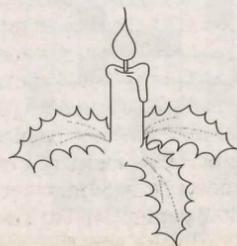
At this time of the year we would like to thank the many wonderful friends who have visited our campus in 2006.

We also have a great depth of gratitude for those who have supported us throughout this past year and have made our ministry financially possible.

Thank you also to the multitude of volunteers who have helped us with so many long-term and short-term projects.

We look forward to being a ministry you can be proud of in 2007.

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



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Affirming our values

Endowment campaign surpasses halfway mark

Last year, trustees approved a \$1.2 million "Affirming Our Values—Leaving a Legacy" capital campaign. At the end of the year, we surpassed the halfway mark of the campaign, and expect to reach this base goal by the May 4 graduation.

The campaign includes two endowments that support our curriculum. The Dale and Millie Rose Evangelism Endowment will help support evangelism education, and to send student and faculty evangelism teams to the mission field. Dale is a 1989 alumnus and evangelist from Monticello.

Jim and Angelena Sears of Woodbine made an estate commitment to underwrite a general studies endowment and student scholarship for preachers. The general studies support will strengthen our teaching within a Christian worldview. This endowment remembers their daughter, Donna Beth, a biology teacher who died of cancer when she was 40.

The major portion of this campaign is the beginning of a student "workshop" endowment. We pray that this \$1 million dollar base will grow to the largest portion of the college endowment. We em-

ploy about 65 students and spouses through campus jobs, at an annual cost of about \$500,000. Most of these jobs pay minimum wage, but provide crucial income for student families. We have reached \$615,000 of the "workshop" endowment goal.

One of our goals sought 500 individuals, churches, businesses or organizations to give at least \$1,000; thus far, 115 have responded. The Kentucky Baptist Convention has approved this appeal to the churches. Many churches could give \$1,000, others even more.

As a way to inform members about our unique mission, consider scheduling a "Clear Creek Day" in your church. Call our College Relations Office to plan student testimonies, special music and other activities for this special event.

These goals are small compared to our institutional efforts. Every Kentucky Baptist needs to affirm biblical values and leave a legacy for Christ. You can do that with Clear Creek.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

'Black Hawk Down' soldier faces fear with faith in God

By Ken Walker
Baptist Press

Columbus, Ga. (BP)—After facing death on several foreign battlefields, Jeff Struecker has overcome the fear of his own demise, not to mention less pressing concerns like financial difficulties or the childhood nightmares that followed his parents' divorce.

Still, he battles uncertainties, and at the top of the list is the possibility of a seventh trip to the war-torn Middle East. Struecker dreads the possibility that his wife, Dawn, could be left alone to raise their five children, ages 4 to 12.

The former Army Ranger and central figure in the hit book and movie "Black Hawk Down" is OK with admitting that fear.

"This is sad if you think about it, but there's an overwhelming philosophy in (U.S.) culture that you just don't show fear," said Struecker, author of a new book titled "The Road to Unafraid."

"I think that's a mistake. People in other cultures readily display their fears, but they go on with life anyway," he said. "In our culture we tend to repress the fact that we are afraid."

Now a military chaplain serving at Fort Benning, Ga., Struecker hopes his book will help readers—especially Christians—learn how to overcome the fears that he says are a part of everyone's life.

People fear the unknown

Whether in military or civilian life, Struecker, a member of Fairview Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga., said people generally are afraid of the unknown. Ultimately, that revolves around fear of what might happen in the future, whether with personal relationships, career decisions or finances, he said. Such trepidations, and the unwillingness to admit their existence, propelled the writing of "The Road to Unafraid."

Although he and his wife started writing it prior to his 1998 enrollment at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, after 100 pages it sat on the shelf for more than eight years.

But when an editor with a division of Thomas Nelson Publishers approached him about writing a book that would use his experiences to help people overcome fear, he felt inspired to resume.

Struecker said he and co-author Dean Merrill "felt like the whole book was earning the right to say what we said in the last chapter," which culminates Struecker's tales of life-threatening combat experiences with an in-depth look at the topic of fear.

"The last chapter takes a very different tone and in some cases takes a hard right turn. It went through many different edits before it was approved," he said. "We smashed through the rest of the

book but we both firmly believed we wanted the last chapter to be very pastoral."

Men are the worst when it comes to admitting fear, Struecker said, and that may stem from their upbringing and the cultural messages that showing fear equals weakness.

He argues it is the opposite, pointing to Paul's request that God remove his thorn in the flesh. When God refused, He said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9), Struecker noted.

"Fear is healthy for us, just like pain is healthy," he added.

"Pain tells you, 'This is not a good situation.' Fear also tells us, 'This is not a good situation' and to repress it is unhealthy."

Struecker accepted Christ at age 13, and it was a decision that helped end his youthful nightmares. He said his faith was the first step to overcoming fear. Another step was confessing it to a chaplain during a 1993 deployment to Somalia, when Struecker thought he would die.

In a scene from chapter 1 of his book, when a soldier tells him he doesn't want to return to a dangerous area to rescue stranded soldiers, Struecker replies, "The difference between being a coward and a hero is not whether you're scared or not. It's what you do while you're scared."

That confession helped him the next day, when he would look soldiers in the eye and say, "I'm afraid just like you are, but I'm going to do my job," Struecker recalled.

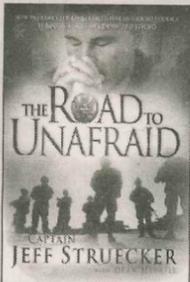
The first way he suggests overcoming fears is casting them on God, which Struecker relates to trusting in God's sovereignty. Whether in combat with bullets whizzing overhead, potential financial crises or a medical emergency with their oldest child, Struecker said it helped to remember he wasn't in control of any of those situations.

God "has my best in mind"

"I also believe God is good and He has my best in mind," Struecker noted. "He is still good and He is using these circumstances to grow me, to mold me and to make me into the man He wants me to be."

Confessing such fears is best done in a small group where people can share problems or misgivings and enlist prayer support, he suggested.

"I don't know anybody who has reached a level of spiritual maturity they are comfortable with who hasn't been involved in a small group or mentored along the way," Struecker said. "In my opinion, anyone who just shows up (for church) on Sunday morning and leaves is not as spiritually mature as they should be or could be."



The Starbucks Experience: 5 Principles for Turning Ordinary into Extraordinary. Joseph A. Michelli. McGraw Hill Co., 2007. 200 pages. \$21.95. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

The very mention of the name "Starbucks" brings certain pictures to mind. Most often, those images and experiences are positive and refreshing.

How does that happen when the product the company sells can be bought in any convenience store for less than a dollar a cup? How does a company leap onto the scene as one of the best companies to work for in America in just a few years?

Author Joseph Michelli has taken his business experience and written a detailed book on the inner workings of the Starbucks conglomerate. The five principles are the core values that each employee, manager and associate must learn and adhere to in order to make the experience memorable for each customer.

"The Starbucks Experience" is a book on business and not a church-related book. But the principles to make church the third-place experience is really what church environments are all about. How to make the church a place that meets needs of people and the place where they want to go is central to what the church is about.

The five principles Starbucks adheres to sounds like the principles from a church growth book. They are "be welcoming, be genuine, be knowledgeable, be considerate and be involved." Churches should be welcoming to all comers, genuinely love and care for those who come, knowledgeable of what the church has to offer, considerate of one another and involved in people's lives.

The church should be "driven by passion for the product, people, experience and community." These words are aimed at the business world, but shouldn't the church also lead the way in working in the community and reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

The book notes that various business leaders go to Starbucks to learn how they do things so that they also can reach their market with better customer service.

While the church is not really a business per se, the fact that there is a market that needs the product it has to offer shouldn't be ignored. Any church leadership team would

benefit by reading this book, reviewing their church operation and evaluating where they are in their plans to reach the community and minister to one another. Steve Coleman

The Real Mary: Why Evangelical Christians Can Embrace the Mother of Jesus. Scot McKnight. Paraclete Press, 2007. 176 pages. \$19.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

For Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Anglican Protestants, Mary the Mother of Jesus plays a central role in the ongoing drama of salvation. For evangelical Protestants, she is little more than a bit player. Scot McKnight, professor of religious studies at North Park University, believes the time has come for evangelicals to reassess our disregard for Mary.

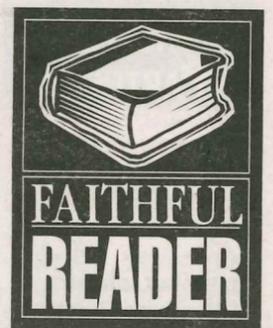
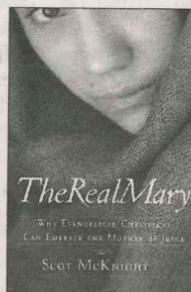
To help us, as well as Catholics, Orthodox and Anglicans, gain a deeper appreciation for Mary, McKnight offers a look at Mary that goes beyond the traditional view of Roman Catholics as well as the evangelical stereotype of that view: "The real Mary always leads us to Jesus. When we discover the real Mary, the one who lived in first-century Galilee with Joseph, who I believe nurtured other children, and who struggled at time with herself, we also discover someone we can embrace because Mary embraced her Son as we are called to do. When you find the real Mary of Scripture, the Mary of the

first century, you'll discover that she'll be talking about Jesus and pointing us all to Jesus."

McKnight paints a picture of Mary who is not a passive figure in the drama of Jesus' birth, life and death. Rather, she is a vibrant woman of faith, who is more than willing to be used by God. Like the disciples, she is prone to misunderstanding God's purpose for her Son. However, at critical points she becomes a pivotal witness to God's redemptive plan, such as at the foot of the cross and as first witness to the resurrection. McKnight also points out that Mary is the source for our knowledge of the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke.

McKnight's perspective on this often controversial character in Christian history deserves to be read and discussed in evangelical circles. The book is highly readable and accessible, so it would be a good resource for a book discussion circle. Jim Holladay

♦♦♦♦♦



By Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; and Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: lyndonpastor@aol.com; rissen4me@hotmail.com.

TV intolerant of religion, study finds

New York (RNS)—Network television in America is moderately tolerant of spirituality and openly hostile to organized religion, according to a study by a conservative media watchdog group.

The Parents Television Council said Fox led the six commercial networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB and UPN—in anti-religious references during prime time in the study period of September 2005 to August 2006. (WB and UPN merged into the new CW network in September.) Nearly half (49.7 percent) of Fox's religious mentions were negative, the study said. It was followed closely by

NBC (39.3 percent) and UPN (35.4 percent).

Comedies such as Fox's "The Family Guy" were the biggest offenders, but the phenomenon was more widespread, the report said. ABC's "Boston Legal" and CBS' "C.S.I.," for example, "viciously caricature religious individuals and beliefs and put diatribes against religion into the mouths of their lead characters," a statement by the group said.

Nearly two-thirds of references to faith were delivered in a positive light, but nearly half of the depictions of laity and religious institutions were negative.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist ministries and missionaries.

Prayer box ministry of Mouthcard Baptist Church. Mouthcard Church has placed a prayer box in the local grocery store and invites shoppers to write down their prayer requests and concerns and place them in the box. The prayer cards are collected each week and church members pray for the shared concerns. Pray that the community will see the reality of Christ as they experience answers to their prayer requests. Pray also that church members will commit more fully to a life of personal and corporate prayer.

Mission Service Corps Missionary Jeremy Robinson of Bowling Green. Robinson serves as an assistant to the campus minister at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. He provides leadership by equipping, training and shepherding student leaders in evangelism, discipleship and missions. Pray that student leaders will be bold in their witness of Christ on this campus of more than 18,000 students. Pray for Robinson as he seeks to develop an outreach strategy with the Greek organizations on campus.

If you would like Kentucky Baptists to join in praying for a ministry of your church or association, please send the information to Eric Allen at Eric.Allen@kybaptist.org or call (866) 489-3530.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **AUGUSTA**—First Church ordained its pastor, **Tony Bishop**, to the gospel ministry Dec. 10.

■ **BARDSTOWN**—Mill Creek Church recently called **Matt McBee** as minister of music.

■ **BEREA**—Galilee Church recently called **Mike Hetrick** as pastor.

■ **EAST BERNSTADT**—First Church recently called **Chad Rogers** as associate pastor. **David Hawkins** is pastor.

■ **HEIDRICK**—**Tony Merida**, whose home church is Highland Park Church, recently received the doctor of philosophy in preaching degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—Second Church recently called **Larry Purcell** as pastor.

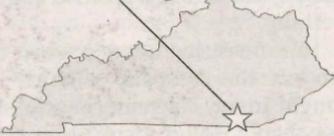
■ **LEXINGTON**—Right to Life of Central Kentucky will host a "Vigil for Life" prayer service Jan. 19, 8:30 p.m., in front of the District Court building in Lexington to mark the 34th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—The Christian Business and Professional Women organization will host a luncheon at noon, Jan. 25, at the Hurstbourne Country Club featuring guest speaker **Nikki Knight**. For reservations, call (502) 419-4371.

St. Matthews Church will host a free concert by folk and gospel re-

Spotlight on ...

Williamsburg



Retired Rear Admiral **Barry Black**, chaplain of the U.S. Senate, will speak at University of the Cumberlands Founder's Day Convocation service Jan. 15, 10 a.m., in the school's O. Wayne Rollins Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Recording artist **Kate Campbell**, Jan. 27, 7 p.m. Campbell, the daughter of former Southern Baptist Convention President **Jim Henry**, has recorded 10 albums. An offering will be collected to benefit Habitat for Humanity of Metro Louisville, which is a sponsor for the event. **Les Hollon** is pastor.

■ **MARION**—**Bobby Lady** recently resigned as pastor of Lighthouse Church.

■ **PRINCETON**—Calvary Church recently called **Mark Caffee** as minister of music.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Heritage Church recently called **Garry Michael Greer** as interim pastor.

Anonymous donors help rebuild church destroyed by arsonists

Birmingham, Ala. (RNS)—When Morning Star Baptist Church burned to the ground in a string of church arsons last February, its future looked bleak.

The tiny congregation near Boligee, Ala., had no insurance, no money and didn't even own the rural property the church had stood on for 94 years. About three weeks later, its pastor had a stroke and was forced to retire.

Now, three anonymous Birmingham donors have stepped forward to spearhead efforts to rebuild the church and persuaded an architect, contractor and others to donate their time and materials. They've backed the project so construction can begin this month and are pushing to raise a final \$200,000 to get the church finished and on solid footing.

The 60-member African-Ameri-

can congregation, now worshipping in a double-wide trailer on the old church lot, broke ground this week and plans to move in the summer. An interim pastor is in place, and the former pastor, James Posey, is up walking and talking.

"It's such a blessing," said Morning Star Deacon Frank Wallace. "It might have been meant for evil, but it's all good so far, because we got a better facility, and the members are pulling together, and it brought black and white together. It brought us more together in this community."

Morning Star was one of nine Baptist churches set on fire in February in rural Greene, Pickens, Bibb and Sumter counties. Three former college students pled guilty last month to setting the fires. They face prison sentences of seven to eight years each.



BOARD OFFICERS Newly elected officers for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation board of directors are (from left) Laurie Valentine of Louisville, assistant secretary; Barry Allen of Louisville, treasurer; Mike Melloan of Owensboro, chairperson; Leigh Jones of Berea, vice chairperson; and Shirely Spalding of Louisville, secretary.



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, Northside 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.

21 Financial Support Issues for Ministers and Church Employees Conference, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

22 Financial Support Issues for Ministers and Church Employees Conference, Versailles Baptist Church.

23 Financial Support Issues for Ministers and Church Employees Conference, Florence Baptist Church.

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

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Bellfield Baptist Church, Henderson, Ky. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee Chairman Larry Sutton, 6094 Highway 1299, Robards, KY 42452.

SEEKING: Minister to students for small Kentucky/Southern Baptist-aligned church in south central Kentucky in the heart of Big South Fork Recreation Area. Individual would work with youth in grades 1-12. We are looking for someone to develop and lead our youth in spiritual growth. Please send resumé and address any questions to: Pastor Ronald Davis, Whitley City First Baptist Church, PO Box 670, Whitley City, KY 42653. Phone: (606) 376-2418; e-mail: fbwc@highland.net.

SEEKING: Part-time or bivocational minister of music for Hawesville Baptist Church. Responsibilities will include preparation of weekly order of service, leading the adult choir and development of children and youth choirs. Hawesville is on the Ohio River roughly midway between Louisville and Evansville, Ind., about 25 miles from Owensboro. HBC runs about 190 in Sunday school, with morning service attendance around 250. We anticipate an exciting future under the leadership of a dynamic young pastor. Applicants may send resumé to the attention of the Music Minister Search Committee, by mail to Hawesville Baptist Church, PO Box 57, Hawesville, KY 42348; or by e-mail to hawesvil@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Volunteers for Glorieta Conference Center. Volunteer March-November in the mountains, 18 miles east of Santa Fe, N.M., at 7,500 feet. Serve in maintenance, conference support, grounds and food service. Long-term commitments are preferable with a minimum commitment of one month. Each volunteer works at least 30 hours a week for which Glorieta will provide: a full-hookup RV site, or an apartment or hotel room and meals. For information or an application, contact Lee or Bea Carl, Coordinator of Volunteers, at (505) 757-4298; or Lee.Carl@lifeway.com; or mail request to PO Box 8, Glorieta, NM 87535; or visit our website, www.glorieta.com, and download application/information.

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

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: Part-time music minister for a growing community. Seeking an energetic person who has a love for tradition and change. Average attendance 250 in two morning services (blended and traditional). Praise band and adult choir (30 members). Please send resumé to Pleasant Grove BC, 5825 Highway 44E, Shepherdsville, KY 40165; or seek more information online at www.PGBC.net.

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: 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: 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. Seminary degree and experience required. If interested, please send resumé and cover letter to: Journey Search Committee, PO Box 22137, Lexington, KY 40522-2137.

'The most important generation'

Urbana speakers challenge students to combine evangelism, social justice to reach world

For security reasons, some names in this story have been changed.

By Melissa Deming
Baptist Press

St. Louis (BP)—With various global issues challenging the body of Christ, leaders of the 2006 Urbana Student Missions Conference called on the current generation of students to be the catalyst for a missions reformation.

During the Dec. 27-31 conference in St. Louis, global Christian leaders challenged the 22,000-plus collegians and youth to strike a balance between traditional evangelical missions strategies and the social justice necessary to address such issues as urbanization and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Urbana '06 director Jim Tebbe said students should integrate political action with missions for the sake of God's Kingdom.

"Our need to leverage for greater influence in the structures and systems in this world may not be the message you were expecting at a missions conference," Tebbe said, "but ... the Apostle Paul was not afraid to assert his Roman citizenship for the cause of the gospel. The prophet Daniel was an advisor to a pagan nation—and so were Esther and Joseph."

With some of history's greatest reform movements spearheaded by Christian men and women, Tebbe asked Urbana participants to "incorporate a compassionate concern" in their daily walk with Christ.

"We cannot be silent in the political and social arena," Tebbe said. "Our voice, a voice motivated by a love of Jesus and a desire for His Kingdom to come, must be heard. We must use our influence among the power-holders in this world for the things that so rend the heart of God."

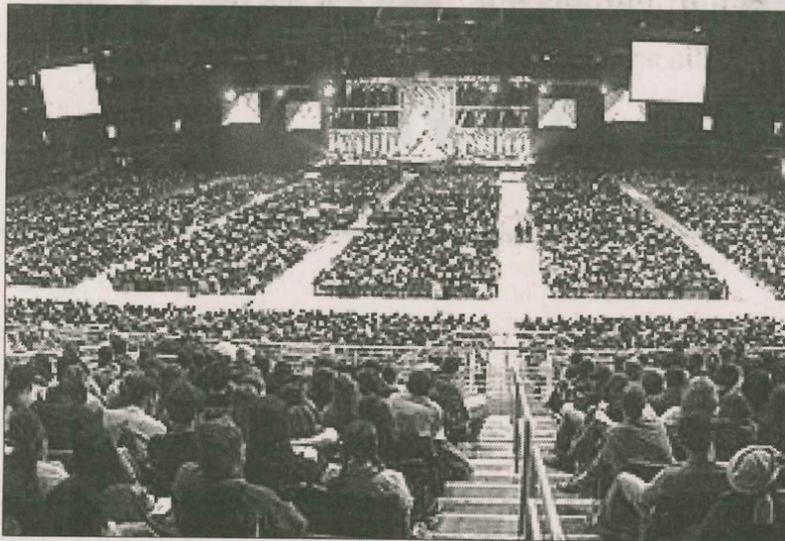
Begin a reformation of missions

Citing power in global partnerships, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church, spoke to the students during the conference's "Community Night." Warren presented them with a catchphrase for their generation: "whatever, whenever, wherever."

"To dedicate your life and sanctify your life, you are going to have to become familiar with three very important words: whatever, wherever, whenever," Warren said. "Because that is what it means to be fully consecrated to Christ."

He invited students to begin a reformation of missions. "We don't need to move the church forward; we need to move it back to the first century and do it the way Jesus did. You are the reformation generation. You must be those who bring in the reformation of world missions."

In response to the changing mission field and the need for new mission strategies, Urbana attendees immediately put hands and feet to their faith by raising \$1.257 million for missions during the five-day conference. Setting records over previous years, the offering will fund missions around the world, AIDS programs and urban ministries.



CALLED TO ACTION More than 22,000 collegians and youth were urged to infuse evangelism into global issues during the post-Christmas 2006 Urbana Student Missions Conference in St. Louis.

John Smith, a missionary with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, sees unique opportunities for today's students.

"They are the most important generation in history," he said. "We don't expect enough of them, and oftentimes we don't send them out with a big enough challenge. ... They are stepping up and will do some things that maybe people from a past generation could not do. With a little bit of mentoring and leadership, they can do anything."

During the conference, church leaders, AIDS activists, missionaries and international pastors urged students to develop new missiological approaches to the challenges ahead.

With new people groups migrating to urban centers in both the United States and abroad, oceans and mountains no longer separate churches from the international mission field, said Ray Bakke, plenary speaker and academic dean at Bakke Graduate University of Ministry headquartered in Seattle.

"We're moving away from a world of about 200 nations and (toward) a world of interconnected city-states. It is changing in your lifetime and mine," he said. "We are shifting from an Atlantic world to a Pacific world, and the frontier is the city, not the jungle. And so, missions is no longer across the ocean, mountain, across the desert—it is across the street. It is the greatest bargain in world missions. They are coming here at their own expense, and it's happening on all six continents."

Looking to the Bible for a model of urban ministry, Bakke cited Psalm 107. "We notice that not only is the world in motion, with the Southern Hemisphere coming north, east coming west, but everybody is coming to the city. But it may have missed your attention who is to blame for bringing the multitudes to the metropolis." Referencing the Psalm, Bakke said, "The people were wandering out in the wilderness without hope, and they cried out to the Lord in their misery, and what did our gracious God do? He led them straightaway to the city to dwell in."

God has provided a unique opportunity for students to involve themselves in missions in city neighbor-

hoods, Bakke said. "In 1800, 2 percent of people lived in sizeable cities; in 1900, 8 percent."

Today, "for the first time in human history, the majority of this planet lives in sizeable cities. It has happened in your time and mine."

Southern Baptist missionary Jim Douglass has watched the process of urbanization open doors for sharing the gospel.

"Because people are migrating to these centers, they are outside of their local culture and support network. They are almost like foreigners even though they are still in their own home country," Douglass said. "But they are more likely to listen to the gospel. It has become easier to reach remote people groups when they are outside of their local network and culture."

Douglass said students are going to the mission field in spite of the crises of globalization. Attending the conference to recruit students for mission activities, the 25-year-old missionary discovered a hard-sell for missions wasn't necessary.

"Most of the students ... wanted to go to places that have not been touched by the gospel yet, and wanted to use their degrees to meet human needs while sharing the gospel."

AIDS impacts the mission field

This complementary combination of desires is refreshing, he said. "A lot of missions organizations have strayed on meeting needs and focused solely on evangelism. We will need to move back toward the middle to be the hands and feet of Jesus as well," Douglass said.

Highlighting the dilemma in which many missionaries find themselves in the fight against global diseases, Douglass said common ground must be found regarding the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the mission field.

With 39.5 million people living with AIDS at the end of 2006, and 15 million children orphaned by the disease, Urbana organizers urged students to look beyond the statistics to a mission field of opportunities.

"My generation really needed to be exposed to that because in North

America the perception of AIDS is very different than in the developing world where there are not even ways to screen blood to see if it is infected," Douglass said.

Kay Warren, wife of Rick Warren and an Urbana plenary speaker, shared her story of traveling to Rwanda to meet with AIDS victims. "HIV offers you and me the opportunity to do the most powerful thing in the world, and that is to make the invisible God visible," she said. "Our world doesn't understand God until you and I make Him visible."

The Warrens said social justice and traditional evangelism must go hand-in-hand. "Those who argue that there is only one way to evangelize, that is like only dropping one hook in the water," Rick Warren said. "I imagine some of the churches that are doing social ministry are seeing greater results than even those who have limited themselves to one form of outreach."

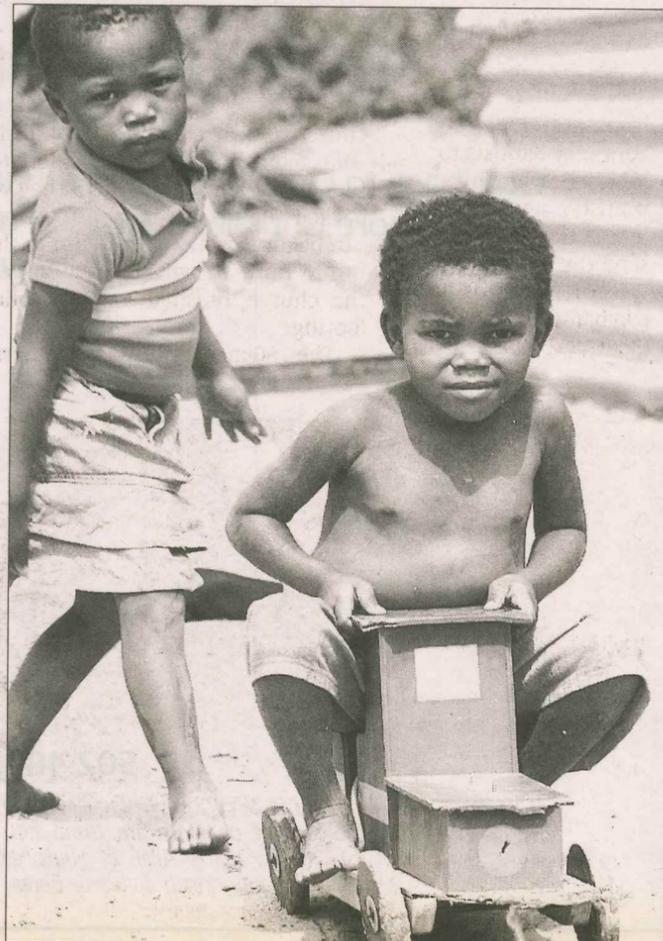
Steve Haas, vice president of World Vision, said more Christian leaders are incorporating a response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic into their mission strategies. "There are a lot of people in the tent who don't appear to agree on everything."

"But we do agree on God's love for the world. We do agree on the fact that He loves every individual. We do agree on the fact that AIDS can be prevented. We do agree that it takes our voice to stand up for people who have no voice," Haas said. "That is where we start. That may be different than some people's understanding of what 'evangelicalism' is," Haas continued. "It's not to say anyone is watering down anything. It's just to say there is a wealth of things that we need to be talking about and have a great deal of similarities in. Let's start there and just see what God does."

"Missions is no longer across the ocean, mountain, across the desert—it is across the street."

Ray Bakke, academic dean at Bakke Graduate University of Ministry in Seattle

ORPHANED BY AIDS
The AIDS pandemic has orphaned a generation of African children. Students attending the recent Urbana conference in St. Louis were challenged to find ways to minister to the millions of people affected by the disease. (IMB file photo by Sue Sprengle)





Why You Need To Make A Will

Making a Will allows you to choose who will receive your assets and how and when they will receive them after your death

Will distribution provisions can include specific bequests of particular assets or amounts, as well as general bequests of personal property and the residue of your estate

Making a Will allows you to provide for special needs of your beneficiaries

Children or grandchildren may be too young and other beneficiaries may not be capable of managing what you want to leave to them. A trust provision in your Will may be just the answer—the beneficiary will receive the benefits of your gift (income and principal also, if you wish) without the burden of its management

Making a Will allows *you* to name an executor for your estate

An executor determines what you own at your death, settles your final debts, files final tax returns and then distributes your estate. If you do not make a Will, the court and your heirs will select an executor. This may cause delays in getting the estate open and in handling certain matters that may arise during the estate administration process

And, Most Importantly. . .

Making a Will enables you to practice your Christian stewardship
beyond your lifetime

Give back to God a Portion of that with which he has so richly blessed you by including a bequest to one or more Christian causes of a tithe of the date of death value of your estate, a designated asset, or share of the residue of your estate



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