


PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
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FOR THE RECORD

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Ministers ranked among nation's ethical leaders

Dallas (ABP)—Most Americans trust their pastors almost as much as they trust their nurses and pharmacists, according to a recent USA Today/Gallup Poll.

For the sixth year in a row, nursing topped the list as the most ethical occupation in America, according to a survey of public perceptions of honesty and ethical standards for 23 occupations.

More than 84 percent of Americans said ethical standards for nurses are "very high" or "high." It was the second-highest rating ever for any occupation. Firefighters scored 90 percent in December 2001, right after the World Trade Center attacks.

Clergy members placed seventh on the list for combined scores of "very high" and "high," with a total of 58 percent. When evaluated only by the "very high" ratings, they tied for third place, along with veterinarians and medical doctors, at 16 percent. Pharmacists came in second, with 17 percent of them receiving the "very high" rating. Only 3 percent of Americans said clergy have "very low" ethical standards.

Car salesmen came in last on the list, with 55 percent of Americans saying they have low or very low ethics. No other profession came close to that level of skepticism.

Results were based on phone interviews conducted Dec. 8-10 with 1,009 adults.

Church finances

Decreasing slice of funds going beyond church walls

By Matt Vande Bunte
Religion News Service

Champaign, Ill. (RNS)—An annual study of church giving shows most offerings go to activities and needs within local congregations while activities focused beyond the congregations increasingly go unfunded as contributions decline.

The authors, Sylvia and John Ronsvalle of Champaign, Ill.-based empty tomb inc., contend U.S. Christianity is becoming a "maintenance organization" that soon will have zero financial capacity for external ministry if the trends continue.

The numbers lay guilt at the feet of the worshippers in the pews and also challenge church leaders to motivate members toward a financial generosity that could have earth-changing effects.

"We're not doing the good that we can do," said Sylvia Ronsvalle, co-author of "The State of Church Giving Through 2004: Will We Will?" "The portion of income going to benevolences has been shrinking steadily."

The Ronsvalles have published 16 annual editions of the study. The most recent report, which uses published financial data from the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches as well as direct correspondence with denominations, contains figures for 2004, the latest numbers available.

The study finds that while gifts to churches have increased 78 percent in real dollars since 1968, in-



come has risen 116 percent over the same period.

The average U.S. congregation member gave 2.56 percent of personal income to the church in 2004, a decline for the fourth straight year. That's down 18 percent from 1968, and below giving levels from the early 1930s at the height of the Depression.

"It is clearly not an issue of capability," Ronsvalle said. "The issue is: Will we choose to do what we know we should be doing?"

As financial contributions to U.S. churches founder, more of the available funds are taken up by building projects and staff salaries, according to the study.

The percentage of the average church member's income devoted to internal congregational operations was at 2.18 percent in 2004, on par with figures from the mid-1970s.

But the amount used for benevolent causes outside the congregation has declined to 0.38 percent, about one-third of a penny for every dollar of income. In 1968, 21 percent of the typical church member's giving went to external ministries; in 2004, that figure was less than 15 percent.

□ See *Giving beyond local ... Page 10*

KBC initiative helps train youth to pursue church leadership goals

By Erin Roach
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—Thanks to an initiative launched last summer by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's youth ministry and Sunday school group, a select group of Kentucky youth are pursuing a lofty goal: ministry leadership within their churches, homes and communities.

Pursuit Student Leadership Academy, an initiative aimed at helping the most committed youth realize their potential for ministry within their churches, kicked off last summer on the campus of Campbellsville University with an intense three-day retreat that included both classroom learning and practical application, as well as discipleship, fellowship and worship.

But the most important aspect of the training began when students went back home, where they have been encouraged to take on leadership roles and meet regularly with

an adult mentor.

Eleven students from four churches qualified to participate in the inaugural class. Participants had to meet certain requirements, such as gathering letters of recommendation from their pastor, youth leader, school staff member and a friend.

"The best and the brightest"

"I asked for the best and the brightest, and I got those," said KBC youth strategist Joe Ball. "I've worked with students for more than 20 years, and it was just amazing to see that we asked for the cream of the crop and that's what our churches sent."

The group of 11 youth "was a great starting point," Ball said. As organizers plan future Pursuit events, "we are trying to make it larger but also maintain the small-group atmosphere," he added.

The participants met this fall, and plan to meet again in the spring

for a time of encouragement and accountability.

Ball, who developed Pursuit, hopes the academy will build stronger connections between youth and their churches.

"I think part of the reason we're losing students when they graduate is they've never connected with anybody in the church outside the youth ministry," he noted. "We challenge them to work in their church, in their home, in their community and in their school to establish relationships and show leadership in those areas."

Ball said he grew up in Boy Scouts and realized that the student organizations teens are involved in at school such as Beta Club and National Honor Society do a great job of developing leaders, but churches often expect teens to suddenly know how to lead when they graduate from high school without offering them much guidance.

"Our goal is to help the students figure out who they are in Christ and how they can take how they're gifted, what their passions are, what their personality is and lead within the context of their church, not just within their youth ministry," Ball said.

During the retreat, students completed a spiritual gifts inventory and personality profile, he added.

"The rest of the experience then was based on, 'This is what you know. How do you apply that to where you are?'" Ball said. "We worked through those types of things with them."

Random acts of kindness

During the Pursuit retreat, students also participated in evangelism through random acts of kindness and intentional witnessing. They also were trained on Baptist distinctives, including learning

□ See *Kentucky youth pursue ... Page 3*

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, January 17.

BAPTIST
DIGEST

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was discharged Jan. 10 from Louisville's Baptist Hospital East in Louisville after a two-week hospitalization that included abdominal surgery and a four-day stay in the intensive care unit due to blood clots in the lungs. Mohler and his family are "overjoyed to be back home," according to a seminary press release. "Dr. Mohler looks forward to resuming his presidential and ministerial duties, but his activities will be limited for some time as he continues his recuperation at home," the release stated. Mohler was moved out of intensive care and into a private room at the hospital Jan. 8. He was admitted to the hospital on Dec. 27 with intense abdominal pain and underwent surgery the following day.

Wiard Popkes, a German Baptist theologian who led the International Baptist Theological Seminary through some of its most tumultuous years, died of a heart attack Jan. 3. He was 70. Popkes, a retired professor at the Baptist Seminary of Hamburg, was a long-time trustee chairman of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague. He helped lead the European Baptist seminary through the Southern Baptist Convention's decision to withdraw funding from it in 1991, when it was known as the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. As chairman of the IBTS board, Popkes also oversaw the school's purchase, renovation and 1996 move to Prague, Czech Republic. "We thank God for Wiard—his deep Christian commitment; his outstanding New Testament scholarship; his devotion to our Baptist family; and his deep attachment and concern for IBTS," said IBTS Rector Keith Jones. Popkes is survived by his wife, Irmgard, and one son.

Carter, Clinton headline moderate Baptist call for unity

By Marv Knox and Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

Atlanta (ABP)—Baptists from across North America will convene in Atlanta early next year to emphasize their compassion rather than the racial, theological and social conflict that has divided them for decades, according to two former U.S. presidents.

Southern Baptist Convention leaders, who were not invited to the event, disagree with organizers' claims that "North America desperately needs a true Baptist witness." (See related article below.)

Former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton—two of the world's most famous Baptist laymen—announced the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant, tentatively set for Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2008. The announcement came Jan. 9, after the former presidents had met with about 80 leaders from 40 Baptist organizations in the United States and Canada at the Carter Center in Atlanta.

The 2008 convocation will be "one of the most historic events—at least in the history of Baptists in this country, maybe Christianity," Carter predicted.

Baptist harmony was broken, at least in the United States, in the mid-1800s. That's when divisions between Northern and Southern Baptists overwhelmed the missionary spirit that previously brought them together, Carter said, lamenting the schism that lasted for generations.

"We hope to recertify our common faith without regard to race, ethnicity, partisanship and geography" in the 2008 meeting, he said.

Diverse Baptist gathering

Participants in the meeting included representatives of groups connected to the North American Baptist Fellowship, a 20-million-member regional affiliate of the Baptist World Alliance. Leaders of the four predominantly African-American National Baptist conventions attended, as did leaders of U.S.-based Hispanic, Japanese, Laotian and Russian-Ukrainian Baptist groups, plus

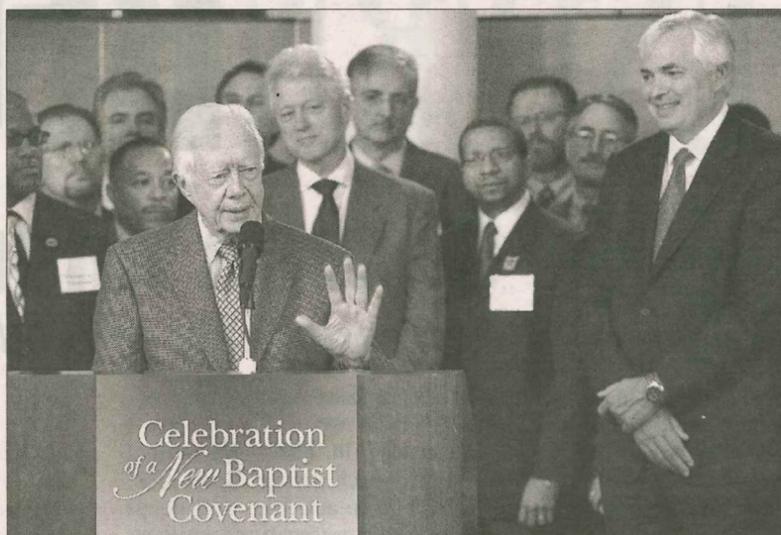
SBC leaders take issue with views expressed by Carter and Clinton

Atlanta (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page takes issue with Bill Underwood's claim that "North America desperately needs a true Baptist witness."

Underwood, president of Mercer University in Georgia, was among the organizers of a Jan. 9 news conference announcing a "Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant" in early 2008. Other spokesmen at the event held at the Carter Center in Atlanta included former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton.

Page, pastor of First Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C., expressed concern about Underwood's assertion as well as Carter's and Clinton's remarks apparently aimed at Southern Baptists.

"Instead of engaging in a war of words, let's do a reality check," Page told Baptist Press. "Word games are fine, but reality says Southern Baptists are presenting a positive life-changing message, impacting our culture with our ministries and sharing the good news of Jesus



NEWS CONFERENCE Former President Jimmy Carter introduces a proposed "Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant" during a Jan. 9 news conference at the Carter Center in Atlanta as former President Bill Clinton and other participants look on. (Photo by Billy Howard)

Canadian Baptists and heads of Baptist state conventions in Missouri, Texas and Virginia.

Noticeably absent from the gathering were representatives of the SBC. Although Southern Baptists leaders were not invited to the Atlanta meeting, Carter and Clinton said they are welcome to join.

In recent years, Southern Baptists withdrew from the Baptist World Alliance and its North American Baptist Fellowship because of alleged liberalism—a charge that BWA and its affiliated Baptist bodies denied.

Bill Underwood, president of Baptist-related Mercer University in Atlanta and Macon, Ga., said an invitation hadn't been formally extended to SBC officials because the North American Baptist Fellowship's membership provided the core of the Carter Center gathering. "But it's important to say that a number of people here are Southern Baptists," he added.

The overall endeavor is the brainchild of Carter and Underwood.

"Baptists—North and South; from the U.S. and Canada and Mexico; black, white and brown; progressive, moderate and conservative in theol-

ogy—can focus on issues that bind us together as followers of Christ," Underwood said.

Topics tap racism, poverty, AIDS

According to Jimmy Allen, the Southern Baptist Convention's last moderate president and chair of the program-planning team, plenary sessions of the 2008 convocation in Atlanta will address large issues while breakout seminars will offer specific ways for Baptists to make a practical difference in solving the problems Jesus addressed.

Topics for the breakout sessions will include prophetic preaching, ecology, sexual trafficking, racism, religious liberty, poverty, HIV/AIDS, dealing with religious diversity, public policy, youth issues, evangelism, stewardship and spiritual discipline.

"In the process, we will be looking at ways to network," Allen said. "Every person who comes ought to be able to find some specific way to put their faith into action."

Clinton expressed hope for what he said might become "a movement" among Baptists. He offered the resources of his foundation to help participants make specific com-

Christ."

The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported that Carter and Clinton "said they want to counter concerns that Baptists have been 'negative' and 'exclusionary' and promised an inclusive organization willing to debate openly on all issues."

Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said Carter's concerns about negative perceptions of Baptists ring hollow.

"He has been one of the most vocal critics of Southern Baptists, using 'fundamentalist' as a pejorative and drawing a caustic comparison between Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power in Iran and the resurgence of conservative leadership being elected in the SBC," Chapman wrote to Baptist Press.

Chapman also disputed Carter's and Clinton's notion about a negative perception of Baptists.

"Research shows this premise is false," he said. "Zogby International conducted a survey for the SBC that showed adults view Southern

Baptists favorably, equally to their views about Catholics and United Methodists. Not surprisingly, we fared best in areas where we have a strong presence and the community at large experiences our ministries and is familiar with our beliefs."

Both Page and Chapman addressed Clinton's and Carter's statements that last week's gathered group offered something new for Baptists.

Page pointed out that although Southern Baptists are painted as a white denomination, "it was not long ago that the Saturday Evening Post described the Southern Baptist Convention as 'the most ethnically diverse of all U.S. Protestant denominations.'"

According to SBC data for 2002, 4,742 out of 43,071 churches identified themselves as predominantly ethnic, with 2,085 describing themselves as African-American.

Chapman defended Southern Baptists' record of ministering to the poor.

mitments to become involved in issues they will discuss in Atlanta.

"This is an attempt to answer: What would our Christian witness require of us in the 21st century?" Clinton said. "It is a part of our faith obligation. But it also is a part of our common life. ... This is an important event in the history of Christianity—how faith should react on public life."

William Shaw, president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, a predominantly African-American group, echoed Clinton's observations.

"One of the challenges this places before us as Baptists and as believers is to live up to our faith," Shaw said. "God is moving to make faith real, addressing the issues we face in non-political ways and non-partisan ways, but in prophetic ways. We look forward to this with tremendous celebration."

The convocation will move Baptists forward, Carter stressed. "Our goals are completely positive ... and all-inclusive," he said. "We call on all Baptists who share these goals to join with us."

Carter noted Southern Baptist officials participated in meetings he initiated in the 1990s to try to reconcile Baptist factions.

Both Carter and Clinton said they were encouraged more recently by the conciliatory tone struck by SBC President Frank Page and both called Page to tell him so.

"Our goal will be to extend an invitation to all Baptists," Carter said. He and Clinton agreed that enlisting more conservatives and more Republicans will be important to the endeavor.

Underwood emphasized Carter and Clinton were not speaking in their capacity as political leaders or Democrats, but as Baptist Christians.

"We anticipate that there will be other Baptists who will participate in this endeavor who happen also to be Baptists but also happen to be Republicans," Underwood added.

With additional reporting by Robert Marus

"Southern Baptists address world hunger in many ways, but a good example this past year was their giving \$5.8 million, collected by the SBC Executive Committee, with every penny going solely to combat this global tragedy," Chapman said.

According to budget allocations, about 20 percent of funds collected for the SBC's World Hunger Fund are used in the United States and 80 percent overseas.

"In the U.S. alone, Southern Baptists provided over 5 million meals," he said.

"The great difference in our approach from liberals is that in ministering to the body, we do not neglect the needs of the soul, and the gospel was shared with over 500,000 people with over 32,000 professions of faith resulting," Chapman added.

"When we offer a loaf of bread, no strings attached, we also present Jesus as the Living Bread and lives are changed both physically and spiritually."

Townsend named Western Recorder business manager

Louisville—Tom Townsend, former vice president for development and communications for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, has been named marketing and business manager of the Western Recorder effective Jan. 10.



Tom Townsend

He succeeds Janet McIntosh who was named accounting manager of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation effective Jan. 15.

McIntosh, who has served as the Recorder's marketing and business manager since 2004, previously was the Recorder's part-time accounting coordinator.

"I appreciate the significant contributions Janet has made in our accounting, business and marketing areas the past several years," noted Western Recorder Editor Trennis Henderson. "We will miss her expertise on the Western Recorder staff, but wish her the very best as she shares her skills with the Kentucky Baptist Foundation."

Henderson also expressed enthusiasm about Townsend joining the Recorder staff.

"Tom brings a rich blend of experience in pastoral ministry, business and denominational service," he said. "His vision to help strengthen the Recorder's impact throughout Kentucky will pay dividends both for the Recorder's ongoing ministry and Kentucky Baptist congregations."

"I am looking forward to serving Kentucky Baptists in this position," Townsend noted. "The legacy of the Western Recorder lays a great foundation for the future as we endeavor to minister together for the sake of the gospel."

Townsend served most recently as vice president for U.S. relations for Life International, a ministry to orphans in the Ukraine. He previously served on the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children staff from 2000 to 2004. He also was administrator for development and public relations for the Florida Baptist Children's Homes in Lakeland, Fla., and was pastor of churches in Florida and Tennessee.

Townsend holds a bachelor of science degree in business management from the University of West Florida in Pensacola. He also holds master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Townsend and his wife, Mary Jo, are members of Crestwood Baptist Church in Oldham County.

Evangelism Conference set for Feb. 26-27

By Jonathan Johnston
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Bowling Green—Kentucky Baptists will be challenged to "get connected and stay connected" at the 2007 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference Feb. 26-27 at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

The annual conference, which will highlight the theme, "Get Connected—Stay Connected," will include breakout sessions covering such topics as evangelism in the smaller membership church, the biblical basis of missions, children's ministry, student ministry and discipleship, as well as messages from a number of keynote speakers.

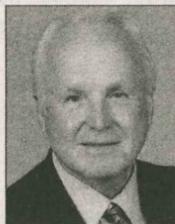
Next month's event will be the first Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference under the leadership of Ross Bauscher, who was elected leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's newly organized evangelism team in December.

Call for spiritual passion

Bauscher, who previously served as director of the KBC's partnership missions department, said he hopes that those attending the conference will "realize the wonderful challenges, purposes and fulfillment of being connected to God."

"My hope is that all who attend will leave the conference with a renewed passion and desire to live for Jesus Christ," Bauscher added. "I am excited about the upcoming Evangelism Conference. I think that the conference speakers and the breakout sessions topics will be meaningful and informative to any church."

Featured speakers on the conference's opening day are Mike Licona, director of apologetics and interfaith evangelism for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board; Charles Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala.; Bill Wagner, professor of world missions at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.; Richard Gaines, pastor of Consol-



Charles Carter



Richard Gaines



Charles Roesel



Raul Vazquez

dated Baptist Church in Lexington; and Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla.

Featured speakers during the conference's Tuesday sessions are Don Wilton, president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention and se-

nior pastor of First Baptist Church of Spartanburg, S.C.; Jeff LaBorg, senior pastor of College Heights Baptist Church in Gallatin, Tenn.; Raul Vazquez, retired director of the Florida Baptist Convention Language Division; Dean Haun, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, Ga.; and Charles Roesel, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Fla.

The conference begins Feb. 26 at 1 p.m. The final session on Feb. 27 is scheduled to conclude at 8:30 p.m.

There also will be a special breakout session for women on Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. This session, titled "When I Lay My Isaac Down," will be led by Carol Kent. There is a \$10 registration fee for the women's event that will cover the cost of a light breakfast and lunch.

The Evangelism Conference is free for participants and no registration is necessary. For more information, visit www.kybaptist.org/evanconf or call (502) 489-3571.

Evangelism breakout sessions

Bowling Green—More than 20 breakout sessions on a variety of topics will be offered at 8:30 and 11 a.m. during the Feb. 27 session of next month's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Breakout topics and leaders include:

- Comparing Islam and Christianity's View of the Last Days, Bill Wagner.
- Growing the Church through Ministry Evangelism, Charles Roesel.
- Evangelizing Muslims, Mike Licona.
- Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? History, Hogwash and Hot Air, Mike Licona.
- Transformational Discipleship, Richard Gaines.
- Love Your Neighbor, Tell Your Story: A Practical Guide to Soul Winning, Ted Traylor.
- Connecting through Intentional Pastoral Preaching, Don Wilton.
- Casting Vision and Raising Up Leaders, Jeff LaBorg.
- Conectandonos con Nuestra Familia Denominacional (Connecting with our Denominational Family), Raul Vazquez.

- Reaching People in a Changing Community, Dean Haun.

- Moving Students from Salvation to Baptism, Bill Houpt.

- One Day Witnessing Workshop, John Mark Toby.

- How to Lead a Child to Christ, Marilyn Goodwin.

- Reaching Children and Families for Christ, Wendy Dever.

- Discipling Children and Families, Vicky Donelson.

- Launching New Ministries that Reach New People, Eric Allen.

- Evangelism in the Smaller Membership Church, Chad Fugitt.

- How to Become Missions Strategists, Jeff Wallace.

- Developing a Missions Program to Reach People for Christ, Jeff Carlisle.

- Missiology 101—The Biblical Basis of Missions, Jeff Carlisle.

- How to Develop a Membership Class, Dan Garland.

Kentucky youth pursue church leadership goals

Continued from page 1
basic beliefs, understanding the Cooperative Program and Southern Baptist entities.

Students left Pursuit with a set of goals for how they planned to implement what they learned. They planned to serve in leadership roles in their churches, and meet regularly with an adult sponsor from their church who would mentor them and assist them in meeting those goals.

"For me, it was great to see it work because a lot of the things that we plan, the event is the event," Ball said. "But we tried to plan this so that the event at Campbellsville was just the launching pad for what would happen when they left."

Wade White, youth minister at Grand Rivers Baptist Church in Western Kentucky, said Pursuit is the first event he has found that offers Christian leadership training to a select group of students.

"I like the aspect of it that it was difficult for the kids to apply and get into it," White said. "Because of that, I think my kids took it more serious-

ly. When they got there, they were prepared for something that was real—not just a youth rally or something to inspire them. It was something to change them, and it did."

Katie Smith, a 17-year-old member of the youth group at Grand Rivers, heads the church's new children's ministry based on encouragement and motivation she received at Pursuit.

"I learned that regardless of the fact that we're high schoolers, we can still do things for God," she said. "Some people tend to think that because we're teenagers we won't be serious about it, but we took it seriously and knew we really wanted to work for God."

Incorporated in the children's program at Grand Rivers is a painting ministry that 17-year-old Clarissa Nelson started after Pursuit. She combined her love of painting with a desire to form relationships with kids in her church, and now she serves as a role model.

"I have somebody teach while I paint, and I listen to what they're saying and paint it," she said, adding

that one of the first works she did was a rendition of Noah's Ark while someone told the story.

Her twin sister, Brandi, teaches the kids interpretive movements and drama. She said that when she went to Pursuit, she learned that she had leadership potential.

"I learned a lot on how to be a leader with others, to listen and start up a ministry and to really have a servant's heart," she said. "I learned that I'm one of the leaders who don't lead big time but kind of lead in the background. I learned that God really does love it when we have a servant's heart."

White noted that Pursuit gave his youth "confidence that they were capable of leading."

"It's stuff that I teach and other people teach," he added, "but you get them off in one place like that and let them meet other kids that are leaders and it just does something. It just works."

The next session of Pursuit will be July 5-7 at Campbellsville University. For more information, visit www.kybaptist.org/pursuit.

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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WMU forced to face funding issue

By Bob Terry

Decisions by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and North American Mission Board have become catalysts for Woman's Missionary Union in determining how the national missionary organization will fund itself in the years ahead.

WMU is best known among Southern Baptists for its promotion of the two national missions offerings—the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

Historically WMU has also been the heart of missions education among Southern Baptists. For decades, the majority of missionaries serving overseas testified that God used their years in GAs and RAs (Girls in Action and Royal Ambassadors) to guide them into missions service.

Yet WMU has never received any Cooperative Program allocation in the budget of the Southern Baptist Convention. Like LifeWay Christian Resources, WMU has been expected to fund itself through the sale of literature and other products.

So successful have the two national missions offerings become that the Lottie Moon offering now makes up more than half the IMB annual budget. For NAMB, Annie Armstrong receipts outdistance CP support by about 20 percent annually.

Missions offerings depend on WMU

Yet true to the sacrificial spirit of its beginnings, none of the funds from the offerings have ever gone to the primary sponsor—WMU. However, IMB and NAMB do reimburse WMU for direct expenses incurred in promoting their respective offerings.

A NAMB spokesman acknowledged that the national missions offerings would flounder without the work of WMU. He observed that no

other organization in Baptist life could do the promotion as effectively and efficiently as WMU.

Both mission boards also have made annual gifts to WMU in appreciation for its contributions to missions education, missions support and missions involvement.

The amounts have never been overly large in light of the funds WMU raised for the mission boards. Since the beginning of the Lottie Moon offering in 1888, WMU has raised more than \$2.5 billion for international missions. IMB's gifts to WMU during that time total about \$9.5 million. That is .004 percent of the total. Offerings for North American missions total more than \$1 billion. NAMB's gifts to WMU are about \$8.5 million, or .008 percent, according to figures made available by WMU.

IMB's largest gift, made in 2003, was \$325,000. In 2006, the mission board gave \$250,000. Also in 2006, IMB announced plans to phase out its annual gift to WMU by 2009 due to "budget constraints."

NAMB's largest gift, made in 1991, was \$461,552. However, some of that amount went to specific partnership projects and was not all a gift to WMU. Since that time, the gift has been pared back to \$50,000 for each of the last three years. NAMB has not indicated that it will eliminate its annual gift.

The gifts from the two mission boards combined total \$300,000, only 2.6 percent of WMU's annual budget of \$11.4 million for the 2006 fiscal year. The problem is that even with the gifts, WMU has been operating at a deficit for the past decade. This year, the annual audit presented to the national WMU executive board in its Jan. 13-16 meeting was expected to show about \$130,000 more in expenses than in income. In nine of the past 10 years, actual receipts have trailed actual expenses.

Like LifeWay, WMU has experi-

enced a decline in the sale of dated literature. That translates into less money to run the organization. Down years in investments meant the organization had to dip into its reserves to operate just as SBC entities did.

How will WMU fund itself in the future in a climate where sales of Christian literature are declining? The answer to that question is important to all Southern Baptists.

A study in 2003 illustrated that churches with WMUs gave more than three times the amount of CP dollars than did churches without WMUs. Churches with WMUs gave about four times the amount to the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offerings than did churches without WMU organizations.

This is due, in part, to the fact that WMU, from its beginning, taught that everything one has belongs to God and that each individual is responsible for using whatever he or she has to honor God.

Heart of missions education

The same is true for missions education. WMU has been the heart of missions among Southern Baptists everywhere. Just as an occasional tithing sermon will not transform a church into a hotbed of biblical stewardship, neither will an occasional missionary speaker cause a congregation to be committed to missions at home and around the world.

What is needed, as WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee observed, "is an ongoing infusion of these principles through the teaching of the church." That is what WMU provides.

Without WMU, missions will take on a completely different look than Southern Baptists have ever known. That is why the question of funding WMU in the future is critical for all Southern Baptists. That is why those who believe in the contributions WMU makes to Baptist life will have to support it in new ways in the days ahead.

Bob Terry is editor of the Alabama Baptist

ton. Charles Carter, retired pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., has been used of God to inspire congregations with his expository messages.

Kentucky Baptists know of the great outreach ministries of First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Fla., which have been developed under the compassionate leadership of Charles Roesel, who served in Eastern Kentucky during his seminary days.

Equally outstanding will be messages by Mike Licon, director of apologetics and interfaith evangelism for the North American Mission Board, and Bill Wagner, professor of world missions for Golden Gate Seminary.

Laypeople and pastors alike will benefit from all of the sessions. Twenty-one workshop options on Tuesday morning will be of interest to every believer.

Early indications from the annual church profile are that we will be down in baptisms for 2005-2006. This conference will be an excellent opportunity for God to speak to us about connecting our communities to Jesus Christ.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

COMMENTARY

Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference

The Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference will be held Feb. 26-27 at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green. The program has a number of outstanding speakers and workshop leaders you definitely will not want to miss.

Ted Traylor has been pastor of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., for 17 years. The church has experienced outstanding growth and development in evangelism, missions and discipleship.

Dean Haun has provided creative and strategic leadership with First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, Ga., in ministering to a transitional community in metro Atlanta.

Don Wilton has provided dynamic leadership in Sunday school, broadcast media, worship, missions, evangelism and youth ministry that has enabled First Baptist Church of Spartanburg, S.C., to become one of the strongest congregations in that state. A native of South Africa, he is a former professor of preaching and evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and has

preached in numerous U.S. and international crusades.

More than 200 youth and leaders from the church have conducted as many as 25 vacation Bible schools in the area around Barbourville during one week, plus other projects. We have an opportunity to say thank you to Don Wilton for this incredible missions ministry in Kentucky.

Jeff LaBorg is the dynamic and creative pastor of College Heights Baptist Church in Gallatin, Tenn. He has provided godly leadership in intentional evangelism, casting vision and raising up young leaders.

Raul Vazquez recently retired as director of the language division of the Florida Baptist Convention. He has had a strong role in developing the partnership between the Hispanic ministry in Florida and the Hispanic ministry of the KBC.

Richard Gaines, pastor of Consolidated Baptist Church and a member of the KBC Mission Board, has provided excellent leadership for a growing congregation in Lexing-

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

FAMILY

Avoid financial idols; invest in eternal treasures

By Jeremy White

One of the Ten Commandments is to not put any idols before God. We're not to worship any other form of god. This seems like one of the easier commandments to obey—

compared to not lying, not coveting or honoring one's parents. After all, we don't have wooden carved images or poles on a mountain like the cultures in the Old Testament.

But we can see parallels with today in 2 Kings 17:15, "They rejected His laws and the covenant He had made with their ancestors and they despised all His warnings. They worshiped worthless idols and became worthless themselves."

We are drawn to what we worship. A similar scripture in Matthew 6 says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." That really is the same thought. What I treasure ultimately will capture my heart and will be what I think about, worry about, plan around and spend time on.

Today, we're tempted to think about and spend time on financial idols. Here are examples of financial idols:

- Your house and its fair market value.
- Income stream from your career.
- Your retirement plan account value.
- Certificates of deposit.
- Pension plan and health insurance coverage.
- Cars, trucks and boats.
- Value of your business or farm.

Interestingly, the verse in Matthew doesn't say, "Don't have any treasures." In fact, it says to store up treasures in heaven. So then, the issue is not that we have treasure, but what the treasure is. Whatever we treasure, worship and value will determine the focus of our hearts and lives. If I want to become more Christ-like, I must treasure, worship and value Him.

Financial expert Ron Blue says, "The challenge to my heart and mind is to focus my thoughts, my heart, my intentions—my whole being—on treasuring and worshipping my Lord and Savior." By doing so, one's life has value, purpose and meaning and, more importantly, eternal significance.

My challenge to you is to think about what you're worshipping: Is it a worthless financial idol or a treasure of eternal significance?

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant with Blythe, White & Associates in Paducah



Thought-provoking questions help couples assess marriage

Q: My husband and I have been challenged by our Sunday school class to spend a month evaluating our marriage. It's a class activity, and then we plan to do a Bible study afterwards on marriage. Do you have any suggestions for doing an evaluation?

There are various assessment tools available for married couples. Life Innovations has a product called ENRICH. It is a questionnaire that assesses a couple's strengths and growth areas. The tool is designed to facilitate a dialogue between the couple about specific areas of the relationship.

MARRIAGE

FOCUS is another relationship tool. For married couples, there is a series of questions in several categories to help couples focus on certain aspects of their marriage. There also are Marital Satisfaction Scales used for research and study. You might also consider creating an evaluation from I Corinthians 13. To get you started, consider some of these questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the best marriage we could have and 1 being the worst, where does our marriage fall?
- What is something I like about my marriage that I never want to change?
- What is something I wish would change tomorrow?
- What would it take to move my marriage closer to the 10 on the scale?
- How does my attitude toward my spouse help or hurt the marriage?
- What personal growth work have I done in order to make my marriage better?
- If our marriage were a house we were putting on the market to sell, what would we need to do to get it ready to sell? What maintenance? What updates?
- If we chose one of the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn or winter—to compare our marriage to, which one would best represent our marriage?

Perhaps these questions will stimulate some of your own for your evaluation study. Marriage is worth taking time to reflect.—Valerie Vincent

Q: What is the MyActivity Pyramid?

The MyActivity Pyramid was designed by a group of health educators at the University of Missouri Extension to help children ages 6-11 understand the importance of being physically active in order to be healthy. Sedentary lifestyles coupled with lots of fast food have contributed not only to a growing number of obese children, but to a decline in the overall fitness of boys and girls. The pyramid encourages children to be active, with the researchers calling for a minimum of 60 minutes of activity every day.

Each level of the pyramid represents a different level of activity. The base consists of Everyday Activities—things that should be done every day, as often as possible. These include playing outside, helping around the house, taking the stairs and walking.

Level 2 consists of Active Aerobics and Recreation Activities. Examples include riding a bike, playing basketball, jumping rope, skateboarding and swimming. These should be done three to five times a week.

Level 3 involves Flexibility and Strength Activities, and should be done two to three times each week. Stretching, doing push ups, practicing martial arts and rope climbing fall into this category.

Inactivity stands at the top of the pyramid. Children are challenged to cut down on watching television, playing computer and video games and sitting around for too long.

The MyActivity Pyramid suggests a great New Year's resolution for families and children: Move more! For copies of the pyramid, visit www.muextension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/foodnut/n00386.htm, or just Google MyActivity Pyramid for a link.—David Garrard

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



What are your church's resolutions for '07?

Now that we're already halfway into the first month of 2007, how are you doing on your New Year's resolutions?

It seems that fewer and fewer people even bother to make New Year's resolutions these days, and many of those who do often abandon their annual goals fairly quickly.

But beyond the tradition of personal resolutions, the first month of a new year is an ideal time for churches and other ministry organizations to review long-term plans and determine if any changes or additions are needed in the coming months.

One helpful resource for Kentucky Baptist churches to use in evaluating their ministry priorities is the state convention's Kentucky Baptists Connect goals through 2009. Detailed objectives in such areas as evangelism, missions, leader training, networking and strengthening churches can easily translate to the local church and associational levels.

Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Bill Mackey noted in one of his recent "Partners in the Mission" columns that one of the major goals of Kentucky Baptists Connect "is for Kentucky Baptists to be used by God to see a significant increase in baptisms through the churches."

"This means that we must ask the Holy Spirit to fill us and do a mighty work through us," he wrote, adding that "adjustments must be made in our lifestyles so that we can relate to individuals not yet reached for Christ."

Mackey acknowledged that Kentucky Baptists "have been plateaued in reaching people for Christ and baptism." What is the solution? He urged churches to develop a prayer list of people who need to accept Christ, build relationships with unreached people, teach believers to share the gospel through their personal testimony, conduct ministries that meet the needs of unreached people in the community and create new Bible study groups to assimilate new members.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Just seeking to fulfill that list of priorities could keep many congregations busy throughout 2007 and beyond. But that's just a few of the many goals and objectives in the KBC's Connect strategy.

In addition to seeking to baptize an average of 25,000 new believers each year, other Connect priorities include:

Missions. Seeking to "help Kentucky Baptists identify, explore and respond to mission opportunities in Kentucky and beyond," Connect calls for launching 75 new churches; helping 1,250 churches develop and implement outreach ministries and mission strategies; and enlisting and developing 500 workers to lead in establishing 500 evangelistic outreach points focused on unreached people groups in the state.

Leader training. Connect goals include training 1,000 leaders in spiritual life development and leader skills; equipping 1,000 church leaders to provide authentic worship experiences that connect with emerging generations; and training 500 leaders to begin or strengthen men's and women's ministries.

Networking. More than 40 churches already have joined in church-to-church partnerships to encourage and support one another in ministry. Connect calls for a total of 100 churches involved in such partnerships before 2010.

Strengthening churches. Striving to "assist churches in realizing their God-designed potential," Connect goals include assisting 250 congregations in church development and growth; equipping 1,000 pastors for small group/Sunday school development; and leading Kentucky Baptist churches to start 5,000 Bible study units.

What are your church's ministry goals for 2007? Take time to review the above list and consider where your church can plug into Kentucky Baptists Connect. Establishing vital ministry goals to help impact Kentucky with the gospel of Christ is one resolution worth keeping all year long.

There's no room for apathy

By Gibson Largent

I ran across a term a few years that describes the spiritual status of many people in our culture today. The term is "apathetic" (coined in The Atlantic Monthly, May 2003 by Jonathan Rauch). It describes those who do not care whether or not God exists. The term has become so popular that a church has been organized! Together they unite and celebrate their apathy toward religion.

As an evangelist, I encounter many people from all walks of life on a regular basis. This term describes so many people with whom I speak. There is a general lack of seriousness, concern or even thought about religious matters. The average person doesn't seem to be interested in matters of eternity or spirituality. Similar to the seed that fell among the thorns, these people are "choked with worries, riches and pleasures of life" (Luke 8:14). They are so choked that they avoid religious conversations like most people avoid telemarketers.

I feel that I understand this new twist on an increasingly secular America. For years I lived a non-Christian life. I grew up outside of the church. One of my parents leaned toward New Age spirituality while the other had a Catholic background. Neither had a positive enough regard for church or the Bible to instill the value of these in their children.

The result for me was apatheism.

I once ridiculed Christian friends who tried to share their faith with me. I told them I didn't believe there was a God. Several years later my beliefs, or lack thereof, left me unable to cope with my poor moral choices. With the prospect of failure looming over my head, I found myself in a garage with a gun, contemplating suicide. I could see no other way out of my miserable existence. But I tried prayer as a last-ditch effort.

I recall sinking to my knees by my bed one night in February of 1991. I prayed, "If there is a God out there somewhere, You've got to help me, because I can't live like this anymore." I slowly slumped into bed and drifted off in an alcohol-induced slumber.

I'll never forget what happened a few days later. On Feb. 20, 1991, at 8:30 p.m., a man going door to door sharing his faith in Jesus Christ knocked on my door. The stranger standing on my porch asked me two questions: "Do you go to church?" and "If you were to die today, do you know for sure that you would go to heaven?"

I couldn't answer. I had no idea if I would go to heaven. The man asked, "Would you like to know?" I said, "Yes." He spent the next 10 minutes telling me about Jesus Christ and the forgiveness He offered. I prayed with him and asked Jesus to forgive me. I trusted that His sacrifice on the cross took care of my sins and that God was able to forgive me.

The man left and I went inside. Something was different; I slept with peace for the first time in a long time. The stranger had told me I should read the Bible daily and pray about everything daily. I did it faithfully and within months I realized that everything had changed. I was somehow a new person from the inside out. Many of my poor moral choices were disappearing and were being replaced by a new desire to live a life that pleased God. I couldn't contain the overwhelming joy and peace I was experiencing.

I also couldn't keep my mouth shut about what had happened. I can't remember how many people I shared my new faith with but I remember leading almost 20 of my friends and family members to faith in Christ that first year. Meeting Jesus that night was the single most life-changing event of my life. I've never recovered from that day!

With more and more people drifting further into "apatheticism," the priority of personal evangelism has never been more urgent. How can we revitalize our evangelistic efforts? With bold and urgent personal evangelists. It is imperative that Christians everywhere personally assume responsibility for their lost friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members. We must all actively and aggressively step up to this challenge. There is no room for apathy.

Gibson Largent, a member of Ninth and O Baptist Church in Louisville, is a master of divinity student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Conservatives divided over Ellison's use of Koran in oath

Washington (BP)—When U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison became the first person in Congress ever to take the ceremonial oath of office on the Koran, conservatives split as to whether it was appropriate.

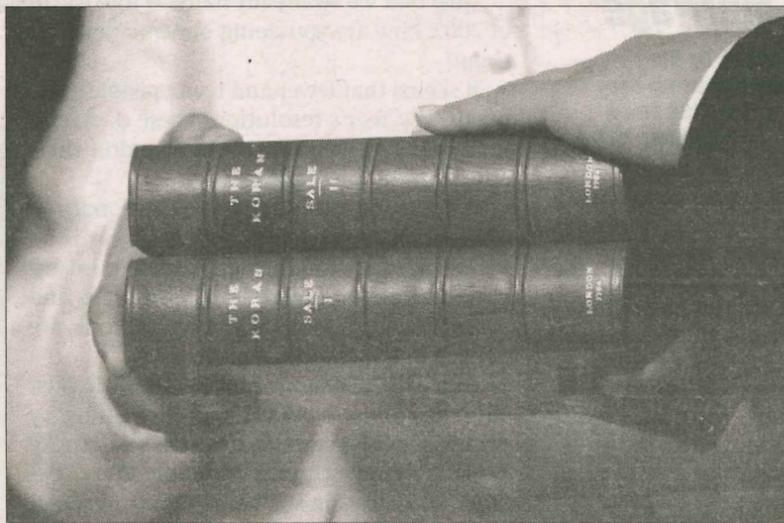
Ellison, a Democrat from Minnesota, became the first-ever Muslim elected to Congress in November when the Democrats regained power in both the House and Senate. He took the ceremonial oath Jan. 4 using a Koran once owned by Thomas Jefferson.

Soon after Ellison announced in November that he would use a Koran for the ceremony, conservative radio host Dennis Prager wrote a column for Townhall.com criticizing Ellison's choice. Prager, who is Jewish, said Ellison's action "undermines American civilization" and "perfectly exemplifies multiculturalist activism."

"Insofar as a member of Congress taking an oath to serve America and uphold its values is concerned, America is interested in only one book, the Bible," Prager wrote. "If you are incapable of taking an oath on that book, don't serve in Congress. In your personal life, we will fight for your right to prefer any other book. We will even fight for your right to publish cartoons mocking our Bible. But, Mr. Ellison, America, not you, decides on what book its public servants take their oath."

"No religious test"

But Eugene Volokh, a professor of law at the University of California Los Angeles and a regular contributor to the conservative National Review Online Web site, disagreed, arguing that any requirement to take



OATH OF OFFICE Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) places his hand on a two-volume English translation of the Koran published in the 1750s and once owned by Thomas Jefferson as he is sworn in Jan. 4 as the first Muslim member of Congress. (RNS/Reuters photo by Jim Young)

an oath using the Bible would violate the Constitution's provision that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office."

"The Constitution thus already expressly authorizes people not to swear at all, but to affirm, without reference to God or to a sacred work," Volokh wrote. "Atheists and agnostics are thus protected, as well as members of certain Christian groups. Why would Muslims and others not be equally protected from having to perform a religious ritual that expressly invokes a religion in which they do not believe? Under the Constitution, all of them 'are incapable of taking an oath on that book,' whether because they are Quakers, atheists, agnostics or Muslims. Yet all remain entirely free to 'serve in Congress.'"

Ellison, in fact, was not the first member of Congress to take the oath using a book other than the Christian Bible. In 2005 Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, D-Fla., used the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, according to The Washington Post.

Affirming common values

Prager asserted that use of the Bible by all members of Congress serves to affirm America's common values.

"What Ellison and his Muslim and leftist supporters are saying is that it is of no consequence what America holds as its holiest book; all that matters is what any individual holds to be his holiest book," Prager wrote. "When all elected officials take their oaths of office with their hands on the very same book, they

all affirm that some unifying value system underlies American civilization. If Keith Ellison is allowed to change that, he will be doing more damage to the unity of America and to the value system that has formed this country than the terrorists of 9-11."

Volokh, though, said Prager's view of oaths undermines their central purpose.

"If you want the oath to be maximally effective, then it is indeed entirely true that 'all that matters is what any individual holds to be his holiest book,'" Volokh wrote. "That book is the one that will most impress the oath-taker's mind with the duty to comply with the oath. ... Letting Christians swear the oath of office, while allowing members of other denominations only to swear what ends up being a mockery of an oath—a religious ceremony appealing to a religious belief system that they do not share—would be such discrimination."

The American Family Association e-mailed a copy of Prager's column to its supporters, asking them to contact their representative and senators and urge Congress "to pass a law making the Bible the book used in the swearing-in ceremony of representatives and senators."

But Kevin Hasson, founder and chairman of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, said such a law would be unconstitutional and wrong. The Becket Fund often sides with conservatives in key issues.

"It makes no sense at all to have him violate the Constitution in order to affirm his duty to uphold the Constitution," Hasson told The Washington Post.

Navy chaplain to be discharged in wake of prayer policy protest

Washington (RNS)—A Navy chaplain who was involved in a protest of prayer policies in front of the White House has received orders to be honorably discharged at the end of January.

Lt. Gordon James Klingenschmitt said his removal from the Navy is imminent after a federal judge denied his efforts to halt Navy action against him. The chaplain was reprimanded Jan. 3 after a military jury determined in September that he disobeyed an order by holding his protest.

Lt. Tommy Crosby, a spokesman for the Navy, confirmed that Klingenschmitt is scheduled to be discharged Jan. 31.

Klingenschmitt had been affiliated with the Evangelical Episcopal Church. He ended that relationship after his court-martial, and is now affiliated with the Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches. He said he made the change because he felt the guilty finding of the court-martial no longer permitted him to "maintain a spotless reputation" that was part of his covenant with the Evangelical Episcopal Church.

Klingenschmitt had sought to be reappointed as a chaplain with the Full Gospel Churches, but a Navy board denied that request.

Vision America, which featured the chaplain as a speaker at its "War on Christians" conference last March, has started a petition drive to Defense Secretary Robert Gates seeking Klingenschmitt's reinstatement.

Klingenschmitt had argued against a Navy policy that urged chaplains to lead "nonsectarian" prayers outside traditional worship services. Late last year, Congress passed a bill that dropped that policy.

The Vision America petition said Klingenschmitt was found guilty under a policy that is now off the books. Navy officials referred questions about the petition to the Department of Defense. Defense officials were not immediately available for comment.

U.S. House adopts embryonic stem cell measure

By Tom Strode
Baptist Press

Washington (BP)—The U.S. House of Representatives Jan. 11 again approved federal funds for stem cell research that destroys embryos but still fell far short of the two-thirds majority needed to override a presidential veto.

The 253-174 vote for the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act marked a gain of 15 votes from the last time the House passed the bill with a 238-194 roll call in May 2005. The latest vote was a gain of 18 for supporters from July 2006, when the House voted 235-193 in an unsuccessful effort to override President Bush's only veto so far.

A veto override would require 290 votes to succeed if all House members vote. Before the latest House vote, the White House reiterated Bush's intention to veto the bill again. The White House released Jan. 10 a 64-page paper making the case for promoting research that does not destroy embryos.

The House roll call means opponents of embryonic stem cell research again will prevail in protecting Bush's policy that bars grants for experiments that destroy embryos. The Senate is expected to easily approve the House-passed bill.

The House-approved measure would provide funds for research using stem cells extracted from embryos stored at in vitro fertilization clinics.

Bush's rule allows funds for research only on embryonic stem cell lines already in existence when his policy was announced in August 2001.

The House debated the bill, H.R. 3, for three hours before it voted.

Rep. John Linder, R-Ga., spoke against the proposal, saying, "If these researchers were taking this embryonic tissue from the just-laid eggs of loggerhead turtles or bald eagles, they would be fined and jailed. Surely we can do as much for humans."

Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., said in supporting the bill, "It cannot be stressed enough that this legislation only authorizes federal research funds for stem cell lines generated from embryos that would otherwise be discarded by fertility clinics."

Many embryonic stem cell research foes, however, support adoption of stored embryos by infertile couples.

The increased support for the legislation was expected after several embryonic stem cell research opponents lost in the November election and Democrats gained a House majority for the first time in 12 years. Voting for the latest bill were 216 Democrats and 37 Republicans. Sixteen Democrats joined 158 GOP members in voting against the measure.

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Re-

ligious Liberty Commission and other pro-life organizations oppose embryonic research because extracting stem cells requires the destruction of the days-old embryo.

Unlike research using embryos, extracting stem cells from non-embryonic sources—such as umbilical cord blood, placentas, fat and bone marrow—has nearly universal support. Such research, which is funded by the federal government, does not harm the donor and has produced treatments for at least 72 ailments, according to Do No Harm, a coalition promoting ethics in research. These include spinal cord injuries, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis and sickle cell anemia.

"Let's be clear from the outset about what is working and what is not," said Joseph Pitts, R-Pa. "Embryonic stem cell research ... has yet to produce a single cure or treatment in humans. Not one."

Tax dollars, he said, "should be directed toward methods that are proven to work" and research that is ethical.

Privately funded research on embryonic stem cells is legal and ongoing in the United States.

Before the House passed the bill, Republicans sought to amend it with a motion to prevent federal money from going to stem cell scientists who conduct therapeutic, or research, cloning. The motion failed, however, 238-189.

LifeWay launches LifeBox project as ministry to military personnel

By Polly House
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

Nashville (BP)—Some soldiers in Iraq have said that the battle times aren't as hard as the down time, the time when all there is to do is sit on their cots and wait. Boredom becomes the enemy without a gun.

The church resources division of LifeWay Christian Resources recently began working with Baptist associations to create LifeBox. These boxes contain items such as a personal note to a service member, chewing gum, tube/crew socks, small candies, stationery supplies, homemade goodies and wet wipes, plus a LifeWay magazine and "The Invitation" CD from LifeWay Christian Stores.

"LifeBox is a way that LifeWay can work with local churches and state Baptist associations to make a positive contribution to our Armed Forces personnel," said Rhonda Buescher, director of LifeWay's magazine advertising and circulation.

"Maxim, a soft-porn magazine, is sent free of charge to military personnel. We want to offer a good alternative," she said. "Soldiers have said that mail and magazines are greatly appreciated, and now we have an opportunity to have a positive impact on their lives."

Churches and interested community organizations donate money to their local Baptist association to pay for magazines and postage for

flat rate mailers, which can be obtained at post offices. Associations order HomeLife, Christian Single, Journey or Stand Firm magazines through LifeWay's network partnerships area at a special discount for this project.

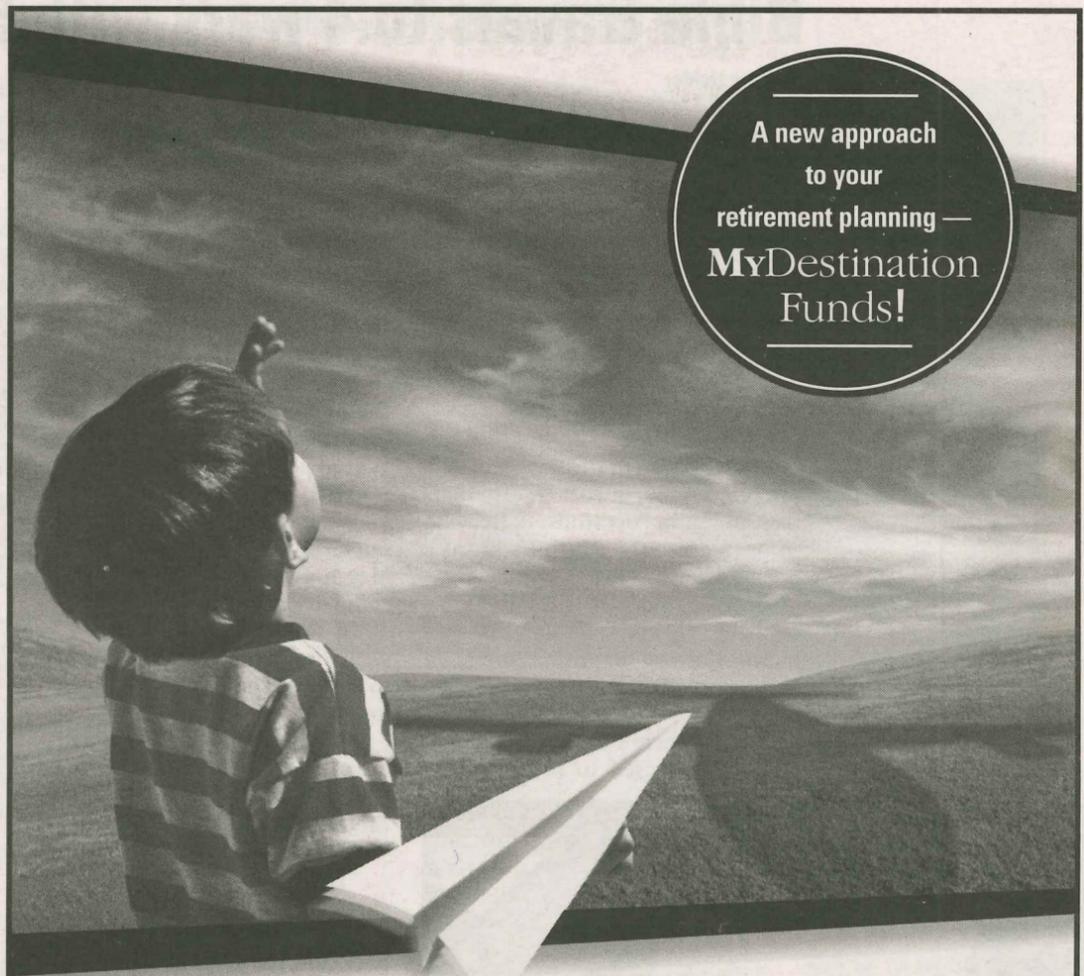
Associations enlist churches to participate, and collection points are designated at associational offices or churches.

Churches and community organizations collect the LifeBox items and deliver them to one of the collection points. Addresses of individual military personnel or chaplains are collected from churches and from Web sites that house names of military personnel who wish to receive mail.

Personal notes are written and packed with other items in LifeBox. Boxes are mailed by March 23, 2007, to arrive by April 7 for Easter weekend.

"The mission of LifeBox is to fulfill the dream of a Southern Baptist Army officer to provide LifeWay's distinctly Christian magazines, in response to the large amount of worldly magazines available in the theatre, along with comfort items and personal notes to the men and women serving in our Armed Forces," Buescher noted.

Questions about how to participate in the project can be sent to lifobox@lifeway.com.



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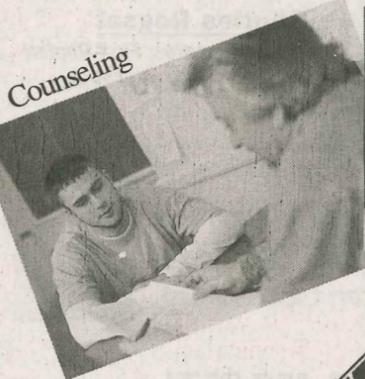
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Bible travels to 4 wars with 5 members of Baptist family

By Mark Hunter
The Advocate of Baton Rouge, La.

Haughton, La. (BP)—With his return from Iraq in 2003, U.S. Marine Cpl. Jerme Vickers of First Baptist Church of Haughton, La., became the fifth member of his family to carry the same New Testament to war and back.

The dog-eared New Testament, known as the family's "War Bible," wears a worn leather cover held together by tape.

Its six-decade journey through four wars began in the pocket of Wilton Borskey, 80, of Port Hudson Baptist Church in Port Hudson, La., who shipped off to the South Pacific as a Navy Seabee in 1944.

In 1968, Borskey gave it to his nephew, George "Butch" Borskey Jr., of Calvary Baptist Church in Thibodaux, La., who went to Vietnam.

At his uncle's insistence, Butch Borskey promised to bring the Bi-

ble back and place it in Wilton Borskey's hand.

Such was born a Southern Baptist family tradition with the Bible going to war four more times with various family members.

Butch Borskey returned it to Wilton Borskey, who then gave it to his own son, Dave Borskey, of First Baptist Church of St. Francisville, La., for a 1969-1970 tour of duty in Vietnam.

Dave Borskey's son, Dave Jr., took the Bible in 1991 to the Middle East for the Gulf War and Jerme Vickers, Wilton Borskey's great-nephew, took it to Iraq in 2003.

Wilton Borskey, called "Uncle Buck" by the family, was drafted in May 1944, and got the Bible at boot camp in Camp Perry, Va.

"It was something I always kept with me," Wilton said. "It's just good to have the Lord's Word with you—to know He's there."

Butch Borskey Jr., 59, joined the Navy as a medic and served with the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, in the rice paddies of Vietnam in 1968-1969.

"When I got ready to leave, Uncle Buck gave the Bible to me and he asked only one thing—that I bring it back and put it in his hand," he recalled. "I told him I would do my best."

"I carried the Bible in the top pocket of my flak jacket every time I went out," he said. "With my job I needed all the help I could get. The

things I had to do sometimes ... you just can't do it on your own."

Wilton David Borskey Sr., 57, Wilton Borskey's son, was drafted into the Army in 1968 and took the Bible on his 1969-1970 Vietnam tour of duty.

He was in four campaigns with the 4th Infantry Division's E Company, driving trucks and operating heavy equipment while building fire bases where U.S. soldiers set up camps for heavy artillery.

Although he grew up attending church, "I didn't know Christ as my Savior until the day I got home from Vietnam," he said. "I read the Bible some (in Vietnam). It gave me hope when there was no hope. It gave me peace when there was no peace and it gave me sanity when there was no sanity."

The family tradition continued with Dave Borskey's son, Dave Jr., who took the Bible in 1991 to Iraq for Operation Desert Storm.

Dave Borskey Jr. was in the Army's 82nd Airborne. "I know he was saved," his father said, "but I don't know if he ever read it."

Dave Borskey Jr. survived the war, but was killed in an accident 11 years ago.

Jerme Vickers, 30, Wilton's great-nephew, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1995 and served until 2004, then joined the Air Force.

"I had known about the Bible because it was a family tradition, that

anytime a member of the family was going to combat they had to go see Uncle Buck," Vickers said. "He would give the history of the Bible and the terms of use—if you take it, you have to bring it back. I can promise you: I didn't want to be the one to break the terms."

While he was driving trucks for the 6th Motor Transport Battalion in 2003, "I kept it on my person at all times," Vickers said. "Most of the time it was in my left breast pocket."

Vickers said he never took the Bible out of its plastic bag. "It was in pretty bad shape, so I got a new Bible to read, but I admit I didn't read it as much as I should have," he said.

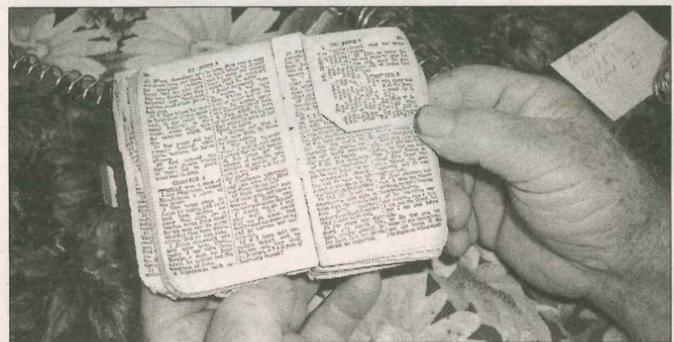
"I am a Christian, I have been baptized and raised in a Christian family, but when I went into the Marines I let my faith kinda' go to the side," Vickers said. "Before I went into the combat zone, I did pray and ask God to watch over my family."

Vickers' faith was renewed soon after he got a call that his wife, Amanda, was having complications with her first pregnancy. He flew home and Adrienne, now 3, was born healthy and normal. "I knew the Lord was watching out for me."

Vickers said he appreciates the family's War Bible and was glad to be able to return it to his Uncle Buck.

"It means a lot to our family. It's a lot of pride and honor. It's a serious thing."

"WAR BIBLE" This well-worn pocket-sized New Testament that belongs to a Louisiana Baptist family has been taken to four different wars—and brought back safely by the family member each time. (Photo by Mark Hunter)





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Senior adults play key roles in SBC's volunteer army

By Erin Roach
Baptist Press

Nashville (BP)—An invaluable amount of manpower, experience, insight and maturity would be absent from volunteer missions in the United States and around the world if senior adults were removed from the equation, two mission board officials say.

"Right now in Southern Baptist disaster relief and even much of volunteerism, senior adults are major players," said Jim Burton, senior director of partnership mobilization for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. "In disaster relief, senior adults have embraced the task and are serving at all levels of leadership as well as service."

The eldest generation brings a valuable work ethic to volunteerism, Burton said, and given their life experiences they possess a level of maturity that helps them be more effective on the field.

Seniors serving at home, abroad

Wendy Norvelle, associate vice president for mobilization for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, said many senior adults are involved in a variety of missions tasks through the IMB overseas, including working alongside board personnel or alongside national believers and church leaders.

"These kind of projects last anywhere from a week or 10 days to several weeks. Volunteers go and pay their own way and as they are doing a particular responsibility they also find ways to share the gospel," Norvelle said.

"Many times it's senior adults who have the financial resources as well as the time available to go on volunteer mission trips or be involved in projects and partnerships overseas," she said.

Burton's hope is that more Southern Baptists, particularly those who have recently retired, will understand how significant they can be in the completion of the missions task because they bring so much to the table.

"Many times through the years I've talked with seniors who will tell me that they felt the call to missions as a teenager and then life happened—maybe they fell in love, they got married and maybe the spouse didn't share that commitment, maybe kids came a little quicker than they expected or whatever—and they didn't quite get there but the call of God stayed on their life and they couldn't let go of that," Burton said.

"And so now suddenly they see these last stages of life and the opportunity to finally come face to face with that calling and to submit to that purpose for their life."

Among the many ways senior adults are involved in volunteer missions:

■ Southern Baptist disaster relief is organized through Baptist state conventions and NAMB. Teams respond following natural or man-made disasters. The ministry is very popular with seniors.

"They play a major role and are often among the first responders," Burton said. "They're often the ones that are able to stay the longest peri-

od of time."

■ Many senior adults also are involved in Baptist Builders, a construction ministry that assists local congregations. Burton said he traveled to Tacoma, Wash., in 1986 for a project that connected young men across the nation with senior adults to help build a Korean church that is now the largest church in the northwest.

■ World Changers is a popular construction ministry primarily aimed at high school students, but Burton said senior adults often serve as crew chiefs, construction coordinators and supervisors.

"We have senior adults that that's all they do in the summer," he said. "They go do World Changers, and that's their thing, which is obviously awesome for us."

■ Campers on Mission is another ministry available to senior adults—most often those who own recreational vehicles.

"These are people that have chosen a very mobile lifestyle, and they want to travel for the purpose of missions. It's not unusual for them to be gone six to nine months at a time, going from mission project to mission project," Burton said.

■ Seniors who want to be involved on a longer-term basis with the IMB can apply for the Masters Program designed for people age 50 and over for two- or three-year assignments. Following the application process, participants are given a specific assignment for which they receive financial support from the IMB.

"In many cultures around the world, maturity is honored and doors can be opened because someone may have lived more years than someone else," Norvelle noted.

She said her father traveled to Zambia several years ago and gained access to some government offices that others had not been able to penetrate because he was retired and had gray hair.

"He was able to make some very significant business arrangements for our personnel because of his elderly status as well as his states-

man's ability," she said. "That's just one example of seniors who at times can bring an added dimension to our personnel on the field."

On the personal side, young missionaries with families often find that seniors on the field fulfill a familiar role such as a surrogate grandparent to their children.

Some senior adults may have reservations about tackling a mission project because they believe they lack the physical endurance necessary for the task—something they believe someone younger could provide more easily.

Norvelle said all types of people are needed, and seniors may be better suited for some situations than younger people who thrive on the fast-paced environment of the 21st century.

"Much of the work we do is relationship building, and that is something that takes time and maybe is harder for someone who is used to being on the go all the time."

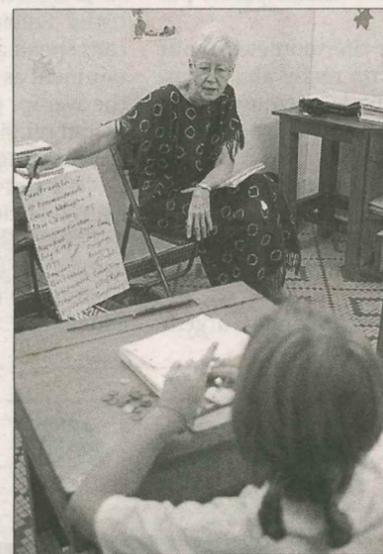
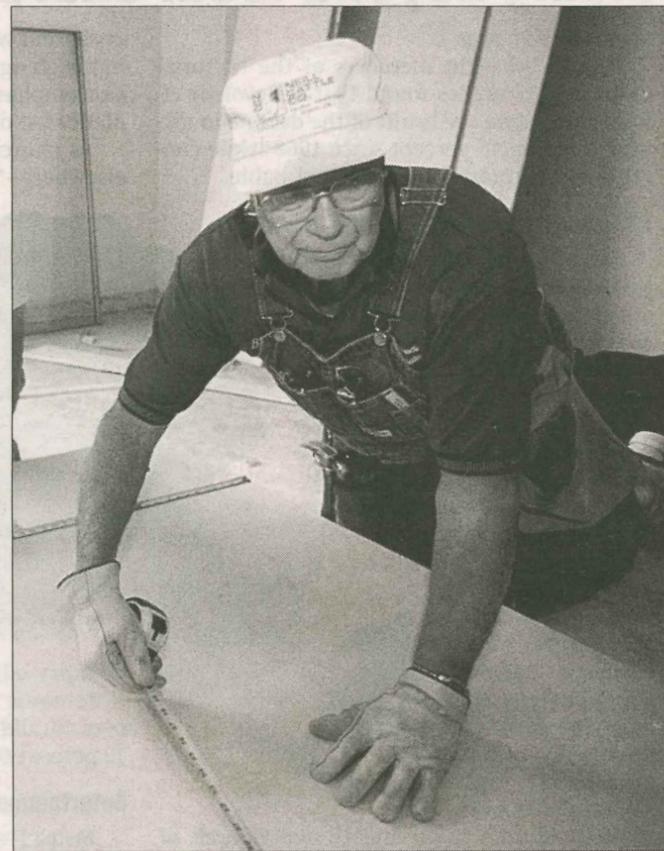
Practical matters are addressed

Obviously medical concerns play a part in the decision-making process when a senior adult is considering mission work overseas, Norvelle noted, and the IMB is careful to send such people to assignments where there is adequate medical care.

"There are many places in the world now where medical care is as good as we have here in the States or growing in that direction or very adequate for the medical needs," she said. "There are some places in the world where it's not. ... We would make sure that they're placed where those needs can be met."

Seniors considering volunteer missions with the International Mission Board can visit going.imb.org on the Web or call (800) 999-3113. For opportunities through the North American Mission Board, the Web site is www.namb.net and the number is (800) 634-2462.

"It's going to take all of us to get the gospel to the whole world, and seniors are an important part of fulfilling the Great Commission," Norvelle said.



CAMPER AT WORK Many Southern Baptist senior adults and RV owners serve through Campers on Mission, traveling the country from project to project while staying in their homes-on-wheels. (BP file photo)

RESPECTED In many countries, a person with gray hair is revered for a lifetime of wisdom. Through the International Mission Board's Master's Program, senior adults such as Elsie McCall serve with career missionaries. (BP file photo)



MEALS ON WHEELS Georgia Baptist disaster relief volunteers fill Red Cross containers with food for delivery to Hurricane Katrina victims. (BP photo by Sherri Brown)

Giving beyond local churches in decline

Continued from page 1

A study of eight members of the National Council of Churches found that benevolent efforts have borne the brunt of the decline in giving, dropping 46 percent since 1968 while congregational funding has remained stable.

KBC churches' CP percentage down

According to Kentucky Baptist Convention statistics, Cooperative Program giving among Kentucky Baptist churches has failed to keep pace with the Consumer Price Index for the past 15 years. Since 1997, the percentage of Kentucky Baptist churches' undesignated giving through the Cooperative Program has declined from more than 10 percent to 7.56 percent in 2005.

A survey of 34 U.S. denominations shows that churches spent an average of 2.1 cents per dollar of donations on overseas missions. The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ all checked in at less than a penny per dollar.

"These numbers are the thermometer of our choices of where our hearts really are," Ronsvalle said. "There is absolutely nothing to prevent us from being faithful, and we're growing cold."

The numbers from the Ronsvalle study do not include donations to disaster relief for 2005's Hurricane Katrina or for the bulk of response to the Asian tsunami in the final week of 2004.

Ronsvalle said people will respond to urgent

crises and will give if they know what their giving is going to accomplish. But she said the vision emphasized in churches has ignored benevolence too often in recent years.

As churchgoers direct most of their money elsewhere—"maybe simply because there are more things to buy," Ronsvalle said—donations that do make it into the offering plate are spent on serving the congregation. And that leaves much of the world out of the loop, she said.

For example, the study theorizes that U.S. Christians could evangelize the world, stop the daily deaths of 29,000 children younger than age

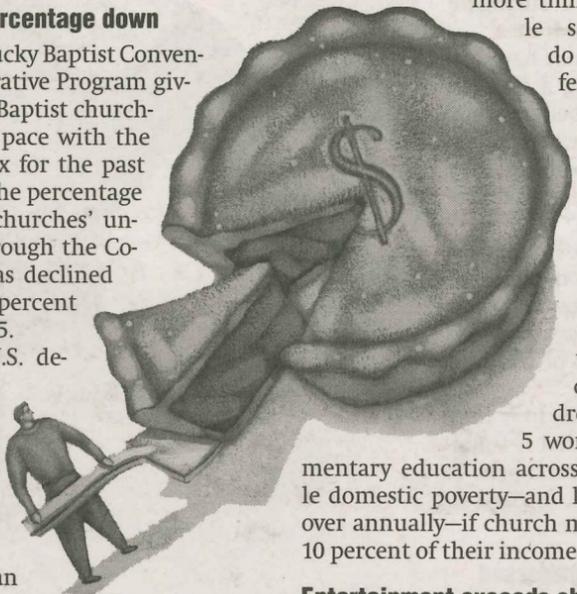
5 worldwide, provide elementary education across the globe and tackle domestic poverty—and have \$150 billion left over annually—if church members tithed a full 10 percent of their income.

Entertainment exceeds church giving

Instead, according to the empty tomb analysis of figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditures Survey, Americans spend almost four times as much on entertainment as on church giving. And 85 percent of the average person's \$565 annual gift to churches and religious organizations is spent internally, according to the study.

"It's not that people aren't generous, but church leadership are not providing a vision to use our power for good," Ronsvalle said. "We're using all of our power for self-gratification."

Jesus "is not impressed with buildings," she added. "He's saying, 'Feed my sheep.'"



New IRS rules require receipts for church & charitable giving

By Jeff Diament
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—The next time you toss bills into the church offering plate, you might want to ask the usher for a receipt.

New federal rules for the 2007 tax year—which took effect Jan. 1—prohibit tax deductions for charitable donations unless the taxpayer can prove the donation through receipts or other official financial records.

The rules, enforced by the Internal Revenue Service, require that people claiming charitable donations back up those deduction claims with canceled checks; records from banks, credit card companies or credit unions; or written notices from the charity or not-for-profit institution.

In the past, the IRS has allowed personal notes, diaries or bank registers as sufficient proof that you actually placed those \$5, \$10 or \$20 bills in the offering plate each week.

Congress approved the new guidelines in August, as an add-on to the Pension Protection Act of 2006. The new rules cover monetary donations to any charitable institution, not just religious ones.

The changes shouldn't affect the giving habits of people who already donate in church-provided envelopes, with checks or over the Internet. Still, a lot of money is given

anonymously.

Cash donors who toss their bills into collection plates must change their habits if they want to claim deductions, said Todd Polyniak, a partner in Sax Macy Fromm & Co., a business accounting and consulting firm in Clifton, N.J.

In the end, Polyniak said, some not-for-profit organizations will bear the burden of the new rules, because offering receipts for every cash donation would strain their resources.

"A lot of them don't have the resources to provide all this documentation," he said. Providing it for everyone is "going to take away from their mission. Or they're going to have to say to folks who are contributing cash, 'Look, we can't really provide you with the documents.'"

"I feel the pain of the not-for-profits more than for the government, but I can understand why the government's doing it," he added. "The government is responding to what they perceive as abuse, and the way they see it, a lot of small dollars add up to big dollars."



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Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund aids more than 1,000 congregations

New Orleans (RNS)—More than 1,000 houses of worship will receive grants from the Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund to help recover from 2005 hurricane damage on the Gulf Coast.

Fund spokesman Bill Pierce said the number of applications far exceeded expectations. Officials originally expected between 500 and 700 applications.

A total of \$25 million of the fund's \$130 million will be distributed to houses of worship, Pierce said. He said between 70 percent and 75 percent of the congregations have received their funds and the rest should receive them soon.

"Clearly this was overwhelmingly successful in terms of the outreach and the education that was done," he said Jan. 4.

Mo. church settles sexual assault suit

Independence, Mo. (ABP)—A prominent Missouri Baptist church has settled a sexual assault lawsuit that a former intern filed against the pastor's son, who was a staff member at the time of the assault.

The Missouri 16th Judicial Circuit Court dismissed the suit against Mark Brooks, his father Paul Brooks and First Baptist Church of Raytown, Mo.

S.R. Prewitt, a former church intern, had filed a civil suit against the younger Brooks—also naming his father and the church—in 2005. It accused Mark Brooks, who is married, of several counts of sexual assault, unlawful imprisonment and infliction of emotional distress over

The fund's work with religious groups became controversial last summer when the co-chairs of its religious advisory committee resigned after questioning the fund's financial oversight. Bishop T.D. Jakes, a Dallas megachurch pastor, and William Gray III, the former president of the United Negro College Fund, said checks were distributed without their knowledge.

Most grants have been for \$20,000 or \$35,000 for physical repairs ranging from water damage to ruined steeples.

Churches were the predominant recipients of the grants but Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist congregations also received funding.

The fund is co-chaired by former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

a period of several months in 2003-2004. It also accused the church and Paul Brooks, its longtime pastor, of negligence in failing to prevent the abuse.

After a January 2004 encounter, the plaintiff became pregnant. Sometime thereafter, the suit said, Mark Brooks left the church's staff to become a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary but remained on the church's payroll until September 2004. The seminary reportedly expelled Brooks after news of the lawsuit broke.

Church leaders investigating the case released a public statement in 2005 acknowledging that Mark Brooks had fathered Prewitt's child.

It's all about our students, part 1

Recognizing student achievement begins long before spring graduation

Anyone who has attended an Oneida graduation normally leaves with two distinct opinions.

First: It was long. I wish I could say that our graduations are not as long as people make them out to be, but they are. Second: Most would agree that it was one of the most meaningful experiences they have had, and the most wonderful graduation they've ever attended. Some people have said that our graduation was a "spiritual" experience.

I do have some bias about our graduations and the effort we put into them. Frankly, it is the most stressful time of the year for me. Many students who come to Oneida have not given parents, teachers or other school officials many opportunities to praise them. Too often the years before coming to OBI have been nonproductive or even full of turmoil. Some of these same students turn their lives around at Oneida, and if we do not take time to praise our young people, neither the student nor his family and friends ever will have the opportunity to hear about the positive things that have happened at OBI. Remember, we are a boarding school, and parents do not have many opportunities to see or hear about what their child is doing. Graduation is a wonderful opportunity for us to do a little honest bragging.

January may not seem to be a likely time of the year to mention graduation, but before graduation can take place and awards can be presented, our faculty and houseparents have two meetings to discuss students who deserve special recognition. Faculty and staff come back from Christmas vacation early to have an all-day meeting be-

fore the students return. These meetings begin at 9 a.m. and normally last until 3 or 4 in the afternoon. Some of us remember meetings that lasted until 7 or 8 p.m.

The first of the two awards meetings was earlier this month. The second will be in April. I thought readers would like to know about some of the awards presented to our students—not only our soon-to-be graduates, but also the awards given to deserving underclassmen.

In the second of this two-part article, I will give the name of each award and the criteria a student must meet to qualify. Each teacher and houseparent has the opportunity to nominate students for these particular honors. Normally four or five students are considered for each award. Everyone has an opportunity to share why he or she believes a certain student deserves the specific awards. After everyone has expressed his views, a vote is taken by secret ballot. Until the awards are presented—at graduation for the seniors or at another special chapel service for underclassmen—only the president and one or two others know who has been selected.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the process we use to honor deserving students, and about the requirements that must be met for a student to be considered for each award. It is a lengthy and time-consuming experience for our faculty and staff. But after all, we are blessed, too. Knowing that we have been able to make a difference in the students' lives is very rewarding. I hope you will also be blessed. Without our friends, we could not make a difference in these lives.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

'The best job I've ever had'

Student Affairs secretary appreciates Clear Creek

Sheila Smith first came to the campus for a women's water aerobics class; now she's secretary to the dean of students.

"When I first came on campus for the ladies' exercise, it was so pretty and I thought it would be great to work here," Sheila said. "The Lord did move, for not long afterward I saw the job-opening announcement in the paper."

Sheila continues to enjoy the aerobics class at the Dudley and Jean Asher Pomeroy Family Life Center, one of three groups that meet each week. About 25 women are in her group. "Water exercise is less stressful on the joints, and the heated pool is great," she said. "I really appreciate the college allowing the public to do this—if not, I wouldn't be here."

She said she enjoys the diversity of her job. "I do a lot of work on the computer and enjoy that," she said. "The personal contacts with students are special. During orientation, I went with them to the welcome dinners provided by churches and got to know the students better."

A native of Cincinnati, Sheila

accepted the Lord at age 9. She is grateful for Christian parents taking her to Sunday school and church. She met her husband 17 years ago in Harlan. They have lived in Bell County for 16 years.

"I miss my family and friends in Ohio, but I love my husband and love the mountains," she said. "It's great to be here."

Her boss, dean of students David Wade, often is teased about the number of secretaries he's had in his six years at Clear Creek (usually because of student graduations). "It took him nine weeks before he told me the name of his last secretary," Sheila said. "He's a great boss and has a nice family. I can say this is the best job I've ever had. I love the Christian atmosphere; it is awesome."

Like all of our employees, Sheila has the opportunity to impact lives of future ministry servants. "I'd like to be a light to them," she said.

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

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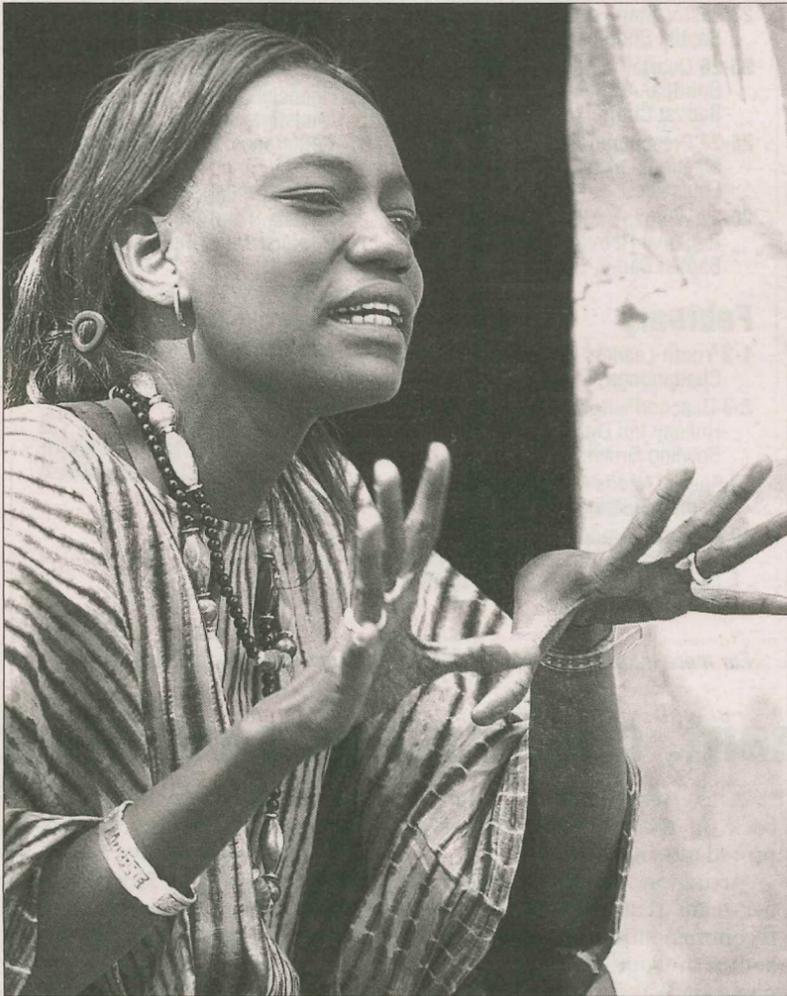
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The gatekeepers

Missionaries say revival among Senegal's Wolof could change all of West Africa



MASTER STORYTELLER A Wolof Christian in West Africa, who was disowned by her family after becoming a believer, tells a Bible story in a village near Dakar, Senegal.

Spiritual battles can't halt gospel's spread among remote Wolof villages

By **Erich Bridges**
SBC International Mission Board

Senegal, West Africa (BP)—Something bad always happened on Tuesday.

Not necessarily disastrous—just bad. Something distracting or debilitating enough to make it hard for Elliott and Pat Nichols to get to the village.

Tuesdays were the days the Southern Baptist missionary couple set aside to drive from the town where they live in northern Senegal to a Wolof village.

The village chief had given them permission to come every week for a year to teach 52 chronological Bible stories. Each story builds on the previous one to lay the foundation of God's salvation from Genesis to Revelation.

But when Tuesday rolled around, either Elliott or Pat—or both—would wake up with sore shoulders or splitting headaches or aching stomachs. Other times, mechanical problems would cripple their truck's engine. If they turned back for home, the engine would begin running smoothly.

They wrote it all off as coincidence, for a while, until it became obvious that spiritual forces were at work. "We don't believe there's a demon under every tree," Nichols said. "But on Tuesdays it was just not natural. We realized this was an attack of the evil one."

That realization—along with God's power over darkness and the prayers of Southern Baptists—gave them new determination to persevere. Why would the devil be so concerned about the telling of some Bible stories in a tiny Wolof village?

Maybe because the village chief invited the Nicholoses to tell the stories with his blessing—in the courtyard of his own compound.

Maybe because superstition, fear and darkness have permeated the area for millennia.

Maybe because the Wolof are the dominant people in the region.

Even on days when the missionary couple shared the stories in the chief's bustling courtyard with no apparent problems, often it seemed no one was listening, much less learning the stories to share with other Wolof. Villagers came one week and asked lots of questions then disappeared for weeks after.

"Some days I was thinking, 'Why do we even bother?'" Nichols said.

One day during a review of key Bible stories, a Wolof man made several mistakes as he recounted names and events. No surprise there.

"But in every detail that wasn't correct, the women would correct him as he was telling the stories," Nichols said. "I was fighting back tears. All the time I'd been saying, 'It's not worth it. They're not listening.' But they were listening. That was one of the greatest moments."

Senegal, West Africa (BP)—A tear rolls down Jim Vaughn's cheek.

The longtime Southern Baptist missionary in Senegal gets emotional when he thinks about Wolof (WUH-luf) friends who have rejected Christ—and others who have embraced Him.

One of the latter, the son of a village chief, came to Vaughn after obtaining his father's permission to be baptized.

"I'm afraid," he told the missionary.

"Afraid of what?" Vaughn asked.

"I'm afraid that if I go into the river to be baptized, I will die," he answered.

So the young man chose a "safer" option: He had three men lower him 180 feet with a rope and pulley into a well—the only other place in the sandy West African landscape where he could be immersed in water.

"If I die, I die," he decided. "I must do all things to follow my God."

That, Vaughn observes, is not the action of a fearful person.

"When I think about him, I'm convicted," Vaughn admits, his voice cracking. "Am I willing to do anything to follow my Lord? I can't say yes. I haven't had to."

Wolof followers of Christ often must make such choices, however. They are bucking centuries of tradition, religion, family, community.

That's what it takes to start a movement.

"Our desire has never changed to see a people group movement," said Vaughn, who designed much of the Bible storying material used with the Wolof. "It's more than just a few churches. It's where the people, as they form their own Wolof groups, reach others."

If such a movement begins among the Wolof, it will reverberate among many other peoples in the region.

"They are a gatekeeper in West Africa," explains missionary Don-

ny Cortimilia, strategy coordinator for the Wolof with his wife, Tammy. "Nothing is going to happen without it happening with the Wolof. If the Wolof are evangelized, have churches and become church planters themselves, it's going to affect all of Senegal."

With as many as 5 million members, the Wolof people dominate society, agriculture, business and politics in Senegal, a growing economic and social force in West Africa.

Many Wolof also have emigrated to Europe and to the United States, where up to 30,000 live in New York alone. Millions more Senegalese are "Wolofized"—so assimilated into the dominant culture that they have abandoned or forgotten their own ethnic languages and traditions.

Fewer than 100 Wolof—perhaps fewer than 50—are Christians.

Most Wolof follow a form of Islam centered around three "brotherhoods" that influence religious, business and social life. It's also permeated by magic, amulets and occult beliefs.

Tall, regal and proud, the Wolof long have mingled with other peoples—including the French, West Africa's main colonizers—without losing their strong cultural identity.

They value hospitality, a rigid sense of honor, a vivid use of language—and above all, community: the family, the clan, the group rule.

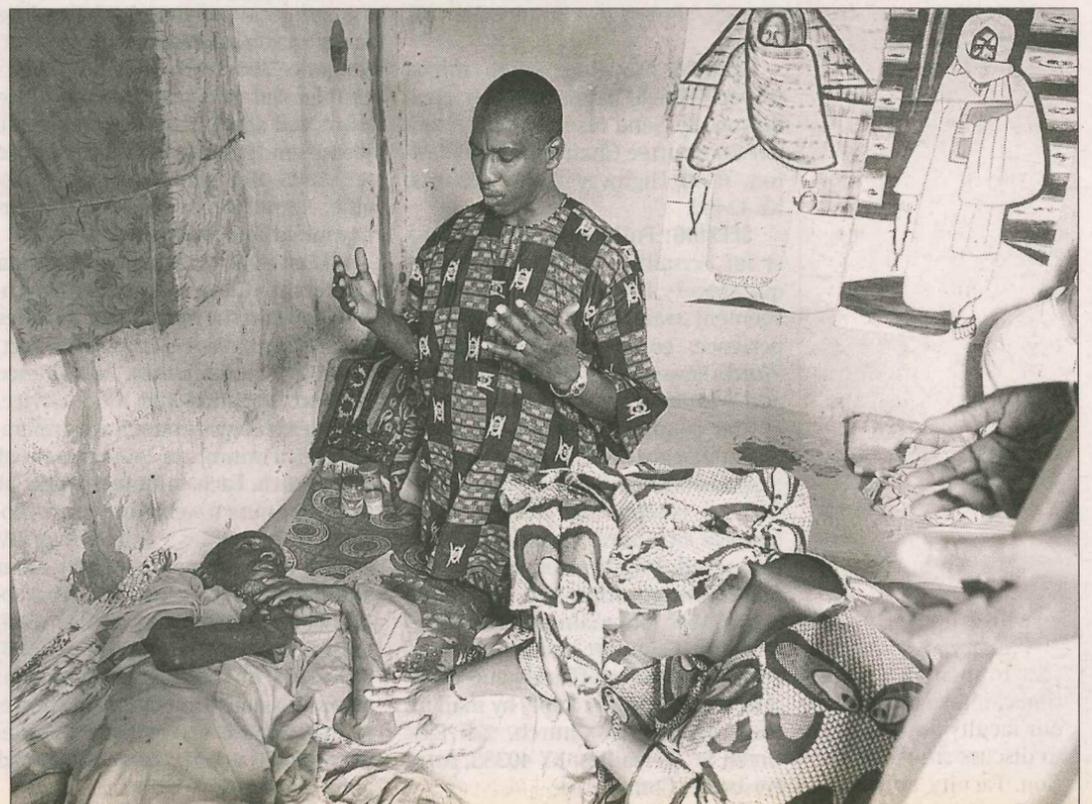
"It's easy to say the largest barrier (to the gospel) is Islam, but in many senses it's tradition," Cortimilia said.

How to cut through the tradition?

"Our No. 1 strategy is prayer," Mrs. Cortimilia notes. "Our No. 2 strategy is making sure God's Word is penetrating all corners of the people group. No. 3 is personal witness, whether it's a missionary, a volunteer or a Senegalese believer. Everything we do centers around those things."



SERVANT'S SMILE Missionary Pat Nichols smiles during a visit to a Wolof village in Senegal. As she and her husband, Elliott, developed relationships with the West African people group, they shared Bible stories and showed the "Jesus" film to villagers.



INTERCEDING Elliott Nichols (center) prays for a Wolof village chief who has been sick for many weeks.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Pray for Scott and Joyce Pittman, partnership coordinators in Teresina, Brazil, as they make plans for 2007 Kentucky Baptist volunteer teams to serve in Brazil.

■ Pray for mission trip team leaders as volunteers are secured and travel arrangements are made for overseas projects.

■ Pray for Bill Barker, director of Appalachian Regional Ministries, and Charles Blair, Mississippi River Ministry consultant, as they plan and prepare for 2007 ministry projects.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—First Church ordained **Dorothy Bailey, Dennis Chaney, Jeff Geron, Ray Lanham, Leigh Mikovch, Melanie Redden** and **Charles Taylor** as deacons Jan. 7. **Mark Hopper** is pastor.

■ **BROOKSVILLE**—Brooksville Church recently called **Calvin Perry** as interim pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Ballardsville Church ordained **Kurtis Winters** the to gospel ministry Jan. 7. **Gary French** is pastor.

■ **EDDYVILLE**—First Church will host Financial Peace University classes each Thursday at 6:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 15. The 13-week video course teaches families to manage their financial resources and financial stewardship. For more information, contact the church at (270) 388-7693. **Tim Purdue** is pastor.

■ **LEBANON**—Woodlawn Church recently called **Daniel Calves** as pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Chevy Chase Church has changed its name to Journey and relocated to 3450 Richmond Road, Suite 130 in Lexington. **Jim McKenzie** is pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Somerset



Pulaski Association, the Somerset-Pulaski Ministerial Association and area school systems will host a "Parenting with Purpose" conference with **Jeff and Debbie McElroy**, Jan. 26-27 at the Center for Rural Development. For ticket information, call High Street Church at (606) 678-8973.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host the Southern gospel **Crossmen Quartet** in concert Jan. 20, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218.

Green Acres Church recently honored **Porter and Katie Smith** on their 50th wedding anniversary. **Dan Powell** is pastor.

LifeWay VP announces retirement, continues as consultant

Nashville (BP)—After a 15-year career at LifeWay Christian Resources, Mike Arrington, vice president of the corporate affairs division, has announced his retirement effective Feb. 1.

But Arrington is the first to say that his mission at LifeWay is not yet complete. He will remain as a consultant to the president, providing leadership to LifeWay's "A Defining Moment" campaign and other development efforts.

Arrington was an executive with Texas Utilities Electric Company when Jimmy Draper, then newly elected as president of the Sunday School Board, asked him to join his leadership team in December 1991.

Noting that "I knew God had called me to LifeWay for a specific purpose," Arrington pointed to four specific events in his LifeWay tenure that confirm God's leading: a new name, an innovative style of products, a renewal of the conference centers and a campaign with global implications.

During Draper's first year, he asked his senior leadership team to identify top strategic issues the Sunday School Board was facing. When Arrington made a case for changing the name of the agency to better reflect its work, Draper told him: "Not in my presidency"—thinking that was something that would never be accepted by Southern Baptists.

A few years later the issue was back on the table and Draper approved moving forward.

Arrington assembled a 19-member team that received about 450 recommendations from across the Southern Baptist Convention. The name LifeWay rose to the top.

"The reality of the word 'LifeWay,' coupled with the meaning of John 14:6 made it a great choice," Arrington said. "The name change has given us Kingdom opportunities and positions us as a dynamic, caring organization working to impact lives."

In 1992, Roy Edgemon and Avery Willis approached Arrington with an idea for the development of Life Support materials. He said that was

the beginning of extensive changes in the undated materials at LifeWay.

In the mid-90s, Arrington saw that Glorieta and Ridgecrest Conference Centers had experienced decline and deterioration. For the next decade, he worked tirelessly to upgrade the conference centers and polish a tarnished reputation.

Arrington said he agreed to remain with LifeWay as a consultant "to help Dr. Rainer and LifeWay achieve success" in the \$29 million "A Defining Moment" campaign.

"The ministry opportunity and value of this campaign are enormous," Arrington noted, "and it positions LifeWay in a way it hasn't been positioned before."

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

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.

24 "Love 101" True Love Waits Conference, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

24 Hispanic Evangelism Conference, First Baptist Church, Mount Washington.

26-27 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

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

CLASSIFIED ADS

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

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

SEEKING: Full-time office manager for Versailles Baptist Church. Requirements: Professional office management training or equivalent experience; computer proficiency in Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Publisher and Windows; excellent interpersonal and communication skills. Management experience highly desired. Responsibilities include (but not limited to) receptionist duties, maintenance of church calendar, facilities scheduling and operations, office communication and correspondence, Web site maintenance, secretarial staff support, management of non-ministerial staff and general administrative duties. Reply by mail to: Versailles Baptist Church, 125 East Green St., Versailles, KY 40383, Attn: Personnel Committee.

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: 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: Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to Calvary Hill Baptist Church, PO Box 482, Stanford, KY 40484; or brooks124@peoplepc.com, subject: youth minister.

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 minister of youth/children. Salary negotiable based on education and experience. Send resúmes: Dr. Tom Stokes, First Baptist Church, 302 North Magnolia, Tompkinsville, KY 42167. Telephone: (207) 487-6538.

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.

SEEKING: Morning piano player for small congregation. Call pastor at (502) 777-6797.

SEEKING: Pianist/organist with strong accompanying, sight-reading and improvisational skills for blended worship for Versailles Baptist Church. Average worship attendance: 400. Salary negotiable. Some organ training preferred. Must be available Sunday mornings, Wednesday nights and occasional special services and rehearsals. For more information, contact Maria Lester, minister of music, at (859) 873-7338; or e-mail maria@versaillesbaptist.org. John Brandon is pastor.

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.

KALEO conference assists students called to ministry

By Michael McCormack
Baptist Press

New Orleans (BP)—Discerning God's call can be difficult no matter how old a person is, but it can be especially challenging for teenagers and young adults. "God called. You answered. Now what?" was the theme of the first KALEO conference last fall. Another event is set for March 23-24 in South Carolina.

Sponsored by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's Missions Prep Network, the inaugural KALEO conference was hosted by New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Organizers say the focus of the KALEO events is to help students identify and commit to a specific calling to serve God vocationally.

"God has something very special in mind for the rest of your life," Donald King, director of the conference, told the more than 300 students and leaders.

"You won't have all the answers when you leave here, but we want to help you know where you can go with your questions and who you can talk to," he said.

Also a senior consultant for NAMB, King added, "Your call to ministry is not about you. It's about what God is going to do through your life. Do not limit what God can do."

The conference offered students four large-group sessions and eight breakout sessions geared toward helping them acknowledge and implement God's call in their lives.

Breakout sessions included such topics as spiritual warfare, women in ministry and financial preparedness. The four group sessions concentrated on knowing God, confirming His call, identifying the ways He gifts people for ministry and obeying the Great Commission.

Speakers included Thomas Hammond, NAMB's senior director of church evangelism; Kim Davis, author and former Southern Baptist international missionary; and David Platt, senior pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala.

Through testimony and scriptural application, speakers discussed many aspects of God's calling to missions, the Great Commission and other topics.

Allen Jackson, director of New Orleans Seminary's Youth Ministry Institute, led students in a time of prayer and commissioning. KALEO participants filled the front steps inside the seminary's Leavell Chapel as they acknowledged God's call.

The next conference, KALEO: North Greenville, is scheduled for March 23-24 in Taylors, S.C. For more information about the Missions Prep Network or KALEO, visit www.missionsprepnetwork.com or www.kaleoconference.org.

Students urged to 'tell the nations'

By Brandon Bryant
Baptist Press

Atlanta (BP)—With a record attendance of more than 20,000 students, Passion 07 challenged young men and women to spend their lives telling the nations about Christ.

The four-day conference, Jan. 1-4, was held simultaneously via satellite in two Atlanta locations, Philips Arena and the Georgia World Congress Center.

In addition to Passion founder Louie Giglio, students heard from John Piper, Beth Moore and Francis Chan. Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Charlie Hall and David Crowder Band led times of worship.

"There is a massive worldwide after-party. It's called heaven," Giglio said. "The invitations are going out in every single language, and those who have the story need to take the story to the nations, to the 6,800 people groups that don't yet have the gospel.

"God is asking many of us to pack up the American Dream and is extending the invitation to go to the unreached people groups of the world," he added.

In addition to the challenge, Passion 07 provided students the opportunity to answer that challenge immediately. The world mission-themed Global Awakening exhibit provided information about the needs of various nations across the globe, and then informed young men and women how they could "Do Something Now" to help meet those needs.

"Through a window in the Georgia World Congress Center, I could see that they stopped letting people go into the Global Awakening area until others came out," Giglio said. "How many places do you see a thousand people waiting in such a line?"

Funding wells in Africa

One mission challenge was to finance the digging of 11 wells in African communities. By the final day of the conference, supporters had given enough money for 39 wells, Giglio said.

Closer to home, in a project called Touch Atlanta, students do-



minated towels and socks to the city's homeless.

"These people may not know anything about Passion, but we want them to know that followers of Christ have been here," Giglio said.

Many students explored various avenues of service through organizations such as the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Although a student may have the skills necessary to perform a specific task, he or she must also have a certain level of spiritual maturity, said the IMB's John Robinson.

"I look for two things—passion and teachability," Robinson said, adding that those two traits are exactly what he sees in this generation of college students.

"I'm somewhat amazed by people who feel that this generation is not committed," he said. "These guys are passionate and they're teachable. ... Students are a great resource from the Lord for what we're doing."



HUMBLE SERVANTS Author Beth Moore told Passion 07 conference attendees that humility is essential if a person is to be used by God. (BP photo by Jay Saucedo)

Baylor University student Taylor Dodgen agrees that God is at work in the lives of the current generation. "God is using ordained, gifted leaders to inspire our generation ... to the end of His glorification," he said.

On the second day of the conference, author and speaker Beth Moore talked about the importance of humility.

"This (generation) is so important to me because of the huge things that happen in life from 18, 19 and 20 years old," she said. "I want 20,000 young people to be feverishly and ridiculously used by God. But that will not happen if pride gets in the way."

"Do we really love God?"

Francis Chan, teaching pastor of Cornerstone Community Church in Simi Valley, Calif., spoke about being a lukewarm Christian.

"There is a concern: Do we really love God?" he asked. "I hear everyone singing loud but ... it's not about words. How much love are you in? You do crazy things when you're in love. You're happy to give anything. It doesn't feel like service when you're in love. Jesus is banging on that door saying, 'Let me in. Let me in. I want this love relationship with you.'"

At the close of Passion 07, event organizers announced that there will be no Passion 08, but rather many smaller events held in the United States and other parts of the world. Giglio said the goal for the world tour is to go into 20 cities across 15 nations next year. He told the crowd that financial support was needed if the tour was to take place. The cost of the event is estimated at \$4 million. An offering was collected to support it.

For more information about Passion, visit www.268generation.com. For more information about IMB projects for students, visit www.the.task.org.

With additional reporting by Rick Hoganson

RECORD ATTENDANCE
With 21,000 students registered, Passion organizers held the event via satellite in two locations. (BP photo by Kaysie Dorsey)



REVVED FOR WORSHIP
Students at Passion 07 in Atlanta clap during worship. Chris Tomlin, Matt Redman, Charlie Hall and David Crowder Band led times of worship. (BP photo by Kaysie Dorsey)

Parks Baptist Scholars Program

Now accepting applications for Fall 2007

The Parks Baptist Scholarship, offering full tuition, room and board, is the most prestigious scholarship offered by Georgetown College. Established in 1994 to pay tribute to former trustee Dr. Paul Parks '43 and his late wife, Phyllis, the Parks Baptist Scholarship recognizes highly qualified Baptist students who pursue an undergraduate degree at Georgetown College in preparation for lifelong learning, teaching, and Christian service.

— **Georgetown College Congratulates and Welcomes** —
Parks Baptist Scholars 2006 - 07



Back Row (left to right):

Adam Glover, Glasgow, KY, Class of 2007, Philosophy
Jacob Price, Somerset, KY, Class of 2010, Pulaski County High School
Tyler Stewart, Crestwood, KY, Class of 2008, Communication
Taylor Rains, Paducah, KY, Class of 2008, Political Science

Front Row (left to right):

Brittany Pappas, Bassett, VA, Class of 2007, Economics
Katie Boyd, Mayfield, KY, Class of 2010, Graves County High School
Sarah Schobel, Union, KY, Class of 2009, Education & Math
Mary Alice Birdwhistell, Lawrenceburg, KY, Class of 2009, English

"... Aside from the opportunity to associate with an incredible group of students, the (Parks) scholarship has allowed me to grow spiritually and given me several leadership opportunities that I might not have received at another college..."

-Adam Glover, Class of 2007

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For more information, or to receive an application for the Fall 2007 Parks Baptist Scholars Program, contact:

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400 East College Street • Georgetown, KY 40324

(800) 788-9985

www.georgetowncollege.edu