

WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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U.S. 'satisfied' with religion's role in nation

Washington (RNS)—For the third year in a row, the number of Americans calling for less religious influence in public life exceeded the number of Americans who want more, according to a new Gallup poll. Most Americans, however, remain "generally satisfied" with organized religion's role in the U.S., the survey found.

Nearly 40 percent of Americans say religion's level of influence "in the nation" should not change, 32 percent would like it to have less influence and 27 percent would like it to have more, according to the survey.

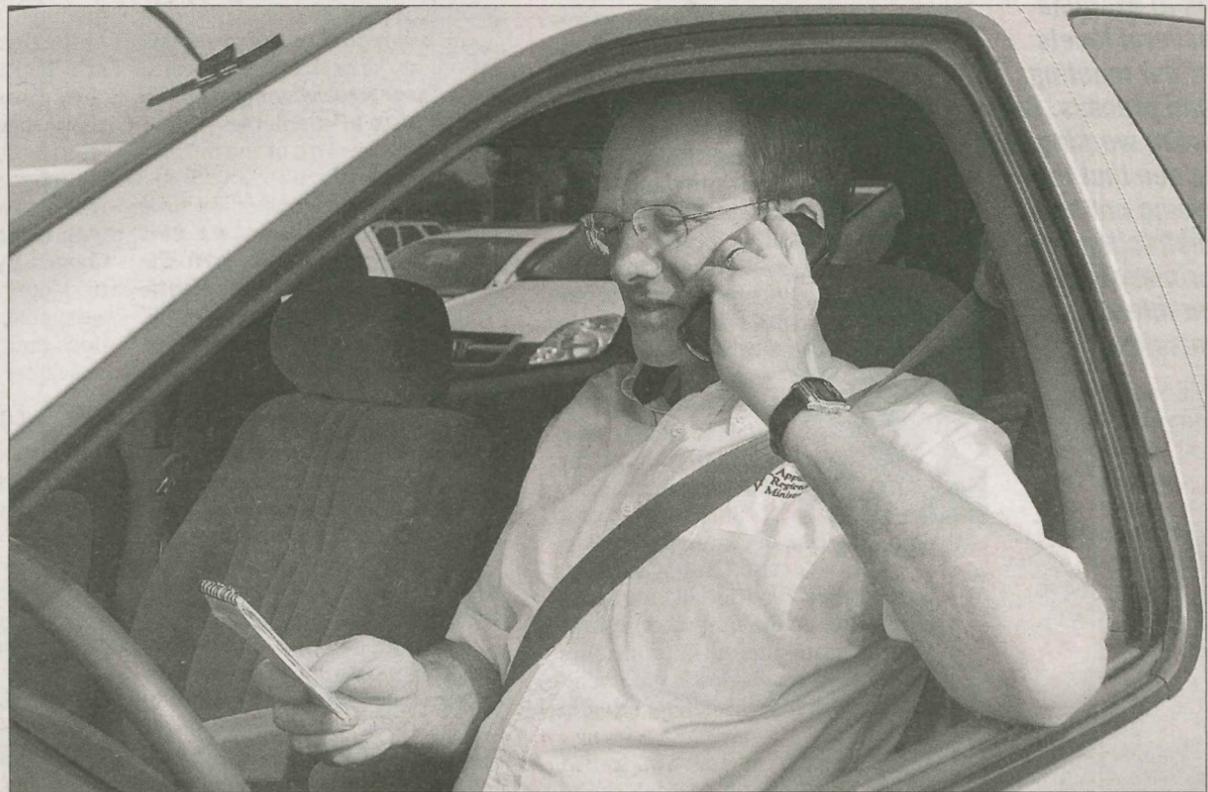
Weekly churchgoers are much more likely to agree that religion should have greater influence on government and politics than those who go to church less frequently, the survey found.

Opinions also tended to shift depending on political affiliation. Approximately 41 percent of Democrats believed religion should have less impact, while 43 percent of Republicans felt it should have more.

During President Bush's first term, 2001 through 2004, more Americans believed the role of religion should increase. But by 2003, the numbers began to shift, and by 2005 a greater number of Americans believed religion should have less influence on public life.

The number of Americans who think religion should have less impact has increased 10 percentage points since 2001, according to Gallup. The poll of 1,018 adults was conducted between Jan. 15 and Jan. 18.

Son of Appalachia



**OFFICE WITH AN AIRBAG** Southern Baptist North American missionary Bill Barker makes a phone call from his minivan. As director of Appalachian Regional Ministry, Barker serves on behalf of millions of Appalachians living in 10 states. He estimates he travels 50,000 miles each year. The week of prayer for North American Missions is March 4-11. This year's goal for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions is \$57 million. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

Barker returns to roots ministering to 'his' people in 10 states

**Hurricane, W.Va.**—It's another early morning for Bill Barker in the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia. He leaves home earlier than usual in his brown Toyota minivan.

As he tops a mountain crest, Barker pulls off the road to talk to God.

"I look out across the mountains as the morning mist and fog begin to lift," he says. "You can still see the green valleys below filled with fog. It's such a beautiful sight. I stand there and pray, 'Lord,

please send revival and fill these mountains again with Your glory even as You fill these valleys with the morning mist.'"

Born in Boone County, W. Va., Barker grew up in coal country but left in 1969 with plans never to return. He said a higher calling from God Himself told him seven years ago that he should "go home" to West Virginia after a 32-year absence.

As a native Appalachian, Barker said he is "uniquely qualified" for

his current post as director of Appalachian Regional Ministry. ARM is a partnership ministry of NAMB, national Woman's Missionary Union and 11 state Baptist conventions, including Kentucky's.

With profound poverty, joblessness and an alarming high school dropout rate, the region has many physical and material needs that can be met by ARM, but it's the spiritual needs that concern Barker most.

The spiritual lostness is "overwhelming," Barker said, "Within the 10-state region I cover, there are 13

□ See Barker returns to roots ... *Page 3*



Study explores common traits of leading evangelistic churches

By Libby Lovelace  
SBC LifeWay Christian Resources

**Nashville (BP)**—In recent years, leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention and the broader evangelical world have sounded the alarm that churches are becoming less and less effective in evangelism.

Baptisms among Southern Baptist churches have numbered less than 400,000 each of the last five years, and 2005 saw the lowest total since 1993.

With that in mind, LifeWay Research conducted an analysis of Southern Baptist churches that are effective in reaching people for Christ.

With input from LifeWay Christian Resources President Thom Rainer, LifeWay Research studied churches that meet the following criteria:

baptized more than 25 people per year for 10 consecutive years; had overall worship attendance growth during the same 10 years; and had a membership-to-baptism ratio of no more than 20-to-1.

Out of more than 43,000 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention, 22 met the criteria based on data they reported annually. Of those, 19 agreed to have several staff members and lay leaders participate in one-on-one interviews.

What do these 19 leading congregations have in common?

Pastors set the tone

The most common element is the essential role of the senior pastor. Results indicate the pastor sets the tone for the church and regards evangelism with utmost importance.

"These pastors do more than stress the importance of evangelism; they lead by example as they are personally passionate about and involved in sharing Christ both from the pulpit and through personal interaction with the unchurched and lost," said Brad Waggoner, director of LifeWay Research.

Those interviewed describe the pastors with terms such as "highly relational," "personable," "caring," "passionate," "humble," "strong leader," "a shepherd" and "authentic."

"This is strikingly similar to the findings in the popular book 'Good to Great' by Jim Collins, as he looked into the leadership of great companies," Waggoner said. "Collins concluded that great leaders are both driven and humble. The pastors of

the churches studied appear to be similar. They love God, love their flock and are compassionate for the lost. They are resolutely committed to reaching the lost and yet they lead with a spirit of humility, authenticity and relational warmth."

Nearly all of the churches describe their polity as pastor- or staff-led. Study participants indicate the pastor provides significant leadership, and both church staff and lay leaders find it easy to follow their pastor.

Staff members interviewed indicate the pastor with whom they serve is effective in creating an empowering environment in which the staff has input and is treated as important to the team. A common term used to describe the leadership style of the

□ See Study examines top ... *Page 8*

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, February 7.

# IMB investigation

## Board addresses charges leveled by fellow trustee

**Wade Burleson's motion "has caused us to examine several facets of our meetings and process. But we're working hard to see that this would not be a distraction from our primary focus on international missions."**

IMB President Jerry Rankin



Wade Burleson

Ontario, Calif.—Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees, following an internal investigation, have rejected a fellow trustee's accusations of impropriety and unauthorized tightening of doctrinal parameters.

The board approved the report, based on its own executive committee's investigations into the charges, during the IMB's Jan. 29-31 meeting in Ontario, Calif.

The action came in response to a motion by trustee Wade Burleson during last year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting that was referred to the trustee board.

Burleson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., called for the SBC Executive Committee to appoint a committee to investigate alleged improprieties by IMB trustees. Burleson did not attend last week's trustees' meeting in California.

His motion at the SBC called for an investigation to "determine sources of the controversies in the International Mission Board, and make findings and recommendations ... so that trustees of the IMB might effect reconciliation and effectively discharge their responsibilities to God and fellow Southern Baptists by cooperating together to accomplish evangelism and missions to the glory of God."

In their response, the trustees noted that the "diversity of personalities, backgrounds and churches represented invariably is reflected in different opinions in giving oversight to the work of the IMB. This diversity is necessary in arriving at consensus. ... We contend that any controversies have been dealt with according to appropriate biblical guidelines and in line with democratic processes and approved board polity."

The trustees, with the "counsel and concurrence of the International Mission Board executive staff," replied to each of the five concerns in Burleson's motion:

- Regarding alleged manipulation of the IMB trustee nominating process by the Southern Baptist Convention, trustees said the IMB "has no authority to speak to the work of the nominating committee elected by the Southern Baptist Convention or to investigate the process by which it does its work."

- Regarding alleged attempts by one or more heads of other Southern Baptist entities to "influence and/or coerce" IMB trustees and administration to take a particular course of action, trustees responded: "While the IMB may exercise authority over its own president and elected staff, we are not in a position to question or investigate the actions and motives of heads of other entities."

## Rankin urges expanded missionary force

Ontario, Calif. (BP)—Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees heard a challenge to speed up the sluggish growth of Southern Baptists' global mission force and appointed 43 new missionaries during their Jan. 29-31 meeting in Ontario, Calif.

In his report to trustees, IMB President Jerry Rankin appealed for a "new resolve" among Southern Baptists to counteract a slowdown in the growth of the international mission force.

"I really believe what we have seen God doing in the first six years of this century exceeds even the previous decade in fulfilling the Great Commission," Rankin said. "It's evident God is using the volatile events around the world to turn the hearts of people to spiritual answers that only Jesus can provide. But whether or not people have an opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the (gospel) is directly linked to the number of God's people who will go in response to His call to engage in cross-cultural witness."

IMB regional missionary leaders estimate a growth in the missionary force to 8,500—from the current total of about 5,100—is needed to effectively touch the remaining unreached peoples of the world in partnership with overseas Baptists and other Great Commission groups.

"However, as we move into 2007

Burleson, in a Feb 1 weblog response, said that was precisely the reason he asked the SBC for an external investigation of the IMB in the first place.

"The IMB is not in a position to question or investigate the motives of heads of other entities," he wrote, "but somebody sure should be in a position to demand that an agency head stop undermining the work, vision and agenda of a fellow agency head—and that somebody is the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention or the SBC herself."

- Regarding the use of closed trustee forums and executive sessions and the "propriety and/or impropriety of excluding any individual trustee ... from participating in meetings where the full IMB is convened," the trustees stated: "The IMB does not allow formal business to be transacted in its closed trustee forums, but uses this time for prayer, personal testimonies and preliminary questions and discussions regarding issues of mutual concern between senior staff and trustees. Official executive sessions are limited to matters dealing with sensitive personnel actions related to staff, missionaries and/or trustees or those in which public exposure would result in detrimental consequences for personnel serving in sensitive and restricted locations around the world."

"Any actions that may be taken to exclude any trustee from participation in closed board sessions by the chairman will have been made with

we see a disturbing trend," Rankin said. "Appointments of new missionaries have plateaued, and the candidate pool is smaller than it has ever been in my tenure as president."

"Regrettably, we had to defer qualified missionaries being sent to the field in 2003 because Southern Baptists had not increased their giving commensurate with those being called out of our churches to go as missionaries. But churches got the message and in the last two years have responded with record levels of giving to the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. We were able to remove those restrictions and give priority to sending out career missionaries."

### Goal: 1,000 missionaries a year

"In 2005, (trustees) approved a goal of sending out a thousand missionaries each year. I believe Southern Baptists are capable of sending out at least a thousand missionaries each year. They are stepping up to provide the financial support to make that happen. Money clearly follows missionaries, and as more and more are sent out, they represent more and more churches who then have a personalized identification with international missions."

New IMB missionaries in 2006 numbered 758, including 306 long-term missionaries and 452 in

short-term (two- or three-year) categories.

Rankin challenged Southern Baptists to send out 800 to 1,000 short-term personnel a year. Personnel serving short-term eventually will increase the number of long-term personnel, he added. For each of the last eight years, one-third or more of all new long-term IMB missionaries have had previous short-term experience.

"I am not suggesting loosening our qualifications," Rankin said. "We must be sure our candidates are doctrinally sound, healthy in mind and body and adequately equipped by education and experience. But I am concerned that we must find ways to reverse the current trend by a renewed commitment to (communicate) that the International Mission Board is the agency of choice for Southern Baptist missionaries being called out of our churches."

Trustees traveled to nearby Highland, Calif., where they were joined by hundreds of California Baptists for the appointment of 43 missionaries Jan. 31 at Immanuel Baptist Church.

Rankin cited the diversity and various backgrounds of the group. "Yet, there is one thing (you) all have in common," he said. "Someone touched your life with the witness about Jesus Christ ... and the Great Commission became very personal."

support of the board as a last resort and in order to avoid disruption and distractions to the board fulfilling its assigned tasks with unity and appropriate decorum."

Burleson was excluded from committee participation by former IMB trustee chairman Tom Hatley last year after Burleson publicly opposed trustee positions and commented on trustee meetings in his weblog. Current trustee chairman John Floyd has continued the exclusion.

But Burleson said he agreed that the IMB's business has been conducted in a more appropriate manner since the board's leadership changed hands and new trustees joined the body in June.

- Regarding "new doctrinal requisites for eligibility to serve as employees or missionaries of the IMB beyond the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message," trustees maintained that "while the Baptist Faith and Message represents a general confession of Southern Baptist beliefs related to biblical teachings on primary doctrinal and social issues, the IMB retains the prerogative and responsibility of further defining the parameters of doctrinal beliefs and practices of its missionaries who serve Southern Baptists with accountability to this board."

That came in response to a request to investigate why trustees had instituted requirements related to the use of private prayer languages and modes of baptism for missionary candidates.

Burleson said that aspect of the report "causes me the most con-

cern." But he declined to comment further on the subject until two separate ad hoc IMB committees appointed to review the policies report back to trustees at the board's March meeting.

- Regarding the "suppression of dissent by trustees in the minority ... and the propriety of any agency forbidding a trustee, by policy, from publicly criticizing a board approved action," the trustees insisted all board-approved actions "result from a process of committee ... consideration before they are brought to a plenary session for adoption. All trustees have opportunity in the committee process and plenary session to express and advocate minority opinions. As in any democratic body, once the majority has determined the action to be taken, the board feels that the action should receive the unified public support of all trustees for the sake of effectively moving forward to fulfill our mission task."

Burleson said he agreed, but "with one caveat—if the policy violates Scripture, then no matter how strong anyone's desire for unity is, it cannot become a stumbling block to seeking correction."

After the vote, IMB President Jerry Rankin said the Burleson motion "has caused us to examine several facets of our meetings and process. But we're working hard to see that this would not be a distraction from our primary focus on international missions."

Compiled from reporting by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press

## McQuilkin highlights 10 major activities of the Holy Spirit

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

Lexington—Southern Baptists have been so afraid of extreme teachings on the Holy Spirit that they have forgotten He is the third person of the Trinity and can empower them, says a former missionary and college president.

"The Holy Spirit appears in Genesis 1:2 and more than 500 times from Genesis to Revelation," said Robertson McQuilkin, who led a "Life in the Spirit" workshop at the Kentucky Baptist Convention's recent Shepherding the Shepherd conference.

"He is charged with carrying out the work of the Father and the Son," McQuilkin added. "When you have a companion and ignore Him, it's tragic."

McQuilkin, the author of an interactive workbook on the Holy Spirit, said he spent two years studying Scripture to prepare the material, which he said transformed his life.

His research revealed 10 major activities of the Spirit and how each one of them affects Christ's followers, said the former president of Columbia International University.

McQuilkin described the first four as foundational, including:

**Creating.** The Spirit hovered over the darkness when God created the

world and was present in the act of creation: "We're custom-designed. God's potential is stamped on us."

God created humans in His likeness for companionship so they could be one with Him, McQuilkin said. The tragedy is humans walked away from that fellowship, which he said led to the Spirit's second foundational activity.

**Revealing reality about Himself.** The Spirit reveals the truth of God and how people can find their way back to Him, as well as inspiring the authors of Scripture, McQuilkin said.

In addition to directing the Bible's writers, He illuminates its truth to help people today understand it, McQuilkin said.

**Salvaging lost people.** While Jesus is the One who redeems people from sin, everything about Jesus involved the Holy Spirit, from conception to empowerment, healing and miracles, McQuilkin said.

"Everything about Jesus is Spirit-energized and Spirit-led," he added. "If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit, how much more do we?"

In addition, the Spirit convicts people of their sin and remakes them into God-compatible people, he said.

That means that although they

will make mistakes, Christ's followers won't consistently choose to do wrong, McQuilkin added.

**Indwelling people.** In other words, He comes to live with believers, quickening their thinking and giving them discernment, McQuilkin said.

The Holy Spirit also is a comforter and friend and alerts believers' conscience when they stumble, he said.

"I get excited when I think about this blessing," McQuilkin noted. "He liberates you to focus on Him. If you want to be transformed, that's the only place to begin."

McQuilkin said the next three activities involve growth, starting with changing people into ever-greater likenesses of Jesus.

Next is filling people with Christ's presence and power. The normal Christian life is to be filled with the Spirit, McQuilkin said.

Asking what it means to be filled with the Spirit, he answered by saying there are three measures: Volitional: Who is in charge of your life? Subjective: Do you feel full? Objective: What evidence of Holy Spirit activity can others see?

Too many people focus on their subjective experience, but evidence that others can see is more important, McQuilkin said.

Acknowledging there is controversy over the meaning of being filled with the Spirit, he added, "Mystery is God's glory. I'm always suspicious when there's a mystery and (someone) gets it all figured out. I'm wondering if we take one part of truth to extremes and distort both parts."

The third area of growth is the Holy Spirit empowering believers to overcome temptations to sin. That confuses many people because they often find themselves falling into temptation, McQuilkin said.

He said resisting requires effort, including prayer, regular Bible study and Christian fellowship.

Two other activities involve ministry, which includes the Spirit giving each person abilities to serve God effectively, and sending every believer on mission to help bring unbelievers to faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit's tenth activity is uniting people in an intimate love relationship with God, McQuilkin said.

He also emphasized the necessity of identifying one's gifts and asking the Spirit to help develop those gifts.

"You can't glorify anybody you don't love," McQuilkin said, adding that the Holy Spirit "created us out of love for love."

*"If Jesus needed the Holy Spirit, how much more do we?"*

Robertson McQuilkin

## Barker returns to Appalachian roots to serve among 'his' people

Continued from page 1

million-plus unchurched men, women, boys and girls. ... Seventy percent of the Appalachian Mountain people are unchurched."

Although it seems there are churches around every bend in every little mountain hamlet, Barker said overall church attendance is down. Many churches have closed.

"Even today, after many years as a Southern Baptist missionary, I drive across these mountains but have to pull off to the side of the road occasionally to weep over the lostness of Appalachia, my people."

Barker and his wife, Arlene, are among more than 5,300 missionaries in the U.S., Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

The annual week of prayer for North American missions is March 4-11. This year's offering goal is \$57 million; 100 percent of the gifts will be used to support or assist North American missionaries.

"The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is one of the most effective ways of being able to reach out and touch lives," Barker said.

"Because Southern Baptists give, and because they care, I don't have to spend my time out trying to raise money. Instead, the offering gives me a way to devote myself 100 percent to the ministry."

Barker drives 50,000 miles a year and spends as many as 180 nights away from home as he encourages pastors, coordinates volunteers, fills pulpits and ministers in other ways to "his" people.

He describes himself as just a preacher who "loves to get out and knock on doors and visit with people—maybe drink a cup of coffee at the kitchen table with them. And often, when I'm out working with



**LEARNING ABOUT APPALACHIA** Southern Baptist North American Mission Board missionary Bill Barker and Teresa Parrett greet visitors to the Appalachian Regional Ministry's informational booth at the 2006 SBC annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

a pastor, I'll just go out and go cold door-knocking with him in the community.

"I've never had a door slammed in my face," Barker said. "I've never had anyone to say, 'You can't come into my home.' Everybody respects religion in the mountains."

### Diverse mission field

The Appalachian Mountains extend from southern New York to northern Mississippi. Barker's ministry area includes all of West Virginia and portions of Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

It is a diverse region, he noted. Recent "transplants" from Florida, south Georgia and Alabama live in the north Georgia mountains, while the coal fields of central and northern Appalachia are peopled with families who have lived there for generations.

"They're quiet, loving and kind people," Barker said. "Religion is still

a big part of their lives. It's mountain religion. They love to sing and they love to make music."

Despite many positive aspects of the culture, Barker said some Appalachian churches are legalistic and emphasize a "saved-by-works" religion instead of salvation by God's grace.

"As Southern Baptists, we have a wonderful opportunity to take the gospel of Jesus Christ into the mountains of Appalachia and tell them God loves them, Christ died for them, and they're saved by grace through faith, not by works, lest any man should boast," Barker said, paraphrasing the Apostle Paul.

One of Barker's major responsibilities is to recruit volunteers to come into the mountains to serve. "I work with the people in the mountains to help them understand how they can use volunteers," he said. "And then I work with the churches and associations to help them understand how they can come in and assist the short-term volunteer missions."

Working to share Jesus in Appalachia means ministering to millions of people who are without Christ, and are the poorest of America's poor.

"Within Appalachia, we have 37 of the 100 poorest counties in America," Barker said. "Twenty-nine of those counties exist in Eastern Kentucky, where 38 percent of adults lack either a high school diploma or a GED equivalent."

Barker said he recruits volunteers to minister on several different levels. "We do ministry that involves cultivation evangelism," he explained. "Volunteers come in and hold backyard Bible clubs, run vacation Bible schools, distribute the 'Jesus' video, conduct block parties and a host of other things. ... We also work with church construction or renovation."

### Spiritual impact

Barker estimates 50,000 Southern Baptist volunteers come to Appalachia each year—with eternal results.

"For every 10-12 volunteers, there's one profession of faith," he said. "And when volunteers come and focus exclusively on intentional evangelism in a particular county, we know that for every four volunteers, there's one decision for Christ."

In a single county, 2,500 people have made professions of faith in Christ over the past five years, Barker said.

"We thank God for every (volunteer) that comes, though that's not nearly enough."

For more information about the Appalachian Regional Ministry, contact Barker by phone at (606) 316-4298 or by e-mail at [bbarker@arministry.org](mailto:bbarker@arministry.org). Visit ARM's Web site at [www.arministry.org](http://www.arministry.org).



Bill and Arlene Barker

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

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## Putting the goods on display

By Joe McKeever

New Orleans (BP)—I noticed something at a new startup church in New Orleans, on Magazine Street in the Uptown area on a recent Sunday night. The building which James Welch rented for his new Sojourn arts center/worship site formerly was a store and is situated in a block of stores, cafes and banks with huge glass windows.

Turn the lights on inside, fill it with 40 young adults sitting around on folding chairs with soft drinks in their hands, stand some people down front strumming guitars and stroking a violin, and everyone passing down the narrow street will see what you're doing.

A number of pedestrians stopped in front of the windows and gazed inside. No sign or lettering on the window indicates anything about what's inside. The people on the sidewalk were just seeing people having fun and enjoying music. At least three opened the door and came inside without an invitation. A couple of them turned out to be druggie-types who talked too loud and seemed not to know what planet they were on, but the third stayed.

## Hiding behind closed doors

Churches are notorious for putting on great shows, having wonderful music, the members enjoying each other—but hiding their activities inside closed buildings, away from the eyes and ears of the community. The result is that no one has a clue what goes on inside and no one would dare walk up and push open a door just to see.

And yet, ask the church members and they would tell you outsiders are welcome and, in fact, much of what they're doing inside their buildings is directed toward the benefit of these very outsiders.

Last spring some former residents of the St. Bernard Housing Development in New Orleans were picketing

that sad site which has been locked down and fenced in since Hurricane Katrina flooded the area. They wanted the project reopened and were making noises about rushing the locked gates and storming the place to get in. The media gave them coverage and protestors set up tents on medians in front of the area.

The next Sunday morning, pastor Lionel Roberts entered the little St. Bernard Baptist Mission across a side street from the project. He turned on the lights and, with his family, began arranging chairs for the worship service. Lionel no longer lives in the area, but he was raised there and still has a burden for its residents. With the help of volunteers from First Baptist Church of California, Mo., his flooded church building was renovated and painted, and even though his congregation was still scattered across America, he began to hold services. Often he would have 25 people, sometimes more, sometimes fewer.

This morning, Lionel had an idea. Before Katrina had ruined this development and scattered its residents, he often would turn on an outside loudspeaker and broadcast the worship service into the neighborhood. With no one living there now, he had not been doing this since re-entering his church. This morning, he turned on the speakers and began the service.

"When we started that morning, I think there were six of us sitting there," Lionel says. "Members of my family. We sang a hymn and read a Scripture and I was leading a prayer when I heard the front door

## FIRST PERSON

## What are you thinking?

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

## The blessing of ministry to children

"And He took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them" (Mark 10:16).

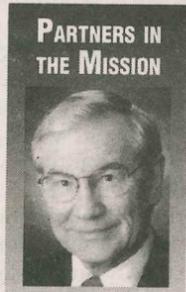
There are many critical needs among American children today and Kentucky Baptist churches have a tremendous opportunity to be a blessing.

Speaking at a recent conference for preschool and children's ministry workers titled "Children's Ministry Today," Wendy Dever, the director of the KBC's preschool/children's ministry and Sunday school department, shared some startling statistics.

"One in six children in the U.S. continues to live in poverty. Someone other than their parents cares for three out of five children under age 6 on a regular basis," she said, quoting 2005 statistics from the Children's Defense Fund Action Council. "Only 31 percent of fourth graders read at or above grade level. Eight children and teens die from gunfire in the U.S. each day—one child every three hours."

James Dobson, in his book, "The

Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide," described the difficulties facing today's children this way:



Bill Mackey

"Fifty years ago, parents and other adults acted to protect kids—from pornography, sexual abuse, harmful ideas and dangerous substances. Millions of husbands and wives stayed together for the benefit of the children. As the family has unraveled, adults have become more self-centered and preoccupied and children are often left to fend for themselves in a very dangerous world. It may be our greatest failing as a people."

The situation sounds dire. However, Kentucky Baptists are not without resources to address the challenge of reaching children for Christ. Churches can make a difference with children in their local community although priorities may need to change.

One of the greatest tools for reaching children is vacation Bible school. Thousands of decisions for Christ are registered each summer

open and the rustling of feet. When I said 'Amen' and looked up, there must have been 60 people sitting in front of me." They had heard what the church was doing and wanted to be a part of it.

The other day a minister of music from another state e-mailed me about bringing his choir to New Orleans next summer and doing some concerts for our people. "We'd like to encourage them," he wrote.

## Taking ministry to the streets

I had another suggestion.

"Bring working choir members," I told him. "People who can do yard work or repair houses or build new ones. And, from time to time, let them stop working and gather on the sidewalk and begin singing. They will draw a small crowd—maybe a half dozen and perhaps 50—and they'll do more good singing there for 10 minutes than they would doing a full program inside a church."

He liked the idea. I haven't actually seen any choir do this yet, but when they do, I predict what will happen: They'll love it so much, some of them will return home and decide to do the same thing in their own city. Imagine a group of singers walking outside a Wal-Mart somewhere and breaking into harmony. A men's quartet at the local grocery store parking lot, singing the Lord's praises. A dozen children at a skating rink spontaneously singing about Jesus.

Nothing formal. Nothing with a "hook." No gimmicks, no nothing. Just breaking into song.

Putting the goods on display and letting the Lord take it from there.

Joe McKeever is director of missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans

during VBS. In my experience, children love VBS.

It is our dream as KBC staff to help each Kentucky Baptist church conduct a vacation Bible school. According to the Annual Church Profile, 1,739 churches reported some VBS enrollment last year.

We know there probably are more, but this could mean only 72 percent of KBC churches conducted a VBS. I am grateful for the thousands of workers who gave sacrificially of their time last year to teach 177,925 enrolled students.

It will be a big challenge to help more than 600 other churches conduct a VBS. It will take the help of directors of missions and churches that are willing to assist other churches.

Many churches help by conducting a mission VBS in their community or surrounding area. And we are grateful for the Baptist Campus Ministry Son Team that assists churches with VBS each summer.

Please pray for children and families in Kentucky. Pray that churches will respond to assist others so that all of our children can be reached for Christ!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## STEWARDSHIP

## Consider ways to use IRAs in your retirement goals

By Don Spencer

There are so many retirement plans available: 401(k), 403(b), SEP, TSA, Traditional IRA, Roth IRA, Employee Stock Option Plans, etc. Each of these has unique rules.

Now 401(k) and 403(b) plans can include contributions similar to a Roth IRA. Add to this complexity the frequent changes that occur in these plans due to tax law changes.

An important retirement saving vehicle for many people is the IRA. But which type of IRA? Here are a few basics of IRAs:

■ With a Traditional Tax Deductible IRA, up to \$4,000 per year (\$5,000 if over age 50) can be contributed and that amount can be deducted from taxable income by qualified individuals. Taxes are deferred on the investment and on the earnings. When withdrawn, the money generally is taxable.

■ With a Non-Deductible Traditional IRA, the same contribution limits apply. You pay taxes on that money now but the earnings grow tax deferred. When withdrawn, taxes are paid on earnings but not on the original investment.

■ The Roth IRA has what some people call a "backloaded" tax advantage. Like the non-deductible traditional IRA, the original amount invested (same limits as above) is not deductible. However, the earnings may be tax-free depending on how and when they are withdrawn.

When one reaches age 70 and a half, there are two critical differences in the Roth IRA vs. the other two types of IRAs. First, a person over age 70 and a half cannot continue to contribute to a regular IRA but he or she may be able to contribute to a Roth IRA.

The second difference could be a critical advantage for the Roth IRA for some people. With traditional IRAs, at age 70 and a half there are required distributions that must be made (and taxed). The Roth IRA can continue to be invested well past age 70 and a half. This advantage allows individuals to let the money continue growing tax deferred and leave the IRA money for their heirs if it is not needed during retirement.

A reminder to ministers: Your denominational retirement plan may provide better tax advantages for you than an IRA.

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



## How can singles find ways to celebrate Valentine's Day?

**Q: I dread the arrival of Valentine's Day since I am a single adult without someone to celebrate the romantic holiday. Any suggestions?**

There is a new Web site with a pretty repulsive title but with wonderful suggestions on how to get through our culture of superficiality. It's HeyUgly.org. Out of their Web site come these suggestions on how to get through the Valentine's holiday:

### SINGLES

**Celebrate you.** Remember, you are a unique, unrepeatably miracle of God. There's no one who's ever been born who has your unique thumbprint—you are "thumbbody"!

Just as couples use this day to celebrate their relationship, you can use it as an excuse to do what God does: Celebrate you! "His banner over me is love" from the Song of Solomon describes how God feels about you. Buy yourself a present today, a CD or a DVD that expresses appreciation for the "you" God has created.

**Take yourself out.** Fear not the call of "party of one" when you get to the restaurant. Take a book along and have a good time. Or take in a movie that only you would relish. Or go to your favorite mall or bookstore.

**Throw a party.** You're not the only one who feels this way. A recent poll confirmed that more than half of American adults are single. Get a party tray and invite all your friends over.

**Serve as a volunteer.** Donate your time at church, your local hospital, library, nursing home or animal shelter and see how quickly you can make a difference.

**LOL—laugh out loud.** Laughter burns calories and relaxes you. Find classic comedy DVDs and watch them until you are laughing out loud.

**Care for your heart—the one that pumps your blood.** Go to the gym, take the stairs, park a mile further away than you have to, take your dog for a long walk. God has created us with natural mood elevators, endorphins. Get out there and raise your spirits!—James Stillwell

**Q: Our family history is full of divorce. How can we help our teenagers avoid ever going through this painful experience?**

Statistics based on thousands of divorces indicate there are potential "risk factors" that can contribute to a marriage heading for divorce. Once a couple is married, there is nothing they can do about most of these "static factors." Help your teenagers recognize these risk factors before they marry. Risk factors include:

- Having a personality tendency to react strongly or defensively to problems and disappointments in life.
- Having divorced parents.
- Living together prior to marriage.
- Either you or your partner being previously divorced.
- Having children from a previous marriage.
- Having different religious backgrounds.
- Marrying at a very young age (under age 19).
- Knowing each other for only a short time before marriage.
- Experiencing financial hardship.

Marrying for life is both about choosing the right person and being the right person. According to God's Word, it is crucial that believers date, court and marry other believers. Regardless of the static risk factors that one cannot change, there are many "dynamic risk factors" within marriages that not only can be changed, but transformed by the presence of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Encourage your teens to read and study what the Bible says about marriage, family and relationships. You might want to provide them with some sound Christian books about this issue so that they approach dating and marriage with a strong foundation.—Scott Wigginton

Family Forum writers are:

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

**James Stillwell**, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. E-mail: james@ibs-lex.org.

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

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

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



## Increased baptisms: What will it take?

"What will it take to significantly increase baptisms in Kentucky?" That question was the primary focus during the second day of last week's annual retreat for the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff and related KBC entities.

In addition to a general call for increased baptisms in Kentucky Baptist congregations, the retreat challenged individual staff members to help increase baptisms both professionally and personally.

Baptism has become a key watchword in both KBC and Southern Baptist Convention life in the past few years. Amid statistics that show baptisms either plateaued or declining for several years, the state convention's Mission Study Committee proposed in 2003 that Kentucky Baptist churches baptize a total of 125,000 converts from 2005 through 2009—an average of 25,000 per year.

So far, that statistical turnaround hasn't happened. Averaging about 17,500 baptisms per year, KBC churches reported a total of 17,395 baptisms in the 2004-05 church year. According to KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey, preliminary Annual Church Profile reports indicate baptisms may have decreased for the 2005-06 reporting period.

"It is my prayer that God will enable us to break the 20,000 barrier in 2006-07," Mackey noted. But even if that happens, Kentucky Baptist baptisms will remain far below the ambitious "Kentucky Baptists Connect" goal of 125,000 baptisms in five years.

Study committee members recognized the incredible challenge of setting such a lofty goal. Among their proposals was to "encourage each church, as led by the Holy Spirit, to increase its baptisms by at least one each year by Jan. 1, 2010."

And therein lies the answer: "As led by the Holy Spirit." Surely, every Kentucky Baptist church desires to increase its number of baptisms each year—even if it's in annual increments of one. But the ultimate key is connecting to the Holy Spirit's leadership and then enthusiastically following His guidance in finding cre-

ative, effective ways to lead people to personal faith in Jesus Christ.

The fact is that as important as our baptism statistics are, the primary goal is to see individuals accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. As those numbers increase, baptisms naturally will follow.

Among stark statistics shared during last week's retreat:

- Only 4.5 percent of the world lives in areas where evangelicals are equal to or greater than 10 percent of the population.

- Seven out of 10 people in the U.S. and Canada do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

- More than 40 percent of Kentuckians are not claimed by any major religious group.

- It takes 44 Kentucky Baptists to produce one baptism per year.

- Approximately 450 Kentucky Baptist churches did not baptize anyone in the past year.

What is the solution? Kentucky Baptist pastors, church members and congregations sincerely seeking and obeying the leadership of God's Spirit.

Among Scripture passages highlighted during the KBC retreat were such familiar verses as Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8 and Matthew 9:37-38. It also included such convicting passages as:

- Isaiah 59:16, "I saw and I was appalled that there was no one to intercede for them."

- 2 Corinthians 10:4, "We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments."

- Galatians 6:9, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Is spiritual victory possible in the face of overwhelming odds? Absolutely.

How? Faithfully seek the Holy Spirit's leadership—and never give up. "At the proper time," God's Word assures us, "we will reap a harvest."

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## Prayerwalking: 'What if God's people prayed?'

"What if God's people prayed? Do you believe God would respond? I do."

That is how Wade White, youth minister at Grand Rivers Baptist Church, begins his YouTube broadcast about the Revive prayerwalk. "In fact," he continues, "I believe this is what God is calling us to do as a community"—to "respond in prayer."

Revive prayerwalk is just that—people coming together to prayerwalk their local school. As they walk, they pray for the

students, teachers and staff of the school. Some people walk alone, touching the walls and doors and praying at different spots. Others form larger groups and lock hands in prayer as they take turns praying.

White and his students currently are leading monthly prayerwalks at Livingston County and Crittenden County high schools. They meet for an hour on Sunday afternoon and prayerwalk those schools.

"We had our first prayerwalk on a cold, rainy day at Livingston County High on Jan. 14," White said. "Very few people knew we had been granted permission inside the gym but 103 adults and youth showed up to pray at the school. At Crittenden County on Jan. 28, 145 attended; over 40 of them were students. And these are very small counties and

very small schools!

"This all started in September 2006, and I fought it for about a month," White explained. "I wrote down and shared with the youth group what I felt like God was leading us to do. I felt God wanted us to do a prayerwalk at their school. I at first believed it was just our youth group, but God slowly revealed to me He was wanting more than our group involved in this."

"But honestly I didn't want to do it for those same reasons we all run from things. I didn't think

I was the one to lead this, I thought I had enough on my plate, etc. But honestly, several kids in my group who have been well trained by Pursuit Leadership Academy kept the faith and would not let me give up on what God had given us.

"After about a month of this we had a prayerwalk at the Livingston County High School, my youth group only, about eight to 10 of us," he noted. "It was dark and cold on a Wednesday night but we went anyway and prayed outside the school. One person got saved and all of us had incredible spiritual awakening at this prayerwalk. It was there I made a commitment to follow through with what God was calling my group to do and set up Revive."

Brandy Nelson, one of the members of the youth group at Grand

Rivers, says on the YouTube post in anticipation of the first prayerwalk, "We don't know how many people are going to show up for the prayerwalk. But I know souls are going to be saved out of it and lives are going to turn. I hope I am a part of it. I am praying each day God is going to use me."

According to White, "Our goal when starting this was to make sure everyone knew this was not a one-denomination prayerwalk, that it cut across all lines. I knew God was not calling us to point out our differences but ... to point out what we do agree on and that is Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, that our schools need God's presence and prayer works."

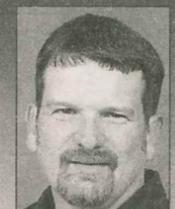
"Christians discuss unity a lot, but our differences usually separate us anyway. So far, we have had Baptist, Southern Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ, Presbyterian and Pentecostals represented at the prayerwalks. That is real Christian unity."

"What God has in store, we can only imagine, but obviously when this many (Christians) from all different religious backgrounds come together for one thing and seek God, I believe He usually answers in a mighty and dramatic way."

For more information about the Revive prayerwalk, including how to start one in your community, visit [www.reviveprayerwalk.com](http://www.reviveprayerwalk.com).

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

### YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball



# Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference

## February 26-27, 2007

Monday, February 26

10 am-Noon CST · Vocational Evangelists Pre-Conference

1:00 pm-9:15pm CST · Conference Sessions

Tuesday, February 27

8:30 am-8:30pm CST · Conference Sessions

### Eastwood Baptist Church

500 Eastwood Avenue · Bowling Green

Church phone: 270-842-7867

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No registration  
necessary!

get  
connected-stay  
connected

Childcare available for children birth through preschool. Call  
Wendy Dever at 502-489-3357 or 866-489-3357 for reservations.

### conference leaders

#### Directions to Eastwood Baptist

From I-65S: take exit #26, turn right onto Cemetery Road, left on Greenlawn, right on Eastwood.

From I-65N: take exit #26, turn left onto Cemetery Road, left on Greenlawn, right on Eastwood.

Church address: 500 Eastwood Ave.

#### Accommodations

The two Bowling Green hotels listed below have rooms blocked for the Kentucky Baptist State Evangelism Conference. When making lodging reservations, mention the KBC and verify special rates.

#### Holiday Inn University Plaza

1021 Wilkinson Trace  
800-HOLIDAY or 270-745-0088  
Rate: \$89 + tax

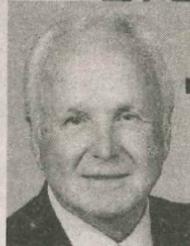
#### Courtyard by Marriott

1010 Wilkinson Trace  
800-329-0955 or 270-783-8569  
Rate: \$89 + tax



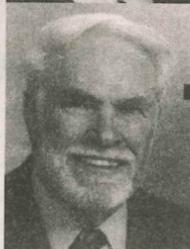
#### Mike Licon

Director of Apologetics & Interfaith Evangelism, North American Mission Board, Atlanta, Georgia



#### Charles Carter

Pastor Emeritus, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama



#### Bill Wagner

Professor of World Missions, Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, California



#### Richard Gaines

Pastor, Consolidated Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky



#### Ted Traylor

Pastor, Olive Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida



#### Don Wilton

Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina; President, South Carolina Baptist Convention



#### Jeff LaBorg

Senior Pastor, College Heights Baptist Church, Gallatin, Tennessee



#### Raul Vazquez

Retired Director, Language Division, Florida Baptist Convention



#### Dean Haun

Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Georgia



#### Charles Roesel

Pastor Emeritus, First Baptist Church, Leesburg, Florida

Also featuring special breakout session and lunch for women!  
Tuesday, February 27 · 9:30am-1:30pm CST · Cost: \$10

Featured Lunch Speaker: Carol Kent

Register online at [www.kybaptist.org/ecwomen](http://www.kybaptist.org/ecwomen)

For more information call 502.489.3387 or 866.489.3387



502.489.3571 · 866.489.3571 (toll free in KY) · [www.kybaptist.org/evanconf](http://www.kybaptist.org/evanconf)



This event is sponsored by the Evangelism Growth Team of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and is made possible by your gifts to the Cooperative Program.

# Ministry milestone

*NAMB sharpens its focus on missions, evangelism and church planting*

By Joe Westbury  
Georgia Christian Index

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—As the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board marks its 10th anniversary this year, leaders emphasize they are committed to maintaining a clear ministry focus.

"We want to be about evangelism and church planting and sending missionaries who do evangelism and church planting," says Harry Lewis, interim vice president for missions.

"We spent several months in listening sessions with our state partners and we heard those three primary objectives as being the areas they would like us to focus on," he added. "We are not reducing the other objectives we have had since our founding, we are just narrowing our focus."

Shortly after its launch in June 1997, NAMB officials announced six major ministry objectives. Those objectives have been distilled down to three—sharing Christ, starting churches and mobilizing missionaries and volunteers.

The objectives that have been removed from the top-tier focus—volunteering in missions, impacting the culture and equipping leaders—have been folded into other strategies that support the remaining three primary objectives.

"We are still committed to those objectives but we believe we can do those more effectively through existing programs," Lewis explained. "This change simply sharpens our focus and helps us to stay on our primary mission."

And it's that focus that bolsters the work of 258 employees in the board's Atlanta-area headquarters. With a simpler mission statement, they say, they are more energized to work with churches, associations and state partners to complete the task of evangelizing North America.

"We are increasingly looking at North America as a mission field of people groups, much like the International Mission Board has approached its work around the world," Lewis said. "We want to focus on the world that God has

brought to us.

"Our team is not just in this building," says John Avant, NAMB's vice president for evangelism.

"We are part of a national team of state evangelism directors, executive directors, pastors, members of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, seminary professors and others who play a valuable role in helping us reach North America. We do not want to do anything in a vacuum; we want to chart our future together, as a team."

The feedback Avant has heard most clearly in the listening sessions is the call for "authentic relationships; real, trusting relationships" and the need for "a cohesive national evangelism strategy for evangelizing North America; not a top-down effort but a grassroots effort."

NAMB is hoping to launch that renewed evangelistic vision at this year's SBC annual meeting in San Antonio, Avant said.

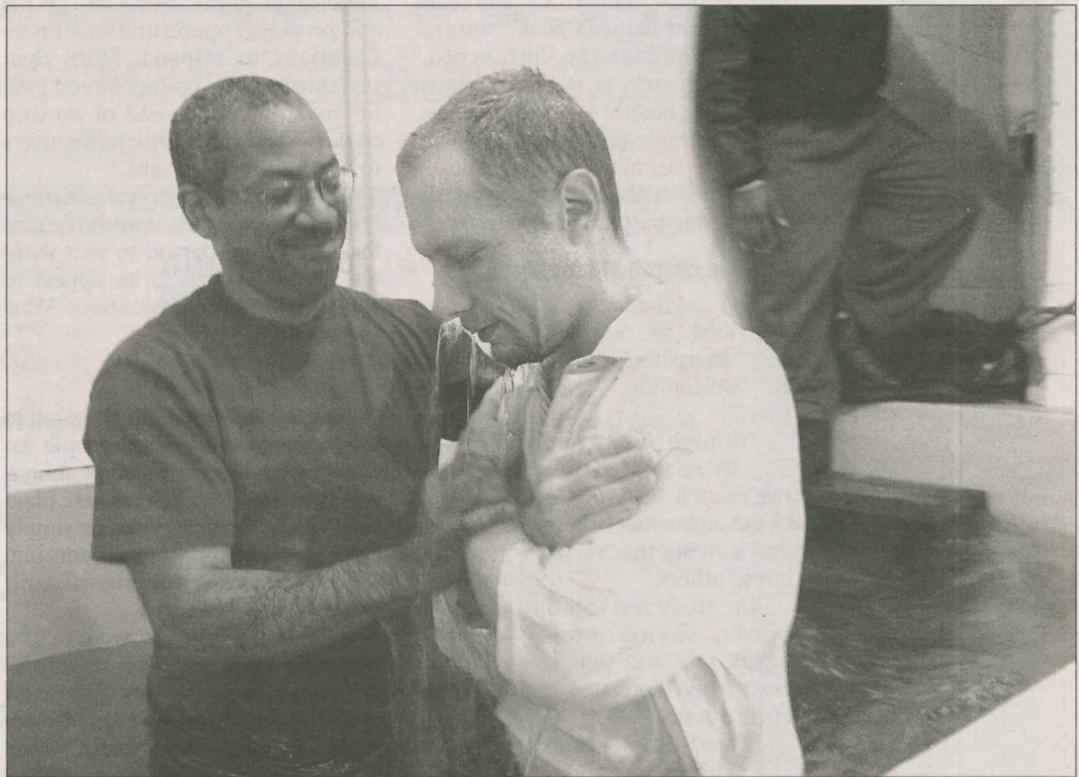
"We are charged by the Southern Baptist Convention to lead in a national strategy for evangelism and church planting. But we cannot possibly do that without the help of our partners," Avant said. "In San Antonio we hope to see a platform full of our leaders from all levels of the SBC, standing shoulder-to-shoulder as a unified team."

The board does not currently know what the long-term strategy will look like or where it will end, Avant said, "but we know where it begins—with leaders on their knees asking God for renewal and for His power" as they make a commitment to evangelize the world together.

## Church planting opportunities

Richard Harris, NAMB's vice president for church planting, is encouraged from the listening sessions by the shared vision that many partners already have for planting more churches.

"I think we live in one of the most opportunity-filled days in the history of church planting that we have ever seen," Harris said. "Church planting is the greatest tool of evangelism if it's intentionally evangelistic."



Harris said he believes NAMB will be far more effective with three major ministry objectives rather than six.

"That's who we are as a Southern Baptist (entity)—we were doing many good things with the six objectives but perhaps at the expense of our primary objectives of evangelism, church planting and missions," he noted.

One of the primary ways NAMB will make inroads in reducing lostness in North America will be through training church planters who baptize new believers, Harris said.

"Anything that is healthy reproduces itself. Our new direction is to ask our church planters to baptize three people in their first year, five in their second year, eight in their third year and 10 in their fourth year. That would add substantially to our baptism figures as a denomination," he said.

NAMB's goal is to work with its partners to start 7,500 churches in the next four years, beginning this year, Harris said. That average of 1,875 plants a year, compounded by the 3-5-8-10 formula over four years, would result in an additional 99,000 baptisms in the fourth year—by 2010.

The SBC's previous high year for church plants was 2004 when 1,791 were started, followed by a slight dip to 1,725 in 2005.

"If we and our partners can meet our church planting goals using the 3-5-8-10 formula, we could get one-fourth of our annual baptisms from church planters," Harris said.

Harris and Avant work closely to monitor growth across the SBC because their assignments are so intertwined. Church plants produce more believers. More believers lead to more church plants.

"We know that nearly 74 percent of all Southern Baptist churches baptize 10 or less in any given year, and the average is only three or four per church. The churches that report no baptisms really bring the av-

erages down," Harris said. "We need to do everything we can to help churches see the lostness of their communities."

"It's a fact that we will not be able to impact all churches; some just don't want to get off of 'dead center'—but we can certainly impact the new congregations."

## Missions partnerships

While NAMB does not do evangelism or church planting in a vacuum, neither does it appoint missionaries by itself. It relies heavily on its partnerships with the 42 state conventions and the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists who share the expense of placing individuals on the field.

Much of that cost is shared through gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, which set a record in 2006. As of late December, NAMB had received \$57.9 million, topping its \$56 million goal. That total is only the third time the offering has surpassed its goal in the past two decades, said Mike Ebert, NAMB's senior director of communications.

The board has 5,364 missionaries, the majority of whom are funded through the Annie Armstrong Offering. About 2,200 of those are self-funded Mission Service Corps missionaries currently receiving endorsement, training and other non-salary ministry support through NAMB. The board also endorses chaplains whose funding is provided by their hiring entity such as the military, healthcare or correctional facilities.

Roy Fish, NAMB's interim president and distinguished professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, is confident that the board is up to the task of reducing lostness in North America through its renewed focus.

"I know we face a task that is extremely formidable," Fish said, "but we believe that the God who assigns us the task is bigger than the task itself."

## MINISTRY IMPACT

*Reggie Robbins (left), a Southern Baptist North American missionary ministering to the homeless and drug-addicted in Atlanta, baptizes a new believer. (BP photo by John Swain)*

## Kentucky among ministry sites

Lynch—While the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board works closely with its ministry partners to place as many missionaries on the field as funds allow, it also is pioneering new ways of involving families in missions.

Families from as far away as Arizona, Wisconsin and Michigan gathered last summer in the Kentucky community of Lynch over the July Fourth week to share in a "Families on Mission" outreach. About 200 volunteers shared in the initiative.

The new venture is more than just another mission project to help a local community, said Rick Head, NAMB's adult volunteer mobilization senior associate. It's designed to bond participating families closer together—physically, emotionally and spiritually. About

half of each day is spent on family devotionals, prayer, worship, mission awareness, family small-group discussions and interacting with missionaries.

After family morning time, participants are assigned mission projects including home repairs, painting, free car washes and visiting shut-ins.

Next year's summer projects will be held in Lynch; New Orleans; and East St. Louis, Ill. A special option for homeschoolers will be held Sept. 29-Oct. 4 in Mobile, Ala.

For more information or to register, contact Head at rhead@namb.net or call (800) 462-8657, ext. 6219. Information also is available by clicking on the Volunteering in Missions link at www.namb.net.

## Study examines top evangelistic churches

*Continued from page 1*  
pastors is "shared leadership."

The average tenure of the pastors included in the study is 15 years. As noted in Rainer's book, "Surprising Insights from the Unchurched," pastoral tenure is strongly related to church health and effectiveness. Those interviewed repeatedly attribute the sustained evangelistic effectiveness of their church to consistent, strong pastoral leadership.

### Positive church atmosphere

The participating churches are described as "exciting," "dynamic," "energetic," "upbeat," "friendly," "welcoming," "warm" and "positive."

The positive environment may be directly related to the finding that the church body has embraced the vision and values of the senior pastor and is living that vision by reaching out to others.

The study results affirm that the worship services are key to reaching people and that the members are highly motivated to invite others to attend.

"Clearly these churches possess an environment conducive to reaching people for Christ," Waggoner said. "The members are enthusiastic about their church and thus are quick to invite their unchurched friends to visit."

The presence of a consistent evangelistic appeal is another common

factor. Pastors indicate they seek to include the gospel in most, if not all, of their sermons. They stress the importance of preaching the gospel and providing opportunities for non-Christians to respond. More than two-thirds of the pastors offer a public invitation at the end of worship services. The others invite inquirers to fill out a decision card.

"In these long-term evangelistically effective churches, it would be rare for an unsaved person to visit without being exposed to an appeal to consider the offer of salvation," Waggoner said.

### Intentional outreach

The study found that the pastors are focused on reaching people for Christ. Whether it's through analyzing the content of sermons, planning the worship services or simply the nature of church programming, ministry efforts are designed with outreach in mind.

Evidence of this is seen in the frequency of a visitation or follow-up strategy employed by almost all of the churches. All but four are involved in a regular, organized visitation program. They also are intentionally organized for weekly follow-up of visitors or church prospects.

While these evangelistic churches share many common traits, they also have their several differences.

When it comes to preaching, one-third of the pastors indicate they

preach topically. Almost half preach expositional or textual sermons. Four of the churches use other terms to describe their preaching style.

Another area of difference involves evangelism training. Half of the churches use formal, ongoing training programs such as FAITH, while the other half is divided between occasional classes and using sermons to train believers in evangelism.

The small-group strategy of the churches also varies. Eleven use on-campus Sunday school as their primary fellowship groups, while six meet in off-campus small groups, and two have a mix of on-campus and off-campus groups.

"When looking at both the similarities and differences of these long-term evangelistic churches, what can clearly be celebrated is that the churches in this study can be a great source of encouragement to any pastor, staff member or lay leader who dreams and prays to be part of a church that is effective in reaching the lost," Waggoner said.

"Scripture promises that the gospel is powerful to save," he added. "We are called to be ambassadors of Christ. We are commanded to preach the message of reconciliation. As we can see in the leaders of these evangelistically effective churches, passion, commitment, focus and intentionality can lead to celebrating the regeneration of many souls."

## B&H Academic plans to explore baptism, ethics

Nashville (BP)—Publishers in the United States release more than 195,000 new titles annually, and LifeWay Christian Resource's Ray Clendenen wants to make sure at least some of those titles contribute to rigorous academic discussions.

Clendenen is the director of LifeWay's newly formed B&H Academic, an initiative committed to providing resources for undergraduate and graduate theological education.

B&H Academic has published six titles to date. He said upcoming releases will include a book dealing with believer's baptism and a series covering Christian ethics.

B&H Academic "is an important part of providing resources to both undergraduate and graduate studies to help those institutions train church leadership," Clendenen said.

In determining which books will fall under the B&H Academic umbrella, Clendenen said one aspect of that process will involve discussions with professionals in the academic arena to determine their future needs and current concerns about academic texts available to them.

# Campus Discovery Days

Saturday, Feb. 17 & March 31

The faculty, staff and students at University of the Cumberlands invite prospective students to experience some of the excitement of being a college student by taking part in our Discovery Days.

This is an excellent opportunity to discover first hand what college life is like. A schedule highlighting our academic departments, campus activities, student services and housing will reveal what University of the Cumberlands can offer you.

All activities are free of charge.

Reserve your spot today!

Register online at [www.ucumberlands.edu](http://www.ucumberlands.edu) or call us at 1-800-343-1609.

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### Schedule

- 8:15 Breakfast
- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 Welcome
- 9:10 Academic Program, Admissions, & Financial Aid
- 10:00 "Why I Chose UC" student panel
- 11:00 Parent Information Session & Mock classes for students
- 11:40 Departmental Browsing
- 12:10 Campus Tours
- Lunch—Our treat!

# Congratulations

## Scholarship Recipients

The following Kentucky Baptist students have been awarded \$1,000 scholarships by the Kentucky Baptist Convention!

### University of the Cumberlands



**Janna Anderson**  
Union City Baptist Church  
Richmond



**Joshua Lowe**  
Boston Baptist Church  
Williamsburg



**Ryan Bennett**  
Central Baptist Church  
Winchester



**Lucas Matlock**  
Central Baptist Church  
Corbin



**David Blount**  
Central Baptist Church  
Corbin



**Kendra Peek**  
Middleburg Baptist Church  
Kings Mountain



**Joshua Brainard**  
Beacon Hill Baptist Church  
Somerset



**Chris Price**  
Bullittsburg Baptist Church  
Hebron



**Shelby Crawford**  
Valley View Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Fahlin Pulliam**  
Blackford Baptist Church  
Hawesville



**Stephanie Earnest**  
Central Baptist Church,  
Corbin



**Travis Roaden**  
Greenland Baptist Church  
Corbin



**Sarah Franklin**  
Central Baptist Church  
Paris



**Dwayne Russell**  
Gano Baptist Church  
Georgetown



**Emily Harlow**  
Shawnee Run Baptist Church  
Burgin



**April Seay**  
Valley View Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Rebecca Hazlett**  
Stanford Baptist Church  
Stanford



**Deavin Stewart**  
Dione Baptist Church  
Lynch



**Amanda Howard**  
Salersville First Baptist Church  
Salersville



**Caitlin Talbott**  
First Baptist Church  
Somerset



**Coty Howard**  
Pleasant Run Baptist Church  
Livingston



**Scarlett Thomas**  
Bond Baptist Church,  
Annville



**Kayla King**  
Anchor Baptist Church  
Wilmore



**Sarah Wasson**  
Shakertown Baptist Church  
Burgin



**Curtis Lawson**  
Calvary Baptist Church  
Williamsburg



**Erin White**  
First Baptist Church  
Williamsburg

### Campbellsville University



**Ashley Boyd**  
Simpsonville Baptist Church  
Simpsonville



**Garrett Lowery**  
Pleasant Grove Baptist Church  
Mt. Washington



**Matt Boyd**  
Crosspointe Baptist Church  
Philpot



**Laura Mann**  
First Baptist Church  
Mt. Washington  
Mt. Washington



**Samantha Burke**  
Woodland Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Joshua Mears**  
First Baptist Church  
Owenton  
Owenton



**Adrienne Butler**  
Hardinsburg Baptist Church  
Harned



**Andre Morton**  
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church,  
Ft. Knox



**Rachel Crenshaw**  
Vine Hill Baptist Ch.  
Shepherdsville



**Joshua Petrey**  
Eubank Baptist Church  
Eubank



**Toni Davila**  
First Baptist Church  
Hodgenville  
Hodgenville



**Tiffany Ramos**  
Piner Baptist Church  
Walton



**Nicky Davis**  
Campbellsville Baptist Church  
Campbellsville



**Lauren Redding**  
North Benson Baptist Church  
Frankfort



**Skye Gardner**  
Elkhorn Baptist Church  
Campbellsville



**Holly Sabo**  
Muldraugh Hill Baptist Church  
Campbellsville



**Ashley Greer**  
Eubank Baptist Church  
Eubank



**Tyler Shelton**  
Burkesville Baptist Church  
Burkesville



**Amber Hall**  
Hurstbourne Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Emily Stivers**  
Highview Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Ashley Karnes**  
Sligo Baptist Church  
La Grange



**Chris Taylor**  
Olive Branch Baptist Church  
Hanson



**David Kays**  
Parkway Baptist Church  
Bardstown



**Whitney Tingle**  
Springfield Baptist Church  
Springfield



**Lincoln "Bubba" Lawless**  
Campbellsville Baptist Church  
Campbellsville



**John Watkins**  
First Baptist Church  
Henderson  
Robards

### Georgetown College



**Chelsey Bottoms**  
Scottsville Baptist Church  
Scottsville



**Cara Hazzard**  
Crestwood Baptist Church  
Buckner



**Roger Brock**  
St. Matthews Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Luther Hutcherson**  
East Frankfort Baptist Church  
Frankfort



**Loran Brown**  
Turner Ridge Baptist Church  
Falmouth



**Jess Lanham**  
Highland Avenue Baptist  
Southgate



**Elizabeth Childers**  
Meta Baptist Church  
Pikeville



**William McCuddy**  
Grace Baptist Church,  
Lexington



**Samuel Chinn**  
St. Matthews Baptist Church  
Louisville



**Ciera Mills**  
Belfry First Baptist Church  
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**Brenton Curry**  
Shelbyville First Baptist Church  
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**Adam Ringo**  
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**Joel Darland**  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Elizabethtown



**Jeremy Shannon**  
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**Brittany Deskins**  
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**Amanda Elliott**  
Edgewood Baptist Church  
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**Korey Snodgrass**  
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Old Salem Baptist Church  
London



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**"I can't think of another president in my lifetime who has done more to promote religious liberty."**

Richard Land, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

## ERLC presents religious liberty award to Bush

By Tom Strode  
Baptist Press

Washington (BP)—President George W. Bush received a Southern Baptist award for his advocacy of religious freedom in a Jan. 29 presentation at the White House.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, presented the entity's 2006 John Leland Religious Liberty Award to Bush in the Oval Office. The ERLC gave the award to the president for "courageously defending the right of all people to exercise freely their religious faith," according to the framed citation.

"I can't think of another president in my lifetime who has done more to promote religious liberty specifically as a fundamental human right around the world than" Bush, Land told Baptist Press.

The award, which was presented for the 15th consecutive year by the ERLC, is named in memory of a Baptist preacher of the late 1700s and early 1800s who strongly advocated for religious freedom. Leland worked with James Madison, often described as the Father of the Constitution, to gain support for the First Amendment's guarantees of no government establishment of religion and no interference with religious free exercise.



**LELAND AWARD** President Bush receives the 2006 John Leland Religious Liberty Award from Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. (White House photo by Eric Draper)

Among the reasons listed for Bush's selection, the award cited the president as:

■ "A staunch advocate for the right of people throughout the world to live out their faith without fear."

■ "An effective opponent of anti-Semitism and all forms of racism and ethnic prejudice."

■ "A faithful witness to his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to both his countrymen and the world's leaders."

Bush personally raised religious freedom as an issue with the leaders

of both China and Russia, Land noted. He also cited Bush's support of Israel and his 2003 address in the West African country of Senegal that was "one of the most eloquent speeches in behalf of racial justice and racial equality that I've ever heard."

Speaking at Goree Island, once a major departure point for slaves destined for the United States, Bush said in that address, "By a plan known only to Providence, the stolen sons and daughters of Africa helped to awaken the conscience of America. The very people traded into slavery helped to set America free."

The ERLC's trustees voted in September to give the 2006 award to Bush. Previous recipients have included U.S. Sens. Sam Brownback and Rick Santorum; Congressmen Charles Canady and Frank Wolf; the late Adrian Rogers, who served three terms as SBC president; the late evangelical theologian Carl F.H. Henry; and Gleb Yakunin, the Russian Orthodox priest who advocated for human rights in the former Soviet Union.

Bush appointed Land to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom for two terms from 2001-04. Land is now serving on the nine-member, nonpartisan panel as a selection by former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist.

## Bush calls U.S. 'nation of prayer' at annual breakfast

Washington—Calling the United States a "nation of prayer," President Bush joined religious leaders and politicians at the annual National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 1.

"Many in our country know the power of prayer," he said. "Prayer changes hearts. Prayer changes lives."

More than 3,500 guests attended the gathering that brings high-powered political figures from Washington and abroad together with religious leaders for Scripture and speeches.

"Prayer makes us a more compassionate and giving people," Bush noted. "When we pray, we surrender our will to the Almighty and open ourselves up to His priorities and His touch."

"His call to love our neighbors as we would like to be loved ourselves is something that we hear when we pray," the president added. "And we answer that call by reaching out to feed the hungry and clothe the poor and aid the widow and the orphan."

Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II, D-Mo., served as co-chairman of the event. He described the 55th annual breakfast as an opportunity for "sowing the seeds of civility in this city, in our country and in the world."

Francis Collins, the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, was the keynote speaker and contemporary Christian artist Nicole C. Mullen sang. Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, read from Philippians and Rep. Allyson Schwartz, D-Pa., read from the Talmud.

The National Prayer Breakfast began in 1953 during President Eisenhower's first administration. It is funded by the Fellowship Foundation, a low-profile group that pro-

motes Christian evangelism.

While most of those at the gathering generally are known for either their political or religious titles, Cleaver claimed both.

"My weekend job is pastoring a church of over 2,000 people back home," he said of St. James United Methodist Church in Kansas City. "When I finish a really good speech on the House floor, I have to stop myself before I pass the plate."

Compiled from reporting by Religion News Service and Baptist Press

## Ohio church-state dispute rooted in cemetery's trees

Ravenna, Ohio (RNS)—The large "X" on the trunk of a state-ly oak tree in St. Mary's Cemetery has faded, but the 200-year-old tree remains in danger more than two years after it was marked for removal.

Its staunchest supporters—relatives of those buried under its far-reaching boughs—are in a battle between church and state.

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled Jan. 12 that, for now, John-Michael Lavelle, the priest for Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, could not order the oak and other trees felled. The court wants the trees to remain until it decides whether to accept an appeal filed by John Plough and others who argue that the operation of the Catholic cemetery does not fall under canon law.

A state appeals court said neither it nor a lower court had jurisdiction. It said a church tribunal ruling that the trees could be cut should stand.

"As a general rule, civil courts lack jurisdiction to adjudicate purely ecclesiastical or spiritual disputes of a church," the appellate court said.

Plough, however, contends that "this is not an internal church matter."

The cemetery deed is titled to the bishop of the Youngstown Catholic Diocese, who is responsible for all diocesan property.

Plough said he and others are the beneficiaries of the charitable trust to which the cemetery belongs because they are members of the congregation and their families own cemetery plots.

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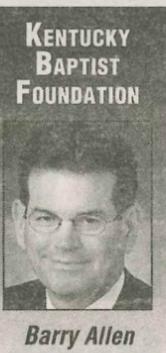


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Family philanthropy

Foundation staff can help provide effective options

I like what "Wealth in Families" author Charles Collier said: "Family wealth is more than money." I also like his definition of philanthropy: "Where wealth finds meaning." He encourages families to understand there are four dimensions to their wealth they need to address: human capital, intellectual capital, social capital and financial capital. Parents need to address these with their children and grandchildren early on to encourage lifelong learning and deliberate thinking about family governance. "Philanthropy is both a value and a vehicle for expressing core values. Engaging children early in the philanthropic process can help teach them about service to others and financial competency."



Barry Allen

For a Christian family these notions take on even greater importance. The Kentucky Baptist Foundation staff is available to consult with you about the most effective practices in fulfilling what you sense to be God's will in the philanthropic preservation and use of your family's wealth.

If your family is considering establishing a private, family founda-

tion, please contact us. There are alternatives worthy of consideration that can accomplish the same philanthropic goals without the administrative burdens and costs associated with a private foundation, not to mention more favorable tax policies. Two examples are a donor advised fund or an endowment fund, or a combination.

Here are a few of the advantages of these alternatives: (1) family member may deduct up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income of cash gifts versus 30 percent; and receive more favorable deductions for gifts of appreciated property; (2) no excise tax on investment earnings versus 2 percent tax on net investment income; (3) no required minimum payout versus a 5 percent of net investment asset value each year; (4) no detailed reporting versus required annual detailed reporting; (5) gifts can be anonymous versus annual reporting of all contributors' names; (6) tax return not required versus annual tax return required. Call toll-free to arrange a consultation.

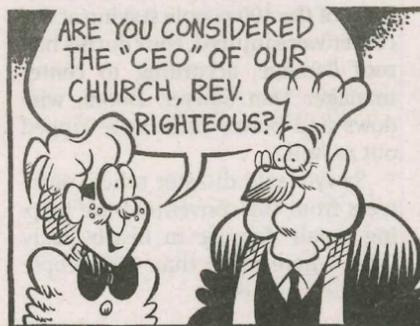
Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; (866) 489-3533; www.kybaptistfoundation.org

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Rebecca Souder

Across

- 1 "Let the earth bring forth ... \_\_\_\_\_, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth" (Genesis 1:24)
- 8 Southern continent, abbr.
- 10 Precipitates
- 11 "The earth was without \_\_\_\_\_" (Genesis 1:2)
- 13 Judah's son (Genesis 38:3)
- 14 When you're going to leave, more or less, abbr.
- 15 Anger
- 16 "\_\_\_\_\_ there be light" (Genesis 1:3)
- 17 Christ's followers, abbr.
- 19 "God \_\_\_\_\_ the heaven" (Genesis 1:1)
- 21 Seventh note of the musical scale
- 22 "Divide the waters \_\_\_\_\_ the waters" (Genesis 1:6)
- 23 Ruthenium, chem. symbol
- 24 Fiddler crab genus
- 26 "Let the \_\_\_\_\_ under the heaven be gathered together" (Genesis 1:9)
- 29 War of the \_\_\_\_\_
- 31 "The evening and the \_\_\_\_\_ were the third day" (Genesis 1:13)
- 34 Extraterrestrial, abbr.
- 35 "Where \_\_\_\_\_ you?" (Genesis 3:9NIV)
- 37 "Breathed \_\_\_\_\_ his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7)
- 38 "In the \_\_\_\_\_ God" (Genesis 1:1)
- 41 "The waters called he \_\_\_\_\_" (Genesis 1:10)
- 42 Common preposition
- 43 "He did \_\_\_\_\_ it under his raiment" (Judges 3:16)
- 45 "There shall come a \_\_\_\_\_ out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17)
- 47 Touchdown, abbr.
- 49 Negative

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9
10						11	12		13
		14				15		16	
17	18				19			20	
21			22				23		
24		25			26	27		28	
29				30		31			32 33
34				35	36			37	
		38	39			40			
	41					42		43	44
45					46	47	48	49	
50				51	52			53	54
		55					56		57

- 50 "Thou art an \_\_\_\_\_ man" (Luke 19:21)
- 53 "And \_\_\_\_\_ said, Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3)
- 55 Day when plants were created
- 56 "Hath God said, \_\_\_\_\_ shall not eat of every tree?" (Genesis 3:1)
- 57 Iron, chem. symbol

- 20 "Neither shadow of \_\_\_\_\_" (James 1:17)
- 25 "Ye shall be \_\_\_\_\_ gods" (Genesis 3:5)
- 27 Preposition
- 28 "Declare his works with \_\_\_\_\_" (Psalms 107:22 asv)
- 30 Droops
- 32 Part of Scripture that contains the new covenant, abbr.
- 33 "And God saw that it was \_\_\_\_\_" (Genesis 1:10)
- 36 Smallest state, abbr.
- 38 "God made the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth" (Genesis 1:25)
- 39 "Let the \_\_\_\_\_ bring forth grass" (Genesis 1:11)
- 40 "Thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_ eat of it" (Genesis 2:17)
- 41 Man's name, for short
- 44 "Under the shadow of my \_\_\_\_\_" (Genesis 19:8)
- 45 "God \_\_\_\_\_ every thing that he had made" (Genesis 1:31)
- 46 "Fools, shall not \_\_\_\_\_ therein" (Isaiah 35:8)
- 48 "On the seventh \_\_\_\_\_ God ended his work" (Genesis 2:2)
- 51 East Indies, abbr.
- 52 Education, abbr.
- 54 Eastern seacoast state, abbr.

Down

- 1 "Every living \_\_\_\_\_ that moveth" (Genesis 1:21)
- 2 Support organization for alcoholics, abbr.
- 3 Binds
- 4 Explosive, abbr.
- 5 Illegal drug referred to as acid, abbr.
- 6 "According to the \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of God" (1 Peter 1:2)
- 7 God's name for Himself: I \_\_\_\_\_ (Exodus 3:14)
- 8 "Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is in itself" (Genesis 1:11)
- 9 "For dust thou \_\_\_\_\_" (Genesis 3:19)
- 11 "God called the \_\_\_\_\_ Heaven" (Genesis 1:8)
- 12 One who raises
- 16 French article
- 18 Decorative loop on ribbon
- 19 "The \_\_\_\_\_ and the bear shall feed" (Isaiah 11:7)

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	H	T	A		
10	W	I	N	E	U	A	G	A	B	U	S	
14	O	R	D	A	I	N	U	L	E	R	S	
16	R	E	E	K	U	N	K	N	O	W	N	
19	D	E	A	C	O	N	A	S	K			
22	P	D	H	E	D	A	R	I				
25	D	I	E	A	S	P	S	N	E	N		
30	E	G	Y	P	T	A	S	H	A	G		
34	B	E	A	R	A	M	E	N	D			
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	
O	B	S	E	R	V	E	M	A	T	O		
41	R	E	G	A	N	I	M	A	L	M		
45	A	A	R	O	N	T	E	D	I	T		
50	H	U	R	A	S	S	U	R	A	N	C	E

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## Baptist retreat center damaged by storms that hit central Fla.

**Eustis, Fla. (ABP)**—Tornadoes that ripped across central Florida Feb. 2 caused extensive damage at the Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center.

The storms, which killed at least 19 people, destroyed housing developments, churches and businesses in four counties.

A tornado touched down at 3:30 a.m. at Lake Yale. The conference center is a retreat facility owned by the Florida Baptist Convention.

At least one church—Lady Lake Church of God—was demolished, although built to sustain 150-mph winds. The steel-reinforced church is used as a storm shelter but was not in use at the time.

Florida Gov. Charlie Crist issued a state of emergency for four counties: Lake, Seminole, Sumter and Volusia. Severe damage along a 40-mile swath of the region suggested some of the tornadoes were as severe as

Category 3 on the Fujita scale.

Lauren Urtel, who works for the Florida Baptist Convention, drove to the Lake Yale Conference Center near Leesburg Feb. 2 to survey the damage.

"They lost the steeple off their chapel," she said. "They also lost the roof off of their pump house, and they have a lot of downed trees and windows out."

According to representatives from the Florida Baptist Convention, none of the 100 people staying at the center were injured. Four dorms had roof damage, according to center manager Don Sawyer. Doors, windows and power lines were ripped out as well.

Sawyer said disaster relief volunteers from the convention are helping repair damage in nearby Lady Lake, where more than 500 people lost their homes.

## Va. group seeks divorce law reforms

**Richmond, Va. (BP)**—After Virginia voters adopted a constitutional amendment last year banning gay marriage, pro-family advocates now are pushing the legislature to reform the state's no-fault divorce laws.

Under current law, a spouse can file for divorce for any reason, even if the other spouse wants to stay married. The proposal by the Family Foundation of Virginia would apply only to couples with children and would require both spouses to agree to the divorce. Exceptions would be made for such instances as adultery and abuse.

"Divorce has just been devastating on the families of Virginia," Victoria Cobb, executive director of the Family Foundation, told Baptist Press. "The numbers are astronomical and the ramifications are overwhelming. ... This bill simply seeks to begin to encourage those marriages to have a chance to stay together."

The bill, she said, is aimed at situations where "one person is unhappy and the other person thinks the marriage is salvageable."

Pro-family advocates in Michigan and Wisconsin also are pushing divorce reform laws in their states.

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## 'No school? No way! Well, almost always no way'

### Classes cancelled at Oneida only three times in past 30-plus years

It is almost always a big shock to first-year Oneida students to discover that no matter how many surrounding schools are closed for snow, ice, cold, high water, flu—or whatever—we still have school.

"But if all the other schools are closed, why are we having school?" is the most common question first-year students ask this time of year.

The past few weeks, all of us have seen long lists of school closing announcements crawling along the bottoms of our TV screens; certainly we here at Oneida understand why those school systems chose to cancel classes, but the reasons other schools close are not applicable to us.

None of our students travel by bus to and from home to campus. The majority of our students already are here. There are a few "day students" traveling by car, and they are excused from class when road conditions are treacherous.

For the most part, our philosophy is: Why waste a day or two, or a whole week, by closing school for no reason? I can recall only three times in the past 30-plus years that Oneida has cancelled classes. Yes, three days!

The winter of 1978 was terribly cold; our water lines froze. With no water to prepare meals or flush toilets, we had to go to "plan B"—no school. I was not here then, but it must have been a painful decision to break the school's longstanding record of "almost never" cancelling classes.

In January 1995, during our Christmas holiday, there was a big snowstorm the weekend students were to return to Oneida. That was a wild

weekend. We had students stranded in airports, at bus stations and many points in between. The National Guard even helped us out, picking up some of our students stranded at the Greyhound bus station in London. They took the boys and girls to the armory until we could pick them up. It took a few days, but little by little, all of our students made their way back to campus. We only cancelled classes on Monday.

The village of Oneida and our campus are bordered on three sides by water. The third occasion we cancelled classes occurred after a spring flood surrounded the campus with several feet of water. About half of our faculty and staff could not get to campus. As painful as it was, I had no choice but to cancel school.

That's it—three days in 30-plus years. For students accustomed to missing a few days each year because of bad weather, it seems totally unfair, but I tell them to remember this when

our school year ends in mid-May and most other schools still are in session. We schedule a few extra days in our calendar in case we are forced to cancel classes, but rarely are they needed. Even at the beginning of the term, we usually know exactly when our last day of school will be.

When you hear about schools closing because of weather or illness, remember our boys and girls heading to class—perhaps a bit jealous of their contemporaries—but thinking of those extra early vacation days in May when the weather will be much nicer and they will be home enjoying activities out of their reach during the cold, snowy days of January or February.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org); e-mail: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)



W.F. Underwood

## MissionsFEST 2007

### Campus family sponsors missions celebration

On March 17, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., Clear Creek will host hundreds of visitors for MissionsFest 2007. It has been about five years since our last missions celebration; the success of that event creates excitement for March 17.

Faculty, staff and students will be the primary labor force for a wide range of activities. Participants will be informed, entertained, inspired and challenged to fulfill the Acts 1:8 command to "go and make disciples."

Six mission information conferences are scheduled for 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. in the classroom building. Each conference will last 40 minutes and will be offered twice. Conference topics include: Urban Missions, KBC Partnership Missions, How to Pray for Missionaries, Homeless Shelter/Rescue Missions, Introduction to Cult Awareness, Missions for Children's Leaders (RA's, GA's, Mission Friends).

From 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., visitors can stop by informational booths at the Pomeroy Family Life Center. Missionaries will be there to answer questions and provide firsthand insight about their minis-

tries. Expect to meet missionaries to South Africa, Korea, the Philippines, Russia and Scotland.

Free activities are planned for preschoolers, children and youth. For a minimal fee, the Irene Peterson Child Development Center will provide childcare and lunch for children 2 weeks to 4 years of age. Advanced registration for childcare is requested; call (606) 337-1758.

For visitors age 5 and up, KBC Disaster Relief will serve lunch for a minimal fee.

The event concludes with a worship service at 1:45 p.m. Former overseas missionary Clyde Meador Jr., who now serves as executive vice president of the SBC International

Mission Board, will speak. Additional MissionsFEST information and online registration are available at: <http://www.ccbc.edu/missionsfest07>.

While you are here, tour the campus and see your Cooperative Program dollars at work.

For the sake of the world, come and join us.



Bill Whittaker

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

## Movie reviewer: This year's Oscar nominations abysmal

By Phil Boatwright

Kansas City, Kan. (BP)—And the winner may be: "The Departed" (R), "Babel" (R), "Little Miss Sunshine" (R), "Letters from Iwo Jima" (R) or "The Queen" (PG-13).

Indeed, four of the five films nominated this year for an Oscar as Best Picture are rated R. What's more, the four R-rated films featured either cynicism, political correctness, crudity, a countless amount of obscenity or material that borders on pornographic.

The artistic and technical merits achieved by directors Scorsese, Eastwood and the rest cannot be denied, but the perspective of these four R-rated films can thwart most any filmgoer's spiritual development.

Following are brief takes on the nominated films, plus a look at one that was sorely overlooked when the Oscar nominees were announced.

■ War has been declared on mobster crime in "The Departed." Though masterfully made, I find no moral compass to a script that is somehow both convoluted and superficial. Whatever ideas director Martin Scorsese has included are so masked with cartoonish revelry that the purpose is defeated. Scorsese and his cast wallow in evil, seeming to enjoy it rather than be repulsed by it. His film spotlights soulless men on the take who find little value to their own lives, and none in anyone else's.

We can learn by viewing the lives of the lost, but there is no redemptive message in this movie. It's just Scorsese's concept of a world not only overcome with vice, but one lacking any true goodness. We leave the theater having been brutalized with profane language and violent deeds (at least eight people are killed execution style). "The Departed" is brutal, profane and darker than night.

■ In "Babel," several lives and seemingly separate storylines are interwoven after two Moroccan boys accidentally shoot an American tourist. Amid all the other R-rated content, this one features a provocative depiction of a 17-year-old Japanese girl trying to cope with her mother's suicide and the seeming indifference of her father. (Rinko Kikuchi is nominated for Best Supporting Actress for the role.)

Looking for love in all the wrong places, the girl engages in exhibitionistic behavior and drug use in various scenes. What's the difference between an X-rated movie and this one? Laws forbid the sexual exploitation of underage children in the making of sex films. But in a big studio release, the same imagery apparently can be featured under the guise of dramatic narrative.

■ "Little Miss Sunshine" is all about a dysfunctional family that comes together in order to achieve

a little girl's dream of entering a beauty/talent contest. The film delivers potent comments on society and does so brilliantly from an artistic standpoint. But like each of these motion pictures, this one features enough crudity and obscenity to satisfy Howard Stern and enough bizarreness to intrigue the Addams family.

■ Clint Eastwood's "Letters from Iwo Jima," in keeping with the general pacifistic mood in Hollywood, does a fine job with putting a human face on the enemy. But Pearl Harbor, which ultimately led to the showdown on Iwo Jima, signaled a gruesome reality that must not be forgotten. In reality, the Japanese were a fearsome and extremely brutal enemy. That's not depicted here.

Of course, Japan is our buddy now, so it might seem politically incorrect to recreate the savagery they brought to war. It might seem positive to downplay and forget such atrocities. After all, it was nearly 70 years ago. But remembering the events of World War II will keep us on guard and remind us that an entire nation can be blinded by evil even when their cause seems noble.

But in this film Eastwood's agenda is an anti-war statement, which isn't always practical. If he showed this film to the terrorists of the world, might it cause them to un-strap suicide bombs and lay down their beheading swords? No? Ah, there lies the fault with such anti-war films. The enemies of freedom and justice never see them, nor do they care to.

■ I expect Helen Mirren of "The Queen" to beat out Judi Dench and Meryl Streep for Best Actress because the latter two already have statuettes and there has been a buzz building around Mirren since "The Queen" (rated PG-13 for brief strong language) was first released. I was unable to see this film and thus cannot give an honest take on its message or subtext.

Sadly, the most affecting film of this past year—"United 93"—was overlooked by members of the Academy.

United 93 (Rated R for strong language, sequences of terror and violence) tells of the heroic actions aboard the hijacked flight bound for Washington, D.C., on 9/11. Told from the perspective of the passengers, the flight crew and those monitoring the plane, the film shows how complete strangers united against a common enemy. Indeed, the film is a cautionary tale that reminds us anew: United we stand, divided we fall.

Though our country is at odds with its involvement in Iraq, the film makes it clear that we face an evil that masks itself as righteous. It is a film that will touch you, move you and make you think. So why wasn't it acknowledged for what it is—the best film of 2006?

Phil Boatwright is the editor and film reviewer for [previewonline.org](http://previewonline.org)

### COMMENTARY

**Transformation: How Global Churches Transform Lives and the World.** Bob Roberts Jr. Zondervan Press, 2006. 197 pages. \$19.99.

♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

Bob Roberts Jr. planted the North Wood Church in 1985, and like a lot of innovative church plants it was wildly successful. The church grew so fast that within months they looked at buying a piece of property that would allow almost unlimited expansion space. As he relates the story, within months of the move, the church grew from 700 to 350. "Our church was growing faster in reverse than it had ever grown in drive," he observed.

Naturally, this became a personal crisis for him. He began to imagine that he would be tagged as an expert on sabotaging church growth. After moving through a period of self-doubt and bargaining with God, he had an epiphany that changed his sense of calling and transformed his understanding of the church.

Transformation stands squarely in the missional church paradigm, which views the church as the mission of God in the world. Roberts contends this is more than simple semantics. The more traditional view understands missions to be a program, and often an optional one, of the church. The missional paradigm understands the mission of God to be the heartbeat of the church.

Foundational to this paradigm shift is transformation, which begins with personal transformation to the person and presence of Christ. A crucial question Roberts encountered early on was: "When will Jesus be enough for you?" When Jesus becomes the center of the church's life, the next step is to order the entirety of the church's life around His ministry and work in the world.

Roberts' book speaks with passion about the missional church and the transformation needed in the life of churches and believers if our existence is to make any difference in the world we live in. At times he tends to universalize his own experience and insights, but overall most churches would benefit with exposure to Transformation. (And, yes, glocal is a word.) Jim Holladay



**Cold War Letters.** Thomas Merton. Edited by Christine M. Bochen and Wllima H. Shannon. Orbis Books, 2006. 206 pages. \$16. ♦♦♦♦

Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, entered the Abby of Gethsemani, near Bardstown, in 1941 and resided there until his accidental death in 1968. During these years Merton wrote more than 50 books and hundreds of magazine articles and spoke often. Through the years since his death his influence has not diminished. Merton "scholars" are in abundance and new devotees are born every day.

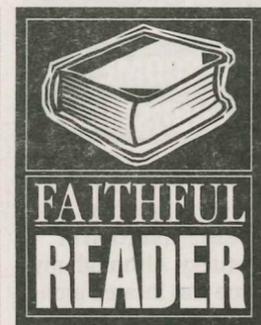
Merton writes as a decidedly "Catholic" author, but what he writes easily transfers to the lives of those who are not Catholic. Merton was one of the most influential Christian writers of the 20th century and with this book, he is posthumously claiming his place in the 21st century as well.

This book consists of 111 letters (with excellent forewords by James Douglass and the editors), written to a variety of people, between October 1961 and October 1962. Hence the title "Cold War Letters."

The subject of the letters primarily is the subject to peace, but Merton does venture out to discuss other events and concerns of the times. Basically, Merton is struggling in his letters with Christianity being all too willing to accept a watered-down witness to what Merton sees as the true message of peace proclaimed by Christ.

Merton was appealing to the establishment of a community of Christian faith that would be totally devoted to living out the teachings of Christ without compromise. He was battling a segment of the Christian church he felt was willing to compromise for the sake of its wealth and power. Sound familiar?

The issue of war and peace to which Merton responds in these letters is just as much a point of concern in the church today. His struggle to be prophetic and not be silenced is still a struggle for those who observe what they consider an all-too-convenient marriage today of church and politics. Change a few names and historical situations, and Merton's words are just as relevant today. Wayne Hager



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; and Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: [whager@adelphia.net](mailto:whager@adelphia.net); [lyndonpastor@aol.com](mailto:lyndonpastor@aol.com).

## Christian literature groups to merge

Colorado Springs (RNS)—Two of the world's largest distributors of Christian literature have announced plans to merge.

The Colorado-based International Bible Society and British-based Send the Light announced that the merger could be completed by March 1.

The Bible society has been focused on the distribution of Bibles, said Steve Johnson, the society's executive vice president of the Americas. Founded in 1809, it works with partners such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Campus Crusade for Christ as well as churches and individuals who use its Bibles for evangelism.

"Our intent is that the merger will actually expand the ministry work we do around the world," Johnson said.

Larry Carpenter, senior vice president and chief marketing officer for Send the Light USA, said the Bible society's success in publishing Bibles will help his organization, while STL's distribution expertise will help the society.

"When you're distributing 13 million products a year, you need a good distribution arm," Carpenter said of IBS. "We think we'll learn some things about publishing from them."

Send the Light, founded in 1957, helps U.S. Christian companies distribute a range of products—including books, music, tracts and home schooling materials—to European and other international locations.

Keith Danby, chief executive officer of STL, will become the global CEO of the blended organization.

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Steve Rice

I grew up in the far eastern section of Kentucky. Although my home was located along the main highway, a lot of my relatives and friends lived up hollows (often pronounced "hollers"). For you city dwellers, a hollow is a narrow valley surrounded by steep hills.

Traverse the narrow, winding road of a typical hollow and you will notice homes of various costs and sizes. Look closely and you also will notice that there is only one road in and one road out. Every person living in the hollow enters along the same path.

The same is true with salvation. During the Sermon on the Mount, likely overlooking the Sea of Galilee, Jesus taught that a person should "enter through the narrow gate." He said, "Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

In the upper room, just before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples He was going to His Father's house (John 14:2). Confused, Thomas asked, "How can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:5-6).

Like the "hollers" of Eastern Kentucky, heaven has only one entrance. Jesus is the only road to heaven and He is the sole assurance of eternal salvation. We can be assured of heaven when we accept Jesus as our one way in and trust Him as our one guarantee of salvation.

*Steve Rice is discipleship and assimilation director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention*

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BENTON**—New Bethel Church recently called **Mark Mohler** as pastor.
- **HENDERSON**—**Ferd Elfreich** recently retired as pastor of Calvary Church.
- **INDEPENDENCE**—Bethesda Church recently called **Troy Cates** as associate pastor.
- **IRVINE**—Calvary Church recently called **Sam Miller** as youth minister.
- **LONDON**—Mount Olivet Church recently called **Jackie Jagers** as pastor.
- **LOUISVILLE**—Buechel Park Church recently ordained **Judy Witt** as a deacon. **Don Rogers** is pastor.

The Christian Business and Professional Women organization will host a luncheon at noon, March 15, at the Hurstbourne Country Club featuring guest speaker **Martha Fel-lure**. For reservations, call (502) 419-4371.

Highland Park First Church will host the 13-week Financial Peace University each Thursday at 6:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 22. For more information, contact **Christine Wal-raven** at (502) 874-2797.

St. Matthews Church will host the "Embracing Grace" women's ministry conference March 2-3 featuring guest speaker **Liz Curtis Higgs** and musical guest **Alma Randolph**. For more information or to register, call (502) 896-8882.

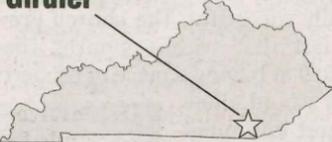
■ **NORTONVILLE**—**Mike Back** recently resigned as music minister at Nortonville Church.

■ **MURRAY**—Ledbetter Church recently called **Phillip Bazzell** as pastor. He was ordained to the gospel ministry Jan. 14 by West Fork Church.

West Fork Church recently called **Matthew Williams** as pastor.

### Spotlight on ...

Girdler



**Mae Lee**, church clerk for Locust Grove Church since 1945, recently was honored for more than 61 years of service as church clerk. Knox Association Director of Missions **Seymour Wattenburger** and his wife, **Wilma Jean**, presented Lee a plaque of appreciation and a dozen red roses. The church also recently honored Lee on her 94th birthday. **David Barnard** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—First Church will host the **Dove Brothers** in concert Feb. 22, 7 p.m. For more information, call (270) 683-3505.

■ **PADUCAH**—New Life Church recently called **Doug Kineman** as pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—Cedar Bluff Church recently called **Mark Faughn** as pastor. Faughn, who previously was pastor of Unity Church in Fredonia, succeeds **J.R. Bruce** who recently retired.

Emmanuel Church recently called **Jerry Holeman** as pastor.

### What's going on?

Mail your happenings to Mountains to the Mississippi at Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. E-mail: wesrec@earthlink.net.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### February

- 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 "Early Bird" Keyboard Festival, First Baptist Church, Murray.
- 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.

### March

- 2-3 Creative Ministry Festival, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 3 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 3 Handbell Ring and Share—East, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

- 3 RA Congress Region 5, Aberdeen Baptist Church, Aberdeen, Ohio.
- 3 Vacation Bible School Clinic—East, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 7-21 Kentucky Changers College Blitz, Boone's Creek Baptist Camp, Winchester.
- 9-10 Creative Ministries Festival, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 10 RA Congress Region 1, Potter's House Baptist Worship Center, Smithland.
- 10 RA Congress Region 3, South Fork Baptist Church, Hodgenville.
- 10 Handbell Ring and Share—West, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 10 Vacation Bible School—West, Second Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 17 RA Congress Region 2, Olive Branch Baptist Church, Hanson.
- 17 RA Congress Region 6, Boone's Creek Baptist Camp, Winchester.
- 17 Statewide Keyboard Festivals, multiple locations.
- 20 Simple Church Seminar, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.
- 22-25 Adult Kentucky Changers, Boone's Creek Baptist Camp, Winchester.
- 23-24 Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting, Third Baptist Church, Owensboro.
- 24 Girls in Action/Children in Action Missions Event, Third Baptist Church, Owensboro.
- 24 RA Congress Region 8A, First Baptist Church, Russell.
- 26-27 Welcome to Kentucky New Ministers Orientation, Baptist Building, Louisville.

For more information, call (800) 266-6477 or visit [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org)

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Bivocational youth minister for a growing, suburban Northern Kentucky church. This ministry position could potentially become full-time in the future. A love for Christ and teenagers a must. Please send resumé by Feb. 28, 2007, to: Youth Minister Search Committee, Union Baptist Church, PO Box 194, Union, KY 41091.

**SEEKING:** Part-time/bivocational music minister (approximately 20 hours per week). If interested, please send resumé to Personnel Committee, Evergreen Baptist Church, 2698 Evergreen Road, Frankfort, KY 40601. Questions: please call Jim at (502) 320-1872.

**SEEKING:** Part-time financial secretary (accounts payable, payroll, financial reports, etc.); knowledge of Power Church a plus. Fort Mitchell Baptist Church, 2323 Dixie Highway, Fort Mitchell, KY 41017. E-mail resumé to [fmcb@fuse.net](mailto:fmcb@fuse.net); or fax: (859) 331-2362.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of students with possible progression to associate pastor for Pleasureville Baptist Church. Prefer seminary student or graduate. Focus on both youth and children's ministry. Will consider part-time applicants. Salary commensurate with experience. Excellent benefit package. Send resumé to Pleasureville Baptist Church, PO Box 147, Pleasureville, KY 40057 by Feb. 24, 2007.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational worship leader for a blended-worship church with a growing multimedia ministry. Located in a fast-growing rural community centrally located between Lexington, Louisville and Cincinnati. Position will be paid salary with available church parsonage and two weeks paid vacation. Applicants may send resumé to the attention of the Worship Leader Search Committee by mail to Long Ridge Baptist Church, 3595 Highway 127N, Owenton, KY 40359; or phone (502) 484-5127; or e-mail [trenthol@msn.com](mailto:trenthol@msn.com).

**SEEKING:** Full-time DOM for Bracken Association. Send resumé to 5105 Main St., Mayslick, KY 41055; or by e-mail to [brackenassoc@earthlink.net](mailto:brackenassoc@earthlink.net). Deadline: April 1, 2007. An associational profile will be sent via e-mail upon request.

**SEEKING:** Baptist church prayerfully seeks applications for full-time senior pastor (see our Web site: [williamstownbaptist.com](http://williamstownbaptist.com)). Average weekly attendance: 300 members, consisting of diverse age groups in a growing, northern Kentucky community. Please send your resumé along with a cover letter, statement of ministry and faith, and audio/video recording to: Pastor Search Committee, Williamstown Baptist Church, 214 North Main St., Williamstown, KY 41097. Resumé will be received until Feb. 28, 2007.

**SEEKING:** Piano/music director for rural Grant County Baptist church. Call (859) 428-3398 for information.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of students. Please send resumé to Personnel Committee, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 8645 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for conservative Southern Baptist church. Please prayerfully consider sending resumé: Pollard Baptist Church, 444 Blackburn Ave., Ashland, KY 41102; or e-mail us at [pastorsearchcommittee@pollardbaptistchurch.com](mailto:pastorsearchcommittee@pollardbaptistchurch.com). (606) 324-3626. [www.pollardbaptistchurch.com](http://www.pollardbaptistchurch.com).

**SEEKING:** Trinity Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., is seeking qualified candidates for the position of minister of music. Trinity has a resident membership of 2,200. There are two morning worship services which are both traditional/blended in style. Qualifications include degree from accredited seminary and at least 5 years experience. Trinity's affiliations include SBC and CBF. Send resumé to Dr. Jeff Roberts, Trinity Baptist Church, 4815 Six Forks Road, Raleigh, NC 27609; or go online to [www.tbcraleigh.com](http://www.tbcraleigh.com).

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Edmonton Baptist Church, Edmonton, Ky. Parsonage provided. Send resumé to Jim Howard, PO Box 150, Edmonton, KY 42141.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. Please contact Personnel Committee at Beechmont Baptist Church, 4574 South Third St., Louisville, KY 40214. (502) 362-5806.

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

**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](mailto:Lee.Carl@lifeway.com); or mail request to PO Box 8, Glorieta, NM 87535; or visit our website, [www.glorieta.com](http://www.glorieta.com), and download application/information.

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

## Don't let the name fool you

*Surviving Vietnam, amputee Wimp Ballard 'stands taller than the rest of us'*

By Tammy Sharp  
Louisiana Baptist Message

Livingston, La. (BP)—Don't let his name fool you, or the fact that he has no legs. Wimp Ballard is as tough as they come.

With one leg blown off while fighting in Vietnam and the other amputated not long after, Ballard, a member of First Baptist Church of Livingston, La., rarely lets an opportunity to serve others, especially veterans, pass him by.

"He never demonstrates a negative attitude and is an inspiration to all who know him," said David Brown, director of missions for Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association. "He has an indomitable spirit and is a vibrant witness for the Lord."

At 24, Ballard was drafted in 1968. He arrived in Vietnam on May 14, and less than four months later, he was wounded.

After field surgery in Vietnam, Ballard was flown to Tokyo, Japan, with "raw" wounds, he said. Doctors closed his wounds, and Ballard began working with a therapist who talked with him about God.

Even though he had made a profession of faith as a boy, no one had gone through the gospel with him, Ballard said. As a result, he felt as if he'd never really accepted Christ.

Though he had shared his story about accepting Christ as a boy, the therapist kept raising the subject—something that further convinced Ballard he was not saved.

After recovering from an infec-

tion that drove him to the brink of death, Ballard said he turned to faith in God by asking a chaplain passing through the ward to lead him to Christ.

"When Christ came into my life, He gave me a peace," Ballard said. "It's just made the difference in my life."

### Serving God is top priority

Today, very little prevents Ballard from serving God.

As a resident of Livingston, La., where he has lived for 40 years, and where his wife was reared, Ballard is involved in the prison ministry, Incarcerated Vets. He and Daniel Nesom, a friend, fellow Vietnam veteran and church member, are "outside sponsors"—people who are not incarcerated.

Nesom arrived in Vietnam May 10, 1968, and came home the same day in 1970. The two veterans did not meet until after they returned from Vietnam, though Nesom graduated with Ballard's wife.

The two vets became fishing buddies and then began attending church together. "We got to be friends," Nesom said. "Then one day, a couple of people were going to DCI (Dixon Correctional Institute) and we went with them as an outreach from church."

It has been 17 years since Ballard and Nesom first went to DCI. "We went in basically to share the gospel with these guys," Ballard said. Today, the inmates conduct their own ser-

vices each Tuesday.

According to Dixon Correctional Institute's Web site, Incarcerated Vets provides services to veterans serving time, "improves the general public's perception of DCI incarcerated veterans," and raises funds for charitable efforts.

Last year the group refurbished 124 bicycles for needy children in the area. They also raised money to buy electric fans for the elderly in the area who cannot afford air conditioning.

The group is built on integrity, Ballard said. If an inmate is disruptive, he is suspended from the group for 90 days.

The ministry's motto is: "Still making a difference," and Nesom said Ballard's positive spirit make a tremendous difference to inmates. "Actions speak louder than words. ... (Ballard) shows how much he loves the Lord with his actions. He inspires a lot of people because he's in a wheelchair and a veteran himself."

Inmate Robert Cox, chief commander of Incarcerated Vets, agreed. "Ballard is always Jesus first. No matter how he addresses the group, no matter what problem an inmate has, he's always addressing them with respect," he said.

"When he speaks to you, he's speaking the truth. He's speaking the gospel. He's speaking the Word."

Cox remembers a fellow inmate who decided to attend an Incarcerated Vets meeting the evening of his mother's death.

"Wimp picked up the fact that there was something troubling him and asked to talk with him," Cox said. He recalled that Ballard told the inmate about eternal life and that no matter how hopeless circumstances might be, a brighter day is possible.

The inmate "still practices the Muslim faith, but he no longer (sees) Christians as an enemy because he saw Jesus in Wimp Ballard," Cox said. "Though he has no legs, (Ballard) stands taller than any of the rest of us."

### Strong men of faith

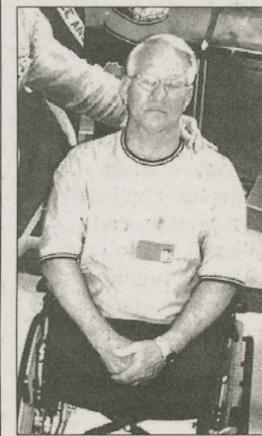
Gary Pearce, senior chaplain at DCI, said Ballard and Nesom are strong men of faith.

"They pray for (the inmates), minister to them and simply care for them. As they meet with the men, they graciously apply the teachings of Scripture to the issues of everyday life," Pearce said.

"Their love for Jesus is demonstrated in how they face the tough challenges of life," Pearce added. "As the men on the inside see Wimp and Daniel deal with their issues, they in turn find encouragement to deal with the challenges they face in life."

In addition to counseling, Ballard and Nesom provide copies of the Bible for inmates.

"The bottom line is that they love God and work hard to spread His love to those who need it most," Pearce said.



Wimp Ballard

## IMB worker fights loss, illness, doubt on Asian mission field

By Marie Travis  
Baptist Press

Richmond, Va. (BP)—When Belinda Baker left to work in East Asia, she planned to settle in, tell her neighbors about Jesus, and then leave and go to another place. It would be simple and quick.

But it didn't quite happen like that.

Two weeks after arriving in East Asia, her father died.

"Please, you don't have to come," Baker's mother told her. "Serve the Lord." Twenty hours away by plane, Baker stayed put and began working on her plan.

Nine weeks passed, and Baker saw no new disciples for Jesus.

"I had never gone this long without leading someone to the Lord," she said.

To build relationships with the East Asian people, Baker immersed herself in the culture. She rode bikes with them, prayed over their houses, ate their food—and got sick many times.

"I finally met the body mass index" standard for Southern Baptist workers, she joked.

Still, Baker did not lead anyone to faith in Christ. Frustrated, she prayed the scripture, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

After nine months, her sister came to visit. Still discouraged, Baker expressed her feelings to her sister, telling her that she "stank" at being a missionary. Her sister didn't

have miraculous words of advice, but God used her to help Baker get a new focus.

"She taught me so much (just) from loving my friends," Baker said. "She loved (East Asia). The Lord wanted to do His work in His time, and I was arrogant."

Now open to what God had to say, Baker said she realized what He had been trying to teach her.

"(The Lord told me) this is not about you; you are trying to convince them of a Savior's love. There are nations who are lost and dying and going to hell."

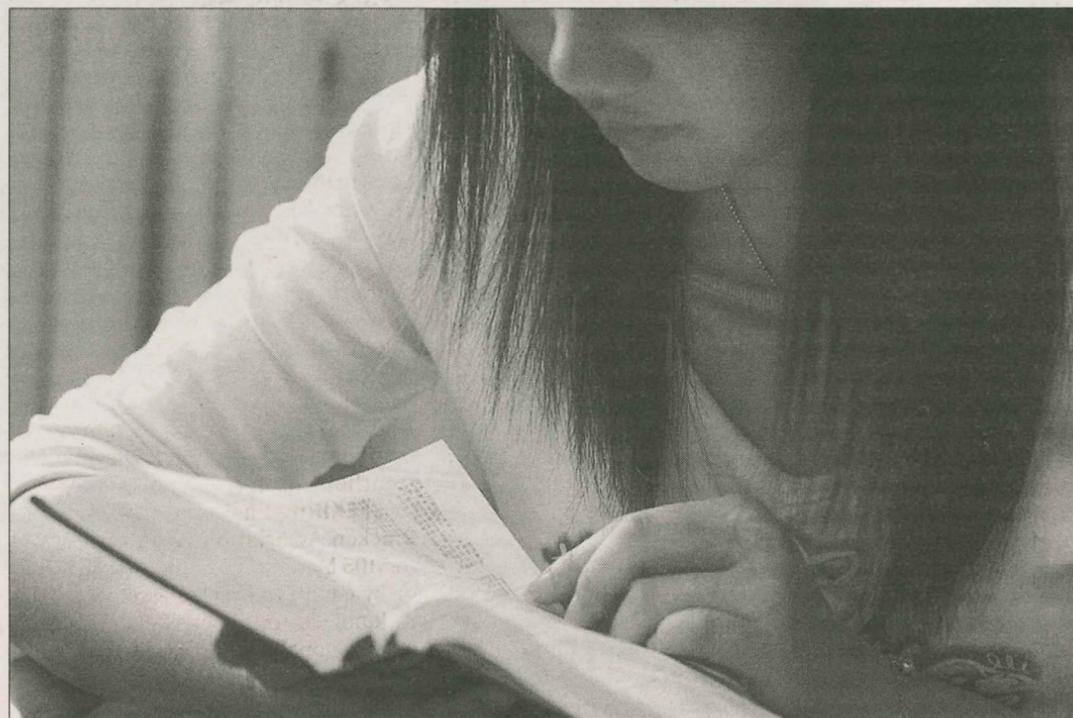
With her attitude adjusted, Baker said it was as if there were "fireworks of people coming to know the Lord." Then, she faced a new challenge—a lack of familiarity with the language. With fellow believers to disciple, knowing the language became even more imperative.

Just as she began digging earnestly into the language, Hurricane Katrina hit her hometown of New Orleans, a year after her father died.

"I spent so much time in the hospital (sick). I wanted to go home," she said. "I prayed to go home. (I told God) I wasn't good at this. (I told Him) 'In the (U.S.) I know the language and I have ministered there.'"

Meanwhile, one of the young women Baker disciplined had led one of her own friends to faith in Christ.

When Baker heard the news, she said God reminded her that she and



her ministry partner were the only Christians the two Asian women had in their lives to disciple them. It was a breakthrough moment.

As she continued to love the people of East Asia, and to teach them about Jesus, she said she also continued to grow in her relationship with Christ.

Months later, before Baker left the East Asian mission field, she helped start four churches and saw 20 people come to faith in Christ.

Now back at home, she said she

continues to see God working.

"God (reveals) another thing He did in my heart every time I speak (at different) churches," she said.

Baker recalls the Bible story of Abraham, and how he failed at the beginning of his mission but because of faith he was credited with righteousness.

"I failed from the beginning too, but every day I want to be a woman of faith," she said. "(God) is faithful to His promises."

\*Name changed for security reasons.

(IMB file photo)

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