



# WESTERN RECORDER

February 20, 2007  
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## Study: Internet porn sites target children & teens

Nashville (BP)—Peddlers of online pornography are stalking children with graphic sexual images, according to a new study that found an increased number of children and teenagers being exposed to unsolicited pornography on the Internet.

The study, which appears in the February issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, found that 42 percent of Internet users ages 10 to 17 said they had seen pornography online during the past year, with 66 percent of those saying they had not sought out the images.

Overall, 34 percent of minors responding to a telephone survey of 1,500 Internet users ages 10 to 17 said they had experienced unwanted exposure to online pornography.

Teens report that such images "pop up all the time" when they're on the Internet, especially when they use file-sharing programs to download non-pornographic images, when they're talking online with friends, when they visit chat rooms and when they play games online, *Associated Press* reported.

"It's so common now, who hasn't seen something like that?" Emily Duhovny, a 17-year-old, told AP. She added that "more than anything, it's just annoying."

Researchers said filtering and blocking software is effective to an extent, but porn peddlers are finding ways to navigate around such filters.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said parents need to step up their efforts to protect their children from unwanted sexual exposure.

## Help wanted—and needed

### Kentucky Baptists continue efforts to aid New Orleans

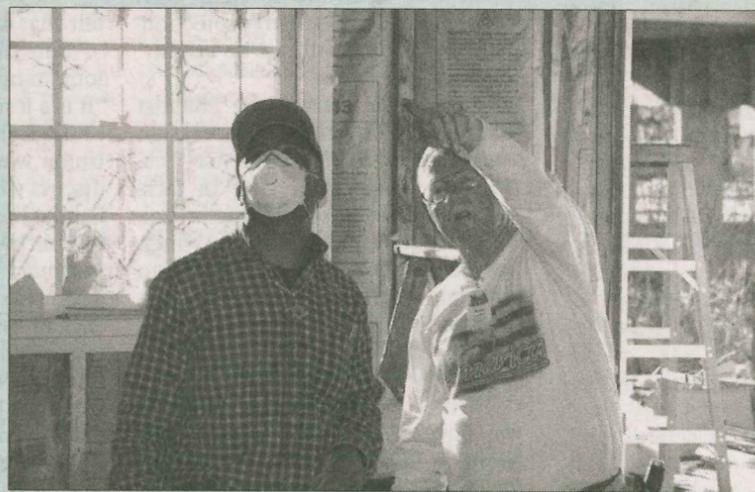
By Robert Reeves  
Kentucky Baptist Convention

New Orleans—For Steve Gomez, his displacement since Hurricane Katrina is almost over.

Gomez, the pastor of Faith in Prayer Missionary Baptist Church in New Orleans, was a substitute schoolteacher and mental health nurse when he ended up in the Louisiana Superdome with 12 patients in his care during the vicious hurricane a year and a half ago. The ensuing days saw him and his family evacuated to Houston where they lived for seven months before making their way back to New Orleans to stay in the home of his mother-in-law.

The Gomez family's own home was a wreck after standing for weeks in water that reached as high as eight feet. Since returning, Gomez, 48, has worked to start a business as a hardwood floor installer, serve as pastor of his church (now meeting in the home of one of the members) and begin repairing his house.

But thanks to the work of a nine-man team of Kentucky Baptist volunteers from Piner Baptist Church in Morning View, the day of moving back home is almost here. Gomez was hopeful that because of the work of the Piner crew, moving day might come as early as this week—a full three months sooner than what he was anticipating if he had to complete all the re-



**RECOVERY** Steve Gomez (above left), pastor of Faith in Prayer Missionary Baptist Church in New Orleans, discusses repairs to his home with Kentucky Baptist volunteer Mike Daniels. FEMA trailers (left) remain a common sight in New Orleans neighborhoods almost 18 months after Hurricane Katrina devastated the area.



pairs himself.

"I'm tickled pink. I couldn't wait to get back here," Gomez said of his reaction to the call that the group was on its way. "These people have shown tremendous concern. It's something beyond imagination."

The team was one of three Kentucky Baptist groups on work sites in New Orleans earlier this month as part of Operation NOAH (New Orleans Area Homes) Rebuild, the Southern Baptist effort to help rebuild homes, lives and churches in the devastated city. Groups from Lone Oak First Baptist Church in

Paducah and Pulaski Baptist Association were also working on homes that same week.

Operation NOAH Rebuild, developed by the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans, the Louisiana Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, divides the New Orleans area into 27 zones with churches, associations and state conventions from across the nation partnering to work in specific zones.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Baptist Convention  
□ See Kentucky volunteers ... *Page 9*

## KBHC leaders change entity's name to Sunrise Children's Services

By Trennis Henderson  
Editor

Mount Washington—Seeking to position Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children for expanded ministry opportunities, KBHC's board of directors has voted to change the ministry's name to Sunrise Children's Services.

Noting that the new name is designed to "better clarify who we are and what we do today," KBHC President Bill Smithwick said, "Like Life-Way (Christian Resources) and GuideStone (Financial Resources), we want to open up to a broader audience."

Smithwick said the projected date for the name change to take effect is March 15. He emphasized that the new name is the only change being made by the Kentucky Baptist Convention-related ministry.

"Our practices aren't changing. Nothing else will change," Smith-

wick said. "We will still be an institution of the convention. We will still participate. We will still be part of the family."

"Our heritage as Baptists is not changing," he added. "Our relationship with the KBC and Kentucky Baptist churches, our traditional family views and stance, our methods—none of that is changing."

Smithwick said the name Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, which the ministry adopted 25 years ago, sparks "a lot of basic assumptions" among many people, including assuming "that Baptists take care of all of our financial needs, ... that we just take care of Baptist kids (and) that we hire only Baptist staff."

Emphasizing that none of those assumptions is accurate, Smithwick said, "We realize sometimes the name is a little antiquated and needs a lot of explaining."

The new name is intended "to better explain who we are" and to provide "a fresh start and let the name catch up to the way the rest of the program has changed," he noted.

As an example, "we're not homes for children anymore. We've got more children in foster homes than in residential care."

Smithwick described "Sunrise" as "a positive word picture of warmth and hope and a new day and a new beginning. That's the vision of what we want for kids who come into our care." He said the new name is based on 2 Samuel 23:4 which declares God "is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning."

KBHC, which has been affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention since 1914, traces its roots to the establishment of the Louisville Baptist Orphans' Home in 1869.

Separate children's home ministries underwent several name changes before merging in 1954 and eventually being named Kentucky Bap-

tist Homes for Children in 1982.

Former KBC President Eldred Taylor, who headed KBHC during its previous name change, described the new name as "a fitting name for such a significant ministry."

"Sunrise causes the darkness of night to flee. Sunrise marks the beginning of a new day and warmth of love in which to heal and grow," Taylor said. "In our rapidly changing world, abused, neglected and troubled children are in desperate need of our help. While the mission has not changed, KBHC has adapted the methods to meet the needs of these children. It is now the right time to have a name more fitting to the ministry."

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey noted that "although I regret Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children will not be in their name, I understand the importance of having a brief, easily communicated name that captures what you do and fa-  
□ See KBHC unveils new ... *Page 3*



Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, February 21.

## SBC leaders issue calls for unity, discipline, evangelism

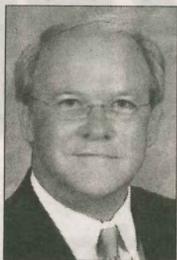
Jackson, Tenn.—The future should be bright for Southern Baptists, but it won't be if they continue their infighting, Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page said Feb. 15 at a conference on Baptist identity.

Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., urged Southern Baptists to stick together. "But if we continue to break into factions that continue to fight each other and focus on turf-protectionism, the future will not be bright," he warned.

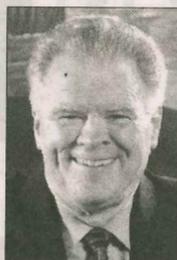
Page spoke during the "Baptist Identity II: Convention, Cooperation and Controversy" conference Feb. 15-17 at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. He wove a theme of unity throughout his message, which focused on the need for Baptists to remain together despite disagreements.

### "Are you preaching Christ?"

"Oftentimes in our convention we have broken into groups that want to know 'Who's side are you on?' rather than 'Are you preaching Christ?'" Page said. "There are people in the Southern Baptist Convention who think the convention belongs to them. There are many groups that think that way. I have



Frank Page



Paige Patterson

felt that way at times myself."

But "this convention does not belong to me, nor to you," he insisted. "It is a Jesus convention."

The three-day conference at Union was organized in an effort to discuss what the future of Southern Baptist life might look like.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson began the second day of the conference by asserting contemporary Baptists could learn much about how to relate to each other from Anabaptists—the Reformation-era ancestors of modern Baptists.

"If modern Baptists are to find a way out of our current malaise, we must, like the Anabaptists did, find a way to make church membership more meaningful," Patterson said.

He said Baptist churches—both in the Anabaptists' time and today—are

lacking in their ability to effectively discipline and provide guidance to new converts. "We are showing a lack of care with new converts," Patterson said. "And a disciplined church is necessary for the church's witness."

Patterson, a former SBC president and a key figure in conservatives' rise to power in the SBC, noted that Anabaptists' refusal to change their minds on issues unless convinced by Scripture should also be a testament to contemporary Baptists.

During his address, Patterson said only God can know people's religious motivations, and he chastised those who spread slander and gossip from within Baptist ranks. "That should be shameful among any Baptists today," he added.

### "Alarms are sounding loudly"

Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, said a renewed emphasis on evangelism must begin with individuals and not with the denomination or church programs.

Lamenting the lack of evangelism taking place in Southern Baptist churches, Rainer cited statistics showing that in 1950, Southern Baptists baptized 376,000 people when the denomination had 7

million members. In 2005, when the SBC claimed more than 16 million members, its churches baptized only 371,000 people.

"Alarms are sounding loudly," Rainer warned, pointing to several reasons for the SBC's downward trend in evangelism.

Eschatology is one reason, Rainer said, because Southern Baptists are increasingly abandoning a belief in a literal, physical hell, which diminishes enthusiasm for evangelism.

He listed ecclesiology as another reason, noting that on a given Sunday, according to statistics, only about 7 million of the SBC's 16 million members attend church.

"It would appear that our church rolls are filled with non-members and, likely, unregenerate members," Rainer said. "That which is dead cannot tell another person how to have life."

Far too many church members, including pastors, admit to having no witnessing or evangelistic relationships, Rainer said, and individual Christians no longer feel like evangelism is their responsibility.

"When evangelism is not my responsibility," he warned, "it does not happen."

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

## Waggoner promoted to LifeWay VP post

Nashville (BP)—Trustees of LifeWay Christian Resources promoted Brad Waggoner to the new position of vice president for research and ministry during their semiannual meeting Feb. 12-13 in Nashville.

Waggoner, who was named director of LifeWay Research in July 2006, now also will oversee the E.C. Dargan Research Library, LifeWay International, ministry development and strategic projects. He also will serve as theologian in residence as a resource provider for LifeWay employees and as academic liaison with Southern Baptist seminaries, colleges and universities.

Waggoner previously was dean of the school of leadership and church ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He also has taught at Hardin-Simmons University, Wayland Baptist University and East Texas Baptist University.

In other business, LifeWay President Thom Rainer noted three major issues facing LifeWay in his address to trustees: integrity and openness, LifeWay as a bridge builder and the need to establish the new research and ministry development division.

Chief Financial Officer Jerry Rhyne reported that LifeWay is off to a "strong start" in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1, 2006, with revenues near budget and expenses well under control.

Among other divisional reports:

■ Church Resources Vice President John Kramp highlighted several new initiatives including: The Worship Project, a new digital hymnal, hardback hymnal and online worship planning portal, and a new eight-year cycle for Explore the Bible.

Kramp also reported that a revision of the "Experiencing God" discipleship course will be released in August; the "Next Generation of FAITH" evangelism resource will be released in December; and "Worship KidStyle," a new children's worship resource, will be ready for churches this fall.

■ LifeWay Christian Stores Vice President Mark Scott reported a successful start to the new fiscal year. In the first quarter alone, LifeWay Christian Stores served 239,000 new households and 2,023 new churches.

Five new store projects in three states—Alabama, Virginia and Georgia—have been completed since September, as well as two relocations and one store closing, Scott said. New stores are opening in Rogers, Ark., and Mt. Juliet, Tenn., as well as a store relocation in Lexington.

■ B&H Publishing Group Vice President Ken Stephens reported that B&H sold 2.8 million Bibles last year and that the Holman Christian Standard Bible was the No. 1 translation in unit sales in LifeWay Christian Stores during the 2006 Christmas season.

Key product launches for 2007 include "Jesus: 90 Days with the One and Only" by Beth Moore, "Now You're Speaking My Language" by Gary Chapman, "The Holman Student Bible" and an "Apologetics Bible."

■ Finance & Business Services Vice President Jerry Rhyne reported that the 100,000-square-foot expansion of the LifeWay's Lebanon (Tenn.) Distribution Center was completed in March 2006, and the dated operations department will relocate from Nashville to the Lebanon facility by Oct. 1.

Rhyne also updated trustees on the current capital improvements at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center located near Asheville, N.C. The new Mt. Laurel Inn West is scheduled to open this spring and will feature 103 guest rooms, five one-bedroom suites, three conference rooms, a fitness center and a new lobby to connect the new wing with the existing Mt. Laurel hotel. He said a decision on whether to move forward with the new convention center at Ridgecrest will be made by June 1.

■ Executive Communications & Relations Vice President Tom Hellams reported that three employee-led mission trips so far this year have resulted in more than 6,500 professions of faith. In addition, LifeWay International now has 628 distributors in 83 countries.

Responding to a motion from the 2006 Southern Baptist Convention that LifeWay undertake research on a number of issues affecting Southern Baptists, the trustees approved LifeWay's response that it supports the motion and is conducting the requested research through LifeWay Research.

## Carson-Newman president resigns amid turmoil, named Mercer VP

By Greg Warner  
Associated Baptist Press

Jefferson City, Tenn. (ABP)—James Netherton, the embattled president of Carson-Newman College, is resigning from the Baptist-affiliated school to become executive vice president of Mercer University.

Netherton, president of Carson-Newman since 2000, has been under pressure in recent months. He was the target of a 129-71 "no confidence" vote from the faculty Oct. 4, followed by similar actions by retired faculty and alumni.

Critics accused Netherton, 59, of incompetence and mistreating faculty, and they blamed him for declining enrollment and financial pressures at the Tennessee Baptist Convention-related school in Jefferson City, Tenn.

Netherton downplayed the differences, admitting some mistakes but insisting the college community could resolve its problems in a Christian way. Still, some critics called for the president's resignation or dismissal.

"You can either change the faculty or you can change the president," Don Olive, professor and former chairman of the humanities department, told a news Web site Feb. 15.

In recent weeks, trustees held listening sessions around the state to hear from faculty, alumni and other constituencies. The dispute appeared headed for a showdown at the March trustees meeting until Netherton suddenly announced his departure Feb. 16.

Carson-Newman trustees also said Feb. 16 they will hold a special meeting March 2 to elect a search committee to find Netherton's suc-

cessor. He will leave Carson-Newman May 31, although the Mercer position won't begin until Oct. 1.

Netherton said Feb. 16 his departure did not mean his problems at Carson-Newman were intractable.

"The main thing the turmoil did was send a signal to a number of folks that Jim Netherton might be open to something else," he told Associated Baptist Press.

One of those people, he said, was Mercer President Bill Underwood, with whom Netherton worked at Baylor University, a Baptist-affiliated

school in Waco, Texas. "Once he persuaded me to come and look at Mercer, I found it to be a very compelling opportunity. ... This was more a matter of someone persuading me that there was something better."

Netherton was vice president and chief operating officer at Baylor until 1996, when he became provost at Samford University, an Alabama Baptist school, for four years. Underwood was interim president at Baylor before becoming Mercer's president in December 2005.

Netherton said he expects Carson-Newman to quickly resolve its problems and continue its tradition of success. He pointed to recent fundraising successes and an increase in new student applications.

Tensions at Carson-Newman were ratcheted up even more by charges of liberalism from the Tennessee Baptist Convention and, in return, concern that conservatives in the convention were trying to control the school. In 2004 the convention called for an investigation of the biblical views taught at Carson-Newman and the convention's two other affiliated colleges.



James Netherton

## KBC churches top \$600 million mark in CP gifts

Louisville—Cooperative Program giving in Kentucky reached a historic milestone Jan. 26 when cumulative receipts since 1925 topped more than \$600 million.

The record amount comes just five years after the Kentucky Baptist Convention reached the \$500 million mark in 2002.

"This is an exciting milestone for all Kentucky Baptists in support of missions and evangelism outreach in the state and around the world," said KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey. "I'm grateful for the ongoing commitment of Kentucky Baptists and especially for the near-record receipts received this January, because these gifts enable our missions and ministries to continue moving forward."

Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC business services team, said the achievement reflects the spirit of harmony that has long characterized Kentucky Baptists. Since its inception in 1925, the Cooperative Program has enabled churches of all sizes to combine resources to more effectively share the gospel worldwide.

In addition to record CP giving, Kentucky Baptists have given more than \$1.5 million since 2002 to support relief work in areas devastated by natural disasters, including the Indian Ocean tsunami and hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Kentucky missions and ministries receive 63.65 percent of every CP dollar contributed by Kentucky Baptist churches while 36.35 percent is forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention for national and international ministry efforts.

While giving to churches is increasing statewide, Ashby noted that the amount designated through the Cooperative Program is not matching that growth.

In 1996, CP giving totaled 10.15 percent of undesignated funds received by local churches. Over a 10-year period, that figure has fallen to 7.57 percent.

Kentucky ministries funded at least in part by CP include KBC Mission Board programs, ministries and training events; Baptist colleges and schools; KBC scholarships; church building grants; and entities such as the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and the Western Recorder.

Funds sent on to the SBC are used to support more than 5,000 international missionaries, more than 5,300 North American missionaries and six Southern Baptist seminaries as well as other ministries.

## Kentucky teens honored by national WMU

Birmingham, Ala.—Three Kentucky Baptist Acteens were among more than 20 teens recently honored by national Woman's Missionary Union.

Chelsea Ballou, 17, of Corbin, was named one of eight 2007 National Acteens Panelists based on her commitment to missions and Acteens and her leadership and involvement in her school, church and community.

In addition to the national panelists, WMU leaders named 15 Acteens as National Top Teens for their strong missions involvement, including Rebecca Gardner, 18, of First Baptist Church of Shelbyville, and Katie Hildabrand, 16, of Post Oak Baptist Church in Russellville.

Acteens is the WMU missions organization for teenage girls in grades 7-12.

"We are thrilled that Chelsea, Rebecca and Katie have been recognized by national WMU as young women of distinction," noted LaRaine Dail, Kentucky WMU's youth/college consultant. "All three have served on the Kentucky Acteens Advisory Panel for two years. Their contributions helped shape Exalt for several years."

"We are very proud of each of these girls and their accomplishments," agreed Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky WMU. "We hope that they will serve as role models to others of the value of missions education."

### Ballou's "passion for missions"

Ballou, a member of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, was recommended by her pastor and church leaders who said they have witnessed the impact she has made through her commitment to missions.

"Chelsea is a dedicated church worker with a generous spirit and a deep love for the Lord," said Darren Gaddis, senior pastor of Central Baptist Church and president of the



Chelsea Ballou



Rebecca Gardner



Katie Hildabrand

Kentucky Baptist Convention. "She is ever the positive influence upon her peers. Having participated in mission trips with her, I have seen firsthand her passion for missions and the gospel."

A National Honors Society student at Corbin High School, Ballou is active in both church and school, especially when it comes to music. At church she plays guitar with the praise band and is a member of the youth choir. She also is a member of the marching, pep and concert bands at her high school.

Ballou also has a heart for young children. She volunteers with children's church and vacation Bible school and serves as a tutor for third grade students through her school's peer tutoring program.

Over the past 12 months, Ballou has been involved in several outreach projects with Acteens including making blankets for Hurricane Katrina victims, visiting shut-ins and collecting school supplies for local children.

"Everything I do through Acteens is a time for me to humble myself and take on the heart of a servant," Ballou wrote in her application. "Learning to humble myself and 'serve Christ by serving others' is the most meaningful thing I've done in Acteens."

Ballou also represented Kentucky as a state Acteens panelist in 2003 and 2004, helping plan and lead the annual statewide gathering. She worked each summer during Girls' Week at Laurel Lake Baptist Camp from 2002 to 2005, and has been on missions trips as close as North Carolina and as far away as Ecuador.

## KBHC unveils new name: Sunrise Children's Services

Continued from page 1

cilitates the marketing of your ministry.

"The heritage and legacy of the ministry will always have its roots in Kentucky Baptist Convention life," Mackey emphasized. "I'm convinced there's no intent to distance the ministry from KBC life and ministries."

Smithwick, who is seeking to touch base with Baptist leaders across the state about the name change, acknowledged that "a lot of folks are a little surprised" when they first hear the proposal. He added, however, that "when they hear our reasoning and our need for the change, they understand."

In an effort to communicate firsthand with as many Kentucky Baptists as possible about the new name and the ministry's current vision and programs, Smithwick has scheduled a series of "town hall meetings" across the state from March 1 to 13.

Among those who have been briefed by Smithwick, Rusty Ellison is pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, which was instrumental in establishing the original Louisville Baptist Orphans' Home.

Ellison noted that "the changing of the name to Sunrise Children's Services doesn't do anything to minimize the history of this ministry. However, this new name does more accurately project where the ministry is today and how the ministry loves and provides care for children in the name of Jesus."

Paul Chitwood, immediate past president of the KBC, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, the community where KBHC's Spring Meadows residential facility and ministry support center relocated last year.

"The name change of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children is certainly not without precedent in Baptist life," Chitwood pointed out. "The most important constituents of this Kentucky Baptist entity are the children. If a name change allows them to better minister to the children, then they have my blessing."

Current KBC President Darren Gaddis, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, affirmed that the name change "better reflects the evolving ministries of the KBHC." He added that he is "most encouraged that the leadership is 100 percent committed to retaining its ministry relationship with Kentucky Baptists."

With additional reporting by Karen Taylor of KBHC

"A common misconception is in order to do missions you must travel to foreign lands, live in a hut, and only eat bread and drink water," Ballou noted. "I am a firm believer that we are called to share our beliefs and be on mission wherever we are."

Kym Mitchell, team leader and design editor of national WMU's student resource team, said the eight Acteens named to the national panel "represent the very best of their generation."

The 2007 National Acteens Panelists will serve through Dec. 31 and each will receive a \$1,000 Jessica Powell Loftis Scholarship for Acteens from the WMU Foundation to be used for higher education.

A highlight of Ballou's service will be ministering at Blume, the national missions event for teenage girls and collegiate young women, to be held in Kansas City, Mo., July 10-13. She also will participate in the WMU Missions Celebration and annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, June 10-11, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention.

### National Top Teens

Among the National Top Teens, Rebecca Gardner is a senior at Shelby County High School. She is editor in chief of the high school newspaper, on the yearbook staff and is a step team member.

Gardner is active in the youth program and children's ministry at church. She has served on several Acteens Activator mission trips, including three projects in New Orleans.

Katie Hildabrand is a junior at Russellville High School where she is president of FBLA, secretary of the First Priority group and editor of the yearbook staff. She also is in the concert and marching bands as well as the drama club.

Hildabrand is a member of her church's youth choir, sign art team and puppet team and serves as preschool choir director.

## Lexington LifeWay Store relocates, plans celebration

Lexington—The LifeWay Christian Store in Lexington will celebrate its new location with a grand opening celebration Feb. 24-March 10. Mark Reiss will serve as manager for the new store.

The 7,200-square-foot facility, located next to Fayette Mall, features Christian music, gifts, Bibles, books, children's products and church supplies. The store's hours are 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

"We have served the Lexington area for 15 years," said Mark Scott, vice president of LifeWay Christian Stores, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources. "The new location better positions us for greater opportunities for ministry."

The store is one of seven LifeWay Christian Stores in Kentucky and one of 136 stores the chain operates in 23 states.



Current KBC President Darren Gaddis, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, affirmed that the name change "better reflects the evolving ministries of the KBHC." He added that he is "most encouraged that the leadership is 100 percent committed to retaining its ministry relationship with Kentucky Baptists."

With additional reporting by Karen Taylor of KBHC

**NEW NAME** The Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's ministry support center and Spring Meadows residential facility relocated last year to Mount Washington. KBHC board members have voted to change the Kentucky Baptist-related ministry's name to Sunrise Children's Services.

## WESTERN RECORDER

Box 43969  
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TRENNIS HENDERSON  
Editor

THOMAS C. TOWNSEND  
Marketing & Business  
Manager

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

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## The tragedy of uselessness (part 2)

By Frank Page

Taylors, S.C. (BP)—I began looking last week at Luke 13:1-9, this great biblical passage in which our Lord Jesus shows the power of His communication skills.

Consider this story: A state trooper pulled a car over and told the man driving that he was going 50 mph in a 40 mph zone. "I was only going 40!" the driver protested. "Not according to my radar," the trooper said. "Yes, I was!" "No, you weren't."

With that the man's wife leaned toward the window and whispered, "Officer, I should warn you not to argue with my husband when he has been drinking."

In this instance, communication certainly occurred. But it occurred in a way other than that which was originally intended. Jesus communicates powerfully and clearly in the parable of the fig tree. It is one of the most powerful passages in all the Word of God.

Last week, I wrote about the fact that the fig tree was placed in a purposeful location, but it failed to bring forth a purpose for which it had been planted. I noted that we also face the same possible failure. God has great hopes for us, yet we have failed so many times.

What are the results of such failure? The first obvious result is uselessness. This fruitless tree was of no use. And that is the tragic truth about so many folks both in the church and out of it. They are guilty of no vicious or outrageous wrongdoing. They do not violate the law. They are just utterly and absolutely useless. They stand with the call of great needs ringing in their ears and never seem to hear.

I am convinced that perhaps the most appalling waste that afflicts us today is the complacent moral and spiritual uselessness of so many decent and capable people.

And this waste is a sin. To Jesus, the crime of crimes is to be merely useless. He says as much in His parables of judgment. Every disas-

ter that is visited is the result not of some wrong thing done, but of some right thing left undone. The five foolish bridesmaids had the door shut in their faces, not because they had become unclean, but because they had no oil. The man of one talent

was flung upon the pile of worthless things, not because he had squandered his talent, but because he had refused to invest it. This fig tree was ordered cut down, not because it was bearing fruit that was poisonous, but because it was bearing no fruit at all.

What are you doing? What good is there in the church or in the city or in the world that owes its existence to you? What contribution are you making? Undoubtedly, there was a time you dreamed of usefulness.

This tree was not only useless. It was a hindrance. It was in the way. "Why should it use up the soil?" was the question of the owner. Since it did not give an account of itself in terms of fruit, it was a parasite. It was receiving the properties of the soil, the attention and care of the vine dresser, and giving absolutely nothing in return. To bear no fruit is not only to be useless. It is to be a menace.

We all know of church members who live in constant neglect of their privileges and obligations. In an effort to justify themselves, they put on a fine show of righteous indignation that the reason they have become antagonistic is because of the evils of the church. While the church has many failings, there is often the degeneration of a church member into a critic and then into a fault finder in order to justify uselessness.

As a denomination, I am convinced that we, too, have squandered opportunities. For several months, I have been talking about the need for a relevant, biblically based methodology to share the timeless message of Christ. Honestly, I have received criticism for this. It seems that in

our world today when one talks about relevance, some people want to ascribe to it compromise or modernism. Some people truly believe that any attempt to relate to our culture is contrary to Christ's desires.

I could not disagree more. I am convinced that if we do not begin to seek a biblically based relevance, we will become the useless—even worthless—fig tree in this parable.

We also need to see the reality of judgment and grace. The final result of fruitlessness is that it invites disaster. "Cut it down" are the words we hear.

Since fruitlessness does not result in immediate destruction, some people are led to believe that no such results will ever follow. The fact that the penalty is not visited at once is due to the mercy of God. The fact that we have been spared in spite of our uselessness does not mean that this law that is inevitable has forgotten to operate. It only means that God is doing His loving best to bring us to our possibilities.

How, then, shall we escape this threefold tragedy—the tragedies of uselessness, being a menace and facing ultimate destruction? The way of escape is indicated by the plain words of Jesus, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." By repentance Jesus means more than our being convicted of sin. The repentance that Jesus is requiring means a turning from barrenness to fruitfulness.

Everyone who looks back and evaluates his or her performance conscientiously must admit that there have been great periods of time when we were not very productive as fig trees in the vineyard of God. We have not brought forth the fruit that would please God.

Please join me in praying that God will give us another opportunity. We do not want to see God's hand of judgment come upon us. We want His words and hand of grace to give us another opportunity to reach our world for Jesus' sake.

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C.

## Paint Lick Church's ministry impact

I recently visited Paint Lick Baptist Church in Warsaw, which has an outstanding ministry to children and youth. The church provides a meal and Bible learning experiences for more than 150 children and teens each Wednesday night.

The church recently bought an additional van in order to transport the children from up to 20 miles away, and already is in need of another. A number of the workers are people who have been reached by the church in recent years.

The church is in new facilities that replaced older ones but already is finding the need to adapt to new opportunities in children's ministry. It is not unusual for the furniture to be removed from rooms in order to accommodate the children.

Most of the children come from families that are not in church and do not have church backgrounds. One teacher shared with me about how gratifying it is to teach the

books of the Bible and share Bible stories.

One worker noted that they tell the children they love them and that the children recently have begun to express love verbally in return.

On my visit, I had the privilege of sharing with the church about missions in Kentucky and around the world that are made possible through the Co-operative Program and special gifts. And it was a special privilege to commend the church on its incredible mission work locally.

Pastor Denny French, who is a native of the area, has served the church as bivocational pastor for 28 years. He has a land excavation business that is demanding, but he has been able to balance his responsibilities as a father, businessman and pastor of a growing church.

Pastor French has a vision for ministry beyond his local church. He is active in Ten Mile Baptist Associa-

tion and serves on the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board.

The church also is active in assisting worthy community projects. Church member Tammy Hornsby coordinates the "Heaven's Helping Hands" ministry, which provides food, clothing and other needs during emergency situations. This ministry is growing and is a significant contributing factor in reaching the unchurched.

John Roberts, coordinator of the Kentucky Raceway Ministry at the Kentucky Speedway, is also a member of the church. He has a vision of providing a raceway ministry at each of the 50 dirt tracks across Kentucky.

David Morris, a Baptist layman and deacon at Paint Lick Church, is the current trustee chairman at Campbellsville University.

Please pray for Pastor French and his wife, Shirley, as they provide leadership for local church ministry. Also pray for the church itself as it reaches out across Kentucky and beyond through missions and evangelism.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## GIVING

## IRS rule changes affect records for charitable giving

By Laurie Valentine

The Pension Protection Act, which became law in August 2006, includes both temporary and permanent tax law changes.

One area where permanent changes were made is in

the rules dealing with what records taxpayers must have to substantiate cash gifts made to charity. Without substantiation, your charitable income tax deduction may be disallowed.

Prior to enactment of the PPA, the recordkeeping rules for cash gifts of less than \$250 required only a "reliable written record showing the name of the charity and the amount of the gift." Gifts of \$250 or more required both the written record and a written acknowledgment of the gift from the charity.

Starting in 2007, a charitable income tax deduction will not be allowed for contributions of cash, checks or other monetary gifts, regardless of the amount of the gift, unless the donor maintains either a bank record or a receipt, letter or other written communication from the charity indicating the charity's name, the date of the contribution and the amount. "Bank record" has been defined in a late 2006 news release from the IRS to include cancelled checks, bank or credit union statements and credit card statements. Bank or credit union statements must show the name of the charity and the date and amount paid. Credit card statements must show the name of the charity and the transaction posting date.

The deductibility of gifts of \$250 or more continues to hinge on the taxpayer also having a written acknowledgement from the charity.

These new substantiation rules also impact charitable gifts made by payroll deduction. The donor must have a written communication from the charity. Qualifying "written communications" include a pay stub, W-2 form or other document furnished by the employer stating the amount withheld during the tax year by the employer for payment to the charity and a pledge card or other document from the charity showing the name of the charity. If the payroll deduction gift is \$250 or more, the pledge card must include a statement that the organization doesn't provide goods or services in whole or partial consideration for any contributions made to the charity by payroll deduction.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



## Constructing proper 'fences' is key to effective discipline

**Q: As a parent of young children, what are the most effective ways I can discipline them?**

In his book "Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success," Hall of Fame basketball coach and teacher John Wooden writes, "We must remember why we discipline. We do it to help, to prevent, to correct, to improve, but not to punish." In Proverbs 19:18, we find these words: "Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death."

### PARENTING

Malachi is a 3-year-old Golden Retriever with lots of energy! He lives on eight acres in Shelby County. Because Malachi had a habit of running off, chasing cars and going places he didn't need to be going, his owners purchased an electric fence. During the training process, Malachi received several pretty good shocks—shocks that were painful to him, as well as to his owners. However, with lots of encouragement, Malachi quickly learned the limits. Now he romps and runs and enjoys a freedom that he could never experience on a leash.

Pastoral counselor Wade Rowatt says that when children are young, responsible parents construct "fences" for them. These boundaries help children learn right from wrong, prevent them from getting into trouble, correct them when they do wrong and generally improve their overall behavior. When the child bumps up against the boundaries or attempts to cross them, the wise parent disciplines.

As children grow and prove themselves more and more responsible, parents move the boundaries and give more freedom. Eventually, the fence comes down because it has been internalized. Though the process can be painful for parents, the benefits for the child are tremendous and ultimately result in a child who makes good choices on his or her own.—David Garrard

**Q: Please address the situation of the middle-aged never-married adult. I feel like part of a much maligned and misunderstood minority.**

Beware of labeling yourself with stereotypes that often get stuck on the never-married (such as being hostile to the opposite sex, immature, irresponsible, socially inadequate, fixated on lost love, unlucky circumstances or unmarried as a political statement).

### SINGLES

You are a person created in God's image (Psalm 139) who can live out God's calling in a way others cannot. The first word I have for you is to monitor your self-talk. You are no less a person than someone who is married, divorced or widowed.

One issue you do need to think about is your safety. Recent studies have shown that never-married individuals are four times as likely to be victims of violent crimes as married people. Take steps to protect yourself.

Many of the issues of being never-married are simply the issues of growing older, without the buffer of someone else growing old with you. By the time you're in your 40s, your task is to work on developing an alternative script to the "happily ever after" myth of married people.

Specific issues involved with those scripts include: accepting the possibility of never marrying, accepting the possibility of not having biological children, defining work and an authentic life for yourself within the single status and establishing adult roles within your family of origin. These are not easy tasks. Consider finding a wise pastoral counselor who can help you sort out these issues as you walk through them.

Remember, the Bible gives models of life as much from singleness as marriage, and the Apostle Paul recommended singleness for those who would give their lives to unencumbered ministry (see 1 Corinthians 7). See yourself as God sees you. Your possibilities are as big as the God you serve.—James Stillwell

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.



## Henry's words worth pondering & practicing

Jim Henry, the keynote speaker during the Kentucky Baptist Convention's recent Pastor/Deacon/Spouse Retreat in Bowling Green, is among the true modern-day statesmen in Southern Baptist life.

Henry, who served two years as Southern Baptist Convention president in 1994-96, retired last fall after nearly 30 years as pastor of the 13,000-member First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla.

In addition to his service as SBC president, he received the SBC Executive Committee's inaugural M.E. Dodd Award for lifetime achievement in promoting and supporting the Cooperative Program. LifeWay Christian Resources officials announced last year that an auditorium at LifeWay's Ridgecrest Conference Center will be named in his honor.

But you wouldn't learn about those honors while spending time with Henry. And that's among the things that make him a worthy role model for current and future ministers and laypeople.

Never one to put himself on a pedestal or engage in self-promotion, Henry is content to make himself available to fellow believers and humbly share words of wisdom and practical insights gleaned from his 45-plus years in pastoral ministry.

A few examples:

■ During his final SBC presidential message in 1996, Henry warned against giving too much importance to high denominational positions as a measure of achievement. "Principles and integrity can be sacrificed on the altar of accommodation and blind loyalty to a temporal kingdom under the mask of continuing the conservative resurgence," he declared. Urging convention leaders to shun intolerance, legalism and extremism, he cautioned against "political manipulation that freezes the work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ."

■ When Henry received the Dodd Award at the 2000 SBC annual meeting, he graciously accepted the

award on behalf of missionaries, seminaries, churches and "the boys and girls who every Sunday put their pennies and nickels into the offering plate, knowing some of it will touch the world."

■ During an interview with the Florida Baptist Witness prior to his retirement, Henry said he will focus on mentoring young pastors and assisting churches. "If God gave me health and strength, I wanted enough time to go and do two things—encourage churches and help younger pastors," he explained. Henry added that his greatest satisfaction in ministry is "seeing lives transformed by Jesus Christ and maturing in the faith, and the personal relationships with people."

I had the privilege of inviting Henry to speak a couple of years ago at the Association of State Baptist Papers' annual workshop. Leading a pair of sessions on spiritual renewal, Henry encouraged participants to "live beyond your circumstances," noting that "all of us are in circumstances—some that we put ourselves in, some that other people put us in."

During a workshop on prayer, Henry said, "Power living comes through power praying. Pray, trust and watch God work in your life."

Participants at this month's Pastor/Deacon/Spouse Retreat had the opportunity to glimpse that same level of humble servant leadership as Henry led three sessions focused on unity in Christ.

"You have to work at staying unified because everything in the world is against unity," he noted. "Anything can divide a church if the Holy Spirit is not in charge."

"It's the blood of the cross that holds us together," he added. "When we realize where we are at the cross of Jesus Christ, we understand the call for unity."

For pastors, deacons, denominational leaders and all other followers of Christ, those are among Henry's words of wisdom worth pondering and practicing.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

## Everything belongs to God—even ducks

By Jimmy Barrentine

A fantastic young minister came to visit me a few weeks back. In prayer, he confessed to God that "the flesh creeps up on us." For me, there are times when the flesh does not creep. It pounces. It dominates. It consumes.

My flesh jumped all over my soul during an early-morning newscast some days back.

The reporter told the story of a hunter who shot a duck, brought it home and threw it into his refrigerator until he had time to dress it. Two days later, his wife opened what must surely have been a refrigerator reserved for the man's recent kills. To her surprise, the woman watched as the duck raised its head. She rushed it to an animal hospital where it underwent surgery. It died during surgery, was resuscitated and is now expected to recover from its ordeal.

My fleshly response was that if God could do that for a duck, surely He could heal my daughter, Jennifer, who has Lou Gehrig's Disease. I said to my wife, Joan, "If I could get my hands on that duck, I would kill it just for spite."

Having lived with me for almost 40 years now, Joan knew that a man who captures and releases spiders that find their way into our house would not kill a duck. Her reply was, "Sure you would." It was the voice of

a loving skeptic.

That leads me to a fresh assessment of prayer. Prayer is not always a spiritual venture whereby we get what we want from God. Frequently, prayer instead is a painful, and even disappointing, spiritual discipline whereby we finally must surrender

our wills to the will of the Father. Years ago, Jennifer was playing with one of her closest friends, Cullen Conley. Cullen was a wonderful boy who would even play with Jennifer's dolls when she wanted him to do so. On one particular day, he even suggested that they play with Jennifer's Barbie dolls. Jennifer was in a mood for cars and trucks instead. When Cullen again expressed his readiness to play with the dolls, Jennifer pushed back with a question, "Whose toys are these anyway?" That settled the issue. They played with the cars and trucks. After all, they were at Jennifer's house and they were her toys.

Too often I forget that we are in the Father's house, even here on earth. None of the toys belong to us. That duck belongs to Him. My daughter belongs to Him. All that we are, and all that we want to claim as our own, belong to Him. When the flesh overwhelms us and we want God to surrender His will to ours, we may well run into those times when we must finally accept that He is God

and that He has every right to have His way. Let His will be done in the life of that duck. May His will also be done in your life and in mine.

When the final chapter is written, we will discover that He was right all along. We also can find comfort in His promise that "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). That message might not play well in the context of today's popular religious culture, a culture that teaches us that all real Christians will be healthy and wealthy and enjoy nothing but good in the here and now.

The fact is that some miserable and rotten stuff is going to happen to most of us. We will suffer. John the Baptist was the Lord's cousin and faithful messenger. That did not keep him from losing his head. Peter truly loved the Lord. That did not spare the apostle from death on a cross.

What also is true is that John and Peter now are with their Lord. That is a good and positive outcome. The other truth is that their lives and witnesses still bear good fruit 2,000 years later.

In the midst of the good and the bad, God is working faithfully to keep His promise. I must believe that, or I must surrender my faith and slip into the bitter darkness of disbelief.

Jimmy Barrentine is executive director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa



# 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

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### 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 Licona

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

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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.



# A place of their own

*Church involvement, paired with peer-group classes, empowers special needs adults*

By **Dannah Prather**  
Partnerships Editor

**Louisville**—"Thank you for treating me like a real person."

Tami Caballeros said the thank-you note she received from one of her Sunday school pupils could serve as a primer for teachers of adults with special needs: Treat them like adults with spiritual gifts to share with the rest of the congregation; after all, that's who they are.

"Don't underestimate your students," said Caballeros, a member of Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville. "They're capable of doing more than you realize."

Such capable Kentucky Baptist adults with special needs include:

■ Eric Krieg of Trinity Baptist Church in Lexington who often plays drums during worship.

■ Marty Nolan of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville who is a member of the church choir.

■ Some interns and staff members of Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green.

■ Members of Caballeros' class who serve as worship service greeters and help take down tables and stack chairs after fellowship events.

■ Members of the Jacob's Ladder class at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville who take roll, keep track of the birthday calendar, or do something as simple and servant-like as tear a morning doughnut into small pieces for a classmate who has problems swallowing.

"Everybody has a gift," said Diane Shelton, who has taught special needs adults at Highview for 14 years. "My main purpose is to try to find that gift and use it."

Experts in adult special needs ministry say personal experience, formal education or extensive training are less important for teachers and volunteers than showing respect, enthusiasm and a willingness to involve their pupils in the life of the church.

At first, teachers and other volunteers may find it challenging to relate to men and women as old as 60 who may have the cognitive skills of a first- to third-grader. Communication without condescension is a

skill, according to Carlton McDaniel, a special needs ministry specialist with LifeWay Christian Resources. "They may read on a third-grade level, but they're a 30-year-old at Wal-Mart or a 40-year-old in the grocery store," he said. "We have to help them become citizens who can survive."

McDaniel recently led a conference on special needs ministry at the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville. He said involving special needs adults in the life of the church will have positive results in students' lives outside the church.

For example, he encouraged teachers to give students who can read the opportunity to read Bible texts to non-readers in the Sunday school class, even if the process eats up more class time than it would if the teacher recited the verses or stories to everyone.

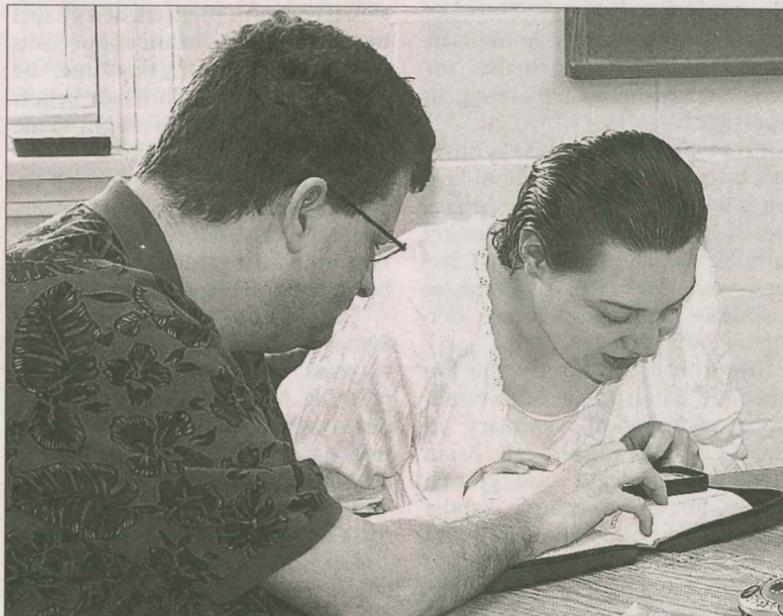
"Having people with a range of abilities together works best," Shelton said. "Everyone loves to be needed and to know what their job and their function is."

According to Ann Cope, a member of the teaching team for the adults with special needs class at Trinity Baptist, finding that function occurs when teachers get to know the parents, siblings or other caregivers of their adult students. "By getting to know the family, you get to know the person you're going to work with," said Cope, who has served in the special needs ministry for more than 20 years.

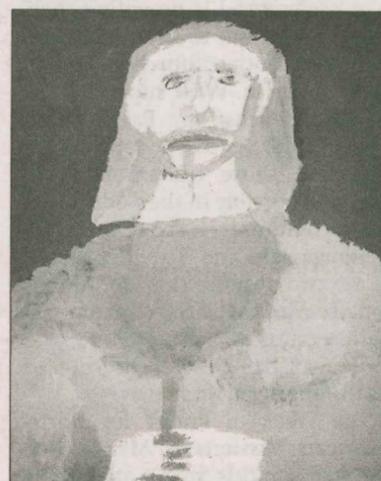
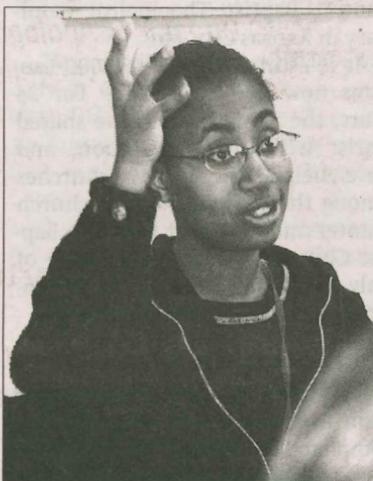
## Learning skills and interests

Formal diagnoses are not as important as learning a student's skill level and interests, teachers say, although some details are necessary for safety, teaching style development and choosing church and community projects.

"I want the students to feel like they can minister to other people," said Caballeros, who began the class nearly five years ago. Her class pools their resources to sponsor a child in need from Parkland's Christmas "love tree." They also take up collections for "warmth" baskets of cocoa, tea and other items to drop off at lo-



**HELP FROM A FRIEND**  
Briton Ryan (left) holds a magnifying glass over a page of the Bible as his visually-impaired classmate, Lexie Law, reads. The two are members of the Shepherd's Class at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. (Photos by Dannah Prather)



**CONTRIBUTIONS** Left: Natasha Jackson shares a story with her Sunday school class. Right: A member's artwork on display.

cal police stations.

Recently, Cope's students made Valentine's Day favors to place on residents' dinner trays at the neighborhood nursing home. They usually make bookmarks for nursing home residents each Easter, and also collect toiletries and other items for a local homeless shelter.

The Shepherd's Class at St. Matthews collects money for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

In ministering to adults, something as simple as where the class is placed in the church's Sunday school structure makes a difference, according to Shelton.

Some members of the Jacob's Ladder class at Highview were part of the church's first special needs children's class decades ago. It was called the Noah's Ark Class. "A number of them have been together for quite a few years," Shelton said.

As the years went by, the class remained within the church's children's department "even though there's not a child in there," she said. It became important to her pupils to move to the adult Sunday school department.

Members of the class wrote letters or talked to church staff about making the change, Shelton said.

When they moved into the single adult department, the class was renamed "Jacob's Ladder, because I told them we were moving up. ... That was a concrete thing" to her students that they were a respected

part of the congregation, she said.

In an effort to include special needs adults in the congregation, leaders should remember that special needs ministries work best with a team effort, according to Cope and A.B. Harmon of St. Matthews Baptist Church.

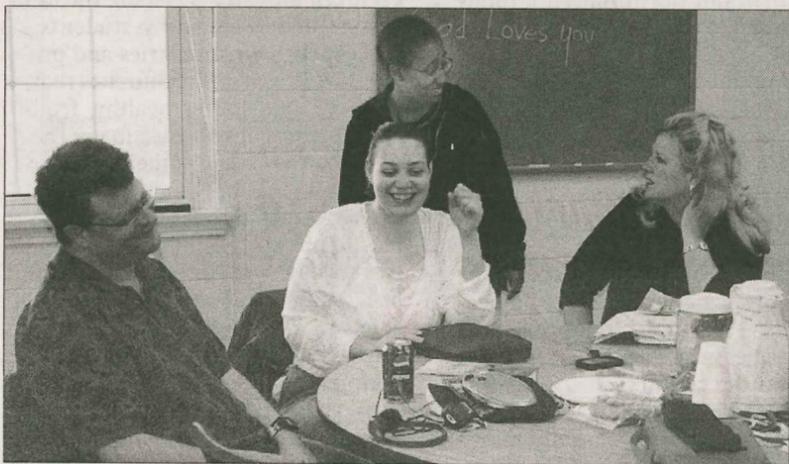
Each month, a couple is responsible for teaching and for organizing music, crafts and other projects at Trinity, Cope said. As many as 10 teaching couples participate annually.

When the call went out for volunteers at St. Matthews, Harmon said the response "was tremendous." Five teachers take turns leading the class with help from other church members who provide refreshments, organize socials and offer other support.

"It's a good system," said Harmon, who coordinates the effort. "It lets teachers maintain contact with their own age group Sunday school class and it doesn't overload them with the teaching responsibility."

Having more than just a few church members involved helps special needs adults become active, welcomed members of the congregation. "We make it possible for them to fit into other social events of the church," Harmon said. "People want to do things for them."

That desire is reciprocal, Shelton said. "If (my students) weren't able to participate, I'm not sure they'd come back," she noted.



**SUNDAY SCHOOL FUN** After the lesson is completed (from left), Briton Ryan, Lexie Law and Natasha Jackson (standing) visit with their Sunday school teacher Susan Clark. Most members of the class are employed and live in apartments within walking distance of St. Matthews Baptist. A team of teachers takes turns leading the class.

# 'Why can't you teach them?'

Midwest missionaries bring theological education to Lao-American pastors



Thira & Montira Siengsukon

By Mickey Noah

SBC North American Mission Board

**Kansas City, Mo.**—"The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering makes the thing that is impossible among us ... possible."

For a man who is Chinese by birth, Thai by culture—and for whom English is a second language—Southern Baptist North American missionary Thira Siengsukon (pronounced See-eng-su-kone) describes the work of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering with precision.

Siengsukon, 57, directs the Lao School of Ministry at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and also is an Asian missionary strategist and church planter for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists.

The former impossibility Siengsukon referenced is providing theological education to the small community of Laotian church leaders in North America. With support from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, he said Southern Baptists are equipping those leaders to serve here, and possibly in their Southeast Asian, communist-ruled homeland.

Siengsukon and his wife, Montira, are two of 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 Week of Prayer for North American Missions is March 4-11. The goal for this year's offering is \$57 million; 100 percent of the gifts support or assist missionaries such as the Siengsukons.

Born in Bangkok, Thailand, to Chinese, non-Christian parents, Siengsukon was raised in the Thai culture, educated in Thai schools and taught the Buddhist religion of his ancestors.

"When I joined an American missionary's youth program at a chapel near my house, I heard about Jesus and the gospel for the first time," he said. "I compared Christian beliefs to the Buddhist beliefs taught to me as a child at my school and home." On Oct. 29, 1967—at Bangkok's Sacred Light Baptist Church—"I surrendered to Christ, admitted I was a sinner, and Christ gave me a brand new life in Him," Siengsukon said.

Childhood sweethearts, the Siengsukons have been married 31 years. They learned English early in life. Mrs. Siengsukon, also Chinese by birth, has a master's degree in education and teaches at the Lao School.

The couple graduated from Trinity College and Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary in Bangkok before relocating to the U.S. so Siengsukon could continue his studies at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

It is estimated that 169,000 Laotians now live in the U.S. For 24 years, the Siengsukons have shared Christ with this population, and have helped start new churches among them. Siengsukon is church planter and pastor of New Life Baptist Church in Olathe, Kan., one of only 80 Laotian churches in the entire Southern Baptist Convention.

### God's call was obvious

Originally the couple intended to return to Thailand after Siengsukon completed his studies. "I couldn't return to Thailand because I couldn't find a Lao pastor to replace me," he explained. "In the meantime, the Lord helped me see the struggles of most Lao congregations in the United States, and the desperate need for biblical training for Lao pastors and church leaders."

He said God's call was obvious. "The Lord spoke to my heart, asking



**LIFETIME OF PREPARATION** Thira Siengsukon teaches Lao-American pastors and church leaders at Laotian Crieveewood Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn., one of a dozen satellite centers of the Lao School of Ministry located in the U.S. and Canada. The son of Chinese parents, Siengsukon was born and raised in Thailand. (Photo by John Swain)

me, 'Why can't you train them?'"

The partnership with NAMB and the Kansas-Nebraska convention helped establish the Lao School of Ministry in 1988. "Our students are first-generation Christians who need basic biblical knowledge and background," Siengsukon said.

Like many other ethnic ministries, sharing Christ with Laotians requires them to let go of ingrained, non-Christian religious beliefs. "Our pastors and leaders need to help their members put away their old ways and plant the church with deep roots in Christ and His Kingdom," he said.

Although the Lao school is headquartered at Midwestern Seminary, Siengsukon travels to 12 satellite centers, bringing instruction to Laotian pastors who cannot invest long hours or funds to travel to Missouri.

Centers are located near existing Laotian Baptist ministries in Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ten-

nessee and Texas. There also is a center in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. A 13th center is planned for the Detroit area.

Currently about 100 students are working toward a diploma in Christian ministry through the 30-credit hour curriculum. While Siengsukon makes the rounds to each teaching site several weekends during the year, much of the coursework is done by correspondence with local instructors who speak Lao.

### A teacher's greatest joy

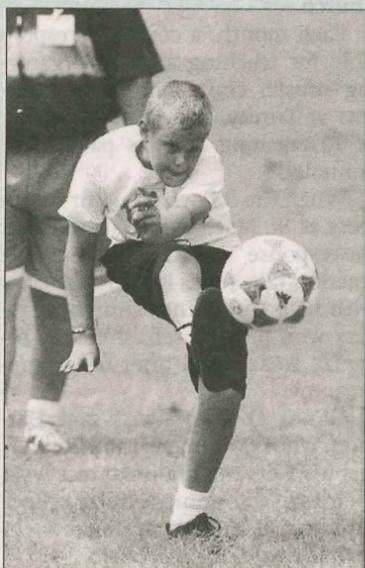
Working with his wife, Siengsukon—who now has a doctorate from Midwestern Seminary—writes or translates all of the coursework to Lao. The couple said English is a difficult second language to master for Laotians.

Siengsukon preaches at the Kansas congregation most Sundays. When he is not on the road teaching, he is grading students' work, providing counseling, or writing/translating curricula.

"I feel that God led me here and prepared me for this because of the educational background I have," he said, adding, "There are many cultural differences between us and the Lao people, especially since Montira and I are Chinese by birth. However, we enjoy unity with the Lao people because of our oneness in Christ."

As a teacher, pastor and fellow believer, Siengsukon said his greatest joy in ministry is "seeing the Lao pastors and leaders—my students—succeed in their ministries and produce healthy, fruitful churches that, in turn, plant other healthy, fruitful Lao churches so that many Lao-American souls can come to faith in Christ and live for Him."

Preaching and teaching the Bible are not allowed in Lao's communist society, but Siengsukon said he believes the work of the Lao School is felt there. "Every year, Lao-Americans go back to visit their parents, their people," he said. "Their relatives ask why they don't practice their cultural traditions any more. Then the testimonies start. They tell their people ... that Christ is changing their lives back in America, and they tell their relatives that 'Christ can change your life over here, too.'"



**GETTING HIS KICKS** With help from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Southern Baptists host events such as sports camps and block parties to meet people in their communities and establish relationships that eventually could grow into new churches. In this file photo, David Blanton participates in a camp hosted by Grace Baptist Church in Hudson, Mass. (BP photo by Gibbs Frazeur)

## Did you know ... ?

- The 2007 budget for the North American Mission Board is \$124 million; the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering represents 44 percent of that total.

- One-third of NAMB's 5,300 workers are career missionaries; 2,600 are chaplains serving the military, hospitals, prisons and in corporate settings.

- Hundreds of thousands of Southern Baptists volunteer each year through World Changers, PowerPlant, Mission Service Corps, disaster relief, Strategic Focus Cities efforts and other initiatives in an effort to share the gospel with everyone in North America.

- Last year more than 25,000 youth and adults served through 93 World Changers and PowerPlant projects, resulting in more than 1,200 people making professions of faith in Christ.

- Self-funded Mission Service Corps missionaries comprise one third of Southern Baptists' North American missionary force.

- More than 1,700 high school

and college students served last year as summer, Sojourner, Innovator or semester missionaries; through their efforts, more than 1,000 people made spiritual decisions.

- 15 percent of the Easter offering supports efforts to start new churches in North America; funds are used to rent facilities, purchase Bible study and other materials, and promote ministries.

- Working with Southern Baptist seminaries in North America, NAMB has appointed nearly 900 church planter interns to serve in summer, semester and full-time capacities.

- Since the implementation of the Strategic Focus Cities emphasis in 1998, more than 400 new churches were started in nine cities across the country. This year's SFC are Baltimore and San Diego.

- Church and community ministries such as hunger prevention, literacy and pregnancy care centers result in more than 30,000 professions of faith each year.

## Kentucky volunteers continue efforts to aid New Orleans

Continued from page 1

of New England are working in Zone 4, which encompasses the southeastern edge of Lake Pontchartrain that sustained some of the heaviest damage when levees broke in the wake of the Category 5 hurricane.

Dianne Gahagan, the Operation NOAH Rebuild office manager, said the goal is for Southern Baptists to rehabilitate 1,000 homes and 20 churches by August 2008. The Salvation Army and Promise Keepers also are participating in the effort.

"You might be surprised to drive

through New Orleans and to see the devastation in some of the homes," Gahagan noted.



Steve Gomez

She said that while the downtown and tourist areas are back in operation, there are wide swaths of residential areas that still look much like they did when the floodwaters first receded. Homes continue to stand empty by the hundreds and many of the city's residents have not returned.

One of the prime signs that a homeowner has returned to the city to rehabilitate a house continues to be a small white FEMA (Fed-

eral Emergency Management Agency) trailer parked in the front yard.

"You get down here and start looking around and you go 'it is only the tip of the iceberg,'" said B.J. Donahue, a volunteer with the Piner group. "We didn't imagine that we'd get down here a year and a half later and see entire neighborhoods like this—some even still needing to be gutted to start the process.

"Zone 4 is one of the harder hit areas," he added. "We have bit off a lot."

Randy Foster, director of the KBC's Baptist Men on Mission department, said he's hoping to see the same kind of sustained response from Kentucky Baptists in New Orleans that they exhibited in Mississippi after Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Hundreds of Kentucky volunteers worked in disaster relief and recovery efforts there during the nine months immediately after the storms.

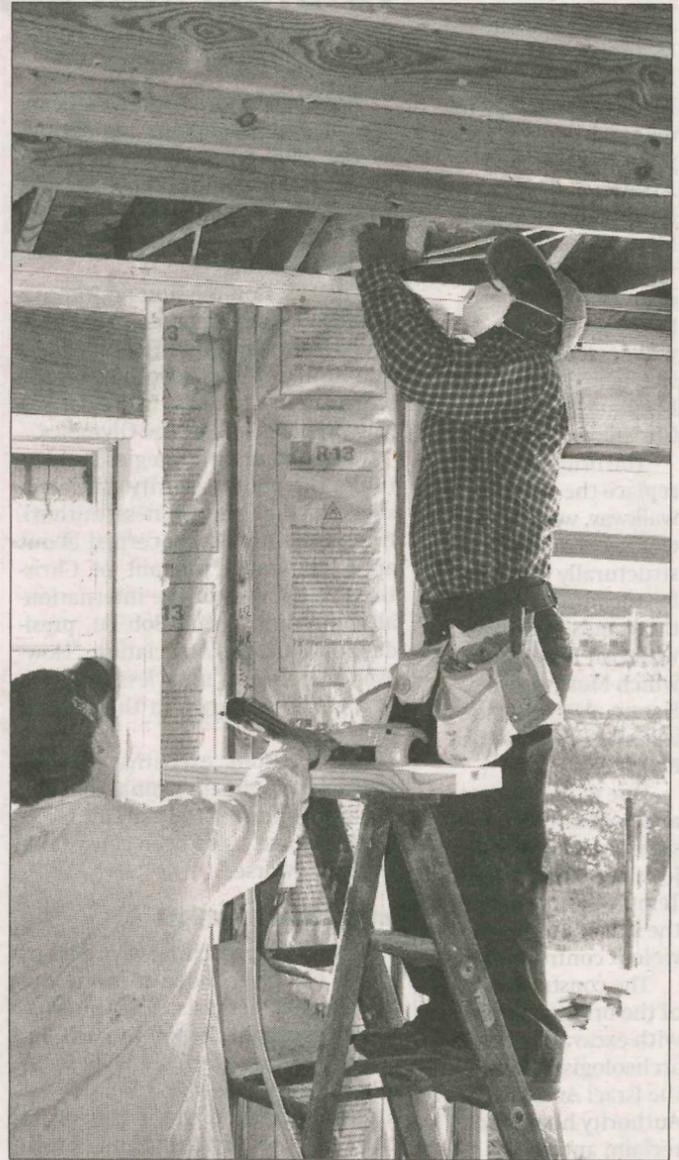
Gahagan said NAMB is seeking 500 volunteers each week in order to achieve the goal.

She said groups can perform a variety of tasks that range from construction jobs such as roofing, installing drywall and painting to office work and answering phones. Groups to lead evangelistic efforts such as prayerwalking, backyard Bible clubs and block parties also are needed.

Volunteers are housed in a "volunteer village" on three floors of the World Trade Center in New Orleans' downtown area along the Mississippi River. Southern Baptist disaster relief workers prepare and serve breakfast and supper and also provide sack lunches for groups to take to their work sites.

Volunteer groups pay just \$20 per person per day for housing and meals, Gahagan said.

Supplies for the construction work—from drywall to insulation to paint—are handled through a ware-



house in what was the sanctuary of a Baptist church before Katrina hit. All projects are pre-screened and approved by Operation NOAH Rebuild's construction coordinators before volunteer teams arrive.

Donahue said the setup is ideal for church and youth mission trips.

"You can't beat the fact that, one, the Southern Baptist Convention is heading it up so we don't have to do the thinking. Number two, they provide all the materials on site for us. We don't have to go out and buy anything," he said. "Number three, they provide housing. Number four, they provide three meals a day. And they do all of that for 20 bucks a night."

Donahue said one of the greatest parts about his church's recent trip was seeing the smile on Steve Gomez's face and hearing him encouraging his "A-team" as they installed drywall together.

"It's really neat to help a pastor get his house back in order so he can be about the business of leading a church," Donahue added.

Gomez said he couldn't agree more.

"They are very instrumental in demonstrating what Noah did and what Nehemiah did—that is rebuilding the walls," Gomez said.

For more information about Operation NOAH Rebuild, visit [www.operationnoah.net](http://www.operationnoah.net) or call toll-free (877) 934-0808 or (504) 362-4604.

### HOME REPAIRS

New Orleans pastor Steve Gomez (on ladder) works alongside a group of Kentucky Baptist volunteers from Piner Baptist Church in Morning View to rehabilitate his home as part of Southern Baptists' Operation NOAH Rebuild effort.

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## Muslims protest construction near Temple Mount

Jerusalem (RNS)—More than 100 Muslims held a peaceful protest Feb. 8 in Jerusalem to demand a halt to Israeli plans to construct a pedestrian bridge leading to the Temple Mount.

The protesters expressed fear that the construction will desecrate the site, which is holy to Muslims, Jews and Christians.

The bridge will replace the Mugrabi walkway, which engineers deemed structurally unsafe for the hundreds of thousands of people who visit the Mount, which Muslims call Haram al-Sharif and is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Due to its holiness and political significance to both Jews and Arabs, the Temple Mount has been the site of numerous violent confrontations.

The construction of the bridge, coupled with excavations by archeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority hoping to reclaim antiquities buried at the construction site, has sparked Muslim anger throughout the Middle East. Israeli politicians reportedly are divided on the issue.

## Witnesses: China's pre-Olympic reforms still hindering religion

By Dustin McNab  
Baptist Press

Washington (BP)—Chinese officials are changing religious regulations as the 2008 Summer Olympics approaches, but some of those changes have proved detrimental to people of faith, witnesses said at a recent Capitol Hill hearing.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom heard testimony from Chinese religious leaders and human rights advocates on the situation in China as the city of Beijing prepares to host the Olympics.

"The changing strategies and tactics of the public security officials ... suggests that the Chinese authorities are becoming concerned about appearing more tolerant of Christians in the eyes of the international community," said Bob Fu, president of China Aid Association. "However, there seems to be less evidence of a genuine change in their broad policy."

Sharon Hom, executive director of Human Rights in China, told the commissioners, "The situation is getting worse. ... It's been consistently getting worse."

### International spotlight

But the approaching Olympics in China has given hope to some human rights activists. The international spotlight hopefully will increase leverage during the next 18 months to encourage China to be more respectful of the rights of its citizens, said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and a USCIRF commissioner.

The Chinese government officially implemented new regulations in March 2005. The public security officials' new tactics include interrogating church members during a raid rather than officially arresting them, Fu said at the hearing. Arrests

have declined significantly—2,000 reported arrests in 2005 decreased to 600 in 2006. But property destruction increased, Fu added.

"Local officials closed and demolished more house churches in 2006 than 2005," Fu said. "A new tendency was to target house church leaders with criminal accusations."

### House church pastor arrested

Cai Zhouhua, a house church pastor in Beijing, was convicted in November 2005 of "illegal operation of a business" for publishing and distributing Bibles without government approval, Fu noted.

In addition to Fu, witnesses at the hearing included Joseph Kung, who spoke about the Roman Catholic Church in China; Bhuchung Tsering, testifying for Tibetan Buddhists; and Erping Zhang, who reported on the Falun Gong spiritual movement.

Among other changes, China has addressed problems in its judicial system, according to the USCIRF. National scandals involving cases of wrongful prosecution and death in police custody convinced the Supreme People's Procuratorate to evaluate itself. The SPP, which is China's highest national agency prosecuting crimes, has investigated cases of illegal detention and has punished law enforcement officials who use torture to extract confessions. It also has recently permitted public criticism of the criminal justice system.

State officials amended the Chinese constitution in 2004 to better protect human rights but, according to the USCIRF, the reforms will have little effect for two reasons. First, the amendment is largely symbolic, because the constitution is not enforceable in Chinese courts. Second, further reform is needed because corruption and lack of accountability are holding back progress.

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## Christian delegation visits Iran to help defuse nuclear tensions

Washington (RNS)—A delegation of 13 U.S. Christian leaders is in Iran this week to meet with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in an effort to foster dialogue between Iran and the U.S. and promote a diplomatic solution to tensions between the two countries.

The group arranged meetings with Christian and Muslim religious leaders, women serving in the Iranian parliament and former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami. Several delegation members met with Ahmadinejad during his trip to New York City last fall, when the idea for the visit to Iran was born.

The trip was organized by the Mennonite Central Committee and the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker group. Others participating include Sojourners/Call to Renewal; the Episcopal, Catholic and United Methodist churches; the National Council of Churches and Pax Christi USA.

The leaders also hope to use person-to-person exchanges between Iranians and Americans to help each group overcome cultural and religious stereotypes.

"People in our country and people in their country have many misunderstandings," said Mary Ellen McNish, general secretary of the American Friends Service Committee. "We want to try to forgive each other and come to an understanding about how we can go forward in a peaceful way."

The delegation also hopes to address Ahmadinejad's comments denying historical evidence for the Holocaust and a recent conference he held in Iran on the subject.

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This event is jointly sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is made possible through the Cooperative Program.

### Giving beyond the offering plate

**Legacy giving options provide benefits and joy to donors**

Sunday by Sunday, Kentucky Baptists place their tithes and offerings in the offering plates of Kentucky Baptist churches all across the commonwealth. More and more of you are learning about the benefits and the joy that comes from giving beyond the offering plate. We refer to such giving as "legacy giving" because it makes a statement and bears a perpetual testimony to the giver's Christian legacy.

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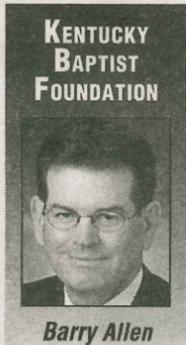
Since 1945, your Kentucky Baptist Foundation has been assisting individuals and families in how best to leave a legacy through estate and charitable gift planning. After practicing law privately for 12 years and specializing in estate and charitable gift planning, Laurie Valentine has been the trust counsel of the Foundation for the past 13 years. Her knowledge and expertise is available to you through private, confidential consultation sessions over the telephone or in person. Please call her toll-free.

The Foundation also makes available informative and easy-to-understand brochures on a variety of "giving beyond the offering plate" giving plans. Some examples are: Better Estate Planning, Giving Securities, Giving Real Estate, Giving through Life Insurance, Giving through Retirement Plans, Giving through Charitable Gift Annuities, Giving through Charitable Remainder Trusts, Giving through Charitable Lead Trusts and Charitable Giving Ideas. Call toll-free for any of these brochures.

For those of you who prefer the Internet, click on our informative and interactive Web site for more "giving beyond the offering plate" ideas and articles. From the Web site, you can communicate with us via e-mail, and you literally can "give beyond the offering plate" via our online giving feature. Click on "Give Now" at [www.kybaptistfoundation.org](http://www.kybaptistfoundation.org).

Please use whatever communication medium with which you are comfortable to contact us to assist you in planning your "giving beyond the offering plate."

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



Barry Allen

### Kudzu

Doug Marlette



### For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan

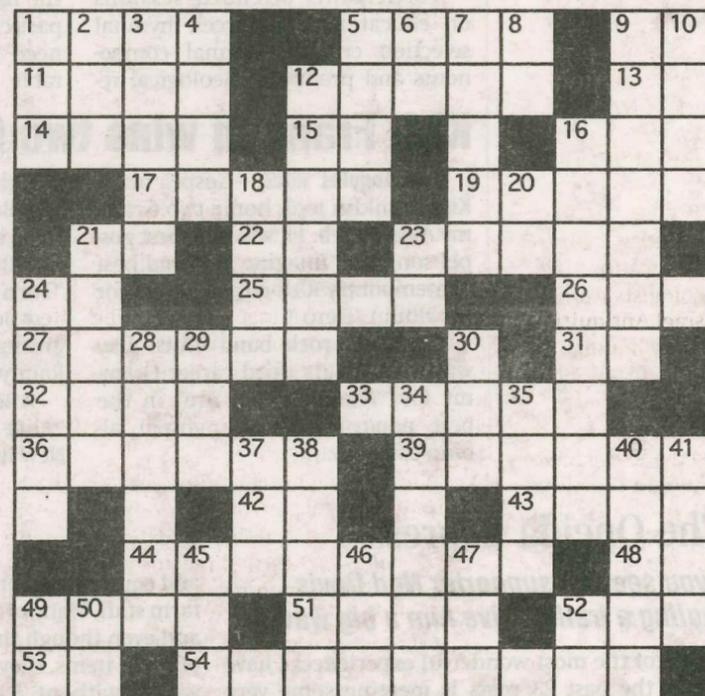


### Bible Crosswords

Rebecca Souder

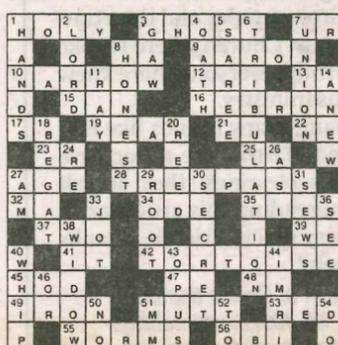
#### Across

- 1 "The \_\_\_\_ of God is eternal life" (Romans 6:23)
- 5 "Jesus Christ our \_\_\_\_" (Romans 1:3)
- 9 Civil Servant, abbr.
- 11 "To God \_\_\_\_ wise, be glory" (Romans 16:27)
- 12 "Walk in the \_\_\_\_, as he is" (1 John 1:7)
- 13 Of age, Lat. abbr.
- 14 "The fallow \_\_\_\_" (Deuteronomy 14:5)
- 15 "The grace \_\_\_\_ our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (Revelation 22:21)
- 16 Tender loving care, abbr.
- 17 "Whom I \_\_\_\_ with my spirit in the gospel" (Romans 1:9)
- 19 "The Word was made flesh, and \_\_\_\_ among us" (John 1:14)
- 21 New England state, abbr.
- 22 Electrical engineer, abbr.
- 23 Abraham's wife (Genesis 12:5)
- 24 Southern continent, abbr.
- 25 "We have seen his \_\_\_\_ in the east" (Matthew 2:2)
- 26 All news station, abbr.
- 27 "He ever \_\_\_\_ to make intercession" (Hebrews 7:25)
- 31 Heligram, abbr.
- 32 Got down
- 33 "And \_\_\_\_ himself in water" (Leviticus 15:5)
- 36 "My heart's desire and prayer to God for \_\_\_\_ is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1)
- 39 "One \_\_\_\_ stretched forth his hand" (Ezekiel 10:7)
- 42 French article
- 43 Assistant, abbr.
- 44 "A virgin shall conceive ... and shall call his name \_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 7:14)



- 48 Biblical land: \_\_\_\_ of the Chaldees
- 49 "I am the true \_\_\_\_" (John 15:1)
- 51 "He \_\_\_\_ again the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:4)
- 52 Spring month
- 53 Preposition
- 54 "His name shall be called \_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 9:6)
- Down
- 1 "For \_\_\_\_ is my witness" (Romans 1:9)
- 2 Chemical suffix
- 3 "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the \_\_\_\_ is of God" (1 John 4:2)
- 4 "The coasts of \_\_\_\_" (Matthew 15:21)
- 5 "He that hath the Son hath \_\_\_\_" (1 John 5:12)
- 6 King of Bashan (Numbers 21:33)
- 7 The damsel that opened the door for Peter (Acts 12:13)
- 8 Dental technician, abbr.
- 9 "That ye may know what is the hope of his \_\_\_\_" (Ephesians 1:18)
- 10 "After the most straitest \_\_\_\_ of our religion I lived a Pharisee" (Acts 26:5)
- 12 "He that \_\_\_\_ not knoweth not God" (1 John 4:8)
- 16 "When for the time ye ought to be \_\_\_\_" (Hebrews 5:12)
- 18 "We which have believed do enter into \_\_\_\_" (Hebrews 4:3)
- 20 American actor and humorist, initials
- 21 "Except I shall ... put my finger into the print of the \_\_\_\_ ... I will not believe" (John 20:25)
- 23 Jr.'s dad
- 24 "The Lamb that was \_\_\_\_" (Revelation 5:12)
- 28 Mary was a \_\_\_\_ when Christ was born
- 29 When you'll reach your destination, more or less, abbr.
- 30 Bachelor of Theology, abbr.
- 34 "Do not think that I will \_\_\_\_ you to the Father" (John 5:45)
- 35 "Come down, and \_\_\_\_ his son" (John 4:47)
- 37 Shade tree (Hosea 4:13)
- 38 "Take my yoke upon you, and \_\_\_\_ of me" (Matthew 11:29)
- 40 Habitual
- 41 Battery, abbr.
- 45 Kitten's cry
- 46 Biblical land (Genesis 4:16)
- 47 Before, poetic
- 49 South Carolina's neighbor to the north, abbr.
- 50 Neuter pronoun
- 52 Missouri University, abbr.

#### Last week's solution



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##### BURLINGTON

10 am - Burlington Baptist Church 3031 Washington St

##### LEXINGTON

7 pm - Immanuel Baptist Church, 3100 Tates Creek Rd



#### Monday, March 5

##### BOWLING GREEN

10 am - Warren Baptist Association, 6448 Scottsville Rd

##### HOPKINSVILLE

7 pm - Christian County Baptist Association, 905 North Dr

#### Tuesday, March 6

##### PADUCAH

10 am - Lone Oak First Baptist Church, 3601 Lone Oak Rd

##### OWENSBORO

7 pm - First Baptist Church, 230 J.R. Miller Blvd



#### Thursday, March 8

##### CAMPBELLVILLE

10 am - Campbellsville Baptist Church, 420 North Central Ave

##### LONDON

7pm - First Baptist Church, 804 W 5th St

#### Monday, March 12

##### CATLETTSBURG

10 am - Oakland Avenue Baptist Church, 3265 Oakland Ave

##### PIKEVILLE

7 pm - First Baptist Church, 126 4th St



#### Tuesday, March 13

##### MOUNT WASHINGTON

7 pm - Sunrise Ministry Support Center, 300 Hope St



If you have any questions or would like more information, please call 800-456-1386 or email us at [info@kbhc.org](mailto:info@kbhc.org)

## Music leaders emphasize songs' theology for new hymnal project

Nashville (BP)—A song's theology is more important than its sound, according to music experts charged with setting criteria for which hymns, worship songs and praise choruses should be part of an upcoming project.

A recent Hymnal Summit hosted by the LifeWay Worship Music Group in Nashville drew 100 participants to provide feedback on potential content for "The Worship Project," which includes a hardback hymnal to be released in 2008 and a 1,000-song digital hymnal repository.

"We have music professors from all of our Southern Baptist seminaries and 21 Baptist colleges, as well as church musicians and worship leaders and local music industry leaders," said Mike Harland, director of the LifeWay Worship Music Group. "We also have invited people who worked on the 1991 Baptist Hymnal and our own LifeWay people who are devoted to this project."

Participants attended sessions on educational resources, hymnal selection criteria, hymnal components and products, theological re-

view, Web portal function and worship song selection criteria. In each session, experts discussed what was needed to make The Worship Project an effective tool for churches.

While "we have not come here with a lot of preconceived ideas about what we are going to do," Harland reminded the group that evangelism must be the core of all that churches do, musically or otherwise.

"If evangelism doesn't come as one of the results of our worship experience, I would question that worship experience," he said.

Jon Duncan, state music director for the Georgia Baptist Convention, shared a list of criteria from the theological review session, which determined that the selected music needs to be Christ-centered, biblically sound, relevant, Trinitarian in scope and distinctive.

Similar criteria were reported from each of the other sessions, with the hymn and worship song session participants adding that the songs need to be easily sung and memorable.

## Kirk Franklin wins two Grammy Awards

Los Angeles (RNS)—Gospel artist Kirk Franklin took home two Grammy Awards Feb. 11, winning best gospel song for "Imagine Me" and best contemporary R&B gospel album for his album "Hero."

Christian rock band Third Day was awarded its third career Grammy for "Wherever You Are" in the best pop/contemporary gospel album category.

Other gospel winners were:

■ Best gospel performance: "Victory" by Yolanda Adams.

■ Best rock/rap gospel album: "Turn Around" by Jonny Lang.

■ Best Southern, country or bluegrass gospel album: "Glory Train" by Randy Travis.

■ Best traditional gospel album: "Alive in South Africa" by Israel & New Breed.

## 'The Oneida Express'

*If you see OBI supporter Ned Davis hauling a trailer, give him a big wave*

One of the most wonderful experiences I have had in the past 23 years is meeting some very faithful friends of our ministry. Hundreds of visitors come to our campus each year. I believe most are impressed with our ministry, but sometimes God brings some very special people to us.

In the past year, some new friends to this ministry have become very special friends. Recently Kay and I traveled to Western Kentucky to speak in two Sunday morning services. We were invited to spend the night in the home of two faithful Oneida supporters who have blessed our ministry as volunteers and by promoting our work. H.C. and Betty Beck live in Princeton and have not only been friends to this ministry, they also have been gracious friends to Kay and me.

The first worship service was at 8:30 a.m. with our friends at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Cadiz. The pastor is one of our trustees and Oak Grove members are generous in their financial and volunteer support. The new friends I mentioned earlier are members of Oak Grove. Ned Davis recently retired from a life-long career of farming. His wife, Martha, is a retired educator. One of the first indications of their special interest in our ministry happened last fall when Ned brought a big trailer full of tools and equipment for Oneida's farm. Over the years, we have been blessed many times with a wide variety of gifts and we are equally grateful for all of the items people choose to give to us. However, I hope you will understand that some items meet a special need or are an answer to prayer, and therefore we are able to see God's hand at work in a unique way. Those tools

and equipment were a very special blessing to our farm staff. Many of the tools were new to our farm and even though there had been a need for many of those items, they were simply too expensive, so we did without. Some of the tools Ned brought were much-needed replacements.

Additionally, Ned brought us a lot of farm equipment. He has made several trips to our campus, each time pulling a 22-foot livestock trailer or an even larger enclosed trailer. The trailers always are packed as full as he can get them.

Many of the churches in the Cadiz area offer to let Ned park his trailer in their lot to be filled with clothing, furniture and other items. Then Ned encourages a friend or two to make the six-hour trip with him. We see "The Oneida Express" driving onto our campus pulling one of the trailers. Ned had a bug deflector installed on the front of his truck with "The Oneida Express" painted on it. If you see a black one-ton truck pulling a long trailer on the Cumberland Parkway or around Cadiz, look for "The Oneida Express" sign on the front and give Ned a big wave.

Ned met us at Oak Grove Sunday and then traveled to Blue Springs Baptist Church where I spoke at the 11 a.m. service. I think everyone there knew Ned and his love for this ministry.

God has given us many, many friends like H.C. and Betty, and Ned and Martha. We never have a problem seeing God's blessings; they are all around us. Many of you reading this article are a part of that group of very special friends. Thanks for your support and help!

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

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## Book highlights wide-ranging defense of believer's baptism

By Jeff Robinson  
Baptist Press

Louisville (BP)—Is the doctrine of baptism a minor theological issue that matters little in the greater scheme of biblical teaching?

Adoniram and Ann Judson, famed Baptist missionaries, did not view baptism as a third-tier issue, according to a new book about believer's baptism.

In the winter of 1812, the Judsons began a long ocean voyage from Massachusetts to the mission field in Burma. The couple was convinced that God had called them to a lifetime of gospel service in Burma, and on the way to the field the Judsons studied their Bibles intensely. Both had been raised in Congregationalist families and baptized as infants.

But as they spent days studying the Scriptures, the Judsons became convinced that only believers should be baptized. Upon reaching Calcutta, the two were baptized by immersion in keeping with their newfound biblical convictions.

The editors and essayists of "Believer's Baptism: The Covenant Sign of the New Age in Christ" (Broadman & Holman Academic), concur with the sentiments of the Judsons, whose story opens the forward by Baptist theologian and historian Timothy George.

Baptism, while it is not required for one to become a Christian, is a critical issue that Scripture regularly connects with belief and salvation, the essayists say.

"Believer's Baptism" is edited by Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright, both professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Schreiner serves as the James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament interpretation and Wright is assistant professor of church history. The book is the second volume in Broadman & Holman's NAC Studies in Bible & Theology and includes essays from theologians with various Southern Baptist ties.

It is being released as several churches nationwide grapple with the issue of baptism. In 2005, the elders of Minneapolis' Bethlehem Baptist Church, where John Piper is pastor, recommended but later withdrew a rule change allowing membership for those who had been baptized as infants. Similarly in 2006, the elders of Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond, Okla., recommended and then withdrew a proposal to remove baptism as a requirement for membership.

Essayists argue that baptism is not a teaching that should be dismissed lightly as a peripheral doctrine, particularly by Baptists whose forefathers were persecuted for insisting on believer's baptism.

"Such sentiment (that baptism is a minor issue) is misdirected,

for baptism is regularly connected in Scripture with belief and salvation," the editors write in the introduction. "Baptism is the initiation rite into the Christian church. Those who label it as minor are imposing their own categories onto the Scriptures instead of listening to the Scriptures."

The book argues from a biblical perspective that baptism is the rite that initiates believers into the church, a rite that is to be administered to believers alone. The essayists also critique arguments for infant baptism and seek to demonstrate the unbiblical nature of baptizing children.

"Baptism is important precisely because it is tied to the gospel, to the saving work that Christ accomplished in His death and resurrection," the editors write. "We do not think baptizing infants is merely a minor mistake, even though we rejoice in the evangelical credentials of many with whom we disagree."

"Believer's baptism accords with the gospel because it teaches that the objective work of God in salvation necessarily leads to the subjective response of faith. ... We believe that baptism should be reserved for believers because it preserves the testimony of the gospel by showing that only those who have repented and believe belong to the church. Only those who have exercised faith are justified. Hence, only those who have trusted in Christ should be baptized. Restricting baptism to believers only, therefore, preserves the pure witness of the gospel."

Other essayists with Southern Baptist ties include:

- Andreas Köstenberger, professor of New Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., who looks at baptism in the New Testament Gospels.

- Steven McKinion, associate professor of historical theology and patristic studies at Southeastern, who examines baptism in the writings of the church fathers.

- Robert Stein, senior professor of New Testament at Southern Seminary, who examines baptism in Luke and Acts.

- Stephen Wellum, professor of theology at Southern, who analyzes the relationship between the old and new covenants and responds to key biblical arguments for infant baptism.

- Duane Garrett, professor of Old Testament interpretation at Southern, who interacts with Reformed scholar Meredith Kline and his view of New Testament baptism.

- Mark Dever, senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and a Southern Seminary trustee, who underscores practical issues related to baptism in the local church.

**The 10 Commandments of Parenting: The Do's and Don'ts for Raising Great Kids.** Ed Young. Moody Press, 2004. 210 pages. \$18.99. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

The idea that parenting just comes naturally is bogus. Parenting is a lifetime commitment—or to some it may become a life sentence. This book offers real reasons for change and constructive steps to become a better parent.

Ed Young Sr. has outlined 10 commandments of parenting in simple steps to help parents. The book also is a good Parenting 101 for young couples who are expecting their first child or have a newborn at home.

Young lays out these 10 commandments in an easy-to-follow way with illustrations and stories, many from his own experience, that drive home his points. The chapters are laid out simply and can be read in any order. In fact, in reviewing the book, I first checked out chapter 9, "Thou Shalt Have the Sex Talk with Thy Child." The first words read, "Even though this is the ninth commandment, I would guess this is the first chapter in this book many will read. It's time to deal with some of the most dreaded words in parenthood. 'Mom, Dad, where did I come from?'" I was caught!

The book details great communication building, discipline, loving and when to say no, all of which parents need. At the end of each chapter there are questions to reflect on and discuss with your spouse. For example, on the issue of sex, the questions include, "Where did you get your first information about sex? What misconceptions do you think children growing up today have about sex? How will you correct those misconceptions in your children?"

This book can be used to discuss a variety of subjects with your children, depending on their ages, or it is a great book to use in a small group setting. Pastors will enjoy this book when preparing to preach about the family, raising children or just building a parenting team at home with everyone on the same page. *Steve Coleman*

**The Ten Commandments: Laws of the Heart.** Joan Chittister. Orbis Books, 2006. \$15. 152 pages. ♦♦♦♦♦

This book can best be described as a work that mines the spiritual depths of the Ten Commandments. While Joan Chittister uses typical biblical background information for each commandment, she is not focused on passing along academic information about the Ten Commandments. She is totally concerned with helping the reader understand what the Ten Commandments mean for life today. Chittister views the Ten Commandments not as a set of rules but as a way of life.

She divides each chapter into three parts: In the beginning... which explores what the commandment meant to the original community of Israel; And then... which explores what the commandment means in our context; And for you... brief quotable statements related to living out the commandment.

It took me a couple of chapters to get into what Chittister was doing with each commandment. And then when I did, I was excited about the way she takes each commandment and connects it to a particular way of living life. For example, "Honor your father and your mother" becomes an appeal to live life with the understanding that we are not a whole unto ourselves.

I think this book brings a refreshing approach to the Ten Commandments and moves them from the stone tablet law mentality and recovers God's invitation for us to live in a different type of relationship with each other and with God than we are prone to do. *Wayne Hager*

**Glocalization: How Followers of Jesus Engage a Flat World.** Bob Roberts Jr. Zondervan, 2007. 208 pages. \$18.99. ♦♦♦♦♦

Yes, glocalization is a word. And no, Bob Roberts did not make it up.

The word has its origins in Japan, where marketers were pursuing strategies for engaging a global marketplace. It has been adopted by a worldwide network of people who see the principles of glocalization as a means for bringing about a more peaceful world through economic development.

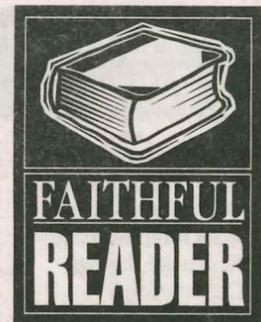
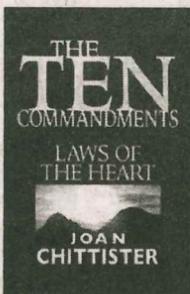
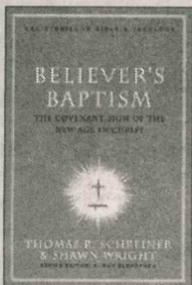
Roberts believes that the glocal viewpoint for understanding the world may be closely aligned with God's design for the world human community. As he sees it, "A flat world is connected like never before through technology, business and communication." The crucial question is, "What does that mean for the church?"

In "Glocalization," Roberts brings forward many of the themes of his previous book, "Transformation: How Glocal Churches Transform Lives and the World," while amplifying the concept of glocalization and offering suggestions on how a church can engage mission in a glocal paradigm. While many of his observations are anecdotal, based on his experience as pastor of Northwood Church in the Dallas area, they are nonetheless compelling.

Part Two of the book deals with the practical application of his glocal, flat-world view of the church's mission. He challenges the church to get educated about and be willing

to engage and learn from the cultures of the world. Building on this observation, he encourages the church to "create culture instead of fighting it." As we engage people and cultures, he advocates serving "not to convert, but because (we) have been converted." Perhaps the most compelling chapter deals

with being "Ghandi's best friend." In the third part of the book, Roberts offers his final challenge to pastors: Get over your call to preach, face your fear of death and depend on the Holy Spirit. Many of us birthed in the world of traditional Southern Baptist assumptions about missions and evangelism will find Roberts' observations a direct challenge, but as a son of that culture, he wants to push us toward a more holistic mission in our world. *Jim Holladay*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C.; Jim Holladay, pastor of Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville; and Steve Coleman, pastor of education and youth at New Work Fellowship in Hopkinsville. They welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: whager@adelphia.net; lyndonpastor@aol.com; risen4me@hotmail.com.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Pray for volunteer teams that will be serving in Malta in 2007. Pray for the planning, travel and ministry related to the trips and for spiritual fruit from their efforts.

■ Pray for Don and Pam Johnson, missionaries to Tanzania who currently are on stateside assignment in South Carolina.

■ Pray for Scott Pittman, a Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil who has accepted a new position with the Baptist mission as strategy facilitator in northeast Brazil. Pray also for this year's Kentucky/Piaui partnership mission efforts in Brazil.

■ Pray for the children of missionaries Eric and Ramona Reese as they minister to local Brazilian children in Rio de Janeiro.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BEATTYVILLE**—Beattyville Church recently called **James Overbee** as pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church honored **Buddy and Mildred Harris** on their 50th wedding anniversary Feb. 17.

Saloma Church recently called **Jason England** as minister of children and youth. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **FOURMILE**—Riverside Church recently called **Mark Elkins** as interim pastor.

■ **GRANGERTOWN**—First Church recently called **Cody Crowell** as pastor. He was ordained to the gospel ministry Feb. 4 by Olive Branch Church in Hanson.

■ **LEITCHFIELD**—First Church recently called **David Atcher** as worship pastor. He was ordained to the gospel ministry Jan. 7.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Broadway Church recently called **Phyllis Vincent** as associate minister of music and office administration. **Chris Caldwell** is pastor.

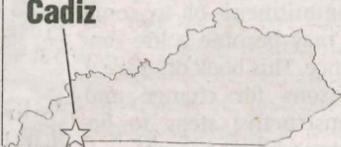
**Melanie Devore** recently resigned as associate pastor to children at Lyndon Church. **Jim Holladay** is pastor.

■ **MONTICELLO**—Lower Turkey Creek Church recently called **Charlie Tucker** as pastor.

■ **PARIS**—First Church called **Ron Wilburn** as interim music minister effective Feb. 11. He previously was music minister at South Elkhorn Church.

## Spotlight on ...

### Cadiz



Little River Association, Little River Cumberland Valley District Association and Lincoln Bingham, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's cooperative missions consultant, are jointly hosting a "Reconciliation Appreciation Worship Celebration" Feb. 24, 10 a.m., at East Cadiz Church in conjunction with Black History Month. Featured speakers are **C.B. Akins**, pastor of First Church of Bracktown in Lexington, and **Larry Martin**, a consultant for the KBC missions growth team.

■ **SHELBYVILLE**—**Delbert Fann**, a retired missionary to the western U.S. for the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, died Jan. 25 at age 78. Fann, who was a member of Waddy Church, is survived by his wife, Mildred, two daughters, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

■ **SOMERSET**—High Street Church recently called **Brad Gover** as minister of youth. **Jammie Vance** is pastor.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### February

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:** Minister of youth. Responsible for providing ministerial leadership and a comprehensive youth ministry that is consistent with the vision and mission of the church. Please send resumé to: Youth Minister Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 446, Taylorsville, KY 40071.

**SEEKING:** Pastor for Southern Baptist church (current pastor retiring). Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 808 Bourne Ave., Somerset, KY 42501.

**SEEKING:** Pianist for Southern Baptist congregation with about 250 attending worship weekly. Pianist works directly with and is supervised by the minister of music. Duties include playing for two Sunday morning services; adult choir rehearsal on Wednesdays; Sunday and Wednesday evening services when needed. Other opportunities include instrumental ensemble, children's choirs, youth choir and soloists. The church uses a wide range of musical styles, including traditional, classical and contemporary. Please respond to: Personnel Committee, 4300 South Highway 53, Crestwood, KY 40014.

**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:** 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:** First Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., is looking to call a senior pastor who will help in meeting the churches mission statement: "Knowing God and Making Him Known." A pastor/shepherd style is desired. FBC is a downtown church with a long history of leadership within the community and an average Sunday attendance of 150. Submit resumé by e-mail to: [fbcashland@fbcashlandky.com](mailto:fbcashland@fbcashlandky.com), or by mail to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 787, Ashland, KY 41105-0787.

**SEEKING:** Baptist church prayerfully seeks applications for full-time senior pastor (see our Web site: [www.williamstownbaptist.com](http://www.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. Resúmes will be received until Feb. 28, 2007.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of education/building administration for First Baptist Church, Tullahoma, Tenn., a Southern Baptist church—conservative in its theology, progressive in its methodology. Resúmes should be sent to: Dr. Herb Hester, pastor, 108 E Grundy St., Tullahoma, TN 37388.

**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.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of music. Applicant should have a degree in music and a strong background in traditional and praise/worship music. Individual would work with planning and implementing all aspects of the music ministry. Salary negotiable based on experience and education. Please send resumé and CD (if available) to Oakland Avenue Baptist Church, 3265 Oakland Avenue, Catlettsburg, KY 41129, Attn: Mike Blankenship.

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

**SEEKING:** Altona Baptist Church in Calvert City, Ky., is now accepting resúmes for the position of part-time youth/music minister. Send resúmes to: Altona Baptist Church, 5847 US Highway 62, Calvert City, KY 42029.

**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/bivocational minister of music for South Elkhorn Baptist Church in Lexington. Send resumé to: Dr. Damon Jones, pastor, 4867 Versailles Road, Lexington, KY 40510; or e-mail to: [preacherjones@windstream.net](mailto:preacherjones@windstream.net) or [donnacornish@windstream.net](mailto:donnacornish@windstream.net).

**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 resúmes 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).

# Freedom journey

*'Amazing Grace,' opening Feb. 23, explores abolitionist's crusade for change*

Washington—Chances are, many Americans haven't heard of him, but if U.S. evangelical leaders and others have their way, the 19th-century evangelical and abolitionist William Wilberforce soon will become a household name.

A new film, "Amazing Grace," opens nationwide Feb. 23 to mark the 200th anniversary of the end of the British slave trade—a cause championed by Wilberforce in Parliament and considered the first step in abolishing slavery itself. His crusade spanned nearly three decades.

The film shares its title with the famous hymn penned by John Newton, a friend of Wilberforce's who once captained a slave ship. After a harrowing storm at sea, Newton wrote the famous song, dedicated his life to Christ and supported Wilberforce's cause.

Welsh actor Ioan Gruffudd portrays Wilberforce in the film. Albert Finney plays Newton.

Events surrounding the abolition's bicentennial, including the film, are not solely evangelical projects, but evangelicals hope to use the film to reclaim Wilberforce as one of the early architects of modern-day evangelism and raise awareness about modern-day slavery.

Kevin Belmonte, a leading scholar on Wilberforce's life and work spoke in a chapel address and a symposium Feb. 9 at Dallas Baptist University. His books include "Travel with William Wilberforce: The Friend of Humanity" and "365 Days with Wilberforce: Daily Readings from the Writings of William Wilberforce."

Belmonte also is the director of the Wilberforce Papers Project, an initiative at Gordon College in Wenham, Mass.

Calling Wilberforce "one of the great souls of history," Belmonte urged listeners to emulate the abolitionist's example of devoting his life to doing right—even against great odds.

"Whenever you share the Wilberforce story, the ways in which the gospel transformed his life shine through," he said. "In the year that followed what he called his 'great change,' Wilberforce came to realize how important it was to watch and to pray. He realized he was called to serve something larger than himself."

Describing his epiphany, Wilberforce wrote: "So enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did the trade's wickedness appear that my own mind was completely made up for abolition. ... Let the consequences be what they would, I from this time determined that I would never rest until I had effected its abolition."

The slave trade was an evil almost beyond description. Slaves were taken from the west coast of Africa on a two- to three-month voyage to the West Indies, where they were sold. It is estimated more than 10 million Africans were put aboard the ships, with perhaps more than 2 million dying during the journey.

Although Wilberforce's task at the outset seemed impossible—many argued the British economy would collapse if Wilberforce succeeded—by 1807, he was considered

a hero. When his bill passed Parliament that year, MPs gave him a standing ovation.

Christians will find the film inspiring predicted Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Land attended a screening of the movie in January.

"(Wilberforce's) task at the outset seemed impossible, humanly speaking," Land said. "The power and influence of the planters and all of those who benefited from the slave trade were enormous. And yet, he continued to chip away at it, in righteous indignation, until finally it imploded of its own moral indefensibility."

The film, rated PG for mild language, was produced in part by Bristol Bay Productions, the sister company of Walden Media, a leading distributor of faith-friendly films—"The Chronicles of Narnia," among others—that is led by influential Colorado evangelical Philip Anschutz.

"Amazing Grace" was directed by Michael Apted whose other films include "Coal Miner's Daughter," "Gorillas in the Mist" and "Nell." He brought Oscar-nominated screenwriter Steven Knight to the project.

Wilberforce was born into a wealthy trading family in 1759 in Hull, England. By 1780, at the age of 21, he was a member of Parliament. Around that time, he converted to evangelicalism.

Albion Urdank, a professor of British and European history at UCLA, said about 500 Church of England clergy would have called them-

selves evangelicals when Wilberforce joined the movement. Evangelicals were considered part of the "low church," along with John Wesley's Methodists, and somewhat radical.

In addition to Newton, Wilberforce also collaborated with a group known broadly as the Clapham Sect—the "Anglican elite," Urdank said—who "took a humanitarian-reformist interest in the question of slavery."

Wilberforce worked the political structure for two decades to launch a petition against slavery and boycott the sugar industry and its reliance on slaves. The bill to end the slave trade passed in 1807, and Wilberforce left politics in 1825. By 1833, Parliament outlawed slavery outright and Wilberforce died that summer. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Now, evangelical groups—led by the Wilberforce Central Coalition, including the John Templeton Foundation, the Wilberforce Forum with in Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries, the Trinity Forum, the anti-slavery group Gilder-Lehrman Center, Ohio's Wilberforce University and Walden Media—and others are organizing events to commemorate Wilberforce's life and his fight against slavery.

Groups especially are focusing on ending "modern-day slavery," which they say entraps some 27 million people around the world.

Compiled from reporting by Religion News Service, Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

**EVIL TRADE** Welsh actor Ioan Gruffudd portrays evangelical abolitionist William Wilberforce in the film "Amazing Grace." (RNS photo courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Films, sketch courtesy of Wilberforce Forum)

## Filmmakers want spotlight on modern-day slavery

By Robert Marus  
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—The producers of "Amazing Grace" and a wide coalition of Christian and other groups hope the inspiring tale will focus the West's attention on a more disturbing story: the modern-day slave trade.

The film chronicles William Wilberforce's nearly three-decade crusade to end the slave trade in the United Kingdom. According to one of the producers, the makers of "Amazing Grace" realized its potential to spotlight both the historic and the modern-day evil of slavery.

Human trafficking is "probably the biggest human-rights problem in the world today," said Bob Beltz, a former pastor who now oversees film production for the Anschutz Film Group. Early on, Beltz said, the film's producers and marketers decided it would be both financially and socially responsible to join the film with a social-justice campaign against modern-day slavery.

"It's a great use of media," he said. "I haven't seen anything quite like it either."

A wide variety of religious and human-rights groups—from the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and Focus on the Family to the National Council of Churches—have

joined with the film's producers in supporting the Amazing Change campaign ([www.theamazingchange.com](http://www.theamazingchange.com)). The campaign aims to use various grassroots groups to raise awareness of the historical and modern slave problems.

According to the U.S. State Department, somewhere between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked—by force or coercion—across international borders every year. Between 14,500 and 17,500 of those people are sold into the U.S.

"The thing about trafficking is that it can occur in the biggest city or in a rural environment—and it is a hidden phenomenon," said Martha Newton, director of the office of refugee resettlement at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Newton noted that there are many different kinds of human trafficking—forced servitude, labor coercion and fraud, sexual slavery and child slavery. The majority of the captives are women and children.

Some illegal immigrants are forced into de facto slavery by organizations that smuggle them into the U.S. promising higher wages. Then the workers are trapped when their captors force them to work off the fee for their importation but make it impossible to do so with bo-

gus fees and fines. Many such indentured servants work as migrant farm laborers in rural areas.

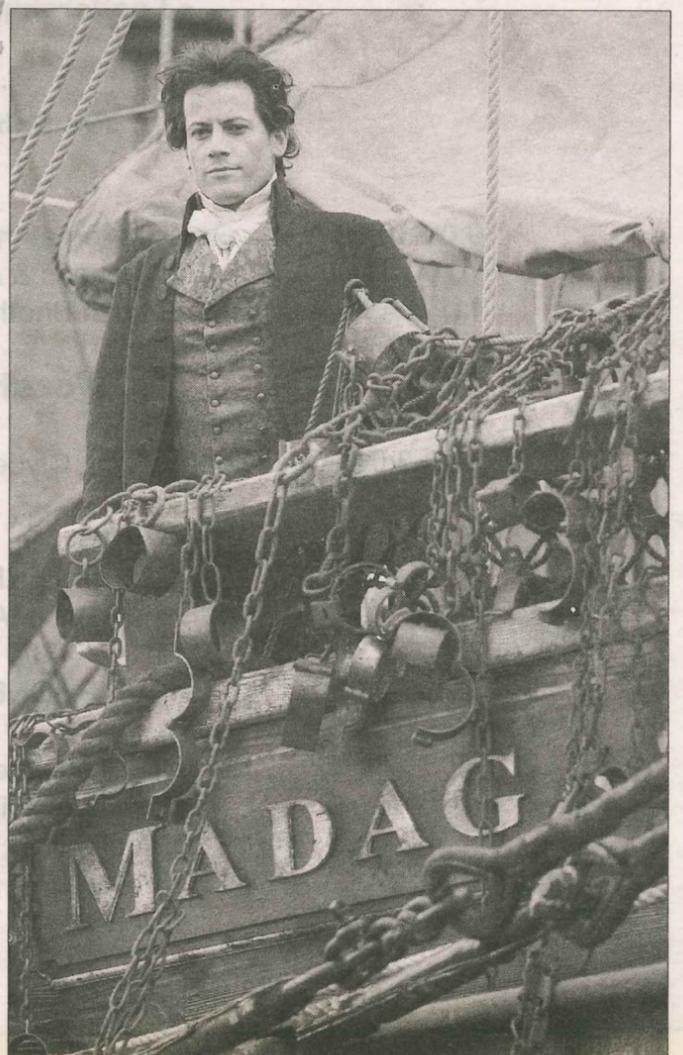
"Their captors might not only be threatening them, but also threatening family members who are back in other countries," she said.

Newton's agency coordinates with other governmental and private organizations to uncover the victims of human trafficking, remove them from bondage and help them rebuild their lives in the United States.

She noted that legislation—first passed in 2000—makes it easier for trafficking victims to get protection instead of worrying about deportation. "We realized we needed to stop treating the victim like the criminal," Newton said.

Secular and faith-based groups work with Newton's agency to help rescue trafficking victims. One of the ways churches have proven most useful, she noted, is by helping government agencies identify victims.

A Long Island church alerted her agency to a possible problem with some Peruvian laborers whose captors allowed them to attend Sunday worship services. "The church members didn't think something was right because the laborers seemed very fearful and didn't want to talk to anyone," Newton said.



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**Other Activities for:**

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**SCHEDULE:**

9:00-10:00 A.M. - Registration at the Academic Center  
10:00-11:30 A.M. - Conferences & Activities for Children at the Academic Center/Other Locations  
11:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. - Lunch/Booths at the Family Life and Conference Center

**Worship Service in the Main Chapel**

1:45-2:00 P.M. - Prelude  
2:00-3:00 P.M. - Speaker: Dr. Clyde D. Meador Jr., Executive Vice President, International Mission Board

**REGISTRATION INFORMATION:**

INTERNET: <http://www.ccbbc.edu/missionsfest07>

MAIL: Clear Creek Baptist Bible College

300 Clear Creek Road Pineville, KY 40977

PHONE: 1-866-340-3196 (Local 606-337-3196)

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