


PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING
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FOR THE RECORD

Baptists
 Southwestern Seminary leaders explore McKissic's removal from board. *Page 2.*

Kentucky
 KBC's mid-year Cooperative Program receipts \$500,000 below budget. *Page 3.*

Financial Forum
 True stewardship: Using God's gifts to fulfill His goals. *Page 4.*

Editorial
 Kentucky Baptist statistics reveal ministry challenges. *Page 5.*

Missions
 WMU choir and handbells from Korea to tour Bluegrass State. *Page 7.*

Ministry
 Leaders celebrate LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center's 100th anniversary. *Page 10.*

Nation
 Supreme Court clears way for lawsuit over anti-gay T-shirt. *Page 12.*

Poll: Most in U.S. say moral values have weakened

Washington (RNS)—Three-quarters of Americans believe moral values in America have weakened in the last 20 years, and almost half think they have weakened significantly, according to a survey released March 7 by the Media Research Center.

"Today, Americans in general continue to believe in classic virtues like thrift, charity and honesty, but in their personal lives don't necessarily practice those virtues," said Brent Bozell, president of the Alexandria, Va.-based center. "America is becoming increasingly situational in its ethics and in its morals."

The survey found that 74 percent of American adults said they believe moral values in the United States are weaker than they were two decades ago, while 48 percent said moral values were "much weaker."

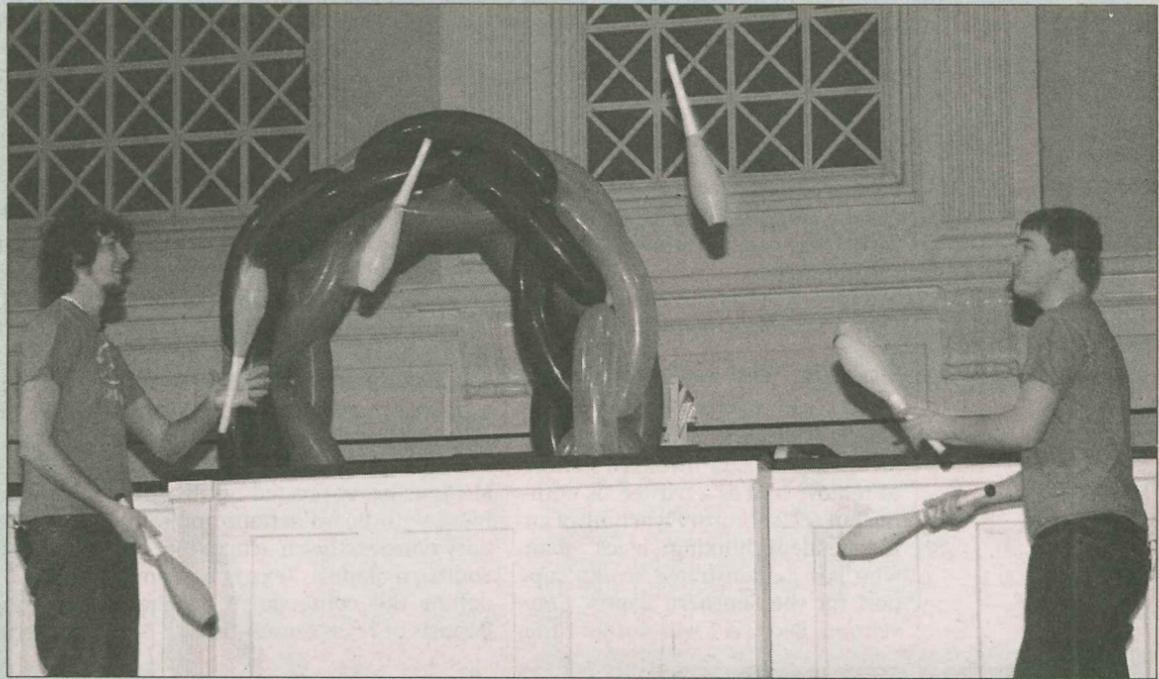
The study was conducted by the Alexandria-based polling firm Fabrizio, McLaughlin & Associates and the center's Culture and Media Institute.

Sixty-eight percent of Americans surveyed said the media—both entertainment and news—have a detrimental effect on moral values. More specifically, 73 percent said entertainment media had a negative influence on moral values while 54 percent said the news media do.

Eighty-seven percent of Americans said they believe in God, while 36 percent agreed that people should always live by God's principles and teachings.

Seeking a specific example of American ethics, researchers asked respondents what they would do if a restaurant check arrived at their table with items missing from the bill; 70 percent said they would inform the waiter and pay the correct amount, while 25 percent said they would pay the smaller tab.

Show & tell



The Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2007 Creative Ministries Festivals attracted more than 2,200 participants to workshops March 2-3 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and March 9-10 at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. The annual festivals provide training in a variety of ministries such as juggling, drama, puppets and balloon art. ■ Above: Bryan Spittler (left) and Shawn Wallick of Spin 4 Ministries perform a juggling demonstration during the opening celebration of the festival in Louisville. ■ Right: Members of Action Ministries' international mime troupe take part in the annual ministry festivals. (Photos by Mandi Buckner) Story and more photos on page 3.



Study: Church, denominational loyalty tied to members' longevity

Nashville (BP)—Two-thirds of American Protestant churchgoers feel they will continue attending the same church in the near future, according to research conducted for LifeWay Christian Resources' Facts & Trends magazine.

The average length of time adults have been attending the same church is 13.7 years, according to findings from the study conducted by Ellison Research of Phoenix.

But researchers pointed out averages can be skewed by a relatively small number of people who cite very high numbers, with some churchgoers having attended the same congregation for decades. They noted that a more accurate reflection of churchgoers in general is the median figure of 6.6 years, which means half of all churchgoers have been attending the same church for

less time than that, and half for a greater length of time.

The study, which examined loyalty to denominations and specific churches, as well as length and frequency of attendance, was based on a representative sample of 1,184 adults who attend a Protestant church in the United States at least once a month.

Of all churchgoers in the study, 13 percent have been attending their current congregation for less than a year. Another 16 percent have been at their current church for one to two years, 11 percent for three to four years, 18 percent for five to nine years, 16 percent for 10 to 19 years and 26 percent for two decades or longer.

People who are age 55 or older are particularly likely to be longtime participants in the same church,

with a median length of attendance of 15 years.

Lutheran and Presbyterian denominations are particularly likely to have people attending the same church for many years; the median length of attendance among Lutherans is 12.5 years, and among Presbyterian congregations it is 10.6 years. Nondenominational churches (median of 3.9 years) and Pentecostal/charismatic denominations (median of 5 years) are among those with the shortest time of attendance.

The denominational groups most likely to show frequent attendance or participation in church are Pentecostals and Baptists. In general, people attending evangelical churches are more likely to be involved more than four times per month than those attending mainline Protestant churches (46 percent to 36 percent).

People under the age of 35, meanwhile, are less likely than others to be involved more than four times per month.

Among all Protestant churchgoers, 30 percent typically attend services or activities at the church less than every week, 29 percent go weekly and 41 percent attend more than once a week.

While two-thirds of all churchgoers said they definitely will continue to attend the same church in the near future, 25 percent said they "probably" will continue attending the same church, while 7 percent said they may or may not do so and 1 percent already were making plans to leave their current church.

Loyalty to a specific church did not vary much among various types of churchgoers. There were no sub-

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, March 14.

□ See Study: Longevity ... Page 9

Southwestern exploring McKissic's removal from board

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

Arlington, Texas (ABP)—For the second time in as many years, a Southern Baptist institution may seek to remove a rookie trustee for alleged misconduct. This time it's Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, which is in a dispute with trustee Dwight McKissic.

Last year, trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board planned to remove Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson from their ranks but later reversed that decision.

In both cases, the trustee controversies emerged around the issue of "private prayer languages," a controversial devotional practice related to speaking in tongues.

No trustee has ever been removed from a Southern Baptist board.

McKissic: "21st-century lynching"

McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, said Southwestern's effort to remove him as a trustee "is nothing but a 21st-century lynching of an independent-thinking black man who has demonstrated strong support for the Southern Baptist Convention. Because I will not join the

'good old boys club,' I'm subjected to removal as a trustee."

McKissic preached a sermon at Southwestern Seminary last August in which he acknowledged he has practiced a private prayer language since his days as a student at Southwestern. He said he disagreed with the IMB's November 2005 decision



Dwight McKissic

to amend its list of missionary qualifications to exclude those who use a "prayer language" in private.

Two months after McKissic's sermon, Southwestern trustees adopted a policy stating the Southern Baptist seminary would not "endorse in any way, advertise or commend the conclusions of the contemporary charismatic movement including 'private prayer language.'" McKissic was the lone trustee to vote against it.

Trustee chairman Van McClain said McKissic inappropriately used confidential material sent to him as a trustee in advance of the board's meeting last October. McClain also said he is concerned about the way McKissic has expressed his disagreement with board actions and seminary policies, the chairman told the Southern Baptist Texan, newsjournal of the conservative Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

McClain said trustee leaders tried to meet privately with McKissic to discuss their concerns about his behavior. But McKissic insisted on bringing outside witnesses and taping the meeting, McClain said, adding that would make a private meeting impossible.

"He has not worked with us in a way that gives many hope that there will be reconciliation and redemption," McClain told the Texan. "I've tried to work privately through correspondence, and he's made that private correspondence public. He quotes me out of context and does not give the full context of our conversation, so he slants the conversation however he wants to."

Trustee leaders seek meeting

Trustee leaders will try again to meet with McKissic immediately prior to their April 2 board meeting, said McClain, who already has asked the Arlington pastor to resign. If that meeting is unsuccessful, trustees may ask the Southern Baptist Convention in June to remove him.

"This is not a question about the issue of private prayer language; he has the right to believe whatever he wants about private prayer language," McClain said. "This is about his conduct as a trustee of Southwestern Seminary."

In a statement March 5, McKissic denied he has broken any rules of confidentiality. "In the past months, I have asked Brother McClain to provide me with copies of any confidentiality policies governing trustee material," he wrote. "I have not received any copy of such policies, and I have been told by Brother McClain that no confidentiality policies exist."

Burleson likewise was accused of a breach of confidentiality for airing IMB trustee information on his blog. Burleson denies any trustee policies were broken. He since has called for an investigation of the trustees handling of the dispute.

Although IMB trustees cancelled plans to ask the SBC to remove Burleson, they placed strict limitations on his involvement with the board, barring him from executive sessions and committees.

Despite Southwestern's attempts to remove him, McKissic said he remains committed to the seminary.

"Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary is very dear to my heart, and I consider my trusteeship to be a great privilege and responsibility given by Southern Baptists," he said. "I am unwavering in my support of the institution, and I am resolved to walk prayerfully and sensitively through these troubling times."

BAPTIST DIGEST

Pastor cleared on sex soliciting charges. A former member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee was found not guilty March 7 of offering to engage in a lewd act. Lonnie Latham, then 60 and pastor of South Tulsa Baptist Church, was arrested Jan. 3, 2006, after allegedly inviting a male undercover Oklahoma City police officer to his hotel room for sex. He pleaded not guilty in February 2006. As a former Southern Baptist leader, Latham often defended the SBC's opposition to same-sex relations. After his arrest he resigned from the SBC Executive Committee, the Board of Directors of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and his church.

Baptist history organization moves to Mercer. In a move that will put an American Baptist history collection and a former Southern Baptist history group under the same roof, the Baptist History and Heritage Society announced that it will relocate to Mercer University. The society's main offices will move from Tennessee to the school's Atlanta campus in July, officials said. Mercer's main campus is in Macon, Ga. Last September, the American Baptist Historical Society also consolidated its archival collections at Mercer. The American Baptist group holds the largest collection of Baptist history resources in the world.

Golden Gate to establish Ph.D. program. Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary will offer a doctor of philosophy program beginning this fall. The Ph.D. program at the Southern Baptist Convention's sole Western seminary will offer degrees in Old Testament and New Testament studies, with minors in theology and church history. The new program has been approved by two independent accreditation agencies—the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Association of Theological Schools.

Baptist philanthropist John Baugh dies. Philanthropist John Baugh of Houston, a major benefactor of moderate Baptist causes and institutions, died March 5 at the age of 91. He has been in declining health for several years. Baugh, a member of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston, was founder of Sysco Corporation. Since its beginning in 1969, it has become North America's leading foodservice marketer and distributor, with \$30.3 billion in annual sales and 47,500 employees. Baugh was a longtime regent of Baylor University and continued to serve as regent emeritus in recent years. He and his wife, Eula Mae, were the primary donors behind Baylor's Truett Theological Seminary. By one estimate, he donated more than \$20 million to Baylor.

Jamaican pastor nominated as next BWA leader

Falls Church, Va. (ABP)—Neville Callam will make history if he is elected general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance in July.

If elected, the 55-year-old Jamaican pastor will be the first non-white chief executive of the international Baptist organization, which represents approximately 110 million Baptists in national and regional bodies across the globe. He also would be the first general secretary in BWA's 101-year history to hail from somewhere other than the United States or Europe.

Callam, who would succeed Denton Lotz, the organization's retiring general secretary, was announced as the nominee March 7 during a meeting of the BWA Executive Committee at the group's Falls Church, Va., headquarters.

"Rev. Callam is a seminal theological thinker ... and he is an articulate statesman," said John Sundquist, chairman of the search committee

that recommended Callam. "I was so impressed by his capacity to listen—the way he is able to take any question, any inquiry, and begin to exegete it biblically."

Sundquist called Callam a "genius" who is "a Renaissance man—and a dedicated, humble follower of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Callam, in response, said he would offer only one sentence: "All I have to say is, if this is how the Lord is leading us, I am willing to follow."

His election will not become formal until the organization's large governing body, the BWA General Council, votes on Callam's nomination during its July meeting in Accra, Ghana.

Callam, pastor of Tarrant Baptist Church in Kingston, Jamaica, has been involved in BWA for more than 20 years. He has served on BWA governing bodies and on several other committees and work groups for the organization. He currently is a

member of BWA's Implementation Task Force, which is charged with restructuring the organization for the future.

Callam has served two terms as president of the Jamaica Baptist Union and has, at various times, held every other office for that denomination, including acting general secretary.

He also serves as a member of the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission. It is a theological discussion forum whose membership is not limited to denominations that cooperate with the ecumenical council. Southern Baptist leader Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, is the only other Baptist on the commission.

A graduate of the University of the West Indies and Harvard Divinity School, Callam is a specialist in Christian ethics. He and his wife, Dulcie, have two grown children.

Graham, other world Baptist leaders honor BWA's Lotz

McLean, Va. (ABP)—A capacity crowd of 750 people gathered March 3 to honor Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Denton Lotz who will retire this year as head of the international Baptist organization.

Lotz joined the BWA staff as its evangelism director in 1980. He became BWA's chief officer in 1988. He saw it through some of its most challenging years, as it supported oppressed churches in the former Soviet Union and communist Eastern Europe, endured the unexpected death of Lotz's predecessor and survived the withdrawal of its largest member body, the Southern Baptist Convention.

"The Lord raised you up for such a time as we've been through," evangelist Billy Graham said, via a letter to Lotz. "Your strong leadership and personal faith has been an inspiration and blessing to me. ... Not only will the Baptist World Alliance miss you, but your ecumenical leadership will be missed throughout the world church."

Graham's daughter, Anne Graham Lotz, is Denton Lotz's sister-in-law. She read the letter from her ailing father, who was unable to attend the banquet.

Another presentation featured a synopsis of Lotz's life. It highlighted his service in Eastern and Central Europe as a missionary with the American Baptist Churches USA. While serving there, he also taught at the International Baptist Theological

Seminary, then located in Rorschlikon, Switzerland.

Recognizing Lotz's humanitarian efforts, Wallace Charles Smith, pastor of Washington's Shiloh Baptist Church, challenged those in attendance to participate in the final push to endow a BWA human rights award to be named for Lotz.

Theo Angelov, who once served as head of the Bulgarian Baptist Union, cited Lotz's encouragement as a key factor in sustaining Baptist churches during the Soviet era.

Expressing his appreciation, Lotz issued a plea for unity. "One of the great doctrines of the Christian faith is unity," he said. "Therefore, I would pray with you and plead with you to work for the unity of Baptists."

Mid-year CP total \$500,000 below projected budget

Louisville—Halfway through the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2006-07 fiscal year, Cooperative Program receipts are more than \$500,000 below budget and almost 2 percent below the previous mid-year CP receipts.

"It is a concern that this is the lowest we've been in relation to the prior year since 2003-04 and the lowest compared to budget since 2002-03," said KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey.

While CP receipts in the second half of the year generally are higher than the first six months, Mackey added, "In terms of budget, adjustments will need to be made soon if receipts do not improve."

As the end of February, CP gifts totaled \$11,275,383. That is \$505,617 below the mid-year budget of \$11,781,000 and \$218,083 below the same period a year ago.

Mackey noted that Restricted Kentucky Only receipts (income designated specifically for Kentucky Baptist ministries) also are down significantly. The designated funds, which have been decreasing each of the past three years, totaled \$195,441 through February. That is down 8.6 percent from the same time last year and below budget by 17.7 percent.

On the positive side, special offerings are up for the year. The Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions is up 14 percent, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions is up 9.2 percent and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions is up 3.89 percent.

Festivals equip 2,200 to perform ministry

Louisville—Whether you were looking for tips on clowning, puppetry, mime, juggling or numerous other creative ministries, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2007 Creative Ministries Festivals were the places to be.

This year's festivals at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville March 2-3 and First Baptist Church of Bowling Green March 9-10 attracted a combined total of more than 2,200 workshop participants from approximately 180 churches.

More than 70 workshop topics ranged from "Creative Crafts on a Budget" and "Dinner Theater 101" to "Comedy Improvisation" and "Mime for All Seasons."

Tom Smoot, director of the KBC's creative ministries group, has coordinated the annual festivals since 1989.

During the past 18 years, Smoot said, one of the most significant changes has been the increased quality of performances by participating churches.

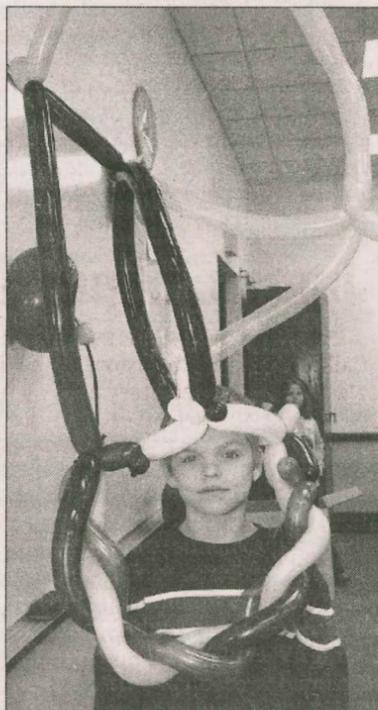
"Each church is striving to do the best they can do," he said, "and each year they get better."

The festivals have grown to include 35 faculty members and 24 church performances at each site.

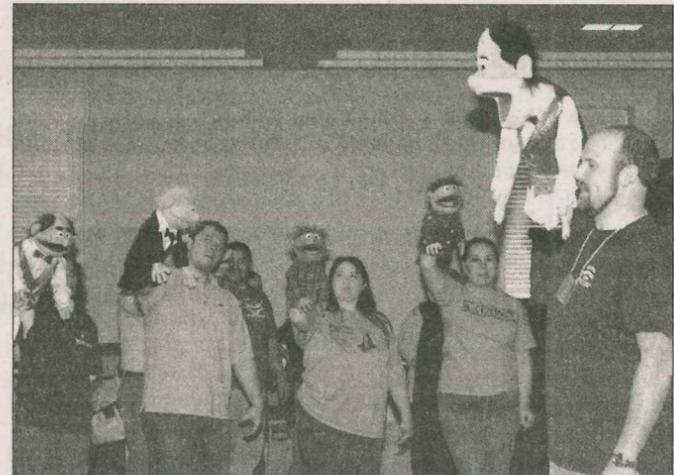
Noting that American culture "has become a very visual-oriented society because of television and Internet," Smoot said, "People want to be shown something rather than just told."

He said a primary goal of the annual festivals is "to allow churches to see and hear the gospel shared. They turn around and take it home and share it at home."

Encouraging churches to use creative ministries to share the gospel during mission trips and backyard Bible clubs as well as at area campgrounds and local community festivals, Smoot said, "People are hungry for it. They want it. Churches just need to take advantage of it and do it."



CREATIVE MINISTRIES Scenes from the 2007 KBC Creative Ministries Festivals include: ■ Top: Barbara and Nick Frasher clown around. ■ Left: A young workshop participant shows off a new balloon hat. ■ Below: Jason Anderson (right) leads a puppetry workshop. (Photos by Mandi Buckner)



Rolando Muñiz, regional Hispanic strategist for KBC, dies at age 42

Hodgenville—Rolando Muñiz, a Kentucky Baptist Hispanic church planter and pastor, died March 5 due to complications from recent heart surgery. He was 42.

Muñiz was appointed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board as a regional Hispanic strategist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He was based out of Liberty Baptist Association in Hodgenville.

"Rolando was a very gifted church planter," said Larry Baker, director of the KBC's new work and associational missions department. "He had a great heart for reaching Hispanics, and had an equally great heart for the work going on in Anglo churches. He was perfect for what he was doing."

Muñiz came to the KBC in 2006 from Georgia, where he was serving as a church planter and pastor for Iglesia Bautista Elohim in Rabun County. Prior to that, he had served as a church planter and pastor for Iglesia Bautista Neuva Esperanza in Chalemette, La. During that time, he

also served as associational Hispanic discipleship director for the Greater New Orleans Baptist Association.

Throughout his ministry, Muñiz served in a number of leadership positions. He was a member of the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee, a member of the advisory committee for the Northeast Georgia Area Missions project, and treasurer for the Hispanic Pastors Association of New Orleans.

A native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Muñiz came to the United States to pursue a degree from Florida Bible College in 1991. After earning an associate's degree in biblical education, he earned a bachelor's degree in pastoral studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He received additional training in music, church planning and evangelism through NAMB and the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Muñiz is survived by his wife, Sarai and two children, Esther and Josias. His funeral service was held March 8 at South Fork Baptist Church in Hodgenville.

Literacy missions pioneer Lillian Issacs dies

Tallahassee, Fla.—Lillian Issacs, a longtime Baptist missionary and literacy missions pioneer, died March 2. She was 88.

Issacs laid the groundwork for Southern Baptist literacy missions in Pineville, Ky., in 1959 and remained involved in the ministry throughout her lifetime. Her legacy includes a network of tutors and literacy missions available today in churches throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Lillian had a great heart for literacy missions," said Rebecca Carnell, literacy consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "She was a lady of prayer and Bible study, and that was truly what motivated her to do her work. She wanted others to be able to read the Bible."

Issacs first identified the need for Southern Baptist literacy missions while assisting her husband, John, a pastor and teacher at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville. During that time, she encountered pastors with many church members who could not study the Bible because they could not read.

Sensing an opportunity to share the gospel of Christ by teaching people to read, she attended a Woman's Missionary Union meeting and called for others to join her in literacy missions.

Issacs secured initial support from First

Baptist Church of Pineville and WMU. In October 1959, she organized the SBC's first literacy training workshop, held at Clear Creek and sponsored by the former Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Trained volunteers then began working with local pastors and WMU to start literacy groups in the community.

Issacs and her family moved to Alaska in 1960 to do further mission work and develop literacy programs for people there. She eventually was appointed as a full-time literacy missionary and was placed in charge of literacy work in Alaska and the eastern United States. Issacs continued working nationally for literacy missions even after retiring in Tallahassee in 1972.

Issacs personally taught thousands of people to read throughout her ministry career. Because of her efforts, the North American Mission Board created a literacy mission division and continues to organize literacy efforts today.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention's mission service and ministries department presents an award each year in Issacs' honor at the annual Literacy Volunteers Conference.

A native of Alabama, Issacs was a graduate of Mercer University. She was the author of "Light Breaking Forth," a book about her students.

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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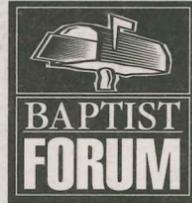
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Trustee credibility

It appears the search committee has been quite deliberate in making their recommendation for the next president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. He appears well qualified both by education and experience.

The financial mistakes of the previous administration have been documented in the press, and the NAMB trustees have intervened, to their credit. I hope the trustees will add to their credibility by stating what the salary will be for the new president.

Why should there be any hesitation to providing this information to the members of our churches? I urge the NAMB trustees to lead the way to a greater confidence in the candidate and our cooperative work by providing full information regarding his election.



Lee Bolton
Shelbyville

Don't change name

I may be in the minority, but I am saddened that we believe that eliminating the name "Baptist" from any of our churches, colleges, homes, offices, hospitals, etc., will cause us to be better received by the world at large. I for one am proud to be called a Baptist, and grateful that so many have given their entire life to be called by that precious name.

It's time to believe God

By Henry Blackaby

Atlanta (BP)—Faith can only operate in the present. It takes no faith to believe what has been—that's settled. Likewise, it takes no faith to believe what God can do, for with God all things are possible. Faith functions in what you believe God is going to do right now.

Jesus told His disciples, "If you have faith ... nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20). Then, Jesus demonstrated such faith as He

healed the boy that His disciples had failed to heal. When He did this He said to the boy's father, "All things are possible to him who believes."

Our Lord is constantly assuring us as well of what can happen if we but have faith in Him. This is especially true in our work places, our homes and our churches. For us, it is time to believe God.

And from the Scriptures, what should we do? For Hebrews 11:6 declares that "without faith it is im-

possible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Therefore, in these urgent days let us:

■ Come to know Him.
■ Believe Him as He has revealed Himself to us.
■ Seek Him.
■ Expect Him to respond.
■ Come to the full knowledge that nothing is impossible with God (Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37, Luke 18:27, Matthew 19:26).

Henry Blackaby is the founder of Blackaby Ministries International in Atlanta

Marla L. May
Lexington

Separate isn't special

As a lifelong Baptist, I must write to address something that troubled me in reading the Feb. 27 article on "special needs" students in the church.

As a mom of a 39-year-old son, who has cerebral palsy, I quickly read the article and ended up in tears. Not tears of joy, but of sadness that once again LifeWay's approach to "inclusion" is to send the message that "separate and special" is the best approach.

While there might be some people with disabilities who desire sep-

arate worship experiences or Sunday school classes, my son and many others would refuse to attend. I am pleased to say that in our church he is in the young men's class with men his own age. They include him in every aspect of their class activities, from bowling leagues to Bible studies. His verbal speech is limited and difficult to understand, but these men communicate with him very well because they value his friendship.

For him to be placed in a "special needs" classroom would be like saying, "All overweight people should attend Class B, while the skinny, physically fit ones should attend Class A." My son is so much more than his cerebral palsy.

The message of your articles may not have intended to imply that all people with "special needs" should have these "special classes" created for them. But after reading it three times, I felt the same result. While I applaud your efforts at recognizing that people with disabilities should be included as valued members of our congregations, I regret to see that full inclusion is not your major emphasis. I suggest that LifeWay and Southern Baptists everywhere do further study to learn more in-depth how to reach out to people with disabilities. And most importantly, ask some of us parents and our sons and daughters what we would like to see as the church's response to our needs.

Marla L. May
Lexington

COMMENTARY

In honor of faithful pastors

I recently had the privilege of participating in the 20th anniversary celebration of Scott Ford as pastor of Maceo Baptist Church in Daviess-McLean Baptist Association.

I preached from 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11 where Paul describes his pastoral relationship to the Thessalonians as being as gentle as a nursing mother and as strong as a loving father who inspires, encourages and exhorts his child through tears to seek the Lord.

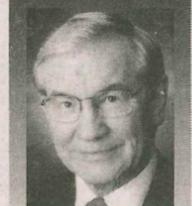
Paul spoke of not only sharing the gospel but his own soul because the people were dear to him. He also spoke of his desire to be a consistent example before the people and God in holiness and in his relationships to people and God. The passage creates a powerful image of the faithful shepherd who cares for his sheep and leads them in every way that is best for them to be safe and healthy.

Scott Ford overcame a vision handicap in order to pursue his education and respond to the call of God. It was his desire to have a long-term pastoral ministry like those he had observed of David Nelson and T.A. Prickett, both long-term pastors in the Owensboro area. God has granted his request in a church where the tenure had been less than one year for two of his predecessors.

Jerry Tooley, director of missions for Daviess-McLean Association, described Scott as a pastor who loves God, loves the Word of God, loves the church and loves seeing people reached for Christ.

There were proclamations from the governor and from State Rep. Dwight Butler who was present. Family members and church members paid tribute to their father and pastor in the Sunday afternoon celebration. An artist in the church pre-

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

pared a glass artistic rendering of the Good Shepherd from stained glass windows in the old church building and the new one.

The pastor thanked the staff and church and described the church as loving and caring, and the deacons as servants. He described the relationship as a "20-year honeymoon."

Although Maceo is a congregation of about 125 people in worship with limited resources, the church gives 15 percent of undesignated receipts to missions in Kentucky and around the world through the Cooperative Program. Their total gifts to the Cooperative Program have reached \$284,598. Their faithfulness has made a tremendous impact for the mission of our Lord.

Scott is just one example of hundreds of pastors across Kentucky who are faithful shepherds and are due recognition by God's people. Praise God for a congregation like Maceo who recognize that they have an incredible gift from God in their pastor!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

FAMILY

True stewardship:
Using God's gifts
to fulfill His goals

By Jeremy White

Many of us may have briefly daydreamed about having a dependable butler. The portrayal of butlers in the movies—perpetually proper in their British accent and black suit—intrigues me.

I've never known anyone with a butler. But who wouldn't want someone to efficiently and amicably carry out the errands of the household?

Another common English word for a butler is "steward." Definitions of steward from Merriam-Webster include:

1. One employed in a large household or estate to manage domestic concerns (as the supervision of servants, collection of rents and keeping of accounts).
2. One charged with overseeing: shop steward, union steward.
3. A fiscal agent.
4. An employee on a ship, airplane, bus or train who manages the provisioning of food and attends passengers.

In Christian circles, we frequently use the terms "steward" and "stewardship." We usually intend it to mean someone who handles money wisely and gives regularly to church.

Actually, the Bible doesn't use this exact word for that meaning. If you look in a concordance for the New International Version of the Bible, you find only a few uses of the word "steward." All of those uses are in the typical context of an employee working for his employer or serving food or drink. There's not a mention of "steward" in the New Testament at all.

Throughout the Bible, however, the concept of stewardship is pervasive. The recurring idea is that God owns it all and that we are managers for a temporary period. All we have is from God's hand. He entrusts us with it.

I like Ron Blue's definition of stewardship from a biblical perspective: "Biblical stewardship is the use of God-given gifts and resources (time, talent, treasure, truth, relationships) for the accomplishment of God-given goals and objectives."

Whatever He's given me, I'm using it for His goals and objectives. I'm trying to accomplish what's He's asked me to by using what He's given me. You could change the above definition of "biblical stewardship" to define "success" the same way—to some day hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

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

Encourage children to help halt cycle of school bullying

Q: Some parents of students at our Christian middle school recently were commenting about the bullying going on in the school. We were shocked. Is this common and how can we prepare our daughter to deal with it?

Unfortunately, bullying and other forms of aggression are quite common in schools, even Christian ones. Statistics indicate that one out of six teens deal with bullying of some type. Students who experience bullying are four to eight times more likely to struggle with depression and suicidal tendencies.

PARENTING

According to Dr. Tom Robbins, bullying can be defined as the "ongoing use of one's strength, skills or status to intimidate another person." This bullying can take the forms of physical, verbal or psychological/relational. While physical bullying often is quite visible, many other types of bullying are not. Spreading rumors on the Internet, sending anonymous text messages on a cell phone, ostracizing individuals from a group, or making them the target of hostile humor may actually be more damaging than a shove from the bully in the school cafeteria.

According to Dr. Robbins, it is important to understand that 85 percent of those involved in bullying are innocent bystanders. When bystanders intervene, up to 57 percent of bullying stops.

Not only must your daughter learn not to contribute to the "Mean Girls" culture, she can actively stand against bullying when it occurs in movies and television and help your daughter and her friends to be Christian nonconformists, not being squeezed into the shape of this world culture.—Scott Wigginton

Q: I have been dating the same guy for eight months and he seems perfectly content to go out three times a week and just be friends. I would like to be married. What should I do?

Only you can determine what you want. Spend some time in prayer and solitude and consider your life goals related to marriage.

MARRIAGE

Most people are in such a hurry that they do not slow down and figure out what's most important to them. Henry David Thoreau said most of us live lives of quiet desperation. We may need to take time out and go out into creation in order to listen, reflect and just think.

A good listener also can help take you through this process—either a pastoral counselor, a life coach or a "soul friend" who can totally focus on what you are saying and reflect it back to you. You might need such reflections of your thoughts to be verbalized and reflected back to you in order to hear them yourself.

Once you know what you want, be honest with your boyfriend. Find out his goals and how flexible he is within his current track of life.

Author and speaker Tommy Nelson says that much of picking the right marriage partner involves:

- Going in the direction to which God is calling you.
- Looking across from you and seeing someone else going in that same direction with whom you feel compatible in as many ways as possible.
- Deciding to take the journey together.

As a Christian, you aim for both love and a sense of calling. Without either of these, you are compromising and settling. With love and calling, you have a powerful combination that can take you into passionate companionship through the next decades of life "for as long as you both shall live."—James Stillwell

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KBC statistics reveal ministry challenges

Recent ministry statistics indicate these are challenging days in Kentucky Baptist Convention life.

While a report last week to the KBC Mission Advisory Committee affirmed significant gains in such Kentucky Baptists Connect goals as new church starts, leader training, church-to-church networking and strengthening churches, several other traditional measures of local church and state convention health are plateaued or declining.

According to the 2006 Annual Church Profile report which compiles key ministry statistics from churches throughout the state, five major areas experienced decline during the 2005-2006 church year. Those five include Sunday school enrollment down 1 percent, music enrollment down 3.1 percent, Woman's Missionary Union down 6.7 percent, Baptist Men on Mission down 8.5 percent and discipleship training down 12.2 percent. Even more significantly, involvement in all five of those ministry areas has posted overall declines in the past decade.

On the positive side, resident church membership was up 4.2 percent, worship attendance increased 3.8 percent, Sunday school attendance was up 1.8 percent (despite the decrease in enrollment) and undesignated offering receipts increased by almost \$20 million for a 6.5 percent gain.

Total baptisms, a major emphasis in the KBC's five-year Connect ministry strategy, were a mixed bag. While baptisms increased slightly over the previous year (up 377 to 17,784 for a 2.2 percent gain), the total remains far below the Connect goal of 125,000 baptisms over five years (an average of 25,000 baptisms per year).

What do those stark statistics mean for Kentucky Baptists' future ministry efforts? While it's important to focus on church starts, leader training and other current ministry goals, we also must strengthen our commitment in such historic ministry areas as Sunday School, discipleship training, music, WMU and Baptist Men on Missions. Those bedrock ministries help lay the foundation for other ministry and mission efforts.

One practical way to enhance your church's ministry in those key areas is to send ministry leaders to the KBC's annual Super Saturday training conferences held across the state in August and September. In the meantime, take advantage of other training op-

portunities and encourage your congregation to pursue excellence on each of its ministry fronts for the sake of God's Kingdom.

One other underlying challenge in Kentucky Baptist life is Cooperative Program funding which helps finance ministry efforts on the state, national and international levels. During the first six months of the KBC's 2006-07 fiscal year, CP receipts were more than \$500,000 below budget and more than \$200,000 below the prior mid-year receipts. (See related article on page 3.)

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey noted that failing to reach the KBC budget goal of \$23,562,000 "means all of the ministries represented in our budget, both SBC and KBC, would have to reduce ministries that are being provided."

He added, however, that "if Kentucky Baptists would maintain their percentage level of giving and make even slight increases, it would make a significant impact on resources available for SBC and KBC ministries."

As an example, Mackey said, "Over the past 10 years, the undesignated receipts to the churches have grown an average of 6.6 percent per year. During the same period of time, giving to missions and ministries by the churches through the Cooperative Program has increased at about 2 percent per year.

"During this same 10-year period, the percentage of undesignated receipts being given through the Cooperative Program by the churches has declined from 10 percent in 1996 to 7.24 percent in 2006," Mackey added. "If the churches maintained their giving at 10 percent, the budget of missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program would be at \$31.7 million instead of \$24 million."

The potential ministry impact is obvious. But it must start with local congregations gaining a vision of what can be accomplished across Kentucky and around the world through committed, growing financial support of Cooperative Program ministry efforts.

"To me," Mackey said, "the Cooperative Program is still the best method that has been given by God to a group of believers to sustain and expand the support for carrying out the Great Commission of our Lord."

That is a clear starting point to help address the ministry challenges Kentucky Baptists face throughout the Bluegrass State and beyond.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Remembering the great storms

By Frank Page

Taylors, S.C. (BP)—I have been privileged to travel to many churches, speak to many groups and see God at work in many places in my role as Southern Baptist Convention president. For this I will be eternally grateful.

There are places, however, in which a special burden has been laid upon my heart. In the last several months I have traveled and have seen the devastation caused by Hurricane Rita. The people of southeast Texas continue to struggle to see their area rebuilt. To date, there are still approximately 60,000 homes which need to be restored. Please do not forget these dear people as you ponder volunteer ministries, and most of all, prayer support.

Recently, I was invited to speak to the Louisiana Baptist Convention as well as to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In both of those instances, I was blessed to be a part of God's work, God's movement and God's blessing. How we thank God for the great leadership of David Hankins, executive direc-

tor of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. How we thank God for the wonderful leadership of Chuck Kelley Jr., president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. In both entities, God is doing a wonderful work through His dedicated servants.

To be honest, however, the trip to Louisiana left me with a renewed passion of the great work needed to be done there in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Many people in that area of New Orleans are experiencing deep depression because of the slow pace of recovery. In most places, it seems as if nothing has changed since the week after the hurricane. In fact, that is true in most areas. Southern Baptists have joined other benevolent entities and are doing a powerful work in rebuilding homes and restoring lives. In fact, that was the only spot of hope that I saw outside the churches in which I spoke.

As I talked with Franklin Avenue Baptist Church Pastor Fred Luter, he shared with me that only one fourth of his congregation has been able to return. As I spoke with David Cros-

by at First Baptist Church of New Orleans, he told me that his church had suffered a loss of approximately 40 percent in attendance. In fact, Crosby told me, "You are now in the largest ghost town in America." Many people have not returned. However, those who have are experiencing needs beyond our imagination. In some cases, basic city services have yet to be restored.

To the people of New Orleans, as well as southeast Texas, I speak a scriptural passage, "Brothers, do not grow weary in doing good" (2 Thessalonians 3:13).

To the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention, I remind us of the admonition of Jesus Who said, "I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me" (Matthew 25:40).

May we ever be aware of the opportunities before us. Natural disasters will come again. Let us be at the forefront of ministering. However, when the initial relief work is done, let us not forget that the recovery goes on sometimes for many years.

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

Roesel urges Ky. churches to pursue ministry evangelism

"Don't ask God for more until you've used fully what you have."

Charles Roesel, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Fla.

By **Dannah Prather**
Partnerships Editor

Bowling Green—Bible studies, video series, Web sites and seminars can be valuable tools for Christians who want to make a positive impact in their communities, Charles Roesel noted, but he puts something else at the top of the list.

"Ministry evangelism is the most effective way to consistently reach people for Jesus Christ that I've seen," said Roesel, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Fla., and one of the speakers at the recent Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Ministry isn't about numbers, Roesel insists, but when telling the story of the Lake County, Fla., congregation, numbers cannot be ignored.

In 1976, when Roesel became pastor, there were fewer than 200 members on the roll. The congregation—located in a community of fewer than 20,000 residents—averaged about five baptisms annually.

Fast-forward 30 years: Thousands of people attend the church that hosts multiple worship services each week, baptizes 200 people each year and operates a "ministry village" that provides people in need with everything from affordable furniture to intensive drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

Roesel led a breakout session on "Growing the Church through Ministry Evangelism," during the Feb. 26-27 conference at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

"We moved from maintenance mode to ministry mode," Roesel explained. "It took about five years to get everyone on board."

During the early years, Roesel worked to communicate what he said was a God-given vision of how to reach people with the gospel mes-



Charles Roesel

sage and practical ministry.

"If you have a vision, put it in a form other people can understand," he encouraged Kentucky Baptists attending the workshop.

When the congregation caught that vision, church members no longer thought about renovating their 1960s-era sanctuary.

"They said, 'We don't want to spend the money on ourselves, we need to spend it on people who are hurting,'" Roesel said.

Among the services provided in First Baptist Church of Leesburg's Ministry Village are:

- Two children's shelters for short-term and long-term care.
- A rescue mission for the homeless.
- A drug and alcohol rehabilitation center.
- A medical care center.
- A counseling center.
- A benevolence center including food, clothing and furniture.
- A Christian school.
- "Saturday Sunday School" for hundreds of children living in high-risk neighborhoods.
- A mentoring program.

The church converted a school bus into a portable stage, complete with sound system, so members and other volunteers can put on block parties or other events virtu-

ally anywhere in the county. Members named the effort the "sidewalk ministry."

Through the years, the ministry village served primarily low-income residents and people in crisis, Roesel said. But the congregation wanted to reach out to middle- and upper-class residents too.

They established Daystar Academy of Music & Performing, offering children lessons in art, music, dance, musical theatre and cheerleading. Unlike other ministry village services, the church charges a fee for children to attend the academy. Today, approximately 250 students are enrolled.

First Baptist Church also undertakes more traditional ministries such as a Hispanic congregation, discipleship training, ministry to the homebound, and overseas missions trips to Romania, Brazil and Africa where, over the years, members have built 70 chapels, children's homes and other facilities.

The story of First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Fla., was so compelling, in 2005, a movie titled "The Touch" was produced. It followed the spiritual journey of one woman who sought help at the ministry village.

As wonderful as the story is, Roesel isn't interested in admiration from fellow Christians who hear it; he wants motivation.

"Start serving where you are with what you have in the name of Christ at the point of their greatest need," he urged Kentucky Baptists. "Don't ask God for more until you've used fully what you have."

To operate the ministry village for one week costs \$20,000, he said. The congregation does not budget for that expense. Instead, they make additional gifts to the village and seek funding from other sources.

If a congregation wants to establish a shelter, medical center, crisis pregnancy program or other ministry, Roesel said, "Never ask: 'Can we afford it?' Ask if it's God's will. If it's God's will—I've got good news—He can afford it."

He also encourages churches to hire a trained grant writer. The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board recommends Strong Foundations, Inc., www.strongfoundations.org, a faith-based agency based in South Carolina, to learn more about researching and writing grants.

As the ministry village grew, church members made community connections that led to better, or new, ministries.

The local hospital made possible the village's medical center. Roesel said 50 local doctors donate time and expertise to the clinic. The hospital's investment benefits their staff because now fewer uninsured patients go to the emergency room seeking medical attention for minor problems.

Thousands of men, women and children have heard the gospel and felt the love of Christ through the ministry village, Roesel said.

He encouraged Kentucky Baptists to maintain an evangelistic focus in whatever ministry they undertake.

"Ministry evangelism is so satisfying that, if you're not careful, (church members) will be satisfied meeting physical needs and will drift from evangelism. ... I'm not interested in a social gospel" that provides only food, clothing and shelter, Roesel said.

"If I bring (people) to Jesus, they have the Bread of Life; they are clothed in righteousness, and they will have a home not made by human hands."

Florida church's ministry focus: 'Love Your Neighbor. Tell Your Story.'

By **Dannah Prather**
Partnerships Editor

Bowling Green—If a Kentucky Baptist were to ask a member of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., what is the best way to share the gospel, the likely answer would be: "Love your neighbor. Tell your story."

These Florida Baptists are earning the right to share the gospel by being good neighbors, according to Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church.

"We're simply doing what the Bible says," Traylor told Kentucky Baptists attending the recent evangelism conference at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green. The "Love Your Neighbor. Tell Your Story," strategy was developed by Olive Baptist's minister of evangelism and missions, Troy Bush.

Jesus' message to "love your neighbor" is recorded throughout the gospels, but perhaps is stated most emphatically in Matthew 22:37-39 when Jesus describes it as a command second only to loving God.

Going door to door asking permission to share the gospel with strangers might have a place in a church's evangelism strategy, but Traylor said in his experience, "90 percent of the time I need to plow ground."

He said such plowing involves friendly, everyday encounters with people he sees in the course of his regular routine.

To find such people, Traylor advised Kentucky Baptists simply to take a look at their checkbook.

Grocery store and drug store clerks; dry cleaners; doctors; dentists; pest control technicians; barbers and hairdressers; financial advisors; restaurant workers; fellow members of the local Rotary, Lions or other community clubs; and, Traylor said, of course friends, family and the people who live next door all are "neighbors" in the context of Christ's instructions.

When the "Love Your Neighbor, Tell Your Story" initiative began, Traylor said Bush told him, "Pastor, you should never pay for your gas at the pump. Always go inside."

Recognizing such opportunities to build relationships with others takes commitment and practice, Traylor noted.

"Get this in the DNA of the congregation," he told fellow pastors, "and they'll find it easier to share the gospel after they've plowed the ground."

One tool used by members of Olive Baptist is cards—approximately the same size as business cards—printed with the name, address, phone number and Web site address of the church. The card informs the recipient that "a friend from Olive Baptist Church" gave them the card and invites them to church services.

While waiting for your lunch in the drive-through line at McDonald's, consid-

er purchasing the meal of the person behind you, Traylor said. Hand the card to the drive-through worker and ask him or her to present it to the person behind you. Random acts of kindness always leave a good impression, he said.

Traylor made several other suggestions on how to share the gospel using the "Love Your Neighbor" approach:

- Every believer has a story to tell about his or her salvation experience. Traylor said Christians should practice a brief two-minute testimony that introduces the gospel. "Practice telling it quickly without any church words."

- The unchurched are more interested in how a relationship with Christ can help them in their daily lives, than they are about their eternal destination, Traylor said. Finding common ground with the person is important.

- Attend non-church events. "I want to get my folks to hang out with lost people," Traylor said, referring to his congregation. "I want them in the world, loving their neighbors."

- Look for receptivity in the people you encounter every day, he suggested. "Expect opportunities. ... Mention God as part of your daily conversations."

- Be kind. One moment's lost temper could destroy the relationship you've worked to build, he said.

- When dining out, tell the server that

you are going to pray before the meal and ask him or her if there are needs in their life for which you could pray.

- Be sensitive. "Make friends, not targets."

- Share a clear, biblical explanation of the gospel, Traylor said, adding that members of his congregation most often use the Roman Road.

If a person is receptive, build a bridge to the gospel in the conversation with such questions as: "Can I tell you how I handled a similar situation?" or "Can I tell you what the most important decision of my life was?"

Making the leap in the conversation might feel uncomfortable at first, but the blessings are worth a moment's awkwardness, he said. "You're not done until you've done this," Traylor emphasized.

- At home, make a prayer list of your neighborhood. Traylor said some of his church members prayerwalk their subdivision, pausing at driveways to mention people by name.

- Simple gestures of friendship such as food, flowers and help with chores can transform acquaintances into friends.

"Love your neighbor even when it is inconvenient and it seems impossible," he said.

More suggestions on using the "Love Your Neighbor. Tell Your Story," approach are available at www.lyntys.net.



INTERNATIONAL TOUR The Esther Missions Choir and Handbells of Korea Woman's Missionary Union will tour Kentucky this month at the invitation of Kentucky WMU.

Korea WMU choir, handbells to tour Kentucky this month

Louisville—The Esther Missions Choir and Handbells of Korea Woman's Missionary Union will tour in Kentucky March 20-29, performing numbers in both Korean and English.

The choir is coming to the state at the invitation of Kentucky WMU to participate in the 2007 Kentucky WMU annual meeting March 23-24 at Third Baptist Church in Owensboro. The choir tour is part of Korea WMU's partnership with Kentucky WMU.

"The trip has been planned to allow our guests to see a variety of Kentucky Baptist churches and ministries," noted Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky WMU. "While they will have the opportunity to see our state as they travel, the primary purpose of the trip is ministry through music and visiting Kentucky Baptist ministry sites.

"The purpose of our partnership with Korea WMU is to strengthen WMU work in both of our countries," she added. "As we learn from one another, we take home insights and ideas that can be used to further Kingdom work."

Thirty-four members of the choir and handbells are scheduled to arrive in the U.S. March 19 and tour the national WMU headquarters in Birmingham, Ala. The group will arrive in Louisville March 20 and Mary Lou Crutcher, WMU director for Long Run Baptist Association, will

serve as the tour leader on behalf of Kentucky WMU.

The choir's visits to churches and ministry sites will include:

March 21. Visit Friendship International, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and perform at Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville.

March 22. Tour ministry sites in Louisville including Baptist Fellowship Center, Jefferson Street Baptist Mission, Long Run Baptist Association, and the backside ministry at Churchill Downs.

March 23-24. Participate in the Kentucky WMU annual meeting in Owensboro.

March 24. Travel to Central City for a 7 p.m. concert at First Baptist Church.

March 25. Sing in the 10:45 a.m. worship service at Marion Baptist Church; sing in the 6 p.m. service at Cadiz Baptist Church.

March 26. Visit ministry sites in Lexington, including a food program, Irishtown Baptist Center and backside ministries at Keeneland; sing at Immanuel Baptist Church at 7 p.m.

March 27. Visit the state capitol, the Kentucky WMU Camp and ministries in Shelbyville; present a 7 p.m. concert at First Baptist Church of Shelbyville.

March 28. Sing in chapel at the Baptist Building in Louisville and tour the building.



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Top 100 KBC churches in total baptisms for 2005-06

1 Hillvue Heights, Bowling Green.....478	29 Hawk Creek, London.....60	57 Garner, Rush.....42	83 Walnut Grove, Russellville.....33
2 Highview, Louisville.....174	30 Franklin Crossroads, Cecilia.....57	Mountain Ash, Williamsburg.....42	84 Cedar Creek, Louisville.....32
Valley View, Louisville.....174	31 Forks of Elkhorn, Midway.....56	57 Enon, Mayfield.....41	Erlanger.....32
4 St Stephen, Louisville.....153	32 Nortonville.....55	Glendale, Bowling Green.....41	North Frankfort, Frankfort.....32
5 Canaan Christian, Louisville.....130	33 Zion, Henderson.....55	59 Four Rivers, Paducah.....40	South Carrollton.....32
6 Living Hope, Bowling Green.....125	34 Bracktown First, Lexington.....54	Hopewell, Corbin.....40	Westport Road, Louisville.....32
7 Binghamtown, Middlesboro.....114	35 Hillcrest, Hopkinsville.....52	61 Edgewood, Hopkinsville.....39	88 Corinth, McQuady.....31
Little Flock, Shepherdsville.....114	36 Piner, Morning View.....52	Lancaster.....39	Oak Grove, Corbin.....31
9 Bellevue, Owensboro.....109	37 Stithton, Radcliff.....52	Leitchfield First.....39	Pleasant View, Waynesburg.....31
10 Northside, Mount Vernon.....102	38 Immanuel, Glasgow.....51	Portland Memorial, Louisville.....39	Walnut Memorial, Owensboro.....31
11 Central, Winchester.....88	Louisa First.....51	Yellow Creek, Owensboro.....39	92 Burkesville.....30
12 Henderson First.....86	Shiloh, Lexington.....51	66 New Light, Cadiz.....38	Carrollton First.....30
Parkway, Bardstown.....86	40 Beacon Hill, Somerset.....50	67 Calvary, London.....37	Central, Hawesville.....30
14 Mill Creek, Radcliff.....84	Mount Washington First.....50	Paducah First.....37	Crab Orchard.....30
15 Hill Top Missionary, Pine Knot.....80	Richmond First.....50	Union, Northern Kentucky.....37	Grapevine, Madisonville.....30
16 Hardin.....79	43 Calhoun.....49	70 Central, Corbin.....36	New Work, Hopkinsville.....30
17 Crestwood, Oldham County.....78	44 Calvary, Princeton.....48	71 Camp Pleasant, Frankfort.....35	Northside, Elizabethtown.....30
18 Moreland First, Hustonville.....75	45 Hope Community, Lawrenceburg.....47	Gano, Georgetown.....35	99 Buck Run, Frankfort.....29
19 Porter Memorial, Lexington.....73	Northside, Princeton.....47	Providence, Campbellsburg.....35	Cynthiana.....29
20 Red House, Richmond.....71	47 Eubank.....45	74 De Mossville, Morning View.....34	Liberty, Russell Springs.....29
21 Imani, Lexington.....70	Fairview, Ashland.....45	His House Ministries, Mayfield.....34	New Hope, Elizabethtown.....29
22 Russell First.....68	49 Lone Oak First, Paducah.....44	Walnut Street, Louisville.....34	New Salem, Nortonville.....29
23 Oak Grove First.....65	New Friendship, Glencoe.....44	77 Allansville, Winchester.....33	Owensboro First.....29
Steubenville, Monticello.....65	51 Immanuel, Lexington.....43	Bellevue, Burlington.....33	Providence, Franklin.....29
25 Trace Creek, Mayfield.....64	Severns Valley, Elizabethtown.....43	Montgomery, Carrie.....33	
26 Consolidated, Lexington.....63	53 Buena Vista, Lancaster.....42	Pikeville First.....33	
27 Florence.....60	Frankfort First.....42	Rose Hill, Ashland.....33	

Top 100 KBC churches in resident members per baptism

1 De Mossville, Morning View.....0.62	26 New Beginnings Missionary, Reed...3.82	51 Rutledge Road, Louisville.....5.21	76 Gratz, Owenton.....6.38
2 Fonde, Frakes.....1.50	27 Mossy Gap, Williamsburg.....3.83	52 Emmanuel, Shelbyville.....5.25	77 Rhodes Chapel, Lynnville.....6.50
3 Seventh Street, Lexington.....1.79	28 Baxter Avenue, Louisville.....3.88	South Carrollton.....5.25	78 Faith Covenant, Lexington.....6.57
4 New Friendship, Glencoe.....1.93	29 Vicco Missionary, Viper.....3.93	54 Keys Ferry, Fairdale.....5.33	79 Ashland Second.....6.63
5 Greenbriar, Irvine.....2.06	30 Mount Vernon, Versailles.....4.00	55 Level Green, Corbin.....5.50	80 Corinth, Providence.....6.67
6 Four Rivers, Paducah.....2.13	31 Dunnville First, Russell Springs.....4.07	South District Hispanic Ministries.....5.50	Freedom, Lancaster.....6.67
7 Horizon, Danville.....2.23	32 Bluegrass Deaf Mission, Lexington...4.14	57 Fishing Creek, Nancy.....5.60	Russell Heights, Columbia.....6.67
8 Olive Branch, Hanson.....2.25	33 Harvest Community, Eminence.....4.17	58 Mount Eden, Shepherdsville.....5.63	83 Viney Fork, Richmond.....6.71
9 Faith, Ashland.....2.57	Young Grove, Dewitt.....4.17	59 Eden, Mount Vernon.....5.69	84 Hawk Creek, London.....6.72
Hispanic Mission, Williamstown.....2.57	35 New Vision Fellowship, Defoe.....4.29	60 Lakeside, Nancy.....5.71	85 Ages.....6.75
11 Spring Valley, Russellville.....2.63	36 Pathway, Beaver Dam.....4.44	61 Calvary Missionary, Clermont.....5.83	86 Northside, Mount Vernon.....6.91
12 Green Grove Mission, Whitley City...2.67	37 Grace, Dry Ridge.....4.47	Cherry Hill, Robards.....5.83	87 Melber.....6.93
13 Oneida.....2.73	38 Ghent.....4.56	63 Meadow Hill, Louisville.....5.86	88 Covington First (Ninth Street).....6.94
14 Radcliff, Rineyville.....2.78	39 Sinking Valley, Somerset.....4.60	64 Fellowship, Smithland.....5.88	89 Eastside, Winchester.....7.00
15 Mount Pleasant, Lawrenceburg.....2.79	40 Freemont, Boaz.....4.64	65 Liberty, Russell Springs.....5.90	New Jerusalem, Cadiz.....7.00
16 Walnut Grove, Morgantown.....2.82	Little Obion, Wingo.....4.64	66 Lakeside Community, Taylorsville.....6.00	Solid Rock, Hopkinsville.....7.00
17 Emmanuel, Louisa.....3.18	42 Greater Saint Paul, Wingo.....4.67	Mission Vision, Whitesville.....6.00	92 Buena Vista, Lancaster.....7.02
18 Wrigley.....3.29	43 Garfield.....4.90	Moreland First, Hustonville.....6.00	93 White Oak, London.....7.08
19 Madison Avenue, Covington.....3.33	44 Calvary, Hardyville.....5.00	69 Bethlehem, Mount Eden.....6.08	94 Gilead, Richmond.....7.14
Watson Lane, Henderson.....3.33	Christ Is King, Louisville.....5.00	70 Calvary, Grand Rivers.....6.10	95 Unity, Louisa.....7.17
21 Living Water, Mt Sterling.....3.50	Dedicated, Bowling Green.....5.00	71 Hill Top Missionary, Pine Knot.....6.19	96 Pleasant Home, Allen.....7.18
22 Weaver, London.....3.53	Sharpsburg.....5.00	72 Fairview, Williamsburg.....6.20	97 Clearview, Leitchfield.....7.23
23 Mill Knob, Stanton.....3.55	Slaty Point, Morehead.....5.00	73 Meadow Land, Bowling Green.....6.22	98 His House Ministries, Mayfield.....7.24
24 Peaks Mill, Frankfort.....3.67	49 Berean, Elizabethtown.....5.13	74 Pine Grove, London.....6.30	99 Cedar Grove, Franklin.....7.25
25 Becknerville, Lexington.....3.75	Slate Lick, London.....5.13	75 Kelly Street, Harlan.....6.33	100 Immanuel, Glasgow.....7.35

Study: Longevity impacts church, denominational loyalty

Continued from page 1

stantial differences by age, gender, income levels, race or other factors.

What does vary is loyalty by length and frequency of attendance. Seventy-four percent of those who attend weekly or more said they definitely plan to continue attending the same congregation, compared to 48 percent of those who attend less than once a week. Similarly, 72 percent of adults who have attended the same church for four years or longer indicated they definitely plan to continue doing so, versus 62 percent among those who have attended for one to three years and 49 percent for those who have attended their current church for less than a year.

Most people plan no change

Although most people are not planning to change churches, the study looked at denominational loyalty by asking what they would do if they had to change (for instance, if they moved to a different area).

Twenty-eight percent of all churchgoers who responded said they would only consider attending a church of the same denomina-

tion they currently attend, while 41 percent said they strongly preferred that option but would have at least some openness to another denomination. Fourteen percent showed some preference to their current denomination but were open to others; 16 percent said the denomination of the church doesn't really matter to them; and 2 percent would prefer to switch denominations.

There were no strong differences in denominational loyalty noted between people in mainline and evangelical churches, but there were some distinct differences among different major denominational groups. Lutherans are the most loyal group, with 52 percent of them saying they would only consider attending a church within their current denomination. Methodists are less likely than average to say they would only attend their current denomination (16 percent), but more likely to say they would strongly prefer to remain in their denomination (59 percent). Baptists were about average in their denominational loyalty.

Among the least denominationally loyal are people attending Pente-

costal, Presbyterian and nondenominational churches. Pentecostals were almost twice as likely as average to say the exact denomination of the church does not matter to them. Only one out of 10 people from Presbyterian churches (compared to 28 percent of all churchgoers) would only consider another Presbyterian church, and the same is true for nondenominational churches.

Denominational loyalty, like church loyalty, is strongly connected with the length of time people have spent in their current congregation. The longer they have been attending the same church, the more likely they are to say they strongly prefer or would only consider a church in that same denomination.

Evaluate local congregations

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, noted that the study might help pastors think about and understand their own congregation more.

"In the typical Protestant church, about one out of every eight people in the congregation has been attending that church for less than a year,"

Sellers said. "What should this mean for the typical church? Does the church have a strategic plan for involving newcomers in the life of the congregation? Does the church leadership make the assumption that everyone in the church knows how the church works and what it believes? These things are very important when so many relatively new people are in the typical congregation."

Sellers also noted that it would be a mistake for individual churches or denominations to assume a level of loyalty among attendees that may not exist.

"In the typical Protestant congregation, one-third of the people in the pews are not definite in their plans to continue attending that church," Sellers said. "If they were to leave, three out of 10 would not consider it a big deal to switch denominations. It's important that pastors or denominational leaders don't automatically assume the people in the pews are 'our people,' because the data suggests a significant minority don't hold a level of loyalty that would make that an accurate assumption."

Catholics report top growth among U.S. churches

New York (RNS)—The Roman Catholic Church grew to 69.1 million members in 2005, making it the fastest-growing church in the nation, followed closely by the Assemblies of God and the Mormons.

Catholics grew 1.94 percent in 2005, Assemblies of God grew 1.86 percent and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints grew 1.63 percent, according to the 2007 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, produced by the National Council of Churches.

The Yearbook, released March 5, is widely considered the most authoritative source on church membership statistics.

The 2007 Yearbook contains data

from 2005 that were compiled and reported in 2006.

Rankings of the top 10 largest U.S. churches did not change from the previous year. Catholics remain the largest group, followed by the Southern Baptist Convention, the United Methodist Church, Mormons and the Church of God in Christ.

Only three mainline Protestant denominations—Methodists, Lutherans and Presbyterians—are counted in the top 10 largest churches, and all three reported membership declines in 2005. The Presbyterian Church (USA) reported the largest decrease, at 2.84 percent.

The top 10 largest U.S. churches include:

- The Roman Catholic Church—69,135,254.
- The Southern Baptist Convention—16,270,315.
- The United Methodist Church—8,075,010.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—5,690,672.
- The Church of God in Christ—5,499,875.
- National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.—5 million.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—4,850,776.
- National Baptist Convention of America—3.5 million.
- Presbyterian Church (USA)—3,098,842.
- Assemblies of God—2,830,861.

Switching religious identities seen as growing trend in U.S.

Hartford, Conn. (RNS)—Switching religious identities has become a common experience for many Americans, according to experts who study the phenomenon.

Sixteen percent of Americans have switched their religious identities at some point in their lives, according to the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey, one of the largest studies of its kind.

Barry Kosmin, co-author of the recent book "Religion in a Free Market: Religious and Non-Religious Americans," which is based on the 2001 survey data, said "more switching is to be expected."

"Family and ethnic loyalties—the old glue that maintained inter-generational religious identification—has weakened," he said.

In addition to moving more frequently, Americans are more likely to be "searching" for religious truth, often outside their own traditions, wrote Kosmin, who directs the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn.

The 2001 study showed clear winners and losers in the competition to attract and retain members: Twice as many Americans left Catholicism as joined the church, while evangelical Christianity registered a net gain, with more than three times as many people joining than leaving. By contrast, the 2007 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches showed Catholics with the largest gain in 2005 (see related article at left).

But the biggest change in the earlier study was registered among Americans who said they had no religious identity at all, increasing from 8 percent of the U.S. population in 1990 to 14 percent in 2001.

While religious switching may bring satisfaction to individual seekers, the phenomenon can be unsettling for religious leaders, who are vying for members ever more aware of new options, according to Kosmin.

"We have a supply-side religious market with more competing firms each year," he noted. Megachurches are successful in part because they actively reach out to "potential" members, including many in high-mobility suburbs and exurbs, Kosmin wrote.

But success in attracting new members doesn't necessarily translate into success at keeping them, according to Daniel Olson, a sociologist at Indiana University South Bend who studies religious competition.

"There is a strong relationship between rates of leaving and rates of joining, both for congregations and whole denominations," Olson said. The 2001 survey found, for example, that while the Mormons welcomed a relatively large number of converts, an equal number left the religion. Jehovah's Witnesses and Buddhists displayed similarly high levels of turnover.

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Baptist & community leaders mark Ridgecrest's centennial

Asheville, N.C. (BP)—A centennial luncheon commemorating LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center's 100th anniversary attracted about 180 ministry and community leaders March 6.

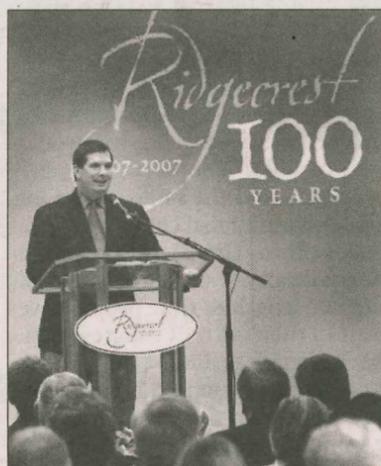
Speakers recalled the many ways God had worked in people's lives at Ridgecrest during the past century while voicing anticipation of things yet to come at the conference center located just outside Black Mountain, N.C., near Asheville.

Black Mountain Mayor Carl Bartlett, who attended vacation Bible school at Ridgecrest in 1948, brought greetings on behalf of the city and read a proclamation recognizing Ridgecrest for 100 years of ministry. The governor of North Carolina, mayor of Asheville and Buncombe County commissioners also issued proclamations.

"Ridgecrest has been called a mountain of faith," said Bill Bowman, general manager of LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, as he cited the center's challenges in its early years, including a fire, two floods and a series of financial crises.

Bowman recounted how in the late 19th century B.W. Spilman dreamed of establishing a place for Southern Baptists to meet and learn how to teach the Bible to the multitudes. "It was his faith in God and His purposes for Ridgecrest that kept Spilman going," Bowman said.

Jack Epps, who worked as a summer staffer in the 1930s as a college student and then returned 40 years later after retiring to spend another 26 years as a volunteer, gave greetings from Florida via video. "You come join us as a volunteer—there's no better place to work," said Epps, who plans to return to Ridgecrest this summer for his 27th year as a volunteer and celebrate his 90th birthday there.



CENTENNIAL Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, addresses a luncheon celebrating 100 years of ministry of LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center. (BP photo by Russ Rankin)

Epps was followed by 25-year-old John Mark Woodard, who served as assistant director for summer staff the past two years. "Things happen here that can't happen anywhere else. God is actively working here," Woodard said.

Byron Hill, executive director of LifeWay Conference Centers and Camps, discussed recent upgrades and new construction at Ridgecrest and plans for a new convention center with an 8,400-square-foot ballroom/exhibit space.

Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, cited Psalm 78 in which God reminds Israel of what He has done and will continue to do for them.

"I want us to remember the past, the place and the plan," Rainer said.

Mike Arrington, vice president of LifeWay Capital Resource Development, noted, "We serve a hurting world and can be a shining light. What God has done in the last 100 years in the lives of 3 million people is a great and awesome thing."

GuideStone enhances financial aid for retired ministers in need

Dallas (BP)—GuideStone Financial Resources has adopted new guidelines to allow more retirees to qualify for financial assistance through its Adopt An Annuitant ministry.

Effective immediately, single applicants with incomes up to \$1,500 per month and married applicants with incomes up to \$2,000 per month can be eligible for Adopt An Annuitant benefits, according to new guidelines approved by trustees.

"We are excited to be able to amend the guidelines so that more individuals will qualify for assistance and that those who have served so faithfully will be eligible for increased benefits in the future," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said in his report to trustees during their Feb. 26-27 meeting in Dallas.

In addition to the increased income guidelines, trustees approved increased amounts for ministers or their widows who have extremely low incomes and more than 30 years of service. Those benefits will begin Jan. 1, 2008.

"We are so grateful to be able to double the amount of assistance to these dear people who have long

years of Southern Baptist service and income amounts below the national poverty levels," Hawkins said. Currently, the Adopt An Annuitant ministry provides \$200 per month in assistance to single annuitants and \$265 per month to married recipients.

As part of its ministry assignment from the Southern Baptist Convention, GuideStone provides a channel through which individuals, churches and organizations can provide assistance to ministers and other church employees who were not able to save for retirement.

Over the past 10 years, individuals, churches and organizations have given more than \$50 million for GuideStone's Adopt An Annuitant ministry.

GuideStone also is releasing its Cooperative Program allocation to be used for other Southern Baptist ministries.

Hawkins said earnings on endowment reserves and continued gifts from individuals and churches will allow GuideStone to release the allocation which has been used to fund financial assistance for needy retired ministers, other denominational workers or their widows.

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"Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen." 2 Ti 2:14

Composer highlights biblical truths through music for VBS

Nashville (BP)—Leading worship in various churches around the country and working in Centri-KID camps each summer helps Jeff Slaughter keep his vacation Bible school music fresh and age-appropriate.

Slaughter, a musician and composer from Nashville, writes kid-friendly lyrics with biblical truths, sets those lyrics to music that kids can sing and then adds sign language and choreography to give kids a whole musical experience. And he does all that in just two weeks.

"I get the VBS theme and the Scriptures from the people at LifeWay, then I have about two weeks to get it all written so the writers of the VBS materials will have it," Slaughter noted.

LifeWay Christian Resources publishes two lines of vacation Bible school materials. This year's themes are "Game Day Central: Where Heroes Are Made!" and "Club VBS: Jungle Jaunt."

"I try to write music that will appeal to the fifth- and sixth-grade boys," Slaughter said with a laugh. "If I can connect with them, then I figure all the kids will like it. The younger kids look up to those guys and if they think the music is cool, so will everyone else."

Slaughter has been writing VBS music since 1996, when he wrote the music for "Wild, Wonderful, Good News Stampede."

All of the VBS music written by Slaughter is available for download on iTunes. For more information about VBS, go to www.lifeway.com/vbs.

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Exciting developments

Jonathan Creek welcomes new director, Mission Board event

The summer is quickly approaching and many of our needed tasks seem to be falling into place. I want to take this opportunity to let each of you know that we have a new director at Jonathan Creek. David Rouse will be joining us later this month.

David and his wife, Susan, are Tennessee natives where David has directed two camps. The Rouses have two children. Our prayers are with them as they begin the transition to a new community, ministry and schools. I am so excited to have him come to our ministry.

This spring will be special as our Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board will be holding their May meeting at Jonathan Creek rather than Cedarmore. For the past two years I have been hoping that the board would do this since a large number of board members have not seen Jonathan Creek for a number of years and some have never been to Jonathan Creek.

I want to extend my thanks to all the Mission Board members for their willingness to travel to Western Kentucky. Cedarmore is in such a great location in the cen-

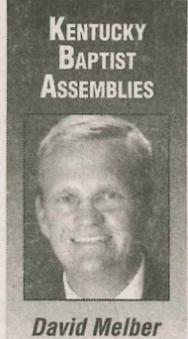
tral part of the state and we look forward to the meeting returning there in 2008.

The May 2008 Mission Board meeting will be of great interest as the members will see new housing, new conference space and coming plans for a new worship center at Cedarmore.

I am humbled by the multiple tasks that are in motion today at each property—tasks that will be completed prior to summer and tasks that are being set in motion for the coming years. We honestly believe the next few years will be the most exciting ever as years of planning come to fruition for our ministry.

As always, remember our staff as we prepare for numerous changes this spring. Continue to pray for the Rouse family as they make this significant transition, pray for our preparation for the Mission Board meeting and pray for summer camps.

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



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David Melber

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

- Across**
 1 Pretty much
 6 Off the cuff (2 words)
 11 Expelled gas
 12 Belonging to the earth
 14 Radium, chem. symbol
 15 Precious stone on the third row of the priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:19)
 17 Western Canadian province, abbr.
 18 All right
 19 Annoyed
 20 Short greeting
 21 "I ... have the ____ of hell and of death" (Revelation 1:18)
 24 Creatures from outer space, abbr.
 25 Slightly open
 27 One who revises
 29 "I was afraid, and went and hid thy ____ in the earth" (Matthew 25:25)
 31 Peter once cut one off
 32 Belonging to New York's largest island, abbr.
 33 "The glory of the Lord ____ the house" (Ezekiel 43:5)
 36 First appearances
 39 "Ye ____ men with burden grievous to be borne" (Luke 11:46)
 40 Lemon beverage
 42 "____ a rod of an almond tree" (Jeremiah 1:11) (2 words)
 43 Letter that follows el

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		56						57				

- 44 Belonging to Mr. Rogers
 46 A mate for Pa
 47 Eastbound, abbr.
 48 Cancel
 49 Point, abbr.
 50 Angry outburst
 53 Man-made channels
 56 Collapsed
 57 Give off
- Down
 1 What the Mount Sinai did when the Lord descended
 2 Biblical land: ____ of the Chaldees
 3 Innings pitched, abbr.
 4 "Lest he ____ my soul like a lion" (Psalms 7:2)
 5 More nervous
 6 Affirm
 7 "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in ____ and in truth" (1 John 3:18)
 8 Living room, abbr.
 9 Iridium, chem. symbol
 10 "Daniel . . shall leap from ____" (Deuteronomy 33:22)
 11 Penniless
- 13 Part of a dress below the waist
 16 Altitude, abbr.
 22 "____ yourselves to the Lord" (2 Chronicles 30:8)
 23 Not fresh
 25 A plausible excuse
 26 Son of God and Son of man
 28 Metal
 30 Strong drink
 33 Swift
 34 Verse written in iambs
 35 Mended socks
 36 Figure out
 37 Where Samuel grew up
 38 "The four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their ____" (Revelation 11:16)
 41 Where Daniel spent time with lions
 44 Lose color
 45 Shut hard
 51 Royal Academy, abbr.
 52 Audio-visual, abbr.
 54 Negative
 55 Preposition

Last week's solution

1	T	R	O	D	5	B	E	L	7	B	L	I	E	V	10
11	R	E	C	E	I	V	E	D	13	S	A	I	D		
14	O	S	T	E	O	15	G	O	16	T	P	I			
18	T	I	D	T	20	I	M	A	21	G	E	F			
22	H	D	23	S	A	24	N	I	25	O	N	L	Y		
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31	A	D	A	M	32	F	I	E	L	D	M				
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Supreme Court clears way for lawsuit over anti-gay T-shirt

Washington (ABP)—In a procedural move, the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way March 5 for a lawsuit over a California school district's suspension of a teenager who wore an anti-gay T-shirt to school.

The decision means the court may soon revisit the debate over students' free-speech rights and school officials' responsibility to foster learning for students of all backgrounds.

The justices summarily vacated a lower court's ruling against a student in Poway, a San Diego suburb. According to court documents, school officials suspended Tyler Chase Harper in 2004 after he refused to take off a shirt that said, "I will not accept what God has condemned" on one side and, "Homosexuality is shameful, Romans 1:27" on the other.

School officials said Harper wore the shirt on the national Day of Silence, which is sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. During the Day of Silence, participants don't talk in order to call attention to harassment and discrimination of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students.

In the case, school officials contended that Harper's T-shirt's message could have caused disruptions or arguments among students. Other students were allowed to wear pro-gay messages to class that day.

Harper sued, alleging that the policy the district cited violated his constitutional rights to free speech and equal protection. His attorneys sought a preliminary injunction

preventing school officials from enforcing the policy.

Lower federal courts ruled against the injunction. A divided three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals went further, saying Harper was unlikely to win on the case's broader merits.

"Those who administer our public educational institutions need not tolerate verbal assaults that may destroy the self-esteem of our most vulnerable teenagers and interfere with their educational development," Judge Stephen Reinhardt wrote.

But Judge Alex Kozinski wrote a blistering dissenting opinion, saying school officials were censoring the teen's political and religious views while tacitly endorsing opposing views.

"Harper's T-shirt was not an out-of-the-blue affront to fellow students who were minding their own business," Kozinski wrote. "Rather, Harper wore his T-shirt in response to the Day of Silence, a political activity that was sponsored or at the very least tolerated by school authorities."

By the time Harper's appeal reached the Supreme Court, he had graduated from high school. The latest decision renders moot his attempt to enjoin the policy's enforcement, but it also negates the 9th Circuit's opinion.

The decision clears the way for another lawsuit Harper filed on the case's broader constitutional merits. A federal district court judge recently ruled against him. Harper likely will appeal to the 9th Circuit.

The works of God

With 'Jesus sight,' we are invited to see glimpses of God's Kingdom every day

By Michael Spencer, assistant to the president

This year's Father's Day Offering theme is "Come and See." I suggested that theme after reading Psalm 66:5, "Come and see the works of God."

The Bible always invites us to see what God is doing, and it always tells us, with confidence, that God's work is there to see.

As a Bible teacher, however, I also know that blindness is a frequent description of the human condition. Jesus healed blind people to demonstrate His power to bring us out of spiritual darkness and into enlightened spiritual sight.

Every day, Oneida provides me with reminders that two people can look at the same thing and—because of the "sight" that Jesus brings—see it very differently.

Some visitors might look at our school and find our facilities modest, our faculty homes unimpressive, our equipment and furniture donated, our students frequently unsuccessful before coming to us, and our staff salaries far less than faculty of a college or seminary.

If you cannot see the Kingdom of God, this kind of sight will leave a less-than-impressive impression.

But with the Kingdom in view, looking at things as Jesus looked at the widow's offering or the mustard seed, you can see incredible evidence of God's goodness and power.

Our Heavenly Father brings us our staff and their support. God brings us abundant resources for our school. God brings friends who provide

us with money, prayers and many hours of volunteer service. Where others sometimes see "problem kids," we see examples of the grace, mercy and salvation of the Lord. We see future missionaries, doctors, teachers and business leaders. In fact, we often see our future staff in the faces of those students.

Keeping the Kingdom view in focus is a discipline, but also a ministry for us. Our school's publications—the Oneida Mountaineer (a general information publication for everyone), Alumni News (for alumni) and On Campus (for our students' parents and guardians)—help our network of friends keep a Kingdom view of what God is doing on our campus.

Coming to Oneida for a visit, mission trip or workday also can give you that Kingdom view. Attending a speaking engagement featuring our president, Dr. Underwood, sharing the story of this ministry will be an "eye-opener." Reading the books "Mountain Rising" and "The Crucible" will show God's hand at work. Our Web site, www.oneidaschool.org also tells the works of the Lord here at Oneida.

Having our eyes opened to God's presence and work is a wonderful thing. If you are reading this, you probably know our story and our way of telling it. How about sharing the works of God at OBI with someone else? We'd love to send them our bi-monthly newsletter.

To subscribe, or to request a subscription for someone else, call (606) 847-4111, ext. 200, or e-mail denise@oneidaschool.org.

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



W.F. Underwood

SIMPLE CHURCH

March 20, 2007

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Crestwood Baptist Church
Crestwood, Kentucky

Cost: \$20 per person

(includes lunch and a copy of the book)

Reservations required.

Register online: www.kybaptist.org/simplechurchseminar

or mail your check with the form below to:

Kentucky Baptist Convention
Simple Church Seminar
P.O. Box 43433
Louisville, KY 40253

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Church _____

E-Mail _____

Phone _____

Association _____

 This event is made possible in part by the Cooperative Program.

Simple Church, a new book by Thom Rainer, Ph.D., president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, calls Christians to return to the simple gospel-sharing methods of Jesus. No elaborate, multi-level outreach strategies required. Simple churches are thriving by taking four concepts to heart: **Clarity, Movement, Alignment and Focus.**



Explore the concepts outlined in *Simple Church*

with Eric Geiger, Ed.D. He is executive pastor of Christ Fellowship, a large and growing multi-cultural church comprised of more than seventy nationalities near Miami, Florida.



For more information, contact the Church Development Team
Phone (502) 489-3335
or toll free in KY (866) 489-3335

One day at a time

Student from Mayslick anticipates May graduation

Michael Ulrich commented on his anticipated May graduation, "It feels good, but I'm still not ready; I'm taking it one day at a time."

Michael has completed his coursework through online classes and commuting to campus. "The online courses have been useful for scheduling problems," he said. "But I prefer the class experience."

He made a decision for Christ early in life, but five years ago he "made it sure." That experience has impacted his work with youth. "A person can assume they are saved just because they go to church," Michael said. "Everyone needs to be sure—do I really believe or is this just a social experience?"

At Mayslick Baptist Church, Michael helps with music leadership and is assistant youth minister. Sometimes, he teaches the college and career class. About 25 youth are involved in the youth ministry; most of them attend Mason County High School with a few from Fleming County.

He emphasized outreach and involved youth in Kentucky Changers. Others served through disaster relief in Mississippi.

"Our church, for its size, has been blessed with several (people being) called into ministry," Michael said. "One attends University of the Cumberlands and two others plan to attend seminary."

What is his future direction? "I don't know all the details yet; I can't see myself satisfied doing anything other than what God desires," he said. "(God's) calling seems to be in youth ministry, but I'm also open to missions and music."

For the immediate future, he hopes to remain at Mayslick and continue his education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Michael said he heard about Clear Creek through a church member whose husband attended the school in the 1970s.

"One summer, unsure about where to attend college, on a step of faith, my dad and I made a campus visit," Michael said. "Billy Howell, the admissions director, told us he felt someone would come that day."

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

Rising above repression

NAMB missionary to U.S. immigrants endured years of Soviet persecution

By Mickey Noah
SBC North American Mission Board

Denver—Little Anatoliy Odnorolov often came home after school with a bloody nose, the result of just another day as a Christian at his school in the North Caucasus region of the old Soviet Union.

"Since early childhood, I knew the price for my convictions," he said.

Anatoliy was the third-born son of an ordinary shoemaker, who, along with his wife, was a faithful believer in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, they were believers living in an atheistic nation dedicated to the persecution of Christians.

The family grew to 15. Anatoliy's father faithfully drew them together and read stories from the Bible, urging his children to pray. With his meager cobbler's pay, he purchased a guitar and an accordion and taught himself and his children to play. He even formed a family band.

Mocked for beliefs

"The school where we were studying mocked us for our convictions and belief in God," recalls Anatoliy, now 43 and a Southern Baptist North American Mission Board church-planting missionary.

Harassed by the KGB and the Soviet Union's Committee on Religious Affairs, Anatoliy's father constantly was being summoned to speak to the authorities. He was accused of educating his children "inappropriately," and authorities threatened to remove the children from his care.

Constant badgering by the KGB cost Anatoliy's father a series of jobs and the family fell into poverty.

Anatoliy's father was killed in a road accident in 1982, leaving 13 children in the care of their asthma-afflicted mother. At one point, Anatoliy's mother had no way to buy milk and bread for her children.

"Kids, I don't know what we will eat tomorrow," she told her children one night. Later, Anatoliy said they heard her praying: "You are the

God of orphans and widows. You are my Father and you promised not to leave me. Support me in my faith and send bread for my family."

Early the next morning, a loud knock at the door awakened 19-year-old Anatoliy. "Mother came out with her eyes red from crying. We saw a man, and before our eyes, there were two huge bags of food. The man said the food was for us," Anatoliy remembers.

"Who are you? Where are you from?" we asked the stranger. But he told us not to ask him anything. Even today, we do not know anything about him and have never met him anywhere again.

"I believe we'll meet him in eternity," he added.

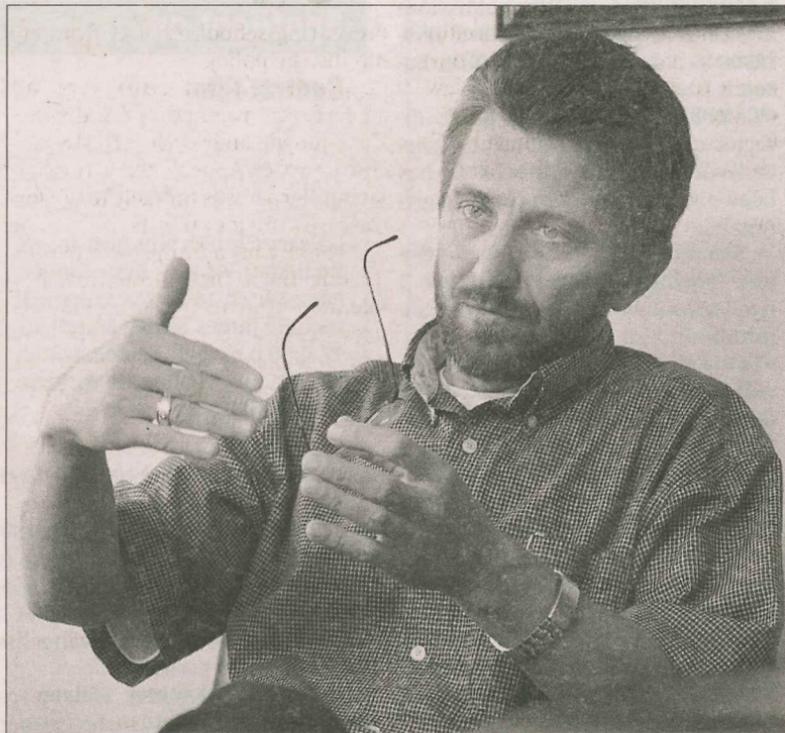
Anatoliy would suffer more, almost unbearable, religious persecution while serving in the Soviet Army. After the military, he attended Ukraine Bible Seminary before immigrating to the U.S. where he studied at Oklahoma Bible Institute in Oklahoma City. He married—his wife's name is Natasha. The couple has four children.

Today, Odnorolov operates the International Center of Hope, a ministry focusing on the 60,000 Russian-speaking immigrants in the greater Denver area. Only 3 to 4 percent are believers; 80 percent are Russian-speaking Jews. He and his wife also work to start new churches in the city's Russian-speaking Jewish communities.

"When we launched the center less than a year ago ... we had to go out and look for local Russian people at their residences. It was not always easy," Odnorolov said. "Now, people come to the center on their own."

The center's chief project is teaching English as a Second Language to as many as 100 Russian immigrants at a time. The center also offers classes in music, art, Russian history and Hebrew.

Summer camp for children is another ministry. "We see kids accept the Messiah, and they pass on the



SUSTAINING A CALLING Anatoliy Odnorolov, director of Hope International Cultural Center in Denver, leads Bible studies for members of the Russian-speaking community. The center provides English as a Second Language courses in addition to classes in music, art, Russian history and Hebrew. (Photos by John Swain)

good news to their friends and family members," he said.

The center sponsors home Bible studies for Russian-speaking people. Odnorolov said people prefer studying the Bible in homes rather than local churches.

Through the work of the center and its home Bible study ministry, Odnorolov said he has seen God's love help hurting individuals and families. "We see families on the edge of divorce. We see people who are depressed. And then we see families restored and relationships between parents and kids restored."

Ministry to Russian Jews

Perhaps the most difficult group in which to serve are Russian Jews, Odnorolov said. "There have been many dark periods for the Jews—like the Holocaust—in which so-called Christians were cruel to Jews. That's why Jews nowadays are resentful and very skeptical about Christians."

Most Jewish immigrants from the

Soviet Union are atheists, Odnorolov said. "Others are willing to admit there's a God, but they're not ready to accept Jesus. They want to attend a synagogue rather than a church. Others say, 'There is a God, but I'm waiting for the Messiah.'"

The Odnorolovs and other Russian Christians often refer to themselves as "Messianic Jews." The title demonstrates respect for Jewish tradition and Old Testament teachings, and sometimes opens a door to share the gospel with Russian Jews.

"It's very difficult for Russian-speaking people, especially Jewish people, to accept this good news," Odnorolov said. "We usually have to work for a long time. ... As the Apostle Paul said, 'The veil on the Jews' eyes can be lifted only by Christ Himself.'"

Immigrating to America wasn't part of Odnorolov's original plan, but he said God's will was obvious. "When I came here, I was asking God, 'Why am I here?'"

Eight months into his new life in the U.S., Odnorolov said God replied through an elderly Jewish man.

The missionary was handing out Christian literature in downtown Denver. "One day, an old man, a Jewish man, came up to my table," Odnorolov recalls. "He asked me why I had come there, bringing my strange God and Christian literature.

"I told him I was bringing the literature just to give out and let people read it. The old man looked deep into my eyes and said, 'I'm an old man. I will die soon, but my people will live until the Messiah comes.'"

Odnorolov said the Holy Spirit immediately spoke to him, telling him to look into the eyes of the old man—and into his heart.

"The Jewish man's eyes were empty and without hope. 'I want you to speak, to tell these people about Me. Tell them without stopping,' the Holy Spirit said. At that moment, I finally understood my call."



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS Anatoliy and Natasha Odnorolov operate a ministry center that provides several services to Denver's Russian-speaking community. The couple also works to start churches in the area.



SHARING THE REST OF THE STORY Anatoliy Odnorolov (left), shares the gospel with Russian immigrants at a local retirement apartment complex in the Denver area. Many of the immigrants are Jewish.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist ministries and missionaries:

New Hope Baptist Church in Radcliff.

Pastor O.C. Jones shares that the church has a vision for reaching out to the community through a medical clinic. The clinic would provide medical service to those who can't afford healthcare. The church has a ministry facility ready and is now seeking God's will for further direction concerning the ministry. Pray that God will provide the needed resources and personnel, especially a physician and/or nurse practitioner. Pray that those who find physical healing also will receive spiritual healing through Christ.

Church & Community Missionaries Greg and Alice Whitetree of Lookout.

The Whitetrees direct the ministry of the Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Pike County. They conduct a weekday ministries program that includes benevolence work, socialization programs, clubs, day camps and vacation Bible school. Pray for the Whitetrees as they minister to the many youth and adults who are addicted to drugs. Pray that volunteers coming this summer to present a Christian witness will have an understanding and sensitivity to the mountain culture.

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

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BARBOURVILLE**—Callihan Missionary Church ordained **Clifford Robinson** as a deacon March 3. **Mike Fuson** is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—**Benji Kelly**, director of alumni relations at Campbellsville University since 2003, has been named director of planned giving.

Saloma Church will show the film "Facing the Giants" March 18, 5 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call (270) 789-0082.

■ **CENTRAL CITY**—Cherry Hill Church will hold revival services March 25 during Sunday morning and evening services and March 26-28, 7 p.m., with **Ron Sivells** as evangelist.

■ **CLINTON**—New Hope Church will hold revival services March 25, 6 p.m. and March 26-30, 7 p.m., with **Greg Wells** as evangelist. **Randy McClure** is pastor.

■ **COXS CREEK**—River View Church will host a "Changed Life Weekend" March 23-25. For more information, call (502) 538-4966.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Ballardsville Church will host a family conference March 28, 6:30 p.m. Speaker **Carl Kerby**, from Answers in Genesis, will address "The Power of Hollywood on Today's Culture." For more information, call (502) 222-9165.

Crestwood Church will host an "Understanding Other Beliefs" conference March 22, 6:30 p.m. Workshops will be offered on Islam, Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Spotlight on ...

Central City



Calvary Church will host its annual Matt Wilkins Bible Conference March 16-18. Speakers will include **James Shutt**, March 16-17, 6:30 p.m.; **Jeff Morris**, March 18, 11 a.m.; and **Donnie Wilkins**, March 18, 6 p.m.

For more information, call (502) 241-8534.

■ **DAWSON SPRINGS**—Mount Pisgah Church will hold revival services March 25-28 with special singing at 6:30 p.m. followed by services at 7 p.m., with **Noble Cobb** as evangelist. **Roger Felker** is pastor.

■ **FRANKFORT**—**Gretchen Watson** recently was endorsed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as a certified pastoral counselor with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

■ **HENDERSON**—Airline Church will host **The Haire Family** in concert March 31, 5 p.m.

■ **LUDLOW**—First Church ordained **Eric King** and **Donald Walsh** as deacons March 11. **Ken Cole** is interim pastor.

■ **MORGANFIELD**—**Richard Carver** re-



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

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.

30-31 Exalt (State Acteens Conference), Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

30-31 For Guys Only, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

30-31 Great Commission Prayer Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

31 RA Congress Region 7, Elk Spring Valley Baptist Church, Monticello.

31 RA Congress Region 8B, Camp Howard.

April

3 Telling Your Mission Story Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.

13-14 Collegiate Leadership Training, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

19-20 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Severns Valley Association Office, Elizabethtown.

20-22 All-State Children's Choir—East, Cedarmore.

23-24 Developing & Managing People/Supervision Training, Baptist Building, Louisville.

24 Senior Living Celebration, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

26 Senior Living Celebration, Central Baptist Church, Winchester.

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

cently resigned as pastor of First Church.

■ **MORNING VIEW**—**Richard Collins** recently resigned as pastor of Piner Church.

■ **SALEM**—Ohio River Association will host "How to Have a Growing Church" March 26, 7 p.m., at Salem Church with **Hershael York**, pas-

tor of Buck Run Church in Frankfort and professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as guest speaker. Registration and refreshments will begin at 6:30 p.m.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—Pleasant Grove Church ordained youth minister **Clayton Pruett** to the gospel ministry March 4. **Von Smith** is pastor.

CLASSIFIED ADS

AVAILABLE: Retired SBC pastor of 54 years available for supply or interim. Seventy-five mile radius of Danville, Ky. Phone: (859) 583-9641.

AVAILABLE: For supply, interim or bivocational pastorate. Call Ben Render at (502) 368-3067.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to coordinate and develop youth/children's work. Send resumé to: Pastor, PO Box 54825, Lexington, KY 40555.

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: Part-time minister of students with possible progression to full time in the future. Focus will be on children, youth and college-age ministries. A love for sharing Christ is a must. Please send resumé to: Student Minister Search Team, Crosspointe Baptist Church, PO Box 21705, Owensboro, KY 42304. Questions: Please call David at (270) 929-4051.

SEEKING: Parkway Baptist Church seeks a youth minister who demonstrates spiritual growth and maturity with a Spirit-led love for students, grades 6-12. Individual to lead youth to a knowledge of the plan of salvation and develop them in Christian nurture. Send resumé to: Parkway Baptist Church, 1915 North Broadway, Lexington, KY 40505; or e-mail: info@parkwaybaptistchurch.org.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and children. If interested, please send resumé via e-mail to: eddyfirst@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for small Southern Baptist church (average attendance: 65). Send resumé to: Pigeon Fork Baptist Church, 5090 Hickory Ridge Road, Waddy, KY 40076.

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 or donnacornish@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and education at Harrodsburg Baptist Church, PO Box 286, Harrodsburg, KY 40330. Primary focus is youth, but education experience is important. For more church information, see www.harrodsburgbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Shawnee Run Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, Ky., is looking for someone who can help take our youth to the next level through worship. Candidate must be able to lead worship in music and word. Our church is a conservative but progressive SBC church. Our youth currently are lay-led and the Lord is blessing them with wonderful growth. A calling in the area of youth ministry is required. The successful candidate must be available on Sunday evenings initially and open to involvement with summer missions this summer. Send resumé: 1490 Shaker-town Road, Harrodsburg, KY 40330, Attn: Youth Intern Position.

SEEKING: Experienced, full-time pastor for church in small, Southeastern Kentucky village. Average Sunday morning worship attendance is 200. Salary based on education and experience. Send resumé with references to Bond Baptist Church, PO Box 520, Annville, KY 40402, Attn: Kenneth Moore, search committee chairman. Deadline for receiving resumé will be 5 p.m., March 16, 2007.

SEEKING: Student pastor. Tennessee church seeks SBC-seminary-trained student pastor with 1-2 successful church experiences—must be currently serving local church and in good standing. Candidates who are open to a new challenge supported by exceptional leadership and a solid budget may send resumé to: Search Team, Hixson First Baptist, 5800 Grubb Road, Hixson, TN 37343.

SEEKING: Memorial Baptist Church is seeking God's leading for the position of full-time associate pastor of worship and education. We are a Southern Baptist church with an average attendance of 400-450. We are seeking a man of God, conservative in theology (Baptist Faith and Message 2000), who has a love for Jesus Christ, a desire for evangelism and a passion for leading the congregation in worship. His primary responsibility will be to direct the entire worship experience and to continue to grow all aspects of a total multi-faceted music program. He should be a "people person" and a team player. He also would have a secondary responsibility in overseeing the entire educational program of the church. A seminary degree is preferred and

an undergraduate degree in music is required, as well as 3-plus years of experience in working with a church body. Contact: Search Committee, Memorial Baptist Church, 1405 South Kanawha St., Beckley, West Virginia 25801; or e-mail: memorial-baptist@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Mount Lebanon Baptist Church (www.mlbctn.org) is seeking a dynamic and ministry-oriented individual to work full time leading the worship and music ministry of the church. Mount Lebanon is a vibrant and growing community of faith located in Maryville, Tenn., a fast-growing suburb of Knoxville. The minister of music will provide innovative and strong Christian leadership for the worship ministry which encompasses both traditional and contemporary worship. The minister of music will work closely with the senior pastor and ministry team in planning and coordinating worship. The minister of music also will be responsible to oversee a choir program for all ages utilizing the gifts of a talented musical support staff and volunteers. In addition to having a strong musical education and full-time experience, applicants should exemplify a passion for Christ and His church, worship and music, and possess outstanding leadership, interpersonal and organizational skills. Resumé will be received through 3/30/2007 and should be submitted to Allan Atchley, associate pastor, via e-mail at aatchley@mlbctn.org; or mailed to Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, 3508 Wildwood Road, Maryville, TN 37804, Attn: Allan Atchley.

The ministry of presence

Baptist seminary alumni help cadets acquire spiritual equipment to face combat

By Gregory Tomlin
Baptist Press

West Point, N.Y. (BP)—Many of the officers and cadets at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., knew Cadet Sgt. Major Emily Perez well. She attended chapel services regularly and was a member of the cadets' gospel chorus. She also ran track.

Today, 2nd Lt. Perez is buried not far from notable generals such as George Armstrong Custer and William Westmoreland in the academy's cemetery overlooking the Hudson River. She died Sept. 12, 2006, in Iraq, the first female graduate from West Point to die in combat in that country.

The words of Scripture from 1 Corinthians 2:9 on her tombstone are a testimony to her faith: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Southern Baptist chaplains Col. John Cook and Lt. Col. Darrell Thomsen, along with other chaplains at the academy, report 51 West Point graduates have died since the war on terror began. Despite those losses, new cadets keep coming with a desire to defend their country and seeking their place in something greater than themselves. Among the cadets are Cook's twin sons, both "plebes" or first-year students.

Academy is place to face fears

A walk into Cadet Chapel, a massive Gothic structure overlooking the academy and its parade ground, reveals an array of campaign flags from wars long ago. A sign at the front of the chapel reminds all who enter "not to leave without saying one prayer to God for yourself, for those who minister, and for those who worship here."

At the front of the chapel is the superintendent's pew, where each of the men who've overseen the academy's cadets has inscribed his name. The signatures of generals Douglas MacArthur and Maxwell Taylor are there.

On the chapel's left side, a pew is reserved for American prisoners of war and those missing in action. A candle burns at the end of the pew as a reminder to the cadets that some of their brothers in arms, many missing since before they were born, are with them in spirit.

Both components of the chapel are reminders of the leaders who have gone before and those who gave everything in the line the duty.

Today, each cadet is similarly mindful of the burdens of duty to their nation in wartime, the chaplains said. They also are aware that the path of service they have chosen may cost them their lives.

"The cadets here know that," said Cook, the academy's senior chaplain and advisor to the superintendent on religious affairs. He is a 1987 graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. "In fact, all of our cadets who are currently students here made the decision to come to West Point after



REMEMBERING A HERO U.S. Army Chaplain Col. John Cook, a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, points to the grave of 2nd Lt. Emily Perez, the first female West Point graduate to be killed in Iraq. Cook is the U.S. Military Academy chaplain and senior adviser to the superintendent on religious affairs. He is a combat veteran, having served in the first Gulf war in 1991.

Sept. 11, 2001, so they knew when they came here that there is a significant possibility that they will be going into combat."

Thomsen, the academy's Protestant cadet chaplain, said, "We help them work through the fear that goes along with combat." Chaplains tell their charges, "There is a lot of power in fear, but there's more power in faith," said the 1985 graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

West Point chaplains are involved in a "ministry of preparation," according to Cook, who said the world's current political climate—expressed in the battle between radical Islam and the West—adds a sense of urgency to their mission.

The chaplains counsel students who have questions about war, killing and about what will happen to them if they die in combat.

Cook and Thomsen explain that they attempt to resolve these issues with cadets during their first two years at the academy, before they must commit to a term of service as an officer in the Army and face possible deployments overseas.

"They know they need to be prepared," Cook said. "We don't want them blindly graduating from here. We have a responsibility to see that they work through this whether they ask about it or not. If they don't ask, we put it on the table for them. They've got to resolve it."

Cadets learn that the chaplains themselves have dealt with many of the same issues. Both Cook and Thomsen have been in combat—Thomsen in Panama with the 82nd Airborne Division in 1989 and both men in Desert Storm in 1991.

Cook was a battalion chaplain with the 18th Airborne Corps and lost one soldier during the 100-hour ground war in 1991. He said he saw rocket launchers and helicopters engage Iraqi troops and tanks in his area and came upon the results

as his unit moved forward. Thomsen also lost some of his troops in a mine field.

"When you move through the mine field and they see the cross on your uniform, there's something that says to them, 'God is with us,'" Thomsen said. "It's important and it's powerful for a chaplain to be on the front lines with them."

From 2004-2005, just prior to his most recent duty station at West Point, Cook also was chaplain to the Coalition Land Forces Component in Kuwait. Being with the soldiers in the theater of combat operations is what he and other chaplains call the "ministry of presence," an indispensable service to troops under fire.

"We weren't there with weapons. We weren't there to take lives. We were there to care for our soldiers on the battlefield," Cook said.

In combat, chaplains care for soldiers by treating them after they had been wounded, writing letters to family members on their behalf, and even relaying messages to wounded comrades.

It certainly means sharing the gospel when the opportunity presented itself. Cook led 27 soldiers to faith in Christ during Operation Desert Storm, and baptized 15.

Caring for the soldiers also meant helping them deal with taking life, both chaplains said, adding that killing is something that soldiers would rather not do.

"Our soldiers value humanity," Thomsen said. "They don't want to take someone else's life. They see themselves as peacekeepers. They see those who are out there who fight against peace and they want to stop it. That's the unique thing about our soldiers. Combat is an ugly thing, but I've watched in all the ugliness some of the most compassionate people carrying weapons, but at the same time caring for others."

Cook and Thomsen bring their experiences in combat to bear in preparing cadets for battle today, and the relationships endure long after cadets graduate and move into their respective military disciplines. In a real sense, their ministry continues as well. Many of the cadets maintain contact through letters and e-mails.

Cook received a letter from a West Point graduate last year. The young officer had just married and had a special request. If he didn't make it home, he wanted Cook to officiate at his funeral.

"I still have the letter," Cook said, adding that the soldier is now home with his wife.

"What happens if I get killed?"

Shortly after President Bush's State of the Union address in January in which he said more troops in Iraq likely would mean more casualties, Cook received another letter. That letter was from a female graduate who was ready to deploy to Baghdad.

"She asked, 'What happens if I get killed? How will my husband be notified?' And then she wrote, 'My mom wants to know how she will be notified.'" Cook said he made plans to talk with the graduate's mother, extending the ministry of comfort and counseling beyond the cadets at the academy to the family of the soldier.

"I always offer the cadets, and those who are already serving, encouragement that their life is in God's hands," Cook said. "And that they won't go home until He calls them."

When death occurs, notifying families of the loss becomes the focus of ministry. Cook and Thomsen have been bearers of the grim news before. Thomsen said the visits are never easy because every family is unsuspecting.

"I'd rather go to combat than I would make a death notification," he said. "You realize you're going to change a person's life forever."

The Cadet Prayer

"O God, Our Father, Thou Searcher of Human hearts, help us to draw near to Thee in sincerity and truth. May our religion be filled with gladness and may our worship of Thee be natural. Strengthen and increase our admiration for honest dealing and clean thinking, and suffer not our hatred of hypocrisy and pretence ever to diminish. Encourage us in our endeavor to live above the common level of life. Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never be content with a half truth when the whole can be won. Endow us with courage that is born of loyalty to all that is noble and worthy, that scorns to compromise with vice and injustice and knows no fear when truth and right are in jeopardy. Guard us against flippancy and irreverence in the sacred things of life. Grant us new ties of friendship and new opportunities of service. Kindle our hearts in fellowship with those of a cheerful countenance, and soften our hearts with sympathy for those that sorrow and suffer. Help us to maintain the honor of the Corps untarnished and unsullied and to show forth in our lives the ideals of West Point in doing our duty to Thee and our Country. All of which we ask in the name of the Great Friend and Master of All. Amen."

Originally written by Clayton Wheat, chaplain U.S. Military Academy at West Point, 1919-26

"When you move through the mine field and they see the cross on your uniform, there's something that says to them, 'God is with us.'"

Lt. Col. Darrell Thomsen, chaplain, U.S. Military Academy in West Point

Kentucky League on Alcohol & Gambling Problems



Words from the President:

The KY League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems is very concerned about the proliferation of gambling and alcohol. Kentuckians are already gambling, betting and wagering over 2 and one-half billion dollars a year on the lottery, casinos, horse tracks and bingo halls. Promoters are now saying we need racinos, casinos and video lottery machine outlets to produce \$400 million in state revenue. That means Kentuckians will have to gamble and lose \$1.2 billion more. This does not include on-line figures, office pools and bets placed at bookie outlets. More resources will be diverted from local industry and business to feed the gambling industry. The costs to the state will be more than it produces in income. The alcohol industry continues to seek ways to increase sales of their products. There are bills before the KY legislature that will increase the prospect of more outlets. Let me also add that there are bills calling for stricter enforcements of alcohol offenses.

We urge you to call your local legislators and ask them to vote against the expansion of gambling and alcohol. Call the Legislative hotline to contact your legislator.

1-800-372-7181

Issues Currently Facing the State:

Gambling Bills Calling for casinos in KY

*Allowing video lottery machines. These video machines are being outlawed by many states, as they hurt and/or put local businesses out of business.

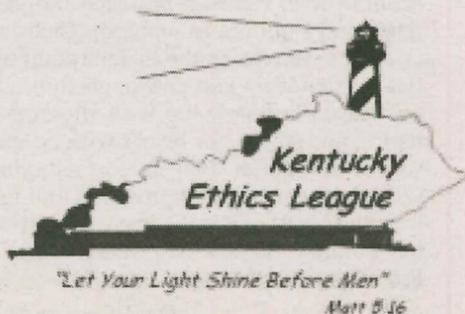
Alcohol Bills

- * Allow alcohol sales at our historic sites.
- * Allow alcohol sales on Election Day after 12 noon.
- * A bill lowering the seating requirement of restaurants from 100 to 50 in order to call for a local option election to sell alcohol.

There are many other Bills to be concerned about. You can check them out at:

www.Irc.ky.gov

Guy Clark, chairman of the National Coalition against Legalized Gambling said, "Internet gambling is a double negative because of its convenience allowing a person of any age to operate from their house." As the saying goes, "With the click of the mouse, you can lose your house—from your house."



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