

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

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IMB missionaries voice thanks for prayer for Guinea

Conakry, Guinea (BP)—After calling for "20 days of prayer for Guinea," Southern Baptist missionaries there are expressing thanks for the intercession of fellow Christians.

Violent protests and a strike shut down most of the African country's businesses and schools and left more than 100 people dead in February.

Two missionary families were evacuated and others were confined to their homes after the country's president declared martial law amid protests against his leadership.

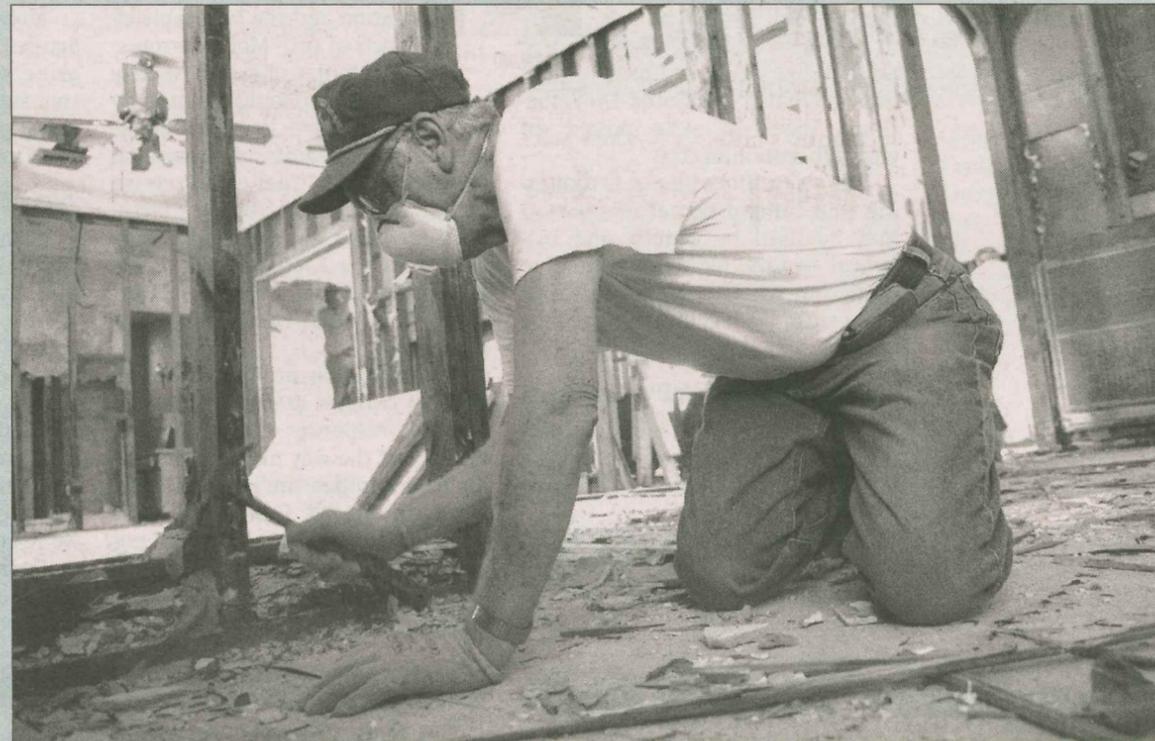
Since then the country has stabilized, the strike has been suspended and businesses and schools have reopened. One of the couples evacuated has returned to the field and the other family will return after state-side assignment.

Missionaries also report that church attendance in and around the capital city of Conakry appears to be growing. They credit the progress to prayer in the country where 85 percent of its 9.6 million people are Muslim.

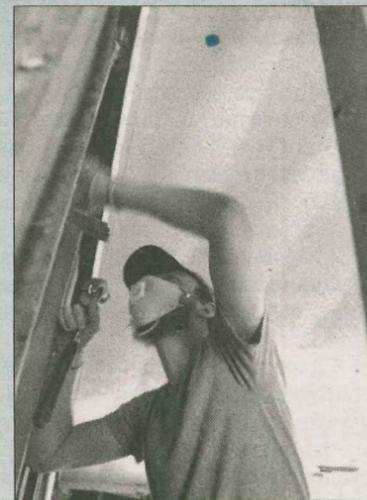
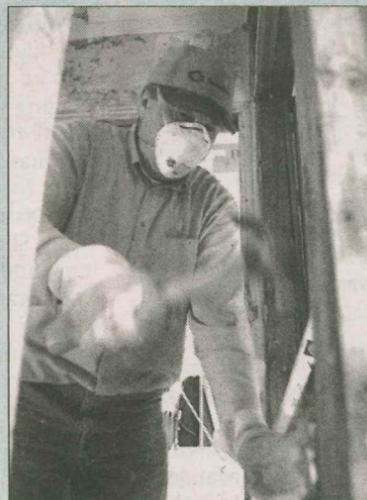
"Gone is the gloom in people's faces, they are happy and hopeful again," one missionary reported in a prayer letter. "Thank you so much for praying with us. ... We continue to be amazed with the response for our call of '20 days of prayer for Guinea.'

"We received so many e-mails that it would be very difficult to answer all individually. There are many praying for Guinea, literally around the world and around the clock, and God is answering your prayers. We have felt God's presence giving us peace and protection, not just for us but also for local believers."

Salt & light



A team of 16 Kentucky Baptist volunteers from Blackford and Breckinridge Baptist associations and the surrounding area recently traveled to New Orleans to gut flood-damaged houses as part of Operation NOAH (New Orleans Area Homes) Rebuild. Director of Missions Bob White said the group sought to be "salt and light" to area residents by "being the hands of God's compassion touching people's lives." Among the team members were (clockwise from top) Scottie Armes of Hardinsburg, Andrew Barnett of Owensboro and Dennis Tierney of Whitesville. (NAMB photos by Kristen Nicole Sayres) See page 3 for more Operation NOAH Rebuild coverage.



Kentucky Changers ministry comes full circle for Maysville teen

By Kristie Randolph
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Maysville—When a group of Kentucky Changers came to Cassandra Campbell's Maysville home in 2005, they did much more than external repairs.

That summer, the group reached out to Campbell and inspired her to share her faith by serving others.

Two years after her family's home was repaired, Campbell has decided to join Kentucky Changers and help make a difference in someone else's life. She will be helping repair another home in her community this summer during Project Maysville, June 23-30.

"I'm really excited about the trip because I want to help people," said Campbell, a high school freshman. "We had such a great time with the group that worked on my house. I can't wait to do that for someone else."

Kentucky Changers, sponsored

by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, provides a weeklong, college students and adults. Participants have the opportunity to live out their faith while completing light construction projects for low-income families. Since the program's inception in 1994, thousands of students have participated in projects across the state.

Campbell is the first known student to volunteer for a trip after receiving help from Kentucky Changers, but it won't be her first experience with house repairs. Campbell helped the Kentucky Changers fix her own home back in 2005. Some of that work included painting, power washing and repairing holes.

"They were having so much fun, and I wanted to be part of it with them," Campbell noted. "We became really good friends and I was sad to see them leave after the week was over."

Campbell is among hundreds of Kentucky Changers volunteers scheduled for trips this summer. The most exciting part of the trip, she said, is the opportunity to form new relationships with fellow team members, as well as the homeowners.

The repairs will be provided at no cost to the homeowners, but Campbell already has started raising the financial support required of each Kentucky Changer volunteer. She has participated in a variety of fund-raising projects with her youth group, including yard sales, spaghetti dinners, car washes and gospel sings.

Campbell became a Christian as an early teen after a friend invited her to First Baptist Church of Maysville. Tony Leiss, Campbell's pastor, said he was thrilled to see her desire to help others.

"This is an incredible example of giving and receiving," said Leiss, who has served as a Kentucky Chang-

ers crew chief. "The team's strong testimony is really what inspired Cassandra to want to give back in the same way."

Kentucky Changers is modeled after the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's World Changers program and is supported in part by the Cooperative Program. Each summer, Kentucky Changers partner with local Baptist churches, government agencies and homeowners to complete community development and construction projects. Evenings are filled with fellowship, group sharing times and worship.

Youth volunteers are still needed for Project Russellville from June 9-16, and Project Monticello from July 7-14.

For more information, call Peggy Murphy at (502) 489-3399 or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3399, or visit <http://www.kybaptist.org/kychangers>.

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, March 21.

"The only cure for sin itself is the cross of Christ."

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Mohler lauds hypothetical prenatal 'fix' for homosexuality

Louisville—Even if a genetic cause for homosexuality is found, gay behavior would still be sin, and Christians should support prenatal treatment to cure it, according to Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Comments by Mohler in a March 2 column on his personal Web site are prompting strong reactions from the left and right. His column—titled "Is Your Baby Gay? What If You Could Know? What If You Could Do Something About It?"—was posted on www.albertmohler.com.

The scientific evidence is mounting that human sexual orientation may be fixed by genetic and biological factors, Mohler wrote, contradicting what many conservative evangelical leaders have asserted for decades.

Bible's "moral verdict" unchanged

"The discovery of a biological factor would not change the Bible's moral verdict on homosexual behavior," Mohler insisted.

Rather than excusing homosexual behavior, such a genetic discovery could lead to prenatal procedures to eliminate homosexual orientation,

Mohler said, and Christians should support such a development.

"If a biological basis is found, and if a prenatal test is then developed, and if a successful treatment to reverse the sexual orientation to heterosexual is ever developed, we would support its use as we should unapologetically support the use of any appropriate means to avoid sexual temptation and the inevitable effects of sin," Mohler wrote.



Al Mohler

Mohler did not specify what treatments would be morally acceptable. His article raised the hypothetical possibility of a prenatal "hormone patch" that could reverse sexual orientation before birth, but he neither approved nor disapproved it. In a 2,100-word "First Person" article posted on Baptist Press March 16, Mohler ruled out "genetic therapies."

Mohler's blog prompted national news articles as well as numerous blog responses. Citing "frustration about the way many in the media have handled the issue," Mohler wrote in BP, "If I believed those things attributed to me, I would not agree with myself and would condemn myself."

Noting that "no 'orientation' can

alter the sinful status of sinful acts," Mohler declared, "The only cure for sin itself is the cross of Christ. No therapy will cleanse us of sin, no treatment will atone."

Mohler also noted that the discovery of a biological basis for homosexuality would be "of great pastoral significance, allowing for a greater understanding of why certain persons struggle with these particular sexual temptations."

Mohler's comments cited recent articles in Radar, a pop culture magazine, and the London Sunday Times that suggested the potential for hormone patches for pregnant women. The Times story was later retracted.

"Very dangerous ground"

Even though such treatments—if ever developed—could be years away, they are not out of the realm of possibility, said Nigel Cameron, president of the Institute on Biotechnology and the Human Future in Chicago.

"Certainly interventions of this kind are going to be possible," Cameron said. "This is certainly the time to have the conversation of what we're going to do with them."

Cameron cautioned, however, that Mohler was "venturing on very dangerous ground."

"Ultimately, we have people who essentially are the Legos products of other people who tried to put them together," said Cameron, a member of the Presbyterian Church (USA). "I'd be very wary of using these manipulative technologies."

But Tim Wilkins, the founder of Cross Ministry in Wake Forest, N.C., which promotes the belief that gays can change through faith in Jesus Christ, said he concurs with Mohler.

"If in fact a biological basis is ever shown to produce homosexual orientation ... just as it is incumbent on mankind to research and to find remedies for all sorts of conditions, there would be, I believe, the need to find a remedy here," noted Wilkins, who said he was once gay but now is married with three daughters.

Wilkins, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Task Force on Ministry to Homosexuals, said he believes that even if some kind of treatment were developed that could change someone from gay to straight, Christian faith is the key to such a change.

"The answer to our sinfulness is not in a patch but in a person," Wilkins said, "and that remedy is Jesus Christ."

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

Welch tapped to help expand SBC's international relations

Nashville (BP)—Bobby Welch has been named strategist for global evangelical relations with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

Welch is the SBC's immediate past president and former pastor of First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach, Fla., where he served 32 years. He began his new duties March 15 and will continue to live in Daytona Beach.

SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman said Welch will be "Southern Baptists' ambassador to those leaders in other countries who are interested in building relationships as like-minded brothers and sisters in the Lord."

Chapman noted that the new position is part of the Executive Committee's implementation of a vote by messengers at the SBC's 2004 annual meeting to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance and to build relationships with evangelistically oriented Baptists and like-minded evangelicals across the globe. Funding formerly designated for the BWA was reallocated for the new international initiative.

The SBC initiative began with a July 2005 gathering in Warsaw, Poland, in which nine SBC leaders met with a dozen Baptist representatives from Poland, Germany, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Moldova to explore ways to partner more effectively in evangelism, church planting and theological education.

In June 2006, 250 Baptists from 11 countries attended a conference in Oradea, Romania, delving into such issues as missions, evangelism, church planting and preaching. Paul Negrut, president of the Romanian Baptist Union, envisioned such conferences being held in other locations worldwide for Christians "whose hearts are knit together in compassion for an unregenerate world."

Several Southern Baptist leaders also have had an exchange of visits during the past six months with leaders of Russian-German Baptist and Mennonite groups in Germany interested in creating a cooperative approach to missions and pastoral training.

"This is in no way any effort to be an alternative to the BWA or to start another BWA," Welch said. "I have no programs, supplies, products, etc. My duty is to connect persons here and around the world to each other in the hope that they will move forward together for the Great Commission."

Welch said his goal is to work with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, North American Mission Board "and others who are trying to reach people and to carry out Great Commission evangelism and discipleship."

Former professor files suit against Southwestern

Fort Worth, Texas (BP)—A former professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has filed a federal lawsuit against the seminary and its president, Paige Patterson, alleging she was dismissed from her tenure-track position because she is a woman.

In the lawsuit filed March 8 in U.S. District Court in Fort Worth, Texas, Sheri Klouda accuses the seminary and Patterson of breach of contract, fraud and defamation. She is seeking unspecified damages and has requested a trial by jury.

Officials at Southwestern declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Klouda, a graduate of Criswell College in Dallas, received her Ph.D. from Southwestern Seminary in 2002 and was unanimously elected by trustees to a tenure-track assistant professor position to teach Hebrew in Southwestern's school of theology.

Now a tenure-track professor at Taylor University in Upland, Ind., Klouda alleges in the suit that after Patterson was elected to lead the seminary in 2003, she was assured

"personally and specifically" by the new president that her position as a Hebrew professor was secure. But in April 2006, according to the lawsuit, Klouda was told she could no longer teach at the seminary and that she was "a mistake that the trustees needed to fix."

Patterson has stated that the seminary does not employ women to teach men in its school of theology out of its desire to "model the local church." The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 states that the role of senior pastor in local churches should be held by men. Patterson, according to the suit, believes that same standard applies to the seminary.

Klouda taught both men and women in classes at the seminary. According to the lawsuit, "she is an accomplished theologian, who served as professor at Southwestern for almost four years, impressing students and faculty alike, until she was forced out in the spring of 2006 because of her gender."

Klouda told the Chronicle for Higher Education that she "is saddened that it became necessary to

file this suit, and disappointed that we were not able to resolve this matter fairly and privately."

Van McClain, chairman of Southwestern's board of trustees, was quoted in a Jan. 19 Dallas Morning News article that the seminary has returned to its "traditional, confessional and biblical position" that a woman should not instruct men in theology courses or in biblical languages.

"I do not know of any women teaching in any of the SBC seminaries presently in the area of theology or biblical languages," McClain added. "In my estimation all of the seminaries have sought to be more consistent with most Southern Baptists' understanding of Scripture on the matter."

The Morning News article noted that Patterson's wife, Dorothy, continues to teach in Southwestern's school of theology, with McClain explaining that she teaches courses in women's studies that are attended only by women.

With additional reporting by Religion News Service

Seminary leaders & McKissic agree to meet, halt removal

Fort Worth, Texas (ABP)—Board officials at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and an embattled trustee have agreed to meet and discuss their differences—with a threat to remove Texas pastor Dwight McKissic from the board taken off the table.

McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, and trustee officers issued a joint statement March 12 announcing a private meeting to be held immediately prior to Southwestern trustees' April 2 board meeting.

McKissic, who likened his treatment by the seminary to a "21st-century lynching," previously had re-

jected the meeting because of preconditions he called unreasonable. He later apologized to Southwestern trustee chairman Van McClain for the tone of his comments.

"Rev. McKissic and the officers of the board of trustees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have agreed to meet privately and confidentially," the statement said. "The officers have also agreed to table any recommended action against Rev. McKissic. Both the officers and Rev. McKissic plan to make no further statements at this time."

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.

Two months after McKissic's sermon, Southwestern trustees adopted a policy stating that the 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 the measure.

McClain then requested the meeting with McKissic, saying he was concerned about the way McKissic has expressed his disagreement with board actions and seminary policies.

Kentucky volunteers still making impact in New Orleans

By Marilyn Stewart
Louisiana Baptist Convention

New Orleans—The Kentucky community of Mays Lick and the city of New Orleans have more differences than similarities, but they each can lay claim to a long history, experience with floods and Baptists committed to impacting the world for Christ.

Mays Lick Baptist Church and Bracken Baptist Association recently sent their first team to New Orleans to work with Operation NOAH (New Orleans Area Homes) Rebuild, a two-year initiative sponsored by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to help rebuild the flood-damaged city.

The 16-member team roofed and hung drywall in homes in Zone 4, a section of the city adopted by the Kentucky Baptist Convention in cooperation with the NOAH initiative.

NOAH's goal is to rebuild 1,000 homes, representing 1 percent of the estimated 100,000 homes damaged or destroyed by flooding in the greater New Orleans area.

Words of appreciation

Team member Maxine Goodwin said she found the New Orleans people to be appreciative of the volunteers. A woman approached Goodwin in a fast-food restaurant and after learning why the Kentucky team was there, hugged her and thanked her for their help.

Joe McKeever, director of missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans, reports that the presence of volunteers in the city who have come at personal sacrifice has opened doors for the gospel.

"It's a great time to be a Baptist in New Orleans," McKeever said of the fresh opportunity available to Christians to evangelize the city.

Waylon Bailey, pastor of First Baptist Church of Covington, La., said recently that the volunteers are accomplishing something beyond rebuilding—they are presenting "a lovely picture of the Body of Christ, each one doing his part and using his gifts to meet needs."

Mays Lick Baptist Church, organized in 1789, is one of the oldest churches in Kentucky and one of the larger churches in Bracken Association. Fifteen team members were from the Mays Lick church.

One of the smallest churches in Bracken Association—the 15-member congregation of Sharpsburg Baptist Church—was also represented on the trip. Dan Rees, a Gideon and a Sharpsburg Baptist deacon, found opportunity to hand out Gideon New Testaments as well as do construction work with the team.

"There is great need here," Rees noted. "I wish I could have come sooner."

Mays Lick Baptist members' first service with the Kentucky Baptist

disaster relief team was at Quincy, Ill., during the 1993 floods along the Mississippi River. They also have been involved in mud-out and chainsaw work in response to state and local flooding.

Having made three previous trips to the Katrina-affected region of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Bracken Association members said they were amazed by the extent of the destruction.

"This is different than most disasters because it is so widespread," Army Reservist Samuel Cheek pointed out. "Nobody was left out."

David Cheek, pastor of Mays Lick Baptist, said his church has an active Woman's Missionary Union and missions program and is intentional in seeking to fulfill the challenge of Acts 1:8. Cheek said two first-time mission trip volunteers were part of their team—two farmers who have not traveled far from home before and who "know what hard work is."

"I tell first-timers, 'You go once and missions will be in your blood,'" Cheek said.

"We can be a blessing"

Although the Mays Lick group was the first team from Bracken Association to serve in New Orleans, another Bracken Association member has been busy in New Orleans for several months.

Lew Cook, a member of Central Baptist Church in Maysville, whose



experience includes 9/11 disaster relief, works weeks at a time in New Orleans helping to coordinate supplies for the volunteer teams. Cook volunteered when Kentucky Baptists made an extended cooperative commitment through Operation NOAH.

Cook said there is great opportunity not only for construction crews, but for Kentucky Baptist churches to partner with churches in the New Orleans area and provide support for evangelistic efforts.

"We can be a blessing to the people of New Orleans," Cook said. "But the blessing goes both ways—if you don't get involved, you are missing out."

For more information about Operation NOAH Rebuild, call (504) 362-4601 or (877) 934-0808.

HANDS-ON MINISTRY
A volunteer from Bracken Baptist Association helps repair a roof in New Orleans as part of Southern Baptists' Operation NOAH Rebuild ministry effort.

NAMB honors Pacheco with top Hispanic church planting award

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist missionary Jesus Pacheco was named as the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's "Hispanic Church Planting Missionary of the Year" for his work to start new churches among Hispanics in Kentucky during 2006.

Richard Harris, NAMB vice president of church planting, honored Pacheco with the award before a crowd of approximately 250 North American church planters during the recent Church Planting Missionary Forum in Atlanta.

"I'm grateful to the Lord for this award, but it would not have been possible to do this alone," said Pacheco, a church planting missionary serving Hispanics in Louisville and central Kentucky. "The key to this work has been the partnerships and cooperation between local churches, associations, the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board."

Pacheco received the award in recognition of his church planting work in the last two years, which included starting eight church plants. He has helped plant a total of 20 Hispanic churches during his 15-year missionary career.

"He has a tremendous passion for evangelism," noted Larry Baker, the KBC's director of new work and associational missions.

"When we made the shift from migrant ministry to Hispanic church planting, Jesus was a great catalyst for that work. It was perfectly natural for him."

Previously a senior buyer for Ford Motor Company in Venezuela, Pacheco said he sensed a call to ministry and came to Kentucky to pursue theological studies. In addition to being a full-time student, he quickly became involved with a variety of Hispanic ministries.

"We planned to return home after school, but the Lord had another reason for bringing us here," Pacheco said. "We saw a great need for Hispanic ministries and a big opportunity to reach them for the Lord."

Pacheco worked with the Hispanic mission of Red Hill Baptist Church in Radcliff for one year before his ministry expanded into Shelby and Henry counties. While working in cooperation with Baptist associations in those counties, Pacheco continued to help strengthen migrant ministries and missions in Kentucky.

Pacheco now works as a NAMB-appointed missionary, in cooperation with the KBC and eight area associations.

Born in Caracas, Venezuela, Pacheco is a graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Marcela, have four children.



Jesus Pacheco

Prayer conference set for March 30-31

Louisville—A conference to help people renew their passion for prayer and develop prayer strategies for worldwide evangelism will be held March 30-31 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

Co-sponsored by the seminary and the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the theme of this year's two-day Great Commission Prayer Conference is "Hearing God's Voice."

Richard Blackaby, president of Blackaby Ministries International, will lead three plenary sessions. Blackaby, including "Hearing God's Voice," "7 Truths from Experiencing God" and "Spiritual Leadership: The Interactive Study."

Baptist leaders from New Eng-

land, North Carolina and Tennessee will be among those leading conference sessions. Participants can customize their conference experience by selecting from a variety of workshops geared toward improving individuals' prayer life and mobilizing others to pray.

Among the workshop topics are biblical prayer patterns for the contemporary church, how to pray effectively for the lost, how to lead a dynamic prayer meeting, becoming a lifestyle prayer walker and how God reads a heart in prayer.

The workshop is \$50 per person, and includes all conference material and a Saturday lunch. For more information or to register online, visit www.kybaptist.org/hearinggod, or call (502) 489-3530 or (866) 489-3530.



CAPITOL RALLY KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey (left) speaks to a crowd of more than 200 people gathered for a rally March 12 in the State Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort in support of Senate Bill 152. The rally, sponsored by the Family Foundation of Kentucky, was held to encourage lawmakers to take action on the bill to prohibit state universities from creating a "domestic partner" status in their health insurance plans. Legislators will be in session March 26-27 and the bill could be voted on at that time if House leaders allow a vote. At right is Family Foundation Executive Director Kent Ostrander.

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

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Transforming a globalized world

By **Erich Bridges**

Richmond, Va. (BP)—China's economy expands, bringing new jobs to your town—or taking them away.

The Japanese yen soars in value, sending world financial markets into a tailspin overnight—along with your 401k.

At home, your kids are playing computer games online with teens living on the other side of the planet—the same teens they'll be competing with for careers in the global economy.

Globalization is no longer a grand theory. It's a daily reality that shapes nearly every aspect of our lives. We can either deal with it or deny it, but it isn't going away.

History is accelerating in ways humanity has never experienced, and we don't know where it will take us. But God does—and He bends history to His purposes. One of His purposes is the globalization of the church. We are seeing it become a reality in our day.

"The map of global Christianity that our grandparents knew has been turned upside down," Christopher J.H. Wright reported recently in an article for Christianity Today. "At the start of the 20th century, only 10 percent of the world's Christians lived in the continents of the south and east. ... But at the start of the 21st century, at least 70 percent of the world's Christians live in the

non-Western world—more appropriately called the majority world.

As the church globalizes, the missionary movement is becoming "multidirectional," Wright says. "The U.S. remains the largest single contributor of Protestant cross-

cultural missionaries. But which country is the second-largest? Not a Western nation, but India. ... Already, 50 percent of all Protestant missionaries in the world come from non-Western countries, and the proportion is increasing annually. So you are as likely to meet a Brazilian missionary in North Africa as a British missionary in Brazil. ... Mission today is from everywhere, to everywhere."

Even China has become a missionary-sending country. You can find Chinese missionaries working across Asia and the Muslim world. According to Lausanne World Pulse, church leaders under pressure in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and other Central Asian nations are asking for Chinese workers to come teach them the meaning of suffering—a topic with which Chinese believers are well-acquainted.

These remarkable cross-currents of missions reveal the creativity of God, as well as His determination to extend the gospel to all nations. When one ministry door closes, He opens two more. When the world persecutes His followers, He

redeems their hardship—just as He has done since the earliest days of the church.

And He still has plenty of room for participation by American believers in the years ahead. But He needs followers who will venture beyond the narrow mental and cultural borders so many of us occupy.

Time magazine recently ran a cover story on the skills and abilities American students will need in a globalized world.

"Kids are global citizens now, even in small-town America, and they must learn to act that way," Time proclaimed.

To cope with the new reality, said the experts Time interviewed, students must learn to:

- See patterns "where other people only see chaos."

- Think across disciplines and make connections between them.

- Distinguish what is important and reliable in an age of "overflowing information and proliferating media."

- Develop strong communication skills and the ability to work in teams and with people from different cultures.

That's an essential set of tools—not just for young people who want to succeed in the new global marketplace, but for Christian workers who want to transform it for the glory of God.

Erich Bridges is a senior writer with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

COMMENTARY

Shared faith statement

I was glad to read that the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee recently affirmed the SBC's confession of faith, "in effect suggesting that trustees do well when guided by the Baptist Faith and Message in crafting doctrinal policies." We are seeing seminary after mission board after state convention decide that they are no longer bound by our 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

This summer's SBC annual meet-

ing in San Antonio may be pivotal in whether Baptists stick together or fall into legalism, separatism or even Lankmarkism. We see missionary candidates being turned down for several reasons that weren't factors even 10 years ago (baptism issues, prayer issues, Calvinism, etc.) Not surprisingly, are we also seeing some seminary enrollments and

numbers of missionaries falling off? Why have a shared faith statement if these agencies are going off in their own directions? Now we are seeing a seminary being sued in fed-

eral court and two different agency leaders try to oust trustees from their boards for their reactions to these moves beyond anything called for in our Baptist Faith and Message statement.

No wonder some churches and agencies are removing the word "Baptist" from their names. How will we get lost people in our churches when "Baptist" is another word for strife and judgmentalism? I just pray that Jesus doesn't start removing it from The Book that He's been keeping.

*Steve Austin
Hopkinsville*

Fellowship in Christian ministry

Recently during the celebration services of the home going of Rolando Muñiz, Hispanic missionary for South Central Kentucky, Norm Brock, pastor of South Fork Baptist Church, paid tribute to Muñiz as his special friend and servant of our Lord.

As Brock spoke of his special friend, it was obvious that he was feeling the loss very deeply. Muñiz was a valued member of South Fork Baptist Church, along with his wife and two children.

The large crowd, about 40 percent of whom were Hispanic, was touched by the wonderful model of friendship in ministry between Brock and Muñiz. Rolando was described as a minister with great faith and a positive attitude that God could do anything.

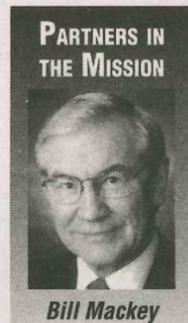
As other pastors—Bill Henderson of Campbellsville and Kevin Denton of Horse Cave—shared, it was obvious that these ministers also had a

special fellowship with Muñiz in the exciting Hispanic ministry.

Carlos De la Barra, another Hispanic missionary, shared a tribute about Muñiz in Spanish at the request of Mrs. Muñiz. A special mentor also came from Georgia to support the family and share in the service.

The music was powerful. I will not soon forget the special arrangement of "Amazing Grace" presented by a church soloist. And the experience that I will never forget is the model of fellowship and support in ministry between these two ministers of the gospel, Brock and Muñiz.

I observed another tremendous experience of fellowship in ministry during a dedication service at First Baptist Church of Princeton. Pastor Tom Hughes had responded to a 20-year call to share with people in the Far East and go on a special missions trip.



Bill Mackey

GIVING

Flexible deferred gift annuities offer key benefits

By **Laurie Valentine**

Are the "minimum distribution rules" requiring you to take out more from your IRA than you currently need? Are you interested in establishing

a charitable gift plan that ultimately will provide a significant gift to one or more charitable causes, while allowing you to tap into an income stream at a later age?

A "flexible deferred charitable gift annuity" can provide a solution to your problem and a way to accomplish your charitable giving objective.

A deferred charitable gift annuity is an arrangement in which a charity agrees, in exchange for a gift of cash, appreciated securities or real estate, to make fixed payments to the giver and/or one other person for their lifetimes beginning at least one year and one day after the gift is made. While the annuity payments don't start for a year or more, the giver is entitled to a charitable income tax deduction in the year the gift is made to the charity.

A flexible deferred charitable gift annuity offers an additional benefit. Instead of designating a particular, unchangeable start date for the annuity payments, under a flexible gift annuity contract the giver reserves the right to postpone the decision about the exact start date for the annuity payments.

Here's an example: Mr. Jones, age 71, is required to take \$10,000 a year from his IRA. He currently has no need for that income. He withdraws the required \$10,000, plus another \$2,000 to cover the taxes. He gives charity the \$10,000 and enters into a deferred gift annuity contract that provides annuity payments that will begin at age 76, unless he elects to begin payments earlier or later.

Results? Mr. Jones is entitled to a charitable income tax deduction of \$3,830, and he has set up a \$10,000 irrevocable fund with the charity from which he can begin to take annuity payments whenever he chooses.

The annuity payout rates and payments available at various ages are: 9.6 percent (\$960 per year) if payments start at age 76; 11.1 percent (\$1,110 per year) if payments start at age 78; 13.1 percent (\$1,310 per year) if payments start at age 80.

Best of all, assuming Mr. Jones lives out his full 15-year life expectancy, there will be almost \$12,900 left for charity if the fund earns an average annual return of 7.8 percent.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



How can parents protect kids from 'bad girl' role models?

Q: I have heard concerns that we are raising a generation of "prosti-tots." How can we protect and guide our children?

Lindsay Lohan. Paris Hilton. Britney Spears. Their images and influence seem to be everywhere. The impact of their lifestyles cannot be ignored. Many young girls look to these young women as role models, patterning themselves after these style-styled "bad girls" in dress, attitude and actions.

As the Feb. 12 issue of Newsweek reported, the behavior of these girls makes most parents cringe. The debate continues over the long-term effects on our children of exposure to the spoiled celebrities of the world, but in the end, the answer may lie in another question: Where do our children learn their values?

One sentence in a letter to the editor responding to the Newsweek article summarized one mother's view: "I am the parent, and I am in charge, at least for now."

The mom who wrote in said that her young daughter does not even know who these young women are because she does not allow her to be exposed to them. The letter makes it clear that this woman has made some good choices on behalf of her daughter and in support of her values.

Too many parents forget that they have control over what their children watch and listen to. Interestingly, the letter writer admits that she and her family are not "devoutly religious." If a non-Christian has this figured out, Christian parents should sit up and take notice.—David Garrard

Q: My wife recently filed for divorce. We have a preschool-age daughter. What do we say to our preschooler?

"Helping Your Kids Cope with Divorce" by Gary Neuman is a good reference. Remember these insights:

- Children want and need to talk.
- Any time can be a good time to talk.
- Set up special times when your child has your undivided attention.
- Put yourself in your child's shoes.
- Most communication is nonverbal.
- Let your child know you hear and understand what she is saying by mirroring and paraphrasing her statements back to her.

Also make a point to pass on these understandings:

- She is not at fault for the divorce. Nothing she did, thought, felt or said led to the divorce. "It is Mommy and Daddy's fault, not yours that we cannot live together anymore. Mommies and daddies make big mistakes sometimes and hurt each other. We're very sorry that this happened and that it is hurting you. Nothing you did, thought, felt or said had anything to do with it. We will always love you."
- She is and always will be safe. "We will take care of you and keep you safe, even though we are not all living together in one house. Someone will always be here for you. Mommy and Daddy will always live in different places but we will always love and care for you. That will never change."
- She will be able and is invited to maintain contact with her other parent and discuss what she chooses. Outline specifics that you are certain of: visits, phone calls, etc.
- It is not bad or wrong to feel sad or upset. "It's OK to feel sad or mad and to tell us any way you're feeling, even if you are mad at me or Mommy/Daddy."
- You will always be there for her. "We will always listen to you and try to help you however we can. Even though Mommy and Daddy are getting a divorce, you will always be part of us. We both still love you and always will."

Surround yourself with supportive family, friends and church members. Biblically, know that God cares for you and for your child. When Hagar was divorced by Abraham and she and Ishmael were left to fend for themselves, God took care of them. God will be with you as you cope with the pain of divorce.—James Stillwell

Family Forum writers are:

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

What resources does your church need?

What are church leaders looking for as they seek to minister effectively in their local settings? According to a recent study by LifeWay Research, a department of LifeWay Christian Resources, key needs include relevance, examples, contextual resources, quality, variety and communication.

That's no small order for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, LifeWay or other Baptist entities that seek to provide ministry support for local congregations and associations. Yet the KBC's stated mission is to "assist Kentucky Baptist Convention churches and ministries and associations in connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

According to qualitative findings in the LifeWay Research study, details about local church ministry needs include:

Relevance. "Church leaders want to know that the SBC entities are in touch with current reality and trends." According to one survey participant, "I need new and fresh ideas related to the trends of the day."

Examples. "Church leaders want to be able to 'envision' better ministry." One respondent suggested, "Give examples of ideas and tactics that have proven successful."

Contextual. "Church leaders want help based on their ministry context. They want training and resources to be as convenient as possible. They want consultative support in diagnosing their specific problems." Among the specific survey responses was, "We want training for our own setting, not a 'one size fits all' approach."

Quality. "Church leaders want the best. They want quality, experienced trainers." One survey respondent noted, "We want training by people who are in the

field doing it. ... Not just theory, but practical help."

Variety. "Church leaders want a variety of 'forms' of help and a variety of 'sources' (not just SBC). They want to know they are getting the best." Among survey responses were: "We need more creative Internet-based educational materials" and "Some churches outside of SBC life are making great headway in evangelism, and we can benefit from their ideas and methods."

Communication. "Many church leaders express their concern that they are not aware of opportunities for resources and training." One respondent stated simply, "I want to be well informed of conferences for staff and laity far in advance."

What about you and your local congregation? What resources are you currently using to make a spiritual impact in your community? What additional resources do you need to do your job more effectively?

Is your church committed to seeking out assistance that is relevant and contextual with quality and variety or have you gotten stuck in the routine of doing the same old things the same old way? If so, your church should be prepared to expect the same old results.

Among ministry areas in which churches seek support, the LifeWay study noted, "In the area of evangelism, church leaders still express a need for training in how to witness and help with methods, but they also need encouragement and motivation."

In what areas do your congregation or association need encouragement and motivation? The KBC Mission Board staff and other denominational entities on the state and national levels stand ready to offer support as we all seek to help fulfill the task of "connecting all people to Jesus Christ."

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Five marks of a great outreach event

By Jamie Ward

Imagine your church planning an outreach event that resulted in significant numbers of your members volunteering to help, while a host of unchurched people participated and were exposed not just to your church, but to the cross and Christ's resurrection.

Outreach events done right can accomplish much more than simply having another event on the church calendar. Outreach events should accomplish several goals. The best and most effective outreach events have at least five things in common. Five marks of a great outreach event include:

Reaches. Why call it outreach if it doesn't reach out to unchurched people? For most of the unchurched, your church offering a worship service is not enough for them to come. Therefore, outreach events are vital in reaching unchurched people.

At your next staff debriefing session, ask: Did our outreach event reach unchurched people? While we know the greatest need of the unchurched is a personal relationship with Jesus, they think they need a host of other things. Which of those "things" can we offer them so that they will come? Remember, I am speaking of outreach events, not worship. A great outreach event will offer one of those "things" so that the unchurched will desire to be involved.

Relational. The event should have a relational aspect that easily can lead to gospel presentations. Rather than simply giving something away as people walk by, a great out-

reach event is planned so that there are meaningful conversational moments with those we come into contact with. In these moments, we get to know people a little bit better and can find out where they are in their spiritual journey. These moments often lead to a gospel presentation.

This approach also offers better opportunities to follow up with individuals. Sometimes people will share about upcoming surgeries or family crises, and we have the opportunity to contact them later and ask how things are going. These calls typically are welcomed and lead to greater opportunities for deeper relational connections. When there are deeper relational connections, there are greater pathways to the cross and the resurrection.

Raises. The event should raise the commitment level of the nominal church member. Outreach events become a great "shallow end of the pool" for those who still are very young in the faith or those who have not grown much spiritually. These people are not comfortable teaching a Bible study class, serving in leadership or other ministries that require spiritual depth.

The reality is that believers should be serving somewhere regardless of their personal spiritual depth. A great outreach event can involve these people, thereby raising their level of commitment and investment in their faith. When we get nominal members involved in ministry, they are more likely to take the next step in other areas of their faith journey.

Rallies. Your church's outreach

event should rally the church together for a common purpose. A great outreach event can utilize many different ministries within your congregation: What part can other ministries play in making the outreach event happen? What outreach event can you plan that will enlist a host of these people to participate? Does your outreach event have opportunities for introverts and extroverts to be involved?

Whether they are bringing food, praying for the event or making coffee, make sure that everyone can participate in various ways. This creates a wonderful opportunity for fellowship with people who might not interact with each other in other settings. Instead of a few people getting excited about the ministry opportunity, the whole church can get involved together. Allow your outreach event to be more than a ministry program. Allow it to be a church unifying moment.

Reinforces. Your outreach event should reinforce the mission and vision of the church. Our church specifically communicates what ways our outreach events meet the mission and vision of our church as well as our core values.

There are a million good things your church can do, but that does not mean you should do them all. Therefore, what outreach events can effectively communicate your church's mission and vision? As outreach events are planned, you can communicate that these events are strategic teaching moments designed to help solidify what your church is about.

Jamie Ward is associate pastor of preaching and evangelism at Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green

NATIONAL NOTES

Stark cited as first 'nontheistic' congressman. Rep. Fortney "Pete" Stark, D-Calif., is the first openly "nontheistic" member of Congress, according to the Secular Coalition for America. The coalition announced March 12 that Stark, who has represented San Francisco's East Bay since 1973, acknowledged his atheism in response to a questionnaire sent to public officials in January. In a statement, Stark said he is a "Unitarian who does not believe in a supreme being," adding that he looks forward to "working with the Secular Coalition to stop the promotion of narrow religious beliefs in science, marriage contracts, the military and the provision of social service." Only 45 percent of Americans said they would vote for a "generally well-qualified" atheist, according to a February Gallup Poll, ranking them lowest on a list that included Mormons (72 percent), candidates on their third marriage (67 percent) and homosexuals (55 percent).

Haggard's former church cuts 44 staff positions. The Colorado megachurch formerly headed by evangelical leader Ted Haggard has laid off 44 staff members, citing a 10 percent decline in revenue since Haggard resigned after a gay sex and drug scandal. The cuts, which include a range of administrators, custodians and nursery workers, amount to about 12 percent of New Life Church's paid staff, the Denver Post reported. Associate Pastor Rob Brendle described the layoffs as a "painful process," adding that "we recognize a church is an institution of trust, and that trust has been bruised. So we're committed to serving people faithfully and earning it back."

'Facing the Giants' making impact on DVD. In its first two weeks on the market, the Christian film "Facing the Giants" was among the 20 best-selling videos, according to the trade publication Video Business. "Facing the Giants" was No. 6 on the list of top DVDs during its first week of sales and ranked No. 14 the following week. The movie, produced by a Georgia Baptist congregation for \$100,000, is about a high school football team and coach who overcome numerous challenges—their giants—with divine assistance. It was released in theaters Sept. 29. "A small film has become a big story," said Kris Fuhr, vice president of marketing for Provident Films which distributed the film for Sony Pictures. "Facing the Giants" reportedly is among the top 10 all-time highest-grossing evangelical movies, earning \$10 million at the box office.

Eleven students in prayer group suspended

Vancouver, Wash. (RNS)—They formed a circle and held hands, praying for the welfare of their school, the nation and the president. Some prayed silently. Others spoke English or Russian.

Administrators at Heritage High School repeatedly asked the students not to pray in the busy commons area and offered them room where they could meet before school. The students refused, triggering a showdown that ended with 11 suspensions.

That penalty has sparked another flare-up in the ongoing national controversy pitting students' rights of free expression against a school's court-ordered duty to separate religion and education.

Similar disputes have erupted across the country, but Clark County's clash over prayer in school has a

unique element: Several of the suspended students are members of the Church of Truth, a congregation of predominantly Russian-speaking immigrants who settled in the U.S. for the opportunity to freely express their religious beliefs.

"We never expected things to happen like this," said senior pastor Sergey Kozlov, who said his church didn't organize the sessions but supports the students. "For us, it's really important to express our beliefs fully, because that's the reason we came here."

Liberty Counsel, a Florida-based conservative legal group aligned with Jerry Falwell, has thrown its support behind the students, threatening to sue the district over the principal's suspensions.

On the other side is Heritage High and Evergreen Public Schools,

whose administrators say they were just trying to get students to class safely and on time, and to evenhandedly apply rules about student gatherings.

Bill Bentley, an assistant superintendent in the Evergreen School District, said officials aren't trying to stop students from praying.

"If the issue is, can these kids pray at school, the answer to that is yes," he said. "Is anyone going to attempt to stop them from doing that? No, as long as it's not disruptive to our educational process."

But Mathew Staver, founder and chairman of the Liberty Counsel, said he sent a letter to the district, demanding the suspensions be expunged from the students' records. He threatened a federal lawsuit if the students' records are not cleared.

Compromise reached on college cross controversy

Williamsburg, Va. (BP)—The brass altar cross at the center of a months-old controversy at the College of William and Mary will be permanently on display in historic Wren Chapel as a compromise between the school's president and his critics.

The Committee on Religion in a Public University unanimously agreed to place the two-foot-high cross in a "prominent, readily visible place" in the chapel. It will be displayed in a glass case accompanied by a plaque explaining the Anglican roots of the college.

The cross will be allowed on the altar during appropriate religious services, according to a statement by the Board of Visitors and William and Mary President Gene Nichol.

A donor had withdrawn a pledge valued at between \$10 million and \$12 million to the nation's second-oldest college because of the president's decision last October to remove the cross from the chapel.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported that James McGlothlin, a former member of William and Mary's board of visitors, revoked his pledge in protest of what he called an "unbelievable" move by Nichol.

Wren Chapel opened in 1732 and was used for mandatory morn-

ing and evening prayers on the Williamsburg, Va., campus at the time. But Nichol determined that the presence of the cross made some students, faculty and staff who do not support Christianity feel unwelcome in the chapel.

Nichol ordered the cross, which was installed in 1940, removed, and in December he agreed to let it appear each Sunday in response to outcries from alumni and others who support the school's Christian heritage.

Sunrise Children's Services

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Saving Childhood: Protecting Our Children from the National Assault on Innocence.

He co-authored a book by the same name with his wife, Dr. Diane Medved.



For more information or to order tickets, call Jennifer at 800-456-1386.

www.sunrise.org

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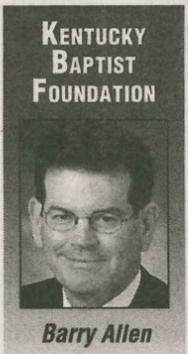
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Gracious supporters

Student's thank-you letter affirms donors' generosity

I just received a letter of gratitude from a student at Southern Seminary who had received scholarship assistance from the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. He was one of the more than 200 scholarship recipients at Campbellsville University, University of the Cumberlands, Georgetown College, Southern Seminary and Mid-Continent University. I am using the salutation of his letter as the title of this column.



Barry Allen

The gracious supporters are those who established with the KBF endowment funds, which currently provide annually more than \$200,000 for scholarships. These gracious supporters were men and women who loved young people, who appreciated their Baptist educational institutions, who believed in Christian higher education and ministerial education and who trusted the KBF to invest and administer the funds until the Lord returns.

A quote from the student's letter of gratitude says it all: "Your recent gift of a scholarship toward my education was an amazing answer to prayer and a testimony to God's faithfulness. ... Through cre-

ativity, hard work, the kindness of others and by God's grace I am entering my last semester at the seminary without ever having to take out a loan to cover my expenses. ... My wife and I are excited about our future opportunities. This is a thrilling time of transition for our family and it is made even more wonderful by the possibility of starting this new phase debt-free. This truly would not have been possible without your gracious gift. Thank you."

As you prayerfully consider ways to leave a legacy, let me encourage you to consider establishing a perpetual scholarship endowment. The students who will benefit from your generosity are the ones who will govern our states and towns, doctor our sick, teach our children, invest in our businesses, discover medical cures; invent ways to make our lives more productive, entertain us, inspire our spiritual beings, challenge our humanitarian endeavors and provide the human and financial resources of our churches and church-related organizations.

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

Sissy Magnusson

Across

- 1 The poor godly man in Christ's parable (Luke 16:20)
- 6 This liquid when new is not put in old bottles (Mark 2:22)
- 9 Printer's measure
- 10 Burying this was a mistake (Matthew 25:15-28)
- 13 Foolish man built his house on this (Matthew 7:26)
- 14 Half-way
- 15 Before, prefix
- 17 The Lord promised that though our sins be scarlet, they shall be white ____ snow
- 18 Bear-like animal related to the raccoon
- 20 Each, abbr.
- 21 Jesus is God's only begotten (John 3:16)
- 23 Jesus told a story about 5 wise and 5 foolish (Matthew 25:1-2)
- 25 Hello
- 26 Underling
- 27 Shade tree (Hosea 4:13)
- 29 What the disciples fished with (Matthew 13:47)
- 30 Finished first
- 32 City in the Netherlands famous for its cheese
- 33 No one puts this kind of cloth into an old garment (Mark 2:21)
- 34 A day's wage for a hired laborer (Matthew 20:2)
- 36 The enemy sowed these among the wheat (Matthew 13:25)
- 38 Thanks, Br.
- 39 Discharged a firearm

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52											52	53
54								55				

- 41 Hush!
- 42 Encountered
- 45 Egyptian sun god
- 47 Full of wonder
- 49 We shouldn't put this under a bushel (Mark 4:21)
- 52 Sick
- 54 The wise man built on this (Luke 6:48)
- 55 In Christ's story, the father threw a party for this son (Luke 15:11-32)
- 61 Hush!
- 62 Encountered
- 65 Egyptian sun god
- 67 Full of wonder
- 69 We shouldn't put this under a bushel (Mark 4:21)
- 72 Sick
- 74 The wise man built on this (Luke 6:48)
- 75 In Christ's story, the father threw a party for this son (Luke 15:11-32)

Down

- 1 The shepherd left the 99 for this (Matthew 18:11-12) (2 words)
- 2 Town in Judah (Joshua 15:37)
- 3 No ifs, ____ , or buts
- 4 Salt Lake's state, abbr.
- 5 The Jews ostracized these people (John 4:9)
- 6 Jesus told a parable about a king who invited people to this kind of celebration
- 7 Surrounded by
- 8 Normal temperature and pressure, abbr.
- 11 A dialect
- 12 Biblical term for yeast (Matthew 13:33)
- 16 Do over again, prefix
- 18 Yearned
- 19 Article that precedes a vowel
- 22 The wise took this for their lamps (Matthew 25:4)
- 23 Jesus spoke of laborers in this place (Matthew 20:1)
- 24 One who scatters seed (Mark 4:3)
- 28 "A certain ____ made a great supper" (Luke 14:16)
- 31 In debt
- 33 Nathan, for short
- 35 Bible part that contains the Gospels, Epistles, and Revelation, abbr.
- 36 Pulled
- 37 "True worshippers ____ worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23)
- 40 Laughter syllable
- 43 Environment, prefix
- 44 Tactical Air Command, abbr.
- 46 European mountain
- 48 Delve
- 50 "Unforgettable" Cole, first initials
- 51 Son of Jose (Luke 3:28-29)
- 53 Californian city, abbr.

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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Philosopher Charles Taylor wins 2007 Templeton Prize

New York (RNS)—Charles Taylor, a Canadian philosopher whose work has touched on questions of spirituality, violence and culture, was awarded the 2007 Templeton Prize March 14.

Taylor, 75, teaches law and philosophy at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., and is a professor emeritus at McGill University in Montreal. He is the first Canadian to be awarded what is often called the most prestigious prize in the world of religion.

The award—valued at about \$1.5 million—has been given out annually since 1973 by the John Templeton Foundation.

“Throughout his career, Charles Taylor has staked an often lonely position that insists on the inclusion of spiritual dimensions in discussions of public policy, history, linguistics, literature, and every other facet of humanities and the social sciences,” John Templeton Jr., president of the Templeton Foundation, said in announcing the award.

Taylor winning the annual honor—officially known as the “Templeton Prize for Progress toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities”—appears to mark a new path for the prize. In its early years, the prize went to prominent religious figures such as Billy Graham and Mother Teresa. More recently, the prize has been awarded to scientists, theologians and ethicists whose work has been focused on the burgeoning field of science and religion.

Taylor, the author of more than a dozen books, will formally receive the honor at a May 2 ceremony at Buckingham Palace in London.

NAE board declines call to reprimand Cizik

Minneapolis—Board members of the National Association of Evangelicals declined March 9 to chasten the group’s public policy officer for his public statements on global warming.

NAE directors, meeting March 8-9 in Minneapolis, did not issue any formal reprimand or criticism of Richard Cizik, the NAE’s vice president for governmental affairs—despite a request from 25 prominent evangelical leaders to silence or fire Cizik for what they called his “relentless campaign” against global warming.

The request came in a letter signed by such evangelical leaders as James Dobson of Focus on the Family and Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council. The letter was sent to NAE board members and released to the news media earlier in the month.

“While many of us consider Richard to be a friend, he regularly speaks without authorization for the entire organization and puts forward his own political opinions as scientific fact,” the letter said. Claiming that the reality of human-induced global warming is an unsettled scientific

issue, the letter added: “We believe it is unwise for an NAE officer to assert conclusively that those questions have been answered or that the membership as a whole has taken a position on a matter.”

The letter also claimed that Cizik is “using the global-warming controversy to shift the emphasis away from the great moral issues of our time, notably the sanctity of human life, the integrity of marriage, and the teaching of sexual abstinence and morality to our children.”

Leith Anderson, a Minnesota pastor who is serving as NAE’s interim president, stated he is “behind” Cizik.

Noting that none of those who signed the letter are members of the NAE, Anderson added, “We would normally look to our own constituency—and not to those who have chosen not to be members of the NAE—

for counsel.”

The NAE board also reaffirmed a 2004 document that places “creation care” alongside nurturing the family, guarding the sanctity of life and caring for the poor as priorities for public policy. They also affirmed a document titled “An Evangelical Declaration Against Torture.”

Cizik said he considered the board’s actions “a strong affirmation” of his role with the association.

Noting that he doesn’t expect evangelicals—inside or outside the association—to always agree, Cizik added, “I think we should view ourselves as a family that pulls together and unifies around basic principles and affords the opportunity to disagree without being fractious relatives who don’t talk to one another.”

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Religion News Service

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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

This is why we're here

Graduates' essays remind students, parents, staff how far kids have come

Graduation is just weeks away and the opportunities we have to influence and change lives will be coming to an end. For the past several years, I have used this season to share some of the success stories of our seniors.

Every year, before students go home for spring break, I ask our seniors to write a brief essay titled, “My Oneida Experience.” The purpose of the essay is three-fold.

First, I use much of the information during our graduation program to remind faculty, staff, parents and friends of the progress each student has made. If a student has been with us for several years, it is easy to forget just how far he or she has come. We do not claim to have success with every student; there always are some we believe could have done better but we never overlook the improvements they have made.

Most of our friends know that our faculty and staff serve for very modest monetary compensation. The success stories of our seniors are, in my opinion, far more valuable than any bonus check our faculty or staff could receive. Apparently they agree, otherwise they would not be here.

The second reason I ask seniors to write the essay is to give them an opportunity to reflect on how far they have come since they came to Oneida. Time has a way of erasing bad memories. In most cases, that is a good thing, but we want our seniors to take a moment and remember where they were before they came to OBI.

I believe it is good for them to think about that period in their lives when things were not going very well. I hope that as they reflect on times

when they were struggling with relationships and in other areas of their lives, they appreciate even more where they are today. Hopefully they will work hard to make sure they do not repeat the mistakes of the past. We also want this time of reflection to be a reminder that, with Christ as Lord of their lives, they can face the future with confidence.

The third reason for the essays may be the most important. Over the years, I have noticed that as they write their essays, they come to realize just how stressful family relationships were before they came to Oneida.

Many were fully convinced that it was their parents who were lacking in understanding and were being unreasonable. Now, years later and with a little more wisdom and maturity, many seniors realize that while their parents may have made mistakes, they themselves were very difficult to deal with. The essays give the seniors an opportunity to say, “I am sorry.” Often, reading those apologies as part of the graduation program is a most emotional time for me. This is a great opportunity for sons and daughters to tell their parents that they have a much greater appreciation for the love and concern their parents demonstrated during very difficult days.

I trust you will rejoice as you read excerpts from these essays in the next several weeks. All of our seniors remain “works in progress.” It is our prayer that they will remember the most important lesson of all: that no amount of success is complete if Christ is not in the center of their lives.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

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'Follow Me'

West Kentucky couple follows Christ to Clear Creek

It's not uncommon to hear one of our student preachers testify that his wife realized God's call to ministry before he did.

Daviess County native Jeff Draper acknowledged, “Tonya surrendered before me. One day she reminded me of our life verse, Matthew 4:19, and said, ‘I've dropped my nets, what about you?’”

They married in 1996 and have two children, Gavin, 9, and Sydney, 7. “God has blessed me more than I deserve,” Jeff said.

When Jeff was little, his parents divorced; his grandparents took him to church.

His grandmother is a member of Old Panther Creek Baptist Church in Whitesville where Jeff grew up. “I talk with her regularly,” he said. “She is a great encouragement to us. I made a decision for Christ at age 8, but I was really saved at age 19 at a youth revival.”

Sam Huff, a 1994 alumnus and pastor of Blackford Baptist Church, is another of Jeff's encouragers. “He is also a character,” Jeff said smiling. “He's an excellent pastor and a good influence.”

The Drapers attended Blackford 10 months before his surrender to

the ministry. Tonya is a native of Hancock County and before coming to Clear Creek had never lived away from her parents; it was a big decision for her. “She's made a lot of good friends,” Jeff said.

“The kids attend Bell County schools; our son got saved at school through the Mission of Hope outreach on Dec. 1, 2005.”

“I had the joy of leading Sydney to Christ in our campus home,” Tonya said.

The family attends Newtown Baptist Church in Pineville where Jeff has started a Sunday afternoon soul-winning visitation program.

Jeff describes Clear Creek as “a Christian environment—almost sheltered from the world. We are encouraged by the friendships we've made. The classes are harder but good; the Bible is first priority here.”

The Drapers are not sure where they will go next. “I don't feel called to attend seminary right now,” he said. “I need to complete Clear Creek first, as Paul said, ‘This one thing I do.’”

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

CLEAR CREEK
CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Strife heightens between ultra-orthodox & Messianic Jews

By Erin Roach
Baptist Press

Beer Sheva, Israel (BP)—The arrest of a Messianic Jewish evangelist in Israel reflects the strife that often confronts Messianic Jews despite Israel's guarantees of religious liberty, the leader of a Messianic congregation told Baptist Press.

Messianic evangelist Eddie Beckford was arrested outside his business, the Chess and Bible Shop in Arad, after a mob of ultra-Orthodox Haredim Jews surrounded his van in the parking lot and beat him Feb. 25.

"In general over the years here in the south in the Negev, in Arad and

in Beer Sheva, there has been some form of harassment or persecution," said Howard Bass, leader of the Nahalat Yeshua congregation in Beer Sheva.

Various degrees of persecution

Groups of ultra-Orthodox Jews seem to have a difficult time accepting the fact that some Jews would believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that they would want to evangelize other Jews, Bass said. So those anti-Messianic groups work to stop the people they consider "missionaries" through various degrees of persecution.

"In Arad, for instance, for almost

three years they have been hounding the believers there at their services, in front of their homes," noted Bass, an American Jew with Israeli citizenship.

Beckford's arrest followed a call to police when the confrontation with the ultra-Orthodox mob broke out. The Haredim complained that Beckford attacked them, according to an e-mail from Beckford's wife, Lura.

The police "blame us for the disturbances the Haredim cause," Lura Beckford wrote. "They tell us, 'If you weren't here, we wouldn't have to deal with this trouble.'

"So, they arrested Eddie and put him in leg irons and took him to jail. They completely ignored the Bedouin's testimony that Eddie did nothing and the Haredim attacked him. He spent the night in a small, filthy cell with five other men, and in the middle of the night they transferred him to another filthy cell."

Beckford, an American, was arraigned before a judge in Beer Sheva Feb. 28 and was offered a plea bargain of spending 45 days in jail or agreeing not to return to Arad for 45 days. He chose to stay with friends outside Arad rather than serve a prison sentence.

"This is a culmination of a week of horror as far as the Haredim are concerned. Just this week, 'A' was harassed by them four different times. They blocked his car and pounded on it, etc. 'R' has been harassed while walking her child from school by these grown men," Mrs. Beckford wrote, using initials instead of names. "She and I have been harassed several times in public areas while walking.

"I had the privilege of being hit by the chief rabbi of Arad. Why? Just because I believe in Y'shua as the Savior of the Jewish people and the world," she wrote. "'S,' a visiting friend of ours, has been terribly harassed while giving out literature, including being beaten and spit upon. All this because we have committed the crime of being believers."

Bill opposes proselytizing

Beckford's arrest preceded the introduction of a bill by an Orthodox political party seeking to sentence proselytizers in Israel to one year in prison.

"Whether it's Christians coming from abroad or Jewish converts working in Israel, they all have the same agenda—to destroy every trace and memory of the people of Israel, and they plan to do this by converting Jews," the proposal by the Shas group said, according to ynetnews.com March 14. "These bodies are operating mainly among the Jewish population which is under physical, social and spiritual distress."

In early February, a religious freedom lawsuit was filed on behalf of Nahalat Yeshua against the chief rabbi of Beer Sheva and Yad L'Achim, a group that is a main source of persecution against Messianic Jews. The lawsuit stems from a violent demonstration that took place at the congregation on Christmas Eve in 2005.

The case essentially is about standing up for the right for Jews in Israel to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, Bass said, though it is not meant to be construed against the state of Israel or against the Jewish people as a whole.

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WORLD VIEW

Hindu mob attacks Indian Bible college. A mob of about 500 anti-Christian radicals, led by a Hindu nationalist group, attacked a Bible college in India's eastern state of Orissa Feb. 28. Five students and one staff member were seriously injured. One student was reported in critical condition. The attackers disconnected the electricity, ransacked the campus and destroyed the roofs of many buildings, Mission Network News reported. "The magnitude of this attack is unlike anything we've ever seen," said K.P. Yohannan, president of Gospel for Asia, which operates the school. The attackers were identified as members of the Bajrang Dal, youth wing of the Hindu militant group Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Study: 400 million Chinese are religious. Citizens of the People's Republic of China are perhaps four times more religious than the government previously thought, according to a new survey conducted by East China Normal University. About 400 million people—more than 30 percent of the country's population—practice a religion. Official estimates previously had placed the number of religious followers at around 100 million. China officially recognizes five religions—Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. The government selects senior clergy for each of them, however, and persecutes people who follow unauthorized groups, including underground Protestant house churches.

Canadian phone company cancels porn access. Canada's second-largest telecommunications company will stop offering pornographic images on cell phones after receiving complaints and learning of a boycott launched by the Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver. A spokesman for Telus Corp., the first major wireless provider in North America to directly sell adult content on mobile phones, said the company was ending the month-old service in light of the public's growing concerns. Even though cell phone users with wireless access can obtain low-quality adult content through Internet Web sites, Telus was the first to list "adult content" as a purchase option on a menu of cell phone services.

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PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following mission projects associated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions efforts:

■ Pray for a team of 10 volunteers from Northside Baptist Church in Mount Vernon that currently is leading an evangelism project in Teresina, Brazil.

■ Volunteer evangelism teams are needed to perform on the seaside in Nice, France, during June and July.

■ A small group of four to six volunteers is needed to lead vacation Bible school at International Baptist Church in Jurbise, Belgium, in July or August.

For more information about volunteer mission opportunities, contact the KBC partnership missions office at (866) 489-3338.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BARDSTOWN**—Bardstown Church recently called **Dylan Mays** as ministry director. **David Stokes** is senior pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—East Cadiz Church will host **Called in Love** in a contemporary Christian music concert March 24, 6 p.m. Donations will benefit the East Cadiz Church Relay for Life Team.

■ **COXS CREEK**—Vine Hill Church will host the 57th annual Easter Sunrise Service in Bernheim Forest, April 8, 7 a.m. For more information, call (502) 543-9429.

■ **DRY RIDGE**—Mount Zion Church will ordain **Larry Gilliam** and **Eric Williams** as deacons April 1. A noon potluck dinner in their honor will precede the 2 p.m. ordination service.

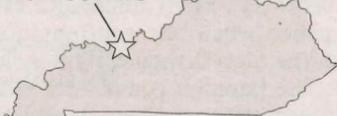
■ **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church's choir will present the Easter pageant, "The Day He Wore My Crown," April 1, 6 p.m. For more information, call (859) 727-2588.

■ **GREENVILLE**—Second Church will present the Easter pageant, "Bow the Knee," March 30, 7 p.m.; April 1, 6 p.m.; and April 8, 11 a.m. For more information, call (270) 338-6160. **Ray England** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—**Ron Wilburn** was honored during the recent Kentucky Baptist Vocational Evangelists Conference for 50 years in evangelistic music ministry. He is celebrating his

Spotlight on ...

Hawesville



Blackford and Breckinridge associations will host the women's conference, "Becoming a Proverbs 31 Woman: Finding Balance in a Busy World," at Pellville Church March 31, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (270) 233-5651.

50th anniversary in church music by presenting concerts in six of the eight churches he has served as music minister. For more information, call Wilburn at (859) 299-7336 or e-mail: ronewilburn@aol.com.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Mathews Church will host **Michael Card** in an evening of praise and worship April 1, 6:30 p.m. **Les Hollon** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—First Church will present the Easter pageant, "His Kingdom Come," March 24-25, 3 and 7:30 p.m., at the RiverPark Center. For more information, visit www.owensboroeasterpageant.com. **Paul Strahan** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Four Rivers Church will



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

- 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.
- 27 Senior Living Celebration, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 27-29 All-State Children's Choir—West, Jonathan Creek.
- 27 Children's Bible Drill, Rose Hill Baptist Church, Ashland.

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

host a presentation of "Christ in the Passover" by **Jews For Jesus**, March 22, 7 p.m. **Mica Cohen** will share traditions of the Jewish Passover that point to Jesus as the Messiah. For more information, call (270) 898-

7487 or visit www.4rcsplash.com.

■ **PRINCETON**—Southside Church will hold revival services April 1, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., and April 2-4, 6:30 p.m., with **Ken Freeman** as evangelist. **Delton Beall** 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.

FOR SALE: Large cabin near cleft-Rock Retreat Center in Rockcastle County. Call (513) 831-0239 for information.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Erlanger Baptist Church, Erlanger, Ky. (Northern Kentucky Baptist Association). Replies treated with total confidence. Contact Arnold Cad-dell, 221 Beil Road, Burlington, KY 41005. Phone: (859) 586-7760. E-mail: acaddell@fuse.net.

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: 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: 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: Bon Air Baptist Church, a growing, 2,700-member congregation near Richmond, Va., seeks a dynamic and creative individual to lead its children's ministry. This person will be responsible for maintaining and enhancing a program of Christian education, outreach and worship for preschoolers, children and their parents and leaders. Candidates should have a successful record in this field, knowledge of the latest trends, understand the multi-site concept and have a passion for sharing God's love with children and families. Qualified candidates may submit a cover letter and resumé to searchteam@bonairbaptist.org. Visit www.bonairbaptist.org for a job description.

SEEKING: Part-time (20 hours per week) youth minister/leader for conservative SBC church. Two-years experience/training in youth required. Cornerstone Baptist Church, 104 W Maple St., Nicholasville, KY 40356. Phone: (859) 881-1213.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth for Russell Cave Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky. Please send resumé by e-mail to pastor_rcribc@yahoo.com; or to Personnel Committee, Russell Cave Baptist Church, 3179 Russell Cave Road, Lexington, KY 40511.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to Wickland Baptist Church, 510 Bloomfield Road, Bardstown, KY 40004, Attn: Youth Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Ohio Valley Baptist Church in Ledbetter, Ky. Please send resumé to Larry Martin, 870 Mt. Zion Road, Tiline, KY 42083; or e-mail to sgillahan@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Mount Lebanon Baptist Church (www.mlbcn.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. Resumés will be received through 3/30/2007 and should be submitted to Allan Atchley, associate pastor, via e-mail at aatchley@mlbcn.org; or mailed to Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, 3508 Wildwood Road, Maryville, TN 37804, Attn. Allan Atchley.

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

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: Full-time minister to children for First Baptist Church, Tullahoma, Tenn., a Southern Baptist church, conservative in its theology, progressive in its methodology. Resumés should be sent to: Dr. Herb Hester, pastor, 108 E Grundy St., Tullahoma, TN 37388.

SEEKING: Grace Baptist Church, Woodbridge, Va., seeks applicants for the position of executive pastor. For more information, go to www.gracehome.org/ministryopenings.

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

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

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.

Searching for the searchers

As vacationers ponder life, resort missionaries seek to share gospel message

Gulf Shores/Orange Beach, Ala.— The Gulf Coast of Alabama is blessed with a warm, emerald-green ocean for swimming, and sugar-white, soft-sand beaches for sunning. It's a paradise that draws 6 million people each year, but according to missionary Jeff Ford, as many as 70 percent of them do not know Christ.

As Southern Baptist North American missionaries, Ford and his wife, Thea, direct Gulf Area Resort Ministries, sharing the gospel message with vacationers to Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Ala. The ministry is supported by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, Alabama State Board of Missions and Baldwin Baptist Association.

"Someone once told me that lost people are most open to the gospel two times in their lives," Ford said. "The No. 1 time is during a crisis, and the second time is during ... vacation."

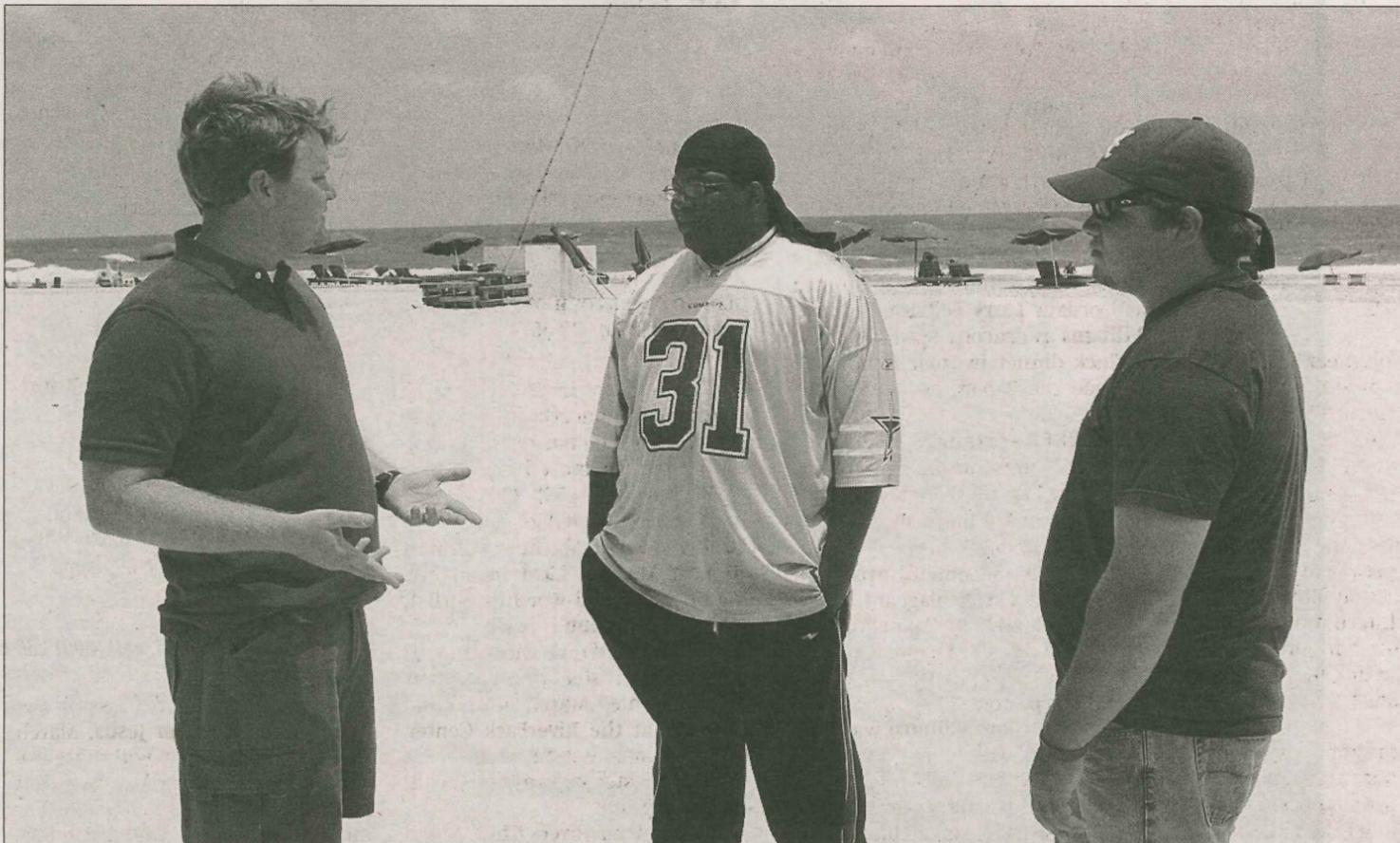
Visitors could be students on spring break or summer vacationers there with their families, but Ford said many come "searching for something, but they don't know what. ... People talk about Gulf Shores and Orange Beach as being party places, but I believe the true party ... only happens through a relationship with Jesus Christ."

"Barefoot Believers"

Each year, the Fords work with hundreds of volunteers, known as Barefoot Believers, providing a variety of activities and outreach events to introduce people to Christ.

"We spend a lot of time barefoot on the beach—handing out bottles of water, Frisbees with the gospel message imprinted on them, setting up face-painting and hair-wrap booths or feeding people cold watermelon," Ford said.

Efforts include regular worship services and Bible studies, backyard Bible clubs in RV parks or on the beach; they use sandsculpting, volleyball, face painting, bottled water and Frisbees to attract attention and spark conversation with visitors.



Some Barefoot Believers offer beachfront entertainment such as vocal performances, dramatic skits, puppetry and other artistic expressions that include the gospel message.

Ford said 1,000 Barefoot Believers volunteered last year, from senior adults to middle-school students and entire families.

Ministry in a resort area does not always focus on young people. Senior adults come in the fall and winter. Ford said most "snowbirds" are from the Northeast and Midwest. Some stay for up to six months to escape harsh winters back home.

"During our snowbird ministry in the winter, we hold worship services at local campgrounds and have a bicycle club where Thea and I ride bikes with the snowbirds, just trying to build relationships," Ford said.

"We may have 200 of them at a worship service. Thea and I feel like we have hundreds of grandparents and when we all get together, we're the only ones there not retirement age."

The busiest ministry season is spring and summer when students on spring break and families on vacation swarm to the beaches. In addition to Barefoot Believers, Ford works with college students through NAMB's Innovators program.

"A lot of college students say, 'I can't be a summer missionary because I have to work and earn some money for school,'" Ford said. The Innovators program allows them to do both. Ford helps students find summer jobs in the resort area. When students aren't working, they help with the ministry.

From emptiness to peace

Ford said Christian college students are eager to talk to people about how Jesus has changed their lives; Ford is eager too.

"A lot of the spring break and summer folks are dealing with addiction and the emptiness that comes from a life without Christ," he said. "Ten or 12 years ago ... my life was a mess. God can take such a messed-up life and make it beautiful. I'm able to share with them the hope that I found in Christ. I think that's why God placed me here."

Ford said when he first sensed God calling him to missions, he hesitated because he didn't feel qualified. A fellow summer missionary told him, "God does not call the qualified; He qualifies the called."

Escape and denial are two traits Ford spots consistently in visitors to the Gulf. "People, of course, come to the beach on vacation to try to find a little peace and quiet—to find some peace of mind," he said. "They want their kids to escape from life for a

while and have a fun time. But the fact is, if they don't have a relationship with Christ, they're not going to find that real peace."

Ford said he believes the emptiness felt by people separated from God actually grows on vacation because they have fewer distractions and more time to think.

"A lot of people on vacation are running from someone or something," he continued. "The problems they try to escape from ... follow them to the beach."

Through the generosity of Southern Baptists and the teams of volunteers who, with the Fords, serve in the resort area each year, many vacationers searching for meaning in their lives find it when they hear the gospel message and respond to it.

"At first I felt guilty as a resort missionary," he said. "I heard all the jokes about 'suffering for Jesus.' I thought I was just having too much fun doing the work God had given me to do. But someone wiser than me told me: 'Jeff, remember when you're serving the Lord, it ought to be fun and enjoyable.'"

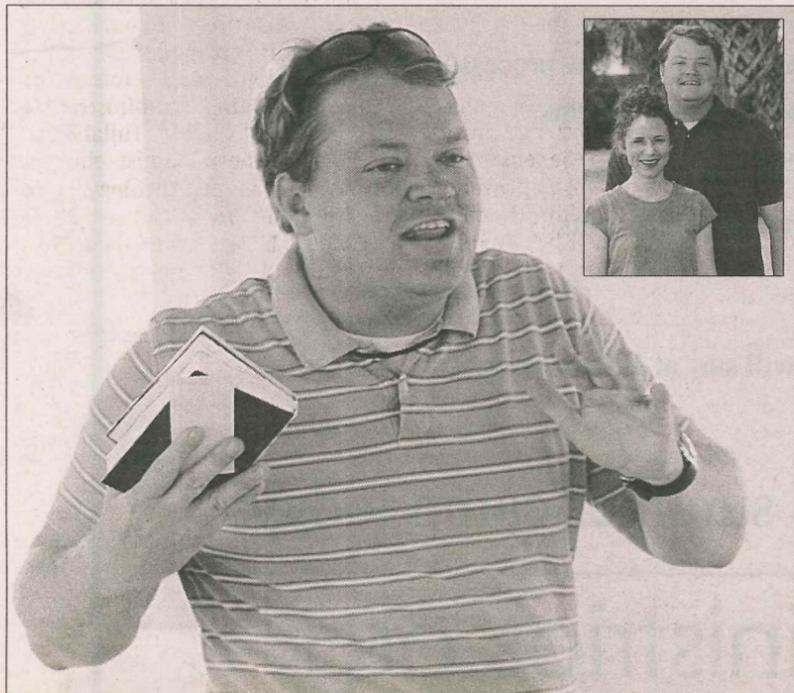
Many beach ministry ideas can be found at Barefoot Believers' Web site, www.barefootbelievers.com. The site also provides details on how to schedule a mission trip through Gulf Area Resort Ministries.

NAMB is coordinating a Families on Mission event in Mobile, Ala., Sept. 29-Oct. 4. The event is designed specifically for families who homeschool their children. For details, see the Volunteering in Missions page at www.namb.net.

This year's FamilyFEST missions events coordinated by national Woman's Missionary Union are June 16-21 in the El Paso, Texas/Juarez, Mexico area; and July 20-25 in Jacksonville, Fla. For details, call WMU's Volunteer Connection at (205) 995-4841 or visit www.wmu.com.

SANDY MISSION

FIELD Standing on the beach at Gulf Shores, Ala., Southern Baptist North American resort missionary Jeff Ford (left) plans beach evangelism activities with summer missionaries Derrick Fields (center) and Matt Goins. Six million people visit Alabama's Gulf Coast beaches each season, but according to Ford, only 30 percent are Christians. (NAMB photos by John Swain)



SHADES UP, BIBLE READY Resort missionary Jeff Ford preaches during a worship service at Gulf Breeze Resort on Alabama's Gulf Coast. Inset: Ford with wife, Thea.



priority: relationships

At Crossings Ministries, we believe that relationships are the key to an *encounter with Christ*.

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