



WESTERN RECORDER

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Crossover seeks spiritual impact in San Antonio

San Antonio (BP)—An estimated 2,000 Southern Baptist volunteers are expected to join forces for "Crossover San Antonio" prior to the Southern Baptist Convention's June 12-13 annual meeting at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio.

Crossover—now in its 19th year—officially is June 9-10 and will be a comprehensive campaign to reach a significant segment of San Antonio's unchurched population, said Don Smith, national Crossover coordinator for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

NAMB is jointly sponsoring Crossover San Antonio with the San Antonio Baptist Association, the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

During the week and weekend leading up to the SBC annual meeting, volunteers representing dozens of SBC churches in San Antonio and around the nation will take the gospel of Christ to the streets, parks and plazas of San Antonio, a city of some 1.8 million people and the second-largest city in Texas. About 60 percent of the population is Hispanic.

Despite a rich religious history, four out of five San Antonio residents do not attend church regularly and two-thirds have no church affiliation, according to Charles Price, director of missions for the San Antonio Baptist Association, which includes 259 churches and missions.

Crossover "is big for us, and we're getting a good response from our area churches," Price said. "We pray that God will give us an infusion of new believers into our churches and that we would be able to start three or four new churches as a result of Crossover."

Crossover outreach efforts will include door-to-door evangelism, block parties and an international festival featuring dozens of ethnic groups showcasing their cultures, food, dress, music, dance and art.

"Some 10,000 people are expected to come to 'Festival de Alabanza' (Festival of Praise), a massive block party and concert planned for the plaza on Guadalupe Street," Smith said.

Several hundred Crossover volunteers also will be involved in "Kindness Explosion," a ministry of random acts of kindness that will take place in the River Walk and The Market areas of San Antonio.

Since Crossover's beginnings at the 1989 SBC annual meeting in Las Vegas, nearly 38,000 people have prayed to accept Christ as Savior and dozens of Southern Baptist churches have been started.

For more information about Crossover San Antonio, visit www.crossoversa.org.

Tri-Hope Crusade



An area-wide Tri-Hope Crusade coordinated by six Kentucky Baptist churches attracted crowds averaging 850 people each evening to the Corbin Civic Center March 18-22. Seeking to impact Knox, Laurel and Whitley counties, sponsoring churches included Calvary, Central, Hopewell, Immanuel and West Corbin Baptist churches of Corbin and Lynn Camp Baptist Church of Gray. Randy McPheron, pastor of West Corbin Church, said approximately 40 to 50 people make public professions of faith in Christ during the crusade. "One of the neat things God did through this is to bring our churches together," he added. "There was a spirit of unity and harmony." ■ **Above:** A 150-voice choir from First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., sang during the crusade and conducted community surveys during the day. ■ **Left:** Dean Haun, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, Ga., was one of two featured speakers during the five-day crusade. (Times-Tribune photos by Bill Hanson)

Kentucky Journeyman to Cambodia: 'I love my job'

Cambodia—Even before he is fully awake, Joshua McFadden* knows he's not in Louisville anymore.

Roosters crowing, babies crying and his neighbors pumping water from the well outside his bedroom window remind the recent college grad that he's in Cambodia. So do the thatched-roof homes on stilts he passes as he bikes down the red dirt road to a Cambodian-style outdoor diner. Yet, as he wolfs down breakfast and endures teasing by the older village women, he said he is thankful God brought him to Southeast Asia.

"I love my job. I love these people. I love Cambodia. I love my life," McFadden says. "I know it sounds sappy, but it's true. When I'm riding my bike through a village and say 'hi' to all the kids, it's a daily revival. How often do you go through a village and everyone speaks to you?"

McFadden's interest in sharing his faith in Christ overseas sharpened as a result of trips to Cambodia and China in college, but he said he can see how God started working on him in fourth grade. That year his Sunday school teacher, a

journeyman just back from Kenya, brought carved rhinoceroses and tribal masks to class and helped make sharing Christ come alive. That teacher is now McFadden's team leader in Cambodia.

McFadden said he has learned a lot since he stepped off the plane in August 2006—not only about fitting in with a different people group but also the importance of helping that people group both physically and spiritually.

"It's really important for Christian people to do development work in addition to evangelism to catch the vision for really changing a place," he noted. "I just hope I am able to portray to them someone who genuinely cares about their needs."

McFadden and his team minister to the Cambodian people first by providing water filters, locating cleaner water sources, providing medical education and creating educational videos. Within his team, McFadden is taking a key role in animal husbandry and agricultural programs. As he helps his neighbors raise healthier goats and pigs and pro-

duce better crops, he is building relationships that give him a foundation to share his testimony.

While McFadden said he loves the work he is doing now, he noted that he is excited about plans to move to a more remote village on his own. That village, accessible only by ferry across the Mekong River, has no electricity, running water or concrete buildings. By choosing to live among an isolated group of Buddhist people, he said he hopes to show them that happiness in life comes not through rituals or possessions but through a God they have never heard about.

At the end of his two-year term in Cambodia, McFadden said he hopes he has helped change the lives of some Cambodians, but more importantly, that his own life will have changed.

"It's one of my biggest hopes that I'll be different when I go home," he said. "I love my life in America, but I want to go back and be different so I don't get pulled back into American culture. I think it would be the way Jesus would live on earth."

* Name changed for security reasons

Mormons offended by Utah outreach effort

Salt Lake City (BP)—Evangelicals in Utah intended the distribution of more than 350,000 DVDs disputing the claims of Mormonism as an act of concern for their neighbors who don't know Jesus as Savior, but the outreach effort has been taken by Mormons as an act of disrespect for their religion.

Hundreds of volunteers across the state hung the DVDs on doorknobs March 25 in white plastic bags that said "Good News for LDS," and others were handed out after a Utah Jazz basketball game that night. The DVDs, which use historical evidence to make the case that Mormonism is a non-Christian cult, were written and produced by LaBarge Media in New York for Tri-Grace Ministries in Utah.

Tri-Grace, a Christian organization founded by a former Mormon, invited Southern Baptist churches to help distribute the DVDs, and many Southern Baptist volunteers agreed to help. Tim Clark, executive director of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, told Baptist Press.

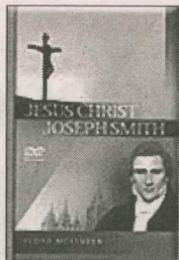
Professions of faith

"Officially, this was not a Utah-Idaho project. It wasn't part of our strategy," Clark said, adding that the convention's Evangelism Response Center has been taking calls from people who watched the DVD and want to ask questions or make a profession of faith in Jesus.

During the first few days after the DVD distribution, Clark said, the re-

sponse center had received more than 500 calls resulting in six professions of faith in Christ.

Clark helped put some of the DVDs into plastic bags for distribution, but he said he was volunteering his time as an individual, not as executive director of the state Baptist convention.



"I believe it's important because we live in one of the most lost places in America even though it's the most church-ed state in the union," Clark said.

"The Mormons so highly revere the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith that it's just an opportunity for us to get them to perhaps call into question their belief system."

Though the DVD made the case for Christ as the only way to God using documented history, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints officials said the production contained many inaccuracies and was not balanced.

"No good will come from debating doctrine with those whose intention is to disprove and degrade the scriptures we have," said Bishop Barlow of the Santaquin Second Ward, in an official response March 25. "The sole purpose of this DVD is to distort what our leaders stand for and what they testify of. I threw my copy in the trash, where I feel it belongs."

Barlow reiterated to his church members that "Joseph Smith is a prophet of God who saw and spoke with God the Father and His Son.

The Book of Mormon is truly a testament of Christ and gives an account of what happened on the American continent."

According to the Web site goodnewsforlds.com, the producers of the DVD "are well aware that members of the LDS Church are sincere about their beliefs, and it is not our desire to belittle those beliefs."

"In our experience we have found that many people have a very limited understanding of what Mormon leaders have actually taught," the Web site noted. "Because this is true even within the LDS Church, some Mormons might feel that much of what this DVD contains is fabricated. For this reason great pains have been made to document the statements it contains. Several of them are taken directly from LDS publications and speeches given by those who are recognized as authorities in the LDS Church."

Mail campaign planned

Clark said Tri-Grace has thousands of DVDs on hold for distribution by U.S. mail while waiting on donations for postage and volunteers to prepare for mailing.

"The Bible says to speak the truth in love," Clark said. "We worked hard to not offend people. We haven't made ungrounded attacks or accusations that weren't based on the historical truth."

Mormons were not the sole focus of the outreach effort, Clark added, because DVDs were hung on every door whether the residents were LDS members or not.

Soulforce protest group arrested at Southern Seminary

Louisville (BP)—Twelve members of Soulforce, a group of homosexual activists, were arrested March 26 during a two-hour sit-in outside the office of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler.

The protest was in response to comments Mohler made in a March 2 weblog entry about the possibility of prenatal testing and treatment for homosexuality.

Soulforce is in the midst of a second nationwide Equality Ride, in which about 50 of its members split up on two buses to travel on an east route and a west route visiting more than 30 Christian colleges and universities in a two-month period.

According to a bus tour schedule posted on the group's Web site, the east route was to stop March 26 at Union University in Jackson, Tenn. But organizers revised the itinerary to go to Southern Seminary in light of what they called Mohler's "inflammatory comments."

Other Baptist-affiliated schools on Soulforce's bus tour schedule include Baylor University, Cedarville University, Mississippi College, Oklahoma Baptist University, Samford University and the University of the Cumberland.

Lawrence Smith, Southern Seminary's vice president for communications, told Baptist Press that Soulforce arrived on campus about 10 a.m. and tried to enter the president's office. The door was locked, so the 22 protesters sat down in the hallway.

"We called our security, which in turn called Louisville Metro Police," Smith said. "They arrived probably 45 minutes after the whole thing started."

Soulforce asked to see Mohler and to read a statement to him, but Mohler was not on campus at the time, Smith noted. Smith agreed to listen to the group's statement on behalf of the administration.

After hearing the group's complaint, Smith asked the protesters to leave the campus because they were disrupting regular seminary business. Ten of them complied and retreated to a public sidewalk in front of the seminary, but 12 refused to leave until police charged them with criminal trespass.

"People have to understand that Soulforce is a professional protest group and their aim is to disrupt and in many cases to be arrested, so that was their purpose in coming here and we were not going to let them disrupt our campus," Smith said.

"We will commit as a seminary and as individuals to pray for members of Soulforce and for anyone who feels trapped in sexual sin," he added. "We'll pray for their salvation and their freedom in Christ."

Seminary leaders and McKissic agree to 'put issues behind us'

Fort Worth, Texas (BP)—Agreeing "to put past issues behind us," trustee officers of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary say they look forward "to working together for many years" with first-year trustee Dwight McKissic.

McKissic told Baptist Press that the statement released by trustee chairman Van McClain also speaks for him.

The two-sentence statement notes: "The officers of the trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have met with trustee Rev. Dwight McKissic and have jointly agreed to put past issues behind us. We look forward to working together for many years to impact SWBTS and the world for Christ."

McKissic affirmed the statement. "I'm excited. I'm looking forward to (continuing as a trustee)," the Texas Baptist pastor said.

He added that the agreement in no way infringes on his freedom to express his convictions.

"As a Southern Baptist pastor, I have the freedom to express whatever it is I feel convicted to express," he said. "No ifs, ands or buts about it."

The administration and trustees of Southwestern Seminary have been at odds with McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, since McKissic spoke in chapel last August about having practiced a "private prayer language" since his seminary days. Without mentioning the Southern Baptist International Mission Board by name, he also criticized the board's 2005 policy that bars candidates who speak in tongues or practice a private prayer language.

McKissic said the agreement "doesn't affect my ability to speak on that, hold a conference on that, address that in any way I so choose."

After McKissic's chapel sermon, tensions increased to the point that McClain raised concerns about possible trustee policy violations involving the manner in which McKissic had expressed his disagreement with board actions and seminary policies. Prior to the March 26 meeting, the board leaders agreed to withdraw a threat to remove McKissic from the board.

Clinton delivers lecture as part of Ouachita president's inauguration

Arkadelphia, Ark. (ABP)—Former President Bill Clinton, delivering a speech that his former pastor described as a "personal favor," encouraged students at Ouachita Baptist University March 27 to help solve the problems of a rapidly changing, increasingly interdependent world.

Clinton delivered the Arkansas Baptist school's annual Birkett Williams Lecture as part of formal inauguration festivities for Rex Horne, who was elected the school's president last year. Prior to serving at Ouachita, Horne was Clinton's pastor for 16 years at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock.

Clinton mostly steered clear of partisan politics, especially his wife's presidential bid, in his address, choosing instead to encourage students to think strategically about solving the problems of a globalized society.

"You need to be able to tell the difference between a headline and a trend line," the former president said, bemoaning the media attention given to celebrity stories such as the death of former Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith or the mental health of pop star Britney Spears.

Clinton said he has recently seen far more important news stories on chickens in three different countries around the world, including Romania. The chickens had one thing in common: All died from the bird flu, which has the potential to

become the world's biggest pandemic since the AIDS crisis.

"The avian influenza story about the Romanian chicken is more important to your future ... than the fight over poor Anna Nicole Smith's remains," he said. "But it gets less coverage—one is a trend line and one is a headline."

During a question-and-answer session with students, Clinton noted that he grew up a lower-middle-class white man in the South in the midst of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. Given that background, he said, he considers it a miracle that he was not raised with a predisposition toward racial prejudice but instead had relatives supportive of desegregation.

Clinton's visit to Arkansas Baptists' flagship school did not come without controversy. Charlie Warren, editor of the Arkansas Baptist News, said he received several letters condemning, and a few defending, Clinton.

In introducing Clinton to the students, Horne noted, "He is here because he loves Arkansas. He is here because he loves education. He is here as a personal favor to your president."

Emphasizing that the Birkett Williams Lectures are intended to be thought-provoking, Horne added, "We want to have difference-makers on campus, and we want those to challenge you to think critically but also to live redemptively."

KBC leaders name De la Barra to new work ethnic post

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Louisville—Carlos De la Barra, a church planting missionary with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board since 1998, has been named the Kentucky Baptist Convention's first new work ethnic associate.

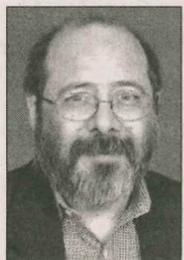
De la Barra was elected March 29 by the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee. In other action, committee members approved shifting Cindy Pelphrey's role as a campus minister for the Owensboro area from part-time to full-time status.

De la Barra's new position is designed to focus on starting language church-type ministries and providing oversight and coordination to language and ethnic work across Kentucky.

Larry Baker, director of the KBC's new work and associational missions department, told committee members, "I am truly excited about bringing Carlos on board."

Noting that De la Barra "has been involved in Hispanic work almost since day one of Hispanic work in Kentucky," Baker added, "I think you're going to see some great things in the next few years."

De la Barra, a native of Chile,



Carlos De la Barra



Cindy Pelphrey

holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the Catholic University of Chile. He served as a computer manager and software company owner before moving to the U.S. in 1991. Since then, he has earned master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He became a U.S. citizen in 2000.

In addition to helping start Hispanic churches in Kentucky, De la Barra has worked with Hispanic ministries in South Carolina and Indiana.

In his role with NAMB, De la Barra has helped start 18 Hispanic ministries and coordinated the KBC's first Spanish-language high-impact church. He and his wife, Cristina, also were among NAMB missionaries highlighted in the annual Annie

Armstrong Week of Prayer in 2005.

De la Barra also serves with a Hispanic ministry affiliated with Chapelin Baptist Church as well as Chapgrass Hispanic Corporation which ministers to Hispanics in Elkhorn, Mercer, Nelson and South District Baptist associations. He also has served on the KBC Mission Board, is a trustee of the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute and vice president of the KBC's Hispanic Council.

De la Barra said among the goals in his new position is to learn "what is happening among Hispanics throughout Kentucky."

Noting that the new work ethnic associate position "is not only for Hispanics, but for ethnics," he added, "There are other ethnic groups that we need to reach."

Owensboro campus ministry

Pelphrey, who began serving as a part-time campus minister in the Owensboro area in 1995, will move to full-time status effective June 1.

Committee members approved a proposal by Keith Inman, director of the KBC's collegiate/young adult ministry group, to move the Owensboro position from three-quarters status to full-time and to move the Berea College campus ministry posi-

tion from full-time to three-quarters. Inman explained that Wyndee Holbrook, the longtime campus minister at Berea, resigned in December and that the Owensboro position involves several campuses and more students.

Pelphrey's ministry assignment includes the campuses of Owensboro Community College, Kentucky Wesleyan College, Brescia College, Western Kentucky University at Owensboro, Madisonville Community College and Henderson Community College.

"This is an economic-driven decision on my part because in Owensboro, we have six institutions in that area," Inman noted. He added that the KBC will continue to make a major ministry investment on the Berea campus with the three-quarters position and will maintain "a very solid presence there in the future."

Inman said Pelphrey "has really brought a good strategy" to the Owensboro-area campuses and that "her leadership is really bringing continuity to what we're doing there."

Pelphrey, a graduate of Georgetown College, is a former minister of youth and missions at Third Baptist Church in Owensboro.

SBC president to lead Ky. Baptist stewardship event

Louisville—Church leaders seeking to improve giving in their churches can attend an

April 17 Stewardship Summit led by Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page.

The one-day seminar, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will explore the biblical basis for stewardship issues. Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., will provide participants with practical advice for motivating congregations to increase financial giving.

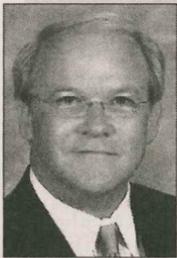
The seminar will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Baptist Building in Louisville.

"All church leaders are faced with this issue because there's an emphasis in the Bible on the giving of your resources," said French Harmon, leader of the KBC church development team. "We can all learn from Frank Page's leadership in this area."

Participants will have the opportunity to dialogue with Page during a question and answer session as part of the seminar.

There is no charge for attendance, but reservations are required.

For more information or to register for the event online, visit www.kybaptist.org/stewardshipsummit, or call (502) 489-3571 or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3571.



Frank Page

On Mission Celebrations help personalize missions

By Kristie Randolph
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist churches or associations seeking to increase missions awareness and participation in their congregations are being invited by missions leaders to consider hosting an "On Mission Celebration" in 2008.

On Mission Celebrations are designed to educate church members about the missions work they support through Cooperative Program giving. Formerly known as "World Mission Conferences" and "Schools of Missions," On Mission Celebrations have helped highlight Southern Baptist mission efforts for decades.

"On Mission Celebrations give Southern Baptists a chance to see and hear the missionaries they support," noted Beth Bootz, mobilization specialist for the Southern Baptist North American Board.

The 2007 schedule already has been finalized, but churches interested in hosting a 2008 event can contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention for information about scheduling a conference in 2008. Mission leaders suggest that reservations be made at least one year in advance to allow adequate time for planning and preparation.

KBC offers support, training

While an association or group of churches must initiate and host each local On Mission Celebration, support and training are offered through the KBC's Baptist Men on Mission department. Officials from NAMB and the International Mission Board work with the KBC to secure missionary speakers for each event.

On Mission Celebrations "are a great way to show congregations where their Cooperative Program dollars are going," said Randy Foster, director of the KBC's Baptist Men on



CELEBRATE Pastor Adam Smith (left) and worship leader Eric Busby of Immanuel Baptist Church in Natchez, Miss., visit with John and Terri Forrester, North American missionaries to Alaska, during an On Mission Celebration. Mission leaders currently are scheduling 2008 celebrations. (BP photo)

Mission department. "I would love to see more Kentucky Baptists host On Mission Celebrations next year."

Nearly 60 celebrations will be held throughout the U.S. this year. Kentucky will host two of the events, one in Gasper River Baptist Association Oct. 13-14 and the other in Muhlenberg Baptist Association Nov. 4-7. Mercer Baptist Association has scheduled one for Sept. 21-24, 2008.

On Mission Celebrations take a variety of forms, including missions fairs, banquets and worship services. Each event is customized to the needs of those involved, and organizers can choose an event timetable from one to four days.

In some associations, as many as 40 churches join together to hold a celebration, and dozens of international, North American and state missionaries participate as featured speakers.

According to NAMB officials, many churches that have hosted an On Mission Conference have seen an increase in their church's giving to the Cooperative Program and Southern Baptist missions offerings. Some

churches even choose to "adopt" one or more missionaries and begin corresponding with them. Many celebration participants also make short- and long-term commitments to missions involvement.

Evangelistic opportunities

On Mission Celebrations also can serve as an evangelistic tool for churches, Foster said.

"These missionaries are also capable of speaking in schools, civic clubs and other similar gatherings," Foster noted. "People in the community become interested in the work of the missionaries and often will come to the On Mission Celebration to learn more."

Hosting churches or associations are responsible for all expenses related to the event, including transportation and hospitality for the missionaries.

Churches or associations interested in hosting an on Mission Celebration can contact Foster at (502) 489-3398, toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3398 or e-mail Randy.Foster@kybaptist.org.

"On Mission Celebrations give Southern Baptists a chance to see and hear the missionaries they support."

Beth Bootz, mobilization specialist for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board

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

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Saving is not the same as hoarding

By Howard Dayton

Gainesville, Ga. (BP)—Once again, Americans are spending everything they make—and then some. The U.S. Commerce Department reports that the 2006 savings rate was a negative 1 percent. That means Americans either dipped into their savings or borrowed to finance purchases.

Furthermore, the 2006 figure was even lower than the 2005 -0.4 percent and was the poorest showing since the -1.5 percent savings rate in 1933 during the Great Depression.

Could it be that some Christians think that when a person saves funds, he or she eliminates the need to live by faith? If so, they have arrived at a false conclusion, because saving is not another word for hoarding.

There is a great difference between saving and hoarding. Actually, saving involves faith, but hoarding eliminates faith. So, it's best to ask God for the wisdom to understand the difference, and the willingness to honor Him by handling your money biblically.

Go ask an ant? In Proverbs 6:6-8, the Bible uses an ant as a good example of saving. "Go to the ant, you slacker! Observe its ways and become wise. Without leader, administrator or ruler, it prepares its provisions in summer; it gathers its food during harvest."

It seems that, somehow, within the ant colony, God has designed these creatures so that they are able to calculate very accurately what they'll need to get through the winter; they then gather and store that amount during the summer and autumn.

In fact, that's a good description of "saving": Looking forward to a future need, then putting aside whatever is necessary to meet that upcoming requirement so you won't have to borrow.

Attitude vs. amount. You must

understand that the difference between saving and hoarding is attitude, not amount. In today's society, when we measure what we're putting aside against the biblical standard, there's no doubt that we could conclude that many of us are hoarding.

A serious question that American Christians need to ask themselves is, "How much is enough?" Many believers have bought into the world's mindset concerning finances and have ignored God's clear biblical principles.

As Christians, God commands us to "not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). The way we handle resources should reveal our trust in God. Even our American currency reminds us that it should be "In God we trust," and that we shouldn't simply trust in the currency on which that statement is printed.

But we're not ants. Since we're not ants, where do we place our savings? Before answering the "where" question, you should determine your specific purpose for saving the money and the sort of risk level you can handle. It's important to understand that although there are certain similarities between savings and investments, there also are great differences. But we won't go into that now, because we're talking about savings.

There are some simple guides we can mention about savings:

■ A savings account might be the safest place to store surplus funds, but it yields the lowest interest rate.

■ Certificates of deposit yield a slightly higher rate than savings accounts. CDs and Treasury notes are two of the safest investment vehicles, but they also return relatively low yields.

■ Money market funds may provide somewhat higher returns than either CDs or savings accounts. There are small risks involved with money market accounts. However, as long as they are with a strong company, the risk should be minimal.

Always keep in mind that the higher the return on your savings, the greater the risk. Consider that if you will need all or part of the money soon, a savings or money market account might be best, because CDs could tie up your money for at least 90 days. And with CDs, there are penalties for early withdrawal of funds.

Plan with purpose. Don't save just for the sake of saving something. Instead, have a plan and save with purpose. Also, prayerfully think about designating some of your surplus money for helping someone in need in your church.

Yes, there is a difference between saving and hoarding. Saving involves faith because it represents good stewardship, but hoarding eliminates faith in God and it ignores faithful stewardship.

Remember, always pray and ask God for the wisdom to handle the provision He has given you. And be sure your savings have a purpose that reflects biblical stewardship so that you will avoid hoarding.

Be sensible, and don't jump on the downward savings trend. Instead, "Go to the ant. ... Observe its ways and become wise."

Howard Dayton is CEO of Crown Financial Ministries

COMMENTARY

What are you thinking?

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

'Live the Call' through missions

"Live the Call" was the theme of the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting held recently at Third Baptist Church of Owensboro.

The theme was expressed in music, testimonies, drama and special theme presentations by Wanda Lee, national WMU executive director and author of the book, "Live the Call."

That book title took on real-life meaning as international missionaries Keith and Gail, who serve in the Pacific Rim; Judy Miller, who serves in Benin; and Karen Wright, who serves in Chile; shared how they are living out God's call in their lives. Drew Phillips, the chaplain at the Christian Activity Center in East St. Louis, shared mission stories of living the call in the inner city.

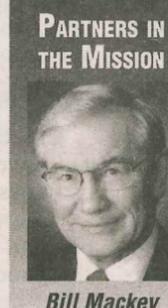
The Friday night session was devoted to prayer for missions in 11 different regions of the world. The missions need was illustrated by a parade of flags from countries in the various regions. The colorful dress

and inspiring music by the Esther Missions Choir and Handbells from Korea Baptist WMU were a highlight of the annual meeting.

Darren Gaddis, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Corbin and president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, expressed gratitude for WMU's support of the missions offerings and the Cooperative Program, which provides the base support for state, North American and international missions work.

One of the most inspiring parts of the program was the presentation of missions work by two Baptist Campus Ministry students in the local area. One student is involved in a tutoring program in a local church. The other student spent one year as an international volunteer teaching English in Poland. Local Baptist Campus Ministry students had helped provide financial assistance for this project and a similar one in France.

This strong missions emphasis is largely due to the missionary heart



Bill Mackey

CHURCH

Church finance committee can aid stewardship

By Doug Stader

One of the simplest ways a church can enhance its financial stewardship is to elect a stewardship committee and follow their leadership in all areas of financial stewardship for the church.



The purpose of the committee would be to help church members grow as Christian stewards through a commitment to the biblical concepts of individual financial stewardship, and to develop and implement an annual church budget.

The committee should include a representative cross-section of the membership. However, the committee should be made up of individuals who are good financial stewards themselves, as well as having some skills and/or knowledge of money management, missions awareness and business principles and practices.

Some of the typical duties of a church finance committee include:

■ Be good students of the biblical message of financial stewardship and teach church members how to grow toward becoming faithful stewards of all their resources.

■ Develop and carry out a church stewardship calendar for the year that will enable church members to be more faithful in their responsibilities as stewards.

■ Coordinate the development of the annual church budget.

■ Advise and consult with the church treasurer and/or financial secretary on all matters related to the financial administration of the church.

■ Recommend procedures to the church for handling all money received, how the money is counted and deposited, and how it is to be dispersed.

■ Review the monthly treasurer's report and make recommendations when needed.

■ Develop a financial plan to be implemented when the church's cash flow is insufficient to pay all monthly bills. The committee should work with the treasurer and/or financial secretary to implement the plan when necessary.

■ Make plans for an annual audit report. The financial stewardship committee should not serve as the audit committee. If the church cannot employ an outside auditor, a committee should be elected from other church members.

Doug Stader, retired director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department, is pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville

'Superwoman Syndrome' often leads to exhaustion, depression

Q: As a wife, mom and 40-hour-a week employee, I am overwhelmed by all I have to do. I am so frustrated with my husband and my kids. They seem to expect everything and give nothing. I am completely burned out. How can I get out of this?

Some people call this the "Superwoman Syndrome" when a woman tries to do it all as if she does not have limits and needs. Others describe this as "overfunctioning."

MARRIAGE

How ever it is described, the results generally are the same—exhaustion, frustration, resentment, anger and even depression. This is not healthy or abundant living for the woman or her spouse and family.

Consider some of the choices you are making. God has created human beings with limits. These limits demand that humans seek God's help and the help of others. How are you seeking God's help? How are you seeking your family's help? You might want to begin with individual time with God asking for guidance. Ask God to reveal to you the expectations you have for yourself. Are these too high or unreasonable? What expectations do you have for your family? Are these too low or absent?

Next try to talk with your husband. Try to use this opportunity to create a dialogue around this problem. Name it what it is—a family problem. This problem does not belong solely to you. So it is not yours to solve alone.

Then you and your husband can help lead a family meeting. Present the problem and use the entire family to brainstorm and problem-solve. Some parents incorrectly believe their job is to take care of their children. It is not. A parent's task is to care about their children and teach them how to take care of themselves. Infants cannot meet their own needs, so adults take care of them. When an adult continues to meet a child or teenager's needs who can meet many or most of his or her own needs, it is a disservice to that child or teenager.

Families can be creative and resourceful when they work together to love one another and care for each other's needs. Give yourself permission not to meet everyone's needs and allow your family to help meet some of your needs.—Valerie Vincent

Q: Why is it important for me to talk to my children about drugs?

Visit the Web site for the Partnership for a Drug-Free America and at the top of the home page you will find this statement: "At some point you are going to have to replace a child-proof cap with a conversation."

PARENTING

Parents often are reluctant to talk with their kids about drugs. Some believe their children would never try drugs. Statistics tell a different story. The average age of kids trying drugs for the first time is under 14 which means that even grade school children are at risk.

Some parents feel hypocritical because they used drugs themselves. The drug scene today is very different than it was 30 years ago. Drugs are more plentiful, more powerful, more accepted—and thus more dangerous. Parents are not perfect, and part of being a parent involves protecting your children from mistakes you made.

Parents might believe that talking with their children won't do any good. Again, statistics say otherwise. The Partnership reports that kids whose parents are involved in their lives are 50 percent less likely to do drugs. Finally, parents often are afraid to talk to their kids because they don't want to show their ignorance. Our children might know more about drugs than we do, but we can find out what we need to know by doing just a little research.

The Web site www.drugfree.org provides lots of information and ideas. The site encourages parents to begin the dialogue when kids are young, and to make explicit a "no use" expectation both for drugs and alcohol.—David Garrard

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.



Easter: Will you have a song in your heart?

With spring officially in full bloom, I enjoy opening the windows or relaxing on our back deck and listening to the inviting melodies of cheery songbirds.

Of course, the beginning of spring also points toward Easter, one of my favorite holidays of the year. The celebration of Christ's miraculous resurrection is echoed in the new life of budding flowers, shrubs and trees.

What about for you? Will you have a song in your heart and a joyful attitude of worship as you observe Easter this Sunday? Or will it be just one more church service and family gathering to check off the list?

As I was eagerly anticipating the Easter season last week, I had the privilege of attending a Baptist Building chapel service that featured the Korea Woman's Missionary Union's Esther Missions Choir and Handbells in concert. From the choir's presentation of "Amazing Grace" in both English and Korean to the handbell choir's rendition of "How Great Thou Art," their music helped prepare my heart and mind for worship.

Although not technically considered Easter music, both great hymns highlight the truths of Easter, the resurrection and salvation.

"Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see," the familiar words of the John Newton classic declare. The simple fact is there wouldn't be amazing grace to sing about without Jesus' sacrificial death and glorious resurrection.

As for "How Great Thou Art," take a moment to ponder its timeless message: "And when I think that God, His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in; that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,

He bled and died to take away my sin. Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; how great Thou art, how great thou art!"

As I reflect on Easter worship services over the years and look forward to this year's resurrection celebration, one hymn stands out in my mind. Generally known as "Up from the Grave He Arose," the hymn's official title is "Low in the Grave He Lay."

Written in 1874 by Robert Lowry, the pastor of First Baptist Church of Lewisburg, Penn., the lyrics were inspired by the words of Luke 24:6, "He is not here, but is risen." The Baptist Hymnal also cites Acts 2:24, "It was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him."

It is the triumphant words of the hymn's final verse and chorus that joyfully proclaim the Easter story for me: "Death cannot keep his prey, Jesus, my Savior! He tore the bars away, Jesus, my Lord! Up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes; He arose a victor from the dark domain, and He lives forever with His saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

That's a lot of exclamation points—but definitely well-deserved ones. With all the heartache and hurt people experience here in Kentucky and around the world every day, there is no greater message to share than Jesus Christ's resurrection and His offer of eternal salvation.

Will you have a song in your heart this Easter—and in the days, months and years ahead? If you're still searching for the right lyrics, tune or inspiration, here's a great starting point: "Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Connect with church's college students

It is that time of year again. No, I'm not referring to the start of baseball season or even the beginning of spring. It is the time of year when our college students are finishing up the current semester and getting ready to head home for the summer.

If this is their first year of college, the return to their hometowns often is a major transition. They have had unlimited freedom to make their own decisions while they were away at college and now they come back to parents who are glad to have them home, but aren't used to their child having that much freedom.

They also will come back to our churches that have had an entire year's worth of experiences that did not include them and a youth ministry where they might not feel welcome (too old) and where they may begin to feel like visitors. They might even have to go to "big church" for the first time, and that can be a scary proposition.

So what can local churches do to help?

Send a care package. Finals are coming and who wouldn't want to receive a box with their favorite goodies in it to enjoy while studying? Contact the student's parents and ask what the student's favorite snacks are, and put some of those in the package. I remember trying to find marshmallow peeps for a student one year. That is not easy to do if you wait until after Easter. Preparing care packages also is

a great way to connect with parents. Contacting parents to ask for a current address and needed information about their students reassures the parents that the church has not forgotten about their child.

Other items to put in the package could include gift cards (check to see which restaurants are in their college community), school supplies, photos from some past youth events they were part of, a couple of issues of the local newspaper, and a copy of the church's last couple of bulletins or newsletters. Make sure you ship it in plenty of time for the student to enjoy the package. If the parents aren't sure when finals are, the school's Web site will have that information. Send enough stuff for them to share; their friends will love them for it.

Plan a homecoming event. Plan an event to welcome students home—a cookout or other activity where they can reconnect with their church family and their friends who also were away at college. Many of them likely stayed connected electronically, but they may have had little or no face-to-face contact with their friends since they went off to school.

This also is a great time for college students' new Sunday school class or small group to connect with them and begin to build relationships. You could include the details of the homecoming event in the care package. Better yet, put the details in the care package, but also send a spe-

cial invitation to their campus mailbox. College students love mail!

Make a campus visit. I know there is not a lot of time left in the semester. But there is still time to go visit students on campus. Every college student loves a free meal so go see them, let them show you around campus and then take them to eat someplace nice. (The college cafeteria, fast food and pizza have been their staples.) It also will help them to know that they have been missed. Surprise visits are nice, but as busy as college students are these days, plan to give them at least a day or two notice so they can arrange their schedule or let you know a better time to visit. Offer to take their roommate out to eat with you as well.

Invite them to youth events. Plan a couple of events that college students can go to with the youth group. It could be awkward for them since they have not been a part of the group for nine months, but the youth will want to catch up with them and they will want to see their old friends. Let them share, if they are willing, about campus life, the struggles they faced, etc. You might also pair them up with graduating seniors to help prepare them for their college experience.

By no means is this list exhaustive, and I hope these are not the first contacts that have been made with your college students during the year. Statistics indicate that students leave our churches in staggering numbers when they graduate from our youth ministries. These are just a few steps that can help stem that tide.

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

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

Blevins cites women's ministry roles at Campbellsville lecture

By Linda Waggener
Campbellsville University

Campbellsville—Baptist historian and religion professor Carolyn Blevins presented a lecture on women's roles in religion to a packed crowd in Campbellsville University's Little Auditorium for the school's recent Baptist Heritage Lecture.

From Ann Judson to Lottie Moon to Annie Armstrong and other Baptist women, Blevins explored the vital role that women have played in the work of the Baptist movement.

She cited numerous examples of Baptist women who have provided key leadership in missions education, involvement and fund-raising as well as nurturing and ministry throughout nearly 400 years of Baptist history.

She also noted that while women follow God's call, they often are discouraged from following that call all the way to ministry in Baptist churches.

Blevins explains in her writings about Baptist women in missions and ministry, "Like other Protestants, Baptists agree with the Apostle Peter and Martin Luther that individuals are directly responsible to God. No mediator is needed. Each believer has the right and the responsibility to be her own priest—going directly to God in prayer, being accountable to Him and responding to Him.

"On the basis of this teaching, a woman is responsible for how she responds to God with no permission needed from any other source," Blevins said. "Yet, when a woman responds to the call of God to minister, she sometimes is told that God does not call women to preach.

"The gap between Baptist doctrine and Baptist practice creates tension for some Baptist women," she added.

"In recent years some young women considering ministerial careers among Baptists have determined that the gap was too great for them to bridge," Blevins said. "These women have chosen to leave the Baptist denomination for those denominations more hospitable to ministering women. Consequently, Baptists have lost some of their brightest and best-educated young women."

"This is a big issue in Southern Baptist life and in Baptist life in general," noted John Chowning, Campbellsville's vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president.

"The autonomy of the local church means that some Baptist churches ordain and/or employ women as ministers, while other Baptist churches adamantly denounce the practice as heresy," he said. "Baptist doctrine assures each church of that authority. Autonomy is a unique freedom that Baptists treasure."

Georgetown students serve in U.S. and Brazil

By Mary Alice Birdwhistell
Georgetown College

Georgetown—A record total of almost 100 students and faculty from Georgetown College sacrificed a week at the beach to spend their recent spring break serving on alternative mission trips.

Some students planned a kite fair for children at the Alpha and Omega Children's Home in Garca, Brazil. Other teams helped rebuild houses in New Orleans; sponsored an after-school program for children in Camden, N.J.; or led backyard Bible clubs at apartment complexes in Arlington, Texas.

Georgetown senior Chelsea Clarke, who spent her spring break in Brazil, noted, "These kids love without restraint. They tell perfect strangers that they love them, and they mean it.

"They can't build up walls, because they don't have anything to hide," said Clarke, a member of First Baptist Church of Walton. "All they have is what is given to them by Christ. All they have to give is love, and they give it abundantly."

Reflecting on her ministry experience in New Jersey, sophomore Emily Mize, a member of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, said, "At first, I kept asking myself, 'Where is God right here? How can it be this bad? How can kids be growing up in this type of environment?' But then we played with the children, sharing Bible stories with them, and I soon saw that God was in them!"

Freshman Gentry Hambrick, a member of Faith Baptist Church in Georgetown, was one of 25 students who helped in leading devotions, running a field day and kite festival, painting and most importantly, developing relationships with the 130 Brazilian children living in the Alpha and Omega Children's Home.

"I was so humbled by how little these children had, and yet they gave so much, and so generously,"



SPRING BREAK Georgetown senior Adam Brown (center) led a team of students who held backyard Bible clubs in Arlington, Texas, during spring break.

Hambrick said. "The whole time we were at Alpha and Omega, the children never stopped smiling. This taught me so much; it became so evident that they had something that I often forget I have, and that's God's gift of salvation."

A group of 10 students traveled to New Orleans to help rebuild houses destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in a project with First Baptist Church of New Orleans and the Baptist Crossroads Project. They worked in Musicians' Village, an area of houses rebuilt for musicians who were displaced by Katrina. The area eventually will include a community center for after-school programs and music lessons.

"We all learned a lot about not only giving to a great cause, but receiving joy and gratitude from each other and from the people we were there to help," noted Georgetown Campus Minister Cynthia Insko. "Jesus told His disciples when He washed their feet that they were to serve others, but He also told them that they needed to learn to receive what He wanted to do for them. Giving and receiving—both are an important part of mission work and

we experienced it firsthand in New Orleans."

A group of almost 50 students traveled to Arlington, Texas, under the leadership of senior Adam Brown of Richmond. They worked through the organization Mission Arlington, leading eight different backyard Bible clubs each morning and afternoon and helping in numerous church services and Bible studies across Arlington.

"Students just opened up and shared their lives with children for a week, showing compassion and love and excitement," said Brown, a member of Union City Baptist Church. "The students saw poverty and abuse and misuse, yet they loved all the more. They truly allowed God to use them during the week."

Whether serving in the U.S. or Brazil, the students agreed they learned that God has called them to share His love in their everyday lives.

"I learned that there are so many people who need attention and love right here in the U.S.," Mize reflected. "We always think about going overseas to share the gospel, but I think we need to begin in our own backyard."

College volunteers help renovate camp

Winchester—Seventeen students from four Kentucky universities used their recent spring break to help renovate Boone's Creek Baptist Camp in Winchester.

Students from the University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Campbellsville University and Alice Lloyd College volunteered their time to complete much-needed repairs at the camp's facility. The group was part of the Kentucky Changers College project, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Repair projects included painting, plumbing, electrical work, wall repair and carpentry.

Boone's Creek Baptist Camp is a ministry of Boone's Creek Baptist Association. For more than 50 years, the camp has hosted a variety of year-round activities and camp programs for youth and adults.

The KBC's Kentucky Changers program provides a weeklong missions experience for teenagers, college students and adults. Kentucky Changers partner with local Baptist churches, government agencies and homeowners to complete community development and construction projects.

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Lawmakers issue 'call to prayer for America'

Washington (RNS)—The Congressional Prayer Caucus, formed in 2005 by Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., is calling on Americans to pray for five minutes weekly for the benefit of the United States.

The prayer caucus, made up of 38 lawmakers from both parties, has a new Web site, www.prayercaucus.org, where people can sign up for a five-minute block of time each week to pray for the nation. The goal—a "call to prayer for America"—is to have Americans praying for their country 24 hours a day, according to the group's charter.

The prayer caucus members are all Christians, including Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Mo., who is senior pastor of St. James United Methodist Church in Kansas City. But they urged people of all faiths and political persuasions to join in prayer for the nation, especially during the war in Iraq.

Procter & Gamble wins \$19 million judgment in Satanism rumors case

Salt Lake City (ABP)—For those who needed any more reasons to discount the decades-old rumor that one of America's largest and oldest consumer-products companies was in league with Satan, a federal jury recently provided more than 19 million of them.

The Procter and Gamble Co. announced March 19 a jury had awarded it \$19.25 million in damages, after a trial in the Utah Federal District Court. The jury entered the judgment against distributors for the Amway Corp., another household-products firm that competes with Procter and Gamble, for spreading the rumors about satanic affiliations with the company.

The case began in 1995, when four Amway distributors circulated a message via a company voicemail system about Procter and Gamble donating some profits to the Church of Satan. Although they soon retracted the rumor, the messages made their way to hundreds of Amway clients—and, eventually, to Procter and Gamble attorneys.

The Cincinnati-based company—makers of Ivory soap, Tide laundry detergent and a host of other household products—sued the distributors and Amway. While Amway successfully argued it had acted quickly to quash the rumors, the jury found they had, nonetheless, likely cost Procter and Gamble millions in lost sales.

It's not the first time the company has gone to court to defend itself against devilish rumors.

Since at least the early 1980s, stories have spread about Procter and

Gamble's association with Satanism. Many focused on the company's logo, which features a crescent man-in-the-moon image, facing leftward over a field of 13 stars against the night sky. According to the Web site snopes.com, which debunks urban legends, some Christians have discerned allusions to the number 666 in the curlicues of the moonman's beard, as well as in the star pattern. The number is mentioned in Revelation as that of the "Mark of the Beast."

Procter and Gamble was founded by two businessmen who began selling soap and candles in 1837. The moon-and-stars logo was introduced to mark boxes of Procter and Gamble candles in 1850. By the 1860s, it was used on all the firm's products and letterhead.

The company filed similar lawsuits—some of which also were against Amway distributors—in the 1980s.

According to snopes.com, the rumor re-appeared in the mid-1990s in a different form, alleging that Procter and Gamble's CEO had appeared on a talk show and mentioned that the company contributed to the Church of Satan.

The company has several pages on its Web site devoted to debunking the rumors.



Judge halts marriage institute lawsuit

Washington (RNS)—A federal judge has dismissed a case involving a Washington state program that a church-state separation group charged was misusing government funds for Bible-based marriage workshops.

At one time, the Northwest Marriage Institute offered biblical marriage counseling, but it shifted its mission to provide secular counseling to qualify for federal funding. It continues to produce a newsletter that includes religious content.

"The institute altered its mission and no longer offers Bible-based marriage workshops," U.S. District Judge Franklin Burgess of Tacoma, Wash., wrote in a March 20 order. He added that the initial grants received by the institute were to help prepare for sec-

ular workshops. And the newsletter is not produced on a computer that was purchased with federal money.

"The fact that a sectarian organization continues with separate religious activities after receiving grant monies for sectarian endeavors does not constitute a violation of the Establishment Clause," the judge ruled.

Barry Lynn, head of Americans United for Separation of Church and State which filed the suit, said the ruling should be heeded as a warning for faith-based groups seeking federal funding.

According to Tim Chanlder, legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, "Christian groups are not second-class citizens that have to give up their religious identity to receive federal funds."

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Meet the class of 2007, part 2

Student says he is 'grateful for having chance to experience the Oneida life'

Students find their way to Oneida for a variety of reasons. I am not sure there is any student here because of a single need; normally students have a variety of needs. The most common challenge students have is reaching their academic potential. Many students are failing—or nearly failing—their courses when they arrive. Other students have average grades, but their ability is above average. We are blessed to meet parents who have recognized that their children are not paying adequate attention to schoolwork, and then seek help for them. Over the years, one of our most outstanding achievements has been to help students no matter their grade or performance level.

"Tony" (not his real name) had not performed to his academic ability. For nearly two years, his parents tried unsuccessfully to find the right combination of situations to help him reach his potential. While Tony did have some good grades, it was always those low or failing grades that captured his parents' attention when it was report card time. Tony was not using drugs and he was not in any trouble. He was, for the most part, a very respectful child at home and at school.

I would like to share part of Tony's "My Oneida Experience" essay with you:

"The day my parents and I drove on the Oneida campus, all I was thinking was, 'Are we in the wrong place,' or 'Did we make a wrong turn or something?' When we pulled on campus all I could think about was the barbed wire fence around part of the campus. When I saw the word 'institute' on the Oneida sign, I asked my parents,

'Does that mean this is a place for crazy people or psychopaths?' My parents just laughed at me. I was really nervous because I was thinking, maybe they were lying to me, then again, I don't think my parents would lie to me ... or would they?

"As the days became weeks and the weeks became months, I began to like Oneida more and more. Oneida has helped me academically. If it were not for study hall when I first came here I would not be on the honor roll now. Since I hated study hall so much, I knew the only way to get out of study hall was to get on the honor roll. ... Being a student here has made me realize the good and the bad and why it is important to make wise decisions. My favorite teachers in high school are Mr. Self and Mr. King. They have helped me understand the concepts of English and ICP (Introduction to Chemistry and Physics). Learning these concepts became surprisingly easy even though there were some hard

times. It was different having fun and learning at the same time.

"I like the worship services and how everyone joins in on Fridays. I enjoy listening to the sermons and daily chapel services. Being able to have the opportunity to hear the Word of God is a big privilege. The services have made my relationship with God grow stronger.

"I will miss Oneida, for the most part, because if I were not here right now, I would probably be in trouble back home. I'm not a bad kid or anything, it is just the friends I hung out with sometimes got into trouble. So, I'm grateful for having the chance to experience the Oneida life."

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



W.F. Underwood

Tremendously blessed

May graduate is preacher, father and student president

Casey Hampton is excited about graduating in May but acknowledges he will miss being a student.

"We have been tremendously blessed," he said. "Now I am excited to see what the Lord will do."

It was in the seventh grade that Casey first came to campus with his parents. "It was a good place to grow up," he said. "I'll always remember those years."

Casey and his wife, Becky, recently expanded their family through adoption—a 12-year-old boy and his 13-year-old twin brothers. The Hamptons became the boys' foster parents nearly two years ago. The couple also has a 2-year-old foster daughter.

While at Clear Creek, Casey served three years as youth minister for Blackmont Baptist Church in Hulen. He also is volunteer chaplain for the Bell County Forestry Camp, a minimum-security prison 12 miles from campus. "The Lord has had His hand on that ministry," Casey said, referring to BCFC. "He has a way of taking broken lives and putting them back together. It is a ministry that needs a definite call, someone willing to listen and look beyond outward appearance. It is one of the

most rewarding ministries."

Since last October, Casey has served on the search committee seeking Clear Creek's fifth president. "At first, I was hesitant to accept the assignment," he said, "but when I met the committee, I was impressed with their heart for the Lord and their desire to find the man God has set apart for this ministry. We've prayed much; it has been a blessing to be a part of this."

During his senior year, Casey has served as student body president. The first semester, we met weekly to pray together, a blessing I have missed since I have returned to the pastorate and serve only part-time with Clear Creek.

In January, Casey went to Haiti with a Joe Mobley Evangelistic Association team. They delivered medicine and developed clean water sources. "Our primary task was to preach the gospel each night," he said.

Casey is committed to God's will for the future. "I believe He is calling me to the prison chaplaincy," he said.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Keeping missions in focus

2007 WMU annual meeting highlights hands-on ministry, missions involvement

By **Dannah Prather**
Partnerships Editor

Owensboro—Just as Woman's Missionary Union sports a large "m" in its logo to emphasize a focus on missions, the "m" was very prominent at the recent annual meeting of Kentucky WMU.

"This has been an exciting year in our work," Kentucky WMU Executive Director Joy Bolton told more than 650 people gathered at Third Baptist Church in Owensboro March 23-24.

In 2006, WMU leaders in Kentucky and Korea further developed plans for their three-year partnership. Bolton and three other Kentuckians traveled to Korea to become better informed about the needs of Korean Baptists and the Korean people.

Prayerwalking China's border with North Korea, and teaching English as a Second Language are two ways Kentucky Baptists can be involved in the partnership, she said. ESL tutors are needed to serve monthly through 2008. The prayerwalking trip is scheduled for May 1-11. An ESL teaching trip to rural areas of Korea will be Aug. 2-18.

Leadership development is another aspect of the partnership. A Korean Baptist student, Soonsil Back, is enrolled at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and has begun an internship with Kentucky WMU.

"Asian Adventure"

The Korean focus will spill over to Mission Adventure Camp at Cedar Crest this year. "Asian Adventure" is the theme for the weeklong events that begin June 11. Also on the schedule is an Express Camp for boys and girls July 5-7, and mother/daughter overnights in June and July.

Discussing missions at home, Bolton announced that MissionsFEST, a week-long ministry effort coordinated by national WMU, will return to Kentucky in 2008.

MissionsFEST mobilizes volunteers from across the country to help local Baptists in various hands-on ministries and outreach efforts. MissionsFEST was held in Enterprise Baptist Association in 2004. Boone's Creek Baptist Association is the focus for 2008.

In recognition of Bolton's efforts to spotlight and help meet ministry needs in Eastern Kentucky, Teresa Parrett of Appalachian Regional Ministry presented her with a framed print.

Upcoming mission events in Eastern Kentucky include a trip to Lynch May 21-25 to assist Meridzo Ministries. Volunteers will help with home maintenance and repair, prayerwalking, cooking, sewing and crafts.

Backyard Bible clubs, youth ministry and visiting homebound residents are part of another trip set for July 30-Aug. 2 to Wheelwright.

Before involvement comes education, and Bolton reported that since 2003, her office has received word that Kentucky Baptists have formed 340 new missions organizations, including 82 Women on Mission groups and 68 Mission Friends groups.

Bolton encouraged Kentucky WMU members to consider hosting missions organizations in their homes. "Somewhere along the way we decided that if we weren't given time on Sunday or Wednesday, we could not have a missions organization," she said. "Would you be willing to invite children to your home to teach them about missions?"

Bolton, who now leads a Children in Action group, once hosted Acteens on Friday afternoons in her home. "Missions groups of any age can meet in a home," she said. "Kids like to eat and they enjoy adult attention."

Noting that charitable contributions to Kentucky WMU by its members will free up more funds for direct missions, Bolton reported new



PRAYING FOR THE NATIONS Bethany Husk, a student at Kentucky Wesleyan College in Owensboro, carries the Hungarian national flag as part of an international prayer emphasis during the Kentucky WMU annual meeting. Missionaries to Europe, Chile, West Africa and other regions led WMU members and guests in interceding for the people of the world. The flags were carried by members of Baptist Campus Ministries in the Owensboro area. (Photos by Dannah Prather)

efforts to increase endowment gifts.

Between 2007 and 2010, WMU hopes to encourage 1,000 individuals or groups to contribute \$1,000 each to the Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund. Last September, the first six \$1,000 pledges were received.

Kentucky WMU received a unique contribution to its endowment in 2006, Bolton reported. Burgin Baptist

Church tithed to WMU the proceeds of an estate left to the congregation. "We've never had a gift come to us in that manner," she said.

During the annual meeting, WMU members and guests contributed more than \$5,400 to fund special gifts for Kentucky missionaries and their children serving at home, nationally or internationally.



KIDS IN ACTION Boys from Dunmor Baptist Church's Children in Action wave flags of different nations during the final session of Kentucky WMU's annual meeting. Just as Girls in Action provides missions education and involvement for pre-teen girls, Children in Action is designed for boys and girls in grades one through six.



LEADING TEEN Chelsea Ballou, a member of Central Baptist Church in Corbin, is serving on the National Acteens Panel this year. She encouraged Kentucky WMU members to fill out prayer cards that will be inserted into informational packets for young women attending Blume, the national Acteens conference later this year.

WMU elects new officers, Executive Board members

Owensboro—

Members of Kentucky WMU elected new Executive Board members and officers at their annual meeting March 23-24.

Officers may serve up to four years and are elected annually. Pat Reaves, a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Louisville, was re-elected president. Sandra Duguid, a member of New Palestine Baptist Church in Crofton, was elected vice president, succeeding Pat Key whose term ended. Cheryl Hatfield, a member of Willisburg Baptist Church, was elected to serve as recording secretary. She has served unofficially since the resignation of Susan Stinnett.

New members of the Executive Board are Linda Devine, Bruners Chapel Baptist Church in Harrodsburg; Pat Ginn, Crestwood Baptist Church in Frankfort; Betty Montfort, Highland Baptist Church in Shelbyville; Mae Renner, Calvary Hill Baptist Church in Stanford; Konnie Smith, Second Baptist Church of Russellville; Kim Thomas, Glenville Baptist Church in Utica; Cecilia Wallace, Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah; Mary Lou Walzer, East Cumberland Avenue Baptist Church in Middlesboro; and Marjorie Yandell, Marion Baptist Church.



CHIMING IN Members of Korea WMU's Esther Missions Choir and Handbells strike chimes during one of several presentations at the Kentucky WMU annual meeting. The Korea WMU members performed in churches from Cadiz to Lexington during their eight-day tour. Church members opened their homes to the women, who purchased their own airline tickets and paid other travel expenses. Contributions from Kentucky Baptists provided for the choir while they were in the commonwealth.

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Chris White

I suppose we all owe James Cameron a note of gratitude this Easter.

He is the Hollywood director who chronicled the neglected ossuary that holds the bones of a man named Jesus—yes, he claims, *that* Jesus. Jesus is human after all, Cameron assured us. And as for the resurrection, well, the bones make the case.

So why am I grateful for James Cameron? Well, he could hardly have defined better the hope that comes by Easter and the resurrection of Jesus.

Rascal and righteous alike have the same concern: Does life end as a box of bones? The answer from Jesus Christ is that life wins—both while we live and when we die.

Because the Bible exposes an empty tomb, not a cluttered box of bones, we see that there is a God capable of redeeming what we spent a lifetime losing (Mark 16:6). The promise of resurrected bodies requires more than good intention; it will require a God. At death, when we can offer no resistance, we find God willing to do for us what only God could do for us. That is the love Jesus promised and the reward for faith (John 3:16).

Until then, while these bones still bear flesh, God promises a new life through Jesus Christ that clears a clouded mind (Romans 12:2), soothes a troubled soul (Philippians 4:7), and literally makes new what was counted as loss (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We will die. But Easter reminds us that God has bigger plans than boxes of bones.

Chris White is pastor of First Baptist Church of Carrollton

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BARLOW**—Ohio Valley Church will hold revival services April 8, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and April 9-11, 7 p.m., with **Ronnie Sivells** as evangelist. **Tim Smith** is pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—Canton Church will host **Jews for Jesus** in a presentation of a Passover Seder April 5, 7 p.m.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host a Weekend of Renewal and Revival April 13-15. Speakers include **James Washington**, April 13, 7 p.m.; **Michael Caldwell**, April 14, 7 p.m.; and **David Walters**, April 15, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. For more information, call (270) 789-0082.

■ **CLAY**—Diamond Church recently called **Ralph Alexander** as pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church recently called **Wayne Eastham** as worship pastor. He previously was associate minister of worship at First Church of Columbia, S.C. **Dan Garland** is pastor.

■ **EWING**—Ewing Church recently ordained **Tracy Hunt** and **Mark Sergent** as deacons.

■ **GREENSBURG**—Greensburg Church's worship and handbell choir will present a Good Friday service April 6, 7 p.m.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Heather Taylor** recent-

ly resigned as minister of children at Fern Creek Church.

Highland Church's choir will present "Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!" April 8, 8:30 and 11 a.m. **Joe Phelps** is pastor.

■ **MAYTOWN**—First Church will hold revival services April 15, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., and April 16-18, 7 p.m., with **Joe Mobley** as evangelist.

■ **MOREHEAD**—First Church will present an Easter musical, "The Lower Room," April 5-7, 8 p.m. For more information, call (606) 784-5768. **Don Mantooth** is pastor.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—Brindle Ridge Church will hold revival services April 15-20, 7 p.m., with **Dennie Crowe** as evangelist. **Ron Roberts** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Buena Vista Church

will host **Children of the World**, a 15-member international children's choir from four nations, in concert April 5, 7 p.m. For more information, call (270) 683-6234. **Bruce Treon** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Olivet Church recently called **Skip Parsons** as pastor.

West End Church ordained **Charles Hammonds** as a deacon Feb. 11. **Wayne Carter** is pastor.

■ **WILLISBURG**—Rockbridge Church recently called **Bob Gray** as pastor.

What's going on?

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

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—any place, anytime, any or no fees. Call Ben Render at (502) 368-3067.

AVAILABLE: Southern Seminary student for supply, interim, part-time or full-time pastoral ministry. Call Mark Hollingsworth at (502) 409-5727 or e-mail: mark6703@yahoo.com.

FOR RENT: Family reunion or wedding parties. Highway 30A, beachside, 75 yards from the ocean; more than 5,000 square feet, eight bedrooms including five masters; full game room; large dining area; private heated pool. Call Suzannah at (800) 397-2708; www.reunionhouse.org.

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

FOR SALE: Duplo D-590 Folder. Asking \$1,200. Contact Louise Cornell at (502) 955-5480.

FOR SALE: Striped neckties: retail value to \$20—your cost \$7. Christian and patriotic neckties: retail value \$15—your cost \$6. Humor book: "500 Laughter Doeth Good Like a Medicine." \$6. (606) 285-3051.

SEEKING: Part-time/bivocational music minister. Send resumés to: Immanuel Baptist Church, 1280 Faulkner Lane, Danville, KY 40422. www.ibcsbc.org.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children. Candidate should have seminary degree or equivalent. Minister will equip parents, committees and other adult members to develop an effective discipleship environment for education and outreach for K-12; plan and implement retreats, camps and mission activities. Reply by mail to: Versailles Baptist Church, 125 East Green St., Versailles, KY 40383, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Community-minded senior pastor for a church with an existing community outreach presence. Morganfield First Baptist Church is located in a small, western Kentucky town, and has an average attendance of 200-250 in two Sunday morning services—one contemporary and one traditional. This is an awesome church with a strong potential for growth. Send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 200 North Morgan St., Morganfield, KY 42437.

SEEKING: Part-time accompanist for Sunday and Wednesday worship and choir practices. Contact Green Acres Baptist Church, 5189 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40219; (502) 964-8165; e-mail: greenacresbaptist@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor at Piner Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in northern Kentucky. We provide many ministries locally and internationally. Average attendance for Sunday services is 450. For more information, go to www.pinerbaptist.org. Resumés may be sent to Wayne Diehl, pastor of administration, 15044 Madison Pike, Morning View, KY 41063.

SEEKING: Minister of youth/music. A conservative SBC church seeks an experienced minister for this dual ministry. Send resumés to: Carpenter Street Baptist Church, 501 E Carpenter St., Moberly, MO 65270; or e-mail to carpbcpastor@yahoo.com. (606) 263-6201 for more information.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of discipleship and evangelism with passion for community outreach and church growth. Duties include planning and implementing balanced program of adult discipleship and evangelistic activities to promote church health and growth; mission trip coordination and leadership; curriculum, space and teacher support for Sunday school, discipleship training. Reply by mail to: Versailles Baptist Church, 125 East Green St., Versailles, KY 40383, Attn: Personnel Committee.

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

SEEKING: Full-time church administrator for large Lexington church. Responsible for the general operations, financial affairs and administrative matters of the church. Individual must possess a bachelor's degree (or higher) and appropriate training to manage business and fiscal affairs, human resources, facilities and food services. A minimum of five years experience in church and/or related environment required. NACBA certification preferred. Please send resumés to: Personnel Committee, 3100 Bates Creek Road, Lexington, KY 40502.

SEEKING: Full-time student minister. Must be energetic and Spirit-led. Please send resumé to: First Baptist Church, 916 Main St., Paris, KY 40361, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for conservative Southern Baptist church in Georgetown, Ky. Forward resumés to: Gano Baptist Church, 212 Bevens Lane, Georgetown, KY 40324; or to ganopastorsearch@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Part-time senior adult minister for large church in Lexington. Send resumés to: Personnel Committee, 3100 Bates Creek Road, Lexington, KY 40502.

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: 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: Pianist/keyboardist with strong accompanying, sight-reading and improvisational skills for blended worship. Must be available Sunday mornings and evenings, Wednesday evenings, and for rehearsals. Contact New Hope Baptist Church at (859) 873-1707; or e-mail wnoss@newhopeky.org.

SEEKING: Minister of students and recreation. Submit resumé to: Chatham Baptist Church, 1500 East Walnut, Chatham, IL 62629; or jerryweber@insightbb.com by April 27.

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

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: 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 resumés to: Search Team, Hixson First Baptist, 5800 Grubb Road, Hixson, TN 37343.

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

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

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

WANTED: Tickets to Beth Moore seminar in Nashville in September. If you have extra tickets, please call M.J. Wilcox at (270) 543-0235 or 754-4136.

From adding to multiplying

Church starters pursue creative methods to impact Seattle with the gospel

By Mickey Noah
SBC North American Mission Board

Seattle—Seattle can seem like one big paradox.

On one hand, it is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Almost 574,000 people live in Seattle proper with 4 million in the metro area.

Known as the "Emerald City" because of the lush evergreens in the area, it has been called the most literate city in the United States. The latest census found that Seattle has the highest percentage of college graduates of any major U.S. city. The area is home to Microsoft, Boeing and Starbucks.

With some 190 different languages spoken, Seattle is multiethnic. Many world religions are represented. More than 80 percent of residents say they believe in something beyond the physical realm, but only about 4 percent of greater Seattle residents are evangelical Christians.

"Seattle has never been a Christian city," said Gary Irby, churching planting missionary for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and Puget Sound Baptist Association. "It's not post-Christian—it's never had a predominant Christian influence."

Therein lies the rub for Irby, 46, whose sole mission is to start new churches whose members will share the gospel with residents of Puget Sound, an area about 100 miles long and 40 miles wide.

Ask about "spiritual journeys"

"One of the important things we've discovered is that you cannot presume that people in Seattle have a basic understanding of the gospel," he said. "You can't assume they've ever been in church, that they've ever even seen or read the Bible."

The best way to share the gospel with people in Seattle is to ask them, "Where are you in your spiritual journey?" Irby said. "As they open

up, we gain the opportunity to share our faith with them."

Like most men and women, "Seattle people want to know that you genuinely care about them before you can start to share your faith," Irby said.

A graduate of Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Wash., and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., Irby has been a pastor of churches in Seattle and Oregon. He and his childhood sweetheart, Joyce, have been married for 25 years; they have four children.

Church planting legacy

Irby comes from a long line of church starters. "My granddaddy was a bivocational church planter in north Texas," he said. "My dad went into the ministry at an early age, moved to Indiana and planted eight churches there before I turned seven years old."

Despite the family heritage, Irby said he thought about "music, education and even politics before God led me into the ministry."

As a young minister in Washington, Irby served a church that was growing, but slowly. He said he became frustrated with himself and with God. He recalled asking God, "Lord, what's going on here? What gives?" And God said to me very clearly—the clearest I've ever heard Him—'Gary, you've been adding. It's time to start multiplying.'"

That experience led Irby to church planting, a ministry through which he has served 20 years—nine of those in Seattle.

"About seven years ago, we had about 100 churches in the area," Irby said. "We've seen that number grow to about 170 different churches, in 20 different languages." More than half are non-English speaking congregations. Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Russian and Spanish are represented.

In addition to language groups, Irby and the 65 church planters he has directed over the last nine years have worked to start churches among different age groups: "Millennials" (teens and 20s), "Busters" (30s to mid-40s) and "Baby Boomers" (late 40s to early 60s).

Community is another affinity factor, so team members have established churches in apartment complexes, theaters and schools.

Scripture is constant and unchanging, but church-planting methods should be flexible, Irby said, adding that church planters need to consider local culture. Effective church starters never should think there is only one way to establish a congregation, he said.

"My role as a church planting missionary is to help recruit and train church planters, to assess them, to help them find partners, and to help them discern where God is leading them to plant a church," Irby said. "A lot of planters come in and say, 'Just tell me where to plant a church.' I

tell them I won't do that. I'll leave that to God. We'll show them a half-dozen possible places, and pray with them about where God is leading them."

Irby said church planting often is lonely, challenging work that takes missionaries away from their families and familiar surroundings to non-Christian locations such as Seattle.

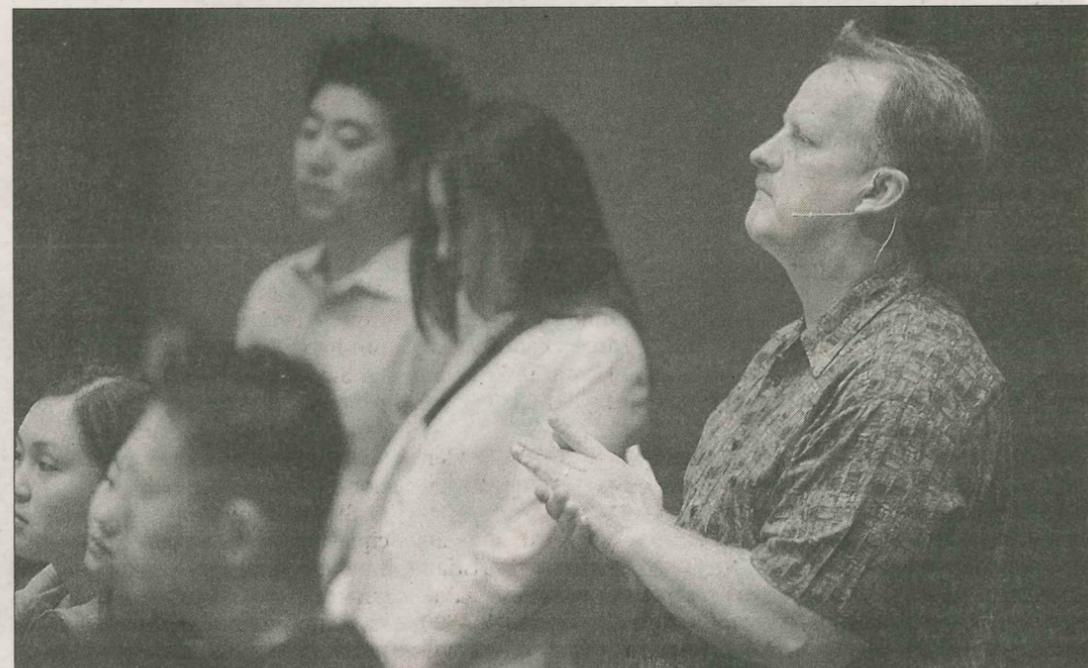
"Another challenge is having enough resources and partners to help. We find that it takes an average of six churches to help support every new church plant," he said.

"It's a constant struggle to find enough churches to come and help us with the new church plants. It takes prayer support, mission involvement and financial giving. But as much as we need money, it's more than that. We want supporting churches that will commit to pray for us regularly and consistently, and churches that will send people to come and help us with short-term missions."



Gary and Joyce Irby

METRO MISSION FIELD Southern Baptist missionary Gary Irby (right) participates in worship prior to preaching at Harvest Fellowship in Seattle. (Photos by Adam Buchanan)



NAMB research identifies primary factors for church plants' success

Alpharetta Ga.—Location, special ministries, member training and adequate staffing are among top indicators of whether a new church will succeed, according to a recent study by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's Center for Missional Research.

According to research center senior director Ed Stetzer and missiologist researcher Phillip Connor, 10 categories are the best predictors for higher worship attendance compared to church plants at or below average attendance.

Location. Church plants that begin in school facilities have obvious benefits, such as visibility, access, parking and classroom/worship space. Most churches meeting in schools reported low costs. Another benefit is that schools and movie theaters can accommodate continued growth easier than other venues.

Ministry. Leadership of new churches with high attendance reported hosting block parties and holiday-themed events such as fall

festivals and Easter egg hunts to attract members of the community.

Promotion. From the start, successful new churches promoted their ministries and special events through direct mail and other means. They also maintain contact with members and regular attendees.

Training. Church plants that experience the best attendance provided training for new members.

Expectations. These churches also required new members to sign a church covenant that communicated an expectation of participation.

Financial. Congregations that attracted more people are intentional about financial stewardship. They communicate giving as an integral part of Christian life and necessary for personal growth.

Staff. Successful churches are led by church planters who were professionally assessed for their suitability to the ministry. These congregations also have multiple staff, facilitating steady and more sustainable growth. The most successful

church plants did not start out understaffed.

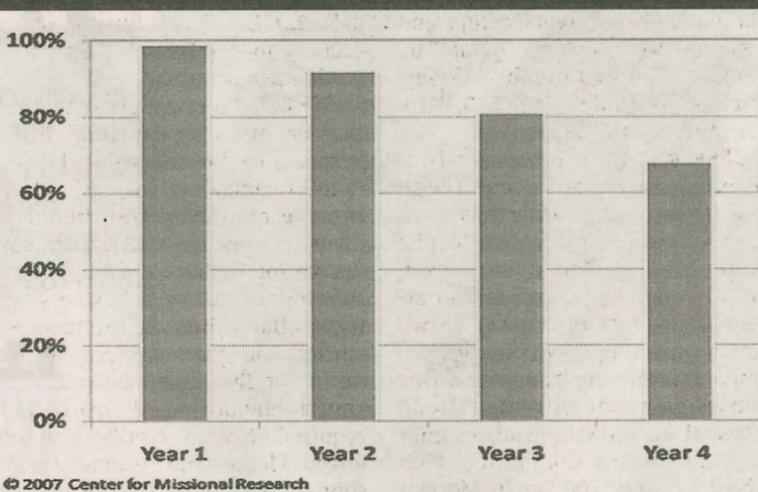
Missions. The most successful new churches plan to start their own church plant within three years. They also find other ways to serve people in their communities.

Leadership. Church plants with

high attendance provide leadership training for members. They also delegate leadership roles to laypeople.

Achievement. The study found that effective church planters are goal-oriented visionaries who do not permit themselves to be distracted from a vision.

Church start survival rate



SURVIVING The Center for Missional Research at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board determined that 68 percent of church starts (or "plants") survive beyond four years. The research also concluded that the survivability rate is similar across denominations.



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