PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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Study highlights benefits of kids attending church

Nashville (BP)—Church is good for children. That's the message of a new study that says young children of churchgoing parents fare better behaviorally, emotionally and cognitively than do children of parents who never attend church.

In fact, the study adds, the more often the parents attend, the better off the kids are.

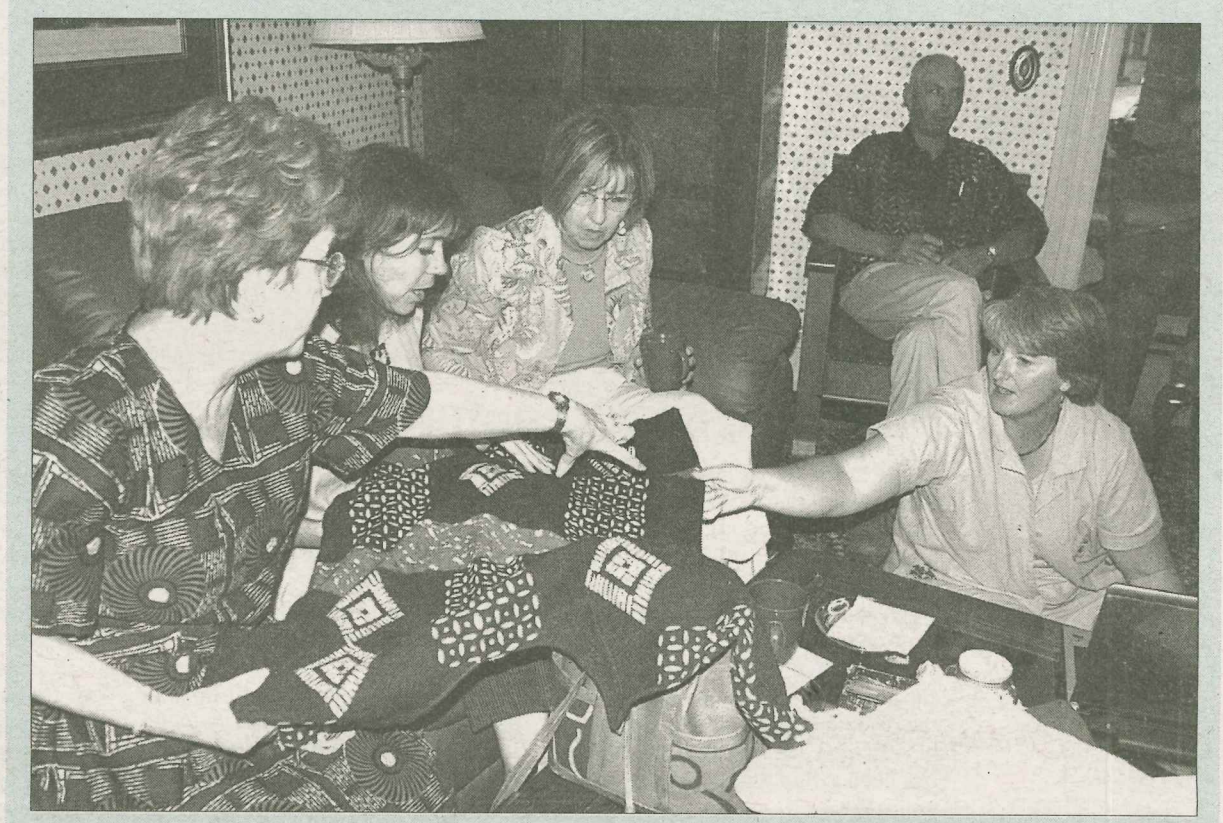
The study by sociologist John Bartkowski and a team of researchers at Mississippi State University examined data from the nationwide Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, which evaluated first-graders by interviewing parents and teachers. In the data Bartkowski used, some 9,500 parents and 8,800 teachers were interviewed.

Examining the ECLS data, Bartkowski and his team concluded it is "quite clear" that religious attendance impacts children positively. His research—which claims to be a "first of its kind" study on the subject using "nationally representative data"—will be published in the journal Social Science Research.

The study also said parent-child discussions about religion "often yield positive affects on child development" and that regularity in attendance can make a positive difference.

"Religion" in the study includes all religions—the ECLS survey did not ask specific faith questions—so the study does not address differences among various faiths.

'Mali moms'



Kentucky native Judy Miller (above right), a Southern Baptist international missionary to West Africa, currently is on stateside assignment in Kentucky. She met recently with a group of "Mali moms" and other family members whose daughters are serving as International Mission Board Journeymen in Mali, West Africa. ■ **Above:** *Mary Lauer (left) shows a mudcloth garment and purse she purchased during a mission trip to West Africa to Gail Getzen and Rosalou Maxwell (on couch).* ■ **Right:** *Judy Miller (center) poses for a photo with Gary and Pam Hutchinson of Dry Ridge following Nelson Baptist Association Woman's Missionary Union's 2007 Women's Celebration May 1. Miller is dressed in a costume from Niger culture and Mrs. Hutchinson is wearing a garment from Mali. The Hutchinsons' daughter, Krystal, is a Journeyman to Mali.* **See stories and more photos on page 3.** *(Photos by Dannah Prather)*

Blackaby urges Kentucky pastors to go to 'next level' in ministry

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Lexington—The man helping shape the newest edition of the popular "Experiencing God" discipleship study has a succinct message for pastors: You can't give people what you don't have.

"If you want to lead people into a growing, dynamic walk with God, you have to have one yourself," Richard Blackaby said at the "Next Level" training conference May 1 at Broadway Baptist Church in Lexington.

"Too many pastors get into the pulpit expecting people to do things they haven't done themselves," he noted. "The best thing you could ever do for your people is to go to the next level yourself."

Co-sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Elkhorn Baptist Association, the seminar attracted more than 120 participants to Broadway Baptist Church.

French Harmon, leader of the KBC's church development team, said participants seemed to resonate with Blackaby's presentation, which he hopes will influence the 70 percent of Kentucky Baptist churches he described as plateaued or declining.

"We hope many of these pastors will hear an encouraging word and will take this message of hope back into their studies and grow their churches," Harmon said.

Blackaby, who was a pastor before becoming president of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary in Cochrane, Alberta, in 1993, became president of Blackaby Ministries International last July.

The ministry was founded by his father, Henry, who co-authored "Experiencing God" with Claude King. The study has sold 5.4 million copies worldwide and has been translated into 64 languages.

Richard Blackaby is editing the newly-revised edition, which will be released in August by LifeWay Christian Resources. He said it will include numerous edits, new stories and new video curriculum.

Blackaby Ministries seeks to spread the study's goal of helping people around the world experience a deeper relationship with God, Blackaby said.

That was the focus of the message Blackaby directed to Kentucky Baptist pastors last week, as he encouraged pastors to never be content with their current spiritual insights.

He recounted suggesting to his father that they get up at 6 a.m. to study the Bible. When he arose, his father already had been up for two hours and had made 12 pages of notes about Scriptures that God had revealed to him.

The elder Blackaby told his son, "God's showing me there's still so much He wants to do in me."

"In that moment, God said, 'Richard, you have just as much opportunity to hear from Me,'" the younger Blackaby said.

"There's a reason why top CEOs, White House leaders and (United Nations) officials want to hear from an ordinary man," he added. "They know they won't get a sermon; they'll get a word from God."

Blackaby spent part of the opening session lamenting pastors who deliver religious clichés and canned sermons.

He said the latter is evidenced by the fact that the sermon.com Web site—where users can download outlines, slides and illustrations—does its peak business on Saturday nights.

"People need to know what God has to say and pastors are giving them sermons downloaded the night before," Blackaby said. "Couples in the church are divorcing at the same rate as the world. They're exposed to sermons but not encountering a word from God. They're desperately seeking a word from God that will set them free."

He also outlined four limits that prevent pastors from walking more closely with God:

■ Not being prepared to hear from Him. Blackaby pointed to John 16:12-13, where Jesus told His disciples they weren't ready to bear some truths but the Holy Spirit would reveal them later.

"When are you at a place where you've exhausted everything a verse in the Bible has to say to you?" he asked, noting that his father once prepared more than six weeks to teach about the first verse in Ephesians.

❑ *See Richard Blackaby ... Page 6*

Fourteen Kentuckians tapped for SBC roles

Louisville—Fourteen Kentucky Baptists have been selected to serve on Southern Baptist Convention boards and committees.

SBC President Frank Page, pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., appointed four Kentucky Baptists to serve on committees during the SBC annual meeting June 12-13 in San Antonio. Kentuckians named to the committees are:

Travis Kerns, pastor of Morningside Baptist Church in Louisville and instructor of Christian worldview and apologetics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Boyce College, Credentials Committee.

Todd Linn, pastor of First Baptist Church of Henderson, Committee on Committees. Linn also was nominated to serve on the board of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dan Summerlin, pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah, Committee on Committees.

John Mark Toby, pastor of Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, Tellers Committee.

Members of the 2006-2007 Committee on Committes, including **Billy Compton,** pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, and **Rick Mann,** pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Russell Springs, nominated 11 Kentucky Baptists to serve on various SBC boards. In addition to Linn, other Kentuckians nominated for a first term of service are:

James Blount, a member of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Southern Seminary.

Gregory Dorris, a member of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, Southern Seminary.

Dan Garland, pastor of Crestwood Baptist Church in Oldham County, North American Mission Board.

Craig Loscalzo, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, Southern Seminary.

Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort and professor of Christian preaching at Southern Seminary, International Mission Board.

Kentucky Baptists nominated to a second term of service are:

Greg Bibb, a member of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, GuideStone Financial Resources.

Rick Bowden, pastor of Ormsby Heights Baptist Church in Louisville, SBC Executive Committee.

Greg Faulls, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, North American Mission Board.

Adam Greenway, pastor of The Baptist Church at Andover in Lexington, LifeWay Christian Resources.

Randall McGee, a member of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Southern Seminary.

McKissic hosts conference to explore spiritual gifts

Arlington, Texas (BP)—The growing debate within the Southern Baptist Convention about private prayer languages came to the fore April 27-29 at the "Baptist Conference on the Holy Spirit" at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas.

Conference host Dwight McKissic, a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, repeatedly affirmed his conviction that he has been gifted with a private prayer language.

"God just showed up in my prayer closet," McKissic said April 28 during a panel discussion. "I've asked the Lord to explain what I am saying, but as of yet I cannot understand it."

Bart Barber of First Baptist Church of Farmersville, Texas, presented a case for semi-cessationism, or the belief that some of the gifts (including speaking in tongues) ceased with the early church.

Specifically regarding the use of tongues or a private prayer language, Barber said, "Exegesis cannot answer this question" of its current-day validity. "Two people using the same methods of interpretation can look at the same text and come to completely opposite conclusions. When someone says, 'I'm speaking in tongues and it is from the Holy Spirit,' some people believe them and other people don't, and there's the difference." Barber said he is in the "skeptic" category.

Barber went on to deny the claim that Southern Baptist mission boards have wronged people who practice private prayer languages by not funding their missions.

"In the process of reviewing a candidate's background, they can come to the conclusion, 'That's not Baptist missions but Pentecostal,'" Barber said. "If they choose not to fund that, they have not denied anyone's liberty."

During the panel discussion, Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson, an International Mission Board trustee, did not directly address the issue of private prayer languages, but criticized IMB policies he regards as too restrictive.

"Denominationally, all I'm asking for is that we let people be free to be who God created them to be," he said. "We are turning a ship. ... One of these days, Dwight McKissic will be president of the Southern Baptist Convention."

During a discussion time, Burleson challenged Barber about whether McKissic should be barred from serving on denominational boards because of his view of tongues. Barber replied that he should not be barred from such appointment, because there should be no such litmus tests for volunteers. Barber went on to say that the denomination has every right to set up litmus tests for paid employees.

During the morning session April 29, McKissic collected a special offering for Gospel Fellowship Community Church in Salt Lake City. Pastor Jason Epps, a graduate of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, said his church was denied North American Mission Board funding because he acknowledged practicing a private prayer language.

BAPTIST DIGEST

GuideStone plans wellness walk/run. GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention will sponsor its annual Wellness Walk/Run during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in San Antonio. SBC messengers and their families are invited to join in the walk, which begins at 6:30 a.m. on June 12 at the Alamo Street entrance to HemisFair Park. The park is adjacent to the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and within walking distance from most hotels in the Riverwalk area. The first 500 registered walkers age 10 or older to stop by the Wellness Walk booth at the convention center will receive a free T-shirt. Warm-up will begin at 6:15 a.m. There will be a one-mile and 5K course for both runners and walkers. Interested individuals can register online at www.GuideStone.org or by calling 1-888-98-GUIDE (1-888-984-8433).

Missouri volunteer coordinator drowns. Keith Ward, the Missouri Baptist Convention's partnership volunteer coordinator for El Salvador, drowned April 22 in the Pacific Ocean along an El Salvadoran beach. The drowning occurred near the end of a week-long trip to El Salvador by a volunteer team from Missouri to identify churches and locations where Missouri Baptists can work during the three-year partnership effort. Ward and his wife, Karen, were three weeks into the three-year missionary effort. Before going to El Salvador, they were members of Fruitland Community Church in southeast Missouri. Mike Parry, Fruitland's pastor, said Ward apparently got too far out in the ocean, developed cramps and drowned. Observers said it appeared that Ward and his wife were carried out into the ocean waters by a riptide. Team member Heber Mena was able to rescue Mrs. Ward. In addition to his wife, Ward is survived by three children: Jenny, 27; Matt, 22; and Christa, 18.

Bluefield trustees elect Olive president. Trustees of Bluefield College elected former Kentuckian David Olive as the ninth president of the Baptist-affiliated Virginia college, effective July 1. Olive, 44, currently is executive vice president and chief operating officer of Pfeiffer University in Charlotte, N.C. He joined Pfeiffer's administration in 1998 as vice president for advancement and, before his current position, was executive vice president for administration and advancement. Olive previously was associate pastor of Georgetown Baptist Church as well as an attorney in Tennessee and Kentucky. Olive's election followed a 10-month presidential search process led by a committee of five trustees and one representative each from the faculty, staff and student body. He succeeds Dan MacMillan who led the college for nine years and is now director of the Ed.D. program for Dallas Baptist University's Gary Cook Graduate School of Leadership and special assistant to the president.

Samford provost's daughter dies in crash. Caitlin Creed, 19-year-old daughter of the provost of Samford University, died in a car crash April 30 on her way to visit her grandparents in Tyler, Texas. Creed, a freshman social work major at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, is the daughter of Brad and Kathy Creed of Homewood, Ala. Brad Creed is provost of Samford in Birmingham, Ala. He previously was dean and professor of Christian history at Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

More than 3,000 congregations join Acts 1:8 Challenge

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—More than 3,000 Southern Baptist churches, including 120 in Kentucky, have registered commitments to participate in Southern Baptists' Acts 1:8 Challenge.

Launched in 2004 by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board and North American Mission Board in cooperation with Baptist state conventions and associations, the Acts 1:8 Challenge is designed to encourage churches to take a fresh look at how they plan and execute their missions efforts.

The 3,019 churches on board with Acts 1:8 across the United States and Canada are "a testimony to the passion that Southern Baptists have for Jesus' Acts 1:8 mandate to impact lostness and create disciples of all nations," said Tim Yarbrough, NAMB's director of church relations.

The Acts 1:8 Challenge assists congregations in implementing a comprehensive missions strategy based on Jesus' charge to the apostles in Acts 1:8.

To fulfill the Acts 1:8 commitment, each church is encouraged to cooperate with its local Baptist association, state convention, NAMB and IMB. Churches accepting the challenge commit to eight "Kingdom-growing" responses as they work to intentionally prepare, learn, pray, give, go, tell, send and multiply.

Texas is the top state in the number of Acts 1:8 churches with 268. Others with more than 200 churches involved include Georgia, 260; Missouri, 254; and Florida, 215.

"Through the Acts 1:8 Challenge, any church of any size can embrace a strategic, biblical missions model that literally impacts eternity," Yarbrough said. "After all, missions is the overarching purpose of the church."

When a church commits to the Acts 1:8 Challenge, it receives a packet of resources that include a sermon outline, bulletin insert, video clips on CD-ROM, PowerPoint presentations and a 60-page leadership guide.

New implementation tools for churches are being developed in 2007-08, including an Acts 1:8 Renewal Weekend.

"Churches desiring to jumpstart their Acts 1:8 missions commitment should look closely at conducting an Acts 1:8 Renewal Weekend," Yarbrough noted. "There's no better way to bring awareness to and a passion for God's mission in the world than through a focused event like a renewal weekend."

Pastors and missions leaders interested in more information about the Acts 1:8 Challenge can visit www.ActsOne8.com or call 1-800-4 ACTS 18 (1-800-422-8718).

Meeting 'Nafi'

Journeymen parents meet career missionary who is 'big sister' to their daughters

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Bardstown—"You take them to Mission Friends, to G.A.s and then they want to go on a mission trip. ... Go figure."

Feigning helplessness, Tami Johanningsmeier held her hands up in a "what-are-you-going-to-do?" gesture as the men and women sitting around the comfortable family room joined her in laughter.

It wasn't a typical after-church get together that Darrell and Mary Lauer hosted in their Bardstown home May 1. Their guests were immediate family members of four Southern Baptist international missionaries to Mali, West Africa. The gathering was their first opportunity to meet Judy Miller, a Kentucky native and the career missionary who supervises their loved ones.

After Mission Friends and Girls in Action came the call for four young women, Amy Getzen, Krystal Hutchinson, Susan Johanningsmeier and Monica Maxwell, to serve Christ in a part of the world where the average life expectancy of the population is between 25 and 50, and most people live on less than $1 a day.

Having her daughter, Krystal, a world away "isn't always easy," said Pam Hutchinson of Dry Ridge. "I had to give Krystal up to the Lord a long time ago."

Miller, a native of Hardinsburg, has served in West Africa for 10 years with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. While on stateside assignment, she has spoken to Kentucky Baptist groups large and small, telling them about her mission field and the young men and women who serve with her.

Prior to the party, Miller spoke to 188 members of Nelson Baptist Association Woman's Missionary Union gathered at Parkway Baptist Church in Bardstown.

She said the audience of nine sitting around the Lauers' family room was far more intimidating.

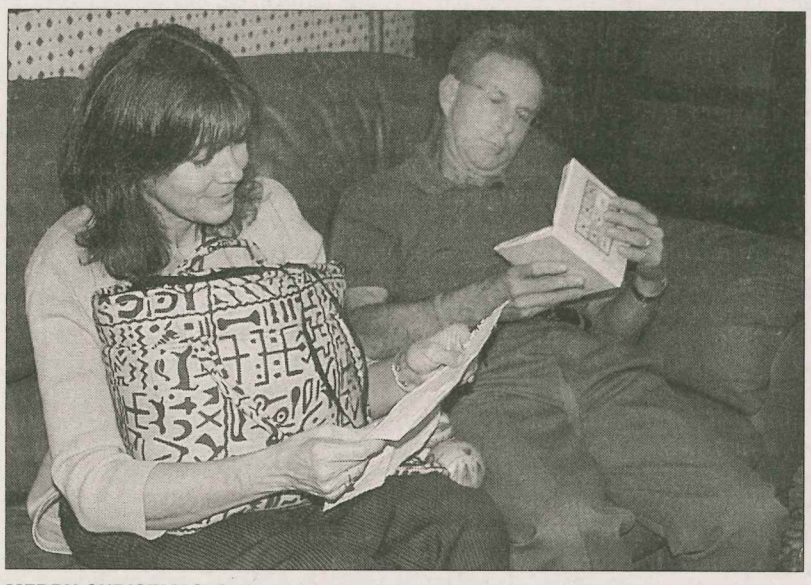
"I was waiting for: 'Why has my child lost 45 pounds?' or 'Why does my child have malaria?'" Miller said, admitting she was downright scared. More than a supervisor, her role in the lives of the IMB Journeymen missionaries can be summed up in one West African word: "Nafi."

"Roughly translated, that means 'big sister who takes care of her family,'" said Mary Lauer who has been to West Africa with her husband specifically to minister to the Journeymen missionaries serving for two to three years.

No tough questions about weight loss or illness arose. Instead the party was a time to compare stories of success and challenge from their daughters' ongoing ministry season in Mali.

Attending were Jimmy and Gail Getzen of Hendersonville, Tenn.; Gary and Pam Hutchinson and Krystal's grandmother, Garnett Hutchinson, from Dry Ridge; Wayne and Teri Johanningsmeier and their daughter, Lisa, from Floyds Knobs, Ind.; and Rosalou Maxwell of Birmingham, Ala.

MISSIONS MOVIES *Family members of four Southern Baptist missionaries to Mali, West Africa, enjoy photos from the mission field shown by Judy Miller (on floor), a Kentucky native and career missionary with the SBC International Mission Board. From left, Gail Getzen, Rosalou Maxwell, Gary Hutchinson, Jimmy Getzen, Garnett Hutchinson, Wayne Johanningsmeier, Pam Hutchinson, and Tami and Lisa Johanningsmeier met Miller for the first time May 1 at the home of Darrell and Mary Lauer of Bardstown. (Photos by Dannah Prather)*



MERRY CHRISTMAS *Gail and Jimmy Getzen of Hendersonville, Tenn., enjoy a letter and photos from their Journeyman daughter, Amy. The recent missionary parents' party provided Pam Hutchinson the opportunity to deliver the Christmas gifts to the Getzens and Johanningsmeiers. The packages, lost last year when Krystal Hutchinson returned to Kentucky for a family wedding, were recovered by an airline in April.*

"Did you hear the one about ..." was repeated throughout the evening as parents swapped stories from their daughters' e-mails and phone conversations.

Learning to drive a stick-shift, enduring illness, overcoming barriers of language and culture, facing spiritual warfare and mice falling from the hut ceiling were among topics. Miller shared photos and answered questions about everything from parasites to voodoo.

Mrs. Hutchinson said Miller's persence in her daughter's life is a comfort. When a close family member died, she contacted Miller whose schedule permitted her to travel to Krystal's village to inform her personally instead of via e-mail or phone. "I knew (Krystal) would have support with Judy there," Mrs. Hutchinson said.

The parents said the party was a great time of encouragement. Many of them met at their daughters' IMB commissioning service last year, but that was before the countless e-mails and other correspondence they have had among them since. "It helps to know you're not a Lone Ranger," Mrs. Hutchinson explained.

IMB's Journeymen program commissions college grads in their 20s to international missions service for at least two years.

PURE WATER, PURE LOVE *IMB missionary Judy Miller holds a portable water purifier purchased by Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union. A national effort, "Pure Water, Pure Love" provides water purifiers for missionaries around the globe. A larger model is used in homes. Drinking untreated water in West African villages is unthinkable, Miller said. The units filter "99 percent" of bacteria, she added. Learn more about "Pure Water, Pure Love" at www.wmu.com*

OneStory is unique gospel sharing

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Bardstown—The Journeymen in Judy Miller's charge are part of OneStory, a non-traditional gospel-sharing effort of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

According to the IMB, there are more than 1,600 people groups in 22 West African countries. Some do not have a written language. In Mali, Miller said, only 14 percent of the population is literate. "It's not just that they don't read," she said. "It's deeper than that. They learn differently. They're oral learners."

In a culture that admires stories—and stories well told—sharing biblical truths by focusing on the great stories of the Bible makes sense and follows Jesus' example, she said.

"Christ didn't speak *without* stories," Miller said, adding that He used stories even when speaking to the most-educated people of the day, the Pharisees.

Through OneStory, missionaries research several Bible translations and develop a "panorama of the Bible about why Jesus came—why Jesus was necessary," she said.

Dozens of stories from creation to Revelation are told to local believers, or "storycrafters," who then re-tell the narrative in their language and also in the context of their culture, for a recording.

Other team members review the recording to ensure errors have not crept into the translation. Areas of concern are noted, and the process is repeated until an accurate Bible story is produced that is culturally relevant so local people will want to share it with family and neighbors.

Miller said depending on the complexity of the story, it may require repeated revisions.

The four Journeymen in Mali began their service last fall. They concentrate on building relationships with people in the towns and villages. They pound millet, shuck corn, learn to weave, and play with the local children. As relationships develop, stories—and the gospel—are shared.

IMB missionaries in Asia, South America and Southern Africa also use the OneStory method.

With information from the SBC International 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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Responding to Jesus: 'Do you love Me?'

COMMENTARY

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va. (BP)—It's a simple question: "Do you love me?"

It cuts to the quick, demands a straight answer. When someone asks you such a question honestly, you respond from the heart.

When the Lord asks, can you do any less?

In one of the most beautiful and mysterious encounters recorded in the New Testament, the risen Jesus appeared one morning at dawn beside the Sea of Tiberias (John 21). Some of the disciples had been fishing there all night, but had caught nothing. A stranger on shore called out to them to cast the net one more time. They did—and couldn't lift all the fish in the net. John, the beloved disciple of Christ, realized that the "stranger" was the Lord and told Peter.

Peter, true to form, plunged into the water and swam 100 yards to shore to greet Jesus. The others followed on the boat. As the sun broke over the water, Jesus invited them to a breakfast of bread and fish He had already laid atop a charcoal fire on the beach. One can only imagine the awe the disciples felt during this quiet meal by the sea.

Ponder question's significance

Afterward, the Lord asked Peter, not once but three times, "Do you love Me?"

Most commentators focus on Peter's responses ("Yes, Lord; You know that I love You") and what Jesus told him to do as a result: "Tend My lambs. ... Shepherd My sheep. ... Tend My sheep" (John 21:15-17).

But think for a moment about the question itself—and who asked it.

"Jesus needed to hear a human voice tell Him, 'You know that I love you,'" wrote the late Brother Roger, founder of the non-denominational Taize Christian community in France. "Christ asks each of us the very same question, age-old and always new: 'Do you love Me?'"

Here is a divine mystery. Does the Lord really "need" anything from us? Perhaps there is a better word to describe the yearning of a holy and eternal God. Yet at the Last Supper, Jesus said, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you" (Luke 22:15). At Gethsemane, He cried, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me" (Matthew 26:38). Yes, these words came just before Christ's suffering and death, when the weight of the world's sin and impending rejection was upon Him. But on the beach, after His passion and glorious resurrection were accomplished, He still wanted to know, "Do you love Me?"

The desire of God the Son and God the Father is one. From the time He created us, He has expressed again and again His deep longing that we abide with Him, worship Him, love Him, adore Him. It is the very reason He created us—not to bless us, though He does so in abundance, but that we might bless Him.

"We" means all of humanity, not just the children of ancient Israel or the inhabitants of "Christian" lands in our age. Jesus told Peter to "shepherd My sheep," to love and disciple His followers so that they, in turn, might love and disciple others among all nations who would glorify Him. He spoke of these generations of spiritual children in His priestly prayer to the Father: "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word ... that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me" (John 17:20, 23b).

These are missionary passages of Scripture as surely as Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8. But they hint at the bottomless depths of God's love and His desire to be loved—both of which motivate His command that we go to all nations.

That's why missions is an act of worship. Through missions, we sing glory to God in places and among peoples where He has not been glorified before. We make new disciples who will join in the everlasting song of praise and teach it to others. As John Piper reminds us, when the day comes that God is being worshipped among all peoples, the need for missions will cease. But worship will go on forever.

Church planting expands family

During 2005, Southern Baptist missionaries and their international partners began church planting among 104 people groups for the first time—including 13 peoples with no evangelical churches of any kind.

"For these 13 people groups, for the first time in their history there is a church representing our Lord and Savior to an unreached people that have never heard the gospel, don't have a Bible in their language and have never known what church looks like," explains Gordon Fort, International Mission Board vice president for overseas operations.

Put another way, these 13 peoples have been given the opportunity to join the vast, multilingual choir singing songs of love to the Lord.

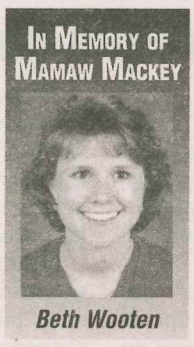
"Do you love Me?"

Yes, Lord, You know that we love You. Help us to love You more by shepherding Your lost sheep home.

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

Words of tribute to my mother

I lost my mother last November at age 86 and I thought the best way to pay tribute to her would be for you to read about her through the eyes of my daughter, Beth. Beth is now the mother of three children and wife of a minister, Bartley Wooten, in Charlotte, N.C. Here is her essay, written 15 years ago:



Beth Wooten

"The person who has had the most influence upon my life is Evelyn Ellis Mackey, my grandmother. She has had the greatest impact upon my life because she is a rare example of unselfish service, she makes people feel special, is a great encourager to others and has a disciplined lifestyle.

"Mamaw, as all the grandchildren call her, is very sensitive to the needs of others and takes the initiative to meet those needs. She gives unselfishly to others at her own expense. Mamaw has assisted almost every family in the small community of 120 homes regardless of their social status. As a child I can remember visiting the shut-ins and seeing my grandma do more for them than their families did. When I begin to think of my needs only, I am challenged by her example of selfless service to others. When I have given all that I think is possible, I am inspired by her example to keep giving, serving and caring. When Mamaw gives to people, she seems to gain a certain energy and glow that goes out to everyone.

"Grandma constantly shows people how special they are to her. I have never known anyone to leave her house empty-handed. Mamaw always has a creative gift to give. When someone is coming to visit, she prepares a big meal and is sure to make their favorite dish. I love macaroni and cheese, and every time I go to visit she makes it for me. When I was younger I would spend a week during the summer at my grandma's house. Each time she had planned special activities for me. Mamaw would take me shopping; we would visit shut-ins, go to picnics and go to the pool. Mamaw was one of seven children. Her grandmother made her feel special by giving her personal gifts and doing special activities with her. I hope to continue the heritage of making people feel special.

"Grandma not only makes people feel special but she also is a great encourager to people and helps them believe in themselves. There was a young girl in the community who did not receive much support from her family. Mamaw took her to church and brought her home regularly. The girl is now a mother of two children. Mamaw is always asking me about my activities and expressing how proud she is of my accomplishments. I hope I give as much encouragement to the ones I love as my grandma does.

Grandma also encourages me in her disciplined lifestyle. She has a great ability to organize and get things done. Mamaw awakes every morning at 5 a.m. to begin her day. She accomplishes more in one day than most do in two days. Mamaw has become conscious of cooking for good health and is an avid walker on a daily basis. She is now 71 and has more energy than most young women. Her discipline greatly challenges me to get things done and take better care of myself.

"My grandmother has had the greatest influence on my life because she has inspired me to utilize my talents and abilities in service to other people. If everyone had the unselfish spirit and unconditional love that my grandmother has, we could have a little bit of heaven on earth. Jesus evaluated the life of service in Matthew 25:40, 'Whatever you did to serve the least of these you did to serve me.' This verse clearly states the motto by which my grandmother lives."

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

FAMILY

No joke: God has clear purpose and plan for your work

FINANCIAL FORUM

By Jeremy White

A friend sent me a joke about the top excuses for falling asleep at your desk while at your job:

- I wasn't sleeping, I was trying to pick up contact lens without hands.
- Sleeping? I was meditating on the mission statement and envisioning a new paradigm!
- Amen.
- This is just a 15-minute power nap like they raved about in the last time management course you sent me to.
- Whew! Guess I left the top off the liquid paper.
- This is one of the seven habits of highly effective people!

We can chuckle at such a list because most likely we've had various jobs in our lives that are boring or have drained us or just have to be endured.

If you were to conduct a "man on the street" interview asking people what they thought about work, you'd probably receive comments ranging from "I owe, I owe, off to work I go" to "I work hard now so that someday I won't have to" to "my career is a big part of me."

God's view of work is different. Man was given work to do in the Garden of Eden before the fall. The curse of the fall was that work was just much harder. Work is a normal part of God's created order for humanity.

Work is not entirely who you are, but you can bring glory to God in your work. Rest is also part of God's plan, but we're not called to just long for retirement and leisure.

The physical and mental energy we exert for work has a practical purpose of providing for our families: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Timothy 5:8).

Work also provides for everyone to contribute to supporting a community or a church. "For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat'" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

So, when you're tempted to whistle that tune of the country song, "Take this job and shove it," remember that God has a purpose and plan for your work.

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

Resource can help couples strengthen communication

Q: My husband and I have read "The Five Love Languages," and it was helpful. What other books would you suggest that deal with this topic or other aspects of communication in marriage?

Dr. Emerson Eggerichs has written a book for couples titled "Cracking the Communication Code: The Secret to Speaking Your Mate's Language."

MARRIAGE

The premise of the book seems to be that husbands and wives speak different languages, much like one of you speaking Danish and the other speaking Cebuano throughout your marriage. Eggerichs declares that wives speak a "love language" while husbands speak a "respect language." He cites Ephesians 5:33 for this revelation in his own marriage and calls this the "Love and Respect Connection."

FAMILY FORUM

According to Eggerichs, the key of marriage is a mutual understanding of one another's language. The "crazy cycle" he describes happens when husbands speak in unloving ways and wives speak in disrespectful ways. This cycle keeps couples stuck and is destructive to the marriage relationship.

If you are seeking a resource to further explore your and your spouse's needs and the ways in which you communicate, this book might offer some additional insight.

One activity for exploring your love and respect connection is to write down speech that your husband says to you that you like and that you do not like. Does one seem loving to you and one unloving? Think about the ways you speak to your husband. Write these down and mark the ones that show respect. Evaluate your speech and invite your husband to join you in this activity. Begin a discussion about the spoken word and assess what is lovingly and respectfully spoken in your marriage communication and what is not. *—Valerie Vincent*

Q: As parents, should we leave our children completely free to choose a faith for themselves?

Genuine faith will always be personal. Everyone has to choose for themselves what they are going to believe, who they are going to follow and how they are going to live. Such freedom, however, does not preclude parental persuasion. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says just the opposite: Impress the ways of God on your children; talk about them, and make them a part of your everyday life.

PARENTING

As stated in this column previously, our children need to know what we believe and why. If we do not talk to them about our beliefs and teach them about our faith, we are doing both our children and our faith a disservice. In the end, our children may draw the conclusion that faith doesn't matter much to us.

Some parents do not talk with their children about faith issues or teach their own faith as absolute truth because they want their children to be free to choose for themselves what they are going to believe. Such a perspective may result from a situation where Mom and Dad have different faith perspectives that deep down they know to be mutually exclusive. Other parents may ironically feel it is simply too awkward to talk about something so important and personal.

Granted, children are impressionable and can be manipulated. However, committed parents will find ways to share what they believe with their children in appropriate ways—remembering that faith is personal and that ultimately, children have to choose for themselves.*—David Garrard*

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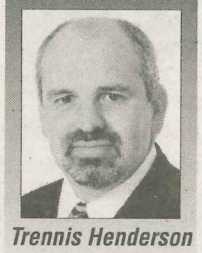
Scriptures offer words of tribute for moms

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

As Mother's Day takes center stage this Sunday, moms across the nation will be honored with flowers, cards, phone calls, breakfast in bed and other heartfelt expressions of love and gratitude.

That is as it should be. Setting aside at least one day a year to place our mothers on a well-deserved pedestal is the least we can do.

One other gift we can give is to pause and thank God for the unwavering love expressed by our moms over the years.

God's Word is filled with examples of mothers and grandmothers who selflessly served their loved ones and others around them. Consider a few examples:

■ **Hannah.** "And it came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I have asked him of the Lord.' ... 'For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord.' ... And his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ... And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:20, 27-28; 2:19, 21b). Imagine the loving sacrifice of a mother who dedicated her long-awaited son to God's service and then continued to serve him from a distance and watch him "grow before the Lord."

■ **Eunice and Lois.** "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, ... to Timothy, my beloved son: ... For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well" (2 Timothy 1:1, 2, 5). What a wonderful testimony of a faithful mother and grandmother who planted a strong spiritual foundation in young Timothy's life.

■ **Mary.** "And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions. ... And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?' ... And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:46, 49, 51-52). As Mary nurtured the Son of God, she quietly watched, listened, learned and "treasured all these things in her heart."

There are many other Scriptures we could dedicate to moms this Sunday, including Proverbs 31:10, 28a, "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. ... Her children arise up, and call her blessed" and 1 Corinthians 13:7, "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

In God's perfect wisdom, He established the family, providing the setting for moms—and dads—to guide their children to follow Christ's example of "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Take time this Sunday to share a verse of appreciation with your mother—or to remember her legacy of love.

Reflections from Blacksburg

FIRST PERSON

By Darrell Cook

Words. How can I put into words what we have experienced at Virginia Tech?

How can I communicate the depth of the hurt and the beauty of the first steps of God's healing? It seems impossible to even begin. Yet it was often with words that Jesus, the Living Word, has sustained us amid this crisis. Each day there were different phrases, different words, which provided pictures of all that God was walking us through.

Monday, April 16: "It's not about us." Still reeling from the shock of the shootings, our staff began to prepare for an evening gathering in our Baptist Campus Ministry Center for students to talk, pray and encourage one another. People pulled together so quickly. A couple of other campus ministries joined us that night.

Area churches brought food and people to serve. Jimmy Via (our BCM director at Radford) and Mark Appleton (our BCM associate director at Virginia Tech) were ready to lead a time of worship and prayer. Two Virginia Baptist crisis care counselors were on the scene by the time the event started.

As everyone got settled in, I began to wonder if any of the 300-plus students would utilize these counselors. Do I have them in the right place? What if no students come to visit them?

Apologetically, I said to Gerri McDaniel, one of the chaplains, "I don't know how the students will respond; I'd hate for you to travel here and not be utilized." For the first of multiple times that night, Gerri said to me, "That's OK. It's not about us." As those first days passed, our staff understood more of what she meant. It was not about us because the most important needs to be met were those of students and families close to the tragedy, not the needs of those preparing to serve. We were just a tiny fraction of all the people being used to point the campus toward healing. By the end of that evening, it was confirmed that our BCM students had lost a close friend, graduate student and BCMer Brian Bluhm. As we could only imagine the pain that his family must have encountered that night, indeed it was not about us.

Tuesday, April 17: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." I shared this verse (Psalm 34:18) with many people Tuesday and Wednesday after it was sent to me in an e-mail by Jody Faig, our human resources associate for the Virginia Baptist Mission Board. That verse was basically all there was to the e-mail. No commentary was needed. Thanks, Jody.

Wednesday, April 18: "The Body of Christ." I am in awe of the network of support with which Virginia Baptists are ministering on this campus.

Disaster relief workers, students, campus employees, VBMB staff, local church staff members and laypeople, and BSU/BCM alumni have all been a part of our extended team this week. The hands and feet of Jesus have gone out with many names and it is a joy to see so many serve so well.

Thursday, April 19: "The media is not the enemy." These words came to me from Al Meredith, pastor of Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. The shootings that occurred at Wedgwood Sept. 15, 1999, saw seven precious lives lost. Earlier on Thursday, multiple students told me that they were fed up with the media. They decried the speed with which some cast blame on the Virginia Tech administration. They were also upset by episodes of insensitivity shown by cameramen toward those grieving at the monuments around the drillfield.

After I shared the frustration, Al shared his own desire to be a blessing to people in the media and praying for them in the midst of their difficult jobs. I saw things differently the rest of the week and had some positive exchanges with the media. Though their numbers were decreasing, there were still countless opportunities to encounter reporters. Various students resonated with this idea when I shared with them that vision of responding to reporters with an attitude that holds forth kindness and God's grace.

Friday, April 20: "Go Tigers!" Some of our BSU/BCM alumni and friends from Blacksburg Baptist Church served a late breakfast to students. While the breakfast was still going on, a donation of 200 Detroit Tigers hats arrived. Brian Bluhm was a tremendous fan of the Tigers and the idea came about for our BCM students to wear Tiger hats around campus in his memory. We're hoping students have a chance to share with others that they miss their friend Brian, who loved the Tigers and loved God. May those words and other words spoken by our students bear fruit on this campus in the coming days of healing. In so many ways, they already are.

Darrell Cook is Baptist campus minister at Virginia Tech

Pastors resonate with Blackaby's straightforward words

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Lexington—What is the primary hindrance to pastors experiencing effective ministry?

The answer is pride, according to Richard Blackaby. He noted that pride prevents pastors from seeking help to overcome whatever problems or limits they face in ministry.


Richard Blackaby

Pride urges people not to admit they have a problem or ask anyone for help, emphasized Blackaby, president of Blackaby Ministries International, in an interview after last week's "Next Level" training conference in Lexington.

Pride "so blinds you to your condition you don't do anything about it that would really make a difference," he added. "Even when people are ready to help you, pride will tell you that you don't really need help."

He said pride is "particularly devastating because it immobilizes people from even finding the help they could have had."

Another leading obstacle to ministry he cited is neglecting an intimate walk with God.

While it might seem that anyone in full-time ministry would recognize their need for a deep spiritual life, there is a subtle temptation to think that because you're serving God you're automatically close to Him, Blackaby pointed out.

"That's why I think a lot of people are burning out today," he told the Western Recorder. "They're serving God but they're not relating to Him. They're not abiding in Him and so their roots aren't in the ground. They're not getting nourished."

Pastors who attended the May 1 conference indicated they appreciated such frank talk.

Among them were Dick Wilkins, associate pastor to senior adults at Rosemont Baptist Church in Lexington, who said Blackaby reminded him of his need to keep growing spiritually.

There is a temptation as one grows older to think you've done all the learning you can and let your mind retire, Wilkins said.

"If I'm growing, God is teaching me and I've got to let those things work in me before I can give them away to other people," he added.

Wilkins said the conference sessions had prompted him to consider starting a reading group to discuss books, such as those written by the Blackabys.

Carter Stewart, pastor of Mount Union Baptist Church in Keno, drew encouragement from the conference, which he said reminded him he's not alone in ministry.

"It wasn't a conference where he came in and said every small church is wrong and we need to be growing," Stewart said. "He came in and encouraged us where we are. I was so thankful for that."

Bobby Reno, pastor of Nortonville Baptist Church, said he initially was reluctant to make the three-hour drive from western Kentucky to attend the conference, but that he gained reassurance God has a place for him in ministry.

Recognizing his shortcomings and failings and his need to go to the next level in ministry was "convicting," but also a blessing, he added.

"I know with God all things are possible," Reno said. "I'm just going to ask God to help me believe more and increase my faith as those did in Jesus' day.

"The first thing I've got to do is start spending more time in prayer," Reno said of ideas he gleaned from the conference. "I know our churches take on the personality of the pastor and the pastor has to take on the personality of Christ first."

Max Hester, pastor of Stanford Baptist Church, said he was most impressed by Blackaby's example.

Although Blackaby had a lot to say, he spoke more by who he is than by what he said, Hester noted.

"That's a tremendous lesson for us, especially as pastors," he said. "I want to spend more time making sure my family has a better pastor, to focus more on becoming the man God's called me to be, because then my people will benefit."

Richard Blackaby urges pastors to go to 'next level' in ministry

Continued from page 1

Such a stance means being sensitive to the Holy Spirit's direction, he said, recalling the time a church member's wife was suffering from terminal cancer.

When he went to the hospital to comfort the man, instead of trying to explain why God would allow that to happen, Blackaby opened his Bible and read from the Psalms.

"As I read the Word of God, it was like a sense of peace enveloped both of us," he recalled in an interview after the conference. "We just had a sense that He was in complete control and we could trust Him."

■ Placing limits on what they believe God will do through them. The way a pastor knows he is doing a good job is when God gives him fresh revelations that help him minister more effectively, Blackaby said.

A pastor's assignment can expand only when he has the character to match the demands of that position, he added.

That can mean praying, "Make me more like Christ" and withstanding the pressure and criticism that comes with the answer, Blackaby said.

"Don't expect a shallow walk with God and a deep assignment," he added. "If you want God to do a fresh work through you, you have to let Him do a fresh work in you."

■ A lack of faith in what God can do. Teaching from Luke 9:37-45, Blackaby noted how Christ's disciples were ready to give up trying to cast a demon out of a boy even though Jesus said He had given them power over evil spirits.

Blackaby asked how many churches give up on people today and, instead of helping people whose marriages are troubled or children are on drugs, turn their backs on them.

"People are looking at the church and saying, 'You're irrelevant. You don't have any power,'" he warned. "When we get careless in our walk with God, it costs other people."

■ Failing to know God on a deep level. When Jesus asked, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me, Philip?" (John 14:9), that question revealed how little the disciple knew about Christ, Blackaby said.

Likewise, Blackaby said he can sometimes imagine God asking how he could have been a Christian for nearly four decades and still not understand His love.

"Ever hear people pray and you get blessed?" Blackaby asked. "You're not necessarily blessed by praying with a seminary professor, but a widow who needs to depend on God. I love to get around people I sense who have been places with God I have not been."

Blackaby's seminar can be downloaded at www.kybaptist.org. CDs can be ordered by calling the KBC church development office at (502) 245-4101 or toll-free in Kentucky at (800) 266-6477.

'Tech Connect' event set for June 9

Louisville—Church audio ministry workers can learn how to maximize the effectiveness of their sound system at the upcoming "Tech Connect" conference June 9 at the Baptist Building in Louisville.

The conference, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is designed to provide technical training to those working with church sanctuary sound systems. "Tech Connect" will offer resources and training for workers of all levels, including technical ministry staff, audio system operators, ministers of music, worship leaders and pastors interested in audio system operation.

Conference participants will select one of two all-day focus tracks offered at the event, both geared toward beginner to intermediate technicians.

Track one, titled "Exploring the Digital Console," will be led by Daniel Craik, console product manager for Yamaha Commercial Audio Systems, Inc., in Buena Park, Calif. He will examine the features, operations, effects, graphic equalizers, hardware and software of the digital console.

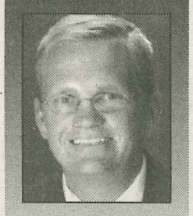
Track two, titled "Audio Signal Flow—From Source Wave to Delivery & Perception," will be led by Steve Ross, lead design engineer and director of technical operations for CIM Audio Visual in Louisville. The morning session will cover topics such as microphones, mixing consoles and infrastructure basics. More advanced techniques will be explored during the afternoon session, including equalization, amplifiers, stage monitors and loudspeakers.

The conference will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. Advanced registration of $45 online or $50 by phone is required by June 7. Registration is available at www.kybaptist.org/techconnect or by calling (866) 489-3377.

Helping children in crisis

Pursue passion to pray and give to aid needy children

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



David Melber

During this time of year it seems as though we have somewhat of an ongoing conflict around the Melber house. Before you get nervous and think that I am publicly airing our "dirty laundry," you can relax. It is not as bad as it sounds.

We have two TVs in our house that have cable. One large TV in our family room and one 13" TV in the master bedroom—and with my poor eyesight, a 13" TV is basically useless to me so I don't ever want to watch it.

As you can imagine, with just one good-size TV, there is the possibility of conflict with a family of six when it comes to show selection.

The entire Melber clan, with the exception of me, really likes the show "American Idol." This past episode was a fundraising event for children in need. The entire show was filled with video primarily from Africa about the endless needs of millions of children who are sick and starving.

This was actually one episode of the show that I thought was purposeful. I am not sure what your situation is, but the reality is that we as Americans are incredibly wealthy when compared to the world. It takes so little of our money to make a huge difference, even to the point of saving a life. One example was to provide $10 worth of pills that could save the lives of four people.

For the past six years, our camps have partnered with countries from Asia to the Caribbean to Eastern Europe. We have witnessed thousands of our students gaining a passion to give to others. In all, we have seen campers give nearly $250,000 to help impact students and children in these other three regions of the world.

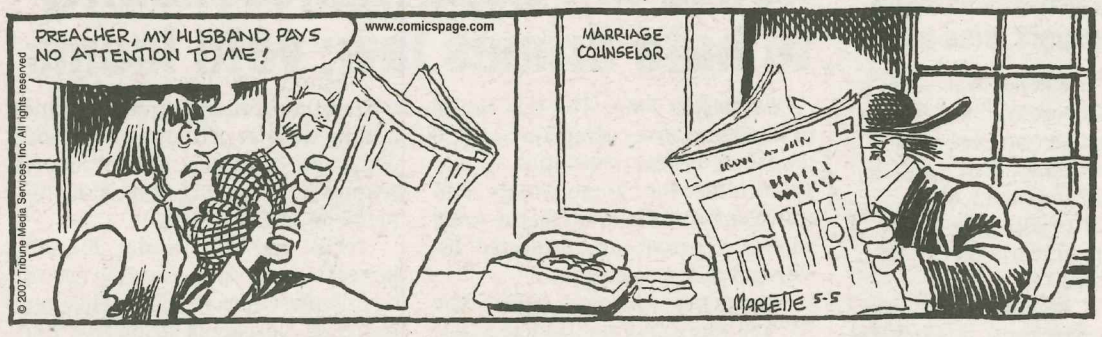
As you consider the investment of your resources, the reality in Africa is that death waits at every doorstep in every village. In countless lives, not only physical death but spiritual death hangs in the balance as so many have not heard the gospel.

Pray and trust God to take action today. Lives literally are hanging in the balance.

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

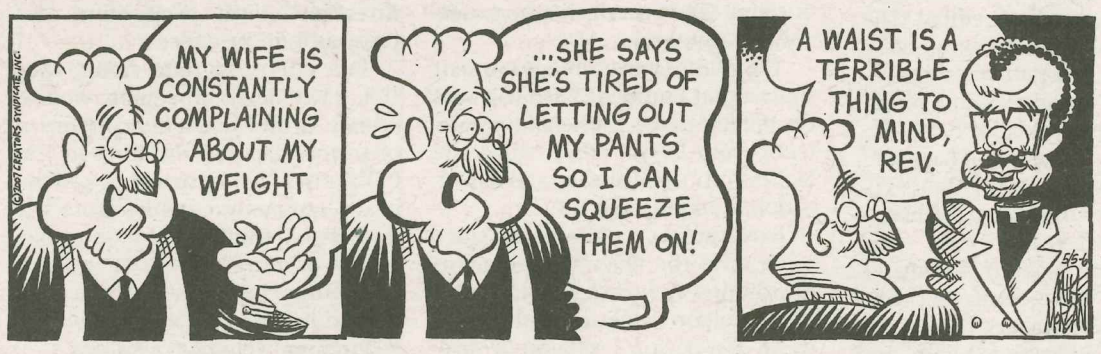
Kudzu

Doug Marlette



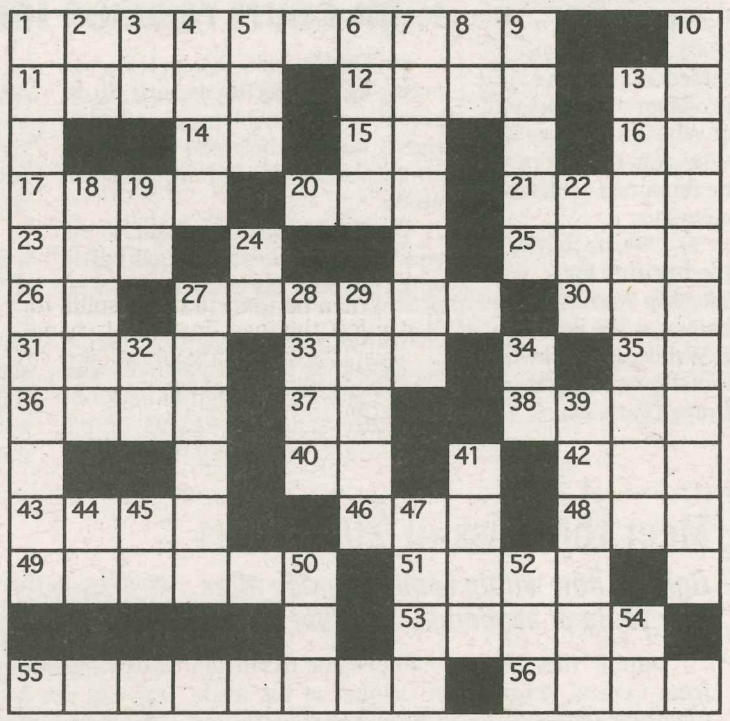
For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Bible Crosswords

Sissy Magnusson



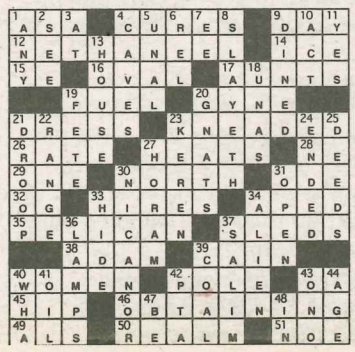
Across

1 Our ____ is with the Father (1 John 1:3)
11 Constellation (Job 9:9)
12 The ____ chapter (1 Corinthians 13)
13 Southern slang for poor
14 A populous place (Nahum 3:8)
15 Son of Peleth (Numbers 16:1)
16 Printer's measure
17 To boast
20 Wonder
21 Vehicle (Amos 2:13)
23 An age
25 Otherwise
26 ____ me, expression of sorrow
27 Pure
30 Writing instrument
31 Forbidden insult (Matthew 5:22)
33 Great happiness
35 Montpelier's state, abbr.
36 Pertaining to wings
37 Astronomical unit, abbr.
38 Oldest son of Noah (Genesis 9:18)
40 Head nurse, abbr.
42 Sooner than
43 Oldest son of Adam (Genesis 4:1)
46 City on the coast of Caesarea (Joshua 11:2)
48 Short for Leonard
49 A riddle
51 None in Gilead? (Jeremiah 8:22)
53 Come in
55 Opposite of pride (1 Peter 5:5)
56 Will come out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17)

Down

1 Control of one's feelings (Ephesians 4:2)
2 Son of Jose (Luke 3:28–29)
3 New York's largest island, abbr.
4 A fruit of the spirit "____-suffering" (Galatians 5:22)
5 Biblical city (1 Chronicles 8:12)
6 "____ to anger" (Nehemiah 9:17)
7 Truthfulness
8 Intravenous, abbr.
9 The absence of strife
10 Satisfaction
13 Keep on keeping on
18 Kingly
19 Article
22 European mountain
24 Expression of satisfaction
27 Loving
28 Son of Zibeon (Genesis 36:24)
29 "Healthy" heart (Proverbs 14:30)
32 Earthquake state, abbr.
34 In like manner
39 "____ of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17)
41 Name meaning "wild goat" (Genesis 36:28)
44 Airman, abbr.
45 2, Romans num.
47 "To ____ is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22)
50 Name meaning "my brother" (1 Chronicles 5:15)
52 Lights, abbr.
54 Egyptian sun god

Last week's solution



Robert Webber, Christian worship expert, dies at 73

Sawyer, Mich. (RNS)—Robert Webber, an expert on Christian worship, died April 27 in Sawyer, Mich., after suffering from pancreatic cancer. He was 73.

Webber, a professor of ministry at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Ill., was known for his expertise on the early church. He edited "The Complete Library of Christian Worship," an eight-volume series published in 1995.

The son of Baptist missionary parents to the Congo, Webber wrote more than 40 books, including "Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail," "Worship Is a Verb" and "Ancient-Future Faith."

Webber taught at Northern for seven years. He previously served 32 years as a professor of theology at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill., where he remained professor emeritus.

In 1998, he founded the Institute for Worship Studies, now known as the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies, in Orange Park, Fla.

House bill adds homosexuality to hate crimes law; veto looms

Washington (RNS)—The U.S. House of Representatives voted May 3 to extend hate crimes legislation to add protections for homosexuals and transgender individuals in the same way that people are protected because of race or creed.

Democratic leaders called the 237-180 vote a civil rights victory, but conservatives and some church leaders argued the bill gives gays special rights and threatens the free speech of clergy who preach that homosexuality is immoral.

The White House already has sent signals that President Bush will veto the bill if it passes the Senate; a statement from Bush's office called the legislation "unnecessary and constitutionally questionable."

Existing law, on the books since 1968, gives the federal government jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute violent crimes committed because of a person's religion or race. The new legislation would put sexual orientation on the same plane, adding stricter penalties for those convicted of crimes against homosexuals. It also adds protections for people with disabilities.

Focus on the Family founder James Dobson said the law would be "the first step to criminalize our rights as Christians to believe that some behaviors are sinful.

"Pastors preaching from Scripture on homosexuality could be threatened with persecution and prosecution," he added.

But bill supporters noted that H.R. 1529 deals only with violent crimes. It also explicitly contains a provision that says nothing in the bill should "be construed to prohibit any expressive conduct protected from legal prohibition by, or any activities protected by the free-speech or free-exercise clauses of, the First Amendment to the Constitution."

With additional reporting by Associated Baptist Press

High court refuses lesbian rights case

Washington (BP)—The U.S. Supreme Court declined April 30 to accept a case involving a parental rights dispute between two women previously in a same-sex civil union.

The high court's refusal to review the case means a legal battle will continue between two states, Vermont and Virginia. Vermont has civil unions and recognizes parental rights for lesbian partners who do not give birth. Virginia does not recognize same-sex unions or parental rights stemming from them.

The justices had been asked to review a ruling by the Vermont Supreme Court granting parental rights to Janet Jenkins despite the protests of Lisa Miller, the biological mother.

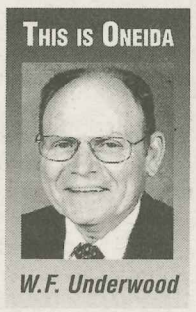
Jenkins and Miller entered into a civil union in Vermont in 2000. At the time, they lived in Virginia. In April 2002, Miller gave birth to a daughter conceived by artificial insemination. The two women moved to Vermont that August but separated about a year later. Miller and her daughter returned to Virginia.

Meet the class of 2007, part 7

College now within Lonnie's grasp after four years of academic, spiritual growth

"Lonnie" (not his real name) came to Oneida from Central Kentucky in October of his freshman year. There were no serious issues; Lonnie was just not applying himself in school. His father believed he was fighting a losing battle when it came to getting Lonnie focused.

For the past four years, Lonnie has been a wonderful student. He is a respectful and pleasant young man, a fine athlete, scholar and Christian. He has been involved in a host of athletic opportunities here at Oneida.



W.F. Underwood

When Lonnie enrolled, he told us his two primary goals were to "change my attitude and learn to manage my activities." We believe he has accomplished that and much more. Here is part of his senior essay, "My Oneida Experience."

"At my old school there were from 25-30 students in my classes. That made it very difficult to get individual attention or help. As a result, my grades were average or lower. I had been involved in some athletics before coming to Oneida but I wasn't able to get much recognition. ... Before coming to Oneida, I believed my parents were too strict and I didn't appreciate them or recognize what they were really trying to do for me. I realize now that they are a blessing to me from God. My father and I used to quarrel almost every day and not just once a day, but what seemed to be all day. Since I have been at Oneida, I have come to realize what my family really means to me and how much they influence me. Now, when it comes time for a holiday or break, I can't wait to see my family."

For most students who come to OBI, saying goodbye to their families can be very emotional. Here is how Lonnie describes that day:

"After my father and I unloaded my stuff, I was really beginning to feel nervous. I realized that my dad was actually going to leave me here. After we said our goodbyes, he began to drive away. I could feel my eyes begin to swell with tears. I am going to be completely honest, I was scared.

"As I continued my journey at Oneida, my grades continued to climb dramatically until I had a 3.9 GPA at the beginning of my senior year. Because of this, I was awarded a full academic scholarship to a university that I had previously decided I wasn't going to be able to attend unless I got some kind of athletic scholarship.

"When I came to Oneida, I welcomed the chance to worship every day. I will never forget some of the sermons I heard in chapel. They have had a dramatic impact on my life and my spiritual growth. This strengthened my relationship with God so much I was more than willing to admit that He was in control of my life.

"His Son died to bear my sins, to unburden me and make me worthy of entering the kingdom of heaven. If I really wanted to live the Christian life, I knew I would have to give God all of the glory He truly deserved.

"The most important thing I've learned at Oneida is that you must be willing to do things to help others when you are able. If it weren't for Oneida, there would be a lot of people with no place to go, or maybe even out in the streets in a much worse situation than they could possibly imagine themselves to be in."

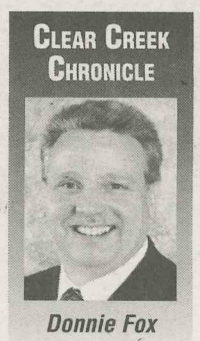
W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; www.oneidaschool.org; e-mail: president@oneidaschool.org

Following a divine plan

Alumnus experiences fresh sense of awe for God's plan

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is a place where plans are fulfilled—and not just any plans. I'm talking about God's plan for our lives.

This college in itself is a result of the fulfillment of God's plan for one man's life. L.C. Kelly, the first president of Clear Creek, was following God's plan and call on his own life when he founded this institution in 1926.



Donnie Fox

My wife, Penny, and I now have experienced a fresh sense of awe about God's plan for our lives. On April 17, the board of trustees voted unanimously to name me as the fifth president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

As an alumnus of this great institution, I am truly honored that the Lord is allowing me to serve His college as president. I look forward to following God's leadership and building upon the legacy that others have left at Clear Creek over the last 80 years.

My one desire is to truly glorify God in all that we do here as we follow His plan for His college.

Students, faculty and staff have been following God's plan by coming to Clear Creek since 1926. They come by faith believing that God has a plan for their lives, and Clear Creek is part of that plan.

R.P. Mahon, one of L.C. Kelly's best friends and partners in the early years of the college, had a favorite saying related to following God's plan involving Clear Creek: "Have faith and find God's way."

Through faith, Penny and I have found "God's way" for us is to be at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. We look forward to fulfilling God's plan for our lives and for Clear Creek through all those who will, "by faith," find that "God's way" also brings them to Clear Creek.

We are so thankful for your support of this ministry. We ask that you continually pray for us as we seek God's guidance to fulfill His plans for Clear Creek.

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, KY 40977; toll-free: (866) 340-3196

Religious freedom commission adds Iraq to 'watch list'

Washington (BP)—The continuing deterioration of religious freedom in Iraq has resulted in a bipartisan United States panel placing it on a "watch list" for careful monitoring.

The announcement of Iraq's addition to the list came as part of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's 2007 report, which was released May 2. In its annual report, the USCIRF recommended the same 11 countries it cited last year for designation as the world's most severe persecutors of religious adherents.

The commission called for U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to retain Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Uzbekistan as "countries of particular concern," a category reserved for governments that have "engaged in or tolerated systemic and egregious violations of religious freedom." The panel also urged Rice to return Vietnam to the list and repeated its call from last year for Pakistan and Turkmenistan to be designated as countries of particular concern.

In November, Rice removed Vietnam from the list and declined to add Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

Iraq was the only addition to the USCIRF's "watch list," which still includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia and Nigeria.

The commission, which is independent of the federal government, recommends governments for designation each year, but the secretary of state determines which countries are put on the list.

The commission expressed concern about religious liberty in Iraq in its 2006 report but did not add the Middle East country to the watch list at that time, though it did place Afghanistan on the list.

Iraq was included on the watch list because of the "alarming and deteriorating situation for freedom of religion and belief," the commission said. The country has been plagued by continuing violence between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, as well as attacks on non-Muslims.

Commissioners who disagreed with recommending Iraq as a CPC reminded reporters of the conditions before the 2003 invasion by the U.S.-led coalition and said the commission need not wait a year before acting again.

USCIRF commissioner Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, noted that "religious freedom and every other freedom was a disaster under Saddam Hussein."

Nina Shea, also a commissioner, told reporters, "We're not going to be sitting on our hands for the next year on Iraq or any of these countries. We continue to take action" and possibly make recommendations, she said. The commission will meet with Rice in May about Iraq, Shea added.

Turkey's small Baptist community fears threats amid civil unrest

Izmir, Turkey (ABP)—Turkey's handful of Baptists and other evangelical Christians fear increased persecution as the nation continues to reel from political upheaval and the brutal murder of three Christians, allegedly by radical Islamists.

Meanwhile, Turkish Christians of all stripes, their allies in Europe and American officials are calling on the nation to prove its commitment to religious freedom.

According to Klaus Rosler, an official with the European Baptist Federation, worship services at the Baptist church in the Buca district of Izmir, Turkey, "are being shielded by the police."

Two of the murder victims—Necati Aydin, 36, and Ugur Yuksel, 32, were Turks who converted from Islam to Christianity. The third man, Tillman Geske, 46, was a German citizen.

The church hosted the funeral for one of the three victims. It is the nation's only congregation officially affilated with a Baptist denominational body, although EBF General Secretary Tony Peck said there are other "baptistic" churches in Turkey.

Rosler, in an April 27 article on the EBF website, also said the Izmir church's pastor has received police protection after being falsely accused of engaging in coercive evangelism.

Ertan Cevik said a local Buca newspaper published an article accusing him and the Izmir congregation of being a missionary center for evangelical Christians trying to convert Turkish Muslims.

The articles came in the wake of the murders, which took place in the conservative Eastern Turkish city of Malatya. According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, similar accusations have been made against evangelical Christians by local publications and activists elsewhere in Turkey.

The events come against the backdrop of broad social upheaval over the role of religion in Turkish public life as the nation makes a bid to join the Western world more fully.

Turkey's population is 99 percent Muslim according to most estimates. However, unlike most other majority-Muslim nations, the government has been staunchly secularist since the Turkish Republic's founding in 1923.

Much of the nation's elite—concentrated in large cities such as Istanbul and Ankara—are staunch defenders of secularism. But, in recent years, many of Turkey's more religious and rural citizens have gained more economic and political power.

Four Christians killed in roadside attack in Sudan

Istanbul (BP)—An Egyptian and three Sudanese Christians were killed when their truck came under gunfire after the four participated in an evangelistic meeting in Sudan's Nuba Mountains region April 27.

Egyptian Daniel Girgis, 37, and local Sudanese Christians Markous Tiya, Rihab Kafi Jadeen and an unidentified young boy were killed when unknown assailants opened fire on their vehicle.

At least five others, two foreigners and three Sudanese, were injured in the attack that began when the truck driver refused to stop at a makeshift roadblock of large rocks.

The vehicle was returning to the town of Torogi, 70 kilometers south of Kadugli, at around 10:30 p.m. carrying 14 foreign Christians as well as several local Sudanese believers.

Organized by the Bahry Evangelical Church in Khartoum North, the evangelism team had spent the previous week in central Sudan's Nuba Mountains on one of the church's twice-a-year outreach projects.

The group had finished showing the "Jesus" film in the village of Gnaya, evangelism coordinator Barnaba Timothous of the Bahry Evangelical Church told Compass Direct News Service. While returning to Torogi, they came under fire, reportedly from two men.

The motive for the attack remains unclear. Timothous said the government in South Kordofan State had formed a committee to investigate the attack.

"We haven't had any updates," one Christian source said. "On Sunday four officials from the Nuba Mountains government—two Christians and two Muslims—came to the church in Bahry, expressed their condolences and assured us that they would get the people who did it."

Though of Egyptian nationality, Girgis was living in Khartoum and attending Bahry Evangelical Church. The three Sudanese killed as well as three others injured were Nuba Mountains residents, Bahry church pastor Hafis Fasaha told Compass.

The two foreigners injured in the attack received medical treatment in a private home in Khartoum. They reportedly planned to leave Sudan this week.

The three injured Sudanese were receiving medical treatment in a Kadugli hospital, Dr. Dawood Bashir reported.

"All the people of the church are paying visits to them and encouraging them," Bashir said.

Prayer Partners

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist ministries and missionaries:

Sole 2 Soul Ministry of Greensburg Baptist Church. Elementary school students Kayla Estes and Masden Griffiths started this ministry after realizing that most children outgrow their shoes before the shoes are worn out while some children do without shoes. Good used shoes will be collected from churches and distributed to needy children along with the "Are You Walking with Jesus?" tract. Pray that churches will strongly support this ministry and assist with collecting shoes. Pray that people will come to know Christ through the Sole 2 Soul ministry.

Mission Service Corps Missionary Chaplain Vola Brown, Renfro Valley. Brown serves as a chaplain at the Renfro Valley Entertainment Center where thousands of tourists come weekly to enjoy music and shows. He leads a Sunday morning worship service and ministers to the spiritual needs of entertainers, staff and visitors when called upon. Pray that Brown will be faithful to share Christ with visitors who come to Renfro Valley. Pray for additional opportunities to minister to the staff and entertainers as well.

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

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

■ **ASHLAND**—Rose Hill Christian School, sponsored by Rose Hill Church, will hold graduation services May 20, 3 p.m, with **Bob Pearle,** pastor of Birchman Church in Fort Worth, Texas, as commencement speaker. **Ronnie Mayes** is pastor.

■ **BEDFORD**—Antioch Church recently called **Stephen Cavness** as pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Acton Church will hold revival services May 17-19, 7 p.m., with **Kenny Rager** as evangelist and May 20, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., with **Paul Pik** as evangelist. For more information, call (270) 465-3462. **John Batcher** is pastor.

Saloma Church will host a Memorial Day Weekend Celebration of Music service May 27, 6 p.m. For more information, call (270) 789-0082. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **CARLISLE**—**Chris Bailey** recently resigned as pastor of Locust Grove Church.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—**Gary French** recently resigned as pastor of Ballardsville Church.

■ **HARRODSBURG**—Mercer Association recently called **James Harley** as interim director of missions. Harley, who also is pastor of Fellowship Church in Harrodsburg, will become Mercer Association's permanent director of missions in May 2008 after he retires as pastor.

■ **LaGRANGE**—Buckner Church recently called **David Dunn** as interim pastor.

■ **LANCASTER**—Lancaster Church will serve as a local host site for the Maximum Impact simulcast, "The Influence Index," May 1. The live leadership seminar, hosted by **John Maxwell,** will be broadcast from Atlanta to sites in 600 cities. For more information, call Lancaster Church at (859) 792-2781. **Zach Terry** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host **Brian Free & Assurance** in concert May 10, 7 p.m. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Hillview Church recently called **James Shelton** as pastor.

■ **NANCY**—Hopeful Church recently called **Brandon Wilson** as pastor.

■ **NICHOLASVILLE**—Crosswoods Church recently called **David Conrades** as children's pastor. He is a recent graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. **Stephen Bruce** is pastor.

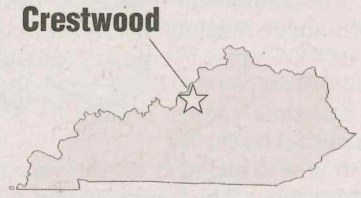
■ **PRINCETON**—First Church recently called **Dane Hodges** as minister of music. **Tom Hughes** is pastor.

■ **RUSSELLVILLE**—Logan Todd Association held its annual "Disciple Now Jr" discipleship and missions event for children April 28 at Post Oak Church with **Roberta Robertson** as guest speaker. A total of 130 children and 40 adults from 18 churches attended.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church recently called **Darrell Morgan** as pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Crestwood



Crestwood Church will host an "Embrace" marriage conference May 11-12 featuring **Michael and Amy Smalley.** For more information, call (502) 241-8534. **Dan Garland** is pastor.

KBC Calendar of Events

KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

May

14-15 Sharing Good News through Good Works, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

21-23 Youth Ministers Spring Retreat, Georgetown College.

22 Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference, Northside Baptist Church, Princeton.

June

2 Church Weekday Education Seminar Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

9 Technical Ministries Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.

9-16 Kentucky Changers, Russellville.

11-15 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.

15-16 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.

17-24 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Tour, Campbellsville.

18-22 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.

22-23 Acteens Splash, Girls in Action Overnight, Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creek.

23-30 Kentucky Changers, Maysville.

25-29 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.

29-30 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.

30 Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Luncheon, Farmdale Baptist Church, Frankfort.

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

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: For supply, interim or bivocational pastorate—any place, anytime, any or no fees. Call Ben Render at (502) 368-3067.

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: Church pews available immediately. Call (859) 987-3790 for more information.

FUNDRAISERS: Raise money for your group or organization with gourmet scented candles. Home parties and income from home also available. Please contact Holly Ballback, (502) 572-6379, e-mail: holly ballback@candlelivingathome.com; or Derek and Rachel Allen, (502) 648-4764, e-mail: derek@ferncreekbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for southeast Louisville church. Send resumé to Khill@universallinen.com; or call Jeff at (502) 263-4099.

SEEKING: Teaching pastor for shared pastoral staff model to lead growing, missions-focused church in northeast Nelson County. Church currently has two full-time associate pastors and one part-time missions intern; worship attendance 300-350 (two services), Sunday school 185-200+; candidates must have an earned Master of Divinity (or equivalent) or higher degree and have demonstrated experience in leading a growing church. Send resumé to: Teaching Pastor Search Committee, Bloomfield Baptist Church, PO Box 217, Bloomfield, KY 40008.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music/worship leader. Send resumé to Grace Community Baptist Church, 7300 National Turnpike, Louisville, KY 40214; e-mail: gcbc7300@peoplepc.com.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor, Okalona Missionary Baptist Church, Nancy, Ky. Send resumés to: Roy Chapman, 1983 Highway 235, Nancy, KY 42544.

SEEKING: Part-time youth leader. Please send resumé to brooks124 @peoplepc.com (Subject: Youth leader); or mail to Calvary Hill Baptist Church, PO Box 482, Stanford, KY 40484.

SEEKING: Part-time financial secretary. Hours and salary negotiable based on education and experience. For more information: http://broadwaybaptist.org/positionavailable.html. E-mail letters and resumés, attention Mr. Larry Dauenhauer, Broadway Baptist Church, 4000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207; phyllis@broadwaybaptist.org.

SEEKING: Director of missions. Big Hatchie Baptist Association is a rural/urban association of 43 churches in Tipton and Lauderdale counties (just north of Memphis). This is one of the fastest growing areas in Tennessee. Previous DOM retired after 13 years, led the association to modernize its organization, begin new churches and establish a counseling center. Send resumé by May 30, 2007, to BHBC, PO Box 646, Covington, TN 38019; or e-mail cindy@bighatchiebaptist.org. For more information, call Rev. Bob Lane, chairman of DOM Search Committee, at (901) 837-2683.

SEEKING: Minister of students/recreation (6th grade through college age). Accepting resumés until May 31. Send to: Red House Baptist Church, 2301 Red House Road, Richmond, KY 40475; or rhbc@redhousebc.com.

SEEKING: Full-time director of missions for Ohio River Baptist Association, a 41-church association in western Kentucky. Resumés will be received through May 31, 2007. All responses will remain confidential. Please mail to: Search Committee, Ohio River Baptist Association, PO Box 9, Salem, KY 42078.

SEEKING: Part-time/bivocational minister of music (approx. 20 hours/week). Duties include leading Sunday morning worship and evening congregational singing in blended music style, plus leading adult choir, youth choir and children's choir. Send resumé to: Search Committee, McHenry Baptist Church, PO Box 154, McHenry, KY 42354; or e-mail mchenrybaptist@vonageonline.net.

SEEKING: Administrative assistant to senior pastor for Southern Baptist church in northern Kentucky. Applicant must be individual of integrity who demonstrates: a high level of trust; the ability to communicate well—vocally and in writing; create an inviting environment for people passing through the office; ability to work efficiently with other staff members and support personnel; computer literacy in Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and Internet research skills. A minimum of three years experience or education equivalency also is required. Qualified applicants may submit their resumés by mail to: Administrator, PO Box 456, Florence, KY 41022-0456.

SEEKING: Piano player for Thursday evening and Sunday morning services for Calvary Road Baptist Church in Shepherdsville, Ky. If interested, call (502) 905-0902 or 905-3782.

SEEKING: Music director for Clayvillage Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Ky. Duties include adult choir rehearsal and Sunday morning worship. Experience helpful; modest stipend. Contact pastor at leebolton @bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Full-time director of missions for Monroe Baptist Association. College and some seminary training desirable, as is associational experience. For more information, call Rev. Ty Clenney, (270) 618-4373. Send resumé: DOM Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 302 North Magnolia, Tompkinsville, KY 42167.

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: 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.

Police chaplains tune in to officers' challenges

By Polly House
LifeWay Christian Resources

Glorieta, N.M. (BP)—Police officers "have stresses on them that civilians can't fathom," a police chaplain told 80 officers, spouses and guests from 15 states attending a Western Law Enforcement Summit at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center near Santa Fe, N.M.

"Most cops have shift work, and these schedules make it difficult to spend consistent quality time with their families, said Tim Eldred, chaplain with the Rutherford County (Tenn.) Sheriff's Office.

"It's often hard for them to go to church, especially if they work on Sunday or are just coming home on Sunday morning after working all Saturday night," he continued. "Working different schedules is hard on your body clock too. It's hard to get good, restorative rest."

Eldred continued describing the lifestyles and needs of police officers to a crowd that has experienced the challenges firsthand.

"Think about how you'd feel if you were never really off duty," he said. "Anywhere you go, you could be a target; your wife, your husband, your kids could be targets. People—bad people—you've arrested know your face. They probably know where you live. You take your kids to school, and you're looking over your shoulder. You go to a restaurant, you always sit facing the door."

Law enforcement chaplains provide a spiritual and emotional outlet for officers; they strive to be a pillar of strength in times of turmoil.

As Jack Poe, chaplain with the Oklahoma City Police Department, put it during the April 3-6 gathering, "I couldn't count the number of times I have arrived at a scene and one of the officers will tell me he feels better now that I'm there.

"I know these guys—know what they go through," Poe said. "They know I will do whatever it takes to help."

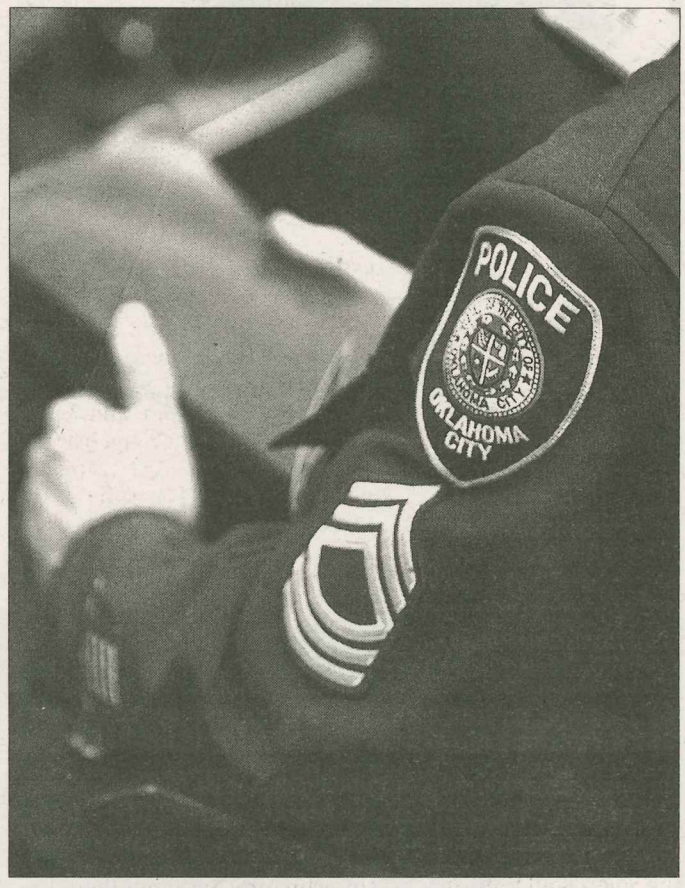
Paul Gilbreath, commander of the U.S. Department for Homeland Security in Dallas, leads praise and worship for the opening session of a Western Law Enforcement Summit at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center. (BP photos by Kent Harville)

Greg Giltner, a master sergeant with the Oklahoma City Police Department, expressed appreciation for Poe. "As a police officer, I often deal with people on the worst days of their lives," Giltner said. "As a chaplain, you're with me on the worst days of my life."

Eldred said he is quick to tell pastors interested in becoming law enforcement chaplains that the role is not as a minister to inmates. "Police chaplaincy is not a jail ministry. There is a place for jail ministry, of course, but a law enforcement chaplain is there for the officers and their families—just them," Eldred said.

According to the International Conference of Police Chaplains' Web site, a law enforcement chaplain may be called upon to:

- Counsel law enforcement officers or other members of a department.
- Counsel families of law enforcement personnel.
- Visit sick or injured officers and departmental personnel in homes and hospitals.
- Make death notifications.
- Provide assistance to victims.
- Teach officers in areas such as stress management, ethics, family life and pre-retirement planning.
- Serve as part of a department's crisis response team.
- Assist at suicide incidents.
- Serve as liaison with other clergy in the community.
- Respond to religious questions.
- Offer prayers at special occasions such as recruit graduations, awards ceremonies and building dedications.
- Serve on review boards, award boards and other committees.



BASIC EQUIPMENT *An officer with the Oklahoma City Police Department holds his Bible and prays at the Western Law Enforcement Summit at LifeWay Glorieta Conference Center in New Mexico.*

Eldred said a chaplain is there to minister to people of all faiths. "I tell the pastors the chaplaincy is not the place to try to grow their church. It's a Kingdom ministry, not a denominational ministry," he said. "I'm a Southern Baptist pastor myself, but as a chaplain, I deal with every denomination and faith group."

The next Law Enforcement Summit will be Oct. 2-5 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C. For more information, visit www.LifeWay.com/LawEnforcement.

Counselors use Bible to address tough questions at Va. Tech

By Brent Thompson
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Blacksburg, Va. (BP)—As students, faculty and staff at Virginia Tech struggled with the tragic deaths of 33 of their own, a team of 14 members of the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors joined the recovery process.

"Nouthetic counselors use the Bible to encourage and give hope to struggling people," said John Babler, associate professor of biblical counseling at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Babler helped supervise the group's week-long activities.

"At Virginia Tech, a primary focus was providing answers from Scripture to the hard questions that arose from the tragedy," he said.

Arriving at Virginia Tech on the Monday after the shootings, Babler said his experience as a volunteer fire department chaplain, social work coordinator and children's home program director were quickly put to work.

He helped coordinate the counselors' contacts and interaction with students around campus. Words of encouragement and gestures of grace were extended by the counselors to students who were gathering at impromptu memorial sites and information booths.

"The ministry I had there was training and equipping the counselors who were working there," Babler said. "I also had a lot of good contact with the fire chief, the fire department and the emergency medical services department who were all serving in a volunteer capacity."

Main Street Baptist Church in Christiansburg, Va., and Campus Crusade for Christ invited the nouthetic counselors to help them distribute thousands of pieces of biblically based literature. Serving at a tented table sponsored by the church, Babler and his team shared with hundreds of students the love of Christ and the hope found in Him. Babler said he personally had about 30 spiritually meaningful discussions with students and staff at the university.

Ministry amid crisis

"This was a great example of how a local church that had cultivated relationships with campus ministry groups was able to step up in a time of crisis and be a presence for Jesus Christ," Babler said.

The Christiansburg church also hosted a "Why Virginia Tech?" program that provided anyone the opportunity to ask spiritually sensitive questions. Nearly half of those in attendance were VT students and campus ministry leaders from Korea. Babler was one of the panelists.

The discussion lasted just over an hour, but Babler and other counselors stayed an additional 90 minutes, counseling Korean students.

Babler noted that the Korean students he spoke with were relieved that they had not experienced any race-based reactions after the shooting.

"There is a strong sense of community at Virginia Tech," Babler said. He noted that members of Korean campus ministries tried to develop friendships with Cho Seung-Hui, the man who killed 32 fellow students and faculty before shooting himself, April 17.

"One of the campus ministries had sent a series of e-mails to Cho the first year he was there, inviting him to come to some functions and services," Babler said. "That was contrary to what (Cho) had claimed: that no one reached out to him."

Today, their focus has changed. "The Korean ministry leaders who came to the 'Why Virginia Tech?' panel were especially interested to understand how they could minister to Cho's family," Babler said.

Before returning to Southwestern, Babler conducted training sessions for counselors and emergency responders on how to use Scripture to meet needs. He has developed a curriculum based on his experiences in crisis ministry after the 1999 Wedgwood Baptist Church shooting in Fort Worth, after Hurricane Katrina, and conducting several firefighters' funerals.

"This was training the counselors in the principles of biblical crisis ministry so they can minister in this way when they get back home," Babler said. "In our culture, we need to prepare churches to do crisis ministry. ... We emphasized how counselors having a relationship with people they are helping is central. I helped them see how this relationship looks different in a crisis situation than it does in the in-office counseling sessions they are used to."

Airline donates ticket

No one was more surprised than Babler that he went to Virginia Tech. When he received the invitation from the counseling group's coordinator, Ernie Baker of the Master's College in California, Babler said he was uncertain whether it was what God wanted him to do. He would need to be in Virginia the next day. A quick check of airline tickets showed prices of more than $1,200 on such short notice.

"I called American Airlines just to see if they had anything," Babler said. "I told them where I was going and why. I couldn't believe it when American Airlines donated an open-ended, round-trip ticket. The provision of the ticket by American was one of the ways God confirmed to me that I should take advantage of the opportunity to go to Virginia Tech."

For more information on biblical crisis ministry, Babler can be contacted by e-mail at jbabler@swbts.edu.

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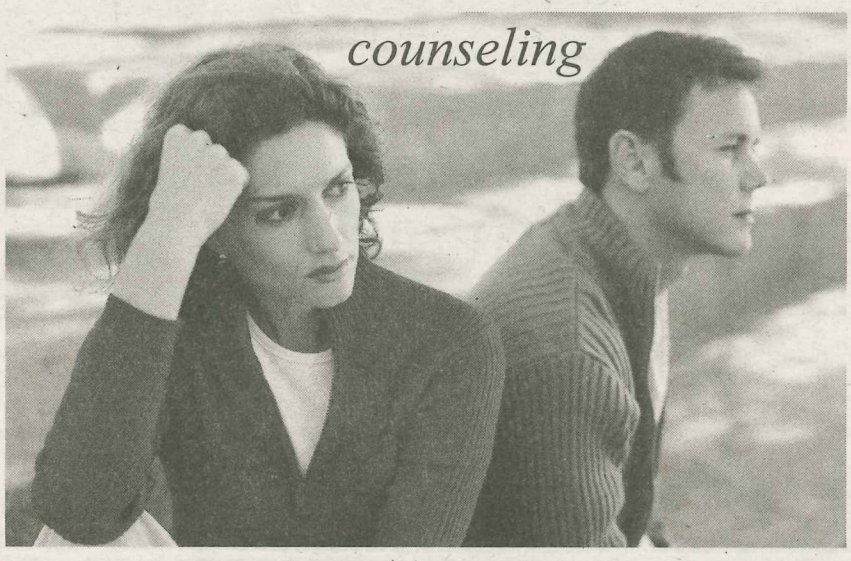

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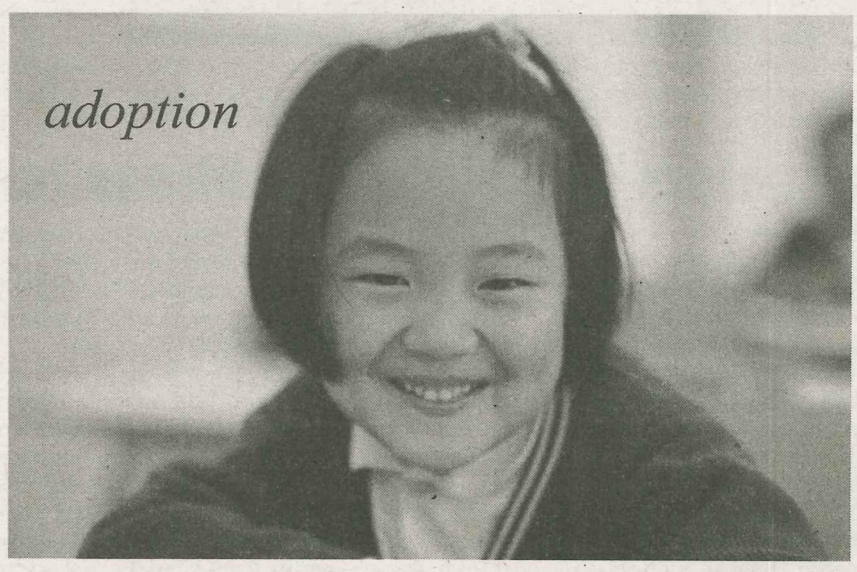

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