



WESTERN RECORDER

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Barna: American Christianity is a lukewarm church

Nashville (BP)—Like the lukewarm church at Laodicea mentioned in the Book of Revelation, the Barna Group in a recent study assessed American Christianity as neither hot nor cold.

According to Barna, 83 percent of Americans identify themselves as Christians, but only 49 percent of those describe themselves as absolutely committed to Christianity.

"Most Americans do not have strong and clear beliefs, largely because they do not possess a coherent biblical worldview," said David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group. "That is, they lack a consistent and holistic understanding of their faith. Millions of Americans say they are personally committed to Jesus Christ, but they believe He sinned while on earth.

"Many believers claim to trust what the Bible teaches, but they reject the notion of a real spiritual adversary or they feel that faith-sharing activities are optional," Kinnaman added.

One reason beliefs fluctuate, Kinnaman said, is that most Americans hold few convictions about their faith and "have one foot in the biblical camp and one foot outside it."

"They say they are committed, but to what? They are spiritually active, but to what end? The spiritual profile of American Christianity is not unlike a lukewarm church that the Bible warns about," Kinnaman said.



Record gas prices fail to deter summer mission volunteers

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Owensboro—Memorial Day is behind us and the summer vacation season has arrived. But with gas prices at an all-time high, many families may opt for the backyard kiddie pool over a road trip to the beach.

In Kentucky, the average price at the pump is hovering around \$3.15 for a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline. And many experts believe that number will continue to rise through the summer.

A recent survey by WNBC and Marist College in New York shows that 35 percent of families are taking weekend trips rather than long vacations. Another 37 percent said they were canceling their trips altogether.

However, not every vacation destination is a tropical getaway. Many families choose to do mission work

on their summer break.

But are those people who are called to help others this summer feeling the same financial crunch?

"It doesn't stop us from going," Jimmie Workman said.

Workman is the president of the Kentucky chapter of Campers on Mission, an organization comprised mainly of retirees who do volunteer building and repair work at many churches around the region.

Most members travel in RVs to get to a job site and live in them for weeks at a time. With fuel tanks as large as 75 gallons and very low gas mileage, the cost can be considerable.

David Fuqua, the project coordinator for the group, said a recent trip from his Owensboro home to Salyersville, then down to Chattanooga, Tenn., and back home cost

\$700 for fuel. But he keeps the expenses in perspective.

"It's just part of the price we pay to be part of God's plan in our lives," Fuqua said.

And he said he hasn't noticed a drop in the number of people joining him at each job site, but conceded he tries to keep the jobs closer to home.

"We don't go quite as far as we used to," Fuqua said. "But the men are just as involved now as they've ever been.

"This is something the Lord puts in their hearts and they'll do it ... regardless of what it costs."

□ See Record-high gas ... *Page 3*

LifeWay study: Half of SBC pastors affirm private prayer language

Nashville—Half of Southern Baptist pastors believe the Holy Spirit gives some people a special language to pray to God, according to a recent study by LifeWay Research.

The study also indicates the majority of Protestant senior pastors (63 percent) and laity (51 percent) believe in the gift of a private prayer language.

Brad Waggoner, vice president of research and ministry development at LifeWay, said the organization conducted the study because "this is an issue that is being discussed throughout the convention, and we wanted to determine the perceptions and opinions of SBC leaders."

Major discussion topic

The issue of a private prayer language has become a major topic of discussion in the Southern Baptist Convention in the past two years.

Trustees of the SBC International Mission Board adopted a policy in 2005 banning the future appointment of missionaries who practice a private prayer language. Trustees voted earlier this month

to revise that action, downgrading the prayer language directive from a board policy to a guideline which provides "a degree of flexibility" in working with individual candidates.

But the guidelines still specify that trustees are "not persuaded that ecstatic utterance as a prayer language is a valid expression of the New Testament teaching on prayer."

The topic is likely to surface at this month's SBC annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

The recent LifeWay study on the issue was conducted by phone survey of 405 Southern Baptist pastors and 600 pastors of other Protestant denominations.

The survey asked participants: "Do you believe that the Holy Spirit gives some people the gift of a special language to pray to God privately? Some people refer to this as a private prayer language or the 'private use of tongues.'"

Fifty percent of Southern Baptist pastors answered yes, 43 percent said no and 7 percent responded "Don't know."

Southern Baptist pastors are more likely than other Protestant pastors to understand "tongues" in the New

Testament to mean the "God-given ability to speak another language you had not previously been able to speak" (62 percent vs. 54 percent).

Among Protestant pastors, 30 percent understand "tongues" to mean "special utterances given by the Holy Spirit meant as messages to the congregation with the help of an interpreter."

Laity divided on views

Laity are divided among the meanings "God-given ability to speak another language" (32 percent) and "special utterances given by the Holy Spirit" (37 percent).

Southern Baptist pastors are more likely than other Protestant pastors to believe the gift of tongues has ceased. Forty-one percent of Southern Baptist pastors responded "this gift was only given in the days of the apostles," compared to 29 percent of other pastors.

The majority of Protestant pastors believe the spiritual gift of tongues is "still given today to some believers" (53 percent). Thirteen percent believe "the gift is still given today to all true believers."

Recent Southern Baptist seminary graduates are more likely to believe the gift of tongues has ceased than current SBC pastors. Fifty-five percent of recent Southern Baptist seminary graduates believe "the gift of tongues (as described in 1 Corinthians) ceased to be a valid gift in times past." A minority of Southern Baptist pastors (41 percent) believe the spiritual gift of tongues was given only in the days of the apostles.

Noting that "more recent graduates tend to be more 'cessationist' than their pastoral counterparts in SBC churches," Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research, added, "A majority of recent SBC seminary graduates are cessationists—the only group in our study that identified with this position at over 50 percent."

Ed Stetzer, LifeWay's director of research, said the study found there are two sizeable yet contradictory positions among Southern Baptist pastors. Half believe the Holy Spirit gives the private use of tongues today, compared to 41 percent who identify themselves as cessationists.

Compiled from reporting by LifeWay Christian Resources and Editor Trennis Henderson

Jim Richards to be nominated as SBC first vice president

Jacksonville, Fla.

(BP)—Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, will be nominated for Southern Baptist Convention first vice president, according to Mac Brunson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.

Richards is the founding executive director of the eight-year-old conservative state convention which broke away from the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He and his wife, June, are members of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth.

Richards, a Louisiana native, was a pastor in that state for 21 years before becoming a director of missions in Arkansas in 1995. He is a graduate of the University of Louisiana at Monroe, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

Richards has served as chairman of the former SBC Christian Life Commission (now the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission) and the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

According to the SBC's 2006 Annual Church Profile, First Baptist Church of Fort Worth baptized 26 people last year and gave 12.3 percent of undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program.

Among other offices, SBC President Frank Page is expected to be elected unopposed to a second one-year term.

Two nominees have been announced for second vice president: Bill Britt of Gallatin, Tenn., and Eric Redmond of Temple Hills, Md.

Disaster relief crews busy on several fronts

By Mickey Noah

SBC North American Mission Board

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—The deadly tornado that leveled Greensburg, Kan. The forest fires in Florida and Georgia. Serious flooding in New England and New Jersey. Weary Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers all over the United States have been working overtime.

One month after an F-5 tornado killed 12 people and obliterated tiny Greensburg, Kan., Southern Baptist disaster relief workers remain on the scene, feeding uprooted townspeople and relief volunteers who have been there since May 5.

About 95 percent of the rural town of 1,500 lost their homes, businesses and earthly possessions. If they worked in a bank, office or store on Main Street, they also lost their jobs—because there no longer is a Main Street in Greensburg.

Since the tornado, citizens of Greensburg have moved in with other family members who live in the region.

"We came in on May 5, the day after and began feeding in Haviland, a town nearby," said Bob Mills, state director of missions for the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists. "I guess we've fed about 25,000 meals by now. We also had five chainsaw teams in the area but not in Greensburg, because there was nothing left. All we have now is some heavy equipment bulldozing in Greensburg."

Mill said recent high winds and rain have hampered the operation of a second feeding unit in Greensburg. In all, some 100 volunteers—feeding

unit workers and chainsaw teams—have worked the area since the tornado hit. Most volunteers were from Kansas and Nebraska.

Mills and his team are now preparing the way for a mobile chapel. The chapel—underwritten by a \$65,000 grant from the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board—will seat 100 people. Mills said local citizens have raised another \$10,000 for the interior and furnishings.

"It will be wonderful if we can have our first service by July 4, but we hope for sure by the second week in July," he said.

Mills said a local farmer has offered a lot on the edge of Greensburg on which to locate the mobile church.

"It will be a church plant and at some point a permanent building will replace the mobile chapel," Mills said. "Then we will move the mobile chapel to another location where we'll plant yet another church."

"We need the prayers and support of Southern Baptists for those who lost their properties and have been displaced," Mills said. "We really don't need donations of materials because we have no place to store them. But we could, of course, use monetary contributions for the day-to-day living expenses of these folks, to help them get back on their feet."

"Mud-out" ministry in New England

New England Baptists were called into "mud-out" action recently in the wake of serious area flooding, according to Bruce James, director

of evangelism and men's ministry for the Baptist Convention of New England.

"For about three years in a row, thousands of homes have been affected when local rivers keep overflowing after big rains," James noted. "People have been living with mold and flooded basements for years."

"Our disaster relief organization is coming together, and we have received a lot of outside help but we could use some more help," he added.

James said his 20-person team has completed 28 mud-out jobs in New Hampshire and has 18 more to do there, and another 24 jobs in Maine.

"Anything we can do to connect the church with the community through disaster relief and evangelism projects helps us," James emphasized. "We need to get churches out of their buildings and into the community."

Responding to Florida fires

Fritz Wilson, state director of disaster relief for the Florida Baptist Convention, said local churches in the fire-ravaged state—with support from the state convention—have carried most of the load to support some 350 firefighters and other public safety personnel working to control the forest fires near Keystone Heights. That support has included food, shelter and staging facilities.

More than 163,000 acres reportedly have burned in more than 225 fires throughout Florida. The fires have affected 57 of Florida's 67 counties.

Page decries Carter gathering's 'liberal agenda'

Nashville (BP)—Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page has called on organizers of a planned January 2008 "New Baptist Covenant Celebration" to focus less on reported plans to "take the microphone away" from conservatives and focus more on spreading the message of the gospel.

Page's response May 25 came about a week after former President Jimmy Carter made a pitch to Southern Baptists to attend the gathering he is organizing with Bill Underwood, president of Mercer University. Bill Clinton, also a former U.S. president with Southern Baptist ties, has described himself as a "cheerleader" for the event.

Carter invoked Page's name May 17, saying the SBC leader "has not

been negative" in discussions about the gathering.

Page countered that Southern Baptists "were not invited to be a part of the initial meetings of this group." He also expressed concerns about political overtones related to the meeting.

"I will not be a part of any smoke-screen leftwing liberal agenda that seeks to deny the greatest need in our world, that being that the lost be shown the way to eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord," Page said in a statement.

Page rebuked criticisms by New Baptist Covenant organizers aimed at the Southern Baptist Convention. Carter and Clinton have used such terms as "negative" and "exclusionary," and Underwood has said there

is a need for "a true Baptist witness." Defending the SBC, Page pointed to Southern Baptists' national ministry efforts aimed at meeting social needs but not to the exclusion of evangelism.

For Southern Baptists, the mark of their ministries is spiritual, Page insisted. "Unlike those who focus only on the social good of ministry, we give a man a loaf of bread and also introduce Christ as the Bread of Life," he said.

Page also took issue with the proposed program's focus on social ministry and lack of evangelical emphasis.

"To be 'a true Baptist witness,' any group must see the winning of souls to Christ as the cohesive factor in our fellowship," Page insisted.

Proposal allows N.C. colleges to elect trustees

By Tony Cartledge

North Carolina Biblical Recorder

Asheboro, N.C. (ABP)—The five colleges affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina would be able to elect their own trustees under a proposal adopted by the convention's board of directors, but the schools will lose the convention's direct financial support.

The plan, which has the support of the schools and would be phased in over a four-year period, is intended to avoid a showdown over how much control the Baptist convention should have over the colleges—Campbell University, Chowan University, Gardner-Webb University, Mars Hill College and Wingate University.

A scholarship fund, to be administered by the convention, could continue to aid students from convention-related churches who attend the schools.

The board of directors approved the recommendation May 22, which came from the convention's Council on Christian Higher Education.

Specifically, the recommendation calls for a "restructured, mutually voluntary relationship." It requires the schools to "have a significant portion of trustees who are members of churches in friendly cooperation" with the convention, to continue to provide services and ministries to convention churches, and to "continue to promote and advance Christian principles and beliefs as reflected in traditional Baptist doctrine."

Richard Hicks, pastor of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Supply, N.C., asked what assurance school leaders could give "that when you've passed off the scene, it will still be a Christian and Baptist institution."

Representatives from four of the five schools were present. Each of them described Christian commitment and Baptist principles as basic elements of their school's identity, insisting there are no plans to change that focus.

The board voted overwhelmingly in favor of the proposal. It must now be considered by messengers to the Baptist state convention over a two-year period.

The day after the board action, director Ken Jones proposed a bylaw amendment to deny scholarship funds to Baptist students attending any school with any trustees who are not professing Christians and members of a Christian church or who belong to a church that "affirms, approves, endorses, promotes, supports or blesses homosexual behavior."

Directors voted to postpone consideration of the motion until the board's January 2008 meeting.

BAPTIST DIGEST

Reynolds, former Baylor president, dies.

Herb Reynolds, former president of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, died May 25. He was 77. Reynolds, who joined Baylor as executive vice president in 1969, served as president from 1981 to 1995. In 1986, he was named one of America's 100 most effective chief executive officers in a study funded by the Exxon Education Foundation. During Reynolds' tenure, the university changed its charter so the Baptist General Convention of Texas could appoint a quarter of the school's regents. Previously, the convention had appointed all of its regents. Reynolds said the change was needed to protect the school from being taken over by conservatives.

Pumpelly to lead True Love Waits in Africa.

Sharon Pumpelly, who with her husband, Larry, spent 25 years as a Southern Baptist international missionary in Uganda and Kenya, has been named lead consultant for True Love Waits International's expansion in Africa. LifeWay President Thom Rainer announced May 31. In her new role, she will be responsible for strategic planning, networking and implementing True Love Waits' abstinence-until-marriage initiative in South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho. The Pumpellys helped launch True Love Waits in Uganda and worked with the Baptist Convention of Kenya to develop a strategy to decrease AIDS.

N.C. pastor tapped as CBF moderator-elect.

North Carolina Baptist pastor Jack Glasgow has been nominated to serve as the next moderator-elect of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Glasgow, pastor of Zebulon Baptist Church in Zebulon, N.C., is the former moderator of CBF of North Carolina and has served on the Fellowship's national coordinating council. He will be presented for a vote as moderator-elect during CBF's annual meeting June 28-29 in Washington, D.C. Harriet Herral of Fort Worth, Texas, is the current moderator-elect. She will assume the office of moderator June 29. This year's moderator is Emmanuel McCall, an African-American pastor from Georgia.

Missionary works to stop prison cycle in Kentucky homes

By Erin Roach
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Eddyville—While most Kentucky Baptists typically wouldn't associate the Awana program with prison ministry, Mission Service Corps missionary Harrell Riley believes Awana is an excellent tool for ministering to inmates and their families.

Statistics show that children with incarcerated fathers are seven times more likely to go to prison themselves. Riley currently is working to bring the Awana program to the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex in Eddyville as a way to reconcile inmates and their children.

"About a year and a half ago, I began to pray about how we can impact families," said Riley, who as an MSC worker is a self-funded long-term missionary appointed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Riley gave up a steady job in a production facility in Princeton more than five years ago to become an MSC missionary through the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Now operating from a minimal salary, Riley helps people who desperately need Jesus.

Inmates at the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex are among those Riley works hard to reach with the gospel through an annual Father's Day picnic, a Christmas carnival and regular Bible studies and worship services.

Riley had heard about a popular program called Awana, which uses Bible teaching and Scripture memorization to help local churches reach children and youth for Christ. He was also inspired by Malachi Dads, a spiritual development program for imprisoned men that started at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola.

"God continued to lay Angola on my heart and the Awana program I had heard about," Riley said. "I contacted Awana International, and the day that I called they had just finished praying about another facility being opened for this program to be started."

Relationships open doors

Over the past several years, Riley and the volunteers who help him have worked to earn the respect of the staff at the facility. Those relationships helped open the door for Riley to introduce the Awana program as another extension of his ongoing ministry.

Plans are now in the works for Riley and his trained volunteers to invite the families of the Eddyville inmates to a Father's Day picnic in June. At the event, fathers and children will have the opportunity to start working through an Awana handbook separately and then meet during visitation time to discuss it, following the model set at Angola.

"Right now what we're doing is trying to contact and encourage more churches with Awana programs and get people to understand the process of what's going on and the need to break the cycle in the family, to be hands-on with the prison," Riley said.

He explained that the idea is for churches with Awana programs that know of someone in prison at Eddyville to reach out to the man's family and help the children get involved in Awana at their local

Riley named MSC Missionary of the Year

Louisville—Harrell Riley of Princeton has been named the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2007 Mission Service Corps Missionary of the Year.

Mission Service Corps missionaries are self-funded missionaries who are commissioned by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Riley coordinates ministries at Job Corps sites in Morganfield, Greenville and Simpsonville and ministers at the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex in Eddyville. Job Corps is a federally funded program designed to teach occupational skills to economically and socially disadvantaged students.

Riley currently is working to bring the Awana children's program to the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex as a way to reconcile families and further minister to inmates (see related story at left).

He also provides leadership to college student missionaries each summer, works with lo-

cal homeless shelters, and ministers to motorcycle riders.

"Harrell doesn't see obstacles, he sees challenges that can be overcome with the Lord's help," said Eric Allen, director of the KBC's mission service and ministries department. "If he sees a ministry opportunity, he'll come up with a way to get it done."

Each year, the KBC recognizes an MSC missionary for his or her commitment to and effectiveness in ministry, evangelism or church planting.

"We are pleased to recognize Harrell in this way, particularly because of his incredible dedication to the Job Corps ministry," Allen said. "He's literally touching the lives of young people from all over our country."

As the state honoree, Riley will serve as Kentucky's nominee for the National Missionary of the Year award to be presented by NAMB this summer. Riley and his wife, Debra, have three children.



LIFE OF SERVICE Harrell Riley, KBC's MSC Missionary of the Year, ministers to one of his Job Corps students.

Record-high gas prices not putting a crimp in summer mission plans

Continued from page 1

The story is similar in the eastern Kentucky mountain community of Lynch.

"So far, (the gas prices) have not affected us," said Belinda Riley, co-director of Meridzo Center Ministries. "Our groups are still coming and still using their vehicles to get to their projects."

Riley and her husband, Lonnie, have operated Meridzo in northern Harlan County since 1999. The ministry provides much-needed supplies and assistance to the residents of the rural area. And they rely on outside volunteer groups, many from other states, to accomplish that mission.

Riley said she hasn't noticed a decline in the number of groups coming to help out, just that their travel plans may change.

"We just know that they have to work within their budget," Riley said. "They may not be able to take the kids and do something extra" on the way home.

Dozens of families will be joining Meridzo in Lynch for a week this summer through the Southern Baptist

North American Mission Board's Families on Mission project. Following a pilot venture in Lynch last summer, this is the launch year for the project that allows families to share a mission experience together.

Rick Head, the senior associate for NAMB's adult volunteer mobilization team, said despite the fact that their families are responsible for their own transportation to the project, attendance is at capacity.

However, projects later in the summer in East St. Louis, Ill., and New Orleans have yet to fill up. He speculates gasoline costs could play a role in that.

"There could be a lot of reasons for that," Head said. "I'm sure that is just one of the factors."

Fuel costs do not seem to be slowing down the work of those called to do missions, especially those who have made a career of it.

"It hurts the budget and our pocketbook, but it has not affected ministry," said Eric Allen, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board's mission service and ministries department.

church.

"This is only the second program in the United States to be started," Riley said of getting Awana into prisons. "The average time for the men we'll be working with to return to society and their families is going to be between 18 and 24 months. So it definitely has an opportunity to impact the home and the culture."

Malachi-based ministry

Along with the Awana handbooks, Riley plans to implement Malachi Dads starting in the fall at Eddyville with a family day kickoff called a Returning Hearts Celebration, which is also patterned after Angola. The program is based on Malachi 4:6, which says, "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers."

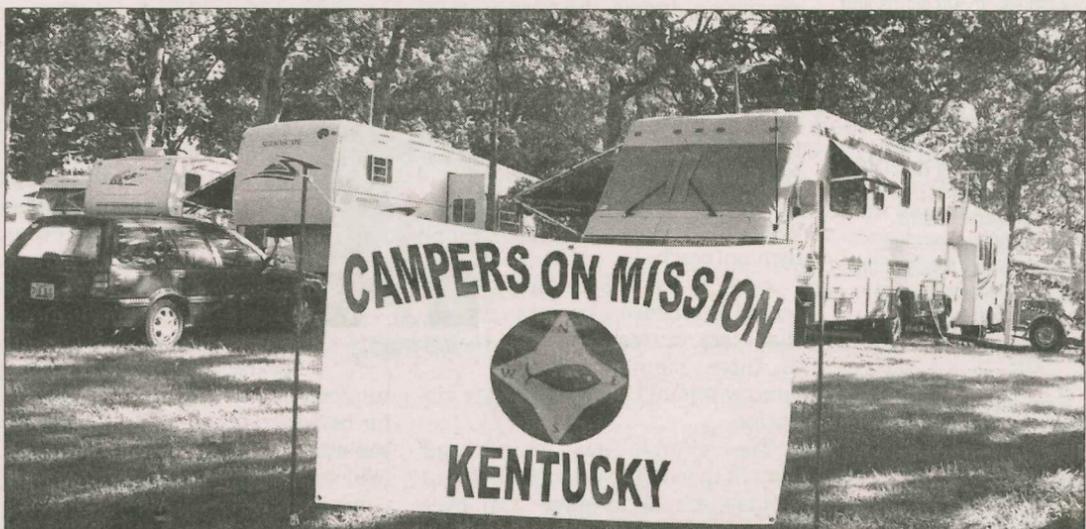
Malachi Dads helps imprisoned fathers commit to the spiritual development of their children in order to break the cycle of crime in their families. It focuses on five areas of training: fatherhood, spiritu-

al, educational, moral and vocational development. At Angola last fall, 45 inmates were in the first group to begin participating in the 12-month program.

Riley's work in the Eddyville prison is just part of what is being accomplished by about 150 Mission Service Corps missionaries in Kentucky who are thinking creatively in order to spread the gospel and minister to people in need, noted Eric Allen, director of the KBC's mission service and ministries department.

"I'm very thankful for Harrell's faithfulness to ministry," Allen said. "He gave up a full-time, paying career to follow the call that God had placed on his life, so I'm very humbled by him and I have a great deal of respect for Harrell. He is a tremendous example of what an MSC missionary is, and what our missionaries are doing in Kentucky."

To learn more about Riley's ministry or other MSC efforts in Kentucky, contact Allen at (502) 489-3530 or toll-free at (866) 489-3530, or email ministries@kybaptist.org.



Allen oversees 12 full-time church and community missionaries working throughout the state. He said that the high cost of gas does affect the limited funds available to those serving, but that they are careful in their spending.

"We always ask them to be conscientious of that kind of thing," Allen said. "To try to be very frugal

and wise stewards of what they do have."

Regardless of how high prices at the pump may climb, folks like David Fuqua remain committed to continuing the work God has called them to do.

"We're thrilled that God is letting us do this," Fuqua said. "So we just accept the expenses as part of it."

CAMPER CARAVAN

Groups like the Kentucky chapter of Campers on Mission use gas-guzzling RVs to get to and from volunteer projects across the state. (Photo courtesy of Patricia Fonner)

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

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Another 'Me Generation'?

By **Erich Bridges**

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Baby boomers have long taken the rap for being the most selfish generation of Americans ever, but we finally have some competition.

Our children and grandchildren are coming up fast in our rearview mirrors, and they're about to leave us in their dust when it comes to narcissism and self-absorption.

I'm not just talking about the little thugs and thugettes who run amok in stores and restaurants while their clueless parents ignore them. I'm talking about at least some of the intelligent, ambitious young adults graduating this spring from American colleges and universities. Too many celebrity commencement speakers are telling them what they've heard for years from parents and others: "You are special. The world revolves around you. The future belongs to you."

In other words, they're being sold a bill of goods by their indulgent boomer elders, who should know better by now. The world doesn't revolve around 20-somethings any more than the sun revolves around the earth. Why are we telling them so? It shortchanges them and cripples the mission of the church, which needs a new generation of selfless servants—not a new cult of self-worship.

Swimming against the tide

Don't get me wrong. I know many young adults who are living out a passionate desire to serve God. Some of them are making history right now on some of the toughest mission fields in the world. But they're swimming against the tide of our times, not flowing with it.

Before you dismiss me as a grumpy boomer, read on.

Recent studies on parenting and child development by Christian researcher George Barna find that the typical worldview of Americans in their early 20s "promotes self-cen-

teredness, the right to happiness and fulfillment, the importance of personal expression in all forms (and) the necessity of tolerating aberrant or immoral points of view; allows for disrespect of other people and use of profanity; and advances forms of generic spirituality that dismiss the validity of the Judeo-Christian faith. Largely propelled by post-modern thought, (this) worldview ... does not facilitate respect for life, acceptance of the rule of law or the necessity of hard work, personal sacrifice, paying dues or contributing to the common good."

I know, I know. Every older generation complains about the behavior of "kids these days." But the sense of entitlement among many young Americans today reflects years of conscious indoctrination by parents, teachers and coaches. These authority figures see their main mission not as educating and developing character in the young but as building "self-esteem," according to Jeffrey Zaslow of the Wall Street Journal.

"Now, as this greatest generation grows up, the culture of praise is reaching deeply into the adult world," Zaslow writes. "Bosses, professors and mates are feeling the need to lavish praise on young adults, particularly 20-somethings, or else see them wither under an unfamiliar compliment deficit. Employers are dishing out kudos to workers for little more than showing up. ... Certainly, there are benefits to building confidence and showing attention. But some researchers suggest that inappropriate kudos are turning too many adults into narcissistic praise-junkies."

America's "praise fixation," Zaslow warns, "has economic, labor and social ramifications. Adults who were over-praised as children are apt to be narcissistic at work and in personal relationships."

He cites a multi-university study involving more than 16,000 college students over several decades. They

took a standardized "narcissistic personality inventory," responding to such statements as "I think I am a special person." The average college student in 2006, according to the study, was 30 percent more narcissistic than the average student in 1982.

Praise and encouragement are wonderful tools as we love our children and guide them into adulthood. Mindless adulation, however, creates as many problems as condemnation does. It deceives young people into thinking any effort at all is their best effort. It prevents them from discovering their true abilities, developing their potential or forming discipline and character. It hurts their chances of building loving relationships with others.

Distorted understanding

Worst of all, it distorts their understanding of God's world and their role in it.

American-style Christianity already over-emphasizes the personal benefits of faith and neglects its responsibilities: Jesus loves me. He saved me. He blesses me. It's all about me. The narcissistic "culture of praise," as Zaslow calls it, only encourages this tendency. What about loving God, serving Him, following Him—and demonstrating such faith by loving and serving others at home and around the world?

"Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers," a 2005 book published by Oxford University Press, explored the inner lives of more than 3,000 U.S. teens ages 13 to 17. The study found that in contrast to the rebellious boomers, today's teens tend to believe in God, listen to their parents and willingly adopt their parents' religious views. If parents model a shallow faith with few demands, however, their children imitate them.

Biblical faith is about a very different "culture of praise." We praise and serve a God who lavishes unconditional love and undeserved grace upon us.

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

Parkland Baptist Church's FAITH focus

I recently had the privilege of preaching during the 11 a.m. Sunday worship service at Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville. Parkland is located in an older community and has maintained a strong focus on reaching the local area for Christ by using the FAITH evangelism outreach.

FAITH is a Sunday school evangelism process that uses outreach teams of three members from Sunday school classes in weekly visitation.

The church has experienced growth in worship (average 513) and Sunday school (average 274) over the last 10 years, and has averaged 27 baptisms and 39 other additions during the same period. In 2006, 18 of the baptisms were of people ages 12-59.

Sunday school enrollment has grown from 699 to 872 and resident membership from 770 to 977. All of the church programs remain strong, with 200 in music ministry, 65 in Woman's Missionary Union,

50 in Baptist Men on Mission, 260 in vacation Bible school and 185 participants in missions projects.

Pastor Tom Curry is convinced that the church's vitality and strong focus on evangelism could not have happened without the focus on FAITH evangelism through the Sunday school.

The pastor, who has served the church for 23 years, gives credit to the minister of education, Todd Beasley, for his outstanding leadership in 15 semesters of FAITH. With this staff leadership team, Parkland has overcome all of the excuses and barriers as members have presented the gospel 1,035 times and talked to 5,380 individuals during FAITH visits.

Pastor Curry and FAITH trainees have also assisted their mission church in launching FAITH by conducting sessions and weekly visitation with the church. This is a big Great Commission commitment.

The church has worship services at 8:30 and 11 a.m. on Sundays, with

a blended style of music, led by John Finney. The Sunday that I was present, the youth drama team presented a powerful drama on moral decisions and the struggles that people face every day that can result in victory through Christ.

Beth Turpin, who is a school teacher, has led the active youth ministry during the past 10 years. The youth will participate in camp and conduct a challenging mission trip this summer involving outreach, VBS and construction with a local church. Two volunteers work with their youth drama group.

The church has a strong missions emphasis. Recently, 13 Royal Ambassadors and 15 Girls in Action received recognition. Adults have been involved in several mission trips, including several trips to the Gulf following Katrina.

I am grateful that Parkland is committed to support missions through the Cooperative Program. The church contributed \$47,272 in 2005-06 and this year will exceed \$1 million in total gifts to CP since 1928.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

FAMILY

Today's economy:
How concerned
should you be?

By **Jeremy White**

In the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life," the main character, George Bailey, is about to realize his dream of travel and leaving Bedford Falls

for his honeymoon. Leaving the wedding, he and his bride ride away in the taxi, giddy with excitement.

Their excitement fades as they see the beginning of the run on the town's banks and their family-run building and loan. George and his bride, Mary, spend their honeymoon savings to keep the building and loan's doors open and depositors happy. The Great Depression had begun—and had ruined their honeymoon plans.

In the real world, the Great Depression in the U.S. ruined many people's plans and savings. Even though little may have changed in their local town or economies from one day to the next, the national changes had a drastic effect on many individuals.

You've seen headlines: "The Fed Raises Interest Rates," "The Dollar Hits Record High," "Government Deficit Is Higher," "Lower Unemployment Rattles Bond Market." (Makes you want to skip quickly to the comics!)

Are any of these matters vital to your everyday financial concerns? Well, the answer is yes and no. These can drastically affect your personal financial situation, yet you also could do well financially without even paying attention to them.

When looking at how the overall economy affects you, it's important to consider what you can control and what you can't. No one individual can affect the long-term stock market changes or the unemployment rate or inflation. I'm not saying those items are unimportant, but you can't do much to influence them.

I'm reminded of the "serenity prayer" often seen on plaques and cards: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

I think the idea of this prayer can apply to the economy. We have to accept the overall economic conditions in which we find ourselves. But we must have the courage to change what we can about our personal financial situation. To better prepare for uncertain changes in the economy, spend less than you earn, maintain liquidity, avoid debt, set goals and invest long-term.

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



Summer reading: From 'Dumb Attitudes' to 'Good Marriages'

Q: Could you recommend some books for summer reading about improving one's marriage?

Let me start by suggesting a light read that addresses attitudes in marriage: "Rescue Your Love Life: Changing Those Dumb Attitudes and Behaviors that Will Sink Your Marriage" by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

MARRIAGE

Some of the points seem obvious and they are. The problem is couples really do live out these "dumb attitudes." Knowing a truth and doing something about living out a truth are two different realities.

The book offers "Rescue Concepts" to bring your marriage back into balance. A few of the dumb attitudes addressed are:

Dumb Attitude #1: "My lover should make some changes." The focus here is on the other partner making changes rather than looking at yourself and exploring what changes need to happen with you. God always wants us to start with ourselves—get the log out of our own eye before working on the speck in our spouse's eye.

Dumb Attitude #2: "My lover should make me happy." God does not set a goal of happiness for us in life. God sets goals for us of maturing in Christ and growing in our faith. Happiness is a byproduct of being in healthy relationships, serving our Lord, living out our faith, using our gifts and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Again, this "dumb attitude" shows a focus on self rather than seeking ways to bring joy and meaning to your spouse's life.

Dumb Attitude #5: "My lover should read my mind." Ahh, the ever-present dream of so many spouses—the eternal longing that someone else would love us so deeply that he or she would know what we think, what we need and respond accordingly. This is a dumb attitude. God can read our minds. God knows our thoughts and our hearts. Our spouse does not. Our friends do not. Our pastor does not. It is our responsibility to speak what is on our minds. Sorry, but that's the deal. If you want your spouse to know you, understand you and love you the way you would like to be loved, then you have the responsibility to speak this.

Dumb Attitude #8. "My lover should be perfect at sex." Yes, many Christians are not satisfied with their sex life. Sex, as in many things in life, involves skills. Skills can be learned. Practice may not make perfect but might make sex better. Talk to each other. Listen and learn about your partner's sexuality. What does she like? What makes him feel good about himself? Animals can perform the sex act. Humans are intended to express their sexuality in a loving, safe and committed relationship. Communication is essential for wonderful sex.

If you would like a book that offers an interactive experience with your spouse, consider "Relationships: How to Make Bad Relationships Better and Good Relationships Great" by Les and Leslie Parrott

This book has more than 100 pages of exercises for those seeking an interactive, experiential study on relationships. Here are a few examples of the exercises for couples in the book:

- Exercise #1: Your Relational Readiness.
- Exercise #5: How Healthy Is Your Home?
- Exercise #6: Uncovering Unspoken Rules.
- Exercise #13: The Friendship Assessment.
- Exercise #23: The True You Self-Test.
- Exercise #36: Really Relating to God.

Such exercises help couples reflect and talk more intentionally about their relationship. Premarital counseling typically is designed to help couples be intentional in this way. Once they get married, many couples fail to continue being intentional in their communication.

Consider using a resource like this to bring intentional reflection and communication back into your marriage. Imagine the ways your marriage can grow and mature over the summer of 2007.—Valerie Vincent

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'Lost Boy of Sudan' shares ministry vision

It was one of the most gripping lunch conversations I've had in recent memory.

My dear friend Keith Inman, director of Kentucky Baptists' collegiate ministry department, invited me to join him for lunch with Gabriel Akech Kwai, one of the Lost Boys of Sudan. As we ate together, Gabriel recounted his 20-year odyssey that began at age 7.

During the past 50-plus years, Gabriel noted, various factions in Sudan have waged civil war against one another, including the current violence in Darfur. When Gabriel was a youngster, his father was imprisoned, tortured and killed by invading government forces who later attacked Gabriel's hometown of Bor.

Gabriel was separated from his family during the turmoil and joined an exodus of approximately 33,000 war orphans who trekked 1,000 miles from Sudan to Ethiopia and eventually to Kenya. As they left Ethiopia, Gabriel recalled, more than 5,000 of the boys were massacred by Ethiopian militia on a single day.

Gabriel and others who escaped the attack found their way to a refugee camp in Kenya where he lived for nine years. During that time, he was able to receive his elementary and high school education.

In 2001, 14 years after the Lost Boys began their journey, Gabriel was among 4,000 of the boys who were allowed to immigrate to the U.S.

Gabriel spent his first few years in the U.S. working in Louisville. He currently is a student at Murray State University where he is majoring in finance and computer information systems.

Reflecting on his years as a war refugee, Gabriel said hardships along the way included starvation, diseases, attacks by wild animals and other horrors. He said the toll of long-term violence in Sudan includes 2.5 million people killed, 6 million survivors displaced, an 80 percent increase in poverty and a sharp decline in health and education.

As he completes his education, one of Gabriel's goals is to return to his native country and help pro-

vide much-needed education for girls and young women. He noted that the current literacy rate among women in southern Sudan is a mere 12 percent compared to 37 percent for men.

In an effort to fulfill his vision, Gabriel established the non-profit WEEP for Sudan (Women's Educational Empowerment Project for Sudan) earlier this year. He will lead a group of Baptist Campus Ministry students from Murray on a vision tour this summer to help raise awareness about the region's educational needs.

His initial plan is to pair American donors with Sudanese girls in need by funding their costs to attend boarding schools in neighboring countries. His eventual goal is to build permanent schools in southern Sudan. He

said increased educational opportunities for girls in the region can help enhance economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve nutrition and health, reduce poverty and curb HIV/AIDS outbreaks.

"If you educate a young woman," Gabriel explained, "you educate her whole family."

As Gabriel seeks to make a positive difference in his war-torn homeland, he urges prayer for peace, freedom and relief from hunger and diseases. Pray also for Gabriel and the team of Baptist Campus Ministry students as they lay the groundwork for future ministry.

Declaring that God is good, even in times of sorrow, Gabriel cited the familiar words of Psalm 23:4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

It's difficult to wrap our Western minds around all the tragedy and heartache that Gabriel and countless others in Sudan have endured. Yet in the midst of such suffering, he has gained a God-sized burden for making a small part of the world a much better place.

It was a compelling lunch conversation—and ministry vision—I won't soon forget.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Take parental influence seriously

Since the inception of its popular "Parents: The Anti-Drug" campaign in 1998, the federal government reportedly has spent \$1 billion on the emphasis. That amount was spent because research then and now suggests that the top influence in the life of teenagers is their parents.

Through the years I have noticed some things, both as a youth minister and a parent that parents (including me) need to be reminded of.

Discipleship: Like it or not, it is our responsibility as parents to disciple our own children. Scripture makes this our responsibility.

Deuteronomy 11:18-19 declares, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

We have been passing that responsibility on to the church, the youth minister, the Sunday school teacher and the pastor. And while discipleship is of primary importance to a church's ministry, it is not the church's job to disciple my child. It is theirs to supplement what is being taught in my home. Far too many of us as parents have blamed the youth pastor when our child didn't get it. I

am not naïve enough to believe that youth ministers are innocent in this; it just isn't all their fault.

Example: Maybe I have noticed this more because our son, Jordan, now has his driver's permit and I am more conscious about my driving habits than normal—but I don't think that is all of it. We have to lead by example. If we don't want our children to smoke, then we can't either. The same goes for drinking alcohol, sex out-

side of marriage, driving too fast, talking about people, etc. The same holds true about good habits and Christian values we want our children to exhibit. When was the last time your teen saw you read the Bible, share your faith with someone or help somebody in need? If it is important to us, our children can sense that by what they see us do.

Life ain't fair: As parents, we so much want our children not to experience disappointments in life. But disappointments are going to happen. Sometimes they won't make the team or win the competition. When that happens, do we blame the coaches or the judges? Or do we take that as a teaching moment and help our child learn how to process disappointment. Personally, I prefer an Oreo Blizzard from Dairy Queen to help in the healing process. Tears are good sometimes. Even Jesus

cried (John 11:35) when He was sad and disappointed.

Rules do apply to you: Perhaps this is the hardest lesson for us as parents. Our tendency is to circumvent the rules and then try to wiggle our way out of the consequences when we get caught. Our children learn that from us as well.

"The teacher is picking on my kid," "the cop has a quota to reach," "I couldn't find shorts the right length for camp so these will have to do." I have heard all of these. And while such excuses might sound innocent, they reinforce in our children that rules don't matter.

Scripture is clear time and time again on the issues of reaping what you sow, judgment for indiscretions, etc. When we continue to reinforce in our children that we are above the rules then they will believe they are as well. I don't know how many conversations I have had with youth ministers on this issue. It is hard to enforce rules when the student's parents are ignoring them.

This list is by no means exhaustive. I could go on, but space limitations won't allow for it. But if the federal government has figured it out, and researchers such as Barina have been verifying it for years, then it behooves us to pay attention to the fact that we as parents have great influence in the lives of our children. That is, after all, how God designed it.

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

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

Hendry challenges Christian women to 'lead like Jesus'

"The Bible is clear about our purpose. Our purpose is to glorify God."

Phyllis Hendry, president of the "Lead Like Jesus" ministry

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Princeton—While some Christians consider themselves lacking in leadership skills, Phyllis Hendry insists that through their relationship with Christ, believers are equipped to lead others.

"You have great influence and are a steward of that influence," Hendry told Kentucky Baptist women and guests attending the recent Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference in Princeton. "God has positioned you exactly where you are."

Hendry is president of "Lead Like Jesus," a ministry based in Augusta, Ga., that provides resources and coaching for current or potential leaders. She said the ministry highlights aspects of Jesus' character that made Him the ultimate servant leader.

In examining Christ's earthly ministry, Hendry said, it becomes obvious He was masterful at:

- Establishing clear goals.
- Communicating in multicultural settings.
- Dealing with imperfect people.
- Handling turnover and rejection.
- Training and delegation.
- Enduring constant scrutiny.
- Handling fierce competition.
- Rejecting the temptation for recognition.

His ultimate act of servant leadership was sacrificing Himself for the

benefit of others when He was crucified, she pointed out.

"How many of you want to make the world a better place?" Hendry asked the audience. Most everyone raised their hands.

"How many of you have a plan to do that?" she continued. Most hands were lowered.

To develop an action plan, Hendry said individuals should consider their purpose or mission statement, their personal values and their picture of the future.

Personal mission statement

Believers can turn to the Bible for a personal mission statement, Hendry said. "The Bible is clear about our purpose. Our purpose is to glorify God."

Adopting the same values Jesus demonstrated also starts in the pages of Scripture, she noted. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke record Christ's instruction to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind." Mark and Luke include "all your strength" and Luke adds Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself."

When visioning a future, Hendry said believers should remember, "God does not look at your past to determine your future."

One somewhat unorthodox option for setting goals is for individuals to imagine their own obituaries, Hendry said. As an example, she

shared the story of Alfred Nobel, the Swedish scientist who devoted the bulk of his estate to establish the Nobel Prizes.

Many scholars believe Nobel envisioned the prizes after reading his premature obituary in a French newspaper. It labeled him a "merchant of death" because of his research in explosives. It is possible, Hendry said, that Nobel changed the course of his life because he wanted to be remembered differently.

Whether supervising employees or teaching a Bible study class, leaders must focus on their actions as much as their words, Hendry said. "People are watching you," she noted. "If we're going to lead like Jesus, our behavior often has to change."

The good news is that, in general, women already are wired to be encouragers and teachers, she said. Many women "have a heart to help people perform better."

Good communication is key to developing a positive teacher/student or supervisor/employee relationship, she told conference participants.

Noting that leaders must express their expectations clearly, Hendry said, "We need to tell them what a good job looks like. A lot of businesses evaluate things employees don't know they're being evaluated on."

Another vital characteristic of Christ-like leaders is encouragement, she said. "We don't have to

wait for them to get it perfect (to offer praise). We need to catch the right things they've done."

Setting a positive public example actually begins in solitude through a believer's relationship with God, Hendry said. "Jesus literally had people pulling on His clothes but He did not neglect His time with the Father."

The Gospels record Christ's habit of rising "when it was yet dark" to pray to God and listen for His response, she said, adding that "He never did anything the Father did not tell Him to do."

To lead like Jesus, Christians need to memorize verses of Scripture that remind them of God's love, power and presence in their lives, Hendry suggested. "Nothing is more powerful than having the word of God in your heart."

One of the most challenging aspects of leadership for believers is remembering their status before God through Christ, she said. "We can't do anything to get more love from God," she added. "We don't have to worry about another audience. We can be secure in our self worth when we abide in His love."

Northside Baptist Church in Princeton hosted this year's Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

To learn more about Hendry's ministry, visit www.leadlikejesus.com.

Ky. Baptist schools highlight campus visits

Frankfort—Several Baptist schools are among 20 colleges and universities across the state that will observe Kentucky Private College Week June 18-22.

Campbellsville University, Georgetown College, Mid-Continent University in Mayfield and University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg are among schools that will participate in the annual emphasis. The week is designed to make it convenient for students and families to hit the road and explore Kentucky's diverse private educational institutions.

Each campus will offer tours and information sessions about admissions, financial aid and student life at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily during the week.

"Students can hit multiple colleges in the week," noted Frankfort High School guidance counselor Joretta Crowe, "and everyone's on the same page as to what students and parents expect to see during their visits."

The free event is open to anyone interested in learning more about Kentucky's 20 nonprofit independent schools. Students receive an application fee waiver for every campus they visit during the week. Each student who visits three or more campuses during the week is entered into a prize drawing for an iPod shuffle.

Online registration is available at www.kentuckyprivatecolleges.org. For more information, call the Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges and Universities at (502) 695-5007.



MID-CONTINENT UNIVERSITY

Tony Higgins—Making a difference for the cause of Christ!



It is true, Sometimes the mere *prospect* of surmounting an obstacle can make the journey over the thing in front of you appear longer-harder-than the task really will be; such was the case for me in the Spring of 2002. It was at this time I was sensing the Lord was calling me to teach in the field of Higher Education. Now, as excited as I was at the prospect of following the Lord's leadership into this new arena, I was also *extremely* apprehensive. You see, at the time I had virtually no undergraduate credits to my name, I was just about to complete a *Diploma in Christian Education* from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY.), and I knew if I were to be faithful to what the Lord was asking me to do that would mean I

would need to do three specific things: 1) earn an undergraduate degree from a good school; 2) upgrade my diploma from SBTS to a master's degree; 3) eventually obtain a Ph.D. Needless to say, the prospect of all of that seemed quite daunting! I suppose my great comfort in even taking the first step in what had been laid before me was this: *Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established* (Prov. 16:3, NASB).

In May of 2004, I graduated from Southern Seminary with my master's degree (M.A.C.E.), and I can honestly say that would not have happened without the degree I earned through the *Advantage* program of Mid-Continent University (BS, Organizational Leadership), and without the support of both the faculty and administration of MCU, as well as that of my cohort—**BOWLING GREEN 2!**

A lot has happened since graduating from both SBTS and MCU in 2004. For the last two years (since January 2005), my wife (Heidi), our two daughters (Abigail and Elisabeth), and I have been serving in Nashville, TN. as church-planting missionaries, appointed through the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Our primary responsibility has been to work with and through the Nashville Baptist Association to help start churches in the Nashville area. These have been very busy, challenging, and rewarding years. Over the past two years, we have worked in some capacity to help start more than 5 new-works, primarily in inner-city/urban Nashville. I have also had the great opportunity extended to me to serve as an adjunct instructor for Mid-Continent; thus, beginning my foray into teaching in Higher Education! Currently, I am pursuing a Ph.D. (Leadership and Christian Education) from Southern. Again, none of this would have happened without the education, support and friendships I gained through Mid-Continent.

I certainly don't say any of the aforementioned to, "float my own boat . . ." Rather, I hope that by sharing a little bit of my own journey—and my heart—that I have been able to encourage both current and prospective MCU students to continue (or to even *start*) that walk towards what you believe the Lord is calling you to do. MCU plays into that journey. I can say from experience that you will have a willing partner for that journey—and beyond.

Yes, it is true, sometimes the mere *prospect* of surmounting an obstacle can make the journey over the thing in front of you appear longer-harder-than the task really will be, but it is equally true if you *Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established* (Prov. 16:3, NASB).—Tony Higgins, Bowling Green 2

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Sentimental life insurance gift

Accumulated cash value can help advance ministry cause

After my father died of lung cancer at age 43 in 1966 the year following my graduation from high school, my mother informed me of a whole life insurance policy my father had purchased on my life when I was 6 years old.

According to the 1954 policy application, I weighed 38 pounds and was 3 feet 2 inches tall at the time. It was one of two policies my father bought his only son because of his concern for my future insurability due to a three-month rheumatic fever episode three years

earlier at age 3. My mother continued to pay the premiums until 1974 when the policy was paid-up. Over the years I have collected the dividends and had the peace of mind this policy has provided my family. Fortunately, I have been insurable and able to buy additional life insurance to fill the gaps of my estate needs.

Now, 53 years later, I have donated this policy to the Kentucky Baptist Foundation as part of my wife's and my annual giving plan, which we began in 1985 with the establishment of an endowment fund for the benefit of several of

our favorite Baptist causes. At times we have given appreciated stocks; at other times we have given cash. This time we decided to give this policy, which has 53 years of accumulated cash value, and which we no longer needed in our estate plan. How thankful I am to the Lord for this financial provision my parents made available to me at an early age, and which I am able now to use to advance the Kingdom of Christ.

Let me encourage you to consider a life insurance gift. Such a gift is immediate, convenient, private, economical and flexible. Although the tax advantage was not my main motivation, I shall be entitled to a charitable deduction related to the cash surrender value at the time of the gift.

Call Laurie Valentine or me toll-free to discover the seven ways you can give using life insurance.

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

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

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

By Linda Nunn

Across

- 1 "Joshua the son of ____" (Deuteronomy 34:9)
- 4 "And I sent the ____ before you" (Joshua 24:12)
- 9 "Blessed are ____" (Matt. 5:11)
- 11 One of the kings of Judah (1 Kings 15:11)
- 12 "He had compassion ____ him" (Luke 10:33)
- 13 "Intending after ____ to bring him forth to the people" (Acts 12:4)
- 15 "Thy father made our ____ grievous" (1 Kings 12:4)
- 16 "The ____ shall be first" (Matt. 19:30)
- 17 "____ burden is light" (Matt. 11:30)
- 18 "There was one ____, a prophetess" (Luke 2:36)
- 21 "And a certain woman named ____" (Acts 16:14)
- 24 "When I am weak, then am I ____" (2 Corinthians 12:10)
- 25 "____ strong" (1 Samuel 4:9)
- 26 "I am that bread of ____" (John 6:48)
- 28 "As the apple ____" (Song of Solomon 2:3)
- 29 "What must I do to be ____?" (Acts 16:30)
- 31 "Better is it that thou shouldst not ____" (Ecclesiastes 5:5)
- 34 "O generation of ____" (Matt. 3:7)
- 37 "And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount ____" (Exodus 24:16)
- 39 Seeds that can be made into soup
- 42 A natural substance containing a valuable metal
- 43 New Testament, abbr.
- 44 Latin that is, abbr.
- 45 "____ man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24)

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				17					18		19	20
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45			46	47	48	49			50	51		
52		53					54			55		
56								57				

- 46 "And whatsoever goeth upon his ____" (Leviticus 11:27)
- 50 "He hath ____ great things" (Joel 2:20)
- 52 "There shall be weeping and ____ of teeth" (Luke 13:28)
- 55 "Though they be ____ like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18)
- 56 "Rebekah ... the daughter of Bethuel the ____" (Genesis 25:20)
- 57 "We remember the ... ____" (Numbers 11:5)
- 17 "And (Jesus) called, saying, ____ arise" (Luke 8:54)
- 18 "Thou ____ my King" (Psalm 44:4)
- 19 Compass direction, abbr.
- 20 "Rock of ____, cleft for me"
- 21 Pounds, abbr.
- 22 "____, though I walk" (Psalm 23:4)
- 23 French word for island
- 27 "I will fear no ____" (Psalm 23:4)
- 30 "I am the true ____" (John 15:1)
- 32 "Who is worthy to ____ the book?" (Revelation 5:2)
- 33 "So they two ____ until they came to Bethlehem" (Ruth 1:19)
- 35 Right, abbr.
- 36 Yes, in Italian or Spanish
- 37 "Speaking to yourselves in ... spiritual ____" (Ephesians 5:19)
- 38 Sarcasm
- 40 "Fine ____ is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:8)
- 41 "Some ____ fell by the way side" (Matthew 13:4)
- 46 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet
- 47 Expression of triumph
- 48 "That I may ____ Christ" (Philippians 3:8)
- 49 Chemical symbol for tin
- 51 Spanish word for gold
- 53 "To the dwelling of ____" (Numbers 21:15)
- 54 "____ ye therefore" (Matt. 28:19)

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60

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American Legion defends vet memorials' religious symbols

Washington (RNS)—The American Legion has joined forces with two conservative legal groups in a campaign to defend religious symbols on veterans' memorials.

Reacting to suits by the American Civil Liberties Union and other groups that have challenged crosses at memorials in San Diego and the Mojave Desert, the veterans organization hopes to halt future efforts that would remove religious symbols.

"We stand here today to put the ACLU and any other organization on notice that filing self-enriching lawsuits for the removal of religious symbols that are on veterans' memorials will not be tolerated," declared American Legion Post National Commander Tom Bock.

The Mt. Soledad cross—which was dedicated in 1954 and initially honored Korean War veterans but now honors all vets—still stands following a string of legal victories by supporters. But the Mojave Desert cross—erected in 1934 as a memorial to World War I vets—currently is covered up due to a judge's order. Both crosses initially sat on public land, although officials have attempted to save the memorials by making the land private.

Bock said memorial religious symbols other than crosses would also be defended.

"The religious symbols on them reflect the service of that veteran regardless of that belief," he said. "We're a free nation. We have many, many beliefs in this nation."

The American Legion intends to create a private database of local vet-

erans memorials. Two other groups, the Arizona-based Alliance Defense Fund, and the Texas-based Liberty Legal Institute, intend to help defend city and county governments that may be sued for having religious symbols on those memorials.

"The question in everybody's mind is, what about Arlington? Where does this end?" ADF attorney Joe Infranco said. "This is a campaign to call attention to what's happening."

Jeremy Gunn, director of the ACLU's Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief, said the symbols that often appear on veterans' memorials "end up being majority religious symbols" and the government should not be promoting them.

"The religious symbols are things that people, families, religious institutions should all be able to post," Gunn said, "but we should not be using the government and taxpayer dollars to be erecting religious symbols that the Alliance Defense Fund and the American Legion like."

But Infranco said any memorial "that has any type of religious symbol" could be the target of a suit.

"These are progressive lawsuits," he said. "There's clearly a goal in mind. It's an overused metaphor, but it's a slippery slope."

With additional reporting by Baptist Press



President's AIDS proposal welcomed by religious groups battling disease

Washington (RNS)—Religious groups involved in addressing the AIDS crisis have praised President Bush's proposal to double U.S. efforts to fight global HIV/AIDS.

Bush announced May 30 he will ask Congress to double the spending—from \$15 billion to \$30 billion—on government programs that fight AIDS in some of the world's poorest countries. The plan would continue efforts that began with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which is scheduled to expire in 2008.

"I ask Congress to demonstrate America's continuing commitment to fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS by reauthorizing this legislation now," Bush said.

Under the plan, the U.S. would work with governments and faith- and community-based groups to help prevent new infections, support orphans and treat people with the disease.

Rick and Kay Warren, who

lead an HIV/AIDS initiative from Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif., are among those welcoming the plan.

"We're thrilled that the president's plan calls for a comprehensive program of prevention, treatment, care and support for those with HIV/AIDS, and a new allocation for the millions of orphans left behind," the Warrens said in a statement. "Every American should support this effort to save lives at home and around the world."

Evangelist Franklin Graham, president of Samaritan's Purse, said the additional funds proposed to fight the disease demonstrate how much more work is needed to address it.

"That is why I am encouraged by this new request for \$30 billion—so the increased support can begin as soon as possible and continue well beyond this president's term," Graham said.

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Ready to go

Monticello student prepares for God's next ministry call

Nick Catron drives 120 miles from Monticello to Pineville to pursue his studies at Clear Creek. He said he is grateful he can take a full class load on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. "I'm up at 4 a. m.," Nick said. "I try to do as much as I can while

on campus because I usually go straight to church after classes."

Like most Clear Creek students, Nick also holds down a job. The days he is not on campus, he works at radio stations WMKZ and WXYR—Monticello's Christian radio.

Nick was baptized at age 9 in his home church, Steubenville Baptist. He married Russell County native Marlene Bell in 1988. They have two children, Nikka, 18, and Elijah, 11. A niece, Ravane Perkins, 15, also lives with them.

Nick said God called him to ministry in 1999 after a two-week mission in Poland. The local missionary told Nick, "I could see turning a 'big horse' like you loose on the streets of Warsaw. We could do that together."

Nick said when he gave Marlene the news, she laughed. "My call has been an adjustment for her," he said. "We've since been to Poland

three times and applied with the (Southern Baptist) International Mission Board for appointment." Family health issues put the IMB appointment on hold, but Nick said there was another reason. "The Lord was actually leading me to school," he said. "I needed to be better prepared for what He desires."

An alumnus of Clear Creek, Kenneth Dick, encouraged Nick to start classes at the college to become better prepared for ministry. The first class Nick took was a New Testament course taught live via the Internet. The next two semesters he attended classes at Steubenville Baptist.

In 2006, Nick served at a Baptist camp in Mexico. The team renovated some of the facilities and also assisted a local congregation in its efforts to share the gospel. "The church had three block walls, a dirt floor and a tarp roof," Nick recalled. "It was full every service. The last night it rained and the electricity was failing. A young boy named Carlos trusted Jesus that night."

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977; toll-free: (866) 340-3196; Web site: www.ccbbc.edu; e-mail: dfox@ccbbc.edu

God really is in control

Farm operation expands after generous donations and momentary setbacks

By Lynn Cole, farm manager

The past year has been filled with evidence that it is God who manages Oneida's farm operation, not me.

It all started early in the spring of 2006 when I was introduced to Billie Singleton from Indiana. He wanted to donate two used grain bins. We needed to replace our small, wet corn holding bin, but we didn't really know what we would do with another bin. We did not want to refuse the generous gifts, however, even if we weren't sure how to use one of them. Last summer, Mr. Singleton delivered the bins and additional equipment: nine hog feeders, some Flex-Auger materials used to convey feed, and other miscellaneous farm equipment and machinery. We didn't really have an immediate use for any of the items in the foreseeable future. We erected the bins and put the other equipment in storage.

Then God went to work. First, our usual buyer for excess feeder pigs told us he had to suspend purchases for three months. At the time, we were producing about 200 pigs each month and had no way to feed them on our farm. I called many potential buyers throughout the five-state area and found no one interested in purchasing our relatively small number of pigs.

I realized that circumstances were forcing us to change our operation.

We converted half of our gestation building into additional space to finish the pigs for market. For this conversion, we needed: a small grain bin, nine feeders and a good length of Flex-Auger materials to convey the feed.

Wow!

For several years, corn supply has been very tight. The transition to finishing all of our pigs would force us to reduce the number of feeder calves we could raise. Additionally, changes in estates required Oneida to relinquish some of our acreage. We lost an entire farm on which, for years, we have produced hay or silage. With these changes, we were sure we needed the large grain bin even less than we did before.

Again God solved the dilemma when acreage about 10 times larger than what we had lost was donated. That gift created a snowball effect. The donor's cousin who owned adjoining land contributed acreage to the school; then two other landowners also made donations of land. Suddenly, we knew we would have enough forage and corn for our livestock. We also realized that we needed that large grain bin.

Wow, again!

Blessings continued. In a year when seed, fertilizer and other chemicals were in short supply and expensive, virtually all of our farm chemicals were donated, and we found quality seed at reasonable prices, even though we were making many last-minute decisions that changed our operation. We purchased additional farm equipment at greatly reduced prices. The new equipment permitted us to plant more, better and quicker than previous years. Except for a few wet spots that were planted May 15, we planted about 85 percent more corn than ever before, and finished on May 9. That is a new record for OBI.

Why do we fret? God really is in control.

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



W.F. Underwood

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

Museum celebrates creationism

\$27 million facility's grand opening draws mix of supporters, detractors

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

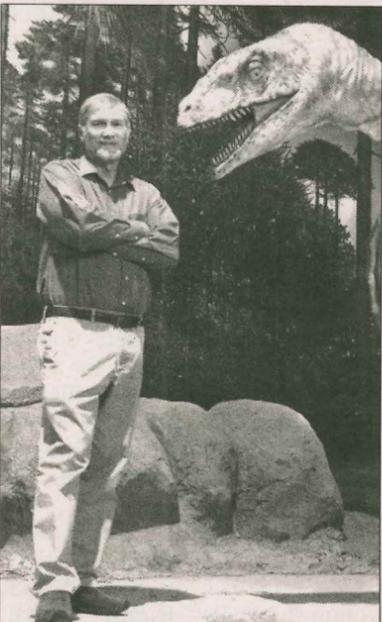
Petersburg (RNS)—Ken Ham stood outside his \$27 million Creation Museum before its official opening on May 28 and declared its mission is not just to counter evolution.

He also wants to create a few Christians.

"We don't just want to see people converted to creationism," said Ham, president of the Answers in Genesis ministry, which built the museum on a site officials say is a convenient travel distance for two-thirds of all Americans.

"We do want to see people consider the claims of the gospel, the claims of Christianity, to see people put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ."

The latest juncture between evolutionists and creationists comes in the form of a 60,000-square-foot building whose main hall features animatronic dinosaurs and figures of young children playing near each other in a way its owners believe life really occurred some 6,000 years ago.



MUSEUM FOUNDER Ken Ham, president of the Answers in Genesis ministry, stands with a dinosaur sculpture featured in the new Creation Museum.

With the slogan "Prepare to Believe," Ham's creation-defending ministry opened the museum on Memorial Day on 49 acres just over the Kentucky state line from Cincinnati.

The museum was partially funded by three families who anonymously donated \$1 million each, but 75 percent of all donations averaged around \$100, officials said. Those donations built a state-of-the-art museum with vibrating seats and sprays of water in a theater that depicts Noah's flood, and extensive exhibits that claim the Grand Canyon could have formed around the time of that flood rather than millions of years ago as suggested by most scientists.

"Ground zero" for creationism

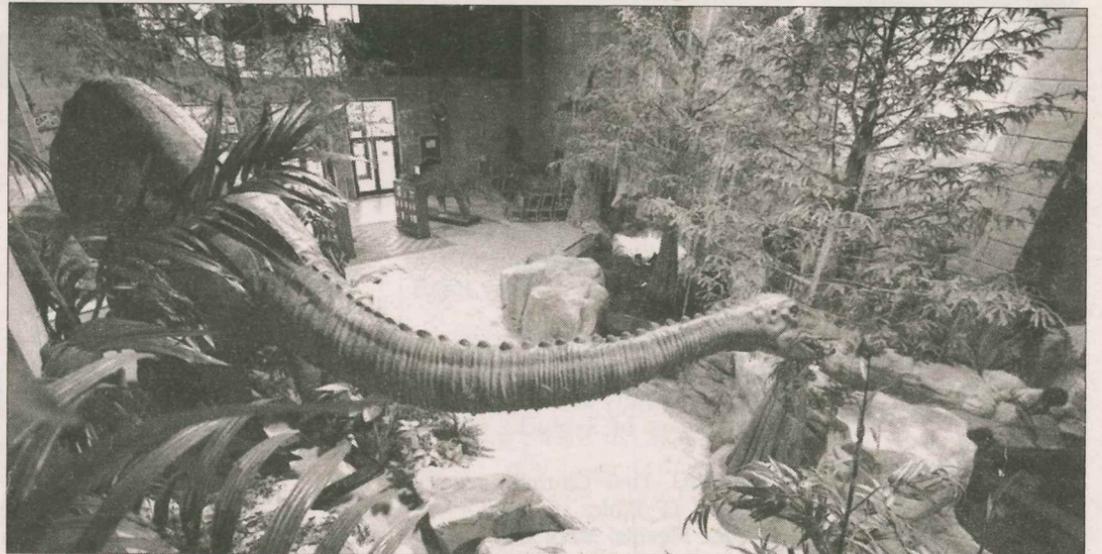
"Just as Dayton, Tenn., was ground zero for the defense of evolution in 1925, so Petersburg, Ky., will become ground zero for the defense of creation in 2007," Ham said in a museum press release.

"The purpose of the museum is to use observational science to show that the Bible is true, its history is true and therefore the gospel is true," Ham added. "There are a lot of Ph.D. scientists who believe what the Bible teaches. Both creationists and evolutionists use the same science, and the same evidence—the difference is our pre-existing beliefs."

A studious visitor could spend several hours in the museum, which includes a planetarium, exhibits detailing the construction of Noah's Ark and life-size sculptures of Eve handing Adam the forbidden fruit from the Garden of Eden.

Two days before the official opening, a supportive crowd of hundreds of civic and business leaders and charter members—some who paid \$1,000 for a lifetime membership—dined on shrimp and fruit kabobs after a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Critics, however, were not far away. A plane circled overhead from the group Campaign to Defend the Constitution, or DEFCON, flying a banner that read, "DEFCON says thou shalt not lie." Atheist and scientific groups have signed peti-



tions complaining the museum fosters "superstition" and will confuse schoolchildren who see one view there and hear another in high school and college.

"The 'museum,' as it's called, is part of a campaign to deceive children and undermine scientific understanding in our country," said Clark Stevens, co-director of DEFCON.

Russell Moore, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, disagrees. He attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony with his wife and four young children.

"I want to raise children who are able to understand Darwinism and to be able to see the alternative to it," said Moore, a proponent of creationism. "We have a biblical text that reveals the universe as it is and I believe in raising children who understand the authority of the Word of God and who also understand all of the alternatives ... and are able to make informed, educated analysis of those things."

Paleontology perspectives

One room in the museum features two paleontologists—both as sculptures and as actors in a brief video—examining dinosaur bones. One declares them to be thousands of years old; the other says they are millions of years old. The first paleontologist appears again in the last theater presentation, Bible in hand, declaring that every word of the holy

book is true.

Just outside that last theater, members of a "CARE team" are ready to answer questions about the video, which begins with the paleontologist holding the bone of an ancient animal and ends with the story of Jesus' resurrection. The team's acronym stands for Compassion, Acceptance, Respect and Encouragement, said Cecil Eggert, the museum's "creation evangelism" director.

He said the 30-member CARE team, which was trained over several weekends, will offer everything from informative pamphlets to praying with someone who has decided to become a Christian.

"We know that the bottom line in all of this is to show them that the Bible is truly the Word of God," Eggert said, "but also (that) the creator God wants to have a relationship with them through His Son Jesus Christ and we are here to help them in that journey."

Ham, who once was a science teacher in his native Australia, said the museum's exhibits on creation explain the basis of the Christian faith by linking the first sin by Adam to the sacrifice of the "last Adam," Jesus.

"If you want to go and tell someone about Jesus Christ and about sin and about the need for repentance, ... you really can't do it without the foundational history of Genesis," he said. "Without the history of Genesis, you have no basis for any Christian doctrine."

DINOSAUR EXHIBIT

A plant-eating, animatronic sauropod dinosaur is featured in the Main Hall of the Creation Museum. (RNS photos courtesy of the Creation Museum)

Study indicates American news media overplays religious conservatives

Washington (ABP)—A new study by two Washington-based groups asserts that the mainstream media, derided by some observers as liberally biased, actually over-emphasizes the importance of religious conservatives.

Media Matters for America and Faith in Public Life released the report, titled "Left Behind: The Skewed Representation of Religion in the Major News Media," May 29. It found that between the 2004 elections and the end of 2006, prominent conservative religious leaders were interviewed, quoted or mentioned in more than twice as many stories as were prominent moderate or liberal religious leaders.

For years, conservatives have accused the mainstream media of widespread bias in favor of liberals and liberal causes. But the study's numbers suggest that when it comes to religion-related coverage, con-

servatives get far more attention than liberals and moderates.

At least one conservative journalism watchdog group dismissed the study, saying its sponsorship and methodology compromised it.

Media Research Council spokesman Robert Knight said the study left out important liberal religious leaders who often are quoted or appear on newscasts. The list of moderate and liberal leaders whose appearances were tallied "is missing some key people, who, if included, would eclipse any perceived advantage in coverage garnered by conservatives," he said, according to CNSNews.com, the Media Research Council's news arm.

To come up with its figures, the study counted media appearances or mentions by 10 religious conservatives and 10 religious progressives. Among the conserva-

tives were Franklin Graham of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson.

Among the progressives were Jim Wallis of Sojourners magazine, Baptist sociologist and author Tony Campolo, and "emerging church" leader Brian McLaren of Maryland.

The study set aside several religious "celebrities" who receive frequent media attention but who themselves are often newsmakers rather than commentators. They include Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, Pat Robertson, James Dobson and the late Jerry Falwell.

Katie Barge, spokesperson for Faith in Public Life, said the 20 leaders whose statistics form the study present a truer

picture of how the media provides a "religious" perspective that over-represents conservative points of view.

"These are truly the ones that the media seeks out for a religious perspective on news of the day," she said.

Carl Kell, an expert in religion and the news media, said the study likely underestimated the inequity in media exposure between religious conservatives and progressives.

"I would say that's probably conservative in its estimate," said Kell, a communications professor at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green.

Kell claims conservatives are represented more than moderates in stories about religion because it's "easy to find" representatives of "a religious community that has hard-edged, sharp perspectives on faith and life."

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Mark Whitt

I recently observed the end of another school year on our campus. I watched as students said goodbye for the summer or parted ways amid the excitement of graduation.

I also saw students celebrating the joy of relationship—heartfelt relationships with those they have walked with through a school year or a collegiate career. Relationship is an important part of all of our lives in whatever season of life we find ourselves.

While relationship with those around us is extremely powerful, even more significant is that we are able to have a relationship with Jesus Christ every moment of our life—a living, breathing, intimate relationship with our Savior and Lord.

Jesus modeled a life of relationship throughout His ministry, including relationship with His Father. "He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray" (Matthew 14:23). "And He withdrew from them ... and He knelt down and began to pray" (Luke 22:41).

Relationship with others also was central to Christ. When He called His disciples, He said, "Come, follow me" (Matthew 4:19). His words affirm that He is in this life with us through the joys and struggles. When we follow Him, He will never leave us (John 14:18).

As we celebrate the joy of relationship with family and friends, may we never forget the most central relationship we are able to have with Jesus. That personal relationship with Christ is available to everyone who repents of their sin and calls on Him in faith.

The longer I walk this life, the more I realize it truly is all about relationship.

Mark Whitt is Baptist campus minister at Murray State University

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **EAST BERNSTADT**—Randy Bingham, pastor of Hazel Patch Church, was ordained to the gospel ministry April 15.

■ **LaCENTER**—Tony DeWeese recently resigned as pastor of New Hope Church.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Maple Grove Church ordained Joshua McFarland to the gospel ministry May 20. Ray Hayes is pastor.

■ **MORGANTOWN**—Amanda Phelps of Morgantown recently received her master of divinity degree from Baptist Seminary of Kentucky in Lexington.

■ **OLIVE HILL**—First Church recently dedicated 67 Bibles in memory of Christine Blevins. Mark Lilly is pastor.

■ **OLMSTEAD**—Dripping Spring Church will dedicate a new sanctuary during a special service June 10, 3 p.m., with Bill Mackey, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and Ronnie Sivells, KBC church development strategist, as guest speakers. A reception will

Spotlight on ...

Mackville



Mackville Church recently honored Dudley and Lorna Thompson on their 75th wedding anniversary. The Thompsons have been members of Mackville Church since 1938. Micah Carter is pastor.

follow the dedication service. The 12,500-square-foot facility includes a 500-seat sanctuary, two multipurpose Sunday school rooms, a nursery cry room and restrooms. Jeff Noffsinger is pastor.

■ **VERONA**—New Bethel Church recently called Bryan Cobb as minister of youth.

■ **WALTON**—First Church recently ordained Tony Fish as a deacon.

Kentucky students among recent Southern Baptist seminary grads

Several students with Kentucky Baptist ties were among graduates who received degrees at recent commencement ceremonies at three Southern Baptist seminaries.

Students, their hometowns and degrees include:

Southern Seminary

Geoff Baggett, Cadiz, master of divinity.

Ilene Bosscher, Louisville, master of divinity.

Keenan Braden, Walton, master of arts in Christian education.

Jerald Burgess Jr., Whitley City, master of divinity.

Brian Burkhead, Harrodsburg, master of divinity.

Randy Burns, Bowling Green, master of divinity.

Michael Cabell, Shelbyville, master of divinity.

Phil Champion, Louisville, master of arts in Christian education.

Glenn Chasteen Jr., Butler, doctor of ministry.

Jonathan Christman, Owensboro, master of divinity.

Shannon Clark, Nicholasville, master of arts in biblical counseling.

Matthew Dye, Wheatley, master of divinity.

Teddi Embrey, Rineyville, master of arts in Christian education.

Brian Flahardy, Owensboro, doctor of education.

Travis Freeman, Corbin, master of divinity.

David Lee Gagel, Louisville, master of church music.

Nathan German, Fern Creek, master of arts in theological studies.

Jason Glenn, Wilmore, master of divinity.

Rahsheeno Griffith, Louisville, master of arts in biblical counseling.

Katie Hancock, Owensboro, master of divinity.

Adam Henker, Louisville, master of divinity.

Jason Hutchinson, Ashland, master of divinity.

Christian Michau, Louisville, master of arts in Christian counseling.

Micah Millican, Louisville, master of divinity.

Edward Morris, Louisville, master of arts in theological studies.

Kirk Ogren, Louisville, master of divinity.

Jason Parry, Louisville, master of divinity.

Jacob Preston, Monticello, master of divinity.

Richard Ross Jr., Louisville, doctor of ministry.

Marciano Santos, Muldraugh, master of divinity in worship.

Terra Santos, Louisville, master of arts in theological studies.

Holly Sharp, Glendale, master of arts in Christian counseling.

Matthew Spandler-Davison, Bardstown, master of divinity.

Jay Sulfridge, Middlesboro, doctor of education.

Allison Summers, Louisville, master of arts in Christian counseling.

John Mark Tittsworth, Taylorsville, master of divinity.

Douglas Wallaker, Louisville, master of divinity.

Matthew Wireman, Glasgow, master of divinity.

New Orleans Seminary

Jonathan Clark, Hopkinsville, master of divinity.

Kevin Keane, Benton, master of arts in marriage and family counseling.

Southeastern Seminary

Whitney Danielle Cornelison, Shepherdsville, master of divinity with biblical counseling.

Shanna Lynn Heath, Hickory, master of arts in biblical counseling.

Sean McKenzie, Louisville, master of divinity with pastoral ministry.

Nathan Whisnant, Henderson, doctor of ministry.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

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 Service Corps Basic Training & Support, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

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.

July

2-3 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.

5-7 Express Mission Adventure Camp for Girls & Boys, Cedar Crest.

5-7 Pursuit Student Leadership Academy, Campbellsville University.

7-14 Kentucky Changers, Monticello.

9-13 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.

19-20 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Northside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.

25-26 Kentucky Baptist Secretaries' Summer Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.

27-28 World Missions Unlimited, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

August

11 Crafters on Missions, First Baptist Church, Central City.

14 Understanding Other Beliefs, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro.

18 Super Saturday, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

20-22 Freedom Experience, Lincoln County High School.

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FOR SALE: Stacked nursery cribs (2 units, 2 high). Very good condition. \$400 OBO. Contact Jed Davis, New Columbus Baptist Church, Corinth, KY 41010. Phone: (502) 857-2272.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Paris, Ky. We are a growing Southern Baptist church in central Kentucky. Please send resumé and a tape/DVD of a sermon by June 30 to the Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 327, Paris, KY 40361.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Aberdeen Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Bracken Association of Kentucky Baptist Convention. Send resumé to Lowell Lively, Pastor Search Committee, 1996 Campbell Drive, Aberdeen, OH 45101.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for Calvary Baptist Church in Maysville, Ky. Send resumé to Tom Adams, 9529 St. Rt. 41, Aberdeen, OH 45101. Phone: (937) 549-2006.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music with seminary degree for conservative but progressive SBC church in southeast Kentucky. Must be energetic, Spirit-led individual with an ability to work with all age groups, blended as well as traditional worship services. Send resumé to: Music Search Team, First Baptist Church, 170 Madison Ave., Whitesburg, KY 41858.

SEEKING: Lawrenceville First Baptist Church in Gwinnett County, Ga., is accepting resumés for a full-time senior pastor. Please mail a resumé, and a DVD, videotape or other media, to Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 228, Lawrenceville, GA 30046-0028.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor, First Baptist Church, Hodgenville, Ky. Send resumés to the Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 730 Tonieville Road, Hodgenville, KY 42748.

SEEKING: Pastor for Munfordville Baptist Church in Munfordville, Ky. Interested parties should mail resumés to: MBC, PO Box 768, Munfordville, KY 42765.

SEEKING: Youth minister and music minister or combination—this could be full- or part-time. Submit resumé with letter of interest to: Silver Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 97, Berea, KY 40403.

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@voyageonline.net.

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Going underground

Nepali Christians stand firm despite setbacks amid political turmoil

For security reasons, the names of some of the people in this story have been changed.

Nepal (BP)—Imagine heading to church on Sunday but instead of a large brick building with a cross ascending from the roof you enter a fellow believer's humble home.

"Rather than using podiums and pews, the whole group sits on the floor, including the presenter," a Nepali believer said, describing indigenous worship in house churches. "The music is performed with traditional instruments, not Western keyboards or drums."

"Bible messages are presented as stories, not in 'traditional' three-point sermons," he continued. "Leaders are trained not from Western theological schools but through mentoring by local leaders in sound biblical practice and in the local tribal language."

Official Hindu nation

Depending on the political climate of the day, Christian worship is either tolerated or shunned in Nepal, the world's only officially Hindu nation. An estimated 29 million people live in the Himalayan country in south Asia that borders Tibet, China and India.

At one time, there were two local Christian churches very similar to many of their U.S. counterparts, according to Royce Allard, an international Christian who mentors Nepali believers.

"Both churches were successful in raising financial support from outside of Nepal for building meeting centers," Allard said.

When the country's latest political struggle deteriorated to war, the plans of the two Western-style churches changed quickly. Quite unintentionally, the believers discovered the benefits of indigenous worship.

Politically, Nepal's volatility stems from short-lived governments whose promises of progress have

fallen flat. Additionally, the Maoist movement renewed its violence against the government.

Nepal was a monarchy until 1951 when a cabinet system of government was instituted. According to the World Factbook published by the U.S. Department of State, reforms in 1990 established a multiparty democracy within a constitutional monarchy.

Officially known as the Communist Party of Nepal, the Maoists became a political party in 1994; it launched the "People's War" in 1996. In 2001, the crown prince massacred the royal family, including the ruling king, and then killed himself.

In 2002, the political situation changed again when "the king made the decision to remove the standing government and directly take on the Maoist insurgency," Allard explained. A negotiated ceasefire between Maoists and government forces was broken in early 2003.

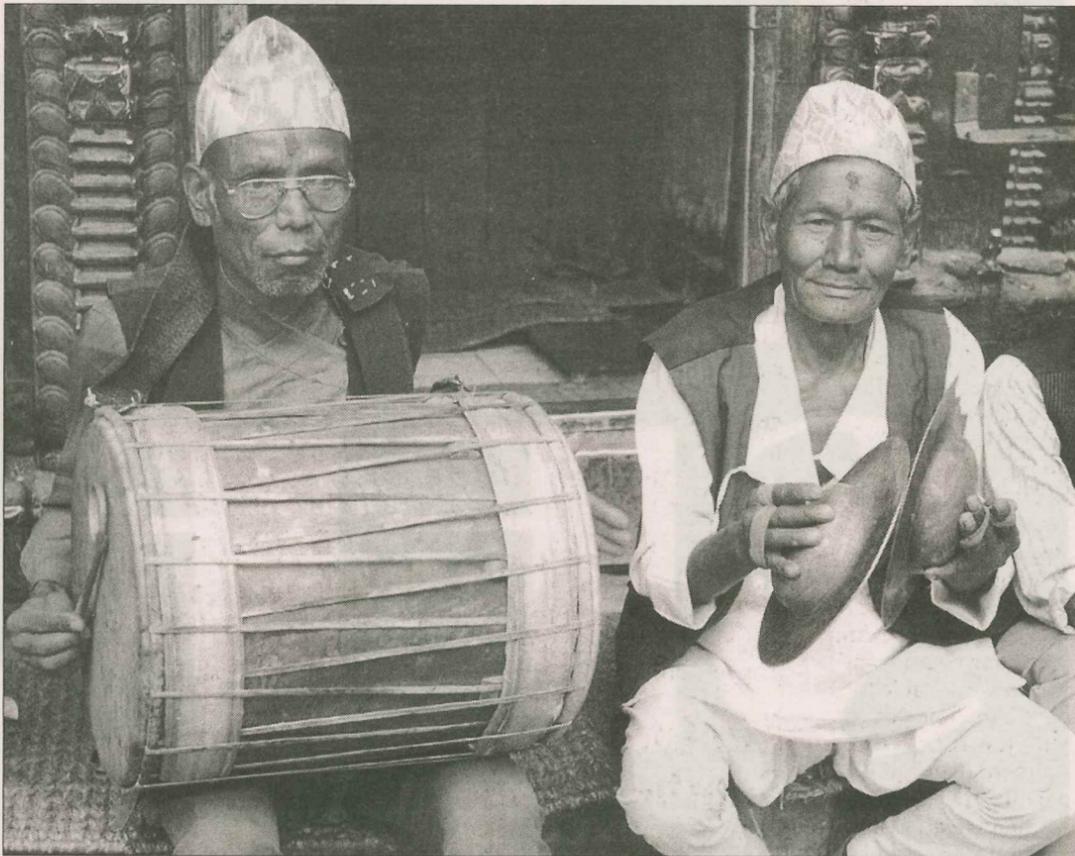
The Maoist insurgency closed one church's meeting place and restricted access to another's. Out-of-country funding that supported one of the pastors was cut. Maoists persecute Christians because believers are perceived to be under foreign influence, Allard noted.

"Now the churches meet in believers' homes (and) rotate leadership among local elders. ... (They) demonstrate more dependence on the teachings of the Bible."

The violence has not diminished the faith of Nepali Christians.

Maoists have confronted Narayan, a local church leader, on more than one occasion. He has "used this experience to share with the Maoists, sometimes while at gunpoint, that he has chosen faith in Christ freely because of the inner peace and joy it brings, without any material gain," Allard said.

The first signs of positive political change came late last year when the opinion of the people convinced



King Gyanendra to reinstate a parliamentary government. Since then, power has shifted from the monarchy to Parliament and the prime minister. The monarchy remains with diminished influence.

Believers glorify God

The largest demonstration since the resumption of Parliament was Feb. 13, the 11th anniversary of the start of the Maoists' "People's War." Local Christians said the demonstration displayed how God can be glorified amid difficult circumstances.

"The (communist) party arranged to bring in thousands of supporters and observers from the countryside and forced many private individuals and groups to house and feed the out-of-town attendees," Allard said.

"One church here was 'invited' to house a group of several attendees of the rally and responded that they would do so, but on the condition that those staying must take time to listen to the church's gospel presentation," Allard said. "During that presentation, many heard the gospel clearly for the first time."

Through this ministry, the church distributed 100 Nepali Bibles to the Maoist supporters they took in; all 120 guests heard the gospel, Allard said.

More positive changes may be on the horizon. This month, citizens will elect representatives to a committee charged to rewrite the country's constitution.

Even though some violence between the communists and government forces continues, Christians serving in the country said they believe there is reason for hope in Nepal—a hope that reaches far beyond any political circumstances.

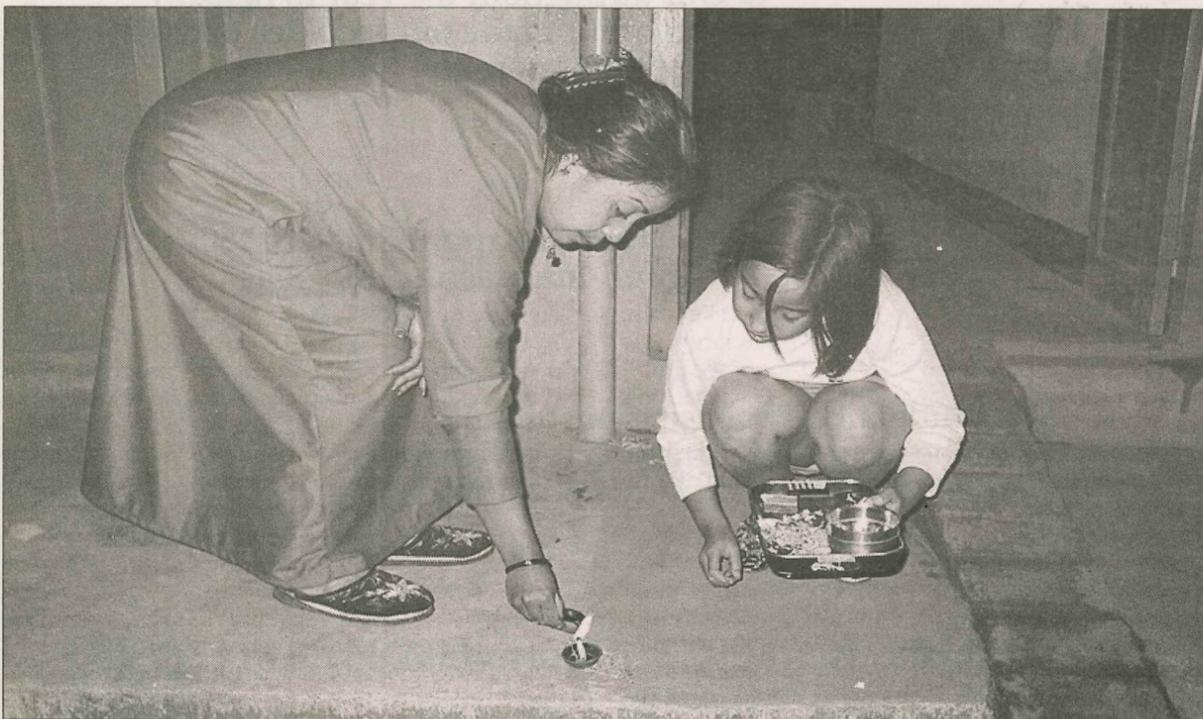
"With the government change in Nepal and a newly elected secular state, some international Christians decided to test the waters," said Truman Cleversey, another international Christian who serves in Nepal.

"They set out for a new ministry area where they asked God for men and women of peace and for five new church plants."

The group went out armed with tracts, audio Bibles and "Jesus" films. As they presented their gifts and shared their testimonies with local people, the Christians met a fellow group of Nepali believers who asked to join them.

"As the day went on, they were emboldened and went to the bus park where hundreds of people were waiting," Cleversey said. "Within 10 minutes, they had given away about 800 tracts telling the story of Jesus' life. They were able to share with many who were headed all over Nepal."

MUSIC MAKERS Two
Nepali men perform on the country's traditional drums and cymbals. Nepal is the only officially Hindu state in the world, yet pockets of Christians are gaining notice by the peace they have found amid the nation's political upheaval in recent years.



READY TO HEAR? A Nepali mother teaches her daughter how to welcome Hindu gods into their home. Some citizens of this Himalayan nation also practice Buddhism and Islam. Dedicated Nepali Christians, with assistance from other believers, are sharing the gospel in many ways.

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