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FOR THE RECORD

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A glance back at 2007

Major news coverage in Baptist life ranges from controversy to cooperation

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

From ongoing war in Iraq to a deadly shooting rampage at Virginia Tech, violence made headlines around the globe in 2007.

In Southern Baptist life, debate continued over such issues as Calvinism and private prayer language. In missions-related news, Geoff Hammond was elected president of the North American Mission Board and overseas missionaries and their partners reported more than 600,000 baptisms.

Closer to home, Donnie Fox was elected president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children changed its name to Sunrise Children's Services.

Those and other major stories reported by the Western Recorder in 2007 include:

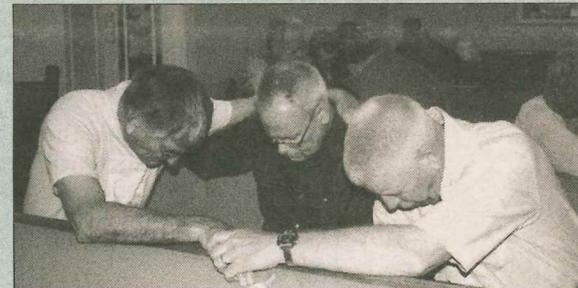
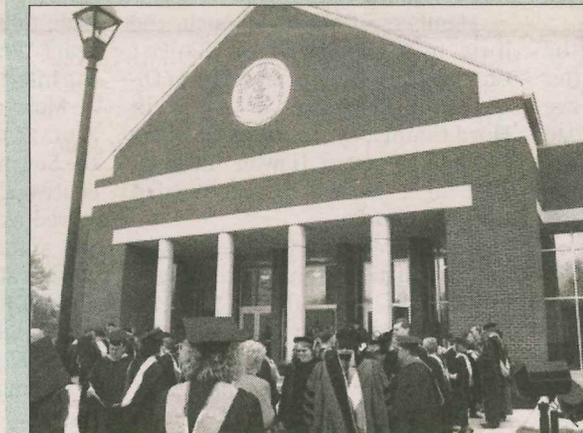
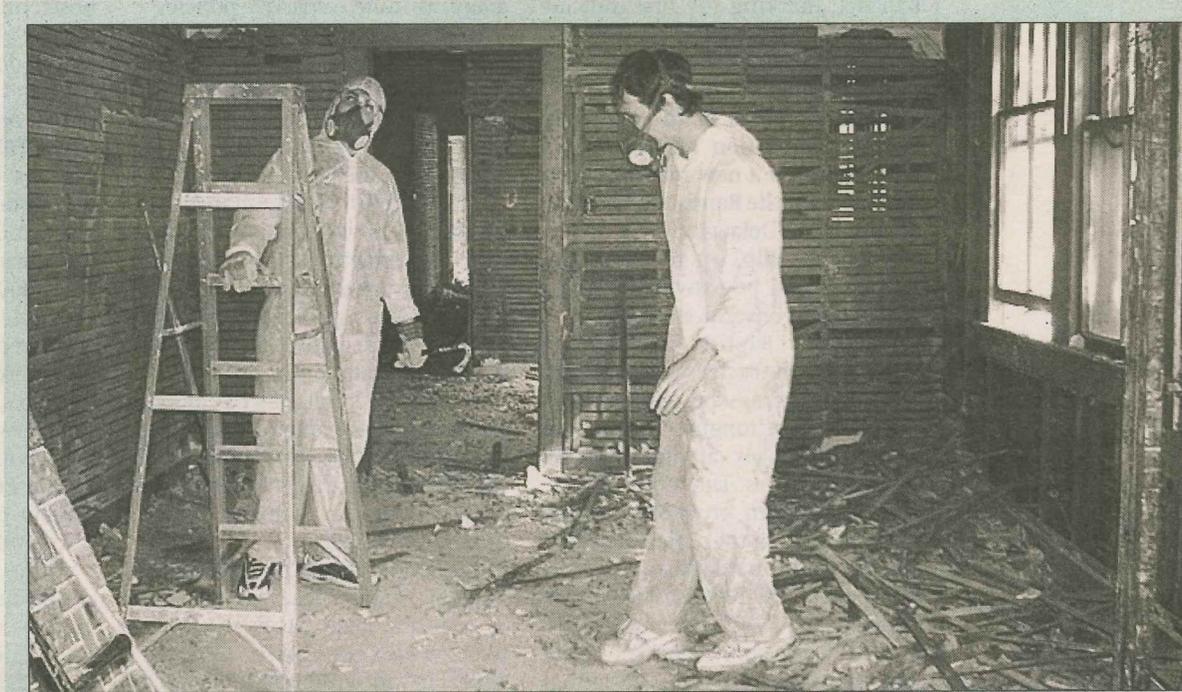
JANUARY: Several organizations, including the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, are calling for improved treatment of Christians in Iraq, whom they say are being martyred, persecuted or forced to flee the country to survive. Among the reported atrocities are the bombings of more than 15 churches.

James Welch, a Missions Service Corps missionary and a member of the pastoral team for Crossing Church in Louisville, was among members commissioned to launch a new congregation in the Uptown district of New Orleans in response to ongoing ministry needs in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Leaders from more than 40 Baptist organizations across North America will convene in Atlanta in early 2008 to emphasize their compassion, rather than the racial, theological and social conflict that has divided them for decades, according to former U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. Southern Baptist Convention leaders, who were not invited to participate in the Jan. 9 news conference, disagree with organizers' claims that "North America desperately needs a true Baptist witness."

In the wake of powerful winter storms blamed for the deaths of at least 90 people in the Midwest, Kentucky Baptists were among nearly 1,000 Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers deployed to clean up downed trees and debris in Missouri and Oklahoma.

FEBRUARY: President Bush received the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's John Leland Religious Liberty Award in an Oval Office presentation by ERLC President Richard Land. The citation affirmed Bush for "courageously defending the right of all people to exercise freely their religious faith."



YEAR IN REVIEW Baptist-related news in 2007 ranged from ongoing clean-up efforts in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina (top) to the dedication of Campbellsville University's \$4.9 million Ransdell Chapel (left) to Kentucky Baptists' simultaneous "With One Voice" prayer gatherings Sept. 11.

Seeking to position Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children for expanded ministry opportunities, KBHC's board of directors voted to change the ministry's name to Sunrise Children's Services. KBHC President Bill Smithwick said the name change is designed to "better clarify who we are and what we do today."

Cooperative Program giving in Kentucky reached a historic milestone when cumulative receipts since 1925 topped more than \$600 million. The record amount came just five years after the KBC reached the \$500 million mark in 2002.

Kentucky Baptists recorded increases in baptisms, worship attendance and undesignated offerings during the 2005-06 church year. The number of baptisms, one of the most closely watched statistics among Kentucky Baptist churches in recent years, totaled 17,784, a gain of 377 (2.2 percent) over the previous year.

MARCH: Lillian Isaacs, a longtime Baptist missionary and literacy missions pioneer, died March 2 at age 88. Isaacs laid the groundwork for Southern Baptist literacy missions in 1959 at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville and remained

involved in the ministry throughout her lifetime.

Kentucky Baptist missionary Jesus Pacheco was named the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board's "Hispanic Church Planting Missionary of the Year" for his work to start churches among Hispanics in Kentucky. Pacheco serves as a NAMB-appointed missionary in cooperation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and eight area associations.

Sheri Klouda, a former assistant professor of Hebrew at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has filed a federal lawsuit against the seminary and its president, Paige Patterson, alleging she was dismissed from her tenure-track position because she is a woman.

Trustees of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board voted unanimously March 21 to elect Geoff Hammond, senior associate director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia convention, as NAMB's new president. His election came almost a year after a major leadership crisis rocked NAMB, leading to former President Robert Record's resignation. Greg Faulks, pas-

tor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, chaired NAMB's presidential search committee.

APRIL: Virginia Tech students gathered April 16 for prayer, comfort and counseling at the school's Baptist student center after a massacre unprecedented in American history. A gunman shot and killed 32 students and professors, including at least six students with Baptist ties, before taking his own life.

Trustees of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College elected Donnie Fox as the school's new president April 17. Fox, dean of institutional advancement at Clear Creek, is the school's first graduate to serve as president.

The Southern Baptist Convention's ambitious goal to baptize 1 million people in 2006 fell far short of that target, according to Annual Church Profile statistics reported by Southern Baptist churches. In fact, baptisms declined by 1.89 percent—364,826 in 2006 compared to 371,850 the previous year.

Culminating a longtime dream of Campbellsville University President Michael Carter, university officials and guests dedicated the

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Jan. 2.

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Year in review highlights top Baptist news stories of 2007

Continued from page 1

school's \$4.9 million Ransdell Chapel April 18. The 900-seat chapel is named in honor of Campbellsville trustee George Ransdell and his wife, Marie, who donated \$2 million toward the project.

The U.S. Supreme Court narrowly upheld a federal ban on partial-birth abortion April 18. The high court's 5-4 decision reversed rulings by two federal appeals courts and affirmed the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act, marking the first judicially approved restriction on a specific procedure since the justices legalized abortion in 1973.

MAY: Members of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board have approved a new missions partnership with the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. The three-year partnership, set to begin Jan. 1, 2008, could be extended beyond 2010 if both conventions agree.

Southern Baptist International Mission Board trustees have adopted revised guidelines on baptism and the practice of tongues and private prayer languages among prospective missionaries. The guidelines reaffirm the main provisions of previous measures that stirred debate among Southern Baptists after being approved by IMB trustees in November 2005. Kentucky Baptist pastor Paul Chitwood, chairman of the IMB trustees' mission personnel committee, presented the revised guidelines.

Religious leaders reflected on the life and legacy of Jerry Falwell after his unexpected death May 15 at age 73. Falwell, who built Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Va., into one of the nation's largest congregations, also founded Liberty University in 1971 and the Moral Majority in 1979.

A crowd of 1,500 people, including three former U.S. presidents, gathered in Charlotte N.C., May 31 to dedicate the Billy Graham Library. Graham, 88 and in declining health, made a rare public appearance for the dedication.

JUNE: Half of Southern Baptist pastors believe the Holy Spirit gives some people a special language to pray to God, according to a 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.

Harrell Riley of Princeton has been named the KBC's 2007 Mission

Service Corps Missionary of the Year. Riley coordinates the ministries at Job Corps sites in Morganfield, Greensville and Simpsonville and ministers at the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex in Eddyville.

Southern Baptist Convention messengers affirmed the Baptist Faith & Message as the "sufficient" doctrinal guide for its agencies and institutions. But SBC leaders immediately disagreed over whether the action will keep those agencies from adopting more restrictive policies.

William Tanner, who served as president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1977-86 and in several leadership roles throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, died June 10 at age 77.

JULY: Baptist World Alliance leaders elected Neville Callam of Jamaica, a descendent of ancestors sold into slavery, as BWA's first non-white general secretary. He also is BWA's first general secretary from outside the United States or Europe.

The Kentucky chapter of Campers on Mission was named Honor Chapter of the Year by the North American Mission Board. The award was presented at the Campers on Mission National Rally.

Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Doug Marlette, whose "Kudzu" comic strip had been published in the Western Recorder since 2002, was killed in an automobile accident July 10. He was 57.

Members of Master's Touch, the hula ministry of Olivet Baptist Church in Honolulu, traveled to Otter Creek Correctional Center in Floyd County, Ky., to minister to the 174 women from Hawaii incarcerated there because of overcrowded prisons at home.

Claude Witt, retired executive director of the Temperance League of Kentucky, died July 31 at age 74. Witt, who retired in 2002 after 15 years as executive director, served nearly three decades in temperance ministry and advocacy in Kentucky and Wisconsin.

AUGUST: Kentucky Baptists' High Impact church initiative, born out of findings from the KBC's Kentucky Baptists Connect emphasis, seeks to start new churches that will reach the unchurched in a specific area, eventually start other churches and reach an average attendance of 250 people each within five years. With 11 High Impact churches already started across the state, the goal is to plant 25 such churches by 2010.

Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina voted to remove itself from the North Carolina Baptist Building—and the state convention executive director's effort to assert authority over its staff. The move culminates 15 months of tension between WMU and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Seeking to help curb sexual abuse and related crises, Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders approved a communications plan draft aimed at protecting Kentucky Baptist churches. The plan was described as an internal document designed to help churches adopt "employee and volunteer best practices."

SEPTEMBER: Local Baptist associations celebrated a monumental milestone this fall. The first Baptist association in America was founded in September of 1707 in Philadelphia—300 years ago this month.

A late surge in Cooperative Program receipts from Kentucky Baptist churches pushed the state convention's 2006-07 CP funds to a record level. Churches gave a total of \$23.53 million through the Cooperative Program, an increase of 0.6 percent over the previous year's record total.

Thousands of Kentucky Baptists joined hearts and hands in prayer during simultaneous "With One Voice" prayer gatherings Sept. 11 in 70 associations throughout the state. "With One Voice" was a state-wide follow-up to the previous two years' "Pray the Perimeter" and "Pray the Interior" prayer tours.

Morris Chapman was honored Sept. 17 for 15 years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Chapman, who served as SBC president in 1990-92, was among the leaders of the SBC's conservative shift since 1979.

OCTOBER: Christian vocalist Larnelle Harris, a member of Maple Grove Baptist Church in Louisville, is among this year's inductees to the Gospel Music Association's Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Harris has received five Grammys and 11 Dove Awards.

The sanctuary of Third Baptist Church of Owensboro was severely damaged Oct. 18 when a tornado caused the church's 5-story bell tower to collapse into the building.

The Baptist Campus Ministry at Northern Kentucky University recently used the unique Love/Hate project to open doors for sharing the gospel on campus. The BCM posted

nine boards on campus for student dialogue, displaying such topics as Christianity, family, government and dating.

NOVEMBER: Southern Baptist overseas missionaries and their national Baptist partners saw the number of reported baptisms top 600,000 for the first time, according to International Mission Board officials.

In a rare move, trustees of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board voted to censure fellow trustee Wade Burleson, effectively barring him from carrying out the duties of his office. Burleson, an Oklahoma Baptist pastor, is a prominent Southern Baptist blogger who has defended his right to publicly critique IMB policies.

Bill Henard, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, was elected KBC president by acclamation during the KBC annual meeting in Elizabethtown. It marked the first time since 2002 that a KBC president has been elected without opposition.

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Wayne Dehoney, longtime pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, died Nov. 15 at age 89.

DECEMBER: Nearly 30 percent of recent Southern Baptist seminary graduates now serving as pastors identify themselves as Calvinists, according to data presented during a conference on Calvinism and the SBC. By contrast in the SBC at large, the number of pastors who affirm the five points of Calvinism is around 10 percent, said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research.

Trennis Henderson, editor of the Western Recorder since 1999, has announced his resignation effective March 1 to become vice president for communications at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark. Henderson has served more than 25 years in Baptist journalism.

Jerry Oakley, who is retiring after 13 years as director of missions for Warren Baptist Association, was honored by the Kentucky Fellowship of Directors of Missions with its 2007 DOM of the Year award.

Billy Compton, pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown since 1996, has been named the KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources effective Jan. 1. Compton, who served as KBC president in 1994-1995, also was associate director of the KBC evangelism office in 1989-1992.

New Baptist Covenant, Huckabee rank as major Baptist news in '07

Washington (ABP)—The biggest news story among Baptists in 2007 was about an event that has not happened yet—the announcement of a major meeting of Baptists from across North America—according to an informal survey of journalists in the Baptist media world.

The "Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant," announced in January by former U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton—and the ensuing controversy stirred by its critics—was the top vote-getter in Associated Baptist Press' 2007 survey. The pan-Baptist meeting will be held in Atlanta Jan. 30-Feb. 1.

Coming in second was Mike Hucka-

bee's long-shot-turned-front-runner campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. The former Arkansas governor served as a pastor and president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention before entering secular politics.

Rounding out the top five were fired Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Sheri Klouda's gender discrimination lawsuit against the seminary and its president, Paige Patterson; continued strife over trustee Wade Burleson of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board who was censured by fellow board members in November and barred from official participation in board ac-

tivities; and Southern Baptist Convention messengers' decision in June that the denomination's Baptist Faith & Message statement is a "sufficient" guideline for its agencies' policies.

Other top 10 news stories of the year according to Baptist editors, journalists, bloggers and public relations professionals include:

6. Texas Baptists elected retired Texas Woman's Missionary Union Director Joy Fenner as the state convention's first female president.

7. (tie) Geoff Hammond was elected president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board after a tumultu-

ous year in which former NAMB President Robert Reccord was fired; and disputes between rival conservative Baptist groups in Missouri led to the ouster of state convention executive director David Clippard.

9. Prominent conservative Christian leader and Southern Baptist pastor Jerry Falwell died unexpectedly at age 73.

10. Years of political controversy in the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's leadership led most of the state convention's agencies—including three colleges and the state's Woman's Missionary Union—to distance themselves from the convention. In response, convention messengers voted to defund WMU.

Churches face Super Bowl restrictions again for 2008

By Garrett Wishall
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—For years, churches have used the nearly unparalleled televised success of the Super Bowl as an evangelistic avenue, inviting members and their guests to watch the football game and fellowship on church premises.

That was, at least, until the National Football League got word of one such party prior to last year's matchup and began restricting such gatherings. The move forced churches to revise or cancel their plans, and continues to affect event plans now under way for the 2008 Super Bowl.

In late January of last year, NFL officials spotted a promotion for a "Super Bowl Bash" at Fall Creek Baptist Church in Indianapolis. Initially, the league said the event had to be cancelled because the church used the trademarked words "Super Bowl" in its promotions and was planning on charging a fee.

John Newland, pastor of Fall Creek, responded that the planned fee was for refreshments, not attendance, and that the church would stop using Super Bowl in the event promotion.

Newland's response was not enough for NFL officials, who objected to the church's plan to show the game on a projector. Eventually, the league relented and permitted the church to host the event as long as a screen no larger than 55 inches was used.

The NFL also banned Fall Creek's plan to show recorded Christian testimonies of Tony Dungy and Lovie Smith, coaches of the Indianapolis Colts and Chicago Bears, respectively.

"While this may be a noble message," NFL assistant counsel Rachel Margolies wrote in a follow-up e-mail, "we are consistent in refusing the use of our game broadcasts in connection with events that promote a message, no matter the content."

It did not take long for news of the restricted event to spread across the country, causing churches everywhere to evaluate and adjust their own gatherings.

Teaching tool

Kris Billiter, minister to students at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, chose to revise his Super Bowl youth party to accommodate the screen size restriction.

"We had originally planned on using two mounted televisions, while also projecting the game on a wall," he recalled. "We went away from the televisions and projected the game on the wall on an image less than 55 inches."

Billiter said the restrictions did not hinder his church's event and actually provided an opportunity for him to model submission to authorities to his youth.

"It really wasn't a big deal for us," he noted. "Part of the event is about the game, but part of the event is about hanging out and fellowshiping and we were able to do that."

"For me, the decision came down to integrity," Billiter continued. "How can I teach my kids the importance of respecting authority and following the rules of our authorities and not submit to the NFL's regulations?"

Many people have criticized NFL officials, saying they are being un-



reasonable and only trying to boost their Nielsen TV ratings.

"We have contracts with our (television) networks to provide free over-the-air television for people at home," NFL spokesman Greg Aiello explained. "The network economics are based on television ratings and at-home viewing. Out-of-home viewing is not measured by Nielsen."

After the negative backlash, the league issued another statement in early February in an attempt to show flexibility without violating national copyright regulations.

The NFL's typical policy is to ban "mass out-of-home viewings," Aiello said, except for in sports bars and other businesses that show televised sports as a part of their everyday operations.

However, in its restatement, the NFL highlighted the "home style exemption" which allows viewings "on a single receiving apparatus of

a kind commonly used in private homes," provided that hosts do not charge a fee or transmit the game as a public event.

While it is unclear exactly what the league means by an "apparatus of a kind commonly used in private homes" or what it defines as a public event, churches will again face restrictions in 2008, as the NFL has not yet indicated any softening of the regulations.

Party restrictions

Churches who choose to host a public event should avoid use of the words "Super Bowl" in promotional materials, hold an admission-free event, and should not use a television or projector screen any larger than 55 inches.

While some Kentucky Baptist churches have revised their traditional plans, others are choosing to simply avoid the controversy by finding other ways to use the game as an outreach.

Simpsonville Baptist Church traditionally hosts an evangelistic Super Bowl event, but this year will most likely avoid such a party to keep in step with NFL regulations.

"We certainly want to abide by the law," noted Pastor Steve Boyd. "However, rather than just exempt the whole event, we are trying to encourage home parties and events of that nature. We are encouraging our members to invite neighbors to enjoy the festivities with them and maybe make new relationships."

"We still want to be intentional about connecting with families who don't know the gospel," Boyd said. "Now, we will have to encourage folks to do it in a different way."

KBC urges churches to highlight community outreach ministries

By Erin Roach
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Richmond—In just two days, members of Eastside Baptist Church in Richmond built a Habitat for Humanity house, held three block parties, delivered flowers to residents of a local nursing home, and distributed water and doughnuts to spectators at soccer games.

They also planted trees and flowers in subdivisions, handed out refreshments to local shoppers and installed a roof and gutters on a house.

The outreach efforts were all part of Eastside's Compassion Weekend, an event that stemmed from the Kentucky Baptist Convention's emphasis on churches starting community outreach programs.

"When churches connect with their community through ministry and service, the church is seen as relevant and its reputation is restored," said Eric Allen, director of the KBC's mission service and ministries department.

The push to get churches to start such programs is directly related to the Kentucky Baptists Connect initiative, which established a statewide goal of having 1,250 churches launch new outreach ministries by 2010, Allen noted.

"A community outreach ministry, as we define it, is a recurring ministry that connects a church with the people in their community

by meeting existing needs," he added. "For example, you have people in communities who are hungry or need help with clothing, so a church might start a ministry to provide food and clothing distribution."

Another example would be a church or association that decides to reach out to unwed mothers by starting a crisis pregnancy care center, he said, or a church that realizes its community deals with alcohol and drug abuse. That church might want to start a Celebrate Recovery program to address the issue, Allen explained.

Other common community outreach ideas include jail or prison ministries and after-school programs for children. But as Allen pointed out, the nature of the ministry depends on the needs of the specific community.

"It's where they look at their community, assess the needs and say, 'Our community needs this, and as a church we feel like God has given us the resources and skills, and so we're going to meet that need and use that as the our vehicle through which we'll share Christ,'" he said.

Eastside Baptist Church in Richmond took advantage of a training session last summer that the KBC sponsored for Tates Creek Baptist Association in which church leaders learned about a one-day servant evangelism event called Operation Inasmuch.

The purpose of the effort is to ignite enthusiasm for servant evangelism within a church body, Allen noted, in hopes that people will catch a vision for implementing a long-term community outreach ministry.

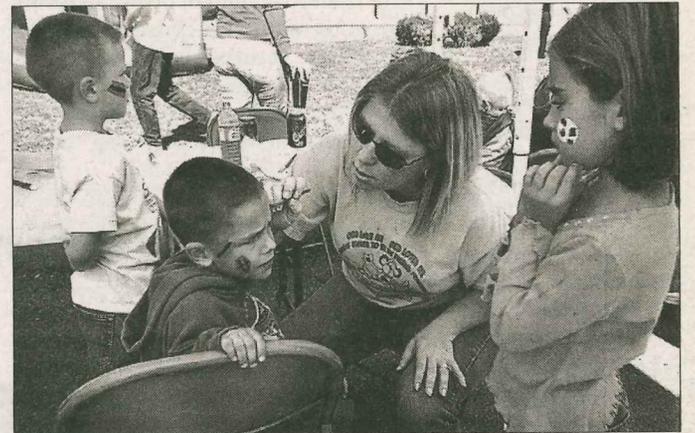
"Our ultimate goal is to see churches create and develop ongoing ministries, but we are using Operation Inasmuch as a tool to help churches get involved," he explained.

"Sometimes as much as 80 percent of a church will get involved in a one-day event like Operation Inasmuch, and then it becomes a catalyst for members who realize, 'Wow, this was pretty awesome to serve our community in this way.' Then they begin to think in terms of long-term ministry or recurring ministry."

Too often, Allen said, church members are overwhelmed by the thought of signing on to a long-term ministry like a pregnancy care center or food and clothing distribution.

"But if we can get them involved in a one-day event where they're doing ministry in the community," he pointed out, "from that event will almost every time come a group of people who are willing to invest more and be involved in ministry on a more ongoing basis."

John Tussey, associate pastor at Eastside, noted that over the past 18 months the church's leaders have started to understand that the con-



gregation's focus should be on the people who are outside the walls of the building.

Spurred by the training they received from the KBC, Eastside organized its first Compassion Weekend. Small groups and ministry teams developed ideas for about 15 total projects and ended up with nearly 200 participants during the October weekend. Tussey said that Eastside averages slightly more than 200 people in small group attendance.

"We had almost 100 percent participation if you put it in terms of small group ministry," he explained. "Our people loved it, and they continue to ask when we're going to have the next Compassion Weekend or something like it. We've encouraged our small groups to plan their own individual projects, like on a monthly or bimonthly basis."

SHOWING COMPASSION
A member of Eastside Baptist Church in Richmond paints a young boy's face during the church's Compassion Weekend, an event that stemmed from the Kentucky Baptist Convention's emphasis on churches starting community outreach programs. (KBC photo courtesy of Eastside Baptist Church)

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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Tips for successful tax filing

By Sherre Stephens

Dallas (ABP)—According to some estimates, two out of five Americans procrastinate when it comes to filing their tax returns. But experts agree that early preparation for the upcoming tax season is best. Here are some tips to aid in preparing 2007 tax returns.

1. Identify last-minute savings opportunities.

■ Maximize retirement plan elective deferrals. The 2007 basic deferral limit is \$15,500 or \$20,500 for those older than age 50. Filers who did not max out deferrals for 2007 should consider an IRA.

■ Contribute to a traditional IRA. Eligibility for making deductible contributions to a traditional IRA depends on two factors: Whether the individual is covered by a retirement plan at work and one's modified adjusted gross income. The maximum contribution limit for 2007 is \$4,000, or \$5,000 for those older than age 50. Remember, a non-working spouse may be eligible for an IRA, and an additional deduction can be beneficial. Qualifiers must be legally married at year's end and file a joint tax return. For more details on IRAs, see IRS Publication 590.

■ Consider a Simplified Employee Pension Plan, Keogh or SIMPLE plan contribution. The self-employed or the small business owner may find that these are the appropriate avenues to reduce gross taxable income. See IRS Publication 560 for details.

Making the most of a retirement plan is good now and good in the future. Although the deferral amounts for 2008 are unchanged, the maximum limits for IRAs (traditional and Roth) increased to \$5,000, or \$6,000 for those older than age 50.

2. Make last-minute estimated tax payments.

Underpayment of taxes can result in an unwanted surprise after filing 2007 tax returns. In addition, the IRS can assess penalties and interest on the underpayment amount. The underpayment penalty can occur

whether the filer is a W-2 employee or self-employed.

How can this happen? For W-2 employees, the withholding on their paychecks may be misaligned.

For the self-employed, there are rules about paying estimated taxes.

Fortunately, making an estimated payment by Jan. 15 for the short-fall amount may resolve this potential tax issue.

3. Make the most of tax deductions.

■ Itemize deductions. The list of possible deductions is myriad, and some impose thresholds in order to take the deduction.

■ Calculate sales tax. If sales taxes are more than state and local income taxes, take this deduction. IRS Publication 600 provides tables to guide in making this decision based on income and household size.

■ Deduct charitable contributions. Organizations must qualify in order for contributions to be deductible. Unfortunately, there are those organizations that falsely pose as charitable entities. Before making a contribution to an organization other than a church or other widely recognized charitable organization, check the IRS Web site. Not only will it verify whether the organization qualifies, it will list the "dirty dozen"—its top 12 tax scams.

Keep in mind, some organizations not listed on the IRS Web site may be covered by a group exemption, meaning they are subordinate units whose parent organization has received an exemption letter.

The bottom line? Deductions help reduce tax liability, but a little research may help eliminate tax scams.

4. Don't forget about IDs for dependents.

A claim for an exemption for dependents, or the child's tax credit, takes an identification number (usually a Social Security number). If a child is born near the end of 2007, the IRS recommends asking for a filing extension date rather than

claiming an exemption without an ID number.

In the absence of an ID number, the IRS will deny the exemption and/or tax credit. A tax credit reduces tax whereas a deduction reduces taxable income.

5. File the return on time.

If the tax return is not filed by April 15, file Form 4868. This form provides an extension until Oct. 15. Nevertheless, later filers will need to estimate their 2007 tax liability and include payment for the estimated tax with Form 4868. The IRS can impose a late-filing penalty of 4.5 percent and a late payment penalty of 0.5 percent of the tax due. Both penalties are assessed on a monthly basis until paid.

Late filers can also file Form 4868 to avoid the penalties or the denial of a claimed exemption.

6. Decide whether or not to get help, and where.

■ The IRS Web site, www.irs.gov, offers a number of fact sheets, tax tips and a toll-free help number: (800) TAX-FORM.

■ The tax advocate service is a free, confidential service within the IRS, available to those experiencing economically difficult circumstances.

■ The Internet offers copious tax helps.

■ Tax preparation software and services are viable resources.

■ Checklists facilitate organization and minimize frustration. Many checklists are available on the web.

Finally, be aware that "2007 tax tips" may refer to the return due in 2007 for the 2006 tax year. Similarly, some references to 2008 apply to tax changes for the 2008 tax year, not 2007.

Sherre Stephens is a certified employee benefits specialist and director of executive services for GuideStone Financial Resources

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

2008: A year of urgency & opportunity

The year of 2008 will be a year of urgency and opportunity for Kentucky Baptists. We need God's help if the baptism goal of Kentucky Baptists Connect is to be achieved.

The goals of Kentucky Baptists Connect are designed to assist churches in reaching and developing people for Christ. But if Kentucky Baptists are going to reach the goal of 25,000 baptisms for even one year of this five-year emphasis, great progress must be made in 2008. Reports for 2006-07 are not complete but indications are that we will not see much increase.

The goal is by no means unachievable. If every church could reach just one more person in 2008 than it did in 2007, total baptisms could exceed 20,000. Every church should ask what is being done to place a priority on reducing lostness in its community.

Baptisms would also increase

significantly if Kentucky Baptist churches were reaching the same number of children and youth for baptism that were being reached just 10 years ago. According to a recent study, the number of baptisms for ages 9-17 in KBC churches declined by 38 percent from 1980 to 2003, although the population for this age group had not declined.

Vacation Bible school has proven to be one of the best ways to reach children for Christ. For this reason, I am urging every church to conduct a VBS in 2008. Every church should also consider a new prayer ministry like prayerwalking and a new ministry for the community that will enable your church members to connect with the harvest.

Several KBC training and inspirational experiences are available to pastors and leaders that will assist you in reaching people for Christ. Plan now to attend the Pastors' Fo-

rum on Jan. 24 featuring Chuck Lawless and others at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, as well as the Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference Feb. 25-26 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

The Comeback Church Conference is also set for March 25 at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. Ed Stetzer, author of the book, "The Comeback Church," will lead the conference.

Also consider being a part of an emphasis called "3:16: The Numbers of Hope," based on the book of the same title by Max Lucado. LifeWay Christian Resources has published a four-week study guide that goes with the book for a special evangelistic emphasis in the church.

It is a matter of urgency and opportunity to seek God for plans to reach, develop and mobilize people for Christ. May God help us to remain faithful in support of one another. I pray that every church will be able to see lostness reduced in its community!

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

CHURCH

Take some time to review past year, look to the future

By Doug Strader

As a new year begins, we have left our mark on the year 2007. Yet as 2008 gets under way, we can decide to make some adjustments and changes to ensure that the new year will be

different from the last one. Some people make resolutions for a new beginning, and that can be a good thing. However, resolutions are no good unless they are carried out.

As you think back over the past year, ask yourself some hard questions about the way you spent your year. God gives us life one day at a time and we actually spend time the same way we spend our money. We invest in the things that we determine to be worth the time and/or money.

Reflect on the following questions to help determine how well you used last year and how you will spend the new year:

■ How much time did I give to God in worship? Bible study? Prayer? Ministry?

■ How much time did I give to my family, especially my spouse and my children?

■ How much time did I invest in my friends? Did I spend time to encourage those who are going through difficult situations?

■ Did I do anything to help those who are needy, whether they had physical, emotional or spiritual needs?

■ Did I do anything to develop my personal growth? How much did I read? How well did I take care of my physical body through good eating habits and physical exercise?

Consider possible New Year's resolutions you can make:

■ You can resolve to spend more time in Bible study, prayer, worship and service.

■ You can resolve to grow in your financial stewardship. If you already tithe, you can resolve to grow in your giving. If you do not tithe, you can resolve to begin tithing or at least to grow in your giving until you are tithing.

■ You can enlist an accountability partner and hold each other accountable for your resolutions.

■ You can ask God to help you grown in some area of your Christian life where you are most needy.

Making resolutions is relatively easy, but it will take personal accountability to accomplish the task. With the help of God, you can do it.

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



Releasing certain attitudes & actions can enhance marriage

Q: As a new year begins, how can we improve the state of our marital relationship in 2008?

New Year's resolutions for marriage are best made jointly as a couple. In those situations where a spouse is not willing or able to participate, marital resolutions can still be effective when established by an individual. Couples should endeavor to set "SMART" goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.

As Michael Card reminds us in one of his songs, often it is the things we leave behind that make all the difference. In the New Testament, Simon left his nets and pride to follow Jesus. Matthew left his tax collecting and greed. Perhaps there are some things you need to leave behind as you enter the new year.

In 2008, resolve to release:

- Unforgiveness for the times your spouse has hurt you.
- Disappointment over your spouse's inability to be perfect.
- Doubts about your choice of a partner.
- Comparisons of your spouse and marriage to others.
- Anger at your spouse's parents or family members.
- The unbiblical belief that your spouse should meet all your needs.
- Complaining about your spouse to others.
- Threats of abandonment or divorce.
- A critical or harsh spirit.
- A tendency to be defensive when your spouse has a complaint.
- A quick fuse.

Be aware that you will need to offer up these prayers for release to God on a daily basis since James 5:16 reminds us that "the effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

All of life is about holding on and letting go. Unfortunately, our sin and brokenness often lead us to hold onto things that should be released and to release things that should be retained. May God smile on your 2008 as you carefully pray about the things to leave behind.—*Scott Wigginton*.

Q: My husband and I want to set some goals for the new year, but we don't want them to be goals we don't end up fulfilling. How can we do a better job in the new year?

What about a slightly different approach? Try this New Year's challenge:

Favorite song. Why is this your favorite song? What does it inspire you to do or become?

Favorite movie. Who do you wish you were more like in this movie?

Favorite place. How do you feel when you are in this place or think about this place? What do you believe is possible when you are there?

Favorite Scripture story. What characters or phrases stand out to you and cause you to reflect? Why?

Favorite book. What do you find compelling about the story? Where would you like to fit into the story?

Favorite memory. What captivates your thoughts when you remember this?

Your responses may reveal what is important to you. They may reveal your dreams, goals and desires. Consider shaping any resolutions around these revelations. This could be a fun activity for you and your spouse while you try to form goals to work on this coming year. Add to this favorites list with any items that move you to explore and discover your places for growth.—*Valerie Vincent*

Family Forum writers are:

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2007 reflections can aid 2008 resolutions

With 2007 officially in the rearview mirror, most people already have turned their attention to the dawn of 2008. And that means, among other things, focusing briefly on the annual ritual of New Year's resolutions.

In fact, with this issue of the Western Recorder dated Jan. 1, 2008, several of this week's columns highlight the time-honored tradition of setting ambitious personal goals to help guide our actions and attitudes over the next 12 months. A sampling of this week's insights includes:

Bill Mackey, Kentucky Baptist Convention executive director. In his page 4 "Partners in the Mission" column titled "2008: A year of urgency & opportunity," Mackey emphasizes that Kentucky Baptists "need God's help if the baptism goal of Kentucky Baptists Connect is to be achieved." Suggesting that "every church should ask what is being done to place a priority on reducing lostness in its community," he added, "If every church could reach just one more person in 2008 than it did in 2007, total baptisms could exceed 20,000." With God's help, that is a worthy and attainable resolution for the coming year.

Doug Strader, pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville. Writing this week's "Financial Forum" column, Strader cautions that "resolutions are no good unless they are carried out." He said worthwhile goals for the coming year include resolving "to spend more time in Bible study, prayer, worship and service" as well as asking God "to help you grow in some area of your Christian life where you are most needy."

Joe Ball, Kentucky Baptist Convention youth strategist. In the Recorder's monthly "Youth Ministry Corner," Ball acknowledges that "the new year is a time of new beginnings and resolutions, like the diet I am going to start (again)." Urging fellow youth ministers not to "forget the target" of their annual ministry goals, he explained, "If this year is going to be any different than the ones before it, we must have not only a resolve to start well, but we must have a dedication to finish well. We must know where we want to be in Decem-

ber 2008 and make a determination to do what it takes to get there."

Barry Allen, president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. Encouraging Kentucky Baptists to be "consistent givers" to state convention ministries and other charitable causes, Allen writes in his page 7 column, "As you begin 2008, let one of your pledges be to be a more consistent giver. Be more consistent in the timing of your gifts and in the target of your gifts. The charities, which are the targets of your gifts, need a consistent flow of gifts to fulfill their missions effectively. ... May we all be found more faithful and more consistent in our giving in 2008."

KBC President Bill Henard, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington. Writing this month's "How to Become a

Christian" article on page 10, Henard asks, "How many of us wish that we could experience something different this new year; something newfangled, unaffected by use?" He noted that "the answer comes in making a New Year's resolution that is grounded in something other than turning over a new leaf. It must be based on a trust in the Person and work of Jesus Christ." For individuals who repent of their sins, confess Christ as Savior and "give Christ control of your life," he added, "Christ truly will make your year new."

How's that for a list of New Year's resolutions? Seek to lead more people to personal faith in Christ, grow in some specific area of your own Christian life, focus on your year-long ministry goals, be a consistent contributor to ministry efforts and for those who have not yet done so, give Christ control of your life.

Before tackling all those goals, also consider Strader's challenge to reflect on the past year and ask yourself such questions as: "How much time did I give to God in worship? Bible study? Prayer? Ministry?" and "Did I do anything to help those who are needy?"

Carefully evaluating 2007 as you step into 2008 could help make the next 12 months one of the best years of your life.

Begin 2008 with renewed sense of purpose

Let's see, is this year 12 or 13 that I have had the same resolution to lose 10 pounds? Except this year it is more like 15.

I have made that resolution every year, knowing that it needs to happen but have done a poor job of following up on it with any determination or discipline that last more than a couple of weeks.

For most of us, the new year is a time of new beginnings and resolutions, like the diet I am going to start (again). So let's make a few resolutions together.

Resolution 1: Don't forget the target. If this year is going to be any different than the ones before it, we must have not only a resolve to start well, but we must have a dedication to finish well. We must know where we want to be in December 2008 and make a determination to do what it takes to get there. It is easy to get discouraged when we make an early failure and scrap the plans we have for the year. Just because I miss a day of exercise doesn't mean I have failed; it is just a setback and I can begin anew tomorrow.

Resolution 2: Pay attention to the mundane. I recently began an interim youth ministry position at Cedar Creek Baptist Church in Louisville, where my family and I are members. For about six weeks now I have had the privilege to again stand in front of a group of teenagers and

lead a Wednesday night youth meeting. The newness of that wore off during week three when I thought, "What do you mean it is Wednesday again already?" Don't get me

wrong; I still love teenagers and "running a youth ministry," but I had forgotten the dedication and time it takes to prepare for the every-week experience. I enjoy event planning, Disciple Now weekends, camps, retreats, etc., but the week in and week out stuff is harder for me. This year, let us all resolve to do a better job of taking care of the weekly routines. Our students deserve the same passion and dedication to the weekly activities and studies as they do the major events.

Resolution 3: Focus on the long haul. Being the "state youth guy," I have gotten to see things at a different level than ever before. Youth ministers need to commit to staying in one location for longer than we have in the past. Students desperately need adults in their lives who have meaningful relationships with them. That is hard to accomplish when we are in and out of their lives so quickly. Why would they let down the barriers that lead to real relationships when they know we will be gone before they graduate? The length of a youth minister's tenure at churches is increasing, but it needs to be greater. The sad part is

there are students in Kentucky who will graduate in 2008 who have had six or more youth ministers during their six or seven years in the youth group. That has got to stop if we are going to make a positive, lasting difference in the lives of students.

Resolution 4: Pay attention to the disenfranchised. I continue to hear from parents whose students are becoming disenfranchised with the church. It would be easy to blame the worship style, the senior adults, lack of understanding from the church as a whole, lack of funding, and on and on as the reasons for this. But I am finding that students are not becoming disenfranchised because of the church as a whole, but because of the youth ministry. They are being left out of the inner circle, have been absent and no one has contacted them or have been burned by broken promises from youth ministers and workers. We are our own worst enemy at times. We need to do a better job of seeing those young people who are on the fringes and pulling them into the group. We want our group to feel like "one big, happy family," but not at the expense of those who aren't there yet.

So as we begin 2008, let us do so with a renewed sense of purpose—a purpose to not only be better at who we are and what we do, but a purpose to make a difference in the lives of the students God places within our sphere of influence.

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

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Ky. Baptist relief teams respond to Midwest

Volunteers aid those hit hard by ice in Oklahoma, Missouri

Tulsa, Okla.—Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers are working to restore areas damaged by recent ice storms in the Midwest.

A team of 11 Kentucky Baptist volunteers from Richmond and Henderson traveled to Oklahoma the week before Christmas to provide relief and remove debris from affected areas in Tulsa. Additional volunteers will continue the effort in the weeks to come, including a group from Owensboro that was scheduled for relief work in Missouri beginning Dec. 29.

It is estimated that more than 1 million people across the midwestern United States were affected by the massive ice storm that hit the region Dec. 8-11. A state of emergency was declared in all of Oklahoma and parts of Missouri where more than an inch and a half of ice fell in some areas.

More than 600,000 people in Oklahoma lost power, according to the Tulsa World newspaper, making it the largest power outage in the state's history.

The storm also claimed dozens of lives across the Midwest, most of them from traffic accidents along ice-covered roadways.

According to Larry Koch, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's disaster relief associate, the relief effort is expected to continue through mid-January. Volunteer workers are still needed, he added.

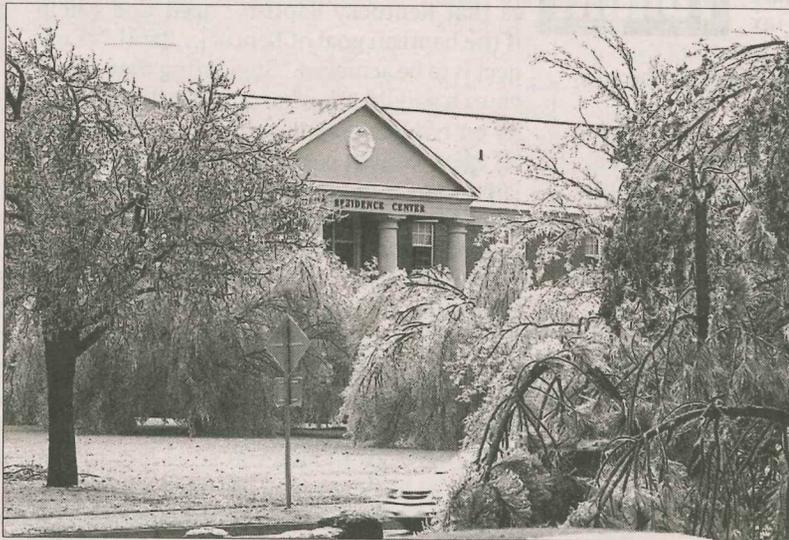
Trained volunteers interested in helping can contact the KBC's Baptist Men on Mission department at (502) 489-3527 or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3527 for more information.

The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board is coordinating the relief work. Kentucky

Baptist disaster relief teams are responding to requests for aid submitted through NAMB.

Kentucky Baptists are part of a larger network of Southern Baptist volunteers trained to respond to disasters by staffing mass feeding operations, using chainsaws to clear downed trees and limbs, clearing mud out of flooded homes and more. Currently, there are 49 units from 13 states working in the region.

For more information about Kentucky Baptist disaster relief, visit www.kybaptist.org/dr.



EMERGENCY RESPONSE Ice-coated trees sag on the campus of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee after an ice storm hit the region Dec. 10. A team of Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers are working in areas of Oklahoma and Missouri. Their work is expected to continue until mid-January. (BP photo by William Pope)

Ministers in Boone County stripped of tax exempt status

Burlington (RNS)—Ministers in Kentucky's Boone County will no longer be granted an occupational tax exemption after a local atheist sued to challenge the practice.

Edwin Kagin, national legal director of American Atheists Inc., filed suit in 2005 to challenge Boone County's exemption of ministers from the tax despite a state law prohibiting such exemptions.

Boone County stopped requiring an occupational tax from ministers and other clergy in 2000.

"In my mind this could be viewed as a license fee for someone to preach the gospel, and I disagree with that idea," noted Gary Moore, Boone County's judge executive.

Moore said he would have fought the suit if the county's legal counsel had not advised against it.

Kagin claimed that the exemption was unconstitutional.

"Why do they think they ought to be exempt?" he said. "Anyone who has to pay an occupational tax ought to be outraged that the county should let the ministers not pay the tax."

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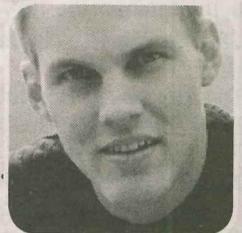
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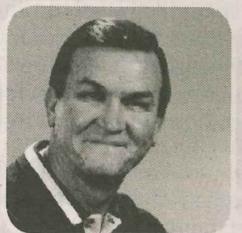
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Be a consistent giver

Charities depend on steady stream of gifts to operate

The results of a recent survey by the Center on Philanthropy reported many Americans who give to charitable causes do so intermittently. Only 56 percent gave in each of the three years of the study; 29 percent gave in some but not all years; and less than 15 percent did not give at all.

The study also revealed those who gave consistently gave on the average three times more than those who gave inconsistently. More families gave to religious organizations than any other type of group. Households with incomes of \$100,000 or more gave on the average of 2.2 percent of their income; those with incomes of \$50,000 or less gave 4.2 percent.

As you begin 2008, let one of your pledges be to be a more consistent giver. Be more consistent in the timing of your gifts and in the target of your gifts.

The charities, which are the targets of your gifts, need a consistent flow of gifts to fulfill their missions effectively. Be reasonable in the number and types of charities you target so you can be more involved in praying, volunteering and finan-

cially supporting their missions, and thus, making a greater impact through those organizations. I trust your church, your association and the missionary, educational and charitable enterprises of the Kentucky Baptist Convention will be among the charities you target.

To the extent the Lord leads you to consider a planned gift for the benefit of one or more of the charities you target and for which you need a third party fiduciary to receive and manage that gift, please give us the privilege to assist you.

You may be considering a gift of real estate, appreciated stock, a life insurance or retirement account beneficiary designation, or a bequest in your will or revocable living trust. Call Laurie Valentine or me toll free for assistance.

May we all be found more faithful and more consistent in our giving in 2008.

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

The greatest gift of all

Blessings at Sunrise extend well past holiday season

The children in Sunrise's care receive a gift with each new day: food, clothing, shelter, education and Christ-like attention from their foster parents or the staff in their residential treatment centers. At Christmas, the kids receive presents that they've put on wish lists and special meals or activities. Still, it's a painful time for many because they aren't home for Christmas.

But there is a gift that some of our children find—one that lasts longer than a single Christmas Day and longer than their stay with Sunrise.

One of those kids is 14-year-old Molly, who came to our Morehead Center with a long history of placements. In addition to the sexual and physical abuse she had suffered, she had to deal with diabetes. Understandably, Molly was full of anger when she arrived at Morehead.

Our nurse, food service workers, therapist and the entire staff worked with Molly to regulate her

diabetes and teach her how to eat healthy food. She lost weight, which boosted her self-esteem. Staff members helped Molly and her mother overcome their strained past and build a positive relationship.

On top of all that, Molly started attending church, listening to Christian music and talking with Mike Dixon, our religious life director. Her favorite band became Day of Fire, so she jumped at the chance to attend the Ichthus '07 summer music festival in Wilmore. Much to her joy, she met the members of Day of Fire and got their autographs and photos. During her stay at Morehead, Molly committed her life

to Christ and was baptized. When Molly graduated from the program, she returned to her mother's home. We rejoice with Molly for all her achievements; but most of all, we rejoice that this Christmas she has in her heart the greatest gift of all—the promise of Christ's never-ending love.

Bill Smithwick is president of Sunrise Children's Services. Contact Sunrise at (502) 538-1000 or www.sunrise.org

SUNRISE CHILDREN'S SERVICES



Bill Smithwick

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



Bible Crosswords

By Janet W. Adkins

Across

- 1 Croaker
- 5 "The priest shall pronounce him clean: it is but a ____" (Leviticus 13:6)
- 9 Female sibling, for short
- 12 South American country
- 13 Layer
- 14 Gold, Sp.
- 15 "And they bowed their heads, and made ____" (Genesis 43:28)
- 17 Familiar name for Saul's son (1 Samuel 14:42)
- 18 "Master, the Jews of ____ sought to stone thee" (John 11:8)
- 19 "Then Saul fell straightway all ____ on the earth" (1 Samuel 28:20)
- 20 "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a ____" (Proverbs 27:22)
- 23 Plural suffix
- 24 "And be ye kind ____ to another" (Ephesians 4:32)
- 25 "Stolen ____ are sweet" (Proverbs 9:17)
- 28 "Woe unto them that draw iniquity ... and sin as it were with a cart ____" (Isaiah 5:18)
- 30 "The liberal soul shall be made ____" (Proverbs 11:25)
- 31 Conceited person
- 33 "Cut the bars of iron in ____" (Psalm 107:16)
- 35 Before, poetic
- 36 Talking horse
- 37 "And the harp, and the viol, and the ____ ..." (Isaiah 5:12)
- 40 "They fell on their ____" (1 Kings 18:39)
- 42 Volcano output
- 43 Burned residue
- 44 "I may provoke to ____ them which are my flesh" (Romans 11:14)
- 49 Black sticky substance

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
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40	41					42					
43				44	45				46	47	48
49				50					51		
52				53					54		

- 50 "And his allowance was a ... daily ____ for every day" (2 Kings 25:30)
- 51 Sharpen
- 52 Compass point, abbr.
- 53 "Thou sawest the feet and ____" (Daniel 2:41)
- 54 Precipitation

- 22 "Their throat is an open ____" (Psalm 5:9)
- 23 "And they shall ____ the flesh in that night, roast with fire" (Exodus 12:8)
- 25 "Joshua made ____ a long time" (Joshua 11:18)
- 26 Einsteinium, chem. symbol
- 27 Painful
- 29 Printer's measure
- 30 "When saw we thee hungry and ____ thee?" (Matthew 25:37)
- 32 Wager
- 34 "The ____ shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isaiah 35:1)
- 37 "And their words seemed to them as idle ____" (Luke 24:11)
- 38 "The king of Assyria brought men from Babylon ... Cuthah, and from ____" (2 Kings 17:24)
- 39 "... and twenty thousand ____ of wine" (2 Chronicles 2:10)
- 40 Destiny
- 41 Belonging to Abia's son (Matthew 1:7)
- 42 Ancient musical instrument
- 45 Late Chinese Communist Chairman
- 46 Charged particle
- 47 "The children of Lod, Hadid, and ____" (Ezra 2:33)
- 48 Not old

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
11	E	D	O	M	L	O	R	G	R	E		
14	G	E	A	B	E	L	A	A	K	L		
19	I	N	E	L	A	V	I	D	O	L		
27	N	O	D	E	N	M	I	T	Y	A	D	O
31	I	N	A	G	A	I	N	I	M			
35	N	A	K	E	D	A	R	C	D	I	M	
40	G	M	V	I	C	E	H	A	S	O	L	
49	B	A	A	H	E	B	A	V	E	S	O	L
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Bosses turn to corporate chaplains to counsel employees

By Mark Weisenmiller
Religion News Service

Tampa, Fla. (RNS)—Every Thursday, Baptist minister Roland Barlowe begins his workday with a “huddle” in the housekeepers breakroom at the downtown Courtyard Marriott. He goes around the room, greeting each of the housekeepers, discussing their worries and concerns.

“We find ourselves capable of worry, but I heard recently a great saying that I want to pass on to you,” the gregarious, grinning Barlowe tells the staff. “Control those things of which you have control and let go of everything else.”

Miriam Johnson, the assistant chief housekeeper, pulls Barlowe aside and requests prayers for a sick grandmother and niece. The two hold hands and bow heads as Barlowe says a brief prayer for both women.

Then it is off to the top floor of the hotel. Barlowe works his way down, floor by floor, popping in and out of rooms to check on the housekeepers.

Barlowe is one of more than 1,900

corporate chaplains employed by Marketplace Chaplains USA, a Dallas-based company that dispatches chaplains to more than 1,600 companies across the U.S. Together, they minister to more than half a million employees.

They are hired to provide spiritual comfort and counseling to American workers. The idea is that happier employees are better employees, and if faith-based counseling helps, bosses are willing to give it a shot.

Office chaplains are just part of a larger faith-at-work movement percolating through corporate America. A 2005 NBC poll found that nearly 60 percent of respondents said religious beliefs played some role in making decisions at work; an even higher number said such beliefs influenced their interactions with co-workers.

Still, there are concerns—and not just about the appropriateness of bringing God and spirituality into the workplace. Douglas Hicks, author of “Religion and the Workplace: Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership,” said it is hard to tell whether corporate chaplains actually meet their mission.

“What does effectiveness mean?” Hicks asked. “Does it mean looking at how these chaplains in the workplace affect a business’s bottom line profit? Does it mean caring to the spiritual needs of the workers in the workplace? Or is it both?”

Most corporate chaplains are Christian, but Marketplace and Corporate Chaplains of America, based in Raleigh, N.C., also provides Jewish rabbis and Muslim imams to counsel employees.

Hicks said he wonders whether

the diversity of chaplains reflects a globalized, international corporate landscape. In 2001, one-third of human resources professionals surveyed by the Tanenbaum Center and the Society for Human Resource Management noted that the number of religions in their companies increased in the past five years.

“It’s true that these companies try to find religious leaders of non-Christian beliefs to also come to the workplace, but still their primary work is for Christian workers,” Hicks added.

His concern is for the non-Christian workers, and whether the counseling is simply a resource or an unspoken requirement.

“You have evangelical Christian pastors being paid by (secular businesses), asking people how they are doing in the workplace,” Hicks said, “and that sends the message to non-

Christian workers that they may be treated differently.”

Sometimes employees can be reluctant to participate.

“It takes a warming-up period,” acknowledged Dwayne Reece, a vice president at Corporate Chaplains of America, which has 100 chaplains working in 330 companies. “You’ll have employees which quickly take to the program and some employees are very hesitant.”

Reece said chaplains are screened carefully for education and experience, personal presence and any criminal history. Most programs require seven to 10 years of chaplaincy experience.

For Barlowe, popping from room to room is more than just a paycheck.

“It allows me to fulfill what I believe Christ has put me here to do, in the workplace,” he declared.

HOTEL MINISTRY Roland Barlowe, a corporate chaplain who works once a week at a Courtyard Marriott hotel in Tampa, talks with kitchen worker Joan Owens as he makes the rounds at the hotel. (RNS photo by Michael Spooneybarger)



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Friends of Oneida show their support through donations, time and prayer

I am not sure if there has been a single day in the past 24 years when I have not been keenly aware of the importance of our faithful friends. I have been blessed to have met many of our ministry friends over the years, but I have not met all of you. Friends of this ministry come in different forms. Many faithful friends often apologize for not being able to support us financially but tell me they do pray for us regularly. To those saints who include the Oneida ministry in their daily prayer lives, thank you! You have no idea how comforting it is to me personally to know that there are so many faithfully praying for us.

Another host of friends volunteer time, talents and skills every year to assist us with an overwhelming number of projects. If it were not for their combined efforts, many of those projects would never be completed or would surely take months or years longer. While I have a good idea of how important those volunteers are, it would be humanly impossible for me to honestly assess the value of their efforts. These wonderful friends take a substantial burden off our shoulders by offering their time and skills. To all the dedicated friends who have volunteered in recent months or years, please know how grateful we are for the help you have provided.

Another group of friends never miss an opportunity to tell as much as they can about the Oneida ministry. These people may not be in a position to help in other areas, but they happily tell anyone who will listen how OBI has impacted their lives or the lives of teenagers they know. To the

champions who speak well of OBI, thank you ever so much for believing in the quality and importance of our ministry.

Still others make visits to our campus to bring a load of used clothing or other items. Sometimes those visits are accompanied by an apology that they cannot do more. Only God knows the number of people who have benefited from items that others no longer had any need of. I am reminded of the value of a “cup of cold water” given in Jesus’ name. No expression of love is overlooked by the Owner of the universe. Thank you.

Finally, to that faithful host of financial contributors, saying “thank you” falls far short of my desire to express my deepest gratitude. Never in OBI’s history has there been a time when we did not depend on the financial gifts of generous donors to keep our doors open. The majority of the monetary support this ministry needs to serve the young people God sends our way comes from faithful friends who share their resources. We could not do what we do without your support.

We believe God has impressed all of these friends with an understanding of the importance and value of what we do. I thank God for each of you and I never, ever forget how important you are to this ministry. Thank you ever so much for making 2007 possible. As you may know, it is only on very rare occasions that we ever ask our friends to help with any special need. Just because we do not ask does not mean the need is not there. We simply trust God and you to meet those needs. I wish for you a blessed New Year! Thank you!

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Serving on the island of Guam

Alumnus offers missions perspective from the field

Clear Creek has alumni serving the Lord literally all over the world as missionaries. Alumnus Jim Ditty Jr. (1981) and his wife, Jenny, give us a current perspective from the mission field. They have been serving on the island of Guam since May of last year.

“We had just finished a pastorate in Pike County, Ohio, about a year ago,” Jim said. “We received a telephone call from someone who had been approached about the position here but did not feel the leadership of the Lord to accept it. This person called me and told me that the Holy Spirit told him to talk to us. From that point forward, it became a reality and we officially came here to serve on May 17, 2007.”

Jim’s official title as a missionary in Guam is Director of Missions and Church Planting Strategist.

“My focus is to help encourage and strengthen churches in their health, and to keep before them their need to start new churches in the area of Micronesia,” Jim noted. “I also teach a basic music course at Pacific Island Bible College here on the island. Our association has a relationship with the college and a lot

of the students are members of the churches in our association.

“I spend a lot of my time calling and visiting with the pastors in my association so I can keep up with how they are doing and help them with anything they may need,” he noted. “We only have seven churches in our association. Five are on this island, one is on the island of

Saipan and the other is in Okinawa. This is a wonderful place to serve. The churches are filled with loving people loving the Lord and growing in the Lord but with struggles just like everywhere else.

“We are excited about getting ready to begin a new church work on the east side of Guam where there is currently no evangelical work going on,” Jim continued. “The population of Guam is about 85 to 90 percent Catholic. Please help us pray for the church in this little village of Ipan that will be starting in March.”

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

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.ccbcc.edu; e-mail: dfox@ccbcc.edu

Hunger fund used to address food crisis in Zimbabwe

Harare, Zimbabwe (BP)—With food prices spiraling out of control and their country's economy in ruins, the average family in Zimbabwe is struggling to survive.

Store shelves are devoid of basic necessities such as oil, flour, sugar, corn meal and even soap. Most items can be found on the black market, but few can afford the inflated prices.

Southern Baptists are responding to the desperate need by shipping 1,000 boxes of food into the country.

Baptist Global Response, a Southern Baptist development and relief organization, purchased the groceries, at a cost of about \$70 per box, with money Southern Baptists donated to the World Hunger Fund.

"Southern Baptists care about ministering in a holistic way. Zimbabwe is in dire need," said Mark Hatfield, who leads Baptist Global Response work in sub-Saharan Africa. "We can connect people in need with people who care enough to help."

While the crisis in Zimbabwe is not the result of a natural disaster, the economic problem has left the people in the same kind of desperate plight—unable to afford or acquire the basic necessities of daily life.

Inflation in the country is out of control. In November, Zimbabwe's chief statistician said it was impossible to calculate the inflation rate because stores did not have anything on the shelves to put price tags on. The last inflation statistic released by the government was 14,000 percent, meaning that last year's 50-cent loaf of bread would now cost \$70.

In September, the government attempted to check the inflationary spiral by fixing prices on basic necessities. Stores could not afford to sell at the government prices, however, and many of them simply shut down, forcing basic products onto the black market.

Finding food is often the main problem. One Zimbabwean Baptist church tried to help a local prison that needed food and spent two weeks trying to find a bag of rice and four weeks looking for a bag of beans. They ended up paying \$62.50 for one bag of rice.

The food boxes being delivered contain rice, oil, salt, powdered milk, candles, corned beef, tea, sugar, soap, matches, flour, washing powder and beans.

Besides purchasing the food boxes, Baptist Global Response also is providing the fuel needed for distribution. That will allow local Baptist churches to distribute the boxes in their communities to families identified as being in need.

Post-tsunami efforts rebuilding lives in Asia

By Mark Kelly
Baptist Press

Southern Asia (BP)—Southern Baptists who gave generously in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami will be glad to know they have helped numerous people not only rebuild their communities but also find meaningful lives, a development worker in the region reported.

More than 230,000 people died when a tsunami struck southern Asia in December 2004. Southern Baptists responded quickly, sending volunteer teams and donating more than \$17 million to help those affected.

As a direct result, survivors have found comfort, homes have been rebuilt, new businesses have been launched and people have been trained in the skills that will help them improve their families' lives.

David Jones*, a community developer who works as a field partner with Baptist Global Response, said the quick response identified Southern Baptists as people who care and opened the door for all the subsequent progress.

"We built more than 120 homes in two villages and rebuilt about that many businesses, which were the backbone of the economy in the county where we focused much of our work," Jones recalled. "It also allowed national Christians and volunteers from the United States to come in and help with body removal and clean-up."

New relationships

Prior to the disaster relief effort, people in the area had few relationships with Christians, and interaction with national Christians and volunteers from the United States have helped many people find hope and peace, Jones noted.

"We are seeing some really strong foundations being built and a great many lives have been changed," he added. "We have had thousands of volunteers come from all over the country and different parts of the world. Towns have been adopted and long-term relationships developed that continue to make a difference. Volunteers continue to come."

The community development team now is working in 13 villages in that county, Jones said. An extension center opened by the team gives local people an opportunity to meet international volunteers who



REBUILDING A man walks through the rubble of homes and businesses near the coast in Sri Lanka shortly after the 2004 tsunami. Community reconstruction projects have been a large part of Southern Baptist aid to southern Asia since the disaster. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)



MEANINGFUL SERVICE Southern Baptist relief workers paint the home of a southern Asian woman whose home was destroyed by the 2004 tsunami. The quick response to the overwhelming disaster identified Southern Baptists as people who care and opened the door for many people to not only rebuild their communities but also find meaningful lives, according to David Jones, a field worker for Baptist Global Response. (BP photo)

can train them in a wide range of techniques that will greatly improve their quality of life.

"The communities are more than 100 years behind in terms of technology. That prevents a lot of advances economically," Jones pointed out. "Without much cost, we can bring in people who have backgrounds in different areas and a lot of technology that will help in many different areas. People from the community can come together and dream about what the future could be for them."

The extension center gives community leaders opportunities for hands-on training in many skills, including forestry, animal husbandry, fisheries, agriculture and nutrition, as well as construction and business development.

"There is a crop production side to what we do. Rice is a staple part of the diet, so we are helping with advances in rice production," Jones added. "We also are experimenting with crops from different parts of the world to see what else will grow in that particular climate and context."

Meanwhile, a nutrition initiative called FAITH—Food Always In The Home—helps villagers grow gardens that provide households with various types of food.

"Back to work"

The center also has introduced new technologies to improve the cottage industries that formed the backbone of the economy before the tsunami, according to Jones.

"As a result of a co-op established following the tsunami, more than 3,000 people have been able to go back to work," he said. "That was a real shot in the arm for the economy. It helped people get back to work and to move into their new homes and provide for their families."

Jones also pointed out that the extension center is demonstrating the effectiveness of a new industry—Interlocking Concrete Earth Blocks.

"The bricks traditionally used in construction require a lot of wood to be burned in kilns, and the forest is disappearing pretty quickly," he noted. "We hope that once the community sees the benefit of the new brick technology, it will create a whole new industry for the area."

"We established a production site that has been going for almost a year now. We have worked with the soils there to identify what soils work best to make the blocks," Jones continued. "Several different facilities have been built with the new blocks, and we are training people on how to use the blocks in construction."

"Memorials to those who lost their lives in the tsunami have been built out of the blocks, and they are being used for fencing around many new homes. It's starting to take hold and hopefully will provide even more livelihoods for the communities."

Valuable friendship

The value of disaster relief, reconstruction and community development can be seen in one "man of peace" relationship that emerged in the weeks following the tsunami, Jones recalled.

"We met my friend about a week after the tsunami, when we were distributing food in a local house of worship," he said. "He asked us to come help his village, which had pretty much been wiped out. There wasn't a home left standing in a community of 3,000 people."

"My friend was out of the country on business when the wave hit, and when he was able to get back, he couldn't find any of his close relatives. They were gone."

The relief team helped locate and bury bodies and also provided tents and fresh water for the survivors. Their attention then turned to helping plan reconstruction of the village.

"As we worked alongside my friend, he developed a real heart and vision for his people," Jones said. "He began sharing the principles we follow about how we are to love one another. He has become instrumental in the development work. He provided the land on which we built the extension center."

That relationship is the key that has allowed the community development team to work in the communities, according to Jones. It also has created opportunities for many conversations about both improving the quality of life and finding hope and peace in difficult circumstances.

*Name changed for security reasons.

"We are seeing some really strong foundations being built and a great many lives have been changed."

David Jones*, Baptist Global Response

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Bill Henard

If you Google the words "define new," a plethora of definitions arise on your computer screen. Princeton.edu provides these explanations: different, having no previous example or precedent, newfangled, unaffected by use. How many of us wish that we could experience something different this new year; something newfangled, unaffected by use? It's probably why we all make New Year's resolutions, only to discover that nothing really changes. But can it?

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come." What God offers is the opportunity to experience a lasting change. The answer comes in making a New Year's resolution that is grounded in something other than turning over a new leaf. It must be based on a trust in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Here's how:

First, you must be willing to repent of your sins. Repentance is not just feeling sorry for doing wrong. It is an act of the will in which you desire to turn away from your behavior and actions. You want God to change you.

Second, you must confess Christ as your Savior. Jesus died on the cross as the only way for humanity to be saved. Your faith must rest exclusively on Christ's sacrificial death for you.

Third, you must give Christ control of your life. In order to be changed, you must surrender your life to the Lordship of Christ. This act is a step of obedience in giving Christ control of your life.

The good news is that when a person makes this commitment, Christ makes all things new. You will be different, newfangled and unaffected by use. Christ truly will make your year new.

Bill Henard, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, is president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Jackson Grove Church recently called **Chad Fultz** as pastor. He is a 2007 graduate of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will hold January Bible Study each Sunday at 6 p.m. from Jan. 6 to Feb. 4 with associate pastor **Tim Shockley** leading the study.

■ **HENDERSON**—The **Silvertones** of First Church honored **Russell and Judy Hibbs** on their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 21.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthews Church will host a 13-week Financial Peace University class each Wednesday beginning Jan. 9, 6 p.m. For more information, contact **Darin Jett** at (502) 896-0851.

■ **MONTICELLO**—New Salem Church recently called **Greg Haynes** as pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Mayfield



Bob Swift has announced his retirement as pastor of First Church effective Jan. 13. Swift, pastor of First Church since 1997, has served nearly 35 years in ministry. The church presented him a retirement gift of one year's salary and will host a reception Jan. 13, 4:30 to 6 p.m.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—**Gary Lovitt** recently resigned as pastor of Pleasant Hill Church.

Mississippi Baptists sell former camp destroyed by Hurricane Katrina

Jackson, Miss. (BP)—The Mississippi Baptist Convention Executive Board has voted to move forward on a developer's \$18 million offer to purchase the property that served as the home of Gulfshore Baptist Assembly before being destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Developer Douglas Johnson of Mandeville, La., submitted a letter of intent on behalf of NewTrac East LLC, to purchase the property for a multi-use, multi-million-dollar project he plans to name Gulfshore

Point. The offer from Johnson came after the convention board's executive committee rejected all offers made during an open bidding process in September.

Johnson, who was not one of the bidders, contacted convention board officials several weeks later and inquired about the status of the property.

Messengers to the 2006 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting voted to accept a post-Katrina special committee's recom-

mendation to sell the property, with the stipulation that the new owners would not build a casino or any gambling-related businesses on the property.

Johnson emphasized in a meeting with the convention board's executive committee that he agreed with the no-gambling stipulation and said he planned to preserve the history of the property, including construction of a chapel to commemorate its time as Gulfshore Baptist Assembly.

"We want to build a wholesome, family-friendly development," Johnson said. "We have no intention of building a casino on the property."

Mississippi Baptists purchased the property in 1958 and named it Gulfshore Baptist Assembly. A state-of-the-art facility with hurricane-resistant features was built on the property after Hurricane Camille hit in 1969, but Hurricane Katrina's massive winds and waves destroyed everything except the main building's superstructure.

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

17-19 Shepherding the Shepherd, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Lexington.

24 Pastor/Staff Forum, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.

24-25 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Hartford Baptist Church.

25-26 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Baptist Building, Louisville.

25-26 Regional Women on Mission Retreat, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.

31-Feb. 2 Southeast Conclave, Chattanooga, Tenn.

February

1-2 Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Holiday Inn University Plaza, Bowling Green.

16 Special Needs Meeting, Baptist Building, Louisville.

18 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, First Baptist Church, Calvert City.

19 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, Warren Association Office, Bowling Green.

20 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, Anchor Baptist Church, Lexington.

21 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, Erlanger Baptist Church.

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

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for a new mission in the mountains of eastern Kentucky (Middlefork in Leslie County). If interested, call (606) 279-2837; or e-mail thepurpose@tds.net.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to children and families at Kings Baptist Church, Mount Washington, Ky. Housing provided. Submit resumé to Kings Baptist Church, PO Box 380, Mount Washington, KY 40047, Attn: Corey Abney; or send via e-mail to cabney@kingsbaptist.net.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Chaplin Baptist Church (www.chaplinbaptist.org) in northeastern Nelson County. Housing is available. Submit resumé to Chaplin Baptist Church, PO Box 93, Chaplin, KY 40012, Attn: Music Search Committee; or via e-mail to fugitt@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Senior pastor. First Baptist Church of Leitchfield, Ky., seeks a visionary leader who is called by God to minister to people of all ages. This position requires strong communication and leadership skills, including the willingness to empower others to lead and work with other staff ministers. Individual must be an energetic, dynamic man who has a passion for community evangelism and soul winning as well as a loving, caring heart for guiding the spiritual development of others. His strong, disciplined prayer life will allow him to recognize God's calling to this church and this ministry opportunity. Please submit resumé to Ed Carter, Pastor Search Team leader, PO Box 411, Leitchfield, KY 42755.

SEEKING: Pastor for First Baptist Church, Providence, Ky. Resumé to Ray Gobin, 214 Benjamin Terrace, Providence, KY 42450.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Cecilia Baptist Church (12-20 hours a week). Experienced individual with knowledge of music, directing congregation and choir. Send resumé to Cecilia Baptist Church, 416 East Main St., Cecilia, KY 42724, Attn: Personnel Committee; or e-mail resumé to church@ceciliabaptist.com.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Anchor Church, a non-traditional, Spirit-filled church with Southern Baptist doctrine, seeking God's direction and will. If by seeking God's will in your life you sense His leading toward Anchor Church, please contact us at: Pastor Search Committee, Anchor Church, 3126 Riggs Ave., Erlanger, KY 41018; or e-mail sjmorison@insightbb.com. If you know of someone who is seeking a church like Anchor, please send your suggestion to the same address.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor for non-traditional, Spirit-led Baptist church. Looking for a shepherd to disciple a diverse community in a deeper walk with God, and to increase His Kingdom in the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky area. Will need to work with elders to develop a staff and rebuild our church family. Preferred requirements: master of divinity degree and five to 10 years experience. Send resumé to Highland Hills Baptist Church, 132 South Grand Ave., Fort Thomas, KY 41075. Accepting resúmes through Jan. 31, 2008.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to youth and children. Send resumé to Pigeon Fork Baptist Church, 5090 Hickory Ridge Road, Waddy, KY 40076, Attn: Youth Search Committee.

SEEKING: Pastor—God's choice for our small, growing, rural church in southern Kentucky. Salary plus benefits package. Send to: Resumé, 812 Walnut St., Franklin, KY 42134; or via e-mail: chatty54@multipro.com.

SEEKING: Minister of music for a growing congregation in Hodgenville, Ky. Duties include leading a comprehensive music program, choir and blended worship services. Please send resumé, references and a DVD if available to: Music Minister Search Committee, South Fork Baptist Church, 4915 New Jackson Hwy., Hodgenville, KY 42748.

SEEKING: Pastor for Burlington Baptist Church, located near Cincinnati in Boone County, one of Kentucky's fastest growing areas. Contemporary and traditional worship services. Preferred is at least 5 years senior-pastor experience and a seminary degree. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, Burlington Baptist Church, PO Box 48, Burlington, KY 41005; or lkmc9@insightbb.com by Jan. 31, 2008.

SEEKING: Part-time worship/choir leader for two morning worship hours for outreach-driven church. Blended worship, early worship band, late worship choir/ensemble, seasonal cantata. Diverse congregation, long-tenured staff. Interested individuals forward resúmes to First Baptist Church, PO Box 296, Carrollton, KY 41008. Phone: (502) 732-4396.

SEEKING: Part-time youth and children's minister. Please send resumé to Palomar Baptist Church, 2190 Ft. Harrods Drive, Lexington, KY 40515, Attn: Youth Search Committee. For details, call Kimberly Goard at (859) 963-1400.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church of Flatwoods, Ky. Please send resumé to: FBC of Flatwoods, PO Box 1005, Flatwoods, KY 41139, Attn: Pulpit Committee; or e-mail resumé to ffbcmccarty@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor for Piner Baptist Church in northern Kentucky. Our Southern Baptist congregation provides many ministries locally and internationally. Average attendance for Sunday services is 400. For more information, go to www.pinerbaptist.org. Resúmes may be sent to Wayne Diehl, pastor of administration, 15044 Madison Pike, Morning View, KY 41063. Deadline for resúmes: Jan. 15, 2008.

SEEKING: Pastor for First Baptist Church, a small Southern Baptist congregation nearing its 200th anniversary. Located in the heart of Newport, Ky. (near Cincinnati), FBC seeks a pastor to lead the church in growth as we continue to be an essential part of our changing community. Applicants should send resúmes to: Pastor Search Committee, c/o Michael Turner, 141 Ridge Hill Drive, Highland Heights, KY 41076.

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

Father's death leads basketball star to heavenly Father

By Bill Sorrell
Baptist Press

Jackson, Tenn. (BP)—Mike Beasley Jr.'s first day of eighth grade was the last day he saw his father.

Michael Beasley Sr. was driving to work in Louisville when a tire flew off an 18-wheeler, bounced off the median divide and into the windshield of his truck. Beasley, 45, died in the accident.

The truck's driver had a suspended license and had bypassed an inspection station.

On most mornings, Mike would hug his father good-bye. That morning, he did not.

"Being a young child, I thought if we had hugged this may not have happened," Beasley recalled. "I had feelings of guilt."

The news, delivered by his mother, Denise, and his grandmother, Betty Dillman, was a "sudden bolt" to his heart.

"It cut me deep," said Beasley, now 22 and a fifth-year senior at Lambuth University in Jackson, Tenn. "It was devastating. I felt bitterness toward God. I cursed God. The feelings I had were so strong, I chose to blame Him for something that was not His fault. I didn't know

who God was at the time."

Through the encouragement of his uncle, Timmy Dillman, and Dillman's family, Beasley came to know who God was.

As he was shown love and compassion, Beasley said he began to experience the love of God.

Invited by teammate Reggie Carrick to a Lambuth chapel service, Beasley accepted Christ as his Savior in January 2005.

"That night I broke down in tears," Beasley noted. "I surrendered to God and God restored me and forgave me. That was the beginning of the transformation process."

"I had a deep hunger for God's Word. It was a brand new book to me. I could go down the 10 Commandments and see how I broke them into 1,000 pieces," he continued.

Drugs, sex and alcohol had been as big a part of Beasley's game as 3-pointers. Lambuth basketball coach Kevin Burton said the young man's life changed dramatically and showed how a "total commitment

to Christ can alter one's lifestyle.

"I was there when Beasley got saved," teammate Paul Narcisse recalled. "He came into the body with the understanding that he owes God and that God doesn't owe him. He understands that in order to be a Christian, you have to be holy unto God."

Beasley, who had grown up as a Roman Catholic, was baptized at Valley View Baptist Church in Louisville.

"When unbelievers talk with me about Christ, I speak with an urgency and love," Beasley noted.

"I show them by my actions that I am genuine."

After missing last season with a torn Achilles tendon, Beasley returned to Lambuth for the 2007-08 season. One of the reasons he still plays is his father. "That's part of my drive," he declared.

His father had coached him on youth league teams and watched as Mike, a shooting guard, became an all-district performer at Louisville's DeSales High School. As a senior, he averaged 13 points per game while earning honorable mention all-

state honors.

Beasley, who has been named to the academic All-TransSouth Conference, is one of the best 3-point shooters Burton has coached.

Because of what the coach called his "strong character and morals," Beasley is "held a little higher in the accountability area than a lot of other players," Burton noted. "I've heard him speak to others of his faith," he added.

Along with a love of basketball, Beasley's father planted "great seeds of respect for others," according to Burton.

"You can tell that Mike is a young man who had terrific parents," the coach said. "He looked up to his father."

God used the death of his earthly father to draw him to his heavenly Father, added Beasley, who will join his fiancée, Chelsea Ringel, as a missionary in Sierra Leone after their marriage in May.

"I no longer want to live for myself," Beasley declared. "I trust God to discipline me and mold me into His image. God means more to me than words can express. I'm willing to give my life to Him because that's all I have to give."



Mike Beasley

Notable Christian players named in MLB steroid scandal

Louisville's Byrd among players mentioned in Mitchell report

By Tim Ellsworth
Baptist Press

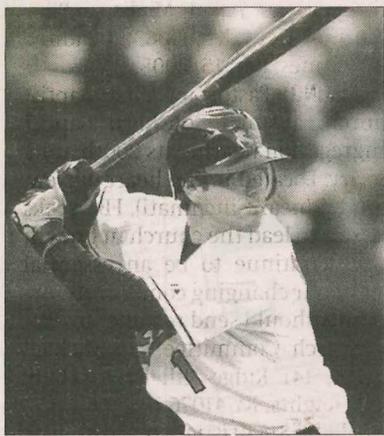
Nashville (BP)—When former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell released his report Dec. 13, he identified 89 Major League Baseball players as users of illegal performance-enhancing drugs.

Included on that list are a few players who are professing Christians—most notably Andy Pettitte, Brian Roberts and Paul Byrd, among others.

That men of faith would be present in the Mitchell Report did not come as a surprise to Rick Horton, former St. Louis Cardinals pitcher and St. Louis area director for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

"Not only have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but they continue to do it after they have a relationship with Christ," Horton noted. "It's a continuing battle."

Pettitte, a pitcher for the New York Yankees, is a Sunday school teacher at his home church in Texas. He is also the author of "Strike Zone: Targeting a Life of Integrity & Purity."



TAINTED WITNESS? Baltimore Orioles infielder Brian Roberts admitted to using steroids once in 2003. (BP photo by Todd Olszewski/Baltimore Orioles)

After the release of the Mitchell Report, in which Pettitte was accused of using human growth hormone while recovering from an elbow injury, Pettitte admitted the accuracy of that charge.

Through his agent, Pettitte released a statement saying he tried HGH for two days in an attempt to recover from his injury more quickly.

"I felt an obligation to get back to my team as soon as possible," the pitcher said in the statement. "For this reason, and only this reason, for two days I tried human growth hormone. Though it was not against baseball rules, I was not comfortable with what I was doing, so I stopped."

"If what I did was an error in judgment on my part, I apologize."

Roberts admits to use

Likewise, Roberts, who has spent his entire career with the Baltimore Orioles, admitted to using steroids once in 2003.

"I immediately realized that this was not what I stood for or anything that I wanted to continue doing," Roberts noted in a statement. "I never used steroids, human growth hormone or any other performance-enhancing drugs prior to or since that single incident."

"I can honestly say before God, myself, my family and all of my fans, that steroids or any performance-enhancing drugs have never had any effect on what I have worked so hard to accomplish in the game of baseball," he added.

Meanwhile, Cleveland Indians pitcher and Louisville native Byrd made headlines during the American League Championship Series in October when it was revealed that he had purchased HGH. Byrd claimed he did so with a prescription from his doctor, because he had a deficiency of an adult-growth

hormone.

"I have a reputation, I speak at different places, I speak to kids, I speak to churches," Byrd said in October. "I do not want the fans in Cleveland—I do not want honest, caring people—to think that I cheated, because I didn't."

Reasons for actions vary

Those accused of using illegal substances fall into one of three categories, Horton explained. The first are the young players who think the drugs might make them better players. The second group are the injured players who use substances like HGH in an attempt to recover more quickly. The third consists of aging players who are trying to hang on at the end of their careers.

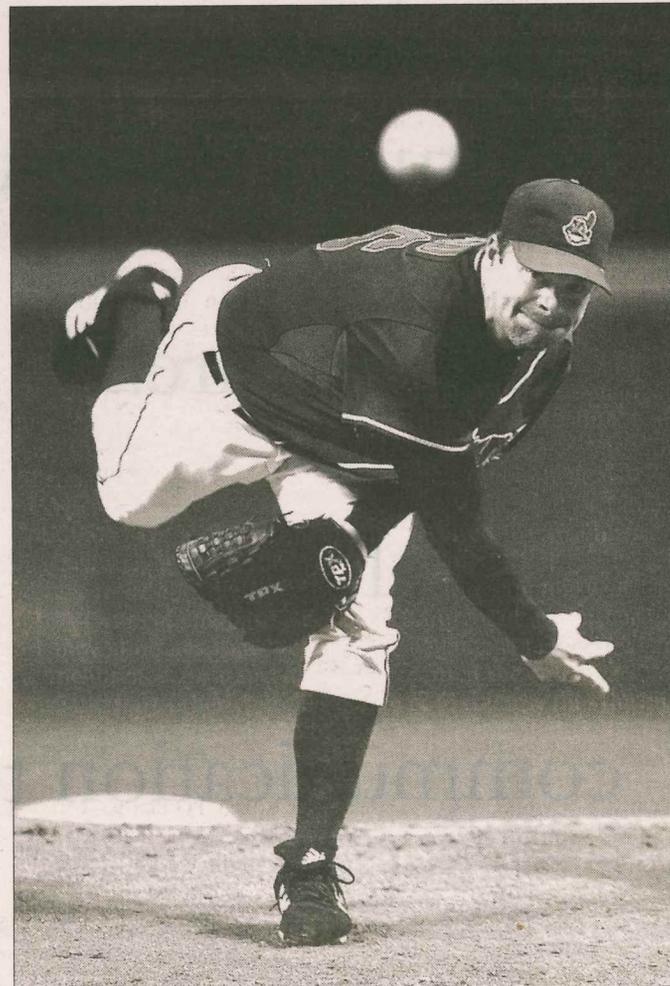
"The motives are not so homogenous as to why guys are doing it," Horton noted. "I think that's one thing we need to understand."

Horton stressed that he is not providing excuses for players who cheated, and was clear that the use of performance-enhancing drugs is "wrong and it's illegal. But so is driving 85 in a 55, and I know people who do that," he said.

"The sports world is so competitive and so short-lived, that there are decisions made within that that are hard for somebody not in that environment to understand," he added.

Horton also said Christian players are easy targets for criticism because of their presence in the spotlight, and noted that fans are naturally going to feel disappointed at these revelations.

But Horton emphasized that sometimes people are guilty of holding others to a higher standard than they hold themselves. It is important for people to realize, he said, that Christian baseball players are still men who sometimes stumble in



their walk with Christ.

"It's legitimate to say that I'm disappointed, but I do think we have to look in the mirror," Horton observed. "I think we need to have an attitude of forgiveness to brothers who make mistakes, and who make big mistakes."

He also said it helps to keep issues like steroid use in perspective.

"Is it really that horrible? Is that as bad as being prideful? Or disrespecting your neighbor?" Horton asked. "I don't have an answer for that, but I think it's worth thinking about."

PLAYING FAIR?

Louisville native Paul Byrd was linked to the use of human growth hormones in former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell's report on performance-enhancing drugs in Major League Baseball. Byrd claimed he purchased HGH under orders of his physician because of an adult-growth hormone deficiency. (Photo by Tony Dejak/AFP/Getty Images)

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PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

www.WesternRecorder.org

WESTERN RECORDER
Gilead Baptist Church Edition
December 18, 2007

DECEMBER'S CALENDAR

- Dec 18 - Sunbiter's Christmas Gathering, 5:00P
- Dec 19 - 2007 Bible Drill Reorganization
- Dec 20 - "A Place To Call Home" Meet @ Church @ 5:30P
- Dec 21 - Christmas Basket Delivery for Helping Hand, see Tod Watson
- Dec 22 - Follow up 9:30A, Combined Worship, 11:00A No Sunday School and No Evening Service
- Dec 23 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:00P
- Dec 24 - No Wednesday Evening Service
- Dec 25 - Youth 3-Day Student Celebration in Pigeon Forge, TN

BUDGET INFO.

2007 ANNUAL BUDGET
Weekly Budget: 1209
Year to Date Budget: 1209
Offering to Date: 1209

IT'S THE SUNSHINER'S 2007 CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!
The Sunshiners invite everyone to join them on Tuesday, December 18th @ 5:00PM. As they come together to celebrate Jesus! The Ham, Turkey & Drinks are provided. Please bring a Side Dish and a Dessert.

2007 BIBLE DRILL RECOGNITIONS
Join Us This Wednesday, December 19th @ 6:30PM As We Recognize All of Our Youth & Children

WESTERN RECORDER
First Baptist Church Edition
December 23, 2007

First Baptist Church

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AS YOU CELEBRATE THE GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN, Jesus!

On Sunday, December 23rd, there will be no 8:30 A.M. worship service. We will only have one A.M. worship service on this Sunday at 10:45 A.M. Discipleship Training will be at 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 23rd. Christmas Lord's Supper Service at 6:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 23rd. Adult choir will present "Jesus, No Other Name" on Sunday, December 23rd at the 10:45 A.M. worship service.

WESTERN RECORDER
Highland Baptist Church Edition
December 23, 2007

Highland Baptist Church

Christmas Eve Services
Our Advent Season continues with worship service this Sunday, December 23rd. On Monday, Christmas Eve, the 5:00 p.m. Family Service and the 7:00 p.m. Lesson and Church Service will have special music led by children, Sanctuary Choir and a Silent Vigil.

An Advent Word of Thanks
What can I give Jesus? I would do my part. The question posed by poet Christina Rossetti has been answered each week this Advent season with wonderful gifts of words. These gifts have been for all of the members who have enriched our worship with new songs, hymns and the members of Highland's Children, the Sanctuary Choir, our youngest musicians - the Children's Choir, Children and Adult Handbell Choir, and our worshiped musicianship. - Eddy Collier

HBC Welcomes

Amendment Creates Interim Director of Young Adult Ministries
After considerable consultation and input, a recommendation by Ministry Planning Team members of the ministry to be a more traditional church staff position was identified. The position is to be filled by Kevin B. ...