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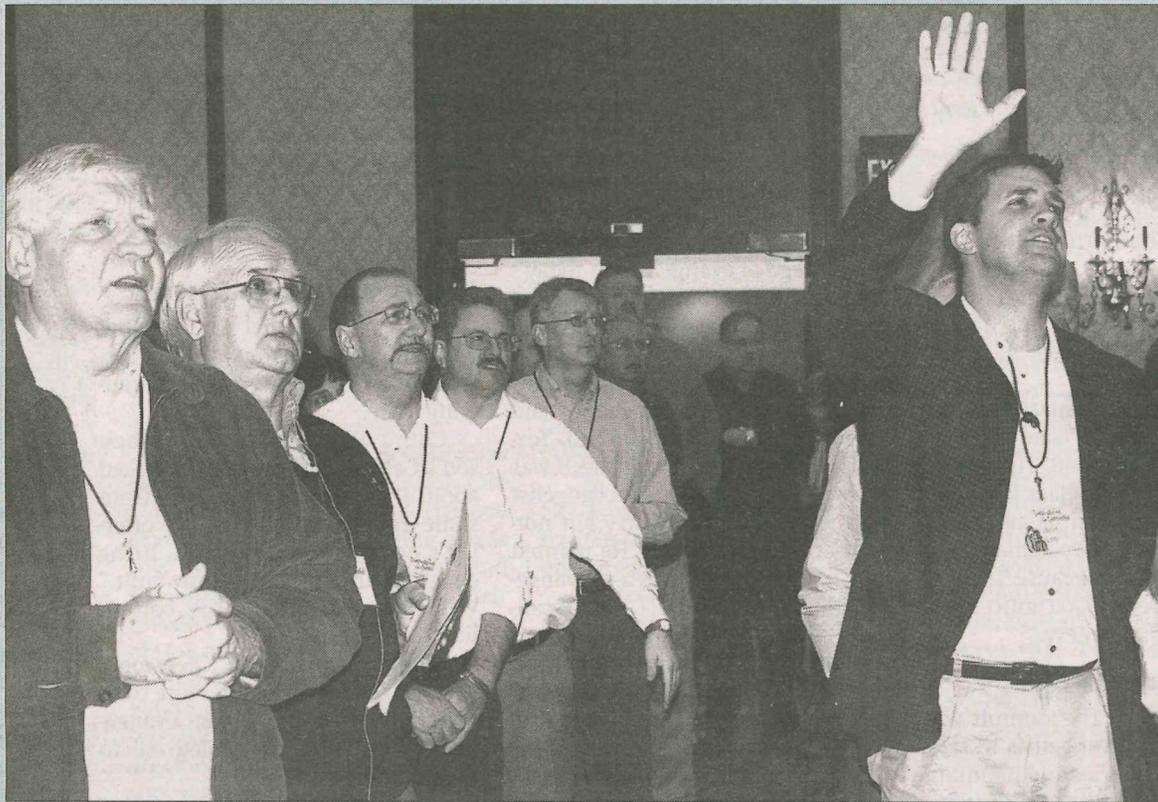
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'Take off the armor'



Pastors from across Kentucky celebrate during a time of worship at the Shepherding the Shepherd conference Jan. 17-19 in Lexington. More than 250 pastors and their spouses attended the annual event sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Baptist Healthcare System. (Photo by Drew Nichter)

Pastors gather for renewal at KBC 'Shepherding' event

By Drew Nichter
 News Director

Lexington—Now that the rush of Christmas has passed and a new year is under way, what is a pastor to do? More than 250 Kentucky Baptist pastors and their spouses packed up and headed to Lexington Jan. 17-19 for the annual Shepherding the Shepherd conference.

Now in its 10th year, Shepherding the Shepherd, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Baptist Healthcare System, is designed to allow the leaders of Kentucky Baptist churches to gather in one place and recharge their batteries.

"This is a time for them to come in, take off the armor ... for a few

days and find themselves personally renewed and refreshed," explained Richard Adams, director of the KBC's leadership development department.

"It's a good way to start a new year," declared Laverne Crawford, who attended with her husband, Sam, who is pastor of Immanuel See *Shepherding the ... Page 3*

Baptist ministries expand in wake of violence in Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya—The ramifications of Kenya's post-election violence are rapidly escalating into a humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations estimates more than 250,000 Kenyans have been internally displaced since the Dec. 27 election. Nearly 600 have died in a wave of clashes after the opposition claimed the election had been rigged.

Makeshift camps of displaced people stretch pop up at police stations, church courtyards and city stadiums. In the first crucial days of the crisis, Baptist Global Response, along with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, responded to critical hunger needs.

"We've been able to help with feeding at seven different sites across the country," said Mark Hatfield, director of Baptist Global Response work in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite the wave of violence, classes began as scheduled Jan. 14 at the Kenya campus of Wayland Baptist University, a Texas-based Baptist school.

The Wayland campus, which offers classes along with Kenya Baptist Theological College, became a temporary shelter for about 200 of the refugees.

Baptist World Aid, the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance, sent \$10,000 to the All Africa Baptist Fellowship for relief work in Kenya. The group sent another \$5,000 to Uganda to provide for Kenyan refugees who have fled to that nation.

Compiled from reporting by Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press

Survey finds most Americans support public religious expression

Phoenix (BP)—Most Americans believe it should be legal to have voluntary student-led prayers at public school events, display the Ten Commandments inside a court building and allow religious displays on city-owned property, according to research released by Ellison Research of Phoenix.

As part of the survey, Ellison presented a number of scenarios to a representative sample of 1,007 American adults and asked whether various modes of religious expression generally should or should not be legal in the United States.

Results indicated that 90 percent said the law should support religious groups renting public property, such as a public school gym or a library room; 89 percent said it should be legal for a public school teacher to permit a moment of silence for prayer or contemplation for all students during class time; and 88 percent believe it should be legal for public school teachers to wear religious symbols during class time.

Ellison also found that 87 percent believe voluntary student-led prayers at public school events, such as football games or graduation ceremonies, should be legal; 83 percent believe the display of a nativity scene on city property should be legal; and 79 percent said it should be legal to display a copy of the Ten Commandments inside a court building.

Those who responded were less unified in their answers to three specific scenarios. Sixty percent believe the display of a scene honoring Islam on city property during the Muslim holiday Ramadan should be legal. At the same time, 25 percent of those surveyed said a nativity scene should be legal but not a display honoring Islam. One percent believe honoring Islam should be legal while a nativity scene should be outlawed.

Also, 52 percent believe it should be legal for a university to determine for itself who can be in their membership, even if certain types of people are excluded, and 33 percent said it

should be legal for a landlord to refuse to rent an apartment to a homosexual couple.

While highly religious Americans as well as those who have a conservative political viewpoint strongly support individual religious and moral rights, Ellison found that a high proportion of non-religious Americans and those who have a more liberal political viewpoint share a similar perspective.

For instance, 92 percent of people who regularly attend religious worship services believe voluntary student-led prayers at public school events should be legal, while 83 percent of those who do not regularly attend worship services also agree.

Solid majorities of people who do not attend religious services agree it should be legal to have a moment of silence in public school classes, for teachers to wear religious symbols during class, for religious displays to be allowed on city property, for religious groups to have equal access to public facilities and for the Ten Com-

mandments to be displayed inside a court building.

Ron Sellers, president of Ellison Research, said this research shows that the labels placed on people often do not accurately define who they are and what they believe.

"There's too often a stereotype in today's world that one side—be they defined as churchgoers, conservatives, the religious right, Republicans, evangelicals or whatever—want to turn the U.S. into a theocracy or shove religion down everyone's throats, while the other side—again, be they called Democrats, the non-religious, liberals or the unchurched—are anti-religion and fighting to make this a purely secular society," Sellers said.

"On most of these issues, these different groups have a lot more in common than the stereotypes would suggest," he added. "Most people simply support the right to individual religious expression, even if another person may not like that expression."

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Jan. 23.

"We must walk with integrity, and not demand, but serve our pastors."

Evangelist Glenn Sheppard of Glenwood, Mo.

SBC evangelists evaluate culture, integrity

By Michael Chute
Baptist Press

Jackson, Tenn. (BP)—Cultural issues facing the church, as well as lack of integrity by some evangelists, are undermining the effectiveness of Southern Baptist evangelists, according to participants in a recent evangelism summit in Jackson, Tenn.

Jerry Drace of Humboldt, Tenn., called together 15 prominent Southern Baptist evangelists, representing more than 450 years of ministry, to take stock of the challenges they face and address possible solutions to diminishing opportunities among the Southern Baptist Convention's 44,000-plus churches.

An opening question for the summit considered whether the days of mass evangelism are over in Southern Baptist life.

"The public proclamation of the gospel always works," said Hal Poe, professor of faith and culture at Union University in Jackson. "For 2,000 years, in every time, place and culture, the public proclamation of the gospel works ... because 'the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to those that believe.'"

Keys to safeguarding ministry

A key theme of the summit was integrity among evangelists to safeguard their ministries and maintain the image of the office—dealing with finances, reporting results, maintaining relationships with pastors, nurturing their families and even crediting others if using their material in preaching.

"When pastors say, 'Evangelis-

tically speaking,' you know what they're saying—we're going to exaggerate," lamented Drace, who, as president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists in 2000, led the group to adopt "Affirmations of Accountability," a code of ethics.



Jerry Drace

"What we preach, we better live; what we sing, we better live. So many of the Southern Baptist evangelists are just outstanding men and women of integrity—the vast majority are,"

Drace noted. "But I lose respect for somebody when they have sold out themselves."

Participants chaffed over the negative image of evangelists in today's secular culture but acknowledged some in their ranks have contributed to that view.

"We are fighting against the media because of televangelists," said Sammy Tippit of San Antonio, Texas. He said the late Jerry Falwell was known worldwide as an evangelist because of his TV ministry but noted that he was a pastor. He pointed out that Jim Bakker was a televangelist, alluding to the "PTL Club" scandal that led to his resignation from the ministry. "In everybody's mind they're thinking of us this way and we need to redefine that (image)."

Drace asked Baptist churches in the Jackson area to invite the evangelists to preach in worship services Jan. 6. The evangelists came from ministries based in eight states: Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas. He then brought the pastors and evangelists together in a round-

table discussion Jan. 7.

Several pastors spoke to the cultural challenges facing churches in trying to host evangelistic events. Ken Story, pastor of Malesus Baptist Church in Jackson, said that "in the 1950s, you could open your door, put up a shingle that said 'church,' and the world came. Everything in the culture pressured people to go to church.

"It's not that way today—they're running from you as hard as they can go. Not only evangelism but churches are tarnished by our culture. Words like 'revival' are passé that people laugh at if you advertise it. You have to find some way to present the gospel to where it meets a need."

Trust strengthens relationships

Participants called for building stronger pastor-evangelist relationships, identifying trust as an underlying issue.

Chuck Williams, pastor of Jackson's Calvary Baptist Church, talked about the pressure he has felt from some evangelists. "If the offering's not there, it's my fault. If the decisions aren't there, it's my fault," Williams said. "That's the bottom line."

Glenn Sheppard of Glenwood, Mo., who has preached in more than 160 countries over a 45-year evangelism career, publicly apologized to the pastors.

"We must walk with integrity, and not demand, but serve our pastors," Sheppard said. "Forgive us. Forgive the heritage that's done this kind of thing. There's a generation of us who want to work and walk in integrity and are determined to so."

Evangelists voice concerns over Calvinism trend

By Michael Chute
Baptist Press

Jackson, Tenn. (BP)—A group of 15 evangelists meeting in Jackson, Tenn., Jan. 7-8 said they have concerns about the growth of Calvinism and the rise of a Willow Creek-style of non-confrontational evangelism within Southern Baptist churches.

The conference was initiated by Jerry Drace, an evangelist from Humboldt, Tenn., who invited prominent evangelists from eight states to discuss issues vital to the evangelists' ministry.

A LifeWay Research study released in November reported about 10 percent of Southern Baptist pastors identified themselves as Calvinists. However, 29 percent of recent SBC seminary graduates espouse Calvinist doctrine.

A few summit participants said the movement toward Calvinism has come on secular university campuses through organizations such as Campus Crusade for Christ and InterVarsity.

"In a broad sense, it's happening on Christian college campuses too, as Calvinism appeals to young people who are wanting a more intellectual approach to Christianity," said Hal Poe, professor of faith and culture at Union University in Jackson. "Southern Baptists neglected serious Christian education from the early 1960s, and that's when all the trouble started."

Poe said the "greatest missionary" for Calvinism in the local church is John Piper, a Reformed Baptist theologian, preacher and author who is pastor for preaching and vision of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis.

"He's effective because he's so passionate," Poe said. "He holds huge, stadium-type events that are rip-roaring. There's nobody else doing anything like that so he becomes (Calvinism's) expositor. But John Piper's version of Calvinism is not something John Calvin would espouse, or even that Charles Spurgeon would espouse."

Drace told the group he currently is working with some young pastors who are "so leaning in this morphed Calvinism that they almost laugh at evangelism. It's almost to the extent that they believe they don't have to do it. So (Calvinism) gives them an excuse not to do evangelism."

Wayne Bristow of Edmond, Okla., added that he is distressed about having to "tiptoe" around terminology for fear someone will misunderstand or take his comments another direction. For example, he said he has always told people who have asked that he can preach and give an invitation with authority and confidence because he believes in the sovereignty of God.

"When I preach, I know the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of people in that congregation—arresting

them, convicting them, convincing them and drawing them to Christ," Bristow said. "If I didn't believe that, I have no authority; I have no confidence. All I did would be in my own strength, and I would be forced immediately into a ministry of manipulation. But we live in a time now where (Calvinism) has come so much to the forefront that when you say something like that then ... you've got to be labeled."

The evangelists also attributed a Bill Hybels-style of seeker-friendly evangelism as a contributing factor to fewer evangelism opportunities in churches.

"When the pastor preaches on Sunday morning in a Hawaiian shirt, shorts and tennis shoes, do you think he's going to bring in this fire-breathing evangelist who wears a tie and black suit and have him stand up there and tell people that they are going to hell?" asked Michael Gott of Keller, Texas.

"Do you think he's going to change that whole user-friendly approach to have somebody like you or me tell people that they must recognize there's something wrong, and what's wrong must be changed, and the only one to change it is Jesus Christ?"

"They're going to try to woo them step by step, overextending friendship evangelism, to the point that confrontational evangelism is not part of the package."

Seminary declines to alter diploma of transgender grad

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Louisville (RNS)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary officials have declined a request to change the full name on the diploma of a 1998 male graduate who has since undergone surgery to become a woman.

Ronnie Elise Elrod, who goes by her new middle name, had asked that Southern Seminary change its records to reflect her new legal name. The seminary instead has reissued Elrod a diploma that includes her middle initial rather than her previous full name, Ronnie Eugene Elrod.

"We have an institutional policy that we do not change names on diplomas," said Southern President Albert Mohler. "That's just the bottom line."

Mohler said the school also doesn't change names to note a change in someone's marital status.

"If you're married, if you change your name, if you move to another planet—it doesn't matter," he added. "We're not going to change the name on a diploma. ... That long predated anyone asking for it for this reason."

Name changed on transcript

The seminary did change Elrod's transcript to read "Ronnie Elise Elrod" last year.

Mohler said name changes generally are permitted on a transcript to help former students apply to other institutions.

"That's an internal document between academic institutions and not a public document," he said.

Elrod, who began her transition in 1999, is a Nashville-based public speaker who talks about bias and gender identity in churches and universities. The 56-year-old former Southern Baptist pastor remains married to her spouse of 37 years.

Mohler has been vocal in questioning whether a man can truly change into a woman or vice versa, but he views that as a separate issue from the school's diploma policy.

Mohler cited the Southern Baptist faith statement, which calls "the gift of gender ... part of the goodness of God's creation."

Mohler said gender is "something that is assigned by God" and surgery may change how an individual looks but not their "chromosomal structure."

"We would want to respond with pastoral concerns to persons who are struggling with this issue," he said. "But we cannot endorse any confusion of gender and certainly not the notion of a sex change or sex assignment and the surgery that may be involved."

Shepherding the Shepherd

Pastors from across Kentucky gather for time of rest, relaxation and renewal

Continued from page 1

Baptist Church in Pikeville. The Crawfords have missed only one Shepherding the Shepherd event in its history, and she said they look forward to it each year. "It's a growth time," she added, "bringing us closer and bringing us back to God."

While rest and relaxation are at the top of the list for the conference, Adams pointed out that it is also designed to send pastors and their spouses back to their home churches with "a sense of wholeness and integrity that they can maintain (and) that they can stay committed to and renewed in their sense of purpose and calling."

Incorporating the theme of "Leadership Integrity," the conference featured a handful of guest speakers, worship times led by Dave Bullock and dBNetwork Band from Wisconsin, a series of specialized breakout sessions, and even a date night on Friday evening for couples to hit the town for some time alone together.

It is also a time to reconnect with old friends, noted Wayne Spivey, pastor of Cynthiana Baptist Church.

"We've actually made relationships with people that we've met here ... and we look forward to seeing them," he said.

Spivey added that Shepherding gives him an opportunity to simply participate in worship.

"It's a chance to ... worship the Lord without the responsibilities of leading worship," he explained.

A call for integrity

Echoing the conference's theme, guest speaker Carlisle Driggers proclaimed that now, more than any other time, the "need for pastor integrity is strong" in the United States.

"You are in a vital place of responsibility in this country," he said, urging pastors to get involved in what's going on in the country and the world. "Do not put yourself on the



TIME TOGETHER Pastors and their wives scour the book table for some good reading material at the Shepherding the Shepherd conference in Lexington. Those in attendance were treated to a series of worship services, guest speakers and even a date night for each couple. (Photo by Drew Nichter)

sidelines," he encouraged.

Driggers, who recently retired as executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, stressed that the gospel is "spreading across this world like never before," and that pastors need to adjust their mindset to be about "the Kingdom of God here on earth."

And that Kingdom is quickly expanding, Driggers noted, pointing out examples of the rise of Christianity all over the world, including in the war-torn country of Iraq, where 15 churches were started by missionaries in 2007.

"It's not just about church growth," he told the pastors. "It's about growing the Kingdom of God here on earth that Jesus died on the cross to save."

Church growth is one of many concerns of Kentucky Baptist pastors. And with that growth, conflict can follow, according to Dale Huff, director of LeaderCare and church administration for the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Huff, whose primary role is to help churches deal with church dis-

putes, called conflict the "greatest test of integrity as a minister."

"Nothing challenges your integrity more than when you're in the middle of a conflict and you're the one being shot at," he said.

The former Kentucky Baptist pastor pointed out research that shows the No. 1 cause of conflict within Southern Baptist churches is the issue of control. "Who's calling the shots?" Huff asked. "Who's determining the direction?"

Seek to address conflict

He also noted that churches dealing with conflict within the congregation often do so because they do not address the problem early on. To better manage it, Huff stressed, leaders must see conflict as "an opportunity to get in touch with reality."

"We make better decisions when we're in touch with reality," he added.

Huff urged pastors not to avoid disagreements and wait for them to "blow up," noting that "the fundamental biblical direction to deal with conflict is to approach it."

Rallies opposing casinos scheduled in Frankfort

Frankfort—As the battle over expanded gambling heats up in Kentucky, a pair of anti-gambling rallies will be held in early February at the Kentucky State Capitol in Frankfort.

A press conference led by the Kentucky Baptist African-American Pastors' Fellowship will be held Feb. 6 at 10 a.m., and a women's rally is set for Feb. 12 at 9:30 a.m. Both will be held in the Capitol Rotunda.

Willis Polk, president of the African-American Pastors' Fellowship and pastor of Imani Baptist Church in Lexington, said his group scheduled the press conference "to get our voice out there. ... We cannot be passive."

Polk estimated that at least 100 African-American pastors and laypeople from Kentucky Baptist churches will join him in Frankfort to speak out against casinos.

"Even though it is purported by many of those people who are in favor of (expanded gambling) that the state will realize \$500 million, the question becomes, 'Yes, but at what

cost?'" Polk asked.

The women's rally will be co-sponsored by WAGE (Women Against Gambling Expansion) and Say No to Casinos, an educational organization of the Family Trust Foundation of Kentucky.

Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, will be among the featured speakers at the women's rally.

In a letter sent this week to WMU leaders, Bolton noted, "This year gambling and all of the attending problems that it brings could be expanded in Kentucky. Our new governor campaigned on the promise to amend the state constitution to allow for casino gambling in Kentucky."

"At the same time that proponents of expanded gambling are promoting their causes," she added, "we know that compulsive gambling is a great problem."

Noting that "study after study shows the havoc that gambling wrecks on families and communi-

ties," Bolton emphasized that "we as women must oppose expanded gambling in our state."

Urging WMU members to "contact your state representative and express opposition to expanded gambling in Kentucky," Bolton said expanded gambling "is not good for our economy or for our families. The cost of the problems that gambling creates far outweighs the income generated. We can find better ways to finance needed programs in our state."

Encouraging women to attend the Feb. 12 rally, Bolton noted, "The presence of a rotunda filled with women in opposition to expanded gambling will send a powerful message to our state legislators."

"Opposition to gambling is an issue for WMU," she added. "We minister in Christ's name when we take positive and practical steps to meet needs and correct social and moral problems which victimize people. I urge you to study the issue, arm yourself with facts and speak up against expanded gambling."

With all of the stress that comes with being the pastor of a church, one of the core challenges is maintaining one's integrity in times of high stress, according to Dan and Mary Southerland.

The husband and wife team, who lead the young Next Level Church in Charlotte, N.C., discussed the importance of stress management in the lives of pastors and their spouses, noting that stress is unavoidable.

"We need to expect stress," Dan Southerland pointed out. "It's a normal part of life. If you are waiting for the moment in life where you have everything you want ... it's never going to happen."

Mary Southerland underscored the importance of managing stress, saying that doing so properly can "make or break your ministry."

Explaining that a "peaceful church is a dead church," Dan Southerland reminded pastors that "it is in the midst of chaos that God shows up."

The Southerlands also noted that the goal in ministry and life is not to eliminate stress, but to have safeguards in place to manage the pressures that will inevitably come. In order to do this, Southerland encouraged pastors to schedule downtime and to "learn the value of solitude."

"There is a part of God you cannot know on the run," he added. "The busier we are, the more we need regular solitude."

The Southerlands noted that pastors can manage stress further by balancing relationships in their lives and by doing only "what God called you to do."

Southerland described a pastor's ministry as a bus, noting that leaders must be willing to get on the bus, get off the bus and also change seats on the bus.

"When you are in the right seat on the right bus, your stress level will diminish," he affirmed.

Kentucky CP giving behind budget through December

Louisville—Four months into the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2007-08 fiscal year, Cooperative Program giving remains behind budget.

Through the end of December, giving was more than \$900,000 (11.3 percent) below budget.

Kentucky Baptist churches contributed a total of \$7,096,397 through December, which also leaves total CP receipts \$6,515 (0.1 percent) behind the previous year's CP giving, according to Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC business services team.

The annual budget for CP during the 2007-2008 fiscal year is \$24 million or an average of \$2 million per month.

Ashby said December receipts totaled \$1,787,598, which is \$26,763 below the \$1,814,361 received in November. But December giving also was \$84,174 above the \$1,703,424 received during the previous December, he added.

KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey said he anticipates January receipts will help recover some of the deficit. January receipts typically reflect a percent of gifts to churches in December, and receipts in early January have been good so far, he noted.

"We are grateful for every gift, regardless of size," Mackey said. "We pray church members will be faithful in supporting their local churches so missions in Kentucky and around the world can continue to be vibrant and spiritually fruitful."

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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Listen to some Jerry Clower

By David Prince

Lexington (BP)—Listening to Jerry Clower will make you a better sermon-listener. Of course, many of you may be asking yourself, "Who is Jerry Clower?"

If you grew up in the Deep South in the 1970s

through the 1990s, you know all about Clower. A comedian, Clower was born and raised in south Mississippi and looked every bit the part—heavy-set, thick gray hair, huge smile and deep Southern drawl. His down-home humor and comedic routines about Southern culture were downright hysterical.

But what made him so funny and effective as a comedian was not his material. You or I could have taken his material and received blank stares. What made him so effective was his ability to tell a story. Some might say that Jerry Clower was a one-in-a-million talent, but the truth is he was about a one-in-a-dozen among his generation in the South. There were Jerry Clowers all over south Mississippi. They did not perform on stages with vast audiences; they simply told stories on the front porch steps to listening family members and friends. Storytelling was a part of the fabric of the culture and it took place wherever two or three

were gathered.

A short time ago, I downloaded one of Clower's famous bits about a baseball game on my iPod. An amazing thing happened: My boys absolutely loved it, and after hearing it a few times they could repeat it al-

FIRST PERSON

most verbatim. They begged me to put more Clower on my iPod, and I noticed how intently they listened to the stories—knowing that they had to listen carefully for how the story fit together so they could enjoy the punch line.

I realized then just how impoverished our culture is with the lack of storytelling. Television, with its imagination-zapping power, has replaced those front-porch times.

The culture of Jerry Clower not only produced good storytellers but also good story-listeners. How important is it that we become good story-listeners? Our spiritual health and well-being depend on it. Have you ever thought about how God chose to reveal Himself in His Word? He gave us the awe-inspiring story of creation, fall, the promise of a skull-crushing Savior, the preparation of His coming, His unusual arrival, His counterintuitive ministry, His death, burial, bodily resurrection and the promise of His sure return

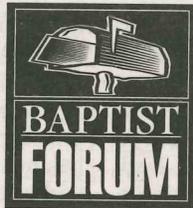
Analyzing attendance

On Jan. 15, the Western Recorder reported that the attendance of 18- to 39-year-olds at the Southern Baptist Convention annual is "declining precipitously."

Thom Rainer, in Life-Way Christian Resources' Facts & Trends, suggests a solution, quoting Daniel Akin's statement, "The fathers need to show their sons why this ship is worth sailing!" This is only part of the truth. There is not a single overarching reason for my generation's absenteeism.

Some, like myself, want to go but can't. What young pastor of a small

church can afford to even get to the annual meeting, much less afford a room, which booked through SBC Housing begins at \$95 per night?



Kentuckians are fortunate that meetings will be close over the next two years.

Others in my generation are ignorant. Denominational education hasn't been what it used to be for some time. I didn't know what the Cooperative Program was until I started at Boyce College.

Third, there are those, to use Akin's words, who don't believe this ship is worth sailing. The seeming constant distraction in denominational life of second- and third-tier

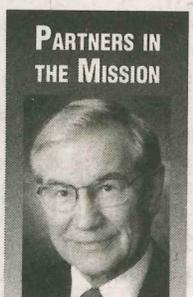
New work celebration highlights partnership

My wife, Kay, and I recently had the privilege of participating in a special celebration service with a new church and its sponsoring church. During the service, the congregations of the two churches recognized a church planting couple they are jointly sponsoring to begin yet another new work.

The service was conducted at Victory Baptist Church in Lexington with Pastor David Head presiding. Victory Baptist Church is only about 15 years old itself but became the sponsor of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's first "High Impact" church start at Master's Station in 2004. Now, Victory Baptist and Master's Church are helping start a new church in Versailles.

Master's Church Pastor Alex Kinchen spoke of the joy of receiving and the joy of partnership as the two churches work together to sponsor another church. That sentiment also was expressed by Head who said one

should always move forward with hands open both to receive from God and to give.



This theme of partnership also was exhibited when Don Reed, director of missions for Elkhorn Baptist Association, gave the opening prayer. Ray Van Camp, consultant for new work and church development in the association, also spoke of the strategic work of planting churches where research indicated a need and of the association's role in walking with a new church plant in the journey.

If the 2.3 million unsaved people in Kentucky are to be reached with the gospel, it will require an intentional and strategic church planting movement. I am grateful that the KBC has a church planting strategy for working with sponsoring and partnering churches and associations to plant new churches.

A major part of this strategy involves our helping to fund high im-

and consummation of His everlasting Kingdom. The unfolding of His story is full of twists and turns, high and lows, irony and suspense.

That is why good expository preaching does not come in a Bible dictionary format, but rather it tells the story of Christ and the unfolding of His Kingdom purposes, and it also challenges you to evaluate your story in light of His.

This is also why sermons that skip the story in an attempt to boil the Bible down to lists and life application points fall short and call into question the wisdom of God in the way He chose to reveal Himself to us.

If you see my family driving down the road in fits of laughter, we probably are listening to Jerry Clower—and, I am convinced, becoming better sermon-listeners.

You might not run to the computer and download Jerry Clower bits, but you should at least think about what it means to listen to the story of the Bible. God thought enough about stories to reveal to us the Ultimate One by which we evaluate every aspect of our lives. Let's start telling His story on front porches and in break rooms and everywhere else two or three are gathered. And let's start getting excited about listening to it as well.

David Prince is pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington

issues such as alcohol, miraculous gifts and Calvinism puts a bad taste in many a mouth. In order to convince this group to come aboard, those "running the ship" must not merely make arguments that this ship is worth sailing but actually make the ship worth sailing.

I believe in the SBC. I believe in cooperation for the glory of God. Then again, perhaps that is what we need more of to convince this generation: cooperation—between Calvinists and Arminians, cessationists and charismatics, young leaders with dynamic ideas and old leaders with their wisdom and tradition. May God bless us.

Josh Hutchens
Louisville

compact churches. Prospective pastors who have demonstrated that they can grow a ministry and have completed church planting assessment training are eligible to present written proposals to a High Impact Task Force for consideration. If approved, the church plants receive special funding. These new churches are expected to participate in the local association and state convention.

It has been gratifying to watch the growth of 14 high impact churches up to this point. The Kentucky Baptists Connect goal is to have 25 high impact starts before 2010.

Please pray for God to raise up church planters to reach more people in Kentucky. Also, pray for Larry Baker, our new work and associational missions department director, as he works with potential church planters and seeks to encourage those who are currently planting churches. Pray as well for Carlos De la Barra, new work ethnic associate, as he works with language groups in new work and church development.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Donor advised funds can serve as teaching tool

By Laurie Valentine

A "Donor Advised Fund" is a fund established with a public charity in which the donor retains for himself/herself, and possibly others, the right to make recommendations for distributions out of the DAF to other charitable organizations in the future.



The donor's retained right is only advisory; the charity is the owner of the DAF and has ultimate control over it. Recommendations can be made for distributions of the DAF's income and/or principal.

Gifts to a DAF are deductible in the year they are made, whether or not there is any charitable distribution out of the DAF during that year.

A DAF is a good charitable giving plan for people who want flexibility in timing philanthropic support. A gift can be made to your DAF at a time when it might be most advantageous for tax-planning purposes without having to immediately decide what charitable causes or projects the gift will ultimately support.

A DAF can also be an excellent tool for teaching philanthropy to children. Including children as "donor advisors" of the family's DAF gives them the opportunity to learn firsthand as the family makes decisions about charitable distribution recommendations together, how their parents approach philanthropy, which organizations they value most and why, and what their parents expect from charitable organizations they support.

Children, no matter their age, should be encouraged to share their own distribution recommendation suggestions during the annual "family conference." Older children and teens should be expected to present information about the organization for which they are recommending a DAF distribution and why they believe that organization deserves the level of support they are recommending.

Encouraging older children and teens to not only be part of the decision-making, but also donors to the DAF, results in even more "buy in." They are not just making decisions about giving away Mom and Dad's money, but also their own.

Donor advised funds provide flexibility in timing your philanthropic support to charitable causes important to you and a means to "grow" giving children.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

How should daughter respond to mother's third marriage?

Q: My mother is about to marry her third husband. She divorced my father when I was 7 years old. It was horrible. They fought and blamed each other. She divorced my stepfather when I was 16. By that time I had pretty much pulled away. Now I am 23 and I don't want to be a part of this. How should I respond to her?

It can be painful to live in a disposable culture. If something is old, used or boring, we get a new one. We believe the new one will be better because it has more to offer. And besides, it is just too much work to take care of what we already have or takes too much work, time and money to repair or restore what is worn or broken.

This is especially true with relationships. Marriage has become a disposable commodity we consider too difficult to restore. It is often accepted that to divorce and start again is much simpler and easier. There is a tremendous amount of pain in the world because of this brokenness.

Perhaps the emerging cultural push to recycle and stop abusing planet earth may bleed over into relationships. Perhaps there can be a shift from creating relationship waste to recycling a marriage and creating something new and useful from that marriage. What if there were programs to recycle marriages—to take the marriage that has become worn, seemingly useless and boring, and remake it into something brand new, something of value, something worth holding onto? What if there were creative minds ready to help recycle marriages? What if there were married couples ready and eager to experience recycling in order to prevent wasted pain, time and money in divorce? It could work. Maybe communities and churches could start marriage recycling programs.

Although you cannot change your mother's choices, you can be wise about your own choices. Perhaps, you could help your mother find a way to create in this new marriage a relationship that can be recycled for usefulness, meaning and beauty many times over rather than disposed of once again.—Valerie Vincent

Q: How can I most effectively help my children in their spiritual growth?

In Luke 1:17, the angel Gabriel tells Elizabeth that her promised son (John the Baptist) will, among other things, "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." That seems to me a worthy goal for parents—to raise our children in ways that prepare them to receive and follow the Lord.

In his book "The Christ of Christmas," Calvin Miller comments on the boyhood of Jesus. Miller noted that Mary and Joseph "could never be accused of being parents who were disinterested in their son's religious education." He goes on to point out that Mary and Joseph did not just send Jesus to the temple; they took Him.

As a parent, what kind of priority are you giving to the spiritual dimension of your child's life? Most of us want the best of everything for our children. We want them to succeed in school, sports and a variety of other interests and activities, and we invest our time and money accordingly. We help them with homework; we pay attention to grades; we know their teachers. For outside activities, we spare no expense when it comes to equipment, extra instruction and opportunities. Are we as diligent when it comes to spiritual development?

Many parents may not notice that a divided example sets up a serious barrier to a child's ability and willingness to embrace Christianity and follow Jesus. Preparing your child to receive and follow Jesus has to be at least as important as everything else in their life and in yours.

As another new year unfolds, ask God to help you be intentional about raising up a child who is prepared for the Lord.—David Garrard

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MARRIAGE



Gambling battle 2008: The same old story

Another year, another battle in the Kentucky General Assembly over expanded gambling in the commonwealth.

Frankly, as Gov. Beshear and state legislators wrestle over the alleged merits of casino gambling, there's little new information to add to the debate. The fact is that Kentucky Baptists and other concerned citizens have gone on record year after year about the devastating economic, social and moral fallout that expanded gambling would bring to the Bluegrass State.

The tragedy, however, is that while gambling opponents must be successful every year in their efforts to halt gambling expansion, proponents only have to succeed once for their pet project to become law.

Why politicians who claim to be public servants would seek to prop up an ailing state budget with a currently illegal activity that has proven elsewhere to increase divorce, crime, bankruptcy, child neglect and suicide is difficult to fathom. Yet gambling interests continue to gain their attention and support year in and year out.

The reality is that the vital arguments against casino gambling remain unchanged as politicians come and go. To illustrate the point, here are a few excerpts from previous editorials the past several years:

August 1999: "From a moral perspective, there is no reason to spend state resources to conduct a study of gambling's impact. Kentucky Baptists repeatedly have gone on record in recent years opposing expanded gambling. Anti-casino resolutions approved by convention messengers in 1993 and 1995 affirm 'the biblical principles which define gambling as inherently evil and grossly immoral.' ... Don't merely sit back and allow others to set our state's moral and social agenda. Now is the time for Kentucky Baptists to let their voices be heard."

January 2002: "The Kentucky General Assembly convenes this week for its 2002 legislative session. Facing the prospects of a \$300 million budget shortfall, legislators are anxious to find additional sources of revenue. Some apparently are even willing to consider options that already are proven losers—such as expanded gambling. Despite the failure of previous attempts to dupe Kentuckians into approving video slot ma-

chines as an answer to the state's financial woes, gambling advocates are expected to make another major push this year. Hopefully, legislators have learned their lesson and won't waste their time on such claims. But concerned citizens must be willing to voice their views to ensure that politicians in Frankfort hear and respond to their concerns."

March 2004: "They're baaack! Just when you thought it was safe to turn on your radio or television without being bombarded by pro-gambling ads, the gambling industry is gearing up once again to try to legalize casino gambling in Kentucky. ... It's up to Kentucky Baptists and other citizens concerned about the negative impacts of expanded gambling to encourage legislators to reject efforts to put casino gambling on the ballot this fall."

October 2005: "Gambling supporters claim there is more momentum across the state for expanded gambling than in recent years. Obviously, that is what you would expect them to say (and what they tend to say at the beginning of each legislative session), but those who oppose gambling's negative moral, social and economic impact must be prepared to mount one more fight—again."

September 2007: "One of the first editorials I wrote for the Western Recorder was titled 'Expanded gambling is a bad bet.' Unfortunately, more than eight years later it's still necessary to continue to battle gambling proponents who falsely claim that casino gambling will be good for the commonwealth. To put it mildly, hogwash! ... Numerous studies from other states clearly indicate that social costs quickly outstrip the economic gains touted by gambling advocates. ... In the meantime, it's clear that casino advocates intend to keep pushing their agenda to the detriment of Kentucky and its families."

Well, you get the picture. You likely are growing tired of having to mount one more battle against casino gambling. Me too.

But we must remain diligent. In the words of Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary in well doing." This battle remains worth fighting for the benefit of families throughout the commonwealth.

You can let your voice be heard by calling the legislative message line toll-free at (800) 372-7181.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Giving thanks, even with cancer

By Keith Manuel

Alexandria, La. (BP)—Cancer is an ugly visitor. It enters your home without asking. It rearranges your life. It takes over with or without your consent.

I remember a conversation about cancer with my friend Ricky several years ago. He told me the story of his father battling cancer, and I was quick to say I never wanted to go through that with a family member. But Ricky said he viewed the issue differently.

Ricky told me how his father's cancer was the greatest blessing of his life. For the first time, he and his father had man-to-man conversations, instead of father-to-son talks. The two spent hours during the chemotherapy, telling each other the things they had always wanted to say. Their love for each other grew deeper. Instead of sadness, there was great joy.

I thought about Ricky's story these past 20 months as I watched my mother-in-law, Claudia, and my wife, Wendy, walk side-by-side as Claudia became a breast cancer survivor. The two who were already

close became even closer. I gave both Claudia and Wendy a double-banded ring to wear to remind them to pray for one another.

Then I saw something else. I saw

Claudia's cancer become a tool to share the love of Christ. Claudia

began to minister to other women in her church who had a loved one struggling with breast cancer. She began to pray for and share with others in the therapy room. Even the nurses became subjects for her prayers. The doctors quickly found out they were not her source for healing. They were instruments of healing in God's hands.

Cancer and disease in the life of a believer can become a source of thanksgiving.

My first lesson in giving thanks in all things came from Helen Lamas. She was my Training Union teacher in my pre-teen years. In spite of my spitballs and horseplay in class, she loved me. Faithfully, she taught me about Jesus.

When I was in junior college, coastal counties in Mississippi were engaged in a battle over legalized gambling. Helen joined the fight

to keep it out of Jackson County. I drove her all over our county to distribute information to churches and others who would listen to her plea to keep it out. Jackson County became the only one of the three coastal counties to vote gambling down. Helen was ecstatic for the victory and delighted to serve the Lord in the fight.

I was away at college when I received the call from my mother telling me that Helen was terminally ill. I was mad and upset all at the same time. I think I was even mad at God for letting such a faithful woman suffer.

As I entered her hospital room, I was wearing my pain all over my face. It wasn't long before my faithful teacher was teaching me from her deathbed. After she coaxed me into admitting my struggle with her sickness, she made a statement I'll never forget, "Why, Keith, if I wasn't sick, I would never get to share my faith with all of these doctors and nurses."

Give thanks in everything, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Keith Manuel is an evangelism associate on the Louisiana Baptist Convention's evangelism and church growth team

FIRST PERSON

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Pastor of FBC,
West Monroe, LA



Kevin Smith,
Pastor, Watson
Memorial Baptist
Church, Louisville, KY



Roy Fish,
Distinguished Prof. of
Evangelism, SW Baptist
Theological Seminary,
Fort Worth, TX



Gerald Sharon,
Executive Pastor of
Ministries,
Saddleback Church,
Lake Forest, CA



Richard Harris,
Sr. Strategist
for Missions
Advancement, for
NAMB, Atlanta, GA



John Sullivan,
Executive Director-
Treasurer, Florida
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I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. — Philippians 4:13

Raising bar for membership creates discipleship growth

By Ken Camp
Texas Baptist Standard

Dallas (ARP)—In a growing number of Baptist churches, new arrivals learn an important lesson early: Membership has its privileges, but it also has its responsibilities.

"We want to create a culture of discipleship here," noted John Wilson, minister of Christian education at Friendship-West Baptist Church, an African-American megachurch in Dallas.

Candidates for church membership know early on that they must attend two five-hour orientation classes on consecutive Saturdays in order to join the congregation.

Once they complete the classes, where facilitators help them discover their spiritual gifts and match them to available ministries in the church, their graduation is observed in a "celebration service." At that point, the pastor announces the ministries in which the new members plan to serve.

The toll of the commitment is telling. Wilson said that only one-third of the people who walk the aisle to join the church during a worship service invitation end up graduating from the orientation class.

But of those who complete the class, most honor their service commitments, he added. And ministers on staff use a church-designed software program to keep in touch with people who express a commitment to specific areas of responsibility.

Many new members at Friendship-West go on to become involved in other discipleship training opportunities the church offers such as teacher-certification classes required for Bible study leaders or a three-year program for ministers in training.

"If you challenge your people to grow, most are going to respond to the challenge," Wilson noted. "We set the bar high because God's Word is high. If you set the bar of expectation too low, you do people a disservice."

Similarly, Legacy Church in Plano, Texas, invites prospective members to attend a two-session "Discover Legacy" class.

The classes teach about the church's mission, beliefs and values. But first, facilitators help the inquirers—many previously unchurched or from non-Baptist backgrounds—un-

derstand what it means to become a Christian.

"We've had people give their lives to Christ in our membership classes," Pastor Gene Wilkes said.

Between the first and second sessions of the orientation class, prospective members are asked to write their Christian testimony and complete a spiritual gifts inventory. At the end of the second session, after they learn more about how to apply their particular talents and skills within the context of Legacy Church, they sign an agreement form.

"When they sign the covenant, that's when they become members," Wilkes explained.

"Initially, some longtime Baptists said, 'We don't sign anything,'" he recalled. But pointing them to church covenants from the mid-20th century that were in the back of Baptist hymnals helped soften the blow.

The new-member orientation classes grew out of need, as the congregation changed from people who transferred membership from other Baptist churches to people who were joining a Baptist church for the first time, he added.

"When Baptists move from franchise to franchise, everybody gets it," Wilkes said. "But when we started reaching non-Southern Baptists and unchurched people, we realized we had to make it clear who we are and what we expect."

During the traditional voting method following a public invitation, he essentially had 30 seconds to decide whether to present the new people for membership, he noted.

After learning the demands of membership, some inquirers opt to remain involved in worship services and Bible studies but not take the next step of commitment, Wilkes said.

And while many of those people contribute to the life of the congregation in a variety of ways, they are not eligible to vote in church business conferences or become part of the church's leadership network, he explained.

Not surprisingly, numerical growth has slowed since the congregation adopted the covenant approach to assimilating new members, Wilkes said, but the commitment level has increased.

"It has raised the value of membership," he declared.

Web site offers family DVD rentals

Genoa, Ill. (BP)—Parents who sit on the edge of their seats worrying which movie scenes they will need to protect their children from next can rest easy thanks to a new company that offers family-friendly DVD rentals in a manner similar to Netflix and Blockbuster.

"Ninety percent of all titles offered by these big-name companies would be considered morally objectionable to the majority of mainstream American families," said Steve Thomas of Faith and Family Flix, adding that he believes people want a change from the onslaught of degrading entertainment.

According to a company news release, Faith and Family Flix "is part

of a silent revolution that is sweeping across the country," and adds that FFF wants to be the main resource center for those searching for moral entertainment.

Movies like "Bella" and the newly animated movie "Ten Commandments" will be among FFF's future new releases, the company noted. Its current list of titles features classics like "Ben Hur," "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and "My Fair Lady" along with popular television shows and more recent films.

Those who sign up for FFF can rent up to six DVDs at a time. Rate plans begin at around \$10 per month. For more information, visit www.faithandfamilyflix.com.

Sharing God's great love

Zambian partnership effort focuses on aiding orphans

The past week has been very special as we have had a mission team working with orphans in Kitwe, Zambia. Unlike our Moldovan summer partnership, the Zambian project will be year-round.

Our initial prayers and hopes for the Zambian project are that we might have the opportunity to engage a local area and partner with the care of orphans on a year-round basis. This partnership would allow us to help provide food, clothing, education and evangelistic teaching. We pray that in the future we might be able to assist in finding these orphans adoptive families.

The mission team has been working with these orphans each day. They have been leading a modified Bible school and have been loving on these impoverished orphans. Our team also has been doing improvements on the school property where these children come each day.

Our ministry plan to serve these children is a long-term commitment. In Zambia, orphans comprise nearly 10 percent of the total population which places current estimates at approximately one

million orphans. With HIV/AIDS, malaria and other illnesses, the orphan crisis is only getting worse.

My initial visit to Zambia left me feeling overwhelmed with the magnitude of the problem. Poverty, sickness and death are all around. The vulnerable young orphans who are the heads of their households are a haunting reminder of the daily struggles and hopelessness that Zambians feel.

As the church, we are commanded to reach out to the least of these. The massiveness of the crisis is not a reason to ignore it. Actually, I think God is opening a door for us to step out in faith knowing that we are totally unable to solve the problems apart from His power and provision.

I hope you will remember to look for the next article in a couple of weeks that will be written by Reagan Carfield who serves as the coordinator for our Africa Initiatives. Reagan was the team leader for this trip and is an invaluable asset to our ministry. I am sure you will be blessed and challenged as she shares her firsthand experiences of God's great love for Zambia.

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

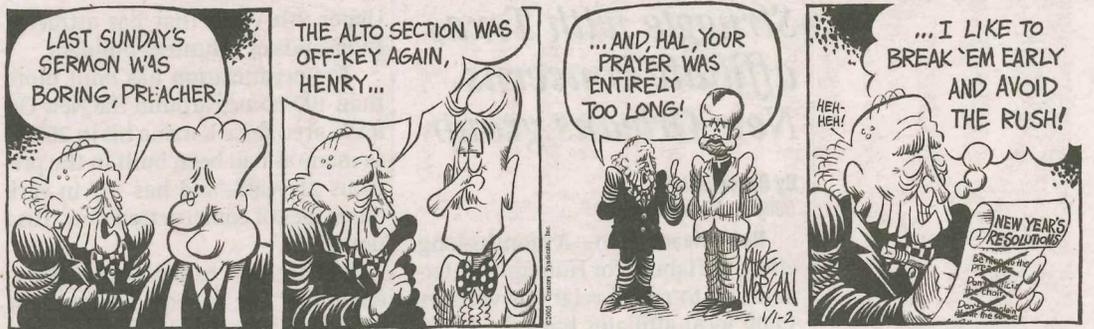
KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



David Melber

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



Bible Crosswords

By Janet Kennedy

Across

- 1 "And the ferret, and the _____, and the lizard" (Leviticus 11:30)
- 6 "A living _____ is better than a dead lion" (Ecclesiastes 9:4)
- 9 "The _____ of money that Haman had promised" (Esther 4:7)
- 10 "As a _____ robbed of her whelps in the field" (2 Samuel 17:8)
- 11 Put into a capsule form
- 15 Man's name
- 16 "Judas ... drew near unto Jesus to _____ him" (Luke 22:47)
- 17 "And the river shall bring forth _____ abundantly" (Exodus 8:3)
- 18 Elevated railroad
- 20 "They all are brass, and _____, and iron" (Ezekiel 22:18)
- 21 Married woman's title
- 23 "And God created great _____," (Genesis 1:21)
- 28 Exclamation of doubt or surprise
- 29 Card that tells who you are, abbr.
- 30 "Five loaves and the two _____" (Mark 6:41)
- 33 Field officer, abbr.
- 34 Compound, abbr.
- 35 An explosive material
- 36 "The swine ... ran violently down a _____ place into the sea" (Mark 5:13)
- 38 "I am like a _____ of the wilderness" (Psalm 102:6)
- 41 "David took an _____ and played with his hand" (1 Samuel 16:23)
- 42 Gloomy; ill-humored
- 43 Egg, prefix
- 45 "The Lord had laid on him the iniquity of _____ all" (Isaiah 53:6)
- 46 Massachusetts neighbor, abbr.

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		51			52	53			54	
		55							56	

- 48 "There came a _____ out of the heat, and fastened on his hand" (Acts 28:3)
- 51 Dover's state, abbr.
- 52 A thought
- 54 "I have given _____ unto the children of Lot" (Deuteronomy 2:9)
- 55 "And the _____ shalt thou trample under feet" (Psalm 91:13)
- 56 "And the _____, and the pelican" (Leviticus 11:18)
- 73 At the back of the boat
- 74 A long period of time
- 75 A liberal or radical
- 76 To direct the attention
- 77 Large African mammals, for short
- 78 "And stingeth like an _____" (Proverbs 23:32)
- 79 "Have ye received the Holy Ghost _____ ye believed?" (Acts 19:2)
- 80 Esther, abbr.
- 81 Station, abbr.
- 82 Einsteinium, chem. symbol
- 83 Each, abbr.
- 84 One who loves
- 85 "For there is _____ respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11)
- 86 "They have caused him to ride upon the king's _____" (1 Kings 1:44)
- 87 Eggs
- 88 "Why make ye this _____, and weep?" (Mark 5:39)
- 89 Dog's foot
- 90 Historical period
- 91 Doctor of divinity, abbr.
- 92 Inspector general, abbr.
- 93 To cause to be, prefix

Last week's solution

A	2	N	T	4	D	A	T	U	M	9	10
11	J	A	H	12	A	R	I	S	E	13	S
14	A	H	15	J	U	I	C	E	16	E	L
17	H	A	G	A	B	A	19	R	E	V	I
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43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
43	O	E	C	L	A	R	E	D	S	A	L
48	I	R	A	49	N	E	E	D	S	51	N
52	M	E	N	53	T	I	R	I	A	54	D

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Habitat dispute could slow Katrina projects

Struggle with Texas affiliate concerns New Orleans group

By Bruce Nolan
Religion News Service

New Orleans (RNS)—A months-long effort by Habitat for Humanity International to retool relations with its 1,600 local affiliates has raised concerns for Habitat's productive operation in New Orleans, where volunteers have built more than 100 low-cost replacement homes since Hurricane Katrina.

The dispute recently surfaced publicly in Texas, when the San Antonio affiliate—the oldest in a far-flung Habitat organization—charged in federal court that Habitat for Humanity International sought to impose unprecedented controls on the local organizations.

The suit stated that the international office warned affiliates they could be stripped of the valuable "Habitat for Humanity" brand if they did not agree to a new "U.S. Affiliate Agreement."

Aleis Tusa, a spokesman for the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity, said, "We do have concerns about the effects it has on us as an affiliate. We're talking with International. We're asking them to clarify some things so we can have a greater comfort level with the new agreement."

The local Habitat chapter is perhaps the most visible housing nonprofit in the area—a major partner in Musicians Village, a cluster of volunteer-built, \$75,000 homes in the

Upper 9th Ward that has attracted thousands of volunteer builders.

The organization has built more than 100 homes around the New Orleans area since Katrina hit in 2005—as many as had been built in the previous 21 years—and has 147 in various stages of construction now, Tusa noted.

She declined to describe which elements of the proposed agreement local Habitat officials object to, but said she felt sure a rupture could be avoided.

"We have every hope they're going to address our concerns before we sign it," she added.

Founded in 1977, Habitat for Humanity is a confederation of Christian nonprofit ministries dedicated to building low-cost homes for the poor.

Changing relationship

Until now, local affiliates previously have been almost completely autonomous. They do their own fund-raising, plan their own operations and are governed by their own boards of directors. The international office provides training and valuable marketing muscle that boosts donations.

The San Antonio lawsuit, the only window into the dispute thus far, described the historic relationship between affiliates and the international office as loose and highly decentralized. The Texas affiliate pointed out that they had been linked only by a brief written "covenant" that set forth broad Christian operating principles.

Under that arrangement, local groups have always been able to use

the Habitat name, the San Antonio builders explained. And although they were encouraged to tithe 10 percent of their income to the international office, many did not, keeping the money locally to build more homes.

The San Antonio group noted that following a leadership change in 2006, Habitat International has embarked on a drive to centralize authority and redefine its relationships with affiliates. The affiliate added that Habitat is using a "commercial franchise" approach that could strip locals of control of their operations or risk loss of the potent Habitat name.

Duane Bates, a spokesman for Habitat for Humanity International, said the ministries' increasing sophistication required a detailed new affiliate agreement to supplement the basic covenant once sufficient for a younger organization.

He denied that the new agreement would redistribute authority. Instead "it seeks to codify existing relationships between International and the affiliates," Bates declared.

He added that most of Habitat's affiliates have agreed to sign the document.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Habitat for Humanity International has funneled about \$20 million into New Orleans, while the local organization has raised another \$20 million, Tusa noted.

Bates said that no matter what the outcome of talks between Habitat International and the San Antonio affiliate, the international office will send New Orleans every dollar earmarked for Katrina relief.

U.S. abortions hit lowest level in 30 years, study finds

Washington (BP)—The number of abortions in the United States has reached its lowest level in three decades, according to a report released Jan. 17.

The study found there were 1.21 million abortions in 2005, down from 1.31 million in 2000 and the smallest annual total since 1.18 million were reported in 1976, according to the Guttmacher Institute. The 2005 total was almost 25 percent less than the 1990 figure of 1.6 million abortions, the annual record since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion nationwide in its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* opinion.

Additionally, the abortion rate fell in 2005 to its lowest level since 1974, Guttmacher reported. In 2005, there were 19.4 abortions for every 1,000 women 15 to 44 years of age. The rate fell from 21.1 in 2001, according to the report. The all-time high rate was 29.3 in 1981.

The study also showed that as of 2005:

- 22 percent of all pregnancies, not counting miscarriages, resulted in abortions.

- 47 percent of women who had abortions had undergone at least one previously.

- About 33 percent of all U.S. women will have an abortion by age 45.

- 13 percent of all abortions in 2005 were performed using drugs such as RU 486.

Hard advice to accept

Staff encourage parents to be patient and develop realistic expectations

Not all of the students who enroll at Oneida have what you might call "issues." But for those who do, poor academic performance is by far the biggest reason. Some parents are desperate and have gone through long periods of frustration. Often they are angry and wonder why this is happening. Frequently they have had contact with other parents whose children have attended OBI. Those parents often provide words of encouragement and hope about their child coming to Oneida.

Generally parents are willing to listen to the advice we offer, though it may be a little hard to accept. One of the most difficult suggestions to follow is to be patient. You can understand that if grades begin to improve relatively soon, things must be going well. On the other hand, if grades do not improve rather quickly then things may not be going as planned. Frankly, nothing could be further from the truth. It is not uncommon for a student to need three or four months before we begin to see significant improvement in his grades and other areas. To be honest, sometimes parents' expectations are unrealistic. Even though it may have taken months or years for a student's grades to deteriorate, Oneida parents often expect quick improvement after their child enrolls. Some of the most common advice I give to parents of children who are struggling academically is to be patient.

"Cal" (not his real name) is a good example. When his parents brought him to Oneida last fall there had been a long history of serious family conflict. While there were several reasons for the

tension, one of the major issues was what his parents considered to be unacceptable grades. The truth is, many parents would have been thrilled if their child made the grades Cal did. There certainly was a boatload of other issues, but this one seemed to cause major family conflict. I gave Cal's parents the usual advice and told them not to expect miracles overnight. I also said that they should begin to see some progress by the end of the first quarter in October, but that their expectations should not be too high until Christmas break.

When Cal's parents came to pick him up for the fall break at the end of September, it did not take long for one of them to express disappointment over what were considered unacceptable grades. On the other hand, nearly all of us working with Cal were very pleased with his progress. He was making a lot of improvement in his social skills and we saw a dramatic change with his anger control issues. I believed the parents' expectations were unreasonable because Cal had been here barely two months.

Just after Christmas break we recognized the students who made honor roll for the second quarter. I had a big smile on my face when Cal's name was called. We continue to see him progress in many other areas. I understand that there were major conflicts at home and I am not saying that Cal wasn't partly responsible. I also know that even good advice can be hard to accept. In this case, Cal progressed just as we predicted. I see Cal nearly every day at breakfast and I know he is proud of his accomplishments, too.

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

Surfing the Web

Michigan teen finds her way to Clear Creek via Internet

There is no doubt that we are living in the age of technology. It seems every day some new gadget is being introduced that is so amazing everyone just has to have it. The nice thing about all this technology is that it can be used even at a Bible college like Clear Creek.

The popularity of the Internet has allowed us the opportunity to reach out to a lot of people who quite possibly would never have known about us if not for this technology.

First-year student Amanda Wheelock is thankful for the technology that provided a way for her to find out about Clear Creek. "I was thinking about a lot of different schools when I began to plan for college," she said. "My aunt just happened to be surfing the Web one day and found Clear Creek's Web page. I was then able to read all the information about the college on the Internet. I talked to my pastor and my family about coming here and felt this is where God wanted me to come."

Amanda is from Cedar Springs, Mich. Her family knew that Pineville is a long way from home, especially for an 18-year-old. "At first, my mom really wanted me to stay clos-

er to home and go to a community college," Amanda said. "Now she's excited about me being here and everything that God is doing in my life right now."

"I am studying in the church music track and really enjoy my classes," she continued. "I don't know specifically how God is going to use me in ministry but I know He will show me what I am supposed to do."

Amanda said she discovered how important ministry training is before she enrolled at Clear Creek. "I spent a week in Arlington, Texas, ministering to children in some of the apartment complexes," she said. "We handed out fliers during the day, inviting children to come to vacation Bible school. Every day we would play with the kids and interact with them. It was a great experience to teach them about Jesus."

Thanks to this technological age we live in, Amanda found out about Clear Creek and now she is a student here. I invite you to visit our Web site at www.ccbbc.edu and get acquainted with us.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

Fla. marriage amendment at risk of not making Nov. ballot

Tallahassee, Fla. (BP)—A proposed Florida marriage amendment that one month ago seemed headed to the 2008 election ballot now is in jeopardy after a state audit determined the initiative is 22,000 signatures short of the number required.

Officials with Florida4Marriage.org have only until Jan. 29 to make up the deficit if the amendment is to appear on the November ballot. Petitions must be delivered to the organization's Orlando headquarters by that date.

Amendment supporters, including Florida4Marriage.org state chairman John Stemberger, are appealing to pastors around the state to pro-

mote the amendment and encourage those who have not signed the petition to do so.

"We are in a state of constitutional emergency with this announcement and we need immediate action from everyone who supports the Florida marriage amendment," Stemberger told the Florida Baptist Witness newspaper.

According to a story in the Miami Herald, a "counting glitch" led to approximately 27,000 petitions from Miami-Dade County being electronically counted twice. The glitch also impacted other initiatives, although the marriage amendment is the highest profile one in limbo.

Supporters thought the amendment had passed the required threshold of 611,000 signatures in December.

If adopted, the amendment would permanently bar state judges from legalizing gay marriage. Florida does have a law prohibiting such unions, although it can be overturned in court. Amendment supporters note that Massachusetts, which saw its highest court legalize gay marriage in 2004, has no such amendment. Additionally, three states—Connecticut, Iowa and California—have been sued by supporters of gay marriage hoping to change the laws in those states. None of the states have a marriage amendment.

The proposed Florida amendment states, "Inasmuch as marriage is the legal union of only one man and one woman as husband and wife, no other legal union that is treated as marriage or the substantial equivalent thereof shall be valid or recognized."

Mathew Staver, president of Liberty Counsel, a Christian legal organization in support of the amendment, said churches have great legal leeway in promoting the effort.

"There is no restriction on pastors and churches," he noted, adding that churches play a pivotal role. "I think right now pastors and churches will play the determinative role as to whether we're going to protect marriage in Florida."

Stemberger said his organization is not interested in whose fault it is that there are now apparently too few signatures for the Florida marriage amendment to appear on the ballot. He is calling on national, state and local leaders to "immediately contact their Florida supporters, making them aware of this crisis."

Are you resolved? Help Turn the Table on HUNGER!

The new year is a great time to make a commitment to help feed the hungry by participating in Fast One to Feed One! Here's how:

- 1) Fast one meal a month, using that meal time to pray for hunger needs in your community, state, and world;
- 2) Donate through your church the amount you would have spent to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

Find out more about hunger and download free resources for your church at kybaptist.org/hunger.



Mission Service and
Ministries Department

502-489-3530 or 866-489-3530 toll free in Kentucky



Texas theme park's request to sell beer sparks protests

Arlington, Texas (BP)—Applications to sell beer at two Six Flags theme parks in Arlington, Texas, have prompted a flood of telephone calls protesting the request.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported that the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission had received 600 calls and a dozen letters as of Jan. 8, all protesting Six Flags' announcement last month to apply for liquor licenses at two of its parks—Six Flags Over Texas and Hurricane Harbor. After a mandatory 60-day waiting period ends Feb. 17, TABC will review the application and protests to determine whether a public hearing will be held.

Six Flags officials claim the beer application is in response to customer requests for beer and pledged that such sales would be handled responsibly and would safeguard guest safety.

Noting the park's pledge to offer quality guest services, Six Flags' in-park services Senior Vice President John Bement said, "For quite some time, many of our guests have requested beer as an option while dining or visiting the park. In fact, several of the parks in the Six Flags system already provide such amenities and have done so successfully and responsibly for many years."

Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom in Louisville is among those that sell beer on park premises. According to the company's Web site, the two Arlington, Texas, theme parks are the only Six Flags-owned properties in the United States not to permit alcohol sales.

Bement added, "As with our other parks, we will have very strict guidelines in place for Six Flags Over Texas, along with extensive training to ensure the serving of beer is done in a controlled and responsible manner. We only intend to sell beer and have no present plans to offer mixed drinks or hard liquor."

Letter writers have raised a variety of concerns, with one noting that TABC should conduct an alcohol impact study to determine the threat to public safety, while another urged the city of Arlington to join in the protest.

"Do we really want to send our youth groups—our church youth groups—to places where alcohol is served?" local Christian leader Linda Rosebury asked in a recent interview.

The sale of beer, Rosebury said, threatens the park's image as a safe place for families.

Shelby Sharpe, an attorney with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, noted that one of the grounds on which Six Flags' application could be rejected is that alcohol permits are typically denied because of the close proximity of a residence, church, school or daycare facility to the place where alcohol is to be sold. In this case, she added, the theme parks should be denied a permit since they are usually attended by children accompanied by their parents or someone responsible for their welfare.

FEATURED SPEAKERS

T. W. Hunt
Teacher; Writer;
Seminar Leader



Frank Page
Pastor;
Southern Baptist
Convention
President



Don Whitney
Author; Former
Pastor; SBTS
Associate Professor;
The Center for
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PRAISE & WORSHIP LEADER
Hiram Rollo
Minister of Music & Worship, Walnut
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...equipping believers to renew a personal
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REGISTRATION FEE
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After March 1, fee is \$35 per participant.



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www.kybaptist.org/greaterwork

FOR MORE INFORMATION
502-489-3530 / 866-489-3530 toll free in KY
ministries@kybaptist.org

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist ministries and missionaries:

Angel Food Ministry of Bardstown Baptist Church. Dylan Mays directs the discounted food ministry that enables families to stretch their food dollars each month. Providing quality food at an economical price allows the church to connect with its community and share the love of Christ. Pray that more churches will connect with their communities and share Christ though this simple and practical ministry. Pray that the Word of God will be spread through the ministry's "blessings by the box."

Mission Service Corps Missionary Melany Hanrahan of Corbin. Hanrahan serves through Friends for Families, a ministry that provides physical and spiritual assistance to families of Appalachia through food and clothing distribution, home repair, Christian education and creative ministries. Pray that God will provide for current ministry needs that include approval of a grant as well as a warehouse, truck and forklift. Pray that God will use workers as they connect volunteer ministry groups to needy families in Appalachia and individuals to faith in Christ.

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

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CADIZ—Doyle Thresher** recently resigned as pastor of Rocky Ridge Church.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville University will host **Eugene and Elisabeth Prjdonoff**, artists-in-residence and professors of piano at the University of Cincinnati, in a two-piano concert Jan. 24, 8 p.m., in the Gheens Recital Hall of the school's Gosser Fine Arts Center. For more information, contact Campbellsville's school of music at (270) 789-5237.

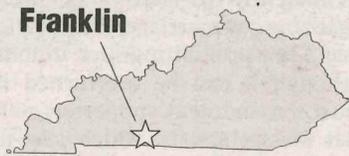
■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Colesburg Church will hold revival services Jan. 27-28, 6:30 p.m., with **Kenny Rager**, pastor of South Greensburg Church, as evangelist.

Northside Church called **Chad Brand** as pastor Jan. 6. He previously served as interim pastor.

■ **FLORENCE—Rebecca Casson**, a pharmacy technician and a member of Greenview Church, died Jan. 11 at age 52. Her husband, **Jim Casson**, is minister of music at Greenview

Spotlight on ...

Franklin



Providence Church and Pastor **Steve Curtis** will celebrate 25 years of ministry together during worship services Feb. 10, 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Church. She also is survived by two sons and one daughter. Her funeral service was held Jan. 16 at Hickory Grove Church in Independence. Memorial gifts may be made to the Ohio River Valley chapter of the Arthritis Foundation in Cincinnati.

■ **HAZARD**—Consolidated Church recently licensed **Charles Click** to the gospel ministry. **Charlie Edmonds** is pastor.

KBC announces eight new Mission Service Corps missionaries

Louisville—Eight new Mission Service Corps missionaries are serving throughout the state, according to Eric Allen, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's mission services and ministries department.

Mission Service Corps enlists, trains and assigns self-funded missionaries in response to requests from local churches and associations. The KBC currently has approximately 150 MSC missionaries serving throughout Kentucky.

"We are blessed by and grateful for these new missionaries who will be serving in Kentucky," Allen noted.

The MSC missionaries include:

Diana Anderson of Greenville is serving as the pregnancy care center director for Pathway of Hope. She is also commissioned through the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board to provide training to other pregnancy resource centers across Kentucky.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 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.
- 23 Hispanic Evangelism Conference and Hispanic Baptist Women's Event, Elizabethtown.
- 23 Love 101 Conference, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 25-26 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 28-March 1 Handbell Festival, Paroquet Springs Conference Center, Shepherdsville.
- 29-March 1 Creative Ministries Festival, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 29-March 1 Mission Service Corps Basic Training, Baptist Building, Louisville.

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

Terry and Brenda Carswell of Taylorsville, N.C., will serve with Christ's Outreach for the Blind Camp in Mount Vernon. They will work with volunteer groups and provide administrative support at the camp.

Heidi Freeman of Richmond is assisting the work of the KBC's Baptist Campus Ministry at Eastern Kentucky University. She will be working alongside Jonathan Barron, campus minister for ECU.

Rick and Kristi Hunter of Lynch recently moved from South Carolina to serve as directors for Solomon's Porch Retreat Center in Lynch. The Hunters will oversee the daily operations of the center, which is used to house ministry teams, youth groups and retreats.

Chris and Mandy Phillips of Louisville are serving at H.A.L.T.E.R. Equestrian Ministries in Goshen, an organization that uses horses for therapy for terminally ill patients.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Full-time minister of education for First Baptist Church, Blytheville, Ark. Responsibilities include education, evangelism and administration. Previous experience required; seminary degree preferred but not required. We are a traditional Southern Baptist church located just north of Memphis, Tenn. Please send resumé to Pastor Greg Bowers, First Baptist Church, 715 West Walnut St., Blytheville, AR 72315. Additional information can be found at www.fbcbytheville.com.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor to be shepherd of a Spirit-led, mission-focused Southern Baptist church. Ballardsville Baptist is a family-oriented church located in a thriving community of Oldham County, Ky., and provides two services each week supported by a full ministry staff. Send resumé with a DVD, CD or tape of recent sermons by March 1, 2008, to Pastor Search Committee, 4300 S Highway 53, Crestwood, KY 40014; or to bbpsc@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for growing church. Primary duties include leading choir and congregational singing, coordinating music program and preparing seasonal cantatas. Please send resumé, references and DVD (if available) to: Minister of Music Search Committee, New Bethel Baptist Church, 2022 Verona-Mudlick Road, Verona, KY 41092; or e-mail to nbbc2003@aol.com with "Minister of Music" for the subject.

SEEKING: Senior pastor for The Baptist Church at Andover, Lexington-Hamburg area. Huge growth potential—150 in worship now. Conservative Southern Baptist. Send resumé, CD/DVD to 3330 Todds Road, Lexington, KY 40509.

SEEKING: Full-time worship pastor gifted in leading contemporary praise/worship style services in seeker-sensitive environment. Significant experience/education expected. Send resumé to Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 W Byers Ave., Owensboro, KY 42303; fax: (270) 685-5134; e-mail to gfaulls@bellnet.org.

SEEKING: Associate pastor. An innovative and contemporary church with a proven track record of being on the edge is looking for a minister who will work with our senior pastor to lead our church to the next level. Responsibilities include: oversight and leadership in the development of a vibrant adult small group ministry; working closely with the senior pastor in the pulpit ministry; and sharing a part of the administrative coordination of outreach/assimilation strategies and missional service ministries. Applicants should demonstrate creativity, strong teaching gifts, a passion for innovation and administrative skills. Send resumé to: Nikki Heiserman, administrative assistant, New Work Fellowship, 1611 S Main St., Suite 3, Hopkinsville, KY 42240; nikkiheiserman@newworkfellowship.org.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Grapevine Southern Missionary Baptist Church, Madisonville, Ky. Average Sunday morning attendance: 350. 10-15 years experience. Send resumé to GBC Pastor Search Committee, 85 Sandcut Road, Madisonville, KY 42431.

SEEKING: Pastor for Tunnel Hill Baptist Church. We are a traditional congregation, standing on the Word of God. Candidate should be a conservative leader with strong, scripturally-based preaching and teaching. Visitation and outreach also are important parts of the ministry of our church. Please send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, 734 Tunnel Hill Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

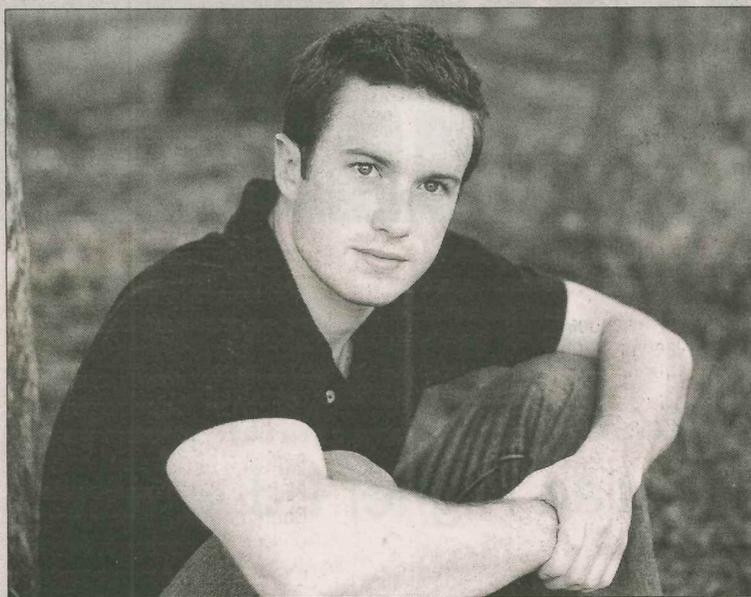
SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Anchor Church, a non-traditional, Spirit-filled church with Southern Baptist doctrine, seeking God's direction and will. If by seeking God's will in your life you sense His leading toward Anchor Church, please contact us at: Pastor Search Committee, Anchor Church, 3126 Riggs 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: 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: 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: 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: 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.



RISING STAR Philip Searcy, son of New Orleans Seminary professor Tim Searcy, is featured in the Lifetime Original Movie "Queen Sized." (BP photo)

Seminary professor's son hopes he can make his mark on film industry

By Marilyn Stewart
Baptist Press

New Orleans (BP)—What is a seminary professor's son doing in a nationally-televised movie with Golden Globe nominee Nikki Blonsky from the hit movie "Hair-spray?" For Philip Searcy, the answer is living as a witness for God.

"Living out your faith in the real world is what following Christ is all about," said Searcy, son of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary professor Tim Searcy.

Fresh out of college with a double major in theater and psychology from University of Mobile in Alabama, Searcy landed a secondary role in the Lifetime Original Movie "Queen Sized" alongside Blonsky and veteran actress Annie Potts, best known for her role in the TV sitcom "Designing Women."

The movie, which premiered on the cable channel Jan. 12, features Blonsky as Maggie Baker, an overweight teenager who refuses to give in to pranksters who nominate her for homecoming queen. Searcy plays a high school athlete and the boyfriend of Baker's best friend.

Searcy landed the role after working as a stand-in for actor Sean Maguire during time-consuming light and camera angle setups on the set of the new movie, "Meet the Spartans." He was also cast as an extra in the film that is marked for release this week. The experience opened the door for his role in "Queen Sized."

With a dream start to his acting career, Searcy acknowledged, "I can only say that this is from God."

"Philip is using his giftedness to share Jesus in the motion picture community—a mission field that is potentially as closed as some countries," noted Allen Jackson, NOBTS professor of youth education and director of the Youth Ministry Institute.

Relating to William Wilberforce's struggle as depicted in the recent film "Amazing Grace," Searcy said he wondered about a career in an industry that is often hostile to Christianity. Wilberforce considered exchanging a po-

litical career for the ministry until friends encouraged him to do both, eventually leading 19th-century England to abandon its slave trade.

"I want to do both," Searcy acknowledged. "I want to live my life for Christ but I want to do it in such a way that I can change the world around me.

"Don't be afraid to be who you are and meet these people where they are," Searcy advised other Christian actors.

The young actor cited his training at the University of Mobile and his experience with UM's Upper Room Dinner Theatre for his unlikely career start. Although film and stage acting differ, Searcy said his stage experience helped him adapt quickly to the film industry.

"In film, the camera may be inches from your face and the scenes are shot out of sequence," Searcy noted. "But UM gave me the solid preparation I needed."

While both "Meet the Spartans" and "Queen Sized" were filmed in his home state of Louisiana, Searcy said he has considered a move to Los Angeles.

"I prayed about Los Angeles but realized that I don't have to move to put my faith in God," he declared. "Whether I'm here or there, I decided to just trust Him."

The next day, Searcy received phone calls for three new auditions.

The patience to weather setbacks and endure times of waiting is also part of Searcy's missionary resume. Twice, his family has picked up and started over—once when his parents, Tim and Brenda Searcy, were forced out of their South American home while serving as Southern Baptist international missionaries, and again when Hurricane Katrina flooded their New Orleans home in 2005.

"This is a generation of young people who are taking their faith into their living, learning and working communities through abilities and talents which make them nontraditional missionaries," Jackson said. "That is very first-century."

Vischer discusses new film, parables & all things Veggie

By Andrea Useem
Religion News Service

Franklin, Tenn. (RNS)—On Jan. 11, "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything"—the second feature-length film from VeggieTales—sailed into theaters.

Phil Vischer, co-creator of VeggieTales and the voice behind many of the movie's characters, said the movie is like a biblical parable. It teaches about the Kingdom of God through an entertaining story—in this case, the tale of three bumbling vegetable friends who must band together and overcome their fears to save their friends.

Vischer talked about what makes a movie Christian and what kids need to know about being a hero.

Why would the movie appeal to non-Christian parents and kids?

This is a fun adventure that shows how everybody can be a hero, and how the hero isn't the tallest or the strongest or the best looking. The hero is the one who does what's right, no matter how hard.

Is it hard for a Christian movie to compete with mainstream movies that don't have Christian themes?

Eight out of 10 Americans still identify as Christian, even if they haven't gone to church since their parents made them when they were kids. But when they become parents, all of a sudden they look at their own kids and ask, "What values am I passing onto them?"

So how is "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything" a biblical movie?

The movie is an allegory, like a parable. If you read the parables in the Bible, none of them mention God or Jesus explicitly, but there's always a character that represents God. Parables are lessons about the Kingdom of Heaven wrapped into the vernacular of the day. With this movie, I said, "Let's create a modern day parable about what it means to be a hero."

And what do you hope kids will learn about being a hero?

What we don't say is, "Every one of you has such extraordinary capabilities that you can, under your own power, be a hero." What we're really saying is: Regardless of how you view yourself, God has created you to do something really cool. That's why we're here, and it involves helping others, and it has nothing to do with

how big and brave and strong you are, and everything to do with trust in God to give you what you need to do what He's asked you to do.

Is it a theological problem that you can create a "biblical movie" without any overt references to God or Jesus?

Our movie is allegorical, but it is a fairly overt allegorical statement about God. I don't know that a movie from a Christian filmmaker has to stand apart that much from a well-told film. There are so many films that have compelling messages with spiritual implications. When Christian filmmakers say, "Mine has to read like a tract," you're not making movies anymore, you're making ser-

mons with a camera.

As an artist, do you sometimes feel suffocated by the Christian community?

Honestly, many do. I know Christian artists who just can't take it; they walk away from the Christian world and get on with their art. I am more a teacher than an artist, which is why I have been so happy making VeggieTales, where a tomato gets down on his knees and says, "God made you special and loves you very much." At the end of the day, I've got more Mr. Rogers in me than van Gogh.

In the movie, the three pirate characters have a ball that guides them and tells them what to do. Does the ball represent the Bible?

No, it's God's call. It's just a device of beckoning, the instrument through which God reaches out and says, "Pssst. I've got something for you." The danger of allegory is that everyone starts trying to find biblical characters around every turn. It's better to look at the allegory in a simple way; otherwise you're making stuff up.

And your simple message is that everyone can be a hero?

Yes, and the message is also: Stop being a consumer and be a producer, because our culture is all about consumption. If you reach adulthood under the impression that the world exists to entertain you, you are going to be on the couch your whole life. That's not what God is telling us to do. The world is on fire. He wants us to jump in, grab a bucket and start putting out fires.



Phil Vischer

10
Minutes
With ...
Phil
Vischer



HEROIC TALES "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything," the second feature-length VeggieTales film, sailed into theaters Jan. 11. Co-creator Phil Vischer calls the film a "modern day parable" that teaches kids what it means to be a hero. (RNS photo courtesy of Big Idea)

Campbellsville UNIVERSITY

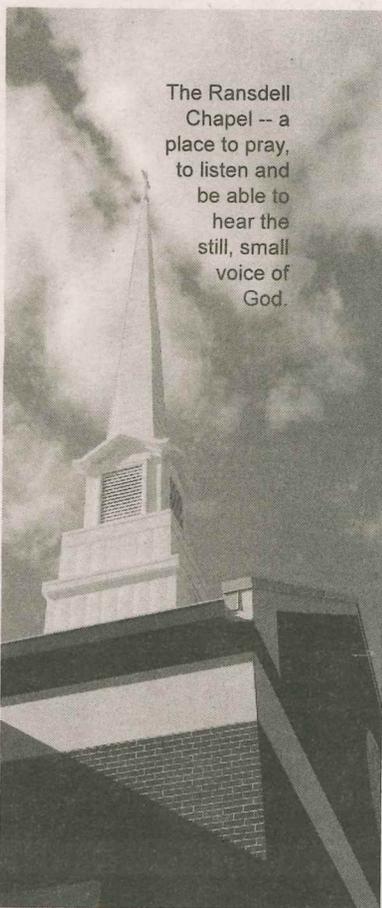


Students at Campbellsville University gather in prayer support for each other, for the university and for the world.

Beginning
Our Second Century
Of Christian Higher Education

Helping Students

Find Their Calling



The Ransdell Chapel -- a place to pray, to listen and be able to hear the still, small voice of God.

The CU School of Theology is designed to strengthen and enhance each student's faith journey, while developing the skills needed to serve in a variety of Christian ministries. CU offers this full range of options to meet the diverse needs of students called to ministerial training:

- The basic 27-hour certificate of ministry
- Bachelor's Degrees in:
 - Biblical studies
 - Education ministries
 - Pastoral ministries
 - Worship arts
- Master's of Theology

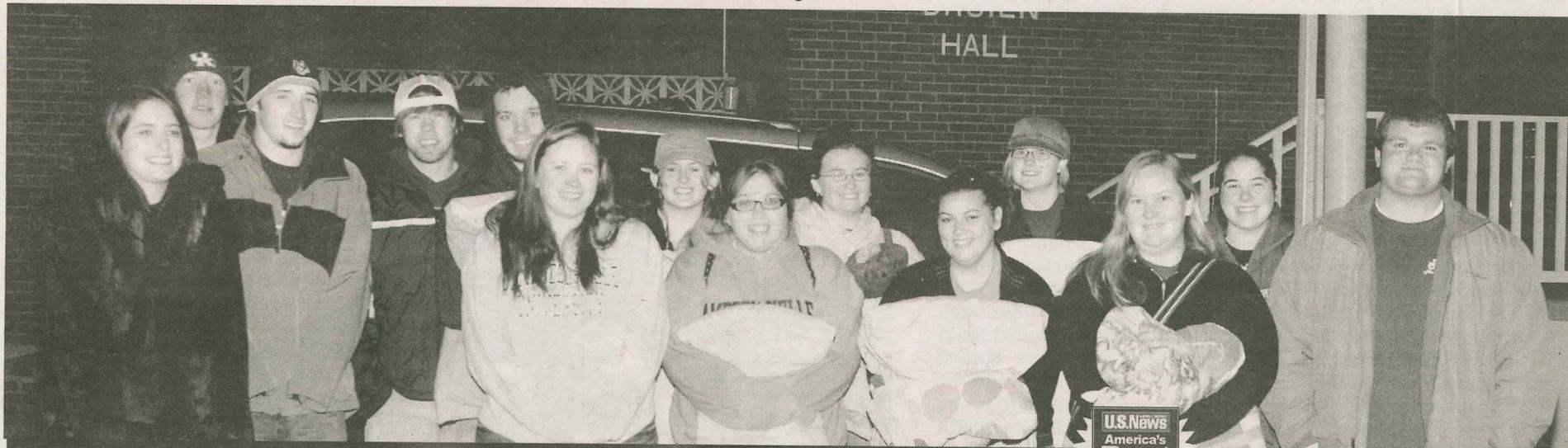
COMING EVENT: Plan now to attend the 2nd Annual Worship Arts Conference 2008 — "Worship and Justice" Ransdell Chapel, Campbellsville University, Feb. 28-29, 2008.

Speakers will be Eric Bryant (Mosaic), Marvin McMickle (Ashland Theological Seminary), and Nathan Ivey (Sojourn), Dr. Les Hollon (St. Matthews Baptist) and artists Derek Webb (formerly with Caedmon's Call) and John Mark McMillan (worship artist) among others.



CU students give of themselves in Servant Leadership, Outreach and Missions.

Campus ministries students, below, left campus at 5:30 a.m. to deliver Christmas gift boxes to children in need.



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