



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## 'Grassroots' relief effort



James Moeller (left) and Lynn Nichols, members of Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, saw a downed tree. The clean-up crew assembled by the church has cleared away as many as 20 trees since the Feb. 5 tornadoes that struck the community. (Photo by Jesse Osbourne/Danville Advocate-Messenger)

### One man's desire to help storm victims spurs local clean up

By Drew Nichter  
News Director

**Harrodsburg**—The morning after the storms was just like any other morning for Mike Riley. That was until he drove to work.

An outbreak of deadly tornadoes swept across Kentucky and several other states the evening of Feb. 5, damaging homes, uprooting trees and destroying lives. Riley's hometown of Harrodsburg

was not spared the storm's wrath.

As he drove to work that next morning, Riley recalled seeing residents standing in their yards with fallen trees all around them, likely wondering how they were going to get it all cleaned up.

"I saw a lot of despair that morning," he said, "a lot of people who didn't know what to do or where to turn."

As he continued on to work, he

said the burden to help those people grew. Riley eventually arrived at work, but did not stay for long.

"I told my boss that I was going to have to head out; that I was going to have to do something," he recalled.

Several months earlier, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's disaster relief team had conducted a disaster relief training seminar  See KBC church leads ... *Page 3*

## Mohler to undergo colon surgery, drops SBC presidential bid

**Louisville (BP)**—Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, will undergo surgery after a scheduled colonoscopy Feb. 11 revealed a tumor in his colon. An initial biopsy indicated that the tumor is pre-cancerous and further tests are to be scheduled, along with surgical options, according to a statement from the school.



Albert Mohler

Mohler acknowledged that the surgery will require that he forego nomination as president of the Southern Baptist Convention at its annual meeting in Indianapolis in June.

"I have decided to give my greatest attention right now to addressing this new challenge and to ministering to my wife and children," Mohler said. "This is clearly not the right time for me to accept this nomination. I have asked my good friend Robert Jeffress (of First Baptist Church of Dallas) not to proceed with nominating me for president of our Southern Baptist Convention this year.

"Frankly that decision is made much easier by my knowledge that there is at least one strongly conservative, committed pastor who intends to be nominated in Indianapolis," he added.

Mohler's decision to withdraw his nomination leaves three candidates to vie for the SBC presidency at the annual meeting in June: Frank Cox, pastor of North Metro First Baptist Church in Lawrenceville, Ga.;  See Mohler ... *Page 2*

## NAMB missionary couple minister in Hawaii's less exotic areas

By Mickey Noah  
SBC North American Mission Board

**Honolulu, Hawaii**—For most Americans and world travelers, Hawaii is the ultimate tourist destination. After all, it is paradise.

But for Southern Baptist missionaries Chris and Monica Woodall, Hawaii is not just a paradise, but islands inhabited by people who are lost and hurting.

While visitors crowd Waikiki Beach in Honolulu for sun and shopping, surfers invade Oahu's North Shore for some of the world's most daredevil surfing, and tourists enjoy the green flora, dark-sand beaches and blue Pacific waters of Maui, the Woodalls see Hawaii's underbelly.

"When you get behind the glitz of Waikiki, you find a lot of needs," Chris Woodall said. "When you get away from there and get back into the communities, it's just like anywhere else in the world. There are

real people who have real problems, real hurts and needs. They just happen to live in a place that others like to come to on vacation.

"Yes, the beaches are beautiful. But Hawaii is home to many, many people. These people have names and souls and are in need of the gospel," added Woodall, who serves as director of prayer and evangelism for the Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention. He also heads up the convention's disaster relief and chaplaincy teams.

The Woodalls are two of more than 5,000 missionaries in the United States, Canada and their territories supported by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. They will be featured as part of the annual Week of Prayer, March 2-9, the theme of which is "Live with Urgency: Seize Your Divine Moment." This year's Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

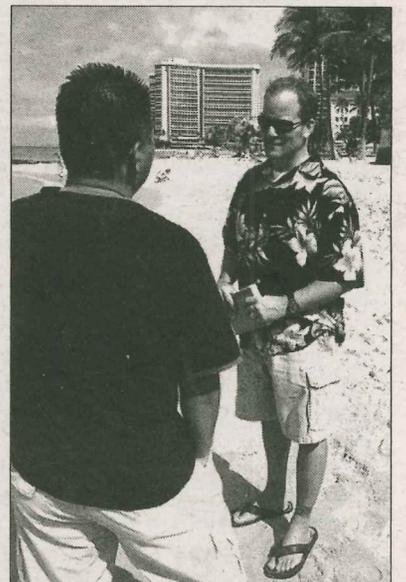
goal is \$61 million, 100 percent of which is used for missionaries like the Woodalls.

Chris' friend, Robert Wittekind, a pastor at Waianae Baptist Church in Honolulu County on Oahu, knows of the poor and illiterate in the Waianae community.

"There are a lot of broken homes here," Wittekind noted. "According to statistics, six out of 10 prisoners have relatives in the Waianae area. We have a lot of drugs, a lot of homelessness—people just running the streets. We have a lot of broken families and marriages."

The Woodalls met while the two of them served the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in East Asia. After they returned from overseas, they married and a year later, became the parents of their first child, Moriah. They are currently expecting their second child.

"Because of what God has put on my heart," Monica said, "we wanted  See Hawaiian missionaries ... *Page 6*



**BEACH MINISTRY** Chris Woodall (right), a NAMB missionary and director of prayer and evangelism for the Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention, shares the gospel along Waikiki Beach in Honolulu. (Photo by Greg Schneider)

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Feb. 20.



## Union Univ. student from Louisville recalls tornado's fury

*Garrity experienced 'power' and 'mercy of God' in the storm*

By Drew Nichter  
News Director

**Jackson, Tenn.**—Sarah Garrity was talking to her mother on the phone just before 7 p.m., Feb. 5 when the first tornado sirens blared.

Garrity, a Louisville native and freshman at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., quickly ended the call as she and her roommate headed from their second-floor apartment in the Dodd building to the suite below.

About 16 girls crammed into the living room of the apartment, Garrity noted, all of them anxiously watching the weather reports on TV. After about 15 minutes, she said the tension eased as news reports came in that Jackson would be spared by the tornadoes.

"We didn't go into the bathroom because it didn't look like it was going to hit us," recalled Garrity, who is a member of Jeffersontown Baptist Church in Louisville.

But that calm did not last long. "We could start to hear things because we were one of the last buildings hit," she said. "We found out later that what we were hearing was the other buildings being ripped apart."

With the tornado upon them in a matter of seconds, Garrity said all of the girls ran for the bathroom. She recalled being the last one in the doorway, just as the windows were blown into the room, spraying her back and legs with glass.

Moments later, she noted, the wind from the tornado forced Garrity into the bathroom where she was able to turn around and shut



**AFTERMATH** A view of the damage to the Dodd building on the Union University campus where Louisville native Sarah Garrity lived. The freshman's second-floor apartment was severely damaged during the Feb. 5 tornado, but she escaped the storm without any injuries. (Photos courtesy of Sarah Garrity)

the door. "My aunt called it the hand of God that pushed me into the bathroom," Garrity said.

About eight seconds later, it was all over.

The girls in the bathroom "immediately started praying and singing songs," Garrity noted.

Fearing another storm was on the way, she and her friends stayed in the bathroom until rescuers arrived to evacuate them from the building. She said she spent that time frantically trying to reach her friends throughout campus.

The girls were eventually moved from the damaged building to White Hall, another facility across campus. It was then, Garrity noted, the devastation became evident.

In the end, more than 40 percent of the dormitories on the Union campus were completely destroyed, while another 40 percent were heavily damaged, along with several of the school's academic

buildings. More than 50 students were injured in the tornado, nine of them seriously.

As Garrity and many of the 1,100 students who live on campus were moved into White Hall, rumors began to spread that as many as 100 students were feared dead. She said that waiting to find her friends was the toughest part of the evening.

"All I had was this puny little flashlight," she recalled, "and there were rows and rows of people just sitting or standing in the hallways, and you just shine (the light) into each person's face praying that it's somebody you know and that they're OK."

By the early morning hours, Garrity said she wound up at a local church, then eventually was taken to a professor's home to get some sleep.

Despite being moved from building to building after the storms, Garrity noted that she was able to

stay in contact with her youth minister from Jeffersontown Baptist, Danny Pacetti. She said she had asked Pacetti for some Scriptures to help her cope with the situation. He suggested Psalm 107:1-2, 15.

"That just wrapped it up for me," Garrity acknowledged. "Because a lot of nationwide news stations made it sound like, 'Christians, where's your God now?' But our response is, 'Our God is within all those little pockets of life of all those people who were trapped.'"

"You saw the power of God in the tornado, but you also saw the mercy of God in sparing our lives," she added.

The next morning, Garrity said her family arrived in Jackson. As they drove back to Sarah's dorm, she noted that the roof of her second-floor apartment, as well as the wall next to her bed, was gone.

After having minor repairs done on her car, Garrity and her family returned to Louisville. Union officials reportedly plan to resume classes Feb. 20. Garrity said the school has been in contact with her about housing arrangements, but added that she has not yet found out where she will live when she returns.

Regardless, Garrity and more than 1,000 other Union University students seem eager to return to their school.

"Everybody is so proud to be a part of Union and we're so excited just to go back and worship together," she said. "The devil probably thought he had a good victory that night, ... but I really hope that he heard all the prayers and all the praises that we sang as soon as the tornado hit."

"And I hope that when we go back, he will hear us when we're all together worshipping."



**"Everybody is so proud to be part of Union and we're so excited just to go back and worship together."**

Sarah Garrity, Union University freshman and Louisville native

## Mohler to have colon surgery, will not seek SBC presidency

Continued from page 1

Wiley Drake, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif., and Bill Wagner, president of Olivet University International in San Francisco.

Mohler, 48, underwent major abdominal surgery in December 2006, complicated by the development of bilateral blood clots in his lungs. Doctors said they plan to take special precautions to prevent a recurrence of the blood clots with the new surgery.

A decision on the date for the surgery is expected soon. The procedure is likely to require an extensive period of recovery for the seminary president.

Mohler expressed his gratitude to God that medical personnel found the tumor early.

"Sometimes we take it for granted that we live in an age like this one, in which God has given us the blessing of medical technology," he noted. "For most of human history, a tumor such as this one would have gone unnoticed until it was too late. I am thankful for modern medicine, but I am even more thankful that we live in a world in which our God hears us when we pray, a Father who listens to His children."

Mohler, who has served as president of Southern Seminary since 1993, said the school "would not skip a beat" during his recovery.

"I have absolute confidence in the seminary leadership team. We will move forward with momentum," he noted. "God has blessed and is blessing Southern Seminary. We do not take that for granted, and we pledge to be good stewards of that blessing, even through this time."

With additional reporting by Associated Baptist Press and News Director Drew Nichter

## Endorsement prompts IRS investigation of Drake

**Washington (ABP)**—California pastor and Southern Baptist Convention presidential candidate Wiley Drake is being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service.

Drake, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif., confirmed Feb. 14 that he had recently received an IRS letter noting that he was under investigation for using church resources to endorse Mike Huckabee, the former Arkansas governor, Southern Baptist minister and Republican presidential candidate. Federal tax law prevents churches and similarly organized

non-profit groups from endorsing candidates or political parties.

Drake is alleged to have used church letterhead and his church-sponsored radio show last year to endorse Huckabee. Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed a complaint with the IRS last August, citing both forms of endorsement. The IRS letter to Drake also mentioned both the press release and the radio show.

After Americans United announced its IRS filing, Drake asked his supporters to pray for ill to befall Joe Conn and Jeremy Leaming, who

work for the agency.

Drake, reached by telephone Feb. 14, referred a reporter to his attorney, Erik Stanley. He told the Associated Press that Drake did not violate federal tax law by endorsing Huckabee because it was a personal endorsement.

"Our position on this is that ... churches and pastors have First Amendment rights just like anybody else, and that includes the right to speak out," he said. "They can feel free to personally endorse candidates. It was not a church endorsement, and he made that very clear."

## Billy Graham undergoes elective surgical procedure

**Asheville, N.C. (BP)**—Evangelist Billy Graham remains hospitalized in fair condition following an elective procedure Feb. 13 to install a new valve in a shunt designed to drain excess fluid from his brain.

"He's on a soft diet tonight, will be on a regular diet tomorrow and should be up and walking around," Graham's spokesman Larry Ross told the Associated Press after the surgery at Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C., near Graham's home in Montreat.

The new valve was an update to a shunt installed at the Mayo Clinic

in Rochester, Minn., in 2000 to alleviate the condition hydrocephalus, a buildup of fluid within the brain that can cause symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease.

At a recent checkup at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Fla., doctors found that the shunt was no longer draining the fluid properly, and proposed an operation for the 89-year-old evangelist.

No date for Graham's release was known as of last week, but he is expected to remain in the hospital for several days while doctors programmed the valve externally to

maintain the appropriate levels.

"He was bright and alert and conscious immediately after surgery and called me by name," said Graham's doctor Ralph Loomis.

Graham was hospitalized at Mission for nearly two weeks last year, after experiencing intestinal bleeding. His wife, Ruth Bell Graham, died last June.

According to Ross, Graham received a call last week from President George W. Bush wishing the evangelist well.

With additional reporting by Religion News Service

## KBC church leads 'grassroots' relief effort in Harrodsburg

Continued from page 1

at Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, the church Riley and his wife, Amy, attend. He began calling some of the men who had participated. Before long, Riley and eight other men were standing in the Bruner's Chapel parking lot with chainsaws in hand ready to go to work.

Amy Riley said that the area of Harrodsburg that was hit hardest by the storms is one of the oldest parts of town. "There are a lot of really old homes that were damaged," she explained, and "a lot of huge trees that stood for years."

Mike and the crew from Bruner's Chapel spent the rest of the morning driving up and down the two streets that were hit hardest, trying to find people they could help.

"We would just knock on their doors and say, 'We're from Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church. How can we help you?'" Riley recalled.

He said that most of the work the crew did that first morning was to remove trees from homeowners' front yards. However, one of the first jobs the crew tackled was also one of the toughest.

Mary Dunn, the owner of a local restaurant who lives in a home next to the business, said the tornado tore the porch and carport off the side of her house. Her nephew, Sid, who manages the restaurant, said his aunt was distraught and did not know how she was going to clean up

the debris.

"My other aunt just said, 'Be patient, something will happen.'" Dunn recalled. "And probably about 30 minutes later, (the Bruner's Chapel crew) rolled up in trucks and asked if they could help."

Riley said the carport and porch had to be taken apart piece by piece then hauled to another county to be disposed of. He added that despite the size of the job, it was a "blessing to be able to help them."

Mary Dunn said that in order to show her gratitude for their help, she gave the church a donation. "I thought it was only fair, because I knew they wouldn't take anything," she explained.

Pastor David Crowe, who has served at Bruner's Chapel for about a year and a half, said the spontaneous disaster relief effort typifies his congregation's selfless nature.

"They give sacrificially to everything, every need they're ever aware of," noted Crowe, who joined the men on several jobs, talking to and praying for the homeowners. "They don't just give with their wallets, they give with their sweat."

The crew continued their clean-up work throughout the next three days, with the group swelling to more than 25 people the Saturday following the storms. The church's Woman's Missionary Union went door to door offering cookies to residents and asking if they had any clean-up needs.

Riley estimated that the crew put in about 28 hours of work during the first four days, with many of the men taking vacation time off from work to help out. Some of the men even had trees to clean up in their own yards, "but they were putting these first," noted Riley, who took time off from his job as an internal policy analyst for the Kentucky Justice Cabinet.

He also estimated that the Bruner's Chapel crew had cleared away as many as 20 trees from Harrodsburg residents' yards, all free of charge, saving their neighbors as much as \$15,000 in clean-up costs.

Coy Webb, KBC's disaster relief associate, applauded the "grassroots effort" of the team, adding that their work made Webb's job much easier.

"It was a relief for me to have these people serving in that area, because that was one area I didn't have to be looking for responders to go to," he noted. "Since we needed such a large response in Muhlenberg County, it made it much easier for me to focus there and (in) Brandenburg."

Webb said he has been in contact with Riley and offered any additional help that the Bruner's Chapel team may need.

Riley noted that even though he is back at his job, the work in the community will continue for as long as people have clean-up needs to be met. "We'll continue to do it



every weekend if we have to do it from now until July," he declared.

Riley added that he also contacted the local United Way office, encouraging them to put those who need help in touch with him.

Pastor Crowe explained that the efforts of Riley and his crew has provided him and the church with a great "witnessing opportunity."

"So many in the community just kept asking us, 'Why are you all doing this and why won't you take our money?'" Crowe recalled. "We just said, 'God has offered His Son freely and we want to offer our services freely.'"

"We're called to take care of each other," Riley said. "And what better way can we be a lifestyle witness than to go out and help these people and show them God's love firsthand?"

### SERVANT EVANGELISM

Shannon Wilson removes downed tree limbs at a Harrodsburg resident's home as part of Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church's disaster relief effort (Photo by Jesse Osbourne/Danville Advocate-Messenger)

## Saddleback pastor returns to Ky. for KBC Evangelism Conference

Louisville—Gerald Sharon, executive pastor of ministries at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., said he practices a highly relational style of evangelism that includes developing trust with people in order to lead them to Christ.

Sharon, a native of Danville, will speak at the Kentucky Baptist Convention Evangelism Conference Feb. 25-26 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

"Reaching people for Christ is absolutely a passion of mine," Sharon noted. "Seeing people come to Christ is one of the things I am most passionate about in life."

A graduate of Georgetown College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Sharon moved to California to join Saddleback nearly eight years ago. One of the church's objectives is getting people to evaluate their SHAPE—or how God has equipped them in the realms of spiritual gifts, heart, abilities, personality and experience.

"For me, there's a need to just have a heart for people, to show that you really care about the whole person, not just their soul and what's going to happen for eternity, but how they live that better life that Jesus talked about," he pointed out.

Sharon's evangelism style emphasizes developing long-term relationships with people he encounters.

"For me, it's to identify and build friendships with people I know who

don't know God," he said. "I start it purely on a friendship basis. Most people that I've engaged in life have to know and trust me before I can have the kind of conversation I want to have with them."

When Sharon attended Calvary Baptist Church in Danville during high school, he closely observed his pastor, Ernest Martin.

"I watched a man who truly loved people and wanted them to know Christ," he said. "I saw him model that authenticity, that real person who would help people get on the journey and come to know Jesus."

Before moving to Saddleback, Sharon was pastor of Highland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Thomas for 13 years. Looking back on his years in Kentucky and his experiences at Saddleback, Sharon said there is a common thread that makes his ministry unique.

"The thing that's always been consistent for me is I enjoy the journey toward faith," he noted. "I enjoy being on the journey with people, and I enjoy being with them as they wrestle through the tough questions of the faith."

When he speaks to Kentucky Baptists, Sharon said he plans to make clear that each Christian should live as if today is his last day on earth.

"I really believe that if we woke up every day and thought, 'If it was going to be my last day on earth, what would be my priorities today?'" he said.



Gerald Sharon

## Harmon delivers opening prayer for Congress

Washington—French Harmon, pastor of First Baptist Church of Somerset, delivered the opening prayer of the Feb. 8 session of the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

"May Your presence fill this historic chamber and Your light shine upon these, Your servants," he said as he began his prayer.

Harmon prayed about matters affecting the country, asking for a renewal of "strength of our military personnel that serve around the world" as well as peace for military families. The pastor also prayed for those affected by the deadly tornadoes which struck Kentucky and several other states across the southeastern United States Feb. 5.

Harmon served as guest chaplain for the day upon the invitation of Rep. Hal Rogers, who represents Kentucky's 5th District and is a member of First Baptist, Somerset.

The day before, Harmon and his wife were the congressman's guests at the National Prayer Breakfast, an annual event attended by more than 4,000 people, including President George W. Bush.

"I was just honored to be asked to be part of that event," noted Harmon, who served as leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church development team before becoming pastor of First Baptist, Somerset, last September.

Following Harmon's prayer, Rogers recited the Pledge of Allegiance and then commended his pastor from the House floor.

"I am very proud of my hometown pastor who reminds me of what really counts, what's really important and why we are here," Rogers declared.

The congressman recognized Harmon's community involvement and leadership which, as Rogers pointed out, has led to a significant increase in the membership of First Baptist, Somerset. Rogers also reminded his House colleagues of the importance of faith in guiding decisions regarding national priorities.

"Let's remember the higher power that we



WASHINGTON VISIT French Harmon (left), pastor of First Baptist Church of Somerset, poses with his family and Rep. Hal Rogers (center, seated) in the congressman's Washington office.

answer to and to whom we are ultimately accountable," he said.

Harmon noted that he and the congressman have developed a friendship since the pastor arrived at First Baptist, Somerset. He added that Rogers "has been able to experience the church's comeback and we're grateful that he's been a part of it."

"Dr. Harmon reminds us to celebrate Jesus Christ and what He sacrificed for us," Rogers told his fellow representatives. Harmon "tells us to connect with one another in our communities, at work and at home. And he tells us to care about our fellow human beings."

"As the Congress goes about the people's business in this chamber, let these words guide us as we strive to make the country a better place."

Harmon called the opportunity to pray before Congress "an amazing experience," adding that the podium at which he stood to deliver his prayer has been used by each president since Abraham Lincoln to address the House.

Harmon was joined in Washington by his wife, Rachael, their three children and Mrs. Harmon's parents. The pastor noted that his children were even allowed to watch his prayer from the floor of the House.

## WESTERN RECORDER

Box 43969  
Louisville, KY 40253  
(USPS 679-380)

TRENNIS HENDERSON  
Editor

DREW NICHTER  
News Director

THOMAS C. TOWNSEND  
Marketing & Business  
Manager

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

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## 10 'excuses' for new Sunday school classes

By David Francis

Nashville (BP)—At a conference held last year at LifeWay Christian Resources, Rich Smith, minister of discipleship at First Baptist Church of Ellisville, Mo., asked for input on starting classes that match teaching and learning styles. As I thought about it, it occurred to me that just about any excuse to start a new Sunday school class is probably worth trying.

Here are a few ideas:

**A life stage class.** How about a class for newlyweds and newlyweds? Parents of preschoolers? Parents of children? Parents of teens? Empty-nesters? LifeWay's Bible Studies for Life series includes resources aimed specifically at such classes: Life Matters for younger adults, Life Truths for parents and Life Values for empty-nesters. LifeWay magazines BabyLife, ParentLife and Living with Teenagers are ideal supplements for classes for parents as well.

**A "couples without kids" class.** One of the negative responses we have received about the life-stage approach with the BSFL series is that adults—notably median-age adults—who do not have children feel left out of classes designated for parents or empty-nesters. That's a good excuse to start a new class specifically for such folks. They could even study the same Scripture passages as other classes using BSFL by using Life Lessons or Life Words. Both of these titles are designed for adults of all ages and life stages.

**A KJV class.** Some people have a strong preference for the King James translation of the Bible. The Life Words title mentioned above utilizes the KJV exclusively and is a complete family of resources, including learner guides, leader guides and audio CDs.

**A "through the Bible" class.** LifeWay's Explore the Bible series is suited for such a class, covering all 66 books of the Bible every eight years. The series balances studies from the

Old and New Testaments and also provides a balanced approach to the various types of biblical literature in each two-year "mini-cycle."

**An affinity group class.** These classes might include such groups as teachers, medical professionals, peace officers, bikers, etc. Just about any curriculum choice would work.

**A "no teacher" class.** What? How would you do that? By using a curriculum resource like LifeWay's MasterWorks. This Bible study series, based on books by popular Christian authors, includes only one book that is used by learners and leaders. Ideas for guiding the discussion are found at the end of each lesson, so the leadership could rotate among members. In such a class, it would be wise to designate one person as the "shepherd" of the class—functioning like a teacher in all regards except actually "teaching."

**A college class.** Recently while dialoging with a group of pastors in Kentucky, a pastor shared that he had started a college class in a small town at a church with an attendance of about 70. In jest, I said, "You can't start a college class in that kind of setting." But he did and now has about 10-12 college students attend the class each week. LifeWay's Collegiate Bible study materials are useful for starting such a class.

**A special needs class.** Churches are rediscovering the joy of serving the needs of adults and children with special physical and developmental challenges. For many years, LifeWay has published Access, a Bible study resource for teaching special needs adults. Now we also publish a resource for special needs children in grades 1-6 called Special Buddies. Leaders and parents also benefit from the LifeWay magazine, Special Education Today.

Beginning this year, LifeWay's VBS resources will include materials for special needs kids called

## COMMENTARY

## Nortonville churches enjoy amazing growth

Recently, my wife, Kay, and I had the opportunity to visit two Nortonville churches that have experienced incredible growth—New Salem Baptist and Nortonville Baptist.

The churches are located within two miles of each other. The pastors began their ministries at their respective churches within a month of each other in 2000 and have become great friends. Both were successful in management before following God's call to preach.

New Salem Baptist Pastor Steve Rutherford has given strong leadership in Sunday School growth and has seen average attendance grow from 71 to 122. I was impressed by the number of children, youth and young adults in attendance and enrolled in Sunday School.

Average worship attendance has increased from 123 to 180 in six years, while resident membership has grown from 305 to 400. The church reported 29 baptisms in

2006 and has built three churches through international missions.

Giving has also increased. Undesignated gifts have risen from \$102,122 to \$181,523, and Cooperative Program giving has gone from \$6,260 to \$18,543 in 2006-2007.

Of the \$253,567 the church has given to support missions through CP since 1929, 48 percent of that has been given since Rutherford became pastor. New Salem gives 10 percent to the Cooperative Program.

Nortonville Baptist Church, located on Highway 41, also has a caring pastor who is focused on growth.

Under the leadership of Bobby Reno, the resident membership has increased from 197 to 484 and the Sunday School average attendance has grown from 56 to 166. Worship attendance has increased from 96 to 260 while baptisms have shot up from six to 55.

The church has also seen its giving increase dramatically. Undesignated gifts have risen from \$67,505 to \$248,808, and CP giving has increased from \$5,755 to \$22,710 in 2006-2007.

Outrigger Island: Special Friends. One of the big surprises reported by churches that begin such a ministry is how many people are willing to help. They don't want to teach a big class, but they are eager to help out in a special needs class.

**A "transition year" class.** Kindergarten and sixth grade are two of the toughest years for kids to navigate. Even churches struggle with where to put these kids. In some churches, kindergarten is in the preschool division; in others, it is in the children's division. In some churches—especially in communities where the schools operate middle schools—sixth-graders are in the youth division and often grouped with seventh- and eighth-graders; in other churches, they are in the children's division and are grouped with fourth- and/or fifth-graders.

The solution is to start a class just for them. LifeWay has curriculum choices specifically designed for both of these transition years called Bible Teaching for Kids: Kindergarten and Everything You Need to Know to Be a Teenager.

**An off-campus, not-on-Sunday class.** You mean you can have a Sunday school class that doesn't meet on Sunday? Of course you can. Funny thing is, the term Sunday school has such a strong "brand identity" that you can even call it a Sunday school class.

Wayne Poling, lead Sunday school leadership specialist at LifeWay, recently led training in Guam along with Clyde Kakiuchi, who directs Sunday school work in the Hawaii-Pacific Baptist Convention. Kakiuchi was headed to Saipan, where one pastor holds Bible study classes every night for different groups of factory workers after they end their overnight shifts. It is an excellent opportunity for a gathering of fellowship and study.

Every church has unique needs. I hope these ideas have started to generate some ideas that will meet some of those needs.

David Francis serves as director of Sunday School for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention

## GIVING

## Ideas for planning your charitable remainder trust

By Laurie Valentine

Charitable gift planning not only offers a variety of ways for you to provide valuable support to causes that are important to you, it can also help you solve certain personal financial challenges.

One such giving plan is a charitable remainder unitrust, or CRUT. A CRUT is an irrevocable trust that pays a designated income stream to the giver and/or others for life or a term of years, and the remainder to one or more charitable organizations.

Your lifetime gift of cash, securities or real estate to a CRUT entitles you to a charitable income tax deduction equal to the present value of the remainder interest. In addition to the tax savings, a CRUT can provide beneficial ways to solve a variety of financial challenges such as:

**Providing funds for college.**

Your grandson will be heading to college in the fall and you would like to provide a good portion of the funds he will need. A gift of \$100,000 to a CRUT that will pay him 15 percent of the value of the trust assets for five years will entitle you to an income tax deduction of approximately \$45,500. If the trust assets earn an average annual total return of 7.5 percent, it will pay your grandson the following amounts: year 1 \$15,000; year 2 \$13,717; year 3 \$12,544; year 4 \$11,471; and year 5 \$10,489. At the end of the five-year term, the trust will have approximately \$64,000 to distribute to the charitable causes you designated in the trust agreement.

**Financial assistance for family members.**

You have been providing \$500 per month (\$6,000 per year) to your 85-year-old father for the past few years. While at age 65, you have no current health problems, you want to make sure that support will continue for your father, no matter what your future circumstances. A gift of \$100,000 to a CRUT which will pay your father for his lifetime—then you if you survive him—6 percent of the value of the trust assets, as revalued annually, establishes a plan that will provide a gradually growing stream of income to your father and then you. It also entitles you to an income tax deduction of approximately \$38,300 and provides you the opportunity to set up a gift that will provide significant future support to ministries that are important to you.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation



## Increased compassion is key to dealing with potential abusers

**Q: I'm a Sunday school teacher in a couples' class and I suspect that a gentleman in my class has an anger problem and is on the path to abuse. I have an opportunity to talk with him one-on-one. What do you think is the key to this issue?**

The most important truth in this regard is to understand abuse not as a relationship problem as much as an emotional self-regulation problem. Other people can trigger hurt or anger but they cannot force you to control, devalue or harm them. The most common danger that helps make in these situations is to increase communication skills without increasing compassion skills. This can only lead to more manipulation and control.

Effecting life change in potential abusers is not about sharing a superior value system. It is more about appealing to the deepest value system in the potential abuser. If your greatest core value is to love, the most self-destructive thing you can do is hurt someone you love, no matter who is "wrong" or "right."

"Train yourself in righteousness" (1 Timothy 4:7) is applicable here because the potential abuser has to train himself to hold on to the self-value of compassion. Hurts must be transformed at the moment of threat into compassion.

The example of Jesus Christ is our model to follow. Help your friend and class member to get in touch with his deepest values of love, compassion and all the things suggested by Phillipians 4:8: "Whatever things are true, whatsoever things are lovely if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." Your friend must practice meditating on the beautiful, compassionate values in his heart so that he is not sabotaged by the perceived threats that relationships will inevitably bring.—James Stillwell

**Q: Are there ways to combat the effects of our culture on how we view marriage?**

William Doherty, professor of family social science at the University of Minnesota and a licensed marriage and family therapist, wrote an article titled, "Does the Consumer Culture Affect Marriage?" There are some questions that emerge from this article that would be helpful to review and reflect on in any current marriage.

### What is your focus?

Doherty noted, "You can ruin almost any perfectly fine marriage in a year or two by emphasizing how your spouse is not meeting your needs, especially if you pick at things they're really not able to change. Like the woman who wants the guy to be warm and emotional. Or the guy who wants the woman to want sex a lot."

### What are your expectations?

"We could make the choice to say, 'This is good enough,' and to remind ourselves of our commitment," Doherty wrote. "Partners who are committed, for example, don't highlight their attraction to other people or spend time comparing their partners to other people."

### What are you fighting about?

"We can all help married people understand that they've got marital versions of the common cold or flu, not a life-threatening disease," Doherty wrote. "I sometimes tell people that every couple has the same two or three fights their entire relationship. If you didn't have those problems, you'd have some other ones. It's almost like the spiritual life: You never stop working on your flaws and faults, and you never stop trying to feel better until you die. You never get there, but you don't stop working at it."

It is challenging to examine the cultural influence on our belief systems. But it is well worth the effort. Marriage is not intended to be a chore, but it is a challenge. Perhaps we have lost in our consumer culture what marriage was originally meant to be.—Valerie Vincent

Family Forum writers are:

**David Garrard**, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. E-mail: dgarrard@smbclouisville.org.

**James Stillwell**, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. E-mail: james@ibs-lex.org.

**Valerie Vincent**, Christian counselor with Hardy Associates in Louisville. E-mail: dr.vincent@insightbb.com.

**Scott Wigginton**, associate professor of pastoral ministries and counseling at Campbellsville University and minister of counseling at Campbellsville Baptist Church. E-mail: sewigginton@campbellsville.edu.

Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail wesrec@earthlink.net.



## Editors explore 'Importance of Knowing'

It was a bittersweet experience to attend my final meeting of the Association of State Baptist Papers last week.

After more than 15 years as a state paper editor in Arkansas and Kentucky, I have developed close relationships with peers throughout the nation. As a former ASBP president and frequent workshop leader, I also have had the privilege of being deeply involved in the association's ongoing work and fellowship.

In an interesting twist, this year's workshop theme was "The Importance of Knowing," with sessions highlighting such issues as the importance of knowing one another, our constituents and our challenges. Whether state paper editors, pastors or laypeople, those are timely topics for all believers to explore.

The printed program included an ancient proverb that declares:

"He that knows not, and knows not that he knows not is a fool. Shun him.

"He that knows not, and knows that he knows not is a pupil. Teach him.

"He that knows, and knows not that he knows is asleep. Wake him.

"He that knows, and knows that he knows is a teacher. Follow him."

Intriguing points to ponder.

While addressing such typical workshop topics as news guidelines, circulation and postal regulations, program leaders also sought to help strengthen the bonds among fellow editors. Among the conference highlights were testimonies about "Finding God in the Hard Times" by editors from New Mexico, Maryland and Tennessee. They candidly shared personal insights about dealing with such challenges as the death of a spouse, battling cancer and parenting issues.

"I have found in the tough times that God can be counted on to meet our every need," affirmed John Loudat, editor of the Baptist New Mexican.

### STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Bob Simpson, editor of the Maryland/Delaware Baptist Life, compared life's challenges to the experience of the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace recorded in Daniel 3. "As children of God, we occasionally go through necessary furnaces," he noted, adding that "it is when we go through hard times that people can determine if our faith is real or not."

Lonnie Wilkey, editor of the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector, cited the recent tornado that hit Union University as an example of crises in life that "spring up all of a sudden."

Comparing that to struggles he and his family have faced in life, Wilkey said, "The two things that have gotten us through are God's Word and prayer.

"As the tornadoes in life face us, we shouldn't be surprised," he declared. "God's grace is sufficient."

It was both humbling and encouraging to hear fellow editors recount the daily concerns of life as well as their testimonies of God's unwavering faithfulness no matter what life brings. It's a worthy exercise for any group of Christian peers to experience together.

Another humbling moment came as ASBP members adopted a resolution of appreciation in honor of my 25 years of ministry in Baptist journalism. They graciously pledged to "pray often" for me in my new role as vice president for communications at Ouachita Baptist University. I can't think of a more cherished gift from a group of respected friends and colleagues.

As I seek to follow God's leadership in a major life transition to new ministry opportunities, I look forward to maintaining personal ties with fellow editors and others who have been influential in my ministry pilgrimage over the years. Their selfless investment in my life and ministry are sterling examples of "The Importance of Knowing."

I pray that each of you also experience the joy of intentionally knowing and being known by family, friends, co-workers and others whom God brings into your life.

## The sun still rises over Union University

By Landon Preston

**Jackson, Tenn.**—On Wednesday, Feb. 6, my alarm went off at 5:45 a.m. and I trudged to my car to drive one of my car-less friends back to the Union University campus which I thought had been annihilated

### FIRST PERSON

the night before. Working as a photographer, he was able to get past security, but was told by another person that the site was still too dangerous for photographers.

It was a quiet ride home, as everyone in the car kept to themselves and looked at the carnage that had been home to more than 1,000 students less than 12 hours earlier. We pulled up the hill near my house and I noticed for the first time the bright morning beams of the sun piercing through the trees.

I remarked out loud, "The sun still rises," out of shock and disbelief, yet reminding myself of the reality of life. When I said those words there was a small part of me that was surprised that the sun came out that morning. I expected it to stay on the other side of the planet until my mourning was over.

All I saw the night before when I drove on Interstate 40 and past the Union campus was darkness, destruction and chaos, with trees and bent metal all around me. These were the scenes that continued to

play in my mind as the cheery sun peeked through the trees.

Yet as a current employee, recent graduate and former resident assistant, what caught me by surprise

that morning was truly a picture of what Union University stands for and what has happened. What I saw the evening before was absolute carnage and I assumed several dead bodies lay hidden among what was left of the dorm rooms. What I had not seen was the local news, which reported that not one person had perished in the tornado.

When I drove in on I-40 from the Stephen Olford Center in Memphis, I heard of students who were trapped under the rubble. What I had not heard was that those students had been lifted up out of the rubble and did not sustain life-threatening injuries. As I drove through the dark streets of Jackson, all I could notice was that the power in north Jackson was gone, but did not know that my home in south Jackson still had power running to it.

The images and memories that flood my mind of that night powerfully remind me of the purpose of Union University's existence: to equip students to think Christianly and serve faithfully in a dark and fallen world.

In order to think Christianly, stu-

dents must learn and know the gospel, which teaches that although man is apart from God, He promised and brought redemption for man through the perfect life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. The entire biblical narrative is essentially a large story of God's triumph over sin and destruction by sending Jesus to be the sacrifice for the sins of men, then rising from the dead in triumph over death.

Union students are trained to know how each area of study is thus affected beginning with the truth of the gospel—that every area of study has been affected by sin, yet redemption is possible even in the darkest realms of life. This is the basis for a Christian worldview and the basis of what is happening now at Union as recovery has already begun.

As I drove frantically around Jackson the night of Feb. 5, my mind was processing so much and it all seemed so sad and disastrous. When I got home and heard the good news of life and safety, I was relieved, but remained sorrowful through the night. Not until the next day, after night had passed and I saw that the sun still rose, was I reminded that Christ has risen—and we will rise also.

Landon Preston is director of operations for the Stephen Olford Center at Union University

# Overcoming Barriers



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- Special Women's Sessions and Luncheon
- Youth Ministers' Dinner with Gerald Sharon
- Focused Breakout Sessions

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**Kevin Smith,**  
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Evangelism, SW Baptist  
Theological Seminary,  
Fort Worth, TX



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



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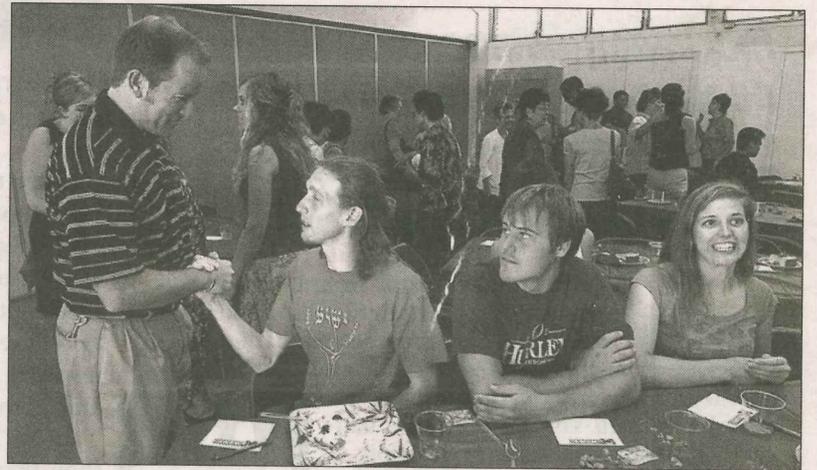
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**IN TOUCH** Chris Woodall (left), a missionary for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in Honolulu, speaks to college students attending an International Student Luncheon. (Photo by Greg Schneider)

## Hawaiian missionaries see less exotic side of paradise

Continued from page 1

to live our lives somewhere where the gospel's not being readily accepted or abundantly shared, and not where there's a church on every corner.

"Although Hawaii is a hard place to live, we want to live where we can be salt and light, and Hawaii is definitely one of those places."

Monica, who first served in Hawaii as a semester missionary after college, said her experience in Hawaii has taught her that people here are spiritually searching, and to get them to talk about spiritual things is fairly easy.

"But then when you start talking about Jesus and Jesus being the only way, that's when it gets a little bit more complicated," she acknowledged. "While it's easy to get into spiritual conversations, I was heartbroken by how that never meant Jesus."

Chris Woodall explained that his and Monica's roles are to "support pastors in doing what they do."

"There are 115 churches in our convention, worshipping in 15 different languages," he noted. "Our convention is not made up of just Hawaii, but includes American Samoa, 1,000 miles away, and Guam, Okinawa and Saipan, more than 3,800 miles from Hawaii. Of course, we have churches on all of the Hawaiian Islands."

As if the spiritual challenges were not enough, Woodall and Wittekind agreed that Hawaii is very much a closed society among the state's indigenous residents.

"This community is a tight, local Hawaiian community," Woodall pointed out. "We just don't ease our way in after a few short years, or even 10, 15 or 20 years. This is a hard culture to get into. It's tough. I'm a minority and so is everybody else who comes from the mainland."

Another challenge is that Hawaii is a very expensive place to live. Typically, a husband and wife both must work because it may take one of their entire paychecks to pay the mortgage on a home. Honolulu, for instance, is one of the most expen-

sive places for housing in the United States. A four-bedroom house worth \$300,000 in Atlanta would cost almost \$740,000 in Honolulu.

"In Hawaii, there are people working multiple jobs," Woodall noted. "You have people working the night shifts, so it's important to have churches that hold services when the night shift is over. That may be at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning."

Despite these cultural and economic challenges, Southern Baptists also have used the state's natural disasters and disaster relief as a way to demonstrate the love of Christ to the local population.

Woodall described Hawaii as a geological and meteorological time bomb. One or more of the state's six inhabited islands is consistently ripe for hurricanes, flooding, earthquakes, tsunamis or volcanoes.

"The next earthquake here is not 'if' but 'when,'" acknowledged Karl Ragan, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Waimea.

In 2006, an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale hit Hawaii and Kapaau, small towns on the north Kohala coast of the "Big Island." For 45 seconds, the earthquake rattled local homes. All of the 3,000 homes in the area suffered damage. Most of them were jilted off their post- and pier-foundations.

"Since last January, we have been working alongside our partners in California to assist families whose homes were either heavily damaged or destroyed by the earthquake," Woodall said. "This has provided many opportunities to minister to families who have never set foot into a church."

With such a significant list of challenges and needs, Woodall said the congregations in Hawaii require the support and financial assistance that the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering provides.

"The Annie Armstrong offering provides a means by which we can help the churches do what God has called them to do—share the gospel, equip leaders and start new churches all over the Pacific," he acknowledged.



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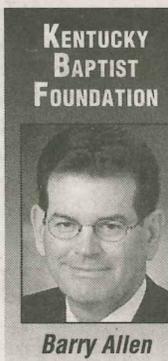
Many people establish an en-

dowment with a modest gift, make additional gifts during life, and include a provision in their estate plans for a final gift. My wife and I have done this.

You can make gifts of cash, appreciated securities, appreciated real estate and life insurance cash values. Using appreciated assets versus cash likely will provide some income and capital gains tax advantages.

Another option is to establish an endowment with a deferred gift—deferred for the benefit of the charitable beneficiary. Such a gift can be made with a bequest in your will or revocable living trust; a beneficiary designation of a life insurance policy and/or retirement plan/IRA survivor benefits; and/or a life income gift such as a charitable gift annuity or a charitable remainder trust.

Call Laurie Valentine or me toll free for more information and assistance in making your next gift last forever.



Barry Allen

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

### For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



### Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



### Bible Crosswords

By Teri Grottke

#### Across

- 1 66 or 80, for example (abbr.)
- 4 Father of Ethan (1 Chronicles 6:44)
- 9 Laughing sound
- 11 Jether's son (1 Chronicles 7:38)
- 12 One of two
- 13 Preserve
- 14 Compass dir.
- 15 "Bread corn is bruised; ...nor break it with the \_\_\_ of his cart" (Isaiah 28:28)
- 16 Ancient entrance
- 17 One of the families of the tribe of Benjamin (Numbers 26:39)
- 19 "They made their lives bitter ...and in all \_\_\_ of service" (Exodus 1:14)
- 21 Certain vessels
- 22 \_\_\_ fried
- 23 Laziness
- 24 Achieve
- 27 Poetic contraction
- 28 April correspondent
- 30 Together with (prefix)
- 31 Wife of Joseph (Genesis 41)
- 34 Possessor
- 37 Commit larceny
- 38 Son of Roboam (Matthew 1:7)
- 39 Note on diatonic scale
- 40 Reluctant visitor to Saul in Damascus
- 43 "Surely Moab shall be as Sodom ...even the \_\_\_ of nettles" (Zephaniah 2:9)
- 47. Biblical verb, KJV
- 48 Drum or drop
- 49 Son of Gad (Genesis 46:16)
- 51 Bind
- 52 She may be out to pasture
- 53 Identifies
- 54 Occurrence (arch.)

#### Down

- 1 Measles symptom
- 2 "For my soul is full of \_\_\_" (Psalm 88:3)

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- 3 Apiece (abbr.)
- 4 Son of Levi (Genesis 46:11)
- 5 List components
- 6 Pronoun
- 7 Ship steering
- 8 European isle (abbr.)
- 9 Loathe
- 10 Unit of measure for manna
- 13 Father of Melchi (Luke 3:24)
- 15 "\_\_\_ meanest thou, O sleeper?" (Jonah 1:6)
- 16 Tiny winged insect
- 18 More destitute
- 20 Likely
- 23 Red or Dead
- 24 Simile component
- 25 "Out of whose womb came the \_\_\_? and the hoary frost of heaven" (Job 38:29)
- 26 Conjunction
- 28 Pronoun
- 29 With "factor," a group of antigens
- 32 Memo
- 33 Son of Gideon (Numbers 1:11)
- 34 Minor prophet (abbr., var.)
- 35 "Who hath gathered the \_\_\_ in his fists?" (Proverbs 30:4)

#### Last week's solution

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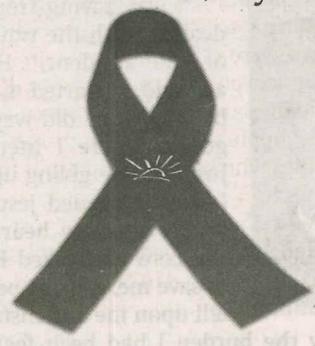
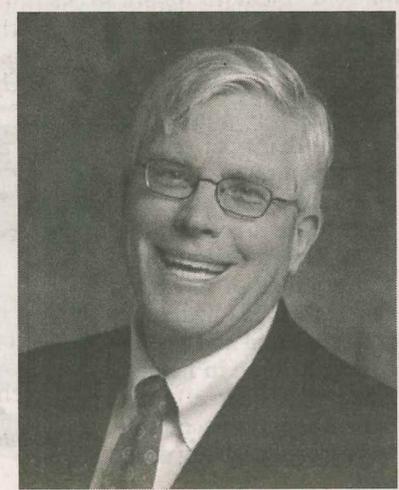
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## Christian pastor honored for advocacy of church in China

Washington (BP)—Bob Fu, a leading advocate for the persecuted church in China, received a Southern Baptist religious freedom award during a ceremony at the Library of Congress Feb. 7.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, presented Fu with the 2007 John Leland Religious Liberty Award, which described Fu as:

■ "A faithful servant of the Lord Jesus as pastor of a house church and leader of a Bible school in the People's Republic of China, a nation politically hostile toward Christianity.

■ "A bold witness for his faith who endured arrest and imprisonment by Chinese authorities.

■ "A brave refugee to the United States who inspires the Christian community to fight for the liberation of their brothers and sisters in Christ living in the grips of persecution."

A native of China, Fu founded the China Aid Association in 2002 after he and his family fled to the United States in 1996. China Aid monitors and reports on religious persecution by the Chinese government, especially of the unregistered church, which Fu said consists of between 60 to 80 million members. Fu's organization also seeks to aid persecuted believers in the world's most populous country.

Upon receiving the award, Fu said he wants China to prosper but believes "this can only be realized as true religious freedom is fully em-

braced in China and protected by the rule of law."

"My hope is that the Chinese government will recognize that Christianity and other true peaceful religious groups do not need to be controlled and are not a threat to the government but rather, are one of the needed building blocks for stability and can provide much-needed help for promoting non-violence during this time of transition in China's history," he noted.

Fu urged the audience—which included legislative and executive branch staff members, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom staffers and representatives of non-governmental religious liberty organizations—to maintain "religious freedom as a top priority but also understand this is a complex issue in the Chinese mindset and Chinese history."

Before his conversion to Christ, Fu was a leader in the student democracy movement that was squashed at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989. He became a house church pastor and a founded a Bible school with his wife, Heidi, before being arrested and jailed in 1996.

The award is named for Baptist preacher John Leland who strongly advocated for religious freedom in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Leland worked with James Madison, often described as the Father of the Constitution, to gain support for the First Amendment's guarantees of no government establishment of religion and no interference with religious free exercise.

## Archaeologist links unearthed seal to different Old Testament family

Jerusalem (BP)—A 2,500-year-old stone seal, unearthed during an archeological dig in Jerusalem last month, is not tied to the obscure Old Testament family initially thought. The scientist who discovered the relic now believes it is linked to an equally obscure and completely different biblical family.

In January, archeologist Eilat Mazar told the Jerusalem Post she had found a seal—designed to make impressions in soft clay—engraved with the name of the "Temech" family, the same family found in the list of Jewish families in Nehemiah 7 that returned to Jerusalem after being taken into exile by the Babylonians.

As it turns out, Mazar said

she misread the inscription. Because the seal is designed to make an impression, she explained, the letters are written in mirror-image form.

Following critiques from scholars, Mazar now acknowledges the letters should read Sh-l-m-t. If that is the case, then scholars believe it could refer to Shelomith, a man mentioned in Ezra 8:10 who also returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, or to Shelomith, the daughter of Zerubbabel mentioned in 1 Chronicles 3:19.

The archeological discovery is at least the second one in recent months tied to an obscure Old Testament name and thus, according to conservative scholars, affirm the Bible's historical reliability.

## Seeking Executive Editor

for the *Western Recorder*, Kentucky Baptist weekly newspaper in Louisville, Ky. Christian journalist with minimum of five years experience in print media; degree in journalism, communications or related field; seminary training preferred. Management and supervisory skills required. Submit resume, cover letter and a writing sample by March 10 to:

WR Editor Search Committee  
ATTN: Skip Alexander, Pastor  
Campbellville Baptist Church  
420 N. Central Avenue, Campbellville, KY 42718

## We count our blessings

### Lack of cell phone service is a blessing that some have trouble understanding

When we count our blessings many of us are thankful that we do not have cell phone service. I know that sounds odd, but think about it. There are places more remote than Oneida, in spite of what many of our students think. True, we have no malls, cinemas, bowling alleys or McDonalds, and to today's teenager it does seem like we are in the middle of nowhere. We prefer to call it "fewer distractions." Often students who enroll at OBI confess that one of the main problems they have been dealing with is having too many distractions.

Many new faculty and staff have some of the same frustrations. We are not very close to much of anything. The county seat is 17 miles away and does offer some shopping. But if you need something that goes beyond the "basic need," you will likely have to travel 40 miles to London or Hazard. It does take some adjusting, but it is worth it.

Spend a day with us—make it a week—and you will notice several things that are likely to be a little different from where most of you live. Listen for a minute; no sirens, train whistles, screeching brakes or horns blowing. That's because we don't have rush-hour traffic or traffic jams. Once in a while three cars go through our community at the same time; for us that is a traffic jam. We don't even have a traffic light.

So why is not having cell phone service a blessing? Two weeks ago, I attended a meeting with several other Christian boarding school administrators in Silver Springs, Md., just outside of Washington, D.C. In one of our sessions we broke into

smaller groups and were asked to share some of the problems we face. Some of the administrators mentioned escalating insurance costs, finding qualified staff, fundraising, dealing with unreasonable parents or board members, making sure no state or federal laws were being broken, etc.

Then someone complained about all of their students having cell phones. I had to laugh because that is one problem we do not have. When I shared with my group that there was no cell phone service in our remote part of the county, the response from the others was quick and amusing. "You don't have cell phone service?" "No, we don't," I replied. Their answer was, "Do you know how lucky you are?"

As a matter of fact, I do know how lucky we are. I admit there are times that having cell phone service would be nice. But given a choice, I am in no hurry for that. It is just one less serious problem that we have to face with students who have become academic failures because of all the distractions in their current learning environment.

Recently, four new students visited our school. Three enrolled but the fourth, a young lady, did not stay. She may be back, but we wanted to meet her before we decided if she really wanted to be here. She did not come into the building with her parents. When I asked where their daughter was, they said she was still in the car trying to get a signal on her cell phone. I laughed and told them, "Good luck. She won't get a signal here." To which her parents replied, "We don't know if she can live without her cell phone." My point exactly.

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

## 'I was a walking dead man'

### Accident changes student's life & leads him to the Lord

Many of us can recall those defining moments in our lives where God used circumstances to either lead us to a personal relationship with Him or make our relationship with Him stronger. First-year student Myron Howard of Whitesville recalls that defining moment in his life that changed everything for him.

"I was involved in a workplace accident in 2000," Howard said. "I was almost killed in an explosion when a hydraulic hose ruptured and literally engulfed me in flames. I had third-degree burns over 65 percent of my body. I was a walking dead man."

"I remember crying out to God and asking Him to let me live so my 1-year-old son would not have to grow up without a father," Howard continued. "I was airlifted to Vanderbilt Hospital where I spent two months. I had two blood infections and pneumonia all at the same time; not counting all the surgeries I had to have for the skin grafts."

Howard said there was no question in his mind that God had worked in miraculous ways to allow him to live through the accident.

"God used that traumatic experience

to change the way I looked at things," Howard added. "I began to realize what's really important in life. I knew that if I died I was going to hell because I didn't know Jesus Christ as my Savior. I began reading my Bible and the Lord started sending people in my path each day to tell me about the importance of a personal relationship with Him."

"I was having trouble dealing with the trauma of the accident," Howard said. "I started to fall back into my old ways. I got to where I literally just felt like giving up. ... I knew I needed Jesus. I finally gave my heart to the Lord and asked Him to save me. A great peace fell upon me and instantly

ly the burden I had been feeling was lifted.

"I'm thankful for a Bible College like Clear Creek," Howard acknowledged. "The family atmosphere and single focus on ministry preparation provides an environment where my whole family can grow in our relationship with the Lord as we prepare to minister to others."

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

## Ga. refinery explosion sends local churches into action

By Scott Barkley  
Georgia Christian Index

Port Wentworth, Ga. (BP)—Sam Self, pastor of First Baptist Church of Port Wentworth, Ga., said his community's defining moment came Feb. 7 when an explosion at the Imperial Sugar plant claimed the lives of eight workers and badly injured dozens.

Since then, the community has rallied in a way that has left a positive mark during an otherwise dark time.

"Jesus said, 'If you give a cup of cold water in My name, you've done it unto Me.' That's pretty much what we saw happen," Self said. "Within

an hour or so, one of the folks noted that we had enough water brought in here to help the drought in north Georgia."

Self joined other pastors in providing counseling support to families of those injured or killed in the blast. Eight members of First Baptist, Port Wentworth, are employed at the plant, though none were injured in the explosion, the pastor noted.

Officials speculated that the fire was caused by sugar dust in one of the silos and that the dust could have ignited like gunpowder, according to Imperial Sugar president John Sheptor. If sugar dust is too dry, it can build up a static charge and be-

come combustible, experts said.

Otis Hill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pooler, Ga., received a call about the explosion that evening.

"In that situation you can only pray with individuals and their families," he explained. "At times we stood and prayed together. We'd encourage families to pray for others."

Associational missionary Steve Sells stayed at the blast site until the morning after, talking with victims' family members. He credited law enforcement for enacting strict parameters from the beginning in a situation that could easily have become chaotic.

"It was one of the most organized

things I've ever seen," Sells recalled. "The news media was wanting to get in and talk to the families but weren't allowed to. It was really an unbelievable (effort) by the sheriff and others."

Sells also remembered a moment of prayer he had with Sheptor.

"He was distraught," Sells noted. "He was very concerned about his employees."

Self said the trauma of the event could be felt in more ways than one.

"One of our young men was in the building during the blast, and the roof caved in on him," Self said. "But he was able to get out, and for all purposes he was unharmed physically. Emotionally, that's a different story."

First Baptist, Port Wentworth, is located about half a mile from the plant, Self noted. Church members started their ministry to the victims' families immediately after the blast.

The following Sunday, the congregation hosted a special worship service for the community, providing a place for people to gather and process what had transpired in the past few days.

"We acknowledged where God was, what He's doing now," Self noted. "We prayed together. We cried together. We hugged each other. We spent a lot of time just encouraging each other."

Although the explosion made headlines, Self said what happened afterward provided a stronger definition of the area.

"Strangers have walked up and asked, 'What can I do? How can I help?'" he said. "God is alive and well in Port Wentworth."

### FEATURED SPEAKERS

**T. W. Hunt**  
Teacher; Writer;  
Seminar Leader



**Frank Page**  
Pastor;  
Southern Baptist  
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**Don Whitney**  
Author; Former  
Pastor; SBTS  
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- 1 March 4 — Rosebower Baptist Church, Paducah
- 2 March 13 — Flemingsburg Baptist Church, Flemingsburg
- 3 April 1 — Walnut Memorial Baptist Church, Owensboro
- 4 April 10 — Immanuel Baptist Church, Pikeville
- 5 April 17 — Central Baptist Church, Corbin
- 6 April 22 — Mount Washington Baptist Church, Mt. Washington
- 7 May 1 — Crossroads Church, Russellville
- 8 May 13 — Danville First Baptist Church, Danville

All events are 6:30 pm — 9:00 pm

## NATIONAL NOTES

**Dobson endorses Huckabee.** Focus on the Family founder James Dobson endorsed Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee Feb. 7, the same day that GOP rival Mitt Romney ended his campaign. Dobson had already said he would not support McCain and called Huckabee "our best remaining choice for president of the United States." "That is why I will support Gov. Huckabee through the remaining primaries, and will vote for him in the general election if he should get the nomination." His statement emphasized that he was speaking as a private citizen and not as the head of Focus on the Family.

**TV indecency bill stalled.** A bill seeking to strengthen restrictions on television indecency, which emerged from a Senate committee in December, now sits idly on the Senate legislative calendar with no signs of progress. The Protecting Children From Indecent Programming Act seeks to overturn the Second Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling in June that the Federal Communications Commission could not prohibit television networks from airing fleeting expletives. The appeals court's opinion ruling was issued after the 2002 and 2003 Billboard Music Awards programs aired indecent language. The FCC ruled in those incidents a single use of offensive words would be considered indecent, but the court rejected the FCC's decisions.

**Guideposts magazine co-founder dies.** Ruth Stafford Peale, the co-founder of the inspirational magazine Guideposts and widow of author and minister Norman Vincent Peale, died Feb. 6 at the age of 101 at her home in Pawling, N.Y. She was called the "first lady of positive thinking" after her husband wrote the best-selling book "The Power of Positive Thinking." She helped found the Guideposts organization in 1945; its flagship publication now has a paid circulation of 2.5 million and a readership of 8 million. "Her strength and belief in the power of prayer was an example to thousands and an inspiration to millions," said Richard Hopple, president of Guideposts.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist ministries and missionaries:

**Missionaries Greg and Alice Whitetree at the Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Marrowbone.** The Whitetrees minister to coal mining families in Pike County, providing for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Some of their ministries include toy give-aways at Christmas, after-school and basketball programs, sports camps, vacation Bible schools, home repair and food and clothing distribution. Pray that God will provide strength for the volunteers who assist them throughout the year. Pray that the many young men in the area involved in drug and alcohol abuse who come to the center for basketball will discover a meaningful life through Christ.

**New Life Maternity Haven in Leitchfield.** Mission Service Corps missionary Tena McNair directs this new ministry that addresses the needs and problems faced in unplanned pregnancies. To ensure physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy moms and babies, the ministry provides shelter, medical care, counseling and training. Pray that many young women will make positive changes through Christ and break the cycle of dependency. Pray for God's provision and for additional volunteers so that the center can remain open for longer periods of time.

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](mailto:Eric.Allen@kybaptist.org) or call (866) 489-3530.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI  
COMPILED BY STAFF

- **CARLISLE**—Locust Grove Church recently called **Josh Pollitt** as pastor.
- **ERLANGER**—**Jeff Barbour** recently resigned as minister of recreation and activities at Erlanger Church. **Derek Coleman** is pastor.
- **EWING**—Mt. Pisgah Church recently called **Todd Wiley** as pastor.
- **JENKINS**—First Church ordained **Frank Hall** and **Larry Hylton** as deacons Jan. 27.
- **KUTTAWA**—First Church ordained **Chris Lowery** and **Randy Wright** as deacons Feb. 10. **Carl Nelson** is pastor.
- **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host **The Harvesters** in concert Feb. 24, 7 p.m. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.
- **POOLE**—Poole Church recently called **David Mabrey** as pastor.

## Spotlight on ...

## Cumberland



Cumberland Church will hold revival services Feb. 27-29, 7 p.m., with **Dave Hammond**, pastor of Faith Church of Myra, as evangelist. **Dennis Williams** is pastor.

- **PRINCETON**—**Tom Keim** recently resigned as pastor of Chapel Hill Church.
- **VANCEBURG**—Union Church recently called **Mike Clark** as pastor.

## Ky. native Skaggs wins gospel Grammy

**Los Angeles**—Bluegrass musician and Kentucky native Ricky Skaggs took the award for best Southern, country or bluegrass gospel album at the 50th annual Grammy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles Feb. 10.

Skaggs won for the album "Salt of the Earth," recorded collaboratively with bluegrass family band, The Whites, which features Skaggs' wife,

Sharon, as lead vocalist.

According to his website, the award is the 13th Grammy win for Skaggs, who is originally from Lawrence County in Eastern Kentucky. It is the singer's second award in the bluegrass gospel album category. He, along with his band Kentucky Thunder, won in 2000 for the album, "Soldier of the Cross."

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

## February

- 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.

## March

- 1 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 1 RA Congress Region 5, Mays Lick Baptist Church.
- 1 State Vacation Bible School Clinic—East, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington

- 4 Assimilation Tour, Rosebower Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 5-19 College Blitz, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.
- 7-8 Creative Ministries Festival, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 7 Mission Service Corps Basic Training, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 8 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Auditions, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 8 RA Congress Region 1, Bellview Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 8 RA Congress Region 3, First Baptist Church, Mount Washington.
- 8 Regional Keyboard Festival, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset; First Baptist Church, Murray; First Baptist Church, Shelbyville.
- 8 State Vacation Bible School Clinic—West, Second Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 13-16 Adult Kentucky Changers, Cedarmore Baptist Assembly, Bagdad.
- 13 Assimilation Tour, Flemingsburg Baptist Church.
- 15 Great Commission Prayer Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 15 RA Congress Region 2, Hyland Baptist Church, Henderson.

For more information, call (800) 266-6477 or visit [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org)

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** Oak church pews with green padding. Twenty pews 10 feet long, 3 pews 7 feet long. \$200 each. Call (270) 849-6144 or (270) 465-1980.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to children and families for Broadway Baptist Church of Louisville. For information, go to [www.broadwaybaptist.org](http://www.broadwaybaptist.org) and click on "Position Available."

**SEEKING:** A Spirit-led, highly motivated individual for minister of music at a growing Southern Baptist church. Send resumé to First Baptist Church, PO Box 327, Paris, KY 40362, Attn: Music Committee.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational music/youth minister for Wingo Baptist Church. Parsonage provided. Contact Scott Solowey, [soloweys@bellsouth.net](mailto:soloweys@bellsouth.net); or (270) 247-0405.

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth pastor for middle/high school program. Applicants will help fulfill our mission statement: "Encountering Christ through servicing people, changing hearts and lives." Send resumé by Feb. 29: Search Committee, North Park Baptist Church, 5015 N First Ave., Evansville, IN 47710; or to [rachelandjeff@msn.com](mailto:rachelandjeff@msn.com).

**SEEKING:** Bivocational pastor for Bethany Missionary Church in rural Lyon County. For more information, please call (270) 522-7670, or send resumé to Bethany Baptist Church, PO Box 1130, Eddyville, KY 42038.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of children. First Baptist Church, Gallatin, Tenn., seeks energetic individual for new position directing our ministry to babies through fifth grade. The ideal candidate will be creative, have a passion for children and have the ability to motivate others. Please mail resumé to Children's Minister Search Committee, PO Box 369, Gallatin, TN 37066; or e-mail to [greg@firstbaptistchurch.com](mailto:greg@firstbaptistchurch.com).

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. Primary duties include leading choir and congregational singing, coordinating music program and preparing seasonal cantatas. We desire someone with a true passion to lead worship. Please send resumé, references and DVD (if available) to: Music Committee, Springfield Baptist Church, PO Box 286, Springfield, KY 40069; or e-mail to [springfieldbc@bellsouth.net](mailto:springfieldbc@bellsouth.net) with "Minister of Music" as subject.

**SEEKING:** Worship leader/minister of music. Younger's Creek Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, Ky., is actively seeking a bivocational minister to lead worship and choir ministries. We are an excellent opportunity for someone looking to minister in a truly blended worship setting. If interested, please send resumé to: Search Team, 251 Younger's Creek Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

**SEEKING:** Part-time financial secretary. Hours and salary negotiable. Please contact Phyllis Vincent at (502) 895-2459; or [phyllis@broadwaybaptist.org](mailto:phyllis@broadwaybaptist.org) at Broadway Baptist Church, 4000 Brownsboro Road, Louisville, KY 40207.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational pastor for small, rural church in Sanders, Ky. Resumés by 2-20-2008 to [sbc0907@hotmail.com](mailto:sbc0907@hotmail.com). Profile listed on KBC site; or call (502) 484-2508.

**SEEKING:** Organist for First Baptist Church, Paris, Tenn. Resumés now being accepted. The music and worship ministry of FBC is blended/eclectic, ranging from Handel to Franny Crosby to Stuart Townsend/Keith Getty. The organ is a two-manual, 28-rank Schantz. Please contact Scott Shepherd, minister of music and worship, for job description or more information: [sshepherd@fbcparis.org](mailto:sshepherd@fbcparis.org); (731) 642-5074. Deadline: March 2.

**SEEKING:** Full-time director of youth ministries for Gardenside Baptist Church. For information, visit [www.gardensidebaptist.com](http://www.gardensidebaptist.com).

**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](mailto:gfaulls@bellnet.org).

**SEEKING:** Senior pastor for First Baptist Church, Morganfield, Ky., seeking community-minded individual for a church that has an existing community outreach presence. Morganfield First Baptist Church is located in a small, western Kentucky town and has an average attendance of 200-250. We have two Sunday morning services—one contemporary and one blended. This is an awesome church that has a strong potential for growth. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 200 North Morgan St., Morganfield, KY 42437.

**SEEKING:** Minister of worship, Green Castle Baptist Church, 4970 Murphy Lane, Louisville, KY 40241. Seeking candidates with mature personal relationship with God, and the ability to conceive, design, prepare, direct and lead high-impact, integrated worship services based on selected themes, drawing from a broad range of worship styles and arts, assisting the pastor in planning worship services—responsible for selection and presentation of music, and the supervision of the music department and worship service staff. This position reports to the pastor. For job description and instruction, contact Angela Overton at (502)243-4040 or [gcbc@iglou.com](mailto:gcbc@iglou.com).

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister for Panther Creek Baptist Church in Owensboro, Ky. Please e-mail resumé to [pcbc@bellsouth.net](mailto:pcbc@bellsouth.net) by March 1, 2008.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Mount Tabor Baptist, an SBC church in Paint Lick, Ky. (near Richmond). Salary plus benefits. Send resumé to L. Metcalf, 213 LeBeau Drive, Nicholasville, KY 40356; or e-mail [lmetcalf@alltel.net](mailto:lmetcalf@alltel.net).

**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 youth minister. Seeking an enthusiastic individual with a heart for youth ministry to: Lead meaningful Bible study; teach relevant topics during youth meetings; plan and supervise age-appropriate activities and events; promote growth of our youth ministry within our church and community; assist in pastoral duties in absence of pastor (i.e., vacations, conferences, etc.). Requirements: college degree and/or previous experience in youth ministry preferred. Compensation: negotiable. First Baptist Church, 116 Eastview Drive, Central City, KY 42330. (270) 754-2420. Contact person: Dr. James (Jimmy) Brewer, [brewerdm@bellsouth.net](mailto:brewerdm@bellsouth.net).

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# Whose job is it to care for America's underprivileged?

*Debate centers on who is responsible, the church or state*

By Marv Knox  
Texas Baptist Standard

Dallas (ABP)—Care for people Jesus called “the least of these” requires response from both congregations and government, according to specialists who focus on ministry to the poor and on church-state relations.

As participants in both church and state, Christians should minister directly to the poor and also advocate to the government on their behalf, specialists stress.

Christians are “citizens of two kingdoms,” said Stephen Reeves, legislative counsel for the Baptist General Convention of Texas’ Christian Life Commission. “We have loyalty and allegiance to God’s Kingdom, as well as being American citizens.”

Churches should follow Jesus’ model—and doing things to help the poor is following His model, Reeves added.

“As American citizens, we have the opportunity to influence policies and our elected officials,” he continued. “In being good citizens of both God’s Kingdom and the United States, you can do that by advocating in the political realm.”

Others agree, first and foremost, that ministry to the poor is a Christian concern.

“Jesus urges the (church) community to be involved in the needs of ‘the least of these,’” said Fritz Gutwein, a lifelong Baptist who works as field coordinator for the National Council of Churches. “If we want to live in community with one another, we must be concerned about ‘the least of these.’”

But people who say that only the church, and not the government, should care for the needs of poor people are not thinking clearly, noted Jimmy Dorrell, executive director of Mission Waco, a faith-based community ministry in Waco, Texas.

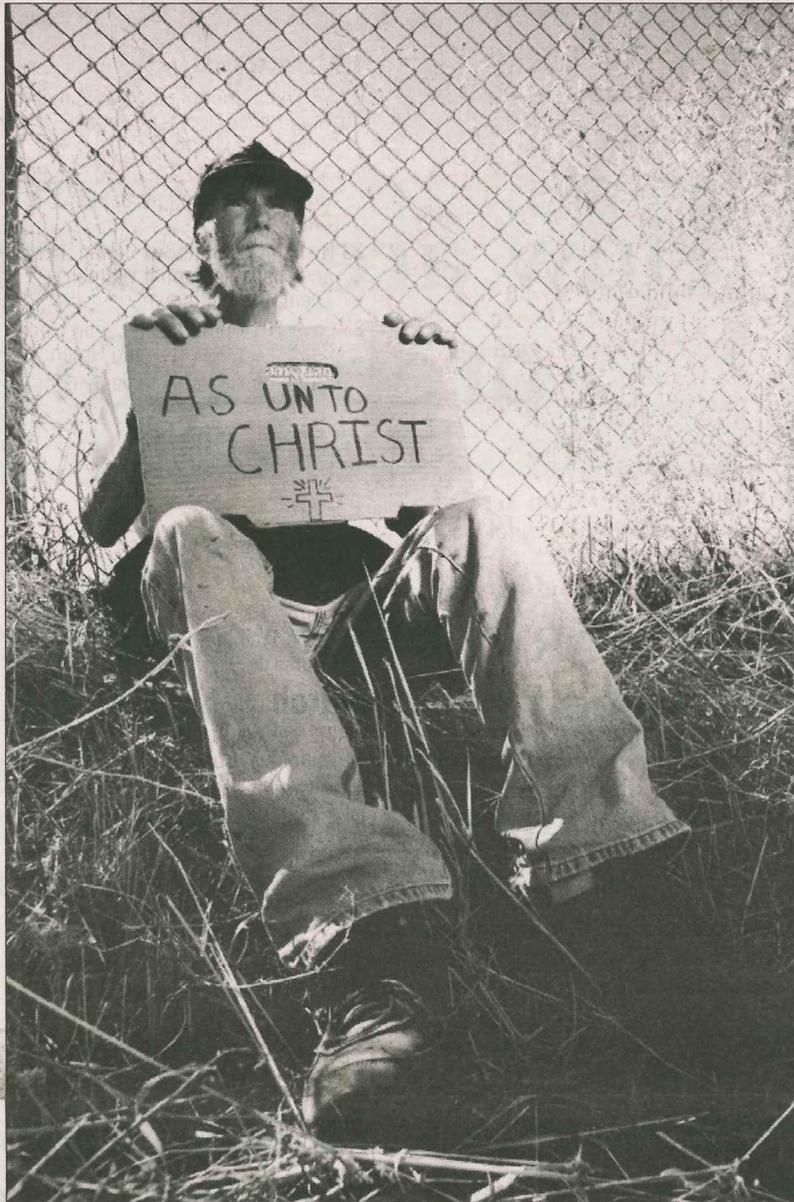
“Practically, it’s fallacious to believe the church can do what the government does for the poor,” Dorrell said. He cited research that shows each church, synagogue and mosque in the U.S. would have to contribute \$300,000 each year to fund the basic poverty-relief programs provided by the government.

“People say, ‘The church should be doing it,’ but we’ve lost that battle,” he reasoned. “We’re giving only about one-half of 1 percent of each congregation’s budget to meet the needs of the poor.”

Besides, the scale of need is just too massive for the church alone, Gutwein added.

“There are needs that can only be met by government; the church is just not capable of doing it,” he said. “Think about health care, or feeding the hungry. Those are huge tasks. They’re similar to infrastructure: We wouldn’t expect the church to pave all the roads between a person’s home and church.”

Melissa Rogers, an attorney and visiting professor of religion and public policy at Wake Forest University Divinity School in Winston-



Salem, N.C., echoed that theme, stressing that church and government should tend to their appropriate roles.

“There are some things that essentially only the government can do—like building and rebuilding levees in New Orleans or ensuring every American has health care,” Rogers said. “And there are some things only religious communities can do—like spreading the gospel and meeting other spiritual needs.”

“And an additional part of the religious community’s job is to call on the government to do what only it can do, like maintaining a safety net for people in particular need of assistance, and making sure they’re safe and secure in the wake of disasters.”

Plus, according to Reeves, when it comes to a problem of scale, there are not a whole lot of other viable options.

## Government can work

Some Christians also need to get over the erroneous notion that government cannot be trusted to do something good, like helping poor people, Dorrell added.

“We’ve determined the government and society are evil, and we’re good,” he said. “That’s bad theology. Government was ordained by God; it’s the structure God created to take care of people.”

“We as faith-based people should be the corrective force. Clearly (government) goes off course. It’s the role of Christians to navigate back to a biblical viewpoint.”

So if both church and state are involved in helping people in need,

how do people of faith negotiate the fault line between the two potent institutions?

A key is how the work is focused and financed, explained Cynthia Holmes, an attorney from Clayton, Mo., who has served on the boards of several First Amendment organizations.

“The government needs to engage in social programs, but it doesn’t need to do the work of the church,” Holmes said. “The Good Samaritan didn’t say: ‘Hang on. I’m going to get a government grant to take care of you.’”

And even though the tasks are enormous, congregations must keep their focus and identity clear, Rogers added.

Congregations “embody” a religious mission and are the core of the religious sector,” she said. “They should always maintain their independent and prophetic voice and not be encumbered by government rules and regulations.”

Holmes noted that churches have a theological reason for not abdicating their responsibility to care for the needy. “As Christians, if we ask the government to do our ministry for us, that ministry is diminished,” she said. “A cup of water given in the government’s name is not the same as Jesus’ name.”

Both Holmes and Rogers suggested that if churches wish to set up programs that receive government funding, they should create completely separate corporations.

“Churches should never seek or accept government funding for what they do,” Rogers said. Churches that

want a ministry which receives government grants can “spin off separate religiously affiliated organizations,” but even then, the lines between what is done for the general good and what is religiously oriented should be bright and wide.

“Don’t use (government) money to proselytize,” Holmes stressed. “Don’t ask the government to do for you what it wouldn’t do for others and discriminate against others. ... And don’t feel discriminated against just because the government won’t advance your religion.”

A church goal in this kind of ministry should be “transforming culture,” Dorrell said. That involves calibrated collaboration—working and interacting with both private and public sectors, including the government, whose services meet the needs of the poor and disenfranchised. “We collaborate, but we’re not beholden to,” he noted.

Rogers offered similar advice to faith-based ministries.

“Religion and government should be in conversation about these issues. But neither one should be commanded, controlled or co-opted by the other,” she said. “Conversation is always good. Cooperation is sometimes good. But having either the government or religion trying to command, control and co-opt the other is never good.”

## Remain impartial

Churches can model appropriate conversation by being nonpartisan, Gutwein noted. “It’s better to define the issues and talk about the issues, rather than get involved with the personalities,” he added. “Authenticity is important. We can’t pretend we’re focusing on the issues and then wink and nod as we point toward a candidate.”

Another important part of conversation is advocacy on behalf of the poor, Reeves said.

“While the government is not the be-all and end-all, it is right to advocate that the government play a role (in meeting human needs), just as the church plays a role,” he explained. “It is legitimate to look at our government’s budgets, to see that they reflect our Christian values. ... Advocate and vote for folks who will be good stewards of our tax dollars, just as you would hope you would have a good stewardship committee in your church.”

And congregations should bear witness to advocacy with their actions, Gutwein insisted. “You can’t do one without the other. You can’t be involved in advocacy without being involved with the homeless who are on the street corners.”

Besides, involvement may not only serve the needy, but it just may save the church, he added.

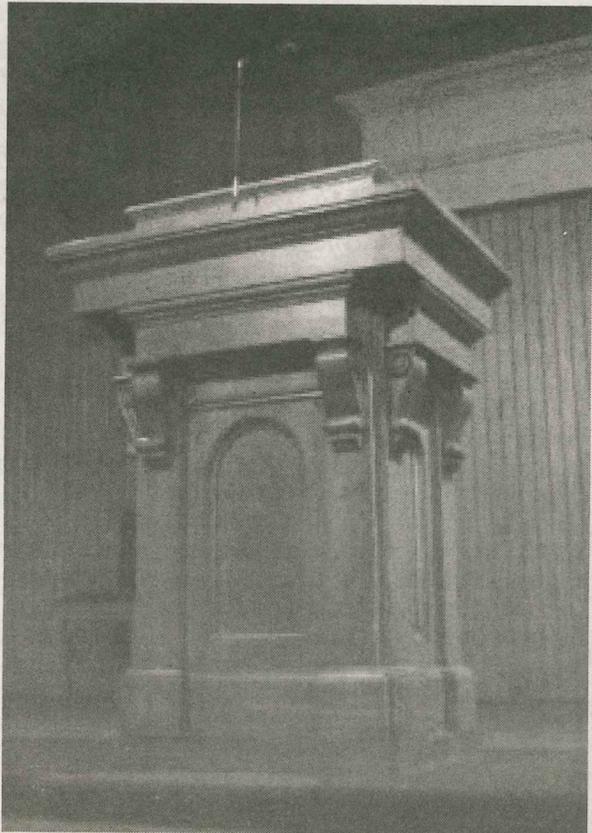
“It’s important for churches to be involved if they’re going to survive,” he explained. “People don’t come to church because of orthodoxy, but because of what churches do. ... The primary thing is what the church is doing, not what they believe. People get the orthodoxy after they come to church.”

“Charity, development, advocacy and justice. To meet the needs of ‘the least of these’ in society, we have to be involved in doing them all.”

**“There are some things that essentially only the government can do—like building and rebuilding levees in New Orleans or ensuring every American has health care. And there are some things only religious communities can do—like spreading the gospel and meeting other spiritual needs.”**

Melissa Rogers, attorney and visiting professor of religion and public policy at Wake Forest University Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

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Fax: 606-337-2372

Internet: [www.ccbbc.edu](http://www.ccbbc.edu)

E-Mail: [ccbbc@ccbbc.edu](mailto:ccbbc@ccbbc.edu)