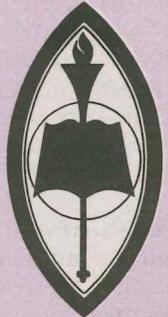


March 4, 2008
Vol. 182, No. 10

WMU Kentucky Notes



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Fla. pastor says post-Castro generations in Cuba still will suffer. *Page 12.*

NAMB missionary seeks to reach Hispanics in Okla.

By Mickey Noah
SBC North American Mission Board

Norman, Okla.—Why did communist guerillas in El Salvador put Daniel Caceres so high on their murder "hit list" in 1980?



Daniel Caceres

Was it because his brother was a top officer in El Salvador's army battling the guerillas? Was it because Caceres had been a successful businessman, or because he was an evangelical Christian leader in the civil war-torn nation?

Twenty-seven years later, Caceres acknowledges he does not care or want to know why he was targeted.

"Back then, pastors and priests were being killed all the time," he recalled. "A lot of people died in El Salvador, close to 100,000 people, especially the clergy, lawyers and businessmen."

Caceres, 58, was born in the Central American country as was his wife, Marta, and their two sons. Educated as an accountant who also achieved national soccer fame, he fled the country when war erupted.

Raised by a mother who was a "great lady of faith," Caceres already had rejected two "calls" from God to become a pastor by the time war broke out.

"God called me three times," Caceres noted. "The first time, I didn't hear His voice very clearly. The second time, I heard His voice but I didn't answer."

The third time—with war and certain death hanging over him—Caceres answered God's call. "I said, 'Lord, it's OK. Now I surrender my life full-time to you,' and I started preaching the gospel," he recalled.

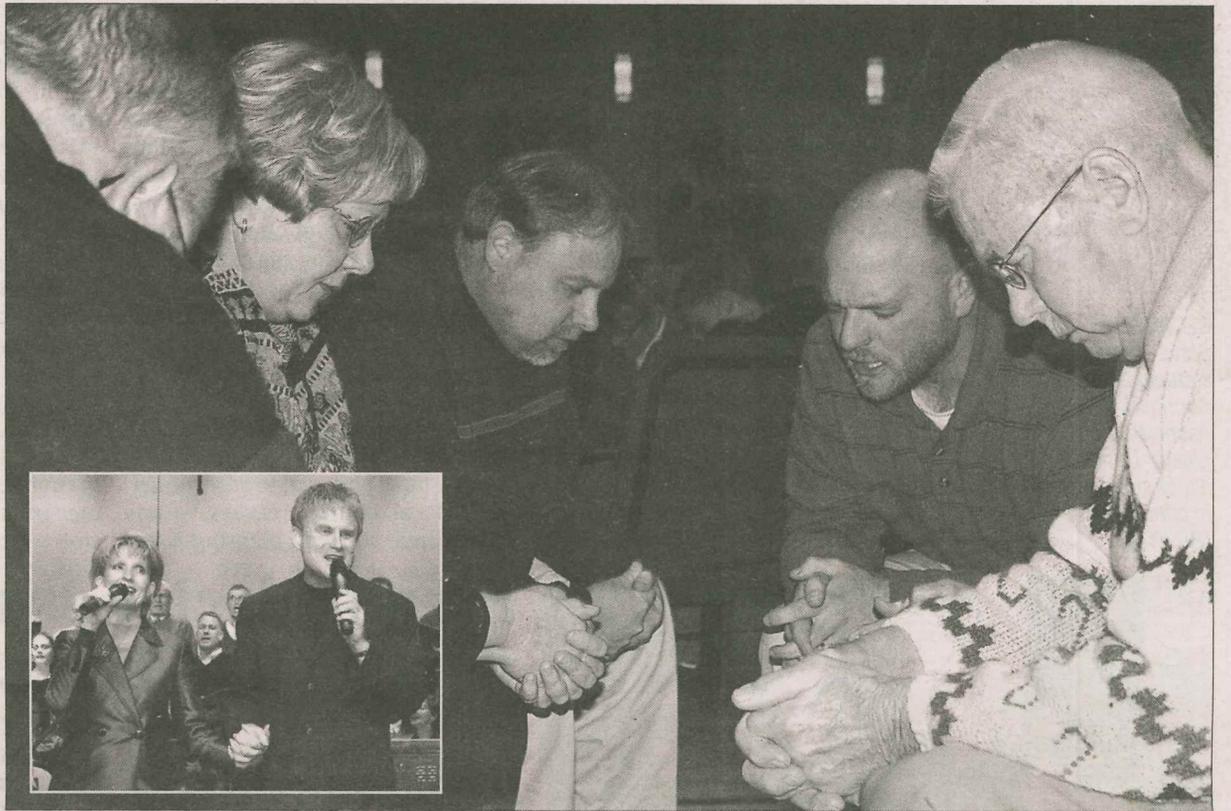
So Caceres left his beloved yet bloody El Salvador in 1980. He lost his heavy equipment business, his house, his cars and the church he loved so much.

"I came to America only with my two kids, my wife and my Jesus Christ," he said with a face that breaks into a warm smile when he mentions the name of "his" Jesus.

Working in His typical mysterious way, God used three communist guerillas—all stalking Caceres to kill him with their machine guns—to make him realize he needed to completely surrender his life to God.

□ See Missionary was ... *Page 9*

Barriers to overcome



Above: A group of Kentucky Baptists pray at last week's Evangelism Conference at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown that all children in the state will have the opportunity to attend vacation Bible school this year. Inset: Dove award-winning duo Terry & Barbi Franklin lead worship during the two-day evangelism event. (Photos by Dannah Prather and Drew Nichter)

KBC Evangelism Conference highlights need for unity in Christ

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Elizabethtown—Prior to addressing the audience at last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, John Avant showed a video featuring dozens of people on the street being asked, "Who is Jesus?"

Most respondents implied that Christ was simply a man, a myth or a legend. As the video faded, Avant asked, "We have a big challenge, don't we?"

Avant, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Monroe, La., was one of 10 speakers at this year's gathering at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, the theme of which was, "Overcoming Barriers." He suggested that the primary barrier to Christians sharing their faith with a lost world, may, in fact, be Christians themselves.

Pointing out some unflattering observations of believers by non-believers published in the Barna Group's recent book, "unChristian," Avant noted, "If half of this is true, we are in deep, deep trouble."

Avant, former vice president of evangelization for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, referenced Isaiah 6:1-9 and the prophet's commission from the Lord, suggesting that Kentucky Baptists should look to that passage as a foundation for evangelism.

The pastor also suggested that believers must "have a new vision of God" and a "new vision of our mission ... if we are going to reach our nation."

To accomplish this, Avant rec-

ommended that pastors should "do anything it takes to reach children, students and young adults." He also said that Kentucky Baptists must "like" lost people.

Most importantly, Avant noted, Christians must be willing to share their joy. "Let's just be a people of joy everywhere we go," he declared.

But as a pastor, "how do you step up to that challenge?" asked Richard Harris, NAMB's senior strategist for missions advancement.

Harris indicated that pastors have a tremendous responsibility to share the gospel, but how ministers han-

dle that task is the challenge that each Kentucky Baptist pastor must face. He also noted that many church leaders are "too full of pride."

"We need to remember it's Christ's church," Harris declared. "By the mercy of God, we've been given this ministry."

Harris alerted Kentucky Baptists to the disturbing trend of declining churches in the United States. He pointed out NAMB research that found at least 62 percent of evangelical churches are in decline. The baptism numbers were even more dis-

□ See Conference presenters ... *Page 3*

Farewell, Trennis



Western Recorder Board of Directors Chairman Floyd Price (left) congratulates Trennis Henderson on his eight-and-a-half-year tenure as editor of Kentucky Baptists' weekly newspaper. On behalf of the staff, board of directors and Kentucky Baptists, we say, "Thank you, Trennis," for the tremendous work you have done during your time as editor, and we wish you God's blessings in your new endeavor.

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, March 5.

Liberty sets goal to plant 500 new churches

By Mickey Noah
SBC North American Mission Board

Lynchburg, Va. (BP)—Leaders at Liberty University have a vision to help plant some 500 new churches during the next five years, demonstrating its commitment with a three-day church planting conference.

At chapel services held during the conference and attended by 5,000-plus Liberty students, several hundred made decisions to sign up for summer missionary and church planting internships across the United States.

Cosponsored and attended by representatives from 15 state Baptist conventions and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, the Liberty conference aimed at recruiting students for real-life church planting opportunities this summer.

"Liberty wants to help students discover and examine their calling in this area of ministry," said David Wheeler, NAMB national missionary and associate director of Liberty's Church Planting Center, "and

to gain a sense of the heartbeat and vision that Liberty has for church planting."

Wheeler indicated that the conference will become an annual event at the Lynchburg, Va., campus.

Jonathan Falwell, Liberty's executive vice president for spiritual affairs, noted, "Our time together was extremely productive as we discussed strategies for literally saturating our nation with new church plants.

"This is something my dad (the late Jerry Falwell) was passionate about and it's something that I'm passionate about as well. Over the next few months, we will begin implementing some of the ideas that were shared" during the conference.

Speaking during a campus-wide convocation, Ergun Caner, president of Liberty's seminary and graduate school, shared his life-changing experience as a summer missionary in Wisconsin during his college days.

"Church planting should be the driving force and goal toward which every local church reaches," Caner declared. "Church planting is es-

sential to the furtherance of the gospel because it is the local church to which God has given the mandate to carry forth the message of Jesus Christ.

"It only makes sense that the strategy for getting the gospel to a lost and dying world would be through the local church reproducing itself," Caner added.

Steve Canter, a NAMB church planting consultant, said, "We at NAMB hope the long-term effect of this emphasis is that as students serve on summer mission projects in church plants, God will work in their lives and then, after graduation, they would serve as church planters or part of a church-planting team out in the state conventions."

Representatives of state Baptist conventions and other ministries spoke in Liberty classrooms and staffed 25 booths at the school's DeMoss Hall during the recent event, enabling SBC representatives to recruit students and share information on church planting, summer missionary internships or mission trips.

NAMB adopts new prayer initiative for missionaries

By Mickey Noah
SBC North American Mission Board

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—If one out of eight of Southern Baptists' 43,000-plus churches would "adopt" a North American Mission Board missionary, all 5,000 of NAMB's missionaries in the United States and Canada would receive much more prayer, encouragement and support.

Under NAMB's new Missionary Encourager initiative, Southern Baptist churches can personalize their missions commitments by adopting a North American missionary.

"Everyone loves to cheer for the home team," said Carol Baker, NAMB's church relations consultant. "Southern Baptists' home team is made up of 5,000 NAMB missionaries across North America."

Some NAMB missionaries need continual encouragement and prayer simply because their jobs not only are challenging, but potentially dangerous.

Jason* is a church-planting missionary in the San Francisco Bay area jointly supported by NAMB and the California Southern Baptist Convention. He ministers to Afghan Muslims who number about 40,000 in the Bay area.

"It's really helped me for my church partners to come in here and do prayerwalks, sports camps and other events," Jason said. "It has opened their eyes to what ministering to other cultures is all about."

A church's size does not matter when it comes to adopting and encouraging missionaries, Jason added.

Four churches—ranging in size from a 5,000-member congregation in Florida to a church of only 30 in Texas—have adopted Jason, who hopes to travel to Afghanistan this coming summer with a former Afghan diplomat.

Bill Johnson, a missionary in Georgia's Stone Mountain Baptist Association, said he appreciates the support of churches through Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

But financial support does not "allow me to do all what needs to be done," Johnson acknowledged.

"We're not meant to be lone rangers out here," he added. "We're very much in need of the church's support. By partnering with us, they come on mission with us. We can't do what we do apart from them."

For information on how to adopt NAMB missionaries through the Missionary Encourager initiative, visit www.namb.net/encourager.

*Name changed for security reasons

RECRUITING PLANTERS
Steve Timmons (left), a student worker with Southern Nevada Baptist Association, talks to two Liberty University students about summer internships in church planting. (BP photo)



Everett elected as executive director for Texas convention

Dallas (ABP)—Commitment to a "Kingdom assignment"—namely, ensuring that every person in Texas has the opportunity to respond to Christ by Easter 2010—can help unite Texas Baptists, Randel Everett told the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board prior to his election as executive director.

The board voted Feb. 26 to elect Everett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Newport News, Va., as executive director at their meeting in Dallas. He succeeds Charles Wade, who retired Jan. 31.

"We no longer live in Acts 2," when Peter was able to address an audience with a shared understanding about God's acts in Israel's history, Everett noted. "We live in a pluralistic Acts 17 world," he continued, comparing postmodern culture to the time when the Apostle Paul addressed a philosophically and theologically diverse crowd at Mars Hill.

Everett, 58, served nine years as president of the John Leland Center for Theological Studies in Arlington, Va. While he was at the helm, the center received accreditation from the Association of Theological

Schools.

His last three years at the Leland Center overlapped the beginning of his pastorate in Newport News. He previously served five years at Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va., a 3,000-member congregation in suburban Washington, D.C.

Everett also served as pastor at First Baptist Church of Pensacola, Fla.; First Baptist Church of Benton, Ark.; Inglewood Baptist Church in Grand Prairie, Texas; and First Baptist Church in Gonzales, Texas. He also was assistant minister of missions at First Baptist Church of Dallas.

Everett served as chairman of the Baptist World Alliance's education and evangelism commission from 2000 to 2005 and has held other positions with the BWA.

He served on the BGCT Executive Board from 1978 to 1979. Other denominational leadership posts included president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board, moderator of Peninsula Baptist Association in Virginia, and trustee of Florida Baptist College.

GuideStone releases '07 tax guide

Dallas (BP)—Ministers can find help in preparing their 2007 federal income tax returns from GuideStone Financial Resources' annual Ministers Tax Guide.

The edition for 2007 taxes, released by the Dallas-based Southern Baptist entity, includes details of tax law changes and their effect on ministers.

"The informative free tax guide includes sample tax returns with step-by-step instructions for active and retired ministers, as well as a special pull-out section regarding the federal reporting requirements for churches," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said. "Our goal as an organization is to be a lifelong part-

ner with our participants in enhancing their financial security. The tax guide is a tangible example of that commitment."

An overview of the tax law changes was written by Richard Hammar, a noted CPA, attorney and widely published author who specializes in legal and tax issues for ministers. The guide is edited by GuideStone's legal and compliance staff to address the tax issues that affect the greatest number of Southern Baptist pastors.

The tax guide can be obtained in an electronic PDF format from the GuideStone Web site, www.GuideStone.org. Printed copies or a CD version also can be obtained by calling (888) 98-GUIDE.

BAPTIST DIGEST

Page urges Baptists to help rebuild Union. Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page called for Southern Baptist churches to give generously to Union University as the campus seeks to recover from more than \$40 million in damages sustained in a Feb. 5 tornado. Page issued his challenge Feb. 27, during his first visit to Union since the tornado destroyed about 70 percent of its student housing and caused extensive damage to other buildings. Page encouraged Southern Baptist churches to take up special offerings in an effort "to step up to the plate and to assist this wonderful university in rebuilding this campus better and bigger than ever before."

Ark. college prof nominated for CBF post. Hal Bass, a professor at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., has been nominated for the position of moderator-elect for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He will be presented for a vote at the organization's annual General Assembly, which will be held June 20 in Memphis, Tenn. Bass, who currently serves as CBF's recorder, teaches political science and is dean of the school of social sciences at OBU. A member of First Baptist Church of Arkadelphia, Bass has served on CBF coordinating councils at the national and state level.

British pastor aids U.N. effort to end slavery. British Baptist pastor Steve Chalke has been appointed as a special advisor to the United Nation's Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. Chalke, chair of Stop the Traffic, a group of 1,000 organizations in 60 countries that work to stop the buying and selling of people, will work in the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime to help foster community action against human trafficking. The author of more than 40 books, Chalke has long campaigned to end poverty through housing, health care and educational projects. He has also become a major advocate in the anti-trafficking campaign. Human trafficking is "the world's fastest growing crime" and is "a great evil" that needs to be defeated, Chalke said.

Southern professors urge evangelism, obedience, unity

By **Trennis Henderson & Dannah Prather**
Editor & Partnerships Editor

Elizabethtown—How can believers move beyond evangelistic apathy? The key, according to Chuck Lawless, is found in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lawless, dean of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, was one of three Southern Seminary faculty members to address last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference. Other speakers included Kevin Smith, assistant professor of church history, and Herschel York, associate dean of ministry and proclamation at Southern's school of theology.

Speaking during the conference's Tuesday morning session, Lawless cited several Scripture references from the Gospels and Acts to highlight steps in "overcoming obstacles in evangelism."

Affirming Christ's declaration in Matthew 28:20 that "I am with you always even to the end of age," Lawless added, "Jesus said, 'Go, make disciples, teach them; but you don't have to do this by yourself. I am with you always.'"

Called to witness

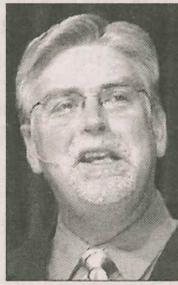
Citing the Apostle Peter's courage to proclaim the gospel after he received the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, he noted, "When God called us to be witnesses, He gave us the power to get it done."

Through the power of God's Spirit, Lawless declared:

■ **Frightened people gain courage.** "Are we afraid of rejection?" he asked. Pointing to Stephen's martyrdom recorded in Acts 7, Lawless said,



Kevin Smith



Herschel York

"The Spirit of God gives courage to live, and like Stephen, the Spirit of God gives courage to die."

■ **Broken people find strength.** Warning that "we've gotten over grace," he said, "We've forgotten that we are sinful people, redeemed only by the gracious call of God."

■ **Believers don't miss opportunities to witness.** Recounting Peter's denial of Christ after He was arrested, Lawless emphasized that Peter "was not thinking about evangelism" because "evangelistic apathy had set in."

After the coming of the Holy Spirit, however, Peter "does not miss opportunities to witness when he walks in the power of the Spirit."

Emphasizing the urgency of walking in the power of God's Spirit today, Lawless urged Kentucky Baptists to "watch where God is working and push through those open doors."

■ **Lives are changed.** The early church "went where the people were," Lawless noted. "They went where people needed to hear the gospel."

"We are so cocooned among church people that we don't even know any lost people to reach," he cautioned. "The devil is all over that, folks."

"Lives were changed in the ear-

ly church because they were willing to die for Jesus," he declared. "When you come to the point where you are willing to die for Jesus, there are no more obstacles."

Kevin Smith, pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville and former KBC first vice president, told Kentucky Baptists, "Christian unity is the most powerful evangelistic force available to us. ... When we fight against unity, unfortunately we fight against the power of God."

Citing Acts 1 and 2, Smith said Christ's disciples needed to be in one accord to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Like-mindedness among the disciples also was crucial before the thousands gathered at Pentecost would accept the gospel message.

"We understand that revival requires our efforts," Smith said, but "the most important evangelistic element (is) the power of God."

Accepting one another

Acts records that prior to the Pentecost conversions, believers were "in one accord and in one place," Smith noted. "That doesn't mean they were all the same. It just means that, as different as they were, they were all focused on the same thing."

To share the gospel effectively, and then to baptize and disciple new believers, Christians must be willing to learn from, and accept, one another. "It doesn't matter if I say it James Brown style and you say it Elvis Presley style," Smith added.

The story of Pentecost contains an important word: "suddenly," he said. When believers gathered in obedience to God's command, "they were waiting for the fulfillment" of His promises. They were not disappointed. "When was the last time

you experienced a 'suddenly' moment?" he asked.

Former KBC President Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, detailed the Old Testament account of Jonah as he highlighted "A Heart for God."

"The only way you can have a heart for God is to know something of the heart of God," he emphasized.

Noting that "your outward obedience can mask inward rebellion," York added that "God can pretty much make you do whatever He wants you to do; it's another thing to want to do what He wants you to do."

Describing Jonah's effort to flee from God's presence as "the peril of a person denying his purpose," York said the prophet's disobedience sparked a "constant downward progression throughout the book."

Addressing whether Jonah being swallowed by a fish is literally true, York declared. "I believe Jesus got up from the dead. If you believe in the resurrection, everything else is minor. ... I am just simple enough to believe the Word of God."

Citing God's forgiveness of Nineveh after the people heard Jonah's message and repented, York said, "God does not change His mind. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. ... He will always forgive the sinner who comes to Him in repentance."

York said lessons to be learned from Jonah include:

■ "You can run from God but you can't outrun Him."

■ "God is as interested in our affection as He is our direction."

■ "God's commands are always for our good."

Conference presenters urge Ky. Baptists to overcome barriers

Continued from page 1

mal with 32 percent of Southern Baptist churches having baptized only one person in a recent year; 23 percent of churches reported zero baptisms in that same year.

Harris attributed this decline to the failure of believers to share the Good News.

He challenged pastors to "preach Jesus Christ the Lord," adding that "He left you behind for a reason, to be proclaimers."

"The more of the Word of God I insert into my preaching, the more power it has," Harris explained.

Declaring that "every bit of biblical theology is evangelistic," Roy Fish said both "a theology of evangelism" and "an evangelism of theology" are "absolutely essential" in sharing the gospel.

Fish, distinguished professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, emphasized that "the theologians in the New Testament were people on the front line of the battle in winning people to Jesus Christ."

Affirming that "the basic doctrines of our Bible are evangelistic," Fish cited such doctrinal examples as Christology, anthropology, eschatology and demonology.

"Every major fact about Jesus Christ is a fact that is related to evangelism," he noted. "You wouldn't have good news to preach ... if there



Roy Fish



Richard Harris

was no incarnation."

Lamenting that "Southern Baptists are weakest in our theology at the point of anthropology—the theology of man," Fish asked, "How in the world can we expect large numbers of lost people to come to our churches when over 50 percent of the members don't come?"

Concerning the doctrine of eschatology, Fish explained, "Nothing magnifies the worth of evangelism like looking at it through the lenses of eschatology."

When someone accepts Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior, "an eternal destiny is changed," he emphasized. "People who were going to be forever in hell will now be forever in heaven."

Noting that fewer than 5 percent of Southern Baptists talked to anyone about Jesus Christ last year, Fish said demonology is "vitaly related to evangelism."

"It's simply the devil," he insist-

ed. "He does everything he can to keep us from telling the good news about Jesus."

Evangelism involves invading Satan's territory, Fish concluded, urging Kentucky Baptists to "leave this place to invade the territory of the devil."

Challenging Kentucky Baptist pastors to "let the Great Commission be the heartbeat" of the ministry, John Sullivan said that Jesus' charge set forth in Acts 1:8 "is at the heart of what the church is about."

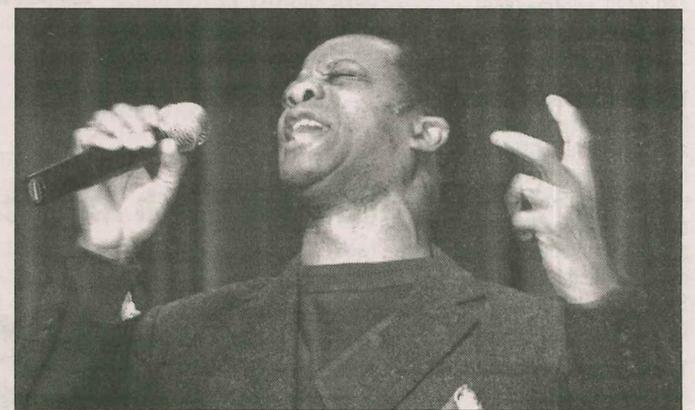
Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, noted that "when you come to the Great Commission ... there are only two things necessary. To accept the authority (and) to have the audacity."

Not only must Kentucky Baptists declare the authority of Christ, but they must be bold enough "to do something about it," Sullivan urged.

"If we love Jesus as much as we say we love Jesus, we must have the audacity to imitate Him," Sullivan added. "When I am doing Acts 1:8, I look like Jesus ... because that's what He did when He was here."

In addition to the host of speakers at last week's Evangelism Conference, participants also were invited to attend more than a dozen breakout sessions on a variety of evangelistic topics.

The two-day event also featured



praise and worship led by Dove award-winning duo Terry and Barbi Franklin. Grammy winner and Kentucky Baptist Larnelle Harris concluded the conference with a mini-concert.

Participants also prayed "With One Voice," emulating the statewide prayer event held last September. Kentucky Baptists prayed that all children in the commonwealth would have the opportunity to attend vacation Bible school this year.

During the time of directed prayer, Keith Inman, KBC's associate team leader for the collegiate/young adult ministry department, also asked men and women to "pass the torch" of Christian ministry "to an emerging generation."

With additional reporting by Editor Trennis Henderson and Partnerships Editor Dannah Prather

TIME OF PRAISE
Grammy and Dove award winner Larnelle Harris performs a mini-concert to close out last week's KBC Evangelism Conference at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. (Photo by Trennis Henderson)

WESTERN RECORDER

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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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Speak out now against casino gambling

By Joy Bolton

Louisville—On Feb. 19, women and men from across Kentucky gathered at the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort to speak out against expanded gambling. The Women Against Gambling Expansion (WAGE) rally featured seven speakers, including two young adults. Each speaker was passionate about the negative impact of expanded gambling on families.

After the rally we delivered letters to state senators and representatives. Later, we attended a meeting of the expanded gambling subcommittee where a revised version of the proposal was approved.

As I observed the committee meeting, I felt that I was seeing exactly what Gov. Steve Beshear intended to happen from the beginning. The committee had determined that the governor's proposal was not acceptable because it proposes far more casinos than this state can possibly support. So they pared down his proposal and added some language for local communities to be able to vote on whether a casino could be established there—provided the state constitution is amended. If the recommendation is eventually approved by the Senate and House, everyone involved can claim to be a winner—the governor for getting an expanded gambling bill passed and

the Legislature for “standing up to the governor.”

I believe this was the plan from the beginning and our legislators are playing along. The telling statement in the subcommittee meeting was when one representative said that he was against the local option proposal because some communities might vote “no.”

The most disturbing thing that I see in all of this is the number of legislators who are quoted as saying, “I’m not hearing any opposition to expanded gambling from my district.” Someone from Tennessee wrote me saying, “I live in Nashville and ... I am concerned about Franklin, Ky. and Kentucky Downs (which is) a 50-minute drive from Nashville. I can’t get the churches there to do something. That is my concern.”

Getting people to understand the potential impact of expanded gambling is a challenge. Too often we just pass off addicted gamblers by saying, “It’s their problem.” What we miss is the fact that children and other family members are victims. Eventually, society at large pays for the destruction in these families through greater need for social services, crime, divorce, etc.

I think part of the problem in getting people to speak out against expanded gambling is that there are people in our churches who are rec-

reational gamblers and do not want to admit it. A survey recently published in the Louisville Courier-Journal proves it. It showed that among born-again evangelicals who attend worship services regularly (at least once a week), more than 35 percent admitted to gambling in the past year, either by playing the lottery, betting on horse races or visiting a casino. Among those born-again evangelicals who attend church less often, the number jumps to nearly 55 percent.

These churchgoers are among the 90 percent of patrons who visit a gambling venue, have a good time losing money (with an occasional win) and go home. It is the other 6 to 10 percent of gamblers, however, who actually provide most of the casino/slot machine income.

Others in our churches fail to speak up out of sheer complacency. However, if a drug was approved that for was good for 90 percent of the population, but made 6 to 8 percent sick and 2 to 4 percent really sick, perhaps even killing them, we would demand that the Food and Drug Administration take the drug off the market. Yet we are apathetic about the potential harm of casino gambling in our communities.

The children of problem gamblers are the ones who suffer when parents waste their money. For the sake of the children, speak up now.

Joy Bolton is executive director of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union

COMMENTARY

Stirring up generosity

As a boy and an adult, I have stirred up several yellow jacket nests over the years. Their sting is about as painful as any wasp sting.

The tornado that came through Muhlenberg County Feb. 5 left a wide and long path of destruction, and our needs in the aftermath stirred up another kind of yellow jacket. Volunteers, trained by the

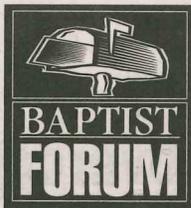
Kentucky Baptist Convention disaster relief team, came from Ohio River Association, Little River Association, Christian County Association, Monticello, and Blue Ridge Association of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

These yellow jackets did not sting. They ministered by helping clear lots and remove trees from houses. They also ministered in words of comfort and encouragement. We thank

them for coming and being here with us.

We thank others—churches and individuals—who gave to our Crisis Closet and in other ways to help our county and us recover from the storm. The help was so generous and ways of helping were so numerous that it is impossible to thank each one individually. But nevertheless, as best as we can, we say thanks to everyone for everything.

Ray Gilliland, director of missions,
Muhlenberg County Baptist Association



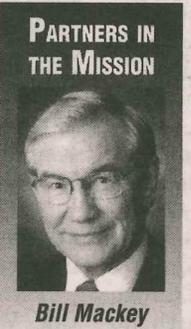
Reaching North America for Christ

As we rapidly approach the time when we collect the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions I want to talk about another Annie who also had a tremendous impact on missions right here in Kentucky.

Annie Allen was a Kentucky Baptist Convention and Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) missionary worker who helped start First Baptist Church of Garrett in 1939. Working under the direction of another missionary, Lewis Martin, Allen conducted Bible studies in the schools and Sunday school. With Martin conducting worship services, she helped the new church grow so that it could buy property and build its first building.

Due to her outstanding ministry, Enterprise Baptist Association's annual offering and week of prayer emphasis now bears Annie Allen's name. It would be impossible to measure the influence for God's

Kingdom of this wonderful missionary from a lifetime of teaching the Bible to thousands of students.



Bill Mackey

I thank God for those who have answered the call to missions in Kentucky, across North America and around the world. Today there are more than 5,000 missionaries serving throughout North America. About 150 serve as Mission Service Corps missionaries in Kentucky, along with about 25 others who serve on the KBC staff and as Hispanic missionaries. I am grateful for their work in reaching people for Christ.

Despite the best efforts of these missionaries, however, NAMB reports that there were fewer than 375,000 baptisms in North America last year. That compares to more than 600,000 reported by the International Mission Board.

Before we are critical of this number, however, we need to remember that Kentucky and each of our churches are in North America. The

NAMB report is based on reports from local churches through associations and state conventions.

During the past 10 years, baptisms have been down in North American churches. KBC churches have been above average for the past 10 years, but we have been well under our Kentucky Baptists Connect goal of 25,000 each year. Preliminary reports even indicate that baptisms in KBC churches may be down by as many as 2,000 in our 2006-07 reports, as compared to 2005-06.

During the Week of Prayer for North American Missions, please pray for national, state, associational and church strategies that can be used by God through us to reach people for Christ and for discipleship in His churches. Pray as well for all pastors and church staff.

Don't stop there though. Pray for your own boldness to share the gospel. Every believer has an incredible testimony of life transformation that deserves to be shared. People will love to hear how God has changed your life and how He is at work in your life each day.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

'Biblical' excuses for not tithing are not found in Bible

By Doug Strader

I began pastoring in 1960 when I was a sophomore in college. To say that I was inexperienced would not do justice to my pastoral beginnings. Like most young pastors, I was eager to “cut my teeth” and get started expounding the message of the Bible, and part of that message was giving at least a tithe to the Lord through the church.

I encountered my first objection to tithing in my first church. A gentleman did not practice tithing because he felt that it was not taught in the New Testament. His reasoning was that since we are under the grace of the New Testament and not the law of the Old Testament, Christians were not obligated to practice tithing. My rationale for tithing in that situation is that if those under the law were required to tithe, then those who were under grace should be willing to give more than a tithe.

Although we disagreed on the issue, he was very kind and gracious to his “brash” new pastor and assured me that through the years, he had given more than a tithe to the Lord.

A few years after that first encounter, I met a man in a church where I was leading revival. He said that he did not believe in tithing because if everyone tithed, the church would have more money than she needed. He was so spiritually shortsighted that he could not envision the church using that money to spread the gospel message. And to think of all the blessings he missed out on.

I have also been told by well-meaning Christians that they either do not make enough money to tithe or that they make too much money to tithe. Which is more difficult? It depends on a person's situation, but the one who makes the least could be the one who has the most difficult time tithing. It is hard for me to see how one can make so much money that it would be difficult to give a tithe.

Several people have told me that after they pay their monthly bills they do not have any money left with which to tithe. But God's Word teaches that we are to give off the top to the Lord.

These are excuses and excuses are attempts to justify one's actions. In my opinion, it is difficult to study God's Word and come up with an excuse not to tithe.

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



Single-parent adoptions are worthy Kingdom investments

Q: I am a single adult in my 40s and would love to adopt a child. At this point in my life, I will never give birth to a child of my own, and I know I have much to give as a potential parent. What advice do you have for me and what resources are available on the subject?

The December 2007 issue of Christian Single magazine has an excellent article on single-parent adoptions. Here are some highlights of that discussion:

Single adults adopting children is now an acceptable and affordable lifelong investment. Sixty-four percent of families in the United States are now led by single parents. Twenty-five percent of all adoptions in the U.S. are now to single-parent homes, as are 33 percent of all adoptions from foster care. It is clear that it is an acceptable practice in our world today.

There are also more subsidies available to help pay for adoptions. Flex time in the workplace is more common to help the single parent to manage her or his day and there are more tax breaks available to help with the costs. Thus, single-parent adoptions are more affordable than ever before.

Single parenting by adoption is not easy. It is a lifelong investment of selfless commitment. In some instances, you are literally saving a child's life. You are offering a good stewardship of your life into the next generation.

Several resources exist to help you on this journey. A balanced Web site about adoption to visit is www.adoption.com. Two organizations that also can help you adopt are MAPS (www.mapsadopt.org) and Children's Hope International (www.childrenshopeint.org).

In many ways, adoption can be one of the greatest, most difficult, and rewarding pro-life things anyone can attempt to do. God bless you as you investigate and seek God's leadership if you sense this calling as a single disciple of Jesus Christ.—James Stillwell

Q: What is the "magic ratio"?

Tom Rath's book, "How Full Is Your Bucket?" deals with affirmation and the amount of encouragement necessary to offset negative words and criticism. Rath said that every single word of criticism requires eight words of praise to balance. Thus the magic ratio is 8-to-1.

For most parents, criticism comes easier and more quickly than praise. We almost automatically notice and point out behaviors in our children that are wrong, inappropriate or unacceptable—and rightly so. However, we need to be as intentional about giving praise for the many qualities and actions that are right and good. If your child brings home a report card with 3 As, 2 Bs and an F, you certainly need to talk about the F. But don't forget to celebrate and affirm the As and Bs—and do it first.

Rath's research finds the 8-to-1 ratio almost exactly reversed and makes several observations. First, the praise we give our children needs to be sincere. Secondly, there needs to be some "pushback" in order for the ratio to have meaning. By "pushback," Rath suggests that parents, in their desire to affirm and encourage, must not overlook behaviors or attitudes that need to be challenged and changed. Whereas some parents only point out the bad, others distort things in the opposite direction by never correcting their children.

Listen to yourself as you talk with your children and keep an informal tally of criticism versus praise. As you do, think about the magic ratio and work to become more intentional about praising and affirming your children.—David Garrard

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.

Straight from the editor ... one more time

It's hard to believe that the time has come for my final Western Recorder editorial. After eight-plus years and more than 400 editorials, this is my last opportunity to share a word with Kentucky Baptists in my role as editor.

Above all, let me express my heartfelt gratitude for the honor of serving in this position since 1999. As I noted on this page a few months ago when I announced my resignation, serving as editor of the Western Recorder has been the absolute pinnacle of my 25 years of ministry as a Baptist journalist.

As I switch gears—and states—for new ministry opportunities and challenges, I always will fondly recall the interaction with and service alongside faithful Kentucky Baptists throughout the commonwealth. From my time as a Recorder intern in the early 1980s during my seminary years to these past several years as editor, it has been an incredibly significant and meaningful part of my ministry pilgrimage. Thank you for allowing me that privilege.

Among the many cherished memories I will carry with me has been the task of eulogizing several prominent Kentucky Baptist statesmen and denominational giants in the pages of the Recorder, including legendary Western Recorder Editor C.R. Daley, former Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Roy Honeycutt, retired Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Secretary Franklin Owen and longtime state convention leader A.B. Colvin.

I had the fortune of counting each of them as both role models and friends. I deeply value the legacy left by each one of them as godly men of vision, integrity and principle who consistently demonstrated courageous, selfless servant leadership.

Among the lessons I have learned from those four men and others is the importance of standing on one's convictions regardless of the consequences. I hope my work has reflected at least some small measure of their ongoing influence.

As I shared in my inaugural editorial, I came to this

position committed to such historic Baptist principles as separation of church and state, priesthood of the believer and autonomy of the local church as well as such vital ministry emphases as missions, evangelism and cooperation. Those convictions remain unwavering today. I would encourage current and future Kentucky Baptist leaders to continue to make those principles top priorities in the days and years ahead.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the Western Recorder board of directors and staff as well as the KBC Mission Board, Foundation and Woman's Missionary Union staff for their gracious expressions of support and farewell the past several days. Your kind words and thoughtful gifts are far more than I deserve. I will forever treasure your friendship and encouragement.

Looking ahead, the Recorder staff and board are both qualified and committed to effectively leading the Western Recorder with a focus on quality, balance and integrity that Kentucky Baptists have come to expect. Please pray for the editor search committee and board—and especially committee chairman Skip Alexander—as they carefully seek God's leadership in recommending a new editor to guide the Western Recorder in its next phase of ministry.

Dr. Daley's farewell editorial in 1984 quoted the Psalmist's poetic declaration that "the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places," adding that "I shall be eternally grateful to Kentucky Baptists for making my lines fall in pleasant places." I wholeheartedly echo that sentiment.

One final thought—and it's the same passage I shared as we began this journey together: In the words of the prophet Micah, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" That has been my goal throughout my tenure as editor of the Western Recorder—and it remains my sincere hope and prayer for all Kentucky Baptists.

May God bless you as you earnestly pursue His will.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson



Being a bivocational youth pastor is tough

The past few months, I have had the privilege of serving as interim youth pastor at Cedar Creek Baptist Church in Louisville. It has been a blessing to be back in a youth ministry role at a local church. I still love hanging out with teenagers and orchestrating a youth ministry.

But this time has been different. I am now a bivocational youth pastor, something I have not been since I left seminary in the early '90s. Honestly, I don't know how those of you who are bivocational do this. So here are some lessons I have learned in a few short months.

The time crunch. I had forgotten how much time planning takes. And with a full-time job, family responsibilities and other things, there wasn't much time left over to plan. Wednesday nights seem to come around quicker than I remember.

There is a built-in luxury of having all of Wednesday to finish up the last minute details that I had grown accustomed to as a full-time church staff member that I just don't have as a bivocational minister. It is amazing how much time gathering materials and making copies takes.

Skiing on President's Day seemed like a great idea. With students out of school, it has become a tradition to take a ski trip that time of year, so preparations began. I was amazed at how little time I had to call the ski

lodge, enlist a speaker, find a place to stay, line up transportation, get promotion out, along with all the other stuff it took just to pull off a simple overnight trip. Tasks I just did before had to be worked into an already full schedule.

I have also not been able to attend as many extra-curricular activities as I once could. The district basketball tournament was held last week and two of our students' teams were playing each other in the first round. It was a great game, or so I heard. As a full-time youth minister I would have been at the game to see Kendall and Meghan face off. I would have been both screaming at the top of my lungs when Meghan hit the game-winning shot with 3.2 seconds left, and hurting for Kendall who, as a senior, had just played her last game.

Volunteers are key. As much as I would like to think I am the expert, I could not do this job without the outstanding volunteers we have at Cedar Creek. Last week as I ran off to a personnel committee meeting, they stayed behind and cleaned up the youth room. I would have done that myself before.

Our volunteers are the backbone of our work. I may be the point person and the one getting paid to do the job, but they are the nuts and bolts of the ministry. They are here every week, ready to engage stu-

dents. Not to mention they have families, jobs and a plethora of other things they have to do as well. I may have overlooked this fact as a full-time guy.

Also, there is virtually no way I can ever—with the size of our ministry—develop in-depth relationships with every student. But one of the best things I have learned is, I don't have to. The volunteers who are here are doing just that. I may not know what is going on in the life of every student, but I can rest assured that every student has someone who does.

Meetings. If there is one thing we do well as churches it is meet. Between staff meetings, youth leadership team meetings, committee meetings and all the usual church meetings, it is a wonder anybody volunteers to do anything.

I have resolved to make meetings that our parents and volunteers attend worth their time and sacrifice. I make it my responsibility to ensure meetings start and end on time and are full of sustenance. If there is nothing to talk about, cancel the meeting.

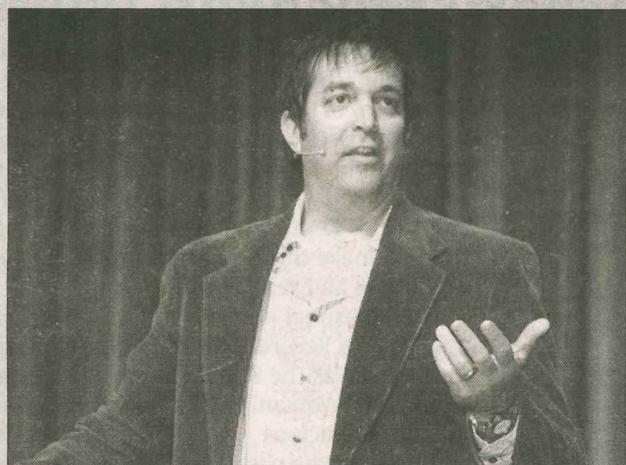
Bivocational youth pastors, whether paid or volunteer, I salute you. Your dedication to reaching students is to be commended. This job is taxing enough when it is the only one you have, but is multiplied a thousand times over when you are required to do something else to support your youth ministry habit.

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

YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball



BACK HOME Gerald Sharon, executive pastor of ministries for Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., and former pastor of Highland Hills Baptist Church, addresses Kentucky Baptists during last week's Evangelism Conference at Severns Valley Baptist Church.

Sharon describes sharing Christ as ultimate 'rush'

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Elizabethtown—Gerald Sharon's address to Kentucky Baptists at last week's Evangelism Conference was inspired in part by a country and western song. It also sort of sounded like one.

"You might have been alive a lot of years, but you weren't living," Sharon told the crowd at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. "It's because we're not living like we're dying, (it's that) we're living like we're already dead."

Sharon, executive pastor of ministries at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., said Christians will experience joy and fulfillment if they make the most of every opportunity to share the gospel and love others.

The former pastor of Highland Hills Baptist Church opened his sermon with a portion of the Tim McGraw song, "Live Like You're Dying," which tells the story of a 40-year-old man who, after being diagnosed with a terminal illness, determines to make the most of what remains of his life.

Sharon also noted that by following the example of Jesus' friend Lazarus, Christians can abandon the counterfeit life of a spiritual zombie for the vibrant existence of a man with nothing to lose.

In McGraw's song, the man goes skydiving and mountain climbing. Those activities are not wrong, Sharon said, but for believers there are risks more exhilarating, such as "the thrill of being there with a person from the moment they say 'yes,' to Jesus."

In leading someone to faith in Christ, "you know that in that moment they step out of darkness into light. ... There's not a better rush in the world," he said.

After his resurrection, Lazarus spread the word about his experience even though it placed his life in danger from Jewish leaders, Sharon explained. He also "got cozy with the riff-raff," inviting "tax collectors and sinners" to his home to dine with Jesus.

"From what I can tell, Lazarus started living like he was dying," Sharon pointed out.

He added that instead of a physical resurrection on earth, believers can make a change similar to Lazarus by:

- Risking doing what is right.
- Refining priorities.
- Reaching for eternity.

"The tomb that most of us are living in is a tomb with a lot of other believers," Sharon noted. "Our lives have become surrounded by people who are already heading to heaven."

Sharon was speaking from experience. "I realized there was not an unbeliever in my life on a consistent basis and it broke my heart. Even worse, I didn't have a way to get connected with them," he recalled.

His solution was to get "real intentional" by taking up motorcycling. Sharon takes his customized bike on the road, rubbing elbows with people who perhaps have never attended a church service or heard the gospel message.

The outreach is not comfortable, he admitted. Staying in the tomb of the familiar means "you don't have to deal with the messy stuff in people's lives" but if he had not taken the step, Sharon said he would deprive himself of the joy of sharing Christ with people in great spiritual need.

"Lazarus knows what you miss out on when you're dead," Sharon explained. "You're going to miss spending time with a lost person."

Page: 'Do not underestimate' enemy's power

SBC president urges Ky. Baptists to wish to be known in hell

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Elizabethtown—As fervently as Christians desire heaven, Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page told Kentucky Baptists last week, they should wish their names to be known in hell.

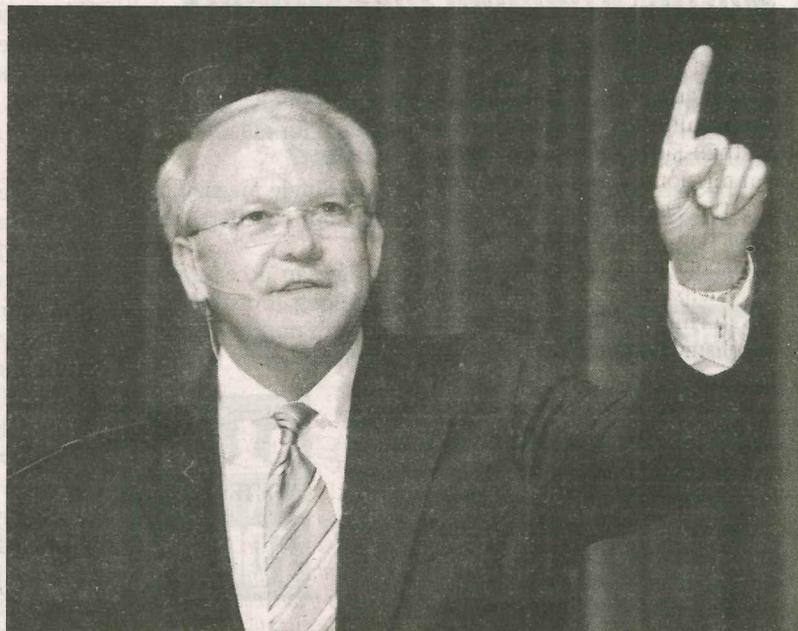
"We desperately need to understand the reality of spiritual warfare," Page said to men and women attending the Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. "We must not underestimate the power of the enemy."

The pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., Page is in the final months of a second, one-year term as SBC president. He told the crowd that he changed the topic of his address because spiritual attacks on God's people should be a great concern to believers. He cited the diagnosis of his daughter, Melissa, with cancer within months of his first term as SBC president as a spiritual attack on his family. He also thanked Kentucky Baptists for their prayers, reporting that his daughter now is "cancer free."

Referencing Acts 19:13-16, Page said as seven Jewish high priests attempted to drive a demon from a man, the spirit responded, "Jesus I know. Paul I know. Who are you?"

The passage recounts that the demon-possessed man overpowered all of the priests who fled the house "naked and bleeding." The would-be exorcists "got hold of a world-class demon," Page noted.

The verses in Acts are not the only ones in the Bible revealing that evil spirits recognize Christ, Page pointed out. "I think they recognized Him so well because our Lord



ONE VOICE Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page encouraged Kentucky Baptists attending the annual KBC Evangelism Conference last week in Elizabethtown to become so focused on evangelism and discipleship that Satan and his demons will feel threatened. (Photos by Drew Nichter)

Jesus has a singular voice. ... They knew that nothing would dissuade Him from the Kingdom of God."

The Apostle Paul also shared the gospel with single-mindedness, making him a threat to Satan and his army, Page added.

The lack of a similar focus among the seven men referenced in Acts 19 perhaps thwarted their ability to exorcise the demon. Similarly, Page continued, satanic influences can distract Southern Baptists from their God-given mandate to share the gospel with the world.

"We have underestimated the influence of the evil one," Page declared. "I am convinced he has won the battle so long, the church has become an anemic, hold-on-until-Jesus-comes-again institution."

Christ and Paul shared a mindset that Satan and the demons found threatening, but Page said he doubts today's church garners

such fear.

"The early church is met with persecution. The modern-day church is met with a yawn," he explained. "I want our name to be known in hell so that when we do the work of God, the very foundations of hell tremble."

"I believe Kentucky and all Southern Baptists need to return to a singular focus ... until every family, every individual knows that Jesus loves them," Page continued.

A lack of unity among believers is a symptom of spiritual warfare, he said, commenting that Southern Baptists "fight for scraps off the table" instead of concentrating on sharing the gospel and discipling new believers.

"May we be a people of singular focus," Page said, adding that he wants "the very demons in hell" to say, "Jesus I know. Paul I know. I know you, too."

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Foy encourages women to seize evangelistic opportunities

By Kristie Randolph
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Elizabethtown—God uses ordinary people when they obey Him and take the opportunities He's given them to share their faith, said Phyllis Foy, national missionary for church renewal for the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

Foy spoke to a room of more than 65 participants at the Women's Event during the Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference last week at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

"Is God good? Does He have a plan for our lives? Yes, He does," Foy declared. "I don't have a lot of credentials. I just want to please my God more than anything else in the world."

Having come from a broken home, Foy recalled "just being drawn to church" from an early age and described how God saved her and used believers at a North Carolina Baptist church to disciple her.

After marrying as high school sweethearts, Foy and her husband eventually gave their lives to full-



SHARING FAITH Phyllis Foy, national missionary for church renewal for the North American Mission Board addresses Kentucky Baptist women during last week's Evangelism Conference at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown (Photo by Kristie Randolph)

time ministry. Over the years, she said she has learned a lot about evangelism and having a Christian witness that is pleasing to God.

"I make more mistakes than I

have success stories," Foy noted, adding that she has experienced fears that many Christians have when sharing their faith. "I can talk about anything until you get to Jesus, then sometimes I back off because I don't want to offend someone."

Foy recalled several experiences in sharing her faith, reminding women of the urgency of telling others about Christ.

"I believe He gives us opportunities every day," she said. "Do you know people today who don't have that assurance? Don't miss an opportunity when Jesus puts it in your lap."

Foy told of a conversation she had with a man who wanted to accept Christ. After arranging for him to speak with her husband the next day, Foy regretted that she had not seized the opportunity to share Christ with him.

The day after the encounter, Foy learned the man had been killed in a hot air balloon accident not long after their conversation.

"I live with the knowledge that the Father trusted me with that

opportunity and I missed it," she said. "He has trusted you with specific people. There are people out there begging us to tell them about Jesus, and we don't do it."

Citing 2 Corinthians 2:15, Foy noted that an effective Christian witness gives off the pleasing aroma of Christ.

Foy spoke of a time when she apologized to a McDonald's restaurant employee after displaying an unloving attitude toward the worker. When Foy mentioned she was a Christian, the employee responded, "I knew you were. Christians are the only ones who are ever mean to me."

"What kind of aroma do we give off? Do we just flat out stink?" Foy asked. "I pray, 'let me be a soothing aroma to a world that stinks.'"

Foy challenged attendees to obey what God has called them to do and to share the gospel with urgency.

"If the Father has called you and you haven't been faithful, repent," Foy urged. "If you have friends who don't know Jesus, share with them today."

"He has trusted you with specific people. There are people out there begging us to tell them about Jesus, and we don't do it."

Phyllis Foy, NAMB national missionary for church renewal

Garcia says women need to 'hit the dirt' when it comes to worship

By Kristie Randolph
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Elizabethtown—True worship is a response to truth and not a reaction to circumstances, recording artist Alicia Williamson Garcia told women attending last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

During a Women's Event session entitled "Essentials for Becoming a Woman in Worship," Garcia used the acronym "S.O.I.L." to represent the four essentials and playfully told women to "hit the dirt" as they seek to please God in worship.

"The word worship literally means 'to bow down,'" Garcia said. "When we put 'bow down' and

'S.O.I.L.' together, it reminds us to just hit the dirt."

According to Garcia, the response to truth must be "sacrificial, obedient, immediate and loving" (S.O.I.L.). She explained that worship involves every aspect of one's life, and encouraged women to take responsibility for their own worship experiences.

"Let's not blame anybody. Let's put the responsibility of worship on us to encounter God," she emphasized, noting that true worship can take place regardless of musical or preaching preferences. "It's supposed to be an awesome experience when believers are encountering the living God.

"When you're in the presence of

an almighty God, how can you not feel something?" she asked. "During the Super Bowl or at a rock concert, people are raising their hands and cheering. Is that what's happening in your life? Do you have an encounter with God in worship?"

People are engaged in what they are experiencing when they understand what is going on, she noted, and women must study the Bible to know more about God.

"We have to know the game we're in like we might know the Super Bowl or a rock star," Garcia said. God "is our father and His spirit lives in us. We need to know who He is. So often we have no response to Him because we are not living out of our relationship with Jesus."



True worship happens regardless of circumstances, Garcia explained, sharing her own experience of surviving cancer.

"God healed me of cancer, and it was in that time that He showed me we win when we worship," she said. "Circumstances might be horrendous, but we don't grieve because we have no hope. I keep my eyes on Jesus."

JOYFUL NOISE Recording artist Alicia Williamson Garcia performs with the Severns Valley Baptist Church choir at last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference in Elizabethtown. (Photo by Drew Nichter)

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"God is looking for somebody willing to get out there and believe God for the victory. The only reason it won't happen is if we don't keep our hope alive in our hearts that God can do it."

Bobby Welch, SBC's strategist for global evangelical relations

Welch: Keys to evangelism include hope, heart & help

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Elizabethtown—Emphasizing how to grow an evangelistic church, former Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch told Kentucky Baptists last week that keys include hope, heart and help.

"We have got to have a renewed hope for our Great Commission," he insisted. Acknowledging that accomplishing Christ's commission "is huge, it is unbelievable, it is almost unthinkable except for God in Christ," he added, "Jesus Christ believed it was possible for anyone to be saved."

Preaching from Romans 9 and 10, Welch noted that the Apostle Paul "had a burning burden for this huge crowd of lost people." Comparing that to the need to make a major spiritual impact today, he declared, "If a bunch of us got on fire, we could do it."

Welch, who is the SBC's strategist for global evangelical relations, said his personal enthusiasm for evangelism has prompted well-intentioned people to caution him against burning the candle at both ends.

"I'm not interested in saving the candle," he told the KBC Evangelism Conference crowd. "I'm interested in putting out as much light as I can."

"God is looking for somebody willing to get out there and believe God for the victory," he noted. "The

only reason it won't happen is if we don't keep our hope alive in our hearts that God can do it."

In addition to hope for the Great Commission, Welch called for "our hearts to be filled with compassion for lost people."



Bobby Welch

Citing a recent study, he said 89 percent of people say they have at least one close friend who is a Christian and 78 percent of those respondents affirmed that "if those persons wanted to tell me about their Christian experience, I would be willing to listen."

Welch said the third key to growing an evangelistic church is help from other Christians "who believe in the power of the gospel."

Decrying the spread of "worship wars" in local churches, Welch asked, "Have you heard of this phenomenon that is taking place? It is where churches are actually splitting over how they worship."

In sharp contrast, he asked, "Have you heard of any churches having witnessing wars?"

Rather than fighting over worship styles, Welch said churches should be "forward operation bases" to spread the gospel.

"We can't keep sitting when hell is filling up and heaven is being robbed," he concluded. "God is still saving if we will share" the gospel.

Fugitt details ways to evangelize effectively in smaller churches

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

Elizabethtown—For the Kentucky Baptist Convention to be effective in evangelism, one vital component is the effectiveness of smaller membership churches.

Why? Because the majority of congregations fall into that category with an average weekly attendance of 200 people or fewer.

In response to that reality, Chad Fugitt offered fellow church leaders several practical keys for effective evangelism in smaller churches. His workshop was one of more than a dozen breakout sessions during last week's Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference.

Fugitt, pastor of Chaplin Baptist Church, said ministers "can take these and apply them wherever we're at." The keys include:

Preach the gospel. "There are so many things that we used to take for granted that we can't take for granted anymore," Fugitt noted. "We have to be very precise about our presentation of the gospel."

Be intentional about evangelism. "Many of our churches are in what I would call a maintenance mode," Fugitt acknowledged. "We have to go to the work."

"In the state of Kentucky, the harvest is plentiful," he pointed out. "Nearly a million Kentuckians are unchurched and are waiting for us to reach them."

Prioritize prayer. "Prayer is the

channel through which God will impact the world," he emphasized. "We need to be praying intentionally for lost people."

Build an evangelistic setting. Urging pastors to "be soul winners" and "mentor soul winners," he said, "The Lord is the One who does the saving, but we have an opportunity and an obligation to create an atmosphere where God will save sinners."

Recognize the 90 percent rule. Noting that most churches have only about 10 percent of their members actively involved in evangelism efforts, Fugitt said, "We have to move people to greater involvement. ... Teach them how to share the gospel effectively."

Personalize your mission. Citing Acts 1:8, Fugitt said keys to reaching one's Jerusalem and beyond with the gospel include "don't be afraid to try new things and don't be afraid to fail."

Seek Great Commission balance. Emphasizing the need to both reach people through evangelism and keep them through discipleship, Fugitt told workshop participants, "The sad reality in Kentucky Baptist churches today is that we are not doing a very good job of reaching people and we are not doing a very good job at keeping the people we are reaching."

Be faithful. While serving as pastor of a small congregation can be challenging, Fugitt said, "God's not looking for us to be superstars. All God wants is our faithfulness."

Ellis discusses importance of sharing faith in conversation

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Elizabethtown—Sermons that communicate the message of salvation through faith in Christ are important, but sharing the gospel through one-on-one relationships is Phil Ellis' passion.

The pastor of First Baptist Church of Jamestown said talking with others about Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection "in the context of conversation" is important to him "because that's how it happened with me."

It was an Army friend who shared the gospel with Ellis years ago. A tedious stint on guard duty provided Ellis and his buddy the opportunity to develop a friendship.

Ellis said his friend, Jeff, introduced the subject of God, heaven, hell and faith into their conversations. Over a three-week period, Jeff shared and explained the gospel. Ellis came to an understanding of what faith in Christ is about and made the decision to accept Jesus as his Savior.

"We need to be preaching the gospel," Ellis told a group of Kentucky Baptists attending a breakout session the last week's KBC Evangelism Conference in Elizabethtown, "but we shouldn't think that just because we're preaching the gospel and extending an invitation (in church) we're covering the base of evangelism."

Ellis said he recalls few people "walking the aisle" of the Jamestown church on Sunday mornings to make a first-time profession of faith in Christ but "there's no way I can tell you the number of times this happened in conversation," he noted.

Church members have an advantage over pastors and ministers when they share their faith with friends, family and strangers, Ellis added.

People tend to consider pastors and ministers as "hired guns" who share the gospel as part of their job, he said. When laymen and women talk about Jesus with someone, they convey an attitude of genuine concern for that person.

Sharing the gospel is part of bearing fruit, Ellis pointed out.

Fear is the main obstacle to overcome in order to share the gospel, he noted. Many believers are afraid of offending people or making an error in the presentation. "All we're talking about is explaining to someone how you got Jesus in your life (and) inviting them to make the same decision," the pastor said.

In 2003, Ellis published a booklet titled "Personal Evangelism in my World." The text includes tips on how to insert spiritual topics in conversations with people who may not know Jesus. One way to create an atmosphere where this can occur is to use the FISH method, asking questions about the person's:

- Family.
- Industry (career or job).
- Self interests (hobbies, etc.).
- Health (Are there current concerns?).

The next step, Ellis noted, is listening. "Let them talk. Ask them about stuff that matters." Often people will bring up concerns, providing believers the opportunity to pray with him or her immediately.

"They don't wonder why you care for them when you're praying for them," he remarked.

Before plunging into a gospel presentation or testimony, Christians should ask permission from the person with whom they are speaking.

That can be accomplished simply by asking, "May I tell you briefly what has happened in my life?"

One method of developing a personal testimony is to consider these thoughts:

- My life before I became a follower of Jesus Christ.
- How I received Christ into my life.
- My life since I became a follower of Jesus.

Ellis suggested writing a testimony first, then practice telling it to a friend. "Get equipped and get prepared," Ellis encouraged Kentucky Baptists. "God wants you to be a fruit-bearing disciple."

Seeking Executive Editor

for the Western Recorder, Kentucky Baptists' weekly newspaper in Louisville. 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 resumé, cover letter and a writing sample by March 10 to:

WR Editor Search Committee
Attn: Skip Alexander, Pastor
Campbellsville Baptist Church
420 N Central Ave., Campbellsville, KY 42718

KENTUCKYNOTES



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Supplement to Western Recorder

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2008 Annie Armstrong
Easter Offering® for
North American
Missions

Theme: *Live with Urgency*
Offering Goal: \$61 million

Give to help our missionary force reach the estimated 251 million lost people in the United States and Canada. That's three out of every four people! Giving to AAEO topped the \$57 million dollar goal for 2007.

Kentucky Baptist churches gave \$1,838,188 to the 2007 AAEO.

Spring 2008

WALK WORTHY

Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown March 28-29, 2008

A Personal Word

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Theme Interpretations: Sisterhood, Christian Drama Ministry

Music Leader—Leslie Hancock • Pianist—Susan Sloane

The Prelude will begin ten minutes before the start of each session

All times listed are in Eastern Time

Pre-Annual Meeting Event: Hall of Fame Party

Thursday, March 27, 5:30-8:00 p.m. at
My Old Kentucky Home—Reservations Required

Friday Morning 9:45 a.m.—Walk Worthy

Theme Interpretation—Sisterhood
A 25-year Walk Together: Ken & Beth
Offering for Kentucky WMU Ministries to Missionaries
Missionaries: Gary & Sis Tufts, Costa Rica

Friday Noon—Heritage Fund Luncheon

Box Lunch by pre-reservation.
Special Emphasis: 1000² Campaign

Friday Afternoon 1:30 p.m.—Fully Pleasing Him

Theme Interpretation—Sisterhood
Korea Partnership Ministries—Kentucky WMU
Volunteers; Special Guest: Sook Jae Lee,
Executive Director, Korea WMU
KY WMU Business Session
Installation of 2008-09 Officers & Board

Friday Afternoon 3:00 p.m.

Ministry Projects: Prayerwalking—Area Schools
Assemble Disaster Relief Kits—Church
Missionary conferences
Missionary Parents Fellowship Reception

Friday Evening, 7:00 p.m.—Being Fruitful in Every Good Work

Theme Interpretation—Sisterhood
Greetings: William Henard, President, KBC
Offering for Kentucky WMU Ministries to Missionaries
State Missions & the Eliza Broadus Offering
Planting New Churches: Claudio Torro
Families on Mission: Pat Reaves & Panel

Saturday Morning, 7:00 a.m.

Baptist Nursing Fellowship “Dutch Treat” Breakfast
Stephen Foster Restaurant

Saturday Morning 9:00 a.m.—Increasing in the Knowledge of God

Saturday will be casual day! You are invited to wear a WMU shirt, mission trip shirt, or other casual attire.
Acteens Feature
Missionary: Rick Brenny, Jefferson Street Baptist Center, Louisville
Offering for Kentucky WMU Ministries to Missionaries
Special Guest: Sook Jae Lee, Korea Baptist WMU
The Heartbeat of God: Ken & Beth
Closing: Sisterhood

Saturday Afternoon, 12 p.m.

Prayerwalking—Area Schools

Directions to Annual Meeting

Parkway Baptist Church
2580 Springfield Road
(Exit 25, Bluegrass Parkway)
Bardstown, KY 40004-8900
Phone: 502-348-4677

For help with driving directions from your area,
go to www.randmcnally.com or www.mapquest.com.

From Louisville, take I-65 south to Exit 112 (Hwy 245—Bardstown/Clermont). Turn left at end of ramp and follow Hwy. 245 south through Bardstown until it dead ends into US Hwy. 150 (approximately 19 miles). Turn left onto US Hwy. 150, cross over the Bluegrass Parkway and take the first street on the left.

From Bowling Green, take I-65 north to Elizabethtown. At Elizabethtown, take the Bluegrass Parkway East toward Lexington. Follow the Bluegrass Parkway to exit 25 (US Hwy. 150—Bardstown/Springfield exit). You will see the church in front of you as you exit the Bluegrass Parkway. Turn right at end of ramp onto Hwy 150 and take the first street on the left.

From Lexington, take the Bluegrass Parkway West toward Elizabethtown. Follow the Bluegrass Parkway to exit 25 (US Hwy. 150—Bardstown/Springfield exit). Turn left at end of ramp onto Hwy. 150 and take the first street on the left.

I have been told that there are two things Baptists hate—one is change, and the other is the same old thing! Just so you will know—we are not changing



Joy Bolton
Executive
Director-
Treasurer

the Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting, but it will not be the same old thing either. (It never is!) This year there are several new features.

First, there is the Hall of Fame Party, a preannual meeting party on Thursday evening at My Old Kentucky Home in Bardstown. Everyone is invited for this drop-in event honoring our Missions Mosaic “cover-girls” and past/current Executive Board members. Pre-registration is required so

get your reservation in soon.

Then, we are expanding the ministry projects for Annual Meeting. In addition to items you can collect and bring to the meeting, you can choose to participate in a hands-on ministry at the church or in the community. School teachers and administrators are thrilled that we plan to prayerwalk every school in the Bardstown area on Friday and Saturday afternoons. We will be assembling Disaster Relief kits at the church on Friday afternoon and there will be missionary conferences as well.

MissionsFEST, April 26-May 3, will follow just one month after Annual Meeting. You need to register by March 15 to participate. This will be a special week in Boones Creek Association as volunteers from across the United States join us for a week of ministry. Projects include block parties, health and wellness fairs, home repairs, light construction, work at the Boones Creek camp, sports ministries and much more.

World Missions Unlimited, our Kentucky WMU training for WMU and Baptist Men on Mission leaders, is scheduled for July 18-19 in Hopkinsville and July 25-26 in London. Mark your calendar now for summer training.

Kentucky WMU continues to go global. A Kentucky WMU team traveled to Brazil, February 18-28. Cathy Chinn led a team of seven to prayerwalk and work with the Piauí Baptist Convention WMU. Stacy Nall will lead our team to Korea, July 31-August 17, to teach English Camps for Children. New materials are being written for the 2008 camps. If you would like to go on this trip, an application form and deposit must be received by April 11.

Another travel opportunity is a WMU trip to Hawaii sponsored by Hawaii WMU and national WMU. You can attend the Discover the Joy of Missions Conference, September 18-20 in Honolulu, then go on a 7-day interisland cruise, September 20-27. The cruise includes participation in ministry projects on each island. You can choose one or both of these events.

Above all, let me say THANK YOU for your response to the 2007-08 Eliza Broadus Offering. We believe that we will not only meet the goal by August 31, but we will exceed it! Overage funds will be used for evangelism, including Crossover, so every dollar is vital. Be watching for progress reports on our Kentucky WMU Web site.

Churchwide



WMU
Directors

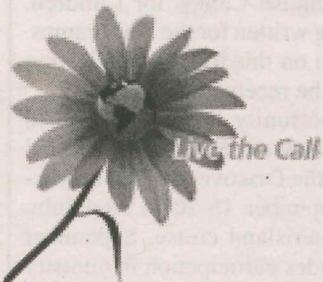
Don't you just love *Directionally Challenged* by Dr. Travis Collins? Now there is a new resource to assist churches and small groups that want to have a study of the book. *Directionally Challenged...Small Group Discussion Guide* is now available through WMU. This seven-week video series assists adults to learn more about what and where God would want them to be. Dr. Collins leads each session. There are times to stop and interact with each other through a series of thought-provoking questions.

As spring is approaching so is the time for plans for fall leadership. Yes, fall. This always seems to get here before we know it, but don't be unprepared. As either a church leader or an associational leader, begin planning with your leadership team to discover who plans to continue as a missions leader. If your leadership is changing, enlist new team members and leaders now. Training opportunities this summer will help the experienced as well as the novice leaders.

Annual Meeting is right around the corner; hope to see you there.

Blessings!

—Wanda Walker



Adults

Do you know about one of the best-kept untapped ministries of Kentucky WMU for adults? Baptist Nursing Fellowship is a Christian organization for health-care professionals with the purpose to encourage health-care service from a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. This is national Baptist Nursing Fellowship's 25th anniversary. Kentucky's chapter was formed in 1987. For twenty-one years Kentucky BNF has provided: worship and Bible study opportunities; mission opportunities; prayer support for other health care professionals and missionary nurses; information and encouragement about mission careers in the medical field;



and preparation for lifestyle witnessing.

In Kentucky, our nurses have written and developed a ministry called Baby Boot Camp. This was in response to Project HELP: Poverty. By addressing issues of pregnant teens and young women, this ministry offers spiritual development, basic baby care, personal development and social interaction.

If you are a nurse or other health care professional or you know someone, consider being a part of this ministry. Contact your WMU office and request information about Baptist Nursing Fellowship.

MissionsFEST is right around the corner April 26-May 2 in Boone's Creek Associa-

tion. In fact, our nurses are leading a wellness component! It's not too late to register. Go to the website www.wmu.com/volunteerconnection for more information and an application form.

Spring is here....Celebrate God's blessings!

—Wanda Walker



Youth



Do your youth sometimes wear masks? Do you? If so, then "Unmasked" is for you. At *Exalt* and *4:GO*, we will discover our true identity in Christ. These two events will take place April 18-19 at First Baptist Church, Shelbyville. *Exalt* is for teenage girls in grades 7-12 and *4:GO* is for the guys. First Baptist recently added a recreation building and can accommodate both events without a problem. The girls will be in one building and the guys in another.

At *Exalt*, Lorie Keene will be the keynote speaker. Lorie will draw on her experiences as a missionary in Poland and a discipleship leader of teenage girls as she shares. 33Miles will be in concert on Friday night. You can read more about them and listen to their music

on www.33Milesonline.com.

We will have a special ministry collection project this year in support of the "Shelby County Backpack Project." The goal of the backpack project is to provide hungry children in all Shelby County elementary schools with nourishment over the weekend. We will collect food to go in the backpacks that are sent home with the children. A specific list of food items will be sent with registration confirmation packs or you can go to www.kywmu.org/exalt for more information.

Final word on *Exalt*: be sure to wear a mask on Friday night. You can buy one or make one—be creative.

It's not too early to be thinking about Acteens camp and Acteens Splash. Acteens camp at Cedar Crest will be June 18-20 and Splash will take place June 20-21 at Jonathan

Creek. Put it on your calendars.

Kentucky Acteens will be sending an activator team to Maryland this summer. The following people will be on the team: Marcia Ballard and Brittany McBride, Ballardville Baptist (Winchester); Cathy Chinn, Brandie Hagerman, Alyssa King and Tonya Shaffer, Hartford Baptist (Hartford); and Sapphire Box, Kristen Large, Joyce Sandlin, Connie Southerland, Joyce Stone and Lauri Warden, Post Oak Baptist (Russellville). Please be in prayer for the team.



—LaRaine Dail Rice

Preschool and Children

PRESCHOOL—

Has your Mission Friends class survived the winter? Let your church know it is alive and growing into spring by involving more preschoolers in missions education. Your Mission Friends class cannot grow without a continuous, intentional effort. Use a variety of methods to show your continuing interest in a prospect:



- Send the child a colorful card addressed just to him or her.
- Visit the child and parents in their home. Explain the Mission Friends organization and give them a copy of *Share*.
- Invite Mission Friends members, parents and prospects and their parents to get involved in Families on Mission. Share suggestions in the spring issue of *Start*.

Make the spring and summer months a special time for missions education for preschoolers. Remember—Preschoolers are worth it!

CHILDREN—

February 16, 2008 marked a significant day across Kentucky and throughout North America as thousands of children participated in the first Children's Ministry Day! This special day, sponsored by national WMU, was an opportunity for children in churches with or without Girls in Action (GA) or Children in Action to participate in hands-on missions. Children in Kentucky participated in a variety of ministries. In Little River Association, children par-

ticipated in "Project Protein" by collecting canned tuna, chicken, peanut butter, salmon, and other protein foods to give to a food ministry in their community. Another group prepared food for Meals-on-Wheels recipients who normally do not receive meals on weekends. Through projects such as these, Children's Ministry Day enabled children to grow spiritually as they stepped beyond their comfort zone to minister to others and share their faith through hands-on missions.



Visit www.childrensmissions.com and share your Children's Ministry Day success stories. Report your church's participation by March 15, 2008, and download a free, customizable certificate of participation. This will be our way of finding out what churches have done in Kentucky as well as obtaining an approximate number of children who participated in our state.

Attention GA leaders and girls! Would you like to have an opportunity to vote for new GA identity items for girls? You can by visiting www.gapassport.com and completing the GA survey. Votes will be taken through April 1.

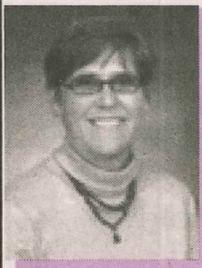
Don't forget camp! Two state camps, Cedar Crest (at Cedarmore) and Jonathan Creek, offer opportunities for all girls. In addition a special Express Week is offered for boys and girls at Cedar Crest. More information can be found on page 3 of this insert.



—Brenda Price

President's Perspective

"Walk Worthy" is the theme of our annual meeting on March 28-29. We look forward to all of you being there to make it a successful event. We actually start on Thursday evening the 27th for those of you who can get to Bardstown a little early. We will have a party at My Old Kentucky Home to honor our "Cover Girls" from Missions Mosaic and Acteens Leader covers as well as past and present WMU Executive Board members. You will also have an opportunity to tour the home.



Pat Reaves
Kentucky WMU
president

Our schedule on Friday will be a little different. The afternoon session will be shortened so you can participate in ministry projects. For those able

and willing to go into the community, we will prayerwalk the schools in Bardstown. We will also have ministry projects and speakers at the church during this time.

You can read all about the event in other handouts, but here are a few additional features. A Heritage Fund Luncheon is planned on Friday to help you understand the importance of this fund. I am excited about our missionary speakers—you know and love some of them already. Sisterhood will bring our theme interpretation each session. Friday evening we will talk to families that have been on mission together. Bring yours and come hear ideas! A "big thank you" goes to Virginia Drake and her committee as they prepare for us.

I was at the WMU national board meeting in January and the folks from Georgia were very appreciative of our help with collecting coats for North Korea. Kentucky contributed over 2,000 coats. Thanks for responding, on short notice, to this need. Keep praying for the work there.

The IMB also thanked WMU for all our help in promoting the Lottie Moon Offering. I know that you worked to educate and encourage our folks about this offering for our missionaries. Let me brag a little. The GAs in my church presented the church with \$2,873.35 (putting us over our goal) as their part of the Lottie Moon Offering. The girls and their leaders, directed by Trina Cox, had a post office (delivering over 4,000 cards) and a Lottie's Latte Shop. The shop was open during December and had homemade refreshments and crafts that the girls had made. I appreciate leaders all over the state that pass their mission heart on to the children!

Dudley and I are planning to be in Winchester for the *MissionsFEST*. The dates are April 26 - May 3. Hope to see a lot of you there too.

See you soon—if I can help you in any way, please let me know.

Walk worthy!

Working together,

—Pat Reaves

MISSIONS CAMP!

Don't miss this summer's variety of camping events in two locations! Registrations are now being taken in the Kentucky WMU office. Please contact Kentucky WMU or visit our Web site if you need registration materials.

CEDAR CREST

Pack your bags for a Mission Safari! Learn about the culture and missions in Africa. **Beginning this summer, each group of 1-5 children attending Girls in Action, Express and Acteens camp will be accompanied by a church chaperone.**

Girls in Action Camps \$122*

June 1-4	girls, grades 3-6
June 4-7	girls, grades 3-6
June 9-12	girls, grades 3-6
June 23-26	girls, grades 3-6
June 30-July 3	girls, grades 3-6



Mother-Daughter Overnights \$48*

June 20-21	grades 1-3 and moms
June 27-28	grades 1-3 and moms

Acteens Camp \$82*

June 18-20	girls, grades 6-10
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Express Camps \$82*

June 12-14	girls & boys, grades 3-6
June 15-17	girls & boys, grades 3-6

*All rates are Early Bird rates through May 12, 2008. Rates are per person.

JONATHAN CREEK

Find your place in MISSIONS! JUNE 20-21

Mother-Daughter Overnight	grades 1-3 and moms	\$35*
GA Overnight	grades 4-6 and their chaperones	\$41*
Acteens Splash	grades 7-10 and their chaperones	\$47*

*All rates are Early Bird rates through May 23, 2008. Rates are per person.



CAMP STAFF NEEDED

Applications for summer staff at Cedar Crest will be accepted until all positions are filled. Positions include: Fellowship Leader, Worship Leader, Crafts Leader, Missions Leader, Lifeguard, Technology Assistant, Recreation Leader Nature Leader and Kitchen Coordinator. Staff members are high school juniors and seniors and college students. Medical volunteers are also needed for each week of camp.

Please contact the WMU office for applications.

For more information contact:

Stacy Nall, 502-489-3454 or 866-489-3534; Stacy.Nall@kybaptist.org

Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund September 1 - November 30, 2007

We are grateful to each person who gave to the Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund in honor of or in memory the following persons during the first quarter of the 2007-08 fiscal year. In addition, you will notice gifts to the 1000² Campaign that was launched at the 2007 Annual Meeting to enlist 1000 WMU donors (individuals or groups) who will give \$1,000 between 2007-2010. We will recognize all 1000² Campaign pledges, completed pledges, and other campaign gifts at the Heritage Fund luncheon during our 2008 Annual Meeting.

In Honor of:

Kathryn Jasper Akridge

Ken & Beth
Cathy Chinn &
Anna Mary Byrdwell
Anna White
Flora Foster
Pat & Dudley Reaves
Joy Bolton
Linda Cooper
Joy Bolton

Betty Brunson
Louise Lewis
Stephen & William Bullen
Joy Bolton

In Memory Of:

Bessie Deweese
Adelle Ransdell
Lealice Dehoney
Libby Cox
Elizabeth Robinson

Donor:

Mr. & Mrs. William Lamkin -
towards pledge
Parkway Baptist Women

Virginia Drake
Children of Anna White
Cheryl Hatfield - towards pledge
Wayne Hayes
Virginia Branscum - towards pledge
Irma Woodrow
Mr. & Mrs. William Lamkin -
towards pledge
Cheryl Hatfield - towards pledge
Bethel Wyatt
Virginia Branscum - towards pledge
Elkhorn Assoc. WMU -
towards campaign

Donor:

Grober-Parrish Baptist Women
Linda Devine
Kentucky WMU
Walnut Street Women on Mission
Anna White

1000² Campaign Contributions

(includes \$1,000 gifts, pledge payments, and other campaign gifts)

Jo Pelham
Westport Road Baptist Church WMU
First Baptist Church, Brandenburg
Betty Kidd
Night Women on Mission, Dry Ridge Baptist Church
Twyla Sheffield
Crestwood Baptist WMU, Crestwood
Irma Woodrow
Carol Russ
Kathy Lloyd Women on Mission, FBC, Henderson
Kentucky WMU staff
Shirley Taliafero
Joy Bolton
Dolores Gilmore
George & Cathy Chinn
Christianburg Baptist WMU

UNMASKED EXALT & 4:GO

April 18-19, 2008 • First Baptist Church • Shelbyville, Kentucky

WORLD MISSIONS UNLIMITED 2008

Are you a church or associational missions leader? Plan to attend this special event designed just for you!

July 18-19, 2008
First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville

July 25-26, 2008
First Baptist Church, London

Friday, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

How can you become a better missions leader in your church and/or association?

Attend workshops for basic training and strengthening leadership skills at World Missions Unlimited. Workshops for church leaders of all WMU organizations and Baptist Men on Mission (formerly Brotherhood) organizations will be provided. Sessions focusing on preschool, children, youth, and adult areas will be available for leaders. During both days of World Missions Unlimited, there will also be numerous workshops dealing with special areas of interest.

A special training track is designed for associational WMU leaders on Friday and Saturday. Associational leaders are encouraged to attend both days to receive the full benefit of this training.

(Continued next column)

Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Luncheon Meeting

Saturday, June 28, 2008
Kentucky Baptist Building

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Refer to BNF newsletter for detailed information or contact Wanda Walker at the WMU office

Cost: \$20 if registered by June 27
\$25 if registered by July 11
\$30 if registered after July 11
(includes: Saturday lunch and resources*)

Registration materials will be mailed to all church/ associational WMU leaders in mid May. For more information, contact Kentucky WMU.

* Those attending WMU conferences will receive a WMU Year Book. Participants in Baptist Men on Mission workshops (Baptist Men, RA, Challengers) will receive appropriate resources.

RESERVATION FORM 2008 KY WMU ANNUAL MEETING

* Reservations for meals, child care, and interpretation for the deaf.
* Please keep a copy of the completed form for your records.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Church: _____

Please complete all applicable information and enclose payment for meals:

___ Ky WMU Hall of Fame Party (Thursday 3/27, 5:30 p.m.) at My Old Kentucky Home State Park (Includes refreshments & house tour)
___ # of tickets requested @ \$15.00 each

Total: _____

___ Heritage Fund Luncheon (Box lunch, Friday noon)
___ # meals requested @ \$6.00 each

Total: _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Please make checks payable to KY WMU
Meal reservations are due by March 15
Tickets will be available for pick up at the Annual Meeting.

OTHER RESERVATIONS:

___ Preschool Child Care
___ # Children Ages: _____
___ Fri. Morning ___ Fri. evening
___ Fri. Aft. ___ Saturday
___ Interpretation for the Deaf
___ Fri. Morning ___ Fri. evening
___ Fri. Aft. ___ Saturday

Special Invitation

National WMU Annual Meeting
Dinner & Opening Session
Sunday, June 8, 6:00 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Cosmopolitan Ballroom
Indianapolis, Indiana
Special Guest Speaker:
Dr. Frank Page,
President, Southern Baptist Convention

Order your ticket from Kentucky WMU for special Kentucky Reserved Seating \$35.00 per ticket
Seating is limited so order early!

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____
tickets @\$35 each: _____
Total enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to Kentucky WMU

Calendar

March

2-9 Season of Prayer for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
7-8 Creative Ministries Festival & Youth Workshops, FBC, Bowling Green
27 Kentucky WMU Executive Board Meeting, Bardstown
28-29 Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting, Parkway BC, Bardstown

April

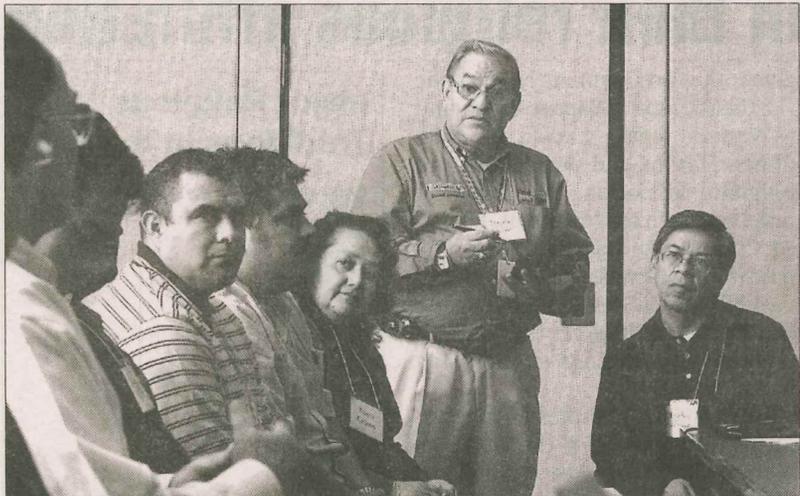
18-19 Exalt & 4:GO, FBC Shelbyville
25-26 KY WMU Resource Team Training, Baptist Building, Louisville
26-5/3 MissionsFEST, Boones Creek Association

May

17 KY WMU State Associational Leadership Training (SALT) Baptist Building, Louisville
25 Paradise, Paradise, Kansas

June

1-4 GA Camp, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest
4-7 GA Camp, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest
8-9 National WMU Annual Meeting, Indianapolis
9-12 GA Camp, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest
10-11 Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis
12-14 Express Camp for Boys and Girls, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest
15-17 Express Camp for Boys and Girls, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest
18-20 Acteens Camp, grades 6-10, Cedar Crest
20-21 Acteens Splash, grades 7-12, Jonathan Creek
GA overnight, grades 4-6, Jonathan Creek, Mother/Daughter Overnight, grades 1-3, Jonathan Creek
Mother/Daughter Overnight, grades 1-3, Cedar Crest
23-26 GA Camp, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest
27-28 Mother/Daughter Overnight, grades 1-3, Cedar Crest
28 Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Luncheon, TBA
30-7/3 GA Camp, grades 3-6, Cedar Crest



BUILDING A STRATEGY Daniel Caceres (standing), a Hispanic church planting strategist in Oklahoma City, listens intently to discussion among fellow Hispanic church planters from across the Sooner State. (NAMB photo by William Pope)

Missionary was once target of guerillas in El Salvador

Continued from page 1

"I now recommend to people who receive a call from God to be obedient the first time. Don't wait for those guerillas to come and get you," he joked.

Daniel and Marta Caceres 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. The theme during this week of prayer is "Live with Urgency: Seize Your Divine Moment." The 2008 goal offering is \$61 million.

For the last five years, Caceres has served as state Hispanic church planting strategist in Oklahoma City, jointly supported by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board and the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

When Caceres first came to Oklahoma in 1981, the state had a relatively small Hispanic population and only a half-dozen Hispanic congregations. Today, 300,000 Hispanics call the Sooner State home, and there are more than 100 Hispanic churches.

According to Caceres, 80 percent of Oklahoma's Hispanic residents come from Mexico. The rest hail from Spain, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and other Central and South American nations.

He said Oklahoma City and its six surrounding counties are the Hispanic hot spots in the state, with about 200,000 living and working there.

"They are people who are coming here to survive," Caceres noted. "We have the privilege that God is sending these people to Oklahoma so we can share the gospel of Jesus Christ with them."

So what is a typical week like for a church planting strategist in Oklahoma?

"First, we are always looking at the cities with the greatest Hispanic populations in the state. And then we are looking for sponsoring churches, partnering churches and primary churches to provide us with their facilities to start new churches in their towns," Caceres said.

"We're also looking for the right person, the right church planters," he added, "and to train them to lead

the Hispanic people here in the gospel. We don't have a lot of people who would like to be church planters here. We struggle with that."

One of Caceres' showcase churches is Oklahoma City's Rios de Agua, which is Spanish for "river of living water." Supported with funds from NAMB and BGCO, the church was planted in 1990 and averages about 300 people in attendance.

With 35,000 Hispanics living within a six-mile radius of the church, Caceres said attracting only one percent of them would increase attendance by 350, while drawing 10 percent would mean 3,500 more people in the church's pews.

Rios de Agua also is trying to start churches in several Central American countries and runs 15 Bible studies throughout Oklahoma City's Hispanic neighborhoods. "It's a great church with great projections," Caceres affirmed.

Despite the hardships he has faced, Caceres has never lost his love for soccer. After all, he was good enough to be asked to join the El Salvador national team. He could not play, however, because games were always on Sundays when he was teaching or preaching. Plus, he did not approve of the sport's association with liquor, cigarettes and other vices.

"I would tell them 'I really don't use that,'" he recalled, referring to the alcohol and tobacco products advertised to sponsor soccer in El Salvador.

"I still enjoy soccer and the relationship it gives me with people," Caceres added. "I can talk to them. I can share my feelings and show them that Jesus Christ is living in me. I'm almost 59, and still have the energy to go out there and play with them, and tell them that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer."

Caceres asks Southern Baptists to pray that God will provide the additional church planters and workers he needs. In 2008, his goal is to start 30 new Hispanic churches.

"Through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, we receive a lot of resources and support," he said. "We now have more than 100 Hispanic churches. ... We're doing our job in Oklahoma."

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Study finds Americans fluid in their religious affiliation

Protestants nearing minority status

By Amy Green
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—The United States is firmly 78 percent Christian but barely 51 percent Protestant, according to a survey released Feb. 25.

The findings, part of the sweeping U.S. Religious Landscape Survey produced by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, reaffirm a decades-long decline toward minority status for the family of churches that long steered American politics and culture.

"We're a society that over the long-term—meaning over the last several decades or the last century—(has) begun to embrace not just religious diversity but appreciate religious diversity," said Mark Chaves, a sociologist of religion at Duke Divinity School.

In some ways, Protestants may be victims of their own success at founding a nation and society that cherished a full range of religious expression, noted Diana Butler Bass who has studied the mainline Protestant churches.

"Sure, it's a little rueful that there aren't as many Protestants as there used to be, but it's also a great pleasure to know that the Protestant experiment in religious pluralism has worked in America," added Butler Bass, author of "Christianity for the Rest of Us."

The survey reveals a fluid and diverse religious landscape in which Protestants are fragmented into hundreds of denominations loosely knit around three traditions—evangelical Protestant (26 percent of American adults), mainline Protestant (18 percent) and historically black Protestant (7 percent).

Catholics, meanwhile, account for 23 percent of American adults, making them the nation's single largest religious group. Other groups are much smaller; Mormons account for less than 2 percent of adults, and Jehovah's Witnesses and the Eastern Orthodox each account for slightly less than 1 percent.

The survey found that as Protestants have shrunk in recent years—down from as many as two-thirds of Americans before the 1990s, based on figures from the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago—the number of Americans not affiliated with any religious group has risen.

Like the Pew survey, Chaves attributed the trend to a small but growing number of Americans who do not view themselves as part of a religious group. He also points to the fast-growing number of non-Protestant immigrants, many of them Hispanic Catholics.

"It's historically true that our country has been predominantly Protestant," he said. "I'd see it as more of another step in a long-term trajectory toward a declining Protestant majority and increasing religious diversity."

Still, Protestants—long the church of the establishment without being an established church—will continue to wield cultural impact, Butler Bass pointed out. She noted that 42 of the 43 U.S. presidents have been Protestants, and all four of the remaining candidates in the 2008 race are Protestants.

"Mainline Protestantism is still culturally influential in the sense that its fielding political candidates, college professors, writers and other elite cultural figures," she said. "You still have cultural impact, and that will continue ... even with that decline."

'Unaffiliated' Americans

Meanwhile, Americans who are not part of a religious organization or who identify themselves as an atheist or an agnostic represent the biggest change among U.S. religious groups. The survey estimates that about 16 percent of America's 225 million adults are not affiliated with a religion.

When "childhood religion" is compared against "current religion," the "unaffiliated" show a net increase of 8.8 percent, compared to a 7.5 percent loss among Catholics or a 2.6 percent loss among Protestants.

The study, however, also makes it clear that the "unaffiliated" are not necessarily living out a strictly secular life. Among the group, only about a quarter identified themselves as non-believers (atheists or agnostics). The remaining group were those who reported "nothing in particular" when asked about their religious affiliation.

Barry Kosmin, director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture in Hartford, Conn., said many Americans are unaffiliated simply because they are dissatisfied with the current religious offerings.

He also said he believes the United States will follow the Western model of becoming less and less religious over time.

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

Washington (RNS)—If you are a Buddhist in the United States, you are most likely a white convert who lives in the American West.

If you are a Jehovah's Witness, you are likely to be a white Southerner, but almost half of your fellow believers are either African-American or Hispanic.

And if you are a Midwesterner, you are living in the region that best reflects the religious diversity of America.

A new study of more than 35,000 adult Americans by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life captures the depth and breadth of religious America—78.4 percent Christian, 4.7 percent members of other faiths and 16.1 percent unaffiliated.

The U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, released Feb. 25, estimates the religious makeup of the country's 225 million adults in groups as large as evangelical Protestants (26.3 percent) and as small as Unitarians (0.3 percent).

The study also paints a picture of people who often move from one faith to another, as well as the religious landscape of various parts of the country. Pew researcher John Green called the Midwest a "microcosm of American religion" and closely matches the overall religious profile of the U.S. population's largest religious groups:

- Evangelical Protestant: 26 percent
- Mainline Protestant: 22 percent
- Catholic: 24 percent

"In religious terms, the Midwest really ... does reflect, of all the regions, the great diversity, at least in terms of affiliation," said Green, a senior fellow at the Pew Forum and an expert on religion and politics at the University of Akron.

Stephen Prothero, who chairs the religion department at Boston University, said that description fits,

given the predominantly Catholic Northeast, mostly Baptist South and a Western region known for Buddhists, Hindus and people with no religious affiliation. The Midwest may be known for Lutherans, he noted, "but the Lutherans don't dominate in the Midwest the way that the Catholics do in New England or the Southern Baptists do in the South."

Other key findings of the study include:

■ The nation's Protestants make up just 51 percent of the U.S. population, meaning that segment of Christianity is close to becoming a religious minority (see related article). Young people are helping fuel that trend: While 62 percent of Americans 70 and older are Protestant, only 43 percent of Americans ages 18-29 are.

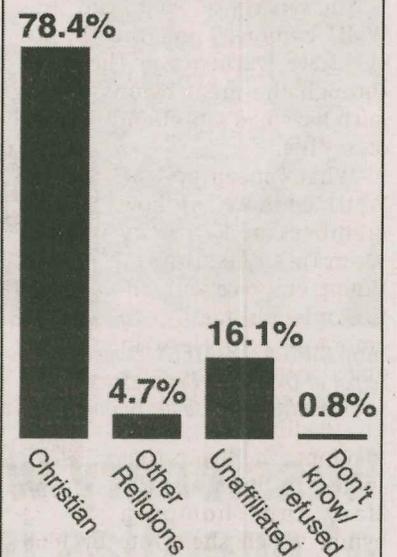
Barry Kosmin, a sociologist of religion at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., said he first detected a drop in Protestant identification in the 1990s. "Christian" has kind of replaced 'Protestant' as a term for most Americans," he said. "If you ask most students 'What is a Protestant?', they don't even know the term."

■ Of the 16.1 percent of Americans who are not affiliated with any faith, just 4 percent describe themselves as atheist or agnostic. The remaining 12 percent are almost equally divided between the "secular unaffiliated," who say religion is not important in their lives and the "religious unaffiliated," who say religion is at least somewhat important.

"Some of those people are between religions," Green pointed out. "Some of them are just hostile to organized religion. They're fine with God."

■ Catholics are the religious group with the greatest loss of adherents, with former Catholics making up about 10 percent of the U.S. population. Hindus, on the other hand, are best at retaining their

Major Religious Traditions in the U.S.



Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Monica Seaberry/Religion News Service

faith; eight in 10 Hindus who were born into the faith remain connected to it.

■ More than a quarter of Americans—28 percent—have left the faith of their childhoods for another—or no faith at all. Including changes from one form of Protestantism to another, 44 percent of Americans have changed their affiliation or dropped their connection to a faith. Jehovah's Witnesses and Buddhists are among the faiths with the lowest retention rates of childhood members.

■ More than a third of married Americans—37 percent—are married to someone with a different religious affiliation, including a different Protestant faith. Hindus and Mormons are most likely to be married to someone of the same religion, while majorities of Buddhists and the "unaffiliated" have married someone of a different religion.

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Still publishing glad tidings

Kentucky WMU embraces KBC's entire mission family

The synergy of what I call "the WMU embrace" and the theology I have learned over the years through the great hymns of the faith have had a profound impact on my life.

What I mean by "the WMU embrace" is how members of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union embrace our entire mission family. To embrace is to clasp in one's arms; to hug; to cherish; to love; to take up readily and gladly; to adopt. The hymn that comes to mind is the Mary Ann Thompson

KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

hymn, which she wrote in 1868 and first appeared in a hymnal in 1892, "O Zion, Haste." Remember the words?

"O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling, To tell to all the world that God is light;

"That He who made all nations is not willing One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

"Behold how many thousands still are lying, Bound in the darksome prison house of sin,

"With none to tell them of the Savior's dying, Or of the life He died for them to win.

"Proclaim to ev'ry people,

tongue, and nation That God, in whom they live and move, is Love:

"Tell how He stoop'd to save His lost creation, And died on earth that man might live above.

"Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious; Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way;

"Pour out thy soul for them in pray'r victorious; And all thou spendest Jesus will repay.

"Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace, Tidings of Jesus, redemption and release."

I give thanks to the Lord that our Kentucky WMU continues to embrace our entire mission family and is still publishing glad tidings, and

not just any glad tidings, but the glad tidings of peace, redemption and release found only in Jesus. It is that combination that helps to continue to propel us onward in the cause of connecting all people to Jesus Christ.

Call Laurie Valentine or me to discover how you can be involved in publishing glad tidings through the Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund.

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

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



I THINK OUR CHURCH NEEDS A REALLY SMOKIN' PRAISE SERVICE!

...SO DO I

Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



WELL MARTHA, WHAT DID YOU THINK OF MY SERMON TODAY?

I REALLY OUT-DID MYSELF TODAY DIDN'T I?

YOU SURE DID! MRS. JOHNSON KEPT YELLING "OH MY" INSTEAD OF "AMEN!"

Bible Crosswords

By Teri Grottko

Across

- 1 Returning exiles, the children of ____ (Ezra 2:44)
- 6 Standoffish
- 11 ____ of refuge
- 12 Mother of Samuel
- 14 "____ if!"
- 15 Encountered
- 17 Biblical pronoun
- 18 Latin abbr.
- 19 Made with yeast
- 23 Take a wrong turn
- 24 City where Isaac died (var., Genesis 35:27)
- 25 Physicians' group (abbr.)
- 26 Looked at
- 27 Greet
- 28 Gossips
- 30 Brother of Harnepher (1 Chronicles 7:36)
- 32 On the outside (prefix)
- 33 Son of Midian (Genesis 25:4)
- 35.O.T. minor prophet (abbr.)
- 38 Father of Azareel (Nehemiah 11:13)
- 40 More painful
- 42 Hearts, for one
- 43 Offering
- 46 Preposition
- 47 Hospital inits.
- 48 King Og's kingdom (Numbers 21)
- 49 Pronoun
- 50 Aka Belteshazzar

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- 53 He prophesied bondage for Paul
- 55 Bear or bee
- 56 Included in the inheritance of the tribe of Asher (Joshua 19:27)
- 23 "He that hath a bountiful ____ shall be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9)
- 26 Son of Zerariah (Ezra 8:4)
- 29 Relative of a borough (abbr.)
- 31 Son of Jether (1 Chronicles 7:38)
- 33 Alleviated
- 34 Servant of Gideon (Judges 7:10)
- 36 Middle Eastern language (abbr.)
- 37 City in the inheritance of the children of Simeon (Joshua 19:4)
- 39 Southern European country
- 40 His son Jonathan served in David's army (1 Chronicles 11:34)
- 41 Asiatic deer (pl.)
- 44 Linking verb
- 45 Comparative conjunction
- 48 Get-together, for a purpose
- 51 Favorite first word?
- 52 Preposition
- 54 Command word

Last week's solution

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
11	Q	U	A	K	E	T	E	A	C	H		
14	S	U	P	E	R	H	A	S	H	E	M	
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Post-Castro generations will still suffer, Fla. pastor says

"The generations after Castro will carry problems and frustrations that only the gospel will resolve."

Heberto Becerra, Cuba native and pastor of First Baptist Church of Plantation, Fla.

Plantation, Fla. (BP)—The challenges that Christians face in Cuba likely will continue even though Fidel Castro has stepped down, a Baptist Hispanic leader told Baptist Press recently.

Castro, 81, ended his nearly 49 years of rule prior to the Feb. 19 meeting of Cuba's National Assembly. He has turned the presidency over to his 76-year-old brother, Raul, the country's defense minister and acting head of state. Fidel Castro has been out of the public eye and in declining health since undergoing stomach surgery in July 2006.

"The generations after Castro will carry problems and frustrations that only the gospel will resolve," said Cuba native Heberto Becerra, immediate past president of the National Fellowship of Hispanic Southern Baptist Churches and pastor of First Baptist Church of Plantation, Fla.

Baptists are ministering "in the middle of problems and difficulties," Becerra noted, and quite likely it "is going to continue like that." Fidel Castro's exit, Becerra added, will not be the lone factor in ending religious oppression in Cuba.

Becerra said he returned to Cuba three years ago "to preach and also to visit my elderly mother."

"Those were days of great remembrances and opportunities to preach the Word. Now is easier than 30 years ago," Becerra said of the country's less-strident stance against evangelicals in recent years.

Restrictions have eased over time, compared to the jailing of 53 Baptist pastors, including two American cit-

izens, in 1965. According to one report, enrollment at the Baptist Seminary in Havana rose from 54 resident students in 1999, to 610 last year through various commuter programs and extension classes for future pastors and church lay leaders.

"The Cuban Baptist conventions are strong with a healthy focus on sharing the Good News of Jesus with all Cubans," one Baptist worker noted. "Regardless of changes, Cuban Baptists are capable of continuing to expand their influence across the island."

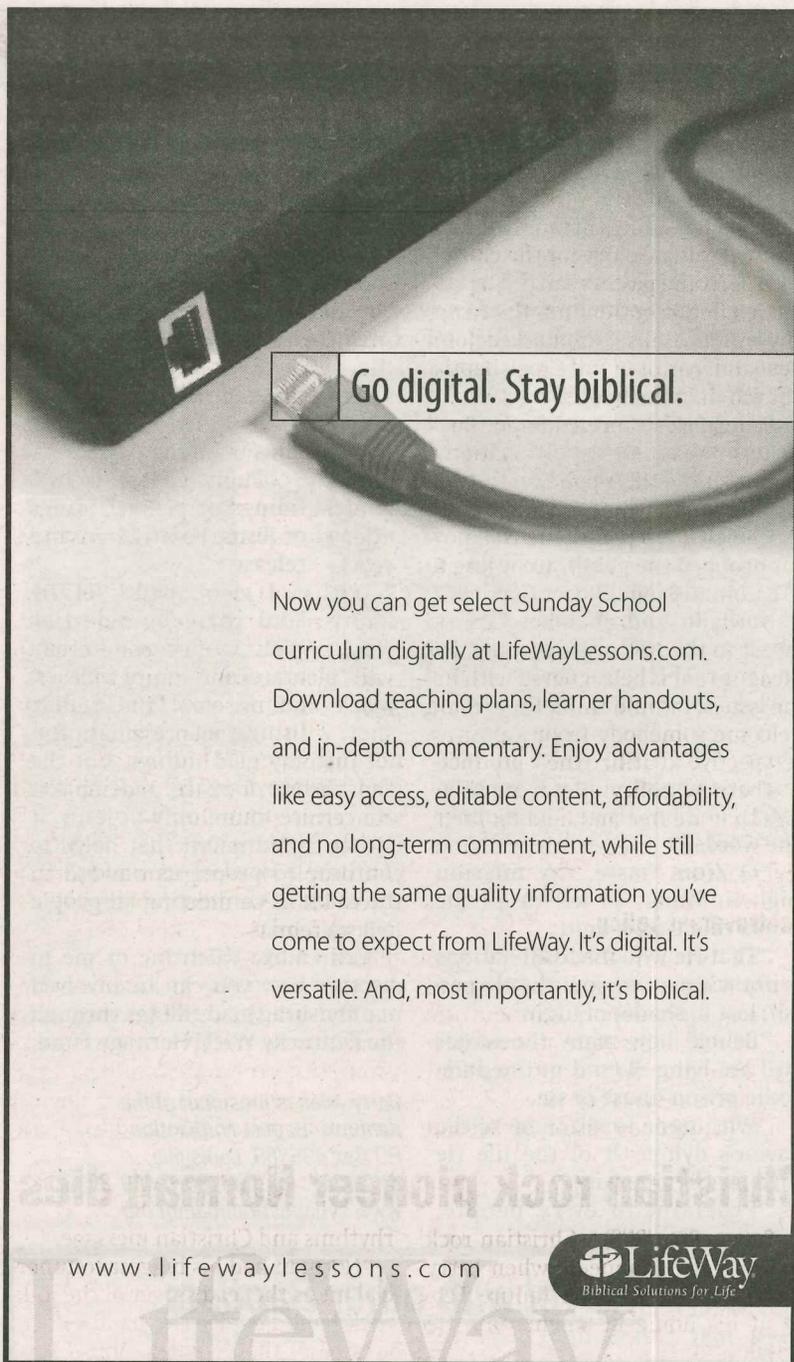
"The one thing we ask is that all Christians pray for them as they move ahead with their plans. Southern Baptists will continue to assist Cuban Baptists as they request and as we are able."

Becerra said Cuba's Christians "pray and hope for a change that facilitates the preaching of the Word" in their country, where, for example, preaching in public venues remains prohibited.

"My prayer is that any change won't cause a greater problem," he added.

Becerra came to the United States nearly 30 years ago. He was a pastor in Cuba who also had served as president of the Baptist Convention in Cuba for four years.

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On this mountain

Oneida faculty & staff exhibit 'Go and do likewise' attitude described by Christ

By Michael Spencer, assistant to the president

Recently, I heard the story of a preacher and his wife who were on vacation in New England. They remembered a favorite poem by Emerson that was inspired by a regional landmark, Mount Monadnock, and decided to take the afternoon to find it. They began to drive to their clearly marked destination. They followed the map, stayed on the right road and eventually began to see signs: Monadnock grocery. Monadnock pottery. Monadnock Inn. Monadnock Church. Obviously they were close to the mountain. They continued looking.

But no Mount Monadnock. Confusion ensued, then frustration. They drove back and forth, looking at various landmarks and asking, "Is that it?" Frustration turned to argument. Eventually, the preacher gave up and stopped at a small store to explain his dilemma. "I've followed the directions to Mount Monadnock," he said, "but I can't find the mountain. I've seen everything else labeled 'Monadnock,' but not the mountain. Where did I miss it?"

The answer was simple: "You don't have to find it. You're on it. You've been on it all the time."

"You're on it." What a good word that is for Christians. God, His Kingdom and His purposes and opportunities are right here, right now. We're "on the mountain." We need to put down our maps and quit looking for the postcard-perfect view. We must stop being tourists, assuming someone else will do all the work. We need to go to work today, now, here.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus clos-

es with a simple sentence: "Go and do likewise." We are to do what Jesus would do, how Jesus would do it and where He would do it. Have you thought about how that sentence intersects your life and how the opportunities that surround you are the ways God answers our prayers to be useful to Him? Our own "mountain" may not seem spectacular, but it has one great advantage: we're on it. And God will meet us there.

My mother lived her last years in a senior-adult community, making her neighbors her mission field. She picked up mail, visited those who couldn't get out, ran errands, prayed, listened and simply brought the presence of God to her "neighborhood" of a few apartments on the same floor. That was her "mountain" and she knew it.

It is inspiring to be around so many on the OBI staff who have decided that they are on their mountain of ministry. While the average time of a pastorate in the Southern Baptist Convention is less than five years, I can look around at Oneida's staff and see an abundance of people serving for 10, 20 and more years. The pay doesn't keep them here; in fact, some are volunteers. The food on the blue trays in the cafeteria gets a bit predictable. We're seven miles from Wal-Mart and 42 miles from a cinema or a Starbucks. But we are on the mountain.

We're at the place where God brings students we can help, He can save and you can impact through prayer, giving and other support. We're in a place where, for 109 years, God's work has been done in the spirit of "Go and do likewise."

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



W.F. Underwood

My Deliverer

Longstaff expresses sincere thanks for God's deliverance

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College was not a place first-year student David Longstaff would have envisioned himself living a few years ago. Even more unlikely was a young man who had been diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome preparing for Christian ministry.

"I came out of a rough past," he noted. "I was involved with a lot of things that led to drugs, jail time, and just a lot of bad stuff. But five years ago God began to deal with me in a very strong way." David said he felt God's conviction so strongly, "I did not want to hang out with the crowd that I was involved with anymore. I knew that all the things I was involved with were not right."

After accepting Jesus Christ as his Savior, David said he was delivered from drug addiction and also from Tourette's. "The best choice I ever made was to follow God," David said. "I am thankful for His deliverance."

A native of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, David never expected God's deliverance would bring him to Pineville and Clear Creek.

"It took me a while to submit to God's call to full time service," he

recalled. "I was happy serving God through my local church as I grew in the Lord after my salvation experience. Deep in my heart, though, I had the desire to serve the Lord full time in a ministry setting. I faced a decision that a lot of people face when struggling with that call to ministry. I had a family to provide for ... and I just couldn't make myself surrender to God's call."

Once again, God sent a spirit of conviction on David. "It was during one of our church worship services. God's conviction had become so strong that I knew I had to submit to His call to full-time ministry. I remember telling the Lord that I was miserable because I felt like I was not doing what I was supposed to be doing. I told the Lord that night I would go anywhere He wanted me to go and do whatever He wanted me to do."

David's pastor "told me this is where I needed to go to prepare for God's calling on my life," David said. "I am at peace now because I know I am where God wants me to be."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

NFL reversal shows value of taking a stand, pastors say

By Ken Walker
Baptist Press

Indianapolis (BP)—The National Football League's reversal over Super Bowl screenings in family-friendly settings is a victory for the church at large, some pastors say.

"It's finally gotten into the realm of common sense," remarked John Newland, pastor of Fall Creek Baptist Church in Indianapolis.

Fall Creek's canceled Super Bowl party last year touched off a national furor over the NFL's policy of restricting church viewings to a maximum of 55-inch TV screens. The NFL now has dropped the policy, according to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

Newland said churches "are no threat to the NFL or its product. For a league that is beleaguered with image issues, I would think they would welcome somebody from a positive perspective to utilize their product."

The new policy allows for showings that are free and held on premises routinely used by the religious organization.

Controversial policy

The former NFL policy had touched off widespread criticism of the league, since sports bars and other establishments were able to show the championship game without any concern for screen size.

David Greene, pastor of Second

Baptist Church of Indianapolis, said the NFL's reversal "shows when you take a stand what can happen versus being intimidated by such a large and significant organization as the NFL that has a lot of money and resources.

"And yet, entities that were far smaller could take a stand and gain the victory. When you stand for what's right, truth prevails," Greene declared.

A number of pastors said their churches likely will return to church-based Super Bowl parties after curtailing them the past two years.

Richard Odom, pastor of First Baptist Church of Summerfield, N.C., noted that his congregation will plan a community-wide outreach and pre-empt the halftime show with a gospel presentation.

The pastor said he is still amazed that the NFL took the position it did concerning churches.

"To some degree, it's a victory for people speaking out and letting them know we didn't appreciate it," Odom remarked. "I know they were flooded with e-mails."

The outcry also included a promise by Heath Schuler, former pro quarterback and now congressman from western North Carolina, to introduce legislation if the NFL did not amend its policy, Odom added.

One Shelby County church that held its customary party—though making sure its screen fit the 55-inch restriction—will return to a full-scale Super Bowl party next year, although its pastor hopes to see it become more of an outreach. Simpsonville Baptist Church welcomed more than 200 partygoers to this year's telecast, which featured corn hole and ping-pong tournaments, a chili cook-off and board games.

"I don't know that it's a victory," Pastor Steve Boyd said of the restrictions being relaxed. "I think the only victory is if we use the Super Bowl and other big events to build relationships and tell other people about the Lord. I can't say we've intentionally used an evangelistic approach for the game."

Sounding off

Mike Johnson, legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, which had threatened legal action against the NFL over its policy, concurred that the case is an example of what can happen when people speak up.

"In something like this where there is no reason for this kind of treatment, we can let our voices be heard," Johnson noted. "I think we need to do more of that."

He drew a parallel between the outspoken nature of protests against the NFL's policy and developments

in the nation's public schools. He referred to a January court decision in Massachusetts, in which a federal appeals court ruled that parents had no right to object to elementary school children being taught pro-homosexual materials, with their only option being to withdraw their children from classes.

Johnson said the viewpoints of Christian students are being squelched and the students are being subjected to teachings diametrically opposed to their views.

"We're losing valuable yardage in the game," he declared. "This (Super Bowl reversal) is a good example of what can happen when we push back."

On the spiritual side, Newland pointed out that the Super Bowl triumph shows how God moved in a situation that was impossible for anybody to influence by human means. Newland said if someone had asked him two years ago how the situation would turn out, he never would have imagined it concluding the way it did. His church turned to in-home parties for this year's Super Bowl that attracted some 300 participants.

"So in that way, it's a testimony to the fact (that) if God wants something done, it will be done, regardless of how we may try to manufacture a result," Newland said.

Christian rock pioneer Norman dies

Salem, Ore. (RNS)—Christian rock lost one of its pioneers when Larry Norman died of heart failure Feb. 24 at his home in Salem, Ore. He was 60.

Norman's death has brought renewed attention to his role as a trailblazer in what is now a thriving category in the music industry. Norman's 1969 solo album, "Upon This Rock," is "considered pivotal in the development of Contemporary Christian music," according to "The Billboard Guide to Contemporary Christian Music."

He was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2001, and for all his influence, Norman was considered to be ahead of his time with his mixture of blunt lyrics, rock

rhythms and Christian message.

Norman had his biggest commercial hit as the lead singer of the folk-rock band People! The band's cover version of the Zombies song "I Love You" peaked at No. 7 on the Billboard chart in June 1968. In later years, Norman started his own independent label, recording additional solo albums while discovering other Christian artists.

In a message posted on his Web site the day before he died, Norman said he knew death was imminent.

"I feel like a prize in a box of Cracker Jacks with God's hand reaching down to pick me up," Norman wrote, adding that he planned to be buried in a "simple pine box with some flowers inside."

NATIONAL NOTES

Hinn submits records to Senate committee. After several weeks of delay, televangelist Benny Hinn has submitted a "significant amount" of financial material to a Senate committee that is investigating the finances of six prominent ministries. A spokesperson for the Senate Finance Committee said ranking Republican Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa "and his staff will evaluate whether the material responds sufficiently but are encouraged by the demonstration of cooperation." Two other ministries—Joyce Meyer Ministries in Fenton, Mo., and Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Newark, Texas—have already provided materials that were reviewed by Senate staff. The remaining three ministries—Creflo Dollar, Paula and Randy White and Bishop Eddie Long—have yet to provide financial records to the committee.

Controversial Iowa prison program ends. A faith-based prisoner rehabilitation program in Iowa that was the subject of a court case will cease later this month. Prison Fellowship President Mark Earley said the Iowa Department of Corrections informed his Virginia-based ministry that the InnerChange Freedom Initiative

program at the prison in Newton, Iowa, would conclude following the graduation of many of the program's participants. The group Americans United for Separation of Church and State had sued the program, saying it should not receive government funds because it is "pervasively religious." A federal judge agreed and ordered the program to repay more than \$1.5 million the program had received since 1999. An appeals court later upheld that decision but lowered the amount to be repaid.

Mayor: God stays in mission statement. The mayor of Hudsonville, Mich. said the City Commission will continue to "strive to serve God," despite an atheist group's demand that the phrase be removed from the city's mission statement. "We are not creating a church; we are not asking anybody to only accept what we have in that mission statement," Mayor Don Van Doeselaar said Feb. 26. "If there are those that disagree, we are fine with that. It's a statement that reflects the community." The Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, which had asked the city to remove the phrase, said it might consider legal action.

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HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Keith Inman

Her name is Barbara. She's a spring break party girl from Indiana University, one of some 40,000 who have joined MTV and others to experience youthful passion gone wild. Panama City Beach, the music, the flesh and the booze: a sure recipe for a hedonistic cocktail.

In the middle of all this "fun and chaos" are Baptist Campus Ministry students prepared to share the good news of Christ. Barbara is on a collision course with these purpose-driven, prayed-up Christian college students who have committed themselves to being conduits of grace through ministry platforms of free rides and free pancakes. On this turf, thousands of college students will hear of God's free gift of eternal life in Christ.

The message is so simple, almost too simple for the educated culture of the university campus. However, as the university is dependent upon the "ABCs," the gospel can start there too.

When presented with the one-verse evangelism of Romans 6:23, Barbara **admitted** her sin and separation from God. The longing in her heart recognized God truly wanted a relationship with her.

As the gospel was explained, Barbara **believed**. Her heart was fertile, prepared by prayer for this providential encounter.

Amid the revelry of spring break, Barbara also **confessed**. She confessed her sin, her need for a Savior, that Jesus is Lord.

This month, hundreds of BCM students will encounter thousands of "spring breakers," loving them and sharing with them the good news. Wherever you are, the good news is still the same: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Keith Inman is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's collegiate/young adult ministry department

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **AUBURN**—New Friendship Church recently called **Tony Chaudion** as youth and education director. **John Birchett** is pastor.

■ **CORBIN**—White Oak Missionary Church recently called **Denny Roberts** as pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Trinity Church recently called **Nathan Barnes** as minister of students and young adults. **Jay Robison** is pastor.

■ **MAYFIELD**—**Jamie Summerville** has been named dean of Mid-Continent University's Baptist School of Arts and Sciences. He also is chair of the school's math department. Summerville, a former faculty member at Morehead State University and Tennessee Tech University, is a graduate of Murray State University and the University of Mississippi.

■ **PINE KNOT**—**Mike Neal** recently resigned as pastor of Pine Knot Church.

■ **RUSSELL SPRINGS**—**Louis and Lois Shepherd**, members of Friendship Church, will celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary March 9. Fam-

Spotlight on ...

Summersville



Brush Creek Church will host a gospel singing March 15, 7 p.m., featuring **The Crossroads Quartet** from Russell Springs and **The Durrett Family** from Greensburg. **Jerry Noe** is pastor.

ily members will host a reception in their honor that day, 1 to 3 p.m. Louis Shepherd served as director of missions for 30 years with Freedom, Liberty, Pulaski and Russell County associations.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—Red Bird Church recently called **Jacob Crussenberry** as pastor.

■ **WOODBINE**—Woodbine Church recently called **Dexter Smith** as pastor.

WMU leaders appoint Kentucky teen to National Acteens Panel

By Julie Walters

Woman's Missionary Union

Shelbyville—When Amanda-Grace Richey and her family joined Burks Branch Baptist Church in Shelbyville three years ago, there was not an Acteens organization in the church.

"In all honesty, I did not expect the program to connect with the other girls," acknowledged Pastor Billy Betts, "but I was wrong."

Richey started a group that began with two or three girls, then grew rapidly. The girls began participating in missions projects such as raising money to dig wells in Africa, stuffing "Baptist bears" to be distributed to orphans in Russia, and leading mission service projects around the church.

"It is truly remarkable how God has used Amanda-Grace to build an emphasis on missions with our youth, and subsequently our church," Betts said. "Due to the success (of Acteens) in our church, the Shelby Baptist Association nominated her to direct Acteens for the entire association. Amanda-Grace is a dynamic leader, a persistent worker and a positive, engaging personality. Her zeal for Acteens, her heart for missions and her own walk with Jesus are truly exemplary."

Based on her strong commitment and involvement in missions and Acteens, along with outstanding leadership and involvement in her community and church, national Woman's Missionary Union has selected



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

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.

15 RA Congress Region 6, Boones Creek Baptist Camp, Winchester.

22 RA Congress Region 4, Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville.

22 RA Congress Region 8, Oakland Avenue Baptist Church, Catlettsburg.

25 Comeback Church Conference, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

28-29 Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.

29 RA Congress Region 7, Elk Spring Valley Baptist Church, Monticello.

31 Understanding Other Beliefs, Sevens Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

31-April 1 Welcome to Kentucky Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.

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

SEEKING: Full-time GL/AP bookkeeper for the KBC Accounting Services Department. Position requires 3-5 years related experience and offers competitive salary and benefits package. For more information, please submit resumé to the Administrative Services Department through www.kybaptist.org/administrative by 3/15/08.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor of family discipleship and student ministries for Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Oklahoma City. Teaching ability, leadership, organization and delegation skills required. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Capitol Hill Baptist Church, 304 SW 134th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73170, Attn: James Fullingim; or e-mail to chbc@chbchurch.org.

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

SEEKING: Full-time director of youth ministries for Gardenside Baptist Church. For information, visit www.gardensidebaptist.com.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Somerset, Ky. Please mail resumé to Pastor Search Committee, 1685 Hwy. 3091, Somerset, KY 42503.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor, Frenchburg Southern Baptist Church, Frenchburg, Ky. Please send resumé with a DVD, CD or tape of recent sermons to: Pastor Search Committee, Frenchburg Baptist Church, 298 Hwy. 36, Frenchburg, KY 40322-8118.

SEEKING: Full-time church planting missionary for Brookhaven Baptist Church (www.brookhavenbaptist.net) for a Nehemiah project in the Brookhaven community of Atlanta, Ga. Please e-mail resumé to Pastor Don Presley at dpresley@presleyenterprises.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth at First Baptist Church, Madisonville, Ky. Master's degree with some experience preferred. Send resumé with recent photo to First Baptist Church, 246 North Main St., Madisonville, KY 42431, Attn: SDC.

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

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: 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: Full-time associate pastor for Oakland Baptist Church, Oakland, Ky. (near Bowling Green). Oakland Baptist is a growing church that is averaging nearly 350 people in attendance each week. The associate pastor will work alongside our lead pastor in seeing that our people have the opportu-

young, emerging leaders for the future as missions advocates and leaders of WMU," noted Wanda Lee, executive director of national WMU. "The Acteens panelists are always a shining example of the high quality of Christian youth in our churches today."

Richey and the other panelists will each receive a \$1,000 Jessica Powell Loftis Scholarship for Acteens from the WMU Foundation. They also will participate in the WMU Missions Celebration and annual meeting in Indianapolis in June.

Applications for the 2009 National Acteens Panel are due to WMU by Dec. 1, 2008. Applications will be available on the Acteens Web site at www.acteens.com.

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nity to become fully devoted followers of Christ. The primary role of the associate pastor is to assist in our discipleship ministry; this includes overseeing our small-group ministry, our Sunday morning Bible study ministry and one-on-one discipleship opportunities. The associate also will take a lead role in connecting our church members, as well as new members, to our ministry. All applicants should have a genuine love for the Lord and His church. Though seminary is not required, it is recommended. All interested applicants should send resumé to Oakland Baptist Church, Oakland, KY 42159, Attn: Personnel Committee. To learn more about Oakland Baptist Church, visit www.oaklandbchurch.org.

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Evangelism in New Orleans

Couple with heart for Crescent City says hardest part is that first knock

By Stacey Billger

Louisiana Baptist Convention

New Orleans (BP)—The rain finally subsided enough so that Ken and Glennes Brassfield could walk around the neighborhood where an Operation NOAH Rebuild volunteer team was hard at work painting the inside of a school. After asking God for guidance and for receptive hearts, the Brassfields headed down the street hoping to meet residents and chat with them for a moment.

"The hardest thing is knocking on that first door," Glennes Brassfield acknowledged.

Sensing the moment was right, the Brassfields headed to a door, knocked and struck up a conversation. Sometimes they are turned away. But more often than not, the Lord has pricked the heart of those they speak with and before long, they are engaged in a conversation about spiritual matters.

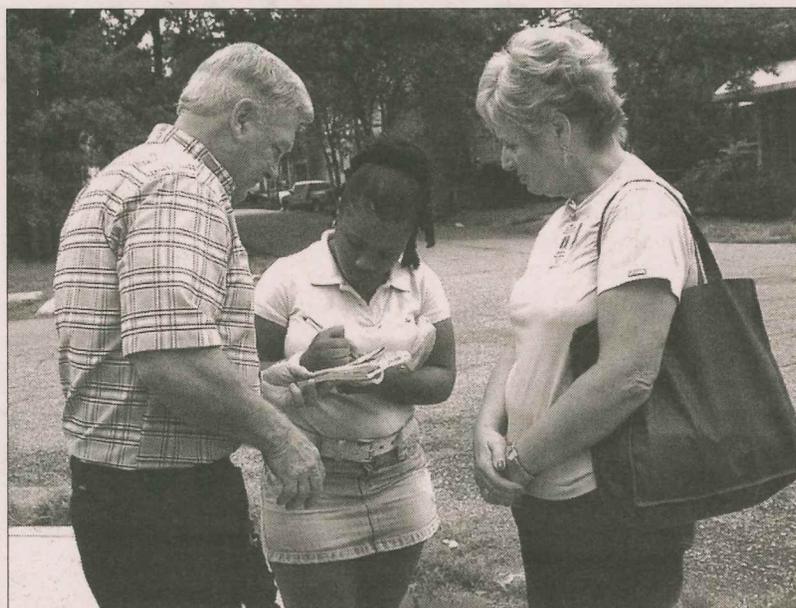
The Brassfields consider their ministry in New Orleans a way to carry out God's calling to be His messengers. The results, they said, "are up to Him."

Within an hour of heading into the neighborhood, the Brassfields had spoken to five residents. Two of them accepted Christ as their Savior; one in her home and another on a street corner.

The couple's commitment to personal evangelism has seen nearly 400 people surrender their lives to the Lord through their ministry.

"They've been one the most effective evangelism ministries down here," said Joe Williams, a chaplain with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

The Oklahoma couple traveled to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, arriving for their first visit in August 2006 and returning 10 times. They said they initially thought they would be assisting residents who needed to talk about their losses or



TAKING IT TO THE STREETS A girl provides contact information to Ken and Glennes Brassfield in a New Orleans neighborhood. The Brassfields have shared a commitment to personal evangelism following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and have seen hundreds come to know Jesus as Savior. (BP photo by Stacey Billger)

helping volunteers cope with everything they experienced. Instead, the Brassfields discovered residents who needed Christ.

Ken Brassfield noted that the main factor in the openness and receptive hearts of the residents has been the volunteer work in the area. In particular, those working with Operation NOAH Rebuild, who have prayed for the city, witnessed to residents and poured countless hours of volunteer work into homes across New Orleans during a three-year partnership project between New Orleans churches and associations, the Louisiana Baptist Convention and NAMB.

"It seems like almost everyone we talk to makes a decision," Brassfield declared.

With follow-up in mind, contact information is gathered, a devotion book is given and new believers are encouraged to share his or her de-

cision with a loved one. The information is given to a local church as well as to NOAH. A large number of people the Brassfields share with are not connected to a church, so follow-up is an important step in the strategy of personal evangelism, they explained.

"We're here a week and then we're gone, but we like to check in with the pastors and NOAH to see how the follow-up has gone," Ken noted.

David Maxwell, project coordinator for Operation NOAH Rebuild, said repairing earthly homes is important to NOAH, but there is more to it.

"What the Brassfields and others like them are doing is allowing God to use them to help people receive Christ," Maxwell noted. "And with salvation comes an eternal home not made with hands."

The Brassfields said they hope

to continue to see God work in the hearts of the people of New Orleans as they make return trips to the area.

"We want to train and equip others to be out sharing the gospel since the harvest is so ripe in New Orleans," Ken Brassfield noted.

Their passion for personal evangelism has been contagious. As they visit NOAH work sites, they often invite team members to join them.

"The last time we were here, we had some members of a team follow us to see what we were doing. Then, they began to share themselves. ... It was so exciting," Brassfield recalled.

Keith Manuel, evangelism associate with the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said the Brassfields "have embraced this city with the love of Christ. Not only have they worked tirelessly, but they have sought to equip others to share the gospel message."

While the Brassfields have years of experience and training in personal evangelism, they insisted that what they do is neither special nor difficult. It is simply a matter of being obedient.

"God showed me 2 Timothy 4:17 recently. ... He's our strength and all we need," Glennes Brassfield noted.

"It becomes easier the more you do it," her husband added.

The Brassfields encourage teams to incorporate personal evangelism in their mission trip planning. They suggested making time after the workday for visiting with neighbors nearby or have one group do construction work while the other does evangelism. The weeks they are in the city, the couples said they are happy to work alongside a team and train them.

"I am praying for God to send more servants like the Brassfields to work alongside our local churches in the fertile fields of New Orleans," Manuel acknowledged.

"What the Brassfields and others like them are doing is allowing God to use them to help people receive Christ. And with salvation comes an eternal home not made with hands."

David Maxwell, project coordinator for Operation NOAH Rebuild in New Orleans

Personal trials prepare husband and wife for work in New Orleans

By Marilyn Stewart

Baptist Press

New Orleans (BP)—Within a year's time, Fred and Nancy Gray each faced a life-threatening illness. After recovering, they determined not only to live every day to the fullest, but to live it fully for God.

Two weeks after Nancy's last chemotherapy treatment for the aggressive cancer she battled, the Grays moved from their home in Memphis, Tenn., to Destin, Fla., and began what they thought would be a typical retirement life together. But something more was ahead.

In personal crisis, facing financial ruin and after years of pretending to be a Christian, Fred Gray said he knelt in prayer at home and gave his life to Christ. Surviving heart surgery reminded him that God still had a purpose for his life. When Nancy became sick soon after Fred's recovery, she said she also committed to make the rest of her life count for Christ.

"It's not that cancer is worse than heart problems or other life-threatening illnesses," Nancy pointed out.

"But with cancer, you have time to think. I was faced with my mortality and I really wanted to do something with my life."

"We wanted to serve the Lord, so we made a commitment to go anywhere and do anything He asked us to do," Fred added.

The Grays were not sure how their new 45-foot motor home could be used for the Lord until they discovered Campers on Mission at a Tampa recreational vehicle show and said they knew immediately what God wanted them to do.

Now on assignment with Operation NOAH Rebuild, the Grays are serving in a place they acknowledged, feels like home. "We knew that this is where God wanted us to be the first week we were here," Nancy declared.

The Grays serve alternate months between New Orleans and Destin, where Fred is a deacon at Village Baptist Church.

"The Grays' testimony is a demonstration of our mighty God at work through His people called Southern Baptists," said John Yeats, direc-

tor of communications for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. "The Lord worked powerfully through the crisis of health issues to prepare the hearts of the Grays to make an eternal difference, and we are grateful for their sensitivity to the Lord's leading."

Doing God's work

As part of the NOAH warehouse team, Fred Gray helps manage and deliver building materials to the hundreds of volunteer teams who are carrying out NOAH's plan of rebuilding 1,000 homes and 20 churches during its two-year commitment to New Orleans. Fred noted he finds abundant opportunities to share the gospel with the homeowners and neighbors he meets.

"It's not kind of fun, it's really fun to talk to people about the Lord," Fred declared. "You talk about what you know best and I know my testimony better than anything."

While in New Orleans, the Grays live at Fort Calvary, a small RV park on the property of Calvary Baptist Church in Algiers, a section of New

Orleans adjacent to the Mississippi River. It is located right next to the NOAH office where Nancy works as a staff member helping link homeowners to volunteer teams.

Nancy said her personal trials have deepened her ability to relate to those in need. At the office, she prays with homeowners whose stories often are like that of an 84-year-old woman who was rescued after three days alone in her attic, and whose sole desire is to move out of a FEMA trailer and back into her home before she dies.

Nancy noted that she hopes her grandchildren will remember that she and her husband came to New Orleans because they cared for the people and wanted them to know that God loves them.

"Life is not about possessions," Fred explained. "People want to be happy, but what better way is there to enjoy life than by serving the Lord?"

Despite the Grays' best efforts, Yeats reiterated the fact that volunteers are still needed in New Orleans.

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